

Palladium Books® Presents:

Bizantium and the Northern Islands™

A Sourcebook for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Glen Evans



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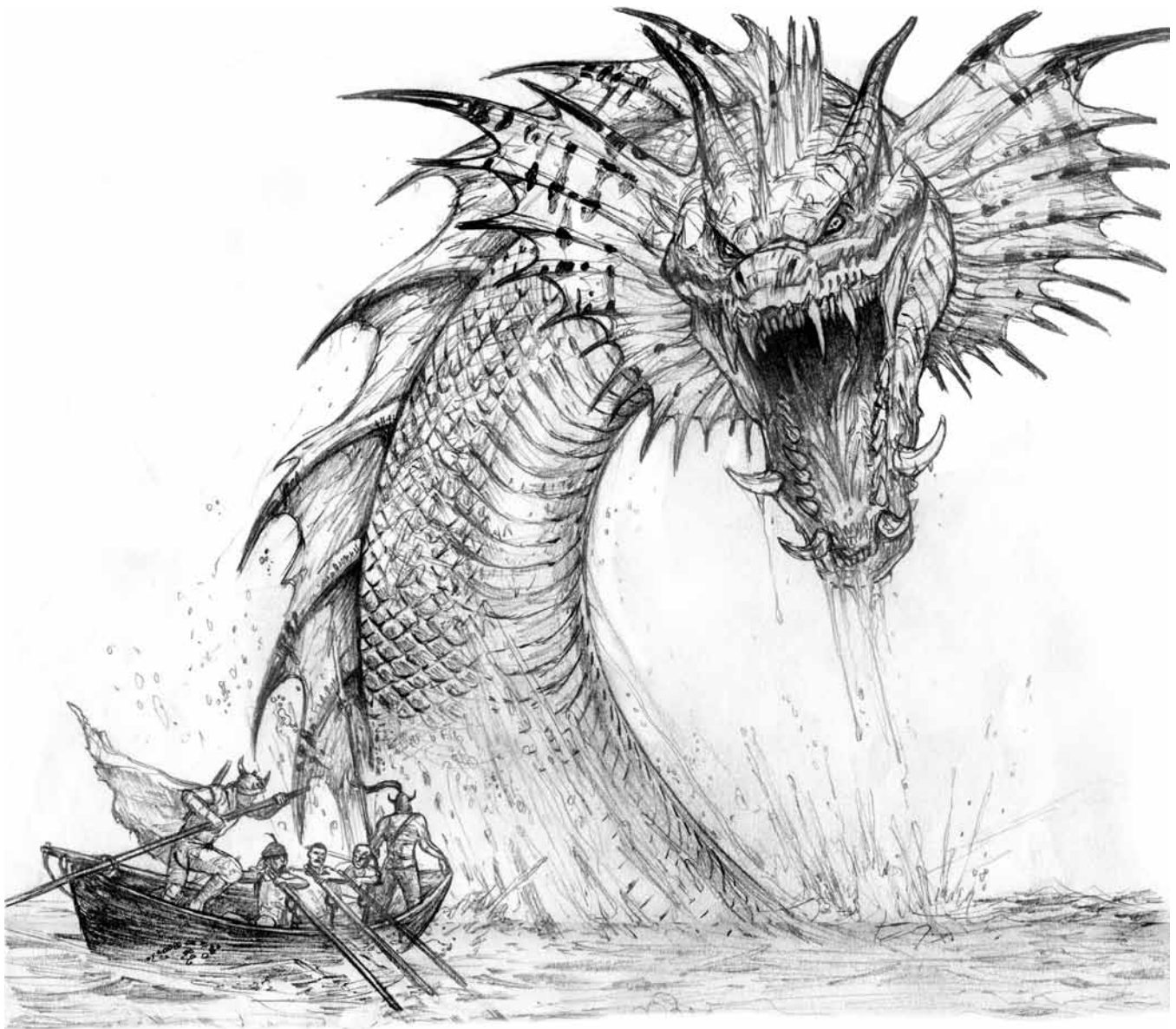
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An epic sourcebook for the *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*, 2nd Edition.

Dedication

To *Kevin Siembieda* and *Erick Wujcik* for making a wonderful fantasy setting that has allowed me to spend part of my life in a wondrous world whenever I need a little escapism.

To my best friend *Miles* who helped bring Bizantium to life with his diligence and mapmaking skills.

To my Fantasy Players, *John, Paul, Richard, Andy, Brent* and *Okey*, for all the good times sitting around the table even when we failed to get any adventuring done.

But above all to my buddy *Herbert Nielsen*, you were there for me during the lowest point in my life, I'll never forget our "going to breakfast mornings," they always cheered me up during the sad days. You forced me to become a better Game Master so in return I became a better story teller. Without you this book and everything I've accomplished with Palladium Books would not be possible. While Bizantium is not the proper setting for the Elf Paladin *Garret Oakenshield*, his adventures remain some of the happiest times in my life. It was destiny that you rolled those natural 20s to defeat the Orcish Warlord; roll another, and keep playing my friend.

– *Glen A. Evans, 2015*

To friends and fond memories . . . of happy times, grand adventures, the Detroit Gaming Center, The Defilers, Erick, Kay, Kevin Lowery, Kevin Long, Thom, Ken, Tony, Julius, Alex, Rusty, Ziggy, Kerry, Al, Dave, Mark, Bill, Robin, and all the rest. And to the many friends and memories that would follow and are yet to come.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2015*

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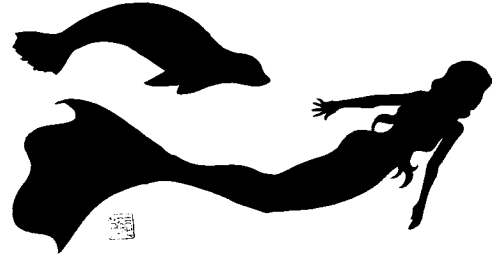
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– *Kevin Siembieda, 2015*

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PALLADIUM

map of the known world



scale in miles

0 200 400 600





Bizantium

The Northern Kingdom of Man

Hirren leaned on the rough-hewn railing that wrapped around the edge of the fishing boat. They were sailing through the waters north of the **Isle of the Cyclops**, trawling for the rich shoals of sardines that frequented the area in autumn and fetched such a good price back home. Two weeks had passed since their departure from Rallian in the **Western Empire**, the boat's home port; two weeks since Hirren had drunk ale from the tap or tasted fresh-baked bread or glimpsed a woman that wasn't the mermaid carved on the fishing vessel's bow. It had either been a life on the high seas or the Imperial Army for him, and lately he had begun to doubt his choice.

"Whale-sign to starboard!" called the lookout, who had been slouched lazily in the crow's nest, half-asleep, until a wave passed under the boat crosswise and shook him awake.

The line in Hirren's hands twitched and his eyes lifted. Sure enough, a Black Whale leapt from the water as he watched, a magnificent display for an animal as big as their boat, and splashed back down into the sea.

"Twenty-five, maybe thirty barrels of oil in that beast, I wager," said first mate Alivar Mortsa, watching with a certain nostalgia in his eyes. "Served on a whaling ship for four seasons. Pay was fine, I tell you that. Better than any fishing vessel. But I never worked so hard in my life."

"Never thought you to be afraid of hard work, Mortsa."

"Didn't leave it due to the toil, left it due to the smell. A dozen giant vats – bubbling with fat, day and night, cooking it all down into whale oil. I couldn't go back for a fifth season, not for any price."

"Worse than being up to your waist in sardines?"

Mortsa nodded, the smell still fresh in his memory. "Tells you something, doesn't it?"

"Ahh!" Hirren winced as the line he held was suddenly jerked away. A long, dark form crossed under them, and the big whale twisted and writhed as massive jaws clamped onto its side. Blood and blubber filled the water, beaten into bubbles and oily froth as an immense sea serpent devoured the whale in incredible, rending bites. Hirren had always heard that huge serpents were common in northern waters, nearing the **Sea of Dread**, but the fishing was just too good for the captain to pass up.

With the best parts of the whale consumed, the sea serpent lifted its head out of the waves, water streaming down off its ar-

mored face and scowling jaws. Then, it turned back toward the ship. Hirren certainly wished he was in the Imperial Army now!

"All hands – hold fast!" yelled Mortsa. Hirren wrapped an arm around the railing, but it was no use. The little fishing boat shattered into splinters, parting before the serpent's hillocks of scaled coils. The lookout fell onto the creature itself and was cut deeply by the jagged ridges that lined its sides, rolling into the water clutching his wounds.

The great beast slipped beneath the waves as swiftly as it had appeared, leaving a dozen men floating in the water with the smashed boards and nets of fish that had been their ship and their livelihood a moment before. Hirren saw the captain swimming for an overturned ship's lifeboat, saw Mortsa trying to help the injured lookout keep his head above water with one hand, holding onto a barrel with the other.

A net-full of sardines exploded in a storm of burning eyes and gulping jaws, a passing snack that would have fetched two-thousand gold back in the fish market.

The sea serpent reared back, sardines spilling out of its mouth, and darted downward, toward the water's surface, to snatch Mortsa up out of the sea. Hirren could only watch and tread water as the monster tossed the flailing whaler into the air and caught him in its giant jaws, gulping him down like a fish taking bait off a hook. The lookout was next, and then the beast vanished back under the waves.

The silence as the survivors waited for the sea monster to reappear was painful. Seconds felt like minutes. Then the sea bulged and the captain was taken just as he climbed into the lifeboat, pulled under, forever gone. A heartbeat later, the sea serpent rose steadily, coil after coil, looking back. It slithered through the water like the sea snakes Hirren had seen as a boy – the poisonous creatures his grandfather had told him never to touch, lest they be the death of him. Well, the king of all the sea snakes was about to be the death of him.

Hirren covered his eyes. If he had joined the Army at least he would have met his death on his feet, at the hands of some Orc or Ogre, not struggling in the water. Those wealthy nobles back home, those fat priests and merchants, were about to cost him his life. They had killed him with their willingness to pay good gold for salty little fish to adorn their crackers and bread rolls.

A horn sounded in the distance and the serpent turned. Through a fog bank, bearing down from the north, Hirren's salvation appeared: a pair of streamlined warships, flying on wings of silk and canvas, casting up sea spray from their bows as they cut through the water.

They were beautifully handled, practically racing each other. Sailors called back and forth as they closed in on the serpent.

The lead ship rammed fearlessly into the monster, shouldering the beast aside. Harpoons, javelins and arrows showered the animal, lodging in between its scales, stabbing into its eyes and face, harassing it to no end. Several of the harpoons were fixed to lines, and sailors pushed huge barrels over the side of the ship; floats that would stop the monster from diving, forcing it to remain near the surface and tiring it out as it tried to escape. Nets were thrown about its fins and tail, too, and suddenly the monster from the deep did not seem quite so fearsome or unstoppable.

Hirren cheered his rescuers, feeling revenge every time the serpent recoiled from a blow delivered by the men onboard. He watched the graceful ships, their billowing sails hurrying them on in their deadly game of cat and mouse with the struggling monster.

He watched as the ships glided across the waves – right past him and the other fishermen still flailing about in the water.

“Wait!” he yelled, waving his arms. “Come back!” Despair settled over him anew. The ships shrunk from view with every passing moment, and before long were lost on the horizon, their horns blaring in the distance.

Hirren’s hopes sank as the distant sound of trumpets faded away. Saltwater stung his eyes and he rocked back and forth in the rolling waves. He watched the water for signs of sharks, or worse, another sea serpent. As long minutes stretched on, he feared his end would be slow and maddening. Many sailors refused to learn how to swim. Now Hirren could see why. A fast death could be considered a blessing.

Suddenly, a tender appeared; a sturdy little cutter following the warships. Mercifully, it dropped its sails as it approached Hirren and his fellow sailors, lowering a pair of smaller boats over the side.

Rough seafarers’ hands pulled him up out of the water. A sailor with a long scar across his face that could only be from a cutlass looked him over, patted him on the back and thrust a waterskin into his hands.

“Southomber Brandy,” he said. “Trust me.”

Hirren took a swig and gasped as the fiery liquid hit him. He coughed up seawater. The sailors laughed.

“Now he’s breathing,” said the scarred sailor. The four men manning the boat’s oars laughed in agreement, each smacking Hirren on the back as a sign of friendship.

Hirren caught his breath, gratefully taking the dry blanket that was offered to him. “Where ...” he gestured toward where he had last seen the two ships. “Where did they go?”

“Why they’re after the serpent, sir! A grand chase, indeed. No telling how many barrels of oil and tons of meat to take off that beast.”

Hirren was dumbstruck. He had once seen a half-grown tiger shark snagged on a tuna line and accidentally dragged aboard. That thrashing fish had been dangerous enough, but a serpent was a thousand times its size.

“I owe you my life,” he said, still in shock.

“You owe us nothing, young gentleman. The sea god smiles upon those who save the needy from the sea.”

“Where do you sail from, sir? What kingdom do you call your own?”

The old seadog grinned, amused, but said not a word. In the distance, a horn cried out again from the ships chasing the serpent. Hirren realized he had heard the sound before, seen the carved ivory instrument that made it. It was the Call of the North. **The Horn of Bizantium.**

An Overview of the Island Kingdom

Standing proudly upon the remote Northern Islands is the Kingdom of Bizantium. No other human sovereignty in the Palladium World is known to exist so far from contact with the rest of human civilization. Even humans living in the **Commonwealth**, deep in the Yin-Sloth Jungles and surrounded by the Orcish Empire, still relish the comfort that comes from being within easy reach of the **Western Empire**. Not so for the **Island Kingdom of Bizantium**. Apart from the *Shadow Coast colonies*, there is nothing but the vast wilderness of the **Northern Hinterlands** to the south and the fearsome and forbidden **Land of the Damned** just a stone’s throw away to the southwest. To the north, east, and west is open ocean, and beyond that, nothing but the uncertainty of the *Edge of the World*.

Its remote location has given Bizantium centuries of isolated peace and prosperity, with the **Western Empire**, its hated enemy, as the Kingdom’s only consistent threat. Despite being so close to the shores of the **Land of the Damned** and the **Wolfen Empire** in the Great Northern Wilderness, the island kingdom has never experienced any sort of demonic attack or invasion from monsters, nor experienced the wrath of the dragons of the icy north. Sea serpents, yes, but those slow-witted monsters inhabit the northern waters all around their island kingdom. There is more to fear from other “civilized” people and their fellow humans than the denizens of the North.

As for the **Wolfen**, those canine humanoids are not the savage barbarians that human kingdoms further south make them out to be. Truth be told, Wolfen can be more noble and trustworthy than most of the Western Empire’s nobles. The people of Bizantium have spent centuries trading and sharing with the canine races of the **Great Northern Wilderness**, so they have little to fear from the *Wolfen*, *Kankoran* or even the massive and terrifying Bear Men. Only the barbaric *Coyles* are a problem from time to time, but even those lazy savages have learned it is better to leave Bizantium ships and citizens unharmed and engage in trade rather than fight them. That said, bands of *Coyles* do sometimes conduct raids against Bizantium people on the mainland. Open communication occurs almost weekly between the island kingdom and the canines of the Great Northern Wilderness, especially among the *Wolfen*. When skirmishes break out with the canine peoples, they are usually isolated incidents, often with troublesome *Coyles* or members of the monster races, and the rulers of Bizantium wisely



recognize them as isolated incidents not involving the whole of the Wolfen Empire.

Reputation

Every nation of the known world has its own unique reputation and stereotypes. The **Western Empire** has its reputation for decadence, sin and corruption; **Timiro** is known for clinging to the past and its antiquated regime, and the **Eastern Territory** as the new frontier filled with knights and adventurers. The **Land of the South Winds** is a land of mystery and forbidden magicks, and home to ten thousand cults and impoverished nobles. The **Old Kingdom**, by comparison, is a shadow of the past and home to the faded empires of Elves and Dwarves – and a land quickly being overwhelmed by conquering hordes of Orcs, Ogres and Goblins. The **Bizantium stereotype**, at least to the those living south of the Great Northern Wilderness, is that of wild-haired warriors, hard-bargaining merchants and serpent-hunting sailors who devote their lives to the sea and associate with the “baby-eating” Wolfen. The **Western Empire** loves to paint Bizantians as barely more civilized than the Wolfen, uncouth louts two steps away from being barbarians themselves. This harsh and untrue portrayal is perpetuated by rival kingdoms in the **Eastern Territories** and many ignorant people in the south who have never seen a soul from Bizantium. Many priests from the *Church of Light and Dark*, which has never been able to gain a foothold in the Northern Islands, also like to portray and think of the people of Bizantium as uneducated ruffians who cannot be trusted or treated like “civilized people.” Priests, acolytes, and churchgoers exaggerate and misreport the behavior and culture of Northerners in an effort to convince their superiors that the Bizantians are a people that need saving and the deities they worship are to be rejected and reviled.

As one might expect, none of this is true. The people of Bizantium are every bit as educated and civilized as any kingdom on the mainland, and in many cases, they are much more noble and respectable than those who speak so poorly of them. With their island nation a relative safe place to live, without threat from monsters or invasion by neighboring rivals, the Kingdom of Bizantium is a place that has preserved its time-honored traditions, customs and values.

Safety in Isolation

The **Kingdom of Bizantium** is predominantly human but is isolated from other human kingdoms, most of which are located thousands of miles to the south. Even the self-proclaimed **Wolfen Empire**, their most immediate neighbor, has shown them little hostility and maintains good diplomatic relations with the kingdom. The **Western Empire** is its closest “civilized” neighbor, but the two kingdoms are separated by more than a thousand miles of sea and an equal amount of hostile and savage wilderness by land. To get to Bizantium without using ships, the Western Empire would have to skirt around the infamous **Land of the Damned**, a place of mystery and monsters, and still need to launch a sea attack from the northern shores of the **Great Northern Wilderness** to do any real harm. This is completely unfeasible, as the canine people and other monster races would never tolerate mass troop movements across “their” land, and would tear such an army to pieces before it was halfway to its destination. Travel by

sea is equally arduous, as it would require the Western armada to travel around the **Land of the Damned**, whose waters are home to legions of monsters and demons. Even worse, the last leg of the trip requires going through the **Sea of Despair** with waters infested with more sea monsters than anywhere in the Palladium World, and subject to rough waves and strange weather phenomena. To avoid the Sea of Despair, the fleet would have to push further north into waters also rife with aquatic horrors, dangerous patches of floating ice, terrible storms and monsters the likes of the Iceborn and sea serpents. Many foreigners have risked their lives sailing these treacherous northern waters around the Land of the Damned, never to be seen again. Only the seafarers of Bizantium demonstrate the necessary knowledge and seamanship to successfully navigate the Sea of Despair and the Northern Sea with regular success.

Sea serpents all around the Kingdom of Bizantium help to keep potential invaders at bay. The seafarers of Bizantium have come to terms with the monsters that infest the waters all around them. They understand the creatures, have learned the best lanes of traffic to avoid them, and have developed strategies and tactics to repel their attacks as well as the means to hunt the monsters for sport and profit. While outsiders might be concerned that the number of sea serpents across the Northern Sea seems to be increasing despite being hunted in great numbers, the Bizantians see this only as a source of greater riches waiting to be plumbed from the icy depths. What most outsiders don’t know (and the leaders of the kingdom never reveal) is that sea serpents threaten the shores of the islands only a few times a year. Sea serpents tend to avoid the warm and well-traveled waters immediately around Bizantium. It is 10-20 miles (16-32 km) and farther out to sea where the serpents are most numerous and present a serious danger to oceangoing vessels. That said, there are vast numbers of sea serpents in the northern waters, so many that Bizantium has turned hunting sea serpents into an industry that has surpassed traditional whaling by ten-fold. It is the serpent trade, with their valuable meat, oil and bones, that has helped make the kingdom so prosperous and powerful.

Still, rumors persist that the **Empire of Sin** (a.k.a. the Western Empire) is in the process of rebuilding its fleet of *Demon Black Ships*, and has plans to conquer the island Kingdom and make it part of the Empire. These rumors have so unnerved the Crown that it has authorized the creation of the revolutionary *Stone Ships*.

Global Influence

Robust sea-trade is Bizantium’s response to its isolation, and their ships can be found in virtually *every* port city throughout the nations of man, and beyond. For a thousand years, Bizantian shipbuilding technology has been the envy of the world. This influential capability has waxed and waned over the centuries, yet remains ahead of most, if not all, competitors. The **Timiro Kingdom** has the largest and most powerful navy afloat, yet, without question, Bizantian shipbuilding technology is more advanced, making them arguably the greatest sea power in the world.

Bizantium’s influence across the known world is more than wealth, mastery of the north seas, and the exercise of imperial power. Though its sway is hard to grasp, difficult to place, and somewhat obscure to the casual observer, modern historians claim the current domination of humankind throughout the Pal-

ladium World could not have existed, nor been nurtured, without numerous contributions brought on by the human inhabitants of the Northern Islands.

Unlike the Western Empire and the southern kingdoms, Bizantium does not have a reputation for plots, assassinations and campaigns of conquest coupled with unquenchable greed. During its 1,200 year history, Bizantium has had its share of treachery, hypocrisy, obscurity and avarice, but has persevered better than most and is seen as a noble kingdom with its integrity intact. Over the centuries, the monarchy has produced a large number of intelligent leaders, brilliant military generals and innovative clergymen.

Bizantians thoroughly believe in *cultural isolationism and xenophobia*, and even today only humans are allowed citizenship. There is also plenty of mystery associated with the islands' "lost history," which is difficult to research, partly because ancient Northerners left behind virtually no written records. Their history remains hidden behind the glories of cave art, stone sculptures, and oral stories passed on over the generations. Stories that reveal details of the old way of life, before the influence of imperialism and the Church of Algor. But the trouble with mythic stories and tales of old is discerning what is truth and what is legend.

The grandeur of Bizantium, with its inherited system of imperial government and the divine source that inspired it, works to give enormous confidence to its rulers and those they rule. The kingdom has been centered around its sailing, shipbuilding and serpent-hunting industries for so long, that they have become firmly embedded in the mindset of its people and appear unchangeable. All Bizantians, from the lowliest citizen to the highest of ruling families, seem to share the same enduring strength and pride in themselves and their nation. As a society, they are honest, hardworking and fiercely loyal to one another. Their religious beliefs help establish a cultural framework that unites everyone with a shared sense of belonging and a dedication to the greater glory of the island nation. They are as proud of their humble origins as their position in the modern world. Yet while the people and industries of Bizantium function with pride and competence, the high courts have been plagued with kingly ineptitude that may make Bizantium vulnerable to its enemies.

Attitudes Toward Outsiders

For any man or woman who finds themselves in the frozen North, Bizantium represents the only human civilization for thousands of miles. The Bizantians have a tradition of coming to the aid of seafarers in need, and any vessel is likely to deposit rescued castaways or shipwrecked sailors safely ashore.

While sailors and merchants are welcome to trade and visit, Bizantium severely limits immigration to its islands. Humans from the Western Empire, Yin-Sloth Jungles and Land of the South Winds are the least welcomed (in that order). Northern mainland people and citizens from Timiro are the most welcomed. Humans from the Old Kingdom and Eastern Territory are also generally allowed to settle on the Island Kingdom, but Bizantium is wary of imperialist attitudes that seem to be taking hold in the Eastern Territory and unsure about how many of its people to take in. Those who are fleeing these nations' rule are the most welcome, but it can be difficult or impossible to determine the true loyalties of new arrivals.

Bizantium is truly a "human" elitist society. Only humans are allowed to remain indefinitely on the islands. Bizantium's small non-human population lives in the cracks and crevasses between functioning society, and is regularly rounded up and deported to the **Shadow Coast Colonies** or the **Great Northern Wilderness** on the mainland. Still, there are *Orc* laborers, *Goblins* who beg or steal to get by, *Elven* merchants, and even a community of *Dwarves* hidden away within the woods near *Lake Kosin* and celebrated by Bizantium's leaders. Overall, however, Bizantium is very much a kingdom of humans dominated by their species. All others are, at best, second-class citizens, or "legal" labor.

Relations with the Wolfen, so numerous on the mainland, are more complicated. While the giant canines may be monstrous in appearance, most Wolfen are smarter and more civilized than most people give them credit for. To the people of Bizantium, it is the fact that the Wolfen are followers of **Algor and the Northern Pantheon**, the major religion of Bizantium, that makes the Wolfen a people to be considered in a positive light and tolerated by the kingdom. The people of Bizantium are amongst the very few who recognize the Wolfen as a nascent civilization with honor and nobility. Moreover, because the Wolfen worship the same Northern gods, the North Folk see them as brothers of a sort, and even grant them the right to come ashore and worship at the islands' temples of Algor and the Northern Pantheon. Prejudice and mistrust remains a problem between the human North Folk and the canines, but several *Bizantium Noble Houses* have been building an economic relationship with the Wolfen. Trading and working side-by-side for more than a few centuries has brought about cultural exchange and interaction that has bred understanding and tolerance between the two species. This is particularly true within the **Shadow Coast colonies**. Very few Wolfen live on the islands of Bizantium, and those who do are usually priests of Algor, but the canines are becoming a more and more common sight in the nation's ports and have established **trading posts** along the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness.

Political Unrest at Home

Bizantium continues to demonstrate its naval superiority to the rest of the world, but the Crown and the Noble Houses have allowed the effectiveness of the government to decline sharply. Bizantium has remained proud and independent throughout its history due to a tradition of strong leaders willing to use their power and influence to assist and protect the nation's merchants, sailors and common man. That tradition of strength and self-reliance continues in all of Bizantium's common folk who call the islands home, in the Marines who protect its shores, and the colonists who have settled the Shadow Coast, but the Crown itself has become complacent and weak, especially in the last three generations. The current king, **Raedaen IV**, is particularly ineffective in his role as monarch and merchant-king, and the level of grumbling and dissatisfaction amongst nobles and wealthy merchants has never been more pronounced.

Threats of a rebellion along the **Shadow Coast** on the mainland are becoming routine. Unless things change soon, the colonies will openly revolt. The Crown possesses far superior military might, but the colonists wield the motivation and the experience to bring on a civil war that Bizantium will find painful to quell without great bloodshed or in a short amount of time. Many

colonists have been preparing for war throughout the last two decades, and if the Kingdom of Bizantium engages in a full-scale civil war now, they are likely to lose the battle. While the loss of the Shadow Coast colonies would not seriously hurt the nation's economy even if it turns out to be a rather lengthy war (2-8 years), the effects will ripple worldwide and no doubt awaken an enemy that has been lying in wait for the island nation to make a critical error for generations. That enemy is the **Western Empire**, ever hungry for new conquests, and only too happy to get a foothold within the rebellious colony.



The King Must Go

The real danger to the kingdom comes from within, as many believe the King is a detriment and he must be removed from the throne, one way or another. A number of groups vie for power and control of Bizantium. One such group is the Warlock Council, who believe that the King and other members of the royalty have grown complacent and sloppy. An example of this is the Crown's lack of firm control over the **Warlock Council**, which has given the Council too much freedom over the affairs of Bizantium, and too much influence with the King. A hundred years ago, the state-run Council was a mix of a guild and regulatory body that allowed the Crown to keep close tabs on all Warlock activity. Today, the number of Warlocks has grown so large that the regulatory body is almost entirely comprised of Warlocks themselves, with a select few nobles and merchant-princes who do little but subvert the Crown's authority whenever it suits them. Moreover, the Warlock Council is quietly encouraging their Warlock brethren on the **Shadow Coast** to sow the seeds of rebellion that could bring war between Bizantium and its colonies on the mainland. If open war begins, the Warlock Council will turn a blind eye to any atrocities committed by their fraternal brothers during insurrection. The Council plans to wait patiently until the Crown has no choice but to ask them to mediate with the Shadow Coast colonies to negotiate terms for peace. Secretly united behind the scenes, the Warlocks will be essentially negotiating with themselves; putting their power bloc in a perfect position to free the colonies from Bizantium rule to form an independent kingdom led by men of magic. At least that is the dream and goal of many within the Council. How realistic it is remains to be seen.

Until then, the Warlock Council is trying its best to manipulate the King like a puppet to do their bidding. They do this because they know the people of Bizantium will never accept an outright *Warlock monarch*. Not all Warlocks feel this way, however, and there are a few Warlocks on the Council who are still loyal to King Raedaen. That means any planning by the insurrectionists happens out of sight and earshot of those loyal to the King. Should the Warlock Council's intentions be revealed, it would be difficult to convince the King himself of their treachery, but powerful figures like *Bizantium's merchant-princes* might call for the War-

locks' heads. In any case, there are several divisions within the Warlock Council, from the handful of Crown-loyalists, to those who think they can negotiate with the King to create a Warlock-state on the Shadow Coast, to a faction who think *regicide* is the only option. If it comes to war, the Warlocks have a great amount of faith in their Elemental magic abilities. The reality is, there is little risk of the Warlocks actually replacing the long-established royal family and Noble Houses, but if their actions do come to bloodshed, the King is likely to be one of the first to die.

As his reign enters its twenty-sixth year, **King Raedaen IV** has unknowingly placed himself in a very dangerous position. The King's lack of judgment, unwillingness to involve himself in the nation's economic affairs, awkward performance of religious duties, total dearth of military experience, poor treatment of many Noble Houses, neglect of the Shadow Coast colonies and general incompetence make him ripe for *replacement* as monarch. While large portions of the peasantry love him as they would any king they see as their own, Bizantium's military, political, religious and economic leaders have little respect for King Raedaen. People like **Merchant-Prince Wilgan Vatatzes** and **Chief Warlock Hanta Farrip** try to exert their will *through* the King, and often have to work around him for his own good, but most other influential figures in Bizantium have gradually realized that the King has to go. Another twenty-five years of Raedaen IV's rule and the Western Empire or some other enemy will sail right up and take the Northern Islands, something no true Bizantian could ever live with.

There are a dozen different factions within Bizantium eager to unseat the King, from merchants to religious leaders, to Warlocks, to virtually every Noble House on the Islands. Outside the kingdom, powerful people like *Emperor Itomas of the Western Empire* and groups of nobles from the *Eastern Territory* are trying to put their own candidates on the throne, people who are willing to help them pursue their respective agendas in the North.

So it is that the Kingdom of Bizantium finds itself at a crossroads. Dissatisfaction with the King amongst some powerful merchants, nobles and Warlocks has built up until something must be done. The only question now is, who makes the

first move? And how? Can the King be “leveraged” to abdicate the throne, or must more brutal and bloody measures be taken? Another assassination attempt on King Raedaen, a declaration of independence from the Shadow Coast colonies, a call to abdicate the throne; any such development could be enough to set events in motion that could strengthen the kingdom or leave it vulnerable. While Bizantium’s military, particularly its navy, remains strong and determined, and its people go about their lives unaware, a redistribution of political power at the top of Bizantian society could come any day now, and with it, murder, mystery and magic the likes of which the Island Kingdom has not known for centuries.

Bizantium’s Origins

Eoten Creation Myth

*During the **Age of Chaos**, while the **Alliance of Light** warred against the **Old Ones** and their minions, the Eoten crossed the Veil, leaving behind their island kingdom in the Great Sky in order to escape the wrath of **Zymir** and **Beastla**, King and Queen of Sea Monsters. Nine Eoten ships met with a great storm; three sank beneath the clouds, never to be seen again. Four were set upon by the minions of Zymir; their crews died in agony. One vanished, gone to the great beyond. The last ship began to fall beneath the clouds, but was lifted up by the hands of **Algor**. The Eoten asked the great sea giant for protection, but he told them to seek the advice of his older brother **Brgg**, **Xy’s Destroyer of Wyrms**. When Algor took the Eoten before Brgg, he agreed to shelter them – if they named him their godly master. The Eoten agreed, and with lordly might, Brgg’s spear tore through the flesh and bones of **Beastla’s children**. He took Zymir’s bottom jaw with one hand, his upper jaw with the other, and tore the beast apart.*

With her mate dead, Beastla fled in fear, but the Veil turned black as night, cutting her off from the Great Sky. With no place to turn, she dove beneath the waves to seek shelter from Brgg’s spear. With the Wyrms vanquished before him, Brgg brought up seven islands from the sea floor as a gift to the Eoten. If they served him well, paradise would be their just reward.

But soon the Destroyer of Wyrms found himself besieged by the victors of the Chaos War. They demanded he choose a side, Light or Dark, but Brgg chose neither, having no desire to share his domain. Next they asked the same of Algor, but Brgg forbade his brother to have voice. The Great Wyrms still seethed with hatred, for Brgg’s spear had killed hundreds of their kin. Vengeance never dies in the heart of a Wurm, and they vowed to bide their time.

*During the **Battle of the Gods**, while the Great Wyrms waged war in the Southern Jungles, Brgg allowed himself to be seduced by the charms of Beastla, who birthed him a son. She summoned Algor and demanded he take the boy to his father. Brgg named the boy **Od**. Brgg taught his son to fight, to think, to rule and serve, but most importantly, to kill Wyrms.*

When he was old enough to understand, Od asked his father, “Shall we kill all the dragons?” “Yes,” his father said. “In time, all Wyrms must die.”

*Od then turned himself into a dragon, to the shock of Brgg, who dropped his axe upon his foot and became angry. He came upon three elderly Jotan women gathering water from a well, and asked them to watch his son until nightfall. They agreed. Brgg went off to find Beastla, but his search was fruitless. Finally, he returned to reclaim his son. He searched the world for the boy until he found him and the three Jotan women beside the **Great Tree**. Brgg did not realize that he had given his son to the **Na’runs**. The youngest said, “You laid with your foe and spawned a son; your next decision will bind you to your fate.”*

“The boy must die,” Brgg replied. “He is Wurm, thus he is my enemy.”

Od spake: “Mother said one day you would try to kill me. That is why we waited for you beneath the Great Tree.”

A host of twelve Wyrms attacked Brgg, using weapons gifted from the tree. Brgg’s bones were broken, and the Wyrms took Brgg to a twilight cave and bound him in chains forged of blood, earth, and runes. There Od left his father to his fate.

*With Brgg gone, Beastla and her spawn rose once more from beneath the sea. Her poison breath killed many Faerie-kind and almost ended the Great Tree. Her Horde of servants raced across the waters, bringing death to anyone their bone swords met. They came to the Seven Isles, but Beastla’s spawn were repelled by the combined magic of the sorceress **Epim** and the weaponsmith **Belimar**. Od rallied the Eoten to his banner. “Name me King of the Islands, and these man-beasts shall fall before us.” And name him King they did, and the Horde army died on the shores of Wyst. As Beastla turned to flee, Algor caught her remaining kin in a great net, burying them beneath the waves, never to be seen again. Beastla alone escaped the net, swimming far to the north, beyond the Seven Isles.*

*After the battle, **Od** and **Epim** married, inviting Algor and many renowned Eoten champions to join them in insuring Brgg’s imprisonment. Od and his cohorts were elevated to godhood, but none of the dragons responsible for Brgg’s downfall received praise or recognition. The ancient Wyrms declared Od and his allies the enemies of all Wurm-kind. Proud and defiant, Od did not apologize, instead punishing the Wyrms to no end, slaying those he once considered his closest friends. Those he did not slay, he bound to his will. This arrogance and bloodshed was too much for **Algor**, already troubled after helping the Wyrms imprison his brother. Algor departed to seek solitude, yet his name was never forgotten by the Eoten.*

*After the **Battle of the Gods**, word spread of the heroics of the Northern Pantheon, creating thousands of new worshipers, especially amongst those fearful of the newly established **Cult of Dragonwright**, whose fifty year war devastated the Southern Jungle and annihilated many human kingdoms that were poised for greatness. Humans not already claimed by the Southern Gods quickly found favor with these new deities and within a thousand years, the Northern Pantheon became one of the world’s dominant religions, second only to the Church of Light and Dark.*

*At the beginning of the **Age of a Thousand Magicks**, the vile mage **Zelru Aooz** led a Horde of ten thousand **Iceborn** to destroy the Eoten. He came not alone; the mage opened a hole to Hades, unleashing countless Worms of Taut. Despite suffering many losses, of heroes and chieftains, warriors and shield-maidens, the Eoten defeated the Iceborn army. **Clan Chief Valyr** disemboweled Zelru, but not before the dark mage cursed the land with undeath. Unable to repel the Worms of Taut, and with the land*

forever a bane to the living, the Island of Torn and the holy city of Valsk were abandoned. Valyr tried to sail to the Isle of Algron (Bizantium) but the sea god Algor was angered by Valyr's greed and ordered the great sea beast **Gggnathu** to destroy the Eoten village of Fensalir.

At the end of the **Age of Thousand Magicks**, the Svart Clan, the last of the Eoten who worshiped Brgg, were driven into the mountains, hunted and persecuted. They learned to live off the land and became filled with hatred and enmity. During the next five hundred years, these "tribal savages" made attacks upon the outlying settlements, exacting revenge upon those who betrayed their Lord Master.

At the beginning of the **Age of Elves**, the Svart invaded the settlements of the other Eoten. They brought death and destruction to those who had once been their cousins. Having failed to heed his demands, Od allowed the Svart to destroy the last remaining Eoten city, reducing it to rubble. Those on Yufel had feasted upon each other. This sacrilegious act angered Od, and no offender was allowed to live.

The Horde army now returned, and with the Eoten no longer empowered by their faith in the Northern Gods, the **Iceborn** conquered the Northern Islands, forcing the Eoten to abandon their Seven Isles and flee to the great wilderness across the sea. There they made a good life for themselves, and for many generations the Eoten lived in the woods, hunting and fishing, yet every son observed his father turn to the north and yearn for their homeland.

One day, **Agmundr**, son of **Báulfr**, was sleeping by the shore when he received a divine message ordering him to bring the Eoten home. Agmundr knew the voice he had heard was that of Od, and he told his people to build boats, to craft spears and axes.

Men and women, old and young, the strong and the weak, they joined together and paddled back to their homeland – but the Horde stood ready for their arrival, outnumbering the Eoten three to one. Battle was joined, and the blood of Agmundr's people ran like rivers to the sea. With his Eoten near defeat, a wounded Agmundr raised his arms and begged the gods for mercy, when **Algor the Giant** rose from the waters – accompanied by schools of legged fish and pods of whales that walked upright like men, marching ashore to fight for the sea god. The Eoten rallied around Agmundr and fought like giants themselves, and the Ice Horde was cast out of the Seven Isles. Agmundr fell to his knees before the sea god and asked, "How do I serve thee?"

The Lord of the Sea replied, "These islands are yours to rule, but the waters are mine. Yet I will teach you to fish and to sail, to travel far across the oceans, if you pledge your devotion to me, as you once prayed to Brgg." Agmundr and his people agreed – and the Eoten became the vassals of Algor forevermore.

– The Saga of Agmundr, from the Northern Mysteries.

The Eoten

For nearly two thousand years, citizens of the Western Empire, Timiro Kingdom, Eastern Territory and Land of the South Winds have used the term "Northerner" to describe any human who lives in the Great Northern Wilderness, along the Northern Sea, or on the Northern Islands that make up Bizantium. Generally, Bizantians don't mind the term "Northerner" being ascribed to them,

but they prefer being called Bizantians. The term "North Folk" applied to members of the ethnic group of humans who inhabited the Northern Islands (known to them as the "Seven Isles") long before Western traders and settlers from the south arrived. These hardy tribesmen and seaborne raiders have evolved into a cosmopolitan culture over the centuries, but their traditions, their toughness and their mastery of the sea live on down to the modern day. Without them, there would be no Kingdom of Bizantium. They are the real Northerners, the North Folk, the **Eoten**.

Before the time of contact with the outside world, the tribal North Folk led an existence very similar to the *Kiridin Barbarians*, and lived primarily on the **Island of Borich**, with the island of Algron (Bizantium) dotted with fishing villages and hunting camps, but few real settlements. Thousands of miles from other human civilization, with Wolfen, Bearmen and the like as neighbors, the Eoten believed they were the only humans in the world for more than a thousand years. They lived primarily by fishing, hunting sea serpents and raiding; such was their mastery of seamanship and shipbuilding that they voyaged across the entire Great Northern Wilderness, sometimes attacking villages and towns as far south as the Eastern Territory or the Isle of the Cyclops in the West. The speed and daring of their attacks was legendary, but with humans few and far between, Wolfen, Coyles, Elves and Dwarves bore the brunt of the Eoten's coastal raids.

Eventually, canine races like the Wolfen became numerous and prevalent throughout the North. Similar in many ways, and fellow worshipers of Algor, trade relations between the North Folk and the canine races flourished. They could exchange stolen items that they had each taken from humans and Elves living in the Eastern Territory. Iron for making tools and weapons was highly valued to the North Folk, so they started bartering with their own resources (glassware, salt, fish, sea serpent meat, bones and ivory) for the canines' iron and various types of herbs and vegetables.

By the time of **Bizas**, the North Folk were conducting limited trade and were known to the other human nations of the West, East, and South. The arrival of outsiders on the Northern Islands brought something no one could prepare for, however: diseases that the North Folk had no natural defense against. Before long they were dying by the thousands. Some retreated further into the wilderness of the Northern Islands, away from foreigners. Others departed for the *Hinterlands* or the *Great Northern Wilderness*,



never to be seen again. The North Folk who remained on the islands and survived, believed they were spared only thanks to the divine protection of Algor, forging a direct and physical connection to the mighty sea god himself. They believed outsiders were destined to come to the Northern Islands, making it the North Folk's sacred duty to incorporate them into their society. By the time of Bizas' grandson, *King Joshius*, the two ethnic groups had already thoroughly blended. No longer were they North Folk and displaced Easterners and Westerners; they had become *Bizantians*.

Today, the pure blood North Folk population numbers less than 2% of the entire population of Bizantium, roughly 11,000 people. Traditional North Folk have well-groomed beards and long hair kept tied in braids and knots, hair that slowly turns white and gray as an individual ages, but with distinct touches of light blue. Blue eyes are also very common amongst the descendants of the Eoten, usually a dark, deep blue, unlike the light blue eyes found in other populations. Many continue to hold on to their ancient traditions, beliefs, and practices. Some still bear resentment toward the interbred Bizantians. To them, those who did not die from the accursed diseases the "invaders" brought still lost their culture and way of life. Even their pure-blood children will never know their traditional tribal existence, and with each passing year, more elders die, taking with them folklore, cultural traditions and sagas of old that are lost forever. Many of these traditional Eoten North Folk fear their people will likely become extinct within a century or so, joining the other *Forgotten Races*.

The large majority, however, embrace the modern world of mankind and the new, more civilized existence granted to them thanks to the will of the sea god. They still tend to be somewhat nomadic, living as fishermen, farmers, and traders in remote areas far from the major port cities, preferring humble fishing villages or small farming communities. Though it is true that the Eoten are being assimilated until they will one day be no more, their lineage lives on in Bizantium, and this *new brand* of "North Folk" has been able to shape world history. The toughness and tenacity inherited from the original Eoten, married to the bold spirit of the seafarers who dared to journey to Bizantium, makes a kingdom of seven tiny islands a competitor to much larger powers like the Western Empire and Timiro.

The Northern Mysteries

The Sagas of the Eoten, often referred to as **the Northern Mysteries**, are stories from tribal North Folk history. Long recitations and poetic passages, they tell tales of early voyages, great battles, the journey to the Seven Isles and feuds between ancient warriors. These stories are incredibly long and detailed. Writing them down is forbidden amongst the North Folk themselves, though there are Bizantian scholars who have transcribed many of the tales. Still, it is estimated that, because they were never recorded, approximately seventy percent of the sagas are lost to history.

The tales are usually realistic, although sagas of high ministers and clan chiefs are sometimes romanticized and fantastic, but always attempt to deal with the human experience by conveying a useful lesson without stating it explicitly. Furthermore, regardless of inconsistencies in the telling of a saga, to traditional North Folk the words are binding and eternal; many of the stories have been repeated again and again over the past ten thousand years.

For the last six hundred years, though, scholars and historians outside of Bizantium who have attempted to study Northern history have found nothing but inconsistencies and erroneous information. The sagas themselves have been continuously proven unreliable, as they do not separate fictional elements from real, historic events. Since ancient North Folk never wrote down their history, and they remained isolated from the established societies of Dwarves, Elves, and Gnomes, all there is to rely on are the events told within the sagas and artifacts found on the various islands or on the sea floor.

The Eoten in Recorded History

The main reason so many people and races tend to overlook the role tribal North Folk have played in the world is because their accomplishments and historical figures are *unknown* to anyone who is unfamiliar with the sagas. Nothing of any historical significance from the Northern Islands has ever been authenticated before the last two millennia, and even some of that is suspect. There is not a single passage in the famed *Tristine Chronicles* referring to the Northern Islands, or for that matter, even mentioning the Northern Gods. As such, the history of Bizantium is less understood and authenticated than even the *Age of a Thousand Magicks*. There are only a handful of datable facts or history mentioned, even in the most recent sagas. One that stands out to many scholars is believed to have occurred before the start of the **Elf-Dwarf War** about 10,000 years ago: an account made by an Elven merchant who was following old maps and trade routes that were ancient even in his time.

According to the author, the Elven ship followed the instructions on the maps, passing through waters infested by sea serpents and along snowy coasts lined by pine trees and forbidding mountains. They eventually arrived at a series of islands inhabited by a race of humans calling themselves the *Eoten*. At first, the Elves were welcomed amongst the inhabitants, fishermen, hunters and raiders who resided on the temperate Seven Isles, molded by the harsh reality of Northern winters and life on the sea. The Elves noticed old Elven weapons and objects hung above mantels and fireplaces, artifacts from long ago that the Eoten claimed had been made by their ancestors. When an Elf tried to secretly take one of the objects to be studied by scholars back in the Elven kingdoms, his theft was discovered, and the offender was put to death on the spot. The other Elves were horrified by his murder and barely made it back to their ship. One of the ancient sagas reiterates the same events, only from the point of view of the Eoten, seemingly confirming the text.

The journal is on display at the *College of Old Timiro* (once the center of higher learning when Elves ruled the Timiro Kingdom some 4,000 years ago). Yet what most monks, scholars and historians find fascinating is that the Eoten were apparently living on the Northern Islands long *before* their warlike barbarian and nomadic human counterparts migrated from the southern jungles and settled in the West, South and East after the Elf-Dwarf War ended some 8,000 years ago. The assumption was always that some of these humans must have continued northward. For this to be true, however, they would have had to sail over the *Great Inland Sea*, then make the long trek over *Ophid's Grasslands* into the *Northern Hinterlands*, then sail the final stretch to the Northern Islands. Such a journey seems highly unlikely, considering the distance, dangerous animals, hostile locals and the difficulty

of navigating two unknown bodies of water. In addition, the likelihood of barbarians building seaworthy boats and sailing from the southern jungles around the Isle of Cyclops, through the sea serpent-infested waters of the Sea of Dread, before entering the even more dangerous waters of the Sea of Despair to arrive at the Northern Islands is even more improbable. The only logical conclusion seems to be that the Eoten lived on the islands or the shores of the Great Northern Wilderness across the strait from them since before the recorded Time of Man.

What little physical evidence has been gathered confirms some of the elements within the sagas. The Eoten were master masons, extremely skilled in art and construction, and capable of crafting weapons from stone and bronze. They could also forge iron weapons, but did so only if the weapon held special significance, or was to be wielded by elite Eoten warriors and chieftains. They worshiped the Northern Pantheon exclusively, yet Algor the Giant seems to have played the biggest role in their lives and is held in greater esteem than Od.

All of this is in sharp contrast to the human barbarians depicted by the Elf merchant some 10,000 years ago, or the Northern raiders who used their expertise in seamanship to attack towns and churches along coastlines across the northern half of the world. The nomadic tribal folk encountered by the Elves were farmers, fishermen, and merchants. Algor was worshiped as the central deity, with the claim that the Northern Gods were a part of *his* pantheon. They understood very little of smelting iron, relying strictly on tools and weapons made out of wood, stone, bone and bronze.

The arrival of modern humans from the West and East further changed North Folk society, providing them with advances in agricultural technology that let them grow more food and farm more land. Soon they no longer needed to raid, but engaged in trade for iron and precious metals, livestock, finished goods, spices, works of art, and raw materials that did not exist in their native land. Eventually, the Western and Eastern settlers absorbed the North Folk through intermarriage and adoption of their customs and traditions. Bizantium became a land of kings, nobles, free people, sailors, merchants and farmers. Yet even today, some traditional North Folk view the modern world in a sharp contrast to their social needs. They long to return to the days of old: fishing and gathering, hunting and raiding. Some even refuse to accept any modern technology, like iron tools, choosing instead to embrace bronze, bone, wood, and stone, just as their ancestors did.

The Slayer of Mountains, the legendary wizard of the Western Empire, is convinced that the sagas retain too much genuine memory of North Folk lifestyle to have been composed any more than a few generations after the Elf-Dwarf War. His theory was defended by the last gathering of Sages, who disputed whether the Eoten may even have existed alongside Elves, Changelings, Titans and Dragons during the Age of Chaos. If true, it would make them the second group of humans to thrive during this period (the *Kawan* of the southern jungles being the first). However, if this is to be believed, then why is there no mention of them in the fabled **Tristine Chronicles**? Arguments have been made that the Chronicles themselves can neither identify nor prove the existence of most of the accounts written within their own text. The oral traditions of the Eoten are continually met with resistance, because they stand contrary to the popular notion that human barbarians did not appear until thousands of years after the Age of

Chaos, and because their own history via oral tradition is filled with inconsistencies, half-truths and pure fantasy.

One Possible Origin of the Eoten

The roots of the Eoten reach far back into ancient history, obscured by mythology and the passage of thousands of years. Their sagas speak of coming from “beyond the Veil,” a phrase that has been interpreted to mean different things. Some scholars believe “the Veil” is the limit of cultural memory, as far back as the Eoten’s oral traditions can remember. Others think they came from *beyond the Edge of the World*, or that the Veil is simply an ancient term for the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness.

While these stories vary widely, there is some physical evidence of Bizantium’s ancient past. When wells and mines are dug in the Northern Islands, particularly around the City of Bizantium itself, they often turn up Elven relics from a time long forgotten. These are leftovers from a colony of Elves for which there are no historical records, but who clearly once lived upon the Northern Islands, the most distant outpost of Elven civilization. Long before the Elf-Dwarf War, the Elves of the Northern Islands fell to destruction. As there is no record of them, their existence and fate is also a mystery.

Lost in antiquity, the true origins of the Eoten may never become known. The only beings who might know the truth are a handful of gods or dragons, but they aren’t sharing. So the debate rages on. Did they migrate north from the Yin-Sloth Jungles or other southern lands? Were they already living in the northern part of the world, similar to the Kiridin Barbarians? Or, as the Eoten sagas could be interpreted to suggest, is there an ancient Eoten homeland that now lies lost beneath the waves or, as impossible as it may seem, that originated from somewhere *beyond* the Edge of the World? And if they came from “beyond” the Edge of the World, does that mean there is more of the world yet to be discovered? Why would any god or man create a wall to seal off a portion of the world? Who could wield such power? And what might exist “beyond the Veil?”

The Recorded History of the Kingdom of Bizantium

The origins of the Eoten: 10,000 Years Ago. The ancient **Eoten**, the original inhabitants of the Northern Islands and ancestors of modern Bizantians, lived in a legendary civilization centered around the capital city of **Valsk** on the island of **Torn**. Once a proud race of warriors and coastal seafarers, generations of warfare with the inhuman **Iceborn of the Great Ice Shelf** laid their people low and even forced the Eoten to abandon the Northern Islands for a time and live on the shores of the Great Northern Wilderness. They eventually reclaimed their homeland, but the rustic grandeur of the ancient Eoten was lost forever, never to be restored.

It was these people who were encountered by Elven explorers and colonists long ago, before the Elf-Dwarf War, and reduced to a state of servitude. When the Iceborn attacked the Northern Islands again, having laid low for centuries, these Elves were caught off guard, and abandoned both the islands and the Eoten who had been their slaves and workers. The Iceborn eventually



retreated back to the Great Ice Shelf, and the Eoten took back the islands as their own. The cultural memory of the Elves would fade over the millennia, but many new concepts and ideas had been introduced into the minds of the Eoten by their former masters.

Raiders from the North: 10,000-2,355 Years Ago. For millennia, the only contact between the Eoten and the outside world comes in the form of seasonal raids up and down the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness. Striking from the northwest coast of the Western Empire to the area around the islands of Y-Oda and Zy, they rarely venture further south, due to both religious beliefs and the sheer distances involved. Early sailors from the Western Empire and frontiersmen across the north report raiders with sophisticated longboats and advanced sailing techniques, but their point of origin is unknown. These mysterious people worship Algor and the Northern Pantheon and have their own distinct language and culture, but are hostile towards outsiders and relentless in their raids and pirate attacks. During this period, the Eoten fight countless wars with the Iceborn of the Great Ice Shelf and lose many longboats to sea serpents and monsters, one of the major reasons they never grow beyond being a small society of tribal warriors and northern seafarers.

The Northern Islands are discovered by the outside world: 2,355 Years Ago. A trade fleet from the **Western Empire**, sup-

posedly following ancient Elven maps, attempts to sail north, around the Great Northern Wilderness, in an effort to find a faster route to the eastern half of the world. Several ships are damaged during the dangerous journey through the Sea of Despair, but the fleet is unwilling to even anchor offshore in the Land of the Damned to attempt repairs.

Finding the **Northern Islands** by blind luck, the trade fleet takes shelter in the Inland Sea. The Eoten who live along its shores are awed by the huge number of mighty ships, and make peaceful contact rather than attempt to attack these newcomers. When the trade fleet departs, dozens of sailors remain on the islands rather than continue onward, and their shipbuilding knowledge and the few ships left behind are a massive boon to the Eoten. With this leap forward in naval technology and the Northern Islands' bounty of untouched, old-growth lumber, the islanders will be producing the best ships in the world within just a few generations.

Human explorers from the **Timiro Kingdom** arrive on the Northern Islands soon after, possibly as part of an attempt by Timiro to circumnavigate the Palladium World. They recognize the Eoten as the same raiders who have been plundering coasts to the north for centuries, yet they are eager to do business, primarily in an effort to prevent the Northern Islands from becoming a Western Empire ally. Traders on both sides swap furs, ivory and cod for silks, spices and precious metals.

The population of outsiders from the Western Empire, Timiro and other places begins to grow, including landless knights and nobles eager to find fiefdoms of their own in the North, and Priests of Light and Dark looking for converts. The Eoten, isolated from the outside world for so long, have little immunity to diseases introduced by these newcomers, and typhoid, smallpox and scarlet fever decimate the native population of the Northern Islands. It doesn't take long before Easterners come to believe the Gods of Light are punishing the "primitives" who refuse to forsake their barbarian gods.

Soon, Eastern and Western people on the islands outnumber the Eoten five to one. The line between "North Folk" and outsiders starts to blur as the two live side by side and intermarriage becomes the norm. More and more islanders start referring to themselves as **North Folk**, speaking the Northern language and writing in the newly created alphabet. The arrival of new outsiders also brings scholarly knowledge and trade skills, leading to schools and craft guilds that enrich the islands.

The Time of Bizas: 2,325 Years Ago. It is this changing world into which is born **Bizas**, the man destined to be the first leader of a united Northern Islands. The son of an Eoten priestess and a Western merchant, he represents the two worlds that will combine to create modern Bizantium. Bizas unites the dwindling Eoten tribes into one royal house as a counterbalance to the growing power of outsiders – but then proceeds to include displaced nobles, warriors and traders from both Timiro and the Western Empire in the system of fiefdoms he creates. Bizas establishes **Algor** as the patron deity of the islands, while codifying his peoples' right to follow other religions, particularly the politically powerful **Church of Light and Dark**.

Many of the Noble Houses of Bizantium trace their origins to this period in history. Some, like the *Vatatzes*, grew out of powerful noble families that relocated to the Northern Islands from abroad, bringing with them their wealth, their guards and retainers. Others like *House Arfox* and *Yinxner* were once Eoten tribes, their chieftains adopting the title of "merchant-prince" as the old ways fell out of style. At least one Noble House, *House Norbert*, simply purchased their "noble" status by handing over cartloads of gold to Bizas and his new government.

Scouring the Northern Islands for both Eoten longboat craftsmen and shipwrights born abroad, Bizas also personally oversees the construction of **Kirsgen Yard**, the first real shipyard on the islands. The Noble Houses follow suit, competing to create shipyards of their own, and soon Bizantium is producing merchant vessels, warships and entire trade fleets to rival anything from the Western Empire or Timiro. Bizas dies as High Chieftain of the Eoten and Merchant-Prince of the Northern Islands, but many argue that he was truly the "First King" of Bizantium. For a thousand years, the Northern Islands are ruled by the Noble House system put in place by Bizas, but without an official king.

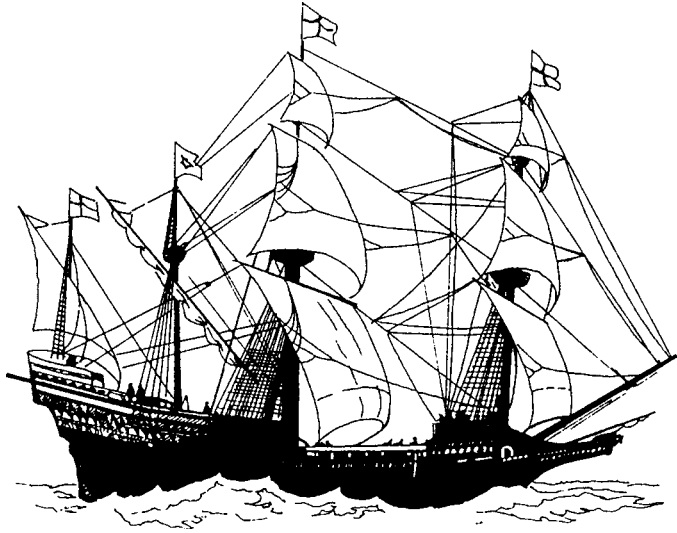
The Western Empire Invasion and Bizantium's Rise to Sovereignty: 1,020 Years Ago. A fleet of **Demon Black Ships** and war galleys is spotted in the Strait of Forlorn Hope by a serpent-hunting ship from Bizantium. The Serpent Chasers race home in time to raise the alarm on the Northern Islands. Unbeknownst to Emperor Jonali and his admirals and war planners, *High Chieftain/Merchant-Prince Joshius* and his military advisor, *Admiral Svend Yinxner*, have been preparing for this day, specifically with the creation of a massive, defensive chain to protect the Inland Sea. After the invasion fleet sails into the Bizas

Inlet, the **Great Chain** is raised, trapping the fleet in place, its ships too numerous to reverse course or maneuver back out the way they came. The Demon Ships are set upon by the defenses of Gate-Fort and the young Bizantian Navy. Survivors who wade ashore are speared in the shallows by fishermen and militias, and the entire fleet is sunk and its demons destroyed. Joshius hopes this display of power will make the Emperor rethink his notions of conquest, but he knows Bizantium cannot sustain a drawn-out fight with the much larger Western Empire. Fortunately, the utter defeat of the Western Imperial Navy convinces Emperor Jonali to postpone any further thoughts of invasion until a "new assessment" of Bizantium's military capabilities can be made. Rumor has it that the Emperor orders the execution of more than fifty individuals who he blames for the embarrassing debacle.

Bizantium is now a fully modern nation, a series of fiefdoms run by Noble Houses, all loosely organized under the largest Noble House, the *House of Bizas*, descended from the old Eoten warrior elite and powerful foreign merchants. The conflict with the Western Empire is the last step in uniting Bizantium as a single nation. Westerners, Easterners and the Eoten have now fused into one people, generally referring to themselves as "North Folk." After his bravery and foresight in repelling the Western Empire invasion, Joshius is crowned *King Joshius, First King of the Northern Islands*. In honor of his famous ancestor, Bizas, he names his kingdom **Bizantium**.

First Contact with the Wolfen: 600 Years Ago. After generations of frontier people telling stories about Wolf-Men in the woods of the Great Northern Wilderness, a Bizantian logging camp is found burned to the ground, the bodies of both human defenders and wolf-like attackers mixed together. *Sir Ervun Malemore* assembles a force to investigate, and its soldiers destroy several Wolfen encampments. The expedition culminates in the **Battle of the Frozen Plain**, where Sir Malemore's troops defeat a small Wolfen army by launching a cavalry charge up a frozen river and catching their enemies off-guard. Malemore's men are about to start executing the Wolfen prisoners taken after the battle when he realizes that these "monsters" are praying to *Algor*, the chief deity of the Northern Pantheon also worshiped by the Bizantian people. A pious man himself, and seeing the potential to stop further conflict, Sir Malemore has a Priest of Algor bless each of the prisoners, then sets them free and sends them on their way. Sir Malemore also sends gold, silver and an assortment of weapons, armor and horses with the confused prisoners as a gift to their leaders, along with a request for a formal meeting in the spring. The freed Wolfen prisoners speak of the Bizantians' mercy, their faith in Algor, and of their deadly prowess in battle. The Wolfen meet Bizantium's diplomats, accompanied by Priests of Algor, on equal terms and vow to keep the peace, for they are kindred children of Algor. Over the next few centuries, trade between Bizantian frontiersmen and the Wolfen increases the pace of cultural exchange and gradually acclimates North Folk and the canine people to one another. With few Wolfen (or humans, for that matter) along the northern edge of the Great Northern Wilderness, other than some tiny Bizantian fishing villages, hunting lodges and trading posts, there is little pressure to create conflict between the two peoples. Though the North Folk come to the mainland to hunt, fish and, for knights and warriors, to seek adventure or test their mettle against "monsters," the human kingdom makes no claim to any part of the Great Northern Wilderness, so the Wolfen do not feel threatened. Likewise,

the Wolfen leave Bizantium's ships unmolested and have never tried to invade the Northern Islands. Moreover, Bizantians know the difference between Wolfen and the more savage Coyles, and don't blame Wolfen for acts of violence by their lesser canine cousins. Over time, these two people will come to respect each other.



Modern Bizantium and Global Outreach: 409 Years Ago.

After the Western Empire's disastrous expansion attempt and thwarted invasion of the Timiro Kingdom, the Land of the South Winds, Timiro and Bizantium join together to force the Empire to surrender and sign the *White Paper*, an acknowledgment of its utter defeat, and a vow to never again build or use the hated **Demon Black Ships**. *Emperor Hazo* is unwilling to either admit defeat or sign the treaty, and vanishes, taking as much of the royal treasury with him as he and his retainers can carry. The new Emperor, *Chuliyi XII*, agrees to the treaty's terms and the remaining Demon Black Ships are sunk under the watchful eyes of the Bizantium and Timiro Navies.

With its own large navy, far-reaching system of merchants and trading ships, and long diplomatic history with the Timiro Kingdom, Bizantium is now truly a player on the world stage. Made up mainly of veterans of the naval expedition to the Western Empire, Bizantium's famous Fourth Fleet is formed, expressly to chart the globe, hunt pirates and explore distant lands, stretching the reach of the Bizantian people even further. Trade with the Wolfen continues and remains peaceful, but *Iceborn Necroilus vessels*, rarely seen for hundreds of years, begin to appear more and more regularly and even launch raids against small villages on the smaller Bizantian islands.

These attacks, and the ever-looming threat of the Western Empire, prompt the leaders of Bizantium to launch an ambitious plan to fortify their kingdom and personal holdings. To that end, they make a deal with five clans of Dwarves who had been hired to work on Bizantium's construction projects for generations. The Dwarves agree, on two conditions:

One, they will need to bring in an estimated 2,000 additional Dwarven stone masters for an operation like this. They will also require human laborers placed under Dwarven management, workers who will be required to follow their instructions with precision and without question.

Two, in return, the Dwarves desire a permanent place of their own within the kingdom. This would be a City of Dwarves exclusive to their five clans, self-governed by the Dwarves themselves.

Of course, this great boon would earn the Crown and the people of Bizantium their eternal favor and loyalty.

After long deliberation, the King and Noble Houses begrudgingly agree. There is some apprehension about this formal, written agreement, but over the decades that follow, the Dwarves prove themselves master builders and artisans, as well as loyal and trustworthy. They do not even ask to break ground on their own city, named **Stonebrook**, until one hundred and one years later, after most of the castles, fortifications and sea ports of the island kingdom are finished or substantially improved.

True to the original agreement, the Dwarves are granted permission to build their city. More than that, they are heralded as friends and defenders of the realm, a title of honor never given to any other nonhumans in the kingdom, and are treated with great respect and tolerance to the present day. The canny Dwarven builders wisely make sure no building in Stonebrook outshines the human castles and cities they helped to build, and maintain a low profile. The Dwarves are quiet, peaceful and always at the service of the Crown and Kingdom of Bizantium. Though the Dwarves of Stonebrook are allowed to govern themselves, they must pledge allegiance to the throne and follow the laws of the land like everyone else. Despite this level of privilege and autonomy, Bizantium's Dwarves remain second-class citizens. They have no political power, no voice in the kingdom's affairs and remain on the island because the humans allow it. However, in a world where Dwarves are often treated poorly and are slowly becoming extinct, life on Bizantium is like living in paradise. If the kingdom is ever attacked, they will fight to defend the realm down to the last man.

Establishment of the Shadow Coast Colonies & the Last Century

104 Years Ago: With the Northern Islands' stands of lumber depleted and the debtors' prisons overflowing, *King Raedaen the First* orders those unable to pay off their debts to work as indentured servants in a series of new colonies planned along the **Shadow Coast**, already lightly inhabited by frontiersmen, loggers, fishermen, and a number of outcast Warlocks. **Seabright** becomes the first of these Shadow Coast colonies, a perfect place to deport criminals, non-humans and those critical of the Crown's rule. Lumber imports from the Shadow Coast increase tenfold, much to the relief of Bizantium's shipyards.

95 Years Ago: Bizantium's economy surges with the creation of three additional Shadow Coast Colonies and a subsequent increase in trade and production. In a show of Bizantium's dominance, *King Raedaen I* orders the construction of another shipyard, specifically to build the fastest and most powerful warship ever designed. *Lord Hathyl Vatatzes* takes charge of the project and gathers the foremost shipwrights, mariners, and mathematicians together in an effort to gain glory for his Noble House. Five years later, the first **Brigantine** sails out of the **Vatatzes shipyard**. Word of this impressive ship reaches the other human nations of the world. Nothing like it has ever been seen before.

82 Years Ago: *Crown Prince Bafag* takes the title *Raedaen the Second* and assumes the throne after his father dies of a stroke. He imposes a multilayer system of taxation on any goods going to and from the **Shadow Coast**. Since half of the colonies are not self-sufficient, they need plenty of supplies from the islands, supplies that they pay for with raw materials and finished goods

produced by their own labor. Since the Crown taxes both transactions, the colonists see the majority of their profits going into the Crown's pocket, distributed back into the King's treasury and the Noble Houses – but not back to the people on the Shadow Coast. Although the colonists object to this treatment, there is nothing they can do as of yet to change their circumstances. A year later, the **Hil-Santo** colony is founded at the foot of Orgod's Backbone.

75 Years Ago: The King, eager for a new royal palace, commissions the Dwarves of Stonebrook to build him a castle fit for a monarch of his wealth and prestige. However, he wants to depart from tradition and invites a few hundred Dwarven masons, architects and craftsmen from the Western Empire and Timiro Kingdom to “consult” and help build a more modern and exotic palace, one with more of a Western flare. This does not sit well with the loyal Dwarves of Stonebrook, who feel insulted and disrespected for the first time in generations. Several of the noble families are also put off. For hundreds of years they have tried to keep themselves removed from all things Western Empire, and now this homage to their enemy feels like an insult to their heritage. Others worry there may be spies and even saboteurs amongst the new arrivals. Later that same year, the first **Frigates** sail out of the Vatatze shipyard and help to restore a sense of national pride and accomplishment.

67 Years Ago: The twelve Wolfen tribes unite into a single Wolfen Empire. These Wolfen are ten times as numerous and far better organized than their ancestors at the time of the *Battle of the Frozen Plain*. King Raedaen II does not want this new monster empire to have any reason to vilify Bizantium, and asks *Merchant-Prince Malcor Yinxner*, who has spent many years living among the Wolfen of the Oak People Tribe, to petition for a formal state of peace between their two kingdoms. Old agreements between Bizantium and various Wolfen tribes are updated to encompass the entire Wolfen Empire.

65 Years Ago: Seven Sisters becomes the last of the Shadow Coast Colonies. Rumor has it that the King fathered a child with one of the Fayd Sisters for which the colony is named, but it is never proven.

60 Years Ago: The first **Bai Regatta** takes place within the Inland Sea.

50 Years Ago: Construction of the new royal palace is complete, but *King Raedaen II* doesn't live long enough to enjoy his new home. He dies of a severe illness and his son, *Crown Prince Raedaen the Third*, takes the throne. To show his appreciation, King Raedaen III allows many of the foreign Dwarves who helped build the palace to remain and settle in **Stonebrook**. As it turns out, the Dwarves from Timiro and especially the Western Empire were oppressed and treated poorly in the kingdoms from whence they came. They have worked hard to prove themselves worthy to the task at hand. Perhaps all the more important, they deferred to the Dwarves of Stonebrook in the creation of the King's palace. They made certain it was elegant and unlike any other castle on the islands, with tall spires and domes, but not a copy of buildings in the Empire of Sin or Timiro, either. This preserves Bizantium's own, unique look, and pleases all parties. As a result, when work is completed and the King suggests any Dwarf who wishes to remain in Bizantium could become a citizen of Stonebrook, there are few objections by their fellow Dwarves. If there are any spies or enemies amongst the Dwarves who remain, which are the majority, they have not yet shown their hand.

45 Years Ago: In a show of strength, King Raedaen III orders a dozen warships to the capital city of Credia in Timiro, *Caer Zeketrius* (now *Caer Itom*) in the Western Empire, *Haven/New Haven* in the Eastern Territory, and *Sulanok* in the Land of the South Winds. With impressive seamanship, the warships arrive almost simultaneously at the four cities despite the vast distances between them. This is Bizantium demonstrating to the other human kingdoms that they are to be regarded as a world power, ending the kingdom's long-held stance of general neutrality. At the same time, official trade between Bizantium and the *Wolfen Empire* begins in earnest, thanks in part to the *Yinxner Noble House*.

30 Years Ago: The first attempt made by a Bizantium ship to circumnavigate the world fails when the ship disappears in southern waters. Meanwhile, the people of the **Shadow Coast** are becoming more self-sufficient and no longer require constant supplies from Bizantium. *King Raedaen III* punishes the *Hil-Santo Colony* for engaging in acts of rebellion by ordering the execution of hundreds of colonists and repossessing dozens of ships under charges of smuggling and disloyalty.

25 Years Ago: King Raedaen falls from his horse and suffers a spinal injury, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down. He begs *High Minister Ljot Thorald* to plead to Algor for his restoration. The High Minister makes three separate pleas, yet the sea god does not respond. Not wishing to be an invalid for the rest of his life, he orders his Marines to throw him into the sea. Raedaen's wife, *Queen Angelita*, begs him to reconsider, but King Raedaen III refuses and as he is thrown into the sea by his loyal retinue, Queen Angelita jumps in after him. They both drown together while their son, the *Crown Prince Raedaen the Fourth*, looks on in horror. The event forever traumatizes the young noble, and he ascends to the throne inexperienced and weak, leaving the administration of his kingdom to a large and fairly self-serving body of advisors. He orders *High Minister Ljot* to be put to death for the failure to heal his father, then bestows his position to *Minister Airen Roth*.

20 Years Ago: The **Shadow Coast Colonies** exploit the inefficiency and lack of oversight from the King to begin trading raw materials, as well as finished goods, amongst themselves, allowing them to make money without being taxed for it a second time by the Crown. The **Shadow Coast Colonies' Council of Elements** does not openly suggest seceding, but the underlying current of rebellion is there, spoken about in whispered tones in homes and meeting lodges.

10 Years Ago: After years of trial and error, *Merchant-Prince Grayden Bardomus*, with the help of a Summoner, a Diabolist, and a Warlock, creates the first **Stone Ship of Bizantium**. He promises the King that Bizantium will soon have the most powerful navy in world history, more than a match for the Western Empire's Demon Black Ships or any sea serpent on the high seas.

5 Years Ago: Inner Cadath becomes the *de facto* capital of the Shadow Coast. While the Noble Houses make the lion's share of the profits from the colonies, the colonists themselves face poverty and harsh weather conditions. Things go from bad to worse when the King reveals his plan to blockade the Shadow Coast, allegedly to stop smugglers and protect the colonists, but really just as a means to enforce the oppressive tax code. This incites cries for rebellion, with numerous protests, work stoppages, sabotage, brawls, and general loud dissent amongst the colonies' population.

2 Years Ago: Bizantium unveils another shipyard, thus giving the kingdom a grand total of nine. To further boast of his

kingdom's naval superiority, *King Raedaen IV* orders *Sir Jonathan Fairchild*, arguably the finest captain in the Royal Navy, to take his ship *Turaline* and circumnavigate the world. It takes the captain and his crew 481 days (a year and three months), but they manage to complete the journey. Word of this incredible voyage is spread to further the glory of Bizantium and its mighty ships. Sir Jonathan is promoted to Admiral and given command of the Fourth Fleet.

Six Months Ago: A string of strange events spread rumor and hearsay throughout the Northern Islands. First, a series of fishing boats disappear in the Northern Sea, leaving no trace, no survivors, no lifeboats or evidence of any kind. A pair of full-sized whaling ships vanish a week later, and the merchant *Fair Rita* is discovered floating adrift to the north of Aquafel without a single man, woman or child aboard. Things get even stranger when a fishing village on the northern coast of **Yufel** is found completely empty and stripped of its fishing boats, its inhabitants never seen again. Some blame magic or monsters from the ocean, but others whisper of the return of the **Iceborn**, Bizantium's age-old nemesis. The King vows to investigate but little is actually done.

Bizantium Today

It is only a matter of time before the colonies of the Shadow Coast revolt. The Crown and the Noble Houses have underestimated the colonists' frustration and anger, as well as their strength and resolve. They have become an independent and capable people with the fortitude to challenge the island kingdom to a lengthy, planned battle for resistance that will cause countless problems for Bizantium's economy. The kingdom could quite possibly lose the colonies, a display of potential weakness that might make it a target for the Western Empire's well-funded Imperial Navy, or if the rumors are true, an opportunity to see how well the recently reinstated **Demon Black Ships** perform in battle.

Hanta Farrip, advisor to King Raedaen IV and leader of **Bizantium's Warlock Council**, is keenly interested in the **ruined city of Valsk** on the island of Torn. She is searching for explorers who would be willing to investigate, excavate and report back any findings. If her research is correct, one of the answers to the great **Northern Mysteries** lies within the holy city. She has already had a Diabolist decipher the markings on the **Ozurr Rune-stone**, but it tells her nothing about its function or creation. She is aware of the saga of the stone, but she'd like to learn and master the stone's capabilities if at all possible. Hanta is always looking for new recruits, offering them the false opportunities of a lifetime to explore the Island of Torn as well as the other islands for information. She knows better than anyone about the island's haunted history, having barely escaped it alive herself.

Airen Roth, the High Minister of the **Cathedral of Algor**, is plagued by terrible visions of sea serpents. He is not entirely sure why, but he knows it has something to do with the **Great Ice Shelf** to the north and the rise in attacks by the **Iceborn**. He is looking to recruit *adventurers* to explore the region, but he must do so without allowing Warlock Hanta or King Raedaen IV to find out about it. High Minister Airen has heard rumors of large gatherings of Iceborn on the Great Ice Shelf, and though it is a considerable distance from Bizantium, he is worried that they have assembled a new Horde and will soon return to the Northern Islands to sow terror and death. If his persistent dreams truly are

a premonition, he fears that these attacks by the Iceborn shall culminate in terrible battles like those spoken of in the sagas from Bizantium's distant past.

King Raedaen IV is the most dysfunctional monarch in Bizantium's long and illustrious history. Between his incompetence, abuse of power, laziness and corruption, he has severely weakened the kingdom's position throughout the Palladium World. While every nation agrees the island kingdom possesses one of the most impressive navies of all time, their ability to withstand a land invasion is questionable at best. Both the Western Empire and the Timiro Kingdom have learned from their spies of the volatile situation coming to a head with the **Shadow Coast colonies** and plan to take advantage of it.

These same spies have learned of a growing number of dissidents who are tired of King Raedaen IV appointing incompetent cronies to important positions. The dissidents not only want the **Warlock Council** and **Council of Elements** eliminated, they will take extreme measures to rid the entire Kingdom of the presence of Warlocks. Ninety percent of these extremists trace their origins back to true "North Folk" who are fanatical in their faith to Algor, despise nonhumans, and treat all practitioners of magic as if they were wicked people, on par with Necromancers and Witches. The problem is, Warlocks and mages play an important role in the kingdom's defenses, commerce, and ability to dominate the seas. Few people, even amongst the fanatical dissidents, recognize the close relationship between the sea god's control of ocean waters and the power wielded by Warlocks; they are one and the same, but the zealots will hear none of it. They shall not rest until every Warlock is removed from the islands and punished for crimes against the sea god, Algor. The majority of these fanatics and separatists live in the city of **Wujik**, guided by the clerical leadership of *High Sister Olevea Latharsis*. Thankfully, the zealots' numbers are quite small. Still, they can stir up plenty of trouble and under the right circumstances (and perhaps with help from outside nations), will make a grab for power when the opportunity appears.

As the Crown and its military prepare themselves for civil war with a barely capable leader at the helm, no one seems to notice the slow encroachment of the **Iceborn** and their **Necroilus sea serpent-ships** around the Northern Islands. Attacks are becoming far more frequent, with some raiders even going ashore on Bizantium's smaller islands and the coasts of the Great Northern Wilderness. **The Western Empire** looks on greedily, waiting for a weakness to exploit, while Timiro stands by idle and distracted with its own problems. As for the fledgling **Eastern Territory**, its diplomats and rulers try to manipulate Bizantium into a war with the Wolfen. The Eastern Territory criticizes the Kingdom of Bizantium for its relationship with, and tolerance of, "monsters." The Eastern Territory, and most people south of the Northern Wilderness, choose to believe the Wolfen and their kin are nothing more than savage monsters who eat babies and feast upon the flesh of every human they slaughter. The size and appearance of the canine races make this fallacy easy to believe, and for Bizantium's enemies and rivals, it is a convenient lie to paint them in a bad light.

With so many groups vying for power both inside and outside the Northern Islands, and the King seemingly oblivious to it all, there is no telling what the future holds for the Island Kingdom of Bizantium and its erstwhile citizens.



The Kingdom of

Seven Main Islands

Estimated Total Population: 653,400 Humans.

Island of Bizantium – 400,000

Island of Borich – 85,000

Island of Yufel – 5,000

Island of Acta – 3,000

Island of Sinza – 100

Island of Wyst – 300

Shadow Coast Colonies (mainland) – 160,000

*“We encountered bad weather a month after leaving port. Just before midday, second mate Epur Dufnial sighted a ship through his spyglass, maybe five miles off the port bow. He said something was wrong with the other vessel. She was yawing slightly, and her sails did not look right, torn and damaged. Gauren Eyars, first mate, agreed, and we decided to investigate. As we moved closer we saw the ship was the **Fair Rita**. I immediately wondered why the Fair Rita had not already reached the Broken Horn, as she had such a head start on us. We approached to within a few hundred yards and continued to cautiously observe her until the start of twilight. She was under sail, but moving erratically on a starboard tack, and slowly heading toward the Horn. I could tell she was drifting after seeing no one at the helm or even on deck, though the ship was flying no distress signal.*

“I ordered Eyars to take five men and board, to make a determination of her troubles. He reported that there was no one aboard, and said that ‘the whole ship was a thoroughly wet mess. There was a lot of water between decks, up to our knees down in the hold.’ Half-flooded or not, she was still seaworthy, but all of the ship’s papers were missing, except for the captain’s logbook. The fore hatch and the storage locker were both open, although the main hatch was sealed. The ship’s clock was not functioning and the compass was destroyed; the sextant was gone. The only rowboat on the Fair Rita was also missing. The peak halyard, used to hoist the main sail, had disappeared. A rope, perhaps the peak halyard, was found tied tightly to the ship with the other end, frayed, trailing in the water behind.

“A six-month supply of biscuit, serpent meat, salt pork and fresh water was still aboard, and the crew’s personal possessions and artifacts were untouched, ruling out an attack by pirates. It appeared the vessel had been abandoned in a hurry. There was no clear sign of a struggle or violence.

“I decided to go aboard myself. Upon arriving on the Fair Rita, I examined the whole of the hull; the stern and keel, post

and rudder. Everything was intact, no trace of the kind of damage that would result from a collision with a rock or other ship. The Fair Rita was in good order and condition. There was no evidence of foul play from the crew, of mutiny, struggle or violence other than the fact the crew were all missing. I believe in my heart that the captain and crew of the Fair Rita met with the displeasure of the sea god, who in his infinite wisdom, punished them with evanescence.”

– A report to the Admiralty by Captain Dyri Ljotson

In spite of their enduring image as fearless sailors and explorers, most Bizantians make their living as farmers, fishermen, lumberjacks, merchants, shipbuilders, craftsmen, blacksmiths or carpenters. Many of them, however, lead a life that combines multiple trades. An able-bodied Bizantian sailor is not just an individual who can hoist the mizzenmast, but someone who can make a living on land as well. A farmer might have to leave his farm or estate at least once a year to further his own ends, whether it be for a two week fishing expedition, a trade mission to sell produce in faraway markets, or even sailing off with explorers in search of treasure, adventure and new lands. Most Bizantians make these decisions not because they are searching for glory, but out of a desire to provide for their families, and to get some use out of the nautical skills that most islanders learn at a young age.

Social Classes

At the apex of the social pyramid of Bizantium stands the **royal line** of kings and queens. Below them are the rich and powerful **merchant-princes** who head the *Noble Houses*. Under them is a diverse group of merchants and guild members, shipwrights, skilled craftsmen and professional warriors, known collectively as **freemen**. This group is the most influential layer of Bizantian society, as their social class creates most of the wealth of the entire kingdom.

Below them are the **peasantry** and **laborers**, the hardworking individuals who live and work in the cities and coastal towns, who also make up the bulk of the kingdom’s population. The **Dwarves** of Bizantium fall somewhere between freemen and laborers. In fact, they are treated as celebrated craftsmen and heroes of the island kingdom, but possess no real power within the government or economy. At the base of the pyramid are the **fief-holders** (farmers) whose sole purpose in life is to work the fields



Bizantium

and tend to the livestock, a permanent lifestyle from which there is no upward mobility to aspire to.

Slavery, per se, does not exist in Bizantium, for its people are traditionally accustomed to hard work and a backbreaking life. The closest thing to slavery on the Northern Islands is the treatment of non-humans. Not only does the Crown not recognize any civil rights for **non-humans**, including Elves and Dwarves, but Bizantians in general disregard them. This does not mean non-humans are not tolerated – on the contrary, any non-human is welcome to visit any Bizantian city or town – but monster races, including, but not limited to, Ogres, Trolls, and Canines, will be stopped and thoroughly questioned (not interrogated). Only those coming to purchase goods or seeking temporary employment will be allowed to stay for any length of time. In other words, Bizantians will take a non-human's money, but then he'd best be on his way. Non-humans cannot open any sort of business anywhere in the kingdom because one must be a *legal citizen* in order to do so, a status non-humans can never attain.

The Monarchy

The Bizantian monarchy traces its origins back to when the Northern Islands' surviving native people united with the descendants of the first colonists and crews of shipwrecked vessels from the *Timiro Kingdom* and the *Eastern Territory* under the rule of *King Joshius the First*, grandson of *Bizas the Wise*. The reign of Joshius has long been overlooked and overshadowed by the achievements of his grandfather, but ask most any Bizantian and they will tell you that Joshius the First is the greatest king in the island's history. Joshius ruled by the same principle established by his grandfather, the *divine right of the sea god*, a tradition that continues today with the absolute monarchy. Both Bizantium and Timiro share this type of regime. The monarch exercises ultimate governing authority as the head of state and the chief of the government, and has total power over the land and its subject people. The principle difference comes from how the monarchy established *divine authority*. In Timiro, it comes from the *Sword of Light*, the legendary magic sword found by *Spatenrok the First* that enabled him to take the land of Timiro from its Elven rulers, a duty that was granted to him by the Gods of Light, at least according to Spatenrok. Because the sword cannot be wielded by anyone who is not a blood descendant of Spatenrok or his brother, *Gregory the Just*, to the mindset of the Timiro populace, **only** the royal family line can lay claim to the throne of Timiro and rule over its people. Yet none of this is supported by any

eyewitness testimony or actual factual accounts, just the word of Spatenrok himself.

Not so in Bizantium. Today the title of **High Father of the Church of Algor** is held by the ruling Bizantium monarch, signifying titular leadership over the *Church of Algor*. Although the monarch's authority over the Church is largely ceremonial, once a year the monarch must validate his position as emissary of the sea god to the Noble Houses and the people of Bizantium. In order to prove this, the monarch performs a clerical ability; something to demonstrate his faith and the power of the god flowing from his person. This priestly act is performed while standing waist deep in the cold waters of the Inland Sea without the assistance of anyone or any kind of magical aid. This supreme requirement makes it necessary for every royal family member for the last eleven centuries to swear an allegiance to Algor or to one of the other gods within the Northern Pantheon (which does include all the Northern deities). Some have taken their clerical duty a step further by becoming true priests of the faith, such as *King Harald the Holy* (8th level Noble and 5th level Priest of Light at the time of his death). Then there are those, like the current monarch, **King Raedaen IV**, who have studied the religion just enough to be an Acolyte (one who wields only the famed priestly Healing Touch). Part of the monarch's duty as High Father is to appoint high-ranking members of the church authority, specifically its High Minister, the principal leader of the Bizantium Church of Algor and the symbolic head of its worldwide followers.

In Timiro, the monarch is the supreme judicial authority. He or she can condemn any Timiro citizen to death without the right of appeal. It is the ruling king or queen's duty to punish offenders, take reasonable measures to administer justice and keep their people safe. The monarch also has the power to make and implement laws, and to change, amend, or annul them merely by giving his or her decree. In Bizantium, the monarch also possesses this power, but the **judicial authority** must be shared with a body of fourteen nobles who advise the monarch when such matters affect the affairs of state. In the beginning, this **Silent Council** met in secret to debate government policy. Two hundred and twenty years ago, the council was given the power (by issue of *King Jonsen*) to approve and publicly accept any decree made by the monarch, thus making it a law. Should the Silent Council disapprove or denounce the monarch's decree, the issue cannot be made law until the monarch convinces eight of the fourteen nobles to change their minds via deliberation. Autocracies like the Western Empire have never found the logic with this. Why



create the means to undermine the monarch? Yet the masterful strategist who established the council, King Jonsen, understood the eventual outcome. The monarchy selects which Noble Houses sit on the council. Therefore, only Noble Houses who are held in good standing with the Crown receive the numerous benefits of sitting on the Silent Council, such as reduced taxes on property or grants of land. This ensures the *merchant-princes* more or less feud with each other, trying to increase their own resources while holding other Noble Houses in check, always giving *the Crown* the superior bargaining position.

The monarch's decisions control almost every aspect of Bizantium life, from financial matters to commercial and trade regulations, to the introduction of new laws. A hierarchy of bureaucratic officials sustains the highly centralized system, even overseas, thus ensuring Bizantians, regardless of where they might be in the world, generally obey Bizantium's laws. The kingdom employs an endless supply of scribes and diplomats to collect taxes, impose tariffs, track shipments and monitor who comes and goes from the nation's ports.

As the emissary for the sea god Algor, the monarch of the Northern Islands receives a reverence from the populace that is, in many ways, equivalent to the worship of a demigod. Insult the monarch or threaten him in any manner and you risk invoking the sea god's wrath as well, or so it is commonly believed. The connection between religious piety and respect for the king makes it especially difficult for clergymen and highly-religious peasants to be critical of their nation's leader.

Noble Houses

The primary duties of Bizantium's nobility are to oversee their estates, collect tax revenue, supervise the maintenance of properties, and provide ships to the Royal Navy. Some of the families, through trade and banking, have risen to such wealth that they exercise both political and cultural power that is nearly the equivalent of the Crown. Noble Houses are represented by the male head of the household, the *Merchant-Prince*. These individuals do not hold any connection to the royal family. The "prince" title is merely given because they are wealthy and/or influential individuals and heads of various Noble Houses. The most powerful Houses rival the royal family in power, wealth, and/or the size of their warrior retinues, but of course they lack the "divine authority" that only royal blood can bring.

That being said, not all Noble Houses are large and powerful. In some cases, they are quite small; just an agricultural holding that owns a single ship that is pledged to the Crown, year after year. Some of the larger and richer Houses provide ships for lesser Houses that join with them to form power blocs. Presently, the Crown recognizes 273 separate and distinct Noble Houses. Many have come and gone several times, and those listed below are not only the most powerful, but culturally influential, and

have large numbers of warriors, scholars, merchants and sailors at their disposal.

Rather than invest in economic activity, most of the Bizantium elite nobility prefer to buy land and acquire administrative positions, from which they make extra money on the side. They also purchase *honorific court titles*, putting themselves in service to the Crown. These titles not only grant them considerable influence with the monarch, but also come with a state pension. After a while, some of the nobles grow tired of the need to accumulate wealth, especially those who possess so much they can live comfortably on the interest earned by their fortunes. Purchased titles are not inheritable, and the original sum invested in the purchase is never repaid, so in the end, many noble lords are motivated to hold on to their positions only for the honor and status given to them.

Despite the power the Noble Houses wield, they do not possess the authority to *defy* the monarch, at least not easily. If the King wishes it, he can enact any provision against any Noble House he wishes. Thus the Noble Houses that are held in good standing and well received in court can count on favorable attention, while those nobles the monarch finds disfavor with may be exiled. Such exile is rarely permanent. The nobles are quite aware of the political nature of their exile and almost always continue to serve as loyal subjects from afar. After a cooling off period (the duration of which is up to the monarch), if the Crown has continued to receive the exiled lord's ship commitment from his Noble House, along with generous presents and occasional pleas for clemency, the monarch might forgive an arrogant noble and restore his status among his peers. Whether or not the Noble House returns to its former status is left entirely up to the King.

Some Noble Houses of Note:

House Arfox (Matchmaker): This Noble House owes much of its influence to the shrewd matchmaking of its house elder, *Prince Thiodolf Arfox*. Five of his six children are married into foreign royal families; his eldest daughter married *King Hafton*, ruler of the City of Wisdom in the Eastern Territory, his eldest son married the youngest daughter of *King Edmund Penington*, ruler of the Kingdom of Peningshir (also in the Eastern Territory). Hafton's other son and two other daughters are married into influential Provincial Houses of the *Western Empire*. Presently, he is debating whether or not to send his youngest daughter, *Ashild*, to *Caer Itom* in the Western Empire in the hope of seducing *Emperor Itomas* or to *Credia* in the *Timiro Kingdom* to try for *Crown Prince Tarat*. When Prince Arfox is not trying to marry off his children, he spends a surprising amount of time with his house's shipwrights, personally advising them in the design of newer and faster vessels. Prince Thiodolf also sends information-gathering agents along with his royal sons and daughters, trained sailors keen to lookout for ship designs that are innovative, for-



eign, inhuman or otherwise remarkable. House Arfox also rules over the Shadow Coast colony of **Oceali**.

House Bardomus (Magic): Rumors have surrounded House Bardomus for generations, and many are the tales of consorting with wizards and witches. The rumors must be true, at least in part, for the Warlocks and shipwrights of House Bardomus are responsible for designing Bizantium's infamous *Stone Ships*. Merchant-Prince Grayen Bardomus has been known to associate with men of magic since his youth, for better or for worse; a reputation that makes many Bizantians suspicious of his entire House. Along with House Baarten, they rule over the Shadow Coast colony of **Stone Coven**, and are using its resources to make the Stone Ships. Of course, few realize that this is all a ruse in order to convince the Church and the Crown that the stone that makes up the ships actually comes from natural sources.

House Conemus (Merchant Fleet): Seated at Northomber, House Conemus is a family of merchants and traders, closely connected to House Rhangnable. However, where Rhangnable is famous for its marines, Conemus is known for its huge fleet of over three hundred merchant vessels. They have control over their own shipyard that produces and maintains these vessels, but with so many new keels being laid down, ships rolling off the piles and a dozen others being rebuilt in dry-dock, shipbuilding quality is sometimes compromised. House Conemus has a fifty percent interest in the **Hil-Santo Colony**, along with House Vatatzes, but also splits management of the colony of **Outer Cadath** with the smaller Noble Houses Hidkun and Vorolf.

House Ducasian (The Matriarch): For several generations, House Ducasian has maintained close ties to the Western Empire, both in blood and in gold. *Lady Lesyta Zeketri*, nearly eighty, has been the matriarch of the Ducasian family since she married *Prince Vander Ducasian* in her youth. The fact that she is also half-sister to *Emperor Zeketri* (previous leader of the Western Empire) has been highly beneficial to House Ducasian; giving them an inside advantage in procuring land, property and profitable businesses in the Western Empire, primarily the Imperial Province and Upper Kighfalton. On Bizantium, the Ducasian fief includes profitable tracts of agricultural land to the south of the city of Vicer, as well as the Shadow Coast colony of **Tohatha**.

House Gareth (Friend to the Crown): This House is quickly losing its status as one of the prominent Noble Houses, according to everyone but King Raedaen. The King wishes all the other Houses managed and maintained their colonial holdings with similar success. In truth, House Gareth is led by *Prince Thorarin Gareth*, a childhood friend of the King who is regarded by all as a childish, spoiled, bumbling fool who spends money extravagantly, especially on clothes and "alleged" magic items. Besides control of **Inner Cadath**, the de facto capital of the Shadow Coast colonies, House Gareth makes most of its gold off the entertainment industry that caters to sailors in the city of Homesight; part Noble House, part crime syndicate.

House Lamrith (Wolfen Traders): The Noble House of Lamrith uses the City of Kallico as the seat of their House, but their fief also includes Cantock Island, at least in name. Over the last few years, House Lamrith has begun to form a commerce-based relationship with the *Ursa Rex Wolfen Tribe*. By royal decree from the King, the Lamrith traders are not allowed to trade war materials with the King Bears, but what qualifies as "war materials" has been left open to interpretation. King Raedaen has also instructed House Lamrith to keep their trading partnership a secret. The last thing he wants is for the Eastern Territory to believe Bizantium is forging a military alliance with the Wolfen Empire.

Despite the wealth of their holdings, House Lamrith is currently in debt to the Crown, so much so that *Geoffrey Lamrith*, Merchant-Prince, is living in exile on the mainland. To save face, Prince Geoffrey continues to promise a ship to the Crown on an annual basis, though he is committing most of his resources towards building up an armed faction of supporters on the Shadow Coast. With the Council of Elements on his side, some fear that he will claim the Shadow Coast as his own and attempt to secede from Bizantium.

House Malemore (Pirates): Long years ago, *Duke Greganz Malemore* was serving on a merchant vessel that was attacked by pirates. When the pirates realized that they had the heir to a Bizantian Noble House on their hands, they took him with them to ransom, leaving the rest of the ship's crew to their lifeboats and whatever fate awaited them. Only fourteen, Greganz was a true Bizantian, already a skilled sailor, and gradually evolved from a captive into more of an unwilling member of the pirate crew. He learned much from the pirates, and when he was ransomed back to his House, Greganz took that knowledge with him. For years, ships under his command would drop the Bizantian colors and fly flags of other nations when a potential target loomed, willing to "go pirate" at a moment's notice against enemies and rivals such as the Western Empire.

Now, as Duke, Greganz has many captains under his command who sail lone, heavily-armed vessels, looking for prey, disguising their true intent; pirates behind a thin veil of legitimacy. The House's shipwrights have even designed shallow-draft vessels that can enter rivers as shallow as 12 feet (3.6 m), supposedly for trading with downriver settlements along the Shadow Coast and Northern Islands, but also perfect for raiding, evading pursuers and hiding out in unlikely locations.

House Malemore lords over the land around the *River Bai* and *Lake Fielder*, but it is the Shadow Coast colony of **Lothea** that they rule with an iron fist. The elder Duke's only son John, along with John's three sons, Alex, Quentin, and Dagan, have turned the colony into a stronghold where pirates and privateers come and go and normal citizens feel like they are living under martial law.



House Norbert (Shipmakers & Bankers): This is the wealthiest of Bizantium's Noble Houses, due in part to careful management of the city of Southomber and its fine shipyard, in part to its massive merchant fleet, and in part to its control over the largest individual bank in Bizantium. The saying, "Raedaen is King of Bizantium, but Norbert is King of Gold" is still spoken throughout the kingdom, and *Prince Humberg Norbert*, now in his sixties, is fiercely determined to hang on to every piece of gold that passes through the House's hands. House Norbert has also recently been placed in charge of the Shadow Coast colony of **Deridan**, and reaps the lion's share of the colony's profits. The House only acquired Deridan four years ago from *House Redriv*, who initially bankrolled the colony until they lost their privileged status when *Lady Gudny Redriv* canceled her betrothal to King Raedaen; an act that almost cost her her head.

House Rhangnable (Soldiers): Descended from soldiers rather than sailors, House Rhangnable is the only Noble House that does not contribute ships to Bizantium's fleets. Over the centuries since the kingdom's founding, the family's retainers and household sentries grew into a sizable military unit, the **Northomber Guard**, named for the City of Northomber, the Rhangnable's seat of power. Every year, a company of the Guard is sent to serve the Crown in lieu of a warship, a compromise King Raedaen is happy to accept thanks to the high quality of the Guard's marines. Northomber Guardsmen often form the professional core of military units raised from across the islands, and every able-bodied male citizen of Northomber serves in the Guard from the ages of sixteen to twenty-four. House Rhangnable also controls the relatively new Shadow Coast colony of **Seven Sisters**. They allow the colony the liberty to run itself without too much outside influence, as long as, like its parent city, it contributes fighting men to the Northomber Guard.

House Selernani (Independent): The *Island of Acta* is the smallest of the populated Bizantian islands, the fief of Noble House Selernani. Since they control the entire island, they have no need to squabble with other Houses over dividing lines between property, rights to natural resources or shared use of roads or rivers. This security makes House Selernani less ambitious than other Noble Houses, content to farm and fish their property and conduct trade with the few merchant ships they maintain. While they do have the ear of the Crown, they are limited in men, vessels and resources.

House Vatatzes (First among Nobles): For many years, Vatatzes has been regarded as the strongest and most influential of Bizantium's Noble Houses. Its leader, *Merchant-Prince Wilgan Vatatzes*, is a direct descendant of *Artus Vatatzes*, long ago a usurper to the throne. Centuries later, however, the Vatatzes family has been redeemed. They are connected to the royal bloodline by a dozen marriages, and Prince Wilgan is a close friend and advisor to the King, regarded as a sharp and competent leader

with a much better head for politics and military strategy than that which actually wears the crown. The House maintains control over the farmland immediately surrounding the capital of Bizantium, but technically has no authority within the city itself. The Vatatzes Yard is the biggest shipyard in Bizantium, specializing in military vessels. Despite their proud history, the Vatatzes have no plans to attempt to supplant the King; being first amongst the Noble Houses has many of the same benefits, with little of the risk. The Vatatzes manage the **Hil-Santo Colony** on the mainland to the south, as well as the original Shadow Coast colony known as **Seabright**. With these holdings so close together (Hil-Santo is located just west of the Shadow Coast), they are also planning to merge Hil-Santo, basically a fishing port with a few hundred residents, with Seabright, a thriving colony with nearly fifty-thousand inhabitants.

House Yinxner (Wolfen Liaisons & Traders): Yinxner has long held territory near **Gate Fort**, and conducted countless interactions with *Wolfen* traders and fur-trappers on the mainland. After generations of living nearby and quietly trading with each other, the House's merchants and soldiers have formed a trusting relationship with their Wolfen counterparts. They brokered the treaty that allowed Bizantium to establish colonies on the mainland without Wolfen interference, and every year they exchange a growing amount of goods and information with the Wolfen.

Instead of worrying the Crown, House Yinxner's actions are seen as positive, bringing in new sources of trade, whether it is human hands or Wolfen paws on the other end of the deal. To further capitalize on this arrangement, Yinxner's scholars have established a Wolfen language school with the help of the *Oak People Wolfen Tribe*, training the sons and daughters of merchants, frontiersmen and tradespeople in the Wolfen tongue and aspects of canine culture. This influx of new translators makes it easier and cheaper to conduct business with the Wolfen; much to the chagrin of House Lamrith, who has its own Wolfen connections. Wolfen-speakers are still rare enough that they can charge a five or ten percent commission on the deals they negotiate.

Freemen

Forming the backbone of Bizantium society are its merchants, fishermen, shipwrights, carpenters, builders, artisans, and professional sailors and soldiers. Since the days of Bizas, every Bizantian leader knows allegiance is not automatically bestowed by its citizens, it must be earned and maintained. The loyalty of its proud and outspoken freemen cannot be priced, for in times of war, famine, and pestilence, it is they who ensure the kingdom's survival. If the monarch rules unjustly, or his decisions bring misfortune and misery, it is always the freemen who suffer, rise up and revolt against the royal family. Afterward, they quickly look for new leadership among the Nobility, someone who can ensure the will of Algor is felt strongly amongst his chosen people.



Unlike the peasantry, freemen are self-sufficient city-dwellers or land-owning farmers. Freemen possess the knowledge and the economic capability to work their land, cut and sell timber, construct and maintain buildings, operate smithies and textile operations, sew clothes, make sails, manufacture their own tools, herd and pen livestock and own or run small and medium inns, taverns, shops, bakeries, stores and other businesses. As a rule, the children of freemen are expected to work hard and learn the skills and inherit the businesses that their fathers have mastered. Freemen also live comfortably enough to enjoy leisure time, meaning recreation is just as important to their lives as it is for royalty and nobility. Freemen have the right to own a weapon larger than a knife and may carry a shield adorned with their own coat of arms.

Laborers and Peasantry

Recognized by their close-cropped hair and simple garments, peasants and laborers include apprentice craftsmen, woodworkers, city-dwelling workers, servants, warehouse workers, and transportation workers, and most are poor and uneducated. The least fortunate perform the heaviest of tasks, like cutting trees, digging ditches, building canals, shipbuilding, working in the lumber mills and stone quarries, working the fish markets, gutting and butchering livestock and sea serpents, hauling cargo, and doing other unskilled (or little skilled) work. Most are uneducated and subject to a life of backbreaking labor. They have little time for rest and relaxation, leading some to feel trapped in a life of hard labor, while others enjoy their work. Some are independent fishermen, hunters, fur trappers and farmers/homesteaders who live off the sea or land, eating what they catch or raise and selling what extra they might have to whoever is willing to offer a fair price. What land they own will be small plots, and personal belongings will be heavy on the tools of their trade and light on everything else. Most small fishing villages are home to such independent workers.

Occasionally, one hard-working peasant might find himself elevated to the status of a work steward, a person who has not earned enough money to emerge from a life of servitude, but has enough status and resources to live essentially as a freeman. Very few peasants earn enough money to find true freedom, and most work till they drop. If anything, they may save enough money to send their oldest born son (or daughter if an only child) to learn a trade skill, so at least the next generation will enjoy the blessing of being a “freeman.” Many peasants will gladly volunteer to crew a ship, hoping to earn or win enough to elevate their position in life. Of course, not every peasant wants to crew a Bizantium ship – nor should. Only the strongest, most seaworthy or most eager to learn is likely to be hired on at all, much less survive his maiden voyage. The risks are great, but the opportunity is out there for those brave enough to leave their dreary existence behind.

Compared to more despotic or unstable kingdoms, however, most laborers and peasants in Bizantium have large families and are reasonably happy. Life is hard, to be sure, but life is hard for most people other than royalty, merchants and the rich.

Fiefholders/Farmers

The difference between a peasant and a fiefholder is simple. Peasants are treated as people, while fiefholders are serfs who, all too often, are barely noticed or considered, and treated little better than the crops and animals they care for. Fiefholders work the fields, farm, tend to livestock, perform unskilled labor – and nothing else. Both genders work in the fields, as do their children over the age of five, each day, six and seven days a week, with little or no leisure time allowed. Fiefholders earn a pittance for their hard work. They own little more than the clothes on their back, a few tools and one or two niceties we would take for granted. They are given simple food, basic tools, and a place to live that can range from a shack to a hut, to a small house to a barracks-like workhouse. They cannot own land for themselves, and work property owned by someone else. Fiefholders are expected to ensure the fields are plowed, the dung used to fertilize them is spread, and the crops and livestock are properly cared for and harvested on time.

Fortunately, not all fiefholders are badly treated by their landowner masters (a freeman or a noble). The luckiest are appreciated by their landowner and given good housing and supplies, live decent lives, and are given time off for being ill, birthing children, and special celebrations. The class of fiefholders are essential to the Bizantium way of life, for without them it would be impossible for the kingdom to support its present day population; someone has to work the fields and provide the food that feeds the kingdom.

Women

Bizantium women enjoy certain advantages that females in other kingdoms generally do not. Because freemen and peasants are given the opportunity to serve the kingdom by working aboard a ship, the males may be away from their homes for an undetermined amount of time – weeks, sometimes months or even years. This means no source of income is available for the family, unless a wife is allowed to work and exercise complete authority over all household and business matters. Unlike the women of kingdoms such as Timiro, the Eastern Territory, or even the Western Empire, Bizantium’s women do not necessarily have to chain themselves to a life of spinning, weaving, stitching, brewing and preparing food (which some certainly do). Female citizens hold equal status as their husbands; even when the husband is home, his wife shares in complete authority over the house and supervision of servants or hired help. From an early age, Bizantium women are encouraged to be self-reliant and re-



sourceful. Since the likelihood of a husband never returning from a sea venture is a real possibility, widows are free to choose new husbands, or retain their independence, rightfully inheriting all things belonging to their spouse. Northern women are imbued with a strong sense of their own worth, and many become influential and wealthy figures.

For those men who rise to the elite ranks of Bizantium society, court ceremonies bestow titles, costumes and insignia of office which confirm not only their own role but also that of their wives. When military and civilian officials receive an honorary title, their wives are endowed with a feminine form of that title as well.



Non-Humans

Bizantium is known for the welcoming nature of its rich and metropolitan capital city, but the same is also true of its many smaller port cities, towns and villages. Nowhere else in the world are the “Rules of Hospitality” so well observed – at least if one is *human*.

The attitude toward others represents the prevalent Bizantium view that all non-humans, including Elves and Dwarves, are simply inferior beings. Humans are the sea god’s chosen people, entitled to a world free of monsters and old magicks. Non-humans

cannot be trusted, and must be carefully observed – or else will start to practice their pagan rituals, consorting with demons and other supernatural menaces.

Non-human communities have existed in the Cities of Bizantium and Wujik ever since the time of Bizas, but they are typically tiny and insular. And while Elves and Dwarves may be the victims of subtle racism and prejudice, monster races are often pushed into the least desirable areas or off the islands entirely. Those who manage to stay in the kingdom usually make their homes in trash-strewn alleys, crowded slums, abandoned buildings, woodlands and along the banks of streams or canals where a city’s refuse is pitched.

Non-humans have no rights, which places them even lower than fiefholders. In some places, they are forbidden to intermingle with citizens unless they accept Algor or one of the Northern Gods as their protector. Non-human visitors are typically met on the docks by a Waterchanter or Priest of Algor, waiting to bless them in an effort to remove the taint of heresy before they bring it into the city. Oddly enough, this gives Wolfen an advantage over the more human-looking races, at least those Wolfen who are part of the majority who already worship Algor, Wolvenar and the Northern Gods.

Another quirk of the system is that non-human “guests” and “visitors” are treated with a fairness that non-human *inhabitants* of the islands will never see. An Elf, Dwarf or Wolfen who steps off a ship could be an emissary or trader from afar looking to pursue trade agreements or temporary alliances, or might simply be in possession of a ship’s worth of valued goods. The moment a Goblin, Orc, Wolfen, or even an Elf attempts to make the Northern Islands his permanent home, however, he is seen as a troublemaker, spy or dangerous foreigner. Fairness ceases and fear and persecution begin. The only non-humans who can hope to assimilate are those who demonstrate themselves to be authentic Priests of Algor, yet even still, the Priest will have to prove him or herself before the High Minister before being allowed to perform any clerical service, is likely never to be accepted as an equal or trustworthy, and can never become a citizen. And while non-humans are the victims of prejudice, the Elven language was assimilated into the islands’ culture centuries ago as a necessity to conduct business, just as Wolfen is being slowly absorbed today. Most Bizantians (90%) speak Elven, still used as a lingua franca and trade language by mariners, merchants and travelers. Many traditional North Folk also remark at the similarities between Elven and Eoten, the old language of the Northern Islands’ original inhabitants.

Taxes and Obligations

The power of Bizantium’s Noble Houses is a strong counterpoint to King Raedaen and the Bizantium Crown. Though the many powerful bloodlines of Bizantium all overlap to some de-



gree, and the kingdom is considered one, single state, most Bizantians feel as much loyalty to their Noble House as to the King himself. And while many Bizantians share similar interests politically, economic self-interest is the real driver behind the island kingdom, and nowhere is the relationship between money and power more complicated than when it comes to taxes.

Bizantium's tax policy reflects a traditional assumption about the economy: that taxing the land and its population is the most efficient way to finance government expenditure on military needs, maintain the imperial court, provision the capital and other coastal cities, and produce highly sought-after luxury goods, such as sealskins, furs, lumber, ivory, cod, sea serpent meat, and finished glass. There is limited space available on the islands, and the Crown is by far the largest landowner, giving it access to a much greater share of tax revenue. Taxing trade makes up a large portion of the overall budget of the Bizantian state, but land tax is far more reliable and provides a steady source of revenue, in part due to investments in the land made by the Crown and societal elite. Besides, too much tax on shipping only makes captains look for other ports, particularly along the Shadow Coast, and the Bizantian leadership has always been keen to encourage sea trade.

Throughout its history, the monarchy often rewarded successful generals, administrators, and churchmen with grants of land, which, in time, became the core of large estates controlled by the Noble Houses. Sometimes this donated land was granted a tax exemption, despite the economic wealth which the Noble House accumulated. Such gifts, however, could easily be taken back. The Crown regularly confiscates the wealth and land of any Noble House or single individual who falls into disfavor and/or finds himself exiled.

Villages throughout the Northern Islands are expected to pay a lump sum to the tax collectors when they arrive on their annual visit, usually after the harvest in autumn. While each household and land owner is taxed individually, the entire community provides the total sum due in gold and/or goods. In this process, the village leaders bear the responsibility for insuring any deficit is made up. If a woman loses her husband and sons, for instance, and is unable to cultivate the family's land, her neighbors are encouraged to help do the work, share in the harvest and make it possible for her to pay her taxes. Tax officials might also grant tax reductions or even exemptions in such cases. Eventually, the neighbors might take possession of the land, especially if they are the ones who work it season after season.

During the early years of *King Joshius'* rule, he vowed the monarchy could not impose any kind of new tax without the consent of those who would pay the tax. In other words, if the King wishes to impose a new tax on the Noble Houses, then each and every one of the Houses must agree to the tax before it becomes law. Since then, no tax has ever been revoked, because it is too difficult to pass them in the first place, and no one is foolish enough to approve new taxes, at least not more than once a

century or so. This makes the tax code of Bizantium one of the oldest in existence (over 1,100 years old), and it remains relatively unchanged despite the passing of kings and queens over the centuries.

This rigid tax code means Bizantium's royalty is always strapped for cash. Some of this could be relieved if the monarchy would stop senselessly spending money, but *King Raedaen IV* takes after his recent forebears, with a taste for private yachts, royal hunting grounds stocked with elk captured and imported from the Great Northern Wilderness, and lavish banquets and celebrations. The Crown is also spending huge sums funding House Bardomus' creation of Stone Ships and House Norbert's Ice Breakers, as well as other ventures.

During times when the Kingdom's finances are stretched, the Crown can do nothing but rely on its traditional tax system, even though one or several Noble Houses might possess enough capital to bail out the entire nation. Over the centuries, the Crown has taken two routes to access this untapped source of income. One is to "borrow" the money, and the other is to seize it by royal decree. Sometimes, both end up in a similar outcome for the Noble House. Money borrowed is usually returned with interest paid, or returned along with something of near or equivalent value: land, trade goods, tax exemption, marriage proposals, etc. Other times, the interest payments are made, yet the principle tends to remain and eventually, the occasional, unpaid interest inflates to more than the amount owed. The Noble House can either complain or say nothing at that point. In truth, it depends upon the monarch. The Crown currently owes tens of thousands of gold to several Noble Houses, but nothing is ever said. Those who complain might be declared a traitor, which results in seizure of all assets and any unpaid loans declared forfeit. The Crown could ask to borrow more money, and the Noble House may refuse or comply – at its own risk. Money is the main reason why Noble Houses continually fall in and out of favor with the Crown.

There is little the Noble Houses can do to solve this continual cycle. Attempts have been made to limit the monarchy's power, yet these efforts have all met with failure. Even when a monarch is disposed of, all that comes about is a period of unstable government, with a potential civil war brewing or freemen and peasantry in a near state of revolt. The populace of the Northern Islands is also very religious; the King is an agent of Algor, not bound by earthly authority or subject to the will of penny-pinching nobles. Any attempt to depose the King or to restrict his powers runs contrary to the will of Algor and may be considered a sacrilegious act.

The Great Requirement

Besides paying their share of taxes, every Noble House is required by royal decree and ancient tradition to support the Bizantium Naval Fleet. This practice has been handed down from



ancient Eoten times, when each family in a tribe was expected to maintain a longboat for raiding and fishing purposes. Each and every lord of a Noble House must contribute one ship to the Royal Navy annually. This includes the ship itself, all the ship's supplies and stores, a crew, and payment of the crew's salary for as long as the Crown holds the ship. There are Seven Rules of Requirement to meet the conditions:

1. The Crown may keep the ship for as long as it wishes. During this period, the noble making the contribution must continue to keep up the ship's supplies, ammunition, and spare parts. The lord must also continue paying the crew as long as the vessel is in service.

2. Every lord must contribute a new ship every year. This applies even if the Crown still has a ship from the previous year(s); indeed there is no limit to the number of ships that the Crown may retain.

3. It is customary for the Crown to return the pledged ship at the end of five years' service. Generally, this custom is only violated in the case of war or other emergency (if the ship is unsalvageable, sunk, or lost at sea).

4. If the Crown is in any way dissatisfied with the contributed ship, it may select any other ship from among the entire merchant fleet of that Noble House.

5. If the Crown is displeased with the contributed ship, and can find no adequate replacement in the Noble's fleet, then the Crown may commission a shipyard to build a ship to *any* order. Of course, the Noble House will be responsible for the bill.

6. Should a Noble House fail to provide a pledged ship, then the Crown is entitled to seize all lands and titles from that Noble House. Such lands and titles cannot be restored until the death of the offending parental nobility (both husband and wife) and the firstborn offspring. However, any ships, money, and personal possessions are left to the remaining members of the disenfranchised family.

7. It is possible for any family to become a Noble House by royal definition. The requirements are the annual ship, the ownership of at least 100 acres of land somewhere in the Kingdom of Bizantium (colonial lands and unrecognized islands do not count), and five years of prior service to the Crown, either as a military officer, as a personal attendant, or as an officer of one of the Crown Commissions.

Laws and Legal System of Bizantium

By strict legal definition, the only one person capable of rendering judicial authority within Bizantium is the monarch himself, but in some instances, the *Heads of the Noble Houses* may pass judgment in crimes or legal disputes that occur on their property involving the peasantry or fiefholders. There are far too many legal disputes and crimes to be managed by the King and nobility, however, so a system of royal "proxies" has been es-

tablished, courts that bear the authority of the King. There is a proxy for each class of Bizantian society, from noblemen down to fiefholders, consisting of three learned men familiar with the Bizantian legal code. By Northern traditions, one is called "The King's Right Ear," who listens to the charges and accusations. The second is "The King's Left Ear," who hears the defendant's pleas and explanations. "The King's Voice" is the third member of the proxy, and listens to the cases as they are made and passes final judgment. This proxy group is always the one designated for the social class of the defendant. In other words, if a noble accused a fiefholder of a crime, the case would be heard by the fiefholder's proxy. Non-humans have no rights in any Bizantian court of law. Even Elves and Dwarves, although otherwise respected, are not valid witnesses and have no rights of citizenship.

Most of the laws of Bizantium are quite similar to those of the Timiro Kingdom (see **Old Ones, 2nd Edition**), with the following additions:

Brawls/Street Fights: All involved in public brawls or street fights are required to make a donation to the Church of Algor. Anything broken during the fight must either be repaired or paid for.

Four-Inch Weapon Rule: Peasants and fiefholders are forbidden to carry any weapon longer than four inches (10 cm) on their person. Freemen and nobility are forbidden to carry any weapon longer than four inches (10 cm) in the presence of royalty unless they are currently serving in the military or are acting as royal bodyguards. Visitors to Bizantium must license all weapons longer than four inches (10 cm) with the *Office of Numbers*. The cost is four gold per week, per weapon. Failure to provide a valid license will result in a fine of 250 gold and confiscation of the weapon for the first offense. A second offense doubles the fine and the individual loses the right to ever purchase a weapon license within the Kingdom of Bizantium. Which means he cannot carry a weapon of any kind within the Kingdom. A third offense results in imprisonment (6D6 days) followed by permanent expulsion from the city. Licensed weapons are given a strip of white cloth (the cloth is stamped and signed by the individual issuing it). Anyone carrying a weapon that does not display the white cloth is guaranteed to be confronted by the local authorities.

