



THE SECOND AGE

CORE RULEBOOK



Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE





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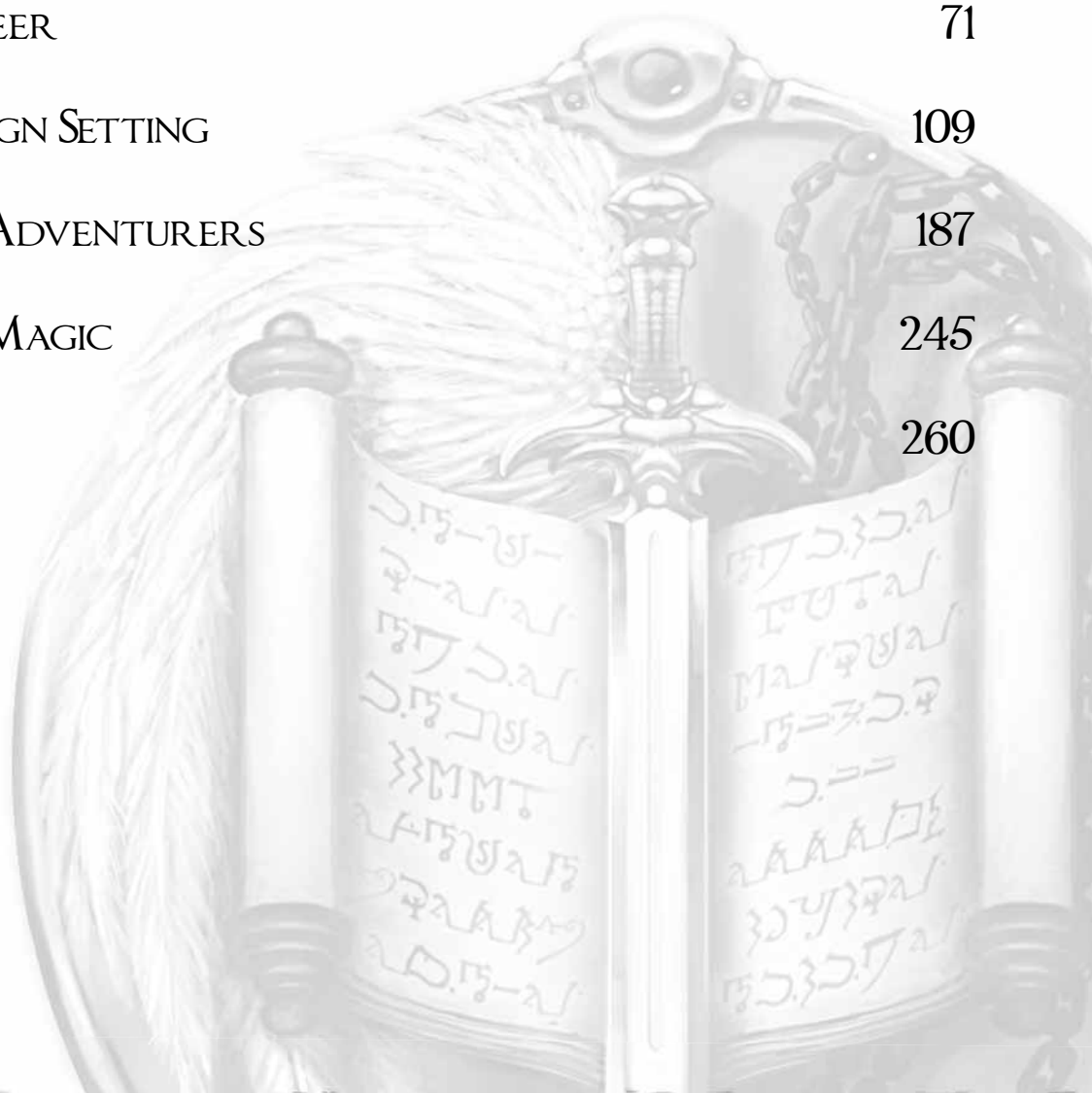
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Welcome to Glorantha

Welcome to the second edition of *Glorantha: The Second Age*.

This book has several purposes:

- X To introduce Glorantha to new *RuneQuest* players and to reintroduce it to old hands...
- X To articulate the magical world of Glorantha as completely as possible...
- X To provide the essential rules necessary for creating Gloranthan characters and hosting adventures within the Second Age of the world.

Before any of these purposes can be realised, one needs to understand what Glorantha is, why it is and how it is. Glorantha's history is important – as important as its destiny. Of more importance is an understanding of how Glorantha differs to traditional fantasy worlds, because these differences are core to its history, its present and the destiny that, through play, Adventurers will help shape.

A MYTHIC WORLD

Glorantha is not a sphere, hanging in space, orbiting a sun. It is a lozenge of earth floating along the river of time, surrounded by additional planes of existence that accompany it on its journey. Above the world is the Sky Dome, separating the sky from the land, and, in this bowl, hang the stars, the planets and Glorantha's rarely seen Blue Moon (which is a goddess, not a satellite).

Below the surface of Glorantha is soil and rock but beneath this, wrapping it, is the immensity of the Underworld, province of gods where once the sun was held prisoner in death.

Seas lap the lands of Glorantha but they are not governed by conventional tides. All waters flow to the vast maelstrom at the centre of the lozenge known as Magasta's Pool. Here the waters plunge through Glorantha, leaving the mundane realm far behind, before eventually circulating once again: if one were to travel through Magasta's Pool and be able to sail it, one would eventually emerge upon the surface again but changed.

Glorantha's gods are real and living: they reside on the God Plane which co-exists with the physical world, separated from it by the Great Compromise, a pact between the gods preventing them from engaging in the kinds of wars that, before the dawn of time, saw chaos arise and almost tear the

world asunder. Through this pact to remain aloof, Glorantha's physical surface is the province of many races who are able to interact daily with their gods, but, separated from them, forge their own destinies.

And the world has many races. Humans proliferate but they co-exist with the Elder Races; those that came before: the dragonewts, the dwarfs, the elves and the trolls, principally, but others exist. Humans are not alone and whilst they might proliferate they do not necessarily rule unequivocally. Each race has its dominion. The dwarfs reside beneath the surface, working hard to repair and maintain the World Machine. The elves are cloistered in their forests, keeping a deliberate distance from artifice, tied to the things that grow and flower. The trolls live underground also, because, tied to the Darkness rune, the light of the surface is painful to them. The dragonewts, most enigmatic of all Glorantha's many races, are scattered across the world, engaged in matters incomprehensible to most and tracing their own agenda, seemingly oblivious to the schemes of mortal kind.

In most respects Glorantha resembles a conventional planet with continents, seas, rivers, mountains, valleys, plains and deserts. Yet none of these features are a result of geological activity. Each is a result of the actions of the gods, shaped before time began. Each feature is a deliberate act of creation or recreation; each has its own, separate reasons for being. Some features, such as the great rivers, are gods, manifesting in physical form but bound by the Great Compromise from interfering with the mundane world around them. The peoples of Glorantha know this and revere it. It is a way of life. If a river decides to reverse its course and flow uphill, it is because the god that is that river has a reason for doing so.

Everything in Glorantha has a reason for being, yet that reason for being is mythical not physical. Humans and others might shape the world as they go about their affairs but the changes wrought are temporary at best: only the creation and manipulation of myth can exert and make permanent changes – and the creation and manipulation of myth involves altering the actions, history and nature of the gods, and therefore the runes.

Myth and Adventure

Glorantha is a world permeated by magic and shaped by myth. With the right magic, Adventurers can travel to the realms of the gods, become participants in their ancestral myths and

return with wondrous new abilities. Those who fail these daunting tests may be diminished, destroyed or eternally lost in the mythic realms.

Explorers, adventurers and kings are not the only ones who wield magical power here. Ordinary people practice their own spells and charms, helping them to feed, clothe and shelter themselves in what would otherwise be a hostile environment.

Glorantha is a world of clashing cultures, where good and evil are not always easy to sort out. Though cursed with more than its share of tyrants, monsters and villains, no single one of its cultures maintains a monopoly on virtue. Two warring cultures can be, from their own point of view, equally right – or equally ruthless and brutal. Cultures differ on the correct way to live, the true events of myth and history, and the very purpose of existence. And that is just the humans: Glorantha's inhuman races follow their own alien agendas, as laid out from the beginning of time.

THE EMPIRES OF GLORANTHA

Four empires – more, if one chooses to include the non-human ones – control Glorantha. Of these, two seek to tamper with myth.

- X The God Learner empire of Jrustela, known also as the Middle Sea Empire, seeks to manipulate myth as part of the great schemes and desires of the Invisible God and his prophet, Malkion. Their power is such that individuals can enter the mythic realm and change myth, bringing about wholesale physical change in the mundane world.
- X The Empire of Wyrm's Friends seek to transform the world into a vast dragon, rejoining with the Cosmic Dragon which they, along with the dragonewts, believe created the universe and has been injured by impurity and the breakage of infinity. The EWF seeks to create new myths, based on draconic enlightenment, that will, in the not too distant future, cause the world to transcend and join with the Cosmic Dragon, remaking infinity.

These are the two dominant human empires of Glorantha during the Second Age but they are not the only ones. Two other empires are important to note.

- X The Solar empire of Dara Happa, worshippers of the Sun Emperor Yelm. These children of the Sun seek to establish Yelm's influence across the world, battling the influence of Yelm's enemy, the Storm God Orlanth. However the Solar Empire is under the control of the EWF and is developing a draconic nature that some have embraced but many abhor.

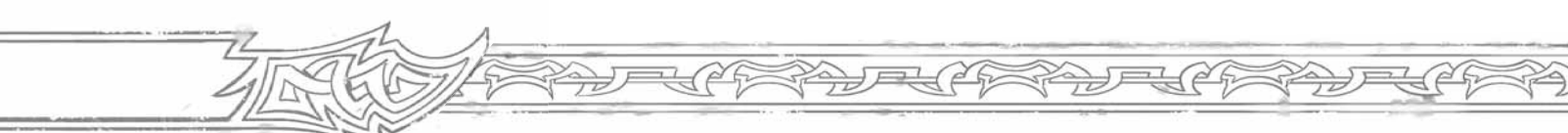
- X The Old Ways Traditionalists – those who continue to worship the Storm Tribe, the pantheon of gods who, before time, challenged Yelm and through the courage and strength of their chieftain, Orlanth, gained dominance of the world, even though this led to the sun's death and the onset of the Great Darkness. The Old Ways Traditionalists are beset on many sides: by the Middle Sea Empire, which seeks to show them that their beliefs are false, in the light of the Invisible God's wisdom and solace; by the EWF, which seeks to draw all races into the Great Dragon's enlightenment; by the Solar Empire of Dara Happa, which has not forgiven them for the death of the sun.

The Second Age is a time of unprecedented discovery and exploration. For the first time, trade and travel allows the interaction of far-flung cultures. Both Empires innovate feverishly, unveiling new forms of magic, new devices, new modes of perception.

Against this backdrop of unfettered progress, dark omens gather. The God Learners and the Wyrmfriends have pushed Glorantha's eternal laws of myth and magic to the breaking point. How long will it be before the world strikes back at them, punishing their unprecedented hubris?

Top 10 Gloranthan Themes

1. Everything is magical.
2. Myth is real.
3. The past shapes the present.
4. Myth is true, even in its contradictions. The truth is how you see it. Every culture has its own truths.
5. Forgetting Number 4 can get you killed.
6. Truth is a matter of perspective.
7. He who embraces materialism at the expense of the spirit can become temporarily powerful but courts ultimate disaster.
8. War can be heroic and glorious but is always devastating and cruel.
9. Ordinary lives are sustained by the idealism of communal sacrifice, of love for family and clan. The grand sweep of history is fuelled by greed, aggression and pride.
10. History is cyclical. The world rises from the ashes of catastrophe, recovers and prospers. People become proud and complacent, tampering with cosmic forces, visiting catastrophe upon themselves. The world rises from the ashes of catastrophe...



THE WORLD

At first glance, the world of Glorantha seems to be much like our own. Land masses rise from a vast ocean. There are mountains and valleys, rivers, lakes and streams. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Coniferous forests cover its colder expanses; jungles and deserts carpet its hot zones. Objects fall to the ground when you drop them. When not otherwise stated, assume that the basic facts of humdrum reality are the same in Glorantha as they are in our world.

Always keep in mind, though, that these resemblances are superficial, if not coincidental. Glorantha is a place governed by the laws of magic, not physics. Vegetation patterns exist because gods put those plants there, back in the time when deities and men mingled in the everyday world. The world's terrain was shaped by divine action. Objects fall because the laws of magic decree that they should.

This can sometimes prove dangerous. Unlike the reliable, repeatable laws of science, the rules governing magic are mutable and can change. And when they change, everything is up for grabs.

Geology and Geography

Glorantha is an enormous earthen cube, floating on an infinite sea, with only one of its surfaces ever so slightly exposed. Swirling in the centre of this exposed surface is a devouring whirlpool, Magasta's Pool, which continually draws the world's water down into it.

The sky overhead is literally a dome. Attached to the dome are Glorantha's stars. Other celestial bodies move around the dome but are not firmly affixed to it. Many of these celestial objects are gods or the bright, twinkling remains of gods, killed and then confined to the sky as a constant reminder of the victor's power.

The sun, which passes from east to west, moving across the sky dome, is Yelm, the Sun God, and not a star at all – although, to mortal eyes looking up, he and his fiery chariot appear to be a round, blazing ball.

Other gods are evident on Glorantha's surface, to either a greater or lesser extent. The volcanoes of Caladraland, for example, are partial manifestations of the gods Lodril, Caladra and Aurelion. The Oslir River of Peloria is a physical manifestation of the goddess Oslira; and the mighty mountain Kero Fin, dominating the Dragon Pass region, is the goddess mother of Orlanth, chieftain of the Storm Tribe.

So, whilst Glorantha's geography *looks* and, often, *behaves* like mundane geography, it is not governed by the same laws. Earthquakes are the result of gods slowly moving and shifting

far beneath the earth or on the Gods' Plane; sea levels rise and fall according to the whim of Magasta, Lord of All the Sea; and when the heavens roll with thunder it is Orlanth's anger (or that of his tempestuous brother, the Storm Bull) being made known. All Gloranthans know that their landscape is shaped in this way, that the gods are all around them, and so belief and faith runs high through everyone.

Beneath the ground minerals and precious metals are found and can be mined, although they are very different to those of a conventional planet. Iron, for instance, is a rare and guarded commodity that has a profound effect on some races; silver, too. Oil and gas, so precious to some worlds, are of little importance to Gloranthans (save, perhaps, the dwarfs – the Mostali – who have their own, arcane uses for such things) but, in many respects, rocks and minerals are identical to those found anywhere else.

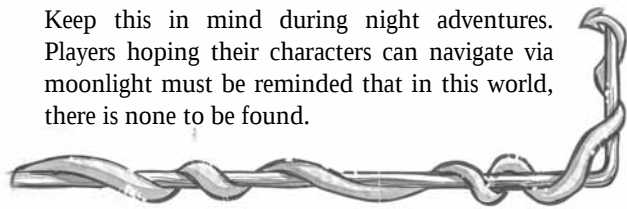
Natural substances, both organic and inorganic, do differ in one, key respect. Everything natural in the world is tied to its respective rune. Rocks and minerals are a manifestation of the Earth Rune and subject to its power; the sea, rivers and rain are subject to the Rune of Water and so on. The primeval power of the runes, the building blocks of creation, have a mundane manifestation in Glorantha's geography and geology. Even the gods are a manifestation of the runes, although in a far more magical and different way, but all – everything – is tied in some shape or form to the runes. This direct relationship means that Glorantha is steeped in magical energy, awash with it. Just as one cannot escape the peculiarities of Gloranthan geography, neither can one escape the power and influence of the runes, manifest in what can be seen, heard, tasted, smelled and touched.



A Moonless Sky

During the Second Age, Glorantha has only one moon, the Blue Moon, which is hardly ever seen, though its movements through the sky can be plotted indirectly, by marking the action of the tides. It briefly appears every six days, as a blue streak dropping into Magasta's Pool.

Keep this in mind during night adventures. Players hoping their characters can navigate via moonlight must be reminded that in this world, there is none to be found.



Other supernatural realms surround the material world of Glorantha, also called the Inner World. Beneath the cube and its enveloping sea is a realm of Darkness.

The world's major land masses are the temperate, heavily populated continent of **Genertela** and the tropical, less hospitable land of **Pamaltela**, where grass does not grow. A major island called **Jrustela** serves as home base to the God Learner Empire. Other, less sweeping, civilisations are found on smaller islands like **Brithos** and **Vithela**.

Calendar

Before the rise of the God Learners, most cultures of Glorantha used their own calendars or no calendars at all. The God Learners chose the most popular calendar, that of a First Age culture called the Theyalans, and have popularised it throughout the world. Anybody who does business with the Jrusteli, even their enemies, knows how to use their calendar of choice.

Each week is seven days long. The days of the week are, in order, Freezeday, Waterday, Clayday, Windsday, Fireday, Wildday and Godday (in areas where more than one god is venerated, the last day is called Godsday).

Eight weeks make up a season. The seasons are named after the elements of Sea, Fire, Earth, Dark and Storm. These correspond to climactic changes: roughly speaking, Sea Season is like our spring; Fire Season is summer; Earth Season is fall; Dark Season is like winter. Think of Storm Season as an especially lengthy and turbulent transition between winter and spring. After Storm Season comes a two-week period outside the seasonal boundaries called Sacred Time, where ceremonies of rebirth are performed and the level of magical energy runs high.

The current year is 908 – the nine hundred and eighth year since the Great Compromise and since recordable Time began.

Quick Note on Pronunciation

Most Gloranthan names are simple and easy to pronounce. As long as you and your group are pronouncing each name in the same way, it does not really matter if you conform to an official pronunciation. That said, when in doubt, Gloranthan words, unlike English ones, tend to place the emphasis on the penultimate syllable of a word. So Issaries is Iss-AR-ees, not ISS-ar-ees. Ernalda is Er-NAHL-dah.

