

Tales *of the* Reaching Moon

Issue 13



Go West!

History of Malkionism

The Great Crusades

Sects secrets of the West

Scenarios by Michael O'Brien, and More!



Go West!

Greetings! This issue takes on a decidedly western flavour with details of the major western religions and cultures, and their chequered history. Much of this has been discovered through the How the West was One freeform which was run at Convulsion '94 and RQ-Con '95. We have tried to present a more accessible, playable and light-hearted view of the west than the limited (and often rather stale) information that has been presented to date.

Unfortunately, pressures of work and other projects have delayed this issue, and are likely to delay the next. However, with any luck, by 1996 we should be back on course.

Hot Goss

Chaosium have now released Greg Staffords latest interim work called The Fortunate Succession, which is a re-working of the Book of Emperors sold at Convulsion '94. It is only available through Wizards Attic. Work is still in progress on the Heroes of the King collection of Gloranthan fiction.

At Avalon Hill Joseph Scott has now departed, and so far there is no successor in sight. I also hear that Stephen Langmead, who did the cover of Lords of Terror, has also left. Even so, the release of RuneQuest: Adventures in Glorantha (or RQ4) is still on the cards, though its status seems to change with the seasons. Rumours are that it will be a generic supplement, with an Introduction to Glorantha book planned as a companion volume. The other major item in the works is Soldiers of the Red Moon, which has expanded into two books; one on the Lunar Army, and the other a campaign based in the Sambari tribal lands of Sartar.

All Change at the Digest

After much stalwart work Henk Langeveld has handed over the reins of the RuneQuest Digest to Loren Miller. The digest is now split up into two, the Gloranthan Digest and a Rules Digest. To get subscription details of these and other mailing lists send electronic mail to Loren at Majordomo@hops.wharton.upenn.edu with "help" in the body of the message.

Megacorp News

Wyrms Footprints is out! If our fiendish plans have come to fruition then this should be available right now! You can purchase copies direct from me for a bargain basement price of £8.99 plus 50p UK postage (£0.95 postage for Europe and £2.85 for elsewhere). We may have taken years to produce this, but we reckon this shows in the quality of the product!

Issue #14 is still planned as a Prax and the Wastes special issue, with issue #15 a Lunar special. MOB is also slowly, but steadily, working on the Best of Tales reprints.

Convention Crazy

Convivium '95, Nottingham, 1st-3rd September. This is a freeform convention at which we will be hosting Cruel Hoax Cafe Casablanca game. If you want to get another freeforming fix, or learn what freeforming is all about, then this is the perfect opportunity. No prior knowledge of freeforming or the background is required. See the enclosed flyer or contact Kevin Jacklin at 4 Lee Court, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3SY.

Convulsion 3D is back in 1996! Having finally recovered from the last one we've foolishly decided to do it all over again. The date for your diaries is 19th to 21st July 1996, and the place is Stamford Hall at Leicester University. Our guests of honour will be Greg Stafford, Sandy Petersen and Michael O'Brien. Membership is strictly limited to 250. See the enclosed flyer or contact David Hall at the editorial address for information.

RuneQuest-Con'95 Berlin is being held from 3rd June to 6th June 1995 and is wholeheartedly recommended! Guest of Honour is David Hall (who he?), and such Gloranthan luminaries as Nick Brooke and Dan Barker will also be attendance, as well as a posse of drunken Megacorp hangers-on, and sober German RuneQuest dignitaries. The organisers will be running a bi-lingual "Heroes of Wisdom" freeform set in the Jonstown Lhankor Mhy temple. Guess which faction the English-speaking visitors will be playing? For details contact Ingo Tschinke, Schevemoorer Landstr. 33, 28325 Bremen, Germany.

RuneQuest-Con Down Under, Melbourne, Australia, January 19th-21st 1996. This is the other major RQ event of 1996, and a chance to visit the delights of Australia. The Guest of Honour is Greg Stafford. Mark Morrison, Penny Love and John Hughes will also be there, as well as most of the Megacorp in order to run our Home of the Bold freeform. Like witchetty grub soup, its not something you can afford to miss! Details from MOB at 48 Barcelona Street, Box Hill 3128, Victoria, Australia.

Contraptions is back too. This will be held at the Northampton Moat House from 23rd to 24th August 1996. Guest of Honour is Steve Jackson. Membership cost is £22 before Easter '95 and £25 after. Contact: Contraptions, 3 Bramley Court, 43 Meath Green Lane, Horley, RH6 8EE.

Apologies

There were a couple of omissions from issue #12 that need to be rectified. Firstly, the Granite Phalanx article was written by Chris Gidlow. Secondly, the front cover picture by Dan Barker depicts a battlefield conference between the Red Emperor and Fazzur Wieread.

Lastly, due to space constraints weve had to put back John Hughes Questlines column for one issue.

Contributions: Contributions are gratefully received, especially artwork. Write to the editorial address enclosing an SSAE or International Reply Coupon for our writers guidelines. All written contributions should be double spaced and typed. Contributions on floppy disc will be given preferential treatment! We can accept discs in various formats - write for details. With artwork contributions please don't send originals by normal post, good photocopies are preferred. As ever, the generous reward for publication is a FREE copy of the issue!





In the next half-century, the Hrestoli Church established itself in the Kingdom of Seshneg. A revisionist movement called



the True Hrestol Way was predominant; angered by Seshna's treatment of their founder, they condemned the corrupting pagan ways of the Serpent Kings, whose temple-tombs were sealed over.

THE SILVER EMPIRE was founded when the new Kings of Seshnela extended their power beyond the safety of Queen Seshna's borders. The peoples expanded towards the darkened land of Ralios, driving away or converting the savages who lurked there. Inland, they settled Tanisor (the rich valley of the Tanier River), and Safelster (the fertile coast around Felster Lake). Overseas, the Empire included all of the Fronelan coastline and Akem, and planted the first colonies in Jrustela. The unity of the empire ended when a naval assault on Brithos was crushed. The newly-free kingdoms of Tanisor and Safelster went their separate ways, and the unity of the West was lost.

The Deceiver, Arkat and the Dark Empire

RALIOS is the highland region surrounding Safelster, a haunt of savages and monsters of all kinds. Beyond Ralios lie lands where the truth of the Creator had never held sway. And from these lands there now came false missionaries, who claimed that a Living God in the land of Peloria could bring a truer unity with the Creator. This "god" was called Nysalor by his followers, but we know him as the Deceiver, an agent of the Devil. He was in truth no god but a mortal, as events were to demonstrate.

THE DECEIVER inspired the uttermost depths of evil in his followers. When a great plague broke out in Tanisor and spread into Seshnela and Arolanit, his missionaries proved miraculously able to heal its victims, and so won acceptance among those peoples. But Brithini sorcerers discovered that the cult had actually spread the plague in the first place. Such treachery earned Nysalor the new name of Gbaji, the Deceiver. Despite this, the king of Tanisor was seduced into his worship, and sent his armies to conquer Arolanit for the glory of the Living God. An army was sent from Brithos to drive them forth.

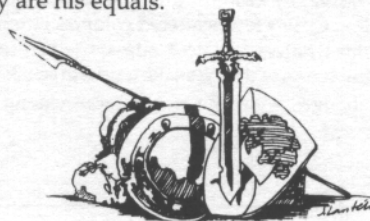
ARKAT was a soldier in that army. His noble spirit refused to be confined by the stultifying Brithini way. When his fellows suffered defeat, he recognised that the Old Ways of Brithos would be unable to succeed against this new foe. He renounced their restrictions to embrace the higher truths of Malkionism. Through his fanati-

cal dedication, Arkat rose to become a perfect Knight of Hrestol, and led the forces of Seshnela in a grand crusade against the Kingdom of Tanisor.

THE CRUSADE AGAINST CHAOS were a terrible and wasteful conflict, lasting whole generations and claiming many thousands of lives and souls. The most terrible thing was that the followers of the Deceiver lost touch with their common humanity, and became warped creatures, vile in soul and body. We call them the *krjalki*. In Tanisor, the King and his Knights became soulless Vampires. In Ralios, the highland tribes were twisted into Werewolves. The longer the struggle lasted, the worse this corruption became. Against these abominable foes, Arkat accepted aid wherever it was offered, and this proved his downfall.

After suffering greatly in the service of the West, Arkat fell from the path of virtue. His obsessive hatred of the Deceiver led him to abandon the Malkioni way, embracing instead the pagan gods of death and destruction. The King of Seshnela banished him; his Wizards excommunicated him from the Church. His war (no longer a Crusade) continued, but few men of the West would follow the man they saw as a traitor. Like those he fought, Arkat is said to have lost his very humanity, becoming a black-hearted Troll. When he returned, claiming victory over the Deceiver, there was no welcome for him in the West.

THE DARK EMPIRE was the state founded by Arkat after his wars were over. Forged from a league of the Safelstran cities he had liberated, this powerful and dangerous country was ruled by Trolls using black magic and evil sorcery. Cruel and ruthless when provoked, it threatened Seshnela for many centuries. The people of Arkat's Dark Empire followed his Stygian Heresy, revering dark gods and arcane secrets. The Stygian heretics do not accept that Arkat fell. They say that after leaving Malkionism he climbed to higher secrets, which he taught his followers. They claim that these secrets allow them to combine the worship of other deities with that of the Invisible God. Though these other gods are usually worshipped as servants of the Creator, some particularly virulent forms of the heresy claim they are his equals.



Jrustela, the Return to Rightness and the God Learners

JRUSTELA was a continent in the Central Oceans of Glorantha, which was first settled in the Dawn Age by Seshnegi colonists. It became a haven for radical sorcerers, traditionalist wizards, banished philosophers and exiled noblemen from all over the West: anyone unwelcome in their homeland could find a new life in the Jrusteli Colonies. Together, these forces formed a powerful new school of thought, which dedicated itself at first to the reunification of Malkioni thought in the wake of the Deceiver's lies and Arkat's defection.

THE RETURN TO RIGHTNESS began as an intellectual movement, born in reaction to the spread of heresy throughout the West. A group of wise and pious scholars collected together all the prophecies attributed to Malkion and Hrestol, searching for their inner meaning. Through the use of pure reason, they stripped away many of the false accretions that had grown around pure doctrine. For their dedication to this task, they are known as the God Learners. Armed with righteous zeal, they launched a great crusade to liberate the other nations of the West from their heretical errors and subjugate their false gods to the One True God.

THE GOD LEARNERS overthrew the Waertagi naval monopoly, using the demonic power of the Firebergs to defeat that sea-born race. Through the pious purity of their faith, they defeated every foe, and in every clime they preached the truth of the One Supreme Invisible God. They liberated the kingdom of Seshnela from its barbaric overlords, and drove out the unrighteous rulers of Loskalm. They destroyed the Stygian Empire, shattering its shadowy cult of Arkat into a thousand splintered forms. On the Dark Continent of Pamaltela they founded cities and built empires. Yet in this greatness lay the roots of their downfall, for in glorying at their success they forgot the simple faith which had brought them power and dominion.

THE MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE stretched across every Ocean, to the farthest Eastern Isles and the uttermost shores of the South. But the insatiable curiosity of the God Learners was never satisfied with the truths they had discovered. They sought ever greater knowledge and power. They transgressed the limits set by piety, and pried into unholy secrets. In seeking to understand all things, they came to comprehend nothing. Some lapsed into deca-

dence or fell into the worship of demons; others commanded that they themselves be worshipped as gods. By the tenth generation, they had completely forgotten the Laws of the Invisible God and his Prophet Malkion which their pious ancestors had rediscovered.

THE DOWNFALL of the God Learners is universally attributed to the Wrath of God. Outraged at the blasphemies committed in His Name, the Invisible God unleashed curses and destruction upon the Jrusteli. Foul demons which they thought they had imprisoned or destroyed were loosed against them; kingdoms were wracked by fire and storm; catastrophes of every kind struck them by land and sea. The proud towers of their cities were cast down; their rule was everywhere overthrown. The oceans devoured first their fleets, then their homeland, as the Waertagi returned to send Jrustela beneath the waves of death.

The ancient land of Seshnela, the heart of their Empire, was shattered by earthquakes then drowned by floods. None of the God Learners survived.

THE CLOSING OF THE OCEANS was the last nail in the coffin of the Middle Sea Empire. Zzabur of Brithos, the Sorcerer Supreme, wrought a great curse that swept the Oceans clear of all shipping. Even the Waertagi lacked the strength to combat this curse. Their city-ships were sunk, wrecked or driven beyond the bounds of this world. Most of them are said to have taken the Death Currents, sailing by their own choice down the great Whirlpool into the Underworld. For more than five centuries, no mariner could successfully brave the ocean waves: the continents were cut off, the islands isolated. Not until the voyages of Dormal the Sailor was this curse driven back.



The Vadeli

The Vadeli are ancient enemies of the Brithini. They are a wholly vile race of sly, devious atheists who cheat, steal and blaspheme, utterly corrupt and beyond all hope of redemption. Unlike the Brithini, they do not even pretend to acknowledge the Laws of Malkion.

There used to be three Vadeli races: Brown, Red, and Blue. In the Ice Age, Zzabur's magic sank their foul lands, wiping out all but a few forlorn Brown Vadeli fishermen on a tiny archipelago.

With the Opening of the Oceans, volcanic islands holding monstrous Red Vadeli warriors have appeared, seemingly from nowhere. Worse still, by cozening Dormal's secrets the Vadeli have become a major naval power. Now the Brown Vadeli unfairly command the sea lanes to Pamaltela, relying on their Red cousins to act as corsairs and drive off competitors. They are grotesquely rich, and can charge extortionate prices for those rare goods of which they are the sole suppliers. Fortunately, the ruling race of Blue Vadeli has been extinct since before the Dawn of Time.

Like the Brithini, the Vadeli are immortal so long as they obey their caste rules — though it is well known that these involve incest, promiscuity, murder, and all manner of unnatural acts. To avoid civil strife, the Vadeli are confined to ghettos in all the Western port cities where their presence must sadly be tolerated.



A CREATION STORY FROM BRITHOS

*This is the official (published) Arolanit view.
The author is anonymous.*

The Invisible God is all things. He is beyond knowing or feeling or Being. He contains all things and will contain them all in the future. He is beyond Life or Entropy.

Within the Invisible God is Existence, and within Existence were conceived the Laws. All things outside the Laws were excluded and cast down, and those things were of Chaos and Entropy.

The Laws created the World through the self application of Wisdom. The experience of Being is of movement through the accumulated Wisdom of the World. By understanding this, and being one with it, we are the Brithini.

The distribution of Existence created a dissolution of Wisdom, and the natural application of divine introspection created Ignorance and beings that thrived upon it.

The spread of Ignorance created a gap in Wisdom, and in that gap some beings wilfully used Ignorance for their own ends, creating the two weapons of Ignorance: pain and injustice. From this was born Death, which changed all things.

One being went further, for although he knew of the Wisdom and walked in it he used the Ignorance of others to manipulate it to hurt itself. This was the birth of Evil and Corruption, and it was made by Vadel.

In the spread of Evil and Corruption many beings turned upon themselves and each other, wallowing in the absence of Law and tearing the fabric of Life. They summoned beings to help them. This was the entry of Chaos into the World.

The natural conflict between Law and Chaos is inevitable, for each is forever rejecting and incapable of understanding the other. The organic contest within the created World brought forth the need for the living beings to understand the Laws to balance the forces of Chaos which threatened it.

Malkion the Prophet was one who could teach others of the Law and the Wisdom. He took the myriad patterns of Existence and showed each person how to consciously find and be his part within it. While the rest of the World ate itself alive, all the beings and parts which he blessed continued in divine perfection. In this way the seeds of truth were preserved during the terrible Ice Ages.

Zzabur the Sorcerer was the greatest of the keepers of Wisdom. He could see the World and sort out its layers, keeping all in mind and out of mind at once. He saw what was and what could be, and he manipulated the subtle Laws to bring back the Wisdom. Thanks to his spell the old World was reborn again. He understood the mechanics of the cosmos and brought back the Sun, which had fallen from the sky.

By Greg Stafford, (From Arkat's Saga, Chapter 1).

Prophecies of the Hero Wars:

Among the Brithini

"Three things for a Hero War: courage, desperation, and free men. Beware the transformation! Destroy the devils of Freedom! The One Law cannot be broken."

The conservative Brithini dread the idea of another war against demigods, and their persistent gloomy prophecies about it serve to combat centuries of ennui. This little chant is so ancient that emissaries from Fronela visited Brithos in 437 to ask if the Empire of the Deceivers marked the start of the Hero Wars. Most modern Hrestoli folk know only the first two lines of the prophesy, which they relish with typical bravado.

The Laws of Malkion

Nearly all Malkioni accept the Laws of Malkion as the keystone of their faith. However, the ease with which these laws can be re-interpreted has led to the many different sects of Malkionism. The laws are summarised below:

The First Law: There is only one God and Malkion is his prophet.

The Second Law: Love that which God has created.

The Third Law: Do not ruin that which you love.
(*This is often interpreted as a proscription against the spell of Tap.*)

The Fourth Law: The second virtue is loyalty: to God, Law, your lord, and your family.

(*Usually valued in that order of importance.*)

Sorcerers and Wizards

Malkioni define a "sorcerer" as any magician who does not limit his magic by moral law. This category includes all non-Malkioni sorcery-users, as well as the Brithini and Vadel, who do not recognize the Malkioni ethical code. Wizards customarily wear white robes, or at least robes with white designs, to indicate that they obey the moral strictures of the Invisible God and are hence honourable and honest. Many non-Malkioni, of course, feel that it is safest simply to mistrust all sorcery-users.

Crusade

by Greg Stafford

Crusade is a special type of religiously-motivated war which gives its participants special magical protection and other combat enhancements, allows zealous endurance, and instils a critical dose of fanatical zeal at the moment of attack and crisis in each battle.

The Kingdom of Seshnela is the home of the Crusade. Crusaders are Carriers of the Cross, an ancient symbol inherited from the mythical Kingdom of Logic, which existed before the gods destroyed the Old World.

Prince Hrestol's initiatory experience was outlined in a secret map which was cross-shaped: from the central Court of Silence he travelled to a test suitable for a member of each social class, then achieved the final challenge at the centre to succeed at the initiation. When he returned, he bore the sword named Justice of the Ages, into whose hilt the + sign was cast.

The + sign became an initiatory secret: a symbol of achieving the salvation symbolised in the public sign of the triangle. Only the ruling noblemen wore it outwardly, usually as an addition to their personal coat of arms. Outsiders usually think that it is strictly a badge of office.

Prince Hrestol discovered the power when his foes, the kings of the hateful Basmoli savages, invoked dark forces with promises to destroy bodies and souls and spirits of the Prince's people. The Crusader's Spirit came to the army of Hrestol when it faced the Cannibal God's Army, and afterwards it left the Scroll of Crusades with instructions on when it can be invoked, and how. The most obvious sign for participants in the Crusade ceremony is to wear a small cross pinned over their hearts.

The immense powers were only rarely used. Frenzied monks and missionaries continually complained before the bishops and lords of Seshnela about the atrocities of pagans and heretics.

We know of no Crusades summoned until the coming of Arkat, who first used it as the biggest surprise in the attack upon the City of Vampires. Arkat was made Grand Marshal of the Seshnelan Crusade against Chaos, a post he maintained far longer than anyone would have expected. During his office he was often accused of abusing invocation of the privilege. After Arkat was excommunicated, a new respect for the power laid its use to rest until invoked in



the eighth century, ironically against the Stygian Heresy founded by Arkat.

The Return of Rightness Crusade was experimental at first – none of the participants were sure the powers of Crusade could be invoked until the Battle of the Chant, where the army's prayer, shouted in unison and backed by the wrath of the Saints, destroyed the great wall of Frowal. To fulfil other obligations of a Crusade (and to attract foreign assistance), the leaders first liberated the holy places from the pagan overlords who occupied the ancient holy cities.

King Trymir, newly installed in the regal post of his ancestors, extended the Crusade to include the reconquest of his kingdom, despite protests by wizards at its misuses. His heirs, urged on by God Learner bishops, extended it to war against neighbours, but with decreasing effectiveness. At Arvinopuel none of the assailants gained the magic, although the entire army was duped into thinking the ceremony had worked. The total loss of the assaulting force gave Crusade invocation a bad name. It was not used in





Shades of Stygian Malkionism

By Mike Dawson

Mabodinarne, Valsatar and Goriant are the three most famous generals to follow Arkat as his sworn men. Aside from a life full of trials and triumphs in service to Arkat, these three heroes are further distinguished by having survived Arkat's campaign in Dorastor. After the apotheosis of Arkat, the generals of the Dark Emperor divided his realm between themselves. Though an appointed emperor still ruled all the realm, great power rested with the remaining companions of Arkat.

Each of these men was the product of his birthplace, and also left his mark indelibly on the provinces they ruled for the Empire. Under their guidance and the guidance of their dynasties, the three regions of Arkat's Empire grew different from each other. The main difference manifested before the coming of the Jrusteli is called the issue of Toleration. For many generations leaders of these three provinces co-operated under succeeding Dark Emperors, but with the attacks of the God Learners, this co-operation was destroyed. Nevertheless, the cultural differences imposed by the Three Generals (as they are known in Ralios) have survived, and are most strongly evident in the Three Shades of Stygian Malkionism.

Mabodinarne came from Tarasdal and was the first of the Three Companions to swear service to Arkat. The son of a bishop, he is remembered in stories as a devoted but friendly man who had many close friends and allies among the Hsunchen and Orlanthi. His realm of influence was originally south-western Safelster, from the borders of Tanisor to Felster Lake, including Kustria, Uron, Sodal Marsh, Azilos, Tiskos, and Dangk. Mabodinarnians are called "Tolerantists," because their beliefs allow for the toleration of pagans, but preclude any direct interaction with what they call the

False Gods. Though they see pagans as deluded and their beliefs inferior, their proselytising is gentle and they do not fear to call pagans their friends or associates.

A Mabodinarnian Tolerantist can be characterised as saying "I don't mind that pagans live in town. I even have some drinking buddies who worship the Felster gods." Even so, like all Henotheists, Mabodinarnian Tolerantists do not tolerate all divine cults. They dislike Eurmali and Chaos cultists as much as anyone else.

Mabodinarnian Tolerantists may not learn spirit magic, use spirit magic matrices, or join any other religion without being censured or excommunicated from the Mabodinarnian branch of the Henotheist church. A common symbol of Tolerantists is a Law rune surrounded by a ring of chain.

Valsatar came from Valantia and was second of the Three Companions. His whole household took up arms to follow Arkat. When Arkat forswore the Hrestoli church in favour of Humakt, Valsatar remained a knight, but many of Valsatar's sons joined the Death God's cult. His realm of influence is north central Safelster and southern Vesmonstran, from the borders of Guhan to the Doskior River, including Lalia, Tinaros, Tortun, Sentanos, Belstos, Surkorion and Otkorion, but most strongly in the upper Tanier River valley.

Valsatarians are called "Permissivists." Their beliefs allow members of their culture to leave Malkion to worship one of the lesser gods, but forbid dual initiations. Valsatarian Permissivists are allowed to learn spirit magic and use spirit magic matrices without penalty. They believe the "Visible Gods" are manifestations of the Creator, and are

worthy of worship, though less worthy than direct Malkionism. Certain people are believed to be less capable of the secret ways of understanding the Creator, and the Visible Gods are considered easier to worship. Taking their symbology from that of the House of Valsatar, Permissivists use three arrows arranged in a triangular outline as their symbol.

Valsatar is revered as a saint in much of his old province, and is remembered as "Peaceteacher." A Valsatarian Permissivist can be characterised as saying "My younger sons may leave the church and join the cult of Humakt. My daughters may join the cult of Ernalda." Participants in lesser religions are all members of the farmer caste, even of their parents were of higher caste. There is no such thing as a pagan knight among the Permissivists.

Goriant claimed Galin as his home and was the last of the Three Generals. Born a pagan Galanini, he was knighted by Arkat. Goriant found secret ways to balance knighthood and Sword status in a ritual aptly called "the Razor Dance." He married a high priestess of Ralia and made her his queen. His realm of influence is south eastern Safelster, from the Estali River valley to the Doskior River and up to the foothills around the Wonderwood, including Galin, Estali, Syran, Drom, and the Helby Lake region. Gorianti are called "Involvisists" because they believe it is right and proper for a Malkioni to participate in the cults of the Visible Gods. They equate the Visible gods with manifestations of the Creator, and see them as useful for reaching union with Solace. To Involvisists, the Visible Gods are on par with Saints, dwelling in Glory with the Creator. Gorianti Involvisists may join any socially acceptable cult while participating as members of the Gorianti Henotheist



Church. "Socially acceptable" cults vary greatly from city to city — Church officials in Galin, a historically Light pantheon place, frown on dual Henotheist/Zorak Zoran cultists!

A pillar of the Gorianti Involvist Church might say "Of course my daughter divides her time between St. Xemela's Sisters of Mercy and the Temple of Ernalda. I am also proud to worship our great city Founder Estal, and the Creator at St. Arkat's."

Goriant has a Hero cult that teaches Spirit and Divine Spell Matrix Enchantment, and Summon Battle Magic Spell Spirit. Some Gorianti Wizards know the otherwise extremely rare Sorcery spell of Summon Battle Magic Spell Spirit. Gorianti often forge Law runes of woven, distinct bands of all the workable metals to show the unity of all things within the Law of the Creator.

Over the hundreds of years since the fall of the Dark Empire, these three broad shades of Stygianism have invariably blurred. In particular, the God Learner purges in Galin and other parts of southern Ralios led to a general diaspora of Gorianti style worshippers into northern Ralios. In the Seventeenth century, many northern churches have a more Involvist bent, while the southern ones remember Gorianti as dangerous darkness worshippers.

Neither have worshippers of these three sects always seen eye to eye. As the tides of political and military power shift across Ralios, different religious leaders became the tools of the power hungry. With conquest came the imposition of foreign priests, bringing new interpretations to old teachings. Thus, as things stand in the mid 1600's, any town or city in Ralios might be home to all three sects of Stygian belief. Sometimes, they might have separate churches within the same town, or even share positions of author-

ity within a single church's structure. Of course, these three divisions are very broad, and only start the examination of variant Malkioni beliefs in Ralios.

Another major spectrum of Stygian philosophy spans the issue of caste. Different Ralian sects and sub-sects follow Hrestol's doctrine of the Joy of the Heart in different degrees. Some Southpoint-inspired Idealists believe in inter-caste mobility. Other sects prefer the Rokari model used in Jonatela and Seshnela. The middle ground lies with the burghers who emphasise equality between castes, while preferring to see individuals remain in their caste of birth. Even without unique doctrinal differences between sects, varying beliefs regarding Arkat's nature, and the level of acceptance of certain "dark" magics, philosophers attempting to rebuild the "true" faith have a difficult job. Opinion on Tolerance and Caste is so widely divergent that reaching compromise and agreement on them is a Hero's task.

A Pelandan Myth from the Rafelios Collection

YarGan and the Sorcerers' Rule

YarGan came to Wendaria upon a great barge rowed by fierce, muscled warriors. They had a fierce god, and no one was prepared for their assault. Whenever they went someplace they were accepted as leaders, and set up terms of tribute.

YarGan was the first god to make his people stay in the same place for the entire year. He was so powerful that people brought him gifts of food every day. Neither he nor his household ever had to work, yet they always had the most delicate and special of foods.

The reason for so many people was because this was where their god lived. It was named Erstor, and called He Gives and Takes. The god lived underground, and sacrifices were taken underground to it. Messengers never saw the god, or else they were eaten. Instead, they heard his voice through cracks in the underground cavern.

People did not like to worship Erstor, but YarGan ordered them to do so, and they dared not resist. YarGan bore the Blue Spear, a magical weapon given to him by his father. It had come from the corner of the sky. With it he could kill people at a distance. Furthermore, he had powerful magic which could make people sick just by looking and pointing in a special way. Normal weapons could not harm him. He was ruthless in justice and plundered his foes mercilessly. His friends were richly rewarded. Betrayal of YarGan, though, earned the most severe and cruel punishment: the Fifth Hell.

YarGan was immortal, just like his master, as long as he wore the adamant crown of Oronin. He had taken this from the body of his royal foe who had dared to resist him. When King Oronin fell dead his blood poisoned the whole of the Oronin Lake and river so that no one took fish from it while

YarGan lived. Thus even in dying the good king struck against his enemy.

During the Primeval Wars the lord YarGan gave refuge to all Logicians who sought it. They lived in cities, and anyone who believed in them came too. Because of this the land was called the Kingdom of Logic, and the people there could perform very evil magic. They could make things change shape so they could not return to their original figure, or become stupid, or darker, or more warm. Since they had no morals except their own personal codes, and since most of them could be allied through flattery and rich presents, they were loved by the king.

Many ordinary people willingly followed YarGan at that time. After all, Heaven itself was unsteady and so no one dared to entrust their fate to the gods. YarGan offered a temporary refuge in troubled times. Ordinary people often chose the expedient solution to survive, and the wise leader knows this. Thus the ordinary people were forgiven when the Bull killed YarGan and drove his people underwater.

Note: Pelandan is the name given to the land surrounding the Oronin river, and beyond. It was the era of early urbanisation, even before the introduction of widespread bronze usage. It equates to the period of the reigns of Anaxial to Ordanestyju.

By Greg Stafford



The Go West! Quiz

(SP: Sandy Petersen, GS: Greg Stafford)

1. Why Go West? Why not just play Pendragon instead?

GS: Although Pendragon is a superlative role-playing product, it is not set in Glorantha. It does not provide for the wide range of Gloranthan choices, but narrowly concentrates upon a single genre. Also, King Arthur never lived in Glorantha.

2. How does the West fit into Glorantha?

SP: The West is the Mind of Glorantha, intellectual, profound, egotistical. The Theists are the Body of Glorantha, with their emphasis on elementals, raw power, and physical sites and relationships. The East is the Spirit of Glorantha.

GS: The West is my Gloranthan version of the Medieval paradigm of mythic reality. It is the root cellar of our modern way of thinking. It is where the mythological flaws and strengths of our Western way of being can be played with.

3. Can you tell me anything about the Kingdom of Logic?

GS: The Kingdom of Logic is a mythical predecessor of the Western culture. It is said to have been all perfectly logical and understandable, and to have made the world that way. When the Evil Ones corrupted the world and introduced non-logical things then they had to adapt to those changes.

4. What role does Arkat play in the West?

SP: He is the Traitor and Liberator. The man who sold his soul to accomplish the impossible. He is the tragic hero of a thousand books, plays and poems. Arkat is the Gloranthan equivalent of Oedipus, Gilgamesh, or Abraham Lincoln, the doomed wonder-worker.