Magic: Assault with Magic (includes magic weapons/objects). Using magic or magical means to *assault* royalty or nobility is punished by immediate imprisonment, a beating by the authorities, expulsion from the Kingdom and being permanently banned from ever returning (cannot step off a ship). Depending on the severity of the offense, such as extortion, kidnapping, attempted murder, rape, and murder, the punishment may be public execution.

For assault against freemen, the punishment is imprisonment, a 2,000 gold fine and a stern warning usually accompanied by a beating. If the assault was serious (see above), public execution is the punishment. The misuse of magic is not tolerated.



Even against a peasant or serf, the punishment is imprisonment, a 1,000 gold fine and a stern warning usually accompanied by a beating. If the assault was serious (see above), the fine will be 10,000 gold and immediate expulsion from the Kingdom, but not a permanent banishment. If the attempted murder, murder, rape or torture was witnessed by many or done in public, permanent exile or execution is the punishment.

If the victim is a non-human, the fine is 100-600 gold, a night in jail, and strong encouragement to leave the island.

Even if committed in self-defense, such a use of magic carries a fine of 100 gold and a night in jail.

Magic: Practice of Witchcraft and Necromancy is forbidden. Engaging in witchcraft, Necromancy and other dark magicks is punishable by death. Public execution after torture is the official punishment, but no man will be charged for murdering a Witch or Necromancer for any reason. Neither magic discipline is tolerated in any manner and they are NEVER practiced or allowed on the Northern Islands.

Magic: Selling or Instructing Magical Service (spells, magic items, etc.): Magic is discouraged in Bizantium, and there is no place in the Kingdom where magic is taught or encouraged. The people are fine with this as all citizens regard magic as dangerous, evil and best to be avoided.

Only *Warlocks* and *Waterchanters* (and Priests of the North Gods) are regarded as acceptable and legal users of magic. While there are visiting mages, and even a few “citizens” who quietly practice Wizardry and other magicks, magic is regarded as dangerous and evil. Foreign mages visiting the Kingdom are treated like lepers and regarded as wicked. This includes the so-called Mind Mage who doesn’t actually cast spells at all, but uses formidable psionic powers. Any serious crime in which magic was involved, especially murder, is likely to end in torture, followed by public execution.

Prostitution: Seen as a necessary evil that accompanies ports and sailors, prostitution is legal in certain districts of Bizantium, including the Dock District and in and around the Star Market. Failure to pay for services may result in a night in jail and a fine that is three times a prostitute’s regular fee. Assault against a prostitute: Imprisonment (short) along with a fine of 100-400 gold, plus payment of all medical expenses and reimbursement equal to five times the regular fee. Murder of a prostitute: Flagellation (20-30 lashes) and imprisonment for 6D6 years.

Using Algor’s Name in Vain: Algor’s name is holy, which means it should only be said in praise and blessing. One has to speak his name with continual awareness of his presence (the sea) and without abuse by careless speech, false oaths, words of hatred, reproach or defiance toward the god, or used in magic. Offenders who curse in the name of Algor are looked down upon, treated with disdain and might find themselves tossed out on the street or punched in the face. Public speakers who debase, defile or condemn the name of Algor are likely to be arrested in a rough

manner and forced to spend 1D4 nights in jail, as well as pay a fine of 1D4x10 gold to the church. If an offender cannot pay the fine, he will be made to work for the church for a brief duration.

Removing/Salvaging Property from any Shipwreck within Bizantium’s Coastal Waters: Goods lost at sea are considered the property of the Crown as part of its holy writ to rule from the sea god Algor. Recovering said property within 50 miles (80 km) of the island chain without permission results in a fine equal to the value of the total property taken or imprisonment for 2D6 years, or forced hard labor on a warship, the Shadow Colony or on the mainland.

Stowaways Aboard Bizantian Ships: Bizantium’s citizens are subject to imprisonment (3D4 weeks) or a fine of 1D6x10 gold if found aboard a ship without permission from the captain; triple if discovered at sea. And at sea, the captain can put the stowaway to any work deemed appropriate or, like a non-citizen or non-human, may deal with them as the captain sees fit; set ashore, tossed overboard, made to work off their debt in the ship’s galley, etc.

The Crown Commissions

The central government of Bizantium is organized into various Crown Commissions, tasked with specific duties and responsibilities in service to the King. The major commissions are listed below, but there are many minor commissions, including the Timekeeper Royal, the Astronomer Royal, the Crown Gallery of Art, and the King’s Own Academy of Arts and Letters.

The Warlock Council. The Warlock Council is charged with overseeing all Warlock activity, including the actions and conduct of guilds, and the worship of the Four Elements. Members consist of non-Warlocks and Warlocks alike, with non-Warlocks in the minority.

Warlocks play an important role in safeguarding the kingdom’s ship traffic, defenses, ship-to-ship warfare, manufacturing and commerce, but suspicion regarding them is deeply entrenched in the kingdom’s populace. The Crown, Noble Houses and military may all see the value of Warlock magic, but the *Church of Algor’s* grip on the populace is incontestable. While Elementalism is not outlawed in the Northern Islands, the teaching of it to others, outside the guilds, is forbidden; thus there are no schools teaching the Warlock arts in Bizantium. However, the College of the Elements (located in the city of Credia in Timiro) has a complex set of legal, political and financial agreements between Bizantium and the Timiro Kingdom that allow its graduates the opportunity to serve either kingdom regardless of religious or political allegiance. Presently, *Hanta Farrip* holds the coveted position of head of the council.

The Office of Numbers. Larger than the Admiralty, larger than the Warlock Council, larger than any of the other Crown



Commissions – is the Office of Numbers, Bizantium’s tax collection agency and census bureau. Staffed by professional scribes and scholars, the Office of Numbers collects taxes, fines, duties on ships’ cargo, interest payments owed to the state, etc. They also audit the Bizantian Navy; the only group apart from the Crown and Noble Houses that has power over the ships and fighting sailors that defend Bizantium. The Office of Numbers is infamous for its “Inquisitors of Numbers,” royal officials who track down anyone who owes gold to the Crown.

The Admiralty. Arguably the most respected institution in the nation of Bizantium is the Admiralty. Even during times when the population was highly suspect of the king and/or nobility, the Bizantian Navy stood strong, the defense of the islands more important than any internal political squabbling. Members of the Admiralty are all experienced ship captains, and appointments last for life. In addition to managing Bizantium’s ships and sailors, armies and armories, the Admiralty is also responsible for maintaining **Gate Fort** and doing what it can to protect Bizantium’s shipping overseas. The Admiralty is also able to exercise the king’s authority in the form of a “Crown Writ of Seizure,” claiming any ships, men, property or resources necessary to safeguard the kingdom or found to be in violation of Bizantium’s laws.

The Forester Royal. Lumber is vital to ship construction, repairs and export to other nations. The Crown has its own special commission to monitor the kingdom’s forests and woodlands, whether they are technically found in the fiefs of Noble Houses, offshore islands or along stretches of the mainland. The Forester Royal employs woodland inspectors composed mainly of Rangers and Earth Warlocks whose job is to make sure that prime stands of lumber are not being cut down, that woodrot and invasive insects are not introduced into valuable tracts of trees, that Noble Houses are not hoarding lumber to raise prices, and that everyone involved is using conservation methods and regrowing the forests that are cleared for lumber operations. They oversee all lumber operations, including mills and shipbuilding.

The Forester Royal has a large staff of inspectors who also work on Bizantium’s docks, responsible for issuing a “Certificate of Inspection” to ships as they enter port, insuring the vessel is clear of rot, mold and fungus. Smuggled goods, castaways and infectious diseases are all a concern of the normal port authorities.

The Office of Farm, Fish & Food. The royal overseers of Bizantium’s agriculture, farmland, and fishing work for the Office of Farm, Fish and Food. Like the Forester Royal, they employ rangers and trappers, but also fishermen, Warlocks, Druids, and Beastmasters to make sure Bizantians and foreigners obey the Crown’s laws on farming, fishing, and hunting. In short, their duty is to protect the kingdom’s natural resources, which also includes fresh water usage, conserving animal populations and preserving wildlife habitats for the continued benefit of the kingdom. With limited natural resources, everything must be conserved as

much as it can. Penalties include severe fines and possibly imprisonment. The hunting of North Elk is another issue; only the Crown and Noble Houses have permission to kill these prized animals on the islands.

The Bizantian Military

The Royal Army of Bizantium. It is difficult to envision, but the Kingdom of Bizantium does have an army of professional, full-time troops assigned to protect the capital. They are garrisoned in the city and provide bodyguard services for visiting dignitaries and diplomats that come to visit the King. Surprisingly enough, most people (even a few Noble Houses) believe the Royal Army is nothing more than an enlarged city guard, capable of defending the city of Bizantium from land-based attacks and nothing more. They would be surprised to learn that the Royal Army is run by Bizantian generals who can initiate campaigns aimed not only to retake territory lost to sub-human armies or peasant revolts, but also to annex territory in far more distant regions. Bizantium is well prepared if, for any reason, enemy forces penetrate their naval defenses and attempt to besiege the city.

Presently, the Royal Army is under the command of *General Deres Markenn*, a Bizantian Marine (10th level, Scrupulous) and formerly the head of House Ducasian’s private guard. Bad blood still exists between the Crown and House Ducasian after the King pulled him away from his old position to oversee the Royal Army, and Markenn maintains close ties and loyalty to his former House. Markenn is intelligent, serious, and dutiful, recognizing that King Raedaen IV is a fool and it is only a matter of time before the Shadow Coast openly rebels against the kingdom. He is looking to reclaim his honor through glorious battle, a feat that can only be achieved by winning a decisive victory for the Kingdom of Bizantium.

Royal Navy of Bizantium. It may be referred to as the Royal Navy, but Bizantium’s fighting fleets are actually an excellent representation of the islands’ ability to work together. The admirals who supervise the Navy are appointed by the Crown, but every ship in the fleets comes from a sponsor; a Noble House satisfying its yearly obligation to offer up a warship to the central authority of the Crown Admiralty.

While the vessels and crews might come from all over the Bizantian Islands, those who serve in the Navy must swear an oath of loyalty to the Crown and to their brothers in arms, making the defense of the kingdom their first priority, above any kind of internal rivalry or feud between neighboring Houses. Fighting side-by-side against the enemies of Bizantium forges close bonds, and many ambitious officers and skilled sailors join the Royal Navy full-time, given commissions as officers or specialists, devoting the remainder of their careers to serving the King, whether di-



rectly in the Navy, as an official at the Admiralty, or working as an inspector in the Kingdom's shipyards.

Crewed by sailors and seamen who have plied the seas since birth, the Bizantian Navy's ships enjoy the benefit of excellent navigation and skilled handling. Their fighting spirit may vary depending upon a particular commander, how long they have been at sea or the odds of surviving an engagement, but the actual seamanship of Bizantium's vessels is never in question. Most Navy personnel have served for years on merchant ships, and have more actual experience on the high seas than their equivalents in the Western Empire or Timiro, both of which maintain excellent navies. When it comes to handling sails and ropes, navigating through difficult waters, skimming close to a coastline, surviving difficult weather or outpacing a hungry sea serpent, Bizantian sailors are the best in the world.

Bizantium's Navy is divided into four separate fleets. **The First Fleet** is charged with protecting the Inland Sea and the immediate approaches to Bizantium. The First Fleet is made up of three "wings" of fifteen ships each, one of which is generally out on patrol, staying within a day's travel of Gate Fort, the second kept in a state of readiness in case of emergency, and the third undergoing repair, refit and resupply. The First Fleet is based out of Bizantium itself.

The Second Fleet makes its home at Port Lila on the Island of Borich. Its two main battle formations are composed of twenty-five ships each, assisted by five patrol flotillas of four ships each. As they are expensive to deploy, the battle formations typically stay in port or go on short cruises within the Northern Islands or between them and the Great Ice Shelf, while the patrol flotillas range far and wide into the Sea of Despair and beyond. When a patrol flotilla finds a target, it dispatches its fastest ship back to Port Lila to summon up one of the battle fleets on a mission of destruction or a mighty show of force.

The Third Fleet monitors the waters that separate Bizantium from the Shadow Coast and the Great Northern Wilderness. As the first line of defense against a potential invasion by sea, and the natural choice to repress any kind of hostile action on the Shadow Coast, the Third Fleet is huge, well-manned, and operates out of a heavily protected military dockyard at *Gate Fort*. The fleet includes one battle formation of twenty-five ships, three wings of fifteen ships, and five patrol flotillas of four ships each. The patrol flotillas ply up and down the Shadow Coast, offering assistance to colonists, chasing away pirates and smugglers, and keeping an eye out for trouble. The battle formation and wings are currently tasked with forming a blockade along both sides of the Shadow Coast, keeping any non-Bizantian vessels away from the colonies. This action is supposedly to help the colonies economically develop by limiting competition from outside sources, but in reality, is a move calculated to intimidate the Shadow Coast colonies and show them that rebellion or secession would be decidedly unwise.

Sailing from the port city of Gideon is the **Fourth Fleet**. Its mission is to conduct journeys of exploration and serve as the outermost "eyes and ears" of Bizantium, scouting for pirates and enemies approaching from across the open sea. The fleet has forty ships in total, but most of them are deployed in pairs on long-duration missions, mapping coasts, hunting pirates and assisting Bizantian vessels the world over, sometimes even conducting rescue missions to free Bizantium's citizens if they are held in foreign or inhuman hands. The Fourth Fleet generally operates in the northern half of the Palladium World, between the Western Empire and the Eastern Territory, but strong winds, pressing matters and impetuous captains might send a single ship or a pair of vessels almost anywhere.

The Royal Marines: See the **Marine O.C.C.** on page 93 for further information on these elite warriors.

Bizantium's Economy

Bizantium is a nation of islands dependent on connections with the outside world to maintain its population and standard of living. If the islands were ever deprived of their ships and sea trade, prosperity and the Noble Houses would suffer, and they would have to become much more reliant on fishing, hunting, raising sheep and goats and raiding outsiders, with limited space fit for real agriculture. The nation would not fall apart, but it would no longer be a world power capable of sending mighty fleets across the seas.

Even before the arrival of outsiders to the Eoten's Seven Isles, the North Folk were changing their attitude toward commerce, beginning to regard trade as an alternative to farming, trapping, sea raids and piracy. As the islands' natural resources were taxed by a growing population, North Folk were obligated to trade by sea in order to improve their living conditions, and made the construction of boats for fishing and commercial exchange a central feature of their lives. This open, capitalist view towards trade lasted for several generations, even after the age of Bizas and the influence of Easterners, but around the time Bizantium gained its sovereignty, a gradual change in attitude had already come about. The Crown and Noble Houses began to involve themselves heavily in trade as well, basically forming the equivalent of corporations that had the resources to establish colonies, outfit ships and buy and sell in volume. With this system, Bizantium soon gained a dominant economic position in the Palladium World, a presence which is still felt at the heart of the world market.

Today, Bizantium dominates the sea trade routes between the Eastern Territory, Timiro Kingdom, Western Empire and Land of the South Winds, as well as Bizantium itself, of course. One of the major reasons Bizantian merchants are so popular is that Bizantian insurers legally must provide compensation to anyone who does business with Bizantium and loses their goods during a



sea voyage. While it may be difficult for some to prove or claim losses, this extra layer of security lets big investors rest at ease, and makes Bizantium ships seem like a safe bet when establishing new trade routes, putting Bizantians at the center of sea trade the world over. There are Bizantium merchant captains who have not seen the Northern Islands in years, having found profitable shipping routes for themselves elsewhere.

There are a few restrictions on trade that the Crown keeps in place. *Enslaving humans* is illegal and slave ships that dock at Bizantium's ports will be seized, their living cargo released, and often deported shortly after, typically to the Shadow Coast. *Slavery involving non-humans* is generally ignored, however, even though it is not technically allowed on the islands. Products essential to the survival of the Kingdom are also not to be exported. Large weapons like catapults and ballista, supplies of gold, salt, and iron for making weapons or wood for shipbuilding, navigational charts – anything that might aid the enemy – will never be exported from the Kingdom. Ships built or sold to other nations are supplied unarmed, and without charts, compasses or other important navigational tools.

Imports have even fewer restrictions. Much of the timber Bizantium uses in shipbuilding is imported, most of it from the **Shadow Colonies**, some from much farther away. Furs, metals and gemstones are commonly brought in from the Great Northern Wilderness, while spices, silks, books, magic items and alcohol are imported from human kingdoms like the Western Empire, Eastern Territory and Timiro. Rubber from the distant Yin-Sloth Jungles and Land of the South Winds is particularly sought after in Bizantium, fetching twenty times the price one pays for it in Timiro!

Glass was used by ancient North Folk in the manufacture of a large range of objects, including drinking vessels, beads, windows, and jewelry. After the creation of the Bizantium monarchy, the use of window glass became more frequent as the Church of Algor expanded its faith and constructed newer churches along the shores of the Eastern Territory and Timiro Kingdom. As the centuries passed, the demand for Bizantium glassware has increased, and more glass-working furnaces were built in a number of cities along the Inland Sea. Glass workers were soon traveling around the Kingdom producing glass on demand and teaching their skills to other craftsmen. Today, Bizantium glassware is highly prized, incorporating potash as well as metallic impurities to provide the glass with vivid colors.

Iron and Coal

Besides importing timber to support its extensive shipping industry, Bizantium is the only major, human-controlled nation that has to look outside its borders for the two most vital materials essential to industry: coal and iron. Although the ancient North Folk knew of mining and at some point in their history mined

iron ore, such deposits simply do not exist in large amounts in the Northern Isles. Even today, there have been few discoveries of economically viable mineral resources on any of the Northern Islands, besides a handful of copper and tin mines.

When Western and Eastern merchants and explorers first came to the Northern Islands, the islanders still generally used weapons and tools made of bronze, stone and bone. If they owned anything iron, it was either stolen during a coastal raid or a treasured item passed on through the family lineage. Excavated bronze objects from numerous sites or found in traditional North Folk burials often feature unidentifiable ancient writing on them and appear to have been forged and crafted with superior workmanship. Clearly ancient North Folk had a connection with some earlier people or other race who taught them traditional metalworking skills, knowledge that was slowly being lost and forgotten when foreigners colonized the Northern Islands. Exactly who enlightened the ancient North Folk is unknown, but a skilled craftsman or historian who studies an artifact might recognize techniques similar to those of the Elves who once lived in the Old Kingdom thousands of years ago.

For centuries, coal and iron were necessary imports, but with the establishment of Bizantium's Shadow Coast colonies and trade agreements with the Wolfen Empire, Bizantium now has more access to coal, iron ore and finished iron items than at any other time in its history. Trade in iron continues with Timiro and the Eastern Territory, but competition has driven down the price, making iron goods easier to obtain for freemen and leading to stockpiles amongst the Noble Houses and the Crown. For the peasantry and fiefholders, iron tools and weapons remain highly valued. The loss of an iron tool for a fiefholder is a disaster, especially if it is a major tool like an axe or scythe. Despite easier access to iron, the price of iron-made items in the Kingdom of Bizantium is still 5-15% higher than elsewhere in the Palladium World.

Should the Shadow Coast openly rebel against the kingdom that founded it, the import of iron from them will come to an immediate halt, forcing Bizantium to rely on the Wolfen Empire and overseas trade as its only sources of iron ore and coal. This will drive the price up an additional 5-20%, depending on the severity of the conflict. A single, standardized iron bar is valued at 6-9 gold in Bizantium, while in Timiro, the Western Empire, and Eastern Territory, it could be purchased for 1-3 gold.

Old Northern iron arms and armor remain treasured by Bizantians (especially traditional North Folk) and end up passed down from generation to generation. Old weapons, armor and tools, especially if not actively used, will last for hundreds of years. When one compares the probable date of manufacture with the probable date of burial of some archeological finds, one is forced to conclude that some iron items were used and repaired for centuries before being buried with their final owner.



Fishing and Hunting Sea Creatures

Many varieties of fish live in the ocean surrounding the islands, and the **fishing industry** is a major part of Bizantium's economy, accounting for approximately one-third of its total exports. More if one includes the sale of sea serpent meat, oil and products. But of all the fishing, none is more important than the cod industry. Nearly two thousand years ago, tribal North Folk were using dried cod as food during their travels, and it wasn't long before their preservation techniques spread to others. Many merchants from Timiro and the Eastern Territory came to trade for Northern cod and to learn the Northern way of preserving fish. Salted cod from Bizantium is still found in ports the world over, and is a common import in the Western Empire, Eastern Territory and Timiro.

Trade in **walrus ivory** has also been part of the Bizantian economy since the time of the North Folk. Tribal North Folk used the ivory for practical reasons; harpoon points, tools, etc., and occasionally to make games for festivities or children's toys. Once outsiders started asking for it, and paying premium prices, the city of Topaz became a major hub for the trade, providing the commodity to a large foreign market. At the beginning of the Bizantian monarchy, sealers and fishermen hunted these animals intensely and greatly reduced walrus populations. As their numbers diminished, ivory became less and less available. For the last three hundred years, Bizantium outlawed walrus hunting until the population could be replenished. Today, with numbers back up to around 200,000 according to the Ministry of Farm, Fish, and Food, Bizantium has reopened the market on ivory and hunting of these animals has begun once again.

Northerners have also **hunted seals** for thousands of years, relying on their pelts, flesh, and fat, which can be used as an effective lamp fuel, ship lubricant, and as an ingredient in soap. As Bizantium increased its presence throughout the Palladium World, so grew the exportation of seal pelts, meat, and fur (the latter is from Northern Sea Lions only). Sealing remains a small-scale operation because Northern tradition requires seals to be killed using a hakapik, a heavy wooden club with a hammerhead and metal hook. The Ministry of Farm, Fish, and Food regulates the dimensions of all hakapiks and anyone discovered killing a seal without one is subject to a fine of 200-400 gold per seal carcass and 3D4 days of imprisonment.

The coastal communities of the Northern Islands also have a long history of **whaling** and harvesting beached whales that wash up on shore. The meat and blubber of whales and dolphins was always an important part of the tribal North Folk diet. They held whale blubber as particularly valuable: both as food and for processing into oil, which they used for both heat and light, but more recently it is being replaced by the sea serpent trade. Tribal North Folk did not hunt whales on the open sea, but instead drove them ashore by placing a number of small boats between the ani-

mal and open water, then frightening their quarry with noise and activity, herding them towards shore or rocks and beaching them helplessly. Centuries later the hunting of whales is still part of Bizantian life, but many whalers now go after them with harpoon and lance.

Once they've slain the animal, they will tow its carcass ashore, usually waiting for high tide to beach the whale, where its blubber can be cut open. Recently, a Bizantium scholar discovered the oil in the blubber of Black Whales is superior for making candles, cosmetics, other specialized lubricants, pencils, leather waterproofing, rust-proofing materials, and lamp oil. Of all the applications, the lamp oil was in most demand until the oils of sea serpents replaced it. Still the oil from Black Whales is considered a "premium" product as the oil retains its viscosity in high temperatures better than any other, though serpent oil is close. Both oils do not tend to become rancid, dry out, or corrode metals. It is fairly resistant to oxidization and it burns more brightly and cleanly than any other available oil without giving off a foul odor. (Serpent oil has a noticeable scent. Not terrible, but noticeable.) The demand for this whale oil is starting to reach the Western Empire, Eastern Territory, Timiro, and even the Land of the South Winds and it is only a matter of time before it becomes a tradable commodity (within a year or so). When it does, Bizantium will start selling the oil at 10 gold per pint, compared to sea serpent oil at one gold per gallon.

Far beyond whaling, the **hunting of sea serpents** is without a doubt the most dangerous job in the Palladium World. Only the bravest of fishermen and most fearless whalers dare to venture out into the *Northern Sea* or the edges of the *Sea of Despair* with the purpose of hunting and slaying a sea serpent. For those who successfully catch and kill one, there is big money to be made from the animal's teeth, claws, scales, meat, blubber, and oil.

Meat from many types of sea serpent ranges from surprisingly good to absolutely delicious. In Bizantium and the Shadow Colonies, where **sea serpent meat** is everywhere, it sells for one or two gold per pound (0.45 kg); double that to the outside markets, and triple for the most premium cuts. Considering the size of the average sea serpent, *tons* of meat can be brought in with a single catch. Serpent meat is looked down upon in many human kingdoms, but sells well in native Bizantian markets and is considered a delicacy in the Wolfen Empire. Likewise, people in the Eastern Territory are rapidly developing a taste for sea serpent steaks. The meat is sold fresh, cubed, salted, smoked and dried, making it the most common provision found on Bizantium sailing vessels. Sea Serpent blood can also be turned into a stew and blood sausage, but both are losing favor amongst Bizantians.

Serpent oil harvested from sea serpents is similar to whale oil, but lasts twice as long in storage. Oils are used as lamp fuel, heating and in the making of soap and perfume. The massive **bones** of serpents can also be used just like whalebone or walrus ivory, selling for 5 gold coins per pound (0.45 kg) in Bizantium, but



double and triple in foreign markets. Common practice in the old days, now used mainly in emergencies, sea serpent bones can be burned like coal or logs of wood in fireplaces and furnaces, and actually burn slower and hotter than wood. Those who truly profit from the remains of sea serpents sell certain parts to alchemists, but the flesh is difficult to preserve (-15% to the Preserve Food skill) and alchemists don't officially exist within the Kingdom of Bizantium. Some might even try to pass off sea serpent bones as dragon bone, but any good alchemist and most practitioners of magic can tell the difference. They'll have better luck trying pass it off as Walrus Ivory to landlubbers who don't know better.

Magic

Any practitioner of magic who comes to the Northern Islands will quickly discover that, while magic is officially tolerated, it is informally and openly scorned. Its use is generally treated with skepticism and a large amount of distrust and disdain. During the time of the ancient North Folk, all magic was considered evil and heresy, in defiance of the worship of Algor. Anyone found practicing magic was given a death sentence without trial.

When Easterners began to arrive on the Northern Islands, they brought with them the worship and practice of Elementalism. At first, **Warlocks** were viewed as apostates to be shunned or subjected to punishment. It was Bizas' grandson, *Joshius the First*, and his Warlock advisor, *Elhacl Ivorysailor*, who finally brought the persecution of Elementalism to an end. It wasn't long before the powers of Warlocks became sought after by the seafaring nation – their magic could be used to calm the seas, dispel storms, and strike with avenging force, the same abilities worshiped by Priests of Algor, and didn't require a ship's crew to participate in elaborate rituals or prayers. One simply paid the Warlock for his services and he ensured the ship would have good weather and calm seas throughout the voyage. Today, Warlock magic and Waterchanter magic are the only magical practices encouraged (and Waterchanters are generally regarded as a sort of priest rather than a mage). It is approved by the Crown and tolerated by the Church of Algor in Bizantium. As such, Warlocks are the only mages who can garner any measure of acceptance and respect within the Kingdom.

Warlocks and the priest-like **Waterchanters** are also the only spell casters in Bizantium allowed to serve in high-ranking positions within the military or in service to the Crown. Some become diplomats, captains of military or civilian vessels, administrators, teachers, and writers. In many cases, these Warlocks must sever any attachment to a Warlock guild to undertake such positions, especially for diplomatic or military service.

While Warlocks are allowed to practice the worship of Elementalism and perform Elemental Magic, the Crown and the Church *forbid* the *teaching* of Elementalism anywhere on the Northern Islands. Warlock guilds in Bizantium are among the

largest in the Palladium World, with 100-400 members in any one guild at a time (typical experience level is 1D6), yet despite their cultural acceptance and formal allegiance with the Crown and the Church, every Warlock in Bizantium must be instructed outside the Kingdom. Potential students are almost always sent to Timiro to be instructed at the *College of Elements*, the largest collective gathering of Warlocks in the known world. Those who do not wish to make the long journey to Timiro have the option of being sent to the Western Empire or finding an independent community of Warlocks somewhere in their travels. In an effort to ensure Warlocks govern themselves properly within the laws and traditions of the kingdom, all Warlocks and their guilds answer to the Warlock Council (see the Crown Commission for further details).

All other schools of magic – Wizardry, Diabolism, Summoning, etc. – are outlawed throughout the Northern Islands. Anyone caught selling magical services or instructing others in magic without Crown or Church approval are prosecuted, tortured and publicly executed.

Foreign and local magic users alike are treated as if they are damaged people, not exactly evil, but fools who risk the corruption of their minds and souls on forbidden knowledge. While it is not outlawed to utilize magic, they must do so without committing assault on another person, unless the mage is acting in self-defense, which must be proven at trial. The chance of avoiding the penalty depends upon the individual who has been assaulted by the magic. The higher the victim's social status the less likely the Crown or Merchant-Prince will believe anything a mistrustful mage has to say. The use of any form of Necromancy magic or Witchcraft is a capital crime punishable by torture and a swift public execution.

Summoners and **Diabolists** are being hired in the city of Wujik for reasons relating to the creation of the newly developed **Stone Ships**. *House Bardomus* is without question the best chance a magic user has to receive sponsorship within the Northern Islands. Sponsorship means the Noble House will accept responsibility for ensuring the mage's proper behavior during his or her stay in Bizantium. The mage is free to come and go, but the Office of Numbers knows of his existence, and every time he arrives in the Northern Isles he ought to behave himself, or could end up costing his sponsor several hundred or thousands in gold. Presently, those living and working in Wujik are receiving not only the best care but silent recognition for their contribution to the Kingdom.

Those who come to Bizantium hoping to find an **Alchemist** to identify magical objects or foretell information will be disappointed to find that there is not a single alchemist's shop to be found on the Northern Islands – at least not in the open. They need to work underground, out of sight of the authorities, which means that prices for alchemist services and magic items – if they



can be found at all – are generally 50% to 300% higher in Bizantium than elsewhere.

Mind Mages, in particular, are hated and severely distrusted, as are many psychics. There are no guilds for psychics in Bizantium, but it is not illegal to instruct anyone in the utilization of psychic abilities, and Psi-Healers are grudgingly accepted, especially within naval operations.

Anyone who brings **magic weapons** or any magic items to Bizantium may do so without having their items confiscated as long as they register every item with the *Office of Numbers* and leave it under lock and key while their owner is on the islands. Of course, this means revealing the nature of such items to strangers (some of them psychics, after all). Failure to do so means putting one's life, liberty, and coin purse at risk. This can be avoided simply by leaving such items on a boat or hidden away in a private room, or any number of other hiding places.

Religion

The Church of Algor is the official religion of the Kingdom of Bizantium, with the worldwide seat of the religion found at the *Cathedral of Algor* in the City of Bizantium. The Crown and most of the Noble Houses worship Algor exclusively. The Northern Gods are worshiped extensively in Bizantium under their own religion or as members of Algor's pantheon. The Shadow Coast Colonies and those found in the Great Northern Wilderness have at least a dozen churches devoted to the god Algor, the Northern Pantheon, and Elementalism, viewed with far less suspicion on the mainland than Bizantium itself. Even in the Colonies, however, magic is looked down upon and generally avoided by the citizenry. The Kingdom of Bizantium is also one of the few human domains in the world that embraces the druidic religion and houses a large number of **Druids** and their faithful. An estimated 10% of the Northern Islands' peasant and fiefholder population follows the Druid faith, but only a tiny fraction are practicing Druids (i.e. are the Druid O.C.C.). The Church of Light and Dark is also present, but these worshipers are more likely to be found in the larger cities and represent perhaps 5-10% of the overall population at the most.

The Shipyards of Bizantium

Building ships is the most sophisticated and complicated technological undertaking that occurs in the Palladium World. Even nations known specifically for their ships and navies might still only possess one or two shipyards. There are only two in all of the Eastern Territory, (Kenington Shipyard in Llorn and the Backlor Shipyard in New Crest), two in Timiro (one in Calra and one in Media) and four in the Western Empire (the Royal Docks and Shipyard at Caer Itom, the Caer Kurgas Shipyard, the Lower Baraduk Commercial Shipyard and the Epiphany Shipyard.) Bizantium, despite being smaller in both land area and population than

any of the aforementioned kingdoms, has *nine* fully functional shipyards that turn out ships for both war and trade.

Kirsgren Yard: Not affiliated with any specific Noble House, Kirsgren yard was established in the charter of the City of Bizantium. It is the busiest shipyard in the entire Kingdom, with 700 or so workers and an average yearly output of roughly 130 ships and large boats. Ships of many different designs and sizes can be found at the Kirsgren Yard, from full-sized military vessels to fishing boats and skiffs. Unlike many shipyards run by Noble Houses, officials at the Kirsgren Yard are willing to sell to the Wolfen Empire, Eastern Territory and to interests within the Western Empire as well.

Vatatzes Yard: Run by House Vatatzes, their shipyard builds military vessels almost exclusively, and the largest Bizantian warships are laid down here. They are currently building the Kingdom's newest type of warship, the *Battleship* class. The Vatatzes Yard is the biggest shipyard in Bizantium, due to the needs of accommodating large vessels, but only has about 400 highly-specialized workers and produces a limited number of ships.

Bardomus Yard: The Bardomus Yard in the city of Wujik is the source of Bizantium's mighty Stone Ships. Once a normal shipyard like any other, now the Bardomus Yard focuses virtually all of its space and resources on Stone Ship construction. They employ a large number of Warlocks, and are always looking for more. The process of creating Stone Ships also has to be kept a closely guarded secret, not only from spies from other countries, but from the ever-watchful eyes of the Church of Algor – who could declare the creation of the mysterious warships an act of blasphemy punishable by death.

Arfox Yard: The shipyard in the city of Letia is controlled by the Arfox Noble House. All the ships built at this yard are designed for speed, and they are constantly reworking old designs in an effort to improve upon them. Currently, they are experimenting with the outrigger design popular in the Yin-Sloth Jungles and Land of the South Winds. Despite its small size, this shipyard produces Corsairs, Lighters, Schooners, and Sloops that travel 2-3 mph (3.2-4.8 km) faster than others built within the Kingdom, and are sold at a premium price.

Malemore Yard: Located in the city of Bai on the mouth of the river of the same name, Noble House Malemore has chosen to build ships with a shallow draft that can freely move in shallow water such as rivers or lakes with a depth of only 12 feet (3.7 m), but are also capable of performing a suitable ocean journey. That being said, Malemore ships are often a bastardization of the usual Bizantium design, only with a few modifications. Perfect for raiding, some Malemore ships fly under flags of different nations, and there have been several Malemore vessels in the past whose crews have been charged with piracy.

Norbert Yard: Located in the city of Southomber, the Norbert Noble House controls the third largest shipyard in the Kingdom, employing roughly 500 workers and maintaining a fleet of



over 700 ships. House Norbert is the largest producer of merchant vessels and barges on the islands, with Schooners and Corsairs as the most popular models. Norbert is presently building *Ice Breakers* and expects to have more than enough to start putting them to work within three months.

Conemus Yard: This shipyard is located in the city of Northomber and is controlled by the Conemus Noble House. With a merchant fleet numbering around 300 ships, Conemus is looking for an opportunity to restore its good name by producing high-quality landing craft for Bizantium's Royal Marine Corps. Their reputation for building large ships is currently very bad, partly because eighteen Conemus ships were sunk in a memorable and catastrophic storm. Of course, that was eight years ago, and Conemus continues to apologize with the utmost sincerity. Still, other Noble Houses and the Crown refuse to buy any large Conemus ships, forcing them to seek customers outside the country.

Ortang Yard: With over 600 workers, Ortang is Bizantium's number two shipyard. Ortang Yard is controlled by *House Torg-er*, a minor house whose influence is increasingly being felt by the other major houses. They specialize in refitting and repairing ships, and the yard has several *dry docks* that make it possible to work on hulls outside of the water. The yard produces *Biremes*, 60 foot (18.3 m) oared galleys that tow barges and pull other vessels. Ortang's operations expand every year, with ships damaged in the Sea of Despair stopping in Port Lila frequently.

Terenal Yard: The city of Homesight is the first familiar sight Bizantian mariners see when returning to their homeland, giving it its name and ensuring a steady flow of vessels that must stop for emergency repairs. Specializing in repair and salvage operations has slowed the overall growth of Terenal Yard as a shipbuilding center, and it only produces a half-dozen new vessels in a year, most of them Lighters, Sloops and other merchant ships.

Bizantium's Laws of Salvage

Bizantium's principles of salvage and salvage law have evolved over many centuries. Anyone who salvages a vessel that is sunken or abandoned takes full ownership of the vessel and/or any cargo they can recover. The original owner may file a suit in Bizantian court if they intended to salvage a lost ship themselves, but possession is nine-tenths of the law in salvage cases, and the intent to salvage a wreck does not necessarily mean one has the capability to do so.

There are specific rules for captains that rescue other vessels as well. Towing a sinking ship back to port entitles the rescuer to 50% of the cargo's value (or 50% of fares paid by passengers), while failing to help a fellow Bizantian ship in life-endangering distress can get someone tossed in a dungeon, have their ship repossessed by the Crown or even see them banished from the Northern Islands. Assisting in necessary repairs entitles one to 10% of the value of a ship's cargo, though in most such cases,

an arrangement is made ahead of time between the ship in distress and the ship offering aid, depending on the severity of the situation and what kind of expertise/replacement parts the ship offering aid will provide. Rescuing a ship from attack by pirates or sea monsters also entitles the rescuers to 10% of the value of goods carried on the ship, but often leads to intense arguments in Bizantian court as to whether or not a ship actually needed to be rescued.

Taking on crew, passengers and cargo from a sinking vessel entitles the rescuer to 30% of the value of cargoes or passenger fares. An age-old tradition, the Bizantian Crown is also willing to pay a reward of 50 gold for every one of its sailors, soldiers, priests or citizens saved on the high seas, in addition to fares, cargo and gifts received from rescued people happy just to be alive.

The Bai Regatta

This yearly racing event is a national tradition within the Northern Islands, and every Noble House sends at least one sailing ship. It is not required that a Noble House sponsors a vessel, but most do so; entry fee is 500 gold. The start of the race begins in Letia, the halfway point is in Bai, before turning around to finish back at Letia. The winner receives a prize of 5,000 gold and the choice of *any* sailing vessel that participated in the race! As a result, the fastest vessels in the Islands tend to change hands regularly, and some Noble Houses enter their best ships in this race rather than use them to conduct commerce or in the defense of the Kingdom. The regatta also hosts a number of smaller competitions in rowing, swimming, and a game called "Plank" where teams engage in ship-to-ship combat wearing padding and armed with blunt staffs and clubs. Plank is becoming so popular that *Prince Wilgan Vatatzes* is thinking about petitioning *Empress Jeslyunn* to make it an event at the Olympic-style games held in **Lopan**.

Every five years, the Crown also sponsors a grueling, long-distance race, beginning in Letia, heading out through Gate Fort into the open ocean, following the Bizantian coast up to Aquafel – before turning around and repeating the voyage all the way back to Letia! Depending on weather, the race can take *days* to complete, and there are no rules apart from a ban on ballista, designed to keep things friendly after an unlucky cabin boy was impaled during the last competition.

Bizantium Foreign Relations

To most of the world, Bizantium is the premier international sea power and commercial trader of the era, bringing lumber, animal furs, skins, sea serpent and whale oils and meat, ivory,



fish, and glassware, to ports around the known world. They are so reliable that other nations often hire Bizantian ships and crews to transport their goods. In order to obtain maximum profit, a Bizantian merchant travels alongside his goods to safeguard against theft, loss or damage. In essence, a *Bizantian merchant* is just as important as a diplomat when it comes to a foreigner's first impression of Bizantium, for he is just as likely to be the one negotiating a trade agreement than an educated ambassador working for the Crown.

When it comes to official conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy, for which Bizantium is famous, corps of Royal interpreters deal with foreign embassies and translate all diplomatic letters addressed to the Kingdom into the northern and/or Elven language. Everything the ambassadors do must be ceremonially translated into Northern prior to being read by the Bizantian monarch, even if the current king is perfectly fluent in the outsiders' language. Diplomats are usually selected from among the edu-

cated elite, including priests of the Church of Algor, as well as military and civilian officials.

The Wolfen Empire

The Kingdom of Bizantium is, and shall always remain, an independent and sovereign nation. As such, it politely declined to sign the Eastern Territory's *Charter of Dominion* as well as a number of agreements suggesting the Kingdom unite with the Territories against the burgeoning Wolfen Empire.

For centuries, the people of Bizantium and the Wolfen have managed to live in relative piece. Though there have been plenty of small skirmishes over decades past, especially with the Coyle savages that even the Wolfen have trouble controlling, Bizantium and the Wolfen have never been at serious odds. This has to do with the fact that both people have a very similar background. Both evolved from tribal hunters and warriors in a hostile wilder-





ness. Both are fiercely independent, brave and industrious people. Both worship the god Algor and the Northern Pantheon. Both are maligned and looked down upon by the kingdoms and nations to the south, and both have grown into an underappreciated and vastly underestimated civilization. And though neither party may openly admit it, both understand and respect the other.

In the last few centuries, the Kingdom has established ever increasing trade with the Wolfen and is the first and only nation to recognize the Wolfen Empire. This has put Bizantium in good standing with the Empire and given the Kingdom virtually uninhibited access to the resources of the Great Northern Wilderness, particularly the Wolfen lumber industry. Having heavily deforested their own islands, and with a limited amount of space on the Shadow Coast, it makes sense for Bizantium to trade with those who control the largest supply of hardwood in the world. Raids by Coyles still occur, and sometimes there is mistrust between human and Wolfen settlers, but the Wolfen Empire has officially promised to respect Bizantium's borders, colonies and tradespeople. Should the northlands ever fall under attack, it is very likely the two powers would join forces to defend "their" homeland.

Furthermore, because members of *House Lamrith* and *House Yinxner* have lived among canines for decades, they have an excellent understanding of Wolfen society and culture, and can explain the Wolfen philosophy of assimilation to the Crown, military and other Noble Houses. This knowledge and genuine friendship prevents Bizantium's rulers from being too quick to violence and gives them a view of canines not shared by the rest of the world. Bizantians are human supremacists. Non-humanoids are to always be regarded as inferiors, and the canine race is no exception. Nevertheless, Bizantians recognize a bit of themselves in the Wolfen people and admire many of their qualities, including living by their word of honor, hard work, similar values and fighting prowess. Where Bizantium has the greatest navy on the high seas, the Wolfen are quickly developing the largest and most capable standing army in the world, a fact that has not gone unnoticed in the island Kingdom. Although Bizantium has little to fear from the small and primitive Wolfen navy, they do not have the manpower to resist the sheer numbers of the Wolfen Imperial Army.

Bizantians have no desire to be dragged into a war with the Wolfen Empire simply because the kingdoms of the Eastern Territory cannot find a way to share the *Disputed Lands* with their canine neighbors. Moreover, they recognize the politics and saber-rattling of the Western Empire on the matter as nothing more than agitating a volatile situation to their own benefit (including turning other human powers against Bizantium), or that Timiro and others are blinded by fear of the "Wolfen monsters."

While Bizantium was quick to establish diplomatic ties with the new Empire, thanks in part to Houses Yinxner and Lamrit, to the rest of the world, Bizantium tries to maintain a policy of peaceful neutrality. The Kingdom neither endorses nor defends

the Wolfen, and pleads ignorance to knowing the Empire's plans, motivations or intentions. The Wolfen are savvy enough to realize Bizantium's awkward position within the global community, and are careful not to do anything that might compromise the Kingdom.

Should one or more nations declare war against the Wolfen Empire, Bizantium shall try its best to remain neutral. This will require tremendous diplomacy, because the Western Empire's agitators have already whipped up emotions in the East and are getting people there to accuse Bizantians of being "Wolfen lovers" and of "turning their back on their own race for financial gain."

The Kiridin Barbarians

The nearest humans in the Bizantium region are those who live on the mainland in the forests of the *Northern Hinterlands*. Known as the *Kiridin Barbarians*, these tribal nomads live much like the ancient Eoten once did. The main difference is these barbarians have remained unchanged for thousands of years, possibly as far back as the *Age of a Thousand Magicks*. They speak an ancient dialect of Northern and Elven, yet they have never put their words into a written alphabet. They care little about the concept of reading, writing, or identifying letters other than ink pictures on paper. In many ways, they are just as savage and brutal as the Coyles.

Neither Bizantium or the Kiridin tribes have any interest in establishing trade relations or having anything to do with each other. Kiridins despise "weak, civilized people" and the Bizantians regard them as ignorant and ruthless savages. As long as the people of Bizantium kept to their island and out of the Hinterlands, the barbarians didn't care about "the islanders." However, the establishment of the **Shadow Coast colonies** has changed all that. Now the barbarians see the Kingdom of Bizantium as a growing threat. Though the barbarians have no means to launch an attack against the Kingdom itself, they have begun to kill huntsmen, trappers and explorers who travel too deep into "Kiridin Territory" and some bands of warriors have begun to raid settlements along the Shadow Coast. So far, the raiders have targeted lumber camps and stolen livestock and dry goods from the edge of a few colonies. The raids have been few and far between, with only a handful of people hurt or killed, but that could change as the colonies grow in size and push deeper into the Hinterlands.

Bizantium's official policy is non-involvement when it comes to the affairs of these primitives, and to ignore the occasional barbarian raid. Meanwhile, most people living on the Shadow Coast have no idea that there are entire tribes of barbarians in the forests and foothills of the Great Northern Mountains, or that Kiridin tribes are not entirely comprised of humans, but include members of the monster races which have no love for "civilized people" in their forests. Violent conflict, though perhaps years away, seems inevitable.



The Eastern Territory

Diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Bizantium and the Eastern Territory are probably best described as “mixed” or strained. There are a growing number of leaders within the Dominion Army, nobles, and church of Light and Dark, especially from the cities of *Dain-Rurga*, *Hadrian’s Cove*, and *Llorn*, who regard Bizantians as “sell-outs” and “human traitors.” This is because Bizantium refused to sign the *Charter of Dominion* and have not sided with them against the Wolfen monsters. Some have gone so far as to suggest punishing the Kingdom with sanctions targeted against the Crown and Noble Houses. Cooler heads have so far prevailed, and though rhetoric and name-calling is heating up, little is likely to change.

Many within the Eastern Territories fear that a new king in Bizantium could lead to a number of changes in trade and political policies that could do more harm than good for the Territories. Merchants and other leaders work to keep tempers down and limit posturing to a minimum. They point out that all-out war with the Wolfen, even with Bizantium as an ally, could be ruinous to both nations and result in a loss of life and property not seen since the Elf-Dwarf War. Besides, the two nations need each other, especially as the Eastern Territory receives more and more homesteaders and settlers who see the Territory as a place to claim land and build a better future for themselves. No one has seen growth and expansion the likes of those in the East since the early decades of Timiro and the Western Empire. Condemning Bizantium and severing ties with the Kingdom during such a boom-time would crush growth. War with the Wolfen would see entire villages and towns of humans wiped out, the loss of countless lives.

Bizantium’s noble houses attribute such talk to chest-thumping fueled by heated emotions, the greed to claim as much land as possible and Western Empire spies agitating for trouble. The Western Empire has its own agenda for undermining both Bizantium and the Eastern Territories. However, the actions of *King Raedaen the First* do not help when he is outspoken about Bizantium’s denouncement of the Charter, and then receives Wolfen ambassadors in his court with the same pomp and respect he would have for their human counterparts. Whenever human diplomats from other kingdoms ask Bizantium’s representatives to explain the Kingdom’s position regarding the “barbaric monsters” (the Wolfen and Coyles), somehow the message is always perceived as, “We do what is best for Bizantium in this matter.”

The Western Empire

The “Empire of Sin” has been jealous of Bizantium’s success and growth as a mercantile and political power for decades. They resent the accomplishments of the “Northern backwoods bumpkins” and at the same time want the Kingdom for themselves. With the expansion of the Eastern Territory and the advantages

held by Bizantium to fully exploit trade, shipping and commerce with the new nations sprouting up there, Western blood boils. The fact that Bizantium has bested them in naval combat in the past and is so smug about their Northern “sensibilities, virtues and bravery,” adds insult to injury in the West. As a result, the Western Empire wants nothing more than to conquer and claim Bizantium for itself. In the meantime, it works to undermine its continuing success by any means possible and isolate the Kingdom from potential allies like the East, hence the Empire of Sin’s ongoing campaign to instigate resentment and trouble between the East and North. If Western spies and diplomats can drive a wedge between the two, it weakens both nations, making them vulnerable to Western conquest. At least, that’s the current plan in operation – and why the Western Empire is quietly building up its navy and armies. The rulers of the West long to become the single, great power in the realm and force *all* others to submit to their will. The Western Empire’s Imperial House, the regional houses, and 90% of provincial houses believe Bizantians to be an inferior lot of fishermen, smugglers and pirates. *Emperor Itomas* sees Bizantium as a “minor obstacle” to be done away with when the time is right.

Bizantium’s leaders are equally guilty of underestimating the Empire’s Imperial Navy and mistakenly believe the Empire of Sin is ready to collapse under its own decadence, and no longer a real military threat. Emperor Itomas is quite aware of this mentality and has chosen to use such overconfidence to the Empire’s advantage. Ever so quietly, he has increased the number of troops in both the Army and Navy, recruited skilled military leaders, and placed spies inside every major Bizantian Noble House, the Crown and the church. And because Bizantium distrusts the use of magic, prevalent in every avenue of Western society, he intends to unleash magic fury upon the Kingdom and their inept monarch, with little or nothing the Warlock Council or Church of Algor can do about it.

Isle of the Cyclops

Though they covet the Cyclops’ lightning arrows, javelins and spears, the Kingdom of Bizantium would refuse to do business with the giant monsters even if they were not under the thumb of the Western Empire. That doesn’t stop some Bizantian merchants and adventurers from making purchases via third parties, but it is a strongly held belief that every sale of lightning weapons puts coins in the hands of the Empire of Sin. No ship of Bizantium nor official from the Kingdom sets anchor at this island.

Lopan

The island of Lopan shares a common history with Bizantium. Both were originally inhabited by a native population that was eventually supplanted by outsiders, both have depleted their natural forests in an effort to protect themselves, both are inde-



pendent kingdoms (Lopan signed the *Charter of Dominion*, but still retains its sovereignty) and both believe they will one day be invaded by the Western Empire. Therefore, it was only natural they use their common ground to forge an alliance. Unfortunately, Lopan has been isolated within the Great Inland Sea for 300 years since the Western Empire assumed complete control over the *Straits of Thunder* (also called the *Gedorma Strait*), the narrow channel connecting the Great Inland Sea to the outer ocean, sealing Lopan off from any commercial and military sea traffic the Empire desires, including that of Bizantium. As the dominant sea trading kingdom, having the Great Inland Sea denied to them is a spot of contention, especially considering Lopan was once Bizantium's third largest importer of goods (behind the Eastern Territory and Western Empire).

For the last three centuries, the Bizantian Crown and Noble Houses have given Lopan little regard, with no hope of resuming extensive trade. Twelve years ago, however, *Prince Wilgan Vatatzes* came to Lopan to meet with *Empress Jeslynn* to restore the once-great alliance. Vatatzes came without the consent of King Raedaen or the backing of any other Noble House, but he did bring several of the best shipwrights from the Vatatzes Shipyard. Long before the interference of the Western Empire, Lopan made the best ships and boats in the Eastern Territory, and they continue to do so to this day. Now, together with Bizantium's premier shipbuilding Noble House, the two have formed a joint operation in an effort to build a rigged sailing ship for use in the Great Inland Sea and Eastern ocean waters, a ship capable of not only enduring ocean voyages but also traversing the Great River of the Eastern Territory, the Old Kingdom River and other shallow bodies of water. This will not change the Western Empire's control over the Great Inland Sea, but will provide more options for Bizantian and Lopani merchants.

Bizantium's renewed relationship with Lopan also puts a thorn in the side of the Western Empire. Prince Vatatzes knows he serves a spoiled-imbecile of a king who refuses to heed his council, but his family has maintained its steadfast loyalty to the Crown for generations. Vatatzes will not have his Noble House shamed by usurping the will of Algor or Algor's emissary, but that does not stop him from looking after Bizantium's best interests on his own. Besides improving each other's ships, the arrangement with Lopan is entirely self-serving. If the Emperor sees Lopan's fleet build-up as a possible threat, he will order it destroyed. This will force the Empire to show its hand, demonstrate naval capabilities and prove if the rumors are true that the Empire has once again reinstated the Demon Black Ships. If Lopan and its people end up defeated and subjugated, it will be a terrible tragedy, but will have little impact on Bizantium. A win for Bizantium either way.

The Timiro Kingdom

The Northern Islands' oldest trading partner is the Timiro Kingdom. At one time, the alliance between Timiro and Bizantium was the strongest in the Palladium world. The Timiro Royal bloodline flowed in the veins of Bizantium's Royalty, and the arranged marriages between the two kingdom's Noble Houses were too many to count. Together, Timiro and Bizantium not only defeated the Imperial Army of the Western Empire, but captured the Imperial Capital and held the Emperor for ransom. With the Western Empire in constant disarray, the Southland in economic ruin, and the Eastern Territory still searching for its identity as it battled monster races for the right to claim the eastern frontier, Bizantium and Timiro are powers to be reckoned with. The alliance might have continued had it not been for powerful Noble Houses in both kingdoms trying to outdo each other.

Greed and rivalry have led to acts of treachery and long-lasting hard feelings. Centuries later, the Royal families and Noble Houses on both sides, distant cousins, have tried to repair their relationship. Trade between the two nations remains constant and both sides have no problem accepting the other's currency, but trust is far more difficult to establish. Three years ago, *King Raedaen IV* and *King Gedro III* made a deliberate effort to restore the alliance, but the bumbling monarch made an indecent proposal to Gedro's daughter, *Princess Lucretia*, ruining the entire affair.

Today the once great alliance between the two kingdoms remains stifled and less than it should or could be. Whether or not either Kingdom would come to the other's aid in a crisis is entirely uncertain. The "Wolfen matter" has also created tension between Timiro and Bizantium. The former fears the Wolfen and cannot understand why the Kingdom will not join the knights and heroes of the Eastern Territory to destroy the "baby-eating monsters."

The Isle of Lemaria

The largest known island in the Sea of Despair, Lemaria is a source of strange rumors and unfounded suspicions, clearly marked on charts and carefully avoided by Bizantium's sailors and ship captains. It was known as a hazard to ships even in ages past, but for the last five-hundred years the island has been claimed by a society of *warrior women* descended from shipwreck survivors, and those who go ashore are never heard from again.

A few, foolhardy smugglers sometimes land on Lemaria, some simply for the tale to tell, others who have heard legends of the isle's women, to those who think they may actually have something to trade. Officially, setting foot on the island is outlawed, and most navigators refuse to even travel within sight of it for fear of the reefs and rocky seamounts that threaten to tear the bottoms out of ships.

For decades, Bizantium's Admiralty has toyed with the idea of taking control of Lemaria for use as a Serpent-Hunting base and naval station to keep watch for fleets from the Western Empire. The isle's small population could never resist a determined invasion, though the hazards in the waters around Lemaria pose a serious threat to any large vessel. For now, however, the situation on the Shadow Coast takes precedence, and Bizantium's Serpent Hunters are having no problem finding sea monsters without the need for a safe anchorage right in the middle of the Sea of Despair.

Note: The people of Lemaria are protected by an elite unit of female Warlocks known as the **Elemental Sisters**. Should the Council of Elements or other Warlocks from Bizantium be made aware of their existence, they might think this could be the beginning of regular contact between Lemaria and the outside world, and possibly reshape Lemaria's future as a haven for Warlocks who would prefer their own little island-nation to the Kingdom of Bizantium or the Shadow Coast. However, the Lemarian people have a long-standing hatred for Bizantium which would color any contact from the Kingdom, even if they too are unhappy with the Kingdom, even Warlocks. Likewise, the dominance of the females over males in Lemarian culture would be hard to overcome. Most important, as per Lemarian law, outsiders who visit the island are not allowed to leave the island. Ever. They will find themselves permanent residents or slaves of Lemaria, forbidden to ever leave, the ship they arrived upon attacked and scuttled. Those who try to escape are subdued and enslaved, or slain where they stand.

The Island of Bizantium

In many regards, the Kingdom of Bizantium, especially on its most populated islands, looks like something out of a storybook. There are magnificent stone castles and keeps flying the banners of their respective noble families and merchant-princes, stone bridges, cobblestone roads, walled fortifications, fountains, grand malls, courtyards, gardens, verdant woodlands, and shipyards. Knights ride upon their warhorses, marines and sailors are everywhere, and Warlocks and other mages work their magic to calm storms and settle rough waters.

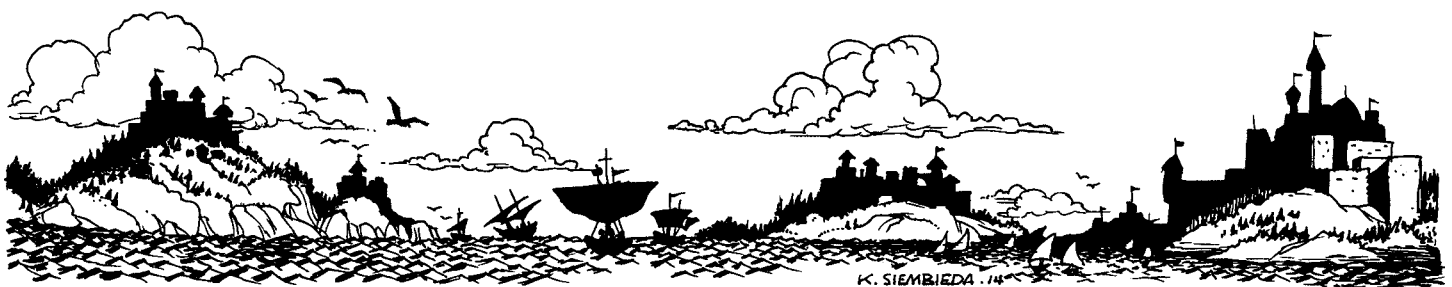
The people are hardy and muscular from a life of hard work, but honest, sincere and playful. Seabirds soar and dance amongst the clouds and boats of every size, type and style fill the water around the islands. There are tiny rowboats, small skiffs for recreation and travel, sailboats, schooners, fishing boats, trawlers,

whaling and serpent-chasing ships, bloated merchants and cargo carriers, naval vessels, warships and even Wolfen longboats. With all the boats and activity around the two big islands and their seaports, you would never know this is one of the harshest and most dangerous places in the world, for Bizantium exists on the edge of the Great Northern Wilderness, just a stone's throw from the fabled *Land of the Damned*. Beyond it, there is only the frigid northern ocean and the Great Ice Shelf, home to ice bears, monsters and worse. The next nearest civilization – not including the demon-filled Land of the Damned, from which few ever return – is thousands of miles away.

The largest and most heavily populated island is the **Island of Bizantium**. It is surprisingly flat with a few areas of gently rolling hills. Unlike some places in the world, Bizantium is a picturesque kingdom of stone castles surrounded by lush and bountiful farmland, light forests and bustling seaports. Even within the cities themselves are hundreds of well-tended gardens and small parks, making even the urban areas of Bizantium lush and inviting. The ancient North Folk called the big island *Isle Grana Algron*, or the "Green Island of Algor," a name it keeps to this day amongst locals who trace their heritage back to the Eoten. After countless centuries of human habitation and agriculture, only one-fifth of the island's natural forests remain; mainly beech, oak, elm, linden, spruce, pine and fir.

Traveling across the countryside reveals neatly divided fields of crops and cattle farms, punctuated by small to medium-sized towns protected by castles and keeps belonging to the noble families and rich merchants. Forested areas are generally light, especially compared to the nigh-impenetrable northern forests on the mainland. Meadows are covered in wildflowers, berries, and tall grasses where, if quiet, visitors may spy Faeries or Sprites playing among the butterflies and insects. *Northern Elk* roam the remaining forests, and it is illegal for anyone except for nobility to hunt them, much less make use of their pelts or meat. Throughout the kingdom, one can find *foxes, martens, rabbits, red northern squirrels, raccoons*, and a vast array of butterflies, moths, and birds, including *ducks, geese, quail, pheasants, puffins, sparrows, starlings, blackbirds, chickadees, cardinals, robins, hawks, seagulls, and pelicans*, amongst many other species. Though there are amphibians and snakes, there are no lizards on the islands, and the *Northern Cottonmouth* is the only poisonous reptile.

Counted among the most exotic and rare fauna are *Drakin, Wing Tips* and the occasional *Pegasus*, as well as Faerie Folk, particularly *Faeries, Sprites, Pixies, Frost Pixies* and *Nymphs*. *Mermaids* and *Merrows* are rumored to be found on the island, but they are more likely to be found sunning themselves on remote shores of the mainland and on the less inhabited islands. Seeing a *Pegasus* and even a mated pair or small family of 3-4 in the wild is always a treat even for residents of the island. A





few *Gryphons* often make their way to the skies above Bizantium, as does the occasional murderous *Peryton Demon Deer*, *Dragonductyl*, and *Sphinx*, but these creatures haven't roosted on any of the islands in decades, and are always driven away. The same is true of *Harpies* and all variety of the demonic *Worms of Taut* which, due to Bizantium's close proximity to the Land of the Damned, simply seem to appear from time to time.

One of the most dangerous indigenous animals on the islands are **Suckers**. Hundreds can always be found on every cliff facing the seashore and sometimes as many as a dozen can be seen clinging to the exterior walls of castles, towers, the underside of bridges, and sometimes even on the sides of large ships! Suckers are a constant threat to livestock and a pain in the neck for residents. Thankfully, they are nocturnal hunters on the prowl when most people are tucked away safely inside their homes. Suckers also tend to avoid the bigger cities at night while they are lit up with torches and candles, and a lot of people are moving about. However, Suckers may creep into town to hunt during the wee hours after the lights have been mostly extinguished. Suckers prey upon livestock that have not been put inside a barn and on animals running loose in the streets, including dogs, cats and rodents, but they'll attack sailors or adventurers stumbling home after an evening at the tavern too.

From time to time, **ice bears** find their way onto one of the islands after hitching a ride on a winter ice floe. Wolves and coyotes, however, have not been seen on the island in nearly 1,000 years. All dangerous creatures are exterminated or chased off as quickly as possible, but try as they might, the Bizantians have been unsuccessful in exterminating Suckers.

The big island has an abundance of freshwater ponds, streams and lakes, the largest being *Lakes Fielder*, *Kosin*, and *Trembley*. The low hills and flat plains make traveling across the big island very easy. The highest point is a hill just outside the city of Vicer that stands 568 feet (173 m) high. The island's eastern half has suffered from considerable deforestation, particularly during the last three hundred years, with much of its forest replaced by farms and pastures, towns and cities. These days, lumber comes from the Shadow Coast colonies and lumber operations in the Great Northern Wilderness.

The southern section, from the **Bizas Inlet** to **Lake Fielder**, is the most extensively farmed agricultural region. Fiefholders (farmers) grow a wide range of crops, most notably wheat, oats, rye, barley, sugar beets, turnips, beans, cucumbers, potatoes, squash, pumpkins, melons and tobacco. Livestock consists primarily of chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, sheep, pigs, and dairy cows. There are some cattle and horses brought in from the mainland, and plenty of hunting and trapping along the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness. The fur trade is the kingdom's fifth largest industry after sea serpent related products (oils, perfume, hides, meat, etc.), fishing, logging, and shipbuilding. The main island produces plenty of food, especially when augmented by all

the fishing and sea serpent meat, and there has been a surplus of grain for many years.

The central interior (west and north of the Inland Sea) contains the last remnants of the original, old growth known as the **Grand Forest**. This region remains deliberately uninhabited and kept wild as part of a conservation program and from fear of the Faerie Folk and "spirits" said to live in these woods and protect the island. If one is to find Mermaids and Merrow on the big island, this is the location. This forest has been considered sacred since the time of the ancient North Folk and is kept in its original condition. If there is such a thing as a wilderness on the island of Bizantium, the Grand Forest is it.

The City of Stonebrook

On the outskirts of the Grand Forest is **Stonebrook**, a small but impressive city of stone that seems out of place amongst the pastures and forest nearby. There is a castle and keep, low towers, stone bridges, fountains and cobblestone streets lined with stone walls and buttresses. Stonebrook is home to the Dwarves responsible for the most magnificent architecture found all across Bizantium and the Northern Islands. They are the geniuses and builders behind the designs and construction of Bizantium's capital city, the King's Palace, the Temple of Algor, and almost all of the castles, defenses and stone buildings in the kingdom. Though the Dwarves do not have political influence or a say in government, they have earned themselves a place of eternal honor among the people of Bizantium, and have been part of the kingdom for 600+ years. The majority of the Dwarven citizens of Bizantium, approximately 5,500 hundred of them, live here, in Stonebrook, with perhaps another thousand scattered across the island kingdom, usually working on new construction or the upkeep of existing buildings, bridges and roads. A few hundred Spriggans, a few dozen Brownies, a couple hundred humans (mostly artisans and assistants) and 1,000 Orc laborers also make Stonebrook their home. The latter are viewed as less than second-class citizens, but their treatment is better than most other parts of the world and the majority are loyal to their Dwarven masters. The Dwarves of Stonebrook live in Bizantium without persecution or prejudice, and when a Dwarven architect visits other towns and cities throughout the Island Kingdom, they are treated with the utmost respect and tolerance.

Stonebrook is isolated for a reason; the Dwarves like to be away from the hustle and bustle of human civilization. They prefer living among their own kind and being close to nature. Their city is filled with courtyards and gardens, as well as terraces and rooftops covered in vines, plants and gardens of their own. It is the Dwarves' designs that gives Bizantium its storybook appearance with castles and wondrous stone architecture. Visitors anywhere in the kingdom, but especially at the capital city and Stonebrook, cannot help but stop and wonder if they are getting a glimpse of what the Dwarven Kingdoms of old must have looked



liked during the height of the Elf and Dwarf Empires of eons past. Visitors to Stonebrook, especially those from other lands, are a rarity. The Dwarves prefer to remain sheltered and out of the limelight.

Further west and north, the terrain remains relatively flat, with low hills, heaths, plains and peat bogs in the west and a more elevated and slightly hilly terrain to the north.

Bizantium

For thousands of years, the Island of Bizantium was never colonized by the tribal people of the Great Northern Wilderness. To this day the Wolfen and others in the region consider the Northern isles to be *sacred* or *cursed*, unfit for habitation. Legends among the Wolfen and other canines of the Great Northern Wilderness warn that the island chain has been the location of violent battles between the gods of light and dark forces of magic. According to other legends, the islands have been colonized many times, but each civilization fell into ruin or vanished. These legends tell of Minotaurs that once flourished on the islands long ago. Later, Titans came to live on the big island before suffering a terrible fate. After them, an ancient and enlightened Elven civilization. All met with destruction. The Elves were the most recent to fall victim to the curse, a short time before humans came into possession of the islands. The ruins of the Elves are sometimes unearthed and relics of their civilization (and some say, dark magic) can still be uncovered. Other legends speak of the islands having been visited by demons and ghosts, Faerie Folk and monsters.

According to the legends of the canine people, the islands are a favored place of the sea god, *Algor*. He uses them as a place to escape from his troubles and engage in the pleasures of fishing, sailing and hunting. According to Wolfen lore, when Algor finds his islands have been overrun and despoiled by intruders, he destroys them so that they may return to nature once more.

As a result, Wolfen, Coyles and most people of the Great Northern Wilderness have kept their distance from the islands. Even today, most Wolfen, Coyles, Kankoran and Bear Men who find they must journey to the kingdom on business keep their visit short and leave at their earliest convenience – but only after paying homage to Algor at one of the many temples, and begging his forgiveness for treading upon his favored place of relaxation.

It was not until the *legendary Bizas* united Bizantium – either by luck or by divine intervention – more than 2,000 years ago, that modern human civilization took root on the islands. Being located on the other side of the known world, surrounded by vast wilderness and hostile seas, had much to do with the Northern Islands remaining untouched by people in the south. In the north, the fact that these “new men” worshiped Algor, suggested, at least to the Wolfen, that their presence may be the will of the sea god, and is another reason the canine people have refrained from violence against the current inhabitants of the islands, and why

both Wolfen and Bizantians regard each other as unlikely brothers in the eyes of their god.

Much of the history of Bizantium and the Northern Islands is steeped in mystery and lost to time and legend. One such mystery involves the **Iceborn**. It is also said that a darkness looms hidden in the bowels of one of the Northern Islands, and from that darkness came the Iceborn. According to legend, during a time long before the arrival of humans, Algor was sickened to find the islands overrun by a savage and wicked people. He showed his displeasure with a storm that brought a great calamity down upon them. Though Algor had intended to wipe the Iceborn from the face of the world, some were washed into the sea where they found their way to the Great Ice Shelf, a place that has come to be known by Bizantians and Wolfen alike as a place of “death and ice” – the new home of the Iceborn. The monsters loathe Algor and hate all to whom he shows the slightest favor. Truth be told, the Iceborn seem to hate everyone and raid the vessels of all nations who venture too far out into the Icy Ocean or too close to the Great Ice Shelf. To mock the sea god, they turn dead *Steeds of Algor* (sea serpents) into monstrous necromantic ships to rain vengeance down upon all who travel the northern waters or dare to live upon what was once their homeland, **Bizantium and the Northern Islands**. Thus, the people of Bizantium are hated above all others, why the Iceborn attack their ships and raid their shores and villages. They might seem to vanish for years – decades – at a time, and just when Bizantium’s sailors start to think they must have finally perished, they reappear in greater numbers, more hateful than ever. Ghost ships found without their crews and villages without their population smacks of the return of the Iceborn after decades of absence.

Historically, the Iceborn reappear, attack ships and coastal communities for a few years and vanish back into the frozen mist of the Icy Ocean. That means if the Iceborn have returned, ships at sea and the **Shadow Coast colonies** are the likeliest of targets, not the isles of Bizantium, and even an attack on the colonies seems doubtful. Still, the recent disappearances have put some of the Noble Houses and merchant-princes on edge. They point to Bizantium’s seers who tell of omens and premonitions of a great danger born in darkness that could rise to threaten the whole of the kingdom. And though it has never happened in recorded memory, some wonder how Bizantium might fare under this weak king against a full-scale invasion from the monstrous Iceborn. Most naval and military authorities scoff at the very notion and dismiss it out of hand. Besides, while there have been some unexplained disappearances, no one has seen the Iceborn in the Northern Sea for two generations.

Bizas Inlet and the Inland Sea

The southern coastline is the only section of Bizantium, besides the northern city of *Aquafel*, where it is possible to form the kind of natural harbor that allows for the easy establish-



ment of fishing communities. Located at the southeastern tip of the island is the mouth of the **Bizas Inlet**, the entrance into Bizantium's Inland Sea. Frequent fog, strong winds and currents and rocky coasts along the island makes the Bizas Inlet the only entry into the island's interior, forcing all shipping to and from Bizantium to converge at this narrow point. This can, on occasion, create a bottleneck and slow traffic in the sea lanes on busy days.

The winds in the **Strait of Forlorn Hope** blow from east to west, giving rise to gusts that can help or harm sailing vessels. Wind blowing in from the Northern Sea also gives rise to correspondingly large waves that attain enormous size as they roll across the ocean free of any interruption from land until they reach the Bizantium island chain. These winds and waves are further exacerbated by the unusual funneling effect of the **Northern Hinterlands** and the Island of Bizantium, which channels them into the *Strait of Forlorn Hope*. When the winds exceed 40 mph (64 km), they are hazardous enough that ships traveling westward sometimes sail north around the island chain to avoid them. Vessels coming from the southeast ride with the winds and make excellent time, though care must be taken to maintain control and avoid capsizing or damage to the rigging.

The prevailing winds and currents make gaining entry to the **Bizas Inlet** a bit tricky for sailors unfamiliar with this part of the world, but Bizantium's vessels come and go with practiced ease. Besides, most captains of large Bizantian vessels, warships, merchant vessels and Serpent Chaser ships employ one or more Warlocks, Waterchanters and/or other men of magic as a member of their crew, all people who can alter the wind and make safe passage easier. Likewise, the most dangerous waters and locations of heavy traffic on the seas have Waterchanters or Warlocks in lighthouses or lookout towers placed at strategic locations on shore. When the water or weather gets rough, they use their magic to calm things down and help lead vessels through the safest waters. Air and Water Warlocks may even summon Lesser Elementals to guide ships through the strait to gain access to the Inlet, while Fire Warlocks light the way.

At the mouth of the Bizas Inlet is the city of **Homesight**, resting atop cliffs rising straight up 100 feet (30.5 m) above sea level. The moment one enters the inlet, both wind and waves are reduced by half and the shallower water is much calmer.

The Bizas Inlet nearly divides the Island of Bizantium in half, and connects Bizantium's **Inland Sea** with the Northern Sea. The two seas flow into each other, but recent findings by the Warlock Council have revealed that there is an underwater channel of cold, high-density water flowing across the floor of the inlet, caused by the difference in temperature and salinity of the two seas. The inlet's maximum width is 11 miles (17.6 km) between the **Lighthouse Tanng** and **Grisni**, and a minimum width of 2,300 feet (701 m) between the towers of **Gate Fort**. The depth of the Bizas Inlet varies from 43 feet (13 m) to 361 feet (110 m) in midstream with an average depth of 213 feet (65 m).

The deepest location is between the lighthouse Tanng and Grisni. The shallowest locations are between Gate-Fort at Tower One and Tower Two.

Compared to the ocean waters, Bizantium's **Inland Sea**, 275 miles (440 km) long from end to end, is calm, peaceful and beautiful. The landscape gives way to natural harbors, flat, sandy beaches, lush farmland and impressive cities. The winters here are mild compared to the mainland and some of the other islands, and the sea never freezes. Two-thirds of the entire population lives in its inviting cradle. Divided into two halves, the **East Sea** supports the bulk of the human population while the **West Sea** has less in the way of boat traffic and more fishing villages, farms and light forest.

Marine life is rich and varied in these waters. Porpoise, cod, herring, northern flatfish and many others swim freely. Cockles, mussels, crabs, lobsters and starfish are plentiful, as are harbor seals and a wide assortment of seabirds. Corpse jellyfish and the occasional shark near shore are the most dangerous creatures in the sea. In fact, with the blessings of Algor, there has never been a report of a sea monster in the Inland Sea. Sightings of the occasional Mermaid or Merrow, on the other hand, always create excitement, with people running to catch a glimpse before they vanish back under the waves. Though both of these Faerie Folk tend to avoid places heavily occupied by humans, there remains enough sea and shore for them to visit. In fact, though seldom seen, there are several clans of Mermaids and Merrows living in and around the Northern Islands, but humans are unaware, and for their own good, as a mischievous or angry Mermaid or Merrow can lead to plenty of trouble.

In addition to its flora and fauna, and overall gentle beauty, the Inland Sea is Bizantium's greatest strategic asset, basically a massive bay capable of sheltering every ship on the Northern Islands from outside attack or ferocious winter storms whenever necessary. It is also its greatest strategic weakness. Bottle up entry to the mouth of the Bizas Inlet, and Bizantium's mighty fleet is trapped.

The City of Bizantium

The City of Bizantium, known by many sailors simply as "**Main Port**," is an industrious and wealthy community. It is here, more than any other city in the kingdom, that you will find foreign dignitaries, merchants, immigrants and visitors from human kingdoms all over the world. The palace of the King of Bizantium is here, along with the offices of various Crown Commissions, bureaucrats, administrators, many shops and taverns, churches, shipyards, and the Royal Marines, amongst others. **The Church of Algor** has its official seat and headquarters in Bizantium, so many pilgrims can be seen walking in the streets and congregating in temple courtyards and gardens. The city also houses two major shipyards, **the Vatzes Yard** and the **Kirsgrén Yard**,



both continually turning out new vessels and repairing ships that have grown old or been damaged in their travels.

Being the largest city in the northern hemisphere of the Palladium World (*Shadowfall* only has a population of 105,000), Bizantium is the largest concentration of humankind for a thousand miles (no one knows how many humans may live in the Land of the Damned). The very fact that the Kingdom of Bizantium offers the only truly safe harbors for “civilized” people in this part of the world attracts numerous foreigners. Adventurers, explorers, and merchants flock to the City of Bizantium and other major ports to buy and sell goods, trade in its markets, and enjoy its hospitality. For many adventurers out in the wilds of the mainland, just finding a warm bed in a safe town is reward enough. The City of Bizantium is the main trading hub where the greatest number of merchants and foreigners are found, making it one of the most lively, diverse and somewhat dangerous cities on the islands. For it is here where mercs, mages and nonhumans come for rest, relaxation and the pleasures big cities have to offer. It is also where they can find work of all kind and patrons to finance their explorations and adventures.

The sea serpent trade, fur, lumber and fishing industries bring in merchants worldwide, as does Bizantium’s glassware and artistry in ivory and the bones and teeth of sea serpents. Bizantium’s naval academy educates sailors, soldiers and ambitious noblemen, the Church of Algor draws in pilgrims, and Bizantium’s strictly human society appeals to many immigrants and visitors from the Eastern Territory.

Merchant caravans enter the city, bringing in handcrafted items from the dozens of smaller villages and other islands, in exchange for gold, foreign imports and trade goods. The trunks of great trees are also brought into the city’s shipyards and lumberyards so they can be turned into masts for sailing vessels.

Literacy is for the rich and noble. Some visitors are surprised by the number of citizens and people who are literate. Trades such as *Warlocks, physicians, lawyers, moneychangers, clerks, scribes, accountants, navigators and educators* (mostly for the wealthy and nobility) are all well educated in mathematics and can read and write in both Elven and Northern, sometimes an additional language or two. Likewise, most – but not all – *Dwarven builders, merchants and nobility* (85%) can read and write Northern and Elven, and are proficient in math. Within the *clergy*, half are educated and literate, as are most (95%) *ship captains, first officers and navigators*, and maybe as many as 30 percent of skilled tradesmen and artisans. Most fishermen, carpenters, mariners, warriors, entertainers, laborers, farmers and common folk are illiterate. Only one in 200 can read or write at least a little bit, though one in four knows basic math.

Bizantium is an unofficial news and information center in this part of the world. Sailors and merchants who sail frequently between Bizantium and the *Eastern Territory* and *Timiro Kingdom* bring news of the latest events and gossip from the southeast. Fewer ships travel back and forth to the *Western Empire* and

Land of the South Winds, so information is not as in-depth nor up to date. Any news regarding the *Land of the South Winds* or *Yin-Sloth Jungles* is simply not reliable and is usually considered gossip and rumor rather than hard fact.

Of course, the people of the Kingdom of Bizantium are the resident experts about all things regarding the *Northern Sea, Icy Ocean, the Great Ice Shelf*, the northern coast of the mainland and things in general about the *Wolfen Empire* and the *Great Northern Wilderness*. Most Bizantians throughout the kingdom pride themselves on the quantity of their “worldly knowledge,” and feast upon every tidbit of gossip, news, rumor and speculation about other human (and non-human) kingdoms and exotic lands. However, this is nowhere more true than on the big island of Bizantium itself. The people on the island of Bizantium and the City of Bizantium are almost always the very first to receive news, which means they are also the first to dissect it and pass it along to other communities. The most scandalous and juiciest news and gossip gets distributed first, and that includes gossip about the Shadow Coasts colonies and Wolfen Empire on the mainland, and rumors about the return of the Iceborn. Hearing stories from many diverse viewpoints (the Western Empire for example, will have a very different view of events than sailors from Timiro or the Eastern Territories) gives Bizantium and its leaders a very unique and more complete perspective than other human kingdoms. Knowledge is power, after all, and the Crown, Merchant-Princes, Warlocks and even individual ship captains are all happy to be at the center of communications. They may also pay for lesser-known information, news and gossip that might give them an advantage in defense and conducting trade or defeating rivals.

Updated City of Bizantium Highlights

Population: 120,000

1. Royal Palace of Kings: King Raedaen’s home and seat of governance, the palace covers a two square mile (5.18 sq km) section of the city. It is surrounded by tall, guarded fences, ringing a luxurious, five-story central keep, gardens, a horse barn, guard post and various other buildings. The general public are invited to tour the grounds several times annually, on holy days and specific occasions, though the palace itself remains off-limits.

2. The Maritime Arena: Bizantium’s largest arena is located by the sea. Valves and waterways allow the arena to be easily flooded for mock naval battles and spectacles involving sea serpents or Warlock magic. Juvenile sea serpents are typically used, as they are easier to restrain, but the walls around the combat floor are also studded with claw-like, down-turned bronze spikes that keep dangerous animals from escaping. The simple “containment system” is highly effective, but it also makes the Maritime Arena’s showrunners confident enough to continually up the ante with bigger and bigger creatures, a practice that they might come to regret one day. Warlocks also put on spectacular shows for



The city of BIZANTIUM



wide-eyed crowds, one of the reasons the public is beginning to accept Elemental magic. The arena floor can also be drained in a matter of hours, making it suitable for chariot races, gladiator games, sporting events, theatrical performances and official ceremonies. 12,000 people can be seated inside the spacious venue, 16,000 if standing room is allowed, making it the largest single gathering place in the kingdom. Thus, it is sometimes used for mass political assemblies or religious ceremonies as well.

3. City Bath: Designed and built by the Dwarves, it is the city's largest and most splendid public baths with elegant and ornate stone carvings, statues and engravings. Hot and cold baths, swimming pools, saunas and areas for exercising are all part of this massive four level structure; three levels are below ground. Tradition and standing policy dictates that free women and children use the baths in the morning, free men in the afternoon, and anyone of either gender or social class is allowed inside during the evening. There is no fee for citizens of Bizantium, and a modest three gold for visitors/outsideers.

4. The Bizantium Royal Theater: A new building put up a few years into the reign of King Raedaen IV, the Royal Theater is a cultural fixture where music, dance and theater are brought to the people, but particularly patronized by the wealthy and educated elite. Farce and spectacles from the Western Empire, Timiro and Elves from the Old Kingdom are popular, as well as operas based on the traditional mythology of Algor and the North Folk. Musicians from the Eastern Territory, Timiro, and elsewhere are also commonly found amongst the theater's performers, bringing with them songs and tales from their homelands.

5. Embassy of the Western Empire: Built near the City Bath by Western Empire builders and artisans, the Empire's embassy is one of the most impressive, ornate, and many would say, pretentious buildings in the city. It is tolerated as a measure to maintain trade and peaceful relations with the Western Empire. In the last few years it has been refurbished and occupied by Western Ambassador *Lord Jucen Brthic*, who was handpicked by *Emperor Itomas* to help him maintain regular communication with Bizantium's monarchy and Noble Houses. Unbeknownst to anyone on the Northern Islands, Lord Jucen is also a Summoner (6th level) and counted among his small staff is a shape-changing Succubus and Incubus who regularly spy for their master, using seduction and disguise to glean information from amongst Bizantium's nobles, the wealthy and influential. Lord Jucen is presently searching for a good crew of adventurers or mercenaries to investigate alleged rumors about a hidden treasure within a sea cave on the Island of Wyst, as well as other plots and schemes.

The Market Star District

The Market Star is Bizantium's largest, open-air market is found at the city center. A huge variety of goods are sold here, including commodities imported from around the world. This includes rubber and fruit harvested in the Yin-Sloth Jungles, silks and spices from the Western Empire and Timiro, to furs, serpent oils, and fresh produce grown in the farmland right outside the city. Most sales booths have distinctive and decorative signs that tell the illiterate their trade; pictures or symbols of the goods they sell or services they provide. Vendors with small and large market stalls call out to passers-by, identifying their wares, throwing around compliments and pitching their goods. The smaller merchants selling out of single stalls or carts tend to be more

aggressive, with some making often dubious claims of quality or uniqueness. There are no alchemists or magic tradespeople, as it is *illegal* to teach or sell magic or magic items throughout the Northern Islands. Magic is reserved for the clergy and Warlock Guilds. That said, there is a decent underground market for magic in the City of Bizantium, and one can make contacts with such sellers in the Market Star, and even buy and sell magic items under the table at the market, if one is savvy and discreet enough.

The Bright Star Shopping District is located north of the Market Star. In addition to the arena itself, there are many purveyors of luxury goods and expensive imports found in this district, as well as fine restaurants and hotels, some of which specifically cater to specific foreign nations, most notably the Western Empire, Timiro, the Eastern Territory and Land of the South Winds. There is also a hotel that caters to Elves and Dwarves, and another for Wolfen and other canines from the mainland (quietly tucked away from the rest and near a park and a temple of Algor). Jewelry, perfumes, Western Empire olive oil, spices, pastries and high quality wine, ale and brandy are all available to those who can afford it. A typical room here is 90-200 gold per night, but comes with the finest bedding, a bath and fireplace.

Star-Side Residences: To the east of the Market Star are Bizantium's residential districts. Most homes are two and three stories tall, often built atop one another and sharing balconies, rooftops and walkways. The wealthiest areas are found to the south, with seaside mansions, large homes and fine apartments. Any non-humans who choose to make the city their home are required to live on the outskirts of the city or stay in the Dock District.

6. Castle Joshius: Just southeast from the Market Star is what was once the Royal Palace of Kings, the old Bizantian palace and royal residence, but it has been rebuilt into a defensive position and headquarters for **Bizantium's Royal Army**. Fences and ornamental partitions have been replaced with 16 foot (4.8 m) thick stone walls, towering 52 feet (15.8 m) over the surrounding city. Soldiers and Marines come and go and ranking generals and officials have their offices within the refitted palace. If the city ever comes under attack, Castle Joshius will serve as a redoubt and strong-point with room to shelter civilians and marshal soldiers in defense of Bizantium. Much to the annoyance of the professional military men who work there, the city's children are fond of climbing on the architecture and battlements and playing on the grounds. Unbeknownst to anyone else, the castle's gardens are inhabited by a Frost Pixie and two Brownies who enjoy playing with the children. In another part of the castle are six poltergeists.

7. Temple of Algor: On the southern boarder of the Star Market district, is the majestic the Temple of Algor is the largest temple dedicated to Algor and the Northern Gods in the world. The main temple took centuries to complete and the Dwarven masonry is without equal. Statues and etched walls display Algor riding sea serpents, controlling the weather, fighting, driving the Iceborn from the islands, welcoming humans and dozens of other scenes. Other Northern gods are depicted on walls and statuary, but none as prominently or as frequently as Algor. Not even Od. Natural life, animals and scenes from the island are portrayed in the stained-glass windows, as are the kings of Bizantium and the founder of the Island Kingdom, Bizas. As a Dwarven construct, rumors abound regarding hidden doors and passageways within its walls and beneath its floors, and some claim there is an entire subterranean level to the temple filled with relics, magic items

and treasure that no one has ever seen. The clergy denies such stories, but they would, wouldn't they?

The Temple of Algor is a destination for pilgrims from all over the Northern Islands, and they are joined by devoted followers, acolytes and priests who visit from everywhere in the world. *King Asser* is the only monarch to be entombed in the temple, but allegedly the bones from the left arm of *Bizas* are buried beneath the altar as well. (**Note:** Any Priest of Algor who performs a special prayer or priestly ability at the altar enjoys a +5% bonus to succeed; +15% when the prayer is for the defense of the city, kingdom or islands.)

The Trade District

8. Office of Numbers: Headquarters of the Crown's tax collectors and census takers, the Office of Numbers is a warren of bureaucrats, scrolls, books and notes. Inquisitors of Numbers have personal offices here where they audit the merchants, Navy and Noble Houses, and supervise the collection of tariffs and trade duties.

9. Temple of Hoknar. This is a small stone temple surrounded by a well kept garden. Within the garden, hidden by tall shrubs, is a shrine to Wolvenar and another to Algor. Both are frequented by Wolfen, Coyle and Bear Men visitors.

10. Norbert Bank. A large bank run by House Norbert, its vaults are rumored to contain a number of confiscated magic items in addition to a small mountain of gold, silver and pearls.

11. Bizantium Exchange & Stock Market. Many of Bizantium's merchant ventures are funded by shareholders; be it the journey of a single ship to bankrolling entire seasonal fishing fleets, merchant companies or privateering ventures. Noble Houses, merchants and ambitious individuals buy and sell shares in potential profit-making operations, exchanged for a percentage of profits at a future date. If a voyage or commercial undertaking is successful, those shares can increase a little or massively in value depending on the success of the business funded. And some may have long-lasting potential that earns them more money (or prestige) in the future. There are experienced brokers who have worked their entire lives in the Exchange, and conducting business without one's assistance is not recommended. In addition to trade missions, Noble Houses have funded expeditions into the Northern Hinterlands and Great Northern Wilderness in search of gold, silver, and ancient ruins (where precious stones, gold, silver, magic and/or lost secrets can be procured). Pedestrian enterprises may include logging operations, the fur trade, and mining and exploration. Sometimes missions of exploration are to unearth history and knowledge, not just valuable artifacts. Any good enterprise that is likely to result in a profit can be posted at the market, but whether anyone bids on it or not is a different story. Only expeditions and business ventures whose key partners have been examined and vetted by the Exchange, and deemed to have true potential, are approved and authorized by the Exchange, which is why it is the leading fund-raiser of such ventures. Those that are rejected must find private funding.

12. Title, Bonding and Trade Building: Every ship that flies the flag of Bizantium must be registered with the Crown, and these titles are kept at the Office of Title, Bonding and Trade. Establishing clear ownership over vessels is necessary for salvage and insurance purposes, and many merchants sometimes bond their vessels, using ships as collateral to borrow money. Bizantium maintains regional title offices in the Shadow Colo-

nies, Western Empire, Eastern Territory, Timiro Kingdom and Land of the South Winds that send updated information back to Bizantium on homeward-bound ships.

13. Justice House: The Capital's main courthouse, the Justice House has stood for nearly 400 years, delivering justice and settling disputes. It also serves as a site for sentencing and the occasional public execution.

14. The Northomber Marine Club: This is a local brewery that has a modest alehouse and restaurant open to all members of the Bizantium Marine Corps and retired military officers. The nobility are also welcome, but seldom come here.

The City Dock District

The City Dock District is located several blocks west of the Market Star, along the shoreline. This is one of the busiest seaports in the kingdom and another other popular retail and entertainment area. There are a vast number of friendly (if rowdy) taverns and markets, bait and tackle shops, boat shops, boat rental, fresh produce markets, stables, tobacco shops, beer halls, bars, fish markets, meat markets (mostly sea serpent), flower vendors, oil vendors, tattoo parlors, dance halls, boarding houses, inns, and other goods and services that cater to sailors and visitors. Several small shops that specialize in scrimshaw, jewelry and other works of artistry using pearls, seashells and the ivory tusks of sea mammals and the bones of whales and sea serpents are extremely popular with foreigners visiting the kingdom and looking for a keepsake or bit of artistry. Some of the shops and markets in the bustling dock district are massive, like the lumberyards, shipwright, and hardware stores, while others are much more modest, and many others are dives. Lantern oil, cooking oils, and perfumes made from sea serpent are plentiful and usually sell for half the price they sell for at the more upscale shops in the kingdom and on the mainland. Fresh, smoked, salted and jerked sea serpent meat and bones from the great beasts for stew are also available in great abundance.

Many good deals can be had at the docks, provided one is willing to put up with the smell of fish and sweaty bodies, the noise, and raucous bawdiness of the many sailors and other hardworking citizenry of Bizantium. After a long day's work, these salty characters unwind with strong ale, stronger language, laughter and the camaraderie of friends and coworkers. The docks also attract the poor, beggars and unsavory types, as well as outsiders visiting the island. The docks are where one is most likely to rub shoulders with Marines and defenders of the realm, sailors, mercenaries, adventurers, mages, foreigners, non-humans (including Wolfen), and spies from other countries as well as encounter prostitutes, pick pockets, thieves, con-artists and other shady characters and rough and tumble folk.

Across the street where the Dock District officially ends are numerous **offices of the Crown, moneychangers and warehouses**, as well as the offices for many of the Merchant-Princes and guilds. All are well kept, clean, respectable buildings that contrast greatly with the more heavily trafficked streets, buildings, markets, brothels and beer houses of the Dock District across the way.

A short distance away is a large **commercial district** where ship captains and independent merchants, as well as some of the Merchant-Prince's that lord over Bizantium's Noble Houses, operate their businesses and keep warehouses. Small Houses may have cramped, shared offices here, but the largest Noble Houses

base their shipping and commercial operations out of imposing, full-sized office buildings.

15. Temple of Light: Although the *Church of Algor* is the official religion of the Northern Islands, this beautiful Cathedral Basilica is still a landmark structure in the city. There have been four previous churches built to serve the spiritual and physical needs of Bizantians, and visitors, who worship the Gods of Light. The first church was destroyed by a devastating storm 300 years ago. The second burned to the ground during a raging fire 225 years ago. The third structure, built 163 years ago, was the scene of a terrible tragedy when the central bell tower collapsed, killing not only the Elf priest but over a dozen Elven children as well.

The current cathedral-like temple was built with the assistance of Dwarves and has endured for over 150 years, but bears the scars of injustice. More than ninety years ago, *King Raedaen the First* made a decree that only humans were fit to serve as priests in Bizantium. *High Priest Alegaen*, the Elven high priest of the temple, protested and was imprisoned for disobeying and defaming the king. The Crown later took grudging pity on the High Priest and released him on the condition he left the kingdom forever. Instead of abandoning his position, Alegaen barricaded himself in a room on the top floor, in further protest. The human priests did everything they could to convince High Priest Alegaen to come out, but to no avail. After a week, the king himself went to the temple and demanded the priest come out, in the name of the Crown and almighty Algor. Alegaen was foolish enough to proclaim that Algor had no power over him or within the Temple of Light. This enraged the king. Though the other priests of Light pleaded with the king on Alegaen's behalf, the king's mercy had run dry. He ordered the door to be bricked over, sealing the Elf inside forever. The bricks have never been removed, and acolytes who serve in the temple claim that the ghost of High Priest Alegaen haunts the top floor. Many have reported hearing prayers or muffled words as well as pounding on the other side of the wall late at night, even all these decades later.

Rumor has it that praying to one of the Gods of Light in front of the walled-in door, or asking the ghost of High Priest Alegaen to put in a good word to a God of Light, increases the chance of a successful prayer from a Priest of Light (+10%). Psychics and mages who can speak to spirits may also have a chance to speak to the priest and get information from him. Should they make contact, devout worshipers and priests of the Gods of Light will ALWAYS win his favor and help if he can provide any. Worshipers of Algor and the Northern Pantheon never get his help, nor do those who worship dark gods or enemies of his pantheon. Despite his unjust death, the spirit of High Priest Alegaen remains loyal to the kingdom and will do nothing to bring it harm.

16. Crypt of the Seas: One of the defining images of Bizantium is the Crypt of the Seas, a series of stone walls that bear the names of every Bizantian sailor lost at sea since the kingdom declared its independence six centuries ago! New names are added with sad regularity, and official Days of Mourning are held twice each year where the king, his entire court and a procession of priests of Algor honor the dead and pray for their souls.

17. The Admiralty: Overlooking the military section of the docks that houses Bizantium's warships, the Admiralty is charged with maintaining and deploying the Four Fleets of Bizantium's Royal Navy. Its headquarters is an ancient fortified building, replete with artifacts from famous ships and statues of the proud sailors who made Bizantium the sea power that it is today. Ad-

mirals and commodores work out of the marble floored offices, and eager new captains wait, hat in hand, hoping for the chance to command one of the kingdom's mighty warships.

18. The Blue Ribbon Club: A captains' club for seafarers only. The captain of any ship is welcome, as long as they are sponsored and vouched for by a current club member. As part of an age-old tradition, members of the Noble Houses and Warlocks are NOT allowed. With the absence of blue bloods, merchants, and bosses, independent captains tend to talk more openly about things than they would elsewhere. There are many private sitting rooms where 2-6 captains can gather behind closed doors to drink, smoke, share stories and engage in complaint sessions about their leaders, bosses and rivals without fear of retribution. It is also a place where some can hatch plots or even exchange contraband.

19. Customs House: An extension of the Office of Numbers and Office of Title, Bonding and Trade, Bizantium's Customs House receives captains of vessels putting into port, reviews their papers and cargo manifests, and collects tariffs and trading fees. The Customs House also has the most up-to-date list of which ships are currently in port, and is sure to be the first stop for officials looking to find a specific vessel, captain or crew member.

20. Forester Royal: Headquarters of the Crown Forestry Service.

21. Temple of Od: This is one of the oldest temples on the island, but is well kept. It has a special shrine for warriors and marines, as well as a well-sculpted statue of Od striking down a sea serpent.

22. Temple of Epim: This temple of Epim, the All-Mother, is modest in size but elegant and somehow comforting. It is popular among healers, farmers, Warlocks and women.

23. King Garvan's Lighthouse: Just to the south of Bizantium's main docks is the Lighthouse of King Garvan, a 300 foot (91.4 m) building that towers over even the capital city's palaces and temples. Using an arrangement of mirrors, the light from its beacons burns brilliantly, and is visible on a clear night far out into the ocean and clear across Bizantium's Inland Sea as far away as Vicer and Wujik. One Fire Warlock, two Air Warlocks and three Water Warlocks are part of the staff and live nearby. They are always on call, and present whenever foul weather or danger manifests. Each is 5th level and loyal to the kingdom.

Other Places of Note in Bizantium

24. Headquarters of The Warlock Council: From this alabaster building, all Warlock activity within the Northern Islands is planned and monitored.

25. The Ministry of Farm, Fish, and Food: Headquarters of the royal overseers of Bizantium's agriculture, farmland, and fishing industry.

26. Western Unity Correspondence and the Eastern Coast Post: In addition to their cargo and passengers, many merchant ships and military vessels also carry bags of letters and small packages destined for sailors and foreign ports. There are two specialty services, however, run by two brothers – the younger sons of House Norbert – that do nothing but deliver mail back and forth between distant destinations. Western Unity Correspondence, run by *Hazik Norbert*, services the *Western Empire*. The Eastern Coast Post, managed by *Renfer Norbert*, delivers to the Eastern Territory and Timiro Kingdom. For 35 gold they will deliver a letter, or 50 gold per pound (0.45 kg) for a package,

up to a maximum of fifty pounds (22 kg). The services both use fast Corsairs as their post-ships, and the average delivery time for the services' experienced captains who have made the run is 4-6 weeks to the Western Empire or Eastern Territory, 6-8 weeks to the Timiro Kingdom. The two mail services have storefronts facing in opposite directions, but are based out of the same building where the Norbert brothers have offices side-by-side.

27. Residence of Merchant-Prince Wilgan Vatzes: The home of Noble House Vatzes, which includes the Prince, his four sisters, and their children (14 total). The residence is a small palace. Other homes and cottages are located across the Bizantium countryside.

28. Residence of Hanta Farrip: Home of the Leader of the Warlock Council. A Phantom (see Warlock Air Elemental spell of the same name) protects her bedroom from intruders. Her basement has a hidden chamber where she keeps all her precious books and scrolls.

29. Surgery: A team of professional medical doctors plus a few psychic healers, a Druid and nurses.

30. Locksmith's Shop & Armorer: A facility run by humans that sells locks, chain, metal boxes, fishing hooks, body armor and a selection of hardware.

31. Kel the Oarmaker: Specializes in making and repairing oars and other components for boats and ships.

32. Coppersmith: An establishment owned by humans, but which also employs several Dwarves.

33. Dockside Blacksmith: An establishment owned by humans, but which also employs several Dwarves and specializes in making fittings and parts for ships, fishing equipment, knives, spears and harpoons.

34. Evanglen Compassmaker: Compasses, large and small.

35. Cooper: A very large barrel-making operation that mass produces barrels of all types and sizes for every purpose: fish, water, wine, lantern oil, fruit, vegetables, etc. Also manufactures the large drogue barrels Serpent Chasers use to keep sea monsters on the ocean surface. Cost varies by size; watertight barrels cost an extra 10 gold. Reasonable prices.

36. Wheelwright: Specializes in making and repairing wheels for carts and carriages. Also makes and offers wheelbarrows and small carts and wagons.

37. Cartwright: A huge operation that specializes in making and repairing work carts and wagons of all types and sizes from small to huge for transporting cargo. A large stable with a legion of mules and workhorses is part of this operation and available for rent on a first-come, first-served basis. Fair prices, but always super-busy and sometimes certain sized carts are not available for rent or purchase.

38. Northern Wolf Management: Professional Wolfen-interpreters and guides to the Shadow Coast colonies and the Great Northern Wilderness. Can provide interpreters and liaisons for buying and selling to Wolfen, traveling through Wolfen territory, hunting expeditions, and similar travels. Owned and operated by House Yinxner.

Notes about Inns in the City

As home to countless sailors, and a safe port to countless more, the City of Bizantium features dozens of inns, hostels, flophouses and places where visitors can rest for the night or stay for weeks on end. During religious festivals and holidays, many of

the city's residents rent out spare rooms for 10-30 gold a night, rig tents, or even just offer floor space to pilgrims and travelers (5-15 gold per night); all part of the spirit of hospitality that has been tradition handed down from the ancestral North Folk.

A typical room at a hotel in the City Docks District provides a bed, closet, dresser, water bowl, and pot for a toilet (the outhouse is outside) for 20-40 gold a night; a bath is an extra 15-20 gold. Boarding houses and bed and breakfast houses usually cost the same but are a bit nicer and provide a hot breakfast for the same price, but are almost always booked up, especially by people staying for more than a week.

The better inns on the Docks offer a slightly larger and nicer room with similar amenities as above for 50-60 a night. The best rooms of the docks come with a private bath and toilet and cost 80-100 gold per night.

Flophouses get you a place on the floor, a pillow and a blanket for 4 gold a night.

Visitor bylaws of the city – a holdover from the old Eoten Rules of Hospitality – “unofficially” requires private citizens, clergy and innkeepers to offer “visitors to the Islands” a place to sleep, whether they are on foot, horseback, or arriving by ship. Many of Bizantium's innkeepers do not follow the old ways of the North Folk, and will send guests who cannot pay out into the cold to find lodging on the floor of a temple or in the home of a more generous citizen. Visitors who are broke and other indigent people find shelter wherever they can on the streets and in back alleys, as well as behind a barn, in a field or in the wilderness. Most temples and clergy will provide a place to sleep and inexpensive meals (oatmeal, corn mash, scrambled eggs and potatoes, cheese and bread, and similar) for a day or two before either asking the person to move on or informing them they will need to “earn their keep,” by performing chores (cleaning, scrubbing, milking cows, making repairs, painting fences, pruning gardens, and so on). Only those of the same faith and in serious need (were beaten and robbed, husband died and there is a wife and children in need, etc.) will be extended free room and board for a week or two before they are asked to pitch in or leave. The same holds true for the occasional generous innkeeper or private citizen, but all are fairly savvy in recognizing con-artists and brigands, especially innkeepers and clergy. Lowlifes looking for a free-ride are likely to be turned away before they can place a foot through the door.

People down on their luck, but willing to do physically demanding work or tasks most people would like to avoid (shoveling manure, pitching hay, loading and unloading for hours on end, chopping wood, cleaning fish by the ton, dumping fish guts, digging ditches, tending crops or livestock, hauling lumber, etc.) can often find backbreaking employment in exchange for 2-6 gold a day plus three hot meals (breakfasts, lunch and dinner) and a place to sleep. The latter may be nothing more than a bedroll and blanket in a barn or a shed, or on the deck of a ship or in its hold, but sometimes it is a backroom or a barracks-style workman's house. It may not be much, but it is honest work, good chow, a place to sleep and better than being stuck out in the weather.

The following are descriptions of just a few of the City of Bizantium's most famous lodgings, from notorious dives to fine establishments, which can also be used as examples for creating your own inns and hotels.

A Few Notable Inns

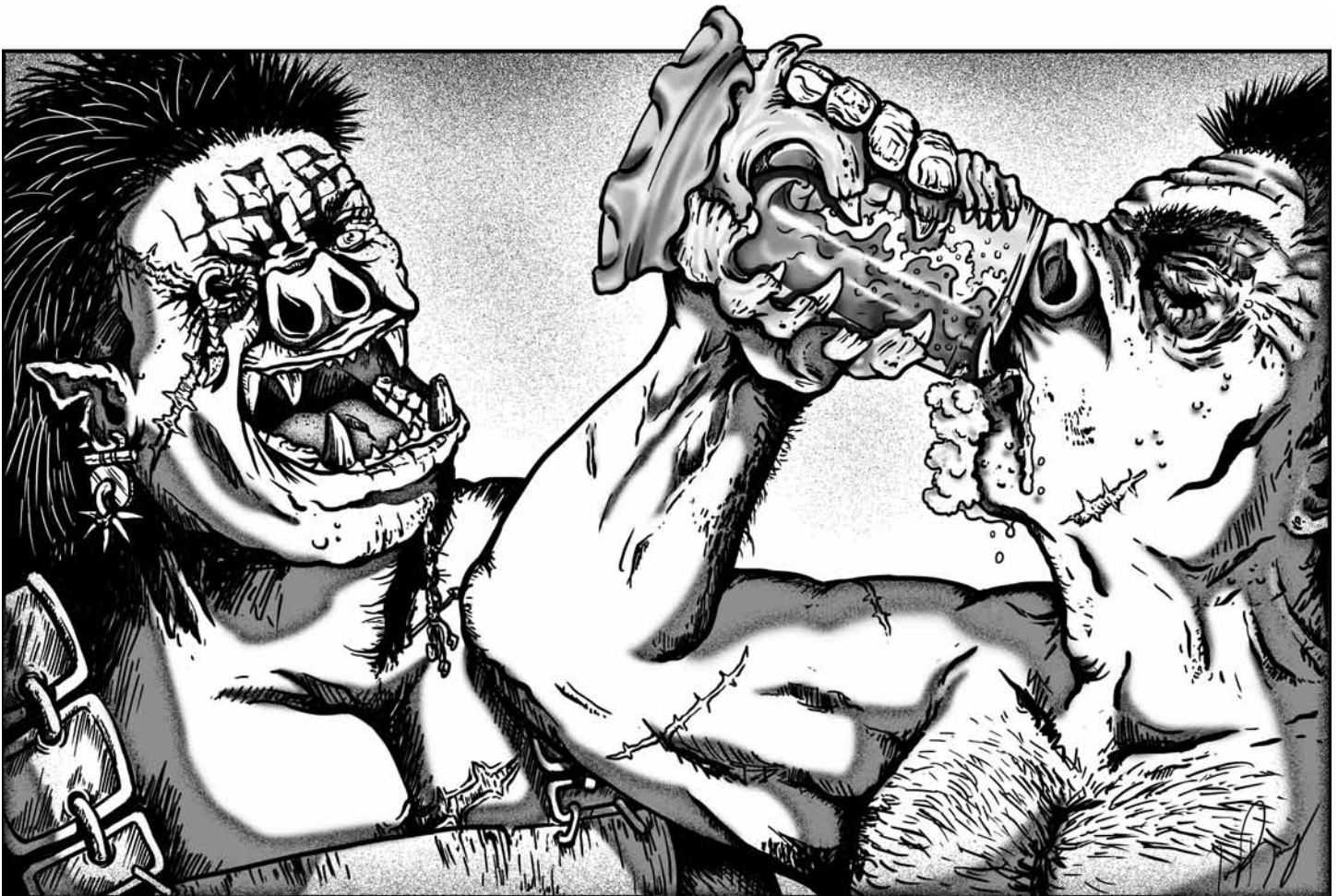
The Grinning Goblin: Located west of the Market Star, this ever-popular tavern and hotel franchise has only recently branched out to the Northern Islands. The three story, timber building has a steep, shingle-covered roof. There are doorways on the upper floor, reached by external staircases and galleries, as well as on the ground floor. In the courtyard, riders dismount and leave their animals in the hands of stableboys who hurry out to take charge of the horses. This service is included in the cost of a single night's stay (50-100 gold per night), though tips are appreciated. A variety of poultry, fish, seal and, the house's most famous dish, grilled shark, is served along with high-quality beer and spirits for the cost of 10 gold per plate. This is one of the best locations in the city of Bizantium for adventurers to seek out information, other adventurers, successful mercenaries, ship captains, pirates and visitors from the mainland and other realms.

The Stone Hearth Inn: Located north of the Market Star, this two-story inn has a high-class feel at reasonable prices. The innkeeper is a cultured woman of good character (Scrupulous) and reputation named *Elenor Rosario*. She is the widow of a prominent noble who was convicted of treason and executed by drowning, as decreed by the king. Now she makes a good living running the inn. In addition to rooms for the night, Elenor sells a variety of delicious ales and wines, including some rumored to be the best on the island because they are made by a secret supplier from the Western Empire or Land of the South Winds (actually made by Grogach and other Faerie Folk on the island). Her best ales fetch 6 gold a glass, her brandy 12 gold and her best, "imported" wines get 100-400 gold for a single bottle. The people who purchase

them insist they are well worth the price. She even has a regular clientele of merchants and nobles who come to her establishment to discuss business and purchase her fine wines and ales.

The inn is a stone building that looks to be quite old. The Great Room is the first thing you see when you enter. In the back of the room is a long bar, with a large room that has open seating and several round pine tables with 6-8 wooden chairs, giving the area more the look of a nobleman's hunting lodge than an inn and tavern. There is a massive fireplace in the center, animal hides, large fish and taxidermied heads mounted on plaques and hung on the wall. Fur rugs cover the floor, and patrons sit at the finely crafted wooden tables and chairs kept in fine condition even though they look to be antiques. There are no windows in this room and it is lit only by the fireplace and some strategically placed lanterns, so it is always dark, but cozy and inviting, even during the day. Merchants and nobles (and spies and thieves) like to meet here because there is no outside noise, no windows to be seen from, and the low light makes it easy to conceal one's identity, especially in the corners away from the fireplace and dim lanterns.

The 24 bedrooms are much larger than most available in town, each with a fireplace, dimly lit lamps, a large, cushy bed, luxurious down feather pillows, and piles of soft furs for blankets. The bedposts, trunk, table and two wooden chairs have the same quality and etched designs as the furniture in the great room of the tavern. Here, for 110 gold a night, you can sleep in a large king-size bed or sleep several travelers in the same bed. Each bed is built in the traditional style of the North Folk and is designed to comfortably accommodate three or four sleepers (6-7 cramped), or one or two giant-sized individuals. Her 10 suite rooms are



twice the size, for 300 gold, and come with the same, single oversized bed, a large table with six chairs, two easy chairs, a dresser and a private bathroom.

Elenor is beautiful (P.B. 23), kind and extremely well-liked (M.A. 20), but there is a melancholy sadness about her, even before her husband's death. She can be flirtatious at times, but does so in an innocent manner, almost as if she is not aware of what she is doing. When men make advances toward her, she becomes shy and dismisses them. Elenor has a secret, she is a *Selkie* – a type of aquatic Faerie Folk whose natural form is that of a seal. A Selkie can shed her seal skin to appear human and walk amongst them. However, if their seal skin is stolen by the mortal and hidden, the Selkie must become that human's mate. This is sad because the Selkie is a creature of the sea, and will always long to return. This is exactly how Elenor became the wife of her late husband. He stole her seal skin and has kept it hidden for years. Though she has come to enjoy her life in Bizantium, Elenor would love to get her "seal skin" back so she could enjoy life as both a human and as a Selkie swimming in the sea. To transform into her animal-Faerie form she must recover her seal hide. Even facing execution, her husband would not reveal where it had been hidden. Elenor will pay handsomely (50,000 gold; most of her savings) for the return of her Selkie seal skin, a quest she asks of heroes and adventurers she believes can be trusted with her secret and who seem up to the task. As a Faerie Folk, she has friendships with various Brownies, Pixies, Faeries, Grogach, and Mermaids that live on the big island – all in secret, of course. In fact, a trio of Brownies named Glitch, Mitch and Michelle and a Frost Pixie named Ragah secretly work at the inn, cleaning and helping their beloved friend Elenor.

The Purple Rose: Located east of the Market Star, the Purple Rose is a high-class bordello with some of the prettiest and priciest ladies of the evening in town. A room for the night filled with pillows and silks is 500 gold, and that's without a "companion" (add another 500-1,500 gold an hour for that). The brothel is very discreet with a number of secret doors, rooms and passages to "hide and protect" clients from their angry spouses, jealous lovers and, well, anyone looking for them. There are also several back doors and secret exits, including a tunnel that leads to the Star Market district and another that leads to a small garden and statue of Algor.

The brothel looks like something teleported from the Empire of Sin and is run by *Celeste Loveless*, a Western Empire actress (9th level; Anarchist, I.Q. 13, M.A. 24, P.B. 20), who involved herself in far too many goings-on at the Imperial Court. She came to Bizantium to hide from assassins and bounty hunters who are looking to cash in on the 25,000 gold bounty on her head – set by Emperor Itomas himself! She is wanted for the murder of *Declar Decurance*, the only son of House Decurance, a long-time friend and political ally of House Itomas. Rumor has it his death may have something to do with his sister *Gievi*, a concubine of the Emperor who bore him an illegitimate son. Celeste still has a weak-spot for intrigue and nobility, lives for rumors and involves her in politics and affairs better left alone – she just cannot help herself. This means she personally knows many nobles, merchants, spies and assassins – and some of their secrets, weaknesses, desires and fears, as well as how to contact them – which means it is only a matter of time before she gets herself into hot water in Bizantium as well. She is addicted to gossip, secrets and courtly intrigue, and already knows too much about too many shady characters and affairs of the court.

The Sailor's Sackhouse: Located in the *Dock District*, this two-story, timber-framed building has accommodations consisting of 60 small rooms with straw mats, plus a large common room with 100 places to sleep on mats on the floor and another 100 hammocks strung to posts in the big room for a better sleeping experience.

The innkeeper is a heavysset, male human named *Tindyr Aegfrid*, a retired sailor (7th level, Scrupulous). He charges 5 gold a night for a mat on the floor, 10 for a hammock and 30 for one of the small, private rooms regardless of how many people cram themselves inside (three fit laying on the floor comfortably, 6-10 crammed in like sardines). He sells a bowl of his famous vegetable and mystery meat stew for one gold and a mug of strong stout for an additional one gold. Those truly in need get the stew for free and are charged half the cost to spend the night on the floor in the common room. The place is usually packed to the gills with sailors sleeping off a night of too much revelry, and fishermen, dockworkers and adventurers who just need a place to sleep for the night or are down on their luck.

The Sackhouse is extremely safe, and troublemakers are tossed out on their ear by Tindyr's "associate," Greyrok the Wolfen (6th level Warrior, Unprincipled) and his two Ogre enforcers, Bruli and Duully (3rd and 4th level Sailors respectively, both Anarchist). Tindyr's four adult sons are also quick to settle down troublemakers. Patrons are either passed out or appreciate this place, so serious trouble is rare. The Sailor's Sackhouse is much nicer, cleaner and safer than a common flophouse, which is usually filthy and dangerous.

The Sailor's Haven: Located in the *Dock District*, this three-story, stone structure is said to be one of the oldest taverns and boarding houses on the docks. Rooms are basic and clean, a night's stay is 40-70 gold depending on how many it can sleep (2-6), and is free from crooks and riffraff. The many regulars who frequent the tavern and stay at the place help handle security and bounce troublemakers and criminals. Rumor has it that non-humans who are willing to remain quiet and unobtrusive can also get a room. This is true. What most people don't know is the Sailor's Haven was built by Dwarves 379 years ago, and there are another two, subterranean levels of rooms reserved for non-humans and regulars who like the peace and quiet.

The tavern attached to the inn is always a lively place filled with sailors, Dwarves and visitors. There is a large variety of beers, ales, wine and some hard liquor (many imported). Soups, stews, tuna, and sea serpent steaks are all part of the food menu and cost 3-10 gold and come with a strong drink.

The Sleepy Captain: Located in a ramshackle portion of the City Docks is a tavern and inn that is little more than a large, wooden shack, with several shuttered windows and a dirt floor covered in straw. There are a few rows of benches for seating along the wall, otherwise people sit on the floor. A small bar at one end sells cheap beer (one gold per glass) and moonshine (three gold per glass). A large iron cauldron sits in the center of the common room. Each day something "new" is cooking in the pot. A bowl of soup or stew, or mush (or whatever is cooking), a slice of oat bread, and a pint of ale costs 5 gold. The innkeeper is an eccentric Serpent Chaser (7th level; Anarchist) named *Knorr Granason*, a devotee of Algor. Anyone bearing a tattoo of a trident – the mark of Algor – gets his first bowl of soup and pint of ale for free.

Kirsgen Yard

The Kirsgen Yard is the only shipyard in Bizantium established and run by the Crown and the Bizantian people, rather than one of the powerful Noble Houses. It is the largest shipyard in the entire Kingdom, not just on the island, with a few thousand workers that turn out several full-sized vessels and dozens of small boats every month.

Most shipyards in the Palladium World have many of the same features as the Kirsgen Yard. The following description can be used as a template for any *Bizantium shipyard*, or, for that matter, any shipyard found in the *Western Empire*, *Eastern Territory*, *Timiro Kingdom*, *Phi*, and *Lopan*. Shipyards of the Wolfen, Elves, Cyclops or other inhuman species, as well as those in the Land of the South Winds, are different, but organized along similar lines.

A. Brickyard and Kiln: Bricks, surprisingly enough, are needed in many aspects of ship construction. Everywhere on a ship where there is to be fire, from the main galley to the smallest watch lights, must be lined or constructed from brick. The shipyard also produces brick for sale to the city and for export, mainly to the Shadow Colonies, always in need of new building materials.

B. Sail Yard: Sail-making is an industry in and of itself. Tons of hemp must be imported from *Timiro* and the *Eastern Territory* (it grows poorly any farther north), separated into long strands, then spun into thread and woven into the canvas used for sails. Silk sails are also used, but the cost is almost thirty-times higher since they must be woven to order and imported from the distant *Western Empire* or *Land of the South Winds*. The yard is also used for storing bolts of sail cloth, as well as coils of rope (also made from hemp).