Currency

While Glorantha in the Second Age uses gold, silver, copper and lead in their currencies, the coinages are referred to differently. Gold ducats are instead referred to as wheels,

gold or sometimes gold pieces. Silver pieces are more commonly referred to simply as silver. Copper pennies are called coppers or occasionally copper clacks. Lead coins are mostly only used by the Uz (trolls) and are referred to as lead bolg.

Gloranthan Metals

Bronze: An alloy of tin and copper, this is the standard metal of Glorantha and grants no specific bonuses or penalties.

Iron: Iron interferes with a bearer's spellcasting ability. Every ENC point of iron carried by a bearer reduces his Magic Point maximum by one. In essence, the bearer's POW is considered lower than normal, for the purposes of determining maximum Magic Points and regaining Magic Points only.

Any damage dealt by an iron weapon against aldryami or Uz is doubled. Iron weapons will also affect creatures normally unaffected by non-magical weapons.

Silver: Too soft to be formed into a sharp edge or tip, only crushing or bludgeoning weapons can be made from silver. Silver weapons will affect creatures normally unaffected by non-magical weapons.

CULTURES AND PEOPLES

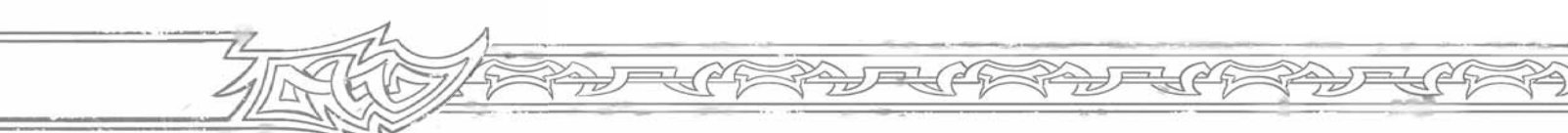
Glorantha has always been a place of clashing peoples, where differences in belief and spiritual practice lead to confrontation on the battlefield. The Second Age is a time of cultural cross-pollination and consolidation. Both major Empires attempt to fuse previously incompatible beliefs into a new political and commercial unity. As traditionalists and innovators clash, old enemies have become new allies.

The Old Ways

Theist cultures access their higher magic through emulation of multiple gods. Though priests may dedicate themselves to a single deity, these cultures are pantheistic, deriving benefits from their adherence to an entire pantheon.

Orlanthi, Worshipers of the Storm Tribe

Orlanthi people worship the tumultuous gods of the Storm Tribe, led by the warrior deity **Orlanth** and his wife, the earth mother **Ernalda**. The popular image of an Orlanthis is that of a cattle-herding hill barbarian who lives in a clan-based society. Although pure Orlanthis are likelier to be found in a few remote, hardscrabble areas, plenty of Storm worshippers can be found in towns and cities, practicing an urbanised version of this boisterous, freedom-loving creed. Orlanth's myths describe him as a violent, wandering troublemaker who is somewhat tamed by his bountiful, nurturing wife, whom he stole from the Sky Gods.



He and others of his rowdy, uncompromising pantheon remain highly popular with adventurers. His divine allies include **Issaries** the trader, **Lhankor Mhy** the scholar, **Humakt** the slayer, **Yinkin** the cat and **Chalana Arroy**, the healer. Followers of Orlanth's even more violent brother, **Urox** the storm bull, are hard to find these days. Urox was famed as a fighter of the dread corrupting force known as Chaos, but Chaos is not much in evidence in the current Age of Empires.

Orlanthi will fight nearly anyone, counting trolls, dragons and Chaos creatures among their roster of foes. Those of central Genertela have always warred against the Pelorians, whose gods they call the Fire Tribe. Nowadays, conservative Orlanthi of these parts find themselves with more in common with haughty Pelorians than the weird, dragon-loving wyrmfriends. Together, these beleaguered theists have joined forces under the banner of the Old Way Traditionalists, determined to bring down the oppressive and blasphemous Empire of Wyrms' Friends.

Pelorians, Worshipers of the Sky Gods

Pelorians, native to the land of Dara Happa, worship the sun god, **Yelm**. They rank themselves in a strictly hierarchical society, in which all people, from the lowliest farmer to the Emperor himself, fulfil the roles handed down to them by their stern paternal deity. An urbanised people, they place the family above the clan.

Dara Happans consider their Emperor to be a divinely-inspired carrier of Yelm's mantle. Things are right in the world when a descendant of Yelm sits on the Dara Happa throne and woefully wrong on those few occasions when the lineage is broken. Now they are conquered and a dragon from the Empire of Wyrms' Friends shockingly occupies the Emperor's throne! Once disdainful of the rude Orlanthi barbarians to the south, they have covertly united with them to wage a harrying insurgency against their draconic occupiers.

Pelorian adventurers do not derive their power directly from the imperial god of the sun but from the pantheon's fiery warriors and staunch attendants. These include: the volcanic **Lodril**, lusty god of the common man; **Lokarnos**, god of trade and travel; and **Yelmalio**, hot-tempered warrior and defender of the faith. Other deities of great importance to their society, but less import to adventurers, are Yelm's consort, **Oria**, the aloof star god **Dayzatar** and the fertile river goddess **Oslira**.

Other Sky God worshippers include the **Horse Nomads of Pent**. These fearsome warriors of the steppes to the east of Peloria worship a sun god called **Kargzant**, who is as harsh and uncompromising as the lives they lead.

Empires of the New

The simmering revolts of the theist cultures have been stoked by the growth of two disturbingly innovative Empires. Neither

worries as much about the threat posed by their beleaguered subjects as they do about each other. The God Learners and Empire of Wyrms' Friends see themselves as locked in a battle for world supremacy.

God Learners

Though properly known as the Middle Sea Empire, most people simply call the far-flung Jrusteli seafaring Empire the 'God Learners Empire'. The Jrusteli follow the **Malkioni** religion, a monotheist faith venerating the **Invisible God**. The faith is named after Malkion, the great deity's defining prophet. Malkioni accept that other gods, like Orlanth and Yelm, exist but see them as lesser beings, or even demons.

The Invisible God grants little magic to his followers. They must secure their own supernatural powers, through logic and scholarship. Expert practitioners of Sorcery, the Jrusteli discovered a secret called **RuneQuest Sight**, a means of perception allowing them to detect the flow of magic and belief. It allows users to see connections between the myths and practices of unrelated cultures and, by venturing into the magical Otherworld called the Hero Plane, to change the details of those primal stories. These changes then radiate to the material world of Glorantha. For example, half a century ago, the God Learners went so far as to switch the grain goddess of two different cultures.

The second prong of the God Learners' power lies in their defeat of the seafaring Waertagi people nearly two centuries ago. Until that day, the Waertagi controlled all sea traffic in the world. The Jrusteli rapidly filled the gap and now control cities and outposts throughout the world's coastal regions.

Wyrmfriends

Central Genertela used to be the cradle of theism but has now given birth to a new blend of old-style worship and dragon magic. The Empire of Wyrms' Friends, or EWF, are former Orlanthi who have formed a mystical sect devoted to the pursuit of dragon wisdom. They owe their origins to their rivals, the God Learners, who stole the secret of dragon speech and began to teach it in the central Genertelan city of Nochet. Those who learned the language called **Auld Wyrnish** were able to communicate with dragonewts, a cryptic race of reptilian humanoids related to true dragons. From them they learned a new mode of mystic worship. It caught on like wildfire, transforming local Orlanthi society within a generation. Followers of the new wyrnish way persecuted conservatives determined to cling to their time-tested traditions.

The mystic sect quickly transmogrified into a political movement, declaring itself an Empire over 300 years ago. Along the way, they have weathered repeated incursions from

the God Learners, who are intent on capturing the secrets of dragon magic for themselves. Riding into battle on the backs of dinosaurs, they have expanded militarily, invading their neighbours, including the proud Dara Happan lands. These conquests serve their final goal: they want to transform the land and people into a new form of dragon, bigger than any ever seen before on Glorantha. This is no minor ambition, given that existing Gloranthan dragons can be as big as mountain ranges.

Dragonewts

Dragonewts are reptilian humanoids who progress through a series of forms as they hone their state of mystical attunement with their draconic natures. This transformation occurs via reincarnation. When a dragonewt dies, its soul migrates into a new egg. If it has progressed spiritually, its new form is more dragon-like than the one before it. It begins as a **scout**, or crested dragonewt, onward to the **warrior** (beaked dragonewt), **noble** (tailed priest) and finally the **ruler** (full priest). Although their motivations and perceptions are thoroughly alien to the average Gloranthan, mastery of their language allows one to understand them. The dragonewt does not seem more human – instead, the speaker of its language becomes more alien.

Mystics

Mysticism, whose practitioners bring magic into the world as a by-product of inner transformation, arose in eastern Glorantha. As the Empire of Wyrms' Friends cements its hold on central Genertela, this elusive tradition is on the ascendant in the Second Age.

Kralori

The Empire of **Kralorela** occupies the eastern third of the Genertelan continent. The people of this large, heavily populated nation used to practice an older, less overt form of dragon mysticism than that promulgated by the EWF. They teach that dragons created the world and heavens, and that the ultimate goal of worship is to become a dragon oneself. Now a new, flashier tradition, imported from the God Learners, has upended the Empire's sense of order. Called the **Path of Immanent Mastery**, it rapidly accelerates the process of draconic transformation. Followers of the original draconic mysticism have fled to the benighted **Kingdom of Ignorance**, leaving ShangHsa, a long-lived Immanent Master, to rule Kralorela.

Teshnans

In the tropical land of **Teshnos**, dozens of mystical traditions compete for the attention of spiritual Questers. Seers and yogis congregate with God Learner scholars, refining meditative techniques and mixing incompatible cosmologies. Most of these paths partake of **sublime mysticism**, in which

the practitioner seeks to perfect himself over many cycles of reincarnation. God Learner insights have greatly speeded these improvements, which can now take place during a single lifetime and are often outlandish in outward effect. Multi-armed warriors sip chai tea with thieves and charlatans. The beasts of the jungle achieve third-eye consciousness. In the mystic hothouse that is Teshnos, all has become possible.

Vithelans

In Vithela, or the Eastern Isles, magic derives from **ascetic mysticism**, a process of denial and self-sacrifice. Vithelans believe that the everyday world is an illusion meant to disguise a true, more perfect reality of spiritual oneness. By denying themselves pleasures, comforts and sensory stimulation, Vithela's austere monks attempt to emulate the **Great Refusal**, in which they reject the illusion, achieving the blissful state of **Durapdur**.

Many routes lead to Durapdur, all of them established by various gods. Those favoured by adventurers include the paths of **Kabalt**, patron of martial artists, **Hensavara** the bowman and **Karkal**, god of fire and war.

Shamans

Shamans, who gain magic through interaction with spirits, can be found throughout Glorantha, usually in deserts, trackless wildernesses and other environments that severely challenge human survival.

Nomads of the Waste

Between the fertile lands of Maniria and Kralorela lie The Wastes, a vast and hungry desert. Only fiercely independent nomadic peoples survive there. The shamans of **Prax**, following ways of spirit knowledge handed down to them by **Waha**, god of survival, help them to bond with their mounts. They herd a surprising array of riding animals, from sable to bison to rhinos and zebras.

Pamaltelans

On the grassless savannah dominating much of the southern continent of Pamaltela, shamans aid their people by contacting the spirits of the great giants and heroes of the original paradisiacal days before death stalked the land. Even more essential to their survival are the good graces of local spirits of vegetation, earth and water.

THE INHUMAN RACES

The inhuman or elder races claim a much longer ancestry in Glorantha than mere humans do. Each remembers an age more favourable to their primal natures and seek to return to it.

Aldryami (Elfs)

Glorantha's so-called elfs, who refer to themselves as aldryami, are mobile, intelligent plant beings in humanoid form. Some appear quite human, with only the odd vegetable feature, like vines for hair. Others are covered with bark or thorns. Each elf is the human-like manifestation of a particular type of tree: there are birch elfs, oak elfs, ash elfs and so on. **Brown elfs** spring from deciduous forests. **Green elfs** are found in coniferous forests; **yellow elfs**, in jungles.

They enjoy a sense of mystic harmony with the woods and jungles around them. In place of gods and goddesses, they commune with several life forces found within the Song of the Woods, most notably the lovely **Aldrya the Grower**.

Chaos Creatures

The destructive and corrupting force of Chaos, a terrible threat originating from before the dawn of time that terrorised the First Age, is today in deep retreat. Chaos has been beaten back to the most haunted corners of the earth. Only the most determined explorers encounter its monstrous exponents, whether they be the diseased, mutant goat men called the **broo**, or more exotic creeping things like **walktapi** or **scorpion men**.



Leonardo Borazzio

Hsunchen (Beast Men)

Hordes of Gloranthans dwell between the state of man and animal. **Hsunchen** are disparate tribes of hunter-gatherers worshipping a totemic ancestor, who can switch form between beast and man. They include the **Telmori wolf men** of Ralios, the **bat people** of the Fethlon Jungle and the **Basboli lion men**, found both in the Waste and in Pamaltela.

Other beast men remain permanently in one state, mixing sapient and animalistic features. These include centaurs, minotaurs and the militant duck warriors.

Mostali (Dwarfs)

The stout, broad-shouldered humanoids who call themselves **Mostali** are creatures of stone and stasis. They dwell underground and eschew emotion and personal identity to pay homage to their stony creator god, **Mostal**. Masters of technology, they cast a jealous eye on the bizarre devices of the innovative God Learner Empire. They view Glorantha as a broken machine running amok and aim to fix it by hammering away all of its distressingly unpredictable moving parts.

Timinits (Insect Men)

The wonders of the Second Age have brought a previously obscure race of inhuman beings to the forefront. Carried about the world by God Learner ships, the Timinits, or Insect Men, have won fame as explorers, warriors and sorcerers. Bizarrely diverse in form, Timinits blend humanoid morphology with various features of the insect kingdom, from antennae and mandibles to chitinous natural armour. Some live the attenuated lifespans of ordinary insects, while others carry on long after their human friends have succumbed to old age. Though most exhibit fierce devotion to the God Learner agenda, a schism in their native Pamaltela has led others to rebel, hoping to establish a civilisation of their own.

Uz (Trolls)

Uz, or trolls, are tusked, bestial humanoids feared for their warlike behaviour and insatiable appetites. Uz break the world into two categories: that which can be eaten and that which cannot. Almost nothing falls into the second category. Creatures of darkness, they mourn the light that returned to the world as history began. They have paid a heavy price for their dedicated opposition to Chaos. At the end of the First Age, a Chaos demigod struck them with a dread curse. As a result, the vast majority of Uz children are stunted wretches called **enlo** (trollkin).

Uz are known for their affinity with worms, insects and other crawling things.

GODS AND HEROES

The conflicts of the Second Age are fought using magic, for magical reasons. As the God Learners and EWF grows more powerful, the rules of magic continue to change.

All magic comes from higher realms of being surrounding the world, most notably a place of continually enacted myth called the Hero Plane. Eventually the battle for the destiny of the Second Age will be fought there, too.

Common Magic

Glorantha is a magically rich world, just about every culture has developed a low-level, ubiquitous style of magic known as Common Magic. Spells vary from one culture to another but the way it works is essentially the same. Common Magic derives its power from the world around and the subtle emanations and interactions of the runes that make-up the mundane world (or Inner World). Just about every Gloranthan is taught a range of Common Magic spells that tap into, and manipulate, this residual energy. Being a fractious place, many spells have been developed for the purposes of war and so Common Magic is sometimes called Battle Magic, although its uses are far more varied than simply aiding the violent to deal in death.

Higher Magic

Common Magic is so-called because any adventurer can do it. To move beyond these basic spells, one must embark on a form of higher magic. For the vast majority of Gloranthans, the form of higher magic open to them is not a matter of choice but of culture. You do what your father did and his father's father before him (a woman follows in her mother's and grandmother's footsteps – many powerful magics are matriarchal in nature).

The Second Age changes all that. Now new forms of magic are open, to those brave or crazy enough to grasp them. Traditions are raided, altered, mixed together and spit back out again.

All higher forms of magic also draw on the True Runes, though they can tap directly into them, without having to find and attune to essence objects.

Divine Magic

Practitioners of Divine Magic draw power into the world through ritual. In performing these rituals they re-enact the great deeds of their patron gods or heroes. To practice magic they must steep themselves in the great myths of their culture, so that they can think and act like their patrons. Although theist priests may speak of communing with their gods, or being granted powers by them, these statements must be seen as poetic, not literal. It is the act of mythic imitation that brings the magic.

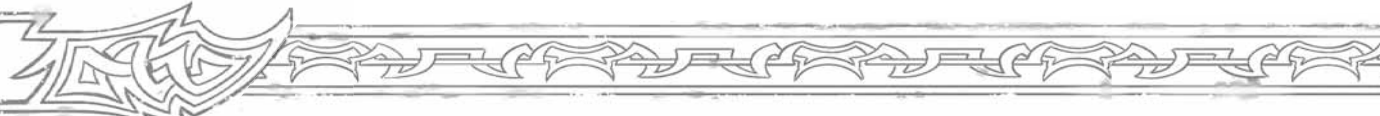
Theists who come to doubt their relationship with their gods may lose access to their magic. This is a rare occurrence; these people spend their entire lives making themselves more like Orlanth, Yelmadio or whoever their patron might be.

Spirit Magic

Shamans derive power directly from minor supernatural entities called spirits. These beings embody abstract concepts, usually elements of nature. Spirits give shamans particular powers to use, which they place in charms and fetishes. Being a shaman means learning, often through direct and sometimes bitter experience, the specific means of approach one must take to a given spirit. Most spirits give magic after being **propitiated**, or given gifts. These sacrifices may take the form of food, performance, items of value, or sincere pleas. A shaman need not feel affection for the spirit in question. He may propitiate fearsome entities to stop them from doing bad things.

Certain shamanic traditions are aggressive and dominating. The shaman defeats the spirit, binding it to his will. The bound spirit must then supply magical services on demand.





Sorcery (Book Magic)

Popular in the west, most especially among the God Learners, Sorcery derives its power from the rote repetition of pre-established formulae, presented through speech, gesture and the manipulation of objects. These are recorded in magical tomes, called **grimoires**, so that others of the same school can later learn them, too.

