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Gazetteer

## REL-DRAXA

DARK THRONE OF THE WESTERN SHORE

by Andrew C. Gale

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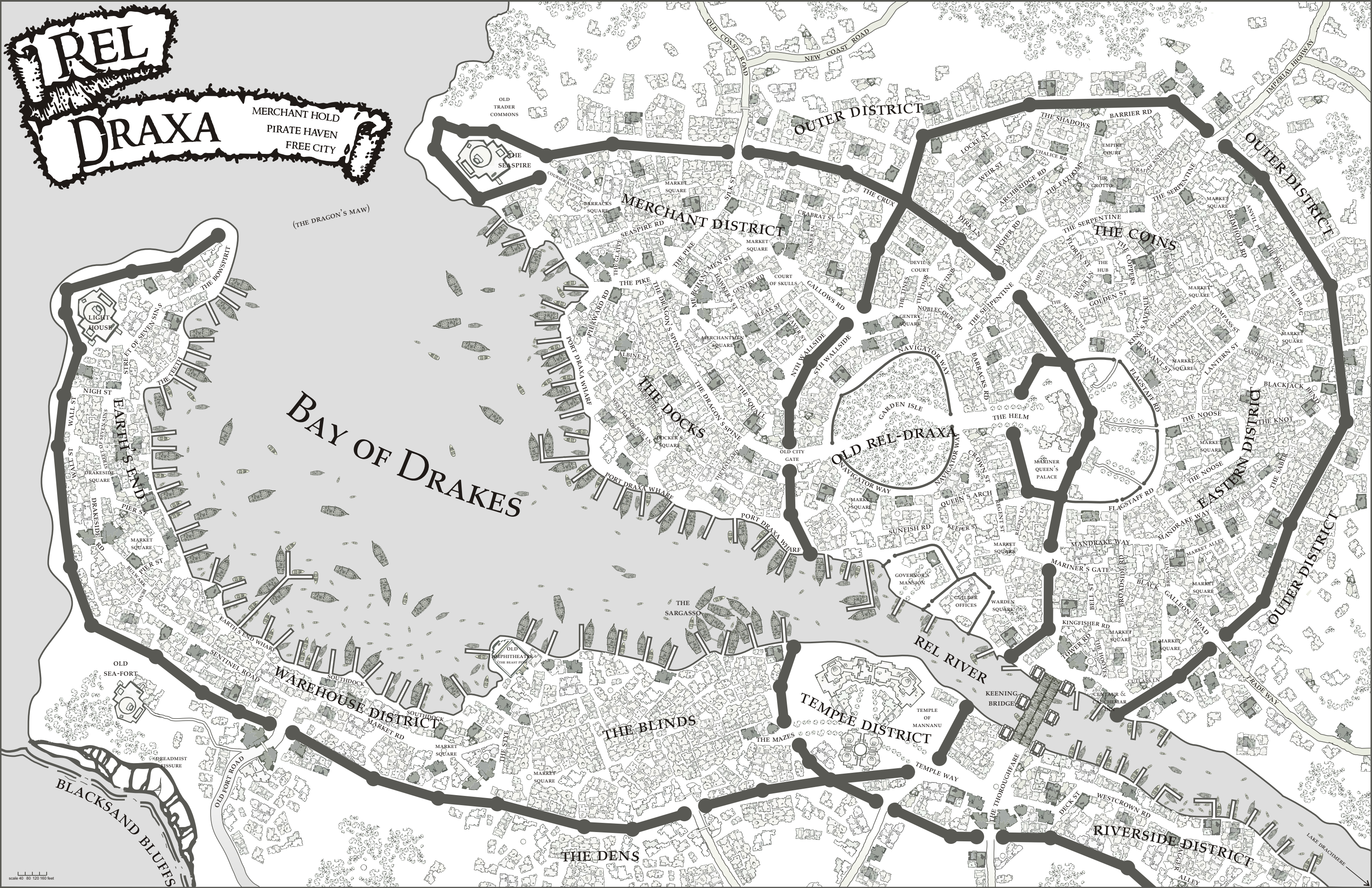
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# REL DRAXA

MERCHANT HOLD  
PIRATE HAVEN  
FREE CITY





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### Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2	<b>Maps and Capsules</b>	
Rel-Draxa City Statistics.....	3	Map: Rel-Draxa.....	Cover
Drake-Town: A Humble Beginning.....	3	Map: Rel-Draxa (blank).....	Cover
The Mariner-Monarchy.....	3		
Rel-Draxa Today.....	4	<b>Capsule: The Mariner-Queen of Rel-Draxa.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Life in Rel-Draxa.....	4	<b>Capsule: Relics from an Ancient Empire.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Law and Governance.....	5	<b>Capsule: Using Rel-Draxa in your Campaign.....</b>	<b>7</b>
City Geography.....	5	<b>Designer's Notes: The Campaign World.....</b>	<b>8</b>

### CREDITS

WRITING, LAYOUT AND CARTOGRAPHY: Andrew C. Gale  
EDITING: Ash Gram

ARTWORK: Some artwork by Paul Slinger and Ash Jackson (Ash Jackson artwork is used in accordance with Image Portfolio 1.6 [LPJ9989] agreement from Devil's Workshop/Louis Porter Jr Design)  
Fontin Font Family: A font by Jos Buivenga [www.exljbris.nl](http://www.exljbris.nl)  
SPECIAL THANKS: Penny Williams

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# REL-DRAXA

--DARK THRONE OF THE WESTERN SHORE--

**M**erchant Hold. Pirate Haven. Free City. By these titles and more, is Rel-Draxa known. Coveted by merchants, mariners, cut-throats and pirates as a safe haven, the city of Rel-Draxa is the largest city-state on the western shore. Jutting out from the coast like an ugly black mark, the city's high walls are stained with the soot from a thousand chimneys. And for all their imposing stature, the walls do little to obscure the densely packed buildings that sprawl haphazardly around the Bay of Drakes.