GS: Arkat is generally viewed as a bad guy through the West. In most history and legend he is admitted to have been charismatic, but variously revealed himself to be a traitor and deceiver, infected and cursed by his obsession. Many of the modern problems are traced to Arkat or his minions' activities in the Gbaji Wars or afterwards. As for his role, it is to serve as an example of what NOT to do to be acceptable. Arkat is the one who essentially entered into many peoples' very staid and trustworthy ways and introduced uncertainty. (Only in Ralios are there sects and cults which believe otherwise, and their practices use the story of Arkat to reveal their innermost secrets.)

5. Who is Zzabur? Is he important?

SP: The First Wizard, source of magic. Soulless, calculating, emotionless, deadly. Is he important? No. Is a lion important, even though it can kill you? No.

GS: Zzabur is the archetypal Sorcerer. He is the individual who first systemised the Western Laws and provided a method to use those Laws to manipulate the magical energy. He is still alive on Brithos, and still studying. All sorcery is from him.

6. What is the purpose of Sorcery? Why not use Spirit magic or Divine magic instead?

SP: Huh? What are you talking about? Sorcery is the BEST magic! You may as well ask why we don't ride bison into combat instead of horses.

GS: Sorcery is used because it is "our way." Divine and Spirit magics are corrupt foreign things, problems introduced by Arkat. Sorcery is clean and logical and those others are dirty. Most people who are familiar with Sorcery don't even know about the other methods. RuneQuest readers know much more than any peasant in Glorantha, and we must always strive to remember the ignorance and conservatism of pre-modern people.

7. How is Sorcery supposed to work in Glorantha?

SP: Subtle, complex and difficult to use, but ultimately more powerful and delicate than anything else.

GS: Sorcery is ritual/ceremonial magic. It takes a while to make it work, often a long while, but is capable of performing unusual and extraordinary tasks. It is not combat-oriented. It is a science, but a beginning and crude one.

8. How is Western religion different to religious worship in Dragon Pass?

SP: It is more infused with philosophy, rhetoric and intellectualism. Dragon Pass worship is pretty much fundamentalist in nature. Think of a Dragon Pass person as a charismatic Holy Roller, and a Westerner as a Jesuit.

GS: Western monotheistic religion is similar to any religion in that it attempts to answer the basic questions of life and death. However, because the religion is based upon logic and ritual, rather than upon personal commitment, the priest-mages are as much administratively as energetically aligned to the god.

9. Do Westerners HeroQuest?

SP: Yes. As much as or more than anyone else.

GS: Yes, they do. We know that both Arkat and Snodal did. They exist within a similar type of mythical realm.

10. What is your favourite place to visit in the West?

GS: Old Seshnela is my favourite. It was the first place, and it has seen it all. I think the ruins of Noloswal would be a good place to be for a while. I'd like to see if the ruins of Seshna's cave can still be found.



MAINSTREAM MALKIONI SECTS

Mainstream Malkionism defines the West. These mainstream Malkioni sects have many features in common. Their beliefs are shaped by the Four Malkioni Social Orders, the Three Cornerstones of Malkion's Law, the Two Prophets, and the One God, Creator and Invisible God. All of these sects are monotheistic, accepting only the Invisible God as a deity worthy of worship, and denying all other spiritual entities as False Gods, Demons or Deceivers. All share the same holy scriptures, though each sect will possess other sacred texts unique to itself. While there remain many fundamental differences between the sects, they also have much in common from their shared cultural heritage. Followers of a mainstream Malkioni sect often consider other sects to be steeped in heretical error, reducing their deluded worshippers' chance of entering Solace in Glory.

The Borists

The Borists believe that the Law of Malkion does not apply to chaotic beings, whom they Tap freely. This act is even regarded as a sacred duty.

This heresy was founded during the Chaos Wars. The few remaining Borists are mostly found in central Ralios. Their heresy was never widespread.

The Galvosti

The Galvosti interpret the Law of Malkion to permit the Tapping of non-Malkioni. Also, unlike most Malkioni, the Galvosti believe in the concept of reincarnation.

This sect originated during the last part of the Second Age, when the Galvosti dynasty of Nomia ruled much of Ralios. The kingdom of Nomia was friendly to the God-Learners and when the God-Learners fell, Nomia was also destroyed. In the early Third Age, the remnants of the sect were nearly wiped out by vindictive Orlanthi barbarians. Most of the remaining Galvosti live in Ralios.

The Hrestoli (Idealists)

See the Hrestoli Sect write-up

The Rokari (Realists)

See the Rokari Sect write-up

The Sedalpists

The Sedalpists believe that death is the result of sin, and that anyone causing the death of another human being can never obtain the Malkioni paradise. They do not progress from caste to caste. Their Knight caste is few in numbers, and regarded as unclean. Knights are only allowed to fight nonhumans, such as elves and trolls, at which task they are expert and greatly in demand. Sedalpist cities regretfully keep mercenary forces of unbelievers to fight other humans when need arises.

The sect of Sedalpism originated during the Closing of the seas. During the Closing, many Pamaltelan Malkioni became pagan worshippers of Orlanth and his fellow gods, but a few remained faithful, and found strength in new beliefs.

The Sedalpists are found only in Enkloso and Vralos, where they are fairly important. Their leader is the Patriarch of Nikosdros.

The Valkarists

The Valkarists have successfully converted pagan deities of the East Isles to their faith, turning them into holy saints worthy of veneration by Malkioni. They give true worship only to the God of Gods. Their society has three castes: the Magic Men rule them, supported by Spearmen and Fishers. Mobility between the castes is permitted at the discretion of the rulers. This sect was founded in the Second Age by the wonder-working wizard Valkaro, and is in constant conflict with the malignant Extogallia, demons who dwell beneath the sea.

Valkarism is found only in the East Isles, where the High Sorcerer-Priest dwells on the island of Ambovombe.

The God-Learners (extinct)

The God-Learners emulated the Stygian Heresy in some ways. Like the Stygians, they allied with other gods in their worship, but unlike the Stygians, they did not always treat such gods in a friendly manner. The God-Learners looked on these deities as tools to be enslaved or resources to be exploited. Eventually, the God-Learners began to deal with foul demons, rationalising that the demons were foes, thus worthy candidates for the God-Learners to coerce into obedience or slavery.

All the God-Learners are dead. Much of their secret knowledge was destroyed with them, and so the full extent of their heresy is unknown





STYGIAN MALKIONI

The Stygian Malkioni do not believe that Arkat fell. They say that after leaving Malkionism, he climbed to higher secrets which he taught his followers.

The Stygians combine the worship of ordinary deities with the Invisible God. The exact importance of the Invisible God varies greatly from locale to locale, each claiming to alone retain Arkat's true faith. In some places, Orlanth, Kyger Litor, or other gods are worshipped as saints or servants of the Invisible God. In others, the Invisible God is reduced to the status of "first among equals." In the most degenerate areas, the Invisible God is considered inferior to the region's dominant deity.

These beliefs once dominated most of Ralios and beyond in Arkat's Dark Empire. The Stygians now exist primarily in Ralios. This is the only Malkioni worship of any importance among non-humans — it is widespread among the trolls of Guhan.

SOME IMPORTANT STYGIAN MALKIONI SECTS:

The Aeolians

Aeolians believe in Orlanth, Creator and Invisible God, who created the world with the Great Compromise and with Time. In the Aeolian sect the gods of the Orlanthi pantheon are Saints who can be worshipped alongside mainstream Malkioni Saints.

The sect is only found in central and southern Heortland, and usually co-exists alongside more conventional Orlanthi worship.

Black Arkat

This sect is ostensibly worshipped by Trolls solely as a source of sorcerous magics. These magics were stolen for the trolls by Arkat Kingtroll, the great hero who destroyed Gbaji the Deceiver and reinstated the Only Old One in the Holy Country. However, the true motives of this far-flung and secretive sect are probably far more complex, involving many other secrets taught by Arkat.

Most Black Arkati live in Guhan and Halikiv, once part of Arkat's Dark Empire. Other converts live in the Yolp Mountains, Troll Woods, and the Shadow Plateau. A few are found in every troll land.

The Carmanians

The Carmanians originated with the epic journey of the Loskalmi general Syranthir Forefront, during the early part of the eighth century S.T. He was an ally of Arkat's Dark Empire, and was driven out by the Silver Alliance led by the Jrusteli. He fled to north-western Peloria with his supporters, where he founded the empire of Carmania, which survived until 1241 when it was conquered by the Lunar Empire.

The Carmanians kept the Malkioni feudal culture, but changed their religious emphasis. Worship was directed to certain brute gods while the Invisible God was depersonalised and even ignored. Most Malkioni theologians believe the Lunar Empire has inherited the Carmanian heresy, and that the Lunars have simply replaced the Invisible God with the Red Goddess.

The Henotheists

The Henotheists believe that there is one Supreme Deity, the Invisible God, and that other deities are important and deserve worship for their aid and protection.

This sect is widespread across Ralios. The majority of the church follows the lead of Archbishop Surantyr of Otkorion, who is actively spreading his church's creed throughout Orlanthi lands. However, other branches of the church exist throughout Ralios which do not accept Surantyr's pantheistic interpretation of the sect's creed.

The Syanorans

This church holds sway over many of the lands of central and eastern Fronela, in direct competition with the Hrestoli sect.

The Syanorans interpret the Third Law of Malkion to be a complete prohibition on divorce and remarriage. They believe the holy state of matrimony to be the perfect expression of spiritual love for the Invisible God. Tapping is permitted by the church, but only of adulterers and bastards: the twin desecrators of holy matrimony. Almost all Malkioni sects practice monogamy, but the Syanorans' strict interpretation is considered extreme.

Other deities and spirits are acknowledged by the church as part of the bounty of the Invisible God. They can be appeased and used, but they cannot be worshipped as gods.

Many of the inhabitants of the cities of Riverjoin and Southpoint also claim to worship in the Syanoran way. However, their acceptance of the Red Goddess as Third Prophet of the Invisible God is frowned upon by all right-thinking Syanorans.



MALKIONI SAINTS

Certain men and women attain great spiritual perfection. After their mundane life, they can procure special benefits for those who pray to them. These individuals are known as saints. A few saints have been debased and are worshipped as deities in non-Malkioni realms. Only mortals can attain sainthood — no deity has ever done so, though a few have achieved salvation through recognition of the primacy of the Invisible God.

To obtain a patron saint, a supplicant must sacrifice POW to him. Different saints require different amounts of POW. This POW maybe sacrificed over a period of time. The supplicant cannot call on the saint until he has sacrificed the full amount. A supplicant can have more than one patron saint.

At will, a supplicant can call on any or all of his patron saints and receive their blessings. Each time this is done, the supplicant loses a point of POW. The saint's blessing takes place on SR 1 of the round he is called upon. A saint's blessing cannot be Dispelled, Dismissed, or Neutralised.

The sects of the Malkioni do not accept the same saints. The Brithini and Vadeli do not recognise any saints and never worship them.

Seven important saints are described below.

Arkat the Liberator

Before Arkat's coming, the Deceiver covered the world with a magical pall, befogging the lives, minds, and souls of all that lived. Arkat came to the Western peoples and healed their bodies, freed their souls, and enlightened their minds, stripping away the evil Deceiver's falsehoods.

Everybody knows Arkat left the Malkioni way. His devotees agree. In his fanaticism to overcome the Deceiver, he forgot the ways of the Creator and fell into alliances with false gods. The story of Arkat is the great moral legend of the West. If Arkat, once the most perfect knight of the world, could fall, lesser men must strive vigilantly to maintain their virtue.

Despite his tragic fall, Arkat still saved the world, and his devotees worship him for this. They remind each man to remain true and steadfast, and maintain his life in proper balance, lest he suffer as did Arkat.

ARKAT'S BLESSING: when Arkat is invoked, the clothing and skin of all Illuminated beings within 100 meters of the devotee turns translucent white. This effect lasts until the next sunrise, and includes the devotee himself, if he is Illuminated. It costs 8 POW to gain Arkat as a patron saint.

Gerlant Flamesword

Gerlant Flamesword ruled Seshnela during Gbaji's time. Arkat achieved his first successes against the chaos god in Seshnela and became a Hrestoli knight. Gerlant became Arkat's liege lord. Arkat led Gerlant's armies through decades of futile struggle against Gbaji.

Gerlant's betrayal of Arkat is one of the great epic tragedies of the West. Arkat freed the souls of Gerlant's people when he cleansed Seshnela from Gbaji's subtle curse. Arkat gave Gerlant his kingdom, his salvation, and then, adding gift on gift, gave Gerlant Arkat's own loyalty and life. The ties between Gerlant and Arkat were many and firm. In the end, Gerlant had to choose between saving the kingdom Arkat had given him and saving Arkat. The perfect ruler, he saved his people, not his friend.

GERLANT'S BLESSING: when Gerlant is called upon, the blade of his devotee becomes magical, producing a Fireblade whenever the devotee holds the weapon. Once called upon, the effect is permanent, though Gerlant can be called on again to transfer the Flame to a different weapon. Only one weapon at a time can be affected. It costs 3 POW to gain Gerlant as a patron saint.

Hrestol

Hrestol is the greatest culture-hero of the West. All Malkioni except the Brithini and Vadeli revere his name. He had a vision of Malkion the holy prophet in the year 2, and taught the rules and laws which all modern Malkioni follow. His life was an unending series of heroic acts, sacrifices, and miracles, too long and complex to detail here.





HRESTOL'S BLESSING: a devotee of Hrestol can borrow Hrestol's might. This doubles the devotee's POW for a full day. This has no immediate effect on magic points, though over the course of the day, they regenerate twice as quickly as usual. When POW drops back to normal at the end of the day, any extra magic points remain until used. It costs 8 POW to gain Hrestol's patronage.

Paslac

He was one of the last true emperors of Arkat's Dark Empire. He held off the God-Learners and their allies for a generation until martyred by treachery.

PASLAC'S BLESSING: when Paslac is invoked, the armour points of a chosen piece of metal, which can be a tool, a weapon, or a piece of armour, are doubled when the item is touched by the devotee. Paslac can be called upon again to transfer the blessing to another piece of metal, but only one piece at a time can be affected. Paslac's Blessing costs 5 POW.

Talor, the Laughing Warrior

When Arkat turned into a servant of darkness in his lust for vengeance, burning villages and slaughtering non-combatants, his Lightbringer rescuers felt betrayed and re-entered their quest to seek a hero to defeat evil Gbaji.

They returned with Talor, the Laughing Warrior. Talor led his new allies to his native land of Akem, now called Loskalm, where he drove out the sinister chaos taint. In a painful struggle, Talor and his alliance of soldiers of Akem, Orlanthi, and savage Rathori barbarians drove Gbaji's Bright Empire from Fronela.

Talor cleaned northern Peloria of its curses and marched into Dorastor at the same time as Arkat's horde of trolls. Arkat's and Talor's armies met, witnessed Gbaji's destruction, and made great celebration.

TALOR'S BLESSING: Talor may only be invoked just before or during a battle. His invocation causes his devotee to experience great joy while fighting. For the duration of the battle, the devotee is immune to Fatigue loss and incapacitation. In addition, when Talor is invoked, the devotee may simultaneously spend one or more magic points. For each magic point used, the devotee gains +2% to all his skills for the fight's duration. It takes 6 POW to gain Talor as one's patron saint.

Valkaro

Valkaro was a famous wizard of the Second Age who converted the inhabitants of four of the Eastern Isles to the Malkioni philosophy and defended his converts in a famous war against the Eastern Seas Empire.

VALKARO'S BLESSING: when Valkaro is invoked, until the next nightfall the devotee has great powers of concentration. He automatically succeeds in any INT roll he needs to make, including Concentration rolls. He also automatically succeeds in sorcery spell casting and manipulation, with no die roll necessary, and no critical successes possible. Valkaro costs 6 POW to gain as a patron.



Xemela

Mother of Hrestol, wife of Froalar, this benevolent queen gave all she had to save her land from the Black Swelling, a grisly plague which scoured Seshnela. As the bodies of both men and cattle succumbed to the ravages of the disease, a spiritual malaise spread over all life. Son spurned father, sister refused sister, and mothers starved their own children. Xemela bared her head, tore her gown in anguish, left her husband, and went barefoot through the country, seeking to end the land's agony.

The source was the Well of Vapours, a poisoned spring emitting malignant gases. Xemela took the poison to herself, leaving none to infect others. But Xemela's body blackened and burst with the venom. Her spirit was entombed in a split rock at the well's bottom, eternally afflicted and suffering all the torments from which she had saved her people.

The cleansed Well produced healing wine which cured any disease until the coming of Gbaji's plagues. One of Hrestol's early deeds was the ending of his mother's torment, freeing her spirit to paradise.

XEMELA'S BLESSING: Xemela can be invoked over one or more persons, up to a total not exceeding the invoker's POW. All wounds and diseases afflicting the targets are instantly cured. Each hit location cured of all damage gives the invoker 1 point of general hit point damage. Each disease cured gives the invoker 1D6 general hit point damage. This effect will not restore a missing limb.

One SR after all diseases and injured hit locations are cured, any victims with remaining general hit point damage (as from poison or certain spells) are cured. Each person so cured costs the invoker 1D6 general hit point damage. The invoker cannot heal himself by calling upon Xemela. Xemela's Blessing costs 6 POW to obtain.



The Holy Church of Rokarism

By David Hall

with Nick Brooke, Michael O'Brien, Paul Reilly and Greg Stafford

History

The Holy Church of Rokarism was born amidst the spiritual turmoil and chaos that reigned at the beginning of the Third Age, after the destruction of the God Learners and the sinking of Old Seshnela. During this time the region of Tanisor and Seshnela was ruled and ravaged in turn by a succession of petty states and foreign invaders. No organised or theologically unified Church existed in the wake of the catastrophic collapse of the God Learner movement.

In 1310 Saint Rokar was born in Leplain. As a young apprentice Wizard he was visited first by Hrestol, and then by Malkion. They imparted to him the knowledge of the old laws which had been lost during the time of the God Learners. Their message was of One God, One Church, One King, One Peace. Hrestol also prophesied that a hammer would be forged in Rindland that would itself reforge the ancient Kingdom of Seshnela.

Rokar's insights and visions were first of all scorned by his fellow monks, but when he continued to espouse them he was defrocked as a Wizard, declared a heretic, and cast out of his monastery. However, outside of the official Church he continued to preach his message to all who would hear, and a popular movement grew up amongst the Peasants of the land who tired of the war and constant change in their lives.

In 1349 Rokar was arrested by the Church, tried, and condemned for heresy. He was burned at the stake, but when the flames reached their height all who were present saw the holy messengers, Solace and Joy, come down from the sky and lead Rokar to the Creator. After this his teachings spread rapidly across Seshnela and beyond. Often its preachers were persecuted and killed, but the message could not be stopped.

In 1410 Bailifes the Hammer, Duke of Rindland, was converted to the ways of Rokar. With the war banner of Saint Rokar he then led a holy crusade across Seshnela to bring the Faith to everyone, and to fulfil the prophesy of the hammer. His opponents were finally defeated at the First and Second Battles of Asgolan Fields in 1412 and their leaders put to the stake or forced to flee. In 1413 Bailifes was crowned King of Seshnela by Mardron, the Archbishop of Leplain (and newly-appointed Ecclesiarch of the Holy Church of Rokarism).

Since that time the descendants of Bailifes have ruled the Kingdom of Seshnela by divine right and in the name of the Invisible God and his three prophets: Malkion, Hrestol and Rokar.

Theology

The Rokari believe that there is only one God and that he is the Invisible God and his prophets were Malkion, Hrestol and Rokar. In this they claim to follow the rulings of the Sixth Ecclesiastical Council of Malkion (held in Leplain in 1427) where the united Churches of Seshnela and Loskalm are said to have declared this unanimously. However, the validity of this declaration is now disputed by the newly-emerged New Hrestoli Idealist Church of Loskalm.

Tapping: The Rokari follow the Laws of Malkion including the Third Law, "Do not ruin that which you love," which they interpret as a proscription on Tapping. This interpretation is relatively recent since, prior to the Sixth Ecclesiastical Council, Tapping of Peasants was permitted with the permission of the Peasant's Lord.

The Church does allow the Tapping of animals by the Wizard caste - though only with the permission of the animal's Lord. This is usually justified as providing spiritual sustenance in the same way that the other castes obtain physical sustenance through the milk, wool, skin, bone, sinews and flesh of animals. Further, they argue, since it is well known that animals do not have souls, they are therefore incapable of being loved in any meaningful way and so tapping of them is wholly acceptable.

Caste: The Rokari believe that there should be no inter-caste mobility. Each person is born into his caste, lives in his caste, does the job of his caste, and dies in his caste. They believe that a man need only master his own station in life to achieve salvation, and, at least in theory, value a great farmer as much as a mighty Knight or wise king. Converts to the Rokari are assigned to the most appropriate class by the local Lord. His decision is final.

Women: Women are regarded as being inferior to men in spiritual terms. It is argued that they lack the intellectual capacity of men, as well as their physical and spiritual strength. As a result of this lack of spiritual backbone they are also susceptible to Devilish influences. Women can therefore only obtain salvation as dutiful wives. They are not permitted to become Wizards or warriors.

Sin: The Rokari have a well-developed concept of Sin. Sin is defined as the breaking of the laws of Malkion and Rokar. This definition includes breaking of caste taboos, illegal tapping, impure thoughts, theft, adultery, falsehood, drunkenness, gluttony, immortality spells, heretical thoughts, envy, slander, avarice, inane speech, indecency, and arguing with a Wizard or Lord.



Each caste also has a number of specific taboos that must not be broken. These include, but are not limited to:

- Lords:** falling into debt, breaking fealty, and menial labour.
- Wizards:** illegal Tapping, using common tools of any sort, shaving one's beard, and menial labour.
- Knights:** not owning a sword and menial labour.
- Peasants:** using gold of any kind, using crossbows, reading and writing, impersonating a higher caste, and riding a horse.

Note that while some caste taboos are strictly adhered to, others are relaxed and even ignored. For example, Wizards are forbidden to use common tools of any kind; Orthodox Rokari would even extend this to cutlery! In fact, the White Wyzards claim that because they cannot wield knives, they cannot carve their meat and so have become pious vegetarians (Theoblanc and his bish-ops, who must maintain an aura of piety, have reluctantly taken to eating mince!) Peasants are forbidden to read or write, but although this taboo has long fallen into abeyance rich merchants and tradesmen still feign illiteracy on Godsdays when they attend Holy Church.

Life after Death: Upon death, the punishment for congenital sinners is an eternity spent in Hell, a part of the Underworld ruled by the Devil. In this cold place of darkness creatures there are Krjalki monsters who constantly torture all pagans, murderers, heretics, witches, caste breakers, tappers, sexual deviants, and habitual sinners. The only escape from this fate is strict adherence to the Rokari faith.

The Rokari Church promises that for the perfectly pious worshipper death will never come. However, few, if any, worshippers (with the exception of the Ecclesiarch) are able to attain such perfection for all of their lives and so all that can be hoped for is a longer lifespan.

Upon death the purest worshippers of the Faith are carried to the heavenly realm of the Creator in the arms of Solace and Joy. There they are able to live perfect and immortal lives.

Hierarchy

The Holy Church of Rokarism is mainly found in the regions of Tanisor, Pasos and Nolos. There are also many small states and cities in Ralios which follow the Faith, as well as large enclaves in Nochet and Sog City. In Pamaltela worshippers of the Rokari faith can be found in the lands of Enkloso and Vralos.

Most regions that worship Rokarism do not tolerate the worship of other Malkioni faiths or false pagan gods amongst their people (though the faiths of foreign visitors are usually tolerated unless they attempt to spread them). Even minor differences in the worship of Rokarism may be declared heresy and ruthlessly persecuted.

The head of the Church is the Ecclesiarch of Rokarism who is traditionally also the Archbishop of Leplain. In theory his authority over the Church is supreme. Beyond the borders of Tanisor, however, obedience is not guaranteed. This position has been held for the last sixty years by Theoblanc the Pious.

The Church is sub-divided into Bishoprics which mirror the County and Baronial boundaries, each ruled over by a Bishop. In Tanisor the Bishops must answer only to their Count, the Ecclesiarch and the King. The Holy Bishoprics of Seshnela are: Arnlor, Deu, Dangk, Estau, Gilboch, Leplain, Noyelle, Seguraine and Voi. The Ecclesiarch also has spiritual authority over the Bishops of Nolos, Pasos, Pithdaros, Nochet & Malkonwal, Enkloso and Vralos.

Large Bishoprics are further sub-divided into Chapters with senior Priests to administer them. Chapters and small Bishoprics are divided into parishes which mirror the local Lord's manorial boundaries. Each parish is assigned a Priest of the Church of Rokarism whose duty it is to serve the spiritual needs of the local Lord, his family, his retainers, and his Peasants - in that order.

The Rokari Church is traditionally subservient to the secular authority of the Lord's Caste, in accordance with Malkion's Fourth Law. However, in Seshnela there is currently (1625) friction between Church and State. Ostensibly this concerns the ownership of lands which the Church holds and the King claims. However, much of the conflict can be attributed to the ambitions of the two main protagonists, the ambitious and grasping King, Guilmarn the Fat, and the ageless and pious Ecclesiarch, Theoblanc.

ROKARI SOCIETY

Peasants

Though the Rokari claim to have no inter-caste mobility the reality is rather different. In fact, where there is any internal mobility, it is generally downward, to the Peasant caste. Defrocked priests, cowardly soldiers and impoverished nobles usually end up being absorbed into the great mass of serfs that makes up over 85% of the population.

Membership of the Peasant caste is automatic, and usually condemns the member to a life of hard-labour and poverty as a serf working for the local Lord of the manor.

Lucky Peasants are born into the families of merchants and tradesmen that make up a growing section at the top of their caste. For very rich and powerful merchants and tradesmen, there is always the possibility of the discovery of a lost and forgotten noble pedigree, and entry into the Lord caste.

All the Rokari castes learn sorcery spells, as well as the Intensify skill. Peasants and Knights may only learn those spells which specifically apply to their class functions. Thus, a farmer may learn Form/Set Wood to repair his sheds and barn.

Common spells known by the Peasant caste: Form/Set (substance), Holdfast, Treat Wounds.

Knights

The castes of Lord and Knight are often blurred in Rokari society. Officially, the entrance requirement is that the applicant be born into the Knights' caste and pass a test. However, in reality anyone born into the Lords' caste can become a Knight as well. Most rich Knights also rule manors, and most poor Knights who serve a Lord can prove a noble pedigree, however distant and removed.



Only rich or mercenary Knights will own warhorses and full armour. The average Knight is horseless, wears armour loaned by his Lord, and fills the equivalent of a sergeant's position.

The test for Knighthood can be simulated by making two out of three hits with a Sword while wearing full Knight's armour (usually borrowed for the occasion).

Knights may only use sorcery spells which specifically apply to their caste. Common spells used by the Knights' caste include Damage Boosting, Damage Resistance, and Enhance.

Wizards

Entrants into the Wizard caste must have been fathered by another Wizard. Within the Church there is great debate over the issue of clerical marriages. A large section of the Church, based mainly within the Monastic Orders, views marriage and procreation with distaste and they only approve of new recruits fathered through the random impregnation of local Peasant girls, either by lot, or by volunteers. Male offspring of these unions are then raised and educated in the monastery.

Only Wizards may learn the more arcane aspects of sorcery, including the special spells of the Rokari College of Magic. The sorcery spells of Create Basilisk, Create Vampire, Immortality, and Tap (Human) are not available to the College.

Common spells known by the Priest caste: All those on the standard list (except those forbidden), Tap (Animal) and Neutralise Damage.

Neutralise Damage Touch, Instant

This spell heals damage and affects only one hit location per casting. Using the Resistance Table, the intensity of the spell is matched against the points of damage in the area. If the spell overcomes the damage points, the wound is healed. Otherwise, all damage remains.

If the target resists the spell's casting, the user must overcome the target's magic points. This spell will not restore lost limbs or organs, for which Regenerate must be used.



Lords

The requirement to become a Lord is to prove noble birth and a valid claim to the land that one wishes to rule. In reality, the latter claim depends on the attitude of the liege Lord, from whom the land is held in fief. If the claim is denied then there is always the option to serve as a Knight.

There have been various attempts over the years, usually prompted by the Church and the older noble families, to place firm boundaries between the Knight and Lord castes - in imitation of the Brithini way. So far these have come to nothing, usually failing due to the problem of what to do with the younger, and disinherited, sons of Lords.

Common spells used by the Lord's caste include Damage Boosting, Damage Resistance, Enhance, and Treat Wounds.

Major Saints

Saint Gerlant Flameking ruled Seshnela during the time of Gbaji. His betrayal of Arkat is one of the great epic tragedies of the West. Arkat freed the souls of Gerlant's people when he cleansed Seshnela from Gbaji's subtle curse. Arkat gave Gerlant his kingdom, his salvation, and then, adding gift on gift, gave Gerlant Arkat's own loyalty and life. The ties between Gerlant and Arkat were many and firm. In the end, Gerlant had to choose between saving the kingdom Arkat had given him and saving Arkat. The Rokari see him as the perfect ruler, for he saved his people, not his friend. Most Lords take him as their patron Saint.

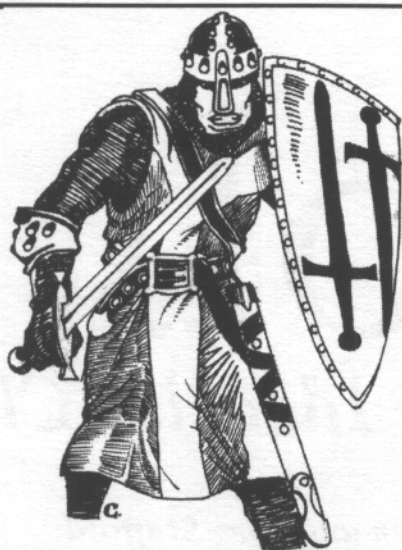
Saint Hrestol was a Brithini Talar who had a vision of the Malkion, the holy prophet. The Rokari say that he taught many of the rules and laws which most Malkioni follow to this day. He introduced the vows of Knighthood and chivalry and gave the responsibility for them to the Lords. He ruled that Peasants and Wizards could not bear arms, but that Knights and Lords should.

Saint Mardron was the disciple of Saint Rokar who brought King Bailifes to the faith and became the first Ecclesiarch of the Holy Church. He spent much of his time as Ecclesiarch building the many monasteries and cathedrals across the land, the finest of which is in Leplain, the Holy See. He also hosted the Sixth Ecclesiastical Council of Malkion, where he was canonised. He embraced Solace and Joy when he was 103 years old. Most Wizards take Mardron as their patron saint.

MARDRON'S BLESSING: when invoked this blessing doubles a Wizard's current Free INT. This lasts for one day, or until sunset. It costs 4 POW to gain Mardron as a patron saint.

Saint Rokar was a Wizard from the city of Leplain who was visited by Malkion and Hrestol and taught ancient laws that had been lost in the time of the God Learners. Though he was martyred by his enemies, his teachings were not silenced. He is a common patron saint for the Peasant caste.