Sorcery is the gift of the Invisible God, who does not give his followers magic directly but instead grants them the tool of logic, so they can discover the underlying powers of the cosmos for themselves.

God Learner magic is parasitic; it draws on the power flowing from the Otherworlds to practitioners of other forms. It twists these energies to its own purposes, sometimes even changing the Otherworldly landscape. God Learner Sorcery is only one style of Sorcery, though – many other schools draw power harmlessly from the True Runes without hijacking it from other sources.

Mystic Magic

Mystic magic draws power into the world by establishing a connection of inexpressible awareness between individual and cosmos. Although it can wreathe a martial artist's fist in devouring fire or guide an arrow to an impossible target, true masters of mysticism claim that these worldly effects are a by-product, or stepping stone, to the true goal of personal transformation. Worse, they may be a trap, a test to see who is truly capable of separating himself from material distractions. That said, many mystics are perfectly content to stop at the fiery fists and inerrant arrows.

Mystic techniques have been established by great yogis or seers of the past but they are cryptic and pUzzling. The practitioner must use them as tools in an individualised inner quest, to find the truth hidden between the lines.

The Other Worlds

The Inner World is the mundane, mortal plane: the physical world of Glorantha.

The God Learners maintain there are three worlds existing contiguously, nestling together but separate and kept that way by the Great Compromise. Each world represents a source of magic. The God Plane is where theistic deities live. The Spirit Plane is where the ancestors, spirits and great spirits dwell. The Sorcery Plane is where the saints reside. Each can be entered spiritually through either a 'This World' HeroQuest or physically during an 'Other World' HeroQuest. The Hero Plane connects the three magical planes. Access to the Hero Plane is via the cultural magic plane. On the Hero Plane it is possible to travel to past events of mythic significance,

or cross over into a different magical realm. The belief that the Hero Plane is the overlapping conjunction of all three magical worlds, or that there are *no* separate magical realms, is a heresy.

Each magical world intersects with the Inner World. With the right magic, a mortal can travel to one of the three magical worlds directly from the Inner World. Entry is always via an Inner World place significant to the myths or magic of the other world: the Graveyard of Bison Bulls leads into the Spirit Plane; the temple of Hrelar Amali leads into the God Plane; and the Great Cathedrals of Malkion lead into the Sorcery Plane. Making use of these places to gain access to the magical plane requires an understanding of the myths – and often specific myths – associated with the gods who represent the Inner World location. This is the nature of HeroQuesting. Most myths, regardless of their origin, have paths which lead from the significant cultural place into the Hero Plane. Paths can be changed or new paths forged by those of enough determination. The more travelled the path, the more powerful the deities associated with it. HeroQuests can reap power from the magical world, preferably by storing the things won (feats, gifts, spells and so forth) in physical items, which can then be used by those who did not perform the quest. In this way HeroQuesters bring back physical items of Great Power that are fundamental aspects of the myths of their culture. But HeroQuesting can impact on the nature of the culture. *Changing* a culture's myths through specific HeroQuesting to do so manipulates the culture socially and undermines its power allowing them to be conquered mundanely. Combining myths from different cultures generates new, awesome powers which can then be harvested or stolen.

Below all of these – the Inner World, Magical Planes and Hero Plane – is Hell which is connected to the 'bottom' of each magical world. This is where the great evils are exiled and is feared to be growing due to the actions of Mysticism (the fourth magic). Hell is entropy, the end of everything.

Above all the planes is the Cosmic Plane where the Runes are. It is creation, the source of everything. The Cosmic Plane is also the realm of the **Eransachula**, the original runic beings. Some of the Eransachula remain on the Cosmic Plane; others fell from it and became the gods. Some left it of their own will and migrated to the Inner World where they represent a particular power, facet, path or energy. Each magical plane scrapes against the Cosmic Plane and this allows the power of the Runes to be directly channelled by the magical entities living in each plane (gods, spirits, saints...) and, in turn, for these runic forces to be channelled into the Inner World. In this way Common Magic is available to all but higher magic is available only to those who engage with the magical plane of their culture.

There are, naturally, suspicions that the more power removed from the magical planes, and the more paths created, the more unstable these planes become. The ultimate objective for some cults is to gather enough power to unlock access to the Cosmic Plane and thereby tap the Runes directly; in theory, the result of this would be to make gods, or god-like creatures, from mortals, placing the very powers of creation in mundane hands.

HeroQuesting

The power of the God Learners lies in their mastery of HeroQuesting. This is a procedure by which adventurers transport themselves into the Otherworlds, interact with the great myths and claim new powers for themselves.

These began as theist religious rites. In a typical religious HeroQuest, worshippers undergo a challenging ceremony in the Otherworld to acquire magical powers.

They travel to their god's home in the Gods World, then through that and onto the Hero Plane. They then re-enact a myth from their religion. Each Quest is made up of **stations**, or stages of the story, in which the god (represented by the Quester) faces a difficult test. If the Quester overcomes all of the obstacles, he gains a power corresponding to the nature of the myth. For instance, a re-enactment of a myth in which Orlanth ends a drought by slaying a dragon might give you a sword to use against dragonewts or the power to bring rain. Myths about groups of gods are the best to recreate, as they allow multiple Questers to face the tests together.

The God Learners have discovered that they can go into other peoples' myths. The first person in history to HeroQuest was a mysterious figure named **Arkat**, one of the great heroes (or perhaps villains) of the First Age. He learned how to travel into the Otherworld and enhance his powers. After his death, his followers secretly preserved his methods, allowing only a few mighty heroes follow in his footsteps. They did so exactly and fearfully.

When the God Learners conquered Ralios, home to the dark Empire Arkat left behind him, they seized the documents laying out his HeroQuesting methodology. At first they simply copied his HeroQuests of their own Malkioni religion. But in their usual bold and heedless inquiry, they soon found themselves able to forcibly enter the myths of the theists, going onto myths of the Gods. They found connections between traditions. They discovered they could step off the beaten path, moving from one myth to the next, and so found they could gather great magic from all over the mythic world. In the course of these inquiries they developed their notorious RuneQuest Sight and stumbled across the **God Learners' Secret**.

A law of HeroQuesting is that nothing can be brought out of the Otherworlds except what is brought in. Thus if the object is to get a great sword of myth, a sword must be brought on the quest and transformed, in the Otherworld, to the magical one. The God Learners have brought back so many strange new abilities from the Otherworld that other cultures have had to master the art of HeroQuesting to keep up with them. But none are as skilled.

Novice adventurers should leave the difficult and dangerous art of HeroQuesting in mightier hands. However, even when they are too green to go to the Hero Plane themselves, their world will continue to be transformed by it.

The God Learners' Secret

God Learners gifted with RuneQuest Sight have perfected techniques allowing them to punch back through the Hero Plane into the God World, permanently changing what they find there. This is how they pulled off the notorious Goddess Switch.

It is the ability to permanently change the Gods World. The God Learners can go into the Theist Otherworld and do things that have consequences in the ordinary world. Normally these are little things but lately they effected the Goddess Switch, proving they can do more powerful things as well.

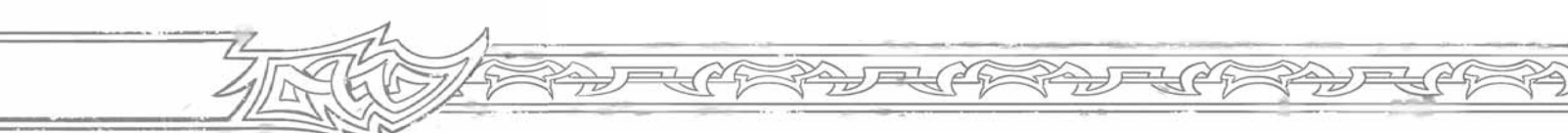
They are certain that these changes are good, permanent and have no subsequent effects. They are wrong but will not discover this for a long time yet to come.

HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

According to the Dara Happans and Kralori, history started over a hundred thousand years ago and they have the documents to prove it. Everybody else knows that period of prehistory as **Mythic Time**. Real time began just over nine centuries ago and before that Glorantha existed in a timeless and immeasurable era of myth.

Prehistory (The God Time)

Theists know prehistory as the **God Time**. During this period, gods and people walked the earth together. Cultures disagree on the details but if you look at their myths together, as the



God Learners are doing, it is possible to sketch out a general **monomyth** tracing the events of Prehistory.

First, there was the **Creation Age**. The **Prime Runes**, the most central of the True Runes, come into being. These gain consciousness and become the original gods. A central pillar of earthly existence, the **Spike**, forms and the world coalesces around it.

Then follows the **Green Age**, in which life as we know it appears, populating the world.

It precedes the **Golden Age**, one of civilisation and order.

The **Storm Age**, or **Lesser Darkness**, an era of war and death, begins when the sun falls from the sky.

Chaos enters the world. It brings the **Age of Terror**, also called the **Greater Darkness**. Misery reigns. Dread gods of evil and entropy, **Wakboth** (also called the Devil) and **Kajabor**, attempt to destroy Glorantha, nearly succeeding. The surviving gods rally to fight them, winning victory at great cost.

In the mortal realm, all of the world's cultures unite to combat the forces of Chaos, in the battle called **I Fought We Won**.

The era of gods ends upon the striking of a **Great Compromise**, creating Time and constraining their ability to intercede in the mortal world. Gods retreat to the eternity of the Gods Realm, leaving mortals to forge a new world as the sun returns to the sky and the **Dawn Age** begins.

The First Age: Recovery and Catastrophe

Glorantha's First Age, also called the Dawn Age, lasts for 500 years. A spirit of cooperation, fostered by the unified battle against Chaos that brought the sun back into the sky, reigns for its first few decades. Then the disparate human cultures fall to fighting among themselves. Not long after that, the elder races resume their ancient feuds.

The **Waertagi**, a green-skinned, sea-faring people descended from the prophet Malkion, rise to power through their monopoly over ocean travel.

In the West, the seer **Prince Hrestol** experiences joyful revelations of the Invisible God, establishing the New Malkioni Church. The institution spreads quickly, superseding more dour and oppressive forms of monotheist belief.

Eastern cultures retreat into themselves, quietly rebuilding their ruined civilisations.

In central Genertela, elder races and theist cultures form the **World Council of Friends**, which sends out missionaries to spread their secrets of survival to lands still shattered by the Great Darkness. They stay unified for a century and a half; then the elder races and other allies begin to desert them.

In the year 350, their heirs, the **Second Council**, perform world-shaking experimental magic, creating a new god, **Nysalor**, who is not bound by the Great Compromise and can therefore walk among mortals. His creation coincides with an event known as the **Sunstop**, wherein the sun halted its position in the sky. Throughout the world, other cultures undergo simultaneous metaphysical upheavals. Each finds a local reason to explain this cataclysmic event.

It is the era of **Gbaji the Deceiver**. Depending on who you ask, either Nysalor transforms into the monstrous Chaos god **Gbaji the Deceiver**, who is laid low by the brave and innovative hero **Arkat**; or Arkat becomes a traitorous identity-shifting magician, who eventually murders Nysalor. The devastating Gbaji War rages across central and western Genertela, ending with climactic hand-to-hand combat between demon and hero in the year 450.

The victor, Arkat, founds the **Stygian Empire** in the land of Ralios. He ascends to the God World somewhere around the year 500, ending the Dawn Age.

The Modern Age: Empire and Adventure

Two interconnected revelations of the Sixth Century drive the history of Glorantha to the present day.

On the island of Jrustela, Malkioni magicians found the first God Learner study groups. Recognising the power unleashed by Arkat and other false gods, they research ways of accessing and manipulating their might. They learn to conduct **spirit raids**, attacks on foreign cults that steal magical knowledge instead of treasure.

A cult of Orlanthi dragon mystics arises in Dragon Pass. They learn to speak in the draconic tongue and then how to become dragons. They establish the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and quickly prove themselves to be hostile to the Jrusteli.

Aided by God Learner magic and carried across the sea by the Waertagi, the Jrusteli colonise portions of Pamaltela. More than a century later, in 718, they turn against the Waertagi, breaking their hold on the seas. A wave of conquests follows. The Jrusteli conquer the West, their ancestral homeland, and establish ports and strongholds along the coasts of the entire world. In 789 they declare themselves the Middle Sea Empire.

In 823, the Empire attacks Brithos, isle of immortals, and is devastatingly repulsed.

Meanwhile, the Empire of Wyrms' Friends expands into much of central and northern Genertela. They conquer the vast land of Dara Happa, then the savage lands of Pent beyond.

The two Empires go to war. In 842, they clash over control of a troll land called the Shadow Plateau, to the south of Dragon Pass.

A greater threat to the EWF rises from within. As the sacrifices required of the people to create the great dragon escalate, the reactionary Old Way Traditionalists gain popular support in the Empire's theist heartland. Priests band together against mystics.

Discontent rumbles in the Middle Sea Empire too, as scholars quietly publish papers warning of supernatural catastrophe, if the God Learners continue their heedless tampering with the Otherworlds. Rebellion begins in distant lands. By 901 the God Learners have lost their holdings in Pamaltela, as rebellion destroys their vassal, the Six-Legged Empire, and the United Fonrit Alliance and the Umathelan Confederation seize their independence.

Current Events: Year 908

It is now the Year 908, when the strain of imperial expansion begins to chip at the facades of God Learners and EWF alike.

The Two-Year Winter

Dragon Pass is now well into its second year of a terrible winter. Some blame the God Learners; others, the heavy cost of the Great Dragon Project. Famine threatens the land. EWF leaders have ordered massive transfers of grain and other foodstuffs from the provinces, stoking discontent in its occupied territories. Old Way Traditionalists avoid attacking food caravans while escalating raids against other imperial institutions. Rancour between ruling factions grows, as debate rages over the correct response to the traditionalist threat. The fearsome **War Dragons** militate for a scorched-earth policy. The **Above and Beyonds** loftily dismiss the seriousness of the rebellion. The idealistic **Converters** sacrifice their own purity to engage with the people and attempt to alleviate the suffering.

Dara Happa Stirs

Murmurs of rebellion against the wyrmfriends circulate most strongly in the Pelorian land of Dara Happa, home to the hierarchical solar culture. Leading its Old Ways faction is a bold, handsome and fast-thinking young man named **Karvanyar**. He claims to be the son of the deposed Yelmite



Emperor **Urvanyar**, whose heart and eyes were taken by the **Golden Dragon** who sits on the Solar Throne.

To combat the growing alienation of the people from their rightful draconic Emperor, a contest of adventurous deeds has been announced, for the hand of a wondrous being, the **Daughter of the Golden Dragon**. Adventurers from across the land line up to claim this prize.

Assault on the Clanking City

A massive siege has begun against a God Learner city, Zistorwal, located in God Forgot, in the heavily contested land of Kethaela. This massive edifice, known by its enemies as the **Clanking City** or **Machine City**, is ruled by a steaming, clattering hybrid entity of flesh and metal called **Zistor the Machine God**. His city is considered an abomination and a threat to the Compromise because it mass produces items of magical power. Dwarfs lead the assault but others, including trolls, Old Way Traditionalists and even champions of the EWF, have also joined the struggle.

Dread Omens on the Sea

On the seas, Jrusteli sailors increasingly note signs of turbulence and supernatural trouble. They return to port with tales of inexplicable waterspouts, sea dragons and ghost ships. Increasing numbers of God Learner vessels fail to return at all or are found derelict, their crews vanished without trace. Of all the setbacks facing the God Learner Emperor, this is the most worrisome of all. If it loses its hold on the sea, the Empire will surely fall.

The Two Empires

This chapter takes a closer look at the two hungry Empires carving up the Gloranthan Second Age: the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and the God Learner Empire. Whether the Adventurers are for them, against them, or avidly switching sides as shifting winds dictate, their relationships to these vast powers will undoubtedly affect or even determine their destinies.

THE GOD LEARNERS

No one hires more adventuring parties, or rewards them more lavishly, than the God Learners. Well-funded and perennially anxious to increase their knowledge of the world's mysteries, they pay huge sums each year to mercenary bands. These groups, called Knowledge Questers, explore the world's obscure reaches and provide detailed reports to their scholarly underwriters. About half of all Knowledge Quester groups work full-time for a university or God Learner order. Others freelance, picking up new missions on a contract basis. Others work speculatively, finding treasures and then auctioning them off to the highest bidder. Some, but not all, members of a typical Knowledge Band (as Knowledge Quester groups are called) are practitioners of God Learner magic.

God Learner patrons may also hire adventurers to safeguard their commercial enterprises, war against their political enemies or advance their political agendas.

The Middle Sea Empire makes an excellent enemy for an adventuring party. They blaspheme against the theist traditions and happily steal the sacred secrets of all traditions other than their own. Arrogant, avaricious and heedless of boundaries, they sow disorder wherever they go. A cosmic comeuppance awaits them and adventurers who wish to strike a blow against tyranny can take a righteous, violent hand in bringing it about.

A Short History of the Empire

The Jrusteli people hail originally from the land of Seshnela, in western Genertela. At the end of the Dawn Age, after the destruction of Gbaji the Deceiver, his slayer, Arkat, established in neighbouring Ralios a dread trollish regime called the Stygian Empire. It exploits Seshnela as a vassal state.



The blasphemous Arkat did much damage to Seshnela but never reduced it to vassalage. When King Nralar launched his victorious war against the Stygians in 578, it was because their autarch refused to pay him tribute!

— Ombast Slope-Treader, Pedant of New Frowal



During the Fifth and Sixth centuries, refugees from Seshnela migrate, with the aid of Waertagi sailors, to the island of Jrustela. The first waves seek political freedom and the right to practice their Malkioni faith free of what they see as Arkat's meddling strictures. They discover the timinits, the insect races, and generally work with them peacefully. They are alarmed to discover other humans there and seek more immigrants, who are delayed by more interesting opportunities.

On the mainland, Seshnela wages successful war on the heirs of Arkat, stealing the secrets of HeroQuesting and sharing them with scholars in Jrustela. The migration recommences soon afterwards, as defeated factions in a Seshnegi war of succession depart, vainly hoping to defuse a looming civil war.