C. Wood Seasoning: This huge, open building houses all the wood while it is pressed and/or seasoned. Preparing wood is a process that can take three years of storage or more.

D. Stables: Four teams of six, giant draft-horses and another four teams of mules and their handlers are based here. Mostly they are used for hauling wagons or timbers (remember, a single tree-trunk could weigh several tons). The teams and their handlers also have to be expert enough to help in the actual ship construction, such as when the two, massive sides of a ship are lifted up against the keel. For the assembly of a major ship, weighing 1500 tons or more, every man and animal in the yard, plus a few hundred recruits from town, are needed.

E. Main Slips: This area is part wood structure and part earth-works. A roof protects the ship construction from rain and snow, but there are no walls. In heavy weather, or during cold months, large tarps are put up along the sides. The area is designed to be flooded, either in whole or part, so that the completed ship can float during high tide.

The Shipwrights: The following three buildings all fall under the auspices of the *Master Shipwright*: Joiners' Shop, Carpentry Shop, and Blockmakers.

F. Joiners' Shop: A large, open building used for forming and joining the various wooden parts of the ship. Most woodwork is done either in this building or on the partially constructed ship itself. Hundreds of special woodworking tools are stored and guarded in this building. It also contains the office of the Master Shipwright, the person ultimately in charge of the ship's construction and the one who makes sure that the plans are followed

correctly. Under the Master Shipwright are the other master journeymen and apprentice shipwrights; perhaps half the entire workforce of the yard.

G. Carpentry Shop: This is where rough logs are sawed into finished pieces. The Master Carpenter's main job is to recognize the best way to cut up a tree. For a straight Forest Oak, it's just a matter of deciding the thickness of the planks and the best angle of attack on the grain. Crooked trees, bent trees, and trees with large branches, however, are outlined and cut into the various curved and angled pieces of wood needed for shipbuilding.

H. Blockmakers: Here are the workrooms where all the ship's smaller wood objects are made. These include blocks for block-and-tackle systems, belaying pins, spars, oars, and ballista weapons.

I. Clock Tower: Unlike most of the Palladium World, where time is measured by the position of the sun in the sky, shipbuilding is often an around-the-clock enterprise. Long hours and even extra shifts are often necessary to meet deadlines and avoid late payments. A full-time Keeper of the Clock lives and works here with his family. He also serves as one of the twelve night watchmen who patrol the yard at night and on holy days.

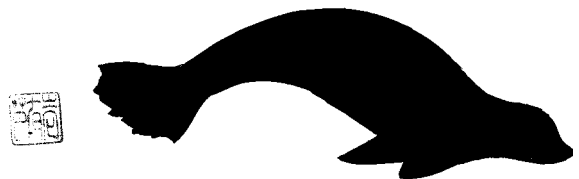
J. Caulking Shop: Caulking is the waterproofing technique used in all of Bizantium's wooden ships. It involves applying hot pitch to the cracks between the boards or driving hemp, impregnated with pitch, between the cracks. This is steady work for the 40 caulking specialists who work on new ships and refurbish older vessels.

K. Main Stores: This warehouse holds most of the imported items that are used in bulk by the yard. Barrels of tallow for candles and for treating wood; turpentine for tar thinner, wood varnish, and sulfur.

L. Smithy: Up to 50 workers, under the direction of the Master Smith, operate the eight, huge furnaces that supply the yard with its iron and steel. The factory is never idle, since the yard will take contracts to produce anything from plowshares to darn-ing hooks. Iron rings, bolts, screws, nails, spikes, anchors, chains, and all the woodworking tools of the yard are produced here. Not surprisingly, in Bizantium there are *no* Dwarves or Kobolds to be found in this area, unlike other shipyards throughout other human controlled nations.

M. Main Offices: There are actually several buildings used to house the various Crown and Noble House officials who oversee ship construction. The main business offices of the yard are here, as well as the office of the Naval Engineer, the man responsible for the design, construction, and/or repair of ships, boats, other marine vessels, and offshore structures, both commercial and military.

N. Temple of Algor: In Bizantium, this is a small temple where several Priests of Algor live to service the needs of the yard. Before the launch of any Bizantian ship, a Priest of Algor must first give it a proper blessing and anoint it with holy seawater.





Other Cities of Note

The City of Wujik

Population: 50,000

Wujik, Bizantium's second largest city, has not traditionally enjoyed the best of reputations. Set on the banks of the mighty River Krkyn, this industrial giant is a gray and soot-covered city. However, in the last decade, House Bardomus has set in motion numerous work projects that are slowly bringing change to the city.

The town is based around the production of lamp oil, turpentine, pitch, and pine tar. Processing pine trees to make these ship-building necessities results in a stench that lingers over the city and as far as 15 miles (24 km) downwind, noticeable to all, but particularly pungent to first-time visitors. This is why some visiting sailors refer to it as the "Black City" and "Port Brimstone."

Though Wujik is a huge, sprawling city with a river running through the middle, it is well laid out and a visitor can walk from one end of the city to the other in just a few hours along its network of paths and bridges. There was once a canal system planned to let boats move through the city, but the operation was abandoned and many canals are now filled in.

Shipbuilding and logging are still major industries along the upper stretches of the river, but the city has suffered some economic decline. For several decades, House Bardomus and their shipyard suffered from a lack of investment and innovation due to growing competition from other Noble Houses and their shipyards like Norbert and Vatzes, further weakening the once pre-eminent position of Wujik's industries.

Ten years ago, the creation of the *Stone Ships* caused a significant resurgence for House Bardomus and Wujik's economic fortunes. Re-energized, Wujik's role as the city of invention brought new business and finances, and with them, the means to improve conditions and make it more attractive to outsiders to come and visit, especially during the annual Trade Festival, a showcase for inventors, tinkers and engineers. This festival is not just for shipbuilding anymore, but for any invention that might promote "a better world." Sponsored by House Bardomus, the winner receives 10,000 gold and the right to sell their products in the city with the Noble House's approval and endorsement. This has led to the establishment of the Arok College of Engineering and Invention, that is attracting and keeping inventors and builders in the city.

The Stone Ship industry and advancement of engineering and sciences attracts both scholars and practitioners of magic. Nowhere else in the entire Northern Isles can mages be seen openly conversing on city streets. The laws of Bizantium regarding the teaching and selling of magic are strictly enforced in Wujik, however, especially by the ever watchful eyes of the Church of Algor. Every mage who comes to the city stands before the congregation and swears: "*I will be a lawful man and bear loyalty to our lord, the king and his heirs, and to my lord Bardomus and his heirs, and I will be a servant to the people of Bizantium, so help me in the name of Algor the mighty.*"

All visiting mages must be sponsored by a merchant Noble House in order to set foot on Bizantium soil. Their name, where they are staying, their sponsor and purpose for the visit are all recorded. They are warned that when one mage breaks the law, two

additional sorcerers associated with the sponsoring Noble House are deported from the island. The one guilty of the actual crime may suffer additional fines, punishment, imprisonment or public execution, and the sponsoring House also suffers steep fines. This is done to keep magic practitioners in line or else. And it works. Many Noble Houses won't even risk bringing mages into the Kingdom.

The process of creating Stone Ships is legal according to Bizantium law, but the teaching of the magic behind it is not, at least not on Bizantium itself. Therefore, House Bardomus instructs its Warlocks and mages at the colony of **Stone Coven**, far enough away to avoid offending anyone's religious sensibilities. As far as the Crown is concerned, this is more than satisfactory. The Church of Algor remains suspicious, but finds itself powerless in the face of the Crown's desire for Stone Ships. Meanwhile, Prince Grayen and his associates continue to look for mages willing to work for the good of the Kingdom. The creation of Stone Ships is too important for the future of Bizantium to allow the Church to stop it based on accusations of breaking religious and social protocol. House Bardomus and its supporters have a fleet of Stone Ships to build, and will not let anyone or anything get in their way.

Despite Wujik's economic renaissance, the East End of the city remains the "Black City," and where the working class live. The gap between prosperous and deprived areas of the city is widening as the benefits of new industry are unevenly distributed. Freeman make up only 30% of the workforce in Wujik, the rest are peasantry and city laborers who barely make enough to support their families.

Notable Locations in the City of Wujik

The Old City (City Center)

1. Wujik Cathedral: One of the oldest religious sites on Bizantium, an ancient Eoten place of worship existed here for a thousand years. The later North Folk eventually built a much larger and modern-looking cathedral dedicated to the Northern Gods. Though quite a bit smaller than the *Temple of Algor*, Wujik Cathedral is the second most popular place of worship within the Northern Isles due in large part to its history. The site is considered sacred, and many claim they hear the voice of Algor when they pray. **High Sister Olevea Latharsis** runs the cathedral. She is a very public worshiper of Algor and the Northern Pantheon, but secretly, she and her priestess promote the Cult of Brgg. Brgg is an ancient god, the outcast brother of Algor and the father of Od, but his wicked and chaotic ways got him banished by the rest of the gods and removed from the pantheon. Some Eoten traditionalists, like Sister Olevea, quietly and secretly hold onto the old ways and revere the ancient dark god. They claim their devotion is pure and dedicated to creating balance amongst the Northern Pantheon, but their true ambitions are much more sinister. (See *Olevea Latharsis* in the **Key NPCs** section for more details.)

2. The Necropolis Cemetery: Located on a prominent hill to the east of Wujik Cathedral is the city's largest cemetery. Fifty thousand individuals are buried here, most of them victims of the Western Empire's invasion or the Great Plague. There are no traditional North Folk buried in the cemetery as the old Northern death rites require burial at sea, and is still a common practice.

3. Hospital.

4. 10 foot Statue of Bizar.

5. Nalur's Brewery: Ale can be bought here for 5 gold per gallon; sold in 5 gallon barrels. The brewery supplies most of the taverns of Dockside.

6. Arok College of Engineering and Invention: This is the newest building in the city. It is located on a small campus surrounded by other schools and workshops where students and volunteers can work on their inventions for House Bardomus. Instruction in seamanship, shipbuilding, mathematics, all aspects of engineering and different sciences are taught, and experimental concepts explored. The school also provides courses in astronomy, art, language, masonry, music and writing.

The Merchant City (East Side)

7. The Old Sailor Inn. The exterior of this building is as black as the pitch made in this part of town. The decor inside is comfy, its furniture a bit worn and overdue for repair or replacement. Visiting sailors looking for a safe, warm, no-frills place to sleep for the night flock to the inn. One night's stay costs 30 gold.

8. The Green Shark Tavern. A huge neighborhood pub and local hangout where workers come to unwind, complain, play darts, play cards, roll dice and relax with their hard-working brethren. Visitors and adventurers are instantly recognized as outsiders and regarded with considerable suspicion. Those who look puny, well-educated or wealthy are subject to pranks, practical jokes, cruel tricks, and snide remarks. In short, they don't belong here with the underpaid working class, and resentment quickly turns hostile and may lead to harsh words, tripping, pushing, shoving, brawling, and very possibly physically thrown out of the tavern. Any display of magic other than by a Warlock or priest causes an all-out riot with the mage and his friends likely to get the snot beat out of them unless they can get outside and run for their lives.

There are two large bars, but both only serve a selection of beer, including Dwarven ale, and hard liquor. A mug of beer is one gold, two for Dwarven ale, hard liquor costs two gold, and a hearty sea serpent stew, two gold, a serpent steak, four gold. There are a few back rooms reserved for card and dice games involving serious money, and for private meetings, and one room with six bunks where some of the regulars sleep it off when they drink too much. The atmosphere is usually loud and rowdy, with plenty of laughter and drunken singing.

9. The Thankful Trader: Franmar, a true North Folk descendant (7th level merchant, Unprincipled alignment), is masterful at accurately appraising goods as well as identifying ancient artifacts and items that date back to the Eoten. He charges 70 gold for providing detailed information about archaic artifacts, map reading, and language deciphering. His shop is full of new and used trade goods sold 20% below the standard price. No weapons, armor, or magic, but he offers a good range of tools and common items for adventuring, hunting, fishing, and sailing, as well as a handful of small statues and objects items with old Eoten writing on them. **Note:** Well versed in Eoten myths and Bizantium history, Franmar would instantly recognize any of the Seven Treasures and knows the powers each holds.

10. Thordril's Leatherworker.

11. Snikdreg's Tannery.

12. The Ruddy Dog: A North Folk Glassblower who can trace his lineage back 2,000 years. His work is of excellent quality and he makes an excellent living with his blown glass. However, he supplements his income by trading in contraband, including

magic items, and can put “clients” in contact with members of the Thieves’ Guild or men willing to work as hired muscle (ex-pirates, ex-marines, and mercenaries, levels 1D6).

13. Cartographer. He reads and deciphers maps and sells basic maps of the Northern Islands and Northern Sea. He has no trouble informing the Crown about people who have acquired navigational maps that the Crown would declare illegal to own and confiscate for its own archives.

14. Office of Nathaniel the Scribe (11th Level Scholar). He not only writes letters, but transcribes almost all human and ancient languages for 30 gold per page. He has four scribe assistants (all level 1D4+2 Scholars), one of whom is a spy for the Western Empire.

15. Gautrek’s Silk Shop: A large business run by a 10th level trader who deals in textiles, bolts of cloth, fur and handmade clothing imported from outside the Northern Islands. There are plenty of silks from the Western Empire and Land of the South Winds, as well as fabrics from Timiro, the Eastern Territory and the Old Kingdom (usually Elven). Tailors on site make excellent clothing at fair prices. Gautrek employs 136 people, amongst them at least one Western assassin and a couple of spies for the Western Empire and Eastern Territory. The business owner doesn’t know anything about spies and would be surprised to learn any of his employees are such scoundrels.

16. The Wujik Steeple: The 126 foot (38.4 m) bell tower chimes during festivals and special occasions as well as warnings. It also serves as the place for public hangings.

17. Hodbrodd Theater: This 1000 year old building is the home of the Wujik Theater Club, where the entertainers produce their own shows in-house. It is also a receiving house for visiting shows, including comedy and music from the Western Empire, Timiro, and Eastern Territory.

18. Guthrom Fruit Market: Nowhere else will one find sellers of such a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs from all over the Palladium World.

19. Residential Square: Here are found the lavish homes of the city’s wealthiest merchants and Freemen.

20. The Winterless Garden. This 2,000 square foot (186 sq. m) garden is magically preserved by permanent spells of Atmosphere Manipulation and Grow Plants, and summer flowers and staple crops grow year round. The garden has existed for millennia, and legend say it is a gift from Algor, and that as long as it stays in bloom, the city and its people shall enjoy the blessings of the sea god.

The Tavern District (West Side)

21. The Wandering Rat Tavern: This seedy dive is a tavern and flophouse that also functions as the secret headquarters of the Bizantium Thieves’ Guild, *Murderers of the Sea*. A number of professional assassins’ are part of the guild, but they rarely take jobs against Bizantians unless the punishment fits the crime. Drinks are cheap at the Wandering Rat, but the place is crawling with thieves, pirates and other unsavory individuals.

22. The Wujik Grinning Goblin Tavern: A smaller version of the Grinning Goblin found in Bizantium, it is an ever-popular tavern and hotel franchise found at many locations in the Northern Islands. This one is a two story, timber building. In the courtyard, riders dismount and leave their animals in the hands of stableboys who hurry out to take charge of the horses. This service is included in the cost of a single night’s stay (50-100 gold per night), though tips are appreciated. A variety of poultry, fish, seal

and, the house’s most famous dish, grilled shark, is served along with high-quality beer and spirits for the cost of 10 gold per plate. Adventurers and outsiders welcomed, and it is often filled with other adventurers, successful mercenaries, ship captains, pirates and visitors from the mainland and other realms.

23. The Kraken Inn and Tavern: This establishment is always filled with fishermen, whalers and Serpent Chasers. A preserved piece of a “kraken tentacle” hangs from the ceiling. The owner, *Hamal Kol* (9th level, retired Serpent Chaser, Scrupulous), claims to have fought and slain the beast himself, just ten miles (16 km) northwest of the Island of Torn. Hamal is a wealth of information, rumor and stories about the **Iceborn** and their dead serpent ships, and claims to have seen their Necroilus from a distance on two separate occasions, and actually fought the Iceborn when his captain thought he was rescuing a couple of shipwreck survivors fished out of the Northern Sea. The pair of monsters slew five crewmen and injured six others, including himself, before they were slain. Hamal claims the long, wicked scar across his chest (which he is proud to display at the slightest hint of interest), is a souvenir from that encounter. So is the bone sword that hangs below the Kraken tentacle.

Perhaps, needless to say, the Kraken Inn is a favorite place for Serpent Chasers, monster hunters, sailors, adventurers and outsiders. The owner, Hamal, is a gregarious and friendly guy who loves to hear stories, rumors and gossip so that he can add them to his already impressive repertoire. A natural born storyteller, himself, Hamal’s stories never seem to get old and many regular patrons enjoy hearing the same tales, time and time again. Anyone looking for the latest gossip, news abroad, rumors about the Noble Houses and info about sea monsters, Wolfen or the Iceborn need to speak with Hamal.

Drinks range from 1-4 gold, food includes perfectly prepared dishes of squid and octopus for 9-12 gold a plate, as well as sea serpent and rice, sea serpent and potatoes, and sea serpent steak with big hunk of bread and cheese, all for 8 gold a plate. Sea serpent tongue, a delicacy said to increase a man’s virility, costs 20 gold a plate and is very popular. Rooms are simple but clean for 35-60 gold a night.

24. The Toad and Horse: This inn is owned by a heavyset human woman named *Wene Gelhne*. She is a retired mercenary (9th level, Anarchist) who served aboard the pirate ship *Nightmare of the Sea*. Rumor has it she keeps a collection of navigational charts of distant lands, including one for the island of Lemaria, one with for getting to the Ilse of the Cyclops and the Sea of Dread, and one to the Great Ice Shelf (though she claims to never have been to the latter).

25. The Sea Gallery: Home to the strange taxidermist, *Edge Seagrave*, a retired 11th level Water Warlock (Anarchist alignment), who has preserved hundreds of species of fish, sea creatures, and aquatic humanoids. Edge claims to know the Sea of Despair like the back of his hand.

26. Bekkhild Boarding House: This place is a high-end brothel that allows for lots of extracurricular activities.

Riverside (North Side)

27. Wujik Sawmill.

28. Lumberyard.

29. Turpentine and Pine Tar Production.

30. Moldan’s Paper Mill.

31. Equipment and Supply Storage.

32-34. Warehouses.

35. Barge Repair & Storage.

36-37. Log Corral.

38. Warlock Guild: This three-story mansion is home to the local guild and includes a Temple for Elementalism. The guild is under constant surveillance by the Church of Algor. So far, 30 Warlocks (11 Earth, 7 Water, 7 Air, and 5 Fire, ranging from levels 4-10) make up the guild and serve as the mystical workforce employed by House Bardomus. Unlike the Warlock Council in Bizantium and the Shadow Coast colonies, each is loyal to house Bardomus and the Kingdom of Bizantium. All are sworn to secrecy regarding the processes used in making the Stone Ships, though truth be told, each only knows a tiny fragment of the process in which they are directly involved. Even all together, they know less than half of what's needed to build the vessel.

39. Klym's Furniture Manufacturing and Retail Store. This is a massive compound with a storefront that sells a vast range of furniture and trunks at reasonable prices. 190 people are employed, and it seems they can always use part-time or temporary work from those with a strong back and are not afraid of a little hard work. Artisans can also find work here.

40. Wagonsmith: Builds and repair wagons.

41. Bizantium Smelting Works: Iron ore and coal must be imported into Bizantium. Both are brought to this smelter. The melted refined metal is poured into molds and cooled into ingots. The bars and rods made here are sold to blacksmiths, armorers, and weaponsmiths all over the Northern Islands.

42. The North Kingdom Smelting Works: A separate furnace building that appears to be part of the Smelting Works, but is secretly used for smelting silver and gold. Very few know of its true purpose as the official *Royal Bizantium Mint* where the ingots are turned into coin of the realm. This secret location is known only to the Crown, House Bardomus and House Norbert. According to rumor, wherever the "secret location" is, Dwarves perform the smelting underground. Another rumor claims that the Royal Mint is disguised as a fishing village or remote farm. Nobody suspects the Smelting Works.

43. Bori's Tannery and Leather Supply: A middle-aged, traditional North Man (8th level Trapper, Scrupulous) produces raw materials for making leather goods, but also offers a nice selection of leather clothing, gloves, boots, long coats, and armor. He makes some of the best leather armor in the entire Kingdom.

Wujik Dockside (South Side)

Shipyard compound. Essentially the same buildings found in the Kirsgen Yard in Bizantium.

A. Brickyard and Kiln.

B. Sail Yard.

C. Wood Seasoning.

D. Stables. Horese and mules.

E. Main Slips.

F. Joiners' Shop.

G. Carpentry Shop.

H. Blockmakers.

I. The Stone Yard: The area is surrounded by a massive stone wall 40 feet (12.1 m) high and 20 feet (6 m) thick. Stories claim the four walls were built using elemental magic (each bears several prominent wards of permanence). The building of the Stone Ships takes place behind these walls. There is no gatehouse; people come and go via the stone towers (see below). The yard is

large enough to build four ships at the same time. Presently, two Frigates are being worked on, with the hulls of two other ships beginning to take shape.

J1 and J2. Stone Towers: Three-story buildings guarded by sixteen soldiers each. Inside Tower 1, a large staircase descends 22 feet (6.7 m) beneath the surface into an underground tunnel of Dwarven construction. The tunnel runs beneath the elemental walls and connects to the other tower, inside the Stone Yard, guarded by a dozen soldiers and the tower captain, a 9th level Earth Warlock. Two Stone Golems under the complete authority of the Warlock serve as additional tower guardians, standing at full attention within the inner tower.

K. Main Stores: This warehouse holds most of the supplies used by the shipyard's workers.

L. Smithy: Same as found in Kirsgen Yard.

M. Main Offices: Same as found in Kirsgen Yard.

N. House Bardomus Mansion: Seaside residence of Prince Bardomus and the rest of his family, a large stone building with verandas and well-maintained gardens. The front of the home faces the ocean; the back looks out over the shipyard.

O. Towers of the Magi: Four stone towers that provide housing for the ever-growing number of Diabolists, Summoners and Warlocks (the latter usually prefer the Warlock Guild) employed by House Bardomus. Presently, fourteen Diabolists and half a dozen Summoners are under contract with the Noble House. These mages range from 3rd to 7th level, with three of the Diabolists and two Summoners 8th to 10th level. For now, everyone is a loyal and willing worker, but rivalry and jealousy are common amongst those who wield magic powers.

P. Weaponsmith: *Mottull Jostein* (9th level Blacksmith) is Bizantium's preeminent weaponsmith, and a distant relative of the royal family. He and his two dozen assistants make metal weapons and armor, and have also developed the secretive process used to make *Red Barnacle armor*. His workshop is the only place on the Northern Islands where the armor is produced. With three months of back orders to finish, Jostein is working like mad to get them out. Mottull, Bori the Tanner, and Prince Grayen have monthly meetings to discuss Wujik politics and future innovations for the city and Kingdom in general.

Other Cities on the Island of Bizantium

Aquafel

Aquafel was originally the location of a fort constructed by Eastern settlers just a few years after the arrival of Bizas, and eventually, a small settlement grew up around the fort. During the Western Empire's invasion, the fort and town was seized by the Imperial Navy and expanded into the command center for their entire occupation effort. Two days after *King Usamo's* assassination, Bizantian Warlocks destroyed nearly all the Imperial Ships, including several merchant vessels, one rumored to be carrying a gift from the Emperor to Usamo. There has been much speculation as to what that gift could have been, from a piece of gold jewelry to a Lesser Rune Weapon, but nothing was recovered at the time, and whatever the vessel carried is still buried in Aquafel's bay.

Once the Western invaders were gone, Aquafel was governed by an oligarchy of fourteen merchant families, as opposed to a single Noble House. Lumber had always been the city's biggest industry, and once the eastern forests of Bizantium were severely depleted, it became necessary to begin lumbering in the western and central interior of the island. Aquafel quickly grew into the destination of choice to pick up lumber floated downstream from Lake Trembly. Timber-cutting operations have turned this once small settlement into a boom-town of over 7000 inhabitants, even with growing restrictions on logging on the island of Bizantium itself and competition due to imports from the Shadow Coast and the Great Northern Wilderness.

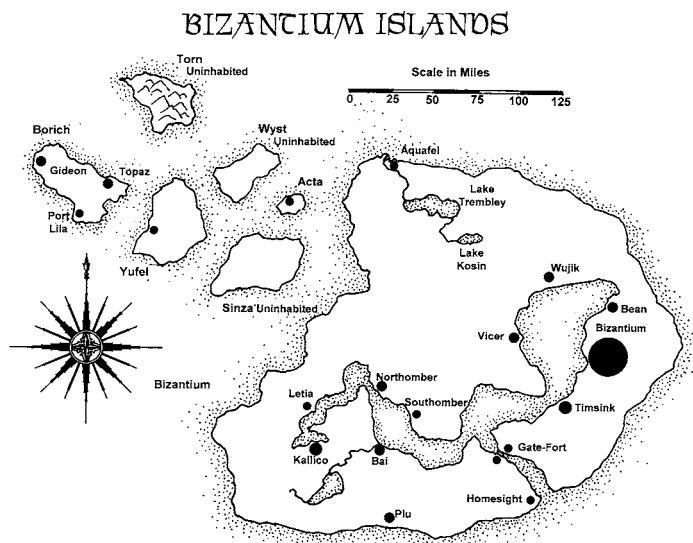
Bai

Located at the mouth of the Bai River, the city was founded by a famed Easterner fisherman and companion of Bizas. In time, he established a close relationship with the North Folk living on the opposite side of the river, and soon a trading center was erected. Four hundred years later, the *Bai Bridge* was built across the river, allowing the Bizantians and traditional North Folk to travel back and forth without the use of boats. As the centuries passed, Bai continued to prosper, but the plague years took a devastating toll on the city, wiping out a staggering 95% of the town's population! With so many dead, most of the bodies were simply weighted-down and tossed into the sea, creating a massive graveyard of unsanctified human remains just off the coast. It has taken almost one hundred and fifty years for the city to recover from this devastating loss, and there are still parts of the city that are basically uninhabited. Along the beaches, Banshees are said to wail for those who died too soon. Today, Bai continues to be a major exporter of dried cod and has established itself as the center of the trade for Southern Bizantium.

As the largest port in House Malemore territory, Bai is also the home base of many of Duke Malemore's "House Mariners" and "privateers," pirates in everything but name. Despite his standing decree that they be on good behavior in Bizantium's ports, these are professional thieves and killers and their presence cannot help but transform Bai's downtown and dockside districts. Gambling, prostitution, smuggling and other activities mean the town's 2000 native residents tend to only go down to the docks when they have to, and tend to lock their doors at night.

Bean

The town was originally established as a trading post by House Ducasian shortly after the Western Empire Invasion. Years later, in an effort to protect the remaining family members from persecution, the family gave up all right and claims to the city to House Bardomus. As fiefholders found it increasingly difficult to raise crops in the area's long-cultivated soil, House Bardomus decided to industrialize the city, building warehouses, textile mills and lumberyards. Before long, the small trading town grew into a thriving city, and now has over 3000 inhabitants. Many of its people work in a 'cannery' established by Prince Grayen, a factory that uses boiling and strong salt solutions to preserve food for long sea voyages. Only time will tell if these 'canned goods' catch on, but Bizantium's mariners are starting to spread them across the entire world in their voyages.



Gate Fort

This fabled landmark is the Kingdom of Bizantium's strongest military fortification. Gate Fort's two stone towers stand two hundred feet (61 m) high, on each side of the Bizas Inlet, the only entrance into the Inland Sea. The northeast tower compound is much larger, with a dozen Warlocks and three dozen siege weapons for attacking enemy ships that might attempt to invade. A port and town of 4,000 people, either employed by, or active officers in, the Bizantium Navy surrounds the northeast tower. The southwest tower is manned only by a military garrison of 200 soldiers, six Waterchanters, five Fire Warlocks, four Air Warlocks, three Water Warlocks and two Earth Warlocks.

Both towers are built along thick walls equipped with more than two dozen ballista mounted on carts to give them increased maneuverability. Manned by crews of three gunners, the ballista can be moved up and down the wall while continuously firing upon ships caught within the inlet. Each ballista is equipped with an arsenal of no less than 50 spear-sized projectiles (1D4x10 points of damage). These crews are so well trained that they can fire each ballista once every four minutes (16 melee rounds).

Besides the ballista, each tower has six *Mangonels*, wheeled catapults that are designed to fire a variety of massive projectiles, from stones to flaming pitch to rotting carcasses. Range: 1,300 feet (396 m). The garrisons at Gate Fort practice twice a week shooting at moving targets, usually the hulks of burnt or rotting merchant ships towed through the inlet, but sometimes they'll target a sea serpent, whale or school of fish. So well trained are the garrisons, they suffer no W.P. penalty when firing at a moving target or at maximum distance. The typical stone ammunition utilized inflicts 1D6x10+10 points of damage.

For additional support, there are 16 long-bowmen (level 1-4), and two 6th level Warlocks, one Air and one Water, on duty at all times on top of the tower. The garrison is commanded by *Arthell Izengel*, a 7th level Palladin formerly of the Order of the Scale, who left the order after disagreeing with the Sect of Rurga and the Eastern Territory's desire to go to war with the Wolfen Empire.

While all the weaponry upon the walls are powerful and intimidating, Gate Fort's best defense goes unseen below the water. Between the two forts (a distance of 2,300 feet/701 m) is stretched **the Great Chain**, a wonder of magical construction built during the reign of *King Harald*, 1,100 years ago. The chain sits on the floor of the channel, allowing ships to pass overhead,

but winches within each fort can be turned to lift it up to the surface, to block ship passage. The Chain is virtually indestructible, making it impossible for any vessel to pass, even tiny rowboats and canoes. This bottleneck tactic lets the garrison lay siege to any entrapped vessels, but likewise the chain, if captured, could be used to “bottle up” Bizantium’s ships, trapping them in the Inland Sea.

For security reasons, the fortified town of Gate Fort itself is rarely visited by travelers and outsiders. Most of the residents are family members of the soldiers who man the defenses, so unauthorized visitors are noticed immediately in this small, close-knit community or warriors and their military families.

Homesight

Homesight is a small fishing town with a population of roughly 2,000 people. The coast along Homesight is more famous than the town itself, as it is the first true city that returning Bizantian ships pass on their way into the Inland Sea, and the last Bizantium’s sailors see as they leave their homeland behind. In addition to its fishing vessels, Homesight contains the *Terenal Shipyard*, specialists in salvage and repair, a few offices of the Bizantium Navy, and drinking halls and other establishments that cater to sailors.

Agriculture remains the dominant industry in the city, and has been since its founding. During the last century, potatoes replaced wheat and grain as the dominant crop, now accounting for one-third of the farmland in the area. The city was almost completely destroyed during the first invasion of the Western Empire, and that fear of being attacked continues to haunt its inhabitants, many of whom are ready to retreat back to Gate Fort at a moment’s notice. With the Great Northern Wilderness just across the Strait of Forlorn Hope, Homesight is also where one is most likely to encounter canine merchants, Sea Huntsmen and explorers, along with vessels entirely crewed by Wolfen, since it is more comfortable stopping here than in a big city like Bizantium or Wujik.

Kallico

A fishing village and popular retreat for Bizantian nobility, a large expanse of untouched wilderness reaches out from the city’s western tip. Kallico itself has a population of 5,000 permanent residents, but about 9,000 people actually live in this region, most of whom are traditional *North Folk* who continue to live as their tribal ancestors did for thousands of years. This part of the kingdom is considered to be its largest remaining undeveloped area, making it ripe for cultivating and harvesting future natural resources. Of course, this talk is usually confined to small circles amongst the major Noble Houses. Few are willing to challenge the true North Folk inhabitants, who may seem to be simple farmers, trappers, and hunters, but band together quickly to defend their traditional way of life.

Letia

For centuries, Letia was a small fishing and hunting village located on the eastern shore of the Inland Sea. Then, roughly a century ago, House Arfox learned that a region offshore called the Whale’s Eye was filled with spawning halibut during the

warmer months. To take advantage of the seasonal fish run, they developed Letia into a busy fishing port, filled with small, fast fishing vessels designed to carry nets, cast lines and make countless runs in and out of harbor during the brief window available to catch halibut.

During the long, lazy months of casual fishing between halibut runs, the fishermen of Letia began to compete amongst each other to see who had the fastest vessel. House Arfox’s shipwrights eventually became involved, always trying to outdo one another with faster new designs. It was not long before the legendary speed possessed by the Arfox boats began to intrigue other Noble Houses who wished to put their own ships to the test. Racing these vessels attracted public attention and quickly received approval from the Crown.

Sixty years ago, *King Raedaen II*, at the behest of House Arfox and Letia’s racing captains, announced the first **Bai Regatta**. The race begins and ends at Letia, and has transformed the village from a fishing and farm community into a major Bizantium port with a population of 11,000 inhabitants. Letia continues to be one of the major fishing centers for the Kingdom, but tourism and shipbuilding have become the city’s main sources of income. Between the yearly Regatta and the race held every five years by the Crown, Letia has become a popular destination for visitors not just from the Northern Islands, but for wealthy Westerners and Easterners as well. Letia is also known for its waterproof sealskin gloves and boots, a craft perfected by monks living in an ancient convent along the coast 900 years ago. The convent closed after the monks died out during the plague years, but the traditional glovemaking methods are being carried on by dozens of shops throughout the city. This is also the place to purchase small, fast sailing ships and racing boats.

Northomber

The city of Northomber is named after the Eastern merchant who settled here to establish a fish and fur trading business. Eleven years later, he left to build a sister city fifty miles (80 km) further down the coast which he named Southomber. Though Lord Northomber maintained business interests in both cities, his heirs eventually sold them off to various Noble Houses. Northomber is a major city and port on the western Inland Sea. Home to 12,500 inhabitants, Northomber is mainly a trading and industrial town, but is also well known for the beautiful, five-spired *Church of the North*, which, despite being dedicated to the Northern Pantheon, is closely associated with *King Harald the Holy*, making it a popular destination for worshipers of both Algor and the Church of Light.

Wages in Northomber are high because there are plenty of jobs to go around, but that doesn’t stop the infighting between those loyal to the city rulers, House Rhagnable, and House Conemus who control the shipping yard. Caught in the middle is the **Northomber Guard**, who try to maintain civility between the two Noble Houses, but owe their existence to House Rhagnable. There is talk amongst lesser nobles and within the Crown that the best way to solve the feud between the Houses is by marriage, and as it turns out House Rhagnable has many sons while House Conemus mostly has daughters. If the two Houses are unable to produce a match soon, the King will order a wedding to take place, choosing the bride and groom himself.

Plu

Plu is a fishing town that serves as a hub for roughly twenty small villages that line Bizantium's southwestern coast. Some of the villages are as small as a few dozen people. In addition to the fishing villages, there are numerous abandoned towns. Places where an entire settlement's population was killed off during the plague so long ago, but where locals are fearful to return, not just because many of the dead were never properly buried, but also because these ghost towns are said to be inhabited by numerous Entities, Ghouls and supernatural creatures, some say this includes Sea Ghouls. The Church of Algor is just now mounting a campaign to exorcize these places, urged on by the Crown and various Noble Houses looking to reclaim their lost property. These "ghost towns" have become refuges for bandits, fugitives from the law, and people on the run who use them as hideouts.

Southomber

The fourth largest city in the kingdom (population 21,000), Southomber includes the second biggest fishing harbor in Bizantium, the driving economic force for the entire city. Besides the fishing and sea serpent industry, Southomber is also home to the kingdom's largest textile manufacturing interests and stockyards. Most of the town's wealth and property is owned by the richest family in the kingdom, **House Norbert**. Most of the Freemen and laborers have no choice but to buy their food, clothing, and firewood exclusively from Norbert owned stores, whose prices are 10-30% higher than the standard cost of goods found throughout the rest of the kingdom. In the last ten years, both Freemen and Fiefholders have joined forces to announce their protest against this price gouging. Sometimes the Norbert mercenary guard (600 strong) must be called in to break up large protests when supplies run short or prices rise to be unaffordable for the average worker. Despite their heavy-handedness, some workers have formed the *Consolidated Bizantium Workers' Guild*. Its primary goals are to force House Norbert to increase pay and end the monopoly on necessities that the House controls.

Timsink

Timsink, with a population just under a thousand, is a small settlement built around a stockyard and dock that specializes in cattle raised in the surrounding countryside, and dairy products like milk, cheese and butter, and ships them off to the City of Bizantium and Wujik on a daily basis. Just outside town is a large cemetery. Among the graves lies the tombstone of the Elf Water Warlock, *Elhacl Ivorysailor*, a well known royal adviser to a past king.

Vicer

The architecture at the city of Vicer, population 4,000, is an anomaly within the Northern Islands. Visitors familiar with the Western Empire will swear they are no longer in Bizantium, as the city core is laid out in the Western style, with similar road designs, wooden houses and buildings with courtyards. The main reason is that House Ducasian is linked by marriage and commerce with powerful families in the Western Empire. The House manages Vicer, sending its wood, wool and sea serpent oil abroad and turning a permissive eye towards Western attitudes, cultural

practices and indulgences. It is the only place in the North where one is likely to see a Western merchant ship or Western merchants and immigrants openly walking down a city street. The city is rumored of becoming a reflection of the Empire of Sin, with all the corruption and decadence that comes with it. Rumors suggest that Vicer is home to Western spies, assassins, merchants and magical contraband.

Stonebrook

The city least known to outsiders and seldom visited by anyone, including the people of Bizantium, is the Dwarven City of **Stonebrook**. This is the community where the Dwarven engineers, builders, masons and their families live, away from the hustle and bustle of the human dominated kingdom. These are the Dwarves responsible for centuries of building castles, cathedrals, churches, stone buildings, roads, bridges, walls and fortifications found across the Kingdom of Bizantium. As non-humans, they are not allowed to become citizens, but the Dwarves hold an honored place within Bizantium for their centuries of service and loyalty. Their reward, to be allowed to build and live in their own city, and to be celebrated by almost all residents of the Kingdom. As a further honor and display of trust, the Dwarves are allowed to govern themselves and are left alone by the Crown, provided they continue to be loyal and maintain the buildings and fortifications they have built. And speaking of fortifications, below the picturesque city with its stone streets, fountains, courtyards and gardens, is a network of underground tunnels and chambers where the entire population can evacuate. Down in the dark, Dwarf-sized tunnels, the Dwarves have the advantage in combat and have many secret passages, tricks and traps they can use against a persistent enemy who follows them into their labyrinth.

The Dwarves of Stonebrook are happy to have found a safe haven in a world that is increasingly hostile to their species. Since the Dwarven people and their civilization is slowly vanishing, they appreciate having a wonderful home like Stonebrook where they can preserve their culture and live in peace. All residents of Stonebrook are loyal to the realm and will die in her defense.

The city of Stonebrook is located on the edge of the wilderness preserve, near Lake Kosin. Dwarves love nature and they volunteer to work at preserving one of the last woodlands on any of the islands. It is here that they have a secret they have not shared with anyone, not even the Crown. This is not an act of disloyalty, but rather an act of kindness to a being more rare than themselves – the magical and sentient Great Oak. This is a legendary **Tree of life**. They have successfully kept her presence in their city garden a secret for years. They keep her hidden for fear that the reckless monarchy or greedy Noble Houses would harm the tree; perhaps even destroy it out of abuse or fear. It is almost certain that the Crown, Noble Houses and Churches would fight over the Great Oak, want to move her for display at a more prominent and important place (like the palace) and try to exploit the magic tree in their favor. As a result, the Dwarves, as a community, have unanimously agreed the benevolent spirit of life and goodness should be kept secret. If the Tree of Life is ever discovered by any Noble House or the King (neither has ever set foot in their city all these years), the Dwarves plan to claim that the tree asked them in dream visions to keep her a secret until a time of need.

This Tree of Life has been named by the Dwarves, **the Great Oak**. She is a very rare mythological creature known to appear

in the world as a source of inspiration and hope, but the trees are almost always discovered by the forces of evil and destroyed. All Trees of Life are magical, sentient plants that resemble an oak tree (related to the *Millennium Tree*), and grow to a height of 300-400 feet (91.5 to 122 m). This one is only 500 years old, an immature mystic tree not even close in age to the **Tree of Life** found in the *Eastern Territory*. She does not yet realize exactly what she is or how she even came to be. She is not subject to the seasons, so her oak leaves never lose their green color. Her foliage can withstand the coldest of winters or the hottest and driest summers. Her sole source of nourishment comes from the ley line nexus that runs along Lake Kosin and through part of Stonebrook.

The Great Oak is very curious about the world around her and openly communicates with the Dwarves who visit her via dreams and inspiration. They treat her with a reverence the Great Oak does not understand, but she realizes they care about her and are protecting her, though from what, she does not quite get. The Great Oak uses her magic powers to reduce the intensity of any natural weather or geological phenomena (storms, earthquakes, etc.) in and around Stonebrook and Lake Kosin. There is a complete absence of disease beneath her canopy or within one mile (1.6 km) of her presence and those who visit and rest under her embrace feel safe and at peace.

The Great Oak can not, herself, speak, but she *listens* to every word spoken beneath her canopy, regardless if they are said by friend or foe (magically understands all languages 98%) and she possesses the equivalent of the psionic powers of Empathy and Total Recall. This enables her to remember every spoken word, laughter and kindness, as well as identify specific people by the sound of their voices (speech pattern, tone, inflection, choice of words, etc.). She can also determine if a person under her branches is happy or sad, nervous or angry, sincere or lying (80% accuracy if the person is known to her, 36% if they are not). Because of her immaturity, the Great Oak is *unable* to manifest the greater powers common to mature Trees of Life (abilities associated with Millennium Trees, including generating an Avatar). She is still learning about the people and the world around her. She is quite naive and very trusting, especially since she has really only known the good and well-intended Dwarves of Stonebrook, thus she can be easily tricked or deceived. Sadly, in order for her to learn about wickedness, cruelty and greed, the Great Oak must be exposed to them, otherwise she simply can not believe people like her Dwarven friends could be capable of hurting each other, engage in war, or do anything wicked. Nor will she understand why anyone might want to hurt her for any reason.

The Great Oak possesses the following abilities as an incredibly powerful Creature of Magic:

1. Impervious to normal weapons and non-magical fire, heat, and cold.

2. Impervious to disease and chemicals – does not need water or air to survive.

3. Resistant to energy attacks, including magical fire, lightning, etc.; all inflict half normal damage. Blows from Supernatural Strength, Rune Weapons, and most other magic weapons inflict normal damage.

4. The Great Oak can cast the following Earth Elemental spells at 3rd level proficiency (requires a saving throw of 12 or better); Animate Plants (10), Animate Object (12), Armor of

Earth (12; see Mysteries of Magic: One), Armor of Stone (24; see Mysteries of Magic: One), Chasm (25), Chameleon (5), Close Fissures (30), Cocoon of Stone (15), Dust Storm (5), Earth Rumble (10), Encase Object in Stone (10), Grow Plants (8), Hopping Stones (6), Little Mud Mound (35), Mend Stone (15), Mend Wood (10), Mend Metal (30), Petrification (40), Quick Sand (15), Repel Animal (10), Sand Storm (15), Secure Stone Foundation (30; see Mysteries of Magic: One), Wall of Clay (8), Wall of Stone (15), and Wall of Thorns (15). **Note:** The spells Chameleon and Repel Animal can be used at will without any cost in P.P.E. **Available P.P.E.:** 900, but recovers spent P.P.E. at a rate of 40 points per hour. **Range of Spells:** Double the usual range.

5. The Great Oak inspires those who live beneath its canopy to protect it from those who seek to cause it harm. So impassioned are these individuals that they are willing to fight to the death in order to secure the tree's safety. She also inspires people who visit her to do good and to be more tolerant and compassionate of others.

6. Magic Items as Gifts: In addition to her own unique powers, the Great Oak can give gifts of magic made from her leaves, bark and branches to those she deems worthy. When given to the Dwarves of Stonebrook, they seldom sell such items, though they do sometimes give them away as boons and rewards. **Note:** All spells/powers are equal to a spell cast by a **5th level Wizard**. The "cost" is what such items can command on the open market; very rare.

Magic Potion: The bark of the tree can be brewed to make holy water similar to that used by Priests of Light. Holy Water typically burns like acid when it comes into contact with vampires, ghouls, witches, and other lesser supernatural menaces, inflicting 3D6 points of damage. Holy water spilled in a circle prevents vampires or any undead from entering.

Magic Acorn: Consuming a single acorn provides the nourishment of an entire meal. A fistful of them could feed an adventurer for a week or two. Cost: 200 gold per acorn. Once eaten, it is gone.

Magic Dew Drop: The tiny bud of a leaf or acorn containing one dew drop. Swallow or eat the bud, or pour the dew drop onto your tongue, and thirst is quenched; equal to drinking a 16 ounce glass of water. A fistful of Dew Drop Buds could keep an adventurer well hydrated for a week (would need 3-4 buds a day). Cost: 100 gold per bud. Once used, it is gone.

Magic Oak Leaf: The leaves can be eaten or made into tea or a potion. It instills the magic power of *Chameleon*, same as the spell, with a duration of ten minutes. Cost: 2,000 gold per leaf.

Magic Oak Bark: An acorn-sized piece of bark can be eaten or made into a tea or potion. Instills the magic spell of *Armor of Earth* for 20 minutes. Cost: 40,000+ gold.

Magic Oak Root: Can be eaten or made into a tea or portion. Instills the magic spell of *Track* for one hour. Cost: 1,000 gold.

Magic Tea: Made from the leaf and the bark of the Great Oak. Instills the magic spell of *Crystal Eye* for one hour. Cost: 2,000 gold.

Magic Oak Throwing Stick: Returns to wielder after it has been thrown, double the normal range, and inflicts 1D6 points of damage against mortal foes, 2D6 points against supernatural beings and creatures of magic. Cost: 55,000 gold.

Magic Staff of Strength: A magical branch that can not be broken or bent. As a weapon, it inflicts 4D6 points of damage to mortal foes and supernatural opponents. It also provides its owner

with the following bonuses: +1 to save vs all magic and psionic attacks, +1 to save vs Horror Factor, additional stamina (fatigues at half the usual rate) and the ability to carry an amount of weight as if the character had Supernatural Strength. Cost: 80,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Defense: A straight piece of branch that makes its wielder resistant to fire and cold (half damage) as long as the wand is in his possession. The wand can also cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are, *Armor of Ithan*, *Blinding Flash* and *Sense Traps*. Cost: 65,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Dowsing: A ‘Y’ shaped branch gives its owner the ability to dowse, same as the *Dowsing* spell with a 90% skill base. In addition, three times a day the wand can also be used to *Create Water (a Warlock spell)*, *Identify Plants* and *Sense Magic*. Cost: 85,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Evasion: This is a crooked branch with two smaller branches running along side the main branch at about half-way up. This gives the wand something of a “forked” look. The person in possession of the wand is +1 on Perception Rolls concerning danger, capture and escape. In addition, the wand can cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are, *Cloud of Smoke*, *Escape*, and *Repel Animals*. Cost: 170,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Healing: This crooked twig has three budding flowers that never dry up or drop away. The person in possession of the wand heals quickly (an additional 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per 24 hours) and without scarring. The wand can also cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are *Heal Wounds*, *Cure Minor Disorders*, and *Negate Poison/Toxin*. Cost: 400,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Hiding: This is a short, darkly colored branch that has several small holes caused by insects burrowing into it. It gives its owner a +10% skill bonus to Prowl and/or Camouflage (if applicable), and the wand can cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are, *Chameleon*, *Invisibility: Simple*, and *Shadow Meld*. Cost: 260,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Travel: This ordinary looking, thin branch gives its owner the skill Land Navigation at 90% and the wand can cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are, *Climb*, *Swim as a Fish*, and *Weightlessness*. Cost: 65,000 gold.

Magic Wand of True Seeing: This crooked branch gives its owner Nightvision (500 feet/152 m). The wand can also cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are, *See Aura*, *See the Invisible*, and *Eyes of Thoth*. Cost: 135,000 gold.

Magic Wand of Wind: This ordinary looking thin branch is green and flexible. It gives its owner the ability to tell which direction the wind is blowing at a 92% skill ratio, and the wand can cast a total of three spells in any combination per 24 hour period. They are, *Globe of Daylight*, *Fingers of the Wind*, and *Wind Rush*. Cost: 160,000 gold.

The Great Oak Stats

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 13, M.E. 21, M.A. 23. The Great Oak is an intelligent being.

Height: 130 feet (39.6 m)

Circumference: 30 feet (9.1 m) around.

P.P.E.: 900

S.D.C. by Location of the Magical Tree:

Leaf Stem – 1

Leaf – 7

Twig (small) – 25

Twig (Wand-sized) – 50

Small Branch – 150

Medium Branch – 300

Large Branch – 600

Giant Branch – 1,200

Main Body – 12,000 (and regenerates at a rate of 1D6x100 per hour).

Attacks per Melee: Three via magic only and usually done to protect herself and others.

G.M. Note: Evil beings such as *Beastla*, *Brgg*, *demons* and the *Iceborn*, amongst others, are disgusted and feel threatened by all Trees of Life, and will want to see the tree tormented and ultimately destroyed. The Dwarves realize the importance and value of this unique magical being and will always do everything in their power to protect her. Likewise, she will do all she can to defend her Dwarven friends from the wicked monsters who assail them. This includes giving them and other heroes of good alignment or courageous spirits, “Gifts,” including magic items, armor and wands (see above).

Geographic Overview

The Kingdom of Bizantium is made up of a cluster of islands located about 100 miles (160 km) off the shore of the **Northern Hinterlands**. In recent generations, the Kingdom has expanded to include colonies of the Shadow Coast on the mainland. The westernmost island of **Borich** is about 250 miles (400 km) from the northern tip of the fabled **Land of the Damned** and a frightening 25 miles (40 km) from the **Sea of Despair**. The Kingdom consists of seven islands: **Bizantium** (the largest), **Borich** (the second largest), **Torn** (said to be haunted), **Yufel**, **Wyst**, **Acta**, and **Sinza**. The smaller islands west of the mainland of Bizantium are usually referred to collectively as the **Windward Isles**. Each is part of a continental archipelago, uplifted portions of the continental self surrounded by water. The size and shape of the islands is constantly changing as the ocean erodes and adds material to the coastline. Each island is less than 30 miles (48 km) from its nearest neighbor, most are much closer. This makes navigation between them simple.

Virtually the entire archipelago is surrounded by a long, rocky reef that extends 1.5 miles (2.4 km) from the shore and is barely visible above the water’s surface. At high tide, the rock might be awash or almost invisible under swells. At low tide, it looks like a low table, with its highest point standing an average of 12 feet (3.7 m) above the water. Because of this, there are only certain routes where a boat can travel within the island chain, especially at low tide. (**Game Note:** Those *without* experience in these waters or very specific charts suffer a whopping -30% to their piloting skill rolls. Failure means the ship will crash against the rocks.) Severe weather conditions, poor visibility, and the size and speed of a ship will also influence the time it takes to move amongst the islands. It is for this reason that nearly all of Bizantium’s harbor cities are located within the inland sea on the main island.

The climate of the Northern Islands themselves is cool summers and mild winters, greatly influenced by their location between the **Northern Sea** and the **Sea of Despair**. The sea keeps



winter temperatures slightly higher and summer temperatures a little lower on the coast than at places inland. The maritime climate produces more variable weather, ample precipitation in a variety of forms, greater humidity, lower visibility, more clouds, less sunshine, and higher winds than conditions found in the **Shadow Coast colonies** and **Great Northern Wilderness**. Winds blowing in from the west, meeting the cold temperature of the north, results in sudden weather changes and powerful sea storms. These storms are responsible for the worst of Bizantium's weather. High winds sweeping over a large surface of ocean can build up very large waves. The frequency and severity of storms is greatest in winter, although they may occur at any time of the year.

The island kingdom is also known for its fog, which occurs most often in the spring and early summer because of the contrast between sea and air temperatures. The fog is frequently accompanied by strong onshore winds. Temperatures average about 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit (18-24 degrees Celsius) in the summer to 32 degrees Fahrenheit (zero degrees Celsius) in the winter.

The Strait of Forlorn Hope is the name of the navigable waterway between Bizantium and the Northern Hinterlands and Land of the Damned. It connects the **Sea of Despair** with the Northern Sea. The strait is approximately 500 miles (800 km) long and ranges from a maximum width of 150 miles (240 km) to just 80 miles (128 km) at its narrowest. Navigation in the strait can be extremely hazardous, with strong tidal currents interacting with the Northern Sea and variable weather conditions that produce gales and fog that can appear out of nowhere. Such phenomena has resulted in many legends and tall tales about angry sea gods, sea witches, Elementals, and evil blowing out from the Land of the Damned.

Traveling through this strait is difficult, even for a well-seasoned Bizantium crew. The coastal waters are surprisingly shallow in some spots, always turbulent, and subject to inexplicable rogue waves. Some believe a rogue wave occurs when a slumbering Old One said to be asleep under the mountains rolls over or tosses and turns in its sleep. The cold ocean current from the east and the warm current from the west meet within the strait, making the area not only one of the richest fishing grounds in the world, but also one of the foggiest stretches of water in the Palladium World. Seafarers are quick to blame the wreckage of their ships on strange phenomena, sea serpents, and the Old Ones or other dark powers locked within the Land of the Damned. Many believe that a sudden fog is caused by the breath of a slumbering Old One. The simpler explanation for the high number of shipwrecks is weather and the rocky shoals. (**Game Note:** -5% to pilot a ship on a clear sunny day in calm waters, -30% in fog). Even with expert pilots and Bizantium's best (and secret) navigational charts, one in every 40 crossings ends in trouble at sea or a shipwreck. Since the waters are turbulent and filled with monsters, the only viable chance of surviving a sinking ship is to row a boat to the nearest shore or nearby vessel as quickly as possible. Swimming to safety, even if one is magically enchanted, is a life and death drama that often ends badly. There are places throughout the strait where the reef is just 5-25 feet (1.5 to 7.6 m) below the water's surface, and all it takes is one swell of the ocean to dash a swimmer onto the sharp rocks. (Victims suffer 2D6+3 points of damage; half damage if wearing some kind of armor that still enables the wearer to swim.) Worse, swimmers are likely to fall victim to attack from the depths below. **01-25%**

Giant squid or octopus, **26-50%** shark, **51-60%** Corpse Jelly Fish, **61-70%** Wolf Seal, **71-90%** sea serpent/sea monster (any variety) and, when close to the Sea of Despair, **91-00%** aquatic demons or other monsters. Such animals and monsters see swimmers as a nice meal or snack. (**Game Note:** 01-35% chance of attracting an aquatic predator for every 20 minutes in the water. Fight or die. The rough waters alone inflict a -10% penalty to the Swimming skill.)

Travel to the strait from the east is relatively easy thanks to *Destiny's Guide*, a cold ocean current flowing out of the Algorian Sea just north of the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness in a westward direction. The current eventually encounters the warm currents flowing east from the Sea of Despair. The meeting of the two in the **Strait of Forlorn Hope** produces heavy fog and unpredictable weather, but also attracts massive shoals of cod and other fish, which also attracts seals, sea lions and the predators that feed upon them. Of course, these southernly waters are dominated by the Kingdom of Bizantium and Wolfen sailors. The winter months see frequent gales and storms, some almost as powerful as southern hurricanes.

Sailor's Dread is a narrow, crescent-shaped sandbar with a surface area of 13 square miles (33 sq. km). Despite being nearly 13 miles (21 km) long, it is only half a mile (0.8 km) across at its widest point. It emerges from vast shoals and shallows following the continental shelf of the Northern Hinterlands, which, along with the strait's frequent fog, sudden strong storms and its location in the middle of Bizantium's shipping routes and rich fishing grounds, have caused hundreds of ship to run aground on the sandbar; some wrecked, others abandoned, but most eventually recovered. The Sailor's Dread sandbar is often referred to as the "Necropolis of the Sea." Few of the wrecks surrounding the island are visible, as they are usually crushed and buried by sand.

Goblin Rock is a small, diamond-shaped, uninhabited island located approximately 15 miles (24 km) southwest of the Island of **Borich**. This 30 acre dot in the Sea of Despair traditionally marks the beginning of the strait. The island is composed of granite and is extremely rugged. It is completely encircled by rocky cliffs and split by a narrow channel that fills with seawater at high tide. No land mammals inhabit the island, although it is home to numerous seabirds. The sparse vegetation is inedible even for most herbivores, and there are few sources of fresh water to be found. The island is fog-bound throughout most of the year and poses a significant hazard to all sea vessels whose crews are unaware of its existence.

The Sea of Despair is said to be the most dangerous waters in the known world. Ocean traveling vessels have been disappearing in the sea since the Forces of Light put the Old Ones asleep and formed the Land of the Damned – one of the locations where one or more Old Ones are said to sleep, deep in the bowels of the earth. According to legend, the Great Northern Mountains, the Sea of Despair and other defenses were created for the very purpose of keeping people away from the Land of the Damned and holding the dark forces within from escaping into the world at large. From time to time, villains and monsters from the Land of the Damned manage to find a way over or through the barriers in place to cause great trouble, but such incidents are few.

It is no secret that the Sea of Despair is stocked with all manner of sea serpents, aquatic demons and monsters. Vicious storms appear without warning to unleash torrents of rain, thunder and lightning (even in the winter), as well as hail, ice, hurricanes and

ferocious winds. Gigantic whirlpools and massive rogue waves towering 50+ feet (15 or more meters) and capable of capsizing even large ships are also commonplace occurrences. One moment, the sea can be perfectly calm, five minutes later, the entire area is engulfed by a huge storm. These storms, fog or rough seas may vanish just as quickly as they arrived, or last for 1D4 hours. The cause of such storms and strange occurrences stems from both natural and supernatural forces at work, but most northern sailors have given up caring about the source of turbulent weather, they focus on surviving it.

Monsters of all kinds prowl the skies and waters of the Sea of Despair. They attack any vessel that disturbs their habitat or catches their eye. While it is sea serpents that outsiders speak of most, danger from above is just as likely as an attack from the watery depths below. *Peryton*, *Dragondactyls*, *Harpies*, and other flying menaces, including the occasional *gryphon*, *sphinx*, and *dragon*, may descend from the heavens to snatch sailors off the deck of their ships, and swimmers from the surface of the water. All these beasts roost in the **Land of the Damned** and the **Northern Mountains**, and find humans to be easy prey, especially at sea. The Sea of Despair is also visited by supernatural horrors – Aquatic demons, ghosts, Entities, Elementals and all manner of strange beings, mutants, and gods. All of these monsters and unpredictable weather have given the Sea of Despair the dubious honor of having more shipwrecks per square mile (2.6 km) of any body of water in the known world. Shipwrecks that remain undisturbed, because no one dares to try to recover the valuables that may have gone down with the ship. With so many dead, it is no wonder that demons, ghosts and Entities are said to inhabit these waters. As for any vessel that makes it to the shore of the Land of the Damned, its survivors are almost certain to be trapped there forever with other damned souls condemned to this part of the world. (**Note:** For additional information on the Sea of Despair, check out **Adventures on the High Seas, Second Edition** and the Land of the Damned series, starting with **Northern Hinterlands**. For information on notable wildlife, see **Monsters and Animals**.)

The blue night waters. The **Sea of Despair** floats atop a system of ley lines that rest upon the ocean floor. These lines are only visible at night, glowing an eerie, pale blue from far below the waves. Bizantium's sailors have learned to use these ley lines as secret signposts that help mark their travels safely in and out of the Sea of Despair. By official decree of the Bizantium monarchy, this knowledge is to be left off any navigational maps and charts. **Note:** The ley lines are part of a network of thirty underwater lines and nine nexus points found on the floor of the **Sea of Despair**. Many believe these lines of magic energy are the source of the many sea monsters in these waters as well as the freak storms and squalls that occur in the region. Few beings have the ability to plumb such depths to access the power of the ley lines, so any storms or strange occurrences are likely to be random events. The

energy of these ocean ley lines cannot be tapped unless the person is underwater and at least one mile (1.6 km) deep.

The Northern Sea is the vast ocean stretching beyond the Sea of Despair and the northernmost shores of the Great Northern Wilderness, past the Island Kingdom of Bizantium and into the frozen North where few mortals dare to sail. It is said that after sailing for what feels like forever – 800 miles (1,280 km) north of Bizantium – is a land of death and ice. A place where the ocean freezes to create a continental ice shelf and the domain of the mysterious Iceborn and other monsters who prefer the cold. You know you approach the Great Ice Shelf when the small ice floes increase in dramatic numbers. The more floating pieces of ice, the closer one is to shore. Traveling down any of the river ways into the interior of the ice shelf is folly, as such passageways are infamous for freezing overnight and trapping ships in solid ice. It is said this is a place not fit for man nor beast, though plenty of monsters make it their home. Beyond the continent of death and ice is the northern edge of the world.

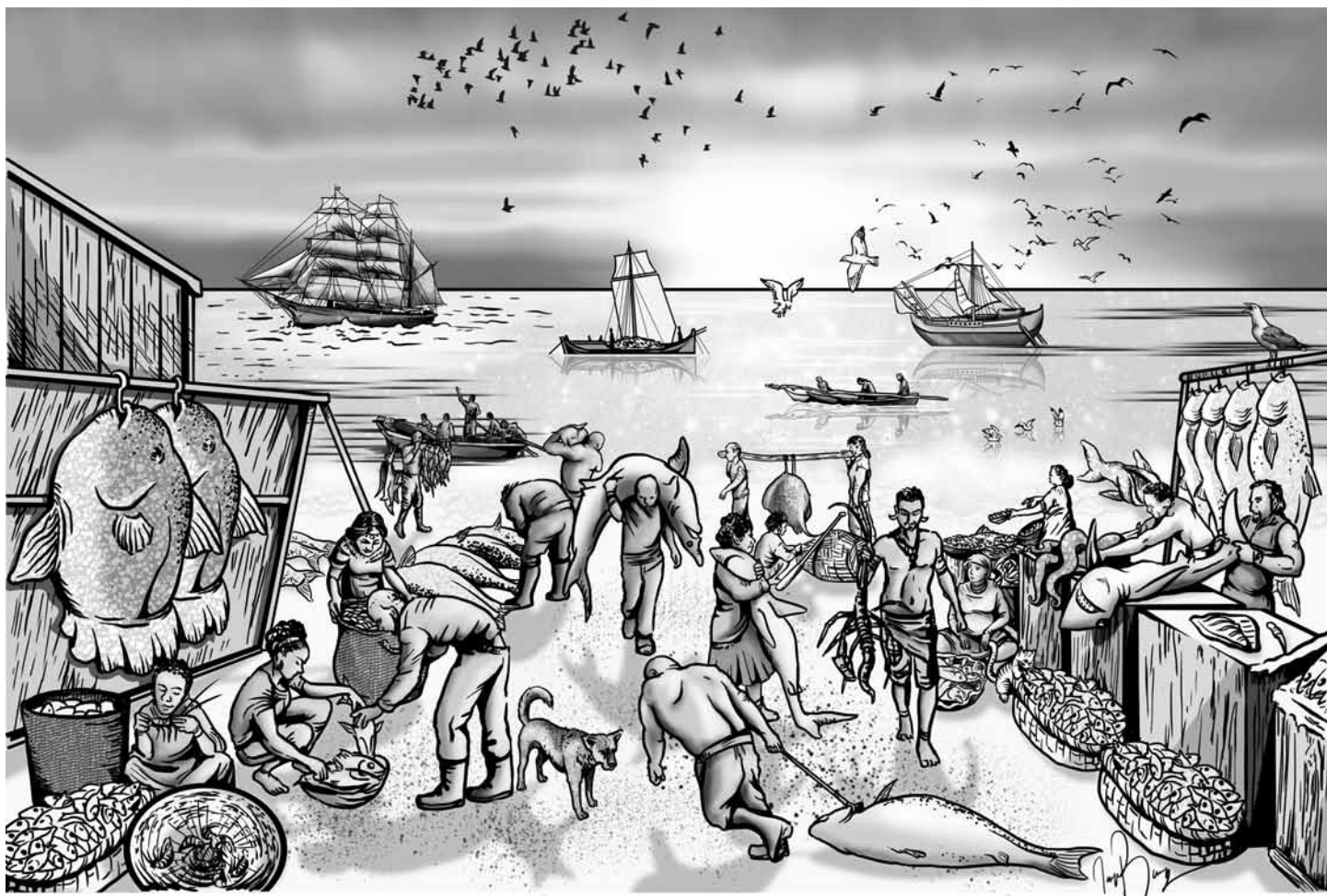
The Icy Ocean. Beyond the Northern Sea is the vast, mostly unexplored body of water known as the Icy Ocean. Starting roughly six hundred miles (960 km) north of Bizantium, ships and sailors begin to encounter icebergs and floating ice sheets with increasing regularity, eventually leading to the **Great Ice Shelf**, a massive plate of ice and monsters another two hundred miles (320 km) farther north. The Icy Ocean surrounds this “continent of ice,” its waters deep, dangerous, freezing cold and home to unknown horrors and strange, Elemental beings. Few ships have sailed into the Icy Ocean. Even in Bizantium, at the northern peak of the world, there is little motivation to explore what is seen as an endless expanse of icy water, ice sheets and monsters.

There are rumors of sea serpents in the Icy Ocean ten times the size of anything seen in the Northern Sea, and tales of giants who live along the bottom of the sea or build floating castles out of icebergs. Sailors speak of strange lights visible far below the surface, along with giant white whales, crabs and lobsters bigger than some ships. It is difficult to separate truth from hearsay, as there are few men and women brave enough to have journeyed into the Icy Ocean or lucky enough to have survived. With ice-breaking ships being developed, however, and Fire and Water Warlocks to tend to them, it might only be a matter of time before Bizantium launches its first serious mission to explore the Icy Ocean and the Great Ice Shelf.

The Island of Borich

Borich is the ancestral home of the Eoten and their North Folk descendants. It is the site of the longest continuously inhabited settlements on the Northern Islands, and the most densely populated of Bizantium's Windward Isles. It is 51 miles (81.6 km) long and 20–30 miles (32–48 km) wide. The coastline is long,





rocky and dangerous, offering little shelter for ships except at the port cities of **Gideon**, **Port Lila**, and **Topaz**. The land is rocky and weather-beaten, with immense boulders scattered over the landscape, some over 120 feet (36.6 m) tall. The oral history of the North Folk claims the island was once covered in coniferous forests, mostly pines, spruces and larches. There are no untouched forests remaining (they were depleted 300 years ago), and wild animals are not a common sight. Fish, whale meat, sheep, oats, and rye are the main products of the island. As the oldest of the inhabited islands, most of its natural resources have dwindled away, forcing some individuals to relocate to the main island of Bizantium. The island supports a small population of traditional Eoten purists (numbering around 1,000), which continues to shrink each year as elders die and young Eoten marry into families on the other islands or descended from sailors and outsiders who herald from Timiro, the Eastern Territories, or the Western Empire.

Borich is believed to be the “original” island inhabited by the Eoten and where their unique culture first developed. Artifacts uncovered on the island prove the Eoten have lived on Borich for millennia, and were visited by both Elves and Iceborn as their weapons and tools have been uncovered when digging foundations and wells.

Cities on the Island of Borich

Gideon

Gideon is the oldest human city in the Northern Islands. Centuries before the time of Bizas, Gideon was home to the most dominant and successful tribe of the Eoten, the *Svart Clan*. According to the sagas of old, the tribe built a hill-fort in order to keep watch over the increasing number of foreigners coming to the island.

As the years passed, the Svart Clan merged with Bizantium’s Noble Houses and Gideon turned into an impressive stronghold, mainly as a display of strength to ward off the Western Empire, making them think twice about any attempt at an invasion. By the time of *King Joshius*’ rule, Gideon was the most powerful city-state on Borich, a position it held for nearly eight hundred years until a peasant revolt beginning in Topaz destabilized Borich’s social order and Bizantium assumed direct control over the entire island.

Today, Gideon’s traditional industries of whaling and fishing are being joined by papermaking, brewing and distilling, but most of its rising prosperity comes from its growing importance as a banking hub. The city center is a major commercial and shopping district, while the west side of the city is becoming increasingly dilapidated, an overcrowded slum with high mortality and crime rates.

Gideon is one of the most densely populated, overcrowded and unsanitary cities in the Palladium World, and the Kingdom of Bizantium's third largest city. Visitors are often awe-struck by the fact that the various social classes share the same urban space, even inhabiting the same buildings, but Gideon is crowded enough that no one has an abundance of elbow room. The original hill-fort still stands, rebuilt with stone walls and fortifications, home to a garrison of 300 troops, captained by an 8th level Fire Warlock.

Port Lila

Like Gideon, Port Lila was originally a permanent village of the tribal Eoten, mainly a trading post for the selling of fish, ivory and animal skins. It didn't take the new settlers long to recognize Port Lila's strategic importance, looking out over the Sea of Despair. Within a few years, a one hundred foot (30.5 m) tower was erected to serve as a lighthouse and signal platform and watchstation to spot approaching ships, storms and monsters. As Port Lila grew into a city-state, it began to rival Gideon in size and importance.

After the Crown assumed control over the Island of Borich, the tiny Ortan Shipyard was placed under *House Torger*, a minor house of little influence but a close ally to the King. Today, House Torger's attempts to wield greater influence within the city are being met by increasing resistance, though many who refuse to submit have left for Bizantium. Choosing to fight adversity with pleasantries, House Torger has decided to turn the city from a failed military port into a tourist attraction. A **Merchants Festival** is held at the docks throughout the summer, where anyone who pays a 100 gold permit and agrees to a 10% sales tax can sell their wares (legal goods, mind you) all summer long. Thanks to the dockside festival, Lila's harbor is packed with boats of all sizes during the summer months, bustling with both visitors and locals.

In the heart of the town is a large *naval library* where one can find records for most of Bizantium's sea battles and ships listed as being lost at sea and their assumed last known location, an important resource for salvagers. There is also a large, popular *theater*, well known for a few troupes of actors who perform comedic and tragic plays. Port Lila is not nearly as overcrowded as Gideon and much cleaner. The total population is only about half as large and the wealthy live in large villas and small but picturesque cottages scattered around the perimeter of the town, but even the Freeman live in nice simple homes. Life in Port Lila is generally relaxed and the crime rate is low. The city's fortunes can be attributed partly to House Torger's management skills, and partly because the Ortang shipyard is always packed with ships that have sustained damage in the Sea of Despair.

City of Topaz

Like the other two cities on Borich, Topaz was originally a tribal stronghold for an Eoten clan that once held the largest population of tribal people on the island. Then, a few centuries before contact with the Western Empire, the entire population vanished. There are no skeletal remains to be found anywhere, yet old homes and belongings lay abandoned, mostly-buried over the centuries. There are no sagas mentioning what happened to

the people, and none of the other tribes ever claimed to know what disaster befell the inhabitants. Over time it was resettled.

Among the settlers was a man named *Brock Gethe*, who found a 75 carat, uncut topaz while digging in his yard. Instead of keeping the stone for himself, he made it into the town's symbol, a source of inspiration for anyone coming to seek their fortune. Soon, prospectors and merchants from the Old Kingdom, Eastern Territory, Timiro Kingdom and even Western Empire came to seek their fortune. Many would end up settling in the region. Topaz quickly became a bustling boomtown, with taverns, inns, trade posts, and brothels.

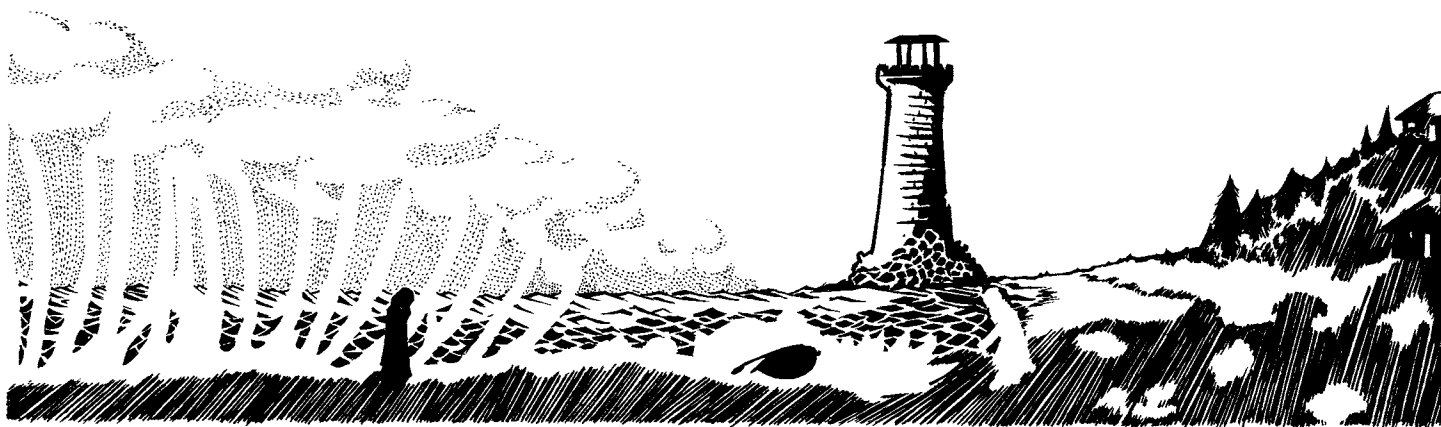
Unfortunately, only a few clusters of gems and rusted weapons were found near where the topaz was found, suggesting it may have been pirates' loot, not a natural mineral deposit. When no gem deposits were found, the mining operations and landowners sold their interests off to the highest bidder. Which was not much when the boom went bust. A Borich born noble named *Skuli Frostson*, bought 80% of the offerings, making him one of the richest landowning nobles on the Northern Islands. In less than five years' time, he transformed the city-state of Topaz from a defunct mining town into an important trade port and fishing center. He also owns and controls many sheep farms on the island and became a rich man.

The descendants of Frostson were not shrewd businessmen like their forebear, and soon enough, the Freeman and peasants of Topaz were not only living in severe poverty, but their children were being stricken by an unknown disease that killed most of them before the age of seven. *House Frostson* refused to allow the Northern Church to let priests or healers into the city – without first receiving a fee for themselves. This stirred up such anger that the fishermen, laborers and peasants of the island took up weapons, tools, stones, whatever they could carry, and stormed the home of the Noble House, killing the entire family.

The Borich Peasant Revolt dragged on for over a month before the arrival of Bizantium's Marines. Instead of being pushed into the sea and drowned, the rebellious peasants were told that if they went peacefully back to work, they would not be punished. This was a direct order of the King. Under the watchful gaze of well-armed Marines, the peasants returned to their homes, their shops and fishing boats, and the old order of House Frostson was swept away. Since that day, the entire island of Borich has been overseen by the Noble House Vatzes.

Since that day, Topaz has remained faithful to the Crown. Fishing remains vital to the town, but it is also supported by well-developed trade routes, shipping and other industries. Seafood, particularly haddock, halibut (a Bizantian favorite), cod, herring, seal, shrimp, squid, etc. is sold in abundance. The city boasts the densest concentration of fish markets in the Northern Islands, and many nobles and wealthy merchants send boats to Topaz on a regular basis to pay premium prices for the freshest and rarest fish.

The city of Topaz is in the process of finishing a university with departments of economics, language, literature, history, fishing and religion. Presently the city's population is 20,000, which, thanks to a recent influx of merchants and students planning to attend the university, is expected to increase by 30% within four or five years.



Cantock Island and the Lighthouse of Konur

Just off the southern coast of Borich, directly in the path of Port Lila, is a tiny island, actually the top of an underwater mountain rising from the ocean sea floor. This barren rock is only 300 feet (91 m) in diameter, and just barely pokes up out of the water. The rock has been the scene of many shipwrecks as it lies just below the surface of the sea for all but a few hours at low tide.

Seventy years ago, the merchants of Port Lila proposed the construction of a lighthouse, but cost concerns and the difficult nature of its design led *King Raedaen II* to cancel the project. A year later, the ship *Prophecy* struck Cantock and sank, with the loss of all 191 men and boys aboard. One of the boys was King Raedaen's second-born son *Konur*, so just days later, the King authorized the Bizantium Warlock Council to use any means necessary to make the lighthouse a reality. King Raedaen II asked *Merchant-Prince Andor Lamrith* (his personal advisor) to oversee the construction of the project, and put at his disposal all the resources of the Bizantium Crown. Minor and Major Earth Elementals were summoned in order to provide the protection the Warlocks needed to finish the project.

The completed lighthouse stands 180 feet (55 m) tall. Both the living quarters and light tower are housed in the same fortress-like structure, sitting on a 30 foot (9.1 m) high foundation, giving the tower an actual height of 210 feet (64 m) above the water. Its light is visible up to 25 miles (40 km) away. Although the lighthouse is built on solid rock, it is surrounded by water on all sides. The Warlocks specifically designed the building to withstand constant impact from waves and wind. Since the lighthouse's completion, not a single ship has been lost off the coast of Port Lila.

The Island of Wyst

This is one of the Windward Isles not inhabited by humans. It is predominantly ringed with steep cliffs that rise 500-1,000 feet (152-305 m) above sea level, making the vast majority of the island inaccessible from the sea. The cliffs are broken in a few places by deep ravines, allowing access to the flat plateau at the center of the island, 16 miles (25.6 km) wide and 35 miles (56 km) long. Seabirds live on ledges along the cliffs surrounding the island, as do Peregrine falcons that hunt them. Wolf seals live on the only natural beach (and best potential boat landing site) on the island, and tend to stay within 5 miles (8 km) of shore. In

addition to birds and small animals, the strange island is home to countless demonic creatures known as the **Worms of Taut**, Nippers and Blow Worms in particular. There have been several, perilous attempts to clear the island of the demon worms, but despite best efforts the monsters always return, seemingly out of nowhere. Most people blame the Land of the Damned and/or Sea of Despair. Others point to an unknown dark magic at work or to the ancient serpent goddess *Beastla*, but the truth is nobody knows why the island is inhabited by the monsters.

Of course, this has spawned all sorts of rumors, any or none of which may be true. Here are but a few notable rumors: **1.** There is one or more portals to Hades on this island. That's how the Worms of Taut reappear and how mortals can reach the pits of Hades if they can find the portal. **2.** *Beastla* is not imprisoned in a block of ice, but someplace on the island, probably inside one of the many caves. The Worms of Taut are there to keep mortals from ever freeing her. **3.** It is said there are *hundreds of caves* on the island (true). Inside one or more is the *treasure trove of Brgg* (or other ancient god, or Old One, or pirates, or Iceborn, etc., as the legends vary greatly). Powerful magic brings the *Worms of Taut* to guard the treasure. **4.** The Worms guard lost magicks of the ancient Elves, or Dwarves, or Titans, or an archaic race, and those who can survive long enough to search the right caves, will find ancient tombs, forges and hiding places containing ancient *Rune Weapons and/or magic items*. **5.** Other rumors and tall tales suggest a powerful mage – some say the Slayer of Mountains – created the island, hence the tall wall-like rocks surrounding the island, to keep *something terrible* from escaping. If true, what was it and does it still roam the island?

Ironically, all of these stories and rumors are modern inventions of the last few hundred years, and spun from pure conjecture with no bearing in fact. That doesn't stop a few hundred treasure hunters, scholars, heroes, villains and adventurers from coming to the island each year in search of fortune or ancient secrets. Most find only terror and death, with fewer than 30% escaping to tell their tales of caves and cave networks and ravenous demon worms.

The surface of the island is a mix of scrub, forest and rocks. On the north side of the island is a large sea cave accessible to kayaks and small rowboats, by swimming in, or by wading through the water when the cave empties out at low tide. This is how most adventurers and fortune seekers gain access to the island and its cave network. Inside, the sea cave may be dry or wet, depending on the time of day and the tide. Colorful patterns of marine algae, lichens, and minerals adorn the ceiling. The cavern is nearly 1,000 feet (305 m) long, with plenty of clearance overhead. The

rocks along the sea outside the cave have become home to a large colony of Wolf Seals. Deep in the interior of one of the caves is a natural, elevated platform on which two circles linked by a Power Matrix can be found, a permanent ward-sealed Circle of Summon Serpents and permanent ward-sealed Dimensional Rift connected to Hades! Inside another cave is what looks to be a carved stone altar. (Sacrificial altar?) Not far from the altar is a deep, manmade pit, its stone cover slid away from it. Could this have been a hiding place for treasure? Is there more to be found? What most caves hold are the splintered and chewed bones of adventurers past, killed and eaten by Worms of Taut. But that also means the occasional bit of salvageable armor, weapons and valuables that were on their person when they died. (Typically not worth more than 1D4x100 gold in total. But there are exceptions.) **Note:** One of the Seven Treasures is on Wyst.

The Island of Yufel

This island has a pastoral landscape that includes rolling hills, woods, beaches of red-hued sand, ocean coves and the famous red soil that gives Yufel a reputation as a place of outstanding natural beauty. The coastline is a combination of long beaches, dunes, red sandstone cliffs, saltwater marshes and numerous bays and natural harbors. The large dunes on the north shore are home to a variety of seabirds and plants.

Yufel's lush landscape should have made it ripe for habitation, but according to the sagas of old, the island is "cursed." At the southern end of the island are a half-dozen abandoned settlements dating back hundreds of years, and which may have once even been occupied by the Eoten before that. Each settlement has always failed, sometimes its people vanishing without a trace. Other times the settlement was struck down by mysterious raiders, or disease, or weather. Many are the stories of strange occurrences, lights and sounds coming from the island over centuries past, and for hundreds of years the place was considered "cursed." To this day, many traditionalist North Folk refuse to set foot on Yufel, fearful of tragedy.

Modern Bizantium settlers, however, are not afraid to build homes and farms on the island, and settlers from both Borich and the island of Bizantium have been flocking to Yufel. In the last twenty years in particular, Yufel has been heavily re-colonized. Companies of Marines, Warlocks and hunters were dispatched to the island to kill the Worms of Taut that had floated over from Wyst, along with other dangerous wildlife. Following after them were settlers, primarily displaced freemen and fiefholders looking to claim land for themselves and their families. A half-dozen fishing villages developed where natural harbors could be found, and **Raemark**, the largest of the villages, has grown into a port town on Yufel's west coast, within easy reach of Topaz and Port Lila on the Isle of Borich.

Farms dot Yufel's interior, most of them still in the hands of individual families and farmers. The Noble Houses saw Yufel as a poor investment originally, and are just now starting to try to buy up tracts of land and combine them into cash-crop farms, palatial estates and vast cattle ranches. Yufel has the highest population growth of any area within the Northern Islands; city-folk from Bizantium, Wujik, Gideon or Northomber relocate to Yufel when they feel like they have had enough of urban life, and peasants who have been forced off their land due to debt or the expan-

sion of Noble Houses can try to make a fresh start on the still, largely untouched island.

The Isle of Acta

Acta is the smallest of the seven Northern Islands, a mere 12 miles (19 km) in length and 10 miles (16 km) wide. The isle is rugged and rocky with some low peaks; the coasts are mostly cliffs, with only a handful of beaches and one natural harbor that allows for large ships to dock. The highest point is *Mount Faungr* – standing 2,894 feet (882 meters) above sea level, making it the highest point in the Northern Islands. The island's climate is influenced by the strong warming influence of the Sea of Dread, whose currents warm the island in winter and create breezes that cool the island in summer. Acta is covered with lush forests consisting of pines and firs that slowly turn into meadowlands closer to sea level. There is plentiful fresh water from dozens of streams, fertile soil, and wildlife that includes reindeer, mountain hare, sheep, game birds, mice, and even Pegasus. *Faerie Folk*, including *Selkies*, *Mermaids* and *Merrows*, are said to visit the island and bask or dance on its beaches, while Faeries and other Wee Folk make their home amongst the flora farther inland. Harbor seals are common around the shorelines as are dolphins, orcas and black whales.

House Selernani rules over the entire island, but their governance is casual and easygoing. With their island-fief surrounded by water on all sides and safe from intrusion by neighbors, the House does not feel the pressure of competition and political infighting that motivates other Noble Houses to attempt to outdo each other. House Selernani has close connections to the King, who often vacations on the island, as do many of Bizantium's wealthier citizens. The money they bring to Acta has transformed its main city, **Selerna**, into a beautiful resort town and keeps the countryside well-manicured with clear roads and trails, with good game hunting in the forests. Nobles and rich merchants have also bought up much of the scenic property on the small island that does not already belong to House Selernani. There are still plenty of farmers, shepherds and fishermen and their families who live and work around the City of Selerna, but the rest of the island is either beautiful forest preserves, meadows or the summer homes and cottages of nobles, wealthy merchants, prosperous ship captains, foreign delegates and the servants and retainers who cater to their needs, surrounded by gardens, fields of flowers and forest. The human population remains sparse enough, especially since many of the summer homes and estates are populated for only a few weeks or months out of a year, that Faerie Folk have not moved away. That means a vacationing merchant or noble may have the experience of seeing 1-4 Faeries or Sprites flittering about with butterflies in their garden. Meanwhile, helpful Brownies have been known to protect children from danger and help do chores for kind farmers who leave them a little milk and honey, or jam and cookies.

The Island of Sinza

Sinza is the second largest of the Windward Isles, very nearly as large as Borich. The entire island is a rocky desert, with two peaks rising to over 760 feet (231 m) above sea level. Seabirds

and Gryphons roost along cliffs and mountainsides, and the island's desert interior tapers down to sandy beaches where colonies of harbor seals live and sea turtles come to breed and bury their eggs, but there is little other indigenous life beyond a few muskrats, sea otters, birds and bugs. There are a few dangerous reefs in the waters around Sinza that have claimed unwary ships in the past, and most mariners steer well clear.

Those who visit the island find it barren of fresh water. When it rains, flash-floods course over the rocky desert and twin peaks, but what water falls seeps into the earth or runs back into the sea. Pirates and smugglers are known to shelter along the coasts, along with fishing, whaling or serpent hunting camps that go up for a season or two before being packed up and relocated.

Besides a few fishing camps or seal hunters and monsters like a Gryphon or dragon come to roost or hunt, Sinza's interior is home to a small population of **Ogres**. These creatures survive off rainwater, lichen, seabirds and the meat and blood of seals. When times are lean, many of them starve to death. Survivors of shipwrecks or unwary fishermen might be set upon, attacked and robbed, perhaps even captured as slaves and eaten when times get desperate. Companies of Marines are sent ashore every few years to cull the Ogre population, but they have never been able to eradicate them completely. Of course, as barren and unpopulated as it is, securing Sinza from savage Ogres is not a high priority.

The only shelter to be found is an abandoned, **ancient Elven monastery** dedicated to the *Church of Light and Dark*. The existence of the overgrown, half-buried monastery was spoken of in Eoten sagas prior to the arrival of Eastern or Western settlers, making it at least 2,400 years old, predating Bizantium's recorded history. The few scholars who have visited the island have reported masonry similar to that of Elven cities, but no Elven remains have ever been found on the island.

At the Cathedral of Light and Dark in the City of *Old Timiro* is an ancient Elven manuscript that makes reference to a monastery on an island far to the north dedicated by *Belbaon Nhalynnil*; an Elf Acamarch of the Church of Light and Dark during the Age of Elves nearly 10,000 years ago. The document states that the monastery remained continuously occupied for a thousand years before it was mysteriously abandoned.

The steps up to the monastery (2,109 in all) are rocky, steep, and old, crumbling away beneath one's feet (-10% to Climb skill, -15% in rain or darkness). Inside are spiders and scorpions, potentially a few Ogres trying to escape the sun or rain, and the strong possibility of ghosts or other Entities. The walls are lined with beautiful old mosaics, dusty but protected from the elements. They depicting Elven warriors, the Gods of Light and Dark, and scenes of life from ages past.

Of course, where there are ancient ruins, there is talk of ghosts, secret chambers, Rune Weapons, ancient magic and lost treasure. However, no excavation – admittedly those that have been done were brief – has ever turned up anything but bits of pottery, utensils and a few personal items like tarnished and half-rotten toys, combs and similar things. Frequent reports of distant songs ringing through the halls and movement in the shadows confirm that ghosts haunt the ruins. The real danger, of course, comes from the Ogres on the island who keep an eye out for “visitors” to rob.

A thorough or lucky exploration of the monastery will reveal a number of secret passages and chambers thick with dust and cobwebs, and more spiders and scorpions, including Giant Spiders. Most furnishings are in tatters, having decayed and rotted

into pieces of wood and debris. Likewise, any books and scrolls that were not magic or marked with runes would have crumbled to dust. Sifting through the debris in some of these hidden rooms, one *might* find an item of some value (01-10% chance). Items are likely to be such things as:

01-10% 1D4 gold pieces. **11-20%** 1D4 silver pieces or a comb made of ivory (worth 1D6 gold). **21-30%** An unbroken piece of pottery (cup, mug, pitcher, bowl, plate, etc.; worth 2 gold as a common item, but worth 1D6x100 gold as an ancient relic to the right person). **31-40%** Tiny bronze statue (1D4x10 gold, but 1D4x100 gold if recognized as ancient Elven). **41-50%** Simple clay bowl (nothing special, 1D4 silver). **51-60%** Tarnished knife (does 1D4 damage; value 4D6 gold). **61-70%** 1D4 arrowheads or spearheads (worth maybe one gold each). **71-75%** One small metal or brass box (tarnished, but after restoration worth 2D6 gold; hard to prove it is ancient or Elven). **76-80%** A large bone weapon. Those familiar with the Iceborn should recognize it as belonging to the monsters who attack the islands every few decades. **81-85%** A small, tarnished piece of jewelry, probably a pin, brooch, or solid bracelet (1D4x10 gold if made of bronze, 2D4x10 gold if silver, 4D6x10 if made of gold). In the alternative this could be a small bone, ivory or clay statue of a god. **85-90%** Short sword or other weapon of average quality (worth 1D6x10 gold when cleaned up). **91-95%** Ancient map scroll of the islands and coast of the Northern Wilderness. It is brittle but still intact. An arrow points to a specific location on the shore of the *Land of the Damned* but there is no annotation as to what it means. (**Note:** It points to the location of *the Citadel*.) **96-00%** An ancient Elven book of songs and prayers preserved by the tiny silver runes in the corner of each page. (It is worth 1D6x100 on the casual market, 1D6x1,000 to collectors of antiquity and/or the Church of Light and Dark.)

Still hidden and undisturbed for 10,000 or more years is a subterranean chamber containing six tombs. It is up to the Game Master if the player group finds the tombs, but they should have to work for it.

Inscriptions on the tombs indicate two are the tombs of great heroes. Two are the tombs of noble monks. One tomb is the founding priest and one is unmarked and twice the size of a man. **Inside one warrior's coffin** is a high quality broad sword that inflicts 2D4+6 damage and +1 to parry (Dwarven made) with a matching dagger that does 1D4+4 damage and is +1 to parry. **Inside the other** is a full suit of ancient double mail armor, A.R. 15, 60 S.D.C. plus an ornate helmet with silver and gold inlay and a figure that resembles a Phoenix. As a helmet it is worth 1D6x100 gold, as an ancient Elven artifact, it is worth 1D6x1,000 gold to the right collector.

Inside each of the monks' stone tombs is an ancient Elven book of songs and prayers preserved by the tiny silver runes in the corner of each page; same as the one described under 96-00%, prayer beads, a writing quill and a book. The Rune preserved book in one tomb is about animals and sea life in and around the islands and Great Northern Wilderness, with many drawings and presumably made by his own hand. It is worth 1D4x10 gold as an interesting “book,” but 1D4x1,000 to a collector of Elven antiquity. **Inside the other monk's tomb** is a book filled with stories about the gods. It too is preserved by runes and is worth 2D6x10 gold on the casual market, but 1D6x1,000 gold to the Church of Light or Light and Dark.

Inside the High Priest's tomb is a silver-plated iron quarter-staff (does 2D6+2 damage), a silver plated dagger (1D6 damage) and a pristine quality copy of the *Tristine Chronicles* easily worth 1D6x10,000 gold!

Opening the giant tomb, one finds the bones and tattered clothing of a Titan Knight, his legs curled and bound in a fetal position. In a small pouch are two *Dragon Coins* intact with their gemstones (worth 5,000 gold each). If any character of *good alignment* is among the people rummaging through the tomb, singing can be heard. **If not**, the place remains quiet except for the shuffling footsteps of 1D4+1 Ogres trying to following their trail. Another 1D6 Ogres wait outside.

If there is singing, it sounds as if it is coming from beneath the tomb. It is a male's voice singing in the Elven or Northern tongue. If singing was heard prior to this, it was soft and always seeming off in the distance and impossible for its location to be identified as it seemed to move. Now, however, the singing is louder and clearly coming from *below* the tomb. *If a successful roll is made to find secret compartment/door*, a panel pops up and slides over to reveal stairs leading down 15 feet (4.6 m). **Note:** In the alternative, the bottom of the stone sarcophagus can be smashed out (60 S.D.C.) to reveal the stairs. The singing continues until the secret door is opened or is smashed out. The singing comes from one of the objects below.

At the bottom of the stairs is a small chamber, about the size of a master bedroom. There stands as stone statue of Wolvenar and Osiris standing as if talking to each other. The statues are human-sized.

In Osiris' hand is a gold orb the size of an orange that represents the sun. A **Sun-Sphere of Osiris** is worth 10,000 gold in metal value alone, 3D6x10,000 gold to the Church of Light, or Light and Dark! It registers as magic and can create a Globe of Sunlight three times per day that lasts for 3 hours at a time and has a radius of 100 feet (30.5 m); no undead, animated dead, werebeast or Entity may enter that sphere of light and all within its radiance are +1 to save vs possession, +10% to save vs coma and death, and +1 to save vs the mind control powers of vampires/undead and Entities. Any Priest of Light or the Northern Pantheon will recognize this item and know what it can do.

Strapped to the waist of the Wolvenar statue is a simple leather belt and scabbard holding a short sword. The sword radiates powerful magic and is the legendary, **Wolf-Son's Sword**, one of the **Seven Treasures of the North**. (See #1 on page 187 of this book for the complete description of this singing sword.) It is said to have been a "dagger" once actually owned by the god Wolvenar. As a Greater Rune Weapon it is worth millions in gold. As a holy relic touched by a god, it is worth no less than 50 million gold and perhaps as much as 100 million to a Church of the Northern Pantheon or the Church of Light in Timiro. Keeping this item safe from thieves should be a top priority of its owner. With it is a scroll to Turn Dead (equal to a 5th level spell) and one to Create Bread and Milk (also 5th level).

The Island of Torn

Torn, northernmost of the Windward Isles, is a rocky, mountainous island with no current human inhabitants. Difficult to reach, even by boat, Torn is ringed by numerous fjords and steep cliffs that make landing on shore difficult, if not impossible. A

large lake at the center of the island creates streams and rivers that turn into waterfalls at the sea's edge, a beautiful sight to behold from the water. The Bizantians claim that Torn is empty and abandoned, an island of jagged, uninhabitable mountains and scrub home to dangerous creatures and spirits. The King has proclaimed the island off limits, at the advice of the Church of Algor. The only real inhabitants are millions of seabirds that nest along the cliffs in summer, as well as a few species of predators that have washed ashore over the ages or crossed winter ice and maintain small populations on the island, including Tomb Worms, Floaters, weasels and snow foxes.

The southern coast is almost entirely cliff faced, measuring an average height of 508 feet (154 m) above sea level. The western coastline is rugged, characterized by high, breaking waves, rocky shores, intense erosion and steep sea cliffs. An unusual environment is present in the north, a karst-like landscape consisting of limestone bedrock, with little or no soil in the innermost areas. There are numerous sinkholes where surface water disappears through the porous rock surface, creating extensive cave systems, home to seals and walruses, as well as the occasional supernatural creature or group of smugglers.

On the eastern tip of the island is the abandoned fishing village of *Ragnvald*. A two hundred foot (61 m) long, dilapidated fishing pier is the only means to access the village from the sea due to a dense rock formation that almost completely surrounds the shore of the harbor.

In the center of the ruined village stands a reddish, granite stone twice the height of a man, a three-sided megalith covered in old Eoten inscriptions. Many are weathered and worn away, but the primary message is still clear and legible to any Bizantian who can read the North Folk's tribal language. Any attempts to identify the stone with magic or psionics only reveal the megalith's age – it has been in place for almost five thousand years, predating modern Bizantium, set and inscribed far back into the history of the Eoten.

The Eoten words read:

"I am the instrument of Power. Where there is Wyrn, they will know dread. Where there is Wyrn, they will know injury. Where there is Wyrn, they will know suffering. Where there is Wyrn, they will know despair. Where there is Wyrn, they will know weakness. Where there is Wyrn, they will know Death without hope. O Earth Mother, grant that I may guard the skies, sea, and land of the accursed Wyrn. O Master Smith, grant that I may last for time eternal."

Anyone familiar with Eoten culture or the Northern Pantheon will recognize the passage as the Litany of Brgg, a prayer called upon when the faithful are threatened by dragons or sea serpents. Seeing it carved into a rock is strange enough, as Brgg is no longer worshiped amongst the Northern Pantheon and largely forgotten, except by the Sisterhood of Brgg in Wujik who maintain the old myths and stories. Most modern Bizantians only know his name from his Saga and Litany, neither of which are given much thought by modern people.

On the outskirts of Ragnvald is a stone pathway that winds up into the countryside. Those who can Sense Magic will register the path as radiating with weak magical energy. The trail is easily traversable on foot, but dangerous for horses that could easily catch their hooves between the rocks and possibly break a leg.

Three miles (4.8 km) down the road the path begins to climb up into the rolling hills and rocky crags at the center of the island. Here there are patches of grass, wildflowers and vine among the rocks and patches of scrub. The path is littered with fallen rocks and overgrown with flowering vines and scrub. It runs through a vast, open plain where grass grows only in patches and the occasional rusted, half-buried helmet or shield can be tripped over. Psychics register an almost tangible sense of apprehension, dread, sorrow, and fear in this area. Some describe it as if the whole area “feels injured.” That something terrible happened here long ago and left a powerful imprint that radiates from the ground and fills the air. All Psychic Sensitives find themselves struck by an onslaught of emotional anguish. The sound of an epic battle roars around them as if they stood right in the middle of it. The smell of blood and ozone fills the air. They hear phantom shouting and crash of warriors at war tinged with fear and vengeance. And then there is the smell of death that can not be shaken. Only by shutting themselves down to all psychic emanations (Mind Block) can they hope to avoid the voices of battle, the smell of death and shadowy images of combat.

Two trails branch from the ancient battlefield. One is a stone path that leads further into the mountains, the other a winding dirt trail leading to a thin, scraggly forest. Following the forest path, anyone who can Sense Dimensional Anomaly detects some kind of dimensional portal, but very faint. There are a number of large boulders along the trail and throughout the forest itself, boulders that seem to have been intentionally placed. The forest is eerily silent with few indications of animal life. There is no recent evidence of humanoids, only the ghost of the past.

At the center of the forest are several large boulders bearing faint, weathered Eoten inscriptions, only one of which is still legible: “*Brandr* and *Eyvindr* had these stones raised in memory of their father *Valyr*, who *Od* betrayed on Torn. Who *Algor* barred him from reaching *Algron*. Please *Hel* help *Valyr*’s spirit find vengeance.”

Anyone who enters the forest and reads the stone is likely to have some kind of encounter with a *Tectonic Entity* that inhabit this location, feeding off energy that emanates from far below. It attacks mortals who linger around the stones and fights until they are 500 feet (152 m) away from the markers. There are 1D4 Poltergeists in this area as well as some of the uglier and menacing Faerie Folk such as Toadstools, Pucks and Bogies, amongst others.

The stone path that leads from the battlefield continues further up into the hills, where it arrives at the shattered ruins of twin temples dedicated to the Northern Gods **Epim** and **Belimar**. Amidst the ruins are broken pieces of pottery, tarnished bronze weapons, stone tools and bits of animal teeth and bones. Further up the trail is more rocks and scrub. The path leads further up into the mountains, outstanding in the natural splendor of their stony peaks, but with little greenery, just stunted pines, patches of grass and brown lichens. The path arrives at another massive stone marked with Eoten words. Translated, it reads: “*Engli* raised this stone in memory of his son *Eysteinn* who died by the magic of *Zelru Aooz*.”

Finally, the stone path ends at the foot of a ruined city set in a saddle between two mountains, shrouded often by low-hanging clouds of mist. On one side the buildings end at a cliff, dropping vertically for 1,500 feet (457 m) down to a stream at its base, and offering a commanding view down the valley. The opposing side is the base of one of the mountains, a near vertical climb up sheer

stone walls. The other mountain, on the far side of the valley, is just as steep and forbidding. The city’s architecture has been blended into the natural form of the mountains, and large boulders are incorporated throughout its construction. Approximately 200 buildings are arranged on wide, parallel terraces around a central square. Numerous stone stairways set in the walls allowed access to different levels across the city, but many are collapsed, or once led to wooden platforms or bridges that are now gone. Anyone familiar with the sagas and legends of the North Folk will know that they have discovered the **Lost City of Valsk**, once the greatest fortress of the Eoten, their refuge and capital.

The Ghost City of Valsk

Just looking upon the bleak, grey edifice of the ancient city one gets the feeling it is a place of ghosts, and no longer meant for the living. Most of Valsk’s buildings were made of heavy stone masonry, or seemingly cut from the very mountain itself.

Many parts of the structure has survived well despite their age. Green moss covers many of them, and any wooden floors or roofs have long ago rotted away. There are plenty of places where one might make camp, sheltered from the wind and rain, but the entire city carries an unsettling feeling of lifelessness and dark secrets that makes staying here, uncomfortable. The entire island feels like a tomb or graveyard and most people desire to leave within hours of their arrival. Undoubtedly, the occasional renegade, outcast, pirate and explorer must come and stay for a while, but clearly not for long nor en masse. The bleakness is oppressive and the city taken over by dark Faerie Folk who enjoy bleak places. Which again, means it is not a place for people. Not anymore. Linger too long, and mortals will be harassed, chased off, captured or killed by the sinister Faerie Folk. There is also a fair number of Haunting Entities, Poltergeists, and a handful of Possessing Entities and Syphons living amongst the ruins. Higher up in the peaks are grphon nests and even a few Dragonactyls and Peryton, both of which hunt human prey. Bizantians have learned to avoid Valsk entire and most stay away from the island.

The City Gate is a huge stone wall that once stretched the length of the city. The main gate is long gone. What stands in its place is a massive debris pile, as if the stone structure simply collapsed. Upon careful inspection, the destruction of the main gate seems to have occurred eons ago, as the rubble pile itself has been worn down by wind and rain, and weeds and tufts of grass grow out of it.

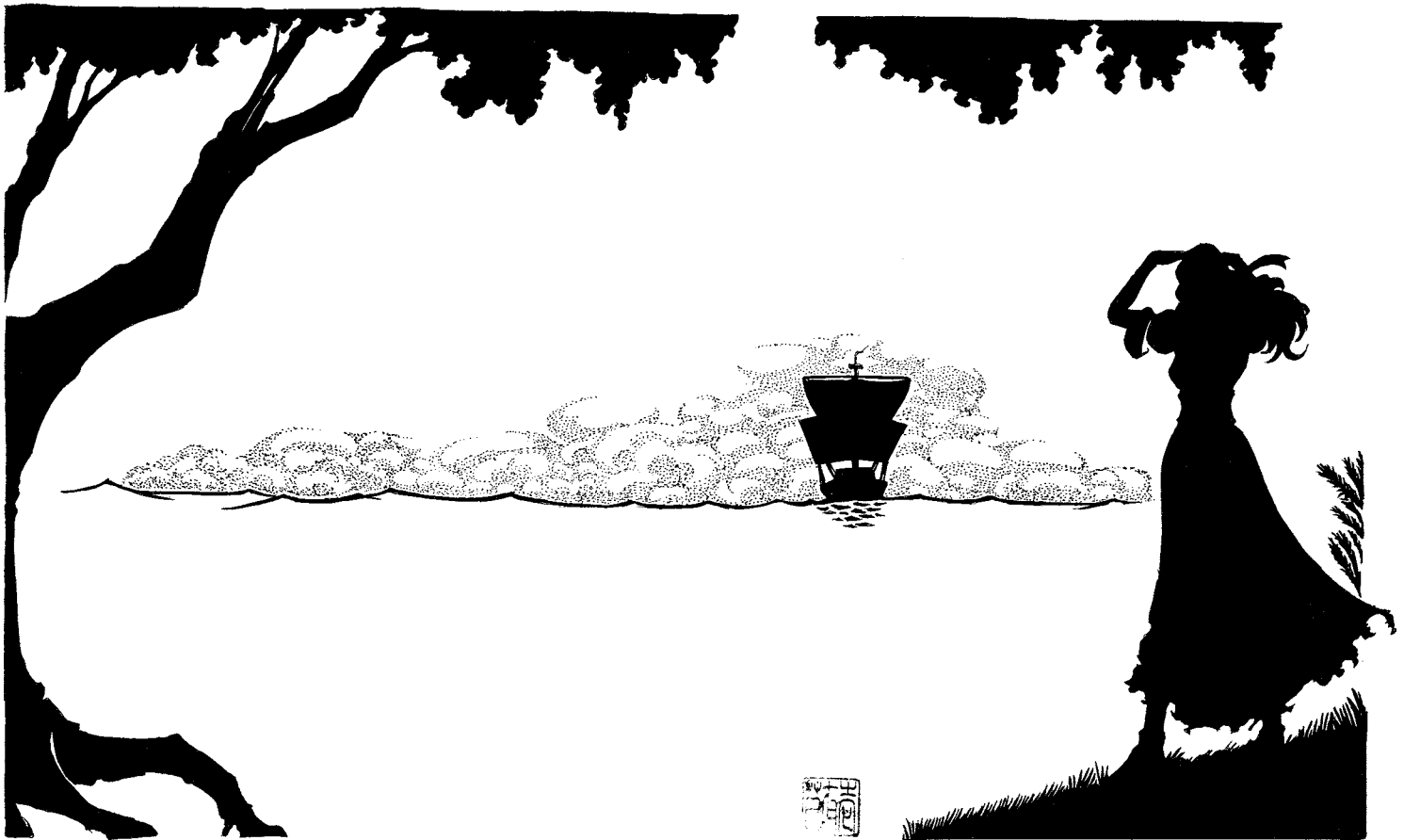
There is a huge statue of an Eoten mariner that greets all visitors. It is remarkably lifelike, apart from its cracks and patches of moss and lichen. Carved at the base of the statue is an inscription that names him, “Valsk the Protector.” Nearby is a large, three-story structure that at one time housed the city guard. There is nothing to be found here. A mostly intact stone tower that rises 100 feet (30.5 m) over the rest of the city. Written on its stone door are Eoten inscriptions naming this place “*Rúna Tower*.” The interior is empty, but a good climber could scale the tower to get a look at the layout of the rest of the city – a jumble of stone buildings slowly crumbling away.

What was once the palace has almost completely collapsed in on itself, this rubble pile is all that remains. Chips of pottery and old bronze nails can be found in the ruins, but little else. Such destruction, however, is not natural. Something powerful made the structure collapse.

There is also what appears to be the remains of a massive wooden ship, roughly 400 feet (122 m) long and 90 feet (27 m) wide. Long, overgrown beams stick up out of the ground, and pieces of the hull are half-buried. The remaining sections are adorned with hundreds of Eoten symbols, most of them too faded to be discerned, but the name *Vanesir* is visibly etched on the starboard side in Elven. This huge vessel has banks of oarlocks where hundreds of rowers once worked to push her through the water, and anyone familiar with Elven ships should recognize elements of its design. How it got here is anyone's guess.

The Cavern: If one can reach the far side of the stone path, they eventually come to a large cavern opening, high up on the

cliff face. Inside are some malicious Faerie Folk and some Worms of Taut. The cavern leads down into the mountain. Legend says it once led down far below the city of Valsk, down below the valley floor beside the city, and into the bowels of the very island of Torn itself. However, any tunnels or caves that may have once existed are clearly all filled in, as if Elemental forces sealed them off completely with rock and dirt. **Game Master Note:** It is from here that one or two tiny crevices lead to the rat-sized tunnel that goes down into Brgg's prison. See **The Binding of Brgg**, page 183, for more details on what waits within. Also located in Valsk, buried under tons of debris at the site of the palace, is one of the *Seven Treasures*.



Other Places of Note

The Shadow Coast

Across the Strait of Folorn Hope, on the mainland in the Great Northern Wilderness, is a large body of water sheltered from the worst weather of the Sea of Despair and Northern Sea. This is Homeland Bay, and its shores are the **Shadow Coast colonies**. Over the last several decades, the Shadow Coast has been settled by thirteen individual colonies of Bizantium. Each one founded by one of Bizantium's Merchant Houses in the name of the monarchy. Each is controlled by the Noble House that sponsored it and the day to day operations and any changes within the colony, including ownership, comes at the hands of the Noble Houses; each selling, buying and trading charter shares to one another. The Noble Houses all work to keep the growing dissension with-

in the colonies quiet from the King, to prevent the Crown from taking greater interest in the goings-on there or feel compelled to take a more direct hand at governing them. The Noble Houses like the absolute freedom they currently enjoy running the Shadow Coast colonies, and the large profits they make. Each colony has its own charter from the king, and though a colony is part of the Kingdom of Bizantium, King Raedaen IV pays little attention to them or the plight of the people. As long as revenues from the Shadow Coast colonies keep rolling in, the Crown is happy. The actual colonists, not so much.

The colonists have grown tired of their "noble" sponsors working them like mules producing iron, gold, lumber, pine tar and other commodities for export to Bizantium and from there, elsewhere. At the moment, the labor and resources from the Shadow

Coast colonies is helping Bizantium's economy, maintaining the fleets and enriching the monied classes, while the colonists have little to show for it; some live in abject poverty and are barely able to feed their families. They are weary of working like serfs when they are Freemen who have every right to earn a decent living.

The **Council of Elements**, who have tremendous influence within the colonies and runs many aspects of their operations, has been sowing the seeds of dissent for at least two generations of colonists. A sister outfit to the Warlock Council in Bizantium, they dream of Warlocks one day running the colonies and secretly have the support of the Bizantium Council. The Council of Elements in the colonies functions behind the scenes, and have insinuated themselves into most aspects of politics and operations. There they work to fan the fires of discontent in the hopes that the people will rebel, demand their independence from the Crown and Noble Houses, and that many colonies will choose a Warlock as their leader. As tensions escalate, the Warlocks have made it known that they sympathize and stand by "the people," and will help them gain their independence if that's what they want. Of course, that's very much what the Warlocks want, because they see themselves usurping the reins of power. They long to form a new nation independent and separate from Bizantium with Warlocks calling the shots.

All this rabble-rousing has finally begun to reach the ears of King Raedaen IV, but his advisors and the heads of the various Noble Houses who control the colonies assure him that everything is fine, and that only a few colonies have unreasonable grievances. They neglect to inform him that their growing list of complaints could very easily turn into violent sedition. Right now, conditions are ripe for a clash or misunderstanding that pushes the two sides into all-out war. The Royal Navy and Marine Corps claim that they could quickly pacify the colonists with nothing more than a show of force, but shrewd individuals like *Prince Wilgan Vatatzes* fear that a rebellion will not be so easily contained and are worried that Bizantium might end up in a lengthy conflict that could cost the kingdom dearly. Yet each time someone like Prince Wilgan expresses his concerns to the King, *Hanta Farrip* and her loyal followers on the Warlock Council, insist that Bizantium has nothing to fear. The greedy nobles who don't want intervention from the Crown concur.

What has the King most concerned are rumors that it is the hated *Western Empire* encouraging the people of the Shadow Coast colonies to revolt in an attempt to either undermine Bizantium, or worse, claim the colonies for itself. No Bizantian can imagine having colonies loyal to the Empire of Sin just across the strait, and that includes the Shadow Coast colonists themselves. They would never ally themselves with the Empire of Sin. Though Western Empire spies are indeed spreading rumors to that effect, and others that claim the Empire is providing arms and magic to aid the colonists in their bid for independence, none of it's true. The Western Empire is just jerking Bizantium's chain and wants to see civil war erupt to weaken the Kingdom. Their efforts are done out of spite and in case an opportunity they can exploitation appears.

In response, King Raedaen IV ordered a full naval blockade of Homeland Bay by the Third Fleet. His public excuse is a desire to "protect the colonies from pirates and raiders" who have been targeting goods and cargo destined for Bizantium, but his decision has effectively placed all shipping going to and from the colonies

under his control, and granted unprecedented powers to the Noble Houses. Any foreign vessel that enters the waters of **Homeland Bay** is turned away, or at least inspected, sometimes with its goods seized, as only ships officially sanctioned by the Crown, specifically those dispatched by the Noble Houses, can export goods from the colonies, which means much more money for themselves. This has further instigated talks of rebellion among some colonists, agents of the Western Empire and the Warlocks who desire war in the hopes the people reject Bizantium and turn to them to lead them. The crazy part of all this is that two-thirds of the populace remains completely loyal to the Crown, or at least to the Kingdom of Bizantium. They are unhappy and feel mistreated, but they see themselves Bizantians through and through. If conditions improved, the level of satisfaction would rise substantially and talk of rebellion would drop. Only one third are so fed up with hard labor, harsh weather and unfair treatment by the merchant nobility that they are willing to engage in open rebellion. But even most of them are likely to acquiesce if the Crown or Noble Houses addressed their grievances and improved their quality of life. If they saw just treatment, they too would happily fall in line. So in short, the Warlocks and others have created anger and outcry, but these are not people who seek to be separate from Bizantium. They see themselves as Bizantians extending "their kingdom." From a practical point of view, the bonds of family (all colonists have family on the islands), history, tradition, religious faith (and remember, the king is seen as the emissary of the Church of Algor, after all), and fear of the monster races in the Hinterlands and the Kiridin barbarians and savage Coyles to the south and east, are all reasons the colonists want to remain loyal subjects of the Kingdom of Bizantium. It is the aspiration of certain Warlocks and the foolish mistreatment at the hands of the Noble Houses that is creating a problem.

The future of the Shadow Coast is uncertain and the remembrance of the massacre that took place at the Hil-Santo colony lingers in the minds of many. Neither the King nor the colonists want to start a war, but *Hanta Farrip* and her allies in the *Warlock Council* and the *Council of Elements* are manipulating events in the hopes of severing the Shadow Coast colonies from Bizantium and forming their own Elementalism-based state. If the Warlocks successfully instigate open rebellion, warfare shall ensue and many innocent colonists could get hurt or killed in what may be a futile dream for a Warlock ruled kingdom. And though the Warlock Council wants the Shadow Coast as their domain, they do not intend to entirely undermine the Bizantian Crown. The last thing the Warlocks want is for something to happen to the inept king and his dysfunctional government, which would both make their struggle for independence much harder, nor do they want to risk the wrath of the sea god by doing harm to his emissary, foolish as King Raedaen IV might be.

What none of the Warlock conspirators realize, is that the bonds that make one a Bizantian are too strong for even them to sever. If the Warlocks push for rebellion too hard or go public with their support of rebellion, it is *they* who may be attacked and brought down by the Crown. Should events unfold like that, the authority, trust and freedom *Council of Elements* in Bizantium will also greatly suffer, and all Warlocks will be regarded with trepidation.

For additional information about the Shadow Coast, see **Paladium Fantasy Sourcebook 13: Northern Hinterlands™**.

The Hil-Santo Colony

Hil-Santo is the second attempt of a Noble House to establish a Bizantium colony on the mainland. While not “officially” one of the Shadow Coast colonies, it is nearby, just northwest of the Seabright, near where *Orgod’s Backbone* (mountains) meets the Northern Sea. Hil-Santo began as a fishing village and port town off the Strait of Forlorn Hope and alarmingly close to the Sea of Despair. There are a number of dolmen (large rocks piled together to make tombs and crypts) that dot the area, inscribed with old Eoten inscriptions. Many believe this proves the tribal North Folk once lived on, or at least visited, the mainland thousands of years ago, and established a village at the very location of Hil-Santo. The sponsoring Noble House saw this as an omen of good fortune, and chose to establish its colony on the “hallowed ground” of their ancestors.

Good luck seemed to smile upon Hil-Santo as it became the center of trade between Bizantium and the Shadow Coast colony of Seabright. As the Shadow Coast colonies grew in number, however, Hil-Santo’s proportion of trade declined, bringing about hard times for its dwindling population. In an effort to save his colony, a dying Raudr Vatatzes asked *Merchant-Prince Nikulas Conemus* of House Conemus if he would be willing to enter a partnership with House Vatatzes to manage Hil-Santo. Nikulas agreed. Conemus officials sought to reorganize the colony, and divided the population into three districts of fishermen, farmers and merchants. Not wanting to give up or exchange their homes, however, the colonists resisted, and, rather than hear them out, Nikulas Conemus ordered his House Guard to relocate them by force. Violence ensued, as many of the locals had no idea why they were being pulled from their homes. Soon gangs of mariners with harpoons and farmers with pitchforks were fighting Conemus’ guardsmen in the streets.

The “uprising” reached a fever pitch when a few dozen colonists stormed a Conemus merchant ship, murdered the crew, tossed Nikulas Conemus overboard and watched him drown. A young *Minister Airen Roth* (who would later become High Minister of the entire Northern Church), tried to stop them, but was lucky to escape from the enraged mob with his life. Fearing a further escalation of violence, Airen sent word of the colonists’ actions to the Crown, hoping the King would defuse the situation. When *King Raedaen III* learned of the civil unrest, however, he ordered the Bizantian Marines to crush the rebellion in a bloody demonstration of force. Three days later, the Bizantian Navy captured most of the colony’s fishing and merchant ships, and rounded up the “insurrectionists.” Nearly two hundred colonists died trying to resist, no match for the well-trained, well-armed Marines. As a further punishment, the King ordered the execution of not only the leaders of the uprising, but their family members and known associates as well. When the day was done, 800 colonists lay dead, and others were arrested and dragged off in chains. While the Crown declared “the rebellion” brought to a swift end, the truth was most of these people were not rebels at all, but confused settlers who were simply fighting for what was theirs. The matter was swept under the rug and forgotten, except by the people of Hil-Santo and their neighbors along the Shadow Coast.