ROKAR'S BLESSING: it costs only 1 POW to gain Rokar as a patron saint and invoking his blessing has no POW cost. His blessing is to give his devotee a feeling of harmony and satisfaction with his or her lot in life. Even in bad times the devotee knows that upon his or her death Rokar will reveal that it has all been worthwhile, and will show them the path to the eternal happiness of Solace in Glory.



Mardron at the Sixth Ecclesiastical Council that led to the Rokari faction voting to outlaw the tapping of all human castes.

The World of Losers Movement: The main heresy in Rokarism today is the World of Losers Movement, which has been imported from Ralios. The followers of this heresy believe that through pain and self-mutilation one can find Solace and be purified of all sins. They have found many converts amongst the Peasant caste, and as a result the Golden Lance has launched a fierce campaign to refute its teachings and halt its spread. The official Church view is that the heresy is being spread by the treacherous and deceitful Arkati of Ralios.

Prominent Personalities

Theoblanc the Pious is the Ecclesiarch of all Rokarism. He has held this position since being elected to it by the Council of Bishops in 1564. His main rival, Bishop Baudwan of Gilboch, was soon afterward sent to lead a mission to the pagan kingdom of Ramalia - he never returned. Theoblanc is renowned for his great piety, and as a result he is now over 150 years old (though some impious critics claim that he uses forbidden immortality spells).

Guilmarn the Fat is the ambitious King of Seshnela. He has continued the policy of his father to seize the lands of his vassal Counts and Barons, thus bringing them directly under his control. The recent death of his premier general, the Count of Estaurenica, has allowed him to seize those lands as well. Only the Counts of Noyelle and Nolos, and the Baron of Gilboch are now left. The Count of Nolos has even gone as far as to declare his lands independent from Seshnela.

Sir Alverius Canardain is the Knight Commander of the Inquisitorial Order of the Golden Lance. He is feared and renowned for his ability to sniff out heresy wherever it is. Indeed, his current position is the result of his discovery of a foul heresy involving the previous Knight Commander of the Order.

Sir Richard de Loimbard is better known as Richard the Tigerhearted. Second son of the Count of Estaurenica, he was forced to seek his fortune as a mercenary in foreign lands. In 1617 the death of his employer, the King of Heortland, allowed him to seize the throne and set up the short-lived Rokari Kingdom of Malkonwal. After his Kingdom's defeat at the hands of the Lunar Empire he has been variously reported as dead or captured and imprisoned in Glamour.



Church Institutions and Popular Movements

The Inquisitorial Order of the Golden Lance: This Order was set up by King Romaine IV and Theoblanc the Pious in 1547 to seek out heresies and heretics and refute them. The order reports directly to the Ecclesiarch. It is composed of members of both the Knight and Wizard castes. The order has the power to investigate anyone in the Rokari Church, and act as it or the Ecclesiarch sees fit. Torture is often used in the pursuit of the truth.

Monastic Orders: Most Bishops have at least one monastery within their Sees. The function of these monasteries is primarily to provide new Wizards, and to train and equip them for the duties of their caste. The monasteries also act as libraries of Church and State knowledge, and as the source of new copies of the Laws of Malkion, the Teachings of Hrestol, and the Book of Rokar.

The White Wyzards: This is relatively new movement which seeks to steer the Church away from involvement in high politics and from the insular attitudes of the monastics; instead working more closely with those of the Peasant caste and for the public good. Thus far its power base is mainly at the grassroots parish Wizard level.

Nunneries: Most monasteries include an order of nuns, the "Brides of Rokar." Their members are specially chosen Peasant girls brought into the monasteries in order to mother future members of the Wizard caste. It is a great honour to be chosen to be a Bride of Rokar and a small dowry is usually paid to the Church by the proud parents.

Heresies

There are few heresies in the Rokari Church, due mainly to the activities of inquisitorial orders such as the Golden Lance. Great store is placed in the Rokari Church on a common creed free of the inconsistencies and falsehoods of the God Learners. Even so, small differences do exist, usually between the Churches of different lands. For example, the Rokari of Pasos have a more liberal approach to some aspects of caste mobility, and do not disprove of commerce and usury as do many Seshnelan Rokari.

There are also many Rokari Priests who seek to bring back the tapping of Peasants. It was only the personal intervention of Saint



The New

Hrestoli

Idealist Church

by Nick Brooke

with David Hall, Sandy Petersen and Greg Stafford

History

The Hrestoli Church is the oldest and largest sect of Malkionism. Founded by Prince Hrestol, the Second Prophet, at the Dawning of the World, it revitalised the moribund Brithini religion. The sect was established before the end of the first century as the official religion of Akem (later Loskalm), and is thus the oldest established Malkioni Church. In the First and Second Ages, all pious Malkioni worshipped in the Hrestoli manner. The God Learner heretics who deviated from this path were all wiped out with the downfall of their Empire. Thus was the Will of God made manifest in the world.

At the start of the Third Age, the Kingdom of Loskalm was a troubled realm: weakened by the collapse of the Middle Sea Empire, it shook under the assaults of barbaric enemies, and was torn by internal strife between many great noble families, each seeking to secure power for its own selfish ends. The peasants were oppressed, the strictures of the church largely disregarded. Worse yet, all the highest offices of state were in practice hereditary, in blatant contravention of the key principles of Hrestolism. While the hereditary nobles fought incessantly, aided by venal priests and bloodthirsty knights, all forgot the common heritage of their Loskalmi blood. Only when the intrepid Prince Snodal saved the land from certain destruction at the hands of the traitorous Zzabur were these squabbling forces brought to their senses.

The New Hrestoli Idealist Church of Loskalm was established by King Siglat the Wise, son of Prince Snodal, during the tranquil peace of the Syndics Ban. After defeating and pacifying his unwise opponents

within Loskalm, Siglat laid down the sword and through meditation managed to renew the the ancient Hrestoli religion. Widespread visions and manifestations brought by Saint Hrestol himself to members of all classes of society proved that these reforms in every way embodied the Ideal form of what the Prophet had desired.

The Ban allowed national introspection on a previously undreamed-of scale, and under it Loskalm blossomed into the just and fair nation it is today. Attitudes of Duty, Chivalry and Equality are inherent in everyone: only a few ancients can remember the Bad Old Days before Siglat's coming. The rulers of the land are now seen as Ideals in themselves, and their elevated state makes every public act and pronouncement into a symbol which reinforces the bedrock of the society: the Hrestoli Idealist Church. Now that the Syndics Ban is ended, the Kingdom of Loskalm has the opportunity to teach virtue by example, uplifting the lesser states and peoples of Fronela to join them in the perfection of the Idealist State.

Theology

The Hrestoli Idealists proclaim that there is only one God and that he is the Invisible God and his Prophets were Malkion and Hrestol. In this they uphold the unanimous declaration of the Fifth Ecclesiastical Council of Malkionism. They reject as invalid the decisions of the Sixth Council (which they term the "Blasphemy of Leplain"), which ranked Rokar among the Prophets; their histories show that the members of the delegation of pre-Idealist Loskalmi Bishops were corrupted by Seshnelan bribery to vote against the Will of God.

Tapping: The sect follows all the Laws of Malkion including the Third Law, "Do not ruin that which you love," which King Siglat the Wise interpreted as a prohibition of all Tapping. The spell may not be learned or used by any member of the Church, on pain of Excommunication and Execution. Instead of Tap, Hrestoli Wizards now employ the less morally objectionable spell of Drain Soul.

Class: The Idealists of Loskalm declare that God created all men equal — that upward mobility through the class system is a right open to all, regardless of birth, wealth, or status. They recognise the fourfold class system instituted by the Sons of Malkion: Farmer, Knight, Wizard, and Lord. Everyone is born into the Farmer class, and can only rise above that lowly status by first mastering its mundane skills. When an individual has fulfilled all requirements for advancement, he is ordained during an appropriate religious festival: the popular Fairs and Tourneys, and the more solemn Examinations and Investitures.

Women: The official Idealist teaching is that women are spiritually equal but different to men, having been created second and thus in some ways more refined than the original (male) form of humankind. Just as a man can achieve salvation through his own merit or through the intercession of a perfected Saint, so a woman can achieve higher social class through her own merit or through marriage. A married woman holds the same social class as her husband, though if she wishes she can rise separately.

Sin: The Hrestoli teach that humans have a divided nature: part of us wants to sin, while part wants to do good. We must continually emphasise and express the Ideal



The Hrestoli Church of Loskalm is headed by the Ecclesiarch of Southpoint: this is the oldest established position in the Malkioni Church, and its incumbent possesses spiritual authority over all Malkioni. The current holder of this sacred office is Gaiseron the Mystic, an ancient wizard who together with Siglat the Wise shaped the modern form of Hrestoli Idealism. Beneath him are the College of Cardinals, the Lords Spiritual of Loskalm, who head the Church in the eight Sees of the Kingdom. Within each See are a great number of city cathedrals, town churches, and village chapels, each tended by one or more clerics of the Idealist faith.

Loskalm's influence now extends beyond the borders until recently defined by the Syndics Ban. Various petty states of Junora have adopted its doctrines to a greater or lesser extent; in some cases through pious zeal, in others through political expediency. Whether or not these regions accept the Ecclesiarch's authority will vary, depending on the circumstances that brought them into the fold.

HRESTOLI SOCIETY

The Hrestoli Idealists believe that an individual must strive to perfect himself in all classes. One must rise through all four social classes to achieve earthly awareness of the Invisible God. However, it is possible to attain paradise without doing this, through the intervention of saints and holy men. Through saintly intercession, a Hrestoli who has spent his entire life as a Farmer can receive Solace upon death without going through the stages of Knight, Wizard, or Lord.

Each class has certain prerequisites which must be met before the next class is officially attained. When an individual has fulfilled all requirements for social advancement, he is ordained during an appropriate religious festival.

Foreigners who wish to join the sect must demonstrate their devotion to the Idealist way of life, and must swear allegiance to the Kingdom of Loskalm. The class at which they enter the Church is determined by the Lord who accepts their oath; normally this will be the Loskalmi equivalent to their former station, but hard-line Idealists may insist that all who enter the sect do so as Farmers.

part of us which does Good, while suppressing and diminishing our flawed and evil half. By doing good deeds, we encourage Good and improve our soul. When we slip, and do a bad deed, our Bad side grows and threatens the survival of our soul.

Conscience: A conscience is Good, because it helps us to know which deeds are righteous and which are sinful. Every good Loskalmi is imbued with a functioning conscience through his Idealist upbringing. Pity the hapless pagan, who sins and sins again without even knowing that he is destroying his soul by doing so! Whether their consciences are innately deficient, or whether they are stunted by false teachings, many Loskalmi now see it as their pious duty to nurture foreign peoples to conscientious self-awareness under their benign supervision.

Life After Death: Saint Hrestol showed us that acting in accordance with the dictates of conscience can bring about a perfected state of spiritual harmony, which he named the Joy of the Heart. If, at death, any human has managed to tip the balance of his soul sufficiently in favour of Good, then he will enter the Malkioni paradise of Solace in Glory. This is the perfect home of the Invisible God, where the immortal soul of the righteous worshipper remains eternally, in total bliss. Failure to achieve Solace condemns the recreant sinner to Waste: he dies, and everything about him dissipates as if he had never been.

In theory even a non-Hrestoli could achieve Solace if, during his life, he performed enough Good and refrained from Evil. It is easier, the more Truth that is known and followed. Thus other Malkioni, even members of lapsed or non-Hrestoli

sects, have a better chance of reaching Solace than do pagans. Non-humans have no hope of attaining Solace: their time of glory in this world is past, and Man is the master race now.

Funerary rites include burial of the corpse, followed by the ancient prayer of Blessing and Banishment.

Hierarchy

New Hrestoli Idealism is the state religion of Loskalm, and the sect's doctrines are pervasive throughout Loskalmi society. To rise to the highest offices of the land, it is necessary to study the lore of wizardry, and satisfy the examiners of the Watchdog Council with one's mastery of the arcane arts. This requirement ensures that those who become the Lords Temporal of the Realm - chief among them being the eight Princes who serve the King - are in every way as magically accomplished as the Lords Spiritual.

King Siglat's comprehensive reform of the institutions of Church and State swept away the old family-held feudal domains and bishoprics, replacing them with an egalitarian and meritocratic structure of royally appointed Principalities and Cardinalships.

There are many zealous Idealists who believe there should ultimately be no distinction between the Loskalmi State and the Hrestoli Church, seeing no essential difference between the military, civil and ecclesiastical structures of society. They decry the current separation of functions as an unnecessary compromise with the Bad Old Days, and call for reform.



Farmers

For native Loskalmi, formal ordination into the Farmer class takes place at twelve years of age; the local Lord assigns each youth to an appropriate task. There are many to choose from, as this class of society includes the vast majority of Loskalmi subjects, not only field workers but also herdsmen, merchants, craftsmen, artisans, sailors and servants to the upper classes (this last category includes both knights' Squires and wizards' Acolytists).

Farmers are taxed to support the other classes, who in turn preserve and direct the nation. In normal times, taxes amount to approximately 15% of their income. Most farmers spend 5% of their time training with their local militia; these unarmoured units are mustered only for defense, never to invade other lands. This amounts to 20 hours' training every season in 2H Spear or Self Bow.

Most Loskalmi farmers never seek to rise from their class; those who master the skills of the common folk end up as country squires, town guildsmen, ship captains, and the like. In rural areas these local dignitaries are commonly termed Squires; the "squirearchy" they comprise exists outside the meritocratic structures of the Idealist State, and allows the government to extend its influence to the lowest levels of society. These "squires" are not the servants of Knights, but are rich Farmers who have taken on some of the responsibilities and privileges of Lords.

A Farmer will be taught one sorcery spell every five years, but may learn no other magic skills, not even Intensity. The spells available to this class are therefore very limited in scope, and are usually specific work-related blessings.

Bless (item)

Touch, Passive, special duration

This spell takes ten minutes to cast, and lasts for one week or until its effect is dispelled. The spell grants a temporary bonus of +1 AP and +5% to all skill or resistance rolls made using the item. This effect is dispelled if the user of the item fumbles (though any effects of the fumble are cancelled), or if the extra armour point is destroyed by damage. A side effect of the extra armour point is that the Blessed item will remain in the same state of repair it was in when the spell was cast: armour remains shiny and new, clothing is difficult to soil, a room stays clean and tidy. The spell is thus extremely useful for keeping up appearances.

While it is usually cast upon a tool (plough, hammer, sword), variant Blessings exist for carts, roofs, fires and the like.



Soldiers

The Loskalmi Army is one of the best in the world: it is professional, motivated, well-equipped, and magically powerful. Each Principality fields a Battalion of 5,000 men; three additional battalions recruit from these regional forces and make up the core of the Royal Army. There is also a navy, consisting of two fleets of longships. In order to rise in Loskalmi society, it is almost always necessary to acquire military rank through the Army.

To enlist in his local Battalion, an applicant must demonstrate 60% ability in two Farmer-class skills (usually Plant Lore and any Craft) to a recruiting officer at a Country Fair. Other tests or contests are frequently held, at the recruiting officer's discretion. He must demonstrate himself to be a true Loskalmi patriot, strong, fit and eager to serve his nation. He must swear

Hrestol's Oath, declaring his readiness to die for his people, and sacrifice 1 POW to Hrestol's Idealism.

The soldiers of Loskalm defend the countryside, administer justice, and protect the people. Those not suited to the army life may be pensioned out to garrison duty or service in the town guard. All soldiers are issued with appropriate armour and weapons; they are paid a wage which amounts (after deductions for board, lodging, equipment, etc.) to one silver coin for every day's service: the King's Shilling.

The army of Loskalm is a standing army, and soldiers must serve in it for 90% of the time, leave being awarded at their commanding officer's discretion. Soldiers must obey the commands of knights, wizards and lords. They may not ride horses in battle: this privilege is reserved for the knights.

Free training is received in military skills: these always include weapon attacks, weapon parries, Listen, Scan and First Aid.

Soldiers are trained in the magic skills of Intensity and Ceremony, and are taught one sorcery spell for free after every five years' enlistment. Additional training in magical skills can be purchased from the battalion's wizards.

Many soldiers learn Treat Wounds, Damage Boosting, and perhaps Enhance (Characteristic).



Knights

A knight is an officer in the Loskalmi Army, a leader of men. He is also an exemplar of Chivalry, carrying on the great tradition of Prince Snodal, Saint Talor, and the Prophet Hrestol himself.



An applicant for knighthood must be serving as a soldier. There must be a vacancy in his Battalion for a new officer. He must demonstrate a melee weapon attack of 60%, a parry of 60%, and one other military skill (such as Ride, First Aid, Conceal, or a missile weapon) at 60%. He must live in an exemplary manner and impress the Grand Master of his Battalion's Order of Chivalry. If acceptable, he will be dubbed a Knight after completing a night-long initiatory vigil, which can be approximated as a Test of Holiness (roll POWx3 on D100). If an applicant is devoted to any Saint, success in the vigil is automatic.

A knight must give his possessions to his heirs, or sell them. He may only own the tools of his new trade: this will normally include full armour and traditional knightly weapons. He must serve in the army of Loskalm for 90% of the time, though it is possible to appeal to the general for a year's Leave of Errantry.

Knights may not labour with their hands for profit, except with the permission of their lords. Their job is to defend the countryside, upholding Truth, Justice, and the Loskalmi Way. The knights serve as officers in the Army and Navy, and are subject to the commands of wizards and lords.

Where possible, knights receive the use of iron weapons and occasionally iron armour. Such artifacts must be returned to the lord if the knight goes on to become a wizard. Knights are allowed to ride horses; this is the distinguishing mark of this social class.

Training in the knightly skills is free while serving with fellow-knights: these include weapon attacks and parries, First Aid, Human Lore, Listen, Orate, Ride and Scan.

Though a knight is taught no more magic than a soldier, he is likely to have long-duration spells cast upon him by wizards and to be granted lessons in the arcane arts in reward for services rendered.

False Armour
Ranged, Temporal

This spell gives the target 1 point of pseudo-armour per intensity in each hit location for the duration. This pseudo-armour is destroyed by incoming attacks, point for point. It is always hit before any protective spell or other armour takes effect (except for Resist Damage, which does takes effect before False Armour).

For example, if a knight had an Intensity 6 False Armour spell cast on him, he would have 6 extra armour points in each location. If he was then

struck for 4 points of damage in his chest, his chest location would only have 2 false armour points left, but his other locations would still have 6, until they, too, were hit.



Wizards

The Wizards of Loskalm are teachers, religious functionaries, administrators, scribes, and, of course, magicians. In wartime, some support the knights, while others fight as the Grand Knights of Loskalm. In peace, they sustain the spiritual needs of the land and its people. They are directed by the nobility, who are all adept wizards.

An aspiring wizard must be a shining example of Hrestoli Chivalry. He must have a melee weapon attack of 90%, a parry of 90%, and one other knightly skill at 90%. He must demonstrate his prowess in a Tourney, and win admiration.

He must also fulfil all the normal requirements to become a sorcerers apprentice: a magic skills category modifier of +10 or better, and the following skills at 25% or more: Read/Write Western, World Lore, Intensity. An Adept must be prepared to take him on as an apprentice wizard (this can be simulated by a POWx3 roll), and the candidate must submit to the Apprentice Bonding ritual (costing 1 POW).

Wizards are fed, housed, and appropriately honoured for the labours they perform for the kingdom. Some work as village chaplains, town priests, or in the courts of nobles. Others study in the universities, or serve with the army as Grand Knights.

Loskalmi wizards are still students of sorcery, equivalent to apprentices in other cultures; those who master sorcery are the Adepts. A wizard must spend 90% of his

time performing various religious and mundane duties, studying and maintaining his sorcery skills. Each year he will receive 400 hours' teaching (a full season) from his Adept master. Wizards may learn all the arcane arts of Sorcery, including the manipulations of Range, Duration and Multispell, and will devote much of their time to mastering these.

Drain Soul
Ranged Instant

As per the spell description given in Gods of Glorantha's "Cults Book," page (xx).

Adepts

Adept wizards are masters of sorcery. To qualify as an adept, the aspiring wizard must have the following skills at 75% or better: one Ritual or Lore, two sorcery skills, and two sorcery spells. Moreover, he must satisfy his master with his Hrestoli piety and his understanding of the mysteries of the Idealist Faith; this can be simulated by a Test of Holiness (POWx3 on 1D100).

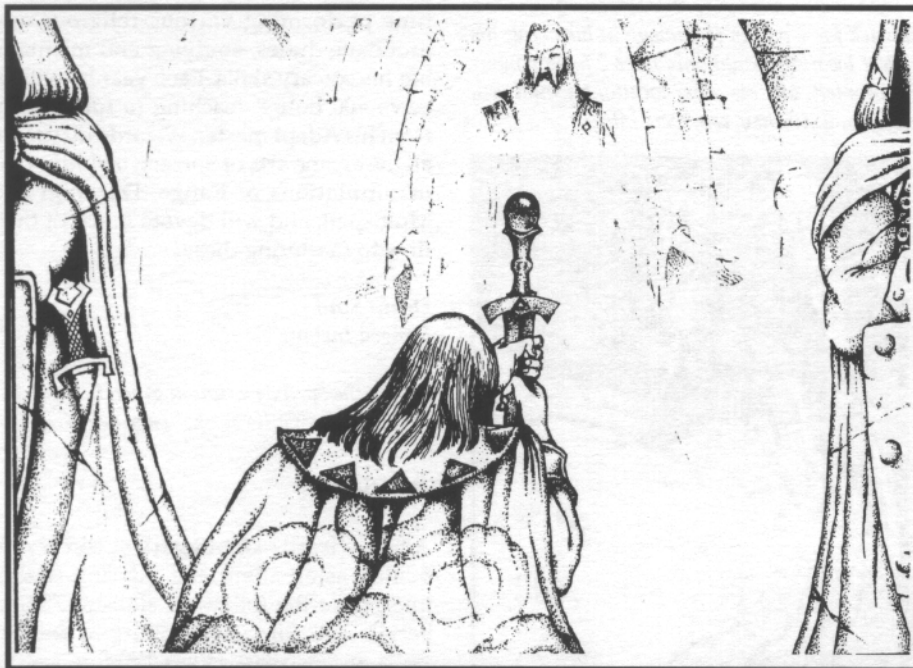
Suppress Paganism
Ranged, Temporal

If the target fails to resist, his chance to cast spirit magic is reduced by 5% per intensity.



Lords

The Lords of Loskalm rule their society. They answer only to other, more potent, nobles. The class can broadly be divided into Lords Temporal, Lords Spiritual, and Lords Military, depending on whether their prime concern is with administration of the State, Church or Army. Above all the Princes, Cardinals and Generals is the King of Loskalm.



An aspirant to the rank of Lord must be an Adept wizard. He must devise a new application for sorcery, and submit it to the scrutiny of the Examiners of the Watchdog Council; success in this test can be simulated by a POWx2 roll on D100, attempted once per year. He must also be an honourable man, faithful to the laws and customs of Malkion and Hrestol, and must have proven himself to be Idealistic, Chivalrous and Pious in his past service. There must also be a need for a new lord at the time of his investiture - this last requirement is often the hardest to fulfil.

The investiture of a new lord is cause for celebration throughout his assigned domain. A lord is the final arbiter for all those under his rule. If he is a Lord Spiritual, his pronouncements on ecclesiastical matters are supreme. If he is a Temporal ruler, his judgement in mundane and legal matters is final. If he is a Military leader, his decisions in battle are followed without question. All taxes are delivered to the lord to use as he sees fit.

The only real restrictions upon a lord are those enjoined by society, his God, and his liege. He is supposed to judge fairly and administer competently and wisely. Blatantly incompetent or dishonest lords may be arrested by their outraged peers, and brought before the High Council of Loskalm.

Major Saints

Prince Hrestol, Saint and Prophet, received a vision of the angelic Prophet Malkion, one year after the dawning. He was in-

spired to break the traditional bounds of society in order to rescue the Kingdom of Seshneg from its barbarous enemies. He is credited with discovering the rank of Knighthood and the spirit of the Crusade. Yet before his final victory against the Basmoli, he was exiled from the land for offending against the evil Serpent Queen, Seshna, his new stepmother: after years of journeying through the Isles of the Western Ocean, he was condemned as a heretic by the Brithini, and gloriously martyred in Sogolotha Mambrola. Hrestol was assumed bodily into the Solace of Glory, and no relics are known. Most of the locations of his life are now underwater, having sunk with Old Seshnela: the precise site of his martyrdom in Sog City is known, and is a popular pilgrimage site for pious Malkioni of all churches.

King Siglat the Wise is hailed as a Saint by the Church he founded. The offspring of Prince Snodal's liaison with the magical Damosel of the Black Veil, who dwelt in far-distant Altinela, his more-than-human wisdom revealed itself through his actions as ruler of Loskalm. When the kingdom was imprisoned during the Syndics Ban, Siglat's divine visions enabled him to guide his people in the paths of Idealist Virtue: a perfect monarch and a perfect man.

***SIGLAT'S BLESSING:** When invoked as a Saint, Siglat fills the blessed individual with his Idealism. This doubles his Orate skill when attempting to inspire other Hrestoli Idealists. It costs 3 POW to gain Siglat as a Patron Saint.*

Saint Talor, the Laughing Warrior, was a companion of Arkat who redeemed the

Kingdom of Akem from vile Deceit in the Chaos Wars which brought the Dawn Age to a close. He smote the Tarjinian Bull, and cursed the pagan Telmori people, revealing them for the brute beasts that they were. In a painful struggle, Talor and his alliance of soldiers of Akem, Orlanthi, and savage Rathori barbarians drove Gbaji's Bright Empire from Fronela. Talor cleaned northern Peloria of its curses and marched into Dorastor at the same time as Arkat's horde of trolls. Arkat's and Talor's armies met, witnessed Gbaji's destruction, and made great celebration.

Afterwards, when Arkat's Stygian darkness overcame Ralios, Talor warded it from his land, instead shining for all his people as a beacon of pure Light and hope. He is remembered as the Perfect Knight, and saviour of his kingdom. His song of battle enables the Hrestoli to achieve strength through joy.

Queen Xemela was the mother of Hrestol, who gave all that she had to save her land from a terrible affliction. For her selfless sacrifice, she is revered as patron Saint of healers by all Loskalmi. Indeed, the oath taken by Xemela's Healers is almost the same as that sworn by Soldiers in the Army, declaring their willingness to die if necessary to save their people. This is one of the instances where individuals can rise through the classes of Loskalmi society without achieving military rank, following a different (though no less arduous) path to achieve personal and spiritual fulfilment.

Church Institutions and Popular Movements

The High Council of Loskalm: King Gundreken of Loskalm has followed tradition by appointing five other Hrestoli Lords, including the Ecclesiarch and the head of the Watchdog Council, to advise him as members of the High Council of Loskalm. This august body determines matters of key importance to the State: it formulates foreign policy, decides on matters of war and peace, and is also responsible for the appointment and rotation of Princes and Cardinals between the eight Principalities and Sees of the Kingdom.

The Watchdog Council is an arm of the New Hrestoli Idealist Church of the Kingdom of Loskalm. Its purpose is to scrutinise all developments in Loskalmi theology, sorcery, science and ideology. Anyone within the Kingdom who wishes to publicise a new concept (be it a spell, a slogan or a doctrine) must first obtain the im-



matur of the Watchdog Council: without this, his work will be publicly shunned. Researchers working in sensitive areas may be called in to explain their work. Lines of inquiry are carefully vetted, and those who ignore the Council's decisions may be officially discouraged.

State Orphanages and Schools: In their desire to destroy the hereditary system altogether, some pious Lords have endowed state orphanages and schools. Places in these are awarded according to need and merit, with no account of the child's background. In these establishments, children from all backgrounds are treated in identical conditions, none of them being presented with any advantages denied the others. They are brought up away from the insidious influence of parental love, receiving their education under the benign but dispassionate tutelage of approved instructors. This schooling instills a profound sense of Hrestoli virtue and fair play in all its students; their boyish high spirits are contained by a regime of strict discipline.

Orders of Chivalry: Every knight must join one of the orders of chivalry. Guardians of the great Western chivalric tradition. The Orders uphold the Laws of Chivalry, the cause of Knight Errantry, and ensure that their members always personify the best that the Loskalmi Way has to offer. Each Battalion of the army has a unique Order of Chivalry into which a new knight is initiated. Other orders exist, such as the Golden Banner of Flame and the Order of the Swallow, which are open by invitation only. A knight may only be a member of one Order of Chivalry and to be stripped of that privilege means dishonour and the loss of their status as a knight.

Muscular Hrestolism: This is a spontaneous popular movement found in Sog City and throughout Junora, which manifests itself in clubs of keen and enthusiastic followers. They celebrate the virtuous spirit of Loskalmi Hrestolism in a patriotic and hearty manner, wearing uniforms modelled on those of the Battalions, and parading to demonstrate their support for the kingdoms policies.

Heresy

The Perfecti: The most widespread heresy within modern Hrestolism is that of the Perfecti, or Pure Ones. These believe that the institutions of the Loskalmi state are inimical to holiness, that progression through the classes cannot be achieved within the structures of the established church, as the lords and wizards of

Loskalm are too interested in the trappings of worldly power to provide for the salvation of the masses. Through introspection and self-denial, they carry out a spiritual process of development and purification, in which the aspirant to perfection gradually refines his soul and transcends the four aspects. Few have achieved this.

Miscellaneous Notes

Isolationism

Many older Loskalmi are sure that isolationism is the best policy for the kingdom. Loskalm should serve as an Ideal to which other nations can aspire, turning its energies inward to perfect itself. Spiritual harmony would not be possible with knights always riding forth to do battle in foreign nations. Loskalm can remain strong, and defend itself against any aggressor: what need for martial bravado when Right will invariably triumph in the end?

Others accuse them of turning their backs on the outside world, and ignoring the ravages of the Kingdom of War at their very doorstep.