Within the bay itself, mariners curse the oppressive sea mists, the stink of the harbor at low tide and each other whilst jostling for a berth or anchorage. These mists turn the harbor into a

shrouded forest of masts, whilst the twisting streets of the city become dark canyons where thieves and vagabonds lie in wait.

Despite the grim appearances, apparent dangers and burgeoning lawlessness, Rel-Draxa is popular with adventurers and travelers who use the city as a place to relax after harrowing expeditions, or as a stopover to other destinations. The city is also very popular with traders, giving credence to the adage "You may buy anything in Rel-Draxa if the price is right." The cries of these traders hawking their wares may be heard throughout the city's numerous market squares, back alleys and the ruins upon which Rel-Draxa is built. Once belonging to a civilization far older than history remembers, the ancient grandeur of these ruins still shines today;



making them a beacon for the curious and the superstitious. The most awe-inspiring of these edifices is the Temple of Mannanu; an elegant marvel of architecture that has been restored to its former glory. The temple is the sanctuary of the Sea-God's faithful and the ancestral home of the Knights-Mariner. These noble corsairs march through the city streets, upholding their mandate to protect Rel-Draxa and its people with their lives. Leading them is the city's newly appointed ruler; a troubled queen who is not accustomed to commanding vast power, a vast economy, or ruling the vast population that calls Rel-Draxa home. In the five years since the queen's coronation, Rel-Draxa has grown even more powerful, as some have described. But distant eyes look upon this as sign that the city is ripe for the picking...

#### REL-DRAXA

**Metropolis** standard government (Monarchy); AL LN (with LE tendencies)

**GP Limit** 51,000 gp

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Population** 262,144

**Type** cosmopolitan (89% human, 6% halfling, 5% other races)

#### AUTHORITY FIGURES

**Mariner-Queen Jiannabeth I (Jianna the Hawk)**, the current ruler of Rel-Draxa (LG [formerly LE] half-elf female rogue9/duellist4/paladin2); **Sea-Father Guern Thionel**, the ageing high priest of Mannanu (LG human male cleric12) **'Sair Ulthaniel Wynn**, High Corsair of the Knights-Mariner (LN human male ranger9/cleric2); **'Admiral' Garius Drask**, master of the Freebooter Armada (LE half-orc male rogue7/fighter8); **Governor Halak Vourne** (NE human male rogue8/aristocrat5); **Heli Hammerhand**, master of the port authority, and the dockers' guild (N dwarf male fighter6/expert8); **Tag Cumblewin**, city official and Rel-Draxa's Chief Exchequer (LN gnome male Expert10); **Hito Kumori**, master of the merchant's guild and purported Master Knave of organised crime (LE Human Male Monk6/Rogue6); various city officials, captains and sergeants of the beleaguered city guard.

## DRAKE TOWN: A HUMBLE BEGINNING

As a city, Rel-Draxa has stood for almost eight centuries. However the ruins upon which Rel-Draxa were built have existed for over ten millennia. These ruins were once part of Que'eltalos, a mighty empire of aquatic elves now lost to the annals of antiquity.

Fleeing the harsh feudal existence in Lyonsmark; a group of hardy and desperate people made camp in the shadows of these great ruins. These people took to river piracy, calling themselves the 'River Dragons', after the skeletal remains that once lay half-submerged in the silt of the river mouth. This camp became a collection of huts and then a small village; swelling quickly with plunder and in later times legitimate trade from nearby settlements. Drake-Town (as Rel-Draxa was then known by) was destined to disappear into obscurity like many other frontier-towns, but for a chance event.

A Thorfane merchantman bound for the Lyonsmark city of Westavalon was caught in a terrible storm, limping to the relative safety of a natural harbor. The storm abated on a particularly grey morning and the bleary eyes of the exhausted crew fell upon Drake-Town, nestled snugly in the bay where they had anchored. The merchantman was carrying cargo destined for the merchants

in Westavalon; superbly crafted weapons, armor as well as craftsman's tools and ingots of the finest mithral. But with their ship badly damaged, the dwarves knew that they stood to lose a fortune if they failed to deliver their cargo on time.

It was to the dwarves' great surprise when a boat bearing the High Captains of this ramshackle town came alongside. The shrewd High Captains could have taken this cargo by force or extortion, but instead offered them a fair and reasonable price for their cargo, throwing in materials and labor to help repair their stricken vessel. The master smith that was accompanying their precious cargo took a liking to Drake-Town, firstly for the immediate generosity they were shown, but most importantly because the dwarves could now forsake the treacherous sea voyages to Westavalon, in favor for a trading settlement on the main continent.

When word that the dwarves of Thorfane had renounced their trade deals with Lyonsmark; the merchant families of Westavalon were outraged. However, they were left with no alternative but to open up newer, less lucrative trade negotiations of their own with Drake-Town. This action was instrumental to other nations following suit.

As Drake-Town's international trade grew, the Crown of Lyonsmark prevaricated on recognizing this growing trading port as a lawful settlement. Twenty years passed before the Crown of Lyonsmark gave into international demand; recognizing the growing city as Rel-Draxa. The word 'Rel-Draxa' is the bastardization of two low-elvish words for 'River' and 'Dragon'; the very name used by the pirates that first settled here. The given name is meant as a slur; referring to the city's lowborn beginning, but the slight is lost on most people. Over the next two hundred years, Rel-Draxa grew steadily under the watchful eyes of Lyonsmark.

## THE MARINER MONARCHY

Rel-Draxa's city charter was drawn up and its lawfulness opined in the courts of several nearby nations, Lyonsmark included. At the urging of the elvish kingdoms, an article was added, tasking the priests of Mannanu to relocate from their isle fastness into Rel-Draxa, whereupon they would become caretakers of the elvish ruins of former Que'eltalos. Seeing an opportunity to control Rel-Draxa as a puppet state, the Crown of Lyonsmark expanded the clergy's duties to also become advisors to the rulers of Rel-Draxa – the High Captain's council. Furthermore, in the event of consul dissolution – an event that could only be instigated by the High Captains themselves – the Temple of Mannanu would take over as an interim government until a new council was elected.