In the years to follow, Hil-Santo has struggled to survive and the colony was so impoverished, it was nearly forgotten. Then, in just the last ten years, House Vatatzes and Conemus have re-

invested in the colony, building a new port and investing heavily in the community. The influx of gold has attracted merchants, trappers and Serpent Chasers who hunt along the Sea of Despair, as well as new investors and new settlers. The expanded, state of the art docks, and sea serpent slaughterhouses and warehouse, have attracted a large number of fishermen, whalers and Serpent Chasers who are making a very good living in the sea serpent trade. This, in turn, has attracted more trading. And since House Vatatzes has made a point to ensure prosperity for its “citizens” – with fair pay and a share in actual profits (unheard of anywhere else) – the near-dead colony is again the shining example of success. This has attracted many other mariners as well as trappers, Wolfen traders, explorers and adventurers in the area. As Seabright and Hil-Santo expand their holdings toward each other, Prince Wilgan Vatatzes is seriously considering folding Hil-Santo and Seabright into one sprawling and expanding city-state. Together, they could become the largest and most powerful colony in the region. Neither colony wants to give up their identity, but the merger would benefit them both.

The success stories of Hil-Santo and Seabright are the exception, not the rule along the Shadow Coast, and their good management, happy populations and success has only served to drive home the injustice and inequity at the many other Shadow Coast colonies. Colonies who feel the sting of their own discontent all the greater because of these two.



The Me’zfii Onh Colony

Located east of the Shadow Coast, near the rivers Accalia and Leidolm running south into the Great Northern Wilderness, Me’zfii Onh is a wilderness port and trading outpost whose greatest asset is its position near Dragon Claw Bay. It is one of the smallest and newest Bizantian colonies, serving mainly as a landing point for rough and tumble woodsmen, loggers, trappers, fishermen, and traders with the Wolfen. Its remoteness means Wolfen can come and go freely without scaring people as they do along the Shadow Coast. The town’s population is still mostly human (over 80%), but an increasing number of Wolfen are settling alongside their human trading partners, and most of the humans are accustomed to seeing and dealing with Wolfen. The canines work alongside humans and other races not so welcome on the islands of Bizantium to fell massive trees in the ancient oak and cedar stands that surround the tiny colony. Wolfen act as guides for human loggers, hunting parties, trappers, explorers and surveyors, and assist the Bizantians in negotiating with the *Ursa Rex* and *Oak People Wolfen tribes*, as well as the smaller *Black Birch* and *Snow Grass tribes*, who live in the immediate area.

The port has a population of less than 300 inhabitants. *Lady Ky’Lee Yinxner* of House Yinxner is the ranking Bizantian of-

ficial in the town. Her duties include governing the area, as well as serving as a kind of ambassador to the Wolfen. Like all in her Noble House, she is fluent in the Wolfen language, and can also barter with the best of them. She meets regularly with **Burnt Eyes**, the local Oak People Wolfen leader (8th level Ranger), with whom she is on very friendly terms. Ky'Lee sees the Wolfen as potential allies, and, even more important, trading partners who can enrich both their respective peoples by working together.

Lady Yinxner is fair, smart and all business. She has no desire to seek independence from the Crown and hopes things can be ironed out without violence at the Shadow Coast colonies. Cross her, however, and you realize that the fashionably-dressed noblewoman is also an experienced combat leader (9th level Mercenary Warrior), who has no problem calling up soldiers and volunteers. She deals with human criminals and renegades herself, but Wolfen, Coyles and Kankoran are handed over to Burnt Eyes to receive Wolfen judgment. (For additional information on Me'zfii Onh, see the **Wolfen Empire™ Sourcebook**, page 102.)

Lyrna Colony

Located southeast of Me'zfii Onh, along the shore of the Dragon Claw, is a human settlement called Lyrna, home to 234 people who wish nothing more than to be allowed to live without interference from Bizantium. The town was established by a 14-member missionary group from the Church of Light and Dark. *Father Josurr Nayin* sought a place where Bizantian citizens could worship their religion without interference, and *King Raedaen III* granted them a piece of land with limited self-rule – many miles away from the Northern Islands and the Shadow Coast.

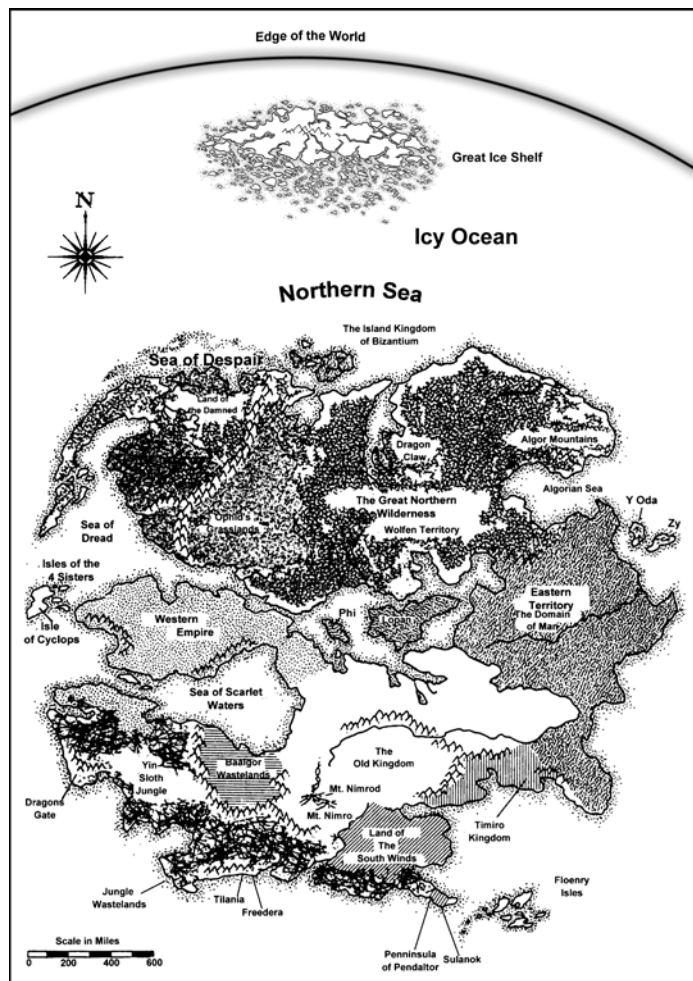
Still there thirty years later, Lyrna is governed by a seven-member council which includes Father *Josurr Nayin* (7th level Priest of Light), *Kiera Hanneet* (6th level female Elf Ranger), and five other councilors. Fishing, hunting and trapping are the main industry at Lyrna with some farming in the summer months. Canine races are welcome in the town and often join humans on hunting expeditions and trade furs and game animals. Recently, Ice Bears have been reported in the area, creatures whose rare pelts fetch a high price back in Bizantium.

Noatun Colony

Forty years ago, the Bizantium Navy selected a large, sandy plateau not far from the Enaer River to build a landing point where Marines could enter the interior of the Great Northern Wilderness and for the Navy to use as a base of operations to patrol the waters of the Dragon Claw in search of pirates. Basic docking facilities were built, and soon freemen from Bizantium began working on the base. A small number of settlers and merchants followed. Noatun has a population of 500 people. The nearby Enaer River is controlled by the Wolfen, which is why Noatun was located away from a tributary, but close enough to have an impact if necessary. The river current is swift and only freezes during the coldest months of winter. The river is also deceptively shallow, and there are a number of places where it can be crossed by foot or on horseback.

Noatun has never been declared an official colony or even registered as a self-governing region, as it is as much a Navy listening outpost and military base as anything else. Most of the outpost's supplies are transported by ship, but they could be self-

sufficient, living off the land in an emergency. Wolfen, Kankoran, and Bearmen are welcomed and are generally treated just as well as humans. Visits by Coyles are common, but the untrustworthy savages are watched closely, especially when they visit in large groups. Pirates and hostile non-humans (Orcs, Ogres, Goblins, etc.) resent the establishment of the Noatun outpost, but usually give it a wide berth.



The Great Ice Shelf

Approximately eight hundred miles (1,280 km) north of the Kingdom of Bizantium is a sight both wondrous and terrifying for inexperienced sailors and fishermen: the **Great Ice Shelf**. A frozen world of ice mountains and mile deep crevasses, there are broad canyons, mesas, endless plateaus and entire landscapes that slowly flow and move. Seasonal lakes form over low areas in summer, their meltwater creating temporary rivers that run down to the sea. Mighty storms blow in from the open ocean and rage in the skies overhead, forming massive blizzards lit by multi-colored lightning, dropping enough snow in a day to render the land beneath completely unrecognizable. Sometimes the sky pours down hail the size of fists, big enough to rip a ship's sails to shreds or dent armored plates. Freezing rain falls often, too, covering everything in a thin veneer of slick ice.

Spanning almost 1,200 miles (1,920 km) east to west, the vast ice pack is also more than 380 miles (608 km) north to south at its center, making it one of the largest single landmasses in the Palladium World – only completely without land. The ice shelf is nothing but frozen seawater, possibly frozen right down to the

sea floor beneath. During the winter, the sea ice increases, usually reaching a maximum extent sometime around the Winter solstice. The Ice Shelf seems to have its own self-contained climate, characterized by persistent cold and a relatively narrow annual temperature range. **In winter** there are 21 hours of darkness and 3 hours of twilight, along with cold, stable weather conditions and clear skies. **Summers** feature continuous daylight with 3 hours of twilight as what passes for “night,” along with damp and foggy weather, rain and snowstorms. Winter conditions on the Great Ice Shelf are similar to those of the Great Northern Wilderness (see the *Wilderness Survival* section of **Northern Hinterlands™** for tips on how to survive cold weather and winter conditions).

Flora does not grow on the Great Ice Shelf, but the surface is home to walrus, seals, penguins, white fur bears, albatrosses and seabirds. In the surrounding water are whales, fish, krill, squid (including giant squid), and plentiful sea serpents. *Ice Bearmen* live in villages along the edge of the ice pack, hostile towards outsiders, but with a wary respect for the *Iceborn* that live further inland. There are camps of *Frost Giants*, some that have become permanent settlements, others that relocate seasonally, and rumors even speak of an entire city of the giants somewhere on the icy “continent.” *Ice dragons* supposedly make their lairs atop peaks and deep in caves across the Great Ice Shelf, particularly the *Winterserpents* that seem to embody the elemental nature of ice itself. The land is harsh and unforgiving, an almost-guaranteed death sentence for any ship that runs aground amidst the ice.

The Frozen Coast

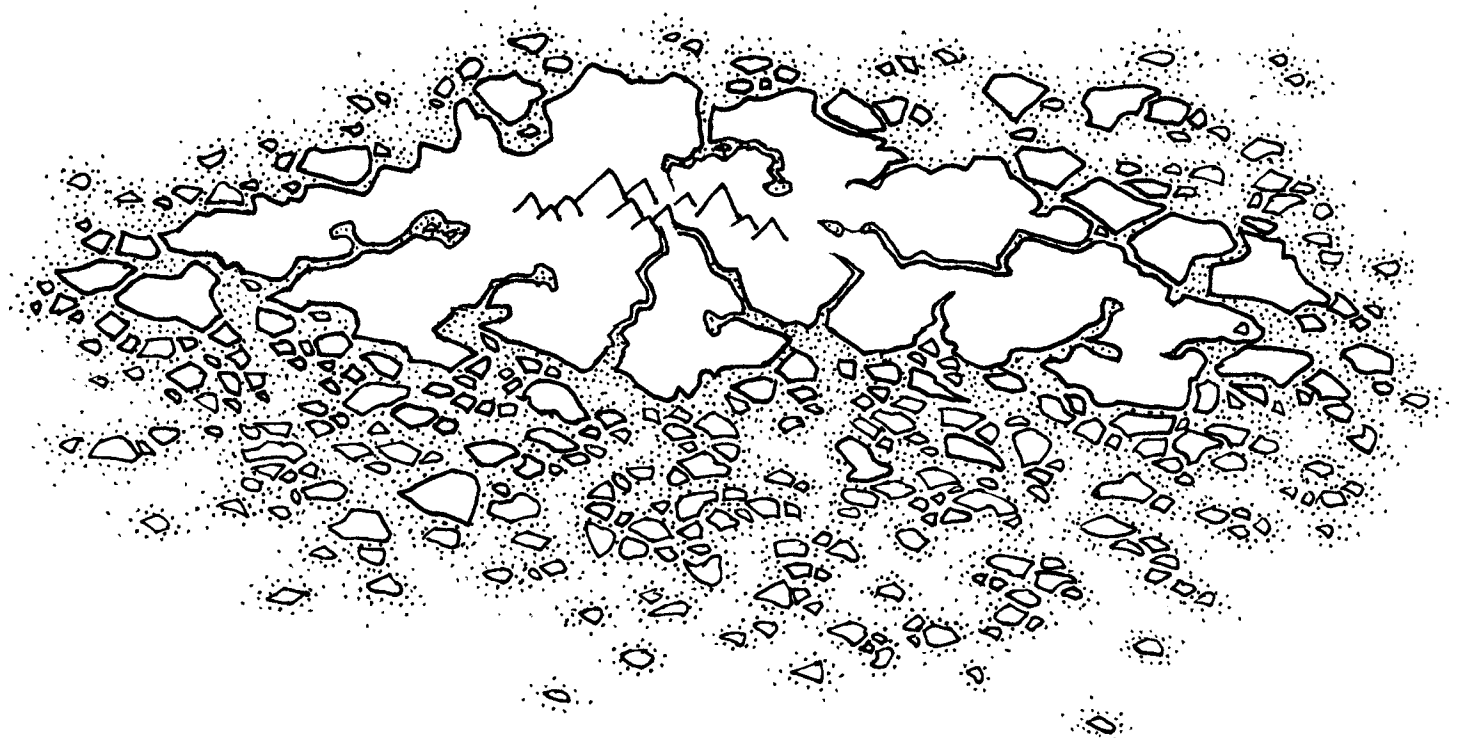
Simply approaching the Great Ice Shelf is dangerous enough, even without attempting to land along the shore. Leaving the relatively gentle Northern Sea behind, the **Icy Ocean** is much less forgiving, with massive waves, icebergs of all sizes and deadly sea life lurking below the surface. In winter, ice sheets grow outward in all directions from the Great Ice Shelf, making it difficult or impossible to determine where the more permanent “ice continent” really begins. Seals, Ice Bearmen and basking sea serpents

live along the edge of the water, as the coast is the most active section of the Great Ice Shelf, with the largest animal population.

In summer, cracks and temporary divisions split the Great Ice Shelf into one main ice-pack and a half-dozen smaller ice sheets. Rivers, bays and inlets develop that will become closed off during the next freeze of the cold season, and hundreds of icebergs and thousands of ice sheets of all sizes break away, posing a hazard to any ship they encounter, floating unrestricted in open water, sometimes coming to rest lodged against the seabed. Icebergs generally range from 3.5-75 feet (1-22 m) above sea level and weigh up to 125,000 tons!

Anyone who sails into the waters around the Great Ice Shelf puts themselves, their crew and their vessel at risk. Getting caught in ice can mean spending an entire winter onboard one’s ship, surviving off fish and seals or enduring slow, brutal starvation. The Kingdom of Bizantium produces the only icebreaker-type ships that are capable of plowing through sea ice, and even then the interior of the Great Ice Shelf freezes into thick sheets that even the heaviest icebreaker cannot penetrate.

From time to time, Serpent Chasers and whalers report to the Crown attacks or sightings of *Iceborn* near the Ice Shelf, and the Royal Navy puts together a fleet expressly for the purpose of clearing out the Great Ice Shelf. It is too risky to go ashore for any sustained operations, so warships cruise through the ice floe and along the Ice Shelf’s southern coastline sinking any *Necroilus* vessels they find (a rarity) and torching the seaside camps of the *Iceborn*, *Ice Bearmen* and other non-humans they find along the shore. Such expeditions return with reports that the threat was exaggerated and (a tiny handful of *Iceborn*) dealt with. However, what they don’t realize is the majority of *Iceborn* are always on the move, out to sea or located along rivers much, much deeper inland and safe. Once in a great while, very brave (or foolhardy) captains decide to pursue an *Iceborn Necroilus* ship upstream into the Great Ice Shelf’s unknown interior. This is an extremely dangerous practice, as shifting ice, freezing water and Elemental magic can all leave a ship trapped in enemy country, surrounded



by strange monstrosities and the ever-present threat of the Iceborn. Such expeditions are usually never heard from again.

The Land of the Iceborn

Beyond serving as a habitat for northern animals and monsters, the Great Ice Shelf is a constant source of icebergs and refuge to the Iceborn. As nomads, the Iceborn have no true home other than the Islands of Bizantium which they claim were taken from them, and belongs to them, and them alone. However, the Great Ice Shelf has become an Iceborn refuge, and a sort of second home. Sometimes smoke rising from the blubber-fires of their campsites can be seen all the way from the sea, dark streaks above a pure white landscape. The ancient savages gather along the coast to meet and trade with other Iceborn, and to make repairs or enlarge their Necroilus vessels, the undead sea serpents that serve as ships. Further inland, one may find entire villages of the evil creatures, complete with “docks” carved right from the ice where they can moor their monstrous ships or offload terrified captives destined to die as sacrifices to some vile lord or master, or be eaten.

Leading in from the coastlines are “Iceborn roads,” age-old paths beaten into the ice and snow by generations of bare feet and desperate prisoners dragged behind. Along these paths are frozen corpses impaled on stakes, ice encrusted skeletons of human victims and of great creatures butchered where they fell, and statues chiseled out of the ice itself, idols of long-forgotten gods and Iceborn champions from ages past. The trails of the Iceborn converge at the center of the continent, sometimes leading over bridges of ice or into tunnels that cross over and under the shallow, seasonal seas that form from summer meltwater. These lakes and lagoons grow in the warmer months, allowing Iceborn Necroilus ships to sail right into the Great Ice Shelf’s interior. Temporary islands become homes for dragons and other creatures that can withstand the low temperatures and are tough enough not to fall victim to the Iceborn and their insatiable appetite for living flesh.

The Heart of Evil

Legends say that at the heart of the Great Ice Shelf is the capital of the Iceborn, **Ay-Ezan**, their only true “city.” Here, amongst crystal spires of ice and a frozen labyrinth of sub-glacial caverns, the Iceborn congregate in large numbers for dark ceremonies and evil purposes, to worship dragons and giants and sacrifice human victims they have taken in their raids. Ay-Ezan is defended by fields of spear-like icicles that grow up out of the ground, by moats of mysteriously unfrozen water, and by savage blizzards and ice storms. There are almost no guards or sentries, however, because the Iceborn fear no enemy in the frozen wasteland. No outsider who was not a prisoner has ever reached their capital, and few people on the mainland of the Palladium world even know that the Great Ice Shelf and Iceborn exists, let alone an entire city of ice and death. Even the people of Bizantium choose to believe that such a city is the stuff of lies and myth.

Every generation or two, as the population grows, the Iceborn gather at Ay-Ezan to assemble as a single, mighty horde and choose a champion, a *Necromancer War Chief* who works them into a frenzy and inspires them to wage war on Bizantium and the shores of the Great Northern Wilderness. With burgeoning numbers, the Iceborn have grown restless once again. The great

assembly met at Ay-Ezan several weeks ago to choose a new Necromancer War Chief and devise battle plans for their coming attacks on the Northern Islands and mainland. Soon, whole flotillas of Necroilus ships will sail southwards, raiding vessels as they encounter them, landing armies and covens of witches on foreign shores, and engaging in all-out war and intent on capturing vast numbers of prisoners for slaves, food and human sacrifice. A few clans have already begun to do so as they engage in reconnaissance missions or are too excited to wait for their fellow tribesmen to arrive en masse. “This time,” the Iceborn shout to the heavens, “this time Bizantium shall be conquered.”

The Edge of the World

When it comes to strange encounters or unusual phenomena, Bizantium sailors have witnessed plenty of sights that are difficult or impossible to explain, from Elementals made of clouds and air, to dragons that vanish into empty skies, to giants who stride up out of the very sea. Nothing, however, compares to the *Edge of the World*. Most scholars and historians, even men of exceptional wisdom, deny it exists, possibly because its existence defies logic and the known laws of magic, possibly because it is terrifying to imagine. Few seafarers outside Bizantium speak of it: superstition warns that to speak of the wall is to invite disaster, to condemn one’s vessel to sail into total nothingness, or at least to the border between the Palladium World and whatever may be on the other side.

To those who have seen it, nothing crafted by mortals (or even gods) can compare. The only way to approach the Edge of the World is by sea, or by somehow flying through the air. Roughly one hundred miles (160 km) from the Edge, anyone nearing it watches as the horizon becomes a mass of dark blue and gray clouds in front of a black, lightless wall of energy, reaching as far as one can see. The closer a vessel approaches, the more the wall’s immensity becomes apparent. Within twenty miles (32 km), the sight is simply awe-inspiring, a silent expanse of mystic energy spanning the entire horizon from west to east, unchanging, unbroken. The wall descends down to the floor of the ocean and seems to ascend endlessly up into the sky. Furthermore, Bizantium’s sailors have basically confirmed that the wall encircles the entire world; missions heading north, south, east and west have all encountered the “Black Wall” at the Edge of the World, and always far out to sea.

There are references in the **Tristine Chronicles** that seem to speak of the Edge of the World going back tens of thousands of years. Some legends claim the wall came into existence when the Great Old Ones were sentenced to their endless slumber, and that their place of exile must exist beyond the wall’s bounds. There are those who have never seen it that think the wall is a figment of the imagination, a story invented by superstitious sailors to frighten landlubbers. Various religions also attempt to explain the wall as the work of a particular god or group of gods.

Whatever it may be, anyone or anything that touches the wall simply vanishes into thin air! Presumed to have been disintegrated. For the last six years the wall has also appeared to inch forward, seemingly devouring everything in its path, including the sky and ocean itself. Anything (even birds and other airborne creatures) that came within three miles (4.8 km) have been snared by a massive maelstrom, dragged into the wall and disintegrated. Fortunately, six months ago, the destructive phenomena around

the Black Wall ceased. Nevertheless, the wall still devoured countless miles of sky and ocean.

Currently, the wall is found about 620 miles (992 km) south of the island of West Mnn, within the Floenry Isles, or about 700 miles (1,120 km) south of the southernmost point in the Land of the South Winds. It is about 600 miles (960 km) east of the Island of Zy and west of the Isle of the Cyclops, and 1,300 miles (2,080 km) north of the Island of Borich in Bizantium. Reaching the wall in any direction is possible by boat, but the northern approach is the most difficult due to icebergs and the Great Ice Shelf. Now,

with the maelstrom phenomenon surrounding the wall over, the Edge of the World is *relatively* safe to approach, no longer interacting with the ocean or the air. Clouds seem to pass harmlessly through the boundary, along with the ocean itself, as if the wall simply did not exist. However, should a living or inanimate object come into contact with the wall, it simply dissolves into nothingness. No magic can dispel the wall, and none have ever crossed it and returned. Leading many to believe there is nothing on the other side.



Key Figures of the Kingdom of Bizantium

“The sharks gather twice as fast when it’s royal blood in the water.” – Bizantian Proverb.

King Raedaen IV

King Raedaen Jostein IV, High Chieftain of the Eoten, Lord of the Northern Islands, Emissary of Almighty Algor, Merchant-King of Bizantium – is one of the least qualified people to ever become ruler of a major nation.

As a child, young Raedaen was spoiled and coddled, the second son of the King, with no prospect of ascending to the throne. *Crown Prince Aevarr*, the heir apparent, nine years older, was already a bold knight and proven sailor, and the future of the kingdom seemed to be in good hands. Without the need to prepare himself to rule, Raedaen grew into a reckless, sometimes even thoughtless youth with no responsibilities, no concerns, and an endless number of royal retainers to clean up after him or fix his mistakes.

At the age of ten, the King sent Raedaen along with a trade mission to the *Yin-Sloth Jungles* to earn his sea legs and see part of the world. Confining himself mostly to his cabin during the difficult journey, Raedaen was eager to get a look at the strange ships, people and creatures of the southern jungles. In Bizantium, young Raedaen was well known to the Kingdom’s seafarers, and the little prince’s favorite game was to explore and play on any ship he chose, indulged in his curiosity and carefully watched. Wandering off in a strange, foreign port, however, the first vessel to catch his eye was a pirate ship masquerading as a merchant, and Raedaen was kidnaped “as easy as leading a lamb up the gangplank” and held for ransom.

When word of Raedaen’s capture reached Bizantium, Crown Prince Aevarr, along with a dozen warships, sailed for the Yin-Sloth Jungles. Somewhere in the Sea of Dread, the fleet encountered an enormous sea monster during a vicious storm. Only one ship escaped the battle with the terrible beast and Aevarr was lost

at sea. The young noble was extremely popular with many of Bizantium’s Noble Houses, who in turn blamed his death (and the loss of the Yin-Sloth trading partnership, worth millions of gold) on prince Raedaen, the boy who would now be their future king. A vast sum of gold was delivered to the pirates, and Raedaen returned to the Northern Islands unharmed, but to an atmosphere of ill will and whispered condemnation.

His father never spoke of the issue and the path of succession remained unacknowledged, even when the King fell from his horse and broke his spine three years later, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down. Not wishing to be an invalid for the rest of his life, King Raedaen ordered his royal guardsmen to throw him into the ocean. Young Raedaen IV watched in horror as the King’s guard complied with his father’s wishes. As the King sank beneath the waters, his wife, *Queen Angelita*, jumped in after him. From that moment on, Prince Raedaen was haunted by the image of his parents drowning and became fearful of the sea.

After taking the throne, King Raedaen proved his worst critics correct. Viewing both the kingdom and the Shadow Colonies as personal possessions, the young King used his power to indulge his whims and bestow important offices upon friends and cronies, rather than further the interests of his country. With no understanding of politics or sea trade, no forceful personality, military experience, religious zeal or other admirable qualities, the King has been nothing but a disappointment to the nobles and merchants that profit most from decisive leadership from the Crown.

The King’s intellectual laziness regarding his own Kingdom and conditions abroad shames not only the Crown, but everyone involved in the Bizantian government. His own father understood that Raedaen was not fit for the throne, but “the divine will of Algor chose this imbecile (not his brother) to serve as the sea god’s emissary.” As dark clouds gather around the nation, however, even the pious are starting to question their leader. King Raedaen IV is not comfortable when required to perform official duties required of the King and emissary of Algor, and the priesthood has

little faith in their monarch's ability to maintain good will with their divine sponsor.

In appearance, King Raedaen IV might be from Bizantian noble stock, but nothing about him looks regal or dignified. His shoulder-length blond hair is usually a tangled mess, and for a king outfitted in the finest silks and rarest materials, he is somehow still a poor dresser, wearing the finery of a nobleman like a peasant in a costume. The King's efforts to procure a queen for himself have thus far been unsuccessful, leading to awkwardness amongst the Crown and Noble Houses, failed matchmaking outside the kingdom and even one potential bride who was nearly beheaded when she backed out of a marriage arrangement, accepting exile on the Shadow Colonies rather than remain with the King.

Despite his obvious shortcomings, King Raedaen is embraced (if not necessarily respected) by Bizantium's people, more so as a symbol of national pride than a decisive leader. He is always ready to extend the generosity of the Crown to the underprivileged, even if he is incapable of understanding the economic conditions or complex mercantile systems that lead to poverty and inequality. By allowing most of the administrative duties of the Kingdom to be run by a self-serving body of advisors, the King has failed to notice that the **Shadow Coast colonies** have nearly reached a state of open revolt. Reports of the **Iceborn** are dismissed, and every rumor of treachery or court intrigue is explained away as paranoia on the part of Raedaen's advisors. The ambitious **Noble Houses** that surround him do their best to maintain the kingdom's standing in the world, but they also have the power to turn on King Raedaen IV or demand that he abdicate the throne. Conflicts between the **Church of Algor** and the growing number (and power) of **Warlocks** who practice Elementalism threaten to create rifts within Bizantian society, while merchants watch as competitors erode their position in certain markets.

The King, however, cannot be bothered with these kinds of boring details, and is unlikely to take action until the walls of his own palace are falling down around him.

Quick Stats for King Raedaen IV

Alignment: Anarchist. **Attributes:** I.Q. 9, M.E. 7, M.A. 13, P.S. 11, P.P. 8, P.E. 11, P.B. 8, Spd 14. **Age:** 37. **Experience:** 6th level Noble and 1st level Acolyte. Note: It's not that Raedaen is truly an imbecile, it's that he has no common sense nor the skill or desire to be a leader. He lacks empathy with the people.

Hit Points: 47. **S.D.C.:** 11. **P.P.E.:** 10.

Magic Items: **The Serpent Tooth of Agmundr:** This item has been worn by Clan Chieftains of North Folk for thousands of years. One of the old sagas claims that it was first worn by the legendary King *Agmundr*, who received it from the sea god himself after reclaiming the Northern Islands from the Great Horde. The 12 inch (30 cm) animal tooth of the pendant portion belongs to some kind of sea serpent, or perhaps a dragon of sorts. No one has ever been allowed to physically examine it to determine its nature.

Whoever wears the necklace receives a +5% bonus in all prayers to Algor, and to priestly abilities. According to the saga, one can also make a direct appeal to the god for an immediate supreme act of divine intervention (+30%) just like a Priest of Light. This means whoever is king has the power to request a miracle from the sea god! The rules are relatively the same; use the wearer's M.A. attribute number plus 3% per level of experi-

ence. Only those who are true worshipers of Algor can make such appeals, and even then the sea god may determine that their cause is unworthy, especially if it leads to personal glory or reward, regardless if hundreds of lives may be at stake. The saga also claims that some requests have not only received the sea god's attention but also cause him to make a personal appearance!

Money: The King has a personal fortune of at least 200 million in gold, jewelry, and prized trade goods, from walrus ivory and rubber to animal skins. In real estate, he owns 22,000 acres of woodland. As he is the King of Bizantium, it is safe to assume Raedaen has access to virtually any kind of non-magical weapons or armor his heart desires, yet neither he nor the Crown actually owns any magic artifacts (except those on his person). However, any item confiscated by any legal authority of Bizantium will be taken to the Office of Numbers and, allegedly, to Norbert Bank. These items "become the property of the Crown" by royal decree, but they remain held in secure locations away from the palace and monarch.

Note: Raedaen suffers from an intense fear of water (hydrophobia), one of the reasons why performing his religious duties as a representative of Algor are so difficult. Though he may be monarch of a seafaring people, the King rarely travels by water, shies away from docks and shipyards, and abhors small boats.

Merchant-Prince Wilgan Vatatzes

For his first sixteen years, the boy who would one day become Merchant-Prince Wilgan Vatatzes was raised in the Timiro Kingdom, practically brother to *Valdin Farstalk*, future Duke of Aracho. His father, Merchant-Prince Symond Vatatzes, after numerous affairs and children outside of marriage, consented to allow his first wife to return to her home in Timiro, unknowingly pregnant with the prince's heir and firstborn legitimate son. Wilgan grew up in the fashion of Timiro's nobles, learning how to court ladies and kill brigands in equal measure, but always had a fascination with ships and the sea. At age sixteen, he was torn away from this life and sent on a long and uncertain sea voyage, a trip halfway around the world, home to the Northern Islands to be with his father and learn his place within Bizantium's nobility.

The appearance of the young prince caused quite an uproar. Symond Vatatzes knew nothing of his son, and sent this upstart to the Shadow Colonies rather than face the reality of a new successor. Wilgan made the best of his fate, however, playing an active part in the governance of the **Seabright colony** and bolstering its wealth and economic production. The Crown and the other Noble Houses praised the ambitious, young nobleman, but his own father remained cold and aloof.

After four years in the colonies, Wilgan was spending more and more time in Bizantium, living the life of a displaced aristocrat and socializing with the Northern Islands' elite. He was also sending "advice" to his half-brothers, half-sisters and cousins within the Vatatzes estate, much to the outrage of his father, the Merchant-Prince. The two even had a few heated confrontations in the halls of power, and many powerful people in Bizantium began to lose faith in the elder Vatatzes, while recognizing untold potential in his son. The issue was decided permanently shortly

after, though, when Symond Vatzes died of a heart attack on the eve of his marriage to his seventh wife.

While his half-brothers bickered and debated, Wilgan invoked Bizantium's laws of succession and assumed leadership of the House. He straightened out his father's messes, found worthy positions for his half-siblings and cousins, and set the Vatzes' shipbuilders to work on newer, bigger warships. Realizing that the King had no temperament to rule, Wilgan also offered his services to the inept King Raedaen IV – who gladly accepted. Before long, Wilgan became the King's chief advisor, a role he still fills to this day. He has assumed command of the Royal Army, drafts laws, dispenses justice, and generally manages the day-to-day running of the Kingdom. Countless times he has found himself acting on the King's behalf, Raedaen either indisposed or simply uninterested.

Some claim Wilgan runs Bizantium so effectively that it should be him sitting on the throne. As much as Wilgan secretly despises the inept monarch, however, he will do nothing to jeopardize or bring turmoil to the Kingdom. Instability is bad for business, and Bizantium survives off the profits brought in by its ships and merchants. Wilgan is used to fixing the King's problems, and usually ends up preserving the status quo.

Prince Wilgan is obviously a Vatzes, with the family's distinct auburn hair and blue eyes. He dresses the part of a Bizantian noble, but at a moment's notice can turn into a sailor and blend in with the common folk. He has handsome features and is the talk of many young noblewomen of the Bizantian court who wonder why he has remained unmarried for so long.

Privately, the prince longs to return to a simple life aboard a sailing vessel, and perhaps one day he will sail around the world, or, better yet, return to the Timiro Kingdom and take up the offer made by his childhood friend, the Duke of Aracho, *Valdin Farstalk*, to serve as his chief military advisor. The two share a close relationship and continually update each other on what their respective monarchs are doing to wreck their beloved kingdoms.

Presently, Wilgan is looking closely into the affairs of *Hanta Farrip*, *Airen Roth*, *Geoffrey Lamrith*, *Calith Orfeld* and *Grayen Bardomus* to make sure their personal endeavors do not threaten Bizantium. Should any of them truly step out of line, Wilgan shall move quickly and have their agents arrested and interrogated in order to bring charges of treason upon their employer. The sooner these troublemakers can no longer influence the King's decisions or affect the affairs of the Kingdom, the happier Wilgan will be. One day, he hopes to be able to see his own ambitions come to pass – marrying one of his sons or daughters to the King's eventual children and putting a Vatzes on the throne as the next King of Bizantium.

Quick Stats for Prince Wilgan Vatzes:

Alignment: Principled. **Attributes:** I.Q. 17, M.E. 19, M.A. 23, P.S. 13, P.P. 12, P.E. 11, P.B. 18, Spd 13. **Age:** 42. **Experience:** 10th level Noble. Wilgan's loyalty and devotion to the welfare of the Kingdom and its citizens is second to none. It is this devotion and sense of duty and honor that keeps him shackled to the affairs of the court where he does what he can to keep the Kingdom running as smoothly as possible.

Hit Points: 49. **S.D.C.:** 14. **P.P.E.:** 7.

Psionic Abilities: A Minor Psychic with the abilities of Telepathy (4) and Object Read (6). **I.S.P.:** 60.

Magic Items: The Deceiver: Within his mansion Prince Wilgan keeps his pride and joy; a powerful crystal headband created during the Time of a Thousand Magicks. It provides him with impressive psychic abilities. **First**, it alters his aura, making him appear to have no psionic powers, and makes his attributes seem much less than they really are. **Second**, he can disguise his Alignment at will, making it appear to be whatever he wants. **Third**, the Deceiver conceals its own magical and psychic abilities to appear absolutely ordinary. **Fourth**, it projects "truth" and "sincerity," making all lies sound convincing. Not even the magic spell Words of Truth or psionic detection reveals his lies (10 I.S.P. per five minutes). **Fifth**, Charismatic Aura, identical to the Wizard spell (I.S.P. cost 10. Duration: One hour). (This psionic crystal device is described in *The Island at the Edge of the World*TM; pages 91-92.) He has never told anyone where exactly he found the rare crystal device and only if tortured within an inch of his life is he likely to reveal who is on the other end (the *Duke of Aracho* is in possession of a Crystal Communicator, which is how the two stay in contact with one another across the many miles).

Drauandvar, Ring of the North: A gold ring, etched with tiny runes on the outside and inside, Drauandvar was given to Hidar Vatzes over a thousand years ago and has remained in the family ever since. Legends speak of the ring's ability to blind the **Ice-born** with holy light, but the only power currently demonstrated by the ring and bestowed upon its wearer is an immunity to mind control & possession, +1 to save vs illusion, and the owner enjoys a +10% bonus to all skills requiring a high M.A., such as diplomacy, confidence-building, rallying troops, making convincing appeals, etc.

Money: He keeps most of his valuables hidden in a secret vault in the basement of his mansion. His personal wealth is around 370,000 gold, but House Vatzes has access to 14 million gold worth of gems, gold, jewelry, ivory, animal skins, and rare articles. House Vatzes also has 1.7 million gold in the Norbert Bank and 700,000 gold in the Aracho Credit Union in the Timiro Kingdom. Most of House Vatzes' wealth has been invested in its shipyard and the Seabright and Hil-Santo Colonies.

Hanta Farrip, Chief of the Warlock Council

Hanta was born the daughter of a fishmonger in the city of Plu. Her mother died when she was nine years old, making her responsible for hawking the cockles, clams and mussels that her father caught at sea. While working as a young street peddler, pushing a wheelbarrow as her father fished, Hanta developed a knack for learning the names of everyone on the city's streets, their trade, as well the locations of criminal and illegal outfits. Few ever paid her any attention; after all, she was the daughter of a fishmonger.

Two years later, a terrible storm forced most of the fishing fleet to flee for calmer shores or retreat into harbor. Hanta's father was one of the few fishermen lost at sea. Heartbroken, but knowing no other trade, Hanta continued to prepare and sell fish, now employed by a stern, uncompromising fish merchant. Within a few years she was smuggling for the local thieves' guild and working as a courier for sailors. When her employer found out about her secret life, he confronted her with a whip, and in the

ensuing melee, she stabbed him in the neck with a fileting knife and fled his house, becoming a stowaway onboard a merchant vessel destined for the Timiro Kingdom.

Three days later, with the ship already out to sea, Hanta was cold, wet, and hungry. She snuck into one of the cabins to try and find food when she was caught by the ship's Warlock, *Tempest Wavemaker*. Instead of reporting her to the ship's captain, he offered her a place as his assistant. During the long voyage, he convinced Hanta to make a better life by studying Warlock magic at the College of Elements in the city of Credia. He would sponsor her and she would never have to endure the harshness of living on the streets or the cruelty of lesser men ever again. Hanta agreed.

In short order, Hanta proved to be one of the most talented pupils to ever attend the College of Elements. She appeared to be an exceedingly quiet and studious person, but *Dean Mariota Aircaster* came to believe Hanta might be the most brilliant student the college had ever seen. She decided to tutor Hanta herself, teaching her some of the shrouded secrets of the Warlock arts and communing with the four Elemental Planes. When Hanta left the College and returned to the Northern Islands, she quickly became chief Warlock in the city of Plu, and joined the Warlock Council with a handwritten letter of recommendation by Mariota Aircaster.

Last year, Hanta's political resourcefulness (and ability to summon Elementals to assassinate her enemies), enabled her to rise to the position of leader of the Warlock Council. She has vowed to see the Shadow Coast become a mageocracy, ruled by the Council of Elements, independent of the Bizantian Crown, and to help the colonies become a new center of power on the Northern Sea, separate and independent of Bizantium. She has no desire to see Bizantium's Crown or Noble Houses destroyed or enslaved, only for the Shadow Coast colonies to become a new kingdom under her rule. Nor does she have any real desire to remove King Raedaen IV from the throne. She knows the populace of the Northern Islands will never accept Warlocks ruling over them, but the colonies are a different story. To get what she wants, she has no qualms about destabilizing Bizantium's economy or stirring up trouble in the colonies, but the inept monarch does all the damage he can on his own. When necessary, she whispers a few words of encouragement or suggestions into the King's ear and he usually acts upon them. Hanta tries to keep her ambitions for a Warlock-governed kingdom on the mainland from interfering with her affection for the Bizantian common folk. Having spent her life as a peasant, she cannot stomach watching others suffer at the hands of smug noblemen and greedy merchants reluctant to share their wealth with those who break their backs getting it for them.

Quick Stats for Hanta Farrip:

Alignment: Aberrant. **Attributes:** I.Q. 19, M.E. 20, M.A. 18, P.S. 10, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 17, Spd 12. **Age:** 29. **Experience:** 9th level Air Warlock.

Hit Points: 93. **S.D.C.:** 29. **P.P.E.:** 181.

Spell Knowledge: Speak Elemental 98%, Sense Air Elementals within 360 feet (109.7 m) and all other Elementals and Golems within a 120 foot (36.6 m) radius automatically; 70%, but if Elemental Forces appear to be at work, she gains a +20% bonus and doubled sensing range, recognize/sense a fellow Warlock and their Elemental sign, she can always see invisible Air Elementals as well as Spirits of Light and demonic Jinn, knows

the direction of wind and can accurately tell/sense time by observing the sky 98%, sense precipitation (rain or snow), weather patterns, and atmospheric disturbances 75%, sense impurities in the air (pollutants, ash, smoke, etc.) and knows if they are hazardous to humanoid health 75%, summon any Lesser Elemental 55% (65% for Air Elementals) for one week without a desire to return to its home plane, afterward an accumulative 6% per week. Summoning only takes 15 minutes. She can summon any Greater Elemental at half the normal percentile level. Note: Farrip's Warlock abilities are slightly enhanced thanks to additional training.

Air Warlock Spell Knowledge: Atmospheric Manipulation (50), Breath of Life (50), Breathe Without Air (3), Call Lightning (10), Calm Storms (20), Change Wind Direction (6), Circle of Rain (25), Cloud of Slumber (4), Cure Frostbite (22), Fingers of the Wind (8), Hurricane (60), Invisible Wall (30), Leaf Rustler* (7), Levitate (7), Lightning Strike (12), Mesmerism (7), Mist of Death (40), Orb of Cold (6), Phantom* (15), Phantom Footman* (10), Snow Walking (8), Stop Wind (5), Tornado (60), Whispers of the Wind (30), Wind Blast (40), Wind Cushion (50) and Wind Rush (10).

Note: Hanta can perform the spells marked by * with only *half* the required P.P.E. (as noted) and *double* the normal duration. There is no limit to how many Elementals she can command. These summoned air essences Bio-Regenerate 1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per minute.

Magic Items: Beads of Souls: Hanta wears thumbnail-sized, jade marbles fashioned into a bracelet (6 beads total) around her right wrist. Each stone functions as a P.P.E. battery containing 30 P.P.E. each. Once she draws the P.P.E. from each bead it turns black and cannot be recharged.

Cloak of Guises: The white, hooded robe worn by Hanta can be turned into a full-length, fancy dress, into traveling attire to be worn when aboard a ship, or almost any garment in between. The cloak does not provide shoes/boots for her feet.

Money: Her personal savings are stored in a hidden vault in her house. Within this vault Hanta keeps 100,000 gold and countless books on history and anthropology (each worth 50-150 gold). There are dozens of preserved scrolls that hold the personal eyewitness testimony of individuals that have traveled the Sea of Despair. Hidden beneath her bed, under a secret floorboard, she keeps half a dozen star sapphires (17 carats) each. There is also a detailed map of the Great Ice Shelf, including the estimated position of the Black Wall beyond it and the location of something apparently buried under the ice.

She owns a dozen sea serpent teeth hidden in a chest full of old clothes. One, the length of a broadsword, has an inscription that reads "Queen of Serpents." As leader of the Warlock Council, Hanta has access to most of its treasury (13 million in gold, gems, precious metals, jewelry, animal skins, and rare articles) but this doesn't include another 3.5 million in magic items hidden in a secret vault at their headquarters.

Note: Protecting Hanta's vault is a Phantom (same as the Air Elemental spell) that Hanta has turned into a *Greater Familiar!* The Phantom's primary duty is to protect the vault, but when Hanta is home, she can send the creature on various errands, which includes dispatching some of her most hated enemies.

Airen Roth, High Minister of the Northern Pantheon

With long, blue-white hair and pale eyes, anyone who meets Airen Roth, High Minister of the Northern Pantheon, will see that he is descended from the Eoten, of true North Folk blood. The eldest of five children, his parents are fiefholders in service to House Ducasian. Airen would have spent his life working the land as well had he not become tangled in a fishing net after falling off an old pier. Caught in the net's lines, Airen thought drowning was only moments away, when a beautiful mermaid appeared out of the sandy water, granting him the ability to breathe beneath the water and cutting his bonds away with a fishbone knife.

Roth emerged from the waters a changed man. The next day, he packed his belongings and departed for the Church of Algor in Southomber. After two years as a student and acolyte, he took a job onboard the merchant vessel *Curious Seal*, serving as the ship's pastor. During a dozen voyages through the Sea of Despair, the *Seal* never grounded on rocks or sandbars, saw no attacks from pirates or sea monsters, and never lost a single crewman. All aboard attributed their good fortune to the ship's pastor and his favored status with the almighty Algor.

Returning to Southomber, Roth was requested by House Vatatze to serve as religious minister for the Hil-Santo Colony. This lasted for only a single year as Airen became involved with colonists who wanted to break away from Bizantium. Unable to convince them otherwise and unnerved by the growing violence in the streets, Airen sent word of the colonists' plans to the Crown – causing *King Raedaen III* to respond with the heavy hand of the Bizantian military. The Navy destroyed or captured most of the Hil-Santo Colony's ships, and Marines executed not just the leaders of the independence movement, but their family members and associates as well, whether they were innocent or guilty, young or old.

The deaths weighed heavily on Airen, who left the colony horrified at the consequences of his own actions. Nonetheless, the Crown and the Church decided to reward his loyalty by naming him *Minister of the Faith*, an exalted position within the church that granted him power equal, in some ways, to that of a Merchant-Prince. Over the next three years, Airen became increasingly pious and removed, choosing to focus on his humility, concern for the poor, and his commitment to dialogue as a way to build bridges between people of all backgrounds and beliefs. In addition, he became known for favoring simple vestments void of ornamentation, sometimes walking the grounds in simple linens or even swimming nude during personal communion with Algor in the sea.

When High Minister *Ljot Thorald* failed to heal *King Raedaen III*'s injuries, leading the King to take his own life, *Prince Raedaen IV* called for the Minister's execution. He then named Airen as Ljot's successor, despite the protests made by several Noble Houses and advisors to the King. No one in the last century has been more influential in the spread of the Church than Airen, and with King Raedaen's lackluster performance of his religious duties, Airen has stepped up to fill the void. His commitment to the people is unwavering. He seeks peace, not just with those who follow the faith, but with all individuals and races, regardless of their motives. He believes clergy should be shepherds looking after the people, but knows that priests can be tempted and cor-

rupted by power as well, making it important to live a humble life. He works tirelessly with the church's acolytes, speaks well of the Wolfen, and is not above counseling the most downtrodden, unfortunate and outcast individuals in Bizantian society.

Airen is being criticized, however, for failing to respond quickly enough to allegations made by Church officials that House Bardomus is using "illegal magic" in the creation of the Stone Ships. As High Minister, he is in charge of all investigations and policies regarding such allegations. As a Bizantian, however, he sees the strategic value in the mighty ships. If arcane, untrustworthy forces are involved in their construction, Airen will look for the truth and close down the shipyard that builds them, but he would prefer to believe that House Bardomus is acting in accordance with the tenets of the Church.

Airen has heard stories regarding the numerous reported incidents of ghostly visions and strange phenomena on the Island of Torn that the Crown and Noble Houses seem to be ignoring. Though they are only rumors, Airen is looking to recruit mercenaries and/or adventurers to journey to the island and conduct a discreet investigation into the matter, reporting back all findings to him and him alone. Airen doesn't want a repeat of the Hil-Santo colony incident, so he will try to handle the affair on his own.

Likewise, Minister Airen is privy to rumors about ghost ships being discovered and villages on the mainland where the inhabitants have vanished. He has prayed to Algor for insight into this troublesome matter. In a dream, the giant sea god rose above the waves with his hands cupped, holding something. When he pointed his right hand north to the Icy Ocean, where storm clouds rolled out toward Bizantium, **Iceborn** encased in ice fell from his other hand, laughing as they dropped into the sea. In the water, they turned into sea serpents. Some of the serpents circled the island kingdom as if laying in wait, but the majority swam to the Shadow Coast where they climbed onto the land, breathing fire and bringing death to the colonies.

Airen is sure that Algor has sent him a warning, but the priest is uncertain with whom he should share this awful premonition. He knows most people believe the Iceborn are long dead and of no consequence, and fears that if he raises the alarm, he will be dismissed as a feeble old man. He plans on speaking to Merchant-Prince Wilgan Vatatze and seeking his counsel on the matter. Shockingly, the King will believe the warning whether it comes from Vatatze or the High Minister directly, and while others scoff, the King will put the monarchy on high alert. Sadly, the Shadow Coast colonies are among the scoffers and take few precautions to ford up their defenses. Worse, as time passes without incident, they will ignore the warnings and go about life as usual.

Quick Stats for Airen Roth:

Alignment: Scrupulous. **Attributes:** I.Q. 19, M.E. 13, M.A. 21, P.S. 13, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 10, Spd 14. **Age:** 61. **Experience:** 10th level Priest of Algor and the Northern Gods.

Hit Points: 54. **S.D.C.:** 20. **P.P.E.:** 82.

Priest Abilities: Blessings, Prayer of Strength 83%, Prayer of Communion 84%, Prayer of Intervention 84%/90%/84%, Miracles 41%, Healing Touch, Exorcism 70%, Resurrection 25%, Turn the Dead 70%, Penance and Sacrifice, Breathe Underwater (special): Same as the Water Warlock spell – (88%, starts out at a base 25% at first level, +7% per level of experience), and *Walk on Water (special)*: Same as Water Warlock spell *Walk the Waves* only the Bizantium Priests of Algor can perform it on themselves

for double the duration and without limit of wave and weather conditions (55% base +10% at first level and each additional level of experience).

Spell Knowledge of Note: Calm Waters (15), Change Wind Direction (6), Create Coal (5), Dowsing (2), Extinguish Fire (8), Lightning Fist (12), Mend Wood (10), Semi-Impervious to Cold (10) and Tongues (12).

Magic Items: Mask of Algor: A ceremonial silver mask said to be forged by the ancient Eoten with the likeness of Algor himself. Airen wears the mask for important religious ceremonies, but it also contains potent magic energies, and sometimes the High Minister is seen swimming in the sea with the mask on or tied to his waist. The bearer is impervious to cold (even magic cold), aggressive and predatory sea animals (including sharks and sea serpents) do not see the wearer as prey and leave him alone, can communicate with sea creatures, and can swim same as the *Swim Like the Dolphin Water Warlock* spell.

Seastar Medallion: A starfish painted with silver and set in a gold disc, the Seastar Medallion was supposedly given by Algor to *Urmangd*, the first Eoten priest to apply the sea god's blessing to ships and boats prior to their maiden voyage. The Seastar grants a bonus of +10% to all priestly Miracles and attempts at Resurrection or Exorcism, and creates an aura 100 feet (30.5 m) around the wearer in which sea serpents, sharks and other ocean creatures will become passive and refuse to attack (has no effect on demons/Deevils or intelligent beings; duration is one hour per level of the priest).

Money: Airen lives a simple life. The Church of Algor receives huge donations from its worshipers, but the large sums are used to support the Church and invested in projects to help the poor and widows of sailors and fishermen. Unknown to all, including Airen, he is very much noticed by Algor and has personally won the god's favor. His dream about the Iceborn coming is a direct warning from the sea god.

Merchant-Prince Grayen Bardomus

Born as the third son of a powerful Noble House, Grayen Bardomus was never intended to bear the title Merchant-Prince. Instead, he was sent to the Timiro Kingdom at the age of eleven to study Elemental magic. For years Grayen developed his mind and link to the Elemental gods and was an exceptional student. At the age of fifteen the young noble returned home, now more experienced and worldly – and trained as a Warlock in the ways of Earth magic.

Upon arrival in Bizantium, Grayen found his family's Noble House in tatters. Shortly after his departure, his elder brother had taken up the title of Merchant-Prince, but his quick temper led him into a duel he lost. The second eldest Bardomus son served dutifully for two years until he died as well, his ship fallen victim to a sea serpent attack in the Sea of Despair. The Bardomus cousin placed in charge of the family in the interim, a brewer by trade, had no mind for either politics or shipbuilding, and the quality of both ships and crews being sent to the Crown dwindled.

Though he was only fifteen, Grayen dismissed his cousin and took on the responsibilities that came with the title of Merchant-Prince for himself. It took nearly a decade, but Prince Grayen has

straightened out the family's finances, renovated the Bardomus shipyards and hired scores of experienced carpenters and shipwrights to turn out superior vessels. People whisper about the young Prince's religious beliefs and supposed mystic powers, but they speak openly about the prosperity he brought back to his House. His boldest decision, however, would unite his knowledge of Elementalism with his people's need to be a dominant sea power.

Grayen Bardomus recruited prominent Warlocks from Bizantium and abroad to consult with him in long, secret planning sessions. His goal: the creation of the first of **Bizantium's Stone Ships**. The process to design such a behemoth took months to develop, months in which he and his advisors were sequestered away at a small, fenced-off dock. There he worked day and night with both shipwrights and Warlocks. Just as other members of the Bardomus family were beginning to suspect Grayen had gone mad, he emerged in triumph – proudly displaying the first of Bizantium's mighty Stone Ships.

Stone Ships are armored giant vessels, designed to stand deck-to-deck against the Western Empire's dreaded *Demon Black Ships*. The creation process has been refined over the last few years, and now House Bardomus has a growing fleet of Stone Ships at its command, and is recognized as an innovator in ship design, alongside Houses like Vatatzes, Arfox and Malemore.

Still, there is a very real risk that the Church of Algor might condemn the magical process behind the Stone Ships should they learn that Diabolism and Summoning are involved. Having the spell casters that perform the complex ritual swear an oath of secrecy provides a thin veil of legal protection, and officially, Stone Ships invoke only "Elemental" forces, which are allowed. However, all it takes is for one Summoner, Diabolist or Warlock to talk to the wrong priest or acolyte to put the entire operation at risk. Bardomus keeps the Stone Yard where the ships are made under heavy guard, and the actual magic ritual that creates the ships is always performed at night under cover of darkness, and with as few people present as possible.

Quick Stats for Grayen Bardomus:

Alignment: Unprincipled. Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 14, M.A. 17, P.S. 14, P.P. 13, P.E. 17, P.B. 12, Spd 11. Age: 31. Experience: 5th level Noble, 6th level Earth Warlock.

Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.**: 20. **P.P.E.**: 158.

Spell Knowledge: Speak Elemental 92%, Sense Elementals within a 120 foot (36.5 m) radius automatically; he gains a +20% bonus and doubled sensing range, and recognize/sense a fellow Warlock and their Elemental sign. There is a 75% chance he can see invisible Elementals as well as Spirits of Light and demonic Jinn, recognize all natural minerals from the earth 72%, sense tremors in the earth from quakes, explosions, and seismic disturbances within a 40 mile (64 km) area, sense the dangers located in the earth like loose rocks, quicksand, pit traps, etc. at 52%, sense direction underground 90%, and summon Lesser Elementals 25%.

Earth Warlock Spells: Armor of Stone (24), Create Dirt or Clay (6), Create Mound (8), Crumble Stone (10), Crystal Eye (22), Encase Object in Stone (10), Fool's Gold (5), Hand of Stone (8), Identify Minerals (3), Mend Stone (15), Mend Wood (10), Rock to Mud (6), Rust (15), Secure Stone Foundation (30) and Wall of Clay (8).

Magic Items: The Earth Stone: Attached to a silver chain necklace is a very large 3x1.4 inch (76x35mm) oval blue onyx. While it is a beautiful stone (valued at 3,000 gold), the true properties of the stone come from the fact that it came from the Elemental Plane. The stone possesses the ability to absorb P.P.E. from living beings without their knowledge (1D4 points per victim) unless victims make a saving throw vs magic (13 or better). Those who make the save are impervious to the draining effect for one hour. Draining the P.P.E. goes on without the victim taking notice or harm (victims recover P.P.E. at the usual rate per hour of sleep). The stone can contain up to 400 P.P.E. and is a P.P.E. battery that only its Warlock owner can access. The stone does not begin to absorb P.P.E. again until the energy held within is reduced to less than 100. The radius of effect in drawing P.P.E. covers everyone within 30 feet (9.1 m).

Money: Prince Grayen has invested most of the family's fortune in its shipyard, and its success has made House Bardomus one of the wealthiest Noble Houses in the Kingdom. Grayen's personal possessions include 380,000 gold and 170,000 silver coins within a secret vault in the family mansion, plus 500,000 gold in works of art, animal skins, and jewelry held in a vault at the Main Offices at the Bardomus shipyard. The Noble House has a grand total of 4.4 million in gold and 1.8 million in gems and jewelry spread out in half a dozen banks throughout the Northern Islands. What's not included among their wealth is the collection of magic items the family has been hoarding for the last 220 years – worth about 18 million in gold. Their collection would be the envy of most men of magic, especially since they have no idea how 80% of the items work or what they do.

High Sister, Olevea Latharsis

Secretly the High Priestess of Brgg

Olevea Latharsis is the High Sister of the *Church of Algor* in the city of Wujik. While the worship of Algor and the rest of the Northern Pantheon takes place at the Wujik Cathedral during the day, Olevea and her six dark priestesses (4th-6th level) hold secret ceremonies to the fallen god **Brgg** during the night. The sisters, along with their converts (at least 200 people, mostly North Folk traditionalists who believe themselves to be “the Chosen”; all of them worship in anonymity and keep their faith secret), wield considerable influence within the city. Despite his rivalry with Algor and status as an outcast and pariah amongst the other Northern Gods, Brgg is still an important figure to the North Folk and their ancestors, and his priestesses are given much respect by them. The Crown has owed serious political favors toward Olevea and her Sisterhood for years. It was the Sisters of Brgg who instructed young *Raedaen IV* in his religious education when all other priestly teachers had failed. Olevea served as the future King's personal teacher and tutor and she holds his attention above all other advisors, more so than *Hanta Farrip* or even *Prince Wilgan Vatatzes*.

The dark truth behind the Sisterhood of Brgg is that, for decades, they have sought to bring about the downfall of the Kingdom of Bizantium as punishment for their ancestors' role in betraying Brgg. The Sisters are convinced that their lord Brgg is somehow imprisoned magically beneath the **Isle of Torn**, and their ultimate goal is to free him and return him to the world. And when that day comes, she expects to sit at the right hand of the angry god, to rule both his church and all of Bizantium. This

would be disastrous for Bizantium and most worshippers of Algor as the entrapped god's primary goal is to destroy the descendants of the Eoten who doomed him to his fate thousands of years ago, including the Bizantian royal family, Noble Houses and every citizen who bears a single drop of Eoten blood. (More than 80% of Bizantium's population!) Fortunately, while the Sisters occasionally try to investigate Torn, the forbidding island's cliffs and mountains, as well as hostile wildlife and vengeful spirits, make going inland for any length of time difficult.

Olevea herself is an enigmatic figure, typically seen in a black cloak when she is outside the church, but donning the full, impressive regalia of an ancient Eoten priestess during her secret, midnight services to Brgg. She wants *High Minister Airen Roth* eliminated before he can learn the truth about the true goals of the Sisterhood. As for *Raedaen IV*, the buffoon of a King, he will prove far more useful alive as her puppet. Olevea and her sisters helped raise him and initiate him into the worship of Algor, and have been manipulating *Raedaen IV* since his childhood. She believes with the Sisterhood of Brgg pulling the strings, it should only be a matter of time before the worship of Brgg subverts that of Algor and the faithful restore their dark god as divine ruler. She is annoyed every time the King follows someone else's counsel, and wonders if she might need to eliminate a few other prominent individuals in addition to High Minister Airen, whom she is constantly at work to undermine.

Quick Stats for Olevea Latharsis:

Alignment: Miscreant. Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 13, M.A. 22, P.S. 12, P.P. 15, P.E. 11, P.B. 13, Spd 10. Age: 40. Experience: 9th level Priestess of Darkness.

Hit Points: 46. S.D.C.: 18. P.P.E.: 38.

Priest Abilities of Note: Blessings, Prayer of Strength 64%, Prayer of Communion 64%, Summon Minions of the Elements 58% (6 Elemental essences; Flame Friend, Phantom Footman, Waters Wisps, etc.), Curse 46% (requires a saving throw of 15 or better), Healing Touch, Exorcism 49%, Remove Curse 49%, Resurrection 16%, Turn Dead 50%, Penance and Sacrifice, Animate & Command the Dead 54%, Demon Familiar (a seagull), and Chant of the Berserker (same as Priests of Northern Religion).

Spell Knowledge of Note: Compulsion (20), Decipher Magic (4), Domination (10), Increase Weight (4) and Tongues (12). All her spell magic requires a saving throw of 13 or better to resist.

Magic Items: Bodn, Odrorir, and Sonn: These three glass jars contain the Blood of Brgg. Any living humanoid who sips but a drop of the blood receives the equivalent of drinking a *Might of Palladium* potion, with the added bonus of 1D4+1 points to ALL physical attributes for an impressive 24 hours! If half the contents are poured down the throat of a recently deceased person (less than 72 hours dead) it functions equivalent to the *Miraculous Healing* of a Priest of Light and restores the person to life. The three jars can only be opened by one who recites a specific prayer to Brgg and speaks the jar's True Name; otherwise, the jars cannot be opened nor broken by any physical, magical, or supernatural force.

Money: The Church receives substantial offerings on a daily basis. Olevea has access to these funds but generally uses them to finance the activities of the church and the secret Cult of Brgg, carefully skimming a few gold for her and her Sisters off the top. However, a secret compartment beneath her study in Wujik Cathedral contains nearly 250,000 in gold and gems.

Powerful Individuals Looking to Subvert the King

The light of the midnight moon shimmered, reflected in the dark, rippling surface of the breaking waves. They were standing on one of the few sandy beaches along the rocky coast of the Northern Sea, twenty miles east of the Seven Sisters colony, tucked away within a cove that the local fishermen tended to avoid. It had been a long journey by horseback, but taking a ship was out of the question; no telling who they might run into sailing along the colony's well-traveled coastline, even at night.

Beside Eristan were a dozen House Lamrith guards in mail coats and breastplates, carrying long spears, and, beside them, Merchant-Prince Geoffrey Lamrith himself. Unlike the guards, who exchanged unsure glances between each other, the eyes of the Merchant-Prince were fixed on the ocean. Eristan strained to see what his lord was looking for, but the waters appeared empty to him.

A light streaked upward out of the darkness, a single line of fire. The flaming arrow that left the trail arced through the night sky before plunging into the surf, extinguishing itself.

"Light it," said the Prince, not taking his eyes off the horizon.

Eristan uncovered the shaded lantern he carried, stooped down, and lit ablaze the dry grass and kindling at the center of the pile of driftwood the guards had set up. The beacon roared to life, the only source of light along the shadowed forests that covered the coastline.

Soon the source of the flaming arrow became apparent. A Wolfen longboat, heading straight for shore. Eristan could see shields and spear points glinting in the moonlight, Wolfen warriors standing at the ready, others pulling at the boat's long oars. The longboat was made for shallow waters and proved it by pulling right up onto the sand.

Wolfen leapt off each side of the boat, landing ankle-deep in water. To accompany him on this mission the Prince had hand-picked the biggest, toughest brutes that the House guard had to offer, soldiers who towered over the average peasant or fief-holder, but these Wolfen were half again as big; the swords they carried were as tall as grown men, their spears more like lances. They studied the humans that had met them on the beach from behind scowling jaws and cold eyes. A few whispered back and forth in their people's low, yowling language.

A Wolfen wearing a black cape stepped down onto the sand next, flanked by a pair of scarred and seasoned warriors, and approached the Prince. The guards were hesitant, unsure, one or two even visibly frightened, but Prince Geoffrey smiled and confidently took the Wolfen's bear-sized paw in both hands.

The Wolfen delivered a respectful bow and smiled back, all pointed teeth and snarled lips. "A fine night, Prince of Lamrith," he said, his Northern speech surprisingly clear.

"Just enough moon to sail by. Allow me to welcome you to the Shadow Colonies, Drovas."

"Shall I refer to them as your new domain?"

"Soon enough – if you can deliver what you promised."

"Warriors I have in plenty, good Prince. But you know what it is I thirst after."

"I certainly do."

Geoffrey snapped his fingers and two of his guards stepped forward with a small chest, struggling, breathing hard under its

weight. They set it down in the sand and Drovas knelt, taking it up effortlessly with both massive paws.

"See if this satisfies your thirst," said the Prince.

Even in the darkness, the gleam of gold emanating from within the chest was unmistakable. Drovas studied a single coin next to the light of the fire, a little disc imprinted with the face of King Raedaen IV, then tossed it back in with the others.

"Are you convinced now? Do you believe my sincerity?" Geoffrey asked.

"You bring me a dozen more chests like this – and I'll bring you a dozen longboats; forty warriors each, arms and armor, tooth and claw."

"And they'll be ready to fight at my command?"

"They'll be ready to fight for the gold, I promise you that."

The City of Bizantium and the court of the King are becoming centers of intrigue as the sharks close in to usurp the crown. There have already been a half-dozen assassination attempts on King Raedaen's life, only one of which he is even aware of, some called off at the last second, some failing due to providence or to the King's propensity for cancelling appearances, indulging sudden whims and delegating religious functions to the High Minister. Raedaen IV is unmarried, he does not have a son, or any children for that matter, and his current successor is technically Valen Jostein, a distant cousin whose claim to the throne could be debated and contested endlessly by many Noble Houses who are tied to the royal family by blood, especially the Vatatzes.

Merchant-Prince Valen Jostein

Raised at court, Valen has just as little practical experience as his cousin the King, and, while he has a good heart, could never provide the steady hand and strong leadership that Bizantium needs. His good intentions, however, might, over time, make him a worthwhile leader, should he get the chance. That chance seems slim, as those who covet control of the Crown are likely to target him for death shortly after his cousin.

Quick Stats for Valen Jostein: Alignment: Scrupulous. Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 10, M.A. 9, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 14, Spd 12. Age: 28. Experience: 3rd level Noble.

Merchant-Prince Geoffrey Lamrith

Exiling nobles who are lax in paying their debts is a long-held Bizantium tradition, a temporary state of affairs that serves as a symbolic punishment, but *Geoffrey Lamrith*, sitting in exile in the Shadow Colonies, is the kind of man who holds grudges and takes things personally. For years, his House has been conducting trade with the *Ursa Rex Wolfen* tribe on the mainland, and the Merchant-Prince has made connections with various Wolfen mercenary captains, princelings and chieftains, all in an attempt to find warriors who can give him a surprise advantage when he makes his move of declaring the **Shadow Colonies** independent from Bizantium. It is Prince Lamrith who has worked hardest at creating discord between the colonies and Bizantium itself, actively whipping up resentment and discontent into rebellion. Of course, he personally stands ready to lead the colonies into a new age as an independent kingdom under the reign of King *Geoffrey*

Lamrith the First. His House Guard has grown to eight-hundred strong, much more of a fighting military unit now than a ceremonial bodyguard, and he can count on support from the Warlocks of the Council of Elements, and whatever varied powers they will bring to battle. Whether or not they really seek to put him on a throne ruling over the Shadow Colonies or are using him as a means to weaken the Bizantian Crown is another matter entirely, however. Prince Geoffery also secretly hires adventurers, mercenaries, thieves, pirates and Wolfen for spying and all sorts of underhanded and nefarious work. Duplicity should be Lamrith's middle name, as he has little use for truth or real justice, and any story he tells, though convincing, is likely a lie driven by his own agenda.

Quick Stats for Geoffrey Lamrith: Alignment: Aberrant, (was Anarchist six years ago, before his exile). Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 11, M.A. 21, P.S. 19, P.P. 15, P.E. 18, P.B. 17, Spd 15. Age: 39. Experience: 9th level Knight.

Western Emperor Itomas and House Ducasian

Long ago, the Western Empire invaded the Northern Islands, and almost succeeded in conquering Bizantium completely. Since then, suspicions regarding the Western Empire have never gone away. Today, those suspicions are well founded, as Emperor Itomas sends spies and agents to Bizantium in an effort to find some way to make the island kingdom a possession of the Empire.

House Ducasian, one of Bizantium's most powerful Noble Houses, is closely connected to the Western Empire by marriage, blood and trade, and the Emperor and many powerful Western merchants are highly motivated to put a Ducasian on the Bizantian throne. Where invasion failed in ages past, Itomas hopes to make Bizantium a satellite-state of the Western Empire slowly, through influence and manipulation, and hopefully through a Ducasian king who can bring about his plans easily via royal decree.

Lady Lesyta Zeketri-Ducasian, reigning matriarch of the family since the death of her husband, was born in the Western Empire, and though she has lived in Bizantium for decades, would still die for her Emperor. She is more than willing to commit her House's resources to put one of her sons or grandsons on the throne. Almost eighty, Lady Lesyta is also totally unafraid to be beheaded over the issue, if discovered, and has long years of experience assimilating into Bizantian culture, perfect for a potential kingmaker seeking to bring her homeland and Bizantium together. Her abilities as a *Psychic Sensitive* also give her a huge edge when it comes to reading people and manipulating their emotions and actions, whether she is dealing with a rebellious grandchild, manipulating members of her House or bargaining with assassins. Though she may be 78 years of age, she is as sharp as ever, and much more ruthless than she was in her youth. She is like a spider spinning a web to entrap her prey, with countless connections, paid informants and secret correspondence with the Western Empire.

Quick Stats for Lesyta Zeketri-Ducasian: Alignment: Anarchist. Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 20, M.A. 17, P.S. 6, P.P. 7, P.E. 9, P.B. 10, Spd 7. Age: 78. Experience: 14th level Psychic Sensitive. I.S.P.: 187. Psionic Abilities: Empathy (4), Meditation (0), Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Telepathy (2), and Total Recall (2), plus four Super-Psionic abilities: Bio-Manipulation (10),

Empathic Transmission (6), Hydrokinesis (varies), and Hypnotic Suggestion (6).



The Eastern Territory and The League of the Northern Sword

There are many people in the Eastern Territory who fear the rise of the Wolfen Empire, and their sentiments are reflected by a sizable percentage of Bizantians, traditionally suspicious of all non-humans. Power-brokers in the Eastern Territory are keenly aware of this, and would like nothing more than to secure Bizantium as an ally against the Wolfen, with its powerful fleets and strategic position right in the canines' backyard. A dozen lords, barons and princes, along with a score of merchants and religious leaders, have banded together to form the *League of the Northern Sword*, a shadowy organization whose goal is to manipulate Bizantium into a war with the Wolfen.

Duke Githeon VasPasseon, ruler of the city of **Llorn**, is the League's most prominent member, but the League is slowly growing, recruiting influential individuals from cities and states in or near the Disputed Lands. Any Bizantian noble who hates or fears the Wolfen is viewed as a "potential ally" and "candidate" for the throne of Bizantium.

House Lamrith and House Yinxner, both of whom have dealings with Wolfen tribes, are seen as traitors to humanity and obstacles to the League's plans.

The Noble Houses of Bizantium

Of the most powerful Houses, most have attained their position due to a strong relationship with the Crown, and seek to preserve the current state of affairs. **Duke Malemore** has his pirate interests, and his House might cause trouble if the Crown attempted to prosecute him or another member of his immediate family, but the King is oblivious to his activities, and would not want to hear the truth, even if presented right to him. **House Rhangnable** controls the *Northomber Guard*, the largest and one of the most effective fighting forces on the Islands, but the House is loyal to the King, and the Guard is divided up amongst the Royal Navy's many ships and forts. **House Yinxner** has connections with the Wolfen, just like **House Lamrith**, but would never be willing to work with them against their own people. And even Geoffrey Lamrith does not seek to overthrow the Kingdom, but to incite rebellion on the Shadow Coast and make Bizantium's colonies his own. **House Norbert's** immense wealth could be a threat to the Crown, but financial success motivates them to preserve the current system even more than anyone else. **House Conemus** controls the largest merchant fleet, but they are reliant on other

Houses and friendly Bizantian ports to repair and maintain their merchant ships, having expanded well past their own capabilities.

It is the smaller Houses that are the real threat, whether or not they have a legitimate chance of claiming the throne, as it only takes a single assassin to end the life of the King. With 273 separate Noble Houses in the Kingdom of Bizantium, there is no way to predict every nobleman's plans or level of greed and ambition. Who knows what any given individual might think they are entitled to thanks to their ancestry or some perceived injustice, or what they might do to find wealth, power or revenge. Many smaller Houses burn with ambition, eager to rise to prominence or regain lost glory. They may target the King, work at undermining one of the more powerful Houses, or both. Ambition and revenge can accomplish many things.

Calith Orfeld and Bizantium's Merchants

Fishing and timber magnate *Calith Orfeld* is the second wealthiest man on the Northern Islands, his fortunes exceeded only by the banking interests of House Norbert. He is certainly wealthier than the personal holdings of the Crown, at least on paper, and sees King Raedaen IV as the biggest obstacle to the continued growth of Bizantium's trade empire. Kings in ages past used their role as sovereign, religious leader and commander-in-chief to assist Bizantium's merchants and expand its sphere of influence, but King Raedaen IV is utterly clueless when it comes to brokering trade treaties or scaring off the competition with shows of force. Nor does he seem to take Orfeld's carefully-presented concerns seriously. Orfeld and his prosperous merchant friends believe that a new king could only be an improvement, especially if the new king is already open to their influence and "wise counsel."

If they had their way they would put the noble and beloved *Prince Wilgan Vatatzes* on the throne, but the Prince will not even entertain the thought — as long as King Raedaen IV lives. If the King should meet with an unfortunate accident or the blade of an assassin (perhaps made to appear to serve the Western Empire), however, Prince Wilgan could be motivated to take the throne in the best interests of Bizantium. Prince Wilgan's devotion to the Kingdom is well known, and if the people wanted him, he would assume the throne. Of course, any such action on the part of Orfeld and his supporters would have to be done in secret — Wilgan can never know the truth or he would bring them down as traitors to the Crown. The insurrectionists have another problem; though they have access to ships, warehouses, trade goods and virtually unlimited funds, they are not killers or military men, and are unsure how to have the King meet his fate, or his cousin after that, for that matter. Discussions have leaned toward hiring an assassin or small group from the outside to do the deed and pay them off, but that comes with its own set of problems. If the transition of power is mishandled, none of them are prepared for the bloody reality of a coup or soldiers marching in the streets and nobles (and wealthy merchants, perhaps?) losing their heads left and right. Once anarchy is set in motion, it is a difficult beast to control.

Quick Stats for Calith Orfeld: Alignment: Anarchist with leanings toward Miscreant. Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 13, M.A. 20, P.S. 12, P.P. 11, P.E. 12, P.B. 15, Spd 10. Age: 51. Experience: 11th level Merchant.

The Council of Elements

The true power running the colonies of the Shadow Coast is the *Council of Elements*, one-thousand Warlocks who seek independence from Bizantium and the establishment of a state based on the worship and practice of Elementalism. *Magul Sovendrisen*, current Prime Minister of the Council, supports independence for all the right reasons: he is tired of the Crown's mistreatment of the colonies, and believes that his Warlocks can create a better life for the Shadow Coast's people. The fact that his family was exiled to the mainland long ago and hates the King passionately is just a coincidence.

Hanta Farrip, leader of Bizantium's Warlock Council, supposedly the King's counterbalance to the Council of Elements, is just as committed to establishing a Warlock-state in the Shadow Coast colonies, but she is not willing to sacrifice Bizantium or even King Raedaen himself to make that dream a reality. At least not yet. Besides, having a weak monarch on the throne should only make it easier for the Shadow Coast colonies to hold on to their independence once they claim it. When that day comes, Farrip plans to disappear from the Northern Islands, taking her place amongst the Council of Elements as they attempt to build a society on the principles of Elementalism. Currently they support **Merchant-Prince Geoffrey Lamrith**, a seasoned soldier who is assembling a military force capable of protecting the colonies from the wrath of King Raedaen IV. If Lamrith is willing to embrace Elementalism and further it as the Shadow Colonies' state religion, they could be willing to tolerate his presence as a king or kind of military executive, but their ultimate goal is a nation governed by Warlocks and the natural order of the Four Elements.

Quick Stats for Magul Sovendrisen: Alignment: Unprincipled. Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 17, M.A. 21, P.S. 11, P.P. 12, P.E. 13, P.B. 14, Spd 12. Age: 44. Experience: 10th level Air/Fire Warlock.

Alfred Bruke, Water Warlock

Cast aside from the Council of Elements, renegade Warlock Alfred Bruke is building up a force of spell casters and assassins with which he intends to eliminate the King and declare himself as new sovereign of Bizantium. Bruke's plan is to wait until the *Bai Regatta*, the Kingdom's social event of the year, before he springs his trap. The King never misses the Regatta, and members of the royal family, prominent nobles, religious officials and prominent merchants are always in attendance. With Bizantium's cultural elite gathered in one place, Bruke and his Warlock followers (2D4+2 Warlocks of varying Elements, average level 1D4+2) plan to attack from the sea, while assassins in the crowd prevent notable individuals from escaping. Any nobles or worthy targets that can be captured will be held for ransom; but a general slaughter of blue bloods should satisfy Bruke's ambitions. Taking the Crown itself, however, is probably far beyond his capabilities. The Warlock Council can meet him spell caster for spell caster, and the **Valgorian Guard** will fight to the last man to protect the City of Bizantium, whether the King is alive, dead, or in enemy hands.

Quick Stats for Alfred Bruke: Alignment: Miscreant. Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 10, M.A. 15, P.S. 14, P.P. 12, P.E. 11, P.B. 15, Spd 14. Age: 24. Experience: 4th level Water Warlock.

Bizantium O.C.C.s

In addition to the O.C.C.s listed below, Bizantium is replete with Sailors, Mariners, and, of course, Pirates. See **Adventures on the High Seas™** for more seagoing O.C.C.s, as well as ships, coastal kingdoms, islands and other information important to Bizantium's people and its seafarers. On shore, Bizantium is like any other kingdom, with Peasants, Nobles, Merchants (lots and lots of Merchants), Knights, Squires, Palladins, Priests, Warlocks and every other imaginable type of occupation and social class.

Fisherman O.C.C.

"Bizantium's Ministry of Farm, Fish and Food estimates that the average Bizantian consumes more than one hundred and sixty pounds of fish per year, and that does not include our vibrant sea serpent industry."

— Ministry's Annual Report to the Crown

Fishing is the most common means of earning a living in the Kingdom of Bizantium. There are more commercial Fishermen than farmers, merchants or soldiers, and virtually every sailor on the Northern Islands started their career off casting lines and hauling nets on a fishing vessel, or takes part in seasonal fishing trips to make a few extra gold or simply indulge themselves and reconnect with their roots.

The title "Fisherman" refers to both men and women whose trade is to catch aquatic animals such as shellfish, octopi, squid, crabs, lobster, shrimp, starfish, sea urchins, sand dollars, and of course, fish. **Sealers** hunt for seals and walrus, **Whalers** seek out whales and dolphins, and **Serpent Chasers** stalk sea monsters, the most dangerous of aquatic prey. Fishing is one of the most important jobs throughout the Palladium world, and absolutely essential to maintaining Bizantium's economy and large, urban population.

Far beyond taking a rowboat and a cane-pole out and casting a few lines for relaxation, commercial fishing is the skill of catching large quantities of fish and other seafood for profit. It includes the preservation, cleaning and preparation of fish for the market and consumption. Fishermen often travel great distances and brave severe weather conditions to reach fisheries, spawning grounds and "lucky shoals" where fish seem to abound. Pirates are a constant threat to a working Fisherman; though they have little interest in taking fishing boats they will not hesitate to empty a vessel of its catch, possibly depriving a Fisherman of thousands of gold. The beasts of the sea are a lurking danger as well. Unlike Serpent Chasers, Fishermen prefer to steer well clear of sea serpents, but generally keep a stout harpoon or other weapon on hand just in case. Many of Bizantium's Sailors, Mariners and Marines, as well as farmers and other "landlubbers," are also knowledgeable and experienced in fishing, or can easily recall fishing skills they picked up in their youth.

Attribute Requirements: None, though a good P.S. and P.E. are advised.

Alignment: Any, but typically good or Unprincipled.

O.C.C. Bonuses: +1 on initiative and +2 to maintain balance.

Receives +2 to Perception Rolls when on or in the water.



O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native Tongue at 98% plus one of choice (+10%).
Astronomy & Navigation (+10%)
Deep Sea Fishing (+15%)
Fishing (+20%)
General Repair/Maintenance (+10%)
Identify Sea Life (+16%)
Lore: Sea (+20%)
Physical Labor
Pilot Small Boats, Kayaks & Canoes (+10%)
Rope Works (+15%)
Sailing (+15%)
Seamanship (+12%)
Swim (+10%)
W.P. Knife
W.P. Net
W.P.: One of choice.
Hand to Hand: Basic; can be changed to Hand to Hand: Expert at the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Choose five other skills at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels 2, 5, 8, 11 and 15. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communication: Any (+5%).
Domestic: Any (+5%).
Espionage: None.
Horsemanship: General only.
Medical: First Aid only.
Military: None.
Naval: Any (+10%).
Physical: Any.
Rogue: Cardsharp, Find Contraband, and Ventriloquism only.
Science: Mathematics: Basic only.
Scholar/Technical: Any (+5%).
Weapon Proficiencies: Any, except Siege and Lance.
Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select three Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and one additional skill at levels 3, 7 and 11. All new skills start at first level proficiency. These additional areas of knowledge do not get the advantage of the bonuses listed in the parentheses.

Starting Equipment: One suit of street clothing, two working outfits (which includes bib and brace trousers), waterproof gloves (sealskin or other treated skins), waterproof boots, leather-brimmed cap, two sewing kits (one for mending sailcloth, the other for clothing and stitching wounds), a "Sailmaker's Palm" (used like a thimble, but made of leather and metal, with a leather strap going around the hand and a metal disk set in the palm), 200 foot (61 m) coil of rope, 50 foot (15 m) coil of rope, 1D6 fishing nets, a marlin spike (for splicing rope), large waterproof clothing bag, 1D4+1 fishing reels, 500 feet (152 m) of silk line, 4D4 hooks (a variety of size, shapes, and types), 2 landing nets, 1D4 filet knives (1D4 damage), fishing tools (pliers, grippers, & hook removers), a complete set of carpentry tools, 3D4 traps and accessories (depending upon the type of aquatic animals the Fisherman intends to catch), one knot-tying tool (+5% to Ropeworks skill), a waterproof purse or wallet and a waterproof sea chest to hold his or her belongings.

Armor: Fishermen do not expect combat, so armor is not a common part of their kit. Any armor they do own will be acquired

for personal reasons, come out of their own pay and left on dry land. Heavy armor is avoided due to its restriction of movement and instant drowning risk. Shark Leather armor is very popular amongst Bizantium's sailors and mariners, but only wealthy Fishermen or those who expect to encounter pirates generally wear leather armor.

Weapons: A cutlass, a type of short sword, is the trademark weapon and cutting tool for most Fishermen. Some Fishermen keep one close on deck if they need to cut a line right away and keep a second sword (usually hidden away) in case they need to defend themselves. Almost every Fisherman keeps a good, sharp knife or dagger on their person just in case they become ensnared in a line or rope and have to cut themselves free as quickly as possible.

Money: The character starts with 120 gold.

Fishing Vessel/Boat: A Player Character may own a typical fishing boat, or serve as a crew member aboard a merchantman or a Jungle Boat/Mini-Merchant Vessel, (if from the Land of the South Winds or Yin-Sloth Jungles). Stats for all types of ships can be found in **Adventures on the High Seas™**. Even a Fisherman who does not own a true seagoing vessel still has a rowboat or canoe.

Aquatic Animal Values: Some fish are common and draw prices accordingly, while others are more expensive, only found in the cold waters of the Northern Sea, or native to the Inland Sea in the center of Bizantium. Fish will be judged based upon size and/or sex. Adults are generally preferred, but juveniles will be taken at half value.

Herring, Haddock, or Northern Flatfish – 1 silver per five fish.

Halibut – 1 silver per four fish.

Cod – 1 silver per three fish.

Anchovy (sardine) – 1 silver per ten fish.

Tuna – 1 silver per three fish.

Flounder – 1 silver per five fish.

Mullet – 1 silver per five fish.

Squid (not giant) – 1 silver per three squid.

Shrimp – 1 silver per fifteen.

Salmon – 1 gold per fish.

Rock Claw (native to Northern Sea only) – 50 gold per 10 lbs (4.5 kg).

Bizantium King Crab (native to Northern Sea only) – 10 gold per adult.

Blue Crab – 1 silver per three adults.

Brown Crab – 1 silver per four adults.

Bairdi Crab (native to Northern Sea only) – 1 silver per two adults.

Snow Crab (native to Northern Sea only) – 1 silver per adult male.

Scarlet Sea Lobster – 10 gold per adult.

Scampi – 1 silver per ten.

Oyster – 1 silver per fifteen (pearls worth 1D6x10 gold are found in 1% of oysters).

Scallops – 1 silver per ten.

Mussels or Cockles – 1 silver per twelve.

Octopi (not giant) – 3 gold per animal.

Echinoderms (starfish, sea urchins, sand dollars, etc.) – 1 silver per three animals.

For sharks and dolphins, see individual entries found in the book. **Monsters and Animals™**

Bizantium Marine O.C.C.

“There’s nothing in this world that gets the blood running quite like drawing your sword and leaping onto the deck of an enemy ship – knowing every soul you come across is trying their best to kill you.”

– Sergeant Vitel Hiyne, Bizantium Royal Marines

A Marine is a soldier who specializes in naval operations such as boarding enemy vessels, fighting ship-to-ship, and launching amphibious assaults on hostile shores. Bizantium’s Marines also defend merchant ships from pirates, fend off sea serpents, guard and defend docks, shipyards and naval storage facilities, and serve as ceremonial bodyguards for ambassadors and the king.

The Marines are typically the smallest military division of any given nation, with Bizantium being the lone exception. Most Marine forces have consistently sought to maintain their own identity with regards to mission, funding, and assets, while relying on support from the larger army and navy. Bizantium has always utilized its Marines to the fullest, but nations like the Timiro Kingdom and states in the Eastern Territory are also learning to use Marines to strike at unexpected targets, seize islands and effectively board enemy ships during combat.

Bizantium’s Marine force is the largest Marine unit in the Palladium World, over six thousand strong. Roughly two-thirds of the nation’s Marines currently serve with the Four Fleets, while the remainder are stationed on land. As an island-kingdom, Bizantium’s Royal Marines are its primary fighting force, and the current crop of Marines are heir to a long and illustrious history. **The Nibis Marines** continually train to respond rapidly to any immediate crisis. Their readiness gives Bizantium a fast response strike force that is usually the first to answer any crisis. Famously, the Marines of the **Northomber Guard** stormed the beaches of the Western Empire and went one-on-one with Imperial Soldiers at the *Battle of Caer Kurgas*. In the end, the sheer number of Westerners carried the day, but for every Marine that lay dead, at least three of the Emperor’s soldiers were slain. *The Northomber Guard* has always trained and equipped the best of them, and all Bizantium Marines now serve a term with the Guard, or at least train with them in Wujik, before being assigned official duties. **The Southomber Guard** are a close second and there is a friendly rivalry between the two units.

So well respected are the Northomber Guard that, for the last two centuries, a special unit of Guardsmen have also served as the elite bodyguards to the King of Bizantium: the **Valgorian Guard**. Actually, the best of the best around the Kingdom may be invited to join the Valgorian Guard. To be a Valgorian Marine, one must be born on the Northern Islands, a lifelong subject of the Bizantium Crown. Second, applicants have to pay an entrance fee of 1,000 gold. This means that, in practice, membership within the Valgorians is only open to men of means, though Noble Houses often sponsor individuals who have proved themselves with loyal service or acts of bravery even if they are of low social status. In return for their service to the King of Bizantium, Valgorians receive a payment of 3,500 gold per month; 42,000 per year. In addition, they get a 20% share of any booty they capture in battle and war, and first choice of magic weapons. Noble Houses in need of warriors can hire units of Valgorians if they are willing

to pay for their services (at a price of 56,000 gold per annum), but the defense of the kingdom always comes first.

The most important duty of the Bizantium Marines is to protect the monarchy. Whenever the king travels outside the palace he is accompanied by a unit of forty Marines; however, twelve Valgorian Guards accompany him at all times, even in the palace. Valgorian Marines are entrusted with keeping public order in times of severe unrest, guarding the royal palace and temple of Algor, and protecting the docks and shipyards should they come under attack. Should a Noble House decide to openly rebel against the King, it is the Valgorian Guard, reinforced by the Northomber Guard to provide weight of numbers, sent to bring them back into the fold — by any means necessary.

The Sky Riders are members of a new, elite Marine force that very few people even know about. They are the Bizantium Marine O.C.C. with two distinct differences: they have mastered the skill of riding Pegasus (78% +2% per level of experience) as their war steed and primary means of attack from the air. Sky Riders engage in some reconnaissance operations, but mainly they are a new and secret air cavalry that functions as “special forces.” They make surprise attacks upon enemy ships from the sky and engage in commando-style assaults. The latter can be a surprise raid with arrows notched in their bow, or via lances and spears at the ready to shred both sails and sailors. For stealth missions they quietly descend upon a ship, dropping down from their winged steeds on ropes as to not hit the deck with a loud thump, and engage in rescue, assassination, theft and sabotage – even scuttling a ship or setting it on fire. Marines dropped from their flying steeds may also try to seize control of a ship by capturing key crew members (captain, first mate, navigator, night watch, etc.) and demanding the surrender of the rest of the crew. They may even be able to lock the majority of the crew below deck while they sleep. **Note:** Though Pegasus can make surprisingly soft and quiet landings, the clomping of their hooves will make a considerable noise, especially when several Pegasus land on deck.

On land missions, the Sky Riders may lead a beach landing, charging like a cavalry squad, or fly ahead to target sorcerers, siege engines, fortified positions or to take down enemy command personnel. One or two Air Warlocks with the ability to fly are usually part of any land assault. The rest all fly Pegasus.

The Sky Riders are kept in reserve and seldom seen in public. Even within the Kingdom of Bizantium their existence is only a rumor, making them the secret black operations force of the realm. This also means their units are small, with an estimated 24-36 men total. All are humans dedicated to the preservation of their country. Average level of experience: 1D4+3.

Bizantium Marine O.C.C.

Includes Valgorian Guard, Sky Riders and Others

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 9, P.S. 10, P.P. 9, and a strong sense of duty, honor, and desire to fight.

Alignment: Any, but most are Principled (25%), Scrupulous (40%), Unprincipled (20%), or Anarchist (10%).

O.C.C. Bonuses (applicable to ALL Marines): +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 on initiative, +2 to maintain balance, +1 to roll with punch, +2 to pull punch, and +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 3, 7, 10, and 13.



Special Additional Bonuses to a Specific Marine Group:

These are bonuses in addition to those received by the Bizantium Marine O.C.C. due to specialized training.

Nibis Marines: +1 to M.E., +1 to P.E., and +1D6+2 to Spd attributes. +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to roll with punch and +5% to all Naval skills.

Southomber Guard: +1D6+1 additional S.D.C., +1 on initiative when defending the shore against invaders, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm, +2 to roll with punch, +10% to all Military Skills.

Northomber Guard: +1D6+2 additional S.D.C., +1 on initiative while engaging in amphibious warfare, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm, +2 to roll with punch, +10% to Seamanship and Military Etiquette and +5% to all naval skills.

Valgorian Guard: +1D6+6 additional S.D.C. +1D4 to P.S., +1 to P.E. attributes. +1 additional attack per melee round, +2 to Perception Rolls, +2 to strike, +1 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +10% to Seamanship and Military Etiquette and +5% to all Naval skills. Given free food and lodging at any Church of Algor regardless of the Marine's faith.

Sky Riders: Attacks from behind do double damage, +1 on Perception Rolls regarding secrets and sabotage, +1 to strike, +1 to disarm, +3 to roll with punch/fall, replace W.P. Grappling Hook with Archery, one of the W.P. of Choice is replaced by W.P. Lance or Spear, and gets the additional skills of Horsemanship: Exotic Animals: Pegasus (special): 78% +2% per level of experience), Exotic Animals (others) +10%, Prowl (+20%) and +5% to all Espionage skills.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native Tongue at 98% plus one of choice (+10%).

Literacy: One language of choice (+20%).

Body Building & Weightlifting

Castaway/Shipwreck Survival (+20%)

Climb/Scale Walls (+10%)

Forced March

Mathematics: Basic (+10%)

Military Etiquette (+20%)

Rope Works (+10%)

Sailing (+15%)

Seamanship (+6%)

Swimming (+20%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

W.P. Grappling Hook

W.P. Pole Arm (the Trident is a popular weapon).

W.P. Shield

W.P. Sword

W.P.: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert; can be changed to Martial Arts (or Assassin if Valgorian, Sky Rider/special forces or evil) for the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two additional skills from one of the following categories: Military, Naval or Espionage, plus select one additional skill at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. All new skills start at first level proficiency.

Communication: Any, (+5% to all languages).

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic only; uncommon.

Medical: First Aid only (+5%).

Military: Any (+5%).

Naval: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any (+5% where applicable).

Rogue: Any.

Science: Advanced Mathematics or Astronomy only (+5%).

Scholar/Technical: Any.

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and one additional skill at levels 4, 8 and 12. These additional areas of knowledge do not get the advantage of the bonuses listed in the parentheses.

Starting Equipment: Uniform, set of civilian clothing, a working sailor's uniform (no shoes, cap, shirt, loose pants, rope belt), sewing kit, waterproof boots and gloves, belt, waterskin, two small waterproof sacks, tinder box, two weeks' worth of dried rations and a waterproof sea chest to hold his or her belongings.

Armor: Light armor, typically leather or studded leather, but may wear plate and chain or splint armor for special missions, land sieges, beach landings and defense of the Kingdom. Officers often wear Studded Serpent Leather armor, and Valgorian Guardsmen receive Red Barnacle armor as standard equipment.

Weapons: Standard is a spear, a trident, a pair of daggers, and two weapons of choice; all are basic S.D.C. weapons of good quality. Sky Riders get W.P. Spear instead of Grappling Hook, W.P. Lance instead of Pole Arm and W.P. Archery (bow and arrow) as one of their choices.

Special or magic weapons, superior armor, additional equipment or small boats may be assigned for special missions.

Officers will have one superior weapon (+2 to parry or +2 to damage, or a magic weapon with one or two abilities), and one additional weapon of choice, along with a standard potion of healing. Officers in among the Sky Riders will have 1D4+1 Cyclops Lightning arrows or javelins.

Money: The Marine starts with 2,000 in gold (Valgorians begin with 5,000 gold). Additional money will come from salary (35,000 a year for most Marines), plus combat pay, and some, like the Valgorians, get a percentage of captured and recovered treasure, which can increase their earnings by 3-10 fold.

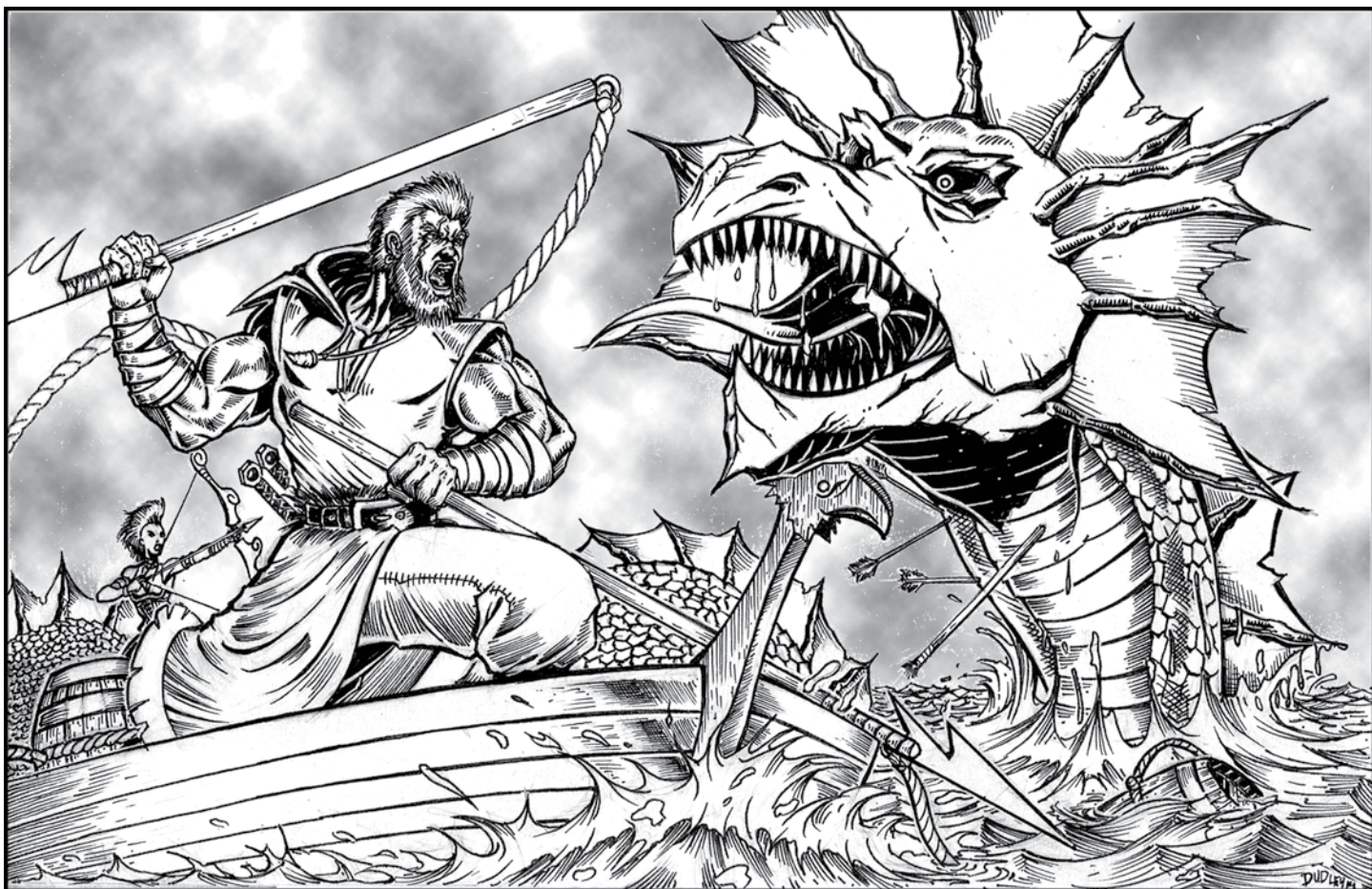
Serpent Chaser O.C.C.

"Of course we know how dangerous a sea serpent is. Know it better than anyone else on the Islands. You just have to balance out the risk of death – with the risk of gettin' rich."

– Kellen Dormungdr, Serpent Chaser

Traditional Eoten whalers would catch their prey by using teams of small boats to chase and frighten sea creatures into beaching themselves or running onto shallow reefs. As their culture and technology developed, the Eoten began to use harpoons with bone or bronze tips, attached to lines tied to *drogues*, floats made of sealskin or wood. Once a whale or sea serpent was harpooned, the drogues would prevent the creature from diving underwater, slowing and tiring it until the whaling boats could close in for the kill.

Modern Bizantian whalers and Serpent Chasers use similar techniques. They have upgraded their whaling kit with iron-tipped harpoons, special, oversized, reinforced barrels that serve as drogues, superior small whaling boats and full-sized whaling ships capable of striking out far into the Northern Sea, Sea of Despair or Icy Ocean halfway to the Great Ice Shelf, not to men-



tion seasonal whaling “grounds” in the Algerian Sea and Sea of Dread, far from home.

Seal hunting is another common practice, with blubber and sealskin making valuable commodities. Hunting walrus for their ivory is even more profitable, so much so that Bizantium has banned the practice repeatedly in its history, repealing the ban once walrus populations recover. Some fishermen also specialize in hunting sharks, giant octopi and giant squid – but the real prizes to be pulled from the ocean, surprising to many landlubbers – are *sea serpents*.

The most daring (some would say foolhardy) of Bizantium’s fishermen are known as **Serpent Chasers**. They hunt the mighty sea serpents and sea monsters of the Palladium World, a rare breed of sailor renowned for their bravery. The young and naive look upon these individuals with a kind of revelry, while old sailors and sea dogs see them as fools driven by a mad desire for money or revenge against the beasts that may have sunken a favorite ship or killed a close friend. Working Serpent Chasers know from firsthand experience just how dangerous sea serpents really are, but they also might as well be made of gold, so valuable are their scales, bones, meat, and, most of all, oil. Balancing risk and reward is what makes the difference between a skilled Serpent Chaser – and a waterlogged corpse.

Hunting serpents is similar to hunting whales, and Serpent Chasers use many of the same weapons and techniques that Whalers have perfected over the centuries. Once a sea monster has been sighted, the ship bears down, harpoons and ballista at the ready. Unlike whales, many sea serpents will rear up out of the water and try to fight, making them susceptible to ramming attacks and magic. Whether the hunt turns into a racing pursuit

or a wild melee, the Serpent Chasers’ first goal is to spike the creature with arrows, harpoons and javelins tied to drogue barrels. Once a few barrels are attached, the serpent quickly tires and loses its ability to dive deep and escape. With the monster pinned at the surface the ship closes in, sometimes dispatching smaller whaling boats, sometimes pulling directly alongside, and the crew finishes the job with ballista bolts, harpoons, spears and magic. Lines are retrieved, the sea serpent is dragged next to the ship, secured and the bloody, time-consuming job of processing the creature and draining it of its oil begins. Even the luckiest and easiest serpent chase is difficult, messy work.

Many Serpent Chasers start out as simple fishermen who become obsessed with “catching the one that got away.” Perhaps they were a survivor from a fishing vessel who watched their ship sink beneath the waves after a serpent attack. With revenge always on their mind, these fishermen make their only ambition to hunt the animals down, no matter the cost, even if it means their own lives! Their need for revenge or desire for wealth is so strong that they risk life and limb, and put entire crews and ships in danger. Others are in it only for fame and glory, but there is a core of experienced, professional Serpent Chasers who live on Bizantium; careful, calculating men and women who use heavy weapons and specialized ships to bring in their catch, many of whom have become fabulously wealthy in the pursuit of their chosen prey.

Special Abilities of the Serpent Chaser

1. Lore: Sea Serpents: No one knows more about the mysteries of what lies beneath the sea surface than a Serpent Chaser. Years spent hunting sea serpents, whales, and other aquatic ter-

rors have given him a knack for locating his quarry and an intuitive sense for when they are near (within three miles/4.8 km) or stalking a ship. Can recognize the species of sea serpent by sight, and sometimes by water spouts certain serpents make when breathing or patterns they leave in their wake. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

2. Sea Monster/Aquatic Animal Slaying: Years of hunting over the seas has taught the character how to slay sea monsters and aquatic animals. A Serpent Chaser knows the location of their weak points and the best strategies and tactics to bring about a quick death. This ability applies if the Serpent Chaser (or person receiving instructions) is wielding a melee, range, or siege weapon. Roll whenever a sea serpent tries to escape, when trying to dodge sea monster attacks with a vessel, or when determining the effectiveness of a unique ploy or tactic not listed as a skill or special ability. **Base Skill:** 66% +3% per level of experience.

3. Serpent Chaser O.C.C. Bonuses: +2D6 to S.D.C., +2 to M.A. and P.E. attributes, +2 to maintain balance, +2 to Perception Rolls involving hunting and slaying sea serpents, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor when fighting sea serpents and aquatic monsters, +1 attack per melee and +2 to automatic dodge whenever battling sea serpents, giant squid, whales, or other aquatic monsters; the act of automatic dodging does not use up a melee attack.

Double damage from behind to sea serpents/sea monsters when they are caught by surprise by an attack from behind.

Critical strike against Sea Monsters (double damage) on a roll of 19 or higher with a *modified die roll* (includes bonuses to strike). **Note:** Only works on sea serpents/sea monsters/aquatic animals, not land-based monsters nor aquatic humanoids.

Death Blow vs Sea Monsters – triple damage *direct to Hit Points* on a Natural 20 (unmodified roll of 20)! 01-50% chance the sea serpent/sea monster is stunned for 1D4 melees, during which the monster is -1 one melee attack and all of its combat bonuses are reduced by half. **Note:** Only works on sea monsters/aquatic animals, not land-based monsters nor aquatic humanoids.

Serpent Chaser O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: A high P.S. and P.E. are recommended, but not required, and many have a surprisingly high M.A./charm and appeal, in part due to their reputation and daring-do.

Alignment: Any, but often Unprincipled or Anarchist. Some Serpent Chasers truly obsessed with killing sea serpents are Aberrant.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native Tongue at 98% plus one of choice (+10%).
Castaway/Shipwreck Survival (+25%)
Deep Sea Fishing (+20%)
General Repair/Maintenance (+10%)
Hunting
Identify Sea Life (+15%)
Outdoorsmanship
Physical Labor
Rope Works (+20%)
Sailing (+15%)
Skin and Prepare Animal Hides (+20%)
Swimming (+20%)
Track and Trap Animals (+10%)
W.P. Blunt

W.P. Knife

W.P. Harpoon

W.P.: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic; but can be changed to Hand to Hand: Expert at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, or to Martial Arts for the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Choose four other skills at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communication: Any.

Domestic: Any (+10% to Dancing, Fishing, Play Musical Instrument and Singing, +5% to all others).

Espionage: None.

Horsemanship: General only.

Medical: First Aid only.

Military: Recognize Weapon Quality (+5%) only.

Naval: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any.

Rogue: Cardsharp, Find Contraband and Prowl only.

Science: Mathematics: Basic only.

Scholar/Technical: Any (+5% to Navy and Lore skills).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any, except Lance and Whip.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select three Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and one additional skill at levels 3, 7 and 11. All new skills start at first level proficiency. These additional areas of knowledge do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses.

Starting Equipment: One suit of street clothing, three working outfits (which includes bib and brace trousers), waterproof gloves (sealskin or other treated skins), waterproof boots, leather-brimmed cap, three sewing kits (two for mending sailcloth, the other for clothing and stitching wounds), a "Sail Maker's Palm" (used like a thimble, but made of leather and metal, with a leather strap going around the hand, and a metal disk set in the palm), 300 feet (91 m) of rope and two 50 foot (15 m) ropes, 2D6 fishing nets, a marlin spike (for splicing rope), a large, waterproof clothing bag, 2D4+4 fishing reels, 1200 feet (365 m) of silk line, 1D4x10 hooks (a variety of sizes, shapes, and types), 2D4 landing nets, 2 filet knives (1D4 damage), fishing tools (pliers, grippers, & hook removers), a complete set of carpentry tools, 1D4x10 traps and accessories (depending upon type of aquatic animals the Serpent Chaser intends to catch), a gallon of whale oil, one knot tying tool (+5% to rope works skill), surgical supplies, a waterproof purse or wallet and a waterproof sea chest to hold his or her belongings.

Armor: Serpent Chasers commonly wear light armor, but never heavy. Armor is a personal choice item that must be purchased by an individual character out of his or her own money. Leather and studded leather armors are the most popular in Bizantium. Most Serpent Chasers wear shark tooth gauntlets.

Weapons: A cutlass and hakapik (the latter is the official weapon to hunt seal with, but most Serpent Chasers will use it to kill just about anything). Most also keep a sharp knife or dagger on their person just in case they become ensnared in a line or rope and have to cut themselves free as quickly as possible.

Money: The character starts with 1D6x1,000 gold!

Fishing Vessel/Boat: Serpent Chaser Player Characters are likely to be a member of a ship's crew, or could be in charge of

their own small vessel. Whaling ships are the most common type of ship used to hunt sea serpents, though anything from a warship to a fishing boat could tow a dead serpent back to shore. Serpent Chaser vessels have 20% more S.D.C. than standard ships or whalers (but reduce Spd 10%), and typically carry even more weapons, (arbalests, catapults and ballista are common), each with at least 3D6 giant arrows or stones on-board. In addition, Serpent Chasers usually put some kind of ram prow/impaling weapon on the bow of their vessels to enable them to slam into a large sea creature like a knight using a giant lance. Of course, regardless of any sort of modification they've done to the ship, ramming a large sea creature with a boat jolts everyone on board (roll to Maintain Balance or everyone is thrown to the deck for 2D4 points of damage, loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions) and possibly sends someone overboard. Ramming a sea creature inflict 4D6x10 points of damage for warships and large merchants, 4D6x10 points for Whalers, 3D6x10 for Schooners, and 2D6x10 points for fishing boats and other small ships.

The wealthier and more famous a Serpent Chaser becomes, the more grandiose he will make his vessel. Some create veritable warships, allowing them to hunt down even bigger and mightier prey, but such ships have large crews and profits must be divided up. For the most fearsome of sea serpents, however, the Royal Navy dispatches true warships with full crews of Marines and fighting sailors, often aided by men of magic; usually working in teams of two or four vessels that cooperate to overwhelm and destroy their prey.

Waterchanter O.C.C.

"Almighty Algor, guide this vessel over cold waters, over reef and rock, over sandbar and sunken ship. Protect us from storm and serpent, from the pirates, from the giants of the sea. Watch over our humble vessel. Watch over passenger and crew, catch and cargo. Bring us home again and grant us your blessing. For this we beg, ever faithful of the sea god."

– The Prayer of the Waterchanter

Among the believers of the Northern Pantheon are those who demonstrate magic potential and devote themselves purely to the worship of **Algor** and the mighty ocean that makes up his domain. Trained specially by both Priests of Algor and veteran sailors, these **Waterchanters** travel on Bizantium's ships, man its ports and watch its coastlines. They are part priest, administering to the faithful and performing the rites of Algor, and part spell caster, combining magic and the blessings of the sea god to favorably influence the weather, ward off sea serpents and ensure a safe voyage.

Trained at the Temple of Algor, Waterchanters spend a lot of time on the beach and in the ocean itself. After a year learning to wield magic and channel the power of Algor, Waterchanters undertake a lone journey by kayak along the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness, looking for signs of Algor's favor. Along their journey they are to rescue stranded sailors, help all in need, and live as the ancient Eoten trappers and Rangers once did. After 2-6 months spent at sea and along the coast of the mainland from the Shadow Coast colonies to the tip of the Algorian sea, and back again, apprentice Waterchanters who survive the ordeal re-

turn to Bizantium, proven worthy of the sea god, and bow before the High Minister as he anoints them. From there, Waterchanters may be assigned to Navy ships by the Admiralty, hired by merchant ships and Serpent Chasers (some personally requested by various captains) or tasked with monitoring the nation's coastline and seaports.

Most large ships count at least one Waterchanter and/or a Water or Air Warlock amongst its crew, particularly if they are setting off on a long voyage. Some will have 2-5 mages of different varieties; most low level spell casters (1-4 level), unless they have been part of the crew for a long time, or have enjoyed the life of an adventurer away from Bizantium or served with the Marines. Waterchanters pray to Algor for safe weather, tend to the sick and injured, and command the powers of the sea for when their mighty sea god of the North is busy with other matters and does not hear their prayers, or is otherwise displeased. While Bizantium's Warlocks often use their abilities as potent weapons, Waterchanters are better suited to supporting and assisting ships, crews and the soldiers the vessel may carry. As devotees of Algor and the Northern Pantheon, Waterchanters are easy for Bizantium's superstitious seafarers to trust, with none of the suspicion or second guessing that surrounds Warlocks. Many of Bizantium's captains refuse to sail without a Waterchanter, and as noted earlier, many military vessels and those owned by wealthy merchants will have one or two Waterchanters, one or two Warlocks, and one or two Wizards or other men of magic. The exact number of mages may depend on the captain, crew and the wealth of the ship's owner. Some vessels may carry only Waterchanters, only Warlocks or Wizards, or a combination of them all, or entirely different masters of magic. But Waterchanters, Air Warlocks and Water Warlocks are amongst the most common.

There is some debate among scholars, clergy and spell casters as to the true nature of the Waterchanter. Some insist they are more mage than Priest. Others say they are an elite and specialized type of priest, though most priests of Algor and the Northern Pantheon consider them to be a lower subset within the clergy like a monk or brother, and some priests of Algor don't consider them true members of the clergy at all, but an upstart group of priest-like mages who wield magic and claim to be in communion with the same god and pantheon. This means many priests of Algor don't like Waterchanters and consider them to be rivals for the hearts and minds of the people. However, since they espoused to be disciples of Algor "called to swim a different path," the clergy has adopted them as "brethren" of the same deity; i.e. the out of town cousin who has overstayed his visit. For the most part, Waterchanters stay out of the politics of the Church of Algor in Bizantium, and often assist the clergy when they share a common cause. However, Waterchanters are much less formal than priests and have thrown off the shackles of dogma and religious rites to focus on their own piety and calling to help others. They function much more like a traveling country preacher who spreads the words and wisdom of Algor as he personally interprets them. Which means they sometimes criticize the church and do not always closely follow its rituals, rites and protocols.

Waterchanter Powers & Abilities

The Four Blessings of Algor

1. Chalice of the Sea God: With a few whispered, spell-like prayers to the sea god, the Waterchanter lifts up a bucket, pitcher



or other container of seawater and transforms it into clean, fresh, drinking water. Up to 12 gallons (45 liters) per level of the spell caster's experience can be transformed at a time. The blessing only works on salt water taken right from the sea or ocean. Water from lakes and rivers are unchanged by this magic as it has no effect on fresh water even if it is muddy or contaminated. This magic can be performed as many times in a 24 hour period as they have levels of experience (i.e. a 7th level Waterchanter can perform the rite seven times a day).

2. Breath of the Sea God: At sea or at the water's edge, the Waterchanter is able to summon winds to push against the vessel's sails. Adds +5 mph (8 km/4.3 knots) to the ship's maximum speed. This ability can be used three times each day, and the effect can be maintained for 12 minutes per level of experience.

3. Mercy of the Sea God: Once per day, the Waterchanter may invoke the divine Mercy of the Sea God, the most powerful of Algor's Blessings. Mercy of the Sea God automatically cures hypothermia and restores the "breath and life" to a single individual who has drowned within the last 12 minutes (+2 minutes per level of experience). This is an automatic success that restores 3D6 Hit Points. There is even a chance of restoring life to those who have drowned and been left in the water for as long as three hours (01-68% chance) and even up to 24 hours (only 01-30% chance of success). Restoring those lost at sea for more than 24 hours and up to four days, is a mere 1%, but it can happen. The Mercy of the Sea God Algor can, in the alternative, be used to heal wounds and negate poison inflicted by creatures of the sea, restoring 3D6+6 S.D.C. or Hit Points, stopping blood loss, closing the wounds and preventing infection.

4. Ocean Magic/Spell Casting: Already sensitive to magic, their training, steadfast belief in Algor and in the magic and mercy that comes from him, Waterchanters are open to a range of spells they believe come straight from Algor himself.

At level one, choose three spells from the list of *Ocean and Elemental Magic* below. Select one additional spell at each new level, starting with level two. Waterchanters can only select spells listed in this book, below.

Permanent P.P.E. Base: 6D6 plus P.E. attribute number and an additional 1D6 per level of experience.

Spell Strength: Starts at 12; +1 at levels 6 and 12.

Waterchanter O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, M.E. 10, and P.P. 8 or higher.

Alignment: Any, but most Waterchanters are of good or selfish alignments.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native Tongue at 98% plus one of choice (+10%).

Literacy: One language of choice (usually native +10%).

Astronomy & Navigation (+10%)

Identify Sea Life (+10%)

Lore: Demon & Monster or Lore: Sea (+15%).

Mathematics: Basic (+5%)

Rope Works (+5%)

Seamanship (+10%)

Swimming (+10%)

W.P.: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic is most common, but it can be changed to

Hand to Hand: Expert at the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills or Martial Arts for the cost of three.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Choose six other skills at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communication: Any.

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Escape Artist and Intelligence only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General only.

Medical: Any.

Military: None.

Naval: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any, except Gymnastics and Wrestling.

Rogue: None.

Science: Any (+5%).

Scholar/Technical: Any (+10%).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any, except Lance and Long Bow.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and one additional skill at levels three, seven, and eleven. These additional areas of knowledge do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses.

Starting Equipment: One suit of street clothes, seagoing attire (leather-brimmed cap, jacket, shirt, leather belt, pants and waterproof shoes), waterproof boat cloak, a personal oil lantern, writing supplies that include pencil, pen, ink and a supply of parchment or paper, waterskin, small mirror, copy of Algor's Hymnal, and a waterproof sea chest to hold his or her belongings.

Armor: Starts with Shark Leather armor.

Money: The character starts with 180 gold that can be used to purchase more equipment or saved.