Imperialism

In the Second Age, the kingdom of Loskalm stretched up the Janube Valley as far as the city of Eastpoint. All of Junora and Dona were included in this realm of Greater Loskalm. Among the younger generation, many see it as their manifest destiny to extend Loskalm once again to these "natural frontiers". The Grand Army of Loskalm will liberate these regions from their oppressive, ignorant rulers and integrate their populace once more into the harmony of the Loskalmi State. The bar-

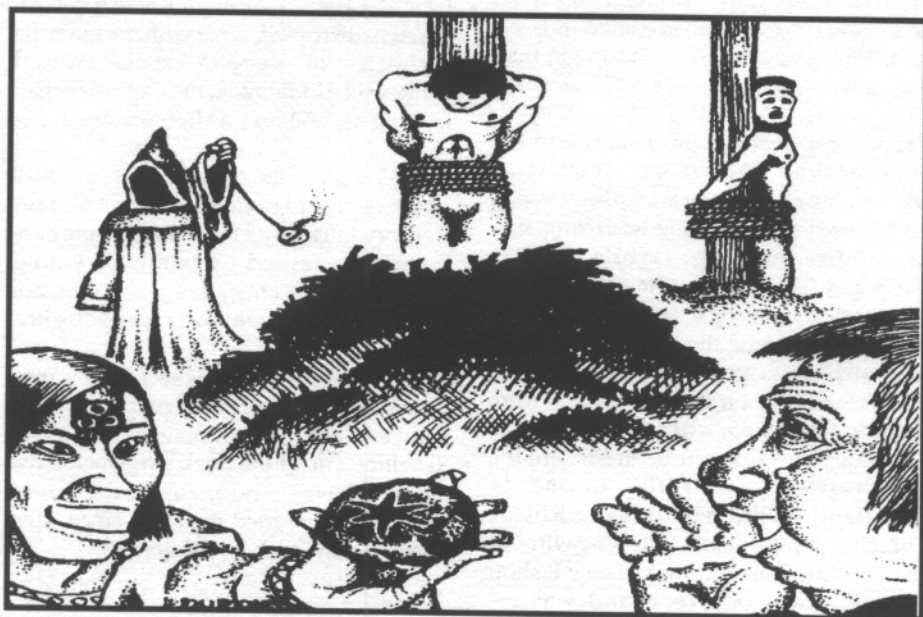
barians who charged in to despoil these regions at the end of the Second Age, bestial savages from the hills and forests, will be driven from the proud cities back to their native haunts!

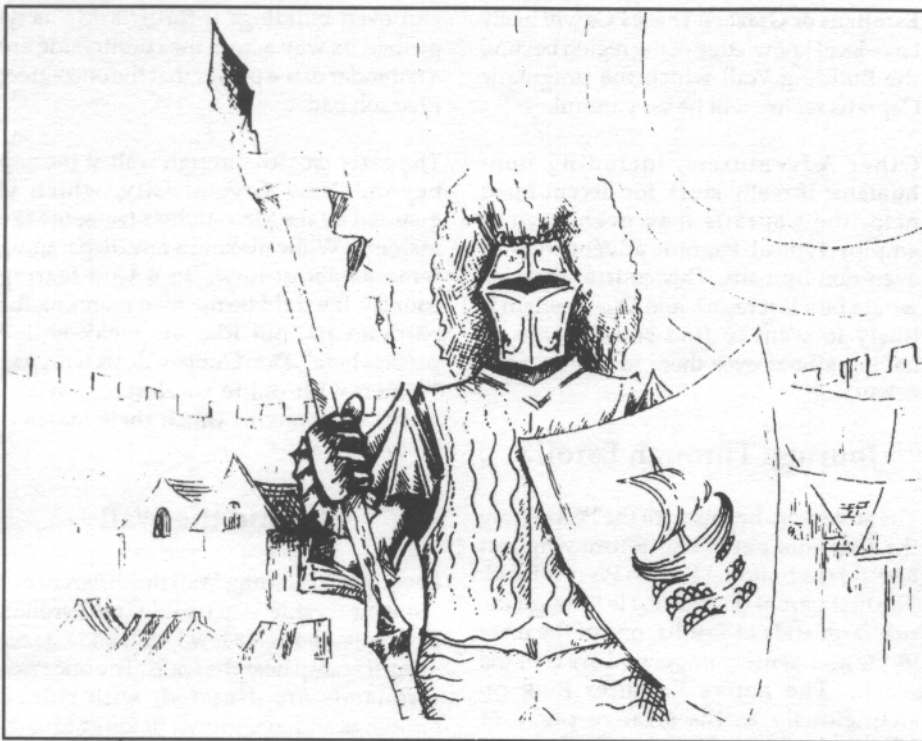
Forward, ever Eastwards!

Virtue or Hypocrisy?

Foreign critics often comment on the apparent divergence of Ideal from Reality in the Kingdom of Loskalm. They say that although everyone professes to adhere to the pure and virtuous path of New Hrestoli Idealism, few are prepared to admit that this egalitarian doctrine, remarkably successful though it is at keeping the masses content, has made little difference to the actual balance of power in the Kingdom. They say that behind the facade, the great offices of state are still controlled by the same class of people who held them centuries ago: the old rulers, their personal friends, and those able enough to overcome the obstacles placed in their way by the System. Despite the cant about openness and a "land of opportunity," the reality of Siglat's Dream is that nothing essential has changed. The names and faces are different, but the old structures are still present.

Of course, the noble members of the Watchdog Council heartily refute such suggestions as the tattle of bitter and envious men. They can point out the many men (and women) of lowly birth who have risen to positions of power and influence. They also explain that the Loskalmi Way is not one of power seeking, but of loyal service to one's Ideals and one's country: something which the most humble farmer is as capable of doing as the King himself!





DU TUMERINES Across the river, the du Tumerines have their wharves. They have been trading in Nochet longer than the Capratis, and once held the license to Alata and the grain monopoly. They were outbid for it by the Capratis about 20 years ago, and were forced to move across-river. The suburb they established there is known as Tumerwal. Tumerwal is considerably larger and more comfortable than Alata, and is building a fine Western-inspired Cathedral for the Bishop. Nevertheless, even the du Tumerines have to admit that the locus of almost all trading activity in the city still takes place over the river at the markets by Alata. It grates the du Tumerines to have lost the grain monopoly, but since then they have managed to win a number of smaller concessions including a monopoly on all trade from Longsi Land and the license to export the famous Esrolian greenware pottery. Tumerwal is ruled by the patriarch of the family, Alabart du Tumerine, in concert with his Bishop (and nephew), Vancelain.

The Rokari see of Nochet was created at the instigation of the du Tumerines shortly after losing the grain monopoly. The Bishop resides in Tumerwal, and the holder of this post has always been a du Tumerine. As they are members of the Rokari faith too, the Bishop claims spiritual sway over the Capratis.

Du Tumerines are characteristically arrogant and overbearing, but sincerely religious. Their brand of Rokarism has an evangelistic flavour which the more

worldly Capratis find somewhat repellent.

The Mission

Having purchased the title to Wyrms Hold from Garth du Tumerine, the Capratis need to send a party out beyond the Building Wall to the site to stake their claim and establish it as a trade post. The player characters are hired as escorts to the Capratis group sent out. The stakes are high, both because the Capratis stand to make handsome profits if a reliable trade route to the Lunar Empire can be re-established, and also because of the personal ambitions of the people involved.

The Capratis Party

The Lord

Guillam Capratis (ambitious, devious, tenacious), the illegitimate son of the old Don of Alata, whose recent death has left his status in the Lord Caste somewhat uncertain. Guillam knows he must succeed in the Wyrms Hold venture to secure his position. He has a tenuous claim to the title of Don, but he knows his audacious scheme to marry the young Donna (technically, his stepmother) and take the title would be dismissed as indecently ambitious, for now. However, should the new trade route through Wyrms Hold be secured...

The Wizard

Father Teoberdt (pragmatic, unprincipled, calculating), a convert from the Aeolian Church during Richard of Malkonwal's campaigns. He fled to Nochet after

Richard's fall, and knows he can never return to Heortland. Teoberdt joined the Rokari Church purely for personal gain, but in his exile felt snubbed by Bishop and the other clergy because of his "barbaric" background. However, as a shrewd politician (who unfortunately backed the wrong side), he has exactly the sort of qualities in a priest that the Capratis find useful, if not openly admire.

The Knight

Sir Pegulen "du Voi", (brash, assertive, self-confident), actually a farmer's son from somewhere in the backwoods of Seshnela. Pegulen claims to be born of the Knight caste, a pretence conveniently overlooked by the Capratis here in Nochet, where skilled western knights are hard to come by and must be taken at face value when found. Pegulen has tied his fortunes to those of Guillam Capratis, who has promised him a Knightly marriage once his own status in the Lord caste is assured.

The Peasants

As befits their status, Guillam, Teoberdt and Pegulen each bring servants with them; all male. - *Ciscard* (taciturn, deferential, diligent), Guillam's hardworking manservant, shuns all non-Rokari. Nevertheless, he cooks for the whole party. - *Luitprand* (fastidious, responsible, loyal) is Guillam's varlet, taking care of his master's armour, weapons and mount. - *Barmast* (sullen, resentful, sly), a Heortlander like his master, although unlike Teoberdt the manservant has never taken a Westernised name. He is still a closet Aeolian. - *Estang* (attentive, willing, hero-worshipping), more a squire than manservant, Estang may one day masquerade as a knight just like his master, Sir Pegulen.

The Pagans

The Capratis have hired three Esrolite muleteers to supervise the mule train carrying the supplies needed to occupy the fort. *Morb*, *Divit* and *Steeff* are all typical Esrolian males (downtrodden, timid, dull-witted) and are essentially non-combatant. None has ever been beyond the Building Wall.

Recruitment

Players characters from a variety of backgrounds can become involved in the Capratis venture to establish Wyrms Hold as a trade post. For Rokari, the Capratis are remarkably pragmatic, and their toleration of other religions and cultures has been a contributing factor to their success as trader princes across the continent. Resources are limited so far from their homeland, and if the Capratis cannot find

trusted employees of their own kind they have few qualms about looking wider for the people they need.

Original negotiations are undertaken by Father Teoberdt, who begins looking for recruits in Alata, followed by the Port District of Nochet. The Capratis are canny, and know that they can obtain good service by offering modest sums up-front but with the promise of generous bonuses at completion. A good incentive for player characters might be the offer of free passage on a Capratis ship to a destination in the West: Pasos, or even Sog City!

The player characters are hired to escort Don Guillam to the site, clear it out of any unwanted denizens (rumour has it the fort is sometimes used by outlaws or Grazer renegades) and await the arrival of Capratis caravan, due sometime in the next few weeks. A band of Rokari knights are due to ride with the caravan, but they are still en-route from Pasos. Don Guillam can't afford to wait for them, which is why he needs the PCs.

Getting Your Player Characters Involved

Player Characters might come from one or many of the following groups:

Fellow Rokari: These would be the employees of choice, unless they are obvious du Tumerine partisans.

Aeolian Malkioni: The Aeolians of Heortland were persecuted bitterly during King Richard's brief reign, and the Capratis have been careful to distance themselves from the actions of the du Tumerine Bishop. Therefore, Aeolian PCs might be distrustful, but could be tempted by Capratis to join the venture.

Other Malkioni: The Capratis rate personal qualities above doctrinal differences, but may be careful about taking on those who show outward signs of being fanatically religious: past experience has showed this can cause problems. (Note this does not apply to non-Malkioni, as they find outward signs of faith and piety among the heathens rather quaint and faintly amusing). Player characters could be from any of the Malkioni sects.

Lunars: The Capratis have a document signed by Fazzur Wideread, acknowledging their interest in Wyrms Hold. Given this, hiring Lunar mercenaries could be advantageous for them.

Esrolians or Grazers: These PCs will likely have local knowledge of the region beyond the Building Wall which the pragmatic Capratis realise will be very useful.

Other Adventurers, including non-humans: If really stuck for decent hired help, the Capratis may even have to employ typical vagrant adventurers or even non-humans. This course of action would be a last resort, and Don Guillam is likely to want to find some means of having a hold over them to ensure good behaviour.

Journey Through Esrolia

The adventure begins with the PCs joining the Capratis party and journeying out beyond the Building Wall to Wyrms Hold. The first part of the journey is through the rich farmlands of Esrolia, one of the most fertile and densely populated areas of the world. The native Esrolites look on suspiciously as the strange party of Westerners ride through their lands, but in these uncertain times they're used to the sight of foreigners: at least the Capratis aren't raiders like the Wolf Pirates, the Ditali, the Solanthi, the Grazers and other barbarian outsiders of recent memory...

The Building Wall itself rises like a wall of jagged coral; the uprooted remains of trees

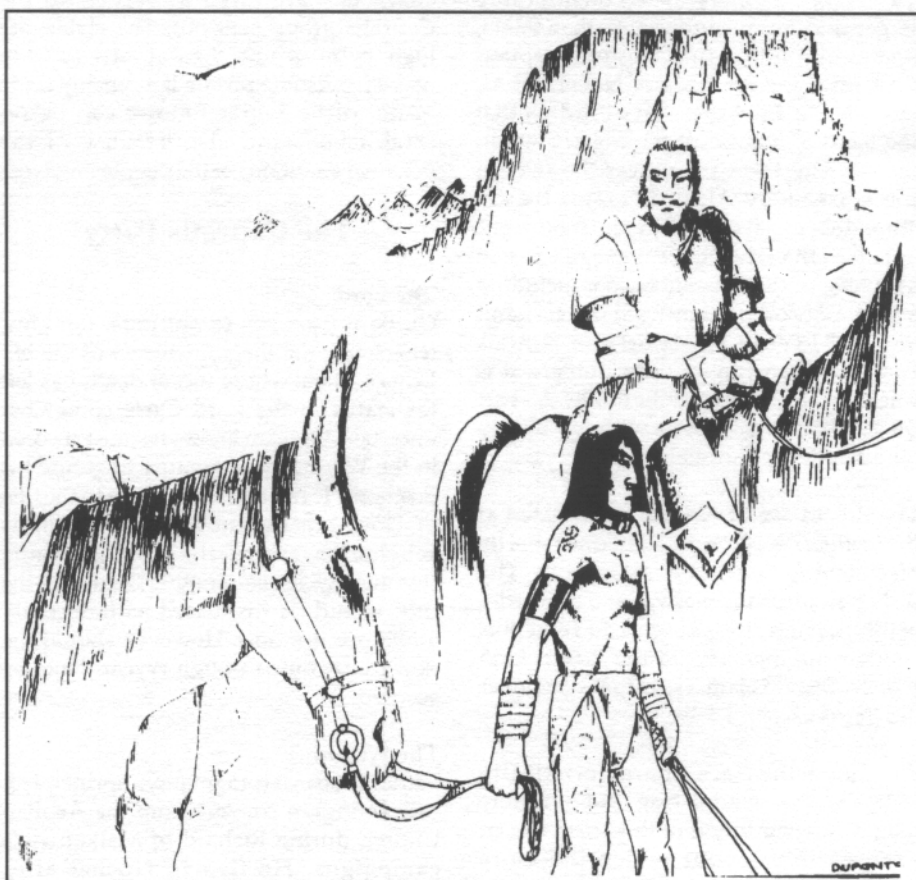
and even buildings it thrust aside as it pushed its way across the countryside are a reminder of the power that the once-great Pharaoh had.

The party crosses through wall at the gap beyond New Crystal City, which is guarded by the Matriarchy's fearsome axe maidens. While making a few disparaging remarks about how "in a God-fearing country, it would be the men manning the battlements, not like the weak-willed pansies here", Don Guillam deals with Axe Women with polite condescension and warns everyone to watch their manners around them.

Beyond the Wall

Beyond the Building Wall the difference in the countryside is palpable: no Esrolian lives here, though a few Ditali and Grazer outcasts camp near the walls. The once rich farmlands are deserted, with ruined buildings and overgrown fields gradually petering out into featureless rolling grasslands.

From the wall it is about a day's journey to Wyrms Hold (about 45 key-miles). Don Guillam intends to camp short of the destination, so that they can arrive at Wyrms Hold early the next morning.





Wyrms Hold looms high on a rise above the Runnel River, the stony blocks ringing the site looking like strange giant teeth. Smoke rises from inside, indicating the fort is occupied. Track rolls indicate a large number of hoof prints in the area around the fort, which might lead the PCs to suspect that Grazer outlaws have occupied it.

The Bandits

The first task the group has is to evict the current occupants: "Count" Twang and his gang of Beast Valley renegades. This gang has recently begun taking a "toll" from travellers along the road from the Building Wall to Dragon Pass and their leader, a centaur called Twang Quickhoof, has proclaimed himself the new "Count" of Wyrms Hold, a claim even more presumptuous than that of the first Count.

The bandits live in the fort itself, where they have crudely rebuilt some of Count Garth's shelters. The scaffolding giving access to the mines in the cliff face collapsed long ago, but Twang has lowered several prisoners down on ropes.

"COUNT" TWANG AND THE GANG

Twang Quickfoot, a charismatic young centaur (boastful, ambitious, reckless), expelled from his herd by its stallion-king for rutting without permission. He was later exiled from Beast Valley for banditry, and fled over the Runnel River with a small herd of adoring brood-mares. There is a price on his head if he ventures beyond the Stone Cross. Twang earned his first name from his astonishing prowess with the bow, and his second from his swiftness.

"Count" Twang's gang is a menagerie of beast people which varies in size from season to season; however, his constant allies include:

Four young stallions, well-trained and totally in awe of their leader: Dornor - cruel, ambitious, energetic Crankus - loyal, dependable, unimaginative Chraff - reckless, opinionated, musical Mured - pliable, brave, stupid

Sisero (cynical, realistic, cautious), an escaped slave centaur, gelded by his cruel Lunar masters. Although older, wiser and a better leader than Twang, he cannot lead the herd because of his affliction. He provides wise counsel to the reckless Twang.

Roue (lustful, vain, sly), an elderly satyr and Mutiog (sadistic, surly, lazy), an incredibly obese Tuskerless tusk-rider. Both are extremely dangerous around the prisoners, for different reasons, and this is one of the reasons why captives are held in the cliff-side cavity out of their reach.

Horus and Suroh (bestial, hungry), manticore twins, more pets than comrades.

Agapanthus (belligerent, cowardly, taunting), a duck warrior who claims to be a Sword Drake of Humakt.

The mares (protective, passive): Twang's six centaur wives, and their foals.

Sisero's Ploy

As the party rides up close, what appears to be a Lunar officer rises up over one mortared gaps between the blocks. This is Sisero, the centaur who escaped from the Lunars with his master's armour. Seen only from the waist up, Sisero makes a very convincing looking Lunar officer in his fine plumed helmet, particularly as he speaks fluent New Pelorian.

In an appropriate accent, Sisero tells the PCs that this is now "Fort Equinox", a Lunar outpost, and they must leave immediately (you might want to use the Taunting Frenchman in Monty Python's Holy Grail as a model). He styles himself as "Captain Sisero Redtail, Commander of the 1st Mirin's Cross Red Dragoons" (Human Lore: the Red Dragoons are elite Lunar cavalry, feared for their deadly charges).

A critical Scan or special Animal Lore reveals that there is something strange about the Lunar officer's posture, and there are no other Lunar soldiers or indeed anyone else visible.

Sisero wants to delay the PCs as long as he can, because "Count" Twang and his wild stallions (Dornor, Crankus, Chraff and Mured) are out raiding, and not expected back until this morning (they will arrive in 1d4-1 hours). He will attempt to carry out tortuous "negotiations", and as he has an excellent knowledge of Lunar military practices and knows all sorts of details about various Lunar officers and officials, his imposture can be very persuasive. He warns he will Mind Blast anyone who comes closer than the foot of the mound, and says he has a full squadron of Red Dragoons behind ready to ride out at his command: at this, a cheer rises up from inside the fort (all the assembled denizens, trying to sound martial). Listen rolls also

detect the sounds of neighing horses and hooves against stone.

Reconnoitre

Don Guillam is reluctant to move against the Lunars, even if he does consider their occupation of the fort a betrayal of the deal he struck with them. The lone Lunar officer perturbs him though, and he orders the PCs to see if they can sneak their way over the ditch and up the mound so they can get a look inside the fort. It is quite easy to skirt round to the flanks out of Sisero's sight, but the satyr Roue, the fat Tusk Rider Mutiog and the duck Humakti Agapanthus are hiding at various points along the wall looking out for just this sort of thing.

Another option the PCs might explore is climbing up the cliffs from the Runnel River side, but this might be quickly dismissed as it involves swimming the fast-flowing river and scaling a sheer 30m cliff. From here though, Scans indicate a number of mines cut into the face.

The Storming of the Fort

Once Sisero's imposture is clear, Don Guillam orders a storming of the fort. While one group diverts the limited number of defenders at the ramp, the others will scramble their way in over the wall on the other side. He, Sir Pegulen and Father Teoberdt intend to remain mounted, so they will lead the assault on the ramp. Beyond this, let the PCs formulate the finer details of the assault.

Without their leader Twang, the other outlaws' response to an all-out attack is simple: they flee. Twang's mares know of several points along the ring of stones where they and their children can squeeze through and make their hesitantly down and through the ditch to freedom; if it comes to this they will then gallop into the plains and only the fastest rider will be able to catch them. Only Horus and Suroh, the manticore twins, stay to fight on to the death after the others have fled.

Count Twang Shows Up

Just as the PCs launch their attack might be a dramatically opportune time for Twang and other centaur outlaws to show up. Twang will want to ride over the ramp into the fort, to look for the safety of his beloved brood mares and colts (he cares little for the other members of his gang). Inside the fort there is plenty of room for lance charges and mounted combat, in and



around the standing stones. Twang has no particular affection for Wyrms Hold. When making their escape, at least one of the centaurs should make a heroic, death-defying leap off the cliff into the water below (just like in those Western movies in the days when film producers could be cruel to horses).

Of all the bandits, Agapanthus the Duck and the obese Tusk Rider Mutiog are the only two unable to make a swift escape. The feisty duck is willing to change sides and might make a useful addition to the fighting force, if the PCs can convince Don Guillam to overcome the Rokari's prejudice against non-humans.

The Prisoners

A coil of knotted rope is tied to one of the great blocks on the clifftop side of the fort. Below here in one of the mines are Twang's three prisoners, whom he was hoping to sell for ransom. If they register that the fort has been liberated, they'll call out loudly to be rescued. The cliff face is especially sheer here, making climbing out of the cave extremely difficult (the cave is 11 meters down the 35 meter cliff - a fall drops into the churning rapids below).

TWANG'S PRISONERS

Yanastan River Laughter (*articulate, honest, grateful*), a Grazer warrior, kept alive only because the Grazelanders captured one of Twang's mares when they were out raiding in Grazer territory some time ago. Twang was hoping to arrange a swap. Though Twang's gang do not know it, Yanastan is a cousin of his tribal chieftain, and could likely be swapped for a good bit more than the captive mare.

Nihilo of Nochet (*pedantic, male chauvinist, inquisitive*), the Lhankor Mhy scholar who carried out the first survey of Wyrms Hold. He was returning to the fort to gather data for his priesthood dissertation but was deserted by his escort of Grazer braves at the first sign of trouble. He has spent much of his imprisonment arguing with Yanastan, even though Yanastan is from a completely different Grazer clan than the unreliable braves he hired.

Vross Hama (*sullen, depressive, laconic*), an impoverished Humakti, hired on as Nihilo's personal bodyguard at Jonstown. Vross is ready to give the irritating scholar the flick, and will hire on to the Capratis group if the PCs suggest it (otherwise, he appears later as a useful advisor to Garth Du Tumerine and his knights).

Erekanst (*secretive, cynical, trustworthy*), a Henotheist Humakti, en route to the troll Shadowlands from Safelster in Ralios. He was gravely injured in the head by an arrow shot by one of his captors, and currently drifts in and out of feverish delirium, though because of medical help forced from Nihilo, he will live. Big Secret: Erekanst is a member of a Ralian secret society called the Kobakuruun. It attracts devotees from Humakt, Zorak Zoran and Arkat and is fervently anti-Chaos, though not opposed to Illuminates (as most Arkati are). Since his capture, Erekanst has spent much of his waking hours talking with Vross Hama, and debating the truth of Humakt's place in the cosmos. He has not revealed his true nature to Vross. He would be interested in similar debates with Humakti PCs.

The prisoners are extremely grateful to be rescued, and all but Yanastan River Laughter can be persuaded to stay on if treated fairly. Nihilo the Sage asks for permission to continue his research; Vross Hama and Erekanst would make excellent additions to the mercenary force. Vross is very keen to get his sword back, which was taken from him by Twang for his own use, and Erekanst is missing an obsidian amulet he says is of great value.

Of all the prisoners Yanastan the Grazer has been held the longest (three seasons). He is quite weak, having been tortured and assaulted by Mutiog and Roue before Twang put him into one of the mines for his own safety. He asks for a loan of a horse, so that he can return to his herds. Don Guillam is prepared to let him go, but his mercantile nature balks at giving a horse. It is up to the PCs to persuade the Don that good relations with the local Grazers would be beneficial. Yanastan can be made to promise to return with the horse (or other gifts) in a season's time.

Settling In

Now that Wyrms Hold is theirs, the Capratis party can settle in. Twang's gang left little in the way of loot, but there are several mouldering sacks of oilseeds and oats that might make good horsefeed and two large partially butchered ham beetles (strays from the Shadowlands shot down by Twang's bow).

The gang's meagre stash is hidden under a loose flagstone (Search at -25% or Craft: Masonry) in the paved area of the fort; it consists of:

* 1025 silvers in mixed coinage

* assorted jewellery and precious stones worth 240 silvers

* a wand with a matrix for the spirit magic spell Visibility (no conditions)

* a small obsidian kygerlith with a matrix for the Black Arkat spell See Rune Magic (Intensity 5).

The Kygerlith belongs to Erekanst, and Don Guillam claims all coins and jewellery of Western origin (about 30%). He has no interest in the spirit magic matrix.

Exploring the Fort

The PCs now have time to explore the fort, as the manservants begin setting up camp. Don Guillam initially chooses a site on the west side of the mound, well away from the non-human bandits' camp: "We shall not bivouac in beast spoor". Give each PC a World Lore to see that this side is exposed to the extremes of weather, and then a Fast Talk to convince Don Guillam to put comfort before piety.

Places worth exploring include the mines in the cliffs. It is up to you to decide what's in them: most may be empty,

* Items of Dragonewt manufacture. Maybe even a slumbering Dream Dragon!

* A secret stash belonging to Count Garth, including hard-tack food supplies (most of it rotten by now), weaponry, armour; maybe even a full suit of plate barding for a war-horse!

* A chaos altar, used by itinerant Harpies or other flying chaos fiends.

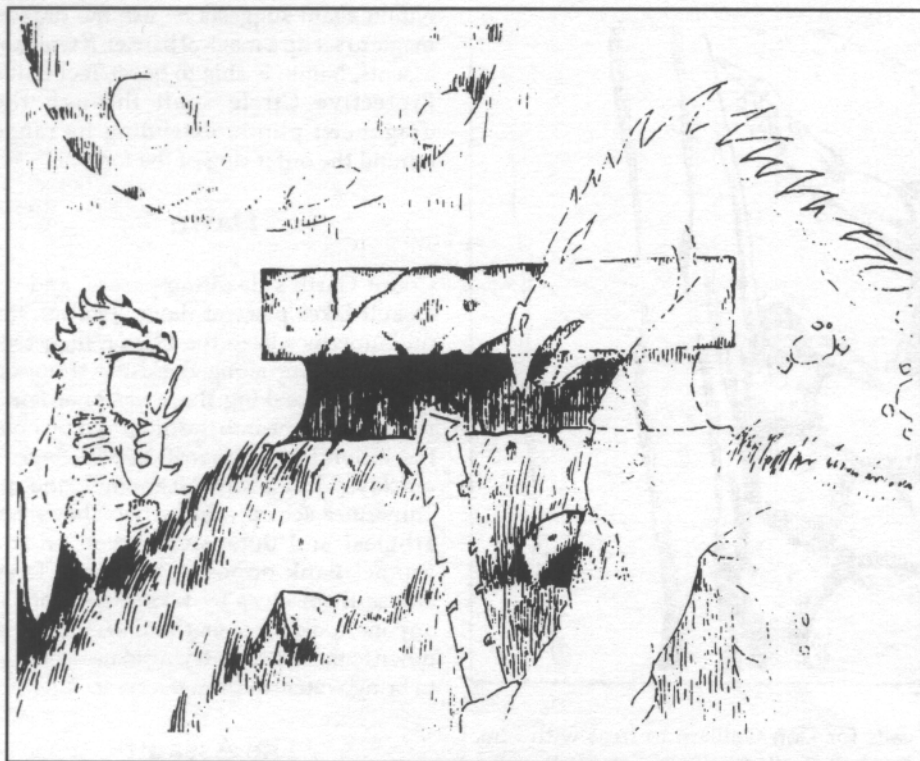
* The burial chamber of Count Garth's knights. Haunted, maybe?

* The half-finished water cistern. Is the water fit to drink, or fouled by disease or poison? Could be of critical importance during the siege.

Dragon Magic

If Nihilo the Sage is induced to stay, the PCs can learn the whole story of Wyrms Hold from him (see Holiday Glorantha). He has a few theories he wants to test out on the huge plinth on the top of the mound, the one the Esrolite soldiers were incinerated on. He asks the PCs to ask Don Guillam for permission to go up there to conduct his tests, and would really appreciate some assistants!

Don Guillam is reluctant to let this heathen



meddle with his fort, but if Nihilo is permitted up there, he begins his studies. Throughout the day, and late into the night, Nihilo works at scraping out faded runes on the large plinths and painting on new ones. This activity is accompanied by occasional weird flashes and static-like noises (as if someone were trying to tune a broken-down old radio). At several stages, a procession of ghostly dragonewts flickers into existence for a few seconds, performing a silent ritual. They cannot be interacted with in anyway unless a Visibility spell is cast (remember the matrix in Twang's cache?). This causes one of the dragonewts to materialise for the duration of the spell (use either the scout or warrior dragonewt stats from the Deluxe RQ Glorantha Book). The corporeal dragonewts continue with their ritual, oblivious to their surrounds. If interacted with physically, the dragonewts attack until no longer disturbed, then go back to what they were doing.

Finally, near dusk, the mound is bathed in a sudden flash of energy and a beam of bright light flashes out and forms a ring around the outer walls of Wyrms Hold for a couple of seconds. Nihilo runs down the mound excitedly claiming that he has discovered a magical means of defending the walls, but may be crestfallen to find everyone flat on the ground or cowering in fright, and with the horses spooked and trying to get away. Finally, Nihilo's meddling with dangerous powers has gone far enough for even Don Guillam's

naturally tolerant nature, and he forbids him to return to the mound until further notice.

Darkness

Father Teoberdt casts a 10 meter radius Protective Circle spell, backed by Damage Resistance intensity 4 and Spell Resistance and Spirit Resistance, both at Intensity 2. It has a duration of 3 days.

Night falls, and the party settle down to sleep inside the Protective Circle; Rokari at one side around their lord, others at the far side. Sir Pegulen orders the PCs to arrange watches. Get one person on each of the watches to try a Scan roll. The first person to succeed swears he saw a large dark troll loping around through the standing stones on the far side of the fort out of the corner of his eye: in the morning, Track rolls discover trollish footprints over there. (This was Erekanst, assuming trollish form for obscure arcane reasons).

Knights on the Horizon

The next morning the group barely has time to finish Ciscard's delicious breakfast when whoever's on lookout duty (Vross or Erekanst if no-one else was appointed) spots a large group of horsemen approaching from the south, from behind the Building Wall. Characters with Farsee or those with keen eyes (Scan) will detect the glint of metal and the reflection of shining shields: knights!

Don Guillam is heartened by the sight, assuming it is his knights from Pasos, arrived early. "Soon your work will be done, fellows," he cries out to the player characters cheerfully. He sends out Sir Pegulen and the PCs to greet them. Estang eagerly asks if he can go too.