In the original Jrustelan settlement, Hredmorinos, the pioneers establish a republic where all free men vote for their leader. At first the settlers work together for mutual survival. Schisms erupt, as they always seem to do. Factions fight one another and finally split off to found other settlements. As these new places prosper, tempers cool and reconciliation binds the burgeoning cities into a new nation. Included in this new political unity are the pre-existing colonies settled during the Dawn Age by migrants from Slontos.

The logic-minded Jrusteli value scholarship above all other pursuits and encourage the creation of various schools of magical inquiry. They remember the story of the dreaded Arkat, who accrued enormous personal power by discovering the technique of HeroQuesting. They work to understand this power, so they can one day defeat those who might use it

against them in the future. Thus the first God Learner study groups are founded, around the year 500.



The term 'God Learner' arose three and a half centuries after the work of the early researchers they claim as the progenitors of their movement. He who uses it to describe sorcerous schools prior to 849 engages in forgivable simplification.

— Toranalt the Abider, Sage of the Segurane Knowledge Market



By 580, the colonies on Jrustela are so settled that a new generation of restless seekers decides to plant their feet on a new frontier. Again with Waertagi help, they sail to Pamaltela, setting up colonies in the land of Umathela.

Religious fervour sweeps the island in the late 640s. Although there is only one Invisible God, revealed by a sole prophet, Malkion, various sects disagree fervently on the practical applications of the prophecies to everyday life. Theological dispute becomes political grievance, then boils over into sectarian violence.

These tensions instantly dissipate upon the miraculous appearance of the *Abiding Book*, a volume of theological guidance written directly by the hand of the Invisible God (see page 42 for more details on the *Abiding Book*).

The clear and certain revelation of religious truth fosters a renewed spirit of unity. In 650, the colonies of Jrustela officially bind themselves together as the Jrusteli Confederation.

A generation later, the certitude of Jrusteli, armed with their *Abiding Book*, turns outward. Devout Malkioni create the Return to Rightness movement, meant to spread the single valid orthodoxy to other Malkioni lands. It finds a martial vanguard in the Order of the New Iron Staff, a squad of militant missionaries equipped with powerful combat magic. The urge to proselytise sparks territorial ambitions but they are frustrated when the Waertagi refuse to go along with them and carry armies abroad.

Jrustela now wishes to be an Empire. To accomplish this, it must turn to its God Learner sorcerers. The island's Sorcery schools are given the task of finding a weapon to use against the Waertagi, so that the Jrusteli can sail the seas unmolested.

In 718, decades of research come to fruition. Jrusteli sailors set forth bravely in their little wooden ships against the kilometre-sized dragonships. Then the sorcerers ignite the waters! Firebergs, floating mountains of elemental flame, boil the briny waters and destroy the Waertagi. This secret weapon gives the victory to the Jrusteli at the Battle of Tanian's Victory.

Their navy, dubbed the Free Men of the Sea, bears liberating armies of righteous soldiers over the seas. A rapid series of military victories follows, carried out in the name of Return to Rightness Crusade. They fall on Seshnela to drive out the invaders, heathens and heretics. It is difficult and natural allies refuse to help, so in 725 the Jrusteli conquer the western coastal kingdom of Loskalm. Nine years later they achieve their most fervently desired goal, liberating their ancestral homeland of Seshnela from barbarians. The Jrustelan leader, Saval, defies the democratic principles of Jrustela and becomes king of Seshnela; later that year, his son Annmak the Peacemaker succeeds him. From this point onward, the leadership of Jrustela and Seshnela is for all intents and purposes combined under the ancient crown of Seshnela.

In 740, the Jrusteli defeat the Stygian army and finally destroy the last of the long-hated Cult of Arkat. HeroQuesting secrets now reside only with the God Learners.

Islands across the oceans are conquered and occupied. The outposts in Pamaltela are overtaken. The few ports of Slontos are conquered. In 768, through its sponsorship of the crazed adventurer-mystic Gillam D'estau, creator of the Path of Immanent Mastery, the nascent Empire captures control of vast Kralorela. D'estau's adventurism places a Jrusteli puppet Emperor, ShangHsa, on the Kralori throne, sending the old leadership into self-imposed exile. ShangHsa, an Immanent Mastery practitioner, remains on the throne to this day. Other Eastern outposts soon follow, as the Jrusteli commercial fleet comes into its own as the world's dominant economic power.

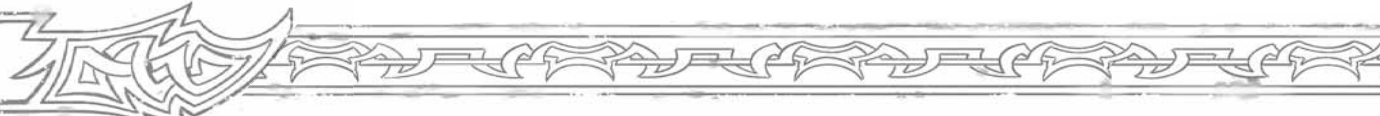
In 789 the Middle Sea Empire comes officially into being and immediately reaches the height of its financial prosperity. In



When lost and starving in the canyons of Kong Jian, the mad hero Gillam D'estau severed and ate his own left arm. Then he re-grew it as a dragon arm and used it to slay those who'd left him there to die.

— Songling Hu, Annalist of the Temple of Immanence, Ting Shui





818, the formerly Brithini land of Arolanit becomes a duchy of the Empire. During this period the rest of the land of Slontos is also slowly annexed.

The pendulum swings against the Empire. The EWF sends hurricanes to lash Slontos, wreaking devastation there from 818 to 825. In 823, after the immortals of Brithos rebuff an attempt to establish a worldwide orthodoxy of Malkioni belief, Emperor Miglos launches a gigantic invasion attempt against their island nation. The whole fleet and army are destroyed. Brithos remains free. Licking its wounds, the Empire expands further into Pamaltela, intervening in warfare between the various city states of Fonrit.

In 842 it invades the trollish Shadowlands of Kethaela, for the first time waging full-scale, head-on warfare against the EWF. Dragons range the skies and some even fall upon distant Seshnela and Jrustela.

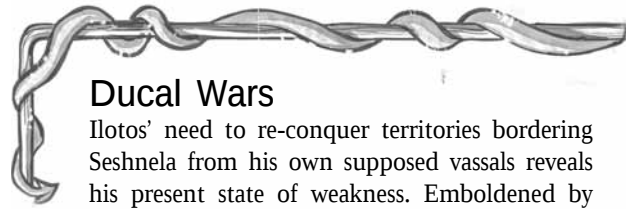
In 849 the various magical schools we have been calling God Learners formally congregate under that title. Four years later, they perform the infamous Goddess Switch (see page 20).

Over the next 20 years, Zistorites, an order devoted to the mass manufacture of magical and technological items, spreads throughout the Empire. The Pamaltelan region of Jolar becomes the subject of a lengthy, draining occupation. There, Knowledge Questers seek a legendary City of Iron, where deep secrets of surpassing interest to the Zistorites would supposedly be found. The Jrusteli introduce horses and cavalry tactics to the region for the first time. At first thinking that horse and rider are the same terrible creature, the central Pamaltelans dub their conquerors the Six-Legged Empire. However, no grass grows in Pamaltela and the horses are short-lived and the advantages of cavalry are lost.

The end of the Ninth Century is a time of magical experimentation on a mass scale. God Learners perform the Four Dukes Folly, a disastrous incantation that accidentally lays waste to an entire neighbourhood in a Loskalmi city. But they acquit themselves spectacularly with other experiments, most notably the Green Waves, the Slag Movement and Erastis' Poison Vapour.

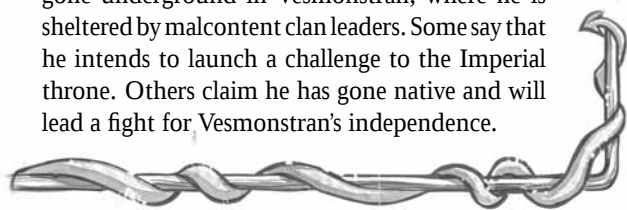
In 901, the current Emperor, Ilotos, ascends the throne. Before the paint has dried on his ceremonial seals, the Empire loses all of its Pamaltelan holdings. Umathela revolts and the Pamaltelan hero Hon Hoolbiktu drives the Six-Legged Empire from Jolar. Expeditionary forces sent to recapture it are lost.

Ilotos responds by sending survivors of the southern war to depose the rebellious dukes of Arolanit and Ralios, placing those lands under his direct control.



Ducal Wars

Ilotos' need to re-conquer territories bordering Seshnela from his own supposed vassals reveals his present state of weakness. Emboldened by his failures in Pamaltela and themselves pressed by EWF mountain raiders, the dukes of Arolanit and Ralios withhold portions of the tribute owed to Ilotos. This loss of revenue would be galling at any time but represents a special burden when Ilotos must rebuild his army and navies. His forces, inflamed by accusations of pagan tendencies on the part of the rebel dukes, lay waste to their fortresses and put their militias to rout. However, especially in Ralios, where the deposed dukes had ingratiated themselves to the local populace, grumblings persist. The most popular of the dukes, Vamargach the Red, has gone underground in Vesmonstran, where he is sheltered by malcontent clan leaders. Some say that he intends to launch a challenge to the Imperial throne. Others claim he has gone native and will lead a fight for Vesmonstran's independence.



In 908, the Empire faces an assault on the Zistorite Clanking City of Kethaela and growing omens of disaster on the high seas.

What God Learners Do

The God Learner's Empire exists by fulfilling multiple agendas. They usually complement one another, cementing alliances between disparate power groups but sometimes come into conflict.

Its most famous agenda is **magical**: its sorcerers wish to expand their knowledge and power through exploration into, and exploitation of, the so-called pagan religions of Glorantha. The God Learner Sorcery schools and Zistorites pursue this aim.

Despite their notoriety, sorcerers compose only a fraction of the Empire. For most ordinary people, its central goal is **religious**. Its duty is to continue the work of the Rightness Army, to promote the orthodox practice of Malkionism and to stamp out heresy.

For the Empire's growing mercantile class, the Empire's central goal is the expansion and protection of **trade**.

Its noble classes seek **military glory**; for its high-born war leaders, any of the above agendas are fine and good, so long

as they provide opportunities to win distinction in combat. Fortunately, all of them do. If given a choice between wars, landless nobles militate for **territorial expansion**. They hope their conquests will win them duchies or lesser vassalages, as their ranks demand. The middle classes may honourably trade their way to riches but for the high-born, land is the only fitting route to wealth.

Faith and Magic: A Conflict of Interest

Some religious orders seek the wholesale conversion of pagan worshippers to the Malkioni way. They subscribe to the Doctrine of Conversion and are called **Missionaries**.

This agenda conflicts with the interests of God Learner sorcerers. If the pagans were to be converted en masse, the God Realm might go away and, with it, the source of the magic they have been perfecting for centuries.



As Sorcery is the gift of the Invisible God, it is eminently possible to be both Missionary and sorcerer. To be a Missionary and a God Learner sorcerer, now that is not so comfortable a fit.

— Brother Aran, Monk of Pombric



Some sorcerers concede that the pagans ought to be converted – but only after their secrets have been thoroughly plumbed. The false gods are part of the Invisible God's creation and he must surely intend for his followers to make use of their gifts before eradicating their worship. This is the Doctrine of Judicious Use; its proponents are nicknamed **Postponers**.

Other sorcerers argue that, while wholesale conversion is ideal in principle, the pagans are so truculent and mired in their false beliefs that the goal is unrealistic in practice. One should instead work to bring light to the few good and receptive souls among the pagan horde and allow the rest the perdition they so fervently seek. Those who espouse this school of thought are called the **Realists**.

Yet another doctrine has it that pagans are cursed by the Invisible God and do not deserve his light. To attempt to convert them is to disobey his will. One should instead give thanks that one was lucky enough to be born a Malkioni and thus be eligible for God's Solace. This is the doctrine of Inherent Selection; its exponents are called **Inherents**.

Finally there is a school of fence-sitters who lament that this controversy was not current in the 7th Century, so that

it might have been addressed by the *Abiding Book*, which conclusively settled all doctrinal disputes active at that time. To avoid error, they say, one must do nothing on the matter, except pray for revelation in the form of a new chapter of the *Abiding Book*. This is the Doctrine of Inerrant Delay; its exponents are the **Delayers**.

Magic

Of the Empire's four driving agendas, the one providing the greatest opportunity for adventurers is the accumulation of magical knowledge. The God Learners hunger for information about pagan gods, mystical traditions and shamanic practices. As far as they are concerned, knowledge is treasure. This pertains especially to the myths of pagan cultures. To the God Learners, stories are power.



Zistorite sorcerers pay handsomely for previously unknown magical artefacts, even when you can't tell what in Malkion's name they're supposed to do.

— Gurek Runespear, mercenary of Safelster



Looting the World of Myth

If the Otherworlds are the ultimate source of power, myths are their treasure maps. In the theist tradition, when you go on a HeroQuest, you venture into a well-known myth of your culture. You always encounter surprises, which may give you new insight into your gods, but the essential outline of the experience is pre-established. You become part of the story, with yourself in the role of the god you worship. You are tested as the god was tested in the original tale. If the story tells you that your god first fought a troll, then an ill-wind, and then bedded a mysterious woman, before finally battling the dragon, you expect to do the same when you enter the Hero Plane. If you do all of these things successfully and in the proper way, you win a great reward, either for yourself or your community. You might come back with a magic sword, gain a Divine Magic spell, end a drought or increase your clan's birth rate.

If you fail to overcome an obstacle, you are in big trouble. If you are lucky, you will simply be injured or diminished in some way and then get ejected from the Hero Plane, back to the place of ritual where you entered the divine realm. If you are unlucky, you will get lost in a world of myth. You might encounter other gods of your pantheon, engaged in activities you are familiar with from their stories. If you know enough of their stories, you may be able to enter one of them and

improvise your way to a proper conclusion, safely exiting from the Otherworld. Otherwise you may be destroyed or trapped forever.

God Learners enter the Other Side to win magical powers for themselves but often do it by moving from one myth to another. They are not the first to engage in this sort of experimental HeroQuesting; Arkat did it before them. Their innovation lies in creating new hybrid stories where none existed before. Once a new story is established, they send in HeroQuesters, armed with RuneQuest Sight and the God Learner's Secret, to repeat it over and over. Thus they cement their new tale as part of the God Realm. The myths become permanent, changing not only a temporary Hero Plane but the God's Realm itself. When the stories change, so do the gods. In the material world, the people who worship the altered god accept the alterations, eventually coming to believe in the newly established myth.

God Learners have collected the major myths of the largest cultures but it is in the minor stories known to only a few communities that they have the greatest freedom to move freely through the Otherworld. Adventurers bringing back useful new myths will be fulsomely rewarded as if they had found fistfuls of gems or ancient crowns of gold.



The Goddess Switch

The Empire's greatest achievement in new myth creation is clearly the Goddess Switch. God Learner sorcerers of Pythos University devoted many years of research to finding two pagan deities of separate cultures who had similar myths. They also needed low-powered deities who were incapable of retaliation. They chose the respective Grain Goddesses of Wenelia and Slontos: Inica, goddess of wild rice and Einkorn, the goddess of grassland wheat. Their adventurers, who blended in with the wild grazing and foraging peoples of both lands, learned two similar myths: 'Inica Feeds the People' and 'How Einkorn's Bounty Filled the Land'. Squads of HeroQuesters journeyed into these myths, playing the roles of the goddesses' attendants. Over many iterations, they slowly altered the stories, until finally Inica and Einkorn were drawn into the same story. A few minor deities proved resistant and were slain during this process. Eventually, prompted by HeroQuesters with RuneQuest Sight, the grain goddesses were forced to admit that they had to be long-lost sisters. Then the sorcerers enacted a new story in which the two goddesses, to stave off a world-eating famine, traded husbands.

The god-talkers of the Slontan gatherers experienced visions of their new grain goddess, as did those of Wenelia. In their dreams, they learned new myths, which were not so much different from the old ones.

At first the switch appeared to be a great success, proving that the pagan gods were false and essentially interchangeable. A few flowers stopped blooming in each place but so what? Then the crops failed. Inica's delicate grain could not be cultivated in Slontos and Einkorn's grass-wheat was damp and blighted in Wenelia. Fruit stopped growing in Wenelia and in Slontos no marriage lasted for more than a year.

In 908 these changes are apparent to the experimenters of Pythos University and to the cultures affected but word has yet to spread across the Empire. Battalions of mercenaries prevent travellers from entering the worst-hit areas. Assassins are dispatched to silence those who try to tell the tale.

Politics

As an old Seshnegi proverb says, 'the troubles of kings are a boon to swordmakers'. Work opportunities abound for adventurers in times of political unrest. The Emperor's ill luck has emboldened his foes to intrigue against him. His enemies within the Empire include:

- X The deposed dukes of Ralios and Arolanit, along with their supporters.
- X The Emperor's erstwhile allies in Ralios, who now recoil at the oppressive taxation he has levied on them, to pay for the cost of their own conquest.
- X Noble families whose sons were lost, or reputations tarnished, by the stunning defeats in Pamaltela.
- X Certain Zistorites, who feel he has not sent enough support to lift the siege against the Clanking City of God Forgot. Others remain touchingly hopeful that their pleas at court will eventually be heard.
- X Nobles of Jrustela, under the banner of the Back to Glory movement, who seek to wrest the imperial throne from hidebound Seshnegi kings back into the hands of a Jrustelan.



In Safelster, they've got a new nickname for the Emperor: 'Ilotos the Unlucky'. He'd better hope it don't stick.