Bizantium Warlocks

While practitioners of magic are often viewed with suspicion in the Northern Islands, **Warlocks** and **Waterchanters** are gradually growing in acceptance. The Warlock Council manages and supervises these spell casters, the worship of Elementalism is proliferating swiftly on the Shadow Coast, and House Bardomus makes use of elemental magic to create Bizantium's mighty *Stone Ships*. Hanta Farrip, head of the Warlock Council, is one of the king's closest advisors, and the soldiers and sailors of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines certainly appreciate the power a Warlock brings into battle.

One might think that every Warlock encountered on the high seas is a *Water Warlock*, but, while their abilities are incredibly powerful and versatile out on open water, *Air Warlocks* can also have a tremendous influence over the interaction between the sky and sea that creates waves and weather. They can create winds that push sails, increasing a ship's speed or forcing an enemy vessel to sail in circles, bombard it with lightning bolts, hail, etc. The powers of a *Fire Warlock* are devastating in naval combat, lighting rope-rigging, sails and whole ships ablaze, or snuffing out the flaming arrows or fire magic of an enemy attempting to do the same. And while *Earth Warlocks* might feel a bit limited in the water, their magic is excellent for coastal attacks and defense, and absolutely vital to the creation of the Stone Ships.

See the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** for Warlock Stats and spells. The following pages present what Waterchanters call

"Ocean Magic" or the "Guiding Hand of Algor." Waterchanters can only select spells from the category of Ocean Magic.

Water Warlocks can also acquire Ocean Magic spells except for *Armor of Algor*, *Metamorphosis: Fish*, *Mystic Seahorse*, *Senses of the Shark*, and *Weed Snare*. Many Ocean Magic spells are less known and less commonly used than Water Elemental spells. **Ocean Magic** has been adapted from the **Rifts® RPG** series, written by Kevin Siembieda, for use in *Palladium Fantasy*. A number of the spells are the same as Warlock Elemental Magic, and their description are found in the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** or **Mysteries of Magic™: Book One**, which contains a number of new spells and background on spell casters.

Ocean Magic Descriptions

Alphabetical List of *Ocean Magic* Spells Available to Waterchanters

Note: The number in parenthesis is the P.P.E. cost for the Waterchanter.

Armor of Algor (20)	Senses of the Shark (15)
Breathe Air (Without Gills; 5)	Speak Underwater (10)
Change Current (15)	Transmute Water (15 or 25)
Communicate with Sea Creature (10)	Travel Above Water (30)
Float on Water (4)	Water of Life (30)
Healing Waters (55)	Water Pulse (8)
Impervious to Cold (12)	Water Rush (15)
Metamorphosis: Fish (50)	Water Seal (10)
Mystic Sea Horse (35)	Water Spout (25)
Ride the Waves (10)	Water Wall (50)
Sense Direction Underwater (4)	Weed Snare (10)
	Whirlpool (100)

Armor of Algor

Note: This is a Fourth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self or another person by touch.

Duration: Three minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: Standard, if the recipient desires to resist.

P.P.E.: Twenty

Note: In **Rifts®** this spell is known as **Armor of Neptune**.

Magically provides the wearer with air to breathe (as long as the magic lasts), makes him impervious to cold (magical cold attacks do half damage), impervious to great depths/pressure (no limit to depth), and provides an invisible armor with 15 S.D.C. per level of the spell caster's experience!

Breathe Air (without gills)

Note: This is a Second Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self or two others.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: Standard, if the recipient desires to resist.

P.P.E.: Five

An enchantment that enables fish and gilled creatures to breathe air like mammals. This is especially helpful when on dry land.



Change Current

Note: This is a Second Level Water Warlock spell (8 P.P.E. for them).

Range: Current nearest the spell caster; affects a 1000 foot (305 m) radius per level of experience.

Duration: 5 minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

The character can reverse or redirect the ocean current in an isolated area, at least for a short period. This can be used to send ships and drifting wreckage in a particular direction, push away pollution or toxins, confuse sea serpents, fish and sailors, and so on. Has no effect on wind direction or intensity.

Communicate with Sea Creature

Note: Not available to Warlocks.

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: Ten minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

Allows the characters to speak telepathically with any sea creature, including fish and sea mammals, and many aquatic predators from other worlds, but not with underwater plants, invertebrates or intelligent beings. This ability to have a dialogue exchange does not mean, however, that the sea creature will obey, cooperate, or provide accurate information.

Float on Water

Note: This is a First Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self or two others (can be cast on others up to 30 ft/9.1 m away).

Duration: 30 minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: Standard, if the recipient desires to resist.

P.P.E.: Four

This spell makes the enchanted person so buoyant that he rises to the surface and floats on the waves like a stick of wood. This spell does not endow the ability to swim, although those who can swim can alter their direction, try to swim against the current, and swim on the surface at their maximum speed at half the normal exhaustion rate. Excellent for rescuing people who fall into the water wearing armor and/or are unable to swim to save themselves.

Healing Waters

Note: This is a Seventh Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: 3 feet (0.9 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifty-Five

Instantly changes a three foot (0.9 m) radius of water, per level of experience, into a warm bath water which soothes all aches, pains, and burns, and heals 1D6 points of damage per minute. Once the healing affect dissipates, the water returns to normal.

Impervious to Cold

Note: This is a Fifth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: 20 minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: Standard, if the recipient desires to resist.

P.P.E.: Twelve

Those affected by this magic are impervious to normal cold, including the icy waters and freezing temperatures at great depths. Magic cold and magic ice attacks inflict full damage.

Metamorphosis: Fish

Note: Not available to Warlocks.

Range: Self or one person (can be cast up to 30 ft/9.1 m away).

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: Standard, if the recipient desires to resist.

P.P.E.: Fifty

A transformation spell that turns the spell caster into any type of large to medium-sized fish. Abilities are fundamentally the same as the fish selected. Does not include jellyfish or starfish, both of which are NOT in the fish family; their names are misnomers. Likewise, sea mammals such as dolphins, whales and sea lions are not possible. While in this animal form, the character retains his own I.Q., memory, knowledge, Hit Points and S.D.C.; however, the performance of human skills is impossible. Likewise, speaking and casting magic is impossible in this form. The metamorphosis can be cancelled at will.

The following are some average abilities common to most fish:

Breathe underwater via gills.

Swim at a speed of 15 miles per hour (24 km).

Swim at 40 mph/64 km in short bursts that last 1D6 minutes.

Two attacks per melee round by bite (1D4 S.D.C. points for medium-sized fish while large ones do 2D4 S.D.C., 2D6 from barracuda) or tail slap (1D6 S.D.C. for medium-sized fish, while large, swordfish or marlin-sized fish do 2D6).

+1 on initiative and +2 to dodge.

Survive depths of up to two miles (3.2 km).

Mystic Seahorse

Note: This is a Sixth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Immediate area.

Speed (magical): Up to 40 mph (64 km) maximum.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

The spell creates a giant, magical seahorse that as many as three human-sized riders mount like a horse, while another 2-6 can find handholds along the tail to hold onto and be pulled along at a speed of 20 mph (32 km) or slower. Likewise, a net of fish or net of additional people, or salvage can be carried or pulled along by the seahorse's prehensile tail (can carry one ton or pull three tons). The Mystic Seahorse can also use its tail to hold on to floating debris or to secure itself and those who ride it to coral, rocks,

a shipwreck and similar, to prevent being carried away by strong currents, storms or whirlpools. The creature is really a minor Water Elemental composed entirely of water and magic, and looks very much like a seahorse. The mount has a low intelligence and serves only as a riding/pulling animal. Maximum depth is unlimited, but most humans cannot survive depths greater than a few hundred feet (90 m) below the waves.

Ride the Waves

Note: This is a Second Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self and/or two others.

Speed: Up to 40 mph (64 km) maximum.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

The spell caster creates a magical wave on the surface of the water and rides it (standing, kneeling, or laying prone) like a surfer, but without a surfboard. This spell can be cast on others, but only the spell caster can control its speed and direction. Likewise, the magic wave can be used to carry a raft, lifeboat or other type of small boat and all occupants onboard, but at half the normal speed (20 mph/32 km).

Sense Direction Underwater

Note: This is a First Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Four

This enchantment provides the character with a flawless sense of direction (north, south, east, west, up, down, etc.), the direction of ocean currents, changes in the current, approximate current speed, and an accurate idea of depth, even in total darkness.

Senses of the Shark

Note: This is a Fourth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

Basic Senses and Bonuses: Taste blood up to two miles (3.2 km) away. Track the blood scent/trail to its source 80%. See and follow electrical impulses and energy released by the earth (electro-magnetic), and muscle movement (no blindness penalty to strike, parry or dodge even in absolute darkness; range 200 feet/61 m plus 10 feet/3.0 m per level of experience). Nightvision 500 feet (152 m), +1 to save vs Horror Factor and +1 on initiative. All abilities are applicable only when underwater!

Penalties: The primitive, predatory senses of the shark makes the character -20% to perform all skills and there is a chance that the taste of blood (automatically tastes any blood in the water) will send the character into a fighting frenzy: Compels the character to fight against overwhelming odds, fight to the death, fight without mercy and strike to kill! While in the frenzy, the character may (1-50%) accidentally strike at a friend or ally before he recognizes his friend and stops. Roll to determine (or maintain) a fighting frenzy for every minute of exposure to blood. The odds of falling into such a frenzy are 1-15% from small amounts

of blood, 1-45% from large amounts of blood, and 1-80% if engulfed/bathed in blood.

Speak Underwater

Note: This is a Fourth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self or two others by touch.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: Standard, but only if the recipient resists.

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell enables surface dwellers to speak underwater with the same relative ease as they do in the air. Their words can be heard at a range of 100 feet (30.5 m) +10 feet (3.0 m) per level of the spell caster.

Transmute Water

Note: This is a Fourth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Touch or up to 3 feet (0.9 m) away per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Savings Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen to change from one to the other, 25 to completely purify.

This spell enables the character to transform 10 gallons (37.8 liters) of water per level of experience from saltwater to freshwater, or vice-versa. An additional 10 P.P.E. enables the spell caster to remove all harmful toxins, poisons, pollution, bacteria, etc. This spell is especially useful on dry land and when a water creature needs either saltwater or freshwater to survive.

Travel Above Water

Note: This is a Sixth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Self and 100 lbs (45 kg).

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Savings Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty

This spell is rarely taken by aquatic beings but can be very useful for surface dwellers. It allows the character to travel one to twelve inches (the spell caster's discretion) above the waves at a speed equal to the character's normal ground speed. The humanoid can run or walk with or against the current (no penalty) as if he were walking on dry land. He can also drift with the current laying on his stomach, side, or back, hovering a few inches above the waves. The amazing part is that the spell caster and his possessions will remain completely dry from the ocean mist and spray, and can ride the highest waves and barely feel the motion. The character can carry up to 100 lbs (45 kg). **Note:** The spell caster can be dragged under the water by a combined strength of 30 or more. However, the spell will still be in effect and the magic buoyancy of the spell will attempt to cause the character to surface. If forced underwater, all his possessions will get wet.

Water of Life

Note: This is a Fifth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant results.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Thirty

The Warlock or Waterchanter revives a victim of drowning, turning the water in the victim's lungs into air and negating possible effects of hypothermia. By simply opening the victim's mouth and blowing into it, the character is revived, coughing and springing back to life; restored to 1D6 Hit Points. Since this is magic, the spell works on people who have been dead for as long as one hour per level of the Warlock; e.g. an eighth level Warlock can revive a victim of drowning who has been dead for eight hours.

Water Pulse

Note: This is a Third Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight

A powerful blast of water that inflicts minor damage (1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C.) and knocks human-sized and smaller targets/items back/away 1D4x10 yards/meters (30 to 120 feet). The blast can be used to startle an opponent, scatter fish, push away sand, knock a weapon or tool out of a character's hand (requires a called shot), and similar.

Water Rush

Note: This is a Fifth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

A powerful jet or stream of underwater currents magically appears to sweep away anything in its path, similar to the wind rush spell. Victims caught in this powerful current are swept 30 feet (9.1 m) away per level of the spell caster and must roll a sort of parry (needs a 15 or higher) to hang onto all of their possessions. A failed roll means the character either drops something from one of his hands or 1D4 items fall from his belt, pack, etc. – they slowly sink to the ocean floor (it takes 2D4 melee rounds to retrieve them). The water rush can be directed at one, specific target, or fired in a wide, 20 foot (6.1 m) swath.

Water Seal

Note: This is a Third Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Touch or up to 3 feet (0.9 m) away.

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This magic enables the character to make any container, regardless of the material it is made from (paper, sailcloth, woven grass, wood, metal, etc.), completely airtight and water resistant, keeping whatever is inside perfectly dry until the spell expires or the container is opened. The spell can cover up to two cubic feet (0.05 m) per level of experience. This spell can also be used to seal leaking doors, hatches and portholes.

Water Spout

Note: This is a Fifth Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Can be cast up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away per level of the spell caster. The spout shoots 100 feet (30.5 m) above the waves,

plus an additional 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience. The spout is two feet (0.6 m) in diameter per level of the spell caster's experience.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

A magic spell that creates a tower or spout of water shooting into the air. It can be used to signal vessels and flyers, to carry the spell caster into the air (standing at the top of the spout; great vantage point and/or opportunity to attack opponents on the water's surface or in the air), or to rock or capsize boats: 1-75% chance of tipping over very small boats like canoes, rowboats, lifeboats, rafts, etc., 1-25% chance against fishing boats, trawlers and small ships, 1-2% chance against medium-sized vessels, and no chance against large vessels, warships, Stone Ships or Demon Black Ships.

Crashing into a water spout that suddenly appears in front of a ship or having one rise up under part of your vessel will make a thunderous slamming noise and give the vessel a tremendous jolt that sends it bouncing off like a bumper car 25 degrees to the side, requiring course correction, as well as spraying the deck with seawater and maybe (12% chance) 2D6 small to medium-sized fish. However, it does no damage to the ship as the spout does not have a tremendous amount of force.

Targeting Note: It is very difficult to get a water spout to appear directly under a small, moving target like a kayak or a fish, or man to Wolfen-sized swimmer. The larger and slower the target the easier it is to make a spout appear in front or under it.

Water Wall

Note: This is a Seventh Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One minute per level of the spell caster's experience.

Saving Throw: None per se; dodge only.

P.P.E.: Fifty

A wall of water five feet (1.5 m) tall and 10 feet (3.0 m) long per level of experience, rises from the water and hangs suspended in the air. Hitting the wall at speed inflicts 1D6x10 S.D.C. damage and temporarily reduces speed by one-third. The wall will also stop arrows, projectiles and magic energy blasts. The wall is drawn from the ocean itself and is constantly flowing and renewing itself. Thus, after a vessel crashes through it, there is no evidence of its passage (like passing through a waterfall). Consequently, the wall has no sort of damage capacity and cannot be destroyed. Instead, it melts back into the ocean once the spell is cancelled or the duration has elapsed. A Water Wall can be created underwater that inflicts half the damage upon impact and has half the duration.

Weed Snare

Note: This is a Third Level Water Warlock spell.

Range: Can be cast up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away.

Duration: Two melee rounds per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Roll to save by managing to pull out of the weed snare.

P.P.E.: Ten

This magic animates seaweed to clutch, entangle and hold onto a single person or animal up to 30 feet (9.1 m) long/tall. The

weeds are so dense and entangling that even supernatural beings and giants will lose two melee attacks/actions struggling to get free or trying to shred the weeds. Normal creatures, including humans, dolphins, sharks, sea serpents and other water animals, roll to save against the attack by ripping or wiggling out of the tangle of weeds. A successful save means they slip the snare within 1D4 melee rounds. A failed roll means they are stuck until the spell is cancelled or elapses.

While ensnared, the captive can use weapons, try to fight and use psionics or magic, but is -2 to strike, -4 to parry, -6 to dodge, and cannot move more than a few feet from the spot where the weeds have grabbed him. The spell can also be used to capture fish and sea animals that are smaller than 10 feet (3 m). Real seaweed must be in the area for this spell to work. One spell affects one person/captive. Not effective against boats larger than 10 feet (3 m), and the paddles and rudders of smaller boats will get entangled and stalled same as above.

Whirlpool

Note: This is a Fifth Level Water Warlock spell (with a much lower P.P.E. expense than what it costs the Waterchanter).

Range: 120 foot (36.5 m) radius; can be cast up to 500 feet (152 m) away.

Duration: One minute per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: One Hundred

This powerful spell conjures forth a great, spinning whirlpool in an ocean, sea or large lake. The watery funnel pulls and sucks all objects on the water into its whirling center, crushing and dragging them down into the depths. Objects caught in the outer edge will be drawn toward the center in a spiraling circle, at the rate of ten feet (3 m) per melee round. Victims on boats will become dizzy and disoriented; 30% will become seasick. Individuals in the water are helpless to escape and will drown (50% chance in 2D4 minutes) unless they are thrown a line or otherwise rescued. Most medium to large ships can *pull out of* the outer edge and escape. Small vessels and life rafts only have a 50% chance to escape. The outer whirlpool has a 120 foot (36.5 m) radius.

The center of the whirlpool is 20 feet (6.1 m) in diameter and inflicts 1D4x10 damage each melee round to any small object in its grip. Large ships and sea serpents suffer 2D6x10 and will be pulled underwater when the vessel/creature hits dead center (usually takes 1D4 melee rounds). Getting pulled down the whirlpool inflicts 1D6x10 to small items/people and 2D6x100 to large vessels, plus a 90% chance that any vessel that rides the surface of the water is sunk and 90% of its crew drowns! Sea serpents and other ocean creatures will take damage, but do not have to worry about drowning. **Note:** A dispel magic barrier spell will destroy a magic Whirlpool instantly.

New Earth Warlock Spells

Create Wood

Level: First Level Earth Warlock spell.

Range: 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Five for soft wood for burning, ten for hardwood for building.

Create Wood does just that. It forces magical energy to draw together particles and fiber from surrounding air and area, bond them together and multiply them on a molecular level to create wood. The shape can be two foot (0.6 m) long logs or six foot (1.8 m) long, one foot (0.3 m) wide planks. Hardwood cost more to make but is excellent for building; soft, weak wood is used for burning. The use of this spell has allowed Bizantium (and others) to use wood in buildings and in shipbuilding without chopping down lots of trees.

The amount of wood created varies: Up to 100 lbs (45 kg) per every 5 (soft) or 10 (hard, building wood) P.P.E. expended.

Mystic Fulcrum

Level: First Level Earth Warlock spell.

Range: Self or two others by touch.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Three

Mystic Fulcrum is another spell that defies or tweaks the laws of physics. Those enchanted by the magic can pick up and move objects that they would otherwise not have the leverage and ability to do without a lever and support. Those enchanted by Mystic Fulcrum can lift 50% more weight than usual and carry 10% more.

Shatter

Level: First Level Earth Warlock spell.

Range: 20 feet (6 m) or by touch.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Three

This spell causes brittle, comparatively fragile S.D.C. objects, like glass, ceramic pottery, china, hardened clay, sandstone, ice, etc., to instantly shatter into hundreds of pieces with a mere touch or mean look (and foul intent). This spell is not effective against objects weighing more than 100 pounds (45 kg), magic items, flexible or elastic materials (cloth, plastic, rubber, etc.) and substances with the toughness of wood or better. Likewise, it cannot be used against living beings (i.e. cannot shatter bones, claws, teeth, or even fingernails) or supernatural beings or creatures of magic.

Throwing Stones

Level: Second Level Earth Warlock spell.

Range: 200 feet (61 m) + 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience. Self only.

Damage: 2D6 points of damage, +1 point per level of experience.

Duration: Two melee rounds.

Saving Throw: Dodge.

P.P.E.: Four

This spell enables the caster to draw upon the earth to magically make a hardball-sized, circular stone appear in his hand per each of his melee actions. The stone can then be magically hurled with surprising accuracy and distance. The magical stone hits with the force of a ballista, and is temporarily a magical item and weapon. The spell caster chooses the target, then throws the

magical stone as he would a ball, but with a +2 bonus to strike (P.P. attribute and targeting bonuses are also applicable). The target may attempt to dodge the attack, but the stones are thrown too fast for most normal beings to parry (-4). After the stone hits, it crumbles into dirt. Creating and throwing count as one melee attack/action.

Metal to Wood

Level: Six Level Earth Warlock spell.

Range: Touch or 12 feet (3.6 m).

Duration: Instant and permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Forty

This transformation spells changes metal into wood. The Warlock can change 60 pounds (27 kg) of iron per level of experience. Not effective on magic items, magic armor, silver, or gold, but will cause 4D6 S.D.C. to metal armor and Iron Golems, 3D4x10 to S.D.C. metals.

New Fire Warlock Spells

Fire Gout

Level: Third Level Fire Warlock spell.

Range: 30 feet (9 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant; about two seconds.

Damage: 3D6 points of damage, +2 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Dodge at -3 to do so.

P.P.E.: Ten

This Warlock can magically conjure and direct a stream of fire similar to a flamethrower, only wider. It can be directed with a wave of the hands; points and shoot. The fiery stream extends the full length of its range, stopped or blocked only by large obstacles in its path, and is about three feet (0.9 m) in diameter. There is 01-70% likelihood that combustible materials will be set on fire.

Fire Blossom

Level: Fourth Level Fire Warlock spell.

Range: Touch; appears above the open palm of the Warlock's hand.

Damage: Varies.

Duration: One month per level of the Warlock without burning, but burns out within 1D6 minutes after it is activated to burn.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This is a unique spell in which the Warlock creates a Fire Blossom — a small tongue of flame about three inches (8 cm) tall. It flickers but does not burn and can be held, put in one's pocket or placed in a bag or backpack without fear of starting a fire. The fire does not burn until the mage or the recipient of the Fire Blossom (it can be created and given as a gift) activates it. Once activated, the Fire Blossom burns into a raging fire three feet (0.9 m) tall and two feet (0.6 m) wide. It will burn without combustibles (wood, rags, coal, etc.) for 1D6 minutes and then vanishes. If placed on or stoked with combustibles, these items will immediately catch fire and burn, thus the Fire Blossom can be used to create a campfire; light torches, or to start a fire.

See Through Smoke

Level: Fourth Level Fire Warlock spell.

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Twelve

Not only can the Warlock see clearly in and through smoke; but he can also breathe it without suffering from smoke inhalation. Thus, he can operate without impairment in a room or area choked with smoke.

Fire Globe

Level: Fifth Level Fire Warlock spell.

Range: Touch, appears above the open palm of the mage's hand. Can be thrown 200 feet (61 m).

Damage: 5D6 at the moment of impact and 2D6 additional points of damage per melee round.

Duration: Stored as a globe for two weeks per level of the Warlock but burns out within 1D4 minutes after it is activated.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This is a unique spell similar to the Fire Blossom, only in this case, the Warlock creates a portable globe containing a magical fire. The globe is about the size of a grapefruit and flickers as if a fire burns inside (which it does), but no heat or significant amount of life radiates from it. Consequently, the globe can be held and put in a bag or backpack without fear of starting a fire. The fire does not burn until activated by the Warlock or the recipient of the Fire Globe (it can be created and given to another as a gift). To activate, the character must throw the globe while wishing it to ignite or damage whatever it hits. Upon impact, the fire erupts like napalm, covering the surface body of its target in flame. It burns without combustibles (wood, rags, coal, etc.) for 1D4 minutes and then vanishes. The use of water to extinguish the fire hurts, creates steam and inflicts 2D6 damage (scalding) before the fire is extinguished. If placed on or stoked with combustibles, these items will immediately catch fire and continue to burn after the magic vanishes.

Melt Metal

Level: Seventh Level Fire Warlock spell.

Range: 15 feet (4.6 m) plus five feet (1.5 m) per experience level.

Duration: Four melee rounds per level of the Warlock.

Damage: 1D6x10 S.D.C., but only to metal, nothing else.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifty

This Elemental magic enables the Warlock to melt up to forty pounds (18 kg) of metal per level of his experience. This metal will immediately become too hot to hold or touch and will melt into slag within seconds. The Warlock does this by staring at the metal objects to be melted. The spell does not melt or harm magic weapons or items, but will inflict 1D6x10 to any metal or alloy. Can be used twice per melee round. Note: Having one's body armor melted on top of him causes 2D4x10 points of damage, the victim loses all attacks for four melee rounds/one minute, and will need medical treatment for second and third degree burns of his body. Reduce physical beauty by half from permanent scarring.

New Skill Descriptions

HS Note: Skills with an “HS” in parenthesis are skills reprinted from the **Adventures on the High Seas™** sourcebook for your convenience.

List of Naval Skills in this Book

Castaway/Shipwreck Survival (27%+3%)
Deep Sea Fishing (32%+4%)
Flag Signaling (18%+6%)
Identify Sea Life (27%+4%)
Lore: Sea (25%+5%)
Outdoorsmanship
Physical Labor
Pilot Small Boats, Kayaks & Canoes (30%+5%)
Seamanship (22%+4%)
Shipwright (26%+4%)
W.P. Harpoon

Other Skills

Seduction (20%+3%)
Spelunking (35%+5%)
W.P. Battle Axe
W.P. Lance
W.P. Pole Arm (and Trident)

Castaway/Shipwreck Survival (HS; a Naval Skill): (Also available under the Wilderness Skill Category.) Surviving without a ship at sea is a specialized skill, since the seas of the Palladium World are quite hostile. Those with this skill know how to avoid being sucked down with a sinking ship, how to select and assemble the best driftwood and scrap for a raft, and how to float without exerting themselves (not the same as swimming) for hours at a time. Once the survivor has something to hold on to, it becomes possible to survive for days at a time, but only if you know how to get fresh water (from fish, certain types of seaweed and condensation of dew on cool metal surfaces), as well as how to keep from being attacked or eaten by sea predators. Characters without this skill, or without help from someone else who has the skill, will likely perish immediately, or within hours. Note that once on land, even the tiniest island, the skill of Wilderness Survival takes over. **Base Skill:** 27% +3% per level of experience.

Deep Sea Fishing (HS; a Naval Skill): (Also available under the Technical Skill Category.) Although similar to freshwater fishing (see **Palladium RPG, 2nd Edition**, page 51), the methods involved are very different. Smaller fish are generally caught using a variety of different nets, and are usually caught in quantity (4D6 fish at a time). For bigger fish (50 pounds/22.5 kg and up), special tackle is required, which is actually attached to the ship. Those with this skill have a basic knowledge of the most common fish, and know the proper techniques for preparation and cooking (many Palladium World fish have poison glands, or quills, that must be removed prior to cooking). For net fishing, roll once every hour, but once every twenty minutes for line fishing. **Base Skill:** 32% +4% per level of experience. **Note:** While someone with the Domestic Fishing skill can catch and cook fish while on ship, using their usual techniques, they'll catch only the smaller fish, and they'll only roll for success once per hour. Also,

they won't have the knowledge involved in identifying which are edible, or the details of how specific fish should be prepared.

Flag Signaling (HS; a Naval Skill): (Also available under the Communications Skill Category.) Ships at sea in the Palladium World, often miles apart, have developed a “language” based on the display of colored flags. Those with this skill can read and compose messages, as well as being able to recognize the banners, ensigns, pennants and standards used to communicate a ship's origin and status. Communicating basic naval messages (“Turn to starboard.” “Do you have any fresh water to spare?” or “Beware! Pirates sighted to the northeast!”) are easy for anyone with 2nd level, or better, expertise. However, non-naval messages, including names (Sir Bertrand, Port Jarl) or messages related to other subjects (magic, money or religion), are more time consuming, and more difficult to compose or decipher. Since each ship usually displays banners showing their nationality and other information, those with this skill have the chance of identifying a fake (pirates often fly false flags). In addition to the common signal code (used by every seafaring nation in the Palladium World), certain navies and merchant companies have developed their own secret systems of communicating. **Base Skill:** 18% +6% per level of experience.

Identify Sea Life (HS; A Naval Skill): (Also available under the Science and Wilderness Skill Category.) Characters with this skill can identify all different kinds of fish, squid, octopus, shellfish, turtles, sea mammals (whales, dolphins, seals), and sea monsters, as well as seaweed, sponges and even tiny swarms of tiny life forms (such as krill, the food source for many whales, and the different one-celled organisms that give off a visible glow at night). Even more importantly, the character can recognize habitats, or water and weather conditions, that signal the presence of certain kinds of sea life. For example, the character can attempt to determine what kind of fish are feeding below the ship, or what giant schools are traveling nearby, based on the appearance of certain predators such as knowing where to find tuna when certain dolphins are sighted. Includes a knowledge of which sea life is edible, useful as healing herbs, or poisonous. Another important bit of knowledge is being able to identify which barnacles, shipworms and mollusks (which live on the hull, under the waterline), are harmless, and which are immediately threatening. **Base Skill:** 27% +4% per level of experience.

Lore: Sea (HS; a Naval Skill): (Also available under the Technical Skill Category.) Knowledge regarding the myths and legends of the oceans and seas of the known Palladium World, including the edge of the world, sea monsters, sea creatures and aquatic people, ghost ships, and general knowledge about marine animals and whether or not they are dangerous to humanoids. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Outdoorsmanship (A Physical Skill): (Also available under the Naval and Wilderness Skill Categories.) Being an avid outdoorsman and survivalist, this character has spent a significant portion of his/her life living off the land or in the wild. As a result, the character is hardened to the rigors of outdoor life. **Requires:** *Wilderness Survival*. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.E. and +2D6 to S.D.C. and adds +5% to Dowsing, Fasting, I.D. Plants and Fruit, and Wilderness Survival skills.

Physical Labor (A Physical Skill): Not all strength and conditioning comes from deliberate training or sports, some comes from old-fashioned hard work. This skill represents the strength and endurance gained from hard physical labor either due to a

physical occupation (such as brick hauling, ditch digging, warehouse work loading and unloading boxes, etc.) or really demanding chores at home such as chopping wood, bailing hay, mending fences, etc. **Bonuses:** Add +2 to P.S., +1 to P.E., and 2D8 to S.D.C.

Pilot Small Boats, Kayaks & Canoes (A Naval Skill). (Also available under the Technical and Wilderness Skill Categories.) The skill includes the basic principles behind using currents, paddles as rudders and propulsion, maintenance, and even tricks like sculling and right-siding a flipped canoe, etc. The character enjoys a familiarity with all types of small boats that do not use sails. **Kayaks and canoes** have been used since old Eoten times on Bizantium (and by the Wolfen) and are still popular today.

Kayaks and canoes are one or two-man boats built for speed and handling the changing currents and rapids of rivers and lakes. Both function wonderfully in shallow and narrow bodies of water. They can also handle deep lakes and even the open sea, especially under calm conditions, but are likely to be swamped or carried out of the paddler's control and out to sea or smashed on rocks in strong currents and large waves in rough waters. Kayaks and canoes can be operated by one paddler. **Kayak and Canoe Speed** is based, *point for point, on the P.S. attribute number of the person paddling*. Thus, a P.S. of 14 equals a maximum maintainable paddle *Spd of 14* or 9 mph (14.4 km), A P.S. of 22 equals a speed of 22 or 15 mph (24 km), and so on. Maximum speed can be maintained a number of minutes equal to the paddler's *P.E. attribute number x5*. A P.E. of 14 means he can row for 70 minutes before needing to stop and rest for 20 minutes. **Note:** Paddling at half the maximum speed and taking frequent breaks to let the current carry the boat for a while enables the paddler to travel for up to 10 hours before starting to feel fatigued.

Other types of small boats: Includes paddled boats, rowboats, lifeboats, tenders, water barges, and river rafts. Such boats are much slower than a canoe or kayak, but also function in shallow or deep waters. Rowing/paddling speed in still water or against current is usually equal to *a character's P.S. attribute number divided by half*. In the case of a boat that has two or more people, they may row in tandem, together at the same pace (this skill teaches that). Speed is always based on the lowest P.S. number in the group of people rowing. Thus, a P.S. of 14 would equal a maintainable rowing *Spd of 7* or roughly 4 mph (6.4 km). Maximum rowing speed can be maintained for the *rower's P.E. attribute number x3 minutes* without pause. A P.E. of 14 means he or they can row for 42 minutes before needing to stop and rest for 20 minutes. However, rowing at half that speed can be maintained for twice as long.

Of course, depending on the water current, a boat may simply ride the current, which might be moving faster than they can row. Direction and speed is controlled via the boat's rudder (if there is one) or by the positioning of the paddle(s) in the water to function as a rudder. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Seamanship (HS; a Naval Skill): (Also available under the Technical Skill Category.) Most sailors don't really need to know how to sail, they just need to be able to follow orders when it comes to belaying, hauling, dropping or trimming sail, which means they need to know the difference between a crossjack, a mizzenmast, a fore lower topgallant and a hundred other names for specific sails, ropes, masts and cross-masts. The skill also includes being able to judge, evaluate and repair sails, ropes and rigging (every sailor has to be handy with a needle and thread,

as well as knowing how to braid rope). Also involves the basics of ship cleaning and maintenance, as well as how to skillfully operate the pumps needed to remove the water that collects in the bilge. **Base Skill:** 22% +4% per level of experience. **Requirement:** Must also have the sewing skill.

Seduction (A Rogue Skill). This is the ability to make the opposite sex melt with desire. This skill is somewhat similar to the Interrogation skill in that the seducer knows how to ask the right questions to get information without being obvious. The seducer usually seems attentive, sympathetic, alluring, and sexy. Men and women who are seduced tend to have loose lips and will spill secrets. They also lose track of time, spend big money to impress and please their seducer, and lavish her or him with their affection, time, and attention while oblivious to everything else around them.

Anyone who has been successfully seduced is distracted, skill performance is half and takes twice as long as before, the character doesn't notice people and events around him/her and is easily caught off guard (no initiative and all bonuses are at half when attacked by a character other than the seducer). Worse, the victim(s) of seduction is completely vulnerable to the seducer. The seducer always gets the first attack/strike/action, and the victim has no chance at self-defense against the first attack, plus the victim loses one attack/action from surprise or horror. **Base Skill:** 20% +3% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** +1% for every one M.A. attribute point over 20, and every two P.B. points over 17 (round up). So the character with a P.B. of 23 (+3) and M.A. of 24 (+4) would be +7% to successfully seduce. The seducer can influence more than one person at a time; one additional victim per every three levels of experience. In addition, the seducer is +5% to the Cardsharp, Sing, and Dance skills. Also, Seduction victims who are intoxicated or drugged are easier to seduce (+5%).

Shipwright (HS, a Naval Skill): (Also available under the Science and Wilderness Skill Categories.) Like an army's field armorer, the shipwright has the necessary skills of a naval mechanic, carpenter and blacksmith needed to repair ships at sea. After any storm, or any battle, numerous repairs are needed, and even in peaceful, calm waters, a ship's structure should be continuously maintained. Another task of the shipwright, one that is never finished, is directing the application of pitch (usually made from pine sap) to keep the cracks between the boards waterproof. Repairing weapons, armor, and other metal objects also falls among the shipwrights' responsibilities. A shipwright can make finished objects out of wood (such as belaying pins, replacement spars or boards) and of metal (nails, chain, etc.). **Base Skill:** 26% +4% per level of experience. **Requirement:** The character must also have the *carpentry* skill, but gets a +5% bonus to carpentry with this skill-combo.

Spelunking (A Wilderness Skill). The art and practices of exploring underground caves. Spelunking is the knowledge of caves and cave types and their individual characteristics. This skill enables the character to navigate a cave or underground cave networks, retain a sense of direction (including up and down), have a sense of the cave's depth, know how to make subtle markings and note formations to find his way out and to better navigate the cave(s) at a later date, as well as rock climbing. The Spelunker can answer questions about a cave system, such as what it is called (if it is a named landmark), where it may lead, how deep it continues, what type of rock it leads through and so on. This skill also lends to familiarity with the correct equipment

needed to go spelunking, and how to apply it. It is also the lore to recognize and identify various dangers, identifying the flora and fauna of cave systems and finding and climbing the best routes and directions. Unskilled characters wandering about in a large series of natural caverns have about the same chance of survival as unskilled climbers attempting a major mountain climb without guidance or equipment. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** +5% to this skill if the character also has Climb. **Underground race bonuses:** Dwarves and Troglydites automatically possess this skill with a +15% bonus. Kobolds, Gnomes and Goblins gain a +10% bonus if they acquire this skill.

W.P. Battle Axe: Training with all types of large axe weapons, including single blade and double-headed axes and picks. **Bonuses:** +1D6 damage at level two! +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 5, 8, 12 and 15. +1 to strike when thrown or to parry at levels 2, 4, 8, and 12; not designed for throwing.

W.P. Harpoon: Training with a type of spear designed for snaring and slaying sea serpents, whales and other large sea animals, and the use of drogues and ballista harpoon cannons. Harpoons come in a variety of sizes but tend to be heavier than traditional spears or javelins. The tip comes to a barbed point. The handle has a place to secure a line because the cable is often attached to a drogue – a barrel-like “float” made of sealskin or wood – or anchored to a reinforced position on the ship. Drogues are designed to put tremendous drag on the beast that has been harpooned and forces it to stay near the water’s surface. The more drogues the harder it is for the creature to submerge and it tires and weakens the beast. **Damage:** *Light Harpoon:* 1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C., *Standard Harpoon:* 2D6 Hit Points/S.D.C.; *Heavy Harpoon:* 3D6 damage. **Range:** 200 feet (61 m) for Light and Standard, 100 feet (30.5 m) for Heavy. **Bonuses:** A throwing weapon designed for hitting and hooking large targets. +1 to strike at levels 1, 4, 7, 10 and 13. +1 to parry at levels 3 and 7; not designed for melee combat. **Note:** These same bonuses apply to the use of *spears*, *javelins* and the *trident*. Characters with W.P. Harpoon are really only good at throwing harpoons and spears, not at using a spear in melee combat.

The W.P. Harpoon skill also includes the use of **harpoon cannons**, ballista-style weapons (think giant, mounted crossbow) that fire a heavy harpoon roughly three or four times the thickness of an ordinary spear or harpoon. It may be fired into sea monsters to hurt them or may be attached to a line connected to a larger drogue or 2-4 standard flotation barrels for much greater and immediate drag. **Damage:** 5D6+8 Hit Points/S.D.C. **Range:** 1,000 feet (305 m). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at Levels 1, 3, 7, 10 and 14; can not be thrown.

W.P. Lance Note: The use of the lance is limited to the Knight and Palladin O.C.C. and is not normally available to other O.C.C.s. See the descriptions under *The Way of the Lance* in each of the respective O.C.C.s.

W.P. Pole Arm: Training with all types of large axe weapons, including the glaive, sabre halberd, runka, scythe and voulge, among others, as well as the *Trident*. **Bonuses:** +2 damage at levels two and eight! +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 3, 7 and 12; not designed for throwing.

Experience Tables

Fisherman

1	0,000 – 1,900
2	1,901 – 3,800
3	3,801 – 7,600
4	7,601 – 15,000
5	15,001 – 30,000
6	30,001 – 45,000
7	45,001 – 68,000
8	68,001 – 102,000
9	102,001 – 132,000
10	132,001 – 172,000
11	172,001 – 216,000
12	216,001 – 237,000
13	237,001 – 260,000
14	260,001 – 275,000
15	275,001 – 300,000

Bizantium Marine

1	0,000 – 2,100
2	2,101 – 4,200
3	4,201 – 8,400
4	8,401 – 15,800
5	15,801 – 23,000
6	23,001 – 33,000
7	33,001 – 48,000
8	48,001 – 68,000
9	68,001 – 93,000
10	93,001 – 135,000
11	134,001 – 174,000
12	174,001 – 225,000
13	225,001 – 275,000
14	275,001 – 325,000
15	325,481 – 375,000

Serpent Chaser & Iceborn Raider/Male

1	0,000 – 2,050
2	2,051 – 4,100
3	4,101 – 8,200
4	8,201 – 16,000
5	16,001 – 32,000
6	32,001 – 49,000
7	49,001 – 71,000
8	71,001 – 103,000
9	103,001 – 134,000
10	134,001 – 165,000
11	165,001 – 190,000
12	190,001 – 213,000
13	213,001 – 249,000
14	249,001 – 290,000
15	290,001 – 315,000

Iceborn Captain & Iceborn Sea Witch

1	0,000 – 2,300
2	2,301 – 4,602
3	4,603 – 9,206
4	9,207 – 18,414
5	18,415 – 36,830
6	36,831 – 56,746
7	56,747 – 85,120
8	85,121 – 119,169
9	119,170 – 154,921
10	154,922 – 201,400
11	201,401 – 251,000
12	251,001 – 313,000
13	313,001 – 350,000
14	350,001 – 400,000
15	400,001 – 460,000

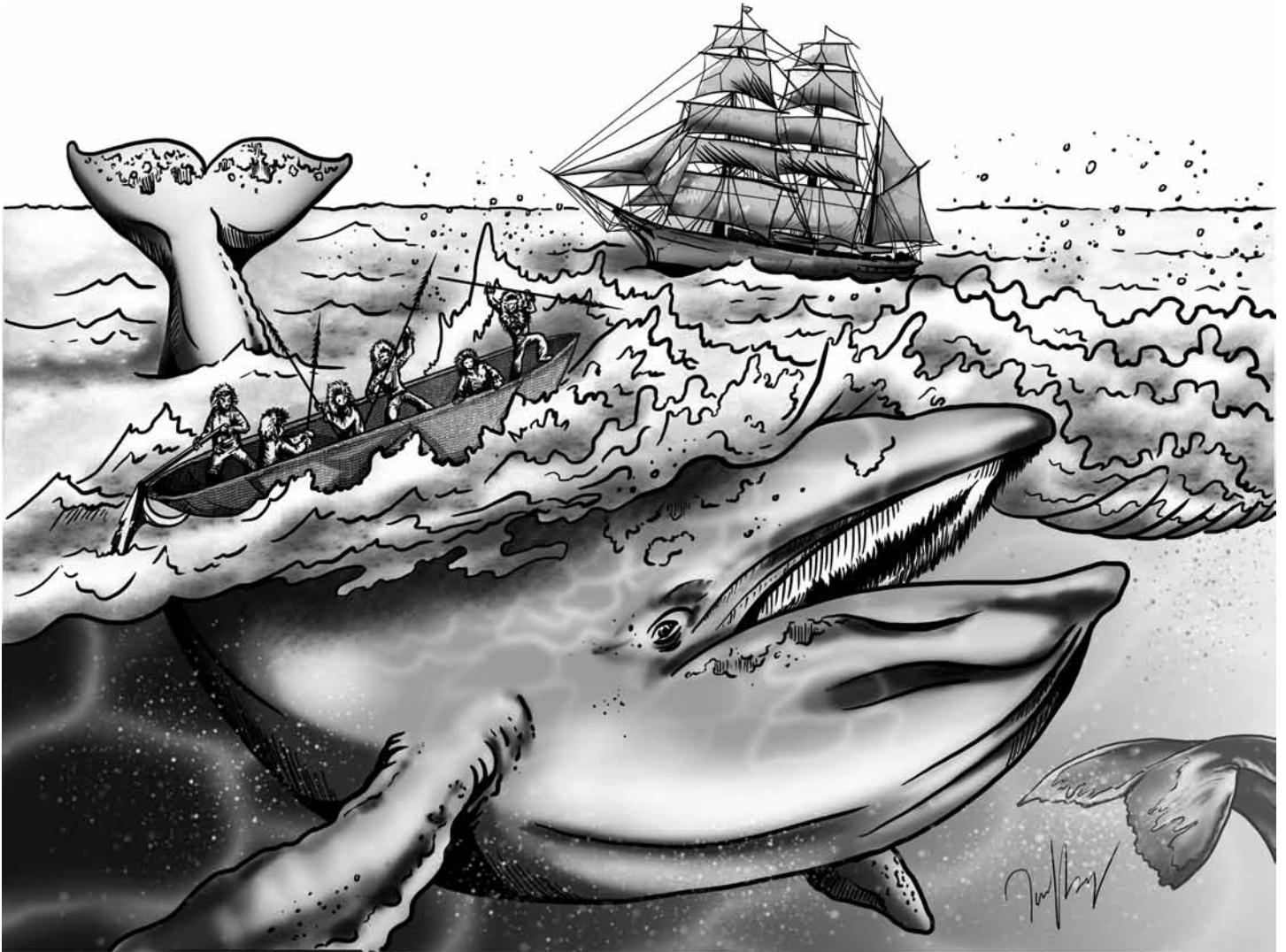
Necromancer

1	0,000 – 2,250
2	2,251 – 4,500
3	4,501 – 9,000
4	9,001 – 18,000
5	18,001 – 28,200
6	28,201 – 38,400
7	38,401 – 53,600
8	53,601 – 75,800
9	75,801 – 100,000
10	100,001 – 130,000
11	130,001 – 180,000
12	180,001 – 240,000
13	240,001 – 320,000
14	320,001 – 390,000
15	390,001 – 460,000

Waterchanter & Iceborn Skinbinder/Female

1	0,000 – 2,000
2	2,001 – 4,100
3	4,101 – 8,200
4	8,201 – 17,000
5	17,001 – 32,000
6	32,001 – 50,000
7	50,001 – 69,000
8	69,001 – 105,000
9	105,001 – 135,000
10	135,001 – 180,000
11	180,001 – 218,000
12	218,001 – 240,000
13	240,001 – 270,000
14	270,001 – 295,000
15	295,001 – 320,000

Animals of the Northern Sea



Black Whales

Also known as Humpback Whales

The Humpback Whale, known to most Bizantians as the Black Whale, is one of the largest animals in the sea. Some fear it, while others worship it as a living embodiment of Algor. Stories speak of sailors swallowed whole and whaleboats smashed by tail flukes, but also of stranded fishermen who swear a Black Whale protected them from sharks or sea serpents.

Black Whales are solitary animals with no natural enemies other than sea serpents. The whales usually associate with other nonaggressive whales and dolphins. Not dangerous to humans, other whales or large sea creatures, Black Whales feed on schools of fish and tiny crustaceans known as krill. They are filter feeders, with large mouths lined with baleen, a specific type of whalebone prized by whalers and used in constructing tools, bone weapons, ivory jewelry and even struts and supports for elaborate dresses. Black Whales are found in the cold waters of the Northern Sea, Sea of Despair and as far south as the Algorian Sea and Sea of Dread. Black Whales have one of the largest brains in the animal world and are highly intelligent (high animal I.Q. of 1D6+6).

They are smart enough to familiarize themselves with Bizantium's shipping lanes and trade routes, and learn to avoid them and the whalers operating in those waters.

Bizantium, the Western Empire, Eastern Territory, and the Isle of Cyclops possess the whaling ships and experienced crews necessary to hunt whales. Centuries of whaling has led to a slight reduction in Black Whale populations worldwide, and the Church of Algor is discussing putting limits on how many of the revered animals can be taken each season. According to a passage in the *Hymnal of Algor*, the day the last Black Whale is slain is the day when Beastla's children rise from the deep and claim the world's oceans as their own.

Black Whale

Size: 40-65 feet (12-20 m). Females are typically slightly larger than males.

Weight: 25-40 tons.

Attribute Note: Highly intelligent, equal to an I.Q. of 1D6+6, M.E. 1D6+8, M.A. 1D6+4, Spd. 22 (15 mph or 13 knots).

A.R.: 9

Hit Points: 3D4x10+50

S.D.C.: 1D4x100

Horror/Awe Factor: 11

P.P.E.: 1D4x10+10

Natural Abilities: Swim 98%, dive 700 feet (213 m), mid-air leap 20 feet (6.1 m), hold breath 3D6+12 minutes, sense magnetic north 90%, electromagnetic sensitivity, sonic echolocation/sonar, maximum depth tolerance two miles (3.2 km).

Average Life Span: 50-100 years.

Attacks per Melee: Two.

Damage: Tail swipe does 1D4x10, body nudge 3D6, head butt 4D6, full body ram 2D4x10.

Bonuses: +1 to strike and +2 to dodge.

Habitat: Open ocean, seldom comes closer than 20 miles (32 km) to shore.

Range: The Northern Sea, Sea of Despair and Algorian Sea in spring and summer. In winter, Black Whales migrate south to breed, some heading west down to the waters off the coast of the Isle of Cyclops, some heading east, ending up near the isles of Y'Oda and Zy and the coast of the Eastern Territory.

Behavior: Black Whales typically hunt alone, filter-feeding krill and shrimp and using sonar and bubbles to force schools of fish together before stunning them with tail-slaps or plunging into a ball of fish with open jaws.

Value: Meat & Oil (whole animal): 600 gold. Spermaceti: 200 gold.

Corpse Jelly

The Corpse Jelly resembles a large blue flower floating under the surface of the waves. Its colors and semi-transparent body helps it to blend in with the waters (equal to a Prowl of 78%). Beneath its floating bell is a cluster of tentacles that dangle below, used to ensnare, hold and kill its prey. Within their cluster of tentacles are tiny barbs that are inserted into fish or floating cadavers. Once inside their victim, they pump digestive enzymes into the prey. As the internal organs and tissue of the prey liquefy, it is sucked out via the tentacle to feed the giant jellyfish, turning its bell from blue to red, and eventually leaving behind an empty husk. In fact, that's how it got its name, because the creature is often seen clutching the dead husk or skeletal remains of its prey in its tentacles. Any humanoid coming within range of a Corpse Jelly's venomous tentacles risks envenomation. Because the Corpse Jelly can launch half a dozen tentacles at a single opponent, they are considered by some sailors to be as dangerous as any sea serpent.

A Corpse Jelly's body is made up of 92-96% water. It senses movement (vibrations) with special sensory cells located in its skin. It also has light-sensitive organs that do not form images but are used to determine up from down, responding to sunlight shining on its skin surface. It does not have complicated internal organs or systems, digesting food using the gastro-dermal lining of its body cavity, which manufactures powerful digestive enzymes. It does not need a respiratory system since its skin is thin enough to take oxygen right from the ocean. It has limited control over movement and mostly free-floats in the water, but it can use its tentacles like a lasso to wrap around a heavy object and pull itself in that direction. Corpse Jellies are extremely sensitive to high and low temperatures, and the animals cannot cope with warm waters. They can only survive in cold water, and outside of water, their fleshy bodies dry up and they die in a matter of 4D4 minutes; half that time in the hot sun.



Corpse Jellies live their entire lives near the surface at a depth of no more than 70 feet (21 m), using slow pulsations to drive it forward. The giant jellyfish depends on ocean currents to travel great distances and is a predator of opportunity, snagging fish, mammals, and people as it happens upon them. Corpse Jellies are most often spotted near shore during the late summer and early autumn, when they grow to a large size and the currents begin to sweep them closer to land. They primarily feed on fish, but sick sea animals, sailors lost at sea, and corpses floating in the water are all just as good.

Corpse Jellies have low intelligence and are not social creatures, but will congregate to feed on a single large corpse such as a walrus, whale or sea serpent. Such gatherings are used as a time to mate, but how the process occurs remains a mystery. Corpse Jellies are valued for their poisonous tentacles, but only the desperate seek them out, for even a lone tentacle can still poison anything that it touches for an hour after being removed from the body and kept in cold water.

Over the last ten years, Bizantium's Inland Sea has been experiencing one of its worst Corpse Jelly infestations ever. The Ministry of Farm, Fish, and Food has been reporting a steady increase in the number of the creature for years, but the Crown and Noble Houses never take it seriously. Now the jellyfish bloom is reportedly killing off countless fish and dozens of fishermen every year.

Corpse Jelly

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D4 (low), P.S. 1D6+8, P.P. 1D6+8, P.E. 1D6, P.B. 1D6+8, Spd 1D4 or by water current; typically floats on the current at or near the surface.

Size: Body (bell) is 8-9 feet (2.4 to 2.7 m) in diameter. The tentacles may trail as long as 90-120 feet (27-36 m).

Weight: 350-450 lbs (157-202 kg).

A.R.: 4.

Hit Points: 1D6+6

S.D.C.: 2D6 for body (bell), 1D4+1 per tentacle.

P.P.E.: 1D6

Horror Factor: 12

Natural Abilities: Swim 98%, breathe underwater indefinitely, impervious to cold (magic cold does half damage), track the movement and location of all moving things within 100 feet (30 m) 92%, knows the distance, direction, speed, and location of prey within 300 feet (91 m) due to vibrations caused by movement in the water 82%, but can feel vibrations caused by the thrashing of large animals (whales and sea serpents) or passing ships up to one mile (1.6 km) away (64%), track and locate the dying up to two miles (3.2 km) away (70%), identify temperature (within 1D6 degrees) 75%, and stinging tentacles.

Average Life Span: Five years.

Attacks per Melee: One.

Damage: Each attack consists of launching a volley of tentacles (1D6). The moment a tentacle successfully strikes a target it discharges dozens of tiny barbed capsules containing coiled, hollow, thread-like structures. These hollow threads must penetrate the skin of the victim in order for the venom to be injected. Roll a 1D20 for each tentacle that strikes. If the strike total is greater than the Armor Rating (A.R.) of the prey, then the victim must roll to save vs lethal poison (14 or higher to save). If the capsules fail to penetrate, the victim takes no damage.

Those who fail to save take 1D6 damage per tentacle that has penetrated skin. The poison causes the victim to lose initiative and feel sick and weak: -1 one attack per melee, -2 on all combat bonuses, reduce speed by half and the victim has trouble determining direction (-30% on Land Navigation). The effects and penalties remain for 1D6x10 minutes, but the effects of multiple stinging tentacles are not cumulative except for the physical damage each one inflicts.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike or entangle, and impervious to Horror Factor, psionics (those requiring saving throws), mind control, possession, poison and toxins.

Habitat: Coastal waters.

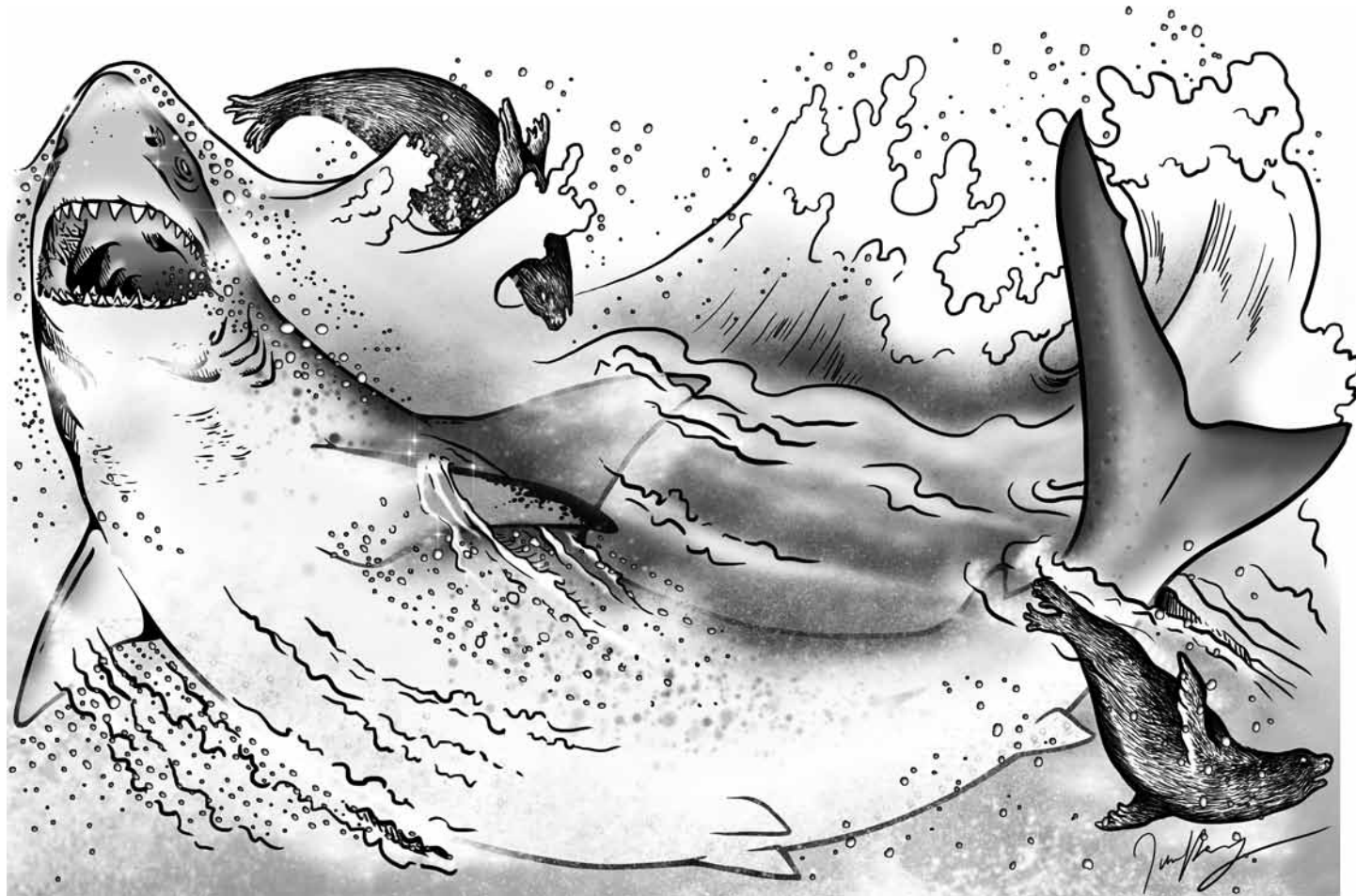
Range: Its range is confined to the cold waters of the Northern Sea, Algorian Sea, and the Sea of Despair.

Behavior: A passive predator, the Corpse Jelly gently pushes itself through the water, floating on currents, eating whatever it encounters. They are simple creatures with minimal intelligence.

Value: Alchemists, herbalist/apothecary, and assassins' guilds are interested in the tentacles for extracting their poison; a maximum of 10 gold per tentacle.

Green Fin Shark

Also known as "the man-eater of the North," the Green Fin Shark is found exclusively in the cold waters of the Icy Ocean, Northern Sea and the Sea of Despair, living farther north than any other shark species. It is infamous for its aggressive nature and large size, rivaling the Great Whites found in the warmer waters



of the world, and sometimes caught by fishermen in the Sea of Despair or Algorian Sea. Cousins of the Great White, Green Fins are long, heavily-built fish with small eyes and gills, and a gray-green coloration that sometimes ranges into browns and tans.

As much as the Green Fin is feared by sailors, it has always been a staple catch of Bizantium's fishermen. Its flesh is poisonous to consume, but its hide can be used to make special leather known as *shagreen*, and its large liver as a remedy to promote the healing of wounds. Fishermen and Serpent Chasers know that these fish can be highly aggressive and are extremely territorial, attacking any unfamiliar animal that gets too close, sometimes even ramming and biting small boats. The animal's main prey consists of marine mammals (seals, dolphins, small whales), as well as fish, squid, octopus and seabirds. Humanoids killed by these sharks are generally not eaten, leading to myths and tales that they are cold-blooded hunters who kill for sport. In reality, the sharks simply don't like the taste of humanoids, preferring fat, protein-rich seals. Still, a single 'test-bite' from a Green Fin can kill due to massive blood loss or shock. Humanoids are actually more of a threat to this shark than the other way around, as the demand for its leather and liver increases.

Green Fin Shark

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D6+1, Spd 1D4+12 (10 mph/16 km or 8.6 knots), but typically cruise at a leisurely one or two miles per hour (1.6 or 3.2 km).

Size: 21-24 feet (6.4-7.3 m). Males are typically smaller than females.

Weight: 2,200 to 3,100 lbs (990-1,395 kg).

A.R.: 9

Hit Points: 2D6x10+10

S.D.C.: 1D6x10

P.P.E.: 1D4

Horror Factor: 14

Natural Abilities: Swim 100%, Nightvision 3,000 feet (914 m), impervious to cold (half damage from magical cold), can locate moving objects in water with keen hearing (up to 3,000 feet/914 m) 90%. Sense movement in water around them (within a 60 foot/18.3 m radius), thus the shark will know where its prey is even if it cannot see it (suffers no blindness penalties). Its keen sense of smell is especially receptive to the scent of blood. Even a few *droplets* of blood in the water can be detected 1000 yards away and a gallon or more for one mile (1.6 km)-track blood scent/trail 80%, recognize other chemicals at 60%. Its eyes are sensitive to light, thus the reason it closes its eyes before attacking prey. Maximum depth tolerance is unlimited.

Average Life Span: 100-250 years.

Attacks per Melee: Three.

Damage: Nip does 1D6 points of damage, full strength bite 6D6, slashing tail 2D6 damage, head butt 1D6, and body ram 2D6 damage.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +1 to dodge, +4 to save vs poison and disease, +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Habitat: Open ocean.

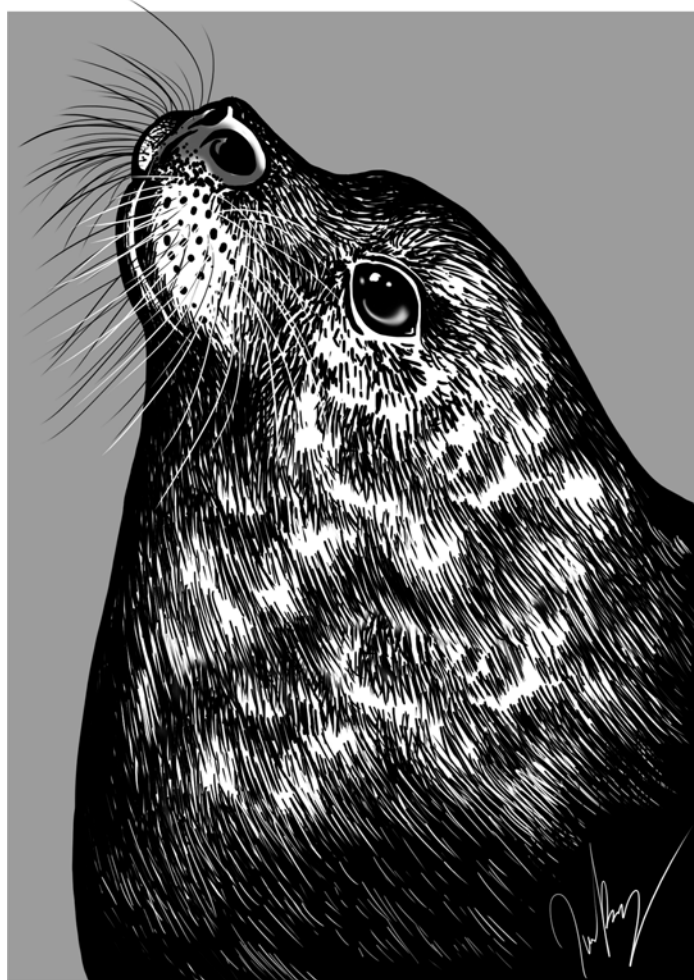
Range: The Sea of Despair and the Northern Sea.

Behavior: The Green Fin normally lives deep underwater, so its behavior is mostly mysterious. While notorious for eating sailors, attacks are actually very rare; most victims are whalers

who come into close contact with sharks trying to scavenge off freshly harpooned whale corpses.

Value: Skin: 75 gold, used in Bizantium to make a number of fancy leather items (book bindings, gloves, leather armor, etc.). Teeth: One gold per 30 teeth. Liver: 300 gold for an oil that can be obtained from the shark's liver that, when made into a poultice, heals 1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. once per 12 hour application. The oil has a shelf-life of one year and 1D4+2 poultices can be made from one live. Green Fin Shark liver oil sells in Northern apothecaries and Western alchemist shops at 100 gold per ounce.

Note: The meat of a Green Fin Shark is poisonous to consume, resulting in a high fever, nausea and the following penalties: -2 to initiative and Perception Rolls, -2 attacks per melee round, -2 to strike, parry, and dodge, -15% on all skills and reduce Spd by 30%. Symptoms and penalties last for 3D6 hours. EVERYONE in the North knows not to eat this shark.



Harbor Seal

Harbor seals are small to medium-sized aquatic mammals with coloration that ranges from browns and blacks to tans and grays. The playful, generally harmless creatures rest and congregate across the rocky coasts of the Northern Islands and shore of the Great Northern Wilderness, and as far north as the Great Ice Shelf. Though seals are ocean creatures, they may also be encountered in large freshwater rivers near the sea. Resting sites range from bare rocks sticking up out of the ocean to gentle shorelines and open beaches to ice floes. Harbor seals are known to gather

in ports and harbors (hence the name), and many sailors believe they are a sign of good luck. Harbor Seals are often encountered in groups, especially on shore, but they do not form groups as large as sea lions. When hunting/fishing, seals remain out at sea for days at a time, traveling long distances. Their diet consists primarily of fish, but also includes crustaceans, mollusks, octopus and squid. Females usually bear one pup at a time, and raise them without the help of males. Pups can swim competently on their own a few hours after birth. Seals tend to live along the coasts not venturing more than 20 miles (32 km) offshore unless they need to find new feeding grounds or are chased away by too many aggressive predators.

Harbor Seal

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D4+6 (high animal intelligence), M.A. 1D6+10, Spd. 1D4+2 on dry land, 1D6+12 (around 11 mph/18 km or 9.5 knots).

Size: 6 feet (1.8 m) long. Females are generally smaller than males.

Weight: 200-370 pounds (90 to 166.5 kg).

A.R.: 6

Hit Points: 4D6+10

S.D.C.: 4D6+4

P.P.E.: 2D6

Natural Abilities: Swimming 98%, dive 300 feet (91.5 km), hold breath for 1D4+10 minutes, good vision, and keen sense of smell (can track other seals, fish/food and other strong smells up to one mile/1.6 km away; 66%).

Average Life Span: 20-25 years for males. Females can live 30-35 years.

Attacks per Melee: Two.

Damage: Bite does 1D6 damage, head butt does 1D4 damage.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, and +3 to dodge in water.

Habitat: Coastal waters.

Range: Coastal areas of the Land of the Damned, Kingdom of Bizantium, Northern Hinterlands, the Great Northern Wilderness, Shadow Coast, Dragon Claw and the Great Ice Shelf.

Behavior: Harbor seals are intelligent, social animals. They live and hunt in groups, and are generally curious and unafraid of humans, making them easy victims for sealers who hunt them for their blubber, pelts and meat.

Value: Fur/Hide/Pelt: 50 gold. Meat (whole animal): 40 gold.

Wolf Seal

Like true wolves, the Wolf seals of the North travel in groups with a mated pair (both Alphas) dominating a “family clan” made up of 9-18 animals – 1D4+2 juveniles/yearling pups (half the Hit Points and S.D.C. of adults), 1D4+2 near-adult offspring and 1D4+2 adults, including the two alpha leaders. Sometimes two or three such families join to form a much larger pack. In ideal conditions, the mated pair produces pups every year, with such offspring typically staying in the pack for 1-4 years before dispersing to form a new pack of their own.

Unlike most other seals, the Wolf seal, though gregarious and playful, is much more aggressive, intelligent, and dangerous. They are wary but not afraid of humanoids, and exhibit great curiosity about boats, human beings and sea mammals like dolphins and whales. However, though they may look cute, like Harbor

seals, Wolves have two inch (5 cm) canine teeth, and do not hesitate to attack anything that threatens the safety of a single pack member. Instead of fleeing from a Green Fin shark, for example, the Wolf seal charges out to confront it, jabbing the shark in the belly and its nose, especially if young pups are present.

Wolf seals are even dangerous toward humanoids. They are known to steal bait and fresh catches of fish, crabs, etc. that might be close to the edge of rowboats, skiffs and tenders. Likewise, a pack of Wolf seals may attack a net full of fish, mussels, crabs, etc., ripping holes in the net and gobbling up as many of the catch as possible. As for thievery, a Wolf seal may snatch a sack or just about anything hanging over the edge if it smells like there is something edible in it or fun to play with. Wolf seals do not commonly regard humans as prey; their normal diet consists of other seals, squid, and fish, with giant octopus as a particular favorite (attacking it as a pack). However, a seriously injured or dying person on a raft or lifeboat may be pulled out of the boat, under the waves and torn to pieces by a hungry pack. Attacks on people and even fishing nets usually occur when food has been scarce and the pack is hungry. Wolf Seals also engage in cruel acts of “play” with live prey animals, tossing their bodies back and forth, repeatedly chasing down crippled seals and seabirds and occasionally dragging humans, especially if exhibiting weakness, below the surface to their deaths. When the playing is done, the seals may just let the body sink or eat it.

The demand for the hide and meat of Wolf seals is increasing around the world, especially in the Northern Islands and the Wolfen Empire, and many Serpent Chasers and Fishermen are willing to risk encounters with the big predators in order to cash



in on the trend. Of course, attack one Wolf seal and you have the entire pack to deal with, and it is not unheard of for the animals to rock small boats to knock hunters into the water where they are drowned or torn to pieces.

Wolf Seal

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D4+7 (high animal intelligence), M.A. 1D6+8, Spd. 1D4+3 on dry land, swimming 2D6+24 (18 to 25 mph/29-40 km or 15-21 knots).

Size: 12-14 feet (3.65 to 4.26 m) long.

Weight: 1,300 to 1,500 lbs (585-675 kg).

A.R.: 7

Hit Points: 5D6+6

S.D.C.: 6D6

P.P.E.: 2D6

Horror Factor: Applicable only when threatening or attacking, otherwise they look rather cute and friendly; 10 for one, 14 when facing a pack.

Attacks per Melee: Three.

Damage: Nipping bite does 1D4 damage, a full strength bite 2D6, head butt 2D4. Speeding underwater body block/ram does 4D6 but counts as two melee attacks.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to dodge underwater, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor (+8 when in a pack).

Natural Abilities: Wolf Seals can hold their breath for up to 20 minutes at a time, have good vision and can see in dim light and murky water, keen sense of smell (track by scent 70%), can smell prey on land one mile away (1.6 km), virtually

impervious to cold (magic cold does half-damage), tolerate depths up to 300 feet (91 m), and heightened sense of hearing (track by the sound of struggling or prey entering the water – 65%).

Average Life Span: 15-25 years.

Habitat: Coastal waters and along ice sheets.

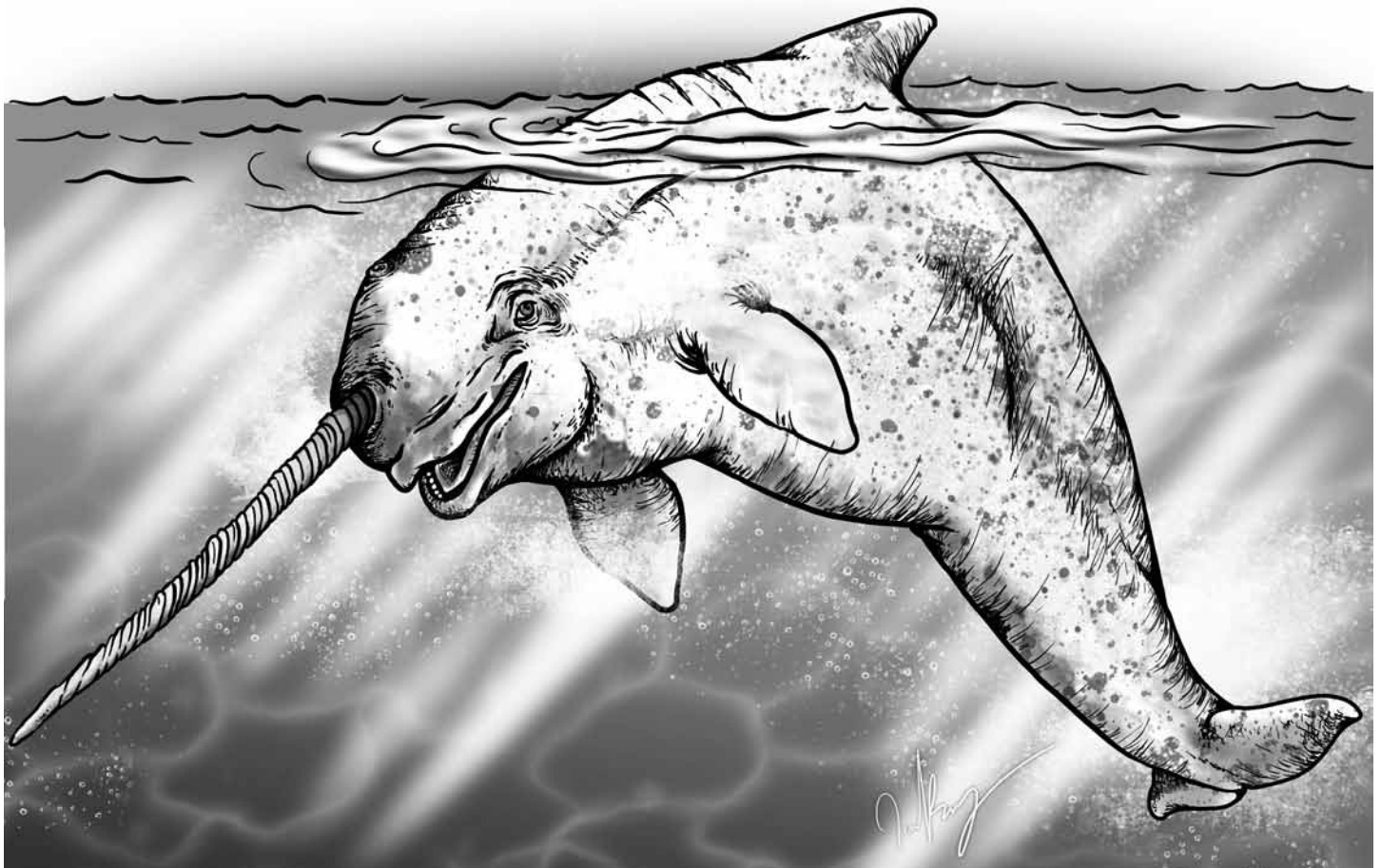
Range: The Sea of Despair, Algorian Sea and coastal waters of Bizantium, the Northern Hinterlands and Great Northern Wilderness, along with the Great Ice Shelf.

Behavior: Wolf seals tend to live in social groups, but some males lead a solitary existence, either young adults who have not yet found a mate and built a pack, or older individuals who have been defeated in mating battles and lost their alpha status. They will follow prey animals (and humans) across sea ice, and right up on to shore, and Wolf seal packs are known to chase off dolphins, orcas and even small sea monsters.

Value: Fur/Hide: 150 gold, meat (whole animal): 90 gold.

Sea Unicorn

The “Sea Unicorn,” is a medium-sized, toothed whale distinguished by a long, straight tusk, actually an elongated canine tooth. Growing out of the forehead of male Sea Unicorns (reminiscent of the narwhal), this “tusk” is what gives them the name *Sea Unicorn*. These gentle marine mammals are highly intelligent, observant, alert, and resourceful. They are curious and protective of humanoids, much like dolphins, and Eoten oral history is filled with tales of fishermen, whalers and sailors falling



overboard, only to have a Sea Unicorn appear out of nowhere to rescue a drowning mariner or chase sharks/sea monsters away.

There are old folk tales that surround the Sea Unicorn. Some sailors claim powdered narwhal horn cures impotence, deafness, and blindness, but the horn of a Sea Unicorn is an expensive commodity, selling for more than ten times the cost of ivory that comes from the tusks of walruses or elephants. What's more, the fabulous powers attributed to the horn are myths and rumors; the tusk has no magical or healing properties. Nevertheless, for thousands of years, North Folk extensively hunted these whales, not just for their highly-prized horns, but for meat, whale oil, skin, blubber and organs. Devout followers of Algor revere these animals and believe hunting them is wrong. They claim the slaying of a Sea Unicorn for just its horn brings bad luck and could doom the vessel and all crew members who condoned the killing.

Sea Unicorns prey upon fish, squid, and shrimp. In summer months, they travel out to sea, eating their fill of Northern Cod, sometimes gathering in huge pods of up to a thousand individuals. Groups might consist of females and young or juveniles and adult males, though these groups unite for brief periods and break apart just as casually. In the winter, they move close to shore, living under seasonal ice shelves. Sea unicorns mate in the spring and give birth to their calves the following summer. Mothers stay with calves for one and a half to two years, and when the whales are traveling, the calf remains close to its mother for protection from predators.

Sea Unicorn

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D6+7 (high animal intelligence), M.A. 1D6+8, Spd. 1D4+3 on dry land, swimming 2D6+24 (18 to 25 mph/29-40 km or 15-21 knots).

Size: 13-18 feet (3.9 to 5.5 m).

Weight: 1,800-3,500 lbs (810 to 1,575 kg).

A.R.: 7

Hit Points: 1D6x10

S.D.C.: 2D4x10

P.P.E.: 1D4x10

Natural Abilities: Swim 100%, maximum depth tolerance is one mile (1.6 km), hold breath 25 minutes, sense magnetic north 90%, electromagnetic sensitivity and echolocation/sonar.

Average Life Span: 50 years.

Attacks per Melee: Two.

Damage: Tail slap 2D6 damage, horn strike 3D6 damage.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, +1 to save vs disease and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Habitat: Coastal waters during winter, particularly the Dragon Claw, Homeland Bay and the Algorian Sea. Open ocean during summer, living in the Sea of Despair and Northern Sea.

Range: From the Algorian Sea to the Sea of Despair, but most common around Bizantium, the Dragon Claw and northern coastline.

Behavior: During winter, Sea Unicorns live under the ice pack/ice sheet that forms over Homeland Bay, the Dragon Claw and Algorian Sea, as well as the countless smaller bays and inlets along the coastline of the Great Northern Wilderness. In summer they migrate into the open ocean as far North as the Great Ice Shelf and as far south as the Floenry Islands, eating a diet heavy in cod.

Value: Meat (whole animal): 600 gold, Blubber/skin: 250 gold, Bones: 200 gold. Tusk: 10,000-15,000 gold!

Ice Bear

Ice Bears are among the largest land carnivores in the unknown world. They are found almost exclusively on the Great Ice Shelf and northern coastal ice sheets surrounding it where they hunt seals, fish, penguins and seabirds. From time to time, one or a few (1D4) find their way to one of the Bizantium islands or the shore of the Great Northern Wilderness. This happens when an Ice Bear or 1D4 Ice Bear hitch a ride on a iceberg or sheet of ice in the winter that floats south until it hits land or melts in the warmer water. Ice Bears who make it to the islands or the mainland can survive for years, though they suffer during the warm spring and summer months and are easy to spot against the greenery. The few who survive the trip usually fall prey to hunters or monsters. Bear Men and all the canine people believe to find and slay an Ice Bear in single combat is a sign of greatness, and only those who kill an Ice Bear in single combat may wear its fur. Such individuals are often destined to become great warriors, war chiefs or achieve a high rank/position among their people. The fur of an Ice Bear slain by two or more hunters is either given to the tribe's healer or traded away to humans.

Ice Bears are capable hunters that prey on penguins, seals, squid, octopus, fish, and animals smaller than themselves, but they are scavengers who eat virtually anything that's edible, including carrion, bones, and bark. Ice Bears have no fear of humanoids and though they avoid large groups, they are known to stalk and kill a lone traveler. A hungry or angry Ice Bear may not hesitate to attack two or three people, especially if one of them is sick or injured. Like most predators, Ice Bears always target the easiest prey – young, weak, sick, injured, lame, and small. Seals make up most of their diet and the bears survive on meat alone, so the scent of any kind of fresh kill attracts their attention. They also take an interest in human beings and the food and refuse that people discard. Once a bear is attracted to a campsite, it is likely to linger and return in search of food, or wait for an opportunity to attack the weakest looking person. Prey at a human camp includes any animals brought to the Great Ice Shelf such as livestock, horses, mules, sled-dogs and pets, or a teammate when he is alone at camp or wanders too far away.

Although they are land animals, Ice Bears are excellent swimmers and spend most of their time in water. On the Great Ice Shelf that means the greatest number of bears are found along the shore and on the ice sheets and icebergs all around the Ice Shelf. In general, adult Ice Bears live solitary lives as hunters. Females breed every 2-3 years, producing two cubs.

Ice Bear

Also known as Snow Bears and White Bears.

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D4+6 (high animal intelligence), M.A. 1D6+6. Ice Bears can maintain an average walking Spd of 5 (3.5 mph/5.6 km) for up to five hours before needing to rest; 15 mph (24 km) at a running trot, and 30 mph (48 km) running full tilt, but only for 1D4+2 minutes. *Swimming speed* is 8 (6 mph/9.6 km or 5 knots).

Size: 9–11 feet (2.74-3.35 m) in total length/height. Shoulder height of 4 feet, 4 inches (1.32 m).



Weight: 1,500–2,200 lbs (675–990 kg). Females are half the size.

A.R.: 7

Hit Points: 2D4x10+10

S.D.C.: 1D6x10+20.

P.P.E.: 2D6

Horror Factor: 10 for an individual male, 13 when facing a female with cubs or two or more bears.

Natural Abilities: Natural swimmers 90%, dive 40 feet (12.2 m), can hold breath underwater for 1D4+4 minutes, Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), Prowl 65%, keen vision and sense of smell, track by smell 68% (+12% if following a blood scent), scale sheer ice 60%, walk across ice without falling, and immune to cold (magic cold does full damage).

Average Life Span: 20-35 years.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Damage: Claws do 2D6+2 points of damage, bite 2D6+2 damage.

Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, +1 to parry, +4 to save vs poison and disease, and +7 to save vs Horror Factor.

Habitat: Lives along sea ice, highly dependent on seals as a source of food. While they are amazingly capable in the water for bears, they require dry land to rest, sleep and raise cubs.

Range: The Great Ice Shelf and on ice sheets in the Northern Sea. In winter they may make it as far as the Island Kingdom of Bizantium and the shore of The Great Northern Wilderness, Shadow Coast and Land of the Damned. Individuals have been seen in open waters as far as 200 miles (320 km) from land.

Behavior: Highly aggressive and intelligent, Ice Bears may follow potential prey for days across extremely difficult terrain and

through frigid waters. They are known for fearlessly boarding full-sized ships trapped in sea ice to hunt human prey.

Value: Fur: 400 gold (uncommon). Meat (whole animal): 300 gold.

Rock Claw

Sea serpents and sharks are not the only monsters of the deep to threaten fishermen and sailors from the Bizantium Kingdom, there is the dreaded Rock Claw. A monster that is part giant lobster and part scorpion. An armored beast with massive claws that can cut a man in half and a venomous stinger that can strike down a whale if stabbed and poisoned enough times. Worse, this monster isn't restricted to the sea, it can climb out of water and onto shore to pursue prey and even climb aboard ships to reap havoc and swallow up sailors until it has had its fill. When a ship without its crew is found at sea, many assume it is the handiwork of the Iceborn or pirates, but those boarding the vessel better be careful, because it could be that a Rock Claw devoured the crew and may still be on board to welcome new prey.

Measuring 16-25 feet (4.6 to 7.6 m) long, if one of these monstrosities grabs onto a fishing boat, whaler or small ship, the crew may be in for a serious fight. Depending on where it is holding on with one claw, it may be able to grab at other crewmen with its other, as well as strike with its stinger tail. Should it decide to climb on board to hunt humans, the creature can cause a lot of collateral damage, smash items on deck, knocking items and people overboard, break masts and oars, tear down sails and eat

any number of the crew. It is usually content grabbing one or two people to eat. If left alone, the Rock Claw snips its prey into smaller pieces (a horror to witness) and eats its victims right there on deck.

If the crew continues to fight or tries to rescue their co-worker(s), the monster is likely to climb over the railing to drop back down into the sea, its prey clutched in one or both claws, so it can eat in peace. Of course, blood in the water might attract sharks and other predators. If the crew can manage to lock themselves below deck, the dull-witted Rock Claw is not likely to pursue them and seldom knocks down doors or hatches. However, it may linger on deck for 1D6x10 minutes, even if the crew remains silent, because it can smell them and is waiting silently, for them to come back out. If the crew continues to talk and make noise below deck the monster is likely to wait 2D6 hours before giving up and sliding back into the sea.

Sometimes one or more Rock Claw – they tend to travel in groups of 1D6 – will climb on board a large ship, but only if the vessel has been anchored in one place for more than a day, or is listing and showing signs of distress. People in small, slow-moving boats and rafts are in the most danger because a Rock Claw can easily overturn the boat and pluck people out as it pleases. Any vessel moving at a steady pace and faster than 3 mph (4.8 km/2.6 knots) is ignored by the monster.

When 1D6 Rock Claw come on shore, it is either to sun themselves or hunt. As an opportunistic hunter, the Rock Claw attacks potential prey as it comes across it. People, livestock, pets and any animal as large as a moose is fair game. Animals that are leashed or penned are easy pickings. At sea, Rock Claw feed on large fish like tuna and swordfish, seals, dolphin, baby whales, and animals in distress, including juvenile or sick and injured sea serpents, as well as carrion floating in the water or that drops to the sea floor. In turn, giant squid and octopus, sea serpents and sea monsters of all kind prey upon the Rock Claw.

The monster is also hunted by Serpent Chasers. Though armored, except for the claws, the armor is light, making it vulnerable to harpoons, spears, swords and battle axes. Rock Claw very much taste like lobster which fetches a high price from the Eastern Territory, Timiro and especially the Western Empire, all of whom consider lobster and Rock Claw to be a delicacy. Ironically, neither Bizantians or the canine people eat lobster or Rock Claw, except under the most dire of circumstances.

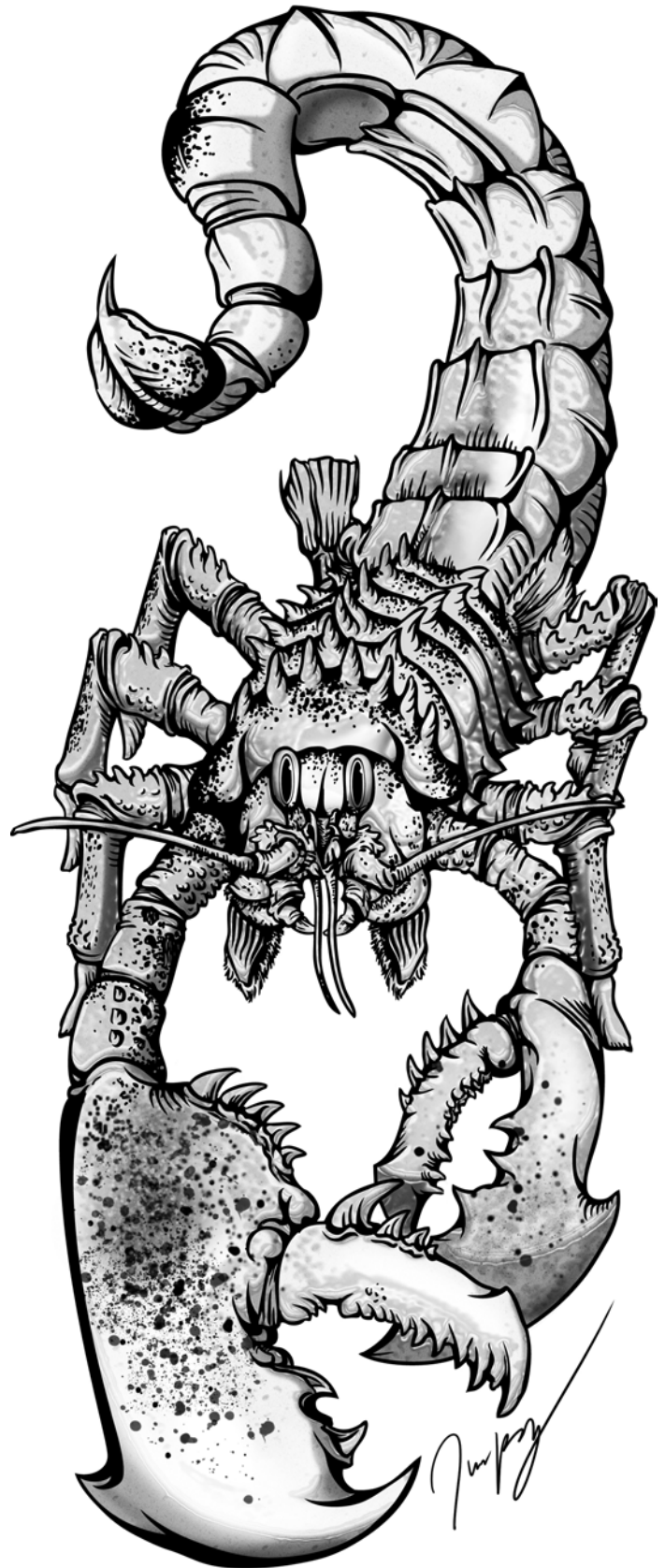
Rock Claw

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D4+2 (Low animal intelligence), Spd 1D6+6 on land, half that speed scurrying along the bottom of the sea or lake bed. Swimming speed is 1D4+4 swimming (around 4 mph/6.4 km or 3.4 knots). Backward Swimming Underwater (special): When threatened, the monster can dart backward in a fast burst of speed by curling and uncurling their abdomen. Each burst of backward propulsion rockets the creature some 1D6x10+40 feet (50-100 feet/15.2 to 30.5 m) at 30 mph (48 km or 26 knots), but each burst counts as one of its melee attacks.

Size: The average Rock Claw is 15 feet (4.6 m) long from the tip of its face to the tip of its stinger, with the tail taking up 10 feet (3 m) of that length. Add another 6-8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) for the length of its claw arms. It stands 3-4 feet (0.9 to 1.2 m) tall, and its long, narrow body is 2-3 feet (0.6 to 0.9 m) wide tapering into a thick tail that ends in the stinger. Its six legs roughly

double its width when crawling, climbing or running, but are tucked under the body when swimming. Males are generally slightly smaller than females.

The largest Rock Claw have been known to reach 25 feet (7.6 m) long and have a 15 foot (4.6 m) reach with their stinger, and 12 foot (3.6 m) reach with their claw arms! Thankfully, the largest of Rock Claw almost never come onto dry land



around Bizantium, and seldom on the mainland, except along the shore of the Land of the Damned.

Weight: 700-1,200 pounds (315 to 540 kg).

A.R.: 10 for the main body, tail and legs, but its big pincer claws have an A.R. of 17.

Hit Points & S.D.C. Combined by Location: Increase the Hit Points/S.D.C. by 50% for the truly giant Rock Claw.

* Head – 1D4x10+40

* Eye-Stalks (2) – 6 each

* Mouth Feelers (2) – 8 each

* Fins (6, small) – 10 each

Stinger Tail – 1D6x10+40

Pincer Claws (2, large) – 1D6x10+80

** Main Body – 1D6x10+70

* A single asterisk indicate a small, moving and difficult target to hit. The attacker must make a “Called Shot” with a penalty of -4 to strike, and the attack must either be with a ranged weapon or thrown weapon, or the attacker must get past the pincers and the stinger to get close enough to strike with a handheld weapon and is open to attack from the mouth. Even at close range the -4 penalty remains. **Note about the Head:** Reduce the Hit Points/S.D.C. of the head to zero and you slay the Rock Claw — mostly. The stinger tail continues to slash wildly and stab blindly for 1D4 melee rounds. Anyone within 10 feet (3 m) of the monster must roll to dodge (10 or better) or take damage.

** Reduce the main body to zero Hit Points and the thing drops dead.

Natural Abilities: Natural swimmers 92%, unlimited depth tolerance, fair vision (about half the range of a normal human), but its eye-stalks can move independent of each other to look forward and backward at the same time as both eye-stalks can turn 360 degree and watch two different people/groups/locations at the same time. Its sensitive feelers enables the Rock Claw to detect movement in the water (even from behind) within a 60 foot (18.3 m) radius, can determine water temperature and the speed of the water current, and function in total darkness without penalty. The monster can also pick up chemical scents in the air and water to determine changes in salinity and chemical components. Track by taste alone: 40% (+20% to follow blood trail); range one mile (1.6 km). Each eye-stalk can move independently, and if destroyed, re-grows in 4D6 days; claws and legs regenerate within 1D4 months. Prowl 50% and immune to normal cold (takes only half damage from magical cold).

Rock Claw can breathe air or water and can survive on the surface in cool and cold climates for as long as two weeks without a refreshing dip in water. They can survive for about the same amount of time in freshwater; Rock Claw are sea creatures and need the salinity.

Average Life Span: 10-20 years.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Damage: Claw attack 3D6 points of damage (5D6 damage from giant Rock Claw), bite 2D6 damage (3D6 for giant ones), slashing tail stinger 1D6, and stabbing stinger 1D6 plus poison regardless of the size of the Rock Claw. The venom from the stinger inflicts 1D6 damage (+3 for giants) for 1D4 melee rounds per sting. It also makes victims feel as if they are burning up with fever, and their limbs feel heavy and clumsy. The following penalties begin one melee round after being stung:

-1 on initiative and all combat maneuvers (strike, parry, etc.), -5% to skill performance and reduce speed by 10%. Penalties last for six minutes and are cumulative. If stung more than five times, reduce the victim's number of attacks by half, and if stung 9-10 times, the victim is barely standing on his feet. **Note:** Roll to save vs lethal poison (14 or higher). A successful save means one point of damage total and no penalties.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike with stinger, pincers and mouth, +4 to parry, +1 to dodge in water, +4 to roll with punch, +6 to save vs Horror Factor. Inflicts a critical strike (double damage) on an unmodified dice roll of 20 for any of its attacks.

Habitat: The waters and coastlines of the Northern Sea and Icy Ocean.

Range: The waters and shores of the Northern Sea and Icy Ocean, including the Great Ice Shelf, the Kingdom of Bizantium, the Great Northern Wilderness, the Northern Hinterlands, the Land of the Damned, and the Shadow Colonies. For some reason, Rock Claw are plentiful in Homeland Bay. Rock Claw like cold waters and seldom travel south beyond the Sea of Despair or the Algor Mountains (rarely encountered in the Algorian Sea).

Behavior: The animal is most active when hungry or mating. Aggressive when hungry and when threatened; will fight to the death when cornered. Smart enough to know when it can not win a fight, the Rock Claw will retreat and swim away (this is likely to happen when Hit Points are reduced to less than 25%). They may be encountered as a solitary hunter or living in a cluster of 1D6 individuals who scavenge and hunt together. They can be found underwater as well as on beaches, coastlines, floating debris and sheets of ice throughout the Icy Ocean and Northern Sea, but may swim to the surface and float on the current or amongst a bed of seaweed. Sometimes one or more climbs up onto docks or a ship anchored in one place for more than a day. This happens when in search of prey or a nice place to dry-off or sun itself, but Rock Claw tend to stay away from busy ports and shipping lanes. When not on the prowl hunting, they are sedentary creatures that hole-up in underwater caves, ravines, caverns, reefs and clumps of seaweed.

Value: This is a foreign export. Meat (whole animal): 800-1,400 gold; two gold per pound (0.45 kg) at foreign ports, with at least 400-700 pounds (180 to 315 kg) of edible meat per animal! Worth only 10% of that amount in Bizantium and the canine people on the mainland who find eating Rock Claw or lobster undesirable. (Crab, shrimp, mollusks, and similar animals are all consumed by Bizantians.)

Walrus

The walrus is the largest species of seal in the known world. With wrinkled brown and pink hides, walrus are distinguished by their long white tusks, grizzly whiskers, flat flippers, and bodies thick with blubber. Their tusks, found on both males and females, are used to haul their enormous bodies out of frigid waters, and to break breathing holes into ice from below. Males also employ their tusks as weapons to maintain territory and protect their harems of females. The walrus has a diverse and opportunistic diet, feeding on shrimp, crustaceans, various mollusks, and clams that it finds grazing along the sea bottom. Due to its great size, tusks, large social groups and aggression toward predators, these ani-

mals have few enemies, with orcas, sea serpents, big sharks and humanoids as their only threats. Walrus form massive groups of hundreds of individuals on beaches or outcrops. These groups migrate between the Great Ice Shelf and the coasts of the Northern Islands and Great Northern Wilderness.

Walrus

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 1D4+5 (high animal intelligence), Spd. 1D4+1 on dry land (roughly 3 mph/4.8 km) on land. Swimming: 25 mph (35 km or 21.5 knots) underwater.

Size: 12–16 feet (3.65–4.87 m) long. Tusks 2–3 feet (0.6 to 0.9 m) long and weigh up to 12 lbs (5.4 kg). The hide usually accounts for about 20% of the animal's total weight.

Weight: 4,000–5,000 lbs (1800–2250 kg).

A.R.: 7

Hit Points: 1D4x10+20

S.D.C.: 1D6x10

Horror Factor: 10 for an individual, 12 when facing a male during breeding season.

Natural Abilities: Natural swimmers 100%, poor day vision (60 feet/18.2 m), but can see forward and backward, making it impossible to sneak attack or surprise this animal from behind, sensitivity to movement within a 60 foot (18 m) diameter around its body (can track the movement and location of those moving around him without actually looking, even if the opponent is invisible or prowling, half penalties), track by motion

detection alone 58% (+20% if target is larger than a human), can hold breath underwater for up to 25 minutes, depth tolerance of 260 feet (79.2 m), effectively immune to cold (magic cold does half-damage), natural diggers and excavators.

Average Life Span: 20–30 years

Attacks per Melee: Three.

Damage: Bite 1D6 points of damage, tusks 3D6 points of damage, critical damage (double) on natural dice roll of 19–20 for tusk attacks. Walrus can drive their tusks through 3 inches (7.6 cm) of super-hard ice and pull their own weight across ice sheets.

Bonuses: +1 to strike with tusks, +2 to dodge underwater, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Habitat: Coastal waters.

Range: The Great Ice Shelf and the Northern Sea. Can be found on the beaches and reefs of Bizantium and the Northern Hinterlands.

Behavior: The breeding season is in the winter, with calves born during spring. Females give birth at most every two years. Walruses live in *harems*, where one large, dominant bull defends several females and their collective young. When left alone, the walrus is of little threat to people.

Value: Hide: 100 gold (traditional North Folk use the tough hide to make rope and coverings for huts, houses and boats). Tusks: 100–150 gold each. Meat (whole animal): 300 gold. Oil: 3 gold per pint.



K. SIEMBIEDA -14-

Sea Serpents & Monsters

The majority of people don't realize it, but most **dragons** are excellent swimmers and unafraid of water. In the North, without as many people to hunt them, dragons come to roost, particularly in the mountains and hinterlands, deserted islands and the Great Ice Shelf.

Demons known as Aquatics and Harpies are notorious for preying on sailors in the water or floating on lifeboats, especially in and around the Sea of Despair. However, demons of all sorts may be called forth by Summoners and practitioners of dark magicks who engage in dangerous schemes and experiments away from the disapproving and frightened eyes of civilized people.

Faerie Folk abound in the pristine forests of the North and live within its waters. The aquatic Selkies and Merrows are known to help mariners, while Mermaids tend to lead them astray and engage in dangerous fun at the expense of mortals.

Giants of frost, ice, and fur, and other large, bestial beings not well known south of the Great Northern Wilderness, live in

the forests and stalk the coasts to prey upon humans, Wolfen, Coyles and anyone who docks their vessels close enough to shore to become a tempting target. Others roam the Ice Shelf or hitch rides upon ice floes, letting the ocean current and Fate carry them where they may.

The Iceborn. Anyone but the people of Bizantium (and the Wolfen) will tell you the Iceborn are nothing more than the stuff of myth and legend. Monsters from the tall tales told by northern sailors to frighten outsiders. Those people are dead wrong. They don't know better because most who come face to face with the Iceborn do not live to tell the tale or vanish, never to be heard from again.

The waters of the North are also rife with **sea serpents** – the monsters that most capture the imaginations of civilized southerners, but there are also giant squid and octopi, sharks, whales and fish of immense size and vast numbers. And don't forget the much maligned and misunderstood **Wolfen** and their canine cousins.



The animals and monsters presented in the pages that follow are beasts that inhabit the northern waters, coastlines of the Northern Wilderness and the ice pack even farther North than the Islands of Bizantium. Few are ever encountered further south than the Algorian Sea and the islands of Y-Oda and Zy in the East, or beyond the southern tip of the Land of the Damned in the West. Thus, for many visitors to the North, they are new and exotic monsters or creatures of myth come to life.

Ice Bearmen

Written by Matthew Clements

The Great Northern Wilderness and Northern Sea are the source of many tales of monsters and exotic animals. Rangers, woodsmen and whalers tell stories of a different sort of Bearmen who feast upon raw flesh and blubber, swim like creatures of the sea and have coats of stark white fur. Isolated on the edge of the world, living in remote villages and temporary camps out on seasonal ice shelves, these **Ice Bearmen** are not a myth, but a rare and reclusive people with a tribal society based upon fishing, whaling and hunting. Ice Bearmen seldom travel beyond the harsh lands of snow and ice that they call home, coming down from the mountains and the Great Ice Shelf and into the lowlands or onto the mainland only in the winter when the Great Northern Wilderness is covered in deep snow. Ice Bearmen consider most other humanoid species to be weaklings. These warriors and huntsmen respect only the strongest and bravest of individuals, and virtually all other people, regardless of race, are referred to as “Greenwalkers,” a term that is not just descriptive but a derogatory reference that, to Ice Bearmen, is synonymous with soft, weak, “civilized” people.

Ice Bearmen migrate with the snow and ice. They seldom see the green grass and leaves of spring, summer or autumn, for they are creatures of the winter, of snow and ice, who live difficult lives. Even the *Wolfen* are regarded as “Greenwalkers” and considered soft; the conniving *Coyles* are despised as tricksters and lazy cowards. Only their *brown Bearmen* cousins, the ferocious (if minuscule by comparison) *Kankoran*, and *Ice Giants* are considered to be equals or worthy adversaries and allies.

Like their more widely dispersed, brown-coated cousins, **Ice Bearmen** are believed to be few in number. Though truth be told, no one really has any idea how many might exist on the Great Ice Shelf or places like the Land of the Damned, and Ice Bearmen have been seen in the Northern Hinterlands and around various mountains. Most of the year they follow the frozen ice pack, coming to the Islands of Bizantium or the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness by hitching a ride on an ice floe heading south as they track seals and schools of fish to feed themselves. Sometimes they are brought back in chains as captives by a Bizantian hunting expeditions.

Along the coast of Bizantium and the mainland, Ice Bearmen may be encountered in small hunting parties (1D4+4 members) or in larger nomadic tribes. They live in small tribes (1D4x10+12) and family groups, gathering together into larger villages during summer, and may travel vast distances following prey or in seasonal migrations. Small hunting parties and lone individuals regularly pursue herds of elk and deer for hundreds of miles across the Great Northern Wilderness. They use their natural swimming skills as well as kayaks made from skin, wood and whalebone

to help bring in seals and whales. They may also use logs and ice sheets as makeshift rafts. Most are proficient with harpoons, spears, hooks and lines. Ice Bearman craftsmen make impressive jewelry out of bone, tusks and walrus ivory, as well as decorative items like pins and combs or handles for weapons. Ivory is as close to a currency as they have, a precious substance that can be traded for food, shelter, clothing or safe passage. Intact tusks and large bones are particularly valuable, necessary for constructing sod and animal hide shelters and used in the largest weapons and artistic carvings.

Ice Bearmen worship nature and the land itself, as well as the *Winter Spirit*, whom they portray as an ethereal, white dragon of incredible size. Some *Wolfen* priests who have studied the Ice Bearmen believe this “Winter Spirit” might be *Kym-nark-mar*, one of the deific God-Dragons praised by the followers of **Dragonwright**, but anyone who has encountered the Ice Bearmen knows that, while they may have had little to no contact with outside religions, they definitely pray and sacrifice to *Ice Dragons*, particularly the **Winterserpents** who lord over the Great Ice Shelf and frozen seas that the Ice Bearmen call home. Ice Bearmen have their own strong religious beliefs, rejecting the traditional northern gods Algor and Od, the first as the deity of the Bizantian humans and the second as an enemy of dragons, which they hold sacred in all forms. Tribes of Ice Bearmen bring sacrificial prisoners and captured loot to the lairs of their dragon idols. They have little need for gold, silver or the metal armor used by humans and *Wolfen*, and gladly offer up such trinkets they may have “acquired” in return for a dragon’s favor or in barter with other humanoids. Most Ice Dragons and Winterserpents, as well as any dragon that has spent time in the North, know that Ice Bearmen will shower them with gold and valuables in return for the “favor” of an *enchanted weapon*. Magic weapons are used against a tribe’s enemies, prized by elite warriors and chieftains. Most dragons in the know comply, because they also know that Ice Bearmen will rush to the aid of a Winterserpent, Ice Dragon, or other type of dragon under attack or in distress. Ice Bearmen are NOT humble servants happy to wait on a dragon hand and foot. Quite the contrary, they are warriors who will fight to protect the dragons they hail as sacred, but they are no dragon’s, nor man’s, lackey or servant.

In Bizantium, the Ice Bearmen are a semi-legendary menace, spoken of in the sagas of the **Eoten**. Mothers on the main islands sometimes tell disobedient children that the “ice bears” will carry them away if they continue to misbehave, but no one takes the threat seriously. To sailors and fishermen, they are very real, however, and shipwreck survivors that wash up on the shore of the Great Northern Wilderness or worse, the Great Ice Shelf, run the risk of becoming a snack for these carnivorous warriors. Likewise, sealers and whalers hunt the same blubber-rich prey that the Ice Bearmen rely upon to survive, and sometimes encounter them on icebergs and ice sheets and are forced to fight for their lives. They typically build their temporary villages out on the seasonal pack ice, but are also known to inhabit the mountains along the Land of the Damned, the rough country around the Dragon Claw and remote wilderness stretching east towards the Algorian Sea. They, like the brown Bearman of the North, are a species that seems poised for slow extinction.

Along the **Shadow Coast**, colonists keep watch for the bear people’s signature two-legged, pawed tracks, often organizing into hunting parties/vengeful mobs that track the creatures down

with torches, spears and bows. When individuals go missing, they are often blamed, whether or not they are actually responsible, and the sight of an armed group of Ice Bearmen on the move will send every defender and lookout for miles running for reinforcements. On the rare occasions that an Ice Bearman is captured alive, they sell for a mint in the arenas of Bizantium and the Western Empire, as they are powerful, valuable, intelligent combatants that can toss human beings around with ease and grapple with serious monsters.

Ice Bearman R.C.C.

Also known as the Winter Bearman, White Bearman and Dragon Bearman.

Alignment: Any, but most often Unprincipled (10%), Anarchist (40%), or Aberrant (40%); 10% other.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D4+6, M.E. 2D4+6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 4D6+6, P.P. 3D6+4, P.E. 4D6+8, P.B. 2D6+8, Spd 4D4 running; 3D6+12 swimming.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number plus 1D6 per level of experience.

S.D.C.: 2D4x10+20, plus those gained from O.C.C.s and Physical skills. **Natural A.R.:** 2

Horror Factor: 14

Average P.P.E.: 3D6+5

O.C.C.s Available: Most tend to be Rangers, huntsmen or fighters equivalent to the Mercenary Warrior. Bearmen have no interest in learning magic, seeing it as the realm of the gods and creatures like dragons, but adore magic weapons and simple magic items, especially magical ice weapons.

Level of Experience: 1D4+2 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters start at level one. **Note:** Use the experience table as per the chosen O.C.C.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), poor day vision (about 120 feet/36.6 m), superior sense of smell and hearing, Prowl 28%, track by smell 78%, Climb 60%/50%, Recognize Poison 90% and Swim 90%. Ice Bearmen are extremely at home in the water, can hold their breath for 1D4+4 minutes, and can swim for up to two hundred miles (320 km) without resting.

Cold Resistance (special): Their heavy fur and blubber make them resistant to cold and they are virtually impervious to hypothermia and frostbite, even when immersed in freezing water. Ice Bearmen only take half damage from cold-based magic attacks; no damage from ordinary cold and weather.

Consume Raw Meat (special): Ice Bearmen are accustomed to a diet of raw meat, bones, fat and blubber. Their bleak habitat forces them to be both scavenger and predator, with robust stomachs that can handle meat that has gone rotten or become waterlogged. Their raging metabolisms need large amounts of flesh, however, with an adult able to consume over 50 lbs (22.5 kg) of meat in a single sitting. An Ice Bearman needs at least 10 lbs (4.5 kg) of meat per day to avoid hunger, and at least 1-2 lbs (0.45 to 0.9 kg) of fat alone. Away from blubber, their traditional source of calories, they will crave butter, cream, lard and any other fatty food they can find.

Ice Bearmen are known for gorging upon the bodies of their enemies following a battle, sometimes out of hunger, sometimes as part of a cannibalistic ritual in which a warrior eats the heart and innards of his enemy to symbolically gain their strength or to show their respect to a worthy opponent. One

way or another, after seven days of insufficient dietary input, an Ice Bearman may not be able to resist the urge to “forage” (steal food), or might even start looking at plump humans and other intelligent humanoids as possible meals.

Attacks per Melee: +1 attack per melee round, in addition to hand to hand combat training.

Damage: Claws: 2D6 plus P.S. bonus, power punch: 4D6 plus P.S. bonus (counts as two attacks), bite: 2D4, head butt: 1D6, or by weapon (prefer large axes, spears and harpoons).

R.C.C. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, and +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14.

Magic: None.

Psionics: Standard.

Average Life Span: 2D6+50 years.

Habitat: Ice Bearmen are found almost exclusively in coastal regions. Most live along the northern coast of the Great Northern Wilderness, with others in the Northern Hinterlands, away from the Shadow Colonies of Bizantium, with the bay known as the Dragon Claw playing home to many tribes. There is a second population of Ice Bearmen that live in cold, remote coastlines of the Land of the Damned and up in the Northern Mountains, but they are primarily cut off from their brethren to the east by the human Kingdom of Bizantium and its ships and seafaring citizens. There is some interaction between the two populations, but the journey across the Northern Hinterlands and through the Northern Mountains is long, cold and perilous. Going through Bizantian waters is more direct, and the area around the islands is ice-free for most of the year thanks to a warm gulf stream current that flows from the west. Ice Bearmen stand out in the open water, though, and following the coast is a dangerous proposition with fishing villages, ports and Bizantian soldiers to avoid.

Languages: Most speak Wolfen, the same as other Bearmen, but all Ice Bearmen are fluent in their own ancestral language exclusive to their subspecies, 25% speak Dragonese and 15% also have knowledge of either Giantese or Faerie Speak.

Enemies: Ice Bearmen are hostile towards virtually all outsiders, especially humans, Coyles, Bug Bears, Harpies, demons and monstrous creatures like Winter Storm Ice Demons.

Allies: “Normal” Bearmen are seen as close cousins. Kankoran are one of the few species Ice Bearmen respect, some even referring to them as “Little Brothers.” Wolfen frontiersmen, Drakin and Faerie Folk are tolerated. They have a special affinity for fellow creatures of the North like *Ice Pixies* and *Frost Giants*, and worship *Ice Dragons* and *Winter serpents* as living manifestations of the Winter Spirit.

Physical Appearance: Massive, bipedal creatures with the heads of bears and thick, streamlined bodies covered in white fur. They have black snouts and dark claws, and wear little more than a loincloth, even in freezing weather.

Size: 10-12 feet tall (3 to 3.6 m).

Weight: 1,200-1,500 pounds (540 to 675 kg).

Notes: Like their more southerly cousins, Ice Bearmen shun suits of armor. Not only does heavy armor restrict movement, but it also makes swimming dangerous or impossible. They will wear pieces of armor made of bone, hides and treated wood, but have a natural disdain for metal, except when it comes to weapons. Ice Bearmen may wear armlets, wristbands, vambraces, gauntlets, gloves, belts, and similar equipment, but it is rare to see one even in partial metal armor.

Equipment & Weapons of Note: An Ice Bearman's standard equipment will include two harpoons, two wooden spears and a stout club with a head made from stone or bone. Metal weapons like swords and axes will have to be captured from intruders like human explorers or encroaching Wolfen, Coyles or demons. Ice Bearmen also typically carry 50-200 pounds (22.5 to 90 kg) of blubber and preserved meat (or raw in cold climes) with them to keep up their energy levels on long journeys. "Money" is usually in the form of ivory rather than gold and silver.



Sea Ghoul

Written by Kevin Siembieda & Glen Evans

Northern customs dictate that when a person drowns it is important to perform some sort of burial ritual or their soul will not rest. Sailors and those who live on or near the sea have followed this tradition for thousands of years. There is a reason for this: sometimes, when the dead is simply dropped into the sea without a burial ritual, an unidentified malevolent spirit (Entity) finds the body and inhabits it. When this happens, the body is brought back to life as an undead monster that pursues the living to harass and torment them. Some North Folk claim these dark spirits are minions of **Beastla**, others that they are manifestations of the seething anger of the evil god *Brgg*.

A Sea Ghoul, sometimes called a "Drowned Ghoul," possesses the basic intelligence of a human and the instincts of a scavenging animal, but is a harbinger of death to sailors. The creature can sense death and the dying – be it the fresh catch in the hold of a ship, the carcass of a whale or sea serpent being butchered at sea, or death from illness or battle. As a ghoul, the creature feeds

upon the flesh of the dead, so when it senses death or people weak and nearing death, the monster will climb onto a sea vessel and find a place to perch itself and wait, like a vulture, for the person to die. It may, alternately, wait at the foot of a sickbed (or under it), hide in a closet or chest, or dark corner. If people are around it will hide someplace else, waiting until they leave and come to check on the sick and dying individual to see if he has died yet.

Malicious and cruel creatures, a Sea Ghoul may stowaway on a ship or cling to its side above or below the waterline, climbing out from its hiding place at night or when crew members are distracted, to sabotage the vessel. Acts of sabotage usually focus on dumping food overboard or otherwise causing food stores damage and ruination, spilling/spoiling drinking water, and stealing items that might cause a fight and injury or death. The monster is too timid to actually kill its own prey, but it will do things to *cause* the suffering and death of others, or to hurry along the death of the sick or injured. When the person dies, the Sea Ghoul feasts on the flesh, but not until at least six hours have passed since the moment of death. This means a Sea Ghoul may steal corpses from the sick bay of vessels and dive into the water to eat undisturbed below the waves.

Sea Ghouls are excellent swimmers, capable of paddling across an ocean without tiring. They can climb the hull of a ship just as easily, and cling to it for days on end when working at killing the crew via starvation or thirst. A Sea Ghoul can hang from the side of a vessel or from the bottom, underwater, where it cannot be easily detected.

Sea Ghouls can come ashore, but they usually don't linger on dry land for very long. Their behavior is basically the same as above, expect the monster will, after 6-12 hours on shore, go back into the sea to sleep or rest in its watery embrace, climbing out to check on the person it is waiting to see die over the next several days. Sometimes, a Sea Ghoul can be spotted walking along coastlines, standing upon a rocky outcropping off shore or treading water on a life raft or piece of debris. When approached, the creature will grunt or squeal and run away. Sea Ghouls only fight when they are attacked first, and even then they fight only long enough to get away and hide or dive back into water. As a result, Sea Ghouls seldom wander more than a hundred yards (meters) from a large body of water.

Sea Ghouls look like decaying corpses in tattered clothing. The Entities can animate and possess the body of any *mortal* humanoid from humans and Elves to Dwarves, Wolfen and Giants, but usually pick human-sized beings; and with the Northern Sea being dominated by humans, human bodies are the most common. The creature has no need for clothes, so as the clothing that may have been worn by the deceased ages, it tatters and shreds into rags. The other feature that earmarks the creature as a Sea Ghoul is that it cannot speak (grunts, growls, hisses, screams), and it will have cat-like claws for climbing and clinging to the hulls of ships and ripping dead flesh.

Sea Ghoul NPC Monster

Also known as Drowned Ghoul.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+4, M.E. 1D6+2, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6+15, P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 1D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D6+10 walking/running, but 2D6+20 swimming. All physical attributes are equal to Supernatural.

Size: Depends on the race of the individual who drowned before coming back as a Sea Ghoul; most are human.

Natural A.R.: 11

Hit Points: 4D6+20

S.D.C.: 1D4x10+10

Horror Factor: 11

Average P.P.E.: Not applicable; the Entity has 1D6x10.

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, Night-vision 1,000 feet (305 m), normal day vision, can see clearly even in dark and murky water, superior swimmers (96%), never tire or fatigue, do not breathe air and can remain underwater indefinitely, can walk along the bottom of the sea (maximum depth tolerance is 6 miles/9.6 km), Bio-Regenerate at a rate of 1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per melee round, are impervious to normal fire, cold and heat as well as disease, poison, toxins, and possession (magic fire and cold inflicts half damage). When released from its current physical body, the Sea Ghoul Entity wanders the Northern Sea and Ocean looking for a new corpse floating in the water to inhabit.

Sense the Dead and Dying (special): Sea Ghouls can sense the dead and dying within a five mile (8 km) radius. This magic ability also gives the creature an idea if it is one, a few or many dead or dying and their general location. The closer it gets to them the stronger the sensation.

Corrosive Vomit (special): A Sea Ghoul can disgorge whatever is in its belly along with a putrid, corrosive acid that burns and stinks to high-heaven. The Sea Ghoul unleashes its vomit when cornered, usually directed at the feet and legs of whatever is threatening it. This attack is such a surprise and so repugnant that most people jump out of the way or take several quick paces back to avoid it. This gives the creature the opening it needs to run past and escape, or make a quick attack. Those who get vomit on their legs or feet take 1D4 points of damage per melee round for an additional 1D4 rounds. The pain is worse than the actual damage and compels most people to strip off their boots and/or socks and pants in an effort to stop the burning. While distracted by the stench, pain and confusion of the disgusting attack, victims (it sprays a 2 foot/0.6 m diameter) are -3 on all combat actions and lose one melee attack per round (1D4+1 if they are trying to remove boots and leggings).

The stench and disgusting nature of the attack is such that everyone within a 10 foot (3 m) radius gags and must roll to save vs poison (noxious fumes) to avoid vomiting themselves; roll 16 or higher to save. A failed roll means the character loses two melee attacks along with his lunch.