Almost immediately after the charter was signed, the Crown of Lyonsmark and the merchant families of Westavalon began a clandestine campaign to dissolve the High Captain's council through blackmail, extortion and murder. Within a year of Rel-Draxa's recognition as a free city, the populace was in riot; baying for the blood of the remaining High Captains. Just as the Crown of Lyonsmark had planned, the clergy of Mannanu soon became the de-facto rulers of Rel-Draxa.

What was disguised as deference to Rel-Draxa's importance to trade and its position within the world, the populace of Rel-Draxa was offered a chance to form its own nobility and from that, a monarchy that would rule the city justly. Lost in their dreams of grandeur, the people of Rel-Draxa gave very little attention to the



## THE MARINER-QUEEN OF REL-DRAXA

Those who are closest to the queen say little about her, or about the events that led to her coronation five years ago. What is known is that Jiannabeth I saved the city of Rel-Draxa from the hellish pirate Fell-Captain Skaarvos. In exchange for his soul, Skaarvos – already feared for his depravity as a dread pirate warrior – was gifted with unearthly power to further the causes of his demonic master, Dagon. The greatest and most terrible of these gifts was a tarnished bronze bell that Dagon himself stole from Mannanu the sea god, perverting the artifact to serve the demon lord's own sinister purposes.

Reveling in his dark gifts, the Skaarvos began a dark war by attacking other pirates and offering them a choice between servitude or death. In time, he had gathered a vast armada of cutthroats and sea-reavers from across the world, promising them the spoils from a thousand sacked cities. Though they knew little of the dark pacts he had brokered, the men and women who followed Fell-Captain Skaarvos soon dubbed him the 'Kraken' and some came to worship him as a demigod of the sea.

Jianna the Hawk, a half-elf pirate queen of the Trackless Isles had thrown in her lot with Fell-Captain Skaarvos, despite having found his appetites for wanton evil abhorrent. Soon after joining him, she had discovered the secret behind the Fell-Captain's dark power and where his destiny was to lead him. With horror, Jianna realized that the Fell-Captain intended to sail into the Eye of Chaos and wrest the sunken throne of Thos from Dagon himself; his crews were then doomed to serve him eternally in torturous undeath. Not wishing to serve a monster as a soulless thrall, Jianna spread word to her most trusted pirates, who were equally appalled at the insanity of Skaarvos' ultimate plans for eternal damnation. Jianna and those loyal to her could only bide their time as the Kraken Armada grew, watching in disgust as Fell-Captain Skaarvos and those closest to him slipped further and further into depravity with each successive pirate raid. Quietly and carefully, Jianna and her lieutenants spread the word of Skaarvos' plan and on the morning of Rel-Draxa's impending invasion, Jianna *put her own plan* into action.

From the deck of his flagship, Fell-Captain Skaarvos conjured a hellish storm with the power of Dagon's Bell. Using the storm-front to fill their sails, the Kraken Armada sailed towards Rel-Draxa and certain victory. As the storm threatened to overtake them, Jianna gave a signal and the other ships peeled away, now at the mercy of the storm-dark sea. Alone, the Kraken was now vulnerable to the trebuchets bristling on Rel-Draxa's sea wall. As the skies turned black over the city, the trebuchets fired, smashing iron balls into the Kraken's ship. With his ship holed beneath the waterline and the demonic power of Dagon's Bell spent, the Fell-Captain knew he had been defeated. At the top of his voice, the Fell-Captain Skaarvos vowed revenge. Grabbing the wheel, Skaarvos brought his ship about and sailed headlong into the storm he had created. He was never seen again.

Jianna the Hawk and her loyal pirates were given sanctuary within the city they had intended to sack. But this was no time for victory; the eldritch storm battered Rel-Draxa for three days, before blowing itself out. Afterwards, they assisted in repairs to the city, throwing themselves into the hard toil as penance for their crimes. At a ceremony held afterwards, Jianna the Hawk and her 'freebooters' were given freedom of the city.

Some said that Jianna the Hawk had beseeched the Temple of Mannanu for aid prior to the battle, whilst others said that Jianna had been a paladin of Mannanu excommunicated from the temple, whose quest for atonement culminated in saving the city. Whatever the reason, Jianna the Hawk was welcomed within and soon after, found herself its reluctant queen and protector.

fact that many of those nominated for elevation into 'nobility' were either secret loyalists of Lyonsmark or to the merchant families in Westavalon. As caretakers, the clergy of Mannanu would continue to select a successor upon the abdication or death of the current monarch.

After the coronation of the first Mariner-Monarch, ties between Rel-Draxa and Lyonsmark became quite close. Indeed, the crown gifted a retinue of warrior-nobles that would serve as the first Knights-Mariner, whose paladins still protect the interests and the ruler of Rel-Draxa to this day. Despite the duplicity of Lyonsmark that resulted in the manipulation of the clergy of Mannanu and the people of Rel-Draxa, their actions have strengthened the city's commerce and power to what it is today.

## REL-DRAXA TODAY

Rel-Draxa is ruled by the Mariner-Queen Jiannabeth I. Her coronation five years ago marks a dramatic return to the Rel-Draxa of old. Jiannabeth I is in actual fact Jianna the Hawk, a half elf and known outlaw pirate. Jianna has featured prominently in Rel-Draxa's recent history; saving the city from destruction at the hands of Fell-Captain Skaarvos. As Queen, her first order was to give a royal pardon to pirates and freebooters formerly affiliated with her, and to open up trade negotiations with races previously considered too dangerous to approach.