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

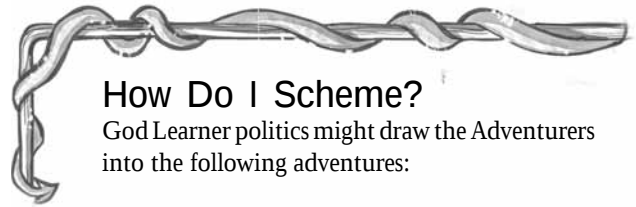


Legally, possession of the imperial throne is not hereditary. Nor is it supposed to be exclusively a Seshnegi privilege. When the Middle Sea Empire formed, it was thought that the throne would pass from region-to-region. The High Council, a collection of religious and secular advisors to the crown, gathers after the Emperor's death or abdication, to select the new ruler. In practice, the Emperors have always been able to stack the High Council with allies and cronies, who will vote for their sons when they die. Since the Empire's formation, the throne has yet to leave Ilotos' family. This increasingly rankles the Jrusteli, who see themselves as the Empire's intellectual inspiration and as Seshnela's liberators. Maybe things would be different if Ilotos were a successful or inspiring leader.

The Jrusteli-based Back to Glory movement schemes to quietly win over members of the High Council, so they elect someone other than his son, Daros. On the other hand, Daros is a dynamic and charismatic young man, arousing greater personal loyalty than his father.

Courtiers lobby ferociously for coveted appointments to the High Council. Although loyalty to the Emperor, who appoints them, is an essential prerequisite, candidates must also triumph within the groups they represent on the Council:

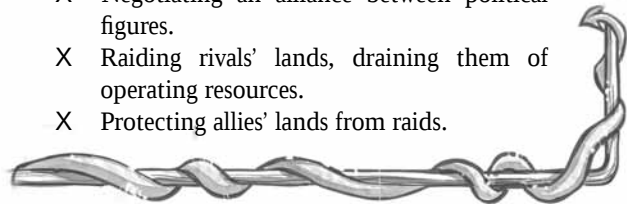
- X The High Sorcerer is usually also head of the God Learners Alliance.
- X The High Ecclesiast is pontiff of the Malkioni Church.
- X The Head of the Mercantilist's League is generally made Lord Treasurer.
- X The Admiral of the Navy is traditionally a Jrusteli nobleman.
- X The Minister of War is a Seshnegi noble with past experience as a field general.
- X Regional leaders make up the rest of the council. These include the Arch-Duke of Loskalm and the Ministers for Kralori and Vithelan Affairs. Positions formerly held by the Arch-Dukes of Aralonit and Ralios are now filled by Ilotos' brothers, although they do not actually administer those territories. Chairs for the Duchies of Fonrit, Umathela and Jolar remain empty, pending the re-conquest of those impudent Pamaltelan territories.



How Do I Scheme?

God Learner politics might draw the Adventurers into the following adventures:

- X Destroying damaging evidence against a patron or a patron's political ally.
- X Recovering damaging evidence against a patron's rival.
- X Gaining a treasure or myth to win the friendship of a desired ally.
- X Couriering sensitive communications between political allies.
- X Rescuing a political figure held by enemies.
- X Assassinating enemies.
- X Investigating assassinations of allies.
- X Temporarily kidnapping rival politicians to prevent them from taking undesirable action.
- X Negotiating an alliance between political figures.
- X Raiding rivals' lands, draining them of operating resources.
- X Protecting allies' lands from raids.



Commerce

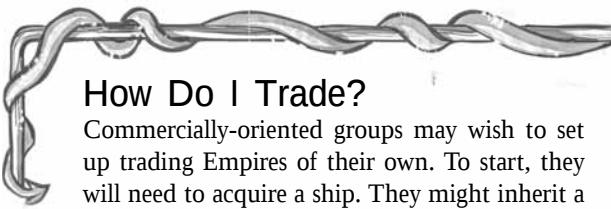
The Empire's seafaring mercantilists conduct a bustling trade throughout Glorantha. Even their sworn rivals, the EWF, benefit from their movement of goods across the



world. Jrusteli trading houses dominate trade, benefiting from their early start in the establishment of shipping fleets. Other colonies and outposts play catch-up, building their own competing fleets.

Where treasure-laden ships fill the ocean, piracy follows. Pirates from the Eastern Isles and the northern coast of Pamaltela grow increasingly bold. The Imperial Navy allocates a small number of ships to the battle against piracy. Other anti-pirate operations are staffed and underwritten by the Mercantilist's League. Adventurers and mercenaries, including many ex-pirates seeking a steadier income, man these fast, cheaply-built and highly expendable vessels.

Any trader, whether based on land or sea, can join the Mercantilist's League, provided that he can present invoices showing at least 10,000 gold pieces of business conducted in the past year. Once eligible, members need not re-establish their credentials. In addition to its role in anti-piracy efforts, the league represents commercial interests to the Emperor, controlling a seat on the High Council.



How Do I Trade?

Commercially-oriented groups may wish to set up trading Empires of their own. To start, they will need to acquire a ship. They might inherit a derelict vessel during an adventure or win a ship as reward from a grateful patron. More likely, they can lease a barely seaworthy knorr for 2,000 to 3,000 silver per season and a 20% share of revenues, calculated before profit. If they go this route, an expendable lackey of the ship's owner accompanies them on their journeys, tallying up their transactions.

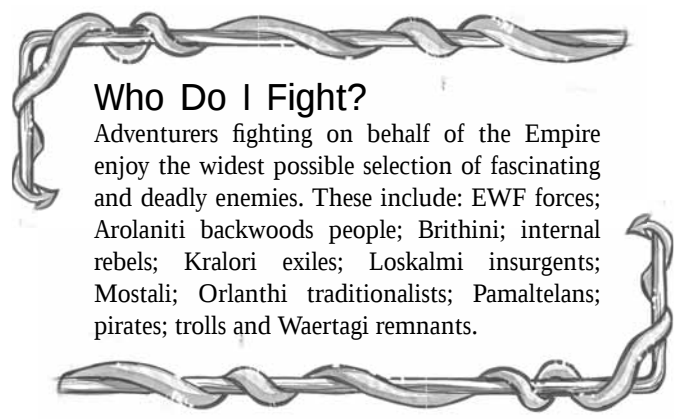
Adventurers are more likely to get involved in trade-based exploits on a one-off basis. They might serve as ship or caravan guards, launch raids against pirate ships or outposts, explore new potential trade routes or broker trade deals between imperial merchants and isolated cultures.

War

The nobility's demand for land and glory necessitates constant war. Although the Empire maintains its own standing army and navy, and is augmented by volunteer forces such as the religiously-motivated Rightness Army, it never has as many men under arms as it wants. Mercenaries fill the gap, travelling to areas of conflict to sign on with the highest bidder.

Although few Adventurers want to join armies and fight in mass engagements whose results they have little control over, they can find gainful employment in support or mop-up operations. Martial-themed adventures might include:

- X Bandit suppression in backwater areas.
- X Sabotage or reconnaissance missions.
- X Military espionage.
- X Stealing myths and secrets from rival powers.
- X Thwarting other adventuring parties working for rebels or foreign powers, whether their objectives are magical, political, commercial or military.



Who Do I Fight?

Adventurers fighting on behalf of the Empire enjoy the widest possible selection of fascinating and deadly enemies. These include: EWF forces; Arolaniti backwoods people; Brithini; internal rebels; Kralori exiles; Loskalmi insurgents; Mostali; Orlanthi traditionalists; Pamaltelans; pirates; trolls and Waertagi remnants.

Notables

A list of God Learner notables must start with **Ilotos, Emperor of the Land and Sea**. His ill political fortunes have turned him into a beleaguered, short-tempered man. He petulantly distrusts his courtiers, officers and functionaries. He is notorious for shuffling them in and out of their posts at the least provocation. Ilotos vindictively punishes his enemies and shows only temporary gratitude to his friends. He maintains his rule through fear; his sudden action against the dukes of Arolaniti and Ralios have given pause to other would-be foes.

His son, **Daros**, contrasts sharply with his ill-humoured father. Handsome, athletic and naturally charming, he is surrounded himself with the Empire's next generation of political leaders. Against his father's advice, he took part in the failed defence of the Empire's Jolari possessions and was one of the few military leaders to acquit himself honourably there. The main interests of this lusty 25 year old lie in carousing, brawling and cementing his alliances with the Seshnegi nobles who will make up his court.

The Empire's most famous magician is **Lurghalos**, High Sorcerer and head of the God Learner Alliance. Moody and capricious, he makes a good match for Ilotos, who trusts him above all others. A scar across his lip, gained during a magical experiment, blemishes his coldly beautiful face. Colleagues whisper of his over-fondness for brandy and the

drunken rages that arise from it. These days Lurghalos chiefly concerns himself with the concealment of the Goddess Switch's ill effects.



Heading the Malkioni Church is a bold and intimidating cousin to Ilotos, the High Ecclesiast **Vesharios**. A first-class intellect, he can recite the *Abiding Book* inside out and argue the meaning of any passage from the viewpoint of every school of theological interpretation. In the matter of pagan conversion, Vesharios is a hard-headed Realist. He bullies other members of the High Council with a mixture of wit, agile sophistry and confrontational body language. His primary goal is the diversion of hot-headed Missionaries to harmless pursuits which will not threaten the Empire in time of crisis.

The unassuming, chameleonic **Sylark** chairs the Mercantilist's League and serves the High Council as Lord Treasurer. Good-looking in a generic and unremarkable way, this Jrusteli-born trader has mastered the skill of seeming to be all things to all people. Everyone on the council thinks he agrees with them and works for their interests, when really he cares only for his own. He wants more money spent on anti-piracy efforts.

Sylark's long-faced, self-doubting cousin **Kenthiliu** was, at the treasurer's urging, recently elevated to office as Admiral of the

Navy. Though successful in his youth in several sallies against piracy, Kenthiliu had withdrawn from political life to serve in a monastery at New Froalar. He wants to please both the Emperor and his cousin but is mostly afraid he will humiliate himself and bring shame on the family name.

Filling the position of Minister of War and High Commander of the Middle Sea Army is the darkly brooding **Gaskaros**, famed for his epic poetry, his swift and ruthless victories against the former Duke of Ralios, and his sword, Even-Hand. Once drawn, this legendary blade cannot be sheathed until it kills an even number of victims.

Everyone agrees that the most influential individual outside the High Council is **Pompalic**, who heads the Rightness Army, a volunteer force of warriors and sorcerers who fight alongside imperial forces wherever the Malkioni faith is threatened. An annoying thorn in the side of High Ecclesiast Vesharios, he foments passions on the streets, urging crusades against heretics. A vociferous Missionary, he advocates forced baptism of pagans. He has secretly allied himself with sorcerer critics of the God Learner project, who argue that it has gone too far and will bring disaster upon the Empire. Pompalic feels that God Learnerism smacks of crypto-paganism and is anxious to shut the whole discipline down, once and for all.

God Learner Tolerance

Despite its fervent monotheism, the Middle Sea Empire shows a surprising degree of tolerance for practitioners of other faiths. While you cannot say that the God Learners respect theist, mystical or shamanic ways, they are anxious to discover more about them and gain from their secrets. Traders encourage contact with other cultures, who provide both products and markets. While non-Malkioni cannot rise into positions of high authority, neither are they harassed while going about their daily business. Especially in occupations open to adventurers, the vast majority of employers care more about a person's capabilities than his beliefs.

Especially conservative Malkioni may insult or condescend to pagans. When times get bad, riots may break out. Unbelievers may be chased, roughed up or even slain. Such occasions are rare, especially in ports and major centres. A Malkioni heretic, who is expected to know better, faces much greater prejudice and risk of harm than a mere pagan.

His niece, **Vissala**, is sweet on the Emperor's son, Daros, and believes she has a shot at becoming his empress. Pompalic encourages her to pursue this dream, hoping to influence his unformed ideology.

EMPIRE OF WYRM'S FRIENDS

Where the God Learners control the coasts and much of western Genertela, the Empire of Wyrms Friends has expanded up and into the continent from their base in Maniria.

The EWF is both more and less inclusive than their rival Empire. As a relatively new transformative religious movement, they are willing to accept anyone who embraces their mystical dragon way. Adventurers of any culture can come to the EWF and find a path from their old worship to the revealed draconic insights. On the other hand, the EWF expects everyone within its borders to join the cause and become part of the Great Dragon To Come. They harshly repress the old faiths and only grudgingly tolerate the long-term presence of foreign unbelievers. Adventurers can visit it from time to time without provoking pressure to conform. Those who put down roots here must appear to follow the draconic versions of their core faiths, or face confiscations, physical intimidation or exile. Open and unregenerate agitation for the old ways can get you killed.

The wyrmfriends may not hire as many adventurers as the God Learners but adventurers still find opportunity galore within EWF borders. Adventurers favourable to the Empire can:

- X Fight the reactionary forces of the Old Ways traditionalists.
- X Aid the Empire's efforts to transform the landscape into a living dragon.
- X Put down local rebellions.
- X Suppress banditry.
- X Quest for artefacts of draconic transformation.
- X Battle the magic-stealing raiders of the God Learner Empire.

Adventurers opposed to the Empire can:

- X Harry, rob and assassinate blasphemous EWF oppressors.
- X Rescue captured heroes of the resistance.
- X Sabotage draconic installations.
- X Intrigue to separate the human dragon mystics from their increasingly distrustful dragonewt helpers.
- X Establish alliances between otherwise hostile cultures under EWF control.
- X Hunt for magical secrets to counter draconic dominance.



What Wyrmfriends Know

Followers of Orlanth the Dragon and the other new religions of the EWF know that the world was created by draconic forces. The following passage from the *Hunting and Waltzing Scroll of Sikaranth Dagger-Tooth* explains the wyrmfriend faith to potential converts:

Misery, hunger, confusion and desire are part of the world because it isn't perfect yet. The violence and treachery of the human condition can also be attributed to this lack of perfection. The dragons made a cure for this when they created the world. They gave men the potential to perfect themselves and at the same time, to complete creation. This final act of completion will occur when all the people of the Empire perfect themselves and also create the conditions for the land itself to transform into the greatest dragon of all. All of the people will then be transformed, too, into the collective consciousness of this new dragon. Thus will they achieve eternal bliss, as the world emerges from its egg to finally achieve its ultimate, perfected form.

Although the struggle for perfection will be long and difficult, it is not without its rewards along the way. It grants its adherents powerful magics to use against its enemies, both from within and

without. Some people cling stubbornly to their imperfections, to the old forms of worship which were meant only as stepping stones to transcendence. These must be shown the way of truth, to have their third eyes opened. Sadly, some are incapable of making the essential transition and must be snuffed out, lest their imperfections prevent blissful attainment for everyone else. To bring misery to the miserable is not a good or righteous action, only a necessary one. Those who perform these acts of oppression sacrifice greatly, marring their souls with hate, greed and violence. They must fast and meditate to return to a pure state. Some of these will be corrupted and must also be extinguished. This is sad, but sadness is also a trap, as are all of the ordinary human emotions. They bind us to the reality around us, which is false, and prevent us from perceiving our Ultimate Dragon Natures, which are cold, analytical, inscrutable, yet partaking of a higher joy than any ordinary sort of human happiness can prepare one to understand.

Those who participated first in the revelations will gain most from the shared energies. If you join us now, you will be more powerful than if you do it later. If you bring in others, you will gain from that, and then gain again when they do the same.

This higher, mystic joy is worth all the hard spiritual work required to attain it. If we suffer deprivation, sorrow, war and doubt, it is only to fulfil cosmic destiny.



The human mystics of the wyrmfriend way seem very sure that they know it all. But I see the dragonewts look at them, doubt pooling in their reptilian eyes.

— Jorudanth Silverhand, Trader of Janstown



A Short History Of the Empire

The Empire of Wyrms' Friends begins in Dragon Pass, in central Genertela, a place where the dragonewts have lived since before the beginning of time. Before this time, the dragonewts, or people of the dragon, had always been difficult to interact with. Their actions are peculiar and no one except for the followers of an Orlanthi hero named Drolgard can speak or understand their hissing, trilling language. Misunderstandings often result in deaths on both sides.

A new school opens in populous Nochet. There they are teaching Auld Wyrmesh to whomever wants to learn.

Knowledge quickly spreads outside the school, spreading with the rapidity of a disease. Those who learn it are transformed by it. To speak the language is to receive mystic insight.

However everyone who learns has a different personal experience. Factions spring up throughout Esrolia and Hendrikiland, enveloping ordinary people into violent metaphysical dispute. 573 is a year of severe unrest.

Vistikos Left-Eye, an Orlanthi convert to Malkionism, learns Auld Wyrmesh directly from the school at Nochet and achieves a conclusive understanding that eventually brings peace to the competing factions. He does this by gaining an audience with a mystical entity called the Cosmic Dragon and then asking the right questions. Equipped with these revelations, he forms the Hunting and Waltzing Bands, groups of missionaries who use dance, drama and fasting to convert influential figures to the new mystic way. This is the start of the new, organised draconic religion. Vistikos and his swelling coterie of followers works from the top down, winning over political leaders, who command their people to follow. Other ordinary people rise suddenly to prominence.

Society in Dragon Pass is quickly reorganised along draconic lines. Those who openly resist the effort to infuse their old religions with dragon symbolism are exiled or killed. Others take the original worship underground, pretending to be sympathetic to wyrmfriendism while forming the roots of the Old Ways Traditionalist movement.

In 578 the Empire of Wyrms' Friends establishes itself as a formal political entity. The Hunting and Waltzing Bands flourish and spread across Genertela, proselytising and strengthening the power-base, creating a pyramidal structure that steadily concentrates power into the hands of the Eternal Dragon Ring.

Many view the approach of the Hunting and Waltzing bands as reckless and irresponsible. A distinct schism develops within, resulting in the Waltzing and Dancing Bands, known otherwise as the Arrogantines, for their arrogance and selfishness; and the Waltzing and Thinking Bands, known otherwise as the Complacentines, who understood that they would not attain draconic perfection in their own lifetimes and should maintain their traditional roles in addition to draconic study. A third band, known as the Introvertines, took a completely different approach. Led by Obduran the Flyer, the Introvertines lived and contemplated the deepest mystical principles and devoted themselves to meditation and purity of being. The Introvertines became known as the Cult of the Inner Dragon and Obduran discovered and revealed the Truth

of Arangorf, the Inner Dragon. This, in turn, allowed him to reveal the Orlanth Dragonfriend secret which led directly to the draconisation of many, many Old Ways Traditionalists.