Note: Sea Ghouls love to eat and will gorge themselves whenever they get the opportunity to do so. However, they can go for six months with no food without ill effect. If forced to go without food for a longer period, reduce Spd by 30% and subtract one attack per melee round.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Bonuses: +5 on Perception Rolls when it comes to noticing people who are sick or injured and likely to get worse and die, +1 to strike, parry and dodge.

Damage: Full Strength Punch: 1D6 damage, Claw Strike: 2D6, Bite: 1D6 damage, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 4D6 damage. Note: Drowned Ghouls are not known for using weapons, but it does happen on occasion.

Vulnerability: Destroy the body (reduce Hit Points and S.D.C. to zero) and the evil supernatural Entity that turned the corpse into a Sea Ghoul is forced to leave the body and find a new host within 48 hours or vanish back to its dimension of origin. Moreover, the Entity can be forced out of the corpse via Exorcism and the Banishment spells, but unless the body is given a proper burial, it remains vulnerable to reanimation by a Sea Ghoul Entity.

Magic weapons, holy weapons and weapons plated in silver inflict double damage, and Sea Ghouls are repelled by holy symbols and holy water.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Note: Sea Ghouls are usually encountered as one lone scavenger, but sometimes they gather in pairs or small groups of 2D4+4. Groups usually only occur when there is plenty of dead to feed upon. For example, many Iceborn Necroilus serpent ships will have 6-12 of them onboard. Iceborn don't mind, and allow the Ghouls to eat their dead, bones and meat scraps.

Selkie

Also known as Faerie Seals

By Kevin Siembieda and Glen Evans

A Selkie is a Faerie Folk whose natural form is that of a seal. The only apparent difference between a Selkie and an ordinary seal is that its eyes seem to have a look of higher intelligence behind them and their faces have a greater range of expression. A Selkie in seal form may smile, grimace and behave in a very intelligent, human-like manner, but cannot speak except in the usual animal barks and whistles of a seal.

By going onto a dry surface, a Selkie can shed its "sealskin" to become a playful and attractive human-looking woman or male, depending on its gender, but female Selkies outnumber males 10 to 1. They shed their "sealskin" to dance on beaches, explore meadows and forests – and to walk among humans. Selkies find humans attractive and interesting. The Faerie Seals enjoy flirting, dating, romance and sex with any human who strikes their fancy. There is no malicious intent in any of these playful, sexual antics. Selkies are just sexual creatures who find lovemaking with heroic and attractive humans to be fun and pleasurable. Though attractive and sexual beings, Selkies are not seductresses, vindictive and dangerous. They do not rob or harm their human one-night stands, and are likely to remember the person with a casual fondness.

Despite their sexual proclivity, most Selkies are rather innocent and shy. They appreciate fun, beauty, nature, music, dancing and discovering new things. In fact, Selkies often lose themselves to childlike excitement and glee when having fun or enjoying a delightful new experience. They love to dance and sunbathe on the beach in human form, and enjoy all types of games, competitions, dancing, songs and parties. They do not like hard liquor, drugs, physical pain or dark, gloomy or sad places. Selkies are playful and positive by nature and trapping them and forcing them to exist in a prison or a cruel or ugly environment breaks their spirit and drives them into deep melancholy and despair.

The danger of the Selkie shedding his or her "sealskin" is that if it is stolen by a mortal and hidden, the Selkie must become the

mate or servant of the person who possesses it. This is a very sad turn of events, because the Selkie is a creature of the sea, and if forced to remain in human form on dry land, will always long to return to the ocean. If unable to return to the sea as an enchanted seal, the Selkie's normal playfulness turns into somberness as the pitiful creature is consumed by a growing sorrow that cannot be soothed. Over time, the Selkie becomes a shadow of itself and may be driven to commit suicide. Any children born of a union between a mortal and a Selkie will be fully human/mortal. However, that child will always have a deep love of the sea and is a natural and gifted swimmer (+6 to swimming speed, +2 to P.E. and P.B. attributes). The child is also likely to have an aptitude for magic, should he or she choose that career (and enjoys a 1D6+6 bonus to his/her P.P.E. base).

Recovering the sealskin enables the Selkie to return to the sea as a seal and to live in both worlds if it so desires. Slipping on the sealskin is as natural as putting on a pair of pants and a shirt for humans, and automatically turns the creature back into its seal form. Though a Selkie may stay on land for months at a time (years if enslaved), it is a creature of the sea who spends the majority of its time in the ocean. **Destroying the sealskin** means death to the Selkie, slowly killing it over a period of 1D4 years. During that time, its human form seems to grow pale and sickly, the Selkie becomes weak and eventually wastes away. However, a Faerie Seal whose natural sealskin is hidden from it can survive

for decades, provided the melancholy never becomes more than it can bear. **Note:** A Selkie can only wear its own skin, so once it is destroyed, she is doomed.

Selkies are so playful and innocent that they don't usually hide their sealskins very well, and some just leave it where they took it off and walked away, just as you might drop your shirt and pants on the floor before donning pajamas and climbing into bed. To walk amongst humans, the Faerie Seal must find clothing and will steal whatever is handy, be it a dress, pants and blouse, or a mere cape, cloak, bed sheet or towel, any of which look surprisingly good on this attractive and vibrant being.

A Selkie who falls in love with a human can be a sweet and playful lover, and for a time, even a loyal partner. However, Selkies are usually too spirited and playful to stay with any one person for long. Nor are they happy living in urban environments, especially big cities. A visit for a few days or weeks is one thing, but living in such a place is abhorrent. Moreover, the fun-loving Faerie Seals hate war, violence, cruelty and ugliness, and are happiest making love, dancing, playing, exploring and having fun. But after awhile, even the most fun and loving human partner must be left behind for life in the sea. That said, there are tales of Selkies in love who stay true to their human lover or spouse and though they are compelled to return to the ocean, and return every Spring or Summer (or sometimes Winter) to spend 1-4 months with their mortal lover. This visitation may go on for decades, and that entire time the Selkie remains true to that person; at least until the human dies of old age or sickness. Selkies are not immortal, but as creatures of magic they live for around 600 years and look youthful (seldom more than 25-35 years old) until the day they die.

When not bound to a mortal, Selkies live in the ocean, playing with seals and dolphins and traveling along the coastlines of the North. They are very curious about humanoids, especially humans, and their ships, and may follow ships at sea, help sailors in trouble, and even climb aboard to try to interact or make love. Often a Selkie will pretend to be a simple seal in order to get a closer look at people. At sea, Selkies in seal form have been known to rescue swimmers and survivors of shipwrecks, dragging the survivor (sometimes pulling an entire lifeboat or raft) to shore before swimming away. If far from shore, a Faerie Seal may bring survivors on a raft or lifeboat freshly killed fish for them to eat, and if a source of it is close at hand, and if the Faerie Seal has a container to put it in, it may retrieve fresh drinking water too. Such rescues can be made in seal or human form, but usually in animal form because in water, the Faerie Seal is at its strongest and fastest.

When out to sea without any human sailors to play with, Selkies may swim and play with other Selkies, Mermaids and Merrows, dolphins, whales, seals and other gentle or playful sea creatures. Their enemies are ocean predators, especially sharks and sea serpents, as well as the wicked and murderous Iceborn. Selkies in seal form have human intelligence and can easily avoid or escape Ice Bearmen and other humanoid hunters. Sometimes they help dolphins, porpoises, and seals avoid hunters, and may help those caught in the cages, nets and lines of fishermen escape them. **Note:** A Selkie can only shed its "seal skin" on dry land or another dry surface like the deck of a boat. They cannot shed their skin while swimming in the water. Though a Selkie can be forced to serve a non-human as a servant or spouse, the creature finds no other beings, not even Elves and other Faerie Folk, as



appealing as humans, and can bear offspring with humans, but not other beings.

Faerie Seal/Selkie Stats

Race: A creature of magic; a type of aquatic Faerie Folk.

As a Player Character, provided the Game Master allows it, the Selkie can be a loyal and helpful teammate who loves travel and adventure. However, she (or he) will behave very much like a sweet, but precocious 10 or 11 year old human child. She will exhibit an intense curiosity and a tendency to get distracted by things that are pretty, fun, new or enticing, especially if it involves music, dancing, entertainment, water, swimming, sailing, fishing and other fun things. When playing or partying, the Faerie Seal is almost certain to lose track of time and forget about any specific goal or mission until reminded by someone. They also tend to be gullible, believing lies and tall tales, and too trusting of others, again, like a child.

Alignment: Scrupulous (30%), Unprincipled (40%), Anarchist (25%), Aberrant (1%), and other (4%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+9, M.E. 1D6+9, M.A. 2D6+13, P.S. 2D6+7 (+9 as a seal), P.P. 2D6+5 (+5 as a seal), P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D6+8 as a seal, 2D6+13 in human form. Spd in human form: 2D6+8 running, 2D6+12 swimming. Spd in seal form: 1D6+1 running, 4D6+30 swimming speed; maximum depth tolerance in both human and seal form is a half mile (0.8 km). **Note:** The numbers in parentheses, above, are an additional bonus added when in seal form.

Size: Males are typically 6 feet (1.8 m) tall. As seals: 9 feet (2.7 m) long. Females are typically 5.6 feet (1.7 m) tall in human guise, and 6 feet (1.8 m) long a seal.

Weight: In human form, males weigh around 190 lbs (85.5 kg), females 115 lbs (51.75 kg). As a seal, males weigh around 525 lbs (236 kg), females 320 lbs (144 kg).

Natural A.R.: 8 in human form, 14 in seal form.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x4.

S.D.C.: 3D6+32 (reduce S.D.C. by half in human form).

Horror Factor/Awe: 11, once someone realizes what they are.

Average Life Span: 2D4x100 years, even without her sealskin.

Level of Experience: 1D4+1 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters start at level one. **Note:** Use the same experience table as the Wizard O.C.C. for a player character to advance.

Natural Abilities: Magically understands all languages 96% but can not speak in seal form (can understand and speak all languages in human guise), swimming 98% (-10% in human form), dive 1,400 feet (426 m; half in human form), maximum depth tolerance 2,800 feet (853 m or roughly a half mile in seal or human form), sense direction underwater 98% (-10% in human form), hold breath for one hour (20 minutes in human form), see underwater and in dim or murky water 600 feet (183 m; half in human form), keen sense of smell (can smell blood in the water, school of fish or crustaceans, a mass of seaweed, fresh water, flowers, and the scent of humans up to 2 miles/3.2 km away; half that distance on dry land, and only a half mile in human form), impervious to normal cold (magical cold inflicts half damage), and Bio-Regenerates 2D4 S.D.C./Hit Points once per melee round in seal form while in water, half on dry land, and only 1 point per minute in human form.

Magical Sealskin (special): Selkies are able to take human form by getting out of water and onto dry land or the deck

of a ship, and removing their sealskin. They turn back into a Faerie Seal by putting their sealskin back on, as if it were a set of clothing. Each skin is unique to the individual, they cannot be exchanged or replaced with a different sealskin. A human who tries to wear the skin will *not* transform into a Selkie nor gain any powers. The sealskin is enchanted, however (A.R. 12, S.D.C. as 32, weighs 20 lbs/9 kg). If a skin is taken from a Selkie, the Faerie Seal will search for it until he or she is successful in recovering it, and is willing to do almost anything to recover it, even lie, steal or kill. If the sealskin is taken and hidden by a member of the opposite sex, that person can force the Selkie to become its spouse, concubine or servant for as long as he/she possesses the sealskin. A magical residue can be sensed on the person who handled the sealskin, binding the Selkie to that individual until it can be recovered. Once the sealskin is back in the hands of the Selkie, the bond is broken, and the Selkie can become a seal again and flee into the sea.

Also see Magic and Psionics below.

Magic Spells: All Selkies possess the following spell Magic. Spells can only be cast when the Faerie Seal sheds its skin to take on human form *and voice*. Charm (12), Command Fish (10), Communicate with Sea Creatures (12), Float on Water (3), Healing Waters (15), Ride the Waves (10), Sense Direction Underwater (4) and Water Seal (10). Spell strength, duration, range, and damage are equal to a 5th level Water Warlock. Can only perform magic while in human form. **P.P.E.:** 1D6x10+40.

Psionics: See Aura (6), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3) and Total Recall (2). Equal to a 3rd level Minor Psychic. Selkies possess their psychic abilities in both human and seal form. **I.S.P.:** M.E. attribute number x2.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Damage: Hand to hand attacks in human form. In seal form a bite does 1D6 points of damage, a head butt does 1D4 damage, and a swimming head butt or body slam does 1D6 damage (+2 to damage from a diving head butt or body slam).

Bonuses: +2 on all Perception Rolls, +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to pull punch, but +4 to dodge in and under water (half in human form), +2 to save vs magic, psionic attacks, illusions, possession and Horror Factor.

R.C.C. Skills: Magically understands and speaks all languages 96%, Acrobatics 70%, Animal Husbandry 70%, Astronomy & Navigation 85% Castaway/Shipwreck Survival 85%, Dance 90%, Deep Sea Fishing 90%, First Aid 80%, Identify Sea Life 98%, Lore: Faerie Folk 80%, Lore: Sea 98%, Mathematics: Basic 90%, Prowl 40% on land (80% in water), Singing 80%, Swimming 88% (without sealskin) and Wilderness Survival 80%.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Attraction to humans. 2. Too trusting, especially of humans. 3. Weaker and slower in human form. 4. Loss of sealskin enslaves the Selkie. Without her sealskin, a Selkie is stuck in human form and the creature of magic must faithfully submit to the control of whoever has taken and hidden it. A Selkie cannot take its sealskin back by force, it must beg for it to be returned or cut a deal and do something for the thief in exchange for its return. A Selkie can also take it back if she can find it, or have another person(s) recover her sealskin for her. She can also get someone else to find it and return it by whatever means necessary. A member of the opposite sex in possession of the sealskin can make the Selkie submit to his

well and make her his unwilling wife, concubine or servant. She retains her own thoughts and desires, but must serve him faithfully, including submitting to his sexual advances and never taking a direct hand against him.

Value: A Selkie trapped in human form can be quite valuable to the right person, giving the hide a value that can range from 1,000-100,000 gold. As an alchemical component a Selkie sealskin is worth 1,000 gold.

Enemies: Sea serpents, aquatic demons, Baehag, Kappa, Ice Bearmen, Iceborn, sharks, killer whales, pirates, and most wicked beings.

Allies: Other Faerie Folk, especially Brownies, Merrows, and Mermaids, as well as Kreel-Lok, Water Bats and Flying Turtles. Curious toward humanoids in general, and very fond of humans, but humans can be kind or treacherous.

Sea Serpents

Jormund Serpent

Many of Bizantium's ships, particularly lightly armed merchants, are accustomed to moving in convoys to help protect themselves against threats. Most sea monsters avoid attacking "fleets" of ships, even if they have intruded on their territory and hunting grounds. While sea serpents are generally aggressive and will attack anyone or anything they believe to be edible, instinctual behavior warns them to avoid groups of sailing ships. Known to the ancient Eoten as the "Changer of Currents" or "Bringer of Storms," the Jormund Serpent is one of the rarest sea serpents in the world, and one of the few that will risk attacking a full fleet or convoy. These animals are simply huge, sometimes measuring over 400 feet (122 m) long! Their heads are the size of fishing boats, their maws filled with two-foot (0.6 m) long, viciously pointed teeth.

Jormund Serpents are not terribly intelligent animals, and are big enough that they tend to ignore lone humanoids in the water, but are extremely territorial when it comes to other sea serpents, large sea creatures, and ships. They eat virtually anything that lives in the water, but prefer sizable prey like whales, walrus, large seals, giant squid and sea serpents smaller than themselves. Jormund Serpents also seem to know when a ship is damaged and crippled or sinking, and sometimes follow such vessels for days, or even weeks, believing them to be injured prey and vulnerable. If such a vessel sinks the Jormund will capsize lifeboats and gobble down any sailors in the water; sometimes eating the boat and all.

Jormund Serpent

Alignments: Considered Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+4 (predatory animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+24, P.P. 1D6+12, P.E. 1D6+20, P.B. 1D6, Spd swimming is 22 (15 mph/24 km); 1D6 on land.

Size: 400-900 (122 to 274 m) long, roll 1D6x100+300 feet for random determination of size.

Weight: 100-400 tons.

Hit Points: 1D6x100+100

S.D.C.: 1D4x100

Natural A.R.: 14

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 6D6

Average Life Span: 3,000-4,000 years.

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Natural Abilities: Natural swimmers 98%, Nightvision 3,000 feet (914 m), keen vision and sense of smell, track by smell or sight 70%, maximum depth tolerance is unlimited, locate moving objects in water 70% by sight, track the scent of blood (90%) up to two miles (3.2 km) away, impervious to cold (even magic cold) and heals at a rate of 1D4x10 Hit Points/S.D.C. per every 24 hours. This is a predatory animal and it does not speak or communicate.

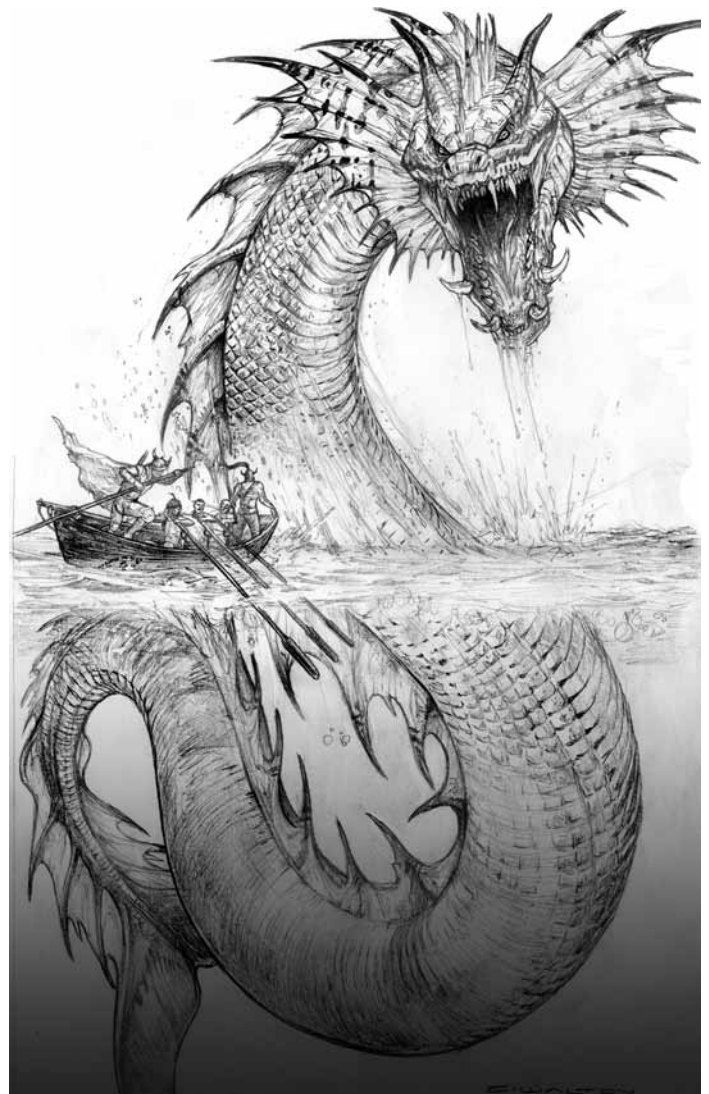
Attacks per Melee: Three.

Damage: Bite: 1D6x10 points of damage, fin strike: 3D6, tail slap: 6D6, head butt: 4D6 damage, body butt/short ram: 5D6 damage, or full speed ram: 2D4x10 (counts as two melee attacks).

Bonuses: +1 on Perception Rolls regarding prey and attackers, +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to dodge in the water, +1 to save vs magic, and +8 to save vs Horror Factor.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.



Value: Bones, teeth, blood, and other body parts are used in alchemy, but are not considered true dragon parts and usually command only a third of the price. The vast amount of oil that can be rendered from Jormund Serpents commands a value of 10,000-20,000 gold!

Habitat: Open ocean, but most common in the Sea of Despair, Sea of Dread and the Icy Ocean the closer one gets to the Great Ice Shelf. However, they have been sighted off coasts throughout the Palladium world, even in tropical climates.

Enemies: Humanoids, dragons, other sea serpents, and large aquatic predators. Dislikes sailing vessels which it sees as another large animal and may regard them as rivals invading its territory (01-50% chance). When that happens, the monster is likely to follow the vessel for 2D6 days and attack people and smaller boats that go into the water. If the ship becomes damaged, the Jormund may become more aggressive, bumping and butting it 1D4 times a day to see if it can provoke an attack. No counterattack makes it assume the "other animal" (the ship) is submissive to it.

Allies: None, other than its own kind, and even then, juvenile Jormund might fall prey to a hungry adult.

Northern Strangler

The Northern Strangler sea serpent is a particularly dangerous species found in the Sea of Despair and the cold waters of the Northern Sea, Algorian Sea and Icy Ocean. They tend to float and swim atop the surface of the water with their snouts barely poking out, rarely lifting their head. The sea serpent swims like a water snake, using an undulating motion, and has good speed. The Northern Strangler usually attacks and kills small prey like seals and humans by biting them a few times then eating them in several giant gulps. It may also pull prey that needs to breathe air underwater, locked in its coils, until it runs out of air and dies.

The Strangler's primary prey, however, are larger sea animals such as walrus, large sharks, whales and other sea serpents. As a constrictor, it will bite to grab onto a moving sea animal, then wrap its long, snake-like body around the target and squeeze, slowly crushing its prey, breaking bones, paralyzing muscles and collapsing lungs. When its prey stops moving for a good while, the Strangler loosens its coils, but still holds onto its kill as it starts taking large bites out of it. The Northern Strangler may gorge itself and eat all or most of its kill, releasing whatever remains of truly large prey to sink to the bottom – food for scavengers. In other cases, it may hang onto the remains still wrapped in its coils to munch on later. A Strangler that catches prey near its lair, such as a cave or rocky outcropping on the bottom of the sea, may carry the remains home to eat later. Such lairs are always littered with the bones of recent kills. **Note:** When coiled around prey, swimming is difficult to impossible, with the serpent usually just hanging on, carried by the current.

Though Stranglers attack only when hungry, they have fast metabolisms and are hungry often. Highly intelligent predators, this sea serpent has learned that ships on the surface of the water are a good source of easy food, be it trash thrown overboard, large fish caught on lines, or people who have fallen over the side. This has made some hyper-aggressive toward boats and sailing vessels. When a Strangler spots a small or medium-sized ship (less than 105 feet/32 m long), it swims after it, and attacks by

wrapping around it like a boa constrictor. Whaling ships and fishing boats are easily crushed by its massive coils, but the Northern Strangler is likely to pick off and eat crew members on deck or who try to fight it before the ship is crushed and sinks. When attacking ships, it always rears its head up, like a cobra, so it can see and attack human-sized prey. The Strangler can usually coil around all or half of small to medium ships and still have 30-50 feet (9 to 15 m) left to strike with its mouth. Meanwhile, the sea serpent can usually get 2-3 coils around a ship up to 100 feet (30.5 m) long, which is still enough for it to crush and sink most vessels that size, given enough time. In all cases, it has that 30-50 foot (9 to 15 m) reach to defend itself and to kill and eat the sailors on deck. Lifeboats and other small boats are likely to be knocked about until those aboard fall into the water or the small boat is tipped over.

When a ship is wrapped in the coils of the Northern Strangler, the monster will always try to snatch up crew members with its mouth and eat them, all the while applying pressure to the vessel. The Northern Strangler is smart enough to know that if it crushes the vessel and it sinks, it can get to the people dumped into the sea, where most humanoids make helpless, easy prey. Once the ship's hull buckles and cracks, it starts to take on water. When it takes on enough water to begin to sink, the Strangler usually releases it and moves a short distance away to wait for crewmen to take to smaller boats and rafts. The sea monster eats any living beings that fall into the water, snatching them up one at a time, and devours them after a few bites to kill them or after they drown. In fact, the serpent may swim under them and grab a foot like a shark and drag them under the waves, shaking and holding them underwater until they drown. As noted earlier, a Northern Strangler will not eat live prey. It has to kill its victims first. It will target and eat people in the water before tipping over or crushing lifeboats that may hold additional humanoid prey.

The Northern Strangler is one of the few known sea serpents that climbs onto dry land to bask in the sun or to lay its eggs on reefs and beaches of isolated islands. They may also chase prey (including people) up onto beaches from time to time, and should not be provoked. On land, the Northern Strangler crawls like a snake, which means it is deceptively fast on the ground, especially in open areas. Reduce speed by half in forests and city streets where the massive sea serpent has trouble moving and seeing. The animal is always aggressive and becomes quite defensive if approached or startled, striking wildly at anything that moves within 100 feet (30.5 m) of it. Stranglers are able to coil and strike like terrestrial snakes on dry ground as well, so they are never safe to approach under any conditions, even when sleeping.

Alignments: Miscreant or Diabolic evil.

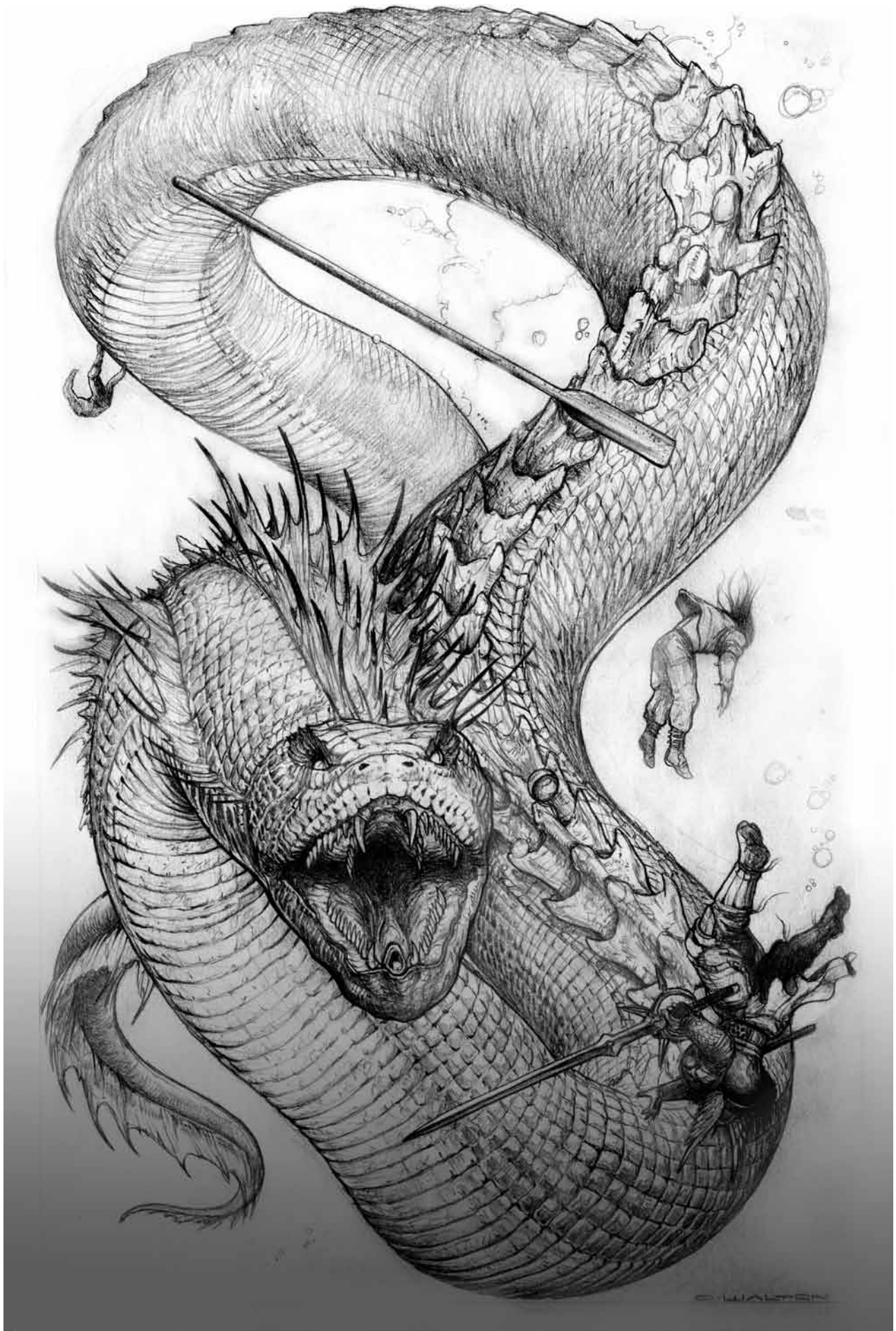
Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+4 (high predatory animal intelligence bordering on low human I.Q.), M.E. 1D6+8, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 2D6+18, P.P. 2D6+6, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 1D6+2, Spd 5D6+30 swimming, 1D6+8 on land.

Size: 180-480 feet (55 to 146 m) long; roll 6D6x10+120 feet for random determination of size. The head alone is 10-15 feet (3 to 4.6 m) long and though large enough to swallow a man whole, the Strangler never swallows anything that is still alive, it must kill its prey first via bite attacks or drowning.

Weight: 30-50 tons for juvenile serpents, up to 120 tons for adults.

Hit Points: 1D4x100+60

S.D.C.: 5D6x10



Natural A.R.: 13

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 1D4x10

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Natural Abilities: Swim 98%, can dive up to 2,000 feet (610 m) deep, breathe underwater indefinitely, breathe on land for three hours before becoming weak (will die after 18 hours trapped on land; reduce speed and Hit Points 10% for every two hours), see the invisible, Nightvision 600 feet (183 m), keen vision and sense of smell, track by smell or sight 80%, maximum depth tolerance is unlimited, locate moving objects in water 85% by sight, track the scent of blood (95%) up to two miles (3.2 km) away, normal fire and cold do half damage (magic fire and cold do full damage), and heals at a rate of 5D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per every 24 hours. This is a predatory animal and it can not speak other than via its growls, roars and honks.

Psionic Communication (special): Stranglers cannot speak, but can communicate via psionic Empathy and even Telepathy, but the thoughts and images and words are very rudimentary, such as hate, kill, angry, want, scared, hungry, happy, more, etc.; see Psionics, below. They also use Empathy to read the emotions of their prey and to tell when they are in a panic, giving up the fight, about to abandon ship, or have died.

Attacks per Melee: Three physical or psionic.

Damage: Bite does 6D6 damage, slashing tail: 5D6 damage. Constriction does 1D6x10 damage per constriction to large prey, but half damage to prey under 12 feet (3.6 m; lacks a firm grip on beings so small). Each constriction uses up one melee attack.

Damage to a ship's hull is 1D6x10 per constriction. When the cumulative damage exceeds the hull's S.D.C., the ship is crushed enough to split boards, take on water quickly and immediately start to sink. The vessel slips under the waves in 1D6 melee rounds. When a ship loses three quarters of its S.D.C., it also starts to spring small leaks and show signs of fatigue and cracking as a warning of the coming danger. Should the sea serpent let go before all S.D.C. is lost, this damage can be repaired and the vessel, though severely weakened, remains afloat. **Note:** The Strangler must be able to wrap itself around a vessel at least three times to inflict the full damage above. If only twice, damage is half, and one coil does no damage. In most attacks it will try to wrap its "prey" – whether animal or boat – with as many coils as possible to pin and hold it while being crushed.

Only somehow forcing the monster to let go or killing the sea serpent can save the ship once the constriction begins. Reducing the monster's Hit Points to less than 60, or rendering it unconscious, causes it to release its hold and free the vessel.

Living prey ensnared by the Northern Strangler cannot attack while trapped in the creature's coils (limbs are pinned) and only an individual with a Supernatural P.S. of 30 or better can attempt to escape. However, the constriction attack of this truly massive sea serpent is meant to be used on very large creatures and ships, so beings who are smaller than 12 feet (3.6 m) have a 01-20% chance of squirming free every melee round! Of course, a constriction attack is not likely to be used on such small targets. Instead, the monster is likely to bite until dead or pull small prey underwater and keep them there until drowned.

Bonuses: +2 to strike with a biting attack, +3 to strike with tail and coils, +2 to parry with tail, +1 to dodge, +7 to save vs Horror Factor, and +2 on all saving throws.

Magic: None.

Psionics: Empathy (4), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), Telepathy (4) and Death Trance (1). **I.S.P.:** M.E. attribute x3. Psionics are equal to a 3rd level Minor Psychic.

Average Life Span: 500-1000 years.

Value: Bones, teeth, blood and other body parts are used in alchemy, but are not considered true dragon parts and usually command only a third of the price. Oil has a value of 2,000-5,000 gold.

Habitat: The Sea of Despair and Northern Sea.

Enemies: Humanoids.

Allies: Other sea serpents but may associate with other evil beings.

Winterserpents

Lords of the icy North, Winterserpents are immensely powerful and exceedingly rare dragons brimming with elemental energy. Scholars of the more learned races have identified them as cousins of *Ice Dragons*, a separate species with an even closer relationship to the elemental forces of water and ice. Natural-born Warlocks, they are found almost exclusively in the northern reaches of the continent where cold temperatures, blizzards, heavy snowfall, icebergs and frozen seas are the norm.

In the southern, more temperate reaches of the Palladium World, Winterserpents are almost unheard of. During winter, they sometimes venture down out of their northern habitat, searching for items to fill up their treasure hoards, seeking out old allies and enemies or simply enjoying their travels before rising temperatures make most of the world too uncomfortably hot again. One might linger for a summer, making its lair atop a snow-capped mountain or in an alpine lake, but they are sure to retreat back to the Great Northern Wilderness, Northern Hinterlands, the Land of the Damned or Great Ice Shelf the next time the seasons change.

Like Ice Dragons, Winterserpents occupy an almost mythological place of reverence amongst northern races like the Wolfen, and, in particular, the Ice Bearmen, who see them as a living link to the great Winter Spirit that brings about the blessed change of seasons. Winterserpents reward their followers with simple enchantments, amulets, fine pieces of ivory and even the occasional Lesser Rune Weapon or powerful magic item from their collections. Unlike times past, when a Winterserpent might try to insinuate itself into Wolfen politics or interfere with human kingdoms like Bizantium, today most Winterserpents live reclusive lives amongst their natural element and prefer the adulation of the Ice Bearmen to the uncertain mix of jealousy, fear, awe and respect that they receive from most other humanoid species. To these favored worshipers and protectors, Winterserpents bestow gifts of magic weapons, usually large swords, axes, daggers and spears. The ancient Eoten knew of the Winterserpents and regarded them with both terror and admiration, and Bizantium's current crop of Serpent Chasers and sailors knows to steer well clear of these powerful dragons, who are far more intelligent and dangerous than the average sea serpent.



Winterserpent R.C.C.

Race: Dragon.

Alignment: Any, but lean toward Anarchist.

Attributes (adult): I.Q. 3D6+8, M.A. 2D6+12, M.E. 2D6+12, P.S. 2D6+28, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 2D6+16, P.B. 2D6+16, Spd 1D4x10+30 running or 2D6x10+50 flying; Supernatural P.S.

Attributes (hatchling): I.Q. 3D6+2, M.A. 2D6+6, M.E. 2D6+6, P.S. 2D6+14, P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 2D6+8, P.B. 2D6+8, Spd 3D6+30 running or 2D4x10 flying.

Size: 25-40 feet tall (7.6 to 12 m) on average. Up to 80 feet (24 m) long when full grown, half that for hatchlings. Can reduce its physical size by as much as 50% at will, and maintain the desired size for as long as desired.

Weight: 24-30 tons.

Natural A.R.: Adult: 14. Hatchling: 10.

Hit Points: Adult: 1D4x1,000 + P.E. attribute number. Hatchling: 1D4x100 + P.E. attribute number.

S.D.C.: Adult: 4D6x100. Hatchling: 4D6x10 plus 3D6 per level of experience.

P.P.E.: Adult: 2D4x100; Hatchling: 2D4x10 +10 per level of experience.

Horror Factor: Adult: 15. Hatchling: 10.

R.C.C. Skills: Hatchlings start with Basic and Advanced Math 98%, literate in Dragonese/Elven 98% and three other languages of choice, plus speaks five additional languages at 98%.

Other skills include Lore: Demons & Monsters (+20%), Lore: Faerie Folk (+10%), Gemology (+25%), Sculpting & Whittling (ice; +15%), as well as a total of 12 selections from

the following skill categories: Communications, Espionage, Military, Physical (other than hand to hand combat skills), Rogue, Scholar/Technical, Wilderness and Weapon Proficiencies. Skill proficiency depends on the level of experience (skill level should be the same as level of magic). Include I.Q. bonus (if any) to all skills.

Average Life Span: 6,000 years, but some have lived as long as 10,000. The dragon reaches full, adult maturity by the age of 1,000.

Level of Experience: Adult is 1D6+6 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. A hatchling is 1D4 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Hatchlings start with the Basic Math skills at 96% proficiency. Domestic skills, Advanced Math and all other skills start at first level proficiency.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), excellent color vision, breathe without air/underwater indefinitely, see the invisible, the Winterserpent is invisible while underwater at a distance of more than 15 feet (4.6 m), Bio-Regenerates 2D4+2 S.D.C./Hit Points per melee round, impervious to cold (does no damage, and even magic cold does no damage), metamorphosis at will (duration 4 hours per level of experience; 2 hours for hatchlings), teleport self 64%, dimensional teleport 24% +4% per level of experience, and all other dimensional powers, spells and knowledge common to most "true" dragons.

Aspect of Ice (special): Conducting the elemental powers of water through its body, a Winterserpent can temporarily become a creature of living ice. While in this form, the dragon's Armor Rating (A.R.) increases by two points; rising to 16 for adults and 12 for hatchlings. Lasts 2D6+2 minutes per level of experience, and can only be performed once every eight hours. While in Ice Form, the Winterserpent is buoyant and unable to swim beneath the surface of the water.

Icewater Breath Attack (special): The Winterserpent's breath "weapon" is actually a spray of water that freezes on contact. The dragon can leave a trail of slick ice behind it, encrust ships and buildings, or distract opponents with frozen armor and impending hypothermia. Affects one specific humanoid target (two if human-sized or smaller and standing within 4 feet/1.2 meters of each other). Ships whose sails are iced-over (freezing each sail counts as one attack), see their top speed cut by 50%, while enemies in armor receive an additional -10% penalty to move, swim and Prowl. Enemies not immune to the cold or not wearing waterproof clothing also have to roll to save vs magic or suffer the effects of magical hypothermia; -20% on all skills, reduce Spd by half, -1 melee attack and -2 on all combat rolls for 2D4 melee rounds.

Form of the Bear (special): At will, Winterserpents can take on the appearance and size of either an Ice Bearman, traditional Bearman (with streaks of gray and white in its brown fur), an ordinary looking white fur bear (polar bear), or a giant northern white bear (10-12 feet/3 to 3.6 m tall and 20-25 feet/6-7.6 m long). They use the Bearman form to walk amongst their chosen people – or other humanoids – and assume the appearance of a giant bear to travel the surface of the land without revealing its true nature as a dragon or terrifying people, to battle supernatural creatures and occasionally hibernate. Can assume bear or Ice Bearman form for four hours per level of experience, two for hatchlings.

Vulnerabilities and Weaknesses: Normal fire does its usual damage, while magic fire does double damage, including

flaming swords. Winterserpents are not physically injured by high temperatures, but become uncomfortable and distracted at any temperature above 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 C). Under these conditions they are -5% on all skills, -1 on Perception Rolls, -1 on initiative, and -1 to strike. Double those penalties at temperatures higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 C) and triple them in temps over 200 Fahrenheit (40 C).

Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): Hatchling: +1 on Perception Rolls, +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, and +2 on all other saving throws. Considered a Hatchling until 1,000 years old.

Adult: +1 on all Perception Rolls, +3 on Perception Rolls involving treasure, magic, dragons, Ice Bearmen, Iceborn and heat and cold, +3 on initiative, +3 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and +4 on all other saving throws.

Attacks per Melee: Adult: Seven physical attacks per melee, or four icewater breath and three physical, or two by magic. Prefer to fight using magic.

Hatchling: Four physical, or two physical and two by icewater breath, or four via magic only.

Damage: Varies with Supernatural P.S. The prehensile tail can be used to strike at its enemies like a whip. The tail does the same damage as a punch +2D6 additional points of damage. Or the dragon may use its breath, magic, or a weapon.

Magic (Adults and NPC hatchlings over 100 years old): Adult Winterserpents of 8th level or higher are likely to know ALL *Water Elemental Magic* (levels 1-8), Wizard magic levels 1-5, plus 2D6 of choice from levels 4-10, often favoring ice spells, or 2D6+2 Ocean Magic spells (make selections from those available to the Waterchanter). Dragons 14th level or higher know all Ocean Magic spells and Water Elemental magic, all spell magic levels 1-6 plus 3D4 additional higher spells. Winterserpents 20th level or higher will know all Wizard magic spells levels 1-12 plus 1D4 higher level spells!

Magic Knowledge of Hatchlings: Full understanding of magic, knows all Water Elemental magic levels 1-3, and can learn spells with the same ease and quickness of a first level Wizard. By 2nd level, the typical hatchling dragon will have learned 2D4 spells from levels 1-3, in addition to its innate Water Elemental magic. The hatchling can also intuitively use all types of magic devices, can read magic, use scrolls, and recognize magic circles and enchantment (the latter is at 40% +5% per level of experience). The hatchling can cast a maximum of two spells per level of experience.

Psionics: Adult: I.S.P. 2D6x10 + M.E. attribute number. An adult Winterserpent has all Sensitive and Physical psi-powers!

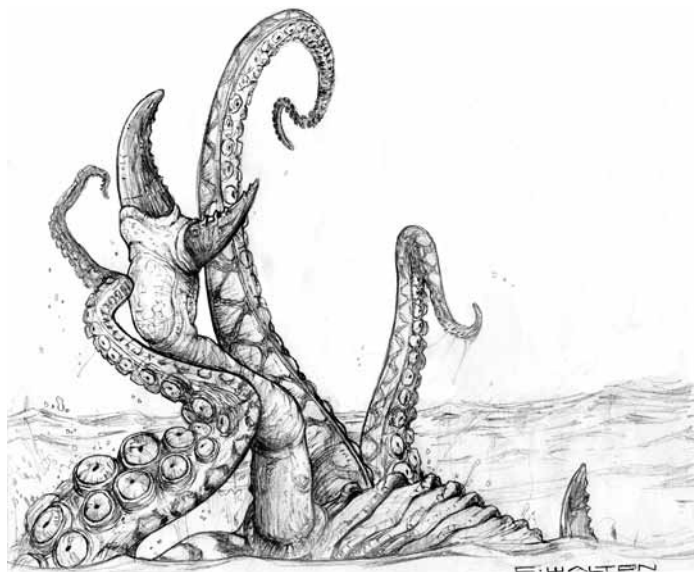
Hatchling: Minor Psychic. The player (or G.M.) can select a total of four psychic powers from either the Sensitive or Physical categories. Select an additional power from that psionic category at levels 3, 7 and 12. I.S.P.: 1D4x10 + M.E. attribute number.

Habitat: Tends to live alone on snow-capped mountains and coastlines in the North as long as they have easy access to water, and on the continent-sized Great Ice Shelf. The Winterserpent often makes its lair underwater, sometimes below sea ice. Journeys south are usually temporary, but dragons in search of solitude might take refuge atop cold, tall mountains

or amongst glaciers anywhere. Much more likely to go exploring during winter months.

Enemies: Winterserpents have few threats in their natural environment and see themselves as above the petty rivalries of humanoids. Their outlook is often relative to their followers; if the Ice Bearman tribe(s) that worship them are at odds with Iceborn, Wolfen, Coyles or other intelligent species, the Winterserpent will likely develop a prejudice against them. If it is the Wolfen who worship them, they will dislike humans, etc.

Allies: Many show an affinity for Frost Giants, Ice Pixies, Wolfen, Kankoran and Bearmen, particularly Ice Bearmen, who worship Winterserpents and Ice Dragons like gods.



Random Sea Monster Generator

The Sea of Despair, the Icy Ocean and to a much lesser degree, the Northern Sea have always been known as breeding grounds for sea serpents. These waters are full of huge, monstrous creatures, and some species seem to return regularly to mate, lay eggs or give birth to live young. These myriad animals only add to the peril faced by anyone who dares to travel through the treacherous waters that encircle the mysterious **Land of the Damned**. For centuries, Bizantians have speculated as to why the Sea of Despair is home to so many serpents. Some say those who control the Land of the Damned are breeding these creatures as “watchdogs of the sea.” Others claim that dimensional barriers within the Sea of Despair are weak, allowing the monsters to come in from other worlds. Then of course, there is the ancient saga of **Beastla; Queen of Monsters** and the mother of Od the All Father. Many traditional North Folk, superstitious sailors and country wives believe the serpents are *Beastla’s children*, searching for her, hoping to discover where Algor hid her away. Priests of Algor have attempted to communicate with the god to learn if there is any validity to these allegations, but he has so far been unwilling to share any insight on the matter, not even to his most dedicated followers. Regardless of how they got there, the Sea of Despair and the northern waters around it are populated by some very unique and strange sea creatures.

1. Sea Monsters: The Basics

All species of sea serpents can breathe underwater and have basic underwater navigation and sensory abilities. Sea serpents start with the following basic stats unless otherwise noted:

Attributes: I.Q. 2D4, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+18, P.P. 2D6+4, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 1D6, Spd 2D6+24 (in water). Not likely to be able to travel on land.

Hit Points: 3D6x10.

S.D.C.: See *Body Type*, below.

Natural A.R.: See below.

P.P.E.: 6D6

Natural Abilities: Swim 98%, dive up to 1,000 feet (305 m), breathe underwater indefinitely, nightvision 300 feet (91.4 m) and can see in murky water, and maximum depth tolerance is unlimited.

Attacks per Melee: See below.

Damage: Unless otherwise stated, bite does 3D6 damage, head butt: 2D6, tail slash or tentacle or claw swipe: 3D6, ram: 4D6, full speed ram: 1D6x10.

Bonuses: +2 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge, and +2 on *all* saving throws.

Psionics: 1D4 sensitive psychic abilities, all at second level proficiency: 6D6+10 I.S.P.

Additional Features and Abilities: Roll once (or pick one) on each of the following tables to complete your sea monster.

2. Body Type or Appearance

01-10% Humanoid/Bipedal: Two legs, feet, arms, and hands. A.R. 8, S.D.C.: 3D4x10, Size: 16+2D6 feet (5.5-8.5 m) tall. Three attacks per melee round, +1 to strike and +2 to parry; and can walk on dry land (Spd 2D6+2) and can breathe air for 1D4 hours before needing to return to the sea.

11-20% Large Fish (Tuna, Mackerel, Sailfish, Swordfish, etc.): A.R. 8, S.D.C.: 2D4x10, Size: 40+3D6 feet (13-17.6 m) long. Two attacks per melee round and +2 to dodge in water.

21-30% Sea Snake: A.R.: 10, S.D.C.: 2D6x10, Size: 2D6x10+30 feet (15-45.7 m) and is a true “serpent” with scales. Two attacks per melee round and +1 to dodge in water and on land.

31-40% Tiger Shark or Great White Shark: A.R. 8, S.D.C.: 1D4x100, Size: 1D4x10+30 feet (12–21 m). Three attacks per melee round and +2 to strike and dodge in water. Full Strength Bite: 1D6x10.

41-50% Dolphin or Porpoise: A.R. 7, S.D.C.: 3D4x10, Size: 3D6+15 feet (5.5-10 m) long. Two attacks per melee round and +2 to parry and dodge in water.

51-55% Sea Turtle: A.R. 10, S.D.C.: 3D6x10, Size: 1D4x10+10 feet (6-15 m) long. Two attacks per melee round.

56-60% Manta Ray: A.R. 7, S.D.C.: 3D4x10, Size: 2D6+20 feet (6.7-9.7 m) long. Two attacks per melee round.

61-65% Giant Lobster or Crab: A.R. 12, S.D.C.: 4D6x10, Size: 3D6+30 feet long (10-14.6 m). Three attacks per melee round and +2 to strike, parry, and dodge in water.

66-70% Crocodile: A.R. 9, S.D.C.: 4D6x10, Size: 2D6+30 feet (9.7-12.8 m). Two attacks per melee round, +1 to strike and bite damage is +4.

71-75% Sea Lion or Walrus: A.R. 7, S.D.C.: 3D4x10, Size: 2D6+20 feet (6.7-9.7 m). Two attacks per melee round and +1 to strike.

76-84% Giant Squid or Octopus: A.R. 7, S.D.C.: 4D4x10, Size: 1D4x10+20 feet (9-18 m). Four attacks per melee round and +8 to parry (2D4+2 tentacles).

85-90% Penguin/Aquatic Bird: A.R. 6, S.D.C.: 2D6x10, Size: 2D6+20 feet (6.7-9.7 m) long. Two attacks per melee round, +1 to strike and +100 feet (30.5 m) on its dives.

91-95% Seahorse: A.R. 8, S.D.C.: 2D6x10, Size: 1D4x10+5 feet (4.5-13.7 m) long. Two attacks per melee round and +2 to dodge.

96-00% Other: G.M.’s choice of any kind of strange creature, bear, sea lamprey, whale, deep-sea fish, or aquatic or surface animal. May not be similar to anything else seen on the Palladium world. **In the alternative, it is an Oarfish or Eel body:** A.R. 9, S.D.C.: 2D6x10, Size: 2D4x10+20 feet (12.2 to 30.57 m). Two attacks per melee round and +2 to dodge in water.

3. Number of Heads

01-70%: One.

71-85%: Two, +1 additional attack per melee round.

86-96%: Three, +2 additional attacks per melee round.

97-00%: Four, +3 additional attacks per melee round.

4. Type of Heads

Roll (or select) once to determine the head of the sea monster. It can be completely different from its body. If the monster has multiple heads, they will either all be the same type or roll percentile for each (G.M.’s choice). Two or three different heads creates a sort of *Sea Chimera*.

01-35%: Same as body type.

36-40%: Fish (any type).

41-45%: Tiger Shark or Great White Shark.

46-50%: Squid or Cuttlefish.

51-55%: Lobster or Shrimp.

56-60%: Turtle.

61-65%: Seahorse.

66-70%: Crocodile or Snake/Reptilian.

71-75%: Eel or Lamprey.

76-80%: Sea Lion or Walrus.

81-85%: Hammerhead Shark

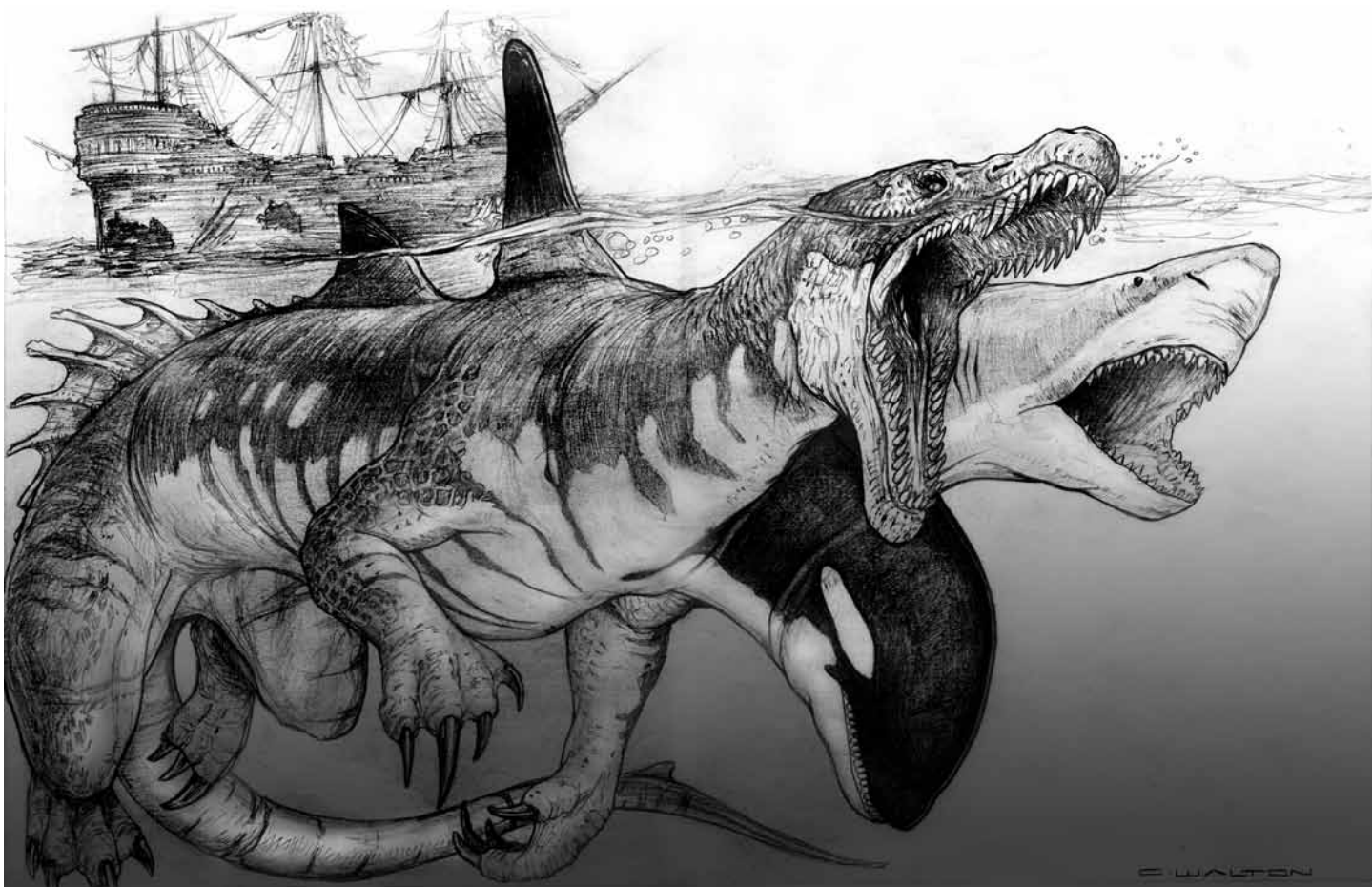
86-90%: Dolphin or Killer Whale.

91-95%: Humanoid (50% look relatively normal/50% look monstrous).

96-00% Other: G.M.’s choice of any kind of strange critter, polar bear, penguin, whale, deep-sea fish, or any aquatic or surface animal.

5. Intelligence & Aggression

01-10% Basic Human Intelligence: I.Q. 1D4+9. This “animal” displays human-like levels of intelligence and understanding. Its perspective and instincts may make it difficult for it to understand humanoids, and communication will be nearly impossible without Telepathy, but this is a thinking being that weighs options and uses stealth, strategy and tactics before acting. This makes it the most dangerous and unpredictable sea serpent type to engage in combat.



11-30% Near-Human Intelligence: I.Q. 1D4+8 and an intellect similar to dolphins, this sea monster demonstrates a level of thinking and perception that is uncommon in animals. It recognizes patterns and specific monsters and people, types of people, prey, predators/enemies, weapons and danger; uses stealth and basic strategies.

31-50% High Animal Intelligence: I.Q. 1D4+6; while still an animal, this sea monster is capable of learning patterns and hunting strategies, and may cautiously study potential prey (including ships) before attacking.

51-70% Medium Animal Intelligence: I.Q. 1D4+4; this is a creature that uses instinct as well as limited learned behavior.

71-00% Low Animal Intelligence: I.Q. 1D4; this is a predator that operates on a level of instinct and brute strength. Otherwise dull-witted and may try to eat just about anything, but gives up on prey that is too big or puts up too much of a fight or proves to be too elusive.

6. Additional Appendages

All are in proportion to the size of the creature.

01-20% 1D6 Tentacles: Each pair adds one attack per melee round, +1 on initiative and +1 to parry.

21-40% Pair of Arms: Arms with clawed hands or webbed fingers. If the creature already has arms, this is a second set. Adds two attacks per melee round.

41-50% Spiked, Prehensile Tail: A muscular tail, at least half the length of the body; +2D6 damage to tail swipe and +1 to parry.

51-60% 1D4 Horns: Cranial horns/spines used for stabbing and impaling; +1D6 damage to head butt/ram attack.

61-71% Crab Claws: Heavy, armored claws that do 4D6 damage per strike. +1 attack per melee round and +2 to parry.

72-80% Fish Tail or Extra Fins: Fins and flippers that add to maneuverability underwater; +2 to dodge, +12 to the creature's normal speed attribute.

81-90% 1D4 Antennae: Long sensor appendages that can detect minute changes in the salinity (salt) and chemical components of the water. This enables the creature to identify blood, whale oil, wine, etc. that has entered the water. Identify chemicals by taste: 68% and track by taste: 64%. Range: One mile (1.6 km).

91-00% Giant Maw: With 1D6 tentacles used for swallowing prey whole. Each pair adds one attack per melee and +1 to strike.

7. Features & Abilities

01-10% Natural Water Magic Abilities: Select a total of 1D4+2 magic spells from levels 1-4. May be Water Elemental spells, Ocean Magic spells or any water or ice/cold related magic. Gets an extra 1D6+10 P.P.E. bonus.

11-16% Natural Wizard Magic Abilities: Select a total of 1D4+3 Wizard spells from levels 1-4. Gets an extra 1D6+6 P.P.E. bonus.

17-20% Silent: Prowl 80%, +2 on initiative, does a critical strike (double damage) from sneak attack or strike from behind.

21-30% Shark Teeth: The mouth is filled with razor sharp, shark-like teeth (for each head) and bite does +1D6 extra damage. If the creature has naturally sharp teeth, they are extra large and inflict +3D6 extra points of damage.

31-40% Breath Attack: Breathe Fire: 4D6 damage. Range: 90 feet (27.4 m). This fire attack can be used only once per melee, but counts as an *extra* melee attack.

41-50% Incredible Swimming Speed: Up to 60 mph (96 km; 52 knots) on the surface of water, 50 mph (80 km; 43.5 knots) underwater.

51-60% Regeneration: Recovers 2D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per melee round.

61-70% Heightened Senses: In the water it can detect blood and other chemical scents, garbage, ships, dead bodies, schools of fish, and other sea monsters at a range of 5 miles (8 km) and track them to their source with an 80% proficiency. Can smell scents in the air at a range of one mile (1.6 km) with a 60% proficiency to track them.

71-80% Breath Attack: Poisonous Vapors: Toxic fumes that cause 3D6 damage to everyone who breathes them in unless they save vs poisoned 14 or higher. Roll to save once. A failed roll means damage for every melee round exposed to the vapors. Range: 50 feet (15.2 m). Area Effect: Vapors fill a 20 foot (6 m) area. The vapor lingers for two melee rounds before dissipating. A vapor attack can be performed only once per melee round and uses up one of the monster's attacks.

81-90% Camouflage Self: This creature can change its body color and patterns to completely match and blend in with its surrounding environment (sand, coral, rocks, cave walls, seaweed, shipwreck, shadows, etc.) in the blink of an eye (counts as one melee attack). When not moving or moving very slowly (Spd 5 or less), to see the monster one must be specifically looking for it or danger, and needs to roll percentile dice and get 88-100 to realize the monster is present and lurking. +2 on initiative and +1 to strike when prey swims right within quick striking range. This ability is common to octopi, cuttlefish, and seahorses.

91-95% Empathic: Limited psionic powers including Telepathy (4), Empathy (4) and Empathic Transmission (6). I.S.P.: 1D6x10+20 points and equal to a third level psychic.

96-00% Super Regeneration: The creature regenerates 4D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per melee round, and grows back eyeballs, severed limbs, its tail and appendages within 3D4 days!

8. Strange Abilities Table

01-10% Insatiable Hunger: Needs to consume massive amounts of food in order to survive. Very aggressive; +1 to initiative.

11-20% Warlock Magic: Select 1D6 Water Warlock spells from levels 1-4. The creature uses these spells mainly when hunting, fighting or cornered. 3D4x10 P.P.E.

21-30% Garbage Eater: Can metabolize virtually anything, including wooden planks, fishing nets and cloth sails to spoiled food, dead bodies, bone, scales, leather armor and clothing. Favorite foods include flesh and blubber of all kinds, bones, plants, leather, cloth, rubber and paper. The only things it cannot eat are rocks, gems, stones, clay, metals, and ceramic compounds. The creature seems to have a knack for finding and eating the most valuable item(s) first, and there is no telling what might be found in this sea serpent's stomach.

31-40% Bad Luck Aura: Something about this creature disrupts focus and concentration so that anyone within 60 feet (18.3 m) is -2 on all die rolls. Effect remains for 1D4 melee rounds after the creature leaves the area.

41-50% Obsessive Imprint: The creature will choose to imprint itself on a particular person (ideally a player character), ship or other sea creature, and follow him/it around for the next 2D6

days! After that, it will choose something new, possibly the same person, but likely somebody or something new. All it does is follow the object of its obsession and observe it/him. It will neither attack or defend the subject of its attraction, although it may leave "gifts" like dead seals, fish, dolphins, a half-eaten carcass, a part from a ship, or worthless (and smelly) items found at the bottom of the sea. Its presence is likely to scare away fish and sea life for fear the monster will eat them, which could be bad news for fishing and whaling operations. Or it could attack predators that usually prey upon it, or another sea monster who sees it as a rival and attacks it and anyone who gets in the way. That could lead to collateral damage to ships and a battle and bloodletting into the water that will attract many sharks and possibly sea serpents. **Note:** If the monster is attacked or feels threatened, it will fiercely defend itself, even against the object of its attraction.

51-60% Magic Sponge: The sea serpent's body soaks up magical energies. The creature is not immune to magic, but is +6 to save vs magic and magic weapons and magic attacks (Fireballs, Call Lightning, Shards of Ice, etc.) inflict half damage. If there is a duration, penalties or side-effects, they too are reduced by half. As bad as that may sound, what's worse is that the monster is attracted to beings with high levels of mystical energy/P.P.E. and targets them as its preferred prey – Men of Magic, Faerie Folk, dragons, certain sea creatures, godlings and gods, as well as powerful magic items that it may swallow whole.

61-70% Giant: The sea monster is 2D4x10% bigger and heavier than usual for a creature of its kind. Add 2D6x10 to S.D.C. and 1D6x10+20 to Hit Points, but reduce normal speed by half. This also means it eats twice as much as normal.

71-80% Spasmodic Shape-changer: Every six hours the creature's shape changes into a new variation of itself: shrinks or grows 1D4x10%, is covered in blotches or boils, changes color, spines appear or disappear, teeth grow or shrink, mucus drips from its nose and eyes or slime drools from the mouth. The metamorphosis takes one minute and is such an ugly sight that a save versus a Horror Factor of 16 must be made. Each transformation is unique and equally terrible to look at.

81-90% Stinks: Natural secretions from body oils create a repugnant odor that cannot be stopped, covered or disguised. The odor can be smelled within a 500 foot (152 m) radius in the air and 4,000 foot (1,219 m) radius underwater. The repugnant smell tends to keep other predators away; sneak attacks are impossible. Those who fight the monster are -1 melee attack, -1 on all combat moves, and -10% on the performance of skills due to the nauseating stench and the watering eyes, assaulted senses and waves of nausea it inflicts.

91-00% Psychopathic Killer: The creature is a killing machine that hunts for the fun and challenge, not just to eat. Though it hunts all kinds of animals, it favors intelligent beings, which means humanoids, Faerie Folk like Selkies, Mermaids and Merrows, Kreeelok, Water Bats, Flying Turtles, and even dragons and sea monsters that have high I.Q.s or great power. This man-killer cannot be reasoned with and especially loves stalking humanoid prey on ships and coastlines. When it is not sleeping, it spends most of its time hunting, maiming, torturing, and killing its next victim. This is likely to be a cunning, treacherous beast capable of feigning injury or death to lure its victims to it, as well as using stealth and basic strategies and tactics. +2 on Perception Roll pertaining to stalking, tracking, hunting and killing, +1 on initiative, +3 to pull punch/bite, and +8 to save vs Horror Factor.

Sea of Despair Animal Mutations

The Sea of Despair is home to the largest concentration of freakish monsters, sea serpents and abominations in the world. Even the heavily populated Sea of Dread and Icy Ocean pale in comparison to the sheer quantity of aquatic nightmares within the Sea of Despair. Unfortunately, most sea life born in and around the Sea of Despair exhibits strange, magic-induced mutations. Sea mammals and intelligent life forms generally don't seem to be affected, but sharks, rays, some deep-sea fish, octopus, squid, eel, and crustaceans (crab, lobster, etc.) are susceptible. Sea monsters originating from here often have one of the following properties (pick one or roll percentile dice).

Note: There is a 01-13% chance that the sea monster will have two of the abilities listed below (pick two or roll percentile dice, ignore repeat rolls). Giantism and Excessive Giantism cannot be added together, select a different mutation or roll again.

01-10% Predator: A normally passive creature becomes aggressive and territorial. +1 to initiative, +1 to strike, +1 attack per melee, +3 additional points of damage to all attacks. It can detect blood in the water up to two miles (3.2 km) away.

11-25% Giantism: Double the normal size with twice the normal S.D.C. and 50% more Hit Points. The creature inflicts +1D6 additional points of damage in any of its normal attacks.

26-40% Excessive Giantism: Four times larger than normal with four times the S.D.C. and double the Hit Points. The creature inflicts triple the listed damage from any of its physical attacks.

41-55% Super-Healing: Bio-Regenerates 1D4x10 S.D.C./Hit Points per melee round and will regrow any lost limbs, appendages, eyes, teeth, legs and tail within 1D6 days!

56-70% Legs/Ground Locomotion: The sea monster has limbs to climb onto land and has decent speed, but can only stay out of the water for 2D6 minutes. Spd on land is 1D6+6.

71-80% Magic Resistant: Takes half-damage from magic attacks.

81-90% Flyer: Can float through the air on wind currents (wind direction and speed determines its speed and course) or can fly under its own power at 2D6+12 miles per hour (22 to 38 km). However, it needs to return to the sea after 1D6+4 minutes and cannot take flight again for at least one minute (four melee rounds).

91-00% Intelligent and Speaks: This monster has at least a basic human intelligence, magically understands and speaks all languages at 75% comprehension and likes to sing, whistle and/or hum loudly (carrying on the wind for 1D4 miles/1.6 to 6.4 km), all at a 90% skill level. It is usually cunning and duplicitous, and likes to lead humanoids into danger of all kind. It understands concepts like money and bartering, as well as human greed and emotions, what drives them and how to appeal to them, and may try to manipulate humanoids with promises of treasure, adventure and other rewards. It may also try to hire people to go on quests and missions for it, using loot, weapons and goods it has salvaged from sunken ships. Such beasts are usually jealous of dragons and like to seem them captured, tortured or cause their deaths.

Note: Do not use the mental attributes listed at the beginning of this section, replace them with the following: **I.Q.** 2D6+9 human intelligence, awareness and understanding, **M.E.** 1D6+14, **M.A.** 1D6+16 (charming and manipulative) and possesses the **psionic powers** of Death Trance (1), Meditation (0), Object Read (6), Telepathy (4) and Bio-Manipulation. **I.S.P.:** 2D4x10 +M.E. attri-

bute number, and may know 2D4 human skills or 1D4+2 Wizard (selected from levels 1-4) or Ocean Magic spells (any). **P.P.E.** Bonus: 2D4x10+20.

The Iceborn

Those who brave the Northern Sea are well aware of its icy winds, sudden storms, unpredictable currents and unexplained phenomena. Yet of all the strange sights on the sea there is one threat that every fisherman, sailor, and ship's captain fears the most; the *Iceborn*.

Striking down from the Great Ice Shelf and the iceberg-filled seas that surround it, the **Iceborn** are an ancient people. One of the *Forgotten Races*, they are known only in legend and rumor to most scholars and people outside the Northern Islands and the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness. To the whalers and sailors of Bizantium, however, the Iceborn are very real, inhuman butchers who strike in the dead of night, climbing aboard ships and slaughtering entire crews. When a *ghost ship* is found floating down from northern waters, stripped of everything of value, blood splashed across the decks, not a living soul aboard, it is said to have fallen prey to the Iceborn. Seasoned captains and battle-hardened Marines offer up quiet prayers to Algor whenever such a gruesome discovery is made. Such ghost ships are said to be cursed, and even the most eager Bizantian salvager and pirate will burn the hulk rather than try to recover it.

Even more terrifying than a night raid is the sight of a **Necroilus**, the hideous ships and floating villages of the death-worshipping Iceborn. Made from the corpses of sea serpents, each Necroilus has been hollowed out, preserved with magic, and adorned with bones and serpent skins to turn it into a warship and floating habitation. The head and body of the dead sea serpent is used like a massive puppet, swimming with their tails and fins and lunging out to attack the ships of men. The serpent body and various corpses used to make the ship are controlled by dark magic spells and devoid of any will of their own, monstrous creations of **Necromancy** and sheer butchery.

The Iceborn live at sea onboard their cadaverous sea serpent ships and come to shore only to raid, rob, and slaughter coastal communities. They are seldom interested in buying or selling slaves, trade or plunder, or in any form of negotiation. The Iceborn are guided solely by their impulse to capture, consume, and reuse the uneaten parts of any living thing they meet. Necromancy is at the heart of their society, and is their source of magic and spiritual beliefs. All things are reused, nothing goes to waste. Death is merely a source of food, raw materials and replacement parts.

Iceborn aboard their Necroilus prowl the northernmost waters around the **Great Ice Shelf**, but sometimes venture down to strike at the ships and the coastal towns of Bizantium, the Northern Islands and the Wolfen Empire along the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness. It is said that they are amongst the very few who can sail through the **Sea of Despair**. Legends even claim that the Iceborn are so skilled and brazen that they dare to raid the monster-filled coastal towns of the **Land of the Damned** and live to tell the tale. According to these legends, they are unafraid of



any mortal enemy, and enjoy battles with demons and monsters – more challenging opponents than mere mortals.

The world of the Iceborn is a militaristic, hierarchical culture. Though their existence may seem chaotic to an outsider, there is structure and order, a chain of command that is difficult to recognize through their acts of barbarism. They are savage, brutal and primal, but have their own bizarre forms of social behavior and cooperation. A tribe is organized enough to act purposefully, and these monstrous pirate-nomads have become master sailors on some of the world's most dangerous oceans. The Iceborn show absolute loyalty toward each other, or at least to members of their own crew. **The supreme leader** of each tribe is the ship's captain. His words are never doubted, never questioned, nor defied. Failure to obey results in death. The Iceborn respect power and ferocity, even more so than Orcs, but they refuse to follow anyone other than one of their own, with the exception of dark gods and possibly Greater Demons.

Female Iceborn have a smaller, slighter build with a surprisingly feminine face, but have the same pointed ears, pale, icy blue eyes (seemingly empty from a distance), sharp, pointed teeth, physical size and lust for brutality and savagery. Unlike the males who shave their heads of all or most of their hair, most females grow their wiry hair into a long, scraggly mane, and have long, claw-like fingernails. As they age, Iceborn women put on

weight, lose or shave their hair, and develop jowls, making many indistinguishable from the males. Almost all females exclusively devote themselves to witchcraft, making them just as abhorrent as the male warriors who swarm aboard merchant ships and carry off their crews. Perhaps even more so, for female Iceborn have no qualms about selling their souls or their firstborn in exchange for *magic powers*, so instinctive is the pact process and allegiance to dark supernatural forces. Another reason for the living to shun them.

Iceborn spend their entire lives at sea and trekking across ice floes; their feet barely know the feel of dry land or grass. The only reason Iceborn come ashore is to sack coastal villages and settlements, to capture humanoids, livestock or monsters for slaves or food. Once all humanoids and domestic animals are carried off to be imprisoned for slavery, to be eaten at a later time, or murdered and consumed on the spot, the Iceborn often leave the vessel or village intact as it was — eerily devoid of the living but otherwise mostly untouched. This is somewhat of a trademark of the Iceborn; to leave a vessel or ghost ship or ghost town empty, with no clue of what may have happened to the occupants. This is often a calculated strategy to create an atmosphere of terror and mystery, especially when they first begin a series of raids in a particular region. Other times they display their ire and savagery by ransacking and looting the place, and take every living soul with

them – or slaughter every last man, woman and child – and sometimes burn the settlement to the ground and move on. Wholesale slaughter or razing a village is either done to make a statement or inflicted upon those the Iceborn hate most.

Back in their shipboard quarters, deep within the bodies of Necroilus serpent ships, skeletal remains are turned into tools and weapons, skins (including those of people) sewn into clothes, and organs preserved for later use. They have no need for ports or dry-docks. Whatever repairs become necessary are made by the warriors and Skinbinder witches using bones as nails and skins and preserved flesh as building materials. Other portions are created via the dark magic of **Necromancy**. The lucky captives are locked away in food pens, killed and eaten within a matter of weeks. The less fortunate are used as slaves and forced to work like mules until they drop from exhaustion or frequent torture. When they can no longer serve their wicked masters properly, they are slain, butchered and eaten. Others are repeatedly raped before being turned into slaves or a meal. Few humanoid captives, be they human, Elf, Orc or Wolfen, survive longer than a few (1D6) months. Many take their own lives and those of their loved ones, rather than endure such brutality.

Everything required by Iceborn society is onboard their ships and what they do not possess they take by force. Land dwellers, undersea races, monsters and sea life are nothing but resources to be pillaged and exploited. The Iceborn are not interested in widening their scope of knowledge, nor the acquisition of wealth or power. They are scavenging predators who live off other people, instinctive fighters and seafarers who know what they need to survive and ensure the perpetuation of the tribe. Despite their lack of education, they are masters of the open seas, equal to the experienced Bizantian sailors and bred to fight and survive under the harshest conditions.

Iceborn technology consists of the non-consumable parts from those they hunt, slay, cannibalize, or find floating dead in the water. They rely almost exclusively on the bones, teeth, blood, guts, sinew and hides of humanoids, sea serpents, monsters, sharks, whales, seals and other animals, although some tools are made out of worked stone. Their clothing and footwear are made from animal and humanoid skins, sewn together using bone needles and threads made from viscera.

In battle, the Iceborn seem to favor close combat, although they are fully capable of using projectile weapons and magic. Typically, they fight as a single unit, hardly ever engaging opponents one-on-one. The entire group will rush forward in an attempt to overwhelm their enemies in a deadly charge with bone blades and melee weapons. If no weapons are available, they will claw and bite their foes with bare hands and teeth. Utterly fearless, the Iceborn fight to the death and until they are wiped out. Death is not to be feared, but embraced; in the end, victory is always attained through sacrifice and loss. With Necromancy so prevalent in their society, giving one's bones, flesh, or corpse to the tribe is viewed as a final contribution to the tribe/crew.

As pirates, Iceborn do prize the possessions of others, and covet that which does not come from the dead, especially metal weapons, gold and jewels. A metal weapon or object is a status symbol, marking an individual's position within the tribe/crew. Magic weapons are even more valued. The male Captains/chiefs and female Sea Witches generally have the best metal and magic weapons or items. Iceborn have no way of recognizing a weapon's quality other than to strike an opponent; weapons that kill

with a single blow are regarded as more valuable. As such, magic weapons with special properties are likely never to be discovered, unless their magic property is obvious (such as a flaming sword), or demonstrated and taught specifically to the Iceborn.

Though outsiders as nearby as the Eastern Territory believe the Iceborn to be the stuff of myth and legend, the **Kingdom of Bizantium** is well aware of the existence of the Iceborn. The King may pretend otherwise, especially to visiting outsiders, but everyone knows a blood-splattered ghost ship is the result of an Iceborn raid. (Such *ghost ships* are left behind because the Iceborn have little use for flimsy ships and boats made of wood, and rarely take nor even burn them, preferring to leave them adrift to sow terror and mystery amongst their civilized neighbors.) Bizantian soldiers, sailors, scholars, and holy men, as well as the traditional North Folk and Wolfen, know the stories, and know the monsters are real.

Unofficially, Bizantium has been at war with the Iceborn race for at least the last 500 years. Many of the sagas of old tell of an army of "man-beasts" called *the Horde*. The Horde always comes by sea to conquer and slaughter the people of the North. While the name Iceborn is never directly used, the descriptions do seem to fit. In one saga, a dark mage named *Zelru Aooz* unites the Horde under his sole authority in a bid to conquer the Seven Isles of the Eoten. Tens of thousands of Eoten warriors fought them on the Isle of Torn, and though the Horde was ultimately defeated, the city of Valsk was sacked and brought to ruin. Another saga proclaims the Horde drove the North Folk from the islands and forced them to seek asylum on the shore of the Dragon Claw. Bizantian scholars debate the authenticity of many of these stories, passed on by oral tradition, due to the lack of archeological evidence of an Iceborn occupation on any of the Northern isles. However, while few Bizantians speak of them, most everyone believes the Iceborn are real, exist to this day, and could attack at any time.

The Bizantian Navy is ordered to seek and destroy Iceborn and their Necroilus vessels on sight. Some commanders are especially vigilant after receiving a reported sighting of the sea serpent ships, but others dismiss the rumors until they are unfortunate enough to have an encounter of their own. Countless times, Bizantian sailors and Marines have come to the aid of humanoid settlements and merchant ships after the Iceborn have been spotted in the general vicinity. Sadly, they often show up too late, finding only ghost ships or smoldering ruins and trails of blood leading down to the water's edge. When a vessel in northern waters vanishes, especially on a calm sea, it is usually assumed the Iceborn are responsible.

Male Iceborn R.C.C.

NPC Villain and Monster

Iceborn as an "Optional" Player Character Note: The Iceborn may be used as a Player Character *only if* the Game Master allows it. If he or she says no, please accept that decision. Iceborn Player Characters are those who have been abandoned or rejected by their people. Alignment can be any, but traditionally evil. A *non-evil alignment* may very well be the reason for being kicked out of an Iceborn tribe (Anarchist, Unprincipled and Scrupulous are most likely), but the character might have been lost at sea as an infant or very young child, and raised by nurturing and kind people. Or expulsion may have been the result of cowardice (a

huge sin amongst the Iceborn) or being too merciful, an affair with a leader's woman, an act of betrayal or treachery, to chronic failure to fall in line and obey the hierarchy, questioning too much (a more advanced thinker), or due to illness, insanity or other perceived weakness. Those deemed to be "weak" are often placed on an ice floe and left at sea.

Those rare Iceborn of *good alignment* and unwilling to kill and consume other intelligent beings will eventually be exiled and likely to be regarded as mentally ill or weak, or both. However, all Iceborn characters, even with a good alignment, remain aggressive and quick to violence, making it difficult to adapt to any civilized society. Most are chaotic beings who rebel against rules, laws, order and authority figures. The knee-jerk reaction of most Iceborn is to resolve misunderstandings with violence, even over a small offense. They are roughnecks at play and don't realize their own strength. All tend to be vicious when angered and their idea of "mercy" may be a quick death. Selfish and Aberrant Player Characters may work with their friends and accept the idea of civilization as a whole, but still have no problem eating their opponents, as well as discarded corpses, road kill, rotten meat and the raw flesh of game animals. An Iceborn Player Character living among other people as anything other than a slave in chains will be looked down upon by all other Iceborn as tainted and unfit even for consumption; the ultimate insult.

Alignment (Males): Diabolic (76%), Miscreant (11%), Anarchist (10%), Aberrant (2%), other (1%). Iceborn do not see anything wrong with killing, eating people, and torturing other humanoids and intelligent creatures. All Iceborn feast on the flesh of those they slay and give their bodies to the Iceborn Skinbinders to use them to feed the children, their skin and bones used as tools and building materials.

Male Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+3, M.E. 2D6+6, M.A. 1D6+3, P.S. 2D6+11, P.P. 2D6+8, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 1D6+3, Spd 2D6+10 running, 2D6+14 swimming.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +1D6+3 per level of experience.

S.D.C.: 1D4x10+40 as well as those gained from physical skills.

Natural A.R.: 14

Average P.P.E.: 4D6 for the typical male Iceborn.

Horror Factor: 10 for a single Iceborn, 13 in groups of five or more.

Physical Appearance: The male Iceborn are stocky, thickly muscled humanoids with rubbery, leathery seal- or whale-like skin and a subcutaneous layer of fat that keeps them warm in cold weather and icy waters. Skin color is white or whitish-grey with hues of green and a touch of pink around the eyes, mouths and the palms of their hands. Some have patches of stringy, black hair on the head, though many males keep their heads shaved. Most females have a long, scraggly mane. Their face is menacing, with sharp, pointed canine teeth, sagging jowls that overhang their jaw, large pointed ears and small, deep-set, pale blue eyes that almost look white and empty until one gets very close. They like to pierce their noses, ears, and faces with bits of bone and jewelry made of bone, and adorn their bodies with teeth, tusks and skulls. Their clothing is minimal, other than a few furs around their neck and lower legs, or worn as a short cloak. Iceborn also wear "plates" made of animal hides, humanoid skin and bone to protect their shoulders, forearms, and legs, as well as strips of leather, pieces of

netting, and, of course, gloves or bits of clothing or adornment that utilize animal hides and/or human flesh sewn into it.

Size: 6 feet, 5 inches to 7 feet, 6 inches (2 to 2.3 m) tall.

Weight: 170-300 lbs (76.5 to 135 kg).

Average Lifespan: 80+ years is possible, but most Iceborn males die before they reach 35, particularly Raiders.

Experience Level: 1D6 for most male Raiders, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters should start at level one.

Natural Abilities: Superior physical strength and endurance, good speed, natural swimmers (88% +1 per level of experience), can hold their breath underwater for 1D6+9 minutes, depth tolerance is an impressive 600 feet (183 m), Nightvision 600 feet (183 m), and can smell the scent of death or recognize the scent of fellow Iceborn up to one mile away (1.6 km) on land or three miles (4.8 km) at sea. Impervious to normal cold (magic cold does full damage), immune to disease, can eat raw flesh and rotting meat without ill effect; in fact they prefer raw meat and are resistant to most toxins and magic (see high P.E. attribute and its bonuses).

The Iceborn communicate in a guttural, ancient dialect of Elven (85%), as well as with grunts, growls, howls, yells, and hundreds of facial expressions. How exactly an Iceborn Captain is able to command his crew/tribe as a functioning unit is baffling to most humans.

O.C.C.s Available to the Iceborn: Males are generally *Iceborn Raiders* (warriors and hunters) or *Iceborn Captains* (Necromancers and Leaders), but some are full-blown *Necromancers* (2%) and *Assassins* (5%).

Magic: Only via Captain and Necromancer O.C.C.s.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: Everyone. Humans, Elves, Titans, Dwarves, and the Canine races are at the top of their hate list (human flesh is a favorite), but everyone is a potential enemy. The Iceborn hate (and fear) *Algor the Sea God* and destroy all symbols or depictions of him. They also despise all people who worship him, delighting in their suffering, enslavement and destruction. That puts the people of Bizantium and the canine people of the Great Northern Wilderness as Enemies Number One and Number Two. They even dislike dolphins, whales, Ice Bearmen, Merrows and Faerie Folk.

Allies: Namely Iceborn. On occasion, they are willing to work with and even temporarily serve intelligent undead like vampires, powerful Necromancers, dark gods and select demons, provided it serves their own agenda or promotes the suffering and slaughter of the beings they loathe.

Habitat: As nomads, Iceborn are constantly roaming the seas of the North in their dead serpent ships. They are most likely to be found in the *Icy Ocean* and on and around the *Great Ice Shelf*. When the murderous nomads travel South, they may be encountered in the *Northern Sea*, *Sea of Despair*, *Algorian Sea* and the *Sea of Dread*.

Favorite Weapons: Bone knives, clubs, harpoons, tridents and spears, usually magically hardened to be equal to stone or steel weapons.



Iceborn Raider O.C.C.

Iceborn Raiders might be thought of as the evil twin of Bizantium's Marines. The average Iceborn tribesman is part warrior, part sailor, and part butcher – monsters that plunder ships and live only to kill and maim other species. In their typical day to day existence aboard a Necroilus, they serve as the crew and defenders of the ship, keeping away live sea serpents, spearing seals and walrus they find in the water, chopping up and processing whale blubber and the bodies of humanoid captives used for food and building materials.

When it comes time to launch raids and attacks, Iceborn Raiders engage in the heaviest fighting, boarding ships, raiding villages, carrying off captives and protecting Necromancers and Sea Witches while they use their dark magic to help in battle. Raiders are extremely proficient with knives, swords, spears and clubs (usually spiked), but equally deadly with their bare hands and happy to rip out throats and bite with their canine-like teeth and powerful jaws.

Combat tactics are more sophisticated than most “civilized” men give them credit for, which give Iceborn Raiders a decided advantage. Though brutal and merciless in combat, the Iceborn use stealth, surprise and ambush techniques to great effect. Most attacks come at night, dusk or just before dawn. Sometimes, Iceborn assassins and strike teams go in first to try to neutralize guards and the greatest threats, and they always do intel and reconnaissance before they attack. The Iceborn are sure to have a battle plan before they make their presence known. They also utilize magic and animated dead to confuse and overcome the enemy. When raiding a village or town, Iceborn Raiders have learned that if they can take down the community's defenders and mages quickly, most of the people will surrender without much further resistance. When the most heated fighting comes to an end, the villagers are gathered and herded onto the Necroilus like cattle (which they are!). Kill the leaders and defenders before the community knows it is even under siege, and little additional bloodshed may be necessary. That's how they leave ghost ships and ghost towns behind. Furthermore, the wicked Iceborn have come to realize that if you leave a town mostly intact, it is much more likely to be repopulated quickly, leaving it vulnerable for future raids.

Like any good pirates, Iceborn Raiders rely on the fear generated by their reputation, a particularly terrifying one at that. Thus, a show of force and the threat of violence may convince a village or town to give in to the Raiders' demands. Many towns will hand over livestock, supplies and even a percentage of people without the Iceborn needing to cut a single throat. Victims may be slaves, enemy captives, prisoners or outsiders, but could also be their own citizens when necessary; the Iceborn rarely care who they're getting. A small army of animated dead backed by Raiders hoping and hollering make an excellent means to get people to capitulate to the invaders' demands.

Western Empire slavers and gladiatorial arenas are willing to pay good money for these rare “creatures of legend” (10,000-40,000 gold). The Iceborn's aggressive nature, primal instincts and hunger for humanoid and animal flesh makes them ideal combatants for gladiatorial games. It also makes them impossible to control or civilize.

Iceborn Raider O.C.C.

Alignment: As per R.C.C., above.

Attribute Requirements: None.

O.C.C. Bonuses: +1 attack per melee round, +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to roll with punch/impact and +4 to save vs Horror Factor.

O.C.C. Skills:

Hunting

Identify Sea Life (+20%)

Intelligence (+6%)

Language: Native Tongue Elven at 85% (see R.C.C.).

Language: Other: One of choice, usually Northern (+10%).

Lore: Sea (+10%)

Pilot Small Boats, Kayaks & Canoes (+10%)

Prowl (+10%)

Sailing (+15%)

Seamanship (+10%)

Skin and Prepare Animal Hides (+10%)

Surveillance/Tailing (+15%)

Swimming (88% to start; a natural ability; see R.C.C.)

Track Humanoids (+20%)

Wilderness Survival (+15%)

W.P. Knife

W.P. Sword

Hand to Hand: Expert, but it may be changed to Assassin at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C.: Related Skills: Select four W.P.s or four Physical skills at level one. Select one additional Related Skill at levels 4, 8 and 12.

Communication: Any, but uncommon.

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Detect Ambush and Detect Concealment and Traps only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic only, but uncommon.

Medical: None.

Military: Interrogation Techniques only (+10%).

Naval: Any (+5%).

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics.

Rogue: None.

Science: None.

Scholar/Technical: Deep Sea Fishing, Fashion Tools, General Repair, Rope Works, Shipwright, and Whittling & Sculpting only (+10%).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any, except Lance, Pole Arms and Siege Weapons.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select one Secondary Skill from the previous list at levels 1, 3, 5, 9 and 11. These are additional area of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. These skills are limited to those previously noted.

Starting Equipment: Short fur cloak, fur leggings, sharkskin boots, sharkskin gloves, bedroll, three large sacks, three small sacks, two waterskins, 50 feet (15 m) of rope made from animal/humanoid parts, jewelry made of teeth, tusks or human heads or skulls, and one week's worth of food (probably blubber/seal meat or preserved humanoid flesh).

Armor: None to start (see Natural A.R. 14 under R.C.C.), but may wear pair of bone gauntlets or forearm vambraces (+1 to A.R.), shoulder plating made of leather and bone, tusks, teeth, skulls and skin (+1 to A.R.). A.R. bonuses noted here are added to the Iceborn's Natural A.R. of 14.

Weapons: Characters start with one bone weapon to match each W.P., plus a sea serpent bone knife and a serpent or whale bone club (does 2D4 damage + P.S. bonuses).

Money: Have no need for money. Player Characters may have scrounged up 2D4x10 gold, plus 1D6 seal skin pelts and human hides.



Iceborn Captain O.C.C.

Amongst the Iceborn, there are Serpent Captains and Clan Captains. The Serpent Captain is the top man who commands and directs each **Necroilus warship**. He is also the leader – chieftain – of the specific tribe of Iceborn that inhabits each Necroilus, for these dead serpent warships are also floating villages. Each Serpent Captain lives aboard the Necroilus he commands, surrounded by the members of the tribe he leads.

The lesser *Clan Captains* are the heads of the largest family clans within a tribe. They function as the ship's main officers and warlords who lead groups of Raiders. There are many different Iceborn tribes with subsets of family clans within the larger overall tribe. No one knows the exact number of tribes – not even the Iceborn – but there are at least three dozen, and some believe there are two or three times as many. Each tribe has one (sometimes two) Serpent Captains and somewhere between a few and several Clan Captains, depending on the size of the tribe. As a rule, the entire tribe lives on one Necroilus warship, making some of these vessels truly immense, with 2,000-8,000 Iceborn (2D4x1000) living on a single ship. On the rare occasion that

one Necroilus is not enough to contain the entire tribe, a second Necroilus is created, with a second Serpent Captain and the Clan Captains and tribe members who serve under him on that vessel. However, the original Serpent Captain remains the *tribal chieftain*.

Two or more Necroilus warships in the same tribe is a rarity. Most Necroilus ships contain a village of 400-2,400 Iceborn (4D6x100), including males, females, the young and elderly. It is important to understand that these marine nomads do not have a land base of operation or permanent villages anywhere in the world. Though they may hide, hole up and hunt on the *Great Ice Shelf* for 1D4 months at a time, these “camps” on the Ice Shelf are not permanent settlements or villages. They are simply where one or more Iceborn tribes have decided to set anchor for a while. When the tribe picks up to go – whether it has one thousand or several thousand members – they all load onto their serpent ships and head out to sea together on this Necroilus. Many Iceborn who live on the Necroilus never leave the deck of the ship, except to go on raids, hunting expeditions, supply gathering missions, fishing or to play and explore wherever it is they have set anchor. No one is left behind unless they are being exiled. When Iceborn die, their flesh is eaten and their bodies de-constructed so that their skin, bones and parts can be used to benefit the tribe as food and components to make weapons or repairs to the ship/village. Sink a Necroilus and you may wipe out an entire Iceborn tribe.

As noted, the **Serpent Captains** and **Clan Captains** are the tribes' leaders. As such, the Captains and Sea Witches (the leaders of the female Iceborn) are the only ones taught to read and write in an ancient, archaic Elven language. It is also the Captains' responsibilities to run a tight ship. They are the ones who organize and assign duties to the crew/tribesmen, shape behavior, maintain order and guide crews/people as a whole. Without an Iceborn Serpent Captain and the lesser Clan Captains/warlords, the tribe/crew would devolve into complete anarchy, fighting amongst each other, unable to make collective decisions. When a *Serpent Captain* dies, the next highest ranking Clan Captain (the equivalent of a first mate) steps up to take the position. If a Clan Captain is not available (all slain in combat), the next highest ranking *Iceborn Sea Witch* steps in to assume command until she can choose and help put into power a new, male, Serpent Captain. However, a new Serpent Captain, or a Serpent Captain who appears weak or is doing a poor job as tribal chief, may be challenged by any Clan Captain within that tribe. This results in a duel or series of duels, usually to the death, until one Serpent Captain asserts his dominance. Once a new Serpent Captain has risen to power, the rest of the tribe/crew settle back into submissive positions within the new hierarchy. Though females are equal to males within Iceborn society, the female Sea Witches seldom take permanent control over a tribe. Instead, an elder or influential Sea Witch may cultivate a Clan Captain of her choosing and support his challenge to the chieftain position of Serpent Captain. Otherwise it is the Sea Witches' responsibility to lead and keep order among the Iceborn females and young.

As the tribal chieftain, Serpent Captains are the absolute commander of the ship and leader of the tribe that crews it. Captains (and Sea Witches) are also the keepers of tribal knowledge and the history of their people, secrets that are passed on only between male and female leaders (Captains and Sea Witches), who tell stories to the tribe during rituals and festivals. No Iceborn Captain would ever consider sharing Iceborn history, much less their

secrets or beliefs about their ultimate destiny, with any outsiders. All Iceborn live by the Serpent Captain's decisions, regardless of their rationale, and seldom question or defy his orders.

As the leaders, the Serpent Captain and Clan Captains encourage the Iceborn traditions of hunting and killing people for food, and support all manner of brutality, torture and murder against other intelligent life forms – with humans at the top of that list. Such is the Iceborn tradition and way of life. Their entire society revolves around raiding, hunting and devouring other people. Too valuable to risk, Serpent Captains/Chiefs seldom leave a Necroilus for anything other than the largest raids and coastal attacks. However, when a Necroilus warship is under attack, it is the Serpent Captain who leads the battle and commands his people every step of the way.

The Serpent Captain (1) and Clan Captains (typically 3D4 even amongst the biggest tribes/crews) are all educated in the ways of war, Iceborn strategies and tactics, the responsibilities of leadership, the command of the Necroilus and death magic. Every Iceborn Captain is a true *Necromancer*. As such, the Captains animate and command the dead, and may have a few zombies at their disposal. On occasion, some Captains may enslave 1D4 Lesser Demons or Deevils (usually Aquatics, Ghouls and similar lesser supernatural beings), but these are slaves, not friends or partners.

Once in a great while, an Iceborn Serpent Captain may appear to partner up with or serve a powerful supernatural being, sorcerer, or ruthless individual in their wars and schemes, especially if it involves mass murder and destruction. But while it may appear that the Iceborn are capable of serving a non-Iceborn master or partner, they can never be trusted. Sooner or later, the arrangement will be dissolved or the Iceborn will turn on their “partner(s).” This may involve one side or the other simply walking away after they accomplished their goal (and for Iceborn, that goal may be as simple as enslaving and killing people), or by betraying or killing their “partner.” More often than not, it is the latter. But such alliances and partnerships can only be made by a Serpent Captain when it involves the entire tribe, or a Clan's Captain when it involves a faction within the tribe.

The tribe is all, and the Captain is its center. It is important to remember that the Serpent Captain's “crew” is also his “tribe.” Males, females and children all live inside the Necroilus and have duties as crew members. The Necroilus is more than a horrifying warship, it is the tribe's *home*. Each Necroilus (sometimes two) represents a different “tribe” within the larger Iceborn community. Anyone aboard who is not an Iceborn is a prisoner, a slave, livestock to be eaten, or a rare, temporary ally of convenience. Iceborn are fiercely loyal only to their own kind, making ALL other humanoids and intelligent beings their hated rivals and enemies.

Non-Iceborn are NEVER accepted into the tribe, never trusted, nor ever regarded as an equal. A worthy adversary, perhaps, but an equal? Never. Even other monster races such as Wolfen, Trolls, Ogres and Orcs are seen as enemies and food. As noted before, Iceborn have little desire for, or need for, wealth or power. They are predators who prey upon other humanoids and worship chaos and death, of which they are harbingers. The killing and eating of people and their use of Necromancy is what makes the Iceborn such a feared and horrifying opponent – and if people knew the Iceborn secretly worship and derived their powers of

Necromancy from the ancient, slumbering Old One, *Netosa*, they would fear the monsters all the more.

Iceborn Captain O.C.C.

NPC Villain, Leader and Necromancer

Alignment: Any, as per male Iceborn R.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, M.A. 10. and a desire to lead.

O.C.C. Captain Skills:

Anthropology: Iceborn (exclusive to a ship's captain, +15%)

Astronomy & Navigation (+20%)

History (from the Iceborn's twisted perspective; +10%)

Identify Sea Life (+20%)

Language: Native Tongue: Elven at 90% (see R.C.C.).

Language: Other: One of choice, usually Northern (+10%).

Lore: Demon & Monsters (+20%)

Lore: Sea (+20%)

Mathematics: Basic (+25%)

Salvage (+15%)

Seamanship (+20%)

Swimming (88% to start; a natural ability; see R.C.C.)

W.P. Knife

W.P.: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert, but it may be changed to Martial Arts or Assassin at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two Related Skills at levels 1, 4, 8 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communication: Any (+5%), uncommon.

Domestic: None.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic Animals only; uncommon.

Medical: Any.

Military: Any (+10%).

Naval: Any (+15%).

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics and Gymnastics.

Rogue: None.

Science: Any (+5%).

Scholar/Technical: Any (+10% to Lore skills, Literacy, Writing, Language, or History).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: None.

Special Iceborn Captain Knowledge and Necromancy:

All Iceborn Captains are Necromancers and possess the magic spells and abilities of the Necromancer O.C.C. Captains are taught the following spells and embrace the slumbering Old One, *Netosa*, as their master and the hand that guides them and their people. Captains are usually Non-Player Characters.

● **Necromancy Magic:** All Iceborn *Clan Captains* start with the following spells: All Necromancy Spells levels 1-5, including Animate and Control Dead (10), plus Animate Dead Greater (50), Cloak of Darkness (6), Death Bolt (30), Death Trance (2), Fear (5), Fire Ball (10), Globe of Daylight (4), Tongues (12), Turn Dead (6) and Shape Bone (40). **Note:** *Serpent Captains* (typically a Non-Player Character/NPC) know all these spells plus an additional 1D6+1 from the available Wizard Invocations available to Necromancers.

● **Additional Spell Selections:** Iceborn Clan Captains usually learn one new spell – *Serpent Captains* 1D4 spells – per each additional level of experience, starting at level two,

from elder Necromancers. Spells are selected from only the Necromancy category or Wizard Invocations available to the Necromancer O.C.C. The spells learned can be of any level, but are seldom higher than 9th level for Clan Captains. The *Serpent Captain* can learn any Necromancy or related spell of any level.

- **P.P.E.** is 1D6x10+90 +10 additional P.P.E. per each additional level of experience.
- **Magic Bonuses:** +1 to spell strength at levels 3, 5, 10 and 15, +1 to save vs magic and +1 to save vs possession.
- **Captain O.C.C. Bonuses:** +1D4 to I.Q., +1D4 to M.E., +2D6 to Hit Points, 5D6 to S.D.C., +2 on Perception Rolls for all things regarding the welfare and security of his ship and tribe, +1 to strike, +2 to pull punch, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor. In addition to these bonuses, the Serpent Captain gets +1 attack per melee round.

Armor: As a rule, none. Most Clan Captains wear hooded robes or long, hooded cloaks made of fur or humanoid skin decorated with skulls, heads, bones, and teeth. They may also wear leather or fur gloves and boots (or sandals) and jewelry made of bone and ivory.

Weapons: A pair of knives, and one weapon for each W.P. Since Iceborn Captains are leaders and managers, they usually have access to humanoid skin, flesh, organs, bones, weapons, armor and gear in the possession of the Skinbinders they lead.

Experience Level: Clan Captains 1D4+3; Serpent Captains 1D6+4; or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not recommended as a Player Character, but if so, use the same Experience Table as the *Necromancer*.

Starting Equipment: Robe or cloak made from animal or humanoid skins, belt made from sinew, sharkskin gloves, bedroll, backpack, large satchel, one large sack, two medium sacks, three small sacks, two waterskins, 1D6 candles, a tinder box, 50 feet (15 m) of rope made from animals or humanoid, 4D6 bones (arm, leg, rib, or any combination), two weeks worth of food (probably blubber/seal meat or preserved humanoid flesh), and some personal items.

Armor: None. Though may wear some leather, studded leather or bone plating as forearm vambraces (+1 to A.R.), shoulder (+1 to A.R.) and/or leg protectors.

Weapons: As the ship's captain and chieftain, Captains have access to the best weapons captured and onboard. Over time, most Serpent and Clan Captains will acquire one or two magic weapons. Blade weapons are usually preferred.

Money: Though they have no need for money, a Clan Captain is likely to have 1D4x1,000 in gold and/or gems and precious metals, plus 1D4x10 furs, 1D4x10 animal hides and 1D4x10 humanoid hides, plus a stash of bones. The Serpent Captain will have two or three times that in possessions, but even the leaders don't have much use or regard for treasure.



Iceborn Female R.C.C.

All Iceborn females are one type of witch or another, taught the ways of skinning animals and humanoids and using their skin and hides to make clothing, sheets, sails, walls, etc., their bones into weapons, tools and building materials and their meat for food. The vast majority of female Iceborn are known as *Skinbinders*. These spell casters and butchers have made a pact with a dark god to receive special abilities and for powers of Necromancy. All are disciples of darkness and a willing servant to a powerful, evil supernatural force that remains unknown to the outside world. Many scholars fear they are disciples of one of the *Old Ones*; most likely **Netosa, Lord of Eternal Darkness** who, it is said, derived pleasure from the pain and sorrow of others. That certainly fits the profile of the Iceborn, and is, in fact, the truth behind their dark religion.

Iceborn Female R.C.C.

Iceborn Player Character Note: Same as the male Iceborn Raider.

Alignment (Female): Diabolic (65%), Miscreant (15%), Anarchist (10%), Aberrant (9%), other (1%).

Female Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+3, M.E. 2D6+6, M.A. 2D6+3, P.S. 2D6+9, P.P. 2D6+6, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 2D6+3, Spd 2D6+7 running, 2D6+10 swimming.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +10 for Skinbinders; +1D6+1 per level of experience.

S.D.C.: 4D6 for Skinbinders.

Natural A.R.: 11

P.P.E.: 1D6x10+30 for the typical female/Skinbinder. 1D6x10+70 for the Sea Witch and Sea Witch Warrior.

Horror Factor: 10 for a single Iceborn, 13 in groups of five or more.

Experience Level: 1D6 for most female Skinbinders, +1 for Sea Witches, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player Characters should start at level one.

Physical Appearance: Female Iceborn have the same general appearance as the males, except that they are about a head shorter, have thinner, more shapely builds, long fingernails and a full crop of wiry, scraggly hair that hangs down to the shoulders or a little beyond.

Size: 6 feet (1.8 m) to 6 feet, six inches (2 m) tall.

Weight: 150-200 lbs (67.5 to 90 kg).

Average Lifespan: 90 years is possible, but most Iceborn female Skinbinders die before they reach 60, and many Sea Witch Warriors perish in combat by age 35.

Natural Abilities: Same as the male Iceborn.

R.C.C. Skills: In addition to O.C.C. and Related Skills, ALL female Iceborn automatically receive the following skills:

Castaway/Shipwreck Survival (+15%)

Leather Working (+10%)

Sewing (+10%)

Skin and prepare animal hides (+10%)

Swimming (+20%)

O.C.C.s Available to the Iceborn: Females are generally *Iceborn Skinbinders* (86%; witches who use their magic to make weapons, tools, clothing and the Necroilus ship), and 12% are *Iceborn Sea Witches*, of which half are powerful Necromancers and leaders among the female Skinbinders, and half of

which fight alongside the male Iceborn Raiders as Sea Witch Warriors (the latter has all the same skills and abilities as the Sea Witch, but hold a different position within Iceborn society as elite warriors and troop support).

Magic: As per Skinbinder or Sea Witch O.C.C. only.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: Humans and everyone else, same as male Iceborn.

Allies: Only their fellow Iceborn. On occasion, they are willing to work with and even temporarily serve intelligent undead, like vampires, powerful Necromancers, dark gods, and select demons, provided it serves their own agenda or promotes the suffering and slaughter of the beings they loathe.

Habitat: Same as the male Iceborn; nomads constantly roaming the *Icy Ocean*, the *Great Ice Shelf*, *Northern Sea*, *Sea of Despair*, *Algorian Sea* and the *Sea of Dread*.

Favorite Weapons: Bone clubs, knives and swords, usually magically hardened to be equal to stone or steel weapons.

Skinbinder Female O.C.C.

Only a female Iceborn may become a Skinbinder. The specific abilities of each Skinbinder can vary quite a bit from one to another, but all are practitioners of death magic and charged with using that magic to create weapons and protect the home. Of course, home is the *Necroilus*, the massive vessel made from the carcasses of sea serpents that the Iceborn crew/tribe call their floating home. It is the Skinbinders, along with the Sea Witches, who help build the monstrous vessels, and it is the Skinbinders' duty to make repairs and changes to the *Necroilus*, provide infrastructure support to crew and Raiders, slaughter and butcher livestock (and people), torture prisoners, oversee slaves, prepare food, care for the young and injured, and make different articles and essential items from the remains of the dead. This includes clothing and sails from the skin and flesh of humanoids and the fur of animals, making armor and weapons from bone and leather, making tools and building materials from bone and skin/hides, and engaging in construction projects within the vessel and to expand its size as needed. Whenever necessary, Skinbinders also fight with murderous fury and dark magic to defend both their *Necroilus* and their tribe. Skinbinders should not be taken lightly, as all Iceborn, be they male, female or child, are fierce and deadly combatants raised within a warrior culture where killing, raiding and eating foes is their way of life. Within Iceborn society, females are the equal to males and just as menacing. Some even join males on raids and fight alongside the male warriors, especially when their dead serpent ships fall under attack. The Iceborn Captain is leader of the male Raiders and the Sea Witch is the leader of the female Skinbinders.

Iceborn Skinbinder

Alignment: Any, as per Iceborn Female R.C.C., above.

Attribute Requirements: None.

O.C.C. Skills:

Biology (+10%)

Boat Building (+20%)

Carpentry (+20%)

First Aid (+15%)

Language: Native Tongue Elven at 85%.

Language: Other: One of choice, usually Northern (+10%).

Mathematics: Basic (+20%)

Pilot Small Boats, Kayaks & Canoes (+5%)

Preserve Food (+10%)

Sailing (+15%)

Sea Lore (+20%)

Seamanship (+24%)

Sewing (+20%)

Shipwright (+30%)

Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+30%)

Swimming (88% to start; a natural ability; see R.C.C.)

Rope Works (+20%)

W.P. Knife

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert. Cannot be changed.

R.C.C. Related Skills: Select one Related Skill at levels 1, 4, 8 and 12.

Communication: Any.

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Disguise and Escape Artist only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic Animals only; uncommon.

Medical: Any (+10%).

Military: Recognize Weapon Quality only (+10%).

Naval: Any (+10%)

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics, Boxing, and Gymnastics.

Rogue: None.

Science: Astronomy & Navigation and Math: Advanced only (+10%).

Scholar/Technical: Any.

Weapon Proficiencies: Any, except W.P. Lance and Siege Weapons.

Wilderness: Any (+10%).

Secondary Skills: None.

Special Witch Gifts/Abilities of the Skinbinder: The Iceborn Skinbinder (female) is a simple, less powerful form of witch that is different than the Witch O.C.C. described in the **Second Edition Palladium RPG**. The Minor Pact is always a Blood Sacrifice involving the slaughter of others or the female's first-born. This usually includes a ritual to the Old One, Netosa that bestows a very specific arrange of abilities and Necromancy magic spells.

Skinbinder Gifts of Union: Pick a total of three "gifts"/bonuses from the following list.

● Bio-Regenerates 4D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. once every 24 hours.

● +15% to save vs coma/death.

● +2 to A.R.

● +2D6 to Hit Points.

● +3D6 to S.D.C.

● +2 to I.Q.

● +2 to M.E.

● +1D4 to P.S.

● +1D6 to Spd.

● +1D4 to P.B.

● +1D6+6 to P.P.E.

● +1 to save vs magic.

● +2 to save vs possession.

● +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Necromancy Magic: All Skinbinders start with the following Necromancy spells: Assemble Bones(2), Bone & Joint Bonding (2), Death Trance (2), Fragile Bone to Wood (5 or

30), Fragile Bone to Stone (10 or 60), Fragile Bone to Steel (15 or 90), Globe of Daylight (4), Locking Hand (10 or 30), Shape Bone (40; Iceborn Skinbinders and Sea Witches can perform this 13th level spell at half its usual cost of 80 P.P.E.).

Additional Spell Selections can be made only from Necromancy spells levels 1-8. Select *one* new Necromancy spell per each new level of experience starting with level two. Any Necromancy spell levels 1-8 can be provided as a “gift” to the Skinbinder by the slumbering Netosa, EXCEPT for *Animate and Control Dead: Simple* and *Greater Animated Dead*; they are reserved for the Captain and Sea Witch O.C.C.s **Note:** +1 to Spell Strength at levels 4, 8 and 12. P.P.E.: 1D6x10+30, +4 additional P.P.E. per each additional level of experience.

Starting Equipment: Two hide/skin dresses or robes, 2D4 shark tooth necklaces, 2D4 animal bone bracelets, 1D4 humanoid skulls, 1D4 sacks, a waterskin, 50 feet (15 m) of rope made from animal/humanoid parts, 4D6 bones (arm, leg, rib, or any combination), and one week’s worth of food (probably blubber/seal meat or preserved humanoid flesh).

Armor: As a rule, none. Most Skinbinders wear a dress made of human skin, which may be accented by leather or fur gloves and boots (or sandals), a fur cloak and jewelry made of bone and ivory.

Weapons: Characters start with a pair of knives, and one weapon for each W.P. Since Iceborn Skinbinders use humanoid skin, flesh, organs, and bones to maintain and repair the Necroilus and make clothing, armor, utensils, weapons and equipment, the character is likely to have access to a large amount of different bones and bone weapons and armor enchanted to be as hard as stone or steel.

Money: Have no need for money. Player Characters are able to scrounge up 1D6x10 gold, plus 1D6 seal skin pelts, 3D6 large fur pelts, and 2D6 humanoid hides.

Iceborn Sea Witch O.C.C.

Sea Witches are legendary, the most powerful of the Iceborn females, arguably the most powerful of all Iceborn, with the possible exception of Captains. Their spells reanimate corpses, preserve and control slaves and zombies, assist Raiders in battle, heal wounded crewmen and fend off sea serpents. Sea Witches function as clan leaders, first mates, managers, priestesses, interrogators/torturers and combat personnel able to fill the role of warrior in the thick of battle and provide combat support. Though they seldom lead male troops unless the Captain or other Iceborn male leaders are all slain, a Sea Witch may gather other Iceborn Sea Witches and Skinbinders (female witches) to mount an assault against the enemy, defend a Necroilus against invaders, or to rescue male warriors who have been cut off behind enemy lines or taken prisoner. Iceborn Sea Witches are devoted to their crew/tribe and ruthless in the defense of their people.

In the role of combat support, Sea Witches may offer strategies and tactics to the male leadership, raise and control armies of animated dead for battle, keep supply lines and communications open, and even fight at the side of the male warriors in open combat. In fact, half of the Sea Witches are designated combatants with the title of Sea Witch Warrior. The witches’ favorite targets in combat tend to be priests, mages, female warriors, knights and heroes of renown. They use their limited flight powers to take to



the skies and spot targets for the Necroilus below, or scan coastlines before a raid goes ashore.

Iceborn Sea Witch O.C.C.

Alignment: Any, as per Female Iceborn R.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: None.

O.C.C. Skills:

- Biology (+10%)
- Holistic Medicine (+15%)
- Identify Sea Life (+15%)
- Interrogation Techniques (+15%)
- Language: Native Tongue: Elven at 90%.
- Language: Other: One of choice, usually Northern (+20%).
- Literacy: Elven (+20%)
- Lore: Sea (+20%)
- Mathematics: Basic (+10%)
- Prowl (+10%)
- Sewing (+10%)
- Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+10%)
- Surgeon (+25%)
- Swimming (see special abilities)
- W.P. Knife
- W.P.: One of choice.
- Hand to Hand: Assassin. No change possible.

R.C.C. Related Skills: Select four other skills at level one, plus one additional skill at levels 4, 8 and 12.

Communication: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Any.

Horsemanship: General and Exotic Animals only, but uncommon.

Medical: Any (+15%).

Military: Surveillance only (+10%).

Naval: Any (+5%).

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics, Boxing and Gymnastics.

Rogue: None.

Science: Any.

Scholar/Technical: Any (+10% to Lore skills only).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any, except W.P. Lance and Siege Weapons.

Wilderness: Any (+10%).

Secondary Skills: None.

Special Sea Witch O.C.C. Knowledge and Abilities: The Sea Witch is similar to the Witch O.C.C. described in the **Second Edition Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, but as one of the archaic races forgotten by most of the world and servant to the slumbering Old One Netosa, they have some unique and different abilities. Their bond to Netosa is a Major Pact of Lifelong Servitude and Netosa's gift of Death and Magic. Remember, the Old Ones were much more powerful than the current known deities and Alien Intelligences of this world.

- 1D6x10+70 P.P.E.

- P.E. attribute number x4 determine the Sea Witch's Hit Points.

- +100 points to S.D.C.

- Fingernails are as hard and sharp as a cat's claws; +1D6 damage from claw strikes, and can be used to torture, perform surgery, and cut and skin a hide.

- Bio-Regeneration: 1D6x10 Hit Points/S.D.C. at will, a maximum of four times per 24 hour period and is +20% to save vs coma/death.

Creature of the Sea and Death: The aptly named "Sea" Witch has nothing to fear from the sea, not even the depths of the frozen Icy Ocean. Double swimming speed (see Female R.C.C.), can breathe underwater indefinitely, unlimited depth tolerance (can walk along the bottom of the ocean), Nightvision 1,000 feet (305 m) and can see in murky waters, and does not suffer from cold waters.

Demon Familiar: All Sea Witches are given a demon familiar to provide assistance and advice. The most common host animals for the demonic essence fragment are birds, especially seabirds (seagulls, albatross, penguin, etc.), but any bird will do, and many select the raven/crow. Other animals choices include the cat, otter, ferret, weasel, ermine, and rat, but never canines. Some Sea Witches choose a sea creature, provided it is no more than four feet (1.2 m) long. This may including octopus, squid, pipefish/cuttlefish, barracuda, or shark. Obviously, an aquatic animal is limited to water environments, but since Iceborn are at sea most of their lives, it makes a certain amount of sense to choose one. Juvenile sea serpents and sea monsters are not an option. **Note:** See page 115 of the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** for complete details about Demon Familiars.

Flight: The Sea Witch has the ability to fly for 30 minutes +1D6 minutes per level of experience at a maximum speed of 30 mph (48 km); maximum altitude 3,000 feet (914 m) — provided she has on her person the bones or feathers of a bird. This can be just the remains or bones of a small dead bird kept in a little bag or pouch, but often takes the form of jewelry such as a brooch, hairpin, talisman or earrings made of feathers or containing the skull of a bird, or as a part on a piece of armor that has bird bones or a bird skull and/or feathers as part of its design. The bird can be as small as sparrow, but must be a bird with the ability to fly. This ability is another reason a bird is often chosen as the mortal form of the witch's Demon Familiar.

Necromancy Magic: All Sea Witches start with the following spells: All Necromancy spells levels 1-4, including Animate and Control Dead (10), plus Animate Dead Greater (50), Death Trance (2), Death Mask (12), Exorcism (30), Fragile Bone to Wood (5 or 30), Fragile Bone to Stone (10 or 60), Fragile Bone to Steel (15 or 90), Globe of Daylight (4), Locking Hand (10+), Mend Living Bone (20 or 100) and Shape Bone (40).