Now, all manner of races along with pirates, cutthroats and smugglers now call Rel-Draxa home. Added to this, Rel-Draxa is now the home of the largest privateer navy in the world; captained by the former pirates the Mariner-Queen pardoned. Outraged at these events, the Crown of Lyonsmark has dispatched agents to Rel-Draxa in hopes of discovering how and why an outsider (and an outlaw pirate for that matter) has attained the mandate to rule the city.

Despite her calm exterior and lengthy moments of what appear to be quiet contemplation, the new Mariner-Queen struggles with upholding the precepts of Mannanu's teachings and courtly etiquette. It is common to hear whispers about the Mariner-Queen reverting to piratical vernacular, thinking and action.

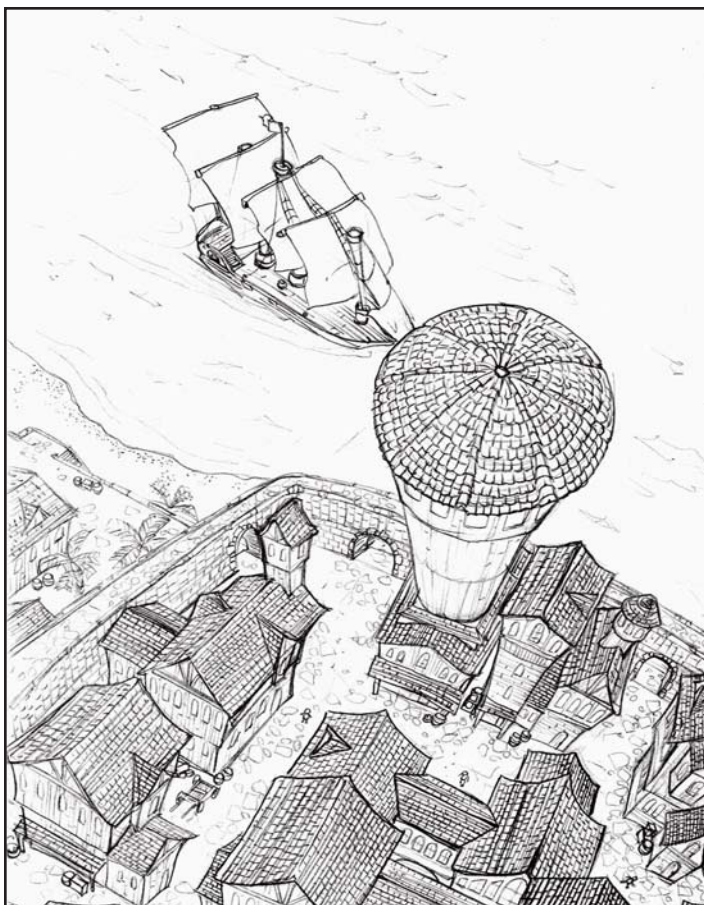
## LIFE IN REL-DRAXA

Rel Draxa is a densely packed city verging on overpopulation. As such, many new buildings have spilled out beyond the city walls and the poorer districts are rapidly expanding out of control. Providing enough infrastructures for this steady influx of people has taxed the city's officials to their limit. Added to this are the new foreigners; races that up until recently were considered too dangerous to trade with. These include the Orcs of Thaaros, the hobgoblin khans of the east and there is even talk that the Mariner-Queen has entertained drow and duergar envoys from the Deepearth realms.

Ever a shrewd businesswoman, Jiannabeth I has reminded everyone that trade relations with the Free City is via invitation only and has demanded that all deep rooted enmities are to *be checked at the city gates*. To indulge in crimes motivated by racial hatred is to go against the word of the Mariner-Queen; at the very least, convicted felons face execution or at worst could see their nations' trade relations revoked which is –to some – a fate worse than death.

Now a visitor to Rel-Draxa will be just as likely to encounter





drow envoys from Deepearth or a minotaur mercenary from the labyrinthine City of Mazes as much as the more 'common' races of elves, dwarves and men.

## LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Rel-Draxa sports an intricate system of laws governing trade, facilitated by a large body of officials, enforced by the City Guard and headed by the Governor of Rel-Draxa; who sees to the day-to-day running of the city. Despite its moniker as the 'Free City' Rel-Draxa's laws border on the draconian and are governed by a set of passes and licenses covering everything from accessing various parts of the city to being able to buy and sell only on certain days. Provided that a trader, merchant or vendor has the appropriate license(s) to do so, he or she may trade almost anything of value within the city walls.

However, both the officials and the city guard are overworked in the day-to-day implementation and enforcement of laws; trade and otherwise, leaving some sections of the city without consistent infrastructure or even regular patrols. This issue has paved the way for corruption; a practice that extends all the way to the Governor himself. Once again, Rel-Draxa's adage of 'You can buy anything if the price is right' rings very true for anyone caught red-handed or seeking to circumnavigate the city's laws. Were anyone to spend time going through the city's countless ledgers, they could find a vast library of writs, authorizing traders to sell goods ranging from the mundane right up to the bizarre. Of particular note is an entry made more than five hundred years ago regarding

## RELICS FROM AN ANCIENT EMPIRE

When the aquatic elf empire of Que'eltalos was destroyed in a volcanic explosion that followed a devastating invasion, parts of its ruinous expanse were thrust out of the seas, to forever bleach in the sun. For ten millennia, these ruins lay half buried in muddy silt, having served for a time as the lair to an ancient black dragon and in later centuries, an enclave of scholars seeking to discover the knowledge of the lost aquatic elf empire. These ruins are still visible in Rel-Draxa today; the Seaspire, the amphitheater in the blinds and the Temple of Mannanu are among Rel-Draxa's famous and prominent pieces of elvish architecture, which makes the surrounding buildings almost crude by comparison.

the Pact Merchant; a trader that offered various magical items and services, but was supposedly only payable with the souls of the living.