Those who studied directly with Obduran embraced Arangorf on personal levels and deepened their own enlightenment. These students took the Cult of the Inner Dragon and made it the Eternal Dragon Ring. Their members were, and are:

Great Isgangdrang: Known also as the Perfect Uprising and capable of either male or female form. Isgangdrang charted the Right Left-Hand Path teaching draconic perfection. Since Obduran's transcendence Isgangdrang has taken leadership of the Eternal Dragon Ring and is active throughout the EWF's territories, having destroyed the last true Orlanthi King 200 years ago.

Lord Great Burin: The Destroyer of Evil and Sorrow, Burin's path of enlightenment is the Path of Unstruck Sound which eradicates all carnal, material and mundane desires. His powers are as vast as those of armies although he, like Isgangdrang, has not attained true draconic ascendance.

Lorenkarden the Mile: Known also as The Above and Beyond and Source of Waters. He claims to have realised the spirit of the True Dragon Aroka, the Fountain of the World, and Lorenkarden has undoubted mastery over the waters of the world. His draconic form is that of the Silvery Dragon a mile in length. Currently he strives in Dara Happa where he acts as council to the Red King of Alkoth, maintaining the Eternal Dragon Ring's interests there.

Hurarbargarten the Golden Dragon: Invited by the nobles of Dara Happa to teach in Raibanth, Hurarbargarten founded the Golden Dragon Society and engineered war to claim the Sun Throne for himself. His revelations through the Empty Riddles philosophy showed Yelm's draconic side and many have accepted this as an absolute truth. In his draconic form Hurarbargarten watches over Dara Happa, coiled around the great ziggurat in Raibanth, the capital.

Varankol the Mangler: Isgangdrang's student and noted hero of the EWF, he leads the Aramites of Tuskwood and is worshipped as a hero by these savage warriors. He rides Gouger, a darkness demon, and wields his axes Hower and Scraper from its back. Varankol acts as first-line trouble-shooter for the Eternal Dragon Ring, leading his Tuskwood mercenaries into battle at the forefront of the EWF shock forces. He currently leads the EWF contingent at the siege of Zistorwal. While there he has developed a perverse admiration for the rebel Orlanthi King Androfin, whom he one day hopes to do the honour of personally dismembering.

Pavis: It is unclear if Pavis was ever a true member of the Eternal Dragon Ring, but he studied with Obduran and developed his own Path which led to the enlightenment that awoke the Faceless Statue at Shadows Dance and the subsequent defeat of Waha and the building of the city bearing his name. Pavis retired to contemplation in much the same way as Obduran but his power still watches over his city.

In 750 Obduran retired to meditation in the city of Dragon's Eye leaving the Eternal Dragon Ring in the hands of its members. In 803 he *Assimilated the Absolute* and transcended the mortal form, becoming the first – and so far, only – human to become a True Dragon.

Since Obduran's Assimilation

For 300 years, the EWF slowly progresses toward its goal of building the Great Dragon, weathering occasional raids from God Learners intent on stealing their secrets. Later incursions prove less successful than the strike that took Auld Wyrnism from the Drolgardi. The new wyrmfriend belief is sufficiently alien to the God Learner mindset that their secrets prove difficult to integrate with HeroQuest-based Sorcery.

Forming the unstoppable dragon armies, aided by dragonewts and dinosaurs, the Empire expands. Through a mixture of conquest and Hunting and Waltzing conversion, it encompasses Prax (first incursions in 620), Pent (675), Dara Happa (780) and Fronela (852). In 875, it reinforces Ormsland, a dragonewt-inhabited region of northern Ralios, against incursion by God Learner forces.



The Dragon Sun should not have been able to pass the ten tests that make a Solar Emperor. But, woe of woes, even though it had no hands, it magically grasped the divine regalia!

— Varustori Gold-beard, Exiled Noble of Dara Happa



Dara Happa falls completely to the Empire in 878, when a dragon, known alternately as the Dragon Sun or Golden Dragon, ascends its throne. This action eventually triggers an unforeseen alliance between traditional enemies, the Yelmite sun worshippers of Dara Happa and the unreconstructed Orlanthi of Dragon Pass. Their alliance revitalises the Old Ways Traditionalist insurgent movement, which grows steadily bolder as the dawn of the 10th century approaches. They preach the Last Chance, a doctrine which states that

the theist peoples must unite immediately or witness the end of the world when the Great Dragon ascends. Ambushes and guerrilla raids flare in the borderlands.

EWf leaders, increasingly attuned with the realm of mystic consciousness and cut off from the everyday needs of the people, react to the insurgents with cold brutality. Their tactics, sweeping in friend with foe, drive more people into the Old Ways camp.

Now the EWf heartland is well into its second year of winter. Starvation looms. To alleviate famine, the leadership forces the outlying provinces to export food to Dragon Pass, spreading discontent. They blame these hardships on the God Learners but a hungry, freezing populace grumbles that they have devoted too much magic and worship to the Great Dragon project and too little to ordinary survival.

Magic

The EWf project works as a vast magical pyramid scheme. The first to join the dragonspeaker cult gain power from everyone they recruit and everyone those people recruit and so on and so forth. Thus the first members of the original Hunting and Waltzing Bands who arose in the sixth century still live today, as the leaders of cult and Empire. Under the ultimate leadership of Vistikos Left-Eye, they dwell in a self-generated serpentine castle at Dragon's Eye, home of the dragonewt Inhuman King. Each has amassed great personal power, which is rarely expended. If they cared to, they could work great wonders at will, felling entire forests, changing the course of rivers or obliterating entire platoons of enemies with a blink of an invisible third eye. They are the Ascendants. In their political capacity, they are referred to as the Original Twelve. In typical confusing dragonfriend fashion, their numbers now far exceed a dozen.

The second generation of dragonspeaker mystics, who served as the first attendants, companions and bodyguards of the Original Twelve, comprise the political entity called the Guiding Council. Each is mightier with draconic power than any individual Runelord or God Learner sorcerer. They hold the mystical rank of Masters.

The third rank of draconic accomplishment, usually held by local war leaders, officials and functionaries, is that of the Triumphant. This is the dragonspeaker equivalent of Runelord or Rune priest status.

Below them, mustering small quantities of draconic power, are Initiates.

Believers are like lay members. Their cooperation is needed to secure the ascension of the Great Dragon. They give power to the hierarchy but receive no magic in return.

Believers may still gain magic from other theist cults, provided that their worship has been draconised. A draconised cult replaces traditional symbols with dragon images and interprets the myths as mystical parables of ascendance.

Dragonspeakers above the rank of Believer may practice only Common Magic and Dragon Magic.

To move up a rank, a candidate must not only achieve inner perfection but earn responsibility for a certain number of initiations. Initiations made by others one has initiated into the cult count both toward one's own total and that of one's initiate. Given the nature of the pyramid, it is now all but impossible to ascend to its highest two ranks.

Rank	Initiations Required
Ascendant	100,000
Master	10,000
Triumphant	1,000
Initiate	100
Believer	Self

Draconic Powers

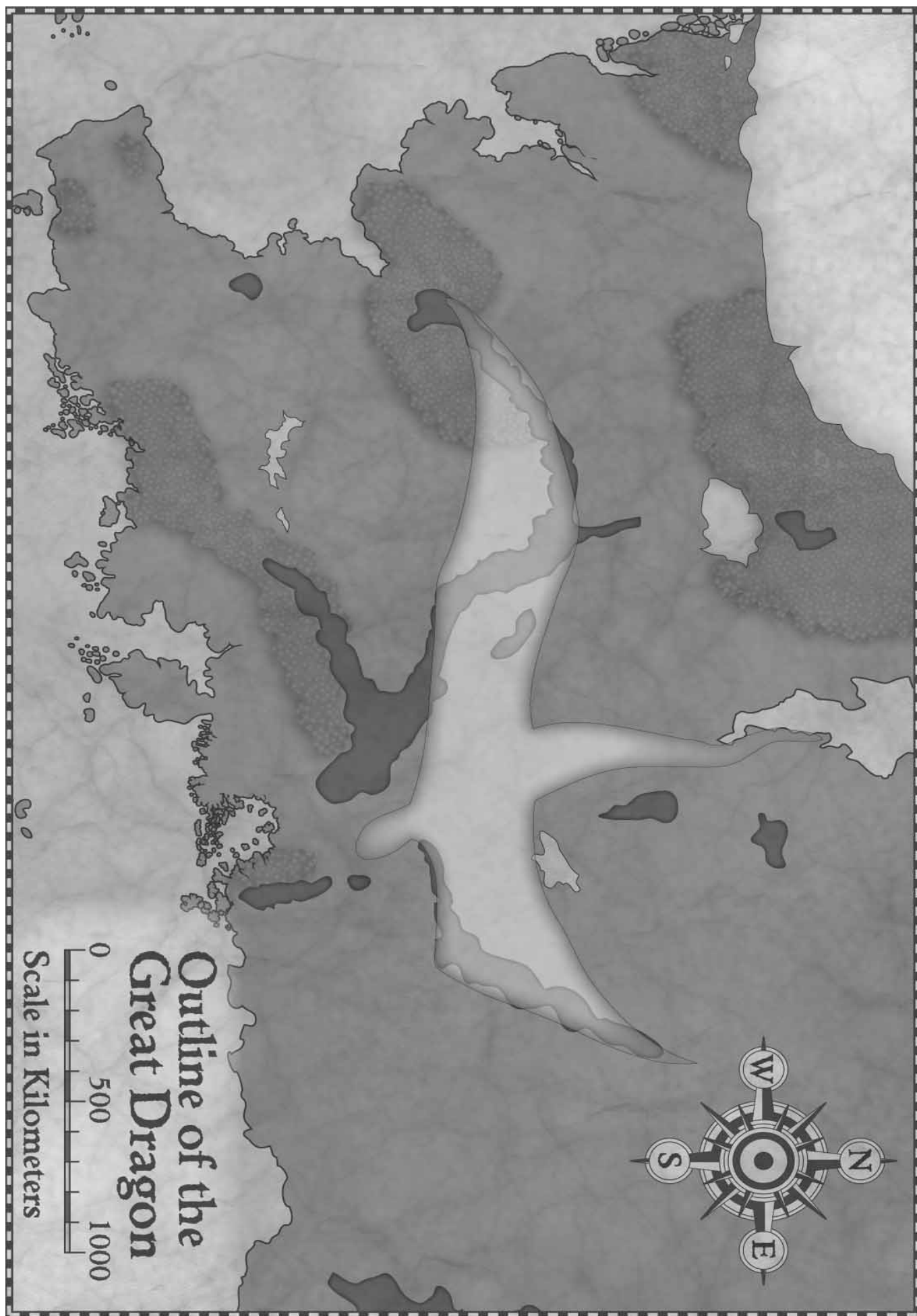
Draconic powers often centre around temporary personal transformation. They include: gaining dragon-like hide, strength, speed or weaponry (claws, tail or horns); the ability to command reptiles and dinosaurs; extrasensory perception; resisting/dispelling magic; instilling fear; causing earthquakes; avoiding detection and rapid self-healing.

The more powerful an EWf figure is, the more reluctant he becomes to exercise these outward abilities. To do so is to bind oneself to the mundane world, retarding transcendent progress.

Highly advanced dragon mystics seem beautiful, serene and magnetic to wyrmfriend believers and creepily distant and alien to outsiders.

Building the Dragon

Wyrmfriends claim that the Great Dragon will arise in both the physical and spiritual planes. Its physical manifestation will ascend from the earth, the core element of draconic nature. The dragonspeaker cult has incised an outline of this dragon in the earth, starting in a place they call the Imminence Valley. As the Empire expands, they increase the boundaries of



the outline, which now extends far into Dara Happa. Entire troops of guardians patrol the outline, which is often the target of sabotage by Old Ways insurgents. Ultimately the dragon outline will extend all the way to Ice Bay, in northern Dara Happa. The Oslir River is its spine; the Rockwood Mountains, its wings, and the volcanoes of Caladraland represent its crested head and fiery breath.

Dragon Secrets

As their Empire frays at the edges, the Guiding Council has come to suspect that the dragonewts are holding out on them. The Inhuman King resists further inquiries. Vistikos Left-Eye's recent attempts to contact the Cosmic Dragon for needed clarifications have gone unanswered.

To fill the gap, the hierarchy seeks old draconic artefacts, especially those with writing on them. They hope that these will contain insights hastening the completion of the Great Dragon project. Adventurers who secure them are generously rewarded. The wyrmfriends do not personally quest for such items, in fear of offending the dragonewts. If mercenaries unaffiliated with them burst into and desecrate hidden dragonewt temples, the EWF can hardly be blamed for that, can they?

Politics

The Original Twelve rule the Empire as detached and disinterested figures of authority. Completely disinterested in governance, they spend their waking days and sleepless nights in meditative contemplation, staring into the transcendent dragon heart. Much is delegated to the Eternal Dragon Ring, which although separate to the Original Twelve, and close to it, has such concentrated power that it is far better placed to actively shape and manage the EWF's interests across Glorantha.

On the next step of the pyramid stands the Guiding Council. These second-generation leaders have mostly crossed over into the realm of metaphysical contemplation but still run the Empire, distractedly, through assistants and functionaries. They make policy and delegate the details to underlings.

It is this third group, unknown to the people and sealed off from their complaints, who act on their superiors' demands for a quick and ruthless end to the Old Ways rebellion. They call themselves the Throne Hands.

As the Two Year Winter continues, dissension builds within the Throne Hands group. The military leaders among them, known as the **War Dragons**, advocate rule through terror and the display of devastating force. They currently enjoy the favour of the Guiding Council. A second group, consisting mostly of administrators, bureaucrats and trade officials, argues for inaction. Called the **Above and Beyonds**, this

faction believes that the rebels are mere vermin, who are best ignored. Effort spent combating them will attach the Empire to material falseness, when it should be speeding up its leap into universal transcendence. Finally, a group called the **Converters** maintains that the leaders have a duty to go out and personally alleviate human suffering. This group arises from the Empire's missionary arm, who maintain the closest contact with the people. Their stance is unpopular, because of the toll it demands from the leaders. If they use their powers in the mundane world, even for a good cause, they become embroiled again in its false reality. The emotions of altruism and sacrifice are as potent a trap as hate and violence.

Lower down on the pyramid are the field and local leaders. They include warriors, missionaries and administrators.

How Do I Scheme?

Political intrigue within the EWF plays out between the three factions within the Throne Hands or between insurgents and government. Roleplayers typically prefer the role of scrappy rebels sticking it to The Man over that of oppressive occupier. These groups can:

- X Lobby tribal leaders to abandon draconised cult trappings and return to the old ways.
- X Set rival EWF factions against one another.
- X Convince dragonewts that the wyrmfriends are perverting their mystical truth.
- X Act as envoys to insurgent groups in other occupied lands.

Or groups can play dragonspeakers, struggling to protect the Empire from its foes and from destructive internal forces. They can:

- X Find, fight or subvert insurgent groups.
- X Curb the power of rival factions.
- X Protect supply trains as famine mounts.
- X Seek out undiscovered dragon secrets.
- X Convert outlying peoples with Hunting and Waltzing magic.

Commerce

Though EWF leadership takes little interest in worldly matters, its people must still feed, clothe and equip themselves as they wait for the Great Dragon to rise. Famine in Dragon Pass has merely

intensified the importance of the makers, sellers and transporters of goods. Following draconised local trader gods, most importantly the Orlanthi deity Issaries, they build commercial networks throughout the greater Empire. In so doing, they cement relationships between previously disparate peoples.

Merchants see the indifference of the Guiding Council to trade as a good thing. They care passionately about religion and magic and so interfere strongly in those realms of life. Commerce flourishes without their careful management. Traders, who thrive on innovation and bridges built between cultures, generally support the EWF and hope for its continued stability.

Most of them treat the Old Ways traditionalists as a dire threat. Their insurgent raids often target trade caravans. If they win, the far-flung imperial provinces will break away into constituent nations once again. Rebels of incompatible cultures may think of themselves as allies now but victory will set them to fighting again. Existing trade routes will crumble. Traders use what political influence they have to protect the status quo. Money cares about the Empire, even if the Empire does not care about it.

How Do I Trade?

An overland trading campaign set in the Empire of Wyrms' Friends provides copious opportunities for adventure: establishing new trade routes; suppressing banditry; dealing with insurgents, either fighting them or striking deals for safe passage; transporting draconic artefacts; finding new food sources for a starving heartland and getting those goods to hungry mouths; discovering local products which will fetch high prices elsewhere in the Empire.

War

The Empire fields war bands big and small to combat insurgents, fight off enemy invasions and to conquer new territories. Politically the military faction is primarily made up of War Dragons, who believe fanatically in the ruthless suppression of dissent.

As their harsh measures feed a backlash among the people, a new generation of warriors, the **Clean Cutters**, has arisen to argue for a more careful application of armed force. They ally with local tribal leaders, gather intelligence and seek to infiltrate and suborn Old Ways groups. Some are more underhanded

than virtuous. They stoke anger against traditionalists by committing atrocities in their name.

While the Empire used to restrict the use of mercenaries to mass-scale engagements in the outlands, they have lately come to rely on them as anti-insurgent forces. Paid foreigners are less likely to become double agents than supposedly draconised locals. Adventurers with a taste for blood will find a lifetime of employment as contractors for the War Dragons.

The War Dragons evoke quaking terror on the battlefield, thanks to their draconic troops. In addition to fielding platoons of dragonewts, they employ a variety of dinosaur shock troops. **Crushers** (brontosaurus) knock down walls and topple towers. **Thunderers** (triceratops) stomp through enemy lines, goring soldiers on their sharpened horns. **Renders** (velociraptors), guided with precision by wyrm magic, leap into foes with bloody tooth and claw. **Death kings** (tyrannosaurs), screaming for mouthfuls of flesh, take a huge bite out of enemy morale before they even reach the frontlines. EWF forces dominate the sky, with wyrms, dream dragons and pterosaurs, piloted by trollkin slaves.

The EWF also fields a variety of beast man units, including centaurs, durulz and tusk riders.



Who Do I Fight?