Of course, the knights are not Don Guillam's men, but his arch-rivals, the du Tumerines! Count Garth du Tumerine has repudiated his deal with the Capratis and wants his fort back. Already deeply in debt, he has attracted a band of landless Rokari knights to his cause with the promise of grants of territory if he succeeds.

As Sir Pegulen and the PCs approach, several of the knights detach themselves from the main group and charge to meet them. Pegulen has his Scan percentage to identify them as knights in du Tumerine service; if the roll fails, the first definite sign they are hostile is when the lower lances and charge! What follows is a desperate dash back to the safety of the fort, with the knights in hot pursuit. To liven things up a little, you might get the overeager Estang to charge at the knights himself, in which case Pegulen will be obligated to ride after him. If the PCs also don't come to Estang's aid, it is possible that the young squire and possibly even Sir Pegulen too will be captured by the du Tumerines!

The du Tumerine Force

The Lord, Count Garth du Tumerine (*arrogant, irritable, inflexible*), approaching 60, Count Garth is in poor health and getting too old for campaigning. Repudiating the deal he made with the Capratis and attempting to win back Wyrms Hold is his last throw of the dice, and he knows it. Count Garth no longer uses the sword, in a desire to imitate the Brithini Talar Caste (and hopefully gain an extended lifespan), and instead wields a jewelled sceptre which doubles - purely coincidentally, of course - as a wicked mace.

The Priest Father, Pederik (*sadistic, servile [to Count Garth], contemptuous [to everyone else]*), Count Garth's personal chaplain, Pederick once served as an Inquisitor in the Order of the Golden Lance and was one of those responsible for the bloodily unsuccessful campaign to convert the Aeolian Heortlanders. During his Lunar captivity he became a devotee of the World of Losers Movement, a tolerated Rokari heresy which believes purification and Solace can be obtained through pain and mutilation. In Pederik's case though, this often seems to be pain and mutilation

If things are going bad for the PCs, Nihilo might be able to summon up the ghostly dragonewts again, up and around the ring wall. Once hit with the Visibility spell, they'll attack anything that threatens them, and the PCs might have some fun trying to steer the du Tumerines into them. Erekant might assume troll form again, wading into the knights or footmen with devastating effect.

The Siege of Wyrms Hold

The du Tumerines return to their camp to lick their wounds, but use their mounted men to blockade the fort. Count Garth hopes to force the defenders out through thirst, as he well knows the problems of water supply at the fort.

The Capratis have limited water supplies, but drinking water is tantalisingly close: the river at the foot of the cliffs, and possibly in the half-finished cistern under the fort. Unfortunately, the only entrance is via the cliff-face, about 6 meters down. Nihilo can tell the party about it, if they have not yet discovered it. The PCs will have to come up with a means of getting to water, all the while dodging arbalest bolts and heavily armoured knights. Possible solutions might include Father Teoberdt's Aeolian storm-magic.

Single Combat

When it becomes obvious to Count Garth that he can't drive the Capratis out by thirst, he offers a novel solution: resolution by single combat, a somewhat antiquated but still legally valid way for Rokari to settle disputes. In obvious poor health himself, he proposes each side send a champion: Sir Arri is his obvious choice (one of the lesser knights if Sir Arri was killed in the initial assault). The du Tumerines give Don Guillam two hours to consider.

A Cunning Ruse!

After some discussion with Sir Pegulen and Father Teoberdt, Don Guillam accepts the offer. However, it is only a cunning ruse! While everyone's attention is distracted by the champions' bout, Teoberdt intends to use some special magic left over from his Aeolian days to secretly fly the PCs out of the fort so they can get help. Teoberdt adroitly rationalises his use of heretical Aeolian magic by claiming, "St Rokar will surely forgive me, for I rid myself of my former tainted ways in a last great expenditure to aid the common weal". (This is even more convincing if the PCs are non-Rokari themselves, already tainted by pagan ways).

Don Guillam gives the PCs a document, sealed with the Capratis stamp. He tells them that they don't have sufficient supplies to hold out for long, and should Count Garth dare launch another assault, the fort will surely fall. The PCs are to seek help wherever they can find it, and return as quickly as they can to Wyrms Hold.

Alata is the best choice, though to get there they would have to pass by the du Tumerines - long detours north through Grazer country or south into the Shadowlands are both dangerous and time-consuming. Another option is to head north through Beast Valley to the Lunar fort at Duckpoint. The Lunars have acknowledged Capratis possession of Wyrms Hold, but getting Lunar support to defend it might require persuasive talking. If they let Yanastan River Laughter go, another choice is to try to find the Grazer clan he belongs to. Yanastan owes them a favour, and the Grazers are probably closer than anyone.

Escape from Wyrms Hold

The Champion

Don Guillam needs a champion: Sir Pegulen is the most appropriate choice, but the Don would prefer to keep his trusted knight by his side. Guillam will take the offer from any PC to act as the champion: if the PC is another Rokari knight well and good; if not, sending out a pagan as his champion to fight Sir Arri is a fine insult to du Tumerine pride. If he's still around, Vross Hama the Humakti is another good candidate, and will also offer to act as a PC's second.

Note, that whoever is chosen, it is unlikely that this character will be able to join up with the rest of the PCs who make their escape during the contest. If none of the players want their character separated from the others for the rest of the adventure

you could get one of them to role-play Sir Pegulen or Vross Hama in the champions' bout.

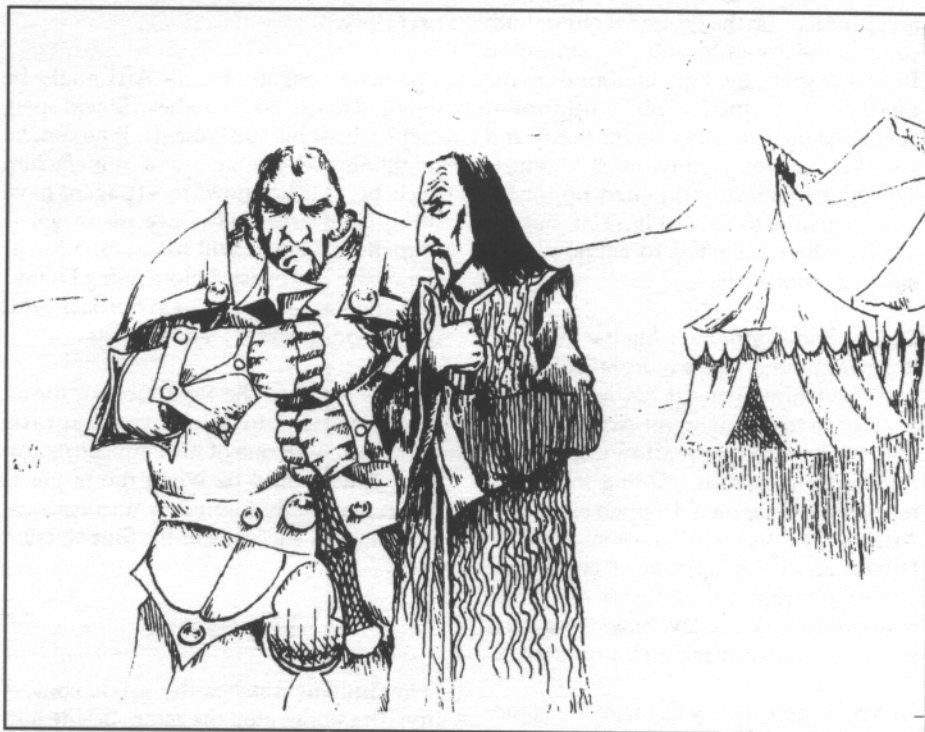
Neither side takes much stock of what happens in the single combat. Don Guillam has no intention of giving up the fort if his champion loses, as he can simply declare that as Count Garth had broken his earlier oath, any promises made to an oathbreaker are themselves not binding. Likewise, if Count Garth loses, Father Pederik declares the Capratis anathema, accusing them of holding heretical views and using pagan magic (not unreasonable, if the champion is not a Rokari). Of course, promises made to heretics are null and void.

Though both sides feel they have nothing to lose by taking part in the single combat, they know if they win extra weight is added to their case should the dispute be settled at a higher level later.

The Bout

The Don instructs his champion to draw out the fight as long as possible, to allow the others time to make good their escape. Father Teoberdt offers magical assistance, in the form of one of his sorcerous spells to the limit of his Free INT. He cannot offer more, as he needs to conserve his magical reserves for the Aeolian storm magic he is about to weave.

The bout takes place on the old Esrolian campsite, which was blasted into barrenness by draconic magic. Following Rokari custom, both sides are permitted to





send another Knight as second and a manservant for each. The du Tumerines send Sir Priamus to support Sir Arri; the PCs might be surprised to see that Sir Priamus is one of the famous Black Knights of Pithdaros, whose ancestors came to Seshnela from Pamaltela hundreds of years ago.

The fight begins on horseback, of course, and proceeds on the ground if one or both combatants are unhorsed. According to Rokari custom, the fight continues to the death, or until one opponent acknowledges the other's superiority and sues for quarter. A chivalrous knight is expected to spare a downed opponent who is unable to defend himself, but the loser is then expected to acknowledge defeat as soon as he is able.

The more his opponent fits the model of Rokari knighthood, the more fairly Sir Arri will fight him. Thus if his opponent is another Rokari knight, Sir Arri's conduct will be chivalrous - allowing him to remount if unhorsed, waiting for him to retrieve his weapon if dropped and so on. After all, he has a reputation to make. However, if the opponent is, say, an Orlanthi barbarian, he fights dirty, and may even sneak in a low blow if his foe is on the ground and asking for quarter.

Sir Arri is protected by Damage Resistance

(Intensity 8, Duration 2) and his spear has been augmented by Damage Boosting (Intensity 8, Duration 2), both cast by Father Pederik. Pederik deliberately enhanced the poisonous spear rather than Sir Arri's sword in the hope this will force the knight to use it. Despite this, Sir Arri will only use the spear on a non-Rokari opponent, and will cast a Damage Boosting of his own on his sword (Intensity 6) if necessary.

Against a "pagan" foe Sir Arri might be tempted to use his Henotheist Shield spell, and some of his spirit magic. If he can, he might also try his hand at a Stupefaction spell, because he knows most pagans have little or no Free INT. Once his target is Stupefied, Sir Arri will have some fun at the victim's expense, before going behind him and king-hitting him in the back with the poison spear.

Pederik watches the fight looking for an ideal moment to attack the Capratis champion with one of his Pain spirits. An ideal time would be when the target is down and badly injured or unconscious, or if Sir Arri succeeds in his Stupefaction spell.

The Escape

Don Guillam watches the single combat from the stones atop the ramp; beside him

stands one of the NPCs in Teoberdt's robes, impersonating the wizard (the sage Nihilo is the ideal candidate, otherwise the Esrolian muleteer Morb has a similar build, though a beard would have to be improvised). Before the champion exits the fort, Don Guillam tells him to do something "special, so that everyone will notice" when he shouts out St Mardron's blessing.

Meanwhile, Teoberdt hides at the back of the fort, near the clifftop, with the PCs making ready for the escape. The first problem is to eliminate the two crossbowmen Count Garth has stationed below the cliff. Left to themselves, both have grown somewhat lax since the beginning of the siege, and have taken to sunning themselves on the grassy bank next to their barricade (50% chance for each: if behind the barricade, only an aimed shot for the head will hit). A carefully-aimed barrage of missile shots might take both of them out, though they will both scramble for cover once the first arrows fly.

After the crossbowmen have either been dealt with (or at least, left cowering behind their shield) Teoberdt spends the last of his Aeolian storm magic, calling upon the Invisible God Orlanth, the Lightbringer Saints and holy St Aeol to aid him. Teoberdt summons a huge sylph to carry the PCs off the cliff and down across the water to the far bank of the Runnel. The sylph cannot carry horses (they are too heavy, refuse to enter the sylph and thrash about in a blind panic so much they can damage the other passengers, themselves and even the sylph).

The du Tumerines have a chance of noticing the breakout, though this depends on what the Capratis champion does to distract them. The sylph is ready to fly 10+1d10 rounds after the bout begins, and once it begins rising up in the air with the PCs on board, Don Guillam shouts out to the champion, "May St Mardron of Blessed Leplain give you strength, lad!"

Judge what the champion does to distract the du Tumerines, and make Scan rolls, one for each of the four castes. Deduct 5%, 10%, 20% or more depending on what the champion does. For example, if all the champion can come up with is just a lusty battle cry, subtract 5% (or maybe even nothing). But, if he points south (away from the fort) and says, "Hey look, the Crimson Bat", or performs an Oscar-winning dying scene, give more generous deductions.



Lord - Count Garth. Scan 40
Wizard - Father Pederik. Scan 35 (halve any deductions for distractions, for Pederik is naturally suspicious and always alert for treachery)
Knight - Priamus, Titus, Turquine, Marhaus etc. Scan 50 (intently watching their master Sir Arri, so deduct an extra 10% from the roll)
Peasant - Footmen. Scan 35

If the escape is spotted, Sir Arri breaks off the fight and orders his knights to head off in pursuit. If the Capratis champion and his second attempt to continue the fight, all the du Tumerine knights join the fight. If they desist, the du Tumerines ignore them and desert the field, leaving the Capratis champion in a position to claim some sort of tenuous and doubtful victory. If the crossbowmen are still able, they get to take pot-shots at the air elemental as it passes overhead (two arbalest bolts at normal chance, followed by two medium crossbow shots at half chance as the sylph moves away to maximum range). This huge sylph has 70 hit points, so it is just possible that the crossbowmen could kill it, in which all those within fall 30 meters to the ground (SPLAT!). All successful hits have a 50% chance of also damaging a random person inside the elemental, at half damage.

Three Choices

The PCs have a letter from Don Guillam, marked with the Capratis seal. Sir Guillam provides them with three possible sources of aid, but if the players think of others you'll have to improvise from here. Each of Guillam's suggestions has its risks and advantages.

Returning to Alata

This might offer the greatest promise of obtaining help, but to get to Alata, the PCs must first cross back over the Runnel River and then break or sneak through the du Tumerine cordon. A pair of Pederik's nasty pain spirits patrol the area from the confluence of the Runnel and New River back to the fort and five key-miles beyond, as do the du Tumerine knights on horseback.

Crossing the empty lands beyond the Building wall risks running into Grazer braves or bandits; keeping to the trail or along the New River risks an encounter with Shadowlands trolls. However, once through the Building Wall, travel in the civilised farmlands of Esrolia is relatively safe and hazard-free.

Once back in Alata the Capratis leadership are very keen to assist Don Guillam against the perfidious du Tumerines. A delegation rows across to Tumerwal to protest to the Rokari Bishop; perhaps some of the characters might testify against Count Garth before Bishop Vancelain. Vancelain listens to the litany of Capratis complaints with a look of studied contempt, before suggesting that if they have a complaint, a simple churchman such as he cannot hope to resolve it and therefore they should take it up with the Prince of Galleys himself, Duke Mulliam of Nolos! The Duke of Nolos is, of course, conveniently thousands of key-miles away back in the west...

As the number of Rokari Knights the Capratis have available is still pitifully small (the ship from Pasos hasn't arrived yet), the PCs are called upon to recruit foreign mercenaries to augment the relief force. If the PCs inadvertently hire on du Tumerine agents or sympathisers, these spies will naturally attempt some form of treachery during the return journey.



The Lunar Option

While the Capratis do have a Lunar document acknowledging their interest in Wyrms Hold, sending for help in this direction is the least likely option to succeed. However, the du Tumerines are unlikely to pursue the PCs far in this direction, both because they fear the

unnatural beastmen of Beast Valley, and also because they expect the PCs to circle back at some point.

The nearest Lunar camp is at the Sartarite city of Duckpoint, about 150 key-miles to the north. To get there, the party must travel through Beast Valley. If "Count Twang" or a significant number of his band got away, now would be an appropriate time for an ambush, made doubly sweet when they learn that their victims are none other than those who drove them out of Wyrms Hold! (Who knows, maybe the PCs manage to recruit Twang and co. to their side. A promise of scads of loot would suffice. Anything's possible!)

The Lunar Commander at Duckpoint, Aleham Ratsbane, leads the 2nd Furthest Foot. Once the Capratis name is mentioned gaining an audience with him is surprisingly easy, and the PCs might be surprised to find that he accepts their story with alacrity (Ratsbane skims profits off the Holy Country trade link, but justifies this by seeing himself as a promoter of free trade in the area). The Lunar commander even knows Don Guillam personally, and asks after his health! He takes the Don's letter when offered it, but only glances at it cursorily before asking the PCs what forces they will require: a century of his finest Foot? a team of Lunar magicians?, why there's even a half-squadron of the famous Red Dragoons in Duckpoint at the moment with nothing to do! He bids his batman serve his guests some wine, calls for his adjutant to deploy the troops, and settles back in his chair to read the Don's letter more carefully. Of course, things can't go this well for long...

Suddenly, the Lunar officer's livid face visibly pales and he begins stammering an apology: he regrets that sending troops will prove to be impossible! Don Guillam's letter notes that the Lunar document acknowledging the Capratis' rights to Wyrms Hold was signed by none other than the Governor-General himself, Fazzur Wideread. Unfortunately, Fazzur was recently replaced in acrimonious circumstances by his rival, Tatius the Bright. Aleham Ratsbane is reluctant to do anything that might offend his new master Tatius, who is currently in the process of weeding out officers he suspects of continued loyalty to his disgraced predecessor.

Aleham can still be convinced, but only to the point of releasing his band of Tarshite Bush Rangers, little more than bandits themselves but currently in Lunar service. Talk of sending in the Furthest Foot or the



Red Dragoons is now simply scoffed at. He expects a huge payment from the Capratis for this favour, and demands the most high-ranking or important PC remain as his hostage to ensure he gets it. (If the PCs strike out with the Lunars, they learn that a mercenary band known as Hannibul's Raiders are currently in town. Further enquiries discover that this is a band of very belligerent ducks, whose leader rides a very rare Teshnan war-elephant!)

Grazer Country

The PCs might decide to strike out into Grazer territory, looking for Yanastan River Laughter and his clan. Yanastan and his people are still in the area, grazing in the rich downs near the foot of the Skyreach Mountains. It is likely the PCs might come across a band of rogue bachelor braves first: exactly the sort the Capratis want to establish the trade post at Wyrms Hold to defend against. Attacking a group of unmounted vendref would be too much for them to resist. If the PCs are failing against them, Yanastan's clan might come over the hills to the rescue: actually, they were lured to the scene with the expectation of sharing in the loot, but when Yanastan sees his rescuers, he tells the rogue braves to keep their hands off. (Of course, if the PCs treated Yanastan cruelly before letting him go, he and his braves will join the rogues in cheerfully slaughtering them). If Yanastan is needed to save the PCs, his debt to them is gone, which might make persuading him to come to the Capratis's aid all the more difficult.

Yanastan is not keen to help the Capratis in their hour of need: as he explains, if he helps them to save the fort, then next will come all manner of dirt-eating vendref to settle around it, like they did in his father's time, and by the time his baby son is in the saddle, there will be no more grazelands for his people.

It is up to the PCs to convince Yanastan that the Capratis are only interested in using the site as a staging post for their caravans, but the du Tumerines - the same people who brought in the dirt-eating farmers last time - are the ones who will occupy and settle the lands around it if they win through.

Yanastan can be persuaded, but demands a special concession in return: his clan's right to graze their herd from the walls of Wyrms Hold to a distance half a day's journey around. The PCs are in no position to offer this, and must convince Yanastan that they are sure Don Guillam will agree to this later.

If Yanastan agrees to help the PCs, he leads a band of four dozen braves (including, most likely, the bachelor rogues) back to Wyrms Hold, and even loans the PCs riding horses.

Back to the Hold!

By whatever means, the PCs return to Wyrms Hold with some sort of relief force. Depending on how long this has taken them, they are greeted by the following situation:

Three Days or Less

Even with a relief force on the horizon, Count Garth still considers himself in a winnable position, as his supplies have not yet run out and he knows the relievers must be weary from a forced march or ride to get back so quickly. He intends to fight and destroy them in pitched battle as soon as they draw near. The Count assembles his full troop (bringing round the arbaests if he's got time), hoping to position himself at the top of a rise. As the enemy approach, he then rides forward giving the Rokari gesture of truce (holding one's weapon by the killing end - in his case, holding his mace upside down). Garth's knights ride just behind him (Scan: they're not giving the truce sign). Suddenly, Count Garth switches hands with his weapon, bringing it round the right way. At this signal, his knights thunder past him down the slope, hoping to smash the relief force with added momentum of the incline.

Look through the stats for the du Tumerines, and pump them all up with magic accordingly (Haste spells on the charging horses, Damage Boosting on lances and swords, etc.). This is a desperate last ditch attempt by Count Garth to win, and he knows if they fail he must flee shamefacedly back to Tumerwal.

Garth and Pederik do not join the fight if they can help it, keeping the footmen in reserve. When the situation calls for it, Pederik drives the footmen forward with his whip, screaming dire threats and curses at them if they fail.

The du Tumerine Knights will rout once half their number falls, or if Count Garth is put out of action. Once the knights go, the footmen follow, regardless of whatever Pederik threatens them with. When Count Garth sees the situation is hopeless, he tries to flee on horseback with Pederik or anyone else who'll follow him.

If Count Garth is captured, the du Tumerines disavow all knowledge of his actions and refuse to ransom him. The Capratis eventually send him back to Pasos for judgement by Duke Porfain.

Fout to Seven Days

The Count is rapidly running out of supplies, and the arrival of the relief force is the last straw. He orders his men to break camp and withdraw. If not attacked or goaded overly much, the du Tumerine party departs in good order, back to Esrolia and the safe but constricting confines of Tumerwal. Count Garth's florid face has a look of thunder; Pederik's face has an ugly cast, but with the hint of an underlying wry sneer. He has unbound several of his nasty pain spirits so they can haunt the area until his return some day.

Despite his growing infirmity, Count Garth continues to plot the restoration of the fort and lands he considers rightfully his, and will remain a nuisance or even an outright danger to the Capratis at Wyrms Hold until the day he dies.

Eighth Day

The relief force arrives while Count Garth is in the midst of a second assault. Despite the bravery of the defenders, it looks as if dragonewt magic will not be enough to hold the determined du Tumerines back this time. The PCs must urge their force to immediately ride in and turn the tide!

Nine Days or more...

Wyrms Hold has fallen! The vanquished and dejected Capratis are met somewhere on the trail, returning to Alata to lick their wounds and plot the triumphant Count Garth's downfall. If the relief force is strong enough, Don Guillam might be convinced to return to the fort for a strike attack, before Count Garth and his men settle in.

The Future?

If Wyrms Hold remains in Capratis hands, two weeks later a group of knights, newly-arrived by ship from the west, arrive at the fort with a large caravan. The establishment of the trade post begins, with great prospects of wealth to be made along this route. Don Guillam is grateful for the PCs' services, and they are amply rewarded. Meanwhile, Count Garth sits in Tumerwal licking his wounds, plotting to return some day and claim what he considers rightfully his...



TWANG'S CAPTIVES

Yanastan River Laughter, male, 23.
Initiate of Yu-Kargzant (Grazer Sun God)

STR 12	CON 17	SIZ 12
INT 14	POW 15	DEX 11
APP 16		

Move: 3 Hit points: 15 Magic points: 15 Fatigue points: 29 DEX SR: 3
Hit locations [Melee/Missile] Head [19-20 / 20] 0/5 Left Arm [16-18 / 18-19] 0/4 Right Arm [13-15 / 16-17] 0/4 Chest [12 / 11-15] 0/6 Abdomen [9-11 / 7-10] 0/5 Left Leg [5-8 / 4-6] 0/5

Arms and Armour: None - Yanastan's bone armour was wantonly destroyed by his captors.

Weapon	SR	Att/Par	Damage	ENC/AP
Lance	3	45/—	1d10+1+horse	1.5/8
1H spear	6	45/15	1d10+1	2/10
Round Shield	8	15/45	1d6	4/10
Javelin	3-10	60/—	1d8	1.5/8
Fist	8	30/15	1d3	—/—
Kick	8	15/0	1d6	—/—

Spirit Magic (75 - ENC): Coordination 1, Farsee, Heal 2, Light, Mindspeech 1, Mobility 3, Slow 4

Divine magic: Catseye x1, Detect Truth x1, Divination x2

Gifts and Geases: Gift of Languages; Never bathe, Speak only truth.
Skills: Communication +10: Orate 36, Fast Talk 47, Bargain 50, Sing 34, Speak Grazelander 80, Speak Tradetalk 65, Speak Sartarite 35, Speak Esrolian 22. Agility +0: Ride 79, Climb 43, Dodge 60. Manipulation +6: Play Flute 63. Knowledge +4: Craft: Butchery 45, Grazelander Lore 60, Horse Lore 46, Perception +11: Scan 45, Track 66. Stealth -6: Hide 56. Magic +10: Ceremony 29.

Special Items: Bone amulet with Glamour 2 matrix (no conditions).
Distinctive Traits: Articulate: Very gifted with languages, and a fine orator, for a youth, he will likely become a chief or an ambassador later in life. Honest: Well, maybe not an ambassador... Grateful: He inspires loyalty among his own by sharing credit with those who help him.

Erekanst, Henotheist initiate of St Humakt, Human Male, age 42. Arkat Sorcerer, and member of The Kobakuruum

STR 16	CON 13 [20] (with enhanced CON)	SIZ 17
INT 15	POW 15	DEX 13
APP 9		

Move: 3 Hit points: 15 [19] Magic points: 15 + 21 spirit Fatigue points: 29 [36] DEX SR: 3
Hit locations [Melee/Missile] Head [19-20 / 20] 0/5 [7] Left Arm [16-18 / 18-19] 0/4 [6] Right Arm [13-15 / 16-17] 0/4 [6] Chest [12 / 11-15] 0/6 [9] Abdomen [9-11 / 7-10] 0/5 [7] Left Leg [5-8 / 4-6] 0/5 [7]

Arms and Armour: Twang traded Erekanst's armour for food with a friendly but unscrupulous trader. He still maintains a tight grip on his huge sword, and Twang balked at trying to take it off him. Enc = 3.5. Fatigue = 32 ([36] - 4)

Weapon	SR	Att/Par	Damage	ENC/AP
Greatsword	5	90/90	2d8+1d6[+3]	

[Damage Boosting] Note: All damage after penetrating armour is doubled (Gift of Humakt)

Spirit Magic (70 - ENC): Darkwall (3), Demoralise (2), Shimmer 4. All are cast through matrixes tattooed onto his forearms.
Divine magic (all one-use): Divination x1, Oath x1, Shield x2, Truesword x1

Sorcerous Magic: (Free Int 12) Darksense Projection 30, Enhance CON 45, Cast Back 45 Boost Elemental 60 (matrix on bolg), Damage Boosting 45 (matrix on sword), Damage Resistance 45 (matrix on sword), Dominate Lune 45 (matrix on amulet), Dominate Shade 60 (matrix on troll tooth) Form/Set Bronze 45 (matrix tattoo), Form/Set Darkness 60 (matrix on troll tooth), Form/Set Lead 30 (matrix tattoo), Mystic Vision 30 (matrix on troll tooth), Neutralise Magic 45 (matrix tattoo), See Rune Magic 45 (matrix on bolg), Shapechange Human to Troll 30 (matrix on bolg).

Skills: Communication +7: Speak Ralian 43, Speak Seshnegi 23, Speak Darktongue 24, Speak Tradetalk 24 Agility -1: Climb 55, Dodge 34, Swim 14. Manipulation +11: Conceal 43. Knowledge +5: Human Lore 61, Troll Lore 21, First Aid 66, Plant Lore 51. Perception +13: Scan 76. Stealth -9: Hide 85. Magic +12: Ceremony/Arkat 63, Ceremony/Humakt 34, Ceremony/Zorak Zoran 29, Enchant 73, Summon 81, Duration 37, Multispell 22, Range 19, Intensity 81.
Gifts and Geases: Erekanst may accept no magical healing, as a geas from Humakt. In exchange, his sword causes double damage after armour.

Special Items: Bringer of Fears, a medium Lune (STR 13, SIZ 3 cu. meters, POW 14, HP 32) bound into a silver amulet.
Shadow of Death, medium Shade (STR 22, SIZ 3 cu. meters, POW 30, HP 29), bound into a lead bracelet.
One of Erekanst's teeth is actually a troll incisor, magically implanted. It is a matrix for several sorcery spells and contains a Power Spirit (POW 21).

Distinctive Traits: Secretive: He will not reveal that he is more than your average Humakt to anyone without making them swear an Oath to not reveal the truth. Cynical: He has a very jaded view of the world, and is very wary of outsiders. Trustworthy: But only to the letter of his commitments.

Vross Hama, male, 34.
Humakt initiate

STR 15	CON 14	SIZ 13
INT 15	POW 04	DEX 11
APP 07		

Hit locations [Melee/Missile] 01-04/01-03 R Leg 2/5 05-08/04-06 L Leg 2/5 09-11/07-10 Abdom 2/5 12/11-15 Chest 2/6 13-15/16-17 R Arm 2/4 16-18/18-19 L Arm 2/4 19-20/20 Head 2/5
Move 3 Hit points: 14 Magic points: 12 Fatigue points: 28 DEX SR: 3
Gear: Hard Leather on all locations Total encumbrance = 5. Fatigue 23 (28-5). Lost shield. Twang carries his broadsword.

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC / AP
Broadsword	5	105/65	1d8+1+1D4	1.5/10
Kite Shield	6	44/92	1D6+1D4	5.0/24

Spirit Magic (20 - ENC): Detect Enemy, Disrupt, Heal 3, Repair 1, Protection 4, Bladesharp 4

Skills: Communication -4: Speak Sartarite 35, Speak Tradetalk 24. Agility +1: Climb 65, Dodge 74, Swim 34. Manipulation +9: Devise 53. Knowledge +5: First Aid 21. Perception +1: Scan 66, Search 54. Stealth +2: Magic +0: Ceremony 43.

Special Items: Iron Broad Sword (AP 15) marked with a Fireblade (4) matrix and 9 MP storage matrix Taken and used by Twang Quickfoot.

Gifts and Geases: Recover magic points at double normal speed; Never refuse a one-on-one challenge.

Distinctive traits: Sullen: a profound melancholy has poisoned his heart. Depressive: his gloom moods rub off on others. Laconic: Vross seems to hear little and says less.

Note: Vross is recovering from an almost fatal divine intervention (he lost 15 POW). Until he gets his sword back, he does not cast spirit magic.