The Knights-Mariner are the true guardians of the city; easily recognizable by their intricately-wrought armor and their ocean-blue cloaks. Their mandate is to protect both the ruler and the interests of the city first and foremost. Even though the Knights-Mariner have a background steeped in social class and elitism, anyone may apply to the Temple of Mannanu as an aspirant. The order itself has direct ties with the Temple of Mannanu and as such, clerics and paladins are counted as common members of the organization. However, many races from all walks of life can be found serving within the knighthood. In fact, several prominent citizens and some merchants hold title as Knights-Mariner; these people are charged with the defense of the city and its ruler during times of war as much as their full-time brothers and sisters.

All Knights-Mariner are addressed using the prefix of 'Sair (an abbreviation for Corsair); an honorific that always appears before the Knight's name.

## CITY GEOGRAPHY

Rel-Draxa has been ill-equipped to deal with its exponential expansion. The city itself is loosely organized into a number of districts, but as its poor design shows, these districts segue into each other, creating a hodgepodge of commercial, industrial and residential areas. The older, more affluent areas of Rel-Draxa have better delineation in the form of the old city walls, however this presents its own problems; pedestrian, animal and wheeled traffic tend to slow dramatically at the old gateways, making access to other areas of the city a nightmarish proposal.

## EARTH'S END

When people think of Rel-Draxa, it is Earth's End that first springs to mind; a fancy enforced by the fact that the district of Earth's End is the first thing that most people see upon arriving by ship. The district of Earth's End is a ribald section of docks that are reminiscent of any seedy port found anywhere in the world. It is filled with countless taverns, inns, whorehouses, opiate dens and establishments offering every other sort of illicit vice. The southern section of Earth's End (near Earth's End Wharf) is a popular destination for the rich that desire to 'slum' it. In catering for this clientele, the establishments found here are relatively tame in the vices they offer.

Those that are more adventuresome travel to the northern end of the district; there, the vices on offer are more discerning (and





in some cases quite dangerous). Other than changing the watch at the lighthouse, the City Guard rarely patrol the northern sections, making it a haven for criminals and other ne'er-do-wells. Visitors to the northern spur of Rel-Draxa are advised to be on their guard as crimp mobs look to pressgang the unwary using any means at their disposal.

## EASTERN DISTRICT

The Eastern District is an extension of the Merchant District to the northwest. The Eastern District encapsulates one of the largest areas in Rel-Draxa and is one of the relatively newer areas built to cater for the city's increased trade and growing population. For those that call the Eastern District home, many of these residents live in houses above shops or in tenements closer to the city's east wall.

A number of piers and jetties stand either side of the southern point of the eastern wall where laborers perform backbreaking work unloading barges. They transfer these goods and produce onto wagons destined for the various market squares dotted about the district. In the north, on the border between the Eastern District and the area known as The Coins, are Rel-Draxa's forges, an area populated by all manner of races inured to the heat and hard work of smithing.

Of particular note is the **Centaur and Cauchemar Inn**, located

by the Keening Bridge. The Centaur and Cauchemar Inn is rumored to be the first permanent structure ever built in Rel-Draxa and is a popular haven for laborers, merchants, travelers and adventurers. The Centaur and Cauchemar Inn is easily recognized by its wood-carved sign, depicting a visibly amorous centaur ambushing a coal-black horse with flaming hooves.

## MERCHANT DISTRICT

One of the more wealthy areas of Rel-Draxa, the Merchant District is controlled by some of the most powerful and influential merchants in the world. The Merchant District conducts almost all of Rel-Draxa's international trade making it possible to buy all manner of goods; ebonsilk gowns from Deepearth, thunderglaives from Thorfane or even clockwork automata from as far east as Ojin are just some of the rare goods that may be found here.

At the very western tip of the district is the **Seaspire**; the north lighthouse marking the entrance to the Dragon's Maw and the official chapter-house of the Knights-Mariner. The Seaspire commands a breathtaking view of Rel-Draxa and the surrounding area; a perfect choice for the lawful knights of the Sea God, Mannanu. The Merchant District is also the location of the Court of Skulls, where punishment for crimes is meted out with harsh justice.



## OLD REL-DRAXA

As the name suggests, Old Rel-Draxa encompasses the original borders of Drake-Town. Parts of Drake-Town may still be seen today; the Governor's Mansion was once home to the first High Captain and the stone buildings that make up the Guilder Offices were once used as plunder storage from early piratical raids. The entire district is centered on a grove of ancient strangler fig trees known as the Garden Isle. The trees of Garden Isle are a haven for various species of megabats. At night, these giant bats fly from their cavern roosts along the bluffs to the south near the old sea fort, winging over the city to feed and cavort with each other in and above the trees of Garden Isle. These megabats are sometimes confused for dire bats or worse; a mistake common for newcomers to make. That said, the superstitious still make the sign of protection and mutter prayers when the bats are spotted in the night sky.

Surrounding the Garden Isle are the more opulent townhouses belonging to a number of wealthy families and nobles who maintain larger estates elsewhere. These nobles pay regular court to Jiannabeth I in her palace at the east end of Old Rel-Draxa. In some circles, it is said that these older families pay mere lip service to the Mariner Queen; their true loyalties lie with the Crown of Lyon-smark.

## OUTER DISTRICT

The Outer District denotes the aptly named swathe of new houses and businesses that have emerged in the last 30 years. These buildings currently reside beyond the protection of the city walls, but the people who live and work there seem to care little of this fact. Businesses range from goods and services (smithies, carpenters, wainwrights, livery stables, teamsters) to lodgings and hospitality, (coaching inns, roadside taverns and even a bordello) which stand alongside the homes of the locals who run these establishments. Indeed, the Outer District has prospered; capitalizing on merchant traffic arriving in by road and catering to travelers that use the roads leading into and out of the city itself.

## RIVERSIDE DISTRICT

Riverside is the newest district in Rel-Draxa; once part of the Outer District, this section was walled not long before the Jiannabeth I came to power. Now, Riverside is home to many of the ex-pirates that now make up Rel-Draxa's Freebooter Armada. Deep-sea fishermen that brave the treacherous seas beyond the Bay of Drakes also call Riverside home.