Enemies of the EWF include: God Learners; Old Way rebels (Pelorians, Orlanthi, Pentans); elves, who object to their transformation of the land; Kralori, who oppose their perversion of draconic mysticism; trolls, who used to rule Dragon Pass and want it back (though other Uz may be EWF allies).

Notables

The Original Twelve, who interact not at all with the common people, are now chiefly known only as names. Chief among them is **Vistikos Left-Eye**, who once was known as a quick-witted, brilliant and restless man but is now an eerily contented shell of a man. His body remains but his consciousness has gone elsewhere. It is said that if he ever left his fortress at Dragon's Eye, that the earth would transform itself under his feet, to a perfect representation of itself.

The Chief of the Guiding Council is **Arene Whisper-Hush**, who was a lowly indentured sheep-herder when the dragon eye awakened to her in 587. Famed for her humility and the skill with which she uses it to silence and intimidate others, she heads the Above and Beyond faction. She wants stability above all else and does not care which faction delivers it.

Whether under the sun or illuminated by lanterns, **Inganna Willowhair** attracts light wherever she goes. She is the Guiding Council's most eloquent Converter and as such has threatened to resign to walk among the people, healing them, nurturing them and returning them to the true draconic path.

Hargrath Golden-Scale, conqueror of Pent and slayer of the Zistorite Shovel Beast, heads the Guiding Council's War Dragon faction. Like Inganna, he is considering a temporary abandonment of his meditative routines to reassume an active role in EWF affairs. In his case, this is so he can destroy the Old Ways Traditionalists, capturing their leaders and subjecting them to unprecedented tortures, so that the masses might be properly instructed.

The real work of government is headed by **Tarkala Wyrmsdottr**, senior official among the Throne Hands. A grey-faced and ink-stained administrator, she wearily tries to balance the three factions, so that internal conflicts do not steal focus from the Empire's true foes. Though scarcely charismatic, she is a master of behind-the-scenes manipulation. Rumour has it that she hatched from an egg.

Delecti the Inquirer, a Malkioni convert to the Dragon Way, serves as consultant on western affairs to the Guiding Council. A mighty sorcerer, he works to perfect his western magic in a draconised fashion, so that the materialistic God Learners might be awakened to the great truth. These inquiries have led him to experiment with sorcerous form alteration and hybridisation. He aims to create new, perfect forms of life which will come into being with mystical awareness already fully attained. These can convert the West and then perform the mysterious final rituals required to activate the Great Dragon.

Enemies of the EWF

The shadowy Old Ways insurgency continually throws up new internal enemies to bedevil the Empire. Some may be more rumour than reality.

Fogarth Toothaxe leads the insurgency in Fronela. He leads his Knights of the Wood, exiled Malkioni nobles schooled in hit and run combat by Orlanthi guerrillas from distant Hendrikiland. Some say Fogarth, once famed for his poetry and erudition, has become more barbaric than his barbarian mentors.

Dijaar and his Five Friends are former dragon mystics who have returned to their childhood traditions as Pentan barbarians. Each has mustered a troop of fervent Kargzant worshippers. Dijaar, also known as the Sun Scorcher, is as brutal as any War Dragon. He is infamous for burning captured enemies alive.

The golden-haired hero **Karvanyar** is the Dara Happan's shining hope. Claiming to be the son of the deposed Emperor and the lowliest commoner, he has surrounded himself with an underground network of fearsome Yelmadio followers. Attempts to arrest him have been repeatedly thwarted; a 10,000 gold piece reward awaits any adventurer who brings him to EWF justice, dead or alive.

King Androfin of Hendrikiland has re-established open worship of an Orlanth shorn of draconic symbology. The earth magics of his wife **Shordala**, a priestess of Ernalda, have kept his people fed despite the Two Year Winter. The rebel king proclaims the chill as a gift from Orlanth's frosty brother, Valind. He also opposes the God Learners, having sent troops to the siege of the Clanking City. Androfin is a hearty, back-slapping leader, generous with both gold and compliments.

Perhaps the wyrmfriends' weirdest foe is the **Man of Five Stones**, from the Pelorian hinterland. A self-taught mystic of the wilderness, his nakedness protects him as no armour could. When he speaks, his enemies hear only growls, where his friends hear exhortations that infuse them with Otherworldly power. He is raising an army of wild men to attack the Empire.

Major Cultures

Whether you want to play a passionate Orlanthi barbarian, a logic-driven Malkioni sorcerer, a haughty Dara Happan noble, or any other human character, this chapter is for you. Use these culture write-ups to immerse yourself in your character's myths, history, magic and reasons for adventure.

Remember that a person who adheres to all of the stereotypical qualities of his culture is just as much an oddball as the eccentric outsider. Most people fit some of the traits commonly associated with their nations and faiths, while departing from that standard image in other ways. Glorantha claims its full share of effete, urbanised Orlanthi, wildly emotional Malkioni spellcasters and touchingly humble Dara Happan nobles.

These cultural descriptions are written from the point of view of a so-called typical member of each culture. Attitudes may vary by locality or be influenced by the proximity of other faiths. For instance, a draconised Orlanthi will tell many of the same stories as the baseline Orlanthi narrator but will use them to illustrate the virtues of EWF mysticism.

KRALORI

We are the Kralori, heirs to a hundred thousand years of sublime tradition. We dwell in the Kingdom of Splendour. For most of our history, we have isolated ourselves from outsiders, pursuing our perfection without looking to backward foreigners. Now we have been changed by the outside world, which has brought our ancient wisdom back to us, in a new form. Some of us have embraced it. Others – your humble correspondent among them – have fled in horror from this insane innovation, taking to the hills, to preserve our time-honoured traditions from outside taint.

My Myths

There is a time before our land existed but that is not interesting. There were entities that were bigger than gods but without inner understanding, for they were too simple to have an outside and an inside. They just were.

Wild Man

The first of these entities changed when she developed pity. She was All Encompassing She of the Before, who the peasants call Empress Earth. She saw the mortal being called Wild Man roaming across the rocky face of her then-infertile earth. He had been created by the other gods, perhaps as a sort of jest,



Javier Charro Martinez

or as an ineffable expression of their collective nature. It does not matter.

Wild Man's nature was to pair with whatever he saw. He mated with stone and metal, creating dwarfs. He mated with plants and foliage, producing elves. With animals, he made the hsunchen races. With sea monsters, he sired the undersea races. All of his couplings were unsuitable and brought him dissatisfaction and suffering. So Empress earth took pity on him and made the serene goddess Allgiver.

Aptanance the Sage

Allgiver tamed Wild Man. Their first child was Aptanance the Sage. When other people came along after – and soon there were very, very many – he was ready for them, as he

had already created a perfect civilisation for them to interact in. This was Kralorela. It was correctly organised from top to bottom, from the imperial throne to the bureaucrats to the craftsmen and peasantry.

While creating civilisation, Aptanance needed light to work by. Metsyla came and shone down upon him, brightly illuminating the world (the God Learners tell us that this entity must also be the foreign god Yelm but it cannot be so, for nothing good ever came from a foreign place). Metsyla was bright and true and clear but lacked wisdom and inner searching.

Aptanance saw this as another absence in his plan and so Daruda came, bearing the knowledge of dragons and their inner magic. Aptanance placed him on his empty throne, which had been waiting for such a worthy. Daruda invented calligraphy, so he could inscribe the secrets of draconic transformation for the Emperors that would come after him.

The Perfect Age

The first Emperor who was not a god was Shavaya, Emperor of Splendour. It was not until his ascension that Aptanance's plans were realised, for a mortal had always been envisioned as the eventual ruler. Immediately Shavaya felt what a god could not: that bureaucracy and inner dragons and calligraphy were all well and good but ordinary people needed food or they suffered terrible pangs.

So Shavaya sent out his clever daughter Unyamor, who was good at finding things, and she found a solution in the form of Rice Mother, the generous one, and she fed the people. Prosperity reigned for what seemed like forever.

Dragons

The people learned of the dragons and the wise found the reflections of these celestial beings within themselves.

There was **Thrunhin Da**, the Blue Dragon of the Sea, whose wisdom runs as deep as the ocean. It was she who gave Unyamor the Rice Mother, as a gift for her serenity and cleverness. Thrunhin Da can be bountiful or wrathful, depending on how wisely one approaches her.

Also there was **Smor-Eel**, the Night Dragon, also called the Helldragon, who held the nightmares that mirrored people's fears.

And there was **Azba Gar**, the Earth Dragon, who perfected the hills around Kralorela, so that they might express a cosmic harmony.

Also there were many more. But people had trouble understanding them, so the dragons invented gods, who

had dragon wisdom within them but were more capable of expressing matters in ways that made sense to human ears.

The Mystic Gods

First they made the Emperor a god, out of respect for Aptanance and Daruda.

Second they constructed heaven and appointed an archexarch, Tanchun Kaii, to rule it. Then they left the task of making human gods to him, as he understood men better than they.

From his thoughts he made Han Majang, the first minister, to whom men petition for boons from the gods. From his need for sustenance he made Miyo, the farming goddess. From his sternness the archexarch created an inferior opposite, Udam Bagur, the archexarch of Hell. He judges the wicked, sentencing them to cleansing torment performed by devils. Folk belief tells us that he is susceptible to bribery and the living often burn sacrifices to him to lessen the course of misery suffered by their dead relatives.

Ascended Gods

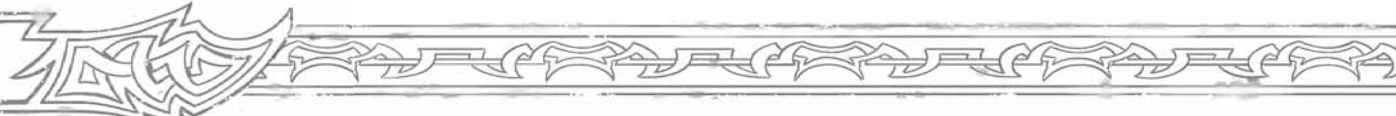
During the Perfection Era, the lines between gods and mortals could be blurred. Especially evolved individuals began as humans and ascended to heaven as deities.

Thalurzni was one of these. His wife, Halisayan, is another. Her humility so impressed Thalurzni that he married her and gifted her with the Pill of Immortality. She epitomises the good and dutiful woman. Mothers pray that their daughters will be like her.

Her sister, Bodkartu, became Goddess of Secrets and Forbidden Lore. She protects her sister, which is necessary, but employs alarming means (such as assassination, poisoning, disease and strangulation), so in normal times her worship must be tightly restricted. Her sinister adherents spearhead the secret fight against the so-called Immanent Masters.

Foreign Monsters Invade

The perfection of our civilisation was disrupted and all but destroyed by the invasion of grotesque monsters from the west and from the sea. They were heralded by the sudden arrival of death, which came like the tides upon the rocks but did not fall



away. Thalurzni, the Emperor, created Calm Waiting Beyond Light and Waters, a place for the dead, where they would wait until his demise. It was first called Winter Heaven, for only the leaderless confused souls were there. Then he would guide them into the beyond. He waged war to expand the imperial boundaries and filled this afterlife with loyal soldiers.

Thalurzni battled the quartet of monsters remembered as the Gang of Four: the Shadow Eater, the Earth Eater, the Star Permutator and the Secret Waters. They slew him and he ascended to the Winter Heaven, taking the first crop of dead souls with him.

He was replaced as Emperor by Vayobi, whose origins were humble. Not long after his triumphant investiture came the worst of all invaders, Sekever the Anti-Dragon. She was beautiful and serene and did not seem like a monster at first, until she devoured the sun, striking Metsyla from the sky. Then she overthrew Vayobi and took the throne for herself.

The Perfect Time ended and the Worst Time began. Its horrors are best not dwelt upon. But this is when order was upended, rice stole nourishment from those that ate it and anyone who wrote in the accepted way burned from the inside out. And it continued for a very long time.

Return to Splendour

The horrors ended when Voyabi arose from centuries of contemplation under the tutelage of the Blue Dragon and transformed himself into the War Dragon. He went to the Winter Heaven, where the gods and god-Emperors had hidden themselves from Sekever. He shone new insight into the hearts of the gods, which had been infected by Sekever's furious despair. Released from inner bondage, they returned to fight:

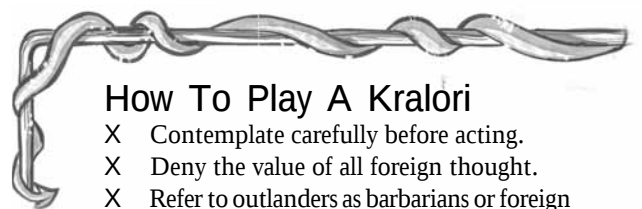
Daruda brought true dragon wisdom back to the people.

Thalurzni drove the Gang of Four into the Kingdom of Ignorance, returning balance to the elements.

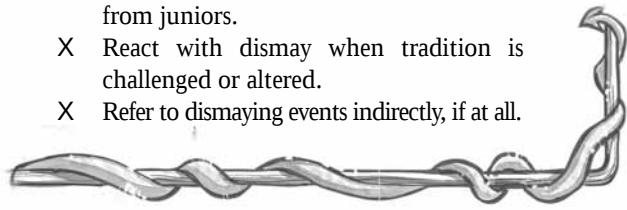
Voyabi mustered armies, scoured Kralorela of Sekever's forces and entered into personal combat with the enemy, dragon versus anti-dragon. The dragon won and then ascended.

The Emperor Mikaday saw that Sekever had burned all the law books and rewrote them from memory. Mikaday ascended, making way for Vashanti, whose practical wisdom matched Mikaday's theoretical weight.

The Emperor Vashanti completed their victory by weaving together the broken elements of governance. When he



How To Play A Kralori

- X Contemplate carefully before acting.
 - X Deny the value of all foreign thought.
 - X Refer to outlanders as barbarians or foreign devils. All of them are barbarians, even if they come from cities larger than yours.
 - X Speak in poetic aphorisms.
 - X Defer to rightful authority.
 - X Give respect to elders; expect respect from juniors.
 - X React with dismay when tradition is challenged or altered.
 - X Refer to dismaying events indirectly, if at all.
- 

completed the last of the banners necessary to proclaim the return of splendour, Metsyla returned to the sky. Vashanti ascended. What the foreign devils call history began.

My History

The first and only rightful Emperor of post-Time Kralorela is Yanoor, whose inner light shines from his throne like a mirror reflecting Metsyla. He rules at the dawn, wisely putting into practice the precepts of society laid down by Mikaday and Vashanti. A new Age of Splendour begins. So successful is Yanoor's early reign that historians are left with little to write about. No greater tribute can be paid to a leader than to say that the Kralori are dull and contented. A hundred spiritual schools flourish, each seeking draconic transcendence in its own way.

In 350, Yanoor's state of meditation on the Dragon's Eye reaches such a state of sublime insight that the sun halts in the sky, waiting for his conclusion. Foreigners say this had something to do with the creation of a barbarian devil-god but naturally this is nonsense.

The next four centuries are occasionally marred by invasions and civil disturbances, which Yanoor always settles with serenity and only the precise degree of force required. These include periodic incursions from Vormain and Teshnos.

From 727 onwards we are subjected to the depredations of the foul-smelling One God Believers. They call themselves the God Learners but their invading freebooters and exploitative traders do little that is godly, even by low standards of foreign dogs. They set up coastal outposts in our land, as if it is theirs. Every time their settlements are destroyed by imperial forces, they come back in greater numbers, with stronger magics.

From 739 to 741, they come each spring to bombard our coasts with green fire from their humming ships. Yanoor responds by writing a banner refuting their Six Effronteries. Festivals of celebration are held to note this triumph. The God Learner outposts continue their infiltration unmolested.

In the year 762 the first whisperings of a dangerous new cult circulate through the southern part of our land. The Darudic monk ShangHsa fails to achieve contact with the Cosmic Dragon, distracted by the frenzied whisperings of the masses. So, aided by the foreign devil Cham Dao (called Gillam D'estau in his own unspeakable tongue) he designs a new, wrong course of dragon mysticism allowing quick progression from novice to master. Its practitioners assume the outward features of dragons but irreversibly cripple their true spiritual progress.

The cult rapidly spreads. Followers of the Mikaday school, then the dread Bodkartu Society, fight its growth but are overwhelmed. The common man loses his bearings and seeks easy dragon transcendence. By 766 the Immanent Masters deploy armies of draconised fighters near the cities of Wah Hua and Sha Ming.

ShangHsa marches on the forbidden palace in 768 and murders Yanoor. Thousands of good people commit suicide to express their distress. The officials of his beheaded government flee to the benighted Kingdom of Ignorance. ShangHsa becomes false Emperor two years later.

In 862, a God Learner ally, the Ogre King, uses his Legion of Red Bones to conquer the metropolis of Chang Tsai. ShangHsa initially objects and sends forces to expel this mercenary marauder from the municipal palace. Dark intrigues by the accursed one's western masters allow the ogre to remain in place. Chang Tsai earns its grim nickname as Cannibal City.

Two years ago, in the Fire Season of 906, a string of poison murders fells nearly a dozen of ShangHsa's foreign conspirators. He announces reprisals, first against the presumed killers, the Bodkartu Society and later against all sages who oppose him. He invades monasteries and private libraries throughout the kingdom. All books and scrolls, no matter how ancient, recording any dragon path other than his own, are piled up and burned. The outrages continue...

My Life

An outsider might think that little has changed in Kralorela since superior men were forced to flee to the Kingdom of Ignorance. We who know our land can see the fault lines form, like cracks which mar and will eventually destroy a vase of sublime beauty.

When we ruled, everyone understood that individualism is an empty and dangerous creed. Social harmony was blessed; personal fulfilment, a disruptive illusion. Foreigners were held at arm's length. Leaders sought to establish their refinement, manners and subtlety.

Now the School of Immanent Mastery preaches base, outward fulfilment through the deceptively quick attainment of magical power. Spiritually untrained men and women, flush with draconic powers they do not understand, fight for personal glory. The humble have become avaricious. Riots break out at the slightest provocation. Persons are elevated to high position by caprice or on the demonstration of new dragon powers. They vie with one another to show who among them is the greediest, mightiest and most brutal.