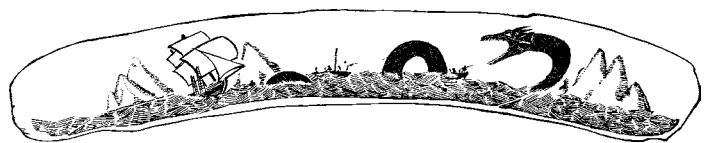
Additional Spell Selections can be made only from Necromancy spells levels 5-10. Select *two* new Necromancy spells per each new level of experience starting with level two. Any Necromancy spell from levels 1-11 is provided as a "gift" to the Sea Witch from Netosa. **P.P.E.** is 1D6x10+80 +10 additional P.P.E. per each additional level of experience. **Magic Bonuses:** +1 to Spell Strength at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12, +1 to save vs magic, +3 to save vs possession, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

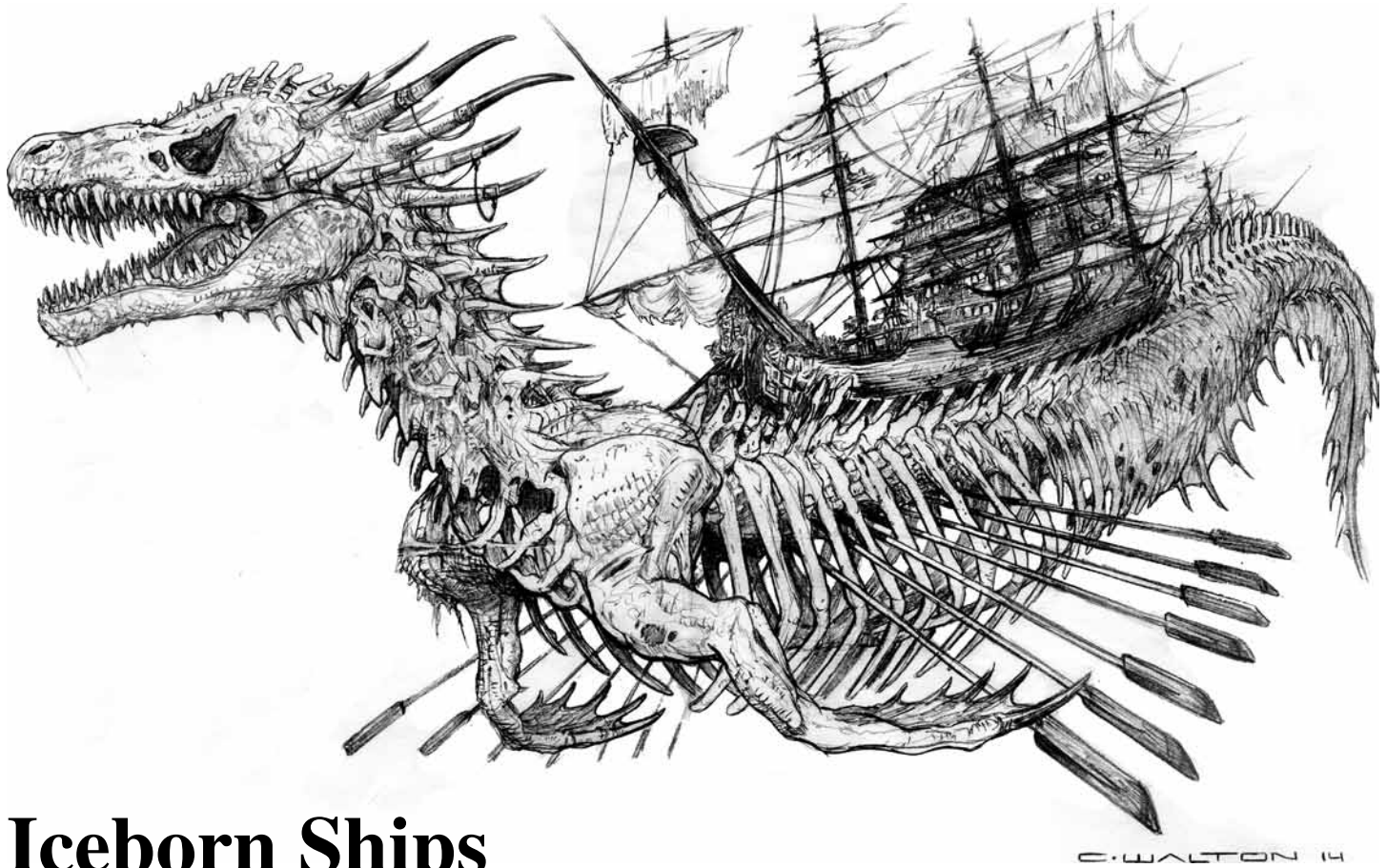
Starting Equipment: Two hide/skin dresses or robes, 2D4 shark tooth necklaces, 2D4 animal bone bracelets, 1D4 humanoid skulls, 1D4 small sacks, 1D4 medium sacks, a waterskin, 50 feet (15 m) of rope made from animal/humanoid parts, 4D6 bones (arm, leg, rib, or any combination), and one week's worth of food (probably blubber/seal meat or preserved humanoid flesh).

Armor: As a rule, none. Most Sea Witches wear a dress made of human skin and or seaweed, which may be accented with leather or fur gloves and boots (or sandals), a fur cloak or cape, skulls or bones, and jewelry made of bone and ivory.

Weapons: Characters start with a pair of knives, and one weapon for each W.P. Since Iceborn Sea Witches are leaders and managers, they usually have access to humanoid skin, flesh, organs, bones, weapons, armor and gear in the possession of the Skinbinders they oversee.

Money: Have no need for money, but understand it has its uses. For that reason a Sea Witch is likely to have 1D4x1,000 in gold, gems and precious metals, plus 2D6 seal skin pelts, 5D6 large fur pelts, and 1D6x10 humanoid hides. Most Sea Witches will eventually procure a magic weapon and 1D4 amulets/talismans/charms and 1D6 magic potions.





Iceborn Ships

Iceborn Necroilus

Also known as Dead Serpent Ships

While the most feared and powerful ships on the high seas are, without question, the *Demon Black Ships* of the Western Empire, the **Iceborn Necroilus** is a close second. The sight of a Necroilus sends chills up the spines of seafarers everywhere, whether they already know of the Iceborn or are seeing one for the first time. Just the appearance of a giant, undead sea serpent rushing toward you is enough to raise the hairs on the nape of the neck. As it gets closer, however, one can see that it is covered in skulls, spikes and buildings, crawling with half-naked, pale-skinned warriors screaming like banshees; a vision right out of a nightmare. To sailors in the North who know the Iceborn are real, or have heard the stories about them, the mere suggestion that one of these massive, freakish vessels is bearing down on them is enough to send sailing vessels fleeing in the opposite direction.

If such a reaction sounds like cowardice, think again. A Necroilus is the terrible creation of ancient Necromancy, long abandoned and forgotten by civilized people. The monstrous warship doubles as the floating home to an entire Iceborn tribe (several hundred to a few thousand individuals). A vessel made from the rotting corpses of sea serpents lashed together and magically brought back to life, the crew is made up of man-eating savages, Witches and Necromancers, all of whom are known to slaughter and eat those they capture. While people in the south insist no such forgotten cannibals or vessels can possibly exist, they are dead wrong. Both are very real. Their confusion comes from the fact that the Iceborn prefer to strike in darkness and work to keep their locations and true numbers secret. Always on

the move, and never gathering as a fleet, they strike like hungry locusts and seemingly vanish into the spray of the sea.

There is one other dark truth known only to the Bizantians: when the Iceborn have not been seen for several decades, many rejoice and claim the threat is gone, but in reality, the murderous fiends to the north are letting their numbers grow. When the population of the many tribes reaches some sort of unknown tipping point, the monsters become emboldened and hungry for blood and war. It has been twice as long as usual between the last invasion of the Iceborn, according to scholars and elders. To the most astute defenders of the realm, it suggests that an Iceborn incursion is overdue and could come at any time. And when it does come, it may be the biggest and bloodiest in recorded history. Others pray that the Iceborn have finally perished in the frozen depths of the Icy Ocean.

If only the latter were true. Indeed, the Iceborn population has risen to an unprecedented number and, soon, the people of the North, both human and nonhuman, will have ample proof that both the Iceborn and their terrifying Necroilus ships are real.

Notes: Why the Iceborn fail at conquest. The Iceborn have never successfully challenged the supremacy of the humans of modern Bizantium (or the Wolfen) – and never will – because they don't fight as a unified force. While a war council must meet out at sea or on the Great Ice Shelf to decide it is time to once again assail Bizantium and the coastal mainland, there is no fleet nor coordinated plan of attack. Each tribe sets out in their own Necroilus, with their own independent and isolated force, at their own pace, with their own agenda of vengeance and murder. When the Iceborn are sighted, it is usually the sign of the beginning of a decades long (1D6+6) guerrilla war at sea. They strike in what seems like waves, simply because each tribe attacks when

it desires to do so. The Iceborn fail at conquest because they are not conquerors, they are predators, killers driven by revenge and hate. They are not the rulers of nations, they are machines of destruction.

The Iceborn use hit and run tactics to strike without warning, usually at night, dusk or before dawn. As is their way, they prefer to leave no witnesses or bodies, and strike fast from the silent shadows of the night. They slay obvious defenders, take key positions and try to capture the entire crew of a ship or village population, vanishing before the sun rises. Because they have little need or desire for money or the trappings of civilization, they leave behind the ship(s) or village buildings largely intact and unmolesed. Ships and towns will remain stocked with food and grains, fires may still smolder in the fireplace, and clothing and valuables remain where they were placed. The people, however, and perhaps livestock, along with a few gems and odds and ends, are gone. Vanished into thin air. Without bodies or hard evidence, it is difficult to pin the fate of a ghost ship or the “disappearance” of an entire town on the Iceborn. Until reports of Necroilus sightings start to come in from reliable eyewitnesses, or survivors of Iceborn raids manage to escape and name the ones responsible, there is no telling what may be the work of other monsters, strange sea serpents, dark magic or normal human raiders/slavers. The Iceborn never knowingly leave any bodies behind, dead or alive, to bear witness against them. That is their way. If a raid goes badly and there will be survivors to identify them, the savage monsters may try to sink a ship or burn a village to the ground. In the latter case, to prevent identification, the Raiders are likely to surround the perimeter of a village, set it on fire, and pick off survivors as they try to flee.

It is only after many successful raids at sea and against farms, settlements and small villages, that the Iceborn begin to consider larger targets in the *Island Kingdom of Bizantium* and the shores of the *Great Northern Wilderness* and *Land of the Damned*. Even then, the attacks are likely to be small incursions resulting in people vanishing at night along the docks and back alleys, or a particular, often isolated area falling under attack. Few Iceborn tribes have the resources and numbers necessary to lay siege to an entire city.

As effective as these guerrilla tactics and night raids are, they can only inflict so much damage and terror. At some point, the Iceborn stop concealing their presence and engage in all-out warfare. Even then, however, it is only one tribe fighting. When they retreat for the day, they’ll take the dead from both sides with them so that they can either send an army of animated dead against the defenders in the next attack, or to eat them and make weapons and repairs from the bodies. If there is more than one Necroilus and tribe of Iceborn attacking two or more locations, it is pure coincidence, as none of the tribes communicate or work together. Not ever. Because of this, there is no one commander with whom to make peace with (not that the Iceborn would be willing to negotiate) nor any one leader to capture and slay to stop the war. Each individual Necroilus represents a single, independent tribe that must be dealt with on its own terms.

Sink a Necroilus out to sea, and you may wipe out the majority of an entire tribe, especially if you stick around to pick off those who try to escape upon floating wreckage or swim away. *Sea Witches* can survive underwater for an indefinite period of time, and can literally walk away, across the bottom of the sea to the nearest shore, or all the way back to the Great Ice Shelf. *Sea*

Witches and *Skinbinders* will both work to rescue as many survivors as possible, even if all they have is a slab of wreckage, an iceberg or are using dead bodies as flotation devices. Both types of witches can enter into a death trance to make themselves appear dead, and wait until the enemy gives them no further mind before sneaking away. This why it is so difficult to exterminate the Iceborn; they can appear dead and float away on the current or slip under the waves with the truly dead. Once they are out of harm’s way, they seek to make their way back to the Ice Shelf, eager to raise a new generation on a lust for revenge and murder. It is an endless cycle of hatred and bloodletting.

Sinking a Necroilus near shore (within 20 miles/32 km from land) is pure folly, as many members of the tribe are likely to survive and make landfall. On land, they try to gather into small groups of 6-18, but even one or two Iceborn spells serious trouble. If there is no possible way home, the surviving Iceborn prey upon their enemies like man-eating lions, killing, eating and butchering people at will until there are themselves hunted down and slain. That means citizens and livestock disappear and half-eaten bodies may be left behind to create an atmosphere of terror and to let everyone know exactly who is responsible. With Iceborn lurking in the countryside or city alleys, no one is safe until each one is hunted down like a rabid dog.

The only thing stronger than the Iceborn’s hatred and thirst for bloodshed is their *instinct to survive*. Though Iceborn marooned in enemy territory may fight to the death, as do some Iceborn raiding parties, the Serpent Captain of a Necroilus and his crew/tribesmen are not so inclined. When it is clear that staying in enemy waters is too dangerous, the ship’s Captain will turn tail and go back out to the open sea, typically retreating back into the Icy Ocean where few dare to follow. When a specific Iceborn tribe is done with its fighting, they go back to living on the sea and eventually return for a summer to the Great Ice Shelf, the default rendezvous point for survivors. If they can make it (half will perish in the attempt), odds are that, over time, they can reunite with their tribe, or start a new one of their own. Iceborn survivors, whether out at sea for years on a Necroilus, or on the Ice Shelf, begin anew to raise the next generation of flesh-eating warriors and Necromancers to seek revenge at another time.

Necroilus Warship, the Iceborn’s Home

Unlike most vessels around the world, a Necroilus is not built from wood and metal, nor even enchanted rock like *Bizantium’s Stone Ships*. Instead, each Necroilus is “constructed” using the corpses of one, two or many sea serpents. The final size of the vessel depends on the number of individuals and demands of the tribe. Necromancy is used to meld and shape bones to build the vessel just as humans would use wood. Hides and treated leather cover the bone constructs and are used to make canvas and hardened walls, enclosures and doors. Every Necroilus has many levels and rooms within the giant gullet of the horrifying warship as well as housing and towers rising above the top deck. At the bow, in place of a figurehead, is the head and neck of a massive, dead sea serpent, reanimated and controlled puppet-like to bite and chomp at the air. The animated serpent head gives the vessel the appearance of being some kind of *undead sea serpent* or “zombie-ship” upon which the savage Iceborn live.

The creation of the Necroilus is a craft that the Iceborn *Skinbinders* and *Sea Witches* have perfected into a macabre art – each vessel, regardless of size, is surprisingly strong and seaworthy.

Banners, flags, tarps, tents and sails, of course, are made from the skin of humanoids and hides of animals. Part of the ship's defenders and labor force are skeletons and corpses of their victims, slain and animated by the Necromancer Captains and Sea Witches. In fact, there are obvious bone hands and arms built into the deck platforms and railings of every Necroilus so that they can be animated to help the crew or to grab and hold intruders.

The dark magic used to preserve a Necroilus is ancient and long forgotten (if ever known) to civilized people. The magic prevents the corpse-ship from decomposing for decades, though the smell of death and decay permeates the vessel and can be carried on the wind for miles around. Sailors often smell a Necroilus coming before they see it on the horizon. Sharks and scavengers follow the vessel, snapping up bits and pieces that rot off, and sometimes take bites out of the ship itself. Anyone who falls in the water near a Necroilus risks an immediate attack by 1D6 sharks.

Necroilus ships are not reliant on sails or oars. They travel using the magically animated tail and flippers of dead sea serpents built into the horrific vessel. Skin-sails are placed for stability and balance, with no real need to catch the wind. What ships do have banks of oars use them to quickly reverse course and back away from targets, or simply as a diversion to keep slaves busy and physically exhausted. Iceborn Raiders and Skinbinders double as "sailors" and fight from behind spikes, scales, and protruding bones. Most Necroilus warships are equipped with ramprows should they get close enough to ram another vessel. From far enough away it is possible to confuse a Necroilus for a living serpent, but the presence of Iceborn crawling around on top of it and the vessel's odd movements soon reveal the frightening truth. Upon closer inspection, you can see numerous tent-like shelters, small house-sized structures and large, almost castle-like battlements on the top deck, built from bones and canvas made from humanoid skin and animal hides. These structures are the domiciles of the Iceborn that live onboard, with many more inside, below deck. Oily, black smoke rises from fireplaces and numerous cooking fires. Sometimes, when raiding is good, pieces of human ships or entire boats and vessels are grafted onto the Necroilus, even though the wood in their construction will eventually rot away if not properly preserved.

The ritual to create such a monstrosity has never been witnessed, but it enables a Necroilus to be constructed from several sea serpents and incorporate the bones, flesh and hides of hundreds or thousands of people who fall prey to the Iceborn. Without the dark magic necessary to support it, the entire vessel would putrefy and rot in a matter of weeks, dissolving into ragged flesh, bone, skin, and viscera. The smallest Necroilus will be made from one, massive sea serpent, its insides hollowed out and rebuilt with decks, stairs, doors and living areas for the tribe.

Unbeknownst to outsiders, the sea serpents used to make most Necroilus are not fished from the sea or killed in battle. Certainly the Iceborn can and do make use of any serpents taken in this way, but most are scavenged, rather than hunted. Even Bizantian sailors don't know that many sea serpents in the last stages of their lives are driven by instinct to travel north, and crawl ashore on icebergs and the shores of the Great Ice Shelf to die. There, Iceborn tribesmen seek out the serpents' frozen bodies, chopping them out of the ice and enchanting them with a series of Necromantic rituals by Iceborn witches to make them into a Necroilus dead serpent ship. Once the vessel has been built to accommodate

the tribe and is ready to launch, it is imbued with a vile magic that preserves the pieces and holds it all together. The same magic enables the Iceborn Serpent Captain to trigger muscles in the tail and flippers to move and swim – using the dead serpents' own fins and tail for propulsion and making sails and oars unnecessary. This dark magic is not known by any other people and is either ancient and forgotten or was given to the Iceborn in a dream by the Old One they worship, Netosa. Once a Necroilus is ready, the abomination is pushed out to sea, where it serves as a warship and home for the piratical Iceborn who live aboard.

Iceborn Necroilus Warship Stats

Also known as Dead Serpent Ship and Iceborn Serpent Ship.

Type: Warship and mobile village.

Crew: Each Necroilus is commanded by an Iceborn Serpent Captain who is also the Chief/Tribal Leader (experience level 1D6+5). The exact number of Iceborn Raiders (adult males), Skinbinders (adult females), Clan Captains, Sea Witches, young and elderly, depends on the size of the tribe. A small tribe with 2D4x100 Iceborn is likely to have 2D6+2 Clan Captains and 2D6+2 Sea Witches. Larger tribes will have proportionately more.

Note: To determine size, cargo capacity, attack damage and S.D.C., either use the listings below for small, medium or large vessels, or use common sense and wing it, with those listed as your template. All Necroilus vessels have only one serpent head and one tail. The number of fins and flippers vary considerably. A few different types of sea serpents and a random sea serpent generator are described elsewhere in this book. Some additional serpents and other creatures are found in the invaluable sourcebook, **Monsters and Animals™**.

Length of a Necroilus: Size can vary by an immense amount. Remember, many Necroilus are made from several sea serpents, but will still only have one head and one tail.

Small Necroilus – 200-400 feet (61 to 122 m).

Medium Necroilus – 500-900 feet (152 to 274 m).

Large Necroilus – 1,000-2,000 feet (305 to 610 m).

Largest Necroilus – 2,600-4,000 feet (792 to 1,219 m).

Excess Cargo Capacity: Small: 80,000 tons. Medium: 200,000 tons. Large: 350,000 tons. Largest: 500,000 tons. This is cargo space, not including the "village" made of improvised shelters and hollows inside the serpent's body. In their living areas, Iceborn also have small caches of weapons (either stolen or made), seized trade goods, odds and ends that struck their fancy and the occasional magic item. There is also one or more slave pens and food pens to hold captives (humans, Wolfen, Bearmen, Dwarves, etc.).

Note: A Necroilus is likely to have 6-30 smaller Bone Longboats tied to it or traveling along after it. See Bone Longboats, below.

Speed: 24 mph (38 km or 20.8 knots) for Necroilus of any size, even the biggest, making them some of the fastest ships on the high seas. Propulsion is via the serpent's tail and 6-12 swim fins/flippers.

A.R.: Bone 12. Bone made stone 15. Bone made steel 17.

S.D.C. by Location: All are presumed to have bone transformed to the equivalent of stone or steel

Serpent Head – Small: 220, Medium: 380, Large: 440, Very Large: 550.

Ram Prow (1; front) – 400

Front Section – Small: 500, Medium: 800, Large: 1,500, Very Large: 2,400.

Midship – Small: 450, Medium: 600, Large: 800, Very Large: 1,100.

Rear Section – Small: 650, Medium: 900, Large: 1,300, Very Large: 2,200.

Bonemasts (2-12) – 150 each

Deck Floor per 10 feet (3 m) – 50

Hull per 10 feet (3 m) – 200

Keel per 10 feet (3 m) – 300

Tail/Rudder & Locomotion – Small: 300, Medium: 450, Large: 600, Very Large: 800.

Flippers for Locomotion (6-10 of them; large) – 100 each

Fins (6-12, various) – 100 each

Doors of Bone (many inside) – 60 each

Hide Tents & Walls – 15

Houses Made of Bone and Hides – 90

Houses and Towers Made of Bone – 200

Note: Destroy the tail and you reduce speed by 50%. Likewise, destroy all the flippers and you reduce speed by 40%.

Cost: Not available on the open market. A creation exclusive to the Iceborn. **Note:** Without at least one Iceborn Captain, Skin-binder or Sea Witch and 12 Iceborn crew members onboard, a Necroilus begins to rot and fall apart; 5% of it and its S.D.C. rots away every 48 hours without the minimum Iceborn. A decaying lump of mushy flesh and decaying bone that is falling apart and too weak to move on within a month. Gone in 45 days.

Remember, a Necroilus may be a warship, but it is a village first. Each vessel is the home to a specific tribe and inhabited by all or most (90%) of its people, with the rest on Bone Longboats nearby or off on a mission.

Features of Note:

1. Preservation: The natural process of decay has been stopped and magic prevents any further deterioration.

2. Sustaining Magic: Constant Necromancy magic flows through the vessel to power it and give it locomotion. It cannot be dispelled, negated, or removed. Placing a Circle of Power Leech on the deck, however, will deprive the Necroilus of regeneration.

3. Regeneration: The dark magic within the sea serpent's body is the tiniest fragment of Netosa and continually restores the flesh, skin, muscle and bones knitted together to make the ship. Once the Necroilus has been activated and empowered, it remains in its preserved dead stasis, and regenerates damage at a rate of **1D4x10 S.D.C. every eight hours** to the following locations of the Necroilus: *Serpent head, fins, flippers, tail, front section, midship* and *rear section*. Masts, rails, walls, keel, steering wheel, decks, houses, towers, tents and other features do not regrow and must be rebuilt as you would a ship of wood.

4. Animate Tail and Flippers for Locomotion: The Necroilus is steered and directed by the Iceborn Serpent Captain (in an emergency the First Mate, one of the Clan Captains or a Sea Witch can take over). While piloting the warship, the Serpent Captain keeps his hands on the wheel and cannot engage in any other action. If attacked and he lets go of the ship's wheel, the fins stop paddling and the tail stops moving to let the vessel coast or ride the current. To go faster or slower, the Captain shouts out directions as if the head could hear him, and the Necroilus responds. To change direction he must turn the wheel. Speed is

outstanding, especially for the large and very large Necroilus vessels. The tail can only be used to swim and propel the ship. Likewise, flippers and claws are used only for swimming, not combat.

5. Animate the Head to Attack: An assigned Clan Captain or Sea Witch mans and controls the Serpent's head and a command by the Serpent Captain or head's controller to "cry out in vengeance" (or victory, etc.) will cause the serpent head to roar or bellow. Actual attacks are handled by the Iceborn assigned to that duty. The head has the same number of attacks as the controller (usually 5 or 6). **Damage:** Small Necroilus: Bites do 3D6+2 damage. Medium: 5D6+3. Large: 1D4x10+4. Very large: 1D6x10 damage per bite. Half damage for a head butt.

6. Aura of Death: While the Necroilus does not decay, the entire ship smells of blood, rotted meat, decay, sweat and death. This is due, in part, to the humanoid slaves kept for labor and food and the frequent killing and butchering of captives for meat and building materials. The Iceborn enjoy the smell of blood and death, and are completely used to it, so the smell has no ill effect upon them. Captives, rare visitors, and boarding parties, however, will be immediately hit by the potent array of smells and must roll 16 or higher (non-lethal toxin) to avoid vomiting. This applies both when boarding the ship and again when going below deck. So powerful is this noxious odor that it can be smelled by a human nose up to two miles (3.2 km) downwind (double that for Wolfen). Any humanoid that dares to climb onboard without wearing nose plugs or a scented-cloth wrapped around their face must make a saving throw of 16 or better (P.E. attribute bonuses can be applied). Those who fail are overcome by the putrid stench, instantly feel nauseous, gag and retch. Vomiting causes victims to lose initiative and -2 melee attacks for that one melee round. The stench also makes eyes water and stomachs queasy. The nausea and penalties (listed here) persist until the character acclimates to it in 1D4x10 minutes; twice as long for characters with a heightened sense of smell, like Wolfen. During that period the victim is -1 to strike, parry and dodge and -5% on all skills.

7. A Necroilus is not an Animated Dead nor Undead: The Necroilus is not an animated dead nor is it undead, it is something different, created via ancient Necro-magic and the tiniest essence fragment of the Old One, Netosa. As a result, the ship is unaffected by spells like Turn Dead, protection circles, wards and any magic that affect animated dead or the undead. Silver and holy weapons do not cause it any additional damage.

Bone Longboats

The giant Necroilus warships are not the only vessels at the Iceborn's disposal. They also construct what are known as *Bone Longboats*. These comparatively small vessels look very much like a Viking longboat, complete with a figurehead that is usually a sea serpent, monster, skull or skull and bones. These smaller boats, driven by oars, are used by scouting parties and by Raiders to quietly travel rivers and lakes, approach the shore and docks of villages and towns, and to close with and board other ships. A favorite tactic is to move in as silently as possible and climb aboard vessels at night, slay the night watchmen, and rush the sleeping crew members before they realize they are in danger. Other times, Iceborn Raiders swarm over gunwales, screaming like banshees and attacking everyone they encounter until the crew or townspeople surrender.

Bone Longboats are made of bones lashed together and sealed with caulk derived from serpent blubber and flesh. The hulls and major parts are usually sea serpent rib bones, magically shaped to fit the female builder's need, and skulls are often mounted where a human or Wolfen longboat might have a carved horse or dragon's head. Bones and the hides of animals and humanoids then cover the bone construction. The oars needed to propel the boat are typically made of fused bone as well. From a distance some vessels may be mistaken for a Wolfen longboat, but as it comes near, the Iceborn crew will become obvious.

Type: Iceborn Longboat and Boarding Craft.

Crew: One Sea Witch as Captain/leader, a lower level Sea Witch as First Mate and 12 Iceborn Raiders as oarsmen. 12-18 additional Iceborn Raiders and 1D4 Skinbinders make up a typical raiding party.

Size: 30-45 feet (9.1 to 14 m) long; 8-12 feet (2.4 to 3.6 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 5 tons of cargo, captured humans, etc.

Speed: 12 mph (19.2 km or 10.4 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Serpent Skull/Figurehead – 75

Mast (1) – 80

Sail (1) – 30

Rudder – 75

Oars (14) – 40 each

Main Body – 800

(Double S.D.C. if bone is equal to stone or steel; half are not).

Cost: Only available to Iceborn. Must be captured from the Iceborn. Any that are brought into Bizantium's ports will be broken up and scattered in the sea at the insistence of Waterchanters or Priests of Algor.

The Necromancer

Optional O.C.C. or a great NPC villain

By Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik

Of all the various practitioners of magic in the Palladium World, there are none who are regarded with such hatred, fear and downright loathing as the Necromancer. Those who meddle with the dead are condemned by virtually all religions, outlawed by most states, shunned by decent folk everywhere, and are the subject of violent abuse and persecutions by virtually every other mage.

Why? Simply because the dead, especially the bodies of relatives and friends, are regarded as sacred. Not only is it disgusting to contemplate the defilement and desecration of the physical body, but it is even more disturbing to consider that the person's immortal soul might be taken from its proper place. Cannibals, while viewed with utter disgust by just about everyone, are acceptable members of society compared to Necromancers.

In the face of overwhelming social disapproval, the only people who would choose to become Necromancers are those of evil (or possibly Anarchist) alignment. Characters of a good alignment simply *cannot* practice death magic. Even an Anarchist (selfish) Necromancer is a rarity. Since the magic frequently requires the manipulation, enslavement, torture and murder of living beings, and since many of the rituals are repulsive and involve working with the remains of the dead, very few *player characters* will be able to take on the role of a Necromancer O.C.C.

Nor is it possible for Necromancers to conceal their grisly profession.

A large part of the Necromancer's power is the ability to animate, control and draw power from the remains of the dead. Consequently, these practitioners of magic are almost certain to carry the remains of the dead, such as the bones of skeletons and preserved claws, arms, hooves, wings, etc. These items are likely to be carried in a large backpack or sack. Extremely rare and/or valuable items, such as the claw of a dragon, may be concealed, but *always* be at the Necromancer's side. Large necromancers, such as Ogres, Trolls and giants, as well as truly evil and flamboyant mages, wear the bones and shriveled remains of creatures as jewelry, belts, necklaces, weapons, easy-to-grab components, and so on. Some traveling Necromancers even use an entourage of skeletons and zombies as animated servants and protectors, with additional limbs and components carried in trunks, crates or wagons.

The lair of a Necromancer, especially for high level characters, will be inhabited by zombies, mummies and animated dead who function as guards and servants. Additional scores of skeletons and corpses will be strategically placed throughout the lair, ready to be animated should the need arise. The Necromancer may also enslave or employ low level demons, monsters and vampires. Death Mages frequently entertain (or serve) supernatural monsters, powerful, evil sorcerers, or death cults and gods, as well as manipulating those who have the political or military power to serve the Necromancer's needs.

Necromancer O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

Note: For an M.D.C./Mega-Damage version of the Necromancer O.C.C., see **Rifts® World Book Four: Africa** or **Rifts® World Book 18: Mystic Russia**, or the **Rifts® Book of Magic**.

The most terrifying and fundamental power of Necromancers are their abilities to animate and control the dead. This macabre power has three different manifestations: The union transformation, the augmentation/additional appendages and the animate/control dead.

1. Union with the Dead. This power enables the Necromancer's own hands or feet to be transformed into the claws of an animal. The transformation is temporary and is accomplished by tying the claw of an animal or monster (it can be skeletal or recently slain and severed) onto the appendage that is to be affected. It also requires muttering a spell incantation known only to those of the Necromancer O.C.C. The hand and/or forearm is then transformed into a clawed appendage that looks exactly like that of the creature, as well as giving the sorcerer the creature's combat bonuses and/or abilities (as listed under the appendage type, below).

P.P.E. Cost: Varies; see descriptions of the various types of appendages, below.

Range: Self only at levels 1-4, others by touch after 4th level. The animal claw must be tied to the body. At fifth level, the Necromancer can perform this transformation on others (same process and conditions), but the duration is half.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the Necromancer. The transformed limb(s) return to normal when the duration of the magic has elapsed, or when the mage is killed or rendered unconscious. The Necromancer can cancel the magic at any time. The entire

incantation and the tying of the limbs to the subject takes one full melee round.

Limitations: The union and transformation of the dead works only on the living. It cannot be used to transform the limbs of dead creatures.

Notes: The limb(s) is always proportional to the size of the necromancer, never tiny or over-sized. One or both human hands can be transformed. Any combination of limbs can be used, such as the claw of a tiger on the right hand, the claw of an eagle on the left, a pair of horse hooves for feet and the wings of a bat attached to the back. Each transformed appendage adds to the Necromancer's frightening visage and power (+1 to Horror Factor per each pair of inhuman limbs).

Union of the Dead combat bonuses and abilities via type of limb:

- **Tentacle:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Includes the octopus, squid and a variety of monsters. +1 to strike, +20 to climb using suction cups, +4 to damage, and can pin or entangle an opponent.
- **Rodent claws/feet:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Including rats, mice, squirrels, rabbits, and other similar, small animals provide bonuses of +1 to strike and parry, +2 to damage, and +10% to Climb. The claws have an opposable thumb and fingers so tools and weapons can be used; roughly equal to human hands.
- **Cat and other feline claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. +2 to strike and parry, +8 to damage, +20% to Climb and +10% to Prowl. The claws are retractable, but have no opposable thumb, making it impossible to grasp and use weapons or tools.
- **Canine claws** (do not make good humanoid hands): P.P.E. Cost: 10. +1 to parry, and +4 to damage, but has no opposable thumb, making it impossible to grasp or use weapons or tools.
- **Bear claws, badger, wolverine and similar large claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. +1 to strike and +1 to parry, +10 to damage, and +5% to Climb. The claw is excellent for digging but has no opposable thumb, making it impossible to grasp or use weapons or tools.
- **Ice Bear or Ice Bearman claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 25. +1 to strike and +1 to parry, +11 to damage, +5% to Climb, +10% to Swim, and makes the Necromancer resistant to cold (half damage, magic cold does full). The claw of a Bearman has an opposable thumb, making it possible to grasp and use weapons or tools.
- **Bird claws/talons:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. +1 to strike and parry, +8 to damage. The claws can grasp tools and use weapons at -1 to strike or parry. When using modern or complicated devices there is a skill penalty of -20%.
- **Sea Serpent claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 25. +2 to strike, +12 to damage, +20% to Swimming skill, and makes the Necromancer able to breathe underwater and resistant to cold (half damage, magic cold does full). The claws can grasp tools and use weapons at -1 to strike or parry. When using modern or complicated devices there is a skill penalty of -15%.
- **Dragon claws and claws from other magical or supernatural creatures:** P.P.E. Cost: 50; Dragon claws (any kind) are +1 to strike, +1 to parry, inflict 6D6 damage, make the Necromancer impervious to fire, and gives the character an extra physical S.D.C. of 150 from hatchlings, 300 from adult dragons and 600 from ancient ones!

The claws from other creatures of magic and supernatural monsters, including the Manticore, Sphinx, Za, Ghouls, Gar-

goyles and other so-called demons and others inflict 4D6 damage, and provide the Necromancer with an extra 80 S.D.C.; no strike or parry bonuses. P.P.E. Cost: 35.

The claws from a powerful, but non-supernatural creature, like the Melech and Peryton, inflict 4D6 damage; no other combat bonuses. P.P.E. Cost: 20.

Hooves, hands and claws can be attached to and transform the feet and legs.

- **Hooves of any kind**, including horse, ox, cow, deer, etc., add +20 to the character's speed attribute and enables him to leap 10 feet (3 m) high or lengthwise. P.P.E. Cost: 15.
- **Rhinoceros or Elephant feet:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. +10 to the character's normal speed attribute but can also run for a short period of 30 seconds (two melee rounds) at +40. Kick or stomp attacks inflict 4D6 damage.
- **Ki-Lin hooves:** P.P.E. Cost: 25. +30 to the speed attribute and can leap 10 feet (3 m) high or lengthwise and kick attacks inflict 4D6 damage.
- **Unicorn hooves:** P.P.E. Cost: 30. +40 to the speed attribute and can leap 20 feet (6 m) high or lengthwise and kick attacks inflict 5D6 damage.
- **Dragon feet/claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 30. +20 to the speed attribute and can leap 20 feet (6 m) high or lengthwise and kick attacks inflict 1D4x10 damage.
- **Monkey or ape (or humanoid) hands:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. +20 to climb, +5% to acrobatics, plus the feet are equivalent to hands and can grasp and use weapons, tools and devices. However, the character's normal running speed is reduced by half (hands are clumsy at walking).

2. Augmentation and additional appendages: This power enables the necromancer to temporarily attach additional limbs of dead creatures, people or animals, and animate them as *additional* parts of the character's own body!

The mage can attach as many as three additional pairs of arms and two pairs of additional legs. If desired, it is also possible to add a pair of wings, a tail, and several sets of horns to his body (in any combination). Not only does this magic augment the mage's combat abilities and powers, but the mere sight of such a disgusting multi-limbed body is frightening to behold; +1 to Horror Factor for each pair of limbs.

Just as with the transformation of union, the appendages must be strapped to his body.

P.P.E. Cost: Varies; see descriptions.

Range: Self only from levels 1-7, others by touch from level 8 on up. The appendage must be tied to the body. At eighth level, the necromancer can perform this transformation on others (same process and conditions) only the duration is half.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the Necromancer. The limbs return to normal when the duration of the magic has elapsed, or when the mage is killed or rendered unconscious, or at will. The entire incantation and the tying of the limbs to the subject takes about 15 seconds/one full melee round per pair.

Notes: The limb(s) is always proportional to the size of the Necromancer, never tiny or over-sized. One or both human hands can be transformed. A total of six additional appendages (arms or tentacles, etc.) can be added to the body. A tail or single horn counts as ONE appendage, a pair of wings counts as two appendages. Of course, the Necromancer can also transform his original

limbs as described in number one. Note however, that the additional, dead, appendages cannot be transformed as described in number one and retain their original and dead appearance.

This transformation and augmentation provides additional combat abilities, powers and speed as follows:

- **Additional Arms or Tentacles:** P.P.E. Cost: 10 per pair, 5 for one limb, 20 for a pair of limbs from magical, supernatural or demonic creatures. Each additional *pair* of arms or tentacles adds one to the character's attacks per melee round, and a +1 bonus to strike and parry. Three additional "pairs" of arms and hands (or tentacles) can be added to the body of the necromancer, for a total maximum of eight arms: the character's two natural limbs and six other limbs. The additional limbs can be humanoid, animal, or monstrous. Note that attaching one giant limb counts as two normal-sized limbs.
- **Horn(s):** P.P.E. Cost: 4 each. Horns are used as a weapon in head-butting and ramming. A single horn inflicts 1D6 damage, while a pair of horns does 2D6 damage; either adds six points to the character's physical S.D.C.
- **Rhinoceros Horn:** P.P.E. Cost: 8. The horn inflicts 3D6 damage and instills the abilities of keen hearing (+1 on initiative) and keen sense of smell (55% to track by smell), plus it gives the wearer an extra 20 S.D.C.
- **Unicorn Horn:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. The horn inflicts 4D6 damage and can be used against vampires, zombies, and magical and supernatural beings who are impervious to normal weapons. It also instills the abilities to see the invisible, nightvision (90 ft/27.4 m), keen color vision, prowling (50%), +1 on initiative and never tires.
- **Ki-Lin Horn:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. The horn inflicts 5D6 damage, and instills the abilities to see the invisible, nightvision (90 ft/27.4 m), healing touch (four times per 24 hour period, restoring 2D4 hit points and 3D6 S.D.C.), and sense evil (automatic sensation).
- **Dragon Horn:** P.P.E. Cost: 30. One horn inflicts 1D4x10 damage, and +250 S.D.C. to the character wearing the horn. Two or more horns do 2D4x10+10 damage, and each additional dragon horn adds another 100 S.D.C. points.
- **Dragon Tail:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. Provides one additional attack per melee and inflicts 1D6x10 damage per strike.
- **Dragon Skull:** P.P.E. Cost: 50. Often worn as a helmet or ceremonial headdress known as the "Dragon Helm" and is very coveted. It instills the following powers: 240 S.D.C., understand and speak all languages, read and write Dragonese/Elf, makes the wearer impervious to fire, resistant to cold, and breathe whatever type of breath weapon (if any) the dragon had, i.e. fire, cold, acid, etc. In addition, the mage can cast any of the spells once known by the dragon equal to a 5th level spell caster!
- **Skull of a Powerful Supernatural Monster** such as a greater demon or demon lord (but not elementals, vampires, or energy beings): P.P.E. Cost: 120. The skull gives the necromancer an additional 300 S.D.C., the ability to speak that creature's language and all of the creature's magic powers and spell knowledge (only while the skull is activated), equal to half the level of ability of the creature when it was alive. Thus, if the creature could cast magic at 10th level, the necromancer's spells derived from the skull are at fifth level power. If sixth level, spells drawn from the skull are at third, and so on.

- **A Pair of Wings from a Bird or Bat** (not insects) can be attached to provide flight: P.P.E. Cost: 30. The wings must be strapped to the back of the mage and can be undersized or oversized, but when the magic is engaged the wings grow or shrink to the appropriate size for the user. Flying speed is limited to 20 mph (32 km) for most songbirds and bats, game and large birds, and 35 mph (56 km) from the wings of birds of prey. Large, monstrous wings from such creatures as the Pegasus, Peryton, Harpy, Sphinx, Gargoyle, Gryphon, Gromek, Waternix and similar beasts provide a flying speed of 45 mph (72 km).
- **A Pair of Wings from a Dragon or Powerful Supernatural Creatures** like the Baal-Rog, Gargoyle Lord, Night Owl, and similar creatures. P.P.E. Cost: 90. Flight at a speed of 60 mph (96 km), as well as adding another 100 S.D.C. to the flyer (note that the wings themselves have 2D4x100 S.D.C.).

3. Animate and Control the Dead. The Necromancer can animate and control dead bodies, skeletons, corpses, etc., as if they were giant puppets. This power is very similar to the Wizard spell (see *Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd edition*, page 200), only the power of the Necromancer is considerably greater than the spell.

P.P.E. Cost: 10

Range: 300 feet (91 m), plus 20 feet (6 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

- The Necromancer can control four corpses/skeletons per level of experience. The bodies or skeletons can be humanoid or animal.
- The animated dead to be controlled must be clearly in view of the spell caster in order to animate them, but the Necromancer can add more to his army as he locates them.
- The Necromancer can also send his dead puppets on simple missions such as "destroy" or "kill" and send them wandering out of his sight, swinging and smashing everything they encounter. The animated dead will try to follow the command until they are destroyed or until the end of the spell (maximum duration). In this special case, it no longer matters whether the Necromancer is in view, present, or even conscious.
- The animated dead can be either in skeleton or corpse form, of any humanoid, animal or monster. Each of the animated dead has a Spd. 7, two attacks per melee round, and attacks are inflicted by punches, kick, claws, and bites (1D6 damage). While swords and other weapons can be used by the animated dead, they don't have the coordination to use them any more effectively than blunt clubs (in other words, they are as likely to hit with the flat of the blade as the edge). Double the speed and damage of giant animals and humanoids and add one attack per melee round. These robot-like animations don't feel pain, fear or emotion.
- Only total destruction will stop an animated dead. Whenever the Necromancer is rendered unconscious (or slain), the animated dead will immediately flop down and stop moving.
- S.D.C. of a small skeleton or corpse, such as a Goblin or Gnome, is 50 S.D.C., human sized bodies, including Elves, Dwarves and Orcs, have 80 S.D.C., larger creatures, such as Wolfen and Ogres have 140 S.D.C., and giants (weighing 500 pounds/225 kg or more) are invested with 200 S.D.C. Note that arrows, spears and stabbing weapons (knives, sword points, etc.) do only one third damage, while blunt and smashing weapons or attacks do full damage. Fire does double damage.

4. Impervious to Vampires! Necromancers are impervious to the mind controlling bite of a vampire, and cannot be turned into a vampire, but can be slain by them. Necromancers know all legends about vampires and other undead, and know the proper techniques for combating them. Vampires will be covered in detail in a future supplement.

5. All Necromancers are inherently frightening, even if their profession is unknown to observers. Horror Factor 6 at first level, add one to Horror Factor at levels three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen and fifteen. Also add H.F. points from bonuses provided by the addition of frightening appendages. Conversely, it tends to take a lot to horrify them; +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Necromancer O.C.C.

Alignment: Most Necromancers are Anarchist or evil, usually Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10 and M.E. 10 or higher, and P.E. 12 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Languages: Native Tongue at 98%, plus one of choice (+20%).

Literacy: Two of choice (+12%).

Lore: Demon & Monster (+20%)

Lore: Magic (+10%)

Mathematics: Basic (+20%)

Skin and Prepare Animal Hides (+5%)

Wilderness Survival

W.P.: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic can be selected as one O.C.C. Related Skill, Hand to Hand: Expert at the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills, or Martial Arts or Assassin for the cost of three.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven O.C.C. Related Skills, plus select two additional skills at level two, and one at levels 4, 8 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications & Performing Arts: Any.

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Any.

Horsemanship: General or Exotic Animals only.

Medical: Any (+5%).

Military: Any.

Physical: Any.

Rogue: Any (+5%).

Science: Any.

Scholar & Technical: Any (+10% on Lore or Literacy).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from those listed at level one and one additional skill at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: A good-quality hooded robe or cloak, two full sets of clothing, a pair of leather gloves, belt, bedroll, backpack, large satchel, two small sacks, a water skin, 2D6 sheets of parchment, a 100 page notebook, three crow quill pens, two bottles of ink (choice of colors), 2 sticks of graphite, 2 sticks of chalk, two candles, a wooden cross, a small mirror, a tinder box, four short pieces of rope (2 ft/0.6 m), one 12 foot (3.6 m) length of rope and a ball of string (20 ft/6 m).

Armor: Starts with a suit of soft leather (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 20).

Weapons: One silver knife (1D6 damage), one wooden knife (1D4 damage; breaks fairly easily, 6 S.D.C.), and one additional weapon of choice.

Money: Starts with 125 in gold. While Necromancers have difficulty finding employment for their skills, when they do find a customer, they can charge enormous amounts for their services. For example, many nobles and the wealthy have questions they would like to put to the deceased ("Uncle Willy, where did you bury that treasure?"), and are usually willing to pay 2D4 times 1,000 gold for the answers. While only an evil lord or warrior would hire a Necromancer, there is no doubt that Necromancy can be valuable during a war. Payment for this kind of work varies, but it starts at no less than 10,000 gold. Necromancers are also known to send animated corpses to engage in banditry, attack merchant caravans and travelers to steal, and even as a threat to blackmail merchants, churches and even entire small towns and villages.

Insanity: The necromancer often becomes deranged with the passage of time. Roll once on the following table at levels four, eight, ten, twelve and fifteen. Of course if you want the character to be crazy, pick one or two from the very beginning.

Necromancer Insanity Table

Roll percentile dice.

01-30 No insanity.

31-40 Obsession: Likes to torture, hurt and kill others.

41-45 Obsession: Hates the light of day and tries to avoid it.

46-50 Obsession: Danger; loves it -- takes needless risks.

51-55 Phobia: Gods of Light

56-60 Obsession: Hates good druids, especially Millennium druids.

61-65 Obsession: Dead things -- loves them; surrounds himself with skeletons, mummies, zombies, and the likes.

66-70 Phobia: Ancient Dragons

71-75 Phobia: High level shamans and priests of light.

76-80 Phobia: Spirits of Light/angels.

81-85 Roll for random affective disorder.

86-90 Roll for random phobia.

91-95 Roll for random obsession.

96-00 Roll for random insanity.

Necromancy Magic

By Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik

Necromancy is a little different than the more common spell magic in that many of its incantations may involve the use of dead beings, skeletons, or components (pieces!) taken from the dead. All necromantic spells are specifically related to the dead, the undead, or to the process of death. Its practice and even usage is forbidden in most human, Elf and Gnome communities. It is absolutely *forbidden* by Dwarves and Titans and was one of the "dark magics" that Elves and Dwarves tried to destroy during the Millennium of Purification. In fact, Necromancy was believed to have been eradicated for centuries, but has resurfaced in the last 400 years. Thankfully, many of the most powerful and horrific necromantic secrets remain lost. **Note:** Most wizards, even evil ones, will not learn or engage in the black arts of necromancy.

Necromancy continues to grow in popularity among the monsters races, particularly Ogres, Orcs, Trolls and Tezcat. The only exceptions are Wolfen. Although they have accepted the practice of necromancy for generations, and are famous for its deft use in military campaigns and sieges, they find it an evil and worrisome profession/power and do not encourage or praise its use. In the last 50 years, some Wolfen communities and warlords have gone so far as to forbid its practice.

Necromancy or Necro-Magic by Level

Level One

Animate Body Parts (2)
Assemble Bones (2)
Bone & Joint Bonding (2)
Rattling Bones (2)
Talking Bones (3)

Level Two

Crawling Bones (5)
Fragile Bone to Wood (5 or 30)
Hide Among the Dead (5)
Stench of the Dead (6)

Level Three

Accelerated Decay (8)
Animate and Control Dead: Simple (10)
Object Read the Dead (8)
Recognize the Master (8 or 30)
Recognize the Undead (8)

Level Four

Command Ghouls (10)
Eyes of the Dead (8)
Funeral Dirge (6)
Kill Plants (10)
Maggots (Insects) (20)
Necro-Armor (16)
Summon the Dead (10)

Level Five

Consume Power & Knowledge (20)
Death Mask (12)
Divining Tombs & Graves (10 or 35)
Fragile Bone to Stone (10 or 60)
Grip of Death (13)
Locking Hand (10 or 30)

Level Six

Poison Touch (15)
Wear the Face of Another (15)

Level Seven

Chicken Bone (20)
Curse: Death Wish (20)
Mend Living Bone (20 or 100)

Level Eight

Death Bolt (30)
Death Strike (25)
Fragile Bone to Steel (15 or 90)
Mock Funeral (Curse) (40+)

Level Nine

Curse of Hunger (50)
Death's Embrace (35)
Funeral Pyre (35)
Greater Animated Dead (50)
Shadows of Death (45)
Shadow of Doom (Curse) (45)

Level Ten

Command Vampires (100)
Curse of Wasting (80)
Strength of the Dead (60)
Summon Insect Swarm (80)

Level Eleven

Bone of Invisibility (180)
Bone Scepter (160)
Summon Vampire (150)
Transfer Life Force (150)

Level Twelve

Bone Staff (210)
Necklace of Bat Skulls (290)
Necklace of Bird Skulls (290)
Necklace of Dragon Teeth (320)
Necklace of Snake Skulls (300)
Summon Worms of Taut (210)

Level Thirteen

Necklace of Goblin Skulls (340)
Shape Bone (80)
Skull with Flaming Eyes (300)
Skull of Knowledge (320)
Summon Magot (Monster) (320)
To Hell & Back (Curse) (180)

Level Fourteen

Return from the Grave (60)

Level One

Animate Body Parts

Range: 20 feet (6 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Two minutes per level of the Necromancer.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Two

Limitations: One body part per level of the Necromancer.

The inexperienced Necromancer is able to animate the appendages and parts of the dead, such as hands and arms, feet, legs, tail, wings, mouth (to bite or mouth words), etc., but not the entire body. Also ideal for manipulating dismembered limbs. If connected to an entire body, one body part (per level of the spell caster) can be animated and controlled. Thus, the hand and arm of a corpse or skeleton could be made to reach out and grab or hit somebody, but little more. Dismembered limbs can be made to move along the ground by crawling, jumping or sliding at a speed factor of 5. The Necromancer has complete mental control over the body parts he can manipulate. Each motion/action of the body part(s) counts as one of his melee actions.

If the Necromancer is rendered unconscious or slain, the spell is immediately broken and the limb/part slumps lifelessly to the ground. A successful Turn the Dead will instantly cancel the spell.

Assemble Bones

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m) +20 feet (6 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Permanently assembled, although the bones can be easily moved or knocked apart.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Two

This spell magically assembles loose bones in one melee round (15 seconds). As much as two complete, human-sized skeletons can be pieced together (roughly 80 lbs/36 kg of bones). If the bones are a loose pile of incomplete skeletons, the spell will assemble what it can and then gather the rest of the bones by type, i.e. all rib bones in one row, femurs in another, etc.

Bone & Joint Bonding

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m) +20 feet (6 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Permanent, although the bones and joints can be chopped apart.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Two

This spell creates permanent, sinewy-like bonds and a flexible adhesive to hold bones together and create bendable joints. This is part of the magic involved in animating skeletons and crawling bones; how else could a skeleton stay together and move without real cartilage and muscle? This magical compound is virtually undetectable. One entire human-sized skeleton can be assembled and bonded together, with bendable joints using this spell.

Rattling Bones

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Two

A Necromancer spell used to unnerve people and create an air of fear. In this case, the magic can make a skeleton or equivalent amount of loose bones tremble. This causes the teeth of a skull to chatter and bones to rattle against each other and/or on the floor. The rattling noise combined with seeing a skeleton or bones moving, even though restricted to one place, is frightening. The effect is equal to a *Horror Factor of 15*. Superstitious people and children are -4 to save vs Horror Factor. All others who fail to save suffer the usual penalties for Horror Factor for one melee round, but the initiative penalty remains in effect for the entire time the bones rattle. Those who successfully save suffer no penalties.

Talking Bones

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Three

This is more of an unnerving trick, a sort of magical ventriloquism, than a powerful magic. The Necromancer can make the skull of any creature seem to talk. The words are his, but the voice is different, raspy and husky, and clearly comes from the skull. The initial words spoken by the skull are startling and frightening; equal to a Horror Factor of 13. Superstitious people and children are -4 to save vs Horror Factor and likely to flee the area. All others who fail to save suffer the usual penalties for Horror Factor for one melee round. As a magical form of ventriloquism, even if the Necromancer is within view, his mouth does not seem to move, and sound will not seem to be coming from him. In addition, the mage can leave the area and have the skull repeat one simple, six word phrase over and over for the duration of the magic, even if he is miles away. This can be a menacing howl, moaning, wailing, or diabolical laughter, or words like, "go no further," or "beyond that door awaits death," or "now you die," or "beware," and so on.

Note that while most frequently used to frighten and intimidate, this magic can also be used to deliver warnings or information, fake seances, and so on, without the Necromancer revealing his true identity or nature.

Level Two

Crawling Bones

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Five

This is a simple and limited form of animate dead, except in this case the Necromancer can only manipulate the severed limbs of a corpse or skeleton. This means he can make one finger, hand,

hand and forearm, arm, foot, or prehensile tail crawl or snake to him or do his bidding. This animated appendage can be used to frighten (Horror Factor 12) or distract people by skittering across the floor or a table, or made to retrieve a small object (key ring, knife, cup, jewelry, etc.), or to attack (grab a leg or throat, claw, punch, or stab, etc.). The animated appendage can also be used as an extension of the mage's own hand. For example, the mage could hold an animated appendage such as a forearm and hand by the end of the forearm to touch, move, turn, grab, etc., something out of his normal reach. Skills that require manual dexterity are performed at -20% when a severed hand is used as an extension.

- The number of appendages that can be animated at a time is limited to one per every two levels of experience, rounding up, so that's one at levels 1 & 2, two at levels 3 & 4, three at levels 5 & 6, and so on.
- Attacks/actions per melee round by the crawling bones are limited to three per round.
- Damage by the appendage is 1D6 H.P./S.D.C. damage.
- Speed is 15 for a hand or foot, 10 for all others.
- Equivalent P.S. is 9.
- Typical S.D.C. is as follows: Finger (2), Hand (12), Hand & Forearm (24), Forearm only (12), Upper Arm only (15), Forearm and Upper Arm without Hand (27), Foot (15), Foot & Lower Leg (30), Lower Leg only (15), Upper Leg (25), Small Tail (10), Large Tail (20).

Fragile Bone to Wood

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Five points; 30 P.P.E. to make the transformation *permanent*.

The Death Mage can turn the equivalent of one human-sized skeleton, or equivalent pile of bones (roughly 40 lbs/18 kg), from ordinary bone to the consistency of wood suitable for building. The "wood" bones are 20% stronger and heavier, so if the bone had 15 S.D.C. it now has 18 S.D.C. The wooden bones are a strong, reliable building material with properties nearly identical to wood. They can be nailed, lashed, glued, polished, sanded, etc., and used to make weapons, furniture, baskets, boats, doors, fences, gates, and even entire houses, although the latter is a rarity. Most Necromancers keep the original bone look for dramatic effect and personal preference (most Death Mages like the color and look of bones and skulls). **Note:** Ordinary bone and bone magically made into wood can be bent and molded via use of the Shape Bone spell in order to curve, bend, twist and adjust the shape of bones for use as building materials; ideal for shaping the handles of weapons, the legs for tables and chairs, pieces for headwear, jewelry, and so on, as well as to get a consistent size, shape, look and symmetry.

The temporary transformation of bone into wood is typically used on simple items when the strength of wood is helpful but long-term use is not. For example, the mage might turn a bone to wood in order to use it as a cudgel/club that won't shatter when it hits. Likewise, he might turn bones into wood to use as a brace or pole to jam a door open or closed, or to prop up a wagon to change a wheel, and so on. The Necromancer can also temporarily turn the bones of animated dead into wood, temporarily

increasing their S.D.C. by 20%. (See animated dead under Special O.C.C. Powers for details on animated skeletons.) Bones are made into permanent wood for long term use.

Hide Among the Dead

Range: Self or self and one other by touch.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Five

Like the Chameleon spell, this magic allows the mage or one other to blend in with his background, only in this case, the background is limited to the remains of the dead. This means the Necromancer can hide among any types of corpses, skeletons, and even animated dead and appear to be just another corpse or skeleton. Even the most advanced modern medical and detection devices are fooled, as are magical and psionic means of detection (see aura, sense magic, presence sense, etc.). This magical concealment only works when there is at least one other corpse or skeleton, and if the Necromancer stays still.

- 98% undetectable if unmoving.
- 70% undetectable if moving two feet (0.6 m) per melee or slower.
- 20% undetectable if moving any faster.

Yes, by the way, if the other bodies are removed (he's the last one), the magic is destroyed and the mage will suddenly appear as his real, obviously living self ("How did we miss that guy?"). The same occurs if he is picked up and carried away from the other corpses.

Stench of the Dead

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Six

A magic mist covers the area when this spell is cast. The mist stinks of rotting meat and decay. The sickening smell causes all who enter its area of affect to cough and retch twice per melee round (15 seconds), plus the eyes water and no other odors can be smelled while in the overwhelming mist. **Penalties:** Reduce speed, number of attacks per melee and combat bonuses by half. The mist can be cast up to 100 feet (30.5 m) or further with experience.

Level Three

Accelerated Decay

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent results, with decay happening before one's eyes, with each melee round (15 seconds) equal to the effects of one day of decay.

Damage: Decays the equivalent of two days per level of the spell caster. Fresh fish, prepared vegetables or fruit, stew, or any food prepared for consumption that day is inedible after the equivalent of two days of decay, fresh meat after four days, and fresh fruit and vegetables after the equivalent of six days. A fresh corpse can be turned to bits of flesh and bare bone after the equivalent

of 60 days of decay. It is unrecognizable after 20 days, and stinks something terrible after four days. High level spell casters can regulate the level of decay in two day increments.

Saving Throw: None, however if protected by a magic circle, sanctum spell, or against "spoiling," the food or deceased is impervious to this spell.

P.P.E.: Eight per corpse or 200 pounds (90 kg) of organic material.

This magic accelerates the decaying process of organic material, from processed meat and prepared food to the body of a corpse. The level of decay and deterioration is equivalent to sitting in the hot sun (even if the actual food or corpse is refrigerated).

An especially useful spell for covering up foul play by turning a fresh corpse into a withered husk. This means that investigators and pathologists are likely to overestimate the time of death by days and have trouble identifying the victim or have trouble determining the cause of death. The spell will also turn freshly prepared food, meat, cut fruit and vegetables into spoiled mush.

Animate and Control Dead: Simple

Range: 400 feet (122 m); line of sight.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell is identical to the standard, 7th Level Animate and Control Dead invocation. The only exception being that it counts as a *third level* spell and requires 10 P.P.E. for the Necromancer (instead of 20).

Object Read the Dead

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight

This spell gives the character a power similar to the psionic ability of object read, only this power is limited to divining things about the dead. Information can be gathered from a corpse, animal carcass, skeleton, skull, or a single large bone. The data is limited but helpful:

- General cause of death: old age, disease, plague, accident or murder.
- Race or animal type.
- Whether the creature suffered or not before dying.
- Whether or not magic was involved.
- The length of time the creature has been dead: immediate (a few minutes), recent (a few hours), quite a while (a few days), a long time (several months), years, or decades (over 20 years).

Recognize the Master

Range: Within 10 feet (3 m) of the mage or by voice command of the mage within 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: One hour per level of experience, or permanent.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Eight; 30 P.P.E. to make the enchantment permanent.

This feature is typically used in conjunction with permanent bone gates and doors. The spell enables the bone door, gate and

any locking mechanisms built into it (even if the lock itself is not made of bone) to recognize the Necromancer who made it and to respond by opening and closing like a modern door with an electronic eye. It will not open to anybody but the Necromancer. To force open a normal door or gate, meaning it has no special key locks, sliding bolts on the inside or magical locking hands, one needs a combined P.S. of 20 or must break the doorknob/handle (typically 15 S.D.C.). Once broken, the door can be pushed open with ease.

If the Necromancer is within 100 feet (30.5 m), he can also command the enchanted bone doors or gates to automatically open and close whenever anybody approaches, but he can verbally rescind that order, effectively closing and locking all doors/gates under this enchantment. All doors under this enchantment will respond to the Necromancer's voice commands.

Recognize the Undead

Range: Self.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the Necromancer.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Eight

The spell caster is given the ability to instantly and automatically recognize all types of undead, including zombies, mummies, animated corpses, vampires and Vampire Intelligences, no matter how human or innocent they may appear. This knowledge enables the character to better prepare himself for conflict with these monsters (or to avoid such conflicts).

Level Four

Command Ghouls

Range: Self.

Duration: 15 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: -2

P.P.E.: Ten

This incantation makes 2D4 ghouls per level of the spell caster's experience fear and obey the necromancer. This spell will affect Grave Ghouls, the Dybbuk and similar creatures, but has no effect on dimensional ghouls or ghoulish demon lords. Also note that the Dybbuk doesn't appreciate mind control and is likely to seek revenge on the person responsible, unless the mission was an enjoyable one. Grave Ghouls are too timid to consider retribution.

Eyes of the Dead

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None for the user. Standard for victims.

P.P.E.: Eight

With this enchantment, the eyes of the Necromancer become black and lifeless. Besides looking creepy and enhancing his already frightening appearance (+2 to Horror Factor), these dark eyes will protect the Necromancer from hypnotic suggestion and any mind control which involves eye contact. The enchantment also enables him to recognize ghouls, animated dead, and the undead. Furthermore, the necromancer's own gaze will unnerv

any who look into it, sending a chill running down his spine and a penalty of -1 to all combat skills for one melee round.

Funeral Dirge

Range: Self or other by touch.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Six

Note: Has no effect unless somebody has died, although it can be played for added effect during a Mock Funeral or as a warning.

Upon recitation of this spell, the Necromancer (or another person, enchanted by touch) can play a recognizable, mournful funeral dirge/death or funeral march on any type of horn, piano, drum, or string instrument. The music has foreboding and dark undertones and can be heard for one mile (1.6 km) per level of the spell caster. To ghouls, grave-robbers, demons, and other Necromancers and death cultists, it is sweet music that may mark the death of an enemy, and, to those creatures who feed on or use corpses, signals to them that a fresh corpse is available. All living creatures who hear it know that it marks the passing of a living being and may spark a moment of reflection and/or sorrow. Juicers, Crazies and Old Believers will feel so sad that they are -3 on initiative, -3 to strike, parry, and dodge, and -1 attack per melee round. These penalties remain in force while the music is played and for 2D6 minutes after it stops.

Kill Plants

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None, unless an intelligent life form, then standard.

P.P.E.: Ten

This death touch inflicts 1D4X10 S.D.C./Hit Point damage to plants per level of the spell caster's experience. The killing touch is usually performed as an act of vandalism, vindictiveness, or cruelty.

Maggots (insects)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Days unless killed.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Twenty

The necromancer can touch food or a dead animal and infest it with maggots and worms that feed on the dead. If the victims of the spell (for example, the owners of the food) acts quickly they can kill the larvae and save 2D4x10% of the food by boiling, deep frying, smoking, or similar measures to kill the bugs and any possible disease. This magic cannot be used against the living.

Necro-Armor

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: One minute per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None for the user; onlookers must save vs a Horror Factor of 13.

S.D.C. of the Armor: 13 points per level of the spell caster.

P.P.E.: Sixteen

Within seconds, the character is covered with a mass of bones, skeletal fragments and putrid remains. This disgusting coating does not appear sturdy, but is, in fact, a protective barrier like leather or iron. Aside from that, the sight of this armor as it envelops its wearer is frightening to watch; roll to save vs Horror Factor 13. The armor also exudes a horrid stench, which will impair anyone within 100 feet (30.5 m) unless they have a separate oxygen supply, no sense of smell, or are supernatural predators. Penalties from the stench are -1 to all combat maneuvers (strike, parry, etc.). At the spell's end, the armor sloughs right off and is quickly reabsorbed into the earth. If cast upon another person, the recipient must roll a successful saving throw vs Horror Factor 13 to fight without impairment. Failure means a penalty of -3 to all combat maneuvers for the duration of the armor.

Summon the Dead

Range: One mile (1.6 km) radius per level of the spell caster.

Duration: 4D6x10 minutes.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This magic is similar to the Animate and Control Dead spell, except that this magic is more limited, because the spell caster doesn't actually control the dead but brings the dead to him. This is especially useful when the Necromancer needs corpses in a hurry, but can't take the time to go out and, um ... dig them up.

1D4 corpses/skeletons, +1 per every other level of experience, will rise from their graves (or wherever) and march on a straight path to their summoner. This can take anywhere from a few minutes to a couple hours, depending on how far away the corpse is. Once the dead makes it over to the Necromancer, it collapses. To animate the thing further, the mage must use the Animate and Control Dead spell. Summon the Dead simply brings the dead to the Death Mage, exactly how he uses them later depends on the character.

Alternately, the mage can elect to summon one specific dead to come to him. For this to work, the Necromancer must either have personally known the deceased or have a personal belonging, or sample of his or her blood, hair, or skin. This is often done to discover what has happened to a missing ally who is feared to be dead, or to desecrate a specific grave. Only one of the specific dead can be summoned in this manner, but the range is doubled. The same limitations as the general summoning still apply.

Level Five

Consume Power & Knowledge

Range: Self

Duration: Varies.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: 20 per each item.

This repulsive magic requires that the necromancer remove the tongue, brain or organ of a dead being, boil or cook it while reciting the magic incantation, and breathe the fumes from the prepared meat. Necromancers who are monsters may tear out the organ and eat it raw (or cooked) with the same magic results. The basic concept behind this magic is the belief by many cultures, both human and monster, that eating the organs of one's vanquished enemies will give the eater his courage or abilities.

Different organs offer different powers. No powers are gained from animal organs. More than one item (maximum three) can be cooked up with accumulative effect.

Heart: Courage and strength. The mage is +3 to save vs Horror Factor, is not easily unnerved or intimidated, gets an additional 10 S.D.C. and can lift and carry twice as much as normal. Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Liver: Sobriety. No matter how much alcohol is drunk, the character cannot get drunk. Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Kidneys: Impervious to poisons and +2 to save vs non-lethal drugs. Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Intestines: Breathing the fumes provides physical nourishment. The character does not need to eat, and will not feel hungry for at least 48 hours after completing the spell.

Tongue: Can understand and speak all languages. Duration: Two hours per level of experience.

Eyes: The necromancer will recognize the people, places and items once known by the deceased, as well as the basic background behind those people, places or items. For example, the necromancer will recognize the deceased's friends, parents, family, lover, wife, enemy, murderer, home, favorite tavern, weapon, clothing, etc. Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Brains: Provides the mage with all of that person's skills at 60% proficiency. Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Death Mask

Range: Self.

Duration: Four minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: All who see the death mask must roll to save vs Horror Factor of 13.

P.P.E.: Twelve

The spell creates a frightening looking death mask that completely covers the spell caster's face. The mask provides the following:

- Disguises the character's normal facial features.
- Frightening visage evokes fear equal to a Horror Factor of 13.
- Wearer is impervious to all normal disease, poisons, and magic sicknesses and curses.
- Prowl at 55%.

Divining: Tombs & Graves

Range: Self.

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 10 or 35

This magic requires the use of a wishbone from a large bird. First the bone is held in both hands. Upon activation of the spell, the bone starts to vibrate, and pulls the character in the direction of any nearby graves or tombs. When a grave has been located, usually when the Necromancer is standing over it, the wishbone stops vibrating momentarily, and then points to the next closest grave. For the cost of an extra 25 P.P.E., the divining spell can locate a specific grave or tomb from among many, but the character must know the name of the deceased (true name or popular name).

Fragile Bone to Stone

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: One hour per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Ten points; 60 P.P.E. to make the transformation permanent.

The Death Mage can turn the equivalent of one human-sized skeleton, or equivalent pile of bones (roughly 40 lbs/18 kg), from ordinary bone to the consistency of stone. The “stone” bones are twice as strong (double S.D.C.) and twice as heavy. Both ordinary bone and bones already permanently turned to wood (including those turned into weapons, furniture, doors, fences, and other items) can also be turned into stone. Real wood cannot. Additional P.P.E. will need to be expended to make larger bone items into stone.

The Necromancer can also temporarily turn the bones of animated dead into stone, temporarily doubling their S.D.C. and punch damage (becomes 2D6 S.D.C.), but weight is also doubled (approx. 80-100 lbs/36-45 kg depending on the size of the skeleton) and speed is reduced to 4. (See animated dead under Special O.C.C. Powers for details on animated skeletons.)

Necromancers, and certainly Iceborn Skinbenders, use this spell to make tools, weapons, and pieces of armor, jewelry and even parts of walls, ships, and furnishings out of bone and then permanently transform them into steel structures that have the light weight of bone (increase the weight of such items by 30% from what it was as bone), but the resilience, strength and hardness of stone. **Note:** Bones can not be bent or shaped by the *Shape Bone* spell once they are turned into stone. Bones are made permanent for long-term use.

Grip of Death

Range: A 10 foot (3 m) diameter up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Horror Factor of 13 and dodge of 16.

P.P.E.: Thirteen

This magic causes 1D4+1 hands and arms of skeletons and corpses to erupt from the ground to grab and ensnare everybody in the radius of influence. First, each character in the area of affect must make a successful saving throw vs Horror Factor 13.

A failed save will inhibit the character’s ability to dodge and is automatically ensnared by 1D4+1 of the hands risen from the grave (plus the usual penalties).

Those who successfully save vs Horror Factor can attempt to dodge in order to escape the clutches of the flailing hands of the dead. The character must make two consecutive dodges of 16 or higher (uses up two melee attacks) to get out of the area of affect. If even one dodge is missed, the character is ensnared by 1D4+1 of the hands.

Those ensnared are shook and pulled down on their knees, so they cannot simply ignore the clutching hands in an attempt to launch attacks at those outside the area of affect. Such attacks can be attempted but are done without benefit of any attribute, skill or combat bonuses-straight, unmodified die rolls. The same applies for trying to parry or dodge attacks leveled at them while in the Grip of Death! This penalty remains in effect the entire time the characters are trapped by this magic.

Only a strength of 35 or higher (or supernatural P.S. of 20 or higher) can pull free of the hands, but one melee action is burned

up for each hand that has a hold. Others can help in the effort, but they may also become ensnared by the hands from the grave as well. Chopping or blasting the grasping hand off at the base of the arm is another possibility but each arm has 13 S.D.C. and will use up the character’s melee attacks (the hand vanishes once destroyed). In either case, the character must then roll two consecutive dodges of 16 or higher in order to escape other hands of the dead trying to grab victims. Note: Negate Magic and Dispel Magic Barrier may offer a means to eradicate the entire magic spell. Anti-Magic Cloud automatically dispels it.

Locking Hand

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m); not applicable when permanent.

Duration: One hour per level of experience or permanent.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: Ten points per each locking hand; 30 P.P.E. per each to make the enchantment permanent.

The hand of a corpse or skeleton can be made to grab and hold tight with an equivalent P.S. of 24 (a P.S. of 25 or higher is needed to pry it open). This feature is typically used in conjunction with permanent bone gates and doors to be used as a locking mechanism or defense. As a lock, the hand automatically clenches onto a parallel bar or handhold as a tight, grasping fist to effectively lock/hold a door, gate, or grille shut. Anybody trying to pry the hand open will be clawed (2D6 S.D.C. damage) or grabbed and held until the Necromancer arrives. The hand opens when the mage who created it arrives, unless it is holding an intruder in its grasp, then it lets go only upon the command of the mage.

When used strictly for defense, the hand (typically several hands or hands connected to a moveable forearm for an extended reach or leverage) will grab the intruder and hold him tight. If there are several hands, they will try to grab and hold each of the person’s arms and legs to prevent escape, and/or try to grab anybody who tries to free its captive or press forward with trying to open the door. Victims who have their hands/arms grabbed are helpless to pull free or perform any skills unless they have a P.S. of 25 or higher. Kicking and using the legs for leverage is of minimal value. If all appendages are held, the character is completely helpless. This locking feature can also be incorporated into chairs, thrones, beds, prison manacles, torture tables or sacrificial altars to hold victims in place and similar

Note: This enchantment can be used on skeletal hands that have been transformed into wood, stone or other materials, provided the hand was once made of genuine bone.

- P.S. of each hand is 24.
- Magically Enhanced S.D.C.: Bone: 24, Wood: 48, Stone: 75, Metal: 100.

Level Six

Poison Touch

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: One minute per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: 12 or higher, but victims are -2 to save.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This spell enables the touch of the Death Mage to secrete a dangerous poison that is transmitted by touch. Each touch requires a separate saving throw, and damage is accumulative. Bare skin must be available. Each touch inflicts 4D6 Hit Point/S.D.C. damage, unless the victim makes a successful save vs poison. A successful save means he suffers only 1D6 H.P. damage. A failed roll to save means the 4D6 damage plus the victim feels feverish, dizzy and nauseous (-1 on initiative, and reduce speed and skill performance by 30%; penalties linger for 1D6 minutes per each poisonous touch). The effects are immediate and cumulative.

The magic Negate Poisons spell or potion will negate the symptoms and penalties, but not the damage inflicted. Those who are impervious to poison are not affected. Mega-Damage creatures only suffer one point of damage and -1 on initiative as they feel a little light-headed, and suffer no effects on a successful save.

Wear the Face of Another

Range: Self.

Duration: One hour per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable, victim is dead.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This grotesque magic enables the Necromancer to quickly (30 seconds/two melee rounds) remove the skin from the face or entire head (including hair) from the skull of a corpse and magically adhere it to his own. The face of the dead man appears completely natural and alive, as if it were the mage's real face. It can make for a completely undetectable physical disguise, unless somebody knows the deceased is dead. Of course the voice, memories, and body remain those of the Necromancer. Note: The corpse cannot have been dead for more than 24 hours.

Level Seven

Chicken Bone

Range: Touch.

Duration: One hour per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None, requires willing participants.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This is an odd spell that can be used one of two different ways.

Wishbone & Luck: The ends of a dried, "U" shaped chicken wishbone (found near the breast bone) is held by two different people (never the Necromancer) while the mage casts the spell. When he says, "luck" both parties give the bone a quick tug to break it in half. Whoever gets the bigger of the two pieces (even if only slightly bigger) enjoys good luck for the next several hours. Being the reward of dark Necro-Magic, there is a catch. The other participant suffers *bad luck* for the same period of time. In both cases, the good fortune and penalties are minor, and typically the participants are well aware of the consequences.

Good Luck: +2 on initiative, +5% to skill performance, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, poison and disease.

Bad Luck: -2 on initiative, -5% to skill performance, -2 to save vs Horror Factor, poison and disease.

Chicken Soup: The Necromancer can brew a cauldron or large pot of tasty, nourishing chicken broth from a single chicken bone. There is no meat in the soup, but it tastes wonderful and makes for a nourishing meal. Adding vegetables and other ingre-

dients is optional. Cooks up in about 20 minutes and is ready to eat shortly after the water comes to a boil.

Curse: Death Wish

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m) per level of the Necromancer.

Duration: One hour per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard, unless a willing subject, in which case the character is -3 to save.

P.P.E.: Twenty

Limitations: One victim per spell casting.

This instills the recipient with no fear of death and suicidal tendencies that result in foolish, death-defying, risk-taking, fights to the death, and unthinking courage. Unbeatable odds and overpowering opponents will not give them the least bit of hesitation. In fact, the victim will go out of his way to take unnecessary risks or challenge others to the point of making the truly crazy look like sane and reasonable people.

The enchantment gives those affected a bonus of +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +4 to save vs possession and mind control, and +2 on initiative, but it also gives them a penalty of -3 to parry, -6 to dodge, -6 to disarm, and -6 to roll with punch, fall or impact and have no bonuses to save vs coma/death. In fact, the victim rarely even attempts to dodge attacks, preferring to stand his ground against his opponents and fight like a man who doesn't care whether he lives or dies.

Mend Living Bone

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m) and line of sight of the Necromancer.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Twenty for mortal bones, one hundred for dragons, giants and supernatural creatures.

Limitations: One victim per spell casting.

One of the few curative powers of the Necromancer, this spell enables the mage to magically set and mend broken bones, making them as good as new (restoring 1D6 Hit Points in the process). Fractured and broken bones are instantly put back into place and mended, allowing the injured to walk again without lasting pain or impairment. However, this magic mends only the bone, not damage done to injured or torn muscles or tissue/skin. Thus, other wounds attributed to the injury (cuts, abrasions, the bone puncturing the muscle or skin) will require medical treatment and/or other types of magic or psionic healing.

Despite the spell's name, it can also be used to mend old bones that have been broken, to piece together a whole, complete bone (up to half a human skeleton per spell) as if magically glued together, and with no sign of the bone having ever been broken.

Level Eight

Death Bolt

Range: 200 feet (61 m) +20 feet (6 m) per level of the Necromancer.

Duration: Instant, plus effects linger for one minute per level of the spell caster.

Damage: 1D6 damage direct to Hit Points per level of experience! Supernatural opponents take half damage.

Saving Throw: Special; potential victims are -2 to save. Those who save take one third damage and suffer no penalties.

P.P.E.: Thirty

This magic unleashes a multi-tendrilled bolt of black lightning that erupts from the Death Mage's palm and completely bypasses armor (or natural A.R.) to inflict damage direct to the target. Damage is S.D.C. or M.D. depending on the nature of the victim. In addition, unless the victim rolls a successful save vs magic, he will suffer from the following penalties: -4 to initiative, -1 to parry and dodge, and Spd. is reduced by 25% for one minute/four melee rounds. The bolt can pass through full armor, but has no effect on inanimate objects or materials.

Against undead creatures, the bolt has an energizing effect. Vampires, Dybbuk, Zombies, and all other sorts of undead will find their Hit Points increased (or restored if injured) by 4D6 points the instant bolt strikes. Used repeatedly, a Necromancer mage can increase an undead's Hit Points by a maximum of 60 points. The duration of the increased durability is two minutes per level of the spell caster, or until additional damage reduces it.

Death Strike

Range: Empowers the spell caster, not others.

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Opponents are -1 to save.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

Every punch, kick, or strike inflicted by bare hands/feet or by hand-held weapons such as a club or sword (excluding bow weapons, thrown weapons and projectiles), inflicts *double damage*. Furthermore, if the opponent is a magical or supernatural being, then the doubled damage will be inflicted as if it were delivered by the required magical weapon.

Fragile Bone to Steel

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: 30 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable; the enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: 15 points; 90 P.P.E. to make the transformation permanent.

The Death Mage can turn the equivalent of one human-sized skeleton, or equivalent pile of bones (roughly 40 lbs/18 kg), from ordinary bone to the consistency of steel. The "steel" bones are four times as strong and harder (quadruple S.D.C.) and three times as heavy. Both ordinary bone and bones already permanently turned to wood (including those turned into weapons, furniture, doors, fences, and other items) can also be turned into steel. Real wood cannot. Additional P.P.E. will need to be expended to make larger bone items into steel.

The Necromancer can also temporarily turn the bones of one human-sized animated dead into steel, temporarily quadrupling their S.D.C. and doubling punch damage (becomes 2D6 S.D.C.), but the weight of the animated dead is also doubled (approx. 80-100 lbs/36-45 kg depending on the size of the skeleton) and speed is reduced to 3. (See animated dead under Special O.C.C. Powers for details on animated skeletons.)

Necromancers, and certainly Iceborn Skinbenders, use this spell to make tools, weapons, and pieces of armor, jewelry and even parts of walls, ships, and furnishings out of bone and then permanently transform them into steel structures that have the light weight of bone (increase the weight of such items by 40% from what it was as bone), but the resilience, strength and hardness of steel. **Note:** Bones can not be bent or shaped by the *Shape Bone* spell once they are turned into steel. Bones are made permanent for long-term use.

Mock Funeral (curse)

Range: Line of vision.

Duration: 24 hours +12 hours per level of the Necromancer, starting with level two.

Saving Throw: 16 +1 per every three levels of the Necromancer's experience, so if the Death Mage is 3rd level, potential victims must roll a 17, if 6th level they need 18, at 9th level they need 19, and if 12th level or higher, they need to roll either a natural 20 or 21 or higher with bonuses.

Limitation: Only one curse can be placed on an individual at a time.

P.P.E.: Forty for one individual, +20 for each additional member of a group or family included in the curse.

A powerful method of unnerving (sometimes frightening away) an enemy by placing a "death curse" on the individual and leaving a coffin with his effigy as a warning. This ritual magic involves making an effigy (often a scarecrow) of the character to be cursed and the participants (Necromancer and at least one other person) wailing, mocking, cursing, laughing and scoffing at the individual, group or family characterized by the effigy. In the case of cursing an entire group or family (six people maximum), the effigy is the head of the family or group with small rag dolls laid in the coffin with him or her to signify each family or group member.

The person(s) being "laid to rest" in effigy must, at some point, see himself in the coffin for the magic curse to work. To this end, the coffin is left in some obvious, often unavoidable place, like an entranceway, doorway, front room, bedroom, in or on top of a vehicle, etc. If the coffin is spied from a distance, the character(s) is inexorably drawn to it to see who is inside. The coffin can be elaborate and fancy or a simple wooden box (typically the latter).

Note: This death curse is especially dangerous and effective, because the Necromancer who inflicted it knows exactly what his victim's (temporary) fears and weaknesses are, and will exploit them. So if the character is vulnerable to poison or fire, the mage or his henchmen will use that against him. Likewise, if vulnerable to a particular creature, like a water spirit, fire demon, dragon, etc., the villain will try to pit one or more against the character. These curses are designed specifically to intimidate, terrify and undermine the Necromancer's enemies.

Types of Mock Funerals & their Curses:

- If the coffin is filled with dirt, the cursed individual will feel trapped, pressed upon, buried by responsibility and worry. All skills are performed at -20% and initiative is -2.
- If the effigy is torn or chopped apart, the cursed character will feel lost and confused. Sense of direction/land navigation and navigation skills are -70%, all other skills are -10%; becomes easily lost even in familiar surroundings.

- If the effigy is holding a dagger & blood stains run down from the mouth/lips, the cursed character suffers from a Death Wish, same as the spell described under 7th level Necro-Magic, only for the longer duration that comes from a Mock Funeral ritual curse.
- If burned, the cursed individual will suffer double damage from fire.
- If a metal spike is driven into the chest, the cursed individual will suffer double damage from lightning and electricity.
- If laid upon or wrapped in a banner of a group's ruler or other power, the individual will be hounded by members of that group-wanted dead or alive for crimes he may or may not have committed. The latter will require the Necromancer having false accusations made against the individual or frame him for something he didn't do.
- If filled with snakes, the cursed individual cannot save vs poison and suffers double damage from poison, plus he is -1 to save vs magic cast by dragons.
- If filled with rats or mice (dead or alive), the cursed individual cannot save vs disease and suffers double damage from illness.
- If drowned (the casket is either filled with water or dumped in water-river, lake, pond, pool, etc.), the cursed character forgets how to swim, making him vulnerable to drowning, and water-based attacks by water demons, water spirits and water elementals do double damage.
- If the casket is overturned and the effigy is dumped onto the ground, the cursed individual cannot save vs punch, fall or impact and takes full damage from such attacks, including explosions. Furthermore, the character is -50% on the skills climb, acrobatics and gymnastics.
- If left on a doorstep, or wherever the character is currently living or an establishment he/she frequents, it is a warning that the individual or family is marked (usually by a Necromancer or his friends or associates), and that the individual or family member must cease his activities against them or be destroyed. Often a note will be attached to the effigy to clarify exactly whom should be left alone.

Level Nine

Curse of Hunger

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Fifty

This magic instills an unreasoning feeling of hunger in its victim. The feeling of hunger is so strong that even when stuffed to the gills, the victim will think of nothing but eating. While hungry, the victim is -2 on initiative and all combat abilities. After eating, he will be fine for the next 2D6 minutes, but will quickly become hungry again. If he eats again when he's already full, he will become extremely sick and vomit 1D4 times in the next twenty minutes. Penalties are the same as when hungry, except that vomiting will fully impair the victim for one melee round (15 seconds); this means only one melee action and no combat bonuses (the act of vomiting takes up all other melee actions that round). Supernatural creatures and creatures of magic are immune to the effects of the spell.

Death's Embrace

Range: Touch or up to 30 feet (9.1 m) per level of experience; line of sight.

Duration: Effects last for 1D6 minutes per level of the caster.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard saving throw vs magic, however, psychics with sensitive powers are -2 to save.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

A powerful force of arcane energies is summoned and directed toward one particular living target. The energies take the form of a black, ghostly apparition that swirls around and embraces the victim. For the duration of the spell, the apparition softly weeps and moans. The effect is that the character embraced by the thing feels defeated and lost to the point that he simply stands or sits, unable to take any initiative whatsoever. The victim will not attack, perform skills, or even shout a warning to a friend. The only action he can take is in self-defense. Once gone or dispelled, the character instantly snaps out of his stupor and takes action. Note: This debilitating energy can be dispelled by sorcerers via Negate Magic and Dispel Magic Barrier.

Funeral Pyre

Range: 20 foot (6.1 m) radius per level of the spell caster.

Duration: 1D4 minutes.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

This spell causes all corpses and dead bodies within range to burst into flame, and only those quickly doused with a vial of holy water or embraced (held) by the living will not be consumed. After 1D4 minutes, the remains will be burnt down to a pile of bones. This is very useful for cleaning up after a big battle or destroying evidence of a slaughter, although the surviving skeletons will raise questions.

Note: This spell has no affect on animated dead, mummies, zombies, or the undead.

Greater Animated Dead

Range: 800 feet (244 m); line of vision.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifty

Virtually identical to the Animate and Control Dead spell, except the range and duration are all doubled (as noted above), the number of dead one can animate is doubled (4), and the animated dead are twice as fast (Spd. 14). They are also stronger (P.S. 20; inflicting 2D6+5 S.D.C./H.P. damage), have 50% more S.D.C. (75-210 depending on size) and each has four attacks per melee round (instead of two).

Shadows of Death

Range: Self or 20 feet (6 m).

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Forty-Five

This spell creates strange and monstrous shadows but has two different applications. If cast on himself, the Necromancer's own shadow will seem to have a life of its own, move independent of

the mage, make sudden or threatening movements, and generally look frightening and unnatural. This adds +2 to the Horror Factor of the mage and makes opponents -2 on all combat bonuses because the movements of the shadow are startling and distracting.

Alternately, the shadows of death can be cast on others. In this case, the spell is considered a curse. Victims have a constant feeling that they are being watched and/or in danger. They constantly catch glimpses of movement and strange shadows from the corners of their eyes. This makes the character paranoid and jumpy, plus they have trouble sleeping. **Penalties:** Tired from lack of sleep and constantly being on edge, reduce speed and endurance/fatigue levels by 20% and all combat bonuses are -1.

Shadow of Doom (curse)

Range: Touch or 20 feet (6 m).

Duration: 48 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Forty-Five

This spell should be considered a magic curse. The cursed character is depressed and feels like the sword of doom is about to drop on him. **Penalties:** -2 on initiative, -1 on all other combat bonuses and -20% on all skill proficiencies.

Level Ten

Command Vampires

Range: Self and 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One hour per level of experience or less.

Saving Throw: Special.

P.P.E.: One Hundred

This spell imbues the spell caster with the ability to impose his will over vampires as if he were a Master Vampire of the same level of experience. Effects are identical to the Mind Control: Vampire over Vampire ability listed on page 212 of **Western Empire**, except that only one vampire per level of experience can be controlled this way. Only Wild and young Secondary Vampires are affected. Masters, Ancient Secondary Vampires, and of course, Vampire Intelligences, are immune.

A Secondary Vampire that fails to resist will remain under control for 1D4 hours. A Wild Vampire will remain subservient for 2D6 hours. After the time period elapses, the vampire can try again to resist the mind control. Should a vampire manage to resist or otherwise break free of the mind control, it can attack the Death Mage, but not necessarily. Vampires are evil creatures who like doing evil, so they may enjoy the tasks that are asked of them while under the Necromancer's influence. They may even volunteer to assist the Necromancer in his evil tasks after the spell elapses (this won't happen if the mage abuses or tortures the creatures or fellow undead). Otherwise, the mage can keep trying to enforce his will over vampires for one hour per level of his experience or until an hour before sunrise. Vampires do need their sleep, after all.

Curse of Wasting

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Eighty

No matter how much the victim eats, his body begins to waste away as if he hasn't eaten in days. After 24 hours the victim's eyes are sunken and gray, the body unnaturally thin and sickly looking and the character feels tired and weak. P.S., P.P., Spd. and attacks per melee round are all reduced to half (also reduce any attribute bonuses appropriately). In addition, skill performance is -20%.

The character gets thinner and weaker with each passing day. Reduce the following every 24 hours: -1 on all combat maneuvers (initiative, strike, parry, etc.), -1 on all saving throws, -10% on skill performance, -1 on Spd.; all penalties are cumulative.

Supernatural creatures and creatures of magic can also be affected by the curse, but only for two hours per level of the spell caster's experience (so only the initial penalties appear after one hour). Vampires and other undead are not affected.

Strength of the Dead

Range: Self.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Sixty

Starting with an intact, recently dead (within a 24 hours) body, the Necromancer can draw out some of the deceased's past life force. This temporarily grants the necromancer half the S.D.C. and Hit Points that the creature had while it was alive. It is possible to use an older, more decomposed (up to one week old) body, but the amount of Hit Points and S.D.C. received will be only 25%.

Summon Insect Swarm

Range: 1,000 miles (1,600 km).

Duration: 12 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eighty

This ritual magic will cause 1000 flying insects (per each level of experience of the summoner) to amass in a gigantic, blinding cloud. The swarm covers a 100 foot (30.5 m) radius per level of the Necromancer.

Blinding cloud of flying insects: Thousands of flying insects fill the air as a massive, living cloud. The swarm reduces visibility to about 10 feet (3 m). The bugs are also very distracting, noisy and annoying, covering the face, impairing vision even more.

Characters not protected inside heavy cloaks and/or armor will be pelted and covered by the bugs. Even though most of the insects in this swarm are harmless, they will crawl in the ears and nose, fly into the mouth and eyes, crawl under clothes and so on. The overall sensation is disgusting and debilitating. Penalties: Characters caught in the cloud lose half of their melee actions, can barely see or hear, completely lose initiative and all combat bonuses, and speed is reduced by half.

Level Eleven

Bone of Invisibility

Range: Wearer or holder; must be worn or held in one's hand to be effective.

Duration: 15 minutes. The bone is so empowered until it is destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: One Hundred Eighty; creates a permanent magic item.

Note: Requires one single, small bone from a rat.

Typically a small enchanted bone that fits in the palm of the hand or worn as a simple necklace. This bone can turn the holder/wearer invisible as often as six times per 24 hours. To activate its magic, the user must close his hand around it and say, "make me invisible." This magic item has 300 S.D.C., but only suffers damage when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

Bone Scepter

Range: As per spell or as melee weapon.

Duration: As per spell (3rd level potency) or until destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: One Hundred Sixty points; creates a permanent magic item.

Typically a scepter or rod made entirely of bone and which ends with a skull, skeletal jaw with teeth, or hand, claw or taloned foot (bird-like). The permanent enchantment turns it into a low-powered magic weapon with the powers to cast three different spells once each per 24 hours: Select three from the following: Repel Animals, Negate Poison, Turn Dead, Fear, Spoil, and Sick-ness.

It is considered a magic weapon with 500 S.D.C. The weapon suffers damage only when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by direct attacks at the weapon only. When used as a blunt weapon it inflicts 3D6 H.P./S.D.C. damage, even against supernatural opponents.

Summon Vampire

Range: 1,000 miles (1,600 km).

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One Hundred Fifty

This ritual magic will cause 1D4 vampires within a 1000 mile (1600 km) radius to come to the Necromancer within 12 hours (at night, of course). If there are no vampires in the area, none will come. Only wild vampires and/or secondary vampires must heed the mystic summons. The master vampire and old secondary vampires are not affected.

Most vampire(s) see the Necromancer as a kindred spirit and a potential ally, so they will gladly work with the death mage. The magic requires the undead to stay for 24 hours per level of experience of the summoner. However, they can decide to stay longer if that is what they desire, the only difference is the vampire is no longer obligated to obey the Necromancer. This means a free vampire may continue to work with the sorcerer, especially if there is a lot of bloodshed or if the creature likes the mage's scheme. Otherwise, the vampire is free to do as he pleases.

Transfer Life Force

Range: 10 feet(3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 24 hours per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One Hundred Fifty

This spell enables the Necromancer's life essence to inhabit and animate skeletons, corpses, mummies, zombies and even

puppets, like a robot. The possessed dead thing has all the mental and physical powers of the Necromancer, however magic spells and psionic powers cannot be used, because the corpse has no P.P.E. or I.S.P.!

The body is dead so it is impervious to pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue, disease, drugs, poisons, gases, heat and cold. However, the sense of smell is lost and the sense of touch is about half of normal. Vision and hearing are provided by mystic means. If the body is destroyed, it is no big deal; the spell caster simply returns to his real living body and can always inhabit another dead body if so desired. The spell can be used as an offensive measure or a subtle means to spy or confuse. The spell caster can disguise himself completely by inhabiting a recently deceased individual or conceal his identity by inhabiting a corpse or skeleton. Note: The dead body looks ... well ... dead and continues to discolor and decay. After a while, the dead body will smell pretty terrible and parts may drop off.

Level Twelve

Bone Staff

Range: As per spell or as melee weapon.

Duration: As per spell (3rd level potency) or until destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred Ten; creates a permanent magic item.

A staff made entirely of bones. It may have a skeletal jaw with teeth, one or more skulls, hands, claws, taloned foot, horns, giant teeth, or feathers at the top or on each end. The permanent enchantment turns it into a low-powered magic weapon with the powers to turn the dead (equal to a 3rd level spell), hold vampires at bay as if it were a holy symbol and inflicts double damage to animated dead-corpses, skeletons, crawling hands, and mummies (but not the undead or zombies). It is considered a magic weapon with 800 S.D.C.. The weapon suffers damage only when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at the weapon only.

When used as a blunt weapon it inflicts 4D6 H.P./S.D.C. damage, even against supernatural opponents.

Necklace of Bat Skulls

Range: Wearer; must be worn to be effective. Can be worn as a necklace or bracelet.

Duration: The necklace is so empowered until it is destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred Ninety; creates a permanent magic item.

Note: Must have at least four skulls.

A necklace that gives the wearer perfect hearing (+1 on initiative) and enables him to see in non-magical darkness (nightvision 200 feet/61 m) as long as the item is worn. The necklace is considered a magic item with 500 S.D.C., but only suffers damage when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

Necklace of Bird Skulls

Range: Wearer; must be worn to be effective. Can be worn as a necklace or bracelet.

Duration: The necklace is so empowered until it is destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred Ninety; creates a permanent magic item.

Note: Must have at least four skulls.

A necklace of clear sight that gives the wearer perfect 20/20 vision (no need for eyeglasses) and exceptional long-distance vision, plus enables him to see into the ultraviolet spectrum of light as long as the item is worn. The necklace is considered a magic item with 500 S.D.C., but only suffers damage when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

Necklace of Dragon Teeth

Range: Wearer; must be worn to be effective. Can be worn as a necklace or bracelet.

Duration: The necklace is so empowered until it is destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred Twenty; creates a permanent magic item.

Note: Must have at least three teeth.

A necklace of clear sight that gives the wearer the ability to see the invisible as long as it is worn or held in one's closed hand. The necklace is considered a magic item with 800 S.D.C., but only suffers damage when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

Necklace of Snake Skulls

Range: Wearer; must be worn to be effective. Can be worn as a necklace or bracelet.

Duration: The necklace is so empowered until it is destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred; creates a permanent magic item.

Note: Must have at least four skulls.

A necklace of healing and protective magic that makes the wearer impervious to disease that causes fever, snake bites, and poison, plus provides a +2 bonus to save vs all types of magical illnesses. The necklace is considered a magic item with 500 S.D.C., but only suffers damage when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

Summon Worms of Taut

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred Ten

This ritual plucks one or more demonic worms of Taut from its native dimension and magically places it before the summoning Necromancer. The creature is automatically under the spell caster's control and will obey him without question.

Not all worms can be summoned, only the Nippers, Fire Worms and Tomb Worms. As many as one per level of experience can be summoned.

The problem with this spell is that after the duration time has elapsed, the necromancer's control over the worms is gone but they remain. All Worms of Taut are extremely aggressive and dangerous predators. See Palladium Fantasy's *Monsters & Animals* for descriptions.

Level Thirteen

Necklace of Goblin Skulls

Range: Wearer; must be worn to be effective. Can be worn as a necklace or bracelet.

Duration: The necklace is so empowered until it is destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred Forty; creates a permanent magic item.

Note: Must have at least two skulls.

A macabre necklace that gives the wearer the ability to understand and speak Gobblely and Faerie Speak, as well as nightvision (100 feet/30.5 m) as long as the item is worn. The necklace is considered a magic item with 500 S.D.C., but only suffers damage when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

Shape Bone

Range: Self (and the bone one is working with).

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: 80

This spell enables the Necromancer to squeeze, bend, and shape bone as if it were made out of clay or soft rubber. Using this spell, he can shape the bone into a dagger, sword, club, or make parts for a bone staff or body armor (bonding the pieces together using other magic), or make tools such as sewing needles, hooks, eating utensils and so on. The only limitation is that he can only work with *one* complete bone per spell casting, whether it is tiny or large like a leg bone or skull. **Note:** The Iceborn Skinbinder and Sea Witch can perform this spell at half the P.P.E. cost (40 points).

Skull with Flaming Eyes

Range: 300 feet (91 m) as a lantern, or by touch.

Duration: Will function indefinitely or until destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred points; creates a permanent magic item.

A magical creation that permanently enchants the skull of a human or other intelligent creature with the powers of light, warmth and fire. It is considered a magic item with 1000 S.D.C. The skull suffers damage only when an adversary deliberately tries to destroy it by directing his attacks at it only.

- Flaming eyes that provide light like a lantern and which can fire beams of light like a high-powered flashlight or lantern; 300 foot (91.4 m) range.
- The light from the eyes magically extinguishes during the day and in brightly lit rooms, and automatically appears with the coming of dusk or in darkness.
- The flaming eye sockets burn like hot coals and can be used to light wicks or branches to build a fire by placing one end of the item into the glowing eye socket. Putting a finger into the eye socket will burn, inflicting 3D6 H.P./S.D.C. damage and setting any flammable items (like gloves) on fire; double damage to angels/Spirits of Light, Faerie Folk, Elementals and spirits.
- Provides warmth equal to a large campfire or fireplace.
- Skull can fire Bolts of Fire six times per 24 hours: 4D6 S.D.C., double damage to angels/Spirits of Light, Faerie Folk, Elementals and spirits; range: 300 feet (91 m).

Skull of Knowledge

Range: As per spell; range of vision is 1,000 feet (305 m).

Duration: As per spell (3rd level potency) or until destroyed.

Saving Throw: As per spell.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred Twenty points; creates a permanent magic item.

Each of the following magic spells or abilities can be performed once per 24 hours and the skull relates/speaks about what it has seen or learned. All spells are equal to 3rd level in potency and duration, non-magical abilities are limited to 30 minutes.

- See the Invisible.
- See Aura.
- Second Sight.
- Eyes of Thoth.
- Cipher: Count & perform basic mathematical calculations 98%.
- Identify plants and fruit 98%.
- Translate for one particular language 90%.

Note: The skull itself can understand and speak all languages at all times at 90% proficiency, and responds in the language by which it was addressed. The skull never speaks or does its magic without being addressed with the opening words, "O' Skull of Knowledge, tell me ..." and whatever – "what invisible beings you spy," "what words you read," "what of my future can you see," etc.

Curse: To Hell & Back

Range: Touch or up to 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: One melee round (15 seconds) for the initial voyage to hell, but the effects linger for one hour per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: -1 to save vs magic.

P.P.E.: One Hundred Eighty

Unless the targeted individual rolls a successful save vs magic, this spell sends him on a mental and emotional trip through the darkest corners of his mind. In a span of only a few seconds, the victim will re-experience every loss he has ever felt and every injury he has ever inflicted. During this mental assault, the character is oblivious to everything around him and cannot take any action. The experience is humbling to even the strongest spirit and shattering to all others. After this moment of torture, vestiges of the experience will continue to haunt the victim for up to one hour per level of the spell caster. The effects are half for those with an M.E. attribute of 20 or higher.

For the duration of this haunting, the victim is obviously shaken and emotionally feeble. During this period, the character is distracted and despondent. If nothing demands his immediate attention, the character will want to curl up into the fetal position and be left alone. The victim suffers from emotional shell-shock with the following *penalties*: -6 to initiative, -4 to parry and dodge, -6 to save vs Horror Factor, and -4 to save vs mind control. In addition, the speed attribute, skill performance, and attacks per melee are reduced by half, and only one offensive move can be taken per round, all others are defensive only. Even 1D4 days after the experience, the victim will be -1 on initiative.

Summon Magot (monster)

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: 12 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred Twenty

This impressive ritual actually plucks one hideous Magot demon from its native dimension and magically places it before the summoning necromancer to do his bidding. The Magot is automatically under the spell caster's control and will obey him without question. The creature's time on the Palladium world is limited and it warps out after the duration time of the summoning magic elapses, or when the summoner bids it to leave, or when it is slain. For a full description of the Magot, see *Palladium Fantasy RPG® 2nd edition*, pages 323-324.

Level Fourteen

Return from the Grave

Range: Self only.

Duration: Special.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Special; a total of 60 P.P.E. and 24 Hit Points are permanently spent.

This magic is less of a ritual and more like a full-time commitment. One evening, once a week, before going to rest, the Necromancer must conduct a ritual which requires reciting a series of arcane verses, ceremonial bloodletting (human or large animal sacrifice), and the temporary expenditure of 25 P.P.E. by the mage. Furthermore, an involved ritual must be conducted every full moon, during which the mage permanently sacrifices three P.P.E. and two Hit Points. After a full year of conducting both rituals, the magic is complete and the Necromancer must only recite a mantra every night.

The purpose of the magic is not obvious at first. But when its effects are realized, they are very apparent. If the year-long ritual is done properly, without missing any of the nightly rituals (if so, P.P.E. and H.P. expended are lost; start again), it will enable the Death Mage to "return from the grave" as a member of the undead. The willing subject of this magic will forever walk the Earth as a vampire, at least until someone destroys him. He is very powerful, thoroughly evil, and even more dedicated to death than before. This magic is one of the only ways for someone to become a member of the undead (equal to a Master Vampire) without being reliant on some other source of power, such as a Vampire Intelligence. Note: Supernatural creatures and creatures of magic, like dragons, cannot use this magic, but mortals can.

The basic powers and weaknesses of this creature are as follows:

- Hit Points are equal to twice the amount of the Necromancer's base P.P.E. at the time of his death. They do not increase with further experience as an undead, since it is locked at the highest level he had attained before death.
- P.S. attribute is increased to 26 or +4, whichever is higher, and is considered to be supernatural.
- P.P. and Spd. are identical to what the mage had during his life.
- P.E. is no longer applicable as the creature never tires and is immune to poisons, disease, cold and many forms of magic.
- P.B. attribute is reduced to 1D6.
- All mental attributes are reduced by 1D4.
- Horror Factor is 3, plus one per level of experience achieved in life.

- Attacks per melee are four, plus one for every four levels of experience in life.
- New combat bonuses are +3 to initiative, +4 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge, +3 to roll with punch/impact, +1 to entangle, and +2 to disarm, in addition to any P.S. or P.P. attribute bonuses.
- The powers of necromancy remain, but in a diminished capacity. All Special Abilities & Powers of the Necromancer O.C.C. remain intact, but O.C.C. bonuses do not apply.

Furthermore, the Death Mage's usual P.P.E. level is reduced by half, making spell casting limited. Moreover, reborn as a vampire, the character only turns to magic when it amuses him or when desperate, otherwise the character relies on his vampiric abilities.

Half the O.C.C., O.C.C. Related and Secondary skills the mage knew in life are retained, the others are forgotten. All skills that remain are permanently frozen at the level they were at the time of death.

Summary of natural Vampire combat abilities (as they apply to undead created by this sorcery):

- The undead creature is no longer vulnerable to normal weapons. Only magic, psionics, wood or silver weapons and physical attacks or strikes from a supernatural creature will inflict damage to the undead. In addition, weapons made of or plated with silver (the bane of all undead) inflict double damage.
- Damage is regenerated at the rate of 1D6 Hit Points per melee round. The undead creature can function even if reduced to -20 Hit Points, albeit at half speed. Even when reduced to -40 Hit Points, he will be immobile/comatose, but will survive, recover 1D6 H.P. per melee round, regaining consciousness at zero.
- Otherwise, the Undead Necromancer has all the basic abilities, bloodlust and desires of a classic vampire. The only way to permanently destroy the creature is the same way as to kill a vampire.

Wizard Spell Invocations Available to the Necromancer

As a spell caster, a Necromancer can learn most any spell. Some spells (those listed below) fit right into the Necromancer's usual way of doing magic and can be learned quite easily and among the most likely to be counted in a Death Mage's library of spells.

All spells **not** listed below will be more difficult and time consuming to learn (takes 1D4 times longer to master them). They can still be learned if the opportunity presents itself, but the cost for casting any spells not on this list is *double the number of P.P.E.* For example, the Armor of Ithan spell normally costs 10 P.P.E., but will cost the necromancer 20, and the Befuddle spell, normally three, will cost six P.P.E. Most of these death wizards focus on spells that are directly applicable to Necromancy and don't learn a wide range of many other spells.

Necromantic spells can be learned by other practitioners of magic, especially those who specialize in spell casting (like the Wizard O.C.C.), but executing any Necromantic spell by a non-Necromancer means spending double the usual P.P.E. cost, and most mages find Necro-Magic to abhorrent to learn. Remember,

most Wizards, even evil ones, will not learn or engage in the black arts of Necromancy.

Note: The amount of P.P.E. needed by the Necromancer is listed in parentheses (they are already double the normal cost).

Level One

Death Trance (2)
Globe of Daylight (4)
Sense Evil (4)
Sense Magic (8)

Level Two

Concealment (12)
Detect Concealment (12)
Fear (10)
Turn Dead (12)

Level Three

Breathe Without Air (10)
Fuel Flame (10)
Ignite Fire (12)

Level Four

Ley Line Transmission (60)
Magic Net (14)
Repel Animals (14)
Shadow Meld (20)
Trance (20)

Level Five

Circle of Flame (20)
Horrific Illusion (20)

Level Six

Fire Ball (20)
Tongues (24)

Level Seven

Animate & Control Dead (40)
Constrain Being (40)
Life Drain (50)

Level Eight

Commune with Spirits (50)
Exorcism (60)
Luck Curse (80)
Minor Curse (70)
Sickness (100)
Spoil (60)

Level Nine

Protection Circle: Simple (90)

Level Ten

Banishment (130)
Control/Enslave Entity (160)

Level Eleven

Create Mummy (320)

Level Twelve

Create Zombie (500)

Level Thirteen

Sanctum (780)

Level Fourteen

Restoration (1,500)

Level Fifteen

Transformation (4,000)

The cost of some specific components

Note: The cost can be as much as four times greater depending on the demand, situation and exactly who the deceased may have been. The costs to necromancers is usually 50% higher because of the component has greater value to the character and shop owners takes advantage of that. However, charging more than 50% above common market value is rare for fear of retribution from the sorcerer.

Selling such items to a magic shop is likely only to command 10% of the average selling price.

Brain: Cyclops – 30,000+ gold
Brain: Dragon – 130,000+ gold
Brain: Mage O.C.C. – 15,000+ gold
Brain: Warrior O.C.C. – 5,000+ gold
Brain: Priest O.C.C. – 25,000+ gold
Claw: Animal – 1D6x10 gold

Claw: Bird (large) – 1D4x10 gold
 Claw: Creature of Magic (Sphinx, etc.) – 30,000+ gold
 Claw: Dragon Hatchling – 25,000+ gold per pound
 Claw: Dragon Adult – 500,000 to a million gold
 Claw: Lesser Supernatural Beings/Demon – 10,000 gold
 Claw: Greater Supernatural Beings – 50,000 gold
 Claw: Ogre, Troll, Giant – D6x10 gold
 Eye: Cyclops – 100 gold
 Eye: Dragon – 150,000+ gold
 Eye: Humanoid – 500+ gold
 Eye: Supernatural Being – 50,000+ gold
 Horn: Animal (cow, deer) – 2D4x10 gold
 Horn: Supernatural Being – 2,000 gold
 Horn: Dragon – 100,000+ gold
 Horn: Ki-Lin – 20,000+ gold
 Horn: Unicorn – 100,000+ gold
 Hooves: Animal – 1D6 gold
 Hooves: Ki-Lin – 20,000 gold
 Hooves: Unicorn – 50,000 gold
 Tail: Dragon – 150,000+ gold
 Tail: Manticore – 25,000 gold
 Tail: Monkey – 350 gold
 Tongue: Supernatural Creatures – 80,000+ gold
 Tongue: Dragon – 300,000+ gold
 Tongue: Faerie Folk – 15,000 gold
 Tongue: Humanoids (low level human, Wolfen, etc.) – 500 gold
 Wings: Rare Animal (Gryphon, Dragonfist, etc.) – 1D6x2000 gold
 Wings: Common Bird (large) – 1D4x10 gold
 Wings: Creatures of Magic (Sphinx, etc.) – 100,000+ gold
 Wings: Dragon Hatchling – 300,000+ gold
 Wings: Dragon Adult – 750,000+ gold
 Wings: Lesser Supernatural Beings – 100,000 gold
 Wings: Greater Supernatural Beings – 500,000 gold

Weapons & Armor

The following are some regional weapons and armor of note.

Bizantian Battle Hammer

A hammer intended for use on the battlefield, found almost exclusively in the north, built by traditional North Folk, Iceborn, and the Kiridin Barbarians. The weapon has a blunt, hammer-like head on one side of the handle, and usually a beak or point on the opposite side made of hard stone. North Folk and Kiridin make their handles out of hardwood, while Iceborn are known to use whalebone. All three often embellish the handle with carvings. **Length:** 2.6 feet (0.7 m). **Weight:** 5 lbs (2.25 kg). **Damage:** 3D6+1. **Cost:** 65 gold.

Bizantian Hakapik

A Bizantian multipurpose hunting tool, the Hakapik is a heavy wooden club with a hammerhead and a hook on the end. The Hakapik is the traditional weapon used to hunt seal in the Northern Islands and along the Shadow Coast. The Ministry of Farm, Fish, and Food regulates Bizantium's sealing industry and anyone discovered killing a seal without the use of a hakapik is sub-

ject to a fine and possible imprisonment. **Length:** 3.4-5 feet (1-1.5 m). **Weight:** 2.5-3.75 lbs (1.12-1.68 kg). **Damage:** 2D6+2. **Cost:** 25 gold. Rarely found outside Bizantium. **Penalties:** -2 to parry and disarm. This is not a balanced or quality weapon for combat. Clubbing a seal is one thing, fighting an enemy on the field of combat is another.

Bizantian Harpoons

These spears have wide, barbed heads used for hunting large fish and aquatic mammals like seals and whales. The spearhead is fitted to the shaft by a socket, and can be replaced if it breaks off in the flesh of a struggling animal. The Iceborn use bones as spear points, but most modern Bizantian harpoons are tipped with iron, though bronze tips were used in ages past by the Eoten and can still be found occasionally. **Length:** 5-7 feet (1.5-2.1 m). **Weight:** 4.84 lbs (2.1 kg). **Throwing Range:** 100 feet (30.5 m). **Damage:** 2D6. **Cost:** 20 gold.

Iceborn Gnagawa

Made exclusively by the Iceborn, the Gnagawa is a type of grappling hook used as a tool and as a weapon. The carved bone hook has several configurations, sporting from two to four separate hooks. As for rope, the Iceborn bind together lengths of treated intestine to achieve a desired length. A Gnagawa can be used to scale walls and the sides of ships, to secure a boat, and entangle its rigging, as well as for hanging up prisoners or equipment, binding prisoners, and used as a weapon (equivalent of a *chain weapon*). Many Iceborn warriors are so skilled they can wrap the hook and/or rope around an opponent's ankles to trip or entangle him. **Length:** Varies depending on purpose and length of rope; typically 10-20 foot (3-6.1 m) length of rope. **Weight:** 3.75 lbs (1.7 kg). **Damage:** 1D6+3. **Throwing Range:** 30 feet (9.1 m). **Bonus:** +1 to entangle. **Penalties:** -2 to strike moving target and -1 to parry. **Cost:** Must be found or captured from the Iceborn.

Iceborn War Club

This weapon is constructed using the jawbone of a White Fur Bear or Wolf Seal, enchanted via Necromancy to have the equivalent strength and hardness of stone or steel. Iceborn sharpen the striking face of the weapon while leaving the teeth inside the jawbone intact. The war club is used as a close combat weapon and has the ability to cut into the flesh of an opponent. **Length:** 2.3 feet (0.7 m). **Weight:** 4.6 lbs (2 kg). **Damage:** 2D6+1. **Cost:** Must be found or captured from the Iceborn.

Serpent Bone Swords

A weapon crafted from sea serpent bone by Bizantium North Folk of direct Eoten heritage, Iceborn, and Wolfen. Those crafted by Wolfen are usually giant-sized. **Length:** Varies from short swords (2D4 damage) to large swords (equivalent to Broad-sword; 2D4+1 damage), two-handed swords (equal to a Bastard sword; 2D6+2 damage) and massive Claymore-like swords (3D6 damage); +1D6 for Giant-Sized weapons. **Cost:** Varies; generally seen as inferior and sell for half the price of metal weapons. **Note:** Iceborn weapons are cruder than other bone swords and clearly made from bone. However, they will be enchanted via Necromancy to have the equivalent strength and hardness of stone or steel.

Serpent Tooth Sword

A serrated sword made with bronze, iron, wood or bone and a row of sea serpent teeth, used by North Folk and the Iceborn. It is a favorite weapon of the Iceborn, Serpent Chasers and Fishermen brave enough to travel far out into the Sea of Despair. **Length:** Varies. **Weight:** Varies. **Damage (special):** Short Sword: 2D4+2. Large One-Handed Sword (Broadsword): 2D6 damage. Large Two-Handed Sword: 3D6+4. **Cost:** 100-400 gold. The sea serpent teeth enable the weapon to inflict *half damage* against sea monsters and creatures normally impervious to “normal weapons.” **Note:** Iceborn weapons are enchanted via Necromancy magic to have the equivalent strength and hardness of stone or steel. Such swords may have teeth on one side or both sides of the “blade.”

Shark or Serpent Tooth Gauntlets

The shark or sea serpent tooth gauntlets are used by some Bizantian seafarers, especially Marines and Serpent Chasers, for melee combat. Shark teeth are embedded in the gloves/gauntlets on the knuckles and top of the hand as well as along the side of the forearm. When the wearer makes a fist, the sharp teeth splay outward from the knuckles and can be used to punch and slash at enemies, and the gauntlets help protect the hands and wrists from cuts, rope abrasions and sharp serpent scales. **Weight:** 2-3 lbs (0.9 to 1.3 kg). **Damage:** Adds +1D6 to punch attacks.

Bone Knives

Used by many sailors as well as North Folk, Iceborn, and Wolfen. Knives crafted from whalebone and the bone of sea serpents can never be made as sharp as metal knives, nor do they make good throwing weapons (half the range, -1 to strike), but they are excellent for scaling fish and sea serpent hides, skinning seals, elk and reindeer, with blades that slide through flesh rather than stabbing or cutting into it. **Length:** Varies, typically less than 1 foot (0.3 m). **Weight:** 8 ounces to 1 lbs (0.22-0.45 kg). **Damage:** 1D4 (2D4 giant-sized). **Cost:** 10-20 gold.

Bizantium Armor of Note

Shark Leather Armor

Shark leather retains its resilience and suppleness, giving it better flexibility and mobility than leather from land animals. The tanning methods used to turn the sharkskin into supple leather while simultaneously removing the denticles (shark scales) are trade secrets known only to Bizantian tanners and leatherworkers, supposedly handed down from their Eoten forefathers. Shark Leather Armor is prized by Bizantian Marines, Serpent Chasers and seagoing-types in general.

Individual pieces of Shark Leather, known as *shagreen* to traditional North Folk and many Fishermen, are sold as lining for the handles of swords and daggers, where a firm grip could make the difference between life and death. Bits of leather rejected by tanners and armorers are also used as a kind of sandpaper for finishing wooden surfaces on ships and stripping away paint.

Soft Shark Leather Armor: A full suit of soft leather armor. **Weight:** 8 lbs (3.6 kg). **A.R.:** 10. **S.D.C.:** 20. **Cost:** 60 gold in Bizantium where it is common, double outside the Island Kingdom. Penalties: -3% to swim, no penalty to Prowl, Climb, or other skills where mobility is important.

Soft-Studded Shark Leather Armor: This is a full suit of soft shark leather armor with metal or bone studs, and metal-plated leather gloves or gauntlets and a bit of metal at the shoulders. **Weight:** 14 lbs (6.3 kg). **A.R.:** 12. **S.D.C.:** 30. **Cost:** 150 gold in Bizantium where it is common, double or triple outside the Island Kingdom depending on the market. Penalties: Excellent mobility. -5% to swim, Prowl, Climb, and other skills where mobility is important. This suit and shark leather gloves are very popular amongst marine warriors, pirates and assassins.

Magic Cold-Water Shark Leather Armor: Available in all styles as above. All penalties apply as per armor. This armor is extremely popular among Bizantium Marines and Serpent Chasers. Waterchanters of Bizantium are able to bless the armor and imbue it with the ability to keep the wearer warm in cold water. This is both magic and a modification by the Waterchanter that creates the effect of trapping a thin layer of water between the leather and the body of the wearer. Body heat warms the water, surrounding the swimming individual with what amounts to an additional layer of cold protection; just like a modern-day wet-suit. Ship's crew who find themselves floating or swimming in the ocean will take twice as long to feel the effects of cold water, including hypothermia (can survive for roughly one hour + two minutes per P.E. point), and suffer no effects of cold in water that is at least 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4.4 C) or higher in temperature. Has no warming effect on land, or at least no more than any other leather armor. This is a closely guarded secret known only to the Waterchanters. Suits that are intended to be blessed by Waterchanters must be left in the possession of the mage-priest for at least 48 hours. **Cost:** The price of the Shark Leather armor (does not work on any other type of leather) plus 300 gold to citizens of the kingdom, 900 for outsiders or suits being sold to outsiders.