Most of the craft that dock here are fishing vessels and smaller barges that ply their trade upriver. Further upstream is Lake Drachmere; a large body of fresh water, fed by a number of tributaries, including the source of the Rel River. Various settlements dot the riverside and the lake itself.

## TEMPLE DISTRICT

Built from the ruins of Que'eltalos, the **Temple of Mannanu** is an elegant edifice that stretches high above the grubby city walls. Appointed caretakers, the priests of Mannanu hold regular services and distribute alms to the needy; which has done little to alleviate the growing numbers of the poor and destitute that now throng in the Dens and the Blinds. Although the church of the Sea-God is the dominant religion Rel-Draxa, the city's religious laws condone the veneration of the entire pantheon. Whilst this has left Rel-Draxa open to a variety of religions that condone evil, it is still

against the law to conduct or execute evil practices within the city walls.

Casual observation will reveal many discreet places of worship throughout the entire city; ranging from private chapels, small prayer-houses right down to simple alcoves set at the end of alleys. Because of their vast numbers, these small places of worship are not all known and thereby sanctioned by the city's laws. As such

## USING REL-DRAXA IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Rel-Draxa is the focal point of the **Adventure, Dungeons & Danger** game module *WG1: Temple of the Kraken*. Even if you do not have or intend to purchase the module, there is enough information provided herein to adequately run Rel-Draxa as part of any campaign. To accommodate this, Rel-Draxa is painted with broad strokes so that the Gamesmaster can flesh out any areas of interest. In addition, a blank copy of the map is included, to give Gamesmasters the opportunity to build a city from the ground up. In developing Rel-Draxa, I wanted a port-city with a seedy past and a tumultuous future; given the political powers that struggle to control it. However as far as fantasy cities go, Rel-Draxa is a standard hub of commerce, travel and trade. To make Rel-Draxa truly unique, Gamesmasters may want to consider these campaign ideas:

### AT THE EDGE OF CHAOS

Rel-Draxa is a hub city that sits somewhere in a vast archipelago of realities adrift in the stormy planar seas of the Maelstrom. The reality that Rel-Draxa sits upon is known for its stability; making it an idea stopover for races of all description. However, many races and nations also eye Rel-Draxa enviously as their own realities crumble about them...

### THE SEAS OF SAND AND FIRE

Rel-Draxa sits upon an island of rock; the shelter provided by Drakgaard Bay does little to shut out the howling sandstorms that perpetually lash the vast deserts where once great oceans sat. But that was long ago; now the world is a sea of sand and fire; arid wastelands and volcanoes belching clouds of pyroclastic ash are all that remains. Despite these end-times, the Bay of Drakes is still busy; sandskiffs have replaced ships more than a thousand years ago and are the vessel of choice for water merchants and land-reavers alike. Still wreathed in the robes of the dead god Mannanu, the dwindling Mariner Guard upholds ancient traditions of the Knights-Mariner; protecting the muddy sand of the River Rel so that its lifeblood can sustain civilization for a little longer...

### HERE, THERE BE MONSTERS

Built upon the ruins of an unknown civilization, is the city of Rel-Draxa; trading port and gateway to the jungle hells of Tchtchulka. Rel-Draxa is a vast melting pot for many nations who have laid stake in the new world, eager to exploit the land for its riches and secrets. But the secrets of the jungles are best left alone, some folk say; who shiver despite the heat of the night. The smell of their fear drifts high above them where dark wings soar on warm thermals. As a flickering thunderhead drifts across the moon, these dark bat-like shapes dive silently down, alighting in the shadows of an alley. There they wait, ready to strike...

## DESIGNER'S NOTES: THE CAMPAIGN WORLD

Rel-Draxa is situated upon the western coastline of a large continent; being part of the *World of Llandover™*. Throughout this product, you will see references to names, places and events that refer to parts of this campaign world that will be detailed further in future books, or can either be used as a basis for a campaign of your own devising. These points of reference within the *World of Llandover™* are designed to be analogous to other campaign worlds, making it much easier for the Gamesmaster to fit in adventures and set pieces with a minimum of work.

NAME	PRONUNCIATION
Al-Qamaj	ahl-KAM-marge
Llandover	lye-arn-DOH-ver
Lyonsmark	LYE-ons-mark
Medea	MEDH-ee-yah
Ojin	oh-JINN
Que'eltalos	KEY-el-tall-loss
Rel-Draxa	rehl-DRAX-uh
Tchtchulka	tutkh-chull-KAH
Thorfane	thaw-FAYN
Uluethe	YULE-oo-eeth
Veliskeim	vehl-HISS-sky-M
Westavalon	west-av-AH-lon
Xhinya	zin-YAH

--Andrew C. Gale

they are sometimes fronts for less-savory religions or disguise something else entirely.

## THE BLINDS

Almost half of Rel-Draxa's population lives in the Blinds and the Dens; a startling revelation given the size of Rel-Draxa itself. Set aside as a residential area, the city officials now curse this district for the logistical, financial and moral problems it brings to Rel-Draxa. The houses and tenements here are packed close together to maximize the living space of such a vast population: Forming towering, urban cliffs and canyons. Taking its name from the many blind alleys within this labyrinthine district, the Blinds is home to many mariners and their families. Given the closeness of the buildings, it is impossible to take a wagon through the Blinds, much less navigate easily on foot. As such, the City Guard and the Knights-Mariner find policing this area next to impracticable. As a trading city, Rel-Draxa is home to many traders and marketplaces and the Blinds are no exception to this. Given the limited presence of the law however, the Blinds are also home to trade and markets of varying legalities, right down to the outlawed. Situated in a collection of permanently moored residential hulks known as the Sargasso, the 'blacker' markets are almost right under the noses of the lawful Knights-Mariner. Whilst not the true site for these clandestine markets (which occur in a number of locations around the city), the Sargasso is where most transactions are carried out.