Nihilo of Nochet, male, 29.
Lhankor Mhy Acolyte

STR 10	CON 12	SIZ 13
INT 17	POW 18	DEX 10
APP 16		

Move : 3 Hit points: 13 Magic points: 9 Fatigue points: 22 Damage: +1D4
DEX SR: 3 Hit locations [Melee/Missile] Head [19-20 / 20] 0/5 Left Arm
[16-18 / 18-19] 2/4 Right Arm [13-15 / 16-17] 2/4 Chest [12 / 11-15] 2/6
Abdomen [9-11 / 7-10] 2/5 Left Leg [5-8 / 4-6] 2/5 Right Leg [1-4 / 1-3]
2/5

Arms and Armour: Leather, encumbrance total = 4.5. fatigue = 17 (22 - 5)

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	Enc/AP
Fist	8	39/39	1d3	—/-

Skills: Agility -4: Dodge 33. Knowledge +7: World Lore 52, Dragonewt
Lore 94, Evaluate 56, R/W Esrolian 87, R/W Draconic 35, First Aid 79.
Manipulation +7: Devise 35. Communication +14: Speak Esrolian 87, Speak
Tradetalk 37, Comprehend Draconic 54. Perception +12: Scan 46 Listen
44. Stealth -12: Magic +15: Ceremony (Lhankor Mhy) 64, Ceremony
(Dragonewt) 27.

Spells (90 - ENC): Detect Magic, Detect Spirit, Detect Dragonbone (2),
Detect Water, Mind Speech 1, Heal 5, Farsee 1, Glue 1, Dispel Magic 4.
Divine Magic: Worship Lhankor Mhy x1, Sanctify x1*, Divination x3*,
Reconstruction x1*, Analyse Magic x2*, Knowledge x1*, Translate x 2*,
Spirit Block x4, Extension x1* *these spells used when Nihilo studies the
site after his rescue.

Armour: Quilted leather under robes.

Distinctive traits: Pedantic: his cautiousness and attentiveness to detail
has perhaps extended his life in the often-hazardous field of Draconology
Male Chauvinist: an attitude unpopular in matriarchal Nochet, but
endemic at the Knowledge Temple. Inquisitive: a natural talent, enhanced
by his years as scholar.

TWANG'S GANG

"Count" Twang Quickfoot male, 18,
Centaur & Leader of Bandits

STR 21	CON 08	SIZ 21
INT 13	POW 12	DEX 20
APP 18		

Move: 10 Hit points: 15 Magic points: 12 Fatigue points: 29-18=11 DEX
SR: 1 RH Leg 01-02/01 2/4 LH Leg 03-04/02 2/4 Hindquarters 05-06/
03-06 2/6 Forequarters 07-08/07-10 2/6 RF Leg 09-10/11 2/4 LF Leg
11-12/12 2/4 Chest 13-14/13-17 8/6 Right Arm 15-16/18 8/4 Left Arm
17-18/19 8/4 Head 19-20/20 3/5

Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance (w/Sword) = 18. Stiff Leather
Barding (AP 2/ENC 4.5). Chain Shirt (AP 7/ENC 8.6). Cuirboully helm
(AP 3/ENC .5). Bow kept in shoulder case across the back. Carries two
quivers of twenty arrows when out of the castle.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Lance	1	85 / 25	1D10+1+2d6	3.5/10
Broad Sword	3	64 / 25	1D8+1+2d6	1.5/10
Target Shield	4	33 / 50	1D6+2d6	3.0/12
Comp Bow	1/5/9	99 / 09	1D8+1	0.5/07
Kick	6	58 / —	1D6+2d6	—/-

Spirit Magic (60%-ENC): Speedart (1), Befuddle (2), Vigor 3, Multimissile
4, Mobility 3.

Bonuses and Skills: Communication +8: Fast Talk 45, Orate 60, Speak

Grazelander 81, Speak Sartarite 52, Speak Tradetalk 31, Sing 37. Agility
+4: Jump 75, Swim 25, Dodge 82(63). Manipulation +17: Play Lyre 40,
Conceal 35, Devise 38. Knowledge +3: First Aid 43, Animal Lore 15, Centaur
Lore 25, World Lore 33, Evaluate 22, Craft Fletching (arrows) 67. Perception
+3: Listen 30, Scan 55, Search 65. Stealth +3: Hide 45, Sneak 35. Magic +10:
Ceremony 20.

Equipment: Target shield painted with a red male centaur crowned in
gold, with silver hoofs standing on a green arrow. Special Items: Vross
Hama's Iron Broad Sword (AP 15) with a Fireblade (4) matrix and a magic
point matrix (9 MP Max).

Distinctive Traits: Boastful: For Twang, it is not good enough to know
how good he is: he wants you to know it, too! Ambitious: His first goal in
life was to start a herd at 17. His second goal is to be ruler of his own
territory. Reckless: And he sometimes cuts corners to do it.

Sisero male, 29,
Centaur & Twang's Advisor

STR 24	CON 16	SIZ 33
INT 17	POW 12	DEX 19
APP 14		

Move: 10 Hit points: 25 Magic points: 12 Fatigue points: 40-20=20 DEX
SR: 2 Location - melee/missile - AP/HP RH Leg 01-02/01 2/8 LH Leg 03-
04/02 2/8 Hindquarters 05-06/03-06 2/11 Forequarters 07-08/07-10
2/11 RF Leg 09-10/11 2/8 LF Leg 11-12/12 2/8 Chest 13-14/13-17 5/11
Right Arm 15-16/18 5/8 Left Arm 17-18/19 5/8 Head 19-20/20 8/9

Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance (w/Sword & Bow) = 19.5 Fatigue
= 20.5 (40-19.5) Stiff Leather barding and leggings (AP2/ENC 5.5). Ring
Jerkin (AP 5/ENC 5.5). Lunar plate helm (AP 8/ENC 3.4).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Lance	2	90 / —	1D10+1+3d6	3.5/10
Broad Sword	4	99 / 86	1D8+1+2d6	1.5/10
Target Shield	5	15 / 95	1D6+2d6	3.0/12
Comp Bow	2/7	83 / —	1D8+1	0.5/07
Kick	7	93 / —	1D6+3d6	—/-

Spirit Magic (60%-ENC): Bladesharp 3, Heal 2, Multimissile 4, Shimmer
3, Mobility 2, Silence 2, Disrupt (1).

Bonuses and Skills: Communication +10: Speak Grazelander 45, Speak
New Pelorian (Lunar) 45, Speak Tradetalk 45, Fast Talk 73, Bargain 65.
Agility -7: Jump 65, Swim 59. Manipulation +18: Conceal 53, Devise 72.
Knowledge +7: First Aid 73, Animal Lore 68, Centaur Lore 30, Plant Lore
29, Human Lore (Lunar) 65, World Lore: 70, Evaluate 49. Perception +11:
Listen 93, Scan 72, Search 78. Stealth +4: Hide 43, Sneak 38. Magic +13:
Ceremony 33

Equipment: Sisero wears his armor (except helm) and carries his sword
(sheathed) and bow (in back case with 1 doz. arrows) around the fort,
always prepared for an attack. His helm, shield and lance are kept close at
hand.

Special Items: Lunar Plate helm taken from his former master (an officer
in the Red Dragoons). If seen from the chest up, he could be mistaken for
a Lunar officer.

Distinctive Traits: Cynical: "Creatures are only motivated by self-interest."
Realistic: "Power and gold are good motivators." Sisero also looks at the
reality of the situation and understands when to cut his losses. Cautious:
"There is no such thing as luck, only caution and recklessness. I would
rather err on the side of too much planning, than not enough."

Chraff, Crankus, Dornor, Mured
young male centaurs

STR 23	CON 14	SIZ 31
INT 10	POW 08	DEX 12
APP 12		



Move: 10 Hit points: 23 Magic points: 08 Fatigue points: 37-17=20 DEX
SR: 3 RH Leg 01-02/01 2/7 LH Leg 03-04/02 2/7 Hindquarters 05-06/
03-06 2/10 Forequarters 07-08/07-10 2/10 RF Leg 09-10/11 2/7 LF Leg

11-12/12 2/7 Chest 13-14/13-17 5/10 Right Arm 15-16/18 5/7 Left
Arm 17-18/19 5/7 Head 19-20/20 3/8

Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance (w/Sword) = 16.7. Fatigue = 20.3
(37-16.7). Stiff Leather Barding (AP 2/ENC 6). Ring Jerkin (AP 5/ENC
5.5). Cuirboulle helm (AP 3/ENC .7).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Lance	3	85 / —	1D10+1+2D6	3.5/10
Broad Sword	5	87 / 40	1D8+1+2D6	1.5/10
Target Shield	6	85 / 80	1D6+2D6	3.0/12
Comp Bow	3/9	75 / 15	1D8+1	0.5/07
Kick	8	98 / —	1D6+2D6	—/—

Spirit Magic (40%-ENC): Shimmer 4, Ironhoof 3, Bladeshard 3.

Bonuses and Skills: Communication +0: Speak Grazelander 30, Speak
Tradetalk 21, Sing 20 (Chraff 70). Agility -13: Jump 53, Swim 48.
Manipulation +6: (Chraff: Play Lyre 76) Knowledge +0: First Aid 35, Animal
Lore 15, Centaur Lore 25, World Lore 25, Evaluate 15. Perception +1: Listen
45, Scan 75, Search 45, Track 30. Stealth -8: Hide 40, Sneak 25. Magic -1:
Ceremony 17.

Equipment: Chraff has a metal lyre which he won in a competition. It is
stored in a wooden case padded in soft cloth.

Distinctive Traits:

DORNOR Cruel: A bully, he never misses a cheap shot at reminding Sisero
of what he is missing. **Ambitious:** Dornor intends to become the number
two Centaur in the herd. **Energetic:** Always pacing when there is nothing
else to do.

CHRAFF Reckless: Chraff has been known to do things without thinking
about the consequences. **Opinionated:** He has an opinion for everything
and he shares it, whether you want to know or not. **Musical:** Chraff was
known in his old herd to be a promising young musician. He can come up
with a song for any occasion.

CRANKUS Loyal: Crankus will die for Twang. **Dependable:** When he
agrees to do a task, he'll do it. **Unimaginative:** Unfortunately, he will do
what he's told to do and not necessarily what you want him to do.

MURED Pliable: It's been said that Mured's opinion is your opinion. **Brave:**
He is known to do things that others would not try on a dare. **Stupid:**
Rocks have more common sense than Mured.

Notes: Usual tactics are to shoot arrows, followed by a lance charge. Switch
to sword and shield if a second charge is not possible.

Agapanthus male, 22, Duck,
Sword Drake (Initiate) of Humakt & Member of Twang's Band

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 7
INT 11 POW 15 DEX 12
APP 7

Move: 2 Hit points: 19(11+8) Magic points: 15 Fatigue points: 27-6=21 DEX
SR: 3 Location - Melee/Missile - AP/HP Right Leg 01-04/01-03 2/7 Left
Leg 05-08/04-06 2/7 Abdomen 09-11/07-10 3/7 Chest 12/11-15 3/9
Right Arm 13-15/16-17 2/6 Left Arm 16-18/18-19 2/6 Head 19-20/20 3/7

Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance (w/Sword) = 6. Hard leather on
limbs (AP 2/ENC 2.4), cuirboilli cuirass and helm (AP 3/ENC 1.6). Gladius
and three heavy crossbows that he will have loaded and ready before the
fight. Once fired, he contemplates engaging the enemy, if it looks
favourable. The buckler has a death rune (sword, blade up) painted on it.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Gladius	8	109/92	1D6+1	1.0/10
H. Crossbow	1/3mr	87/—	2D6+2	8.0/10
Buckler	—	—/87		1.0/8

Spirit Magic (75%-ENC): Detect Enemies (1) Disrupt (1), Fireblade (4),
Heal 2, Protection 3.

Divine Magic (100%-ENC): Berserk, Truesword x2.

Bonuses and Skills: Communication +2: Fast Talk 35, Speak Sartarite 31,
Speak Grazelander 23, Speak Tradetalk 25. Agility +6: Boat 35, Climb 55,
Jump 45, Swim 99, Dodge 45. Manipulation +8: Sleight 53. Knowledge
+1: Evaluate 44, First Aid 64, World Lore 23. Perception +5: Listen 33,
Scan 67, Search 64. Stealth +1: Hide 44, Sneak 33. Magic +7: Ceremony 43,
Enchant 25.

Special Items: 2 General strengthening enchantments (8 HP) tattooed on
body. Gladius has a POW spirit bound to it (POW 12), which Agapanthus
taunts when no one else is available.

Gifts and Geases: Detects Undead (as per spell) by concentrating on
sensing / Only uses cult spells

Distinctive Traits: **Belligerent:** If anyone can find away to cause people to
hate them, this swaggering duck can do it verbally with just a few
"inciteful" comments. **Cowardly:** Usually finds a way to be assign "rear
guard" and just conveniently misses out on the hottest action (unless
pressed). He usually prefers 3 to 1 odds against an opponent. **Taunting:**
"I am the Sword that cuts through the night. Hear me and fear me well!"
(Insert deep evil quack)"

Notes: Although Agapanthus only pretends he is a Sword, he is still a
swishing and swaggering white-hot ball of whirling feathers when angry,
who demands the respect he believes is due to him.

Roue male, 94,
Satyr & Member of Twang's Band

STR 25 CON 16 SIZ 17
INT 14 POW 21 DEX 20
APP 05

Move: 5 Hit points: 17 Magic points: 21 Fatigue points: 41-4=37 DEX SR: 2
Location - Melee/Missile - AP/HP Right Leg 01-04/01-03 3/6 Left Leg
05-08/04-06 3/6 Abdomen 09-11/07-10 3/6 Chest 12/11-15 1/8 Right
Arm 13-15/16-17 1/5 Left Arm 16-18/18-19 1/5 Head 19-20/20 3/6
Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance = 4. Natural 3 point hide covers
Head, abdomen, and legs, 1 point covers all else. A massive club dangles
from his belt.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Butt	8	40/—	1D6+2D6	—/3
Club	5	25/25	1D10+2D6	2.5/10
Thrown Rock	2/7	25/—	1D4+2D3	0.5/—

Spirit Magic (105%-ENC): None.

Bonuses and Skills: Communication +7: Speak Grazelander 43, Speak
Tradetalk 38, Sing 43. Agility +10: Dance 90, Dodge 65, Jump 55, Seduction
30. Manipulation +28: Play Pipes 00. Knowledge +4: Perception +12: Scan
68. Stealth +1: Hide 62, Sneak 82. Magic +20: Ceremony 35.

Equipment: Pipes, Club.

Distinctive Traits: **Lustful:** He is known to have no preferences nor bounds,
except where Twang has drawn it around his wives and foals. **Vain:** Can
be appealed to about his appearance. He will stop at a reflection of himself
to primp. **Sly:** He is known for his sneaky but clever ways of doing things.

Notes: He is extremely dangerous around the prisoners due to his normal
behavior. Decades ago Roue was cursed by a Gorgorma Priestess, and
playing his magical pipes would now cause him unendurable agony in
his groin area.



Mutiog male, 52,
Tuskerless Tusk Rider & Member of Twang's Band

STR 18 CON 14 SIZ 17
INT 12 POW 13 DEX 08
APP 02

Move: 3 Hit points: 16 Magic points: 13 Fatigue points: 32-11=21 DEX SR:
4 Location - Melee/Missile - AP/HP Head 19-20/20 4/6 Left Arm 16-18/
18-19 4/5 Right Arm 13-15/16-17 4/5 Chest 12/11-15 4/8 Abdomen 09-
11/07-10 4/6 Left Leg 05-08/04-06 4/6 Right Leg 01-04/01-03 4/6

Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance = 11. Wears pig-hide cuirboulli and
fur padding (AP 4/ ENC 9). Owns two long spears and a ball & chain.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Long Spear	5	15/15	1D10+1+1D6	2.0/10
Ball & Chain	6	05/05	1D10+1+1D6	2.0/ 8

Spirit Magic (40%-ENC): Demoralize (2), Heal 5

Bonuses and Skills: Communication -1: Speak Tusk Rider 31, Speak
Tradetalk 26. Agility -5: Ride Tusker 75. Manipulation +5: Conceal 45.
Knowledge +2: Craft Bloody Cut 65. Perception +5: Listen 27, Scan 25,
Search 48, Track 51. Stealth -7: Magic +4:

Distinctive Traits: Sadistic: "So what's a little extra pain in life?" This is
just Mutiog's way of saying, "I like you." Surly: He does rudeness as an
art form, displaying a gruff hostility to all but Twang who seems to
understand Mutiog's loss. Lazy: Unless there is a strong motivation, like
going out and roughing up someone or getting so "extra pay", Mutiog
would rather just lay around and think brutal thoughts.

Notes: Mutiog lost his tusker in battle and he did not take it well. Mutiog
takes care of the manticores, who go some way towards filling the empty
spot. If only he could figure out a way to ride them...

Horus and Suroh
male, Manicores & Members of Twang's band

STR 31 CON 15 SIZ 30
INT 7 POW 14 DEX 12
APP 11

Move: 6 Hit points: 23 Magic points: 14 Fatigue points: 46 DEX SR: 3
Location - Melee/Missile - AP/HP Right HL 01-02/01 4/7 Left HL 03-
04/02 4/7 Tail 05-07/03 4/7 Abdomen 08-11/04-09 4/9 Chest 12-14/
10-17 4/9 Right FL 15-16/18-17 4/7 Left FL 17-18/19 4/7 Head 19-20/
20 4/7

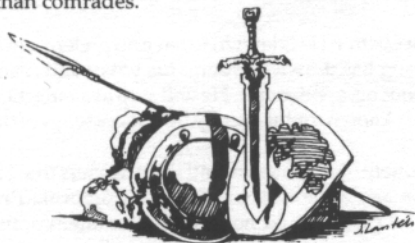
Arms and Armor: Total Encumbrance = 0. Natural 4 point skin. Claws
first, then stings 3 SR later. The sting injects POT 15 poison.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage
Claw	6	05 / —	1D6+3D6
Sting	9	10 / —	1D6+3D6+poison

Bonuses and Skills: Climb 80, Dodge 45, Scan 41.

Distinctive Traits: Bestial: Given to primitive and bestial urges, often
encouraged by Mutiog. Hungry: Bottomless pits.

Notes: Horus and Suroh are twins. They are considered by the band to be
more pets than comrades.



THE DU TUMERINES

Garth du Tumerine, Count of Wyrms Hold male, 59,
Rokari Lord caste

STR 8 (13) CON 5 (13) SIZ 13
INT 14 POW 15 DEX 11
APP 12

Move: 3 Hit points: 13 Magic points: 15 Fatigue points: 26 DEX SR: 3
Location - Melee/Missile - AP/HP Head 19-20/20 8/5 Left Arm 16-18/
18-19 7/4 Right Arm 13-15/16-17 7/4 Chest 12/11-15 8/6 Abdomen 09-
11/07-10 8/5 Left Leg 05-08/04-06 7/5 Right Leg 01-04/01-03 7/5

Armour: Plate Armour (Head and Torso) Chain (Limbs). Total
encumbrance=29 Fatigue: -3 (26-29).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Mace	7	75/-	1D10	2.5/10
Heater	9	-/75	1D6	3.0/12

Sorcery Skills +10: Intensity 63, Ceremony 42. Spells: Haste 65, Damage
Resist 72, Neutralize Damage 67,
Communication +8: Speak Seshnelan 93, Speak Tradetalk 54, Speak
Esrolian, 18 Orate 85. Agility +1: Ride 76. Manipulation +7: Knowledge
+4: Read Seshnelan 72, World Lore 76, Human Lore 87, Gloranthan Lore
35. Perception: +9: Listen 37, Scan 40 Stealth: -7: Hide 13, Sneak 15.

Magic items: He wears one bronze ring containing 10 MP.
Distinctive traits Arrogant: He has always held the view that the beings
of lower classes should be treated with the contempt they deserve. Irritable:
Aware of his increasing mortality, he prefers to hide this fact. Unfortunately
this bubbles over into a short temper. Inflexible: Grasping at the dogmatic
tenets of the Rokari faith in earnest has left him extending the dogmatism
and related inflexibility to his view of the world.

Note: Rides standard riding horse:use stats in RQ Creatures Book). Count
Garth was forced to pawn his stable of war mounts.

Father Pederik male, 48,
Rokari Wizard caste

STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 15
INT 17 POW 16 DEX 15
APP 9

Armour: None. Total ENC = 1 (whip). Fatigue = 29 (30 -1)

Move: 3 Hit points: 13 Magic points: 16 + 18 (matrix) = 34 Fatigue points:
20 DEX SR: 3 Location - melee/missile - AP/HP Head 19-20/20 0/5 Left
Arm 16-18/18-19 0/4 Right Arm 13-15/16-17 0/4 Chest 12/11-15 0/6
Abdomen 09-11/07-10 0/5 Left Leg 05-08/04-06 0/5 Right Leg 01-04/
01-03 0/5

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Whip	3	50/-	1D4+	

Sorcery: Skills +13: Ceremony 68, Enchant 32, Summon 45, Duration 82,
Intensity 76, Multispell 58, Range 66. Spells: Dominate Pain Spirit 101,
Command Pain Spirit 94, Neutralise Damage 73, Regenerate 57, Spell
Resist 69, Damage Resist 59, Enhance STR 65, Enhance CON 63, Damage
Boost 64 (Free INT 9).

Skills: Communication: +9: Speak Seshnelan 82, Speak Trade 34. Agility
-1: Dodge 29, Ride 33 Manipulation: +11: Knowledge: +7: Read Seshnelan
55, Human Lore 72, Gloranthan Lore 25 Perception: +11: Scan 35 Stealth:
-6: Hide 19,

Special Items: A holy icon of St Hrestol the Tortured. It contains a spirit
binding matrix for 10 pain spirits (POW 5, 9, 10, 10, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 29).
Pederik's back has been branded to make a magic point matrix containing



18 MP. This brand marks him as a follower of the tolerated World of Losers Movement, a growing heresy within the Rokari Church.

Distinctive traits: Sadistic: Pain is good. It must be extended to all so as to prepare the soul for Solace. Servile to Count Garth: It is not enough to merely inflict pain upon others. One must also experience considerable torment. Thus Pederak bites his tongue around Garth and suppress his emotions for the spiritual misery it will cause him. Contemptuous to others: Making others feel lower than they really are only causes anguish and thus prepares the soul for solace.

Notes: Rides standard riding horse (use stats in RQ Creatures Book)

Sir Arri Dupeelos male, 21,
Rokari Knight (former Henotheist)

STR 16 CON 18 SIZ 17
INT 13 POW 15 DEX 17
APP 15

Move: 3 Hit points: 18 Magic points: 15 Fatigue points: 34 DEX SR: 2

Location - Melee/Missile - AP/HP Head 19-20/20 7/6 Left Arm 16-18/18-19 7/5 Right Arm 13-15/16-17 7/5 Chest 12/11-15 7/8 Abdomen 09-11/07-10 7/6 Left Leg 05-08/04-06 7/6 Right Leg 01-04/01-03 7/6

Gear: Chainmail armour (ENC=24), Iron Kite Shield. Total encumbrance = 35. fatigue = -1 (34-35). He never carries the lance and the spear at the same time.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
B. Sword	5	104/	1D10+1+1D6	2.0/12
Kite Shield	6	-/93	1D6+1D6	5.0/24
S Spear	5	89/-	1D8+1+1D6*	2.0/10
Lance (mtd)	3+	89/-	1D10+1+3D6	3.5/12

Sorcery Skills +12: Intensity 57, Ceremony 40. **Sorcery Spells:** Boost Damage 72, Stupefaction 65 (FREE INT 6) Spirit Spells (52%) Strength 3 (+5% on combat skills, Damage bonus raise to +2D6, +9 FP), Heal 2.

Divine magic: (One use) Shield 2.
Communication +9: Orate 84. Agility +3: Ride 93, Manipulation +14
Knowledge +3: Animal Lore 78, First Aid 63, Perception +10: Scan 85.
Stealth -5 Magic +12; Insensivity 72.

Notes: Spearhead is of a little known metal called ar-Senikos or Gormetal which has been forged by the dwarves of Bad Deal. Scholars believe that the metal is a perversion of copper. A hit means the victim has to check versus poison at a potency of half the damage inflicted by the weapon alone. If he saves, he takes half the POT in general damage otherwise he takes the full amount. The toxin takes effect the round after the initial intoxication.

Distinctive Traits: Vain: In his desire to dismiss his hick background from his mind, he has become oblivious to all his other faults. Haughty: Deep down, he knows he's simply excellent. Dashing: What he does, he does with flair.

Note: rides warhorse (use stats in RQ Creatures Book).

Sir Titus of Gorgonpaste, Sir Priamus the Pithdarian, Sir Turquine, Sir Marhaus etc. Knights males, Rokari Knight caste

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 14
INT 13 POW 12 DEX 11
APP 12

Move 3 Hit points: 14 Magic points: 12 Fatigue points: 28 DEX SR: 3
Melee/Missile - Location - AP/HP 01-04/01-03 R Leg 7/5 05-08/04-06 L Leg 7/5 09-11/07-10 Abdom 7/5 12/11-15 Chest 7/6 13-15/16-17 R Arm 7/4 16-18/18-19 L Arm 7/4 19-20/20 Head 7/5

Gear: Chainmail armour on all locations (ENC 20.0), Total encumbrance = 30.5. Fatigue -2 (28-30.5).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP	B.
Sword	5				
Kite Shield	6	-/93	1D6+1D4	5.0/24	
Lance (mtd)	3+	60/-	1D10+1+3D6	3.5/12	

Sorcery Skills: Intensity 45, Ceremony 20

Spells: Damage Boost 45, Neutralize Damage 45, Haste 30, Enhance STR 30

Skills: Ride 75, Listen 50, Scan 50, Search 50, First Aid 30.
Languages: Seshnelan 52, Tradetalk 25

Magic Notes: As their ENC is very high, they do not cast spells during combat but instead pray beforehand. They generally cast Damage boost intensity 4 before combat (giving the blessed weapon +4 to damage) or Enhance STR intensity 5 (+3 to combat skills, +1D6 to damage, +5 FPs).

Distinctive traits: Brave: These folks were little more than landless robbers who could not give any loyalty before they took up with Garth. Callous: In their former occupation, they did a lot of brutal things. Some of this baggage still carries on with them. Loyal: Thus they are ready to do anything for him to prove their loyalty.

Note: All ride cavalry horses (use stats from RQ Creatures Book).

Footmen males, Rokari Farmer caste

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 13
INT 13 POW 10 DEX 11
APP 11

Move: 3 Hit points: 12 Fatigue points: 24 Magic points: 10 DEX SR: 3
Melee/Missile - Location - AP/HP 01-04/01-03 R Leg 3/4 05-08/04-06 L Leg 2/4 09-11/07-10 Abdom 2/4 12/11-15 Chest 2/5 13-15/16-17 R Arm 2/3 16-18/18-19 L Arm 2/3 19-20/20 Head 2/4

Gear: Cuirbolli Helm, Quilted Clothing, Long spear. Total ENC = 6. Fatigue = 18 (24 - 6)

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
L. Spear	6	50/45	1D10+1 2.	0/12

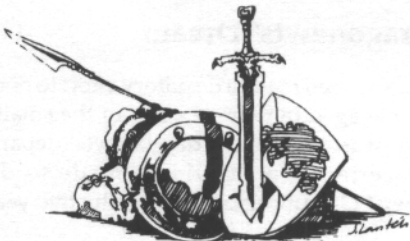
Sorcery Skills: Intensity 30, Ceremony 20. **Spells:** Boost Damage 45, Neutralize Damage 45. (Free Int 11).

Skills: First Aid 20, Scan 35.

Languages: Seshnelan 33/-, Speak Esrolian 12/-, Speak Tradetalk 20/-.

Combat Notes: The footmen are all badly-equipped, but Lord Garth is such a Rokari traditionalist that he refuses to give them anything which would violate their caste. They usually group in numbers pecking at a single foe to bring him down. Two specialists operate the siege arbalest. They are slightly better armoured, also have medium crossbows and shoot at 80%.

Distinctive Traits: Dull witted: Garth hired these poor fools with rumours of plunder to be had.





Holiday Glorantha... **WYRMS HOLD**

By Michael O'Brien

History

The Construction of Wyrms Hold

In late 1535, the Esrolian Matriarchs received a report that a large caravan train of dragonewts had appeared at the banks of the Runnel River, which then marked the far northern limits of the Sixth. When the cavalry squadron dispatched to investigate arrived, they found the dragonewts had crossed into Holy Country territory and were hard at work constructing a large stone edifice on a high ridge above the river.

The dragonewts had obviously come from Dragon Pass, and a contemporary account (recorded by one of the cavalry officers) describes a huge, winged dragonewt in highly ornamental bone armour - almost certainly one of the rare and powerful Ruler Dragonewts, perhaps indicative of the importance of their mission. The dragonewts worked feverishly day and night, apparently neither pausing for sleep nor food. A large number of the smaller dragonewts literally worked themselves to death; these were buried with great ritual precision under certain of the stone slabs. The dragonewts were not interested in parlaying with the humans; but they weren't antagonistic either, and increasingly daring cavalymen found they could even ride through the construction works unharmed and apparently unnoticed. Only when a pair of drunken and foolhardy riders climbed aloft one of the tall plinths did the dragonewts react violently, and even then their anger stopped at the incineration of the desecrators.

Fearing draconic magic, the cavalry were reluctant to attack the dragonewts or hinder their building work. Instead they awaited further instructions from the Pharaoh himself; when these finally came with reinforcements a season later (the orders were to attack the dragonewts and destroy the edifice) the dragonewts had already finished their construction and, pausing only to slaughter and bury those of their number too weak to make the return journey, packed up and left for Dragon Pass leaving the empty monolith behind them.

The Dragonewts' Dream

The Pharaoh's men made a desultory effort to demolish the edifice, but only managed to remove a few of the smaller blocks*. Then, barely two seasons after the dragonewts' departure and before a more concerted effort could be made to dismantle it, the Dragonewts' Dream began. During the five year dream, ghostly

images of the dragonewts appeared across Genertela, enacting a mysterious ritual. "Wyrms Hold", as the monolith came to be known to the Esrolians, played a role in the Dragonewts Dream, for a large number of phantasmal dragonewts materialised there and began performing an elaborate and silent ceremony. Attempts to disrupt the ceremony were met with extreme magical reprisal - grass still no longer grows on the site where the Esrolite encampment below Wyrms Hold was seared away to nothing following an all-out assault on the structure. Following this the dragonewts were left undisturbed, but closely watched from a distance. The silent ritual continued unceasingly day and night for five years, and abruptly as they appeared, one day the ghostly dragonewts vanished without a trace. Wyrms Hold was left deserted and shunned.