Sea Serpent Scale Leather Armor

Working with the skin of sea serpents is similar to turning cowhide into leather, but more difficult, exacting and time consuming. Using bronze saws and iron blades, the tanner/armorer cuts patterns out of sea serpent hide, slicing around the scales. Then, with a whalebone knife, the majority of the scales are carefully peeled away and removed, leaving patches of them on the chest, back, shoulders, and thighs, combined with gauntlets or vambraces for the forearms, vambrace plates for the lower legs, and a helmet. The end result is a surprisingly flexible, natural “scale” armor.

Serpent Scale Leather Armor: A full suit of armor made from the hide and scales of a sea serpent. **Weight:** 30 lbs (13.5 kg). **A.R.:** 14. **S.D.C.:** 55. **Cost:** 400 gold in Bizantium where it is common, sells for double or triple when exported outside the Island Kingdom. Penalties: -7% to swim, Prowl, Climb, and other skills where mobility is important.

Navigational Equipment

All the following items are common in Bizantium and the Northern Islands.

Gideon Compass: First invented by Dwarves centuries before the Elf/Dwarf Wars, early compasses relied on lodestone, a naturally magnetized ore of iron. Several millennia later, Bizantian mariners on rough seas found it difficult to maintain a magnetic needle floating in a bowl or chamber of water, but were highly reliant on compasses due to the rarity of clear skies over

the Northern Islands. A watchmaker in the city of Gideon came up with a solution, inventing the first dry compass; a magnetized needle set in a glass sphere within a bronze box or framework. Using this device, Bizantium's sailors are able to sail in wintry weather, extend their fishing season, and navigate with better accuracy than ever before. Gideon Compasses are treasured, and are now crafted by specialist shops in any major city in the Northern Islands, and a half-dozen locations on the Shadow Coast. They are also appearing more and more regularly in the hands of foreign sailors as Bizantian merchants sell the devices at a premium in foreign ports. **Cost:** 165 gold in Bizantium, three or four times as much elsewhere.

Looking Glass or Spyglass: Basically two lenses connected by a leather, wood or metal body. More sophisticated versions collapse inward for easy storage, but looking glasses made of solid pieces of wood, bamboo, ivory or bone are common. Every ship's officer, lookout or navigator worth his weight needs a looking glass, and cheap versions often work just as well as ornately carved pieces fit for an admiral. **Range:** 3x magnification up to one mile (1.6 m). **Length:** 12 inches (0.3 m), **Weight:** 1 pound (0.45 kg). **Cost:** 200 gold in Bizantium for the basic variety, up to 1,000 gold for a spyglass made by a real artist; double outside Bizantium, where such items are less common and less well crafted.

Sextant: Supposedly invented by an Elf living in Bizantium a thousand years ago, proof behind the story has never been forthcoming, or has been covered up by the Crown. Two Bizantian sailors built the world's first known octant around 730 years ago, which replaced the backstaff that had been previously used by Elves and Dwarves to navigate their ships. Fifty years later, *Naddod Yinxner* of House Yinxner retooled the octant (possibly using an ancient Elven version as an example), creating the world's first navigational sextant. Over the years the secrets of its creation were eventually learned by other nations, but those made in Bizantium are supposedly more accurate because they always use 2 inch (5 cm) mirrors, while most others rarely incorporate mirrors larger than one inch (2.5 cm) wide. **Cost:** The Bizantian version sells for 130 gold on the Northern Islands, twice as much elsewhere. 90 gold for those made outside Bizantium.

Bizantium Navy

Warlocks, Priests and Waterchanters

Virtually every warship in Bizantium's Royal Navy has at least 1D4 Warlocks and/or Waterchanters, or other spell casters amongst its crew. Large ships like Brigs and Frigates will carry several Warlocks or other magic users who work together to multiply the effect of their powers. *Priests of Algor* are a less common sight onboard Bizantian vessels, but as many as half include one or two as part of the crew, often paid directly by the Admiralty like any other ship's officer, given "rank" determined by their time of service, and who sail with the crew of a particular ship for years. These priests tend to the spiritual and psychological needs of the officers, sailors and Marines who undergo severe hardships in the line of duty and endure long months at sea. They also bring with them their significant healing powers and ability

to commune with the sea god. And while many ships, particularly larger vessels, go to sea carrying a ship's priest, Waterchanters are found onboard almost every vessel of the Four Fleets, as well as many merchant vessels, Whalers, Serpent Chasers and even some fishing boats. They can perform rites of Algor, be looked to for spiritual purposes, and have abilities of their own that are best suited towards life on the high seas.

Naval Armament

Arbalests, ballista, catapults, bows, javelins and ram-prows are all common weapons on warships, whalers and Serpent Chasers. *Marines, archers, spell casters and Warlocks* frequently use their skills and arcane powers to defend vessels, attack enemy ships and kill sea serpents, and any member of a ship's crew can use their personal weapons and resolve in battle. *Ramming* an enemy vessel can cause massive amounts of damage, and some warships are outfitted with special ram-prows to absorb impact and inflict more devastating blows to sea serpents and wooden vessels alike. *Boarding* a ship is the best way to capture it undamaged, however, the preferred method of attack for both pirates and Marines. Killing archers, spell casters and sailors who operate heavy weapons is the quickest way to end the threat to one's own vessel, and it becomes virtually impossible to maneuver, operate sails or pull oars while swords are cutting down sailors to the left and right and arrows are flying across a ship's deck. See *Adventures on the High Seas* for more information on fighting ship-to-ship.

The Corvus. With its legion of well-trained Marines, Bizantium's warriors have developed a weapon specifically designed to take advantage of their prowess in boarding and taking enemy ships. Getting safely from one ship to another requires Marines to make a risky jump or swing/climb across with ropes and grappling hooks before they even enter combat. Enemy ships rock in the water, and might be doing their best to break away and flee before they are boarded. The corvus solves both problems. *A long bridge of planks* with a hooked, downward-facing beak at the end, the corvus is held upright by ropes and pulleys, then released to slam down onto an enemy ship's deck. The beak smashes through boards and holds the two ships firmly together, allowing Marines to rush across the planks and onto the enemy vessel. The corvus can only be used when directly alongside another ship, however, as even the longest versions tend to reach no further than 20 feet (6 m).

Ships of Bizantium

Vessels of all kinds can be found in the ports of Bizantium, many from distant kingdoms, like the Carracks and Caravels of the Western Empire, Viscounts and Barks from Timiro, even the occasional vessel crewed by Elves, Dwarves and Wolfen. Bizantian vessels tend to be superior in construction and design (10% more S.D.C. for Bizantian versions of fishing boats, rowboats, canoes and skiffs; see *Adventures on the High Seas* for full stats on these boats and the foreign ships listed above), and rely on sails for power as opposed to banks of oars. Complicated sets of sails are difficult to rig and handle; only skilled mariners, like those born and raised in Bizantium's sailing culture, are capable of handling such sophisticated ships. Powers like the Western

Empire and Timiro Kingdom are studying Bizantian vessels and attempting to build new designs along similar lines, but are still at least 1D6+2 years away from launching even the first handful of them. It will be decades before most other nations catch up to Bizantium and start building vessels powered by large arrangements of complicated sails alone. Only the Western Empire's Carracks and Caravels come close.

Northern Fishing Boat

The fishing boats of Bizantium are built tougher and slightly larger than the average fishing boat encountered to the south. In the Northern Islands, fishing trips often range far from land, out into the Northern Sea. Fishing vessels must be able to withstand rough waves, ice and low temperatures, and also have the capacity to carry enough fish to make an expedition worthwhile. They have two sails to the average fishing boat's one, for greater speed and open-ocean maneuverability. Unlike boats built as group-efforts in fishing villages worldwide, Bizantium's fishing boats are designed by shipwrights and assembled in the Kingdom's shipyards by professionals using many of the same materials found on warships and expensively-built merchant vessels.

Type: Fishing.

Crew: 2-4, with one to work the rudder and another 1-3 to handle the sail(s). Usually carries 6-10 other Fishermen to handle drag nets or fishing lines. As many as 20 people can be accommodated in an emergency.

Size: 25-40 feet (7.6-12 m) long and 8-15 feet (2.4-4.6 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 6 tons light or 12 tons heavy. Can carry up to twenty passengers, but many are equipped with hiding places in the hull for up to eight "secret" stowaways or to conceal valuables, illegally caught fish, weapons or contraband.

Speed: Sail 10 mph (16 km or 8.6 knots).

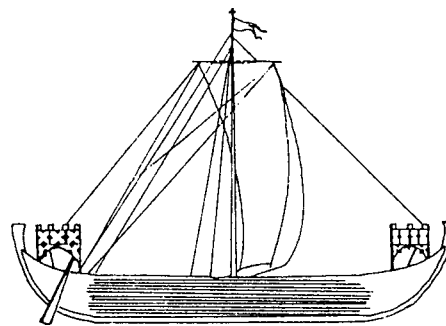
S.D.C. by Location:

- Masts (2) – 55
- Sails (2) – 28 each
- Front Section – 110
- Midship – 110
- Rear Section – 145
- Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 70
- Rudder – 65

Cost: 7,000-9,000 for an old boat (9-18 years old; reduce S.D.C. 25%), from 25,000 to 50,000 for one in good condition (1-3 years old), and 55,000-70,000 gold for a brand new vessel. There are so many fishing vessels in Bizantium, however, that an astute customer can often find a vessel for 10-15% less than list price.

Skiffs and Private Sail Boats

Just about every human in the Island Kingdom grows up learning how to swim, fish and sail for fun, for survival and as a means of common transportation. Small boats and skiffs with one or two sails are a common sight, owned and operated by all classes of society, from peasant-fishermen to Merchant-Princes. They are used for recreational sailing and fishing, as well as visiting neighbors, travel from one port or city to another, transporting groceries and a small amount of goods or people and fishing to supplement food. Size varies, but these are usually small boats able to accommodate only 3-8 people.



Type: Pleasure and travel.

Crew: One or two, working the rudder and sail(s). Usually carries one lantern, a pair of oars when there is no wind, and a couple of fishing poles and a lantern. Depending on the size of the boat, 2-6 additional people can fit comfortably onboard.

Size: 8-20 feet (2.4 to 6.1 m) long, and seldom more than 6 feet (1.8 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 1,000 pounds (450 kg).

Speed: Sail 10 mph (16 km or 8.6 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

- Mast (1 or 2) – 40
- Sail (1 or 2) – 18 each
- Rudder – 30
- Main Body – 220

Cost: 2,000-8,000 gold depending on size and frills.

Biremes (new)

The workhorse of Port Lila, this Eastern-style, oared *galley* is used for towing barges, recovering beached vessels or as a tugboat. Configured with a single, square-rigged sail on a short mast positioned amidships, the craft is rigged with two tiers of oars for rowers. Although only a small number of men are required to crew the boat, between fifty and eighty oarsmen are typically employed in order to provide the necessary power to move and maneuver other boats. Recently, House Torger has begun to produce a large number of bireme-type vessels with no oars and a pair of additional sails. Because they can be built in a short amount of time, a large number of these "sacrificial ships" have been assembled by the House for the Royal Navy, purposely designed to be driven into invaders' flagships and critical vessels or set ablaze as fireships before plowing right into enemy formations.

Type: Tugboat and Small Warship.

Crew: 4 officers, 12 sailors, and 40-80 oarsmen. During times of combat, as many as 30 additional sailors, archers or soldiers can fit on the main deck.

Size: 60 feet (18.2 m) long; 10 feet (3 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 3 tons light, 5 tons heavy, with up to 16 passengers.

Weaponry: Can be outfitted with a ram-prow used to cripple and sink enemy vessels. 3D4x10 damage at full speed, 1D6x10 at half speed, but there is a 01-15% chance the Bireme will also suffer 1D4x10 damage to the front section of the vessel.

Speed: All 40-80 oarsmen: 8 mph (12.8 km or 7 knots), half oars: 4 mph (6.4 or 3.4 knots), all oars and sail: 12 mph (19.2 km or 10.4 knots), sail only: 10 mph (16 km or 8.6 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

- Mast – 90
- Sail – 40

Ram-Prow (1; front) – 330
Front Section – 550
Midship – 350
Rear Section – 450
Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 150
Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 200
Rudder – 100

Cost: 250,000 gold, built fast and cheap. These ships are relatively new, the oldest being around 5 years (150,000-180,000 gold).

Whaling Ship (new)

Whalers are tough, hard-working ships designed for long journeys on the high seas. They are also designed as platforms from which whaling boats can disembark, hunt their namesake prey, and either return with the massive animals for processing or butcher them right there at sea and bring back the meat, blubber and oil. Sometimes whale blubber is processed into oil on land, sometimes huge boiling vats are set up on deck where pieces of blubber or serpent flesh are cooked down. The process is messy and requires special facilities and equipment, making Whalers a bit more expensive than the standard Schooners on which they are based.

Serpent Chasers are also Whaling-style ships in the pursuit of sea serpents and other sea monsters, dragging their corpses aboard just the same as they would with any black whale or beluga. Serpent Chaser vessels tend to have 10% more S.D.C. and carry numerous harpoons and 2-4 large harpoon launchers.

Type: Whaling ship.

Crew: 20 Serpent Chasers, 10-20 sailors, 6 specialists, and can accommodate an additional 20-40 sailors, Whalers or laborers.

Size: 90-120 feet (27.4 to 36.5 m) long; 20 to 25 feet (6 to 7.6 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 65 tons light or 100 tons heavy, in addition to 4-8 whaleboats (see below.)

Speed: 12 mph (19.2 km or 10.4 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 85
Rear Mast (tallest) – 100
Sails (7) – 35 each
Front Section – 850
Midship – 660
Rear Section – 750
Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 160
Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 300
Rudder – 110

Cost: 400,000 to 550,000 gold for an old (12+ years; reduce S.D.C. by 15%), seaworthy vessel; 750,000 to 1 million gold for one in good condition (1-6 years old), and 1.4 to 2.3 million gold for a brand new vessel.

Whaleboats

Whaling ships generally carry between four and eight *whaleboats*, stout, seaworthy, oversized rowboats, often equipped with a single sail, that whalers and Serpent Chasers use to make the final approach on their prey. These boats are small and nimble enough to come within harpoon's reach (100 feet/30.5 m). Whaleboats are pointed fore and aft, made to maneuver in either direction or back away from whales and sea serpents flailing in their death throes. Their sails can be quickly stowed, and most

whaleboats carry oars that let the crew power the boat themselves and push off against sea creatures. Their speed and maneuverability also make whaleboats popular as sporting craft for racing, charting reefs, exploring sea caves and traveling back and forth between ships in a fleet.

Type: Whaleboat/Ship's Boat.

Crew: 1-4 sailors and up to 16 whalers/oarsmen/passengers.

Size: 15-20 feet (4.6 to 6 m) long; 6 to 8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) wide.

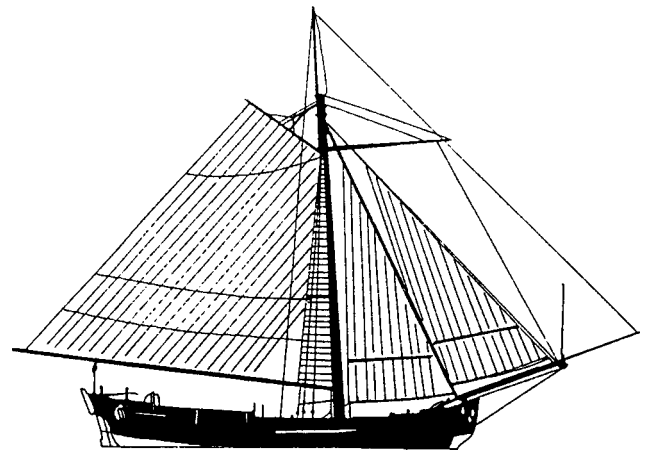
Excess Cargo Capacity: 6 tons of cargo or whale blubber.

Speed: 10 mph (16 km or 8.6 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Mast – 40
Sail – 25
Hull – 115
Rudder – 50
Main Body of Boat – 300

Cost: 10,000-20,000 gold. Old whaleboats may go for as low as half the price, but probably leak and need repair work.



Lighters (Cutters)

Lighters/cutters are relatively small ships with single masts and triangular sails. Not cut out for warfare or hauling large amounts of goods, they are used by many Noble Houses as pleasure yachts, transports carrying light cargo or passengers from port to port, or sometimes as deep-sea fishing boats, usually after specific types of fish that can only be caught seasonally or by using lines. The Bizantium Navy uses Lighters to deliver mail to ships stationed along the Shadow Coast blockade, patrol coastlines and carry personnel. There are also a dozen or so cutters that act as ferries, moving people and light cargo back and forth between the Northern Islands or down to the Shadow Colonies, and maybe two or three times as many vessels that operate as smugglers and blockade-runners out to dodge the Royal Navy.

Type: Mostly transport and pleasure (yacht/schooner).

Crew: 3 minimum, with an additional capacity for 10 to 20 passengers or crewmen.

Size: 50-70 feet (15.2 to 21.3 m) long; 15 to 20 feet (4.6 to 6.1 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 16 tons light or 48 tons heavy.

Speed: Sailing 18 mph (28.8 km or 15.6 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Mast – 75
Sails (4) – 30 each
Front Section – 500

Midship – 350

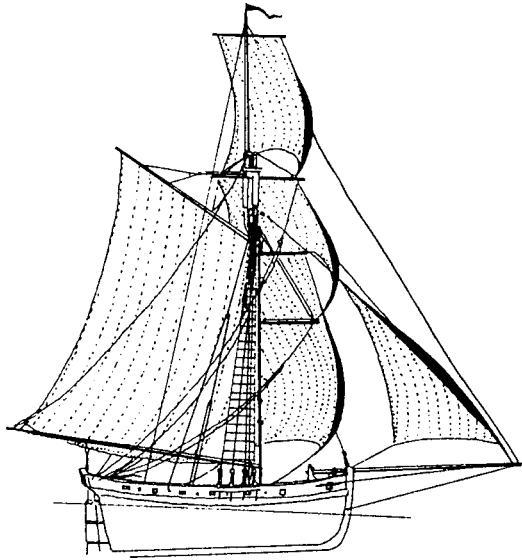
Rear Section – 400

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 150

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 230

Rudder – 80

Cost: 200,000 to 350,000 gold for an old (12+ years; reduce S.D.C. by 15%), seaworthy vessel; 550,000 to 750,000 gold for one in good condition (1-6 years old), and 850,000 to one million gold for a brand new one.



Corsairs (large cutters)

The larger version of Lighters, Corsairs are “gaff-rigged,” like most full-sized Bizantian ships, with square sails that catch more wind and are managed using a gaff pole. The Navy uses Corsairs to dispatch messages to faraway fleets and individual ships, engage in long-range patrols and catch smugglers. There are even a pair of independently run postal services that use Corsairs to deliver mailbags and post to the Embassies on the main island; one to the Western Empire and one to the Eastern Territory and Timiro Kingdom. Corsairs have very tall banks of sails, and sometimes in storms and strong winds the topmast is lowered to steady the ship. Bizantian Navy captains and pirates both appreciate the speed and flexibility of the Corsair, with the toughness to weather difficult seas and an exceptional ability to take advantage of advantageous wind currents.

Type: War, scout/patrol, pirate (privateer).

Crew: 12 to 30 sailors, 6 craftsmen, and an additional 20 to 30 warriors, crewmen or passengers.

Size: 80 feet (24.4 m) long and 20 feet (6.1 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: As a warship: 14 tons light or 42 tons heavy. As a merchant: 22 light or 50 tons heavy.

Speed: Sailing 16 mph (25.6 km or 13.9 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast Pole – 45

Main Mast – 150

Sails (5) – 35 each

Front Section – 600

Midship – 450

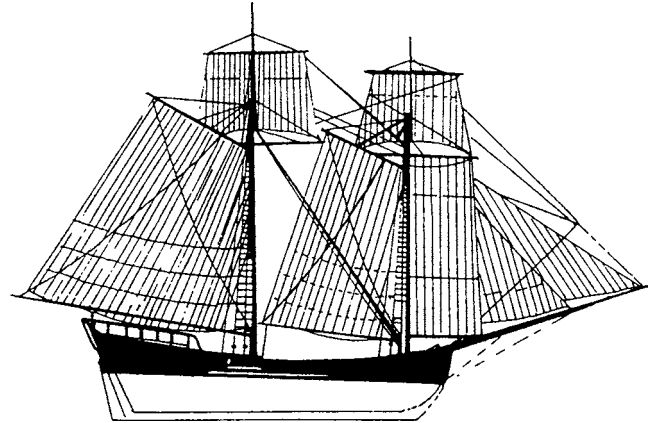
Rear Section – 500

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 180

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 280

Rudder – 110

Cost: 300,000 to 400,000 gold for an old (12+ years; reduce S.D.C. by 15%), seaworthy vessel; 680,000 to 750,000 gold for one in good condition (1-6 years old), and 900,000 to 1.2 million gold for a brand new one.



Schooners

Schooners are the primary merchant vessels and troop transports used by the Kingdom of Bizantium. They are fast in the water and maneuver well, and some Noble Houses, as well as the Crown, use them to make pleasure cruises around the Northern Islands. Ambitious pirates may also use Schooners; suitably quick, yet with a greater capacity to carry plunder.

Type: Merchant and transport (also suitable for war).

Crew: 20-40 sailors, 6 craftsmen, and can accommodate an additional 40 to 60 sailors, warriors or laborers.

Size: 90-100 feet (27.4 to 30.5 m) long; 20-25 feet (6 to 7.6 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: As a warship: 15 tons light or 30 tons heavy. As a merchant: 43 tons light or 80 tons heavy.

Speed: 12 mph (19.2 km or 10.4 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 85

Rear Mast (tallest) – 120

Sails (7) – 35 each

Front Section – 850

Midship – 660

Rear Section – 750

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 185

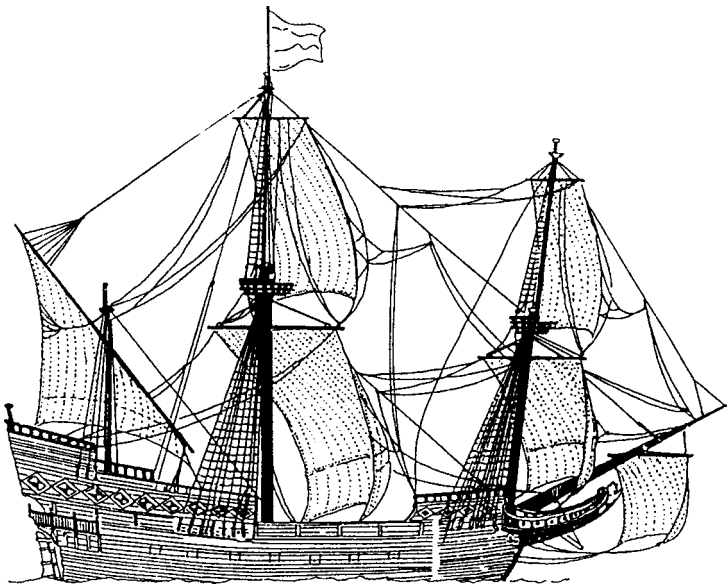
Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 320

Rudder – 110

Cost: 360,000 to 500,000 gold for an old (12+ years; reduce S.D.C. by 15%), seaworthy vessel; 700,000 to 950,000 gold for one in good condition (1-6 years old), and 1.3 to 2.2 million gold for a brand new one.

Brigantines (a.k.a. Brigs)

Suitable for use as both merchants and warships, Brigantines are arguably the fastest ships that sail the seas, outpaced only by the dark magicks that power the Western Empire's Demon Black Ships. Brigantines make up a large portion of Bizantium's Royal Navy, with their ability to outsail other vessels and overtake pirates and blockade-runners. Their speed also makes them well-suited for patrols over long distances or missions to scout distant coasts.



Type: War and merchant.

Crew: 30-50 sailors, 10 craftsmen, and can accommodate an additional 60 to 90 warriors or crewmen.

Size: 100 to 120 feet (30.5 to 36.6 m) long; 30-40 feet (9 to 12.2 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: Fitted as a warship: 26 tons light or 54 tons heavy, fitted as a merchant: 94 tons light or 130 tons heavy.

Speed: Sailing 20 mph (32 km or 17.3 knots).

Features of Note: The fastest ship in the Bizantian fleet, and is only slightly less maneuverable than the Frigate. Warships will have a dozen different siege machines and at least a half dozen Warlocks/spell casters.

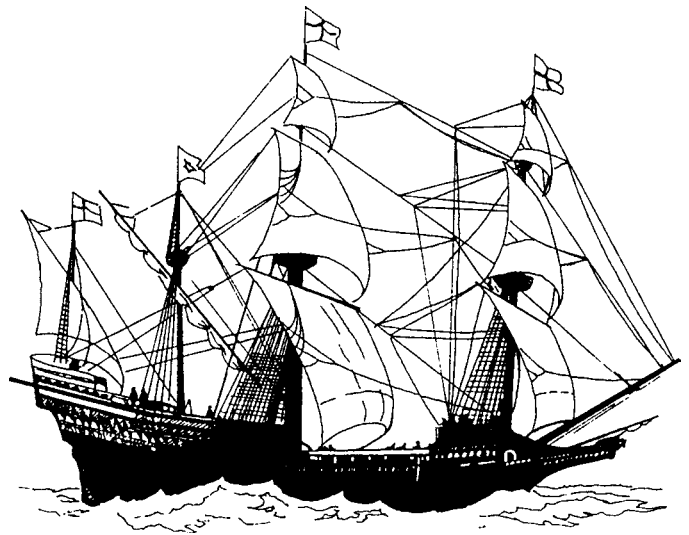
S.D.C. by Location:

- Front Mast – 100
- Main Mast (midship) – 150
- Rear Mast – 90
- Large Sails (2) – 45 each
- Small Sails (5) – 35 each
- Front Section – 1500
- Midship – 1000
- Rear Section – 1300
- Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 200
- Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 350
- Rudder – 150

Cost: 750,000 to 900,000 gold for an old (12+ years; reduce S.D.C. by 15%), seaworthy vessel; 1.2 million to 1.5 million gold for one in good condition (2-6 years old), and 1.9 to 2.4 million gold for a brand new one.

Frigates

An excellent blending of speed and power, Bizantium's Frigates are the bane of pirates and rebels. They possess the large crew and extensive heavy weapons of a true warship, but fly over the water with a speed that belies their bulk. Some merchants use Frigates for particularly long or dangerous runs, but the expense of building and maintaining them means most are produced by the Noble Houses expressly for the Royal Navy. Watching a Frigate with a skilled crew pull tight turns and cut through the water is a sight to behold, and many an unwary opponent or ravaging sea



monster has been blind-sided by the big ship's ability to execute precise ramming attacks or make sudden course changes.

Type: Warship and some merchant duty.

Crew: 40-60 sailors, 12 craftsmen, 1D6 Warlocks, 1D6 Waterchanters and/or priests, and accommodates an additional 92 to 144 warriors/Marines or crewmen.

Size: 130-160 feet (39.6 to 48.7 m) long; 30-40 feet (9 to 12.2 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: As a warship: 32 tons light or 50 tons heavy. As a merchant: 96 tons light or 165 tons heavy.

Features of Note: Probably one of the quickest and most maneuverable ships in all the Palladium World.

Speed: Sailing: 16 mph (25.6 km or 13.9 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

- Front Mast – 120
- Mid-Mast – 160
- Rear Masts (2) – 100 each
- Large Sails (4) – 40 each
- Small Sails (7) – 30 each
- Front Section – 1900
- Midship – 1400
- Rear Section – 1600
- Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 240
- Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 380
- Rudder – 150

Cost: 650,000 to 800,000 gold for an old (12+ years; reduce S.D.C. by 15%), seaworthy vessel; 1.1 million to 1.4 million gold for one in good condition (2-6 years old), and 1.7 to 2.1 million gold for a brand new one.

Icebreakers (new)

Built by Noble House Norbert, the Icebreaker's design is that of a three-masted schooner, built both unusually wide and unusually shallow in order to withstand the forces of pressing ice. The entire hull is made out of blueheart wood (a 100 foot/30 m tall evergreen tree native only to the Northern Hinterlands), selected carefully for its durability and resistance to cold. The vessels are designed to handle shallow waters, and are equipped with rudders that can be pulled up into the ship to protect them from damaging ice floes. At least one Water Warlock, one Fire Warlock and one Air Warlock also serves onboard each Icebreaker, standing

ready to use their magic to break up ice sheets and free the boat from becoming entrapped. Currently there are four Icebreaker ships ready for service, but there are no plans to deploy any of the Icebreakers until winter, when one or two more should be completed and the crews will be more familiar with the vessels. House Norbert intends to use them to keep shipping lanes open well into winter and break-up ice around the Northern Islands and Shadow Coast.

Type: Icebreaker/Exploration.

Crew: 30-40 sailors, 8 craftsmen, and can accommodate an additional 50-60 sailors, warriors, and/or laborers.

Size: 130 feet (39.6 m) long; 34 feet (10.3 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 56 tons light or 104 tons heavy.

Speed: 8 mph (12.8 km or 7 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 100

Rear Mast (tallest) – 140

Sails (7) – 35 each

Front Section – 975

Midship – 760

Rear Section – 875

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 220

Rudder – 125

Cost: Estimated at 2.5-3 million gold. Not available on the open market and House Norbert has no plans to sell the vessels to outsiders.

Battleships (new)

Three years ago, when *Prince Wilgan Vatatzes* read the account of the *Turaline's* encounter with a Demon Black Ship, he decided to take steps of his own to keep the Northern Islands safe from the ambitions of the malevolent Western Empire. The Prince summoned together the best shipwrights of his House (and hired several away from other Noble Houses), and brought them together to design a traditional warship that could (at least in theory) compete with the Demon Black Ships and rival the *Stone Ships* produced by House Bardomus. Built without the radical magic of the Stone Ships or the evil forces that power the Black Ships of the Western Empire, Prince Wilgan Vatatzes believes his new *Battleship*-class vessels will provide Bizantium with a reliable, conventional battle-fleet superior to that of any naval power anywhere in the world.

The first ship took over 2,000 carefully selected hardwood trees to build, gathered from all over the Shadow Colonies and Great Northern Wilderness, and due to the massive resources necessary in their construction, only three Battleships have been produced so far. Prince Wilgan intends to have a fleet of at least a dozen ready within the next five years, however, and if the Crown orders more to be built or other Noble Houses begin to craft similar ships, then that pace may increase significantly. On the other hand, if the Crown considers them unnecessary (and that seems to be the prevailing sentiment), then the Prince may be on his own and seeing more than another two warships in five years seems unlikely. Ironically, these “unnecessary” vessels may be Bizantium’s best weapon for battling the Iceborn and their huge Necroilus ships.

Type: Warship.

Crew: 100 sailors, 20-30 gunners, 1D6+6 Warlocks of any and all Elemental Powers, 1D4+2 Waterchanters, 1D4+2 Priests, 1D4+4 Psi-Healers, 1D6+12 surgeons, 20 craftsmen and other specialists, and accommodates an additional 172 Marines, soldiers, passengers or crewmen. Other psychics and possibly magics may be counted amongst the crew.

Size: 174 feet (53 m) long; 50 feet (15.24 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 40 tons light or 70 tons heavy.

Features of Note: Each Battleship carries a dozen ballista, as well as 1D4 arbalests, catapults and onagers. There are also several Warlocks, Waterchanters and priests, and conjured Elementals are also part of the ranged weapons and defenses.

Speed: Sailing: 17 mph (27.2 km or 14.7 knots)

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 145

Mid-Mast – 200

Rear Masts (2) – 120 each

Large Sails (4) – 45 each

Small Sails (7) – 35 each

Forward Ballista (4) – 165 each

Rear Ballista (8) – 165 each

Front Section – 2280

Midship – 1680

Rear Section – 1920

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 300

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 450

Rudder – 180

Cost: 3.5-4 million gold! Will never be offered to any other kingdom.



Stone Ships of Bizantium

Reprinted from Adventures on the High Seas

The Stone Ships of Bizantium are some of the largest, most powerful, most unusual vessels found anywhere in the Palladium World. A secretive project conceived and funded by *Merchant-Prince Grayen Bardomus* and developed in his House's shipyards, the Stone Ships met with both wonder and instant approval when they were presented to King Raedaen, who ordered their construction to continue. The Church of Algor is slightly more suspicious, however, and has repeatedly requested to inspect the Bardomus Stone Yard where the ships are created. So far the requests have been denied, and High Minister Airen Roth is reluctant to push for more oversight, even though many of his subordinates call for the process to be halted entirely, fearful of using magic in shipbuilding thanks to Bizantium's experience with the Western Empire's Demon Black Ships.

Unlike the Black Ships, however, simple physics and natural properties keep the Stone Ships of Bizantium afloat. While they may be constructed with Earth Warlock magic and countless other spells, buoyancy must still be carefully calculated in order to make a vessel with a stone hull that doesn't sink beneath the waves. Trial and error led the shipwrights behind the process to discover the necessary ratio of size and length to hull thickness. For every foot (0.3 m) of overall length, the ship supports 1/10th of an inch of stone for its hull. A thirty foot (9 m) vessel would only be able to handle a hull 3 inches thick. This is too thin to be reliable, and at least one early test ship was lost just by bumping against the wooden docks beside it. Earth Warlocks attempting to repair the vessels met with no luck; spells like *Encase Object in Stone* or *Mend Stone* only repair missing sections smaller than 70 pounds (31.5 kg), roughly a 4x4 foot (1.2x1.2 m) area. For ships that break apart along their entire length, these efforts were insufficient.

Looking at Bizantium's forests, depleted after centuries of shipbuilding, Prince Grayen knew that his Stone Ships were the future, whether the early tests were successful or not. While his shipwrights advised him to abandon the idea, Grayen pushed them to design larger and larger vessels, until his Earth Warlocks crafted a 160 foot (48.7 m) monster of a ship with a 16 inch (0.4 m) thick hull, capable of shrugging off impacts from ballista bolts, catapult stones, writhing sea serpents and rogue waves. These "Corsair" class ships are not the fastest or most maneuverable vessels, and Bizantium's sailors are still perfecting the methods necessary to properly steer them and operate out at sea. As floating fortresses, however, they are incredibly intimidating just to behold, and bigger and bigger versions have been produced, including the 210 foot (64 m) "Frigate" and 240 foot (73 m) "Titan." Currently, experiments and test-runs are also being conducted on a new 360 foot (110 m) "Gargantuan" class as well, but a seaworthy vessel of this size has yet to be successfully launched.

Building the Stone Ships

During the early days developing the Stone Ships, Prince Grayen Bardomus found himself at a crossroads. Warlock magic, known personally to the prince and controlled at even more powerful levels by his House's spell casters and hired mages, obviously did not have the capability, by itself, to produce a Stone Ship. The prince knew of many other forms of magic, however,

and assumed there was a spell or incantation somewhere that could help him in his quest.

Grayen prayed at the Temple of Algor and made sacrifice after sacrifice to the sea god, asking for guidance. The prince saw nothing in the Temple itself, felt no divine inspiration, but heard a voice telling him to look to the ocean. Grayen piloted a small boat north from Wujik, alone with no crew to distract him, and gazed into the reflective waters of the Northern Sea. A vision of Algor slowly materialized, of the sea god building a boat using three forms of magic; Elementalism, Diabolism and Summoning. Prince Grayen thanked Algor for the revelation, returned to port, and sacrificed a brand new ship to the sea god, setting it ablaze as his confused sailors and dockworkers looked on.

The prince's next move was to find his most experienced Earth Warlock and search out a knowledgeable Diabolist and Summoner. With the three of them united, motivated by the Prince's imposing personality and his generous promises of sacks of gold, a new test ship was planned. They worked in secret, long into many nights, with shipyard workers noticing strange lights and terrible noises coming from the isolated dock that was guarded and sealed-off by House Bardomus Marines. Rumors and speculation abounded, but one day the workers' curiosity was satisfied when they saw a vessel crafted with a hull and keel of pure stone sitting alongside the dock. This Stone Ship instantly became the hottest topic of conversation amongst the sailors and Mariners of Bizantium, and soon enough a dozen more of the "Corsair"-class Stone Ships had been produced, with bigger ships being laid down using a similar design. Prince Bardomus had a special, heavily-guarded dock built at the Bardomus Shipyard, dubbed the "Stone Yard," and his spell casters now work round the clock to expand the fleet of Stone Ships.

The Construction Process. The early stage of constructing a Stone Ship, laying down the hull and keel, requires only the three principal spell casters: a Summoner, Diabolist and Earth Warlock. This trio must have an extreme degree of trust and understanding in one another, as well as the shipbuilding process as a whole. The Summoner must be skilled enough to draw forth an Elemental Force without losing control of it, or exposing the others to a demon or Entity of some kind. The Diabolist must be trusted with the Warlock's true name, and the wards he paints on the bodies of the other spell casters and dockworkers must be effective enough to protect them from possession or the powerful elemental forces being manipulated. The Earth Warlock must be able to complete his or her portion of the job, reshaping the Earth Force into the form of a ship, before the Summoner and/or Diabolist tire, lose focus or deplete their inner energy (P.P.E.). Assembling a trio of such spell casters that are able to work together in such a complicated, overlapping ceremony is no easy task, but House Bardomus now has three or four such teams that are growing more capable and confident every day.

The first step in building a Stone Ship is to have a Summoner create a Summoning Circle, a *Summon Elemental Forces* glyph with a few changes:

1. The top quarter contains only the symbol of Earth.
2. The right quarter bears the six pointed star of unbridled power.
3. In the left quarter are four triangles that represent directed power – focused inward.
4. The most radical is the change in the circle's structure itself. Unlike any other known Circles of Summoning, there is no

sealed circle on the lower right arm where it intersects the circle boundary.

The circle is used to summon up an “Earth Force,” a powerful embodiment of the element of Earth. Many attempts are often necessary before an Earth Force manifests, as pesky Minor Elementals often become caught up in the summoning process. The open Summoning Circle cannot contain a full Earth Force, however, so the Diabolist must intentionally weaken and constrain the Earth Force with the power words “Ariel-Rapere-Kyn-Yin-Lo-Kum.” The Diabolist, other spell casters and the Stone Yard’s staff of workers, masons and shipwrights have already been painted with protective wards, just in case anything goes wrong or they accidentally come into contact with molten rock.

Next, the Earth Warlock must begin to reshape the Earth Force, a process that the Elemental Being naturally resists. In order to give the Warlock the necessary magic power to keep the Earth Force under control, the Diabolist must channel his or her own power into the Warlock, using the phrase “Acba-Yin-Xy-Yin,” followed by the Warlock’s true name.

With the Earth Force only temporarily subdued, the next twenty-four hours are vital. The three mages work nonstop, assisted by small teams of special workers who use masonry tools to help create the final shape of the hull. The spell casters must focus intently on their task, as any lapse in attention or judgment could release the Earth Force, now confused and enraged, resulting in an Elemental bloodbath as it lashes out at anyone or anything nearby. Most people think the high walls, defensive weapons and Marines around the Stone Yard are there to keep curious onlookers out, but in reality they are more like prison guards, there to contain any Earth Force that breaks free of its magic bonds.

As the magic construct “solidifies,” smiths and woodworkers insert wood and metal fittings, absorbed right into the living rock without any need for nails or bolts to hold them in place. Even protected by the Diabolist’s wards (along with heavy gloves and heat-masks) the workers sweat profusely, partially from the extreme heat, partially from the knowledge that any mistake made by the spell casters will instantly doom them to die in a morass of molten stone.

Once something close to the final shape has been formed (bits and pieces can always be chipped off later with chisels), the Diabolist steps in to make the end result permanent, often just as the Warlock and Summoner are becoming physically exhausted and low on magic energy. Uttering the words “Ariel-Rapere-Kyn-Yin-Netose,” the Earth Force is locked into its current physical form, becoming a mass of pure, unbroken stone – shaped in the form of a gigantic ship. The Summoner then alters the Summoning Circle, erasing the minor circle from the lower right line and changing the triangles in the right quadrant from directing energy inward to outward. The circle is now a Dispelling Circle, releasing whatever Elemental energy might still be present safely back into the Megaverse. Steam will continue to billow off the hull of the ship at the waterline for a few more hours, but the magic part of the process is complete. The spell casters retire for well-deserved rest, and teams of shipyard workers, carpenters, sailmakers and metalsmiths descend on the ship to install the wooden decks and masts, the rigging, sails, weaponry and other interior components. With the outer hull purely formed of stone, only one-third of the wood used in an equivalent-sized ship is necessary, and trees suitable to be turned into deck boarding and bulkheads are easier to find than the extremely tall, straight, hardwood trees necessary for building keels and hulls.

Earth Force (Elemental) Stats

Alignment: Unintelligent Anarchist.

Size: 50 (15 m) to 85 feet (26 m) long (before shaping).

A.R.: 17

Hit Points: 200-320

S.D.C.: 2,300 to 4,600

Average P.P.E.: 6D6x20

Attack Damage (when control is lost): Thrashing does 1D6x10 damage and will affect a 20x20 foot (6x6 m) area per melee round. When control is lost, the Earth Force becomes the equivalent of a River of Lava (Earth Elemental Spell, see **Palladium RPG, 2nd Edition**, page 232), doing 4D6+10 damage to anyone coming into contact with it. It also creates an area of heat, such that anyone within 500 feet (152 m) failing to save against P.E. will take 1D6 points of damage per melee round! If attacked, every 50 or more points has a 25% chance of causing the Earth Force to break up into 2D4 Major Earth Elementals!

Corsair Class Stone Ships

The first class of Stone Ships that could actually stay afloat were dubbed “Corsairs,” though they have little of the grace and speed of their namesake. More of a test bed for the Elemental construction process than a seaworthy design, Corsairs are no longer built, as House Bardomus opts for the larger, more stable “Frigate” class ships. Still, a dozen were created, though now they mainly stay close to the Northern Islands and operate in clear weather, often kept in or near the Inland Sea. If any invading fleet should appear off the coast of Bizantium, however, the Corsairs will be sent out to fight. Despite being the smallest of the Stone Ships, they still dwarf the average wooden vessel and are extremely tough, if not the fastest or most maneuverable of ships. Not currently on assignment for the Navy, some are even being used to carry cargo back and forth between the Northern Islands and the Shadow Coast.

Type: War and some merchant.

Crew: 2-4 Earth Warlocks (4th level or higher), 50-70 sailors, 20 craftsmen, and accommodates an additional 120-200 warriors or crewmen.

Size: 160 feet (48.7 m) long; 50 feet (15.2 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: Fitted as a warship: 40 tons light or 78 tons heavy, fitted as a merchant: 64 tons light or 125 tons heavy.

Features of Note: The hull has a natural A.R. of 14, and is fire resistant (but all the decks and masts are made of natural wood, and the sails and rigging are highly flammable). The hold is four decks deep and carries eight lifeboats, each of which can comfortably hold 11 men (20 under cramped conditions).

Speed: Sailing 14 mph (22.4 km or 12 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 120

Main Mast – 200

Rear Masts (2) – 120 each

Sails (5) – 35 each

Front Section – 1,800

Midship – 1,500

Rear Section – 1,700

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 360

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 600

Rudder – 140

Cost: Is in the millions and the ships are *never* offered for sale to other kingdoms.

Frigate Class Stone Ships

House Bardomus has already produced six of its new “standard” Stone Ship design, the “Frigate” class. These are incredibly resilient, well-armed vessels, designed to compete against the Demon Black Ships of the Western Empire. Unlike the earlier Corsair, they have been rebalanced and redesigned, and, while slightly slower, are much larger and much more capable out on the open ocean. Stone Frigates are pure warships, with a limited ability to carry cargo, and are being incorporated into the Four Fleets as flagships and assault vessels brought in for planned engagements and attacks on coastal defenses.

Type: War.

Crew: 2-4 Earth Warlocks (4th level or higher), 50 to 70 sailors, 20 craftsmen, and accommodates an additional 120 to 200 warriors or crewmen.

Size: 210 feet (64 m) long; 60 feet (18.3 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 100 tons light or 200 tons heavy.

Features of Note: The hull has a natural A.R. of 14, and is fire resistant (but all the decks and masts are made of natural wood, and the sails and rigging are highly flammable). The hold is four decks deep and carries four large lifeboats, each of which can comfortably hold 16 men (30 under cramped conditions.) The ship also carries a large ship’s boat that is 36 ft (11 m) long, with a mast and sails like the Bizantium Lighter (cutter), capable of independent travel on the high seas at a full 12 mph (19.3 km or 10.4 knots), and carrying up to two tons of cargo.

Speed: Sailing 12 mph (19.2 km or 10.4 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 120
Main Mast – 210
Rear Masts (2) – 120 each
Sails (8) – 35 each
Front Section – 2300
Midship – 1800
Rear Section – 2100
Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 400
Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 600
Rudder – 180

Cost: Is in the millions and the ships are *never* offered for sale to other kingdoms.

Titan Class Stone Ships

The Battleship of the Stone Ship series, the “Titan” class is a step up from the “Frigate” in size, strength and carrying capacity. Though only one of the ships has been completed so far, Grayen Bardomus plans on building six more Titans over the next two years, and envisions a day when giant trade fleets of these ships sail with impunity all over the Palladium World. Titans can act as merchant vessels, but are also effective combat ships, capable of transporting large forces of Marines or soldiers for shore actions.

Type: War and merchant.

Crew: 4-6 Earth Warlocks (4th level or higher), 60 to 80 sailors, 20 craftsmen and can accommodate an additional 200 to 300 warriors or crewmen.

Size: 240 feet (73 m) long and 65 feet (20 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: Fitted as a warship: 94 tons light or 170 tons heavy, fitted as a merchant: 194 tons light or 375 tons heavy.

Features of Note: Same as the Frigate class of Stone Ships.

Speed: Sail – 11 mph (17.7 km or 9.6 knots).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast – 100
Mid-Mast – 240
Rear Masts (2) – 180 each
Large Sails (2) – 45 each
Small Sails (6) – 35 each
Front Section – 3,000
Midship – 2,200
Rear Section – 2,600
Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area – 500
Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area – 800
Rudder – 200

Cost: Is in the millions and the ships are *never* offered for sale to other kingdoms.

Gargantuan Class Stone Ships

The first of the “Gargantuan” series of Stone Ships sailed out of the Bardomus shipyard several months ago, accompanied by much fanfare. Unfortunately, the giant vessel ran into rough weather during its maiden voyage, swiftly capsized, and sank. Luckily, the crew testing the ship was well aware of the risk, and the numerous tenders accompanying the vessel (not to mention fishing boats eager to take a look), managed to rescue all but one of the sailors who set out on the test run.

House Bardomus’ shipwrights have since examined the design, and are close to completing a new, more seaworthy version of the Gargantuan. At 360 feet (110 m) long, with three-foot thick (0.9 m) stone hulls (and 40% more S.D.C. than the Titan class), House Bardomus is betting that a fleet of Gargantuan battleships will never even need to be used in anger; their very existence should be enough to dash the hopes of anyone or anything who plans to attack the Northern Islands. Given the sluggish speed of the first Gargantuan, they will probably *only* be used for defending the Kingdom as well, as they are simply too slow and resource-consuming for long voyages.

Foreign Ships

Wolfen vessels. Many centuries ago, Wolfen fishermen made the serendipitous discovery of an old, sunken Eoten or Iceborn longboat at the bottom of an icy river within the Great Northern Wilderness. The Wolfen were able to fix ropes around the wreck and drag it ashore, where they found the cold waters had kept its timbers and beams remarkably intact. Carpenters and woodworkers studied the ship, and soon enough the first Wolfen *Dragon Ships* appeared. Though they have evolved over the years, now bigger and more robust to accommodate larger Wolfen sailors, Wolfen Traders and Dragon Ships are still essentially the standard longboat, a fact Bizantium seafarers are probably better off not mentioning in front of a Wolfen captain.

Wolfen are not frequent visitors to the Northern Islands, but seeing a Wolfen ship and canines at Bizantium ports is not an uncommon sight. Wolfen tend to keep to themselves, take care of business and be on their way. They seldom linger any longer than

necessary. Bizantian vessels are more likely to be docked along the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness doing business with Wolfen there, than on Bizantian soil.

Foreign vessels. Bizantium's ports are full of vessels from the Western Empire, Eastern Territory and Timiro Kingdom. Sometimes the owners of these ships try to sell them in Bizantium, a nation where there is always demand for new seagoing vessels. Unfortunately for them, Bizantium produces more ships than any

other nation or kingdom, which keeps prices low. Foreign ships are also generally less sophisticated and more reliant on oars than their Bizantian equivalents, further reducing the demand.

Note: For stats on the Wolfen Dragon Ships and the vessels of the world, machines of war, conditions at Sea, the Sailor O.C.C. and many other O.C.C.s and aspects of sailing and seafaring, see the Palladium **Fantasy RPG® Book 3: Adventures on the High Seas**.



Dangers from the Past

According to legend, *Brgg* and *Beastla* were the original gods worshiped by the Eoten. But then, for reasons not entirely clear, they rejected them both in favor of Algor and the other deities of the Northern Pantheon. Probably because Brgg and Beastla were ancient gods of chaos, war and destruction, who toyed with mortals and liked pitting mortals against each other. For example, Brgg and Beastla were, at the time, also worshiped by the Iceborn as well as the Eoten whom are their mortal enemies. The Iceborn were Beastla's pawns and the Eoten, Brgg's chess pieces. By comparison, the new Northern gods under Algor and Od, were wiser, more human in their emotions and, generally, sought to bring about order and advancement of civilization, not breed destruction.

In time, these two progenitors of the Northern Pantheon disappeared. According to legend, they fell victim to magic and the ire of other gods, were imprisoned and replaced by the newer gods of

the Northern Pantheon. But in realms like the Palladium World, these are not mere gods of myth and fantasy, they are real and represent a lingering danger to their rival gods and the mortals who once worshiped them. Under the wrong set of circumstances, both Brgg and Beastla could walk rise up from the pages of history to bring death and disaster, anew.

Beastla

**Queen of Sea Monsters and
a deity once worshiped by the Iceborn**

"There was once a season when waves rolled over the shores, when fishermen died and ships were lost, and great whales were frightened from the seas. Guonmer, High Priest of the Chieftain

Yeurlt, climbed the tallest mountain in the land, and looked off, into the sea. Before his eyes, **Beastla, Queen of the Sea Monsters**, rose from the waters, casting tidal waves up onto the land, forcing whole schools of fish from the sea, sinking ships and making storm clouds that rained over the Seven Isles without end. Guonmer spoke of what he had seen, of the terrible monster that ruled the seas.

Chief Yeurlt gathered together the whalers and fishermen of the Isles, the warriors and the mages. On a great fleet of fishing boats they set out to do battle with Beastla, to challenge the mighty serpent for the seas that had been promised to them by Algor.

In frozen waters they found their prey, the mother-serpent, and beset her with harpoons and arrows. Beastla was long as a river, strong as the mountains, fierce as the sea itself. She roared and breathed her poison, and many ships were lost to the bite of her jaws and the thrashing of her tail.

It was then that Guonmer, High Priest, neared the serpent, sitting alone in a canoe, playing notes upon the flute Eyemr that had been crafted by Belimar the Dwarf. Beastla heard the music, and the giant serpent's eyes began to close. Her thrashing calmed, her jaws ceased to rend and tear. Yeurlt rose up and speared the hated beast with a golden trident as sleep took her. Whispering prayers to Algor, the whalers of the Eoten closed in on Beastla with ropes and harpoons. They bound her to a berg of ice, trapped and frozen, and pushed it with their ships until it floated into the waters of the North, gone forever more."

– The Sedation of Beastla, from the Saga of Yeurlt

For many years, scout ships have reported Iceborn Necroilus vessels anchored along the Great Ice Shelf, Sea Witches in the skies and waters, and Iceborn Raiders walking along the ice, sometimes trekking for miles in what appeared to be no particular direction. One whaling ship noted that they looked to be digging into the ice, searching beneath the surface.

The Iceborn spend long, tireless hours hacking at ice with stone and bone tools in order to free the frozen bodies of sea serpents, perfect for Necroilus ships, preserved in the ice, just waiting to be animated. The entire Great Ice Shelf is something of a sprawling cryonics chamber where dying sea serpents come to die after crawling up onto shore, curling up inside an ice cave or just laying down to breathe their last breath. Over time, their frozen remains are covered in snow and ice. The Iceborn seek such beasts and turn their frozen corpses into building materials to make their Necroilus serpent ships. Why the Great Ice Shelf is a sea serpent graveyard, is anyone's guess. The Iceborn believe it's because the goddess that spawned their ancestors also lies somewhere beneath the ice, waiting to be set free.

This hibernating monster is **Beastla, the Queen of Sea Monsters and mother of Od the All-Father**. She is said to be an immense serpent from a time long ago. The whole story is lost to myth, but according to various tales, Beastla was defeated by the sea god Algor with the help of the ancient Eoten, who are said to have last seen the monster trapped inside a block of ice floating out into the Icy Ocean. The Iceborn hope that, if they can find and release her, Beastla will join them in fighting Algor's craven worshipers, starting with the people of Bizantium. And when Algor comes to help his chosen humans, the Iceborn will fight with Beastla to destroy him!

If Beastla is ever found and awoken from her ice prison, she will seek vengeance against the descendants of those who defeat-

ed her. Beastla's tremendous size makes her nearly invulnerable to conventional injury. She maintains total control and awareness over her body's entire length, even with it encased in ice. The cold, however, has sapped her strength, and due to her long imprisonment in a state of suspended animation and extreme hypothermia, she is quite impaired. Upon being freed, Beastla has no initiative, all combat bonuses and attacks per melee are reduced by half, Spd is reduced by 80%, -50% to all skills, and she is initially incapable of casting spells. She is however, able to make full use of her psionics and her power of possession.

When Beastla is freed (if ever), she will attempt to escape from the Great Ice Shelf and flee far from the debilitating effects of the icy cold. After 3D6+12 days away from freezing temperatures, she is restored to her full strength. Free from numbing cold, Beastla is happy to return to those who rescued her – presumably the Iceborn back on the Ice Shelf – and indeed, rally them to join her in a campaign of blood and vengeance against Bizantium and all who choose Algor and other deities over her. As the *Queen of Sea Monsters*, Beastla can control a dozen of them at any given time. With the Iceborn at her side and sea monsters under sway, she will set her sights on obliterating the entire Kingdom of Bizantium and the most obvious parts of the Wolfen Empire, before moving on to try to claim dominion over the **Land of the Damned!**

Should Beastla manage to become the ruler of the Land of the Damned, she will have the power to set the hordes of monsters trapped there loose into the world and let chaos reign everywhere once again! This could even set in motion a chain of events that have the potential of releasing one or more of the slumbering Old Ones, starting with *Netosa, the Eternal Darkness*, due to his connection to the Iceborn. Ironically, the awakening of any Old One will force Beastla into a submissive position as one of their minions, albeit a powerful one, or lead to her destruction.

Real Name: Beastla Rarana

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 26, M.E. 23, M.A. 22, P.S. 60 (Supernatural), P.P. 19, P.E. 26, P.B. 6, Spd 33 (22.5 mph/36 km) on land/water.

Natural A.R.: 15

Hit Points: 8,000

S.D.C.: 12,000 (3,000 for her Head alone).

P.P.E.: 6,000

I.S.P.: 200

Horror/Awe Factor: 19

Size: At full size, she is 1,000 feet (305 m) long (at full stretch) and between 15 and 60 feet (4.6 to 18.3 m) wide.

Description: An immense, albino sea serpent. Her body is covered with pure white scales and has a long, prehensile, whip-like tail. Her eyes are bright red. Her forked tongue extends 30 feet (9.1 m) and can function with the dexterity of a human hand, reaching into ships and pulling individuals out. Her jaw is full of teeth the size of a grown man.

Experience Levels: 18th level Necromancer deity.

Skills of Note: Knows all Lore, Medical, Rogue and Science skills at 98%.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 5,000 feet (1524 m), sees in total darkness, can see the invisible, immune to illusions and powers of concealment (includes any magical or psionic power of disguise or camouflage), metamorphosis – superior (unlimited), superior Bio-Regenerates 1D6x10 Hit Points/S.D.C. per

melee round, doesn't need to breathe air, can swim underwater indefinitely at any depth, impervious to normal energy attacks (takes half damage from magical energy attacks), impervious to poison and disease, impervious to mind control and possession, can animate (turn) and control 2D6x10 dead, summon and control 2D6 sea serpents, and magically understands, speaks and reads all languages (95%).

Deific Powers: Beastla has the full range of powers over her followers, and can perform all Prototypical Deific Powers at *double* the regular cost.

Poisonous Breath: Her toxic breath is deadly and poisonous. Damage: 3D6x10, triple damage to all plants and vegetation (including Millennium Trees). Humanoids, supernatural beings, creatures of magic, and even gods feel weak and tired (reduce speed and combat bonuses by half for 1D6x10 minutes). Range: 200 feet (61 m). Affects everything/one within 50 feet (15.24 m) of the target.

Possession: Same as the power used by Alien Intelligences.

Priest/Healing Powers: Healing touch (restores 1D6x10 Hit Points/S.D.C.), remove curse 92%, curse 80%, and resurrection 33%.

Magic Powers: Knows all Necromancy spells/rituals and all common spells associated with Necromancy from levels 1-15. She is even said to know a dozen Necromancy Spells of Legend, whatever those might be.

Psionic Powers: All Sensitive psionics and Empathic Transmission. I.S.P.: 200.

Attacks per Melee Round: Six physical or magical.

Damage: **Bite:** 2D6x10 points of damage, plus poison doing 1D6x10 additional points of damage every round for 1D6 melee rounds (one quarter damage if saving throw is successful). The poison negates the Bio-Regeneration powers of gods, dragons, and supernatural beings for 2D4 melee rounds!

Tongue Lash: Equal to a Supernatural punch: As little as 2D6 damage from a restrained attack, full strength: 2D4x10, or power punch: 4D4x10. A crush/squeeze using her tongue only does 1D4x10 points of damage per melee round. This she can perform on any size individual. Her tongue has 300 S.D.C. and, if severed, regrows within 1D6 minutes!

Head Butt: 2D4x10 damage.

Tail Strike: 3D6x10 damage.

Ram: 1D4x100 damage.

Crush/Squeeze: 2D4x10 damage per each contraction/squeeze, and each squeeze counts as one melee attack. She can crush/squeeze with her coiled body or prehensile tail. Her constriction attack is meant to be used against ships or extremely large creatures/beings. It is impossible for her to perform this attack on a single humanoid smaller than 30 feet (9.1 m).

Bonuses (Total): +5 on all Perception Rolls, +3 on initiative, +6 to strike, +5 to parry, +1 to automatic dodge, +6 to roll with punch, +3 to save vs psionic attack, +7 to save vs magic (+10 against Necromancy), and impervious to possession and Horror Factor.

Vulnerabilities and Weaknesses: Beastla takes double damage from cold magic, including double the effects, penalties, and duration, and damage cannot be Bio-Regenerated for one hour. Being trapped in an environment of extreme cold reduces her number of attacks, ability to Bio-Regenerate and speed by half. After 48 hours trapped in extreme cold, Beastla becomes drowsy and falls asleep 2D6 hours later.

Weapons made of wood or bone inflict triple damage against her (Millennium Tree weapons do damage x10 direct to her Hit Points and the wounds cannot Bio-Regenerate for 1D4 hours!). Holy weapons inflict normal damage against her, as do Rune Weapons.

Killing Beastla: Reducing her Hit Points to zero will seem to have killed her, but is not a permanent solution. The serpentine god will slowly regenerate and rise again. Decapitating her head and burying the body and head at two separate locations is a better way to keep her from returning to life. However, when head and body are rejoined, Beastla is able to rise again, but very diminished. After being slain, Beastla recovers Hit Points at a rate of 1000 per year. If her head was removed, she starts out with only 100 Hit Points and recovers 100 Hit Points and S.D.C. a year. In either case, she will not attack again until she has recovered at least 5,000 Hit Points. One reason is that her powers are not back to full strength until that point (all magic and abilities are at one third potency). If her head is destroyed during this weakened state, Beastla is permanently destroyed, so she will hide until she is back to full strength.

Weapons and Armor: None.

Allies: None. There can be only one ruler of the world. Beastla will try to crush any deity, demon, or Deevil that stands in her way.

Enemies: The entire Northern Pantheon, especially Algor. He will pay for his chosen people entrapping her in ice. She will also take great pleasure slowly killing her son Od and every member of his family (including all his illegitimate children), slowly hunting them down until the end of time itself.

Technology and Notes: None.

Minions: Beastla recruits all wicked and violent beings and will consider the entire Iceborn race to be her rescuers and chosen people, at least until she figures out they worship Netosa, not her, and use her as a means to an end.

Note: As they have for millennia, the Iceborn chop away at the Great Ice Shelf in search of Beastla (and other sea serpent carcasses), while Sea Witches devote a portion of their time searching the depths of the Icy Ocean. So far, the location of the serpent deity remains a mystery to men and Iceborn.

The Binding of Brgg

"Battered and barely conscious, Brgg the Destroyer, brother of Algor and father of Od, was dragged into a darkened cave belonging to bats and creatures of the night. His broken body was thrown to the ground. Betrayed, in part by the Eoten whom he had shown his favor, but who now sided with his enemies. A fire wyrm sank his teeth into Brgg's side. He tore out Brgg's guts and howled with glee. Another wyrm turned his entrails into chains of bronze, leaving them attached to Brgg's body. Three wyrms took a great slab of rock and wrote in the language of Runes over its surface. They stretched Brgg over the slab and bound him with the bronze chains. One held his left hand, the other his right, and the last his waist. They wrote Runes on each link of chain – and when completed, the chains became unbreakable. Then an ancient ice wyrm drew a great pattern, four circles in which Brgg, bound to his Runestone, lay in the center, and spoke the names of the Enemies of Old, infusing the circles with magic. For all his

rage and venom, there was nothing Brgg could do. He lay still, stripped of his power and said nothing.

Od the Son stood before him and said, "It was settled long ago that you should be forgotten. You shall have no songs, none shall chant your name; your face will be lost to time and your feats will go unknown. I alone will speak of you, a thousand curses upon your name."

Brgg's mouth twisted and his eyes shone orange and green. "What does Algor say of this mistreatment? Of when you speak ill to me? What say you, son of mine, born of the she-beast?"

"Hold your tongue," roared Od, "or my sword will cleave that mouth of yours in half. Algor condemns you and serves at my table. Sits in my hall. All reject you, even the Eoten."

"Of all the gods and Elves to ever live, you are the greatest coward," snarled Brgg. "You stole my people and befriend the wyrms instead of putting them to the sword. In the end they will see you imprisoned beside me."

"My fate is mine alone. Yours is to shudder and writhe until you are remembered no more." Od stepped away. "I take my leave. I wish things could be different, but you are no better than the Old Ones, and this is a new age . . . a better age."

Brgg paused and looked around him before bellowing, "Leave me unguarded if you dare. One day I shall escape these bonds and when I do, there shall be a great reckoning. You, yours and all who betrayed me shall suffer like never before. I shall rule these islands again and make the mortals believe they reside in hell, and all my enemies shall meet with doom."

Od looked defiantly down upon his father. Finally, he turned and was gone. For a long time the company of wyrms stared upon the Destroyer, grinning with malice. In silence, they watched, and in silence, they rose and left him to his fate.

And there Brgg lies bound and helpless to this day. His existence forgotten with each passing generation. Forgotten nearly, but not quite. For he is held in memory by a loyal few Eoten. One day, it is written, the dwindling faithful may find Brgg and release him from imprisonment. Should that day arrive, it is said they shall become the elite of the elite. The heads of a new world order.

Until then, Brgg the Destroyer bides his time, suffering in silence until he may know freedom once again and bring about destruction the likes of which will make the gods weep."

– The Binding of Brgg, from the Saga of Od the All Father

Brgg the Destroyer

The supposed creator of the Northern Isles, mythical father of Od and brother of Algor, progenitor of the Eoten, Brgg the Destroyer is said to be imprisoned deep beneath the earth at some location known only to the Northern gods. The cult known as Sisterhood of Brgg have good reason to believe he is locked in a prison someplace deep below the ancient city of **Valsk** on the **Island of Torn**. They just don't know where or even how to look for him. His mind cannot be reached by psionics, nor can he be located by any form of magic or deific summoning. The Rune and Circle Magic that binds Brgg to the earth are the creations of ancient dragons and their secrets can not be easily discerned simply by studying the symbols etched onto his chains or Rune stone slab. That being said, Brgg can still communicate with his followers (and only his followers) via *special prayers*.

Should Brgg ever become free, his first act will be to destroy the Eoten civilization and make all their descendants (the Kingdom

of Bizantium) suffer for the sins of their forefathers. That will be followed by hunting down and destroying Od and then inflicting his vengeance against the rest of the Northern Pantheon, saving his brother, Algor, for last. Brgg is a sort of Alien Intelligence (a distant cousin to the Old Ones, perhaps?) but has chosen a permanent humanoid form. Most of his powers were stripped away during his imprisonment, but Brgg is still an incredibly dangerous, god-like being. Should he ever become unbound, he will become more powerful and he'll try to get new worshipers recruited through terror. Brgg is the kind of threat only the combined might of the Bizantian Navy and another god or two could ever hope to stop.

Real Name: Brgg Aesirvan

Alignment: Miscreant.

Size: 20 feet (6 m) tall in his bound form and smallest manifestation, 100 feet (30.5 m) tall unbound and at maximum size. Stats in parentheses are his true stats if he becomes unbound.

Description: A huge, brutish, long-bearded Frost giant. He is mostly-naked and chained (arms, legs, and waist) to the ground in the middle of a giant power matrix circle.

Attributes: I.Q. 16 (28), M.E. 24, M.A. 18 (30), P.S. 30 (60), P.P. 18 (24), P.E. 18 (28), P.B. 8, Spd 14 (88, 60 mph/96 km).

Natural A.R.: 11 (15).

Hit Points: 2,000 (50,000).

S.D.C.: 4,000 (40,000).

P.P.E.: 480 (12,000).

Horror/Awe Factor: Bound: 14. Unbound: 19.

Experience Levels: Equal to a 20th level Soldier and Warlock.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 2,000 feet (610 m), hawk-like vision, see the invisible, see through all illusions and concealment, Teleport 98%, Dimensional Teleport 88%, Bio-Regenerate 1D6x10 Hit Points/S.D.C. per minute, impervious to cold, heat, fire, disease, poison, normal weapons, mind control, and possession. Takes half damage from magic energy attacks and can also summon 1D4 Minor Elementals of any kind.

Frost Breath: Similar to that of Frost Giants but with a range of 100 feet (30 m) and inflicts 1D6x10 points of damage. Victims also must make a saving throw of 14 or better (P.E. attribute bonus only) or are -2 on initiative, -1 to strike, parry and dodge, and have their speed reduced by 10% for 1D4 minutes.

Deific Powers: Presently, Brgg is limited to controlling only those followers who are in his physical presence. He possesses all Prototypical Deific Powers but at triple the cost in P.P.E. and bodily damage. Brgg is unable to perform any power that requires more than a Severe Body Investment. If he dies in his severely weakened condition he is gone forever.

The Blood of Brgg: Any living humanoid who drinks of his blood receives the equivalent of a Might of Palladium, with the added bonus of 1D4 points to all physical attributes and a 24 hours duration! If the blood is given to a recently deceased person (less than 72 hours), it functions equivalently to a *Miraculous Healing* spell of a Priest of Light.

Skills of Note: Lore: Demon & Monster, Lore: Faerie Folk, Lore: Magic, and all physical, military, and wilderness skill at 98%. All ancient weapon proficiencies at 20th level (+2 to strike, parry, entangle, disarm, and throw, in addition to all W.P. bonuses).

Priest/Healing Powers: None.

Magic Powers: All Elemental Magic spells for all four Elements. Brrg, like most deities, can adjust the level of the spells potency from level 2-20! Opponents must roll an 18 or higher to save vs Brrg's magic.

Psionic Powers: None.

Attacks per Melee Round: Three by magic only while bound. (Unbound: 10 attacks per melee or three by magic).

Special Bonuses (including attribute bonuses – Unbound): 97% to intimidate or evoke trust, +6 on Perception Rolls (all), +8 on initiative, +8 to strike, +9 to parry, +9 to dodge, +5 to pull punch, +6 to roll with punch/impact, +13 to save vs Horror Factor, +8 to save vs Elemental magic, +7 to save vs other magic, +5 on all other saving throws. Also see Natural Abilities, above.

Vulnerabilities and Weaknesses: Rune Weapons and rune magic does double damage against him and the duration and effect is double the normal amount. Holy weapons created by Gods inflict triple damage direct to Hit Points. (**Note:** Weapons made from a Tree of Life, or Millennium Tree, inflict *quadruple* normal damage direct to his Hit Points, and their magic does *triple* normal damage, duration, and effect against him.)

Power Leech Circles: The four giant, sealed power circles that help to hold and bound Brrg limited his powers, S.D.C. Hit Points, bonuses (all), spell magic, natural/combat abilities, and deific abilities. The power matrix circles have four permanence wards on them and his true name is written in silver runes on the ground. The circles are indestructible. **Note:** The Power Matrix Circle has a 1,200 foot (365 m) radius, but does not show any effect on the surface. Although the circles specifically target Brrg, each individual circle still functions as normal and will affect mages and magic as usual.

Favorite Weapons: It is rumored his weapons, armor, and helm are buried somewhere on the Island of Torn.

The Helm of Brrg: A Dragon's Skull Helm, made from one of Brrg's vanquished dragon foes. It is indestructible, the wearer takes half-damage from fire and cold, is impervious to all dragon breath attacks, understands Elven/Dragonese at 98%, is given Nightvision 600 feet (183 m), can breathe dragon fire once per melee round (counts as an extra melee attack, inflicts 5D6 damage, range 50 feet/15.2 m.) It is the size of a house and won't fit anyone but him (shrinks and grows to fit whatever size he chooses, but only when it is on his head).

Skullcutter, Brrg's War Axe: This monstrous weapon is completely alien in origin and weighs 1,000 lbs (450 kg). This Dragon Slayer weapon is said to be indestructible. A single blow against non-dragon foes does 1D6x10 points of damage, 2D6x10+30 points of damage against dragons, sea serpents and any reptilian/serpentine opponent. The wounds it produces against dragons take three times as long to Bio-Regenerate, and against dragons, the weapon provides the wielder *one extra attack per melee* and dragon breath weapons do half damage.

Armor: Brrg's Black Plate Armor: A.R. 16, S.D.C. 8,000, impervious to any kind of dragon breath (fire, cold, acid, hydra attacks, etc.). Regenerates 1D4x10 S.D.C. every melee round.

Allies: Only High Sister Olevea Latharsis and the two hundred or so members of the Sisterhood of Brrg. The only person who visits him (at least 1D4 times a year) is his brother Algor. His only companions are the two Stone Golems buried with him.

Enemies: He hates the Northern Pantheon, especially his son Od and brother Algor. They and the Eoten are responsible for his imprisonment and must be punished. Considers every dragon in the Megaverse an enemy that must die and wants to make all Eoten suffer for betraying him to the Northern Gods. He was always cruel toward Faerie Folk, and now they laugh and joke at his expense (meaning some Faerie Folk of the Northern Islands *may* know where to find him). He's always considered humans and other mortals to be his pawns and playthings, and people to be made to worship him. Only the most wicked and cruel mortals are appreciated, but they are still pawns.

Technology and Notes: No use for it.

Minions: None. Unbound: He can summon 1D4 Minor Elementals, but while lying in the power matrix, he holds no power to summon or command any of them.

The Prison Chamber of Brrg

The main entrance is accessible through a natural cave on the sea floor. A sea serpent lives in the caves and attacks everyone who enters, fighting to the death or until the intruders flee. There is a very small, natural tunnel from the surface to the man-made tunnels below which lead to the basement chamber that contains Brrg, but it is only large enough for a rat or small Faerie Folk to negotiate. However, it could be used by people shrunk to six inches, or as a path to follow for those who can Travel Through Earth/Dirt and similar magic. Both end inside a small tunnel network, the sea cave leading to a tunnel and stairs that go upward from the sea floor and the tiny tunnel leading down into the earth. Any other tunnels that once led down from the surface have all been completely collapsed.

Deep below the sacred mountain of Valsk, beneath the ruined city of Valsk (see description under the **Island of Torn** section), is an ancient, man-made section of tunnels and stairs, the walls covered with strange inscriptions, images of the gods of the Northern Pantheon, and warnings in both the Eoten language and Elven/Dragonese scrawled like graffiti across them in blood and charcoal. They warn of death and destruction for those who continue onward and suggest visitors immediately "turn back." Every so often a pair of stone statues watch over an archway. Such statues are always warriors but depict the many different races (including Iceborn, Ogres, Elves and Dwarves, etc.), some with eyes made of sapphires (1D4x100 gold each, but take 1D6 minutes to pry out of their sockets). Those near the entrance are weathered by humidity, their eye-gems missing, but the statues are in better and better condition the deeper one travels into the tunnels, promising riches ahead.

The man-made tunnels eventually lead to a chamber that was once part of palace basement system. A pair of massive, bronze covered doors stand silent, and painted with graffiti that says, "Turn back, immediately," "Do not open," "Entering means the end of the World." "Death awaits," and similar. The door is guarded by two stone statues in full suits of armor (A.R. 17, 500 S.D.C. each) and they will let no one in. They are *Stone Golems* that come to life to prevent anyone from entering. They fight until unwanted visitors are chased away or until the Golems are destroyed.

The door can be opened with a combined P.S. of 50, or melted away using powerful fire magic, but the latter takes an hour and lots of P.P.E. Anyone who can open the door will discover a large

chamber, its walls ringed with statues of more of the Northern Gods, this time wearing crowns and capes, and holding long spears. Laying on the floor in the middle of it all is Brgg, who immediately begins to laugh. When he stops laughing, he asks if the person(s) will release him from his chains and help him sit up. If the answer is yes, he weeps with joy. The archaic god does not identify himself until completely unchained. He'll want to leave immediately, for until he leaves the chamber and its energy draining magicks, he can not be restored.

If questioned first, Brgg lies about who he really is, and insists he is imprisoned unfairly, though his evil alignment may suggest otherwise. He'll beg for mercy and release at first, and then resort to promises of treasure, power and whatever he hopes can entice them to release him. Each of the chains (made from his own entrails) have 1,000 S.D.C. and as soon as one is broken, there is a 01-20% chance that Od or Algor will know it. Each additional chain broken increases the likelihood of alerting Od or Algor (or both) to the impending release of Brgg. If either deity Teleports inside the chamber, he will usher the mortals away and forbid them to ever return. Any who do anything other than comply or drop to bended knee in worship are chased out or destroyed. (Who says no to a god, or tries to impose conditions on his demand?) If the people present are obviously worshipers of Brgg, they are utterly incinerated! Od and/or Algor will be angry to see their sea serpent slain, their Golems destroyed and their hated kin on the verge of release. If any bond is broken, the gods will have to restrain Brgg and tie him down with new chains (perhaps the same entrails magically restored). Despite the security breach, Brgg will not be moved to a new location. Any mortals who have discovered the chamber and allowed, or forced, to leave will be visited by Od or Algor within 24 hours and "convinced" to never speak of it to anyone nor to ever return. Compliance *may* win them the favor of the god(s). Failure to comply brings misfortune, trouble and a gruesome death on all who defy the deity(s).

If one or both of these gods do NOT appear to stop the madness, Brgg encourages them to continue, as he, himself, can do nothing to destroy the chains and is as weak as a kitten until he is able to crawl out to sea or up to the surface. Once he exits the chamber, he has all the stats of a "bound" Brgg, because he is still recovering from the magic used to imprison him for some time. He is likely to crawl to a safe location or use Dimensional Teleport to hide and recover. He gives nothing to his liberators and will smite them if they try to restrain or destroy him.

Releasing Brgg. Opening Brgg's prison doors weakens the magic that holds him in place. While his chains remain intact, he remains locked inside the chamber, but once freed, Brgg slowly recovers, gaining 100 S.D.C./Hit Points per hour and recovering 10% of his strength/abilities per day until he eventually reaches his full, unbound power level (stats in parentheses). Only at this point can he cast magic at higher than 5th level and use his Deific Powers. Once free and empowered, Brgg is obsessed with revenge, murder and the enslavement of all Bizantian people — and every man, woman and child who lives upon the Northern Islands must bend to his will or die. All Eotens, except those of the Sisterhood, will be tortured and slain before he moves on to the rest of the world, and the slaying of the gods of the Northern Pantheon. This is bad, and could lead to Armageddon as Brgg incites the monster races to join him in tearing down human civilization.

The Trove of Oddgeirr

To help win over the Eoten long ago, Algor gathered seven treasures — one for each island. Each a magic item of considerable power to help the fledgling nation of humans to grow and fend off Brgg's and Beastla's children, the monstrous **Iceborn** and sea serpents. In legend, this collection of magic items is known as the **Trove of Oddgeirr** as well as **the Seven Treasures**. However, before the treasures could be handed to the people, Brgg found the trove and dispatched with it. Some legends say he hid them where they could not be found and then told the people what he had done to taunt and torment them. Another says he threw them away in a great anger and they remain where they fell. Another, popular version is that Brgg hid them, and chided the Eoten for their treachery, then paused, and offered them the trove if — and only if — they rejected Algor and the Northern gods and chose only him as their god. The Eoten recognizing what a cruel and arrogant deity Brgg had become, pretended to accept his offer, inviting Brgg to a great feast in which they would name him their one and only, and condemn all others. But they lied. It was a trap. And when Brgg arrived to accept their worship and gifts of human sacrifice, he was attacked by Algor and Od. The Eoten joined the battle, and though treachery and unity, brought the evil god down to his knees to be dragged away by Od never to be seen again.

Since that day, the **Seven Treasures** have remained lost. According to one legend, they will remain lost until the Eoten people again face a great time of need. Then, one after another, shall the Seven Treasures shall be recovered and placed in the hands of heroes destined to defend the northern islands from all that is evil. Some of these seven magic items may have been found and used by warriors over the centuries, only to be lost again. Some may have made it into the hands of many people, others have remained hidden for millennia. One is even believed to have played a role in the Elf-Dwarf War. Where the Seven Treasures may be today, remains to be seen.

The Seven Treasures of the *Trove of Oddgeirr* are sung of in the sagas of the Eoten. But no one knows where Brgg might have hidden them. Wherever they are, it appears no one has found them in thousands of years. (Or are not aware of what they possess.) The exact nature of the Seven Treasures is also not entirely clear, whether they are Rune Weapons, holy artifacts or symbolic gifts from the sea god. The stories are many and contradictory. It is also said that the Treasures will not work for the unworthy, and without written documents to scrutinize, it is difficult to interpret what any reference entirely means. True North Folk have always claimed they cannot be found or wielded by any save a rightful king and North Folk champions, but that seems unlikely. Present-day Monk Scholars and Alchemists believe the Seven Treasures are Rune Weapons, in that the stories of virtuous heroes seem to establish that they can only be utilized by a person of a particular good nature (alignment) for the purpose of defending the North Folk and their islands.

The Seven Treasures of the North

The Trove of Oddgeirr is real and the Seven Treasure do exist. Finding them is the tricky part.

When Brgg was imprisoned, no amount of torture could make him reveal their location, and it pleases him that his deed so vex-

es Od and Algor. Some myths suggests Bragg deliberately placed them throughout the North, under the very noses of the gods and people (North Folk) he despises. Unknown to Bragg, the Seven Treasures were enchanted to make them call out to heroes and adventurers of noble hearts (this may include Priests and Waterchanters) who are of a or good or Unprincipled alignment. Good people worthy of one of the Seven Treasures may hear a pleasant distant song carried on the wind when they come within a mile (1.6 km) of one. A tune that is somehow alluring and compels them, for a while, to seek its source.

Those who are good and come within 100 feet (30.5 m) of one, hears the singing of old Eoten folk songs louder and more clearly in the ancient Eoten or Elven language. Many mistake these sounds for ghosts and spirits in the area and sometimes run away rather than seek the artifact. But those brave enough may be able to track the song to its source and find one of the Seven Treasures.

According to legend, when four or more of the artifacts have been recovered and placed on flat ground together, they all move to point in the same direction toward the next nearest of the Seven Treasures starting with the lowest number on the Treasure list.

Each of the Treasures is said to have been crafted by the god Belimar, Runesmith and Tinkerer of the Northern Pantheon. Each is considered a Major Rune Weapon, is indestructible, floats when dropped in water, never dulls, rusts or tarnishes, has an intelligence and personality that helps those of like alignment and goals, and feels slightly warm to the touch, even in the dead of winter. Characters of Anarchist or evil alignments (with one exception, the Stone of Locknar can be used by anyone) can not touch these items without agonizing pain and take 4D6 damage direct to Hit Point (double damage to supernatural beings), nor can they draw upon the magic or any of the abilities provided by the Seven Treasures, described below.

1. The Wolf-Son's Sword: According to Eoten legend, the short sword once belonged to Wolvenar himself. The patron god of the Wolfen offered his knife (the size of a short sword to human beings) to the Eoten as a sign of his respect for all warriors of the North. It is a Major Rune Weapon whose personality bears all the energy, restlessness and ferocity of Wolvenar as well as his sense of honor and fair play. It has an I.Q. of 14, Scrupulous alignment, and loves to sing and hum marching songs and songs of war and triumph (professional quality) as well as songs and comments to taunt opponents.

Special Rune Abilities: Six times per day, the sword can restore 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 S.D.C. to its owner; the blade returns to its owner when thrown and has a throwing range of 200 feet (61 m); +2 to strike when thrown, and does 4D6 damage against most opponents; +10 damage against the *Iceborn, Necromancers, Witches, Ghouls, death demons of all kind, animated dead, zombies* and other *undead*. **Bonus:** It also provides a bonus of +1 to parry and +1 to disarm whenever it is used to fight a group of two or more opponents, but receives no such bonuses fighting against a single enemy. **Note:** In the hands of a Wolfen or Kankoran or a pure blood Eoten (must be at least 75% Eoten), the weapon does an additional 1D6 damage against all foes.

Location: Lost to the world for at least 10,000 years, the sword remains hidden in a tomb on the Island of Sinza, below the ruins of the ancient Elven monastery.

2. Hammer of Belimar's Blessing: A hammer made by the Runesmith god Belimar, the hammer is a Major Rune Weapon whose personality is decidedly positive and likes to see things built and restored, be it a ship or a relationship. It has an I.Q. of 15 and a Scrupulous alignment. The hammer has amazing balance, making it wonderful for working in a forge, and being indestructible, it can be left in the hottest fires without ever burning and remains cool to the touch. As a weapon, the Hammer of Belimar's Blessing does only 4D6 damage and offers no special bonuses.

Special Rune Abilities: It is capable of magically repairing objects and items crafted by human hands. A single tap from the hammer restores 3D6 S.D.C. to metal objects (a suit of armor, weapons, shields, tools, anchor chain, etc.), or 2D6 S.D.C. to wooden objects (ships, carts, walls, buildings). Six times per 24 hour period, the hammer can restore 2D6x10 S.D.C. to an object made of metal or wood. **Warlock Earth Spells:** Chameleon (5; itself and its wielder), Dowsing (2), Earth Rumble (10; upon striking the ground), Identify Minerals (3), Mend Stone (15), and Clay or Stone to Iron (40/60); 90 P.P.E. is available for spell casting and regenerates 10 P.P.E. every three hours. Equal to a 6th level Warlock.

Location: Recovered during a salvage operation of a sunken ship in the Strait of Forlorn Hope, the hammer looked like nothing special and was given to one of the workers helping to recover and clean the salvage. He sold it to a friend for two gold. It sits, forgotten inside a spare toolbox at the *Bardomus shipyard* on the island of Bizantium, in the city of Wujik. Its owner, a carpenter at the shipyard who thought he can always use a reliable extra hammer, but he tossed it in a spare toolbox and has never used it.

3. Stone of Locknar: The Stone of Locknar is a small Rune statue of a grinning Locknar. This is a common statue in the North because it is a symbol of good luck. This particular little statue is engraved with Runes that make it a powerful Rune Weapon. It may be worn around the neck on a chain like a medalion, pinned to a shirt or cloak, or hooked to a belt, but it must be displayed in some way or held in the hand for its powers to be unleashed. The stone statue is imbued with the energy and qualities of Locknar. It has an I.Q. of 15 and an Anarchist alignment. Since it represents the "Trickster God of the Northern Pantheon," the voice that speaks to the stone's owner tends to be smartalecky, sarcastic, humorous, and enjoys instigating trouble, tricking people, and pulling off deceptions and confidence jobs. As a "Rune Weapon," the Stone of Locknar casts spells and causes discord and confusion.

Special Rune Abilities: Six times a day, the Stone of Locknar is capable of magically creating confusion, misunderstanding and general chaos to *everyone* within a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius. The only person NOT affected is the person with the stone and any "associates" he may indicate. It is he (and they) who plan to take advantage of the confusion (to make an escape, steal something, kidnap or kill someone, to slip away unseen, to plant evidence, to make a quick investigation while people are distracted, etc.). And while most of the people within that 50 foot (15.2 m) radius (100 foot/30.5 m diameter) are completely distracted, the confusion they are experiencing is likely to affect more people around them, especially in crowds, gatherings and on city streets. To save vs this magic, characters need to roll a 16 or higher. This is most effective when the possessor of the stone starts the commotion/distractation ("Fire!" "Thief, stop," "Unhand me!" "Look out," "Stop

that man!" "Look, it's the King!" Or pointing up toward a building or into the sky, or out to sea and saying, "What is that?" Or, "Oh my god, is that a dragon?!" Or whatever). Everyone affected will turn to look that way and act in a confused and anxious or excited way. ("Where? I don't see it." "Should we call the authorities?" "Oh my, what do should we do?" "There it is!" "Oh, guess not." "Is that it?")

The point is all eyes and attention are away from character with the Stone, allowing him to do something nobody is likely to notice or slip away in the confusion. Other times, general confusion can block traffic or start trouble. **Penalties:** In all cases, while confusion and distraction are in play, everyone affected is -10 on Perception Rolls, -2 on initiative, -1 melee attack and -15% to language skills (has trouble finding the right words) for the entire duration of the magic. **Duration:** Five minutes. **Bonuses:** The person wielding the Stone of Locknar gets bonuses *during the confusion*: +20% to the following skills (when applicable), *Concealment*, *Escape Artist*, *Forgery* (passing off a forgery during the confusion), *Intelligence* (without being noticed himself), *Palming*, *Pick Pockets*, *Prowl*, and *Surveillance*. **Confused Compliance:** In addition, people confused and distracted are likely NOT to question the wielder of the Stone when he tells them to do something, even if it is rather audacious or comes out of the blue. "Quickly, let us through. I must warn Prince So and So," or "I must give this to So and So." "Let us pass" (him and his teammates), "Here, we'll guard the money (or map, or dignitary, etc.) while you go and get help," or "We're going to get out of the way and wait in the back room (or basement, or upstairs or whatever), call out if there is danger." And so on, especially when spoken with authority or charm. It's not quite on the level of psionic Hypnotic Suggestion, but the person is so distracted he only hears part of what was said, is not entirely sure who is saying it, but under the circumstances if it seems halfway reasonable, the answer is, "Uh, what? Yeah. Okay." When asked later, who that person was, the confused character won't be sure or can't remember.

Additional Bonuses from the stone at all times: The Stone's owner is +20% to invoke trust, impress, charm, believed when lying, or intimidate, and is impervious to *Seduction* and *Hypnotic Suggestion*, though he or she realizes the attempt and can play along to his advantage.

Wizard Spells: As the trickster god, this Rune item breaks the rules because it is not an obvious "weapon" and it can be used to cast more than the usual six spells for Rune Weapons. All of the following spells may be cast: *Breathe Without Air* (5), *Calling* (8), *Charm* (12), *Charismatic Aura* (10; self only), *Concealment* (6), *Death Trance* (1), *Decipher Magic* (4), *Detect Concealment* (6), *Detect Poison* (10), *Escape* (8), *Fool's Gold* (10), *Multiple Image* (7), *Reduce Self* (20), *Sense Traps* (7), and *Tongues* (12); 100 P.P.E. is available for spell casting and P.P.E. regenerates at a rate of 5 P.P.E. every hour. Spells are equal to a 7th level Wizard.

Location: The Stone is in the hands of a pirate on the Shadow Coast. The Stone of Loknar was acquired by a cutthroat of a pirate captain who calls himself **the Walrus** (7th Level, Miscreant). He has no idea what the Stone really is. All he knows is since he has tied it to his belt five months ago, he has been the luckiest sea dog on the Shadow Coast. The intelligence inside the Stone doesn't like the Walrus, and has not made its presence known to the brigand. Meanwhile, a thief operating in the *City of*

Bizantium has other plans for the Walrus and is looking for some reliable adventurers to help him raid the wicked pirate's treasure hoard. The thief, *Thynneus Tyme* (5th level, Anarchist) plies his trade in Dockside, and frequents the **Stone Hearth Inn** located north of the Market Star. The owner has confided in him about her plight, and he thinks he has uncovered a solid lead on the whereabouts of the seal skin of Eleanor (the Selkie). He'd like to recover the seal skin to collect the reward. However, if his info is correct, he'll need help getting it from a pirate captain operating on the Shadow Coast. You guessed it, *the Walrus*. The wretched brute was hired by Eleanor's husband, a childhood friend, to hide the Selkie's skin where his wife would never find it. The loutish pirate sometimes brags about his involvement when drunk, and talks about how, one day, he should use the Selkie seal skin to make the beautiful creature marry him, especially now that the nobleman is dead. Enter the player characters?

4. Rauga, the Giantslayer: A tall spear of golden wood with a carved dragon's tooth at its tip. The spear was originally made by Belimar for Hocknar. Rauga has an I.Q. of 13, a Scrupulous alignment and the heart of a noble warrior who hates cruelty, injustice and giants. As with all Rune Weapons, it is indestructible.

Special Rune Abilities: Rauga the Giantslayer does 6D6 damage to opponents under 11 feet (3.3 m) tall, but 1D6x10+10 damage to giants, dragons and all creatures of massive size. Against those of truly gargantuan size, such as the largest sea monsters, sea serpents, giant squid, giant Elementals, Demon Lords, gods and alien intelligences, the weapon does *2D6x10 damage direct to Hit Points!* The weapon also has an incredible range of 2,000 feet (610 m), makes a clap of thunder when it strikes, and vanishes a moment later in a flash of light to reappear in the hand of its "partner" (the owner of the weapon). Rauga has the ability to adjust its physical size to be the ideal length for the person who wields him. **Wizard Spells:** Giantslayer can also be used to cast the following spells as long as it has the P.P.E. available: *Armor of Ithan* (10), *Blinding Flash* (1), *Call Lightning* (15), *Globe of Daylight* (2), *See the Invisible* (4) and *Swim as a Fish, Superior* (12); 85 P.P.E. is available for spell casting and regenerates 10 P.P.E. every three hours. Spells are equal to a 6th level Wizard.

Location: The Island of Wyst, up in the hills that make up the southern portion of the island. Along the crest of a hill is the skeleton of a long-dead giant. The skeleton with a spear in the chest where the heart would be, has been regarded as an omen, and left untouched by all who have seen it. At the heart of the skeleton, Rauga sticks up out of the ground, frozen where it impaled the giant. When Algor cast the Seven Treasures aside, Rauga fell in such a way that it sought out one of its namesake foes, dropping like an arrow out of the sky. There it has remained dormant, the victim of enchantment imposed upon it by Bragg. That same magic made the spear appear too old, weathered, cracking, and no good as a weapon. All this time the Giantslayer has been asleep and dreaming, but it has recently awakened and waits for a noble warrior to use it to defend Bizantium and all people in need of a hero. When such a candidate is sensed, the spear will sing out so they may unite.

5. The Seahawk's Eye: A magical jewel from the collection of Epim, wife of Od, the Seahawk's Eye is a legendary artifact often spoken of by Bizantium's sailors. Seahawk is indestructible, has an I.Q. of 14, a Scrupulous alignment and a curious, adventurous nature.

Special Rune Abilities: The jewel has a power incredibly useful to mariners and ship's captains: when looked through, it shows the bearer what weather conditions will be like over the next 48 hours from the current time. The Eye can see the next two days' weather, approaching storms, water conditions, cloud cover, tides, wind speeds, temperature, anything related to weather. It is not a crystal ball, however, and can not show the user the passage of ships or sea serpents, the locations of pirates or armies nor travelers on land. The Seahawk's Eye can also see, recognize and indicate the location of shallow waters, sandbars, reefs and other dangers 50 feet (15.2 m) below the surface of the water as they are approached and may be avoided. **Bonuses:** The bearer of the gemstone is +1 on all Perception Rolls, +2 on rolls regarding sailing and travel on the high seas.

Wizard Spells: The Seahawk's Eye can also be used to cast the following spells as long as it has the P.P.E. available: Breathe Without Air (5), Float in Air (5), Fly as the Eagle (25), Magic Pigeon (20), See the Invisible (4) and X-Ray Vision (25); 90 P.P.E. is available for spell casting and regenerates 10 P.P.E. every three hours. Spells are equal to a 6th level Wizard.

Location: The Island of Borich, in the city of Gideon, in a church of Algor. The jewel is part of a mosaic that covers one entire wall of the church, set in the eye-socket of a seahawk flying over the Seven Islands. The Priests and acolytes will be extremely distressed if anyone tries to take the Eye, and they would never willingly part with it. The town guard are called if any is found trying to steal the gem, and available priests will fight and defend it with all the strength (and magic) they can muster. If the gem should go missing, there will be an investigation and search for it.

6. Aragat, Sinker of Ships: A gift from Heim the Huntress, this magic bow is enchanted to inflict massive damage to inanimate objects, but cannot harm living things. Aragat has an I.Q. of 12, a Scrupulous alignment and the heart of a noble warrior who hates cruelty, injustice and giants. As with all Rune Weapons, it is indestructible.

Special Rune Abilities: Perfectly normal arrows fired by Aragat devastate fortified walls, siege engines, buildings and ships, yet are totally harmless against any animal, monster, person, demon, supernatural creature or god. Heim felt that the Eoten were too warlike, and that Aragat would teach them a lesson regarding the innate value of life. However, he knew the Iceborn would be a reoccurring threat, so he wanted to give them a weapon that could sink a Necroilus warship. While the bow may be able to sink a ship or shatter body armor with a few well placed shots, the person under the armor is unscathed. **Note:** Arrows fired at living beings bounce off the person like they were made of soft sponge.

Arrow Damage: 1D6x10 against most normal S.D.C. structures from "normal" arrows made by mortals. If the arrow is enchanted, such as a Cyclops Lightning Bolt arrow, the magic arrow does an extra 20 S.D.C. damage. Range for a normal arrow is 3,000 feet (914 m) and damage is as usual. **Heim Ship-Buster Arrows:** 1D6x100 S.D.C. damage from the energy bolt that Aragat can make appear six times per 24 hours; does no damage to living beings, including Elementals. Range is 5,000 feet (1,524 m)!

Wizard Spells: Sinker of Ships can also cast the following spells as long as it has the P.P.E. available: Armor of Ithan (10), Cure Minor Disorders (10), Heal Wounds (10), Levitation (5), Purification (20) and Swim as a Fish (6); 90 P.P.E. is available for

spell casting and regenerates 10 P.P.E. every three hours. Spells are equal to a 6th level Wizard.

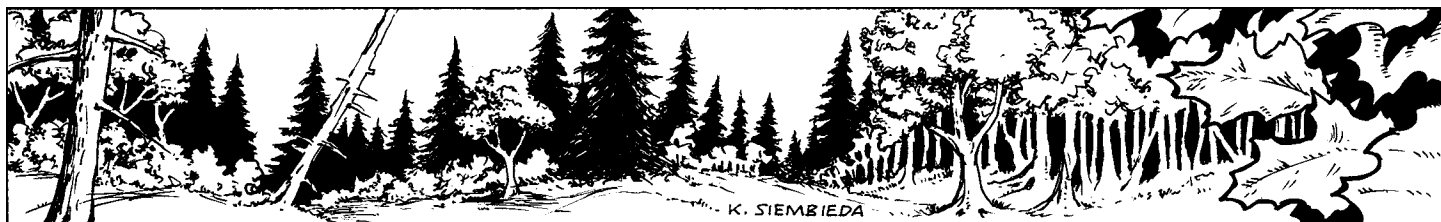
Location: The Island of Torn, buried somewhere under the collapsed palace in the city ruins of Valsk. Aragat can sense the Iceborn are coming, and for too long it has laid trapped under tons of debris. When it senses a compassionate and merciful hero is in the ruins it begins to sing a song of heroes. When such a champion is near, it will muster the willpower to fire one arrow that punches through the debris and into the air. A thin stream of dust and smoke will mark the hole to follow in order to retrieve the weapon. Magic such as travel through Earth or the use of an Elemental may be necessary.

7. The Seventh Treasure, The Trident of Valfdan: The most powerful item in the Trove of Oddgeirr, this trident is a greater holy weapon made completely out of ice that glows with a pale, white, misty energy. Legend has it that Od created it for *Valfdan the Wise*, the *First High Minister and Second Son of Agmundr*.

Special Rune Abilities: The Trident of Valfdan has the power to freeze areas of water, making them impassable to ships and sea monsters. Touch the tip of the trident to the ocean and a 200x200 foot (61x61 m) area will instantly transform into ice, slowly pushing ships aside and gently pressing anything from fish to sea monsters down into the water below or around it. The ice bloom lasts for 2D6 melee rounds, before dissolving away with no permanent effects. The trident is indestructible, and can also fire a bolt of freezing magic once per melee round. (4D6 S.D.C. damage, range of 500 feet/152 m, double damage to cold-sensitive enemies.)

Location: The Trident will be the most difficult of the Seven Treasures to find. Chief Valyr lost the Trident when Algor destroyed his ship, and it sank below the waves where it has not been seen in thousands of years, making some question whether or not it even exists. The Trident *is* real, and it rests on the bottom of the sea, directly south of Yufel and northwest of the city of Letia. It would be impossible to locate, but no fish, sea mammal, sea serpent or other creature is willing to go within 1000 feet (305 m) of the Trident itself. This effect continues upward up to the surface of the water, creating a vast column empty of any living thing, noticeable from below the waves if one looks carefully, but much easier to spot from above the water. Pods of whales and schools of fish go far out of their way to swim around the location, behavior that a skilled Fisherman or Serpent Chaser will surely notice, and many Bizantium mariners speak of the "strange spot" out in the sea. Also, any of the other Seven objects of the Trove will naturally point towards the Trident's location when carried at sea.

Remember, once four of the Seven Treasures are recovered, they can be used to locate the remaining three. The Bizantium monarchy and Priests of Algor and the Northern Pantheon, as well as many Waterchanters and some adventurers and Wolfen know the *Legend of the Seven Treasures*, including what they are, how they work and that four will lead to seven. Should all (or most) of the Seven Treasures be located and fall into the hands of heroes, they can play a huge role in the defense of Bizantium, and humanity in general, from the coming Iceborn invasion – perhaps the largest in history – and other possible dangers from the past.



Avenues of Adventure

Business on the Mainland: There are many reasons for the Crown or Noble Houses (or Warlock Council) to hire adventurers to conduct business for them. This could include rooting out rebels or pirates, chasing off barbarian raiders, securing the Shadow Coast, hunting down a monster(s) that has been terrorizing the area or feeding upon the settlers (could be one or more man-eating Ice Bears, Iceborn, or any number of monsters or madmen), seeking the cause of recent and mysterious disappearances, guarding a ship or precious cargo, protecting a particular noble or manager at the Shadow Coast colonies, sniffing out Western Empire spies and conspiracies, uncovering and stopping plots against Bizantium by other foreign powers (most likely anti-Wolfen zealots from the Eastern Territory or Iceborn advanced scouting parties), following a lead on one of the Seven Treasures, exploring ancient ruins, delivering a message from the King, and so on.

Contact the Wolfen: There may be a handful of trading posts and colonies where Bizantium's frontiersmen and the Wolfen interact, but there is no real official channel between the Crown and the Wolfen Empire: procuring sources of new lumber, escorting cargo or ambassadors through Wolfen territory, hunting down bandits or rogue bands of Coyles, reaching a new accord for sharing *Dragon Claw bay*, or any number of assignments when the King – or more likely, Wilgan Vatatze or one of the other Noble Houses, or even a foreign spy – call for it. Whoever the employer may really be, he hires the player characters to travel inland into the backyard of the Wolfen Empire. There, they are tasked with seeking out a particular tribe, or an individual prince, chieftain, mage, seer or priest who has acted as a go-between in the past. Though the players are on official business, they are still humans/humanoids in Wolfen territory, and misunderstandings are a distinct possibility that could end in plenty of adventure and bloodshed. In the alternative, they may be hired by a foreign agent from the Empire of Sin or Eastern Territory to find and kill a particular Wolfen ally of Bizantium or to create trouble between Bizantium and the Wolfen, or to rob Bizantium ships and trading posts, or steal secrets, or stir up the Coyles and Wolfen.

Close Encounter of the Iceborn Kind: Though more likely to occur along the coastal forests of the mainland, an encounter with an Iceborn scouting party could also happen on any island of Bizantium, even the big island itself. How the group got on the island may remain a mystery, but there they are. The scouts do not want to tip their hand, so they are likely to attack any witnesses to their presence. The monsters see the unfortunate encounter as an opportunity, and rather than try to just kill any witnesses (the player group?), they try to capture them and take them back to their Necroilus! Game Masters, adjust the number and type of Iceborn opponents to make a fair fight the player group has a chance of winning. Barring that, give them a chance to escape and avoid capture. Our suggestion is one low- or mid-level Iceborn Raiders for each player character (if the heroes are low level, then one Raider for every two player characters), with the Raiders led by a low level Skinbinder or Sea Witch (female Iceborn).

Dissent on the Mainland: While the King may lie to himself about the level of unrest on the Shadow Coast, the merchant-princes

who actually control the colonies are becoming nervous. Prince Wilgan Vatatze, chief advisor to the king, has his suspicions as to who is behind the simmering state of revolt, but cannot pressure the king to act without some kind of evidence. Prince Vatatze and his closest retainers are well known to the rebels on the mainland, but outsiders hired on for the task may be able to pick up information and make contacts without alerting anyone. The Prince is most concerned with determining the genuine complaints of the people and who is instigating and inflaming talk of rebellion. He is particularly suspicious of the *Council of Elements* and the ever-increasing role it plays in the colonists' lives, but also has his worries regarding *Merchant-Prince Geoffrey Lamrith*, a veteran knight and ruthless warrior who is said to be becoming more and more unstable as he lives in exile on the mainland. Players must take care, however, as the *Council of Elements* is composed of powerful Warlocks and their devoted followers, and Geoffrey Lamrith is willing to murder anyone who stands in his way without a second thought, no matter what is stated in the code of chivalry he once adhered to.

Explore the Great Ice Shelf: The Great Ice Shelf has been known of since the time of the Eoten, spoken of in the Sagas as a source of icebergs, sea monsters, and a refuge for the vile Iceborn. With the King too distracted to investigate reports of strange events to the north, other individuals, from *Chief Warlock Hanta Farrip* to *Bizantium's admirals* to the *merchant-princes*, are becoming concerned. Sending their own personnel on an official mission into the Icy Ocean or even farther to the Great Ice Shelf could be embarrassing, especially if all they find is ice and snow or a quick death. Thus, they look for a group of third party adventurers who could be persuaded to take a look for the right amount of gold. This would be a job made through a third party to cover any trail to nobility, and the group will be disavowed should anything go wrong. The party will be made aware of all of this, but the price for their service paid upon their return and command of a fully crewed ship (all low level personnel except for the 7th Level, Lieutenant Joshua Phrilban of the Bizantium Royal Marines and a 6th Level Waterchanter, both loyal to their Kingdom and employer), may be too much to resist.

Just skimming the coast may not be sufficient. For real proof that the Iceborn are massing in numbers, one might have to travel down one of the rivers or on foot inland, onto the Great Ice Shelf, a world of frozen seas and shifting ice and untold monsters, some of which may not have been seen in the outside world for centuries, if ever. Good luck.

Investigate Torn: The abandoned Isle of Torn is known for its forbidding mountains, cliff-lined coasts and ancient Eoten ruins. High Minister Airen Roth, however, has been having premonitions and hearing reports of evil spirits and strange encounters from fishermen who land on the island. With only clergymen at his disposal, and unwilling to call for the Navy to investigate what might be nothing, Roth is looking for a group of experienced warriors, scholars and men of magic to travel to Torn and explore the island's interior. *Olevea Latharsis*, *High Sister of the City of Wujik*, is also offering the church's gold to adventurers willing to clear the island of monsters and ghosts. Her full intentions are, however, unclear, and rumors surround the High Sister that suggests she is in league with dark forces. She is known to come and go at all hours of the night on mysterious errands across

the islands. **Note:** Remember, one of the Seven Treasures is located among the ruins.

Ogre Exterminators on Sinza: For as long as anyone can remember, the Isle of Sinza has been home to a small population of Ogres. Normally the Bizantians just ignore them, but lately the Ogres have been attacking fishermen and whalers making camp along the coast. House Selernani on the neighboring island of Acta is looking to hire a discreet group of warriors to go ashore on Sinza and eliminate the pesky creatures, with a bounty of 500 gold on each Ogre's head! What nobody knows is that the Ogre population is at its highest number ever, so if the Player Characters are not careful, they may run into dozens of the big brutes or one small band after another. And one more thing, one of the Ogre clans has a new leader, an Iceborn Sea Witch who was washed overboard during a freak storm and found her way to the island. She is encouraging cannibalism amongst her Ogre minions and she seeks information she might be able to use against hated Bizantium. She is curious about the Monastery, but has yet to visit it because it is controlled by a different clan of Ogres. **Note:** Remember, one of the Seven Treasures is located at the monastery as well as other magic items and artifacts.

Serpent Hunting: The whaling and serpent-hunting industries are big business in Bizantium. One way for Player Characters to make money and search for adventure is to sign on as part of a sea serpent hunting crew, or procure their own vessel and try their hand at it themselves. Magic, psychic powers, wondrous weapons, sailing skills, underwater abilities and sheer strength are all of huge benefit to Serpent Chasers. And while the work may be risky, there is no shortage of sea serpents in the Sea of Despair or Northern Sea, so gold can be made hand over fist by those who can survive the trade long enough to master the art of fishing for the most dangerous catch on the high seas. Traditional whaling, sealing or net-fishing is a much safer livelihood, but with a much slimmer profit margin.

Sailing with the Fourth Fleet

Bizantium's legendary Fourth Fleet is known the world-over for fighting pirates and sea monsters, policing sea lanes, charting coastlines and staging daring rescue operations. Its warships also serve as unofficial ambassadors for the Bizantian people and the Crown, setting up trade deals, mapping shipping routes and sometimes using the ever-present threat of their Warlocks and Marines to "encourage" reluctant trading partners to open their ports to the ships of the Northern Islands.

The average Fourth Fleet mission consists of two ships working in tandem on a long-range journey to some far corner of the world. Ships are dispatched in pairs for several reasons. If one vessel sinks or is damaged and must be abandoned, the other ship can take on its crew and whatever valuables can be saved. If a ship is lost, the other will at least be able to report the loss at some point, rather than leave both the Admiralty and the crews' families to endlessly wonder. A team of two ships can split up to pursue separate vessels, or deliver urgent messages headed in opposite directions. And lastly, two well-crewed, well-armed Bizantian warships are thought to be more than a match for any single vessel they are likely to encounter, no matter its size or armament.

Sometimes ships of the Fourth Fleet have a specific objective, like rescuing the crew of a merchant vessel held captive by pirates, or delivering a merchant-prince or ambassador for important negotiations. Other times they are assigned a specific area to patrol, or a general objective, like pirate hunting or scouting for ships of the Western Empire's Imperial Navy. Open-ended missions are undertaken as well, with a loosely planned general course and timetable, and instructions to seek out targets of opportunity and advance Bizantium's interests as the captains see fit.

For adventure purposes, the players are likely to be crew members on a Fourth Fleet mission, and may even have command of one or both of the ships involved. Sent out into the unknown, they must rely on their wits and whatever resources are at their disposal, for backup from Bizantium is likely to be thousands of miles away and impossible to even contact without powerful magic.

Pirate Hunting: With long stretches of coastline throughout the world unclaimed by any kingdom and/or virtually unmonitored, piracy is a serious problem for honest merchant ships trying to make a living. Bizantium's merchants make diligent reports of sightings and encounters with pirates, information that is funneled back to the Fourth Fleet. When attacks are frequent in an area, warships are sent out, sometimes along with a merchant vessel or two to act as bait, crewed by Marines and Navy sailors. They lure the pirates out and sink them on the open water, search out their camps to fight them ashore, or burn ships sitting in makeshift harbors and hidden coves. A pirate-hunting mission might be intended for almost anywhere in the world; wherever Bizantium's merchant ships sail the Fourth Fleet is willing to follow, even into waters around the Western Empire or hostile, inhuman powers.

Protecting Nobility and the Wealthy: Bizantium Marines are charged with protecting the holdings of the Crown and its merchant-princes. This can mean escorting one or more merchant ships with precious cargo or important dignitaries, rescuing Bizantium people – starting with the rich – from hot zones/war zones and hostile situations, rescuing merchants and nobles taken hostage by pirates, kidnappers or enemies of the Kingdom and kept on a ship or coastal prison, and searching for merchant vessels that have gone missing.

Show of Force: In order to make it clear to local leaders that Bizantium's ships are not to be trifled with, no matter how far from home, the Fourth Fleet (and temporary fleets made up expressly for the purpose) occasionally assembles into impressive sailing formations and undertakes highly visible cruises up and down foreign shores. These fleets stop in far-off ports, salute friendly leaders, conduct trade deals, show off Bizantium's superior ships and engage in military exercises. Sometimes they even escort large convoys of merchant vessels, flooding a city with both sailors on shore leave and imports from the Northern Islands. In most nations, these displays are friendly enough, but missions to the Western Empire are tense, with the potential to explode into open hostilities at any moment.

Trade Mission: Important ambassadors and trade negotiators often travel aboard ships of the Fourth Fleet for missions to far-away destinations or as a means of impressing their hosts. The goal is to safely deliver the "ambassador," often a merchant-prince, other noble, priest of Algor or wealthy merchant, to a foreign kingdom for negotiations, then see to the VIP's safety once in port. Depending on the politics behind the mission, the only threat could be sea monsters and bad weather during the voyage, or there could be assassins lurking around every corner, possibly even hidden amongst the crew...

The Enemy from the North

The Iceborn have been a threat to the Northern Islands for millennia, sometimes disappearing for centuries only to resume their campaign of evil when least expected. With rumors of attacks by Necroilus ships and Iceborn Raiders on the rise, it is only a matter of time before the next great battle takes place against Bizantium's age-old enemy.

The Iceborn establish bases along the Great Northern Wilderness: Rather than attack Bizantium, its ships or its people directly, the Iceborn may choose to establish positions along the coast of the Great Northern Wilderness. From these temporary base camps and landing points for their Necroilus ships, they travel inland to hunt for humans, Wolfen, or any living beings they can find for con-

sumption or use in their dark rituals. Eliminating each of these war camps will spread Bizantium's Royal Navy thin, leaving the islands or the Shadow Coast vulnerable to attacks from the north or dissent from within. Hiring mercenaries and heroes to handle trouble on the mainland keeps the Navy free to protect its waters and the Northern Islands.

The Iceborn attack the Shadow Coast: Circumventing the Northern Islands entirely, the Iceborn may decide to attack the Shadow Coast, especially if they are savvy enough to realize the state of dissatisfaction amongst the colonists. While the Royal Navy might have the coast under blockade, the blockading ships are watching for smugglers from the south, not Necroilus vessels from the north, and could fall victim to a devastating surprise attack. The populace of the Shadow Colonies are self-reliant, but do not have the kind of castles and forts to retreat to that are found on the main islands, or the safety of the Inland Sea to shelter their ships. Realizing that the Crown is unable to protect them, the colonists might finally decide that their ties to Bizantium are more trouble than they are worth, and use the crisis as a chance to declare independence.

The Iceborn attack Bizantium: If they grow confident enough, bear sufficient numbers, or can take advantage of a situation, the Iceborn could set their sights on the ultimate prize: the big island of Bizantium, itself. Most likely attacking from the north, the depths of the *Grand Forest* could conceal an Iceborn army just long enough for them to build up their numbers and threaten *Aquafel*, *Stonebrook*, *Vicer*, *Wujik* and *Bizantium* on land as well as by sea. Bizantium's defenders are strongest at sea, and a land attack could take them by surprise. While it would take a truly massive army to lay siege to the cities of **Bizantium** and **Wujik**, the smaller cities do not feature the same grandiose walls and towers or fighting forces, and the peaceful farmland of the interior is virtually undefended. The Iceborn could capture or slaughter an untold number of innocent people before they are stopped. That said, the city of Stonebrook is very much a fortified stronghold with underground tunnels, hiding places, defenses and backdoor exits the Iceborn could never anticipate.

Depending on how many of them there are on the Great Ice Shelf, an initial attack on Bizantium could just be a feint to cover a much more serious attempt to take a few of the Windward Isles as a stepping stone to ramp up their invasion effort against Bizantium and the Shadow Coast.

The Iceborn attack the Windward Isles: Bizantium itself is a daunting target, but the virtually unpopulated isles of **Wyst** and **Torn** and the lightly populated island of **Sinza** are places where the Iceborn could land unnoticed and set up war camps. **Borich** is heavily populated, but not defended as well as the main island, and the isle of **Acta** is small and comparatively vulnerable. By the time the Navy can properly respond to these attacks, the Iceborn may have already killed thousands, and may even have taken control of castles or defended positions inland where they will be difficult to dislodge. That is, unless they learn of the approaching enemy and are prepared to meet them. Again, volunteers to defend the islands and hired warriors help the cause. Those who volunteer to stay and fight without payment are likely to be regarded as heroes who will win the respect of the Crown and a special place amongst the people of Bizantium. (That translates into discounts on weapons, armor and supplies during and after the war, and plenty of free drinks and meals.)

Kiridin Barbarian Raiders: The Iceborn are not the only danger in the northern lands. A clan of barbarians has gone berserk and have attacked and slaughtered Bizantium trappers and woodsmen, and have conducted raids into the Ocali and Nendalheim Shadow Coast colonies, leaving dozens dead, scores injured, livestock stolen and plenty of collateral property damage. They need to be stopped before more people get hurt or their success causes others to join them.

Note: Barbarians can be substituted with Coyles, or a mixed group of Orcs, Ogres and Goblins, or other monster races such as a couple of Gigantes and a few Orcs, or a small band of Ice Bearmen, Killgore, Muckers, an Angel-Demon Serpent (may lead a small group), a Winter Storm Ice Demon or other monsters come down from **the Hinterlands** or from the Great Northern Mountains, such as Barauders, Croval, Goloth, Kaejor, the Kildred, Zaranceti, Shadow Stalkers, or Waghalter (see **Land of the Damned One: Chaos Lands**).

Worse, the Iceborn's war against Bizantium – which is likely to come in waves over 1D6+2 years with periods of intense battle and lulls that might almost appear that the monsters have gone – provides pirates, barbarians, Coyles and other villains and enemies an opportunity to engage in raids and banditry or attacks of revenge. Even worse, depending on how the war goes, foreign powers like the *Western Empire* and *Eastern Territory* may take action against the weakened nation during or shortly after the Iceborn's campaign against Bizantium. **Note:** The Wolfen and other canine allies, including Bearmen and Kankoran, will do their best to help the besieged Kingdom, especially on the mainland where their forces may arrive like the proverbial "cavalry" to save the day and run off the enemy. However, they are under attack by Iceborn as well. The Iceborn are invading the Great Northern Wilderness and killing and eating Kiridin barbarians, Kankoran, Coyles, Bearmen and most other mortal beings, giving all these people a greater, common enemy to fight. And fight they shall. All the canine races and northern people see the Great Forest as their domain, and they are not about to let the Iceborn take it from them.

Meanwhile, the anti-Wolfen zealots of the **Eastern Territory** are certain to use this as an opportunity to attack the Wolfen Empire from the south and east while it is engaged on other fronts. The heaviest combat being in the *Disputed Land*, where Coyles without the Wolfen to hold them in check, will engage in bloody raids and massacres against humans and their allies like never before seen.

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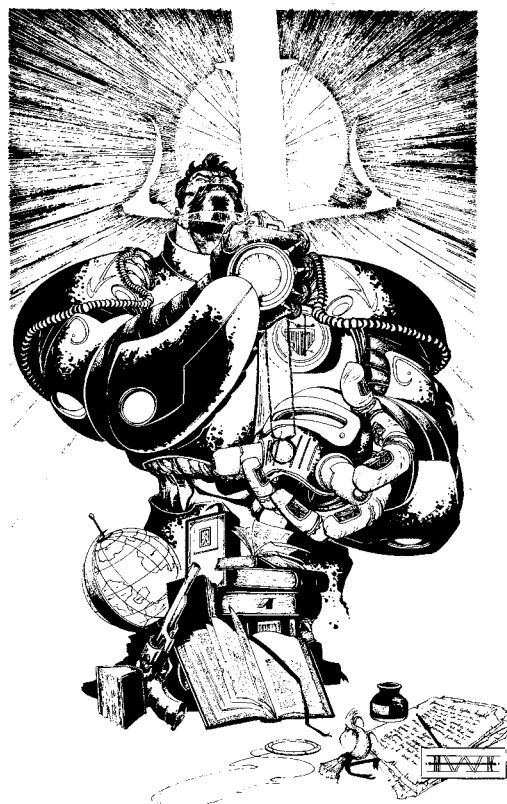
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