On the western edge of the Blinds is an ancient amphitheater, also belonging to the times of Que'eltalos. Over the years, a variety of events have been held in these ruins; ranging from the ceremony recognizing Rel-Draxa as a lawful city state; the plays of Hevaard the great bard; and even gladiatorial bouts. As the Blinds fell into overpopulation, the amphitheater slowly slipped out of

the control of Mannanu's clergy. Now known unofficially as the 'Beast Pits'; where prize fights are organized on a regular basis, the amphitheater is popular with those who seek to air their grievances with the known, the unknown, or just to make a few coins. Of late, rumors have circulated that the Beast Pits have begun pitting the brave and foolhardy against a variety of dangerous creatures; dire animals, monstrous humanoids and in one case; a summoned demon.

## THE COINS

Arguably the most powerful district in Rel-Draxa is the Coins. As the name suggests, the Coins control the vast sums of money that passes through Rel-Draxa. Most of this business is conducted around the hub, where Rel-Draxa's Exchequer keeps his vault and offices. A number of other independent money lenders conduct business in this district; loaning and exchanging currencies from nations across the world. These lenders have varying backgrounds; ranging from the courteous and diligent - who conduct their trade in and around the Hub; to the more predatory lenders; located in the northern section of the Coins. These lenders get their finances from a variety of sources in and around Rel-Draxa, not all of them legal. Rumors abound that the north section of the Coins is a haven for organized crime, often working with or directly connected to the crimp gangs of Earth's End. Falling victim to a press-gang in Rel-Draxa is often the fate for those who default on lenders.

The Coins continues as far south as the lower section of Flagstaff Road; encompassing the three walled mansions as part of this district. These mansions were once the homes to three prominent families in Rel-Draxa, now they are occupied by the 'Admiralty' of Rel-Draxa's Freebooter Armada.

## THE DENS

The Dens stretch to the south of Rel-Draxa as an extension of The Blinds. The Dens are just as they appear; wooden, huts, shacks, and lean-tos reminiscent of any poor city district. These dwellings range from being simple yet inviting lodgings to downright filthy hovels. Like the Blinds, the Dens hold a dense percentage of Rel-Draxa's population, taxing the resources of the city and the Temple of Mannanu in dealing with the abundant poverty that abounds here. The Dens are home to a wide spectrum of Rel-Draxans, ranging from able-bodied foreigners that work on the docks as laborers for meager pay, to cripples, beggars and opiate addicts. Whilst opportunistic, these people fight bravely to protect what is theirs - and what they believe to be theirs. As such, a number of organized crime syndicates use the Dens as a means to procure 'workers' for their own nefarious ends, including press-gangs, brute thuggery and prostitution.

Seeing this growing lawlessness, the acolytes from the Temple of Mannanu work among the Dens: Aiding the crippled, sick and dying as best they can. They also provide a basic education to children and others who seek it. However with the rate at which the Dens' population is growing, these beleaguered priests and priestesses can do little to raise the standard of living.

## THE DOCKS

Also known as Port Draxa, the docks were built soon after Drake-Town adopted legitimate trade with its neighbors. Like most of the overcrowded docks, jetties and piers that ring the Bay of



Drakes, the docks are a bustling area filled with countless ships and other craft from across the world; sturdy galleons of Lyonsmark, longboats from Veliskeim; polyreme war-galleys from the Medea Sea; elegant dhows from Uluethe, large baghlahs from Al-Qamaj and even junks from Xhinya and Ojin to name just a few. Getting a berth in Rel-Draxa is something of a luxury these days; the many ships and boats that stop in Rel-Draxa are constantly vying for a space to moor. Given these harsh realities, captains drive their crews hard, eager to be in and away with a minimum of fuss.

This undercurrent of urgency simmers throughout the docks day and night, making the waterfront a hive of chaotic activity: Laborers, hired hands, merchants, mariners, traders, tradesmen and travelers from all corners of the globe jostle with each other and occasionally tempers flare, sometimes with disastrous results. More often than not, these incidents quickly die away: Backed by the City Guard and the might of the Knights-Mariner, Rel-Draxa's appointed officials ensure that despite being chaotic, the docks maintain steady productivity. The merchants too, have a vested interest in the docks running smoothly; a situation enforced by detachments of able-bodied guards. Given the varied backgrounds of the guards employed in – only what can be called “private armies”, they can sometimes cause as much trouble as they attempt to resolve.

## WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Situated on the south side of the bay, the Warehouse District is a slim area between the Bay of Drakes and the south city walls, nestled between Earth's End and The Blinds. Fed by a fleet of barges that operate right in and around the bay, the Warehouse District is home to the vast amount of imported goods, produce and livestock from across the world. The warehouses themselves were once tenements, but given its proximity to Earth's End, they were a haven for crime. Aided by the Knights-Mariner, the City Guard cleansed these tenements, putting many building to the torch.

Soon after the fires had burnt themselves out, tradesmen and laborers were called in, knocking out inner walls, filling doorways and windows with bricks, and setting great reinforced wooden doors into these dilapidated stone shells. In time, every building had been converted into warehousing. This rapid construction was supposed to continue; the tenements of the Blinds were also to be knocked down to make way for a newer dockland area; however a number of riots soon put a halt to construction. With the coming of the Kraken Armada, the project was soon forgotten altogether. Now, the existing docks suffer for this failure; captains curse the slow barges that delay sailing; the merchants curse the distance they must travel in order to inspect wares and the City Guard curse the dross and filth that still use this district; either looking for a place to sleep off a hangover or to steal something to feed their opiate habit.