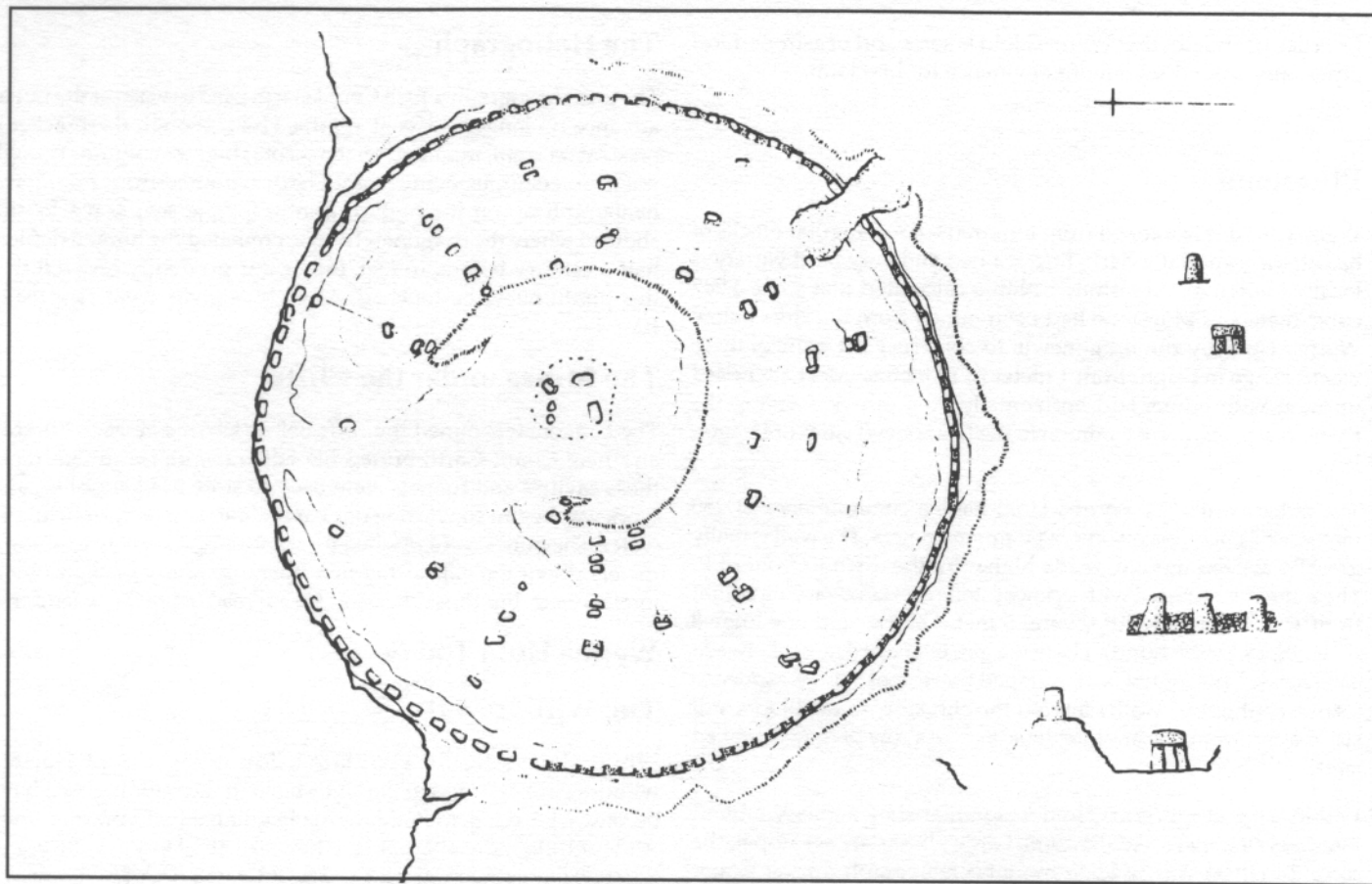
* *One of these blocks is now on display in the centre straight of the Nochet hippodrome; the whereabouts of the others is uncertain - it is possible they were simply dropped over the cliff into the Runnel River.*

Count Garth du Tumerine

Half-a-century later, the Lunar Empire invaded and eventually occupied the Kingdom of Sartar, to the north-east of the Holy Country. The Pharaoh had supported Sartar against the Lunars, and knew once Sartar was pacified it would be a matter of time before the Lunars marched against his lands. He ordered a general strengthening of the northern frontiers to prepare against the invasion.

Occupying a vantage point high above the Runnel River, and offering a sweeping vista both north-east along the road to Dragon Pass (down which the Lunars must surely come), and south, towards the fertile lands of the Lysos valley, Wyrms Hold was an ideal and necessary site for a garrison, but for its eerie reputation.

When the superstitious Esrolians could not be induced to fortify the place, the Pharaoh overrode the protests of the Matriarchs and awarded lordship of Wyrms Hold to the less-credulous Garth du Tumerine, a landless nobleman from Pasos whose family controls Lera, one of the Westerner merchant prince enclaves at the port of Nochet. A Rokari Knight, Garth took charge of the edifice and unilaterally proclaimed himself "Count of Wyrms Hold", a presumption which infuriated the Esrolians but which was ignored by Pharaoh, who in these uncertain times had more important things to occupy him*.



* *Stories of his success convinced another Rokari mercenary, Richard de Loimbarð, to enter into the service of the King of Heortland and eventually forge a kingdom of his own. King Richard the Tigerhearted of Malkonwal later confirmed Count Garth's status; an empty gesture perhaps, given that Wyrms Hold lay far beyond the lands under Richard's control, and in any case by then Garth had long since been forced to desert his fief.*

Count Garth attracted a large number of warriors into his service, including many western knights. Many farmer families from overpopulated Esrolia came out to join him, to settle as tenants in the sparsely inhabited area around the fort. If the Dragonewts objected to the Count's presence, they offered no sign.

The Building Wall Battle

Wyrms Hold was garrisoned by Count Garth from 1592, and it was the fort's flashing heliograph that gave first warning of the Lunar advance when it finally came in 1605. Ironically, the awesome magical instrument the Holy County forces used to repulse the Lunars eventually led to Wyrms Hold's downfall.

A squadron of Tarshite auxiliaries were dispatched to take Wyrms Hold as the Lunar army marched by to south, but they were repelled with heavy loss to both sides. After failing to take it by storm the surviving Tarshites chose not to besiege it, hurrying instead to join the main army and its expected victory.

To counter the Lunar invaders the Pharaoh caused an immense magical wall to appear, snaking its way from the Shadow Plateau to a far spine of the Skyreach Mountains. This Building Wall blocked the Lunar advance into the rich heartland of Esrolia, and the Holy County forces won a decisive battle here, routing and

humiliating the Lunars. Count Garth and his knights rode out of their stronghold to harass the retreating Lunars, capturing much booty and honour. Unfortunately for Wyrms Hold though, it ended up on the wrong side of the Building Wall.

Despite the victory, the Building Wall was the beginning of a very unstable period in the history of the Holy County, which has continued until this day. Preoccupied with problems elsewhere, the Pharaoh chose to consolidate his forces behind the natural border created by the Building Wall. The territory beyond was left to fend for itself, leaving Wyrms Hold out on a limb and without support. When Count Garth could no longer guarantee the security of his tenant farmers from the increasing depredations of bandits and Grazer raiders, most moved back behind the Wall. Finally, without an economic base to support him and heavily in debt, by 1612 the Count and the last hundred of his loyal comrades were forced to withdraw, abandoning Wyrms Hold.

(The Count and his followers later crossed to Heortland, where they joined Sir Richard the Tigerhearted in his struggle to become King of Malkonwal. Following King Richard's defeat in 1620, Count Garth is believed to be a prisoner in a Lunar dungeon.)

Construction

The Surveyor Nihilo of Nochet

In late 1609, only a season before Count Garth and his men deserted the fort forever, the Grey Sage Nihilo of Nochet journeyed to Wyrms Hold to carry out a survey of the site. His findings were later published in volume XXIX of the great Nochet Collectanea, and may now be viewed by initiates of good standing. In it,



Delaclos postulates that Wyrms Hold is some sort of astronomical observatory, but does not offer evidence for his claim.

Bluestone

Wyrms Hold is fashioned from hundreds of rectangular blocks of basalt; this especially dark, fine-grained and very hard variety is locally known as "bluestone". Nihilo calculated that some 4,747 cubic meters of bluestone had been mined from the cliffs below Wyrms Hold by the dragonewts to construct the edifice; these blocks range in height from 1 meter to 10 meters. Most are raised upright, with others laid horizontally atop others, forming the flying ramparts as are common in the Dragonewt cities of Dragon Pass.

The outer "walls" of Wyrms Hold have a circumference of 250 meters and encompass some 5000 square meters. The wall is really is really a steep mound, made higher by the ditch in front of it. The mound is studded with a ring of stone blocks of varying height from 1 to 3 meters (with several 6 meter blocks and one huge 8 meter block by the ramp). There is a gap of about a meter between each block; but Count Garth plugged these gaps with masonry to form a continuous wall. Only on the cliff side do the blocks still stand apart from one another, looking like a row of huge, crooked teeth.

Within the walls, Wyrms Hold is dominated by a grassy mound that rises steeply some 20 meters. Large plinths are set atop it; the second-highest was used to mount a heliograph during Count Garth's time. The top of the of the mound afford panoramic views of the countryside all around - the broad grasslands of Grazer territory to the north, Beast Valley and Dragon Pass to the east, the grim plateau of the Shadowlands to the south, and the rich farmlands of the Lysos Valley beyond the Building Wall to the west.

Because there is no gate, Count Garth eventually built a earthen mound over the wall at one the low points, and the ramp remains to this day. The Count's wizard had the foci for the defensive sorcerous spells intuned into the very blocks of stone, which prompted many of the Count's knights to chisel their names at their posts.

Living Conditions

Originally, Count Garth's men lived under canvas awnings stretched between the blocks. These were later replaced by more elaborate shelters both inside and out of the walls. Nevertheless, life at Wyrms Hold was always hard. Poor drainage was the main problem, for the dragonewts had made no allowances for rain run-off and in the winter months water collecting on the floor sometimes reached knee-high. One winter the excessive damp caused a mould growth to overrun the fort, which the Knights had to later keep in check by scouring with boiling water. Conversely, in the summertime water supply was a problem because it had to be brought up from the river. The Count tried a winch and bucket system off the cliffs above the river, but this method yielded only limited quantities at a time and left the exposed operators such vulnerable targets for missile fire that its use was not practical. Instead, Garth was forced to expend a large sum trying to convert one of the cavities in the cliff below into a cistern. This was only partially successful, and if the Tarshite auxiliaries had only known, they may have been able to force the parched defenders inside Wyrms Hold to surrender within a week.

The Heliograph

The great heliograph which Count Garth used to warn of the Lunar advance no longer exists at Wyrms Hold, though the bracket it once sat on is still mounted on the second highest column. Though not a superstitious man, Count Garth refrained from setting the heliograph up on the highest plinth, for the scorch marks still showed where the dragonewt magic cremated the human defilers half a century before. In fact, the Count prudently ordered that this plinth never be touched. At night, signals were sent using fires.

The Mines under the Cliffs

The Dragonewts mined the cliffs below Wyrms Hold to build it, and here Count Garth buried his fallen comrades. In addition, these cavities and tunnels were used to store food supplies, and work was begun converting one cavern into a cistern for drinking water. The mines were reached by scaffolding stairway running 4 meters down the cliff to the first opening. Many of the tunnels interconnect, but those that don't were reached by rope ladders.

Wyrms Hold Today

The Withdrawal

While always thinly populated, following Count Garth's withdrawal a decade ago the lands beyond the Building Wall have become wild, dangerous and virtually uninhabited by farmer-folk. Although the official boundary between the Holy Country and Beast Valley is marked by the Stone Cross some 75 kilometres further to the north-east, the Esrolian border effectively ends at the Building Wall. Herders from the Grazelands have taken to grazing along both sides of the Runnel, and even as far south to within sight of the Building Wall during the summer.

Wyrms Hold has recently been occupied by a gang of renegades from Beast Valley and their leader, the centaur Twang Quickhoof, has proclaimed himself the new "Count" of Wyrms Hold.





Notes From Notchet

Compiled by Michael O'Brien. Contributors: Paul Reilly, MOB, Nick Brooke

(XXIX.344.88) "On the Properties of the Elements: How far can someone see on the ocean?" by Clement Longhair of the Nochet Lhankor Mhy temple:

As is well known, light, like Fire, is a manifestation of Aether and thus properly belongs in the Sky World. The elements always seeks their own proper level in the bubble that is Glorantha, thus light tends to curve upward slightly as it flits along at a great pace. This is why you see the top of a mast as a ship approaches, then the sails, then the body. Some crude drawings may make this more clear:

At this stage the light from the mast barely skims the waters, making the top visible, but the path that light from the sails would have to take intersects the ocean's surface and is absorbed by the hungry waters. A little thought reveals this to be the true explanation for the 'horizon' of seafarers and for why the tops of objects are seen first as a distant object approaches. Note also that an observer higher up may see farther, thus we have lookouts atop the masts of ships and observation towers (this phenomenon is seen on land as well but is less obvious.)

As for the so-called arguments of the deranged Columbus Mercator, these rest on the principle that light travels in straight lines. Obviously this must be false, as we know that Light is but the subtle form of Fire, which, seeking its proper level, tends to rise. Thus it is insupportable that light should not curve upward in its path.

Objections of the Ignorant:

1. That Light descends from the Sun and Stars, invalidating my Claims.

I answer this as follows: beyond the Sky Dome is a Shining World. Of the Shining World's great Light, but a small Fraction descends to us along the paths pioneered by mighty Yelm and his lesser descendants and followers. The Will of these divine Beings is to send light to the mortal world, hence the light descends, against its Nature. However, it always yearns to return unto its true Home.

2. That El-Metal (Gold) falls Down toward the Earth with great Force, against the Tenets of my Theory.

I answer this as follows: Yelm's metal indeed falls down with great Force, but in the oldest records this is not so. In Godtime, before the Darkness, it was the Lightest of Metals and would even Leap and Dance about, from the Yearning of the Fire Within to return to the Sky World. See [list of references deleted for brevity], and lastly "The Sun Wheel Dancers" by Hector the Wise of Sun County for a compilation of the works of the Ancient Authors I have cited.

Only AFTER the Sunslaying (familiar to all who love the Lightbringer Saga) did Gold become heavy and lifeless, seeking to join the Celestial Emperor in the Underworld. Thus through the actions of Great Orlanth did Gold become the heaviest of Metals.

(XXIX.334.89) I, Columbus Mercator shall not of course need to resort to rank insults to prove my argument, unlike my unworthy colleague Clement Longhair, whose beard (I am reliably informed) is held on with paste. I refer Clement to my notes in Vol. XXIX of the Nochet Collectanea*, which demonstrateth that the true shape of the Earth Rune is not in fact a square or cube, but a SPHERE!

In order to prove this I plan a great journey of circumnavigation around the world. Once I find an agreeable captain, the boat shall set sail from Nochet and travel east, only to appear at some indeterminate time in the west. Many sailors fear that they would sail off the edge of the world, despite my assurances. But when the ship undoubtedly appears again on the western horizon, its mast will be seen first, not because light "bends" as Clement Longhair would have it, but because the world is round, not flat!

(XXIX.334.89.supplemental) Carpocrates the Orthodox, Sage of Truth: You, Mercator, are mad. Stark, staring mad. What will have happened, if your ill-conceived expedition does indeed return as you expect, is this:

As your captain (hopefully accompanied by your good self) sails beyond the Eastern Empire of Vithela, he will be caught up in the great encircling current of Sramak's River and swept around the far North of the world (where the River flows beyond Valind's Ice Palace) to reenter it along the Banthe Current. Thus he will have sailed off the Eastern edge of the world, around it widdershins to the North, and reentered from the Western edge. If his crew have successfully fended off the offended Altinae, Holtri, and other denizens of the Northern Edge of the Outer World, that is.

Alternatively, you could set your course along the Sky River, sailing up through Heaven itself to descend by the far side of the Sky Dome. Though in view of your heresies against True Light, I fear your course would be rudely interrupted by Star Captains incensed at your blasphemous rantings.

Light clearly "bends", tending towards its heavenly home. Rays of Light are akin to arrows or javelins. And the path of an arrow or javelin plainly curves downwards - down and not up because the arrow is of a gross material substance and not of celestial light. An arrow enhanced by Speedart tends more nearly to the horizontal - that is, adopting a flat path (I make this clarification because you, Columbus, would presumably assume the horizontal path to be curved!) - as it is charged with more Light energies.

Even Dormal only sailed as far as Luathela. Your hypothetical captain would undertake a voyage many times as lengthy, and for what reward? Your own Academic renown? Your madness has taken you beyond the bounds of reason. I weep for a fellow sage sunk so low, and cannot help wonder what Sin against Knowledge brought the Brain Flayers to your cranium. Yet all the same, I wish you luck in finding a captain mad enough to take you and your fervid scribbles beyond the Eastern Edge of the World, never to return. With any luck, you could be departed before the Matriarch's Guard unman you for heresies against Our Broad-Bosomed Mother of the Four Corners.

(XXIX.334.90) Urrr... All this arguing about the "true shape of the world" sounds like God Learner talk to me. Who are these Mercator and Longhair guys? Do we know that they're reliable? Maybe we ought to subject them to a few divine Ordeals to test their spiritual purity. I suggest a dunking chair to be followed by branding. Then they should be tossed into the air, encased in lead after they land, and finally buried. This will test them against all of the basic elements. I leave it to my Humakti colleagues to suggest how the other basic Universal traits should be tested upon them. Anbjorn Ragnarsson, Storm Voice of Orlanth

(XXIX.334.91) Anbjorn Ragnarsson, Storm Voice of Orlanth is unfortunately confusing the defense of orthodoxy with propagation of heresy. If he would like to debate this matter further, I can give him the number of Mercator's room in the temple (being sworn to the God of Truth, I could scarcely deny him this interesting factual snippet). Carpocrates the Orthodox.

*see Tales #4



A PAMALTELAN VIEW

Sorcery

Listen, this is Wisdom! 'Sorcery has no lineage.' It is an evil thing, the enemy of the gods. Sorcery feeds on the dead things of the Breath World. Sorcerers and evil gods invaded our land in the time before the First Drinkers. Guidefather Pamalt formed his mighty Necklace to defeat them. Later, the Ill Empire came upon six legs, and used sorcery to twist the power of Right Footpath. Our ancestors suffered terribly until Hon Hoolbiku the son of Vangono killed their strange beasts and drove them from our land.

The wise women say that a sorcerer is born from the marriage of brother and sister, an insult to lineage and to clan. All the evil of their mother's lineage is concentrated inside them. They are hollow inside, like the truth behind Bolongo's mask. They have no True Name.

You can recognise a sorcerer by his eyes, for there is no life in them. They do not truly live: they cannot truly die. They are always unhappy - grasping and greedy and sad. Their lives are solitary, like the Charnjibber that stalks the plains: they will not join in the games, nor hunt with their skin-brothers - they will never know the joy of chasing the Runthing. They will not and cannot join in a Meeting Contest. They care nothing for the Right Footpath; they despise the beauty of the Breath World.

Today most sorcerers live far away in the cities near the Great Ocean, gaining their power from human misery. Sometimes they try to hide amongst the oasis folk, but the Spears of Vangono always seek them out and kill them. Hon Hoolbiktu formed a special lodge amongst his temple: his warriors always carry a magical bronze mirror that will not mist over when a sorcerer breathes upon it.

Our women say that entire tribes of sorcerers live in Batu Batun, consorting with chaos and looking with jealousy upon the water-riches of the Doraddi. I also think there must be many sorcerers among the exigers, for they are evil. To be sure, you should ask a Jmijie man or one of the wind-charioteers. The Kresh? I do not think so. The Kresh are strange, but they are not sorcerers. Sorcerers are kinless: *the gods* are distant to them. That is who they are, the lonely ones who despise the beauties of life.

John Hughes

The rampant xenophobe's view

What do we think about...SORCERERS!

"Beware of sorcerers, my boys, for they are evil. They are men, but they have no souls. We shun all strangers, but you must also hate the sorcerer.

"Ah, but who is a sorcerer you ask? I will tell you lest you meet one on patrol. A sorcerer could be anyone not like us. The Moon Soldiers, who sometimes take the high road through our lands, some of them are sorcerers. Shun them, hate them. The new folk, who are building farms down river, some of them are sorcerers. Shun them, hate them. A sorcerer denies the power of All Seeing Yelm and uses godless magic that is evil. A sorcerer can steal a man's soul just by touching him. A sorcerer can pervert the minds of women by looking into their eyes, inciting their natural lasciviousness.

"If we can, we must beat a sorcerer with sticks to show the Light Sons our piety and zeal, but then such types must be brought to noon judgement before our Count, Solanthos, whose wisdom comes from Yelm. The Count will hold in his hands the Globe of Authority and the Sceptre of Order and pronounce judgement. Perhaps the sorcerer will be banished to our salt mines in Vulture's Country, there to spend the rest of his lifetime pondering his own wickednesses and amorality (minus his hands, of course, lest he work more of his godless evil). Or, better still, the Count will call upon Fiery Yelm to smite vile heathen there and then, scorching his body and soul into blackened cinders!"

- From the weekly sermon to his troops by Coriander Goldbeard, Light Servant (Acolyte) of Yelmadio, File Leader of "The Bird Men" IXth Militia, Eiskolli.

[Obviously, Coriander has never met a real sorcerer in his life, but this hasn't stopped his fervent imagination and rampant xenophobia from constructing an image in his mind. The remark about "stealing a man's soul just by touching him" suggests Coriander has heard of Tapping]

MOB



What we Do with Sorcerorrs in Greydog Village,

**as narrated to me by
Fergus Windbag in the
Greydog Inn one night**

"Sorcerorrs eh? Here in Greydog village we always has a warm welcome for sorcerorrs. A little too warm if you get me meaning, seeing as how the last sorcerorr we found around these parts was rolled in boiling tar, before we threw him into the Upland Marsh.

"He was a furriner of course, but we knew he was a sorcerorr right enough because he had them evil eyes like they do. Put all the hens in the Longbrewer stead off their laying - and that only happens when there's sorcerorrs about. When old Quentin Longbrewer confronted him about it, this furriner just looked him over in in that sneering way sorcerorrs have, and then cursed him in that chaos-speech. We didn't understand a word of it, so that's how we knew he was one of them.

"Anyway, some of the lads held him down, while Big Hralf sat on his head, so he couldn't curse no more. We boiled up Quentin's barrel of tar, that he keeps special for the purpose, and we poured it all over him - you should have seen him jump about and curse at us! But all his cursing didn't do him no good, because we'd all asked Orlanth for his protection against evil charms.

"He didn't die, mind, like normal folks do, so we took him to the marsh, because that's the place for chaos, and tossed him in near Yellowflower Isle. The Ducks got him and covered him in feathers, so everyone would know he was a sorcerorr, but I heard that he got away eventually, and went back to his master, Delecti (Gods curse him).

"Corwen and Branduan said that we should of cut off his head, like they did with the sorcerorr they found in the Howlin' Tower that time - but I reckon that's another story.

Steve Thomas

Introduction to the Sorcery Syllabus

Sorcerers are wise and powerful men who first came from the West. Many of our great noble houses employ them, and in the western Satrapies they are commonly found as viziers to the mighty. They study the workings of Natural Law, and apply their knowledge with wondrous effect to the very substance of the Universe. But in this great comprehension is their weakness. For the sorcerers are locked in the past, constrained always to work with the world as it once was. They have no vision of the future, no ideals to strive toward.

Our Lunar Way is unique, because it was reborn within Time, and thus embodies Progress. While all the other religions of Glorantha are frozen into their current forms, the Lunar Way can change and develop, growing to encompass and convert them into harmony with the truths of the Red Moon. Change is our friend, just as it is the enemy of the old order. And nobody represents more the sterile and rigid nature of Law better than the traditional, conservative sorcerer.

The magi of Carmania worship a God they call the Wise Lord, Invisible God and Creator. The Red Goddess knew of this primal being, and made it part of her mission to heal him (and, thereby, heal the world). Yet by worshipping the Creator as he *was* and *is*, the magi prevented him from attaining the final transformation into what he must *become*. Their faith was fossilised and rigid, limited by its past and unable to perceive the necessity of future change. This is why the Carmanians were overthrown in the Zero Wane by the New Light of the Goddess.

At the College of Magic, we teach students the rigid Old Laws of Sorcery, but we also show how they can be made more flexible, more powerful, by embracing the fertile creativity of the Lunar Way. And our priestesses know of the Creator God of the Carmanians, and follow the path of the Red Goddess as she seeks to heal and transform the Creator and the Universe together.

Nick Brooke

Sorcerous Views



LETTERS

Saravan Peacock South Fremantle, Western Australia

Congrats on issue #12 of Tales, it is fantastic! The colour cover is a great idea and if you (we) can afford it, would be a welcome addition in future. It was good to see some arguments for changing the divine/rune magic system and divine intervention. I think the restriction of DI according to the God's realm of influence is totally justified. It should not need to be enforced, however. Once players become used to the atmospheric use of games rules they quickly adopt the spirit of the DI system when calling for help. Rather than needing to interpret the request harshly, as happens all too often in AD+D wishes, both GM and player will be able to work together to call for and enact an appropriate measure.

I also particularly liked "Warhamster", which bears a close and reassuring resemblance to the Dragon Pass board game. "Reflections on the Red Goddess" and "Things that Love Night", all worthwhile contributions to the magazine which has provided us with so much Gloranthan lore. Grateful thanks to those concerned.

John Hughes "Questlines" was superb. This is the most intelligent and thought provoking look at alternative gaming paradigms I have seen in a field littered with good work on the issue. Glorantha is a perfect setting to expand and develop the potential inherent in the mythical aspects of gaming. Recent developments in the gaming field such as the White Wolf systems Vampire, Werewolf etc. supplement games such as Ars Magica and Pendragon which focus on either an entire community and the close relations between character and society. As Mike Dawson pointed out in CODEX #2, RuneQuest offers the perfect chance to combine all these paradigms within the Gloranthan setting. I'll be looking forward to the rest of John Hughes's articles on this topic.

Harald Smith Haverhill, MA

Kudos to all on the great 'colour' special. In terms of use and personal interest, I would put it in the top three issues.

The timing of Granite Phalanx was particularly good since my players are just in the process of establishing a Lunar

colony along the Elf Sea and will be recruiting good lunar veterans to help it along. I can picture the Granite Phalanx veterans arriving now. Of course, that raised one immediate question - do retirees retain any access to their rune magic or are they considered totally cut off from this once they leave the regiment?

David Cake Perth, Western Australia

I have just received my Tales #12, congrats on the colour cover, very nice. Warhamster looks quite worthwhile, I hope that I can eventually use it. I have always admired the way AD&Ds Battle System integrates so well with the rest of the game system (see, even TSR occasionally produces something worthwhile :-)), and I hope that Warhamster can do the same for RQ.

I am not quite so pleased with the rest of it yet (though I haven't read the fiction yet). Granite Phalanx seems well written, but continues the tendencies I have seen happening in other RQ stuff to make everything into a new cult, and to make up spells to explain what could just be explained by superior training and organisation. Do we really need spells to explain why shield walls are a worthwhile tactic? Do we really need new cults for each lunar regiment? I would much rather that it was just a sub-cult at best, and relied on training rather than magic, like Yelmadio.

De Ed: I think we do need new cults and sub-cults for each regiment. I believe this because I see Glorantha as an extremely magical world where differences between people, species and organisations are not just physical but magical too. The Lunar Army is not as homogenous an organisation as many people perceive - its not the Roman Army (though some parts of it may owe a lot to the Romans). The differences manifest themselves not only as different uniforms, organisation and tactics, but also as different religions, spells, and rituals.

Most regiments are built around their own literal Esprit de Corps. Lunar soldiers worship their standards, which are usually ancient demi-gods, heroes, and regimental founders (often a sub-cult of the local war god). Each of these gives a unique spell or skill which helps to define the regiments area of expertise. The Granite Phalanx happens to be a phalangite regiment and so Shield Wall is the logical spell. Other phalangite regiments might have some variation on the same spell.



Nick Brooke Richmond, Surrey

Sorry about this, it's just a whinge I feel I have to get off my chest.

Religious and/or legal prohibitions are usually imposed (from on high or down below) to stop normal people from doing things they'd otherwise be quite happy to carry on doing. RuneQuest's "Geas" tables are unusual in that while they do make it clear what "pure" Humakti or Yelmations will be like, no "minimum standard" is imposed by them. So (one presumes) a Humakti without the "Never use poison" geas would feel no moral qualms about doing so, and would not suffer for it either tangibly (Spirit of Retribution, Excommunication, beaten up by his colleagues) or in reputation ("Some folk call him Corwen the Poisoner, but most of us don't hold that against him: only Ignar the Healthy, Flostak Broo-Hunter and Bertha Rosycheeks in our Temple shun the use of poison, and even they don't mind when their friends use it."). In the silence of the rules, the obvious implication would be that most Humakti would be culturally inclined to use poison, and (moreover) that almost all were not prohibited by ethical or legal or peer-pressuring considerations from pursuing their inclinations, and that those who did were seen as rather odd: self-denying and austere in their piety.

Aprpos of which, I've sometimes wondered how to replace the rather unusual "Geas" mechanism with something that "feels right" to me in this light:

Perhaps a mechanic that encourages players to act in accordance with as many Geases as possible in order to reap maximum benefits from their deity-of-choice. Making temple POW gains, or MP recovery, or something else magical, somehow dependent on correct behaviour.

Or punishing lapses from "ideal" behaviour rather than forcing compliance with limited aspects of it. (Like, any Yelmation who got on well with a Troll would suffer somehow for it; those who disdain and distrust them would be 'neutral' in the cult: no reward, no penalty; one who always challenges all Trolls on sight would get some kind of benefit).

Or linking Geases to Rune magic: only Humakti who never Lie (or who haven't Lied for a season, or since the last Holy Day, or whatever) would be able to cast Detect Truth; only Humakti who don't accept magical healing can cast Sever Spirit;

Truesword cannot be cast on a blade which has ever been poisoned; that kind of thing.

Or making the whole thing more social/open, so that most Humakti try to live by all the cult's Geases, even though only some of them would suffer terrible punishments for breaking them.

I just think people are more likely to publicly renounce some generally-accepted "sin" (and afterwards, pleasingly, receive some benefit for it) than to select or have imposed a random penalty to receive a peculiar, known, certain benefit.

Currently, the system feels odd (to me). I'd certainly step up the level of priestly involvement in the selection of Geases, to increase Maximum Game Fun. "In our Temple, we *never* speak on Freezeday." I'd incline to impose the prohibition of my GM-ing choice (and present the benefit as a side-effect), rather than keep the current minimaxing "choose whatever you want" system. But this may just be that the rule is presented backwards to what I'd prefer: picking your (divinely-granted) benefit and therefore suffering your (non-self-imposed) restriction. Should the shoe instead be on the other foot?

Of course, the fact that only the randomly-imposed prohibitions etc. are described as Geases adds to the strangeness; if you rewrote Chalana Arroy (for example) to say that "all Healers must take a Geas to harm no living being", the term would feel more natural when encountered in its Humakti context. Or we could call the aberrant "geases" "Vows", or "cult duties", or some such?

I just can't help thinking of RuneQuest Old Testament characters in the Cult of Yahweh being allowed to pick and choose (or rolling 1D10 to discover?) which of the Ten Commandments they'll have to follow...

And, furthermore: whoever gave Yelmations their ludicrous armouring Geases obviously thought as hard about the techniques of Hoplite and Phalangite warfare as MOB did in his memorable passage on 2H Spear w/ Shield in Sun County (dodging in the ranks!).

"Sorry, sir: looks like I'll have to stay in the back rank. 'Never wear any head protection', that's my geas..."

(Perhaps that one gets assigned to Light Sons' sons? Or to female Templars? Or to folk like me who make suggestions like that?)

(Of course, the situation was far worse in 1st edition days! "Never use any shield", forsooth! "Will all those who rolled a '57' assemble at the *left* edge of the Phalanx...")

SURETIES



The information on the Councils has been gleaned from Council records and a number of personal interviews. Unfortunately, many of the records dating from before the God Learner period were destroyed during the Empire's fall and therefore for this period greater reliance has had to be placed on secondary sources and interviews.

The First Council, 88 S.T.

The council was a major success with Priestesses of Seshna and Zoria turning up and voting, and a surprise visitation from Hrestol himself.

The Second Council, 228 S.T.

The Third Council, 453 S.T.

attendance to settle the differences between their Churches, and to identify and purge the heretical influences of Gbaji and Arkat.

The major decision of the council was that there was no higher truth than the Invisible God. This was, in part, to counter the claims of returning soldiers and followers of Arkat. The remaining heretics were then forced eastward into Ralios.

According to their own sources, the Vadelis attended this Council as observers, but since they refused to accept Malkion as a prophet they were not allowed in as full voting members.

The Fourth Council, 660 S.T.

This was held by King Bretnos to try and heal his divided kingdom which was being torn apart by the brothers and relatives of the previous king, Nepur. As a show of unity the Council failed dismally. Only one representative from Akem attended, though a delegation from the Kingdom of Nomia was accepted onto the Council.

The council was dissolved upon the assassination of King Bretnos as he addressed the Council, thus plunging the kingdom into years of civil war and theological dispute.

The Fifth Council, 821 S.T.

This council was held by Emperor Miglos of the God Learner Empire. It is known that representatives from every faction of the Malkioni were in attendance, as well as priestesses of Zoria and Vadeli observers (though the Waertagi were noted as being absent).

uniting behind the creed prescribed by the Emperor, or his compromises. However, the catastrophic failure of Miglos' attack on Brithos, and his death, proved that the perceived unity had been flawed.

It was at this council that the Tapping and Caste sub-committees were set up with the intention of reporting their findings at the sixth Council.

The Sixth Council, 1427 S.T.

This Council was held in Leplain by King Bailifes the Hammer and his Ecclesiarch Mardron. It is usually considered as being a fairly successful venture with representatives from Loskalm, Fronela and Ralios attending the council, and observers from the Aeolian Church of Heortland.

However, few decisions were taken at the council, and none on areas of major dispute. The reports of the Tapping and Caste sub-committee's were deferred, and a further sub-committee was set up (under pressure from Mardron) on the nature and role of women in modern Malkionism.

The Seventh Council, 1625 S.T.

The Seventh Council has been called by all of the major sects under the auspices of the Holy Monk Notslor. It is to be held in Harmony week of Dark Season, 1625 in Sog City, a neutral and holy venue. News of the Council has been spread far and wide to encourage attendance, and it is also expected that there will be representatives from Zoria, and the Waertagi, as well as Vadeli observers.

David Hall

Things that Love Night (Part II)

There was light under Asmodea's door, like a golden wand. He wondered what she was doing awake at this time of night. She answered the door in a smock of wood chips. Her feet were bare. There was a mallet in one hand, a chisel in the other. Her face was fierce.

"It's late," she began, annoyed.

"Big deal. It's always late. You remember our little project."

She didn't move from the middle of the door. "What's so urgent you couldn't wait till morning?"

"We could stand out here in the hall and discuss it if you like."

She brushed some of the chips from her dress. "These are my private quarters," she said at last. "Go down to the audience room and I will meet you there in five minutes."

It was Zero's turn not to budge.

"Here," he said. "Audience means hearing. Too many ears."

She waved the hammer. "This better be good. Otherwise I'm going to sell you to be cut up into paperweights."

She backed into the room.

The table that Zero had envied her was now on its side in a puddle of shavings. The legs were shorter than they used to be.

"The damned thing has always wobbled," said Asmodea, defensively. "Every time I ask Zimmer to fix it, he's got something more important to do, he says. He'll get to it in a couple of days, but by then the roof leaks or a fence post has to be replaced or Plickendacker's wooden head has to be painted again. Actually I'm sure he's down in his little cubbyhole smoking Imfershmorkian lettuce and reading all the missing gynecology scrolls, but I've just never been able to catch him at it. So finally I decided to repair the sucker myself."

She rubbed her forehead with the back of a hand, and continued ruefully, "So what I've got to show for my efforts is a bashed thumb, a year's supply of wood chips, and a table that comes up to my knees and still wobbles."

"Let me try," suggested Zero.

"Why? Do you know something about woodworking?"

"No. But what have you got to lose?"

She handed him the mallet and chisel. He set the table upright, noted which legs were the longer ones, and went to work. The chisel, he observed immediately, did not want to cut against the grain. Perhaps a different instrument was required. He kept at it. It only wanted persistence and close attention. Asmodea sat down to watch.

Fifteen minutes later, it wobbled worse than ever.

"That's all right, Zero. If you had fixed it after all the work I put into it, I was going to chisel inspiring mottoes into your forehead. Now I feel much better."

"There must be something wrong with the hammer."

"No doubt. Now what can I do for you?"

"To start with, the Safeglass."

"Very funny. You want the Crown Jewels too?"

"Practically. But first things first."

She stared at him. "You're not kidding," she said wonderingly. "You really want me to give you a spell matrix."

"And the worst is yet to come. But I need the glass. We have gotten into Cassine's room, but she's virtually mindless with fear. She won't talk to me."

"Very sensible. Whenever I do, I regret it."

Zero plowed on. "With the Safeglass, she'll know she can trust me."

"Ha." She leaned forward, hands on her knees. "You know you'll fry for a dozen years if you don't bring it back."

Her nose twitched. "In deep fat."

"Asmodea must have her little jokes."

She began picking curled woodchips from the smock stretched over her thighs. "Assuming I'm crazy enough to give you the Safeglass, will you go away and leave me in peace?"

"There's just one other thing."

She continued to brush at her dress. Zero decided she was intentionally making him look at her knees, which were quite satisfactory representatives of the species. Knees in general held no fascination for him.

"And that is?"

"Your sylph."

"You're crazy."

"I know you've got a truestone with a wind elemental in it. I want to borrow it."

She slapped her knees in amazement. "You weren't kidding about the Crown Jewels."

Her brow knitted. "How the hell did you find out about it?"

"I'm a detective."

"Well, good for you. Go detect yourself another one."

All he could do was wait.

"Damnation, Zero, you know I can't lend it to you. If you lost it, I would be the one to fry. It belongs to the temple, not to me."

"I still need it."

"What for? Listen, even Verek isn't worth that. If you can't rescue him without it, then let him burn! I simply can't let it out of my possession."

"It's not just Verek."

"Then tell me. Give me a reason!" She stopped, cocked an ear, as if listening to herself, and the unaccustomed pleading note. When she spoke again, her voice had regained its normal tone of command. "Oh, crap. All right, you can have the glass. But not a truestone, no way. And you better tell me how you found out about it."

"Not a chance," said Zero. He scratched his forehead uncertainly. "And I can't really tell you why I need it, either. It's just a suspicion."

"Then you can't have it."

"You could come along. And summon the sylph yourself."



Asmodea thought it over. "All right. That sounds safe enough."
"It's not far," said Zero. "And there will be two of us. I've got a couple of friends in Cassine's room. They can't get all of us."

Asmodea swallowed hard. "They?"

Zero shrugged. "You know how it is. There's always danger when you're dealing with violent crime."

"Violent?"

"We should be going."

Asmodea was thinking. Most temple people were asleep at this hour. It might have been his imagination, but he thought he could hear distant snoring.

"On second thought," said Asmodea, "my duties here make it very difficult to get away..."

"We have the good of everybody to consider," said Zero.

"That'll be the day," replied Asmodea, with her old irony.

"It will be if I don't get moving pretty quick. Get the stuff, please." She bent down, picked up a handful of shavings, strode over to him, and rubbed them into his hair.

"Watch your tongue, peasant. Remember your rank. Your humble, insignificant, wretched, obscure, miserable rank."

"I haven't got all night."

"Lucky me."

But she brought back the truestone.

"Have you ever used one of these before?"

"I've never even seen one before," he admitted.

"All right. To get the Wind elemental, just touch the stone and call on Orlanth to summon it. It can take up to a minute to form. You will be in mental communication with it, and will have to give it orders. It's very slow-witted and can be very difficult to manage. The two of you will get along fine. Don't try giving it any complicated commands. Even," she added, "if you could think of any."

He didn't know what he had expected, but he was disappointed. The truestone was an irregular lump of brownish crystal, with blunt edges, like a sea pebble after it dried. The faces were flat. The stone had no symmetry. Its color and texture were almost dusty, but nothing came off on his hands. It didn't glitter, it wasn't warm to the touch, it had no inner glow. For an instant, it crossed his mind that Asmodea might be giving him an ordinary rock. She had given in too easily. He glanced up at her face, and was surprised to see untroubled eyes. It shook him. Did she trust him? He certainly didn't trust her.

He put the stone in a pocket and took the Safeglass from her. It was a small piece of mirrored ceramic, set in a frame of dull copper. Not for the first time, he wondered at the impracticality of magicians. Considering the effort and sacrifice it took to create a matrix, one would suppose that the creator would use something convenient and accessible, like a ring, a bracelet, or an amulet. But no, magicians had a positive craving to make matrices out of statuettes, flasks, cloaks, candleholders, parasols, axes, and so on. In one case he knew of, a scribe had made his entire house into an Extinguish matrix, so that when he was going to bed at night, all he had to do was touch a wall and all the candles and lanterns in the house went out. Of course, it also put out all lanterns in the houses on either side, which didn't make him popular with the neighbors.

Making a mirror into a spell matrix was equally dumb. Drop it, crack the glass, there went the matrix.

"If you lose either one of these," said Asmodea,

"I will put you on my own special weight-loss program, in which fat is removed gradually, a bit at a time. By surgery. Daily. With no painkiller."

Zero, who was remembering Haptor, was not amused.

*

"You sure took your time," said Samm.

"We could have burglarized three more houses while we were waiting."

Cassine was still crouched as she had been when Zero left, huddled in the corner with the blanket pulled up to her nose. Her eyes flicked dully from one occupant of the room to another, without change of expression.

"I thought you were going back to the Library." Snapdragon frowned.

"It looks to me like you've been taking a nap in a woodpile."

He brushed self-consciously at his scalp. "A misguided levity." He approached the bed.

"Samm, please watch the window. Let me know if anyone appears in the courtyard. Snapdragon, please stand by the door. If you hear anything, tell me."

"You expect someone to show up, boss?" asked Samm.

"Zombies from that mausoleum next door?"

"That would surprise me," said Zero, stopping beside the bed. The mirror was in his hands. He didn't place a lot of faith in magic. It had its uses, but it was no substitute for brainwork. In the case of detect spells, mostly they confirmed what you already knew. Still, it never hurt to check. He closed his eyes, let the mirror give him the words, and recited them. After a few seconds, certainty flooded his mind — the false, deceptive certainty of magic. No hostility to Cassine in the fuzzy spherical range of the spell. But Zero knew better than to take that assurance too literally. At least he could safely get her to cast it.

He showed Cassine the mirror. "Do you know how a spell matrix works?" Receiving no response, he continued.

"What you do is hold this mirror in your hand. Close your eyes. It will tell you what to say. Say the words, don't resist when it tugs at you."

He held out the mirror. She didn't move. Her arms were sticks.

"It will show you you are among friends," he encouraged.

"Please do it."

She quailed as the mirror approached, but could not shrink from it. Zero took her hand and closed her gaunt fingers over the glass. Her gaze never left his face. After a moment, he brought the glass up in front of her eyes.

The instant she saw her image, the fear drained out of her. Zero watched as despair flooded in. Her scoured eyes followed the mirror as it dropped to the blanket. Zero grabbed it before it could fall to the floor. Cassine made helpless muffled sounds. He realized she was crying.

Zero took hold of the hand holding the blanket against her face, and pulled gently on it. Abruptly, she let go. Her hand fell to her side, pulling the blanket with it.

Zero was appalled. She was naked under the blanket and her skin was stretched taut over her ribs, as if pulled inward by some tremendous suction. The skin had a slick tarnished look, like shelf fungus on a dead tree. If she doesn't die soon, he thought, the bones will cut through her skin. She had no breasts, only barely visible wrinkles where the nipples were.

She stared emptily at the mirror and wept, although there was no liquid for tears. At first he couldn't understand the words, but then she said them again.

"I'm ugly," she whimpered.

"No, you're not. You're just sick."

"I'm ugly," she repeated.

"I used to be pretty. Verek always said so. Now I'm ugly. I'm



awful."

"Where is Verek now?"

She gestured weakly with her hand. "He's not here."

"I know." He took her hand. It felt like a bundle of nails. "You have to tell us where he is. And what has happened to you. Then we can help you."

Her fingers closed around the mirror again. She turned it so she could see herself. "Ugly, ugly, ugly," she whispered.

"We're going to take you somewhere where you can get help. We will make you pretty again."

"No!" There was surprising force in her cry.

"I can't leave!"

The nails tightened in his hand. "Why not? What is it?"

Cassine twisted in the bed. He could see lumps on two ribs, clearly etched by the parchment skin, where bones had broken and knitted.

Snapdragon took a step toward the bed. "Dear, we have to get you to the Healers, so you can be pretty again, even prettier than you were before. Verek will tell you so. Even Zero here will admit it."

Unable to look away from the dying woman, Zero checked the mirror, made sure that Samm was still watching out the window.

"That's right," he said.

"You're going to be a real heartbreaker in no time."

"I can't leave," she insisted.

"Why not?"

Her face took on an air of naive cunning. "It's a secret."

"I'm very good at keeping secrets."

"So am I," she said triumphantly.

"She's got you there," said Snapdragon.

"Will you step out in the hall a minute?" he snapped.

"And Samm, you don't hear any of this."

"Suit yourself,"

said Snapdragon, with a snicker. The door clicked behind her. Zero cast an eye in the mirror again. Samm was leaning against the window edge, looking down into the courtyard.

"There's one thing more fun than keeping a secret all to yourself," he lied. "And that's telling just one other person about it, one special person." He patted her hand. "I'm very special. Extraordinary. You can tell that, can't you?"

It wasn't going over. Cassine was paying no attention, her face a glassy mask.

"All right, Cassine, I understand. You don't have to tell me. But now we must take you to the Healers. We can't wait any longer."

Her face constricted with alarm. "No!" she cried.

"He won't be able to find me."

Zero put his arm around her shoulders. "Of course he will. We'll find Verek and tell him where you are. You can help us find him, in fact."

She shook her head. "Not Verek."

"You don't want us to find him?"

"He knows I'm here," she said solemnly. "So he can find me. So you see, I can't leave."

"You have no choice, I'm afraid, unless you help me." She peered anxiously at him, then seemed to reach a decision. "You won't tell Verek?"

"Of course not. This is just between you and me."

She seemed to drift in and out of comprehension, life coming and going in her eyes. "He mustn't find out about my lover," she said. "He wouldn't like it."

"You have a lover who visits you here?"

"Yes, he's very handsome and considerate. That woman who was here, the one who went out the door, she'd fall in love with him too if she met him. But he loves only me. He will come for me soon." Her legs squirmed under the blanket.

"But you mustn't tell. It must be our secret."

"Samm isn't hearing a thing, believe me. Samm is very discreet."

Another glance in the mirror now clasped in both their hands assured him that Samm was still gazing disinterestedly out the window. Leaning on the frame like that would give him a crick in the neck, Zero thought. This can't be that boring.

"Is that why you are naked?" he asked her.

"Are you waiting for your lover now?" She looked coy.

"Yes, he likes it better if I'm naked. It's not so much trouble that way." She started to giggle, but it splintered into a series of coughs.

"He's naked too," she said.

She didn't protest as he took the edge of the blanket and pulled it down to her knees. Her hips rose like twin cleavers. Morbid skin was puckered over her intestines. Where the inside of each thigh met the dull yellow hair at the base of her abdomen sat a huge bruise, sickly purple, angry, brutal, and evil.

"Is this what he does to you?" stammered Zero, hushed.

"Yes," she said. "Afterward it hurts, but while he's with me, it's wonderful."

He couldn't take his eyes from them. There was something baleful, potently sexual but savage about the paired bruises. Brusquely he grabbed the blanket and covered her.

"Samm!" he commanded. "We've got to get her out of here."

"No!" Cassine clutched the blanket. "No!"

"Samm!"

There was no response. He whirled. Samm was still standing as before, leaning against the window stop. Next to him was a greenish man, utterly naked, with his hand on Samm's shoulder. There was blood on Samm's neck. The man was short, familiar. Essence of pleasure was in his eyes. The arm which held Samm by the shoulder bulged with muscles and controlled violence. He looked at Zero, waiting.

"Snapdragon!" bellowed Zero.

He knew where he had seen that face before. He cursed himself. *Of course* he hadn't seen or heard the man enter.

"Snapdragon!" he yelled again. *Of course* he hadn't spotted him in the mirror.

The door flew open, and Snapdragon burst into the room. One glance took in the situation. Without perceptible hesitation, she flung herself toward the man holding her husband.

Give him a goatee, thought Zero. A green goatee Snapdragon covered the distance between herself and the window in huge leaps. At the last instant, she left the floor with a tremendous leap and brought her forearm, braced by the other, down on the side of the man's neck. The impact drummed in the room. She stepped with all her weight on the side of his knee.

"Shammat!" breathed Cassine behind Zero. "You've come!"

The force of Snapdragon's drive carried her over and behind her target, who shook but didn't fall.

"Shammat!" called Cassine again. Zero, forgetting his own warnings to Samm, picked up a chair.

One of the heavily muscled arms swung around, and a greenish hand clamped like a marble vise on Snapdragon's elbow. For the first time, Shammat smiled, and two bright teeth shimmered in the blurry half-light. With absurd ease, he wrenched Snapdragon in a wide circle, bringing her face to face with him. She smashed him in the face with her free hand, but Shammat didn't even blink. Without losing his kindly smile, he turned her arm to bring the point of the elbow underneath. Then he lifted, and all Snapdragon's weight bore on the prisoned joint.

"No!" came Cassine's faint voice.

"You belong to me. I won't share you!"

"Let her go!" demanded Zero. He advanced, holding the chair in front of him. Snapdragon's face was twisted in pain. Amazed, Zero



noted that in spite of the violence, or because of it, the vampire was sexually aroused. For a suspended instant Shammat's gaze ran up and down Snapdragon's body. With his other arm, he gave Samm an effortless shove, and the little burglar went spinning across the room, cartwheeled over Cassine's bed, slammed into the wall headfirst, and dropped to the floor where he lay like a picture of a broken doll.

Snapdragon yelled in agony as her feet left the floor. Again she rammmed a fist into the vampire's face, with no visible effect. "Hurt her!" screamed Cassine. "They wanted to take me away!" Zero heard the sickening crackle as bone gave way in Snapdragon's arm. Shammat continued to smile, bringing his glittering fangs close to her eyes. With a last desperate effort, she brought her knuckles into Shammat's throat. His smile vanished like ice in fire. He gagged, staggered, caught himself, but didn't release the arm. Recovering, he grasped Snapdragon's ankle and lifted her easily into the air. Zero waved the chair futilely. There was no way he could hit Shammat with Snapdragon between them. The vampire's poisonous eyes looked Snapdragon over once more. "You're very healthy," he said, in a mild, musical voice. "Shammat!" cried Cassine. "You promised! I'm your only lover!" "You know," he said calmly, "you have gotten very tiresome. Look at you, you're nothing but bones and hide. You don't eat right, you don't keep up your strength. Now this one," he said, looking up at Snapdragon, "she would last a long time." Zero heard the simple-minded cunning come back into Cassine's voice. "You could have both of us." Shammat shook his head. "Frankly, my dear, I'm tired of you. I admit," he reflected, "your blood does have the piquancy of betrayal and the tang of revenge. But it is very thin lately, and even the most stimulating flavors weary without variety. Besides,"he chuckled, "I think Verek is getting suspicious. We can't go on meeting like this." Shammat's sexual gibes were obviously no bluff. The vampire's monolithic tumescence in the middle of a fight was awe-inspiring. It was one of those competitions you didn't know about until too late. Zero felt futile and incompetent. It was the ultimate masculine sneer. "Actually," said the serene vampire, "I think tonight's contributions to the larder will be one-shot meals. I don't think, Cassine dear, that they would have your devotion and enthusiasm. And it will have to be your last night as well. I don't really need

you any more. You see," he continued, savoring the words, "I have another lover." There wasn't much point in using the Safeglass now. Shammat's hostility to every being in the room was unmistakable. The vampire was smiling with pleasure at Cassine's agony. Feeling as he did about magic, Zero knew few spells, and none of the ones he did know were high-power enchantments. Mostly just detect spells of one kind or another, for sensing the presence of other life or precious metals. A glowspot for reading in the dark. An eyesharp for relieving his nearsightedness. A tiny healing spell for minor cuts.

Healing? He wondered what effect healing would have on a vampire. To apply it, you had to get close enough to touch. It was an idea, though. Cassine stretched out her arms to the vampire. "Oh, Shammat..." It was a wail of despair, not of reproach. "To tell the truth, which is not something I make a habit of, I have had another lover the whole time." Cassine crumpled. There was a death sentence in Shammat's words, but she hardly appeared to notice. Her fingers gouged into her cheeks, and a moan seeped between her palms. "The whole time..." Zero lowered the chair slightly. Eyesharp worked both ways. It could dim as well as enhance. Didn't bats have poor eyesight already? Maybe Shammat's wasn't so good to start with either. Zero started the words of the spell.

Shammat looked suddenly alarmed, and in that fleeting second Zero realized the vampire had no way of knowing how piddling the spell was and how negligible its chance of success. Shammat's arms shot out to full length and hurled Snapdragon across the room, directly at Zero, directly at the chair. Desperately, he pulled the chair out of the way. Snapdragon flailed as she rotated in flight. She filled his field of vision. He was slammed to the ground by the impact. Dazed only a moment, he wrenched himself out from under her She was sprawled in the corner, her head cocked against the wall, blood already starting to stain the brown curls. Her neck was crooked at an impossible angle.

Except for Cassine's last flicker, thought Zero, I'm the only living being in this room.

Rumours

- T - This indicates that the rumour is true
- F - This indicates that the rumour is false
- M - This indicates that the rumour is so general as to be meaningless.
- R - This indicates that the rumour may or may not be true at the referee's option.
- B - This indicates that the rumour is generally true but that it also has a substantial false component.
- A - This indicates that the rumour is too awful to even think about.

In Ramalia Tapping is a form of state punishment, so it is unwise to annoy the judge by conducting a draining defense. R

The rallying call of zealots of the Syanoran Church is Tap the Bastards! T

- Lady Vega Goldbreath, the sole female Light Son at the Sun Dome Temple in Prax, is actually a man who dresses up as a woman. The reaction of his/her husband invictus is not known. B
- Arkat took a vacation in Sog City and was at the Seventh Ecclesiastical Council of Malkion - five times! B
- The Argan Argar cult is planning to resurrect the Only Old One now that the Pharoah is dead. T
- Would-be apprentices beware! The wizard amorous Fredi Lush, Galvosti Magus of Col, likes to bed his new recruits and often uses the Tap spell to prolong his vigor. R
- The Lismelder tribe of Sartar are actually a lost colony of Deep Ones. A
- When buying a Thunder Keg from Throndbol the Dwarf Merchant always ask for instructions. M



Fourth Edition RuneQuest Sorcery

by Oliver Jovanovic and Michael McGloin

Three mounted figures looked over the battlefield. A small band of men at arms, led by knights, were fighting in a desperate struggle against nearly twice their number of raiders. One of the mounted figures, the champion, turned his head to face his lord. "Sire, I fear for our men." The lord stared a moment longer, then nodded, turning to gaze at his wizard. "Panice, I need your services." The third figure, who wore the robes of a Malkioni wizard, spoke softly in return. "Of course, my lord."

Raising his staff, the wizard dug his spurs into his steed's flanks. The horse surged forward, moving with incredible rapidity. The closest raiders had but started to turn when the wizard and his horse tore through them. The wizard smiled as he lashed out around him with his staff, ignoring the hail of blows and spells glancing off the protective spells he always maintained on his mount and himself. His staff licked past the defences of his foes, driven by sinews and reflexes magically enhanced to inhuman levels. All around him, raiders fell, crushed by staff blows or the hooves of his horse. Their feeble parries and defensive spells were no match for the damage boosting spells the wizard maintained on his staff and his horse's hooves. The surviving raiders broke and ran in terror, fleeing the magical juggernaut they could not seem to affect or slow in any way.

The above example is an illustration of what all too often happens when one tries to apply third edition RuneQuest sorcery to a campaign. The current sorcery rules lend themselves far too easily to developing sorcerers that casually maintain dozens of spells upon themselves or their companions. Sorcerers can readily transform themselves into unstoppable killing machines by layering on numerous weapon boosting, characteristic enhancing and protective spells, which

they can effectively maintain at all times. They need little skill to do so, just a reservoir of magic points, easily provided by captive power spirits or a familiar. The fact that they lack effective combat spells leaves them little other choice.

Other problems exist as well. Some that come up repeatedly in discussions include:

- Free INT: a complicated mechanism that does little to limit sorcerers with access to matrices or intellect spirits;
- the extreme range of sorcery spells, which allows for foes to be Smothered kilometres away, or for the establishment of a teleport based postal service that seems out of place in most fantasy worlds;
- the general complexity of the system;
- the limited role skill level plays;
- sorcerers often lack colour, with little to distinguish one sorcerer from another in terms of their abilities or limitations.

Our goals in developing the sorcery system for a fourth edition of RuneQuest were to address some of these problems, while minimising the amount of work gamemasters and players would be forced to do when converting established sorcerers to the new rules. Thus most changes will occur at the level of the mechanics or organisation of sorcery, not affecting the sorcery skills and spells that would appear on a character sheet. As playtesting is still underway, and our intent is for playtesters' response to have an important role in the development of this edition, the current draft rules will no doubt see further modification.

To satisfy the curiosity of those of you lacking access to a playtest draft, I'll describe some of the current changes and the reasoning behind them.



Two major changes in the organisation of sorcery were made.

The first is the separation of sorcery spells and skills into two categories, Low Magic and High Magic. This is primarily a social distinction. The less powerful Low Magic spells and manipulations can generally be freely studied by anyone in a sorcery using culture, while the study of the more powerful High Magic may be limited to wizards, knights and the nobility.

The second is the introduction of schools of sorcery. Much as cults differentiate divine magicians, schools of sorcery differentiate students of sorcery. Members of a school favour certain spells and may be prohibited from studying others. They may also learn spells unique to their school. In addition, additional manipulation skills, such as Ease or Speed have been introduced. They are meant to remain school specific, and allow sorcerers to perform unique manipulations, such as using Speed to cast spells faster at the cost of burning additional magic points.

Both of these changes are intended to more strongly differentiate users of sorcery from each other and to better describe how sorcerers would function in the context of society.

The changes to the mechanics of sorcery were aimed at reducing the complexity of sorcery while fixing some of its current problems:

- the concept of Free INT has been abolished;
- skill in sorcery spells and manipulations (skill/10) limit how far a spell can be manipulated;
- new spells have been introduced, and a number of problematic spells have been redefined;
- the basic range and duration of sorcery spells are now linear;
- a common High Magic manipulation called Maintain allows sorcerers to maintain a few spells on themselves or others, but the total Intensities they can thus maintain are limited.

It is still possible to achieve dramatic increases in spell range and duration, as well as more exotic effects, but these cost the sorcerer a point of permanent POW, which should make them far rarer.

These changes simplify sorcery by eliminating Free INT and the complex bookkeeping required to track the maintenance of multiple extended duration spells. Although a sorcerer will find it nearly impossible to maintain dozens of spells under the new sorcery rules, mastery of the skills and spells of sorcery allows them a flexibility that the spirit or divine magician cannot match. Rather than simply maintain a tremendous number of spells to cover all occasions, a sorcerer is forced to be more selective about the few that they can now maintain. The more powerful High Magic spells and manipulations give sorcerers more of a reason to cast spells in combat, and should they become desperate enough to burn POW, they can achieve effects of great potency.

The overall intent of these changes was to improve the flavour of sorcery. Our example under the new rules might look something like this:

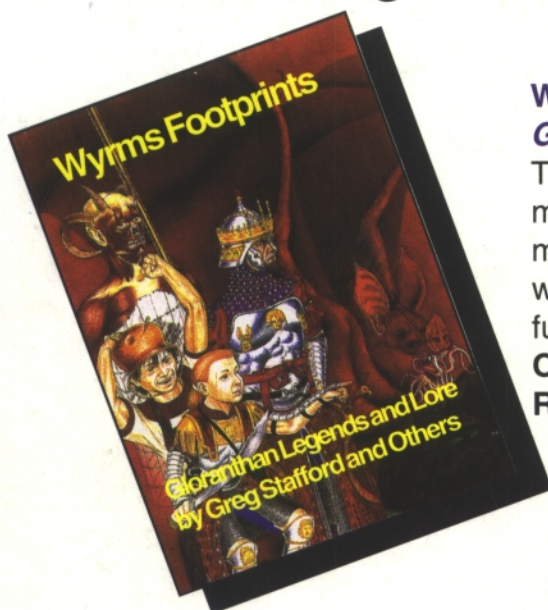
Three mounted figures looked over the battlefield. A small band of men at arms, led by knights, were fighting in a desperate struggle against nearly twice their number of raiders. One of the mounted figures, the champion, turned his head to face his lord. "Sire, I fear for our men." The lord stared a moment longer, then nodded, turning to gaze at his wizard. "Panice, I need your services." The third figure, who wore the robes of a Malkioni wizard, spoke softly in return. "Of course, my lord."

Raising his staff, the wizard gestured, and a fire began to play about the helm and armour of the lord's champion. As the champion lowered his visor and dug his spurs into his war-horse, a white flame began to grow upon the tip of his lance. The lord and the wizard watched as the mounted figure of the champion began its long descent to the battle below. Panice said nothing, focusing only on the spells he now maintained on the champion, but prayed in silence. He knew that if the champion fell, their last resort would be the power of his soul.

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