The Warehouse District is almost as busy as the docks; the barges here run too and fro almost constantly regardless of the hour. Lately, increased foot and wagon traffic has almost brought travel on the roads ringing the city to a standstill; it seems that impatient merchants and captains have taken to hiring road trains and even in some cases, runners to ferry their goods around the city rather than through it. Ironically, this method of shipping goods has been somewhat quicker, despite the toll it has taken upon tempers throughout the city. At the edge of this district is a market square, known for its cheapest and freshest foodstuffs and

is a popular location for many who seek to eat healthily. A vast majority of the laborers that work here and in the warehouses themselves live in the Blinds, eager to earn cash to feed their families. Quite often, these laborers will take payment in food instead of hard cash.

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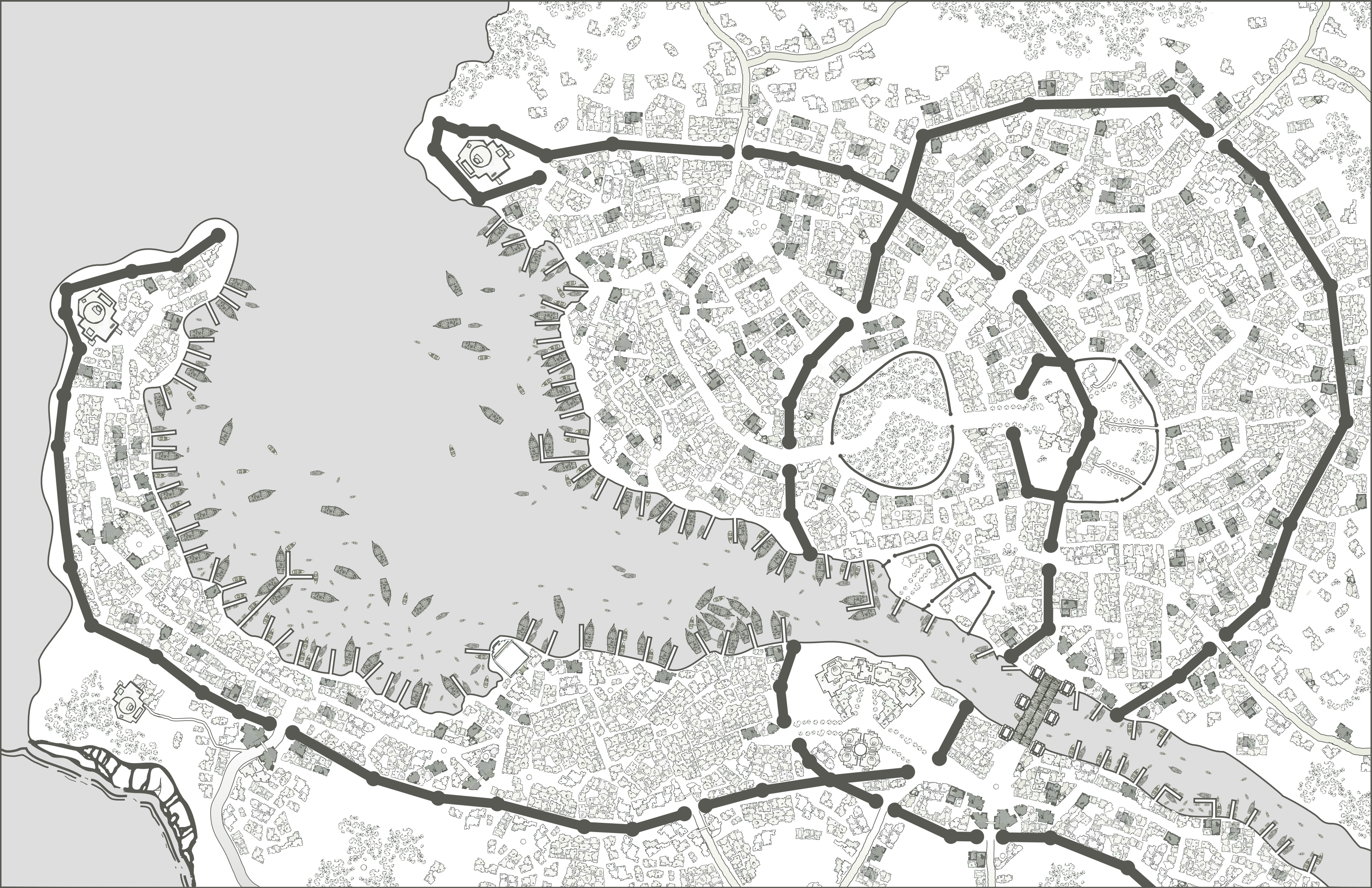
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# Adventure, Dungeons & Danger™

Gazetteer

## REL-DRAXA

by Andrew C. Gale

Welcome adventurers, to mighty Rel-Draxa! Standing proudly upon the western shore, she is the most powerful city in the region and arguably the world.

For almost a thousand years, Rel-Draxa has been a beacon for those seeking to make a profit among the city's ruthless merchants and nefarious dealmakers. Trading within the walls of Rel-Draxa is not for the faint hearted, however. Only the most courageous or foolhardy will emerge from such deals unscathed.

Despite this, merchant vessels from across the world jostle for the opportunity to offload their cargo and be away with their fortunes upon the rising tide. Under the watchful eyes of the Knights-Mariner and the Freebooter Armada, sly traders hawk these wares to those that can afford them. From the shadows of the ancient ruins dotting the city, vagabonds watch nobles carouse in Rel-Draxa's many taverns. These ruins harbor their own secrets, which only the bravest would dare to discover.

From her humble beginnings as a buccaneer's lair, to the uneasy rule of the new pirate queen, Rel-Draxa has opened its gates to all races and buckled the political contours of this great land.

It is said that powerful eyes now watch this dark city with envy; Rel-Draxa is indeed a fruit ripe for the picking...

Rel-Draxa is a game accessory compatible with all levels of play, containing two 11" x 17" maps of the city. Accompanying this is a gazetteer detailing Rel-Draxa's history, laws and the city's geography, making Rel-Draxa easy to place within any campaign setting.