The Empire still has 15 provinces, whose institutions are still ruled over by officials called Xia Ko, or exarchs. True exarchs have spiritually progressed to dragon status but rarely manifest as such, as it retards their transcendence. ShangHsa's so-called exarchs are his false dragon masters, who parade around in their reptilian hides. Some are, unbelievable as it is, foul foreigners!

A well-ordered society maintains itself as follows. Exarchs guide the wisdom of mandarins, the sages of peace who rise to administer public offices by passing the ancient exams handed down by Daruda himself. Martial artists, the sages of conflict, protect us from our enemies. Patricians own land or large urban businesses but are too unwise to rule. Beneath them are the peasants and workers, and then the soldiers who man our army. At the lowest level are delinquents. Anyone else is outside the system, from the beast men of the hills, to devils, to foreigners.

Now Immanent Masters pose as exarchs, anybody can be anything, all as ShangHsa and his dog Cham Dao decree.

My Magic

Our magic is mystical. It comes from long contemplation of the true dragon secrets. Inner transformation begets outer transmutation. Those of greatest accomplishment are least likely to show base outward manifestations, as these tie them to the falseness of the world. Immanent Mastery falls into precisely this trap. It is mysticism practiced with the impatience and materialism of a foreign devil. All other magic is foreign and thus unworthy of contemplation.

Why I Adventure

A wise man does not adventure. A good servant of Kralorela may selflessly struggle to defeat enemies or gain wealth or information of benefit to all of society. Troublemakers and

rebels use their abilities for personal aggrandisement, seeking status in the world of martial arts.

ORLANTHI

I am of the Storm Tribe. I follow Orlanth, God of Kings. He is the storm who shelters me from foes, striking them down with electric bolts from a blackened sky. I follow Ernalda, Queen of the Earth. She fattens our cattle, strengthens our grain and makes our children grow up strong and bold.

We fight as Orlanth did, against sterile authority, against the forces of Chaos, against those who would steal our freedom. We delight in the stories of his victories. Yet it is in the tales of his failures, his overreaching, that the true measure of a man is found. Anybody can win all the time. Greatness is tested when you act foolishly and ruin things, and then must make matters right.



My Myths

Creation: Orlanth was not the first god. There were many others before him. First came the goddess Glorantha. She birthed other gods, who are big and distant. These early, rigid gods made up the Celestial Court. Then came another generation

of gods, including Yelm the Emperor. The distant gods made a range of perfect plants, animals and people. The Young Gods made copies of them and they populated the world we know. The first person like us was Grandfather Mortal. Orlanth did not make him, either. He did not exist yet.

Umath, Father of Orlanth: Into the peaceful but stifling world came Umath, the first storm, his entrance announced by thunder and hailstorms. He went to pay respects to Emperor Yelm, who dismissed him like he was nothing, because he did not fit the rules they had back then. So Umath seized divine territory for himself and jealous Yelm did not like this. When he invented the laws of hospitality, which we still use today, Yelm said his rules bound kings as well as men and were therefore out of order. Even when Umath saved the gods from destruction by the first enemies, the Predark Demons, Yelm turned up his nose. Umath fought the enemies until he was tired and wounded, and finally fell.

Orlanth the Hero: Umath's five sons took over the fight for him. The youngest and cleverest of these was Orlanth. Other gods attacked them but they won, and Orlanth made them stronger by forging them into a ring, like the ring of elders that runs our tribes today.

Orlanth Challenges Yelm: Orlanth wanted his position recognised, as any hero would and so went to Yelm and challenged him to a series of contests. They danced, performed magic and played music. Each time Yelm did the old boring thing, as his rules required. Orlanth was fresh and innovative each time. He did a war-whoop, unveiled the magic of change and played on a new instrument. The old gods hated these new things and blindly awarded the challenge to Yelm each time.

The final contest was of weapons and now Orlanth was angry. So he accepted a sword from the crazy trickster, Eurmal, who can be useful but always in a troublesome way. This sword was a new thing called Death and when Orlanth struck Yelm with it, Yelm died. And then the sun went out.

The Storm Age: As the name suggests, this time was good for our people. The skies were always grey and stormy. Instead of imperious Yelm, the sky was lit by Elmal, a brave hero from the Emperor's Fire Tribe who pledged unbounded loyalty to Orlanth. At this time Orlanth and the other heroic gods of his tribe had many big adventures. He slew a dragon, Aroka, ending a drought by pulling the rain god, Heler, from its gullet. He tussled with gods of all kinds, from elf gods to dwarf gods to troll gods. And of course he won against all of them.

Most importantly, Orlanth rescued the beautiful Ernalda from the Emperor's palace, where she had been imprisoned. Yes, this sounds like it takes place before Yelm was slain. Remember that Time did not exist then, allowing the stories to jumble

together. Do not worry about this. It means that each story tells the right lesson without getting sidetracked by unneeded detail. This is the difference between a myth and an ordinary tale you tell down at the ale-house.

Anyway, Ernalda tested Orlanth, giving him many tasks. He passed them all but most of all he had to learn her lesson. His lesson was: 'Violence is always an option'. Hers was: 'There is always another way'. Together these make up the two big rules of Orlanthi life. Peace and war exist in harmony and each is only used when it should be.

Armed with this knowledge, Orlanth learned to make justice. And he and Ernalda made babies, starting with Barntar, god of farmers.

The Great Darkness: One awful day, the Storm Age gave way to the Age of Horror, the Great Darkness. Orlanth led the fight against the corrupt gods of Chaos, especially Wakboth the Devil. Even though he was never beaten, they slowly destroyed everything. They killed Ernalda and Barntar and the grain goddesses and the animal mothers. Everybody starved. The world nearly died.

The Lightbringer's Quest: This would not stand, so Orlanth entered the Underworld to bring Ernalda back. He accepted gifts from his surviving thanes, to help him on his quest. Heler the rain god gave him weapons and armour. Elmal the Loyal Sun gave him a fiery mirrored shield, to light his way. Mastakos the speeding god gave him a chariot.

He journeyed for a long time. He met friends, like Lhankor Mhy the Knowing God and his friendly rival, Issaries, the silver-tongued Talking God. He fought many terrible foes along the way. More allies joined him: Chalana Arroy, the healer and Flesh Man, a mortal who had been driven mad by all the death he had seen. When they found Eurmial the trickster in trouble, Flesh Man begged Orlanth to save him, which he did, reluctantly. This turned the tide, because the trickster could lead them where they needed to go. Finally they met Ginna Jar, and if you know who she is, you are privy to an eternal mystery and should not tell the God Learners about it.

They journeyed across the world, where the sorcerers and immortals were, and then descended into the land of the dead. They wandered for a long time there, until unreliable Eurmial guided them to the Hall of the Dead, where Ernalda and Humakt and Barntar and all the others were. There was Yelm, also. And Orlanth saw what he had to do. He had to atone for what he had done and save the Bright Emperor, too. They tested each other again and finally were reconciled.

Their new cooperation spawned the last rightful god ever to be born, Arachne Solara, the spider. She wove a net, which was the Great Compromise. It started Time and separated gods from mortals.

The Great Darkness was ended. Orlanth saved the world.

Foreign Gods

Orlanthi recognise the existence of gods other than their own. Those who follow them are not deluded, though they may harbour false beliefs about the Storm Tribe gods and how they fit into the pre-Time stories as they really happened. Certain Orlanthi gods are considered defectors from other pantheons: Elmal came from the Fire Tribe and Heler from the Water Tribe.

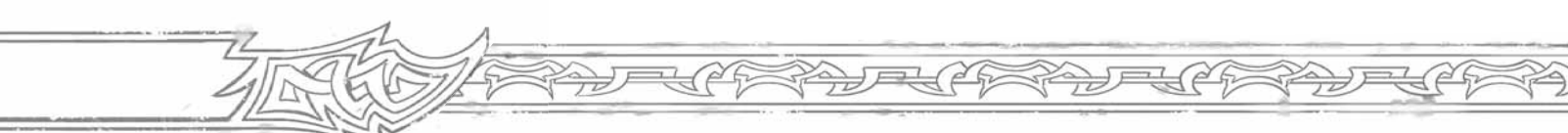
The gods of many other cultures appear in Orlanthi mythology, often as enemies or adversaries of the Storm King himself. They include: the Uz warrior god **Zorak Zoran**, known to the Orlanthi as the God of Hate; the elf mother spirit **Aldyra**, personified as a primal forest goddess; **Dayzatar**, the sky god, high priest of the Fire Tribe; **Lodril**, the consuming volcano god of the Fire Tribe; **Magasta**, hostile king of the Water Tribe and the werewolf god, **Telmor**.

Other enemy gods are specific to Orlanthi mythology. These include **Daga**, god of drought, as well as the Unholy Trio of malign deities: **Mallia**, goddess of disease, **Ragnaglar**, god of evil and **Thed**, goddess of rape.

My History

Orlanthi took an important role in the unity battles that drove off Chaos when the world began, including the decisive one called I Fought We Won, fought near Dragon Pass.

Our people took part in the First Council. We were called the Theyalans then. We took the lessons Orlanth had given us and went out into the world looking for people still suffering the effects of the Darkness. We taught them the skills they had lost. They learned to plant and to raise herds. Also we told them of our Orlanth stories and these were embraced. The weak gods who had failed to help them were discarded.



Orlanthi have always taken risks and created new things. So, to our shame, many of us participated in the creation of the riddling god, Nysalor, who turned out to be Gbaji, a Chaos god in disguise. So then the Orlantheni who had not been driven mad by his strange worship rose up and fought him.

Arkat, the hero who destroyed Gbaji, was an Orlantheni, too, sort of. He accumulated power by joining one cult, then another, changing his identity each time. He was like the God Learners in that way and it is no surprise that their blasphemous raiding of the divine realms is based on his secrets. As wrong as he was, he was for some time a follower of Orlanthen's brother, Humakt. Also he was helped considerably by a great hero of our people, a man named Harmast, who was the first to complete the entire Lightbringer's Journey as a HeroQuest. As such we can take credit for the destruction of Gbaji, whenever the time for a boasting contest comes.

Again our love of innovation proved our undoing in the Second Age, when good people were beguiled by the dragon and worshipped an imaginary god called Orlanthen the Dragon. Those who spoke up were killed or driven off.

We will bring down both the God Learners, who loot our myths like we raid each other's cattle, and the wyrmtalkers, who think that you can worship anything, even a crawling snake, so long as you call it Orlanthen. We are not just people who make new things. We are a people who fight for what is right.

My Life

Traditional Orlantheni life occurs in good grazing land, where it is possible to do a little planting, too. We herd cattle and sheep. We raise horses and consider them a precious commodity. We harvest grains, the exact varieties depending on local conditions. Wheat and barley are best but in some places we have to settle for wilder grasses. We supplement our larders with game and forage.

We organise ourselves into bloodlines, then clans, then tribes, then kingdoms. Of these associations the most important is the clan. Clans control their own pieces of territory. They are governed by chiefs, who may be male or female. Each chief appoints a ring, a council of seven worthies who provide advice. Wisely chosen rings are balanced between worshippers of the various Orlantheni deities, so that their counsel draws on life's many spheres.

You can tell much about a clan from the nature of its ring. A ring filled with priestesses of grain and cattle seeks prosperity, valuing a full belly above all else. These are called peace clans. One staffed by warriors seeks success through tribute and conquest and are known as war clans. Most clans seek

a middle ground. If a ring includes a follower of the crazy outlaw trickster god, Eurmál, count on its magic to be both potent and unpredictable.

Though we worship gods, we gain knowledge and power from spirits, too. The most important is our clan spirit, the wyter. We also revere our ancestors and gain magic when we honour them by behaving as they did, back when the clan was founded. For this reason older clans therefore have more powerful magic, including folk magic, than newer ones.

Each clan is made up of a half dozen to several dozen bloodlines, households of close blood relatives. In most places they live together in large single-room houses called steads.

A tribe is a group of clans gathered together for mutual prosperity and protection. Tribal leaders are called kings and are advised by tribal rings. They settle disputes between clans in a judicial process called a moot. Clans of the same tribe do not go to war against each other — not unless they want to break up the tribe.

When Orlantheni are not battling foreigners or crazy oppressors, we fight each other. We fortify our lands against our neighbours' raids and arm ourselves to conduct raids of our own. Raiding for cattle is not considered warfare; it is a normal way of life. Orlanthen was a thief before he was a king and ordains that clans who cannot protect their cattle deserve to lose them to cleverer, bolder neighbours.

The number of warriors a clan can field is called its fyrd. This includes all able-bodied individuals, not just its great heroes and war priests.

Serious wars can break out between clans, usually as a result of feuds. We are a people of honour. If a person allows insults or injuries to go unchallenged, he shames not only himself but his family too. Though it is possible to make peace and lay feuds to rest, often with the payment of gifts, many of us prefer to solve them with Orlanthen's favoured tool, violence. We go out and do harm to the one who wronged us, or one of his bloodline or clan. This can escalate, because these acts of redress are themselves subject to reprisal. It is a woman's duty to remind men of their honour and to encourage the shedding of blood for it.

Unlike other people, like the arrogant Dara Happans, we know that men and women are equally important. Men fight and women egg them on. Women attend to the fertility of the land and the safety of children and men protect them. We allow people to make exceptions for themselves. If a man wants to devote himself to fertility magic, he can do it. He worships Nandan, the housekeeper god. Women drawn to the sword and spear devote themselves to the martial goddesses.

These include Vinga, Orlanth's red-headed daughter; Maran Gor, mother of earthquakes and the dread axe avenger Babeester Gor.

The Imperial Age is a time of travels and of prosperous cities. Many of our brothers have left their clan lands to live in those cities or traverse the world in search of fortune and trouble.

City Orlanthi still value their clans. Assuming they have not been outlawed, they return to their ancestral lands when they can. Most go at Sacred Time, to participate in ceremonies and renew their ancestral connections.

All of us hold generosity as a cardinal virtue. City Orlanthi show their generosity by bringing home gifts of silver and trade goods. Their welcoming brothers cannot be outdone and shower them with food, ale and the other signs of hospitality, even when they cannot afford it.

In the hill country, the word of chief and ring governs the behaviour of individuals. They maintain little practical influence over their citified brethren. A city Orlanthi must answer to the local authorities, who may also be of the Storm Faith, but it is not the same. They must find their own way, like Orlanth did when he was free and journeying. Old clan rivalries fall away in the city. It is better to embrace a fellow Orlanthi, even if he hails from the hated Blue Deer clan, than to trust a foreign sorcerer or dragon mystic. In the towns we must restrain our sense of honour. Foreigners cannot take away our honour, because they have none of their own. So while you can threaten to strike them with your sword, which is often a satisfying thing to do, such actions occur by choice, not obligation.

After generations in the city, ties to the old clans may fade. Cityfolk of the same tribe associate together in organisations called far-halls. Each maintains a drinking house, often reminiscent of a homeland clan hall. Members of a far-hall help each other out with business connections, knowledge, magic and, most importantly, comradeship. None of these gifts, however worthwhile, substitutes for the guidance provided by a chief and ring or the soulful feeling of solidarity with one's ancestors.

Orlanth has always brought in strays and exiles and, when they proved their value, given them full status in his tribe. Heler brought the rain from the Water Tribe. Elmal was once a member of the enemy Fire Tribe. Even Ernalda was of another people, that of the Earth. For this reason converts to Orlanth and Ernalda are always accepted. Without ancestors to lend them magic, their path may be difficult. Yet Orlanth himself always made it up as he went along and for us it is more

important to have the storm in your heart than to follow a list of musty old rules. These days, though, you have to be careful that a convert is sincere before sharing your rituals and secrets. He might just be a God Learner agent trying to swindle you out of your clan's obscure myths. We Orlanthi have another word for 'blind faith' – we call it stupidity.

Adventurers like Orlanthi gods because they were wayfarers and therefore grant powers useful to mercenaries, freebooters and fortune seekers. It is not insincere to join us for these reasons. It means that thunder beats in your chest and that your feet are as restless as those of our god.

My Magic

Like anyone, we can practice Common Magic. We know it as a gift from Orlanth. Anyone who says otherwise is just fooling himself. You gain it by going out and raiding for it, so it must be from him.

Our truly powerful magics are divine, gained in the theist way.

We get a little bit of magic from spirits, that benefits a clan but is not much use to individual warriors or adventurers. Clans draw on their wyter spirits and their ancestors. Also, one of Orlanth's brothers, Kolat, is master of wind spirits. An Orlanthi who walks his path is a shaman, not a priest.

Sorcery is very evil. Wizards will tell you that not all of them are God Learners, who seek to cut off the connections between us and our deities. Do not believe them. Better to distrust all of them than to be fooled by a single one.

If you asked a Dawn Age Orlanthi about mysticism, he would shrug his shoulders and wonder what you were talking about. Now we have learned to hate this word and all it stands for, because it is what the wyrmfriends use to suppress and pervert our worship. Gbaji, the Chaos god that walked the earth and called itself Nysalor, also had suspiciously mystical qualities. Mystics of other traditions may be acceptable but why risk contaminating yourself?

Why I Adventure

Orlanth went out into the world to take what riches awaited him, so we do it, too. Treasure is a good thing, especially when it benefits the community. The same holds true for magical abilities. Many of his Storm Tribe companions also went out to face the dangers of the world, making it a better place. So by hitting the adventurer's trail, we emulate the divine actions of our gods.

Draconised Orlanthi

Draconised Orlanthi will tell you that the extreme distrust and loathing their traditional brothers feel for them is entirely misplaced. The EWF does not stop you from being Orlanthi. It merely adds new revelations to pre-existing belief. Draconised Orlanthi still derive their powers from Orlanth, Ernalda and all the rest, in the old-fashioned theist way. They even tell the same myths — just with the previously hidden dragon elements pointed out. It is simply a matter of interpretation. Orlanth and Ernalda are reflections of the universal dragon and give their power to us so they can complete its earthly representation. Mystic revelation brings you closer to your gods, because they are part of the dragon. And that allows you to access not only the overt powers granted by the gods but their esoteric draconic gifts, too.

It is certainly true that the power one would normally give to the ancestors or clan wyter is instead gifted to the Great Project. There is no shame in this, the wyrmfriends say. Good followers of Orlanth the Dragon understand the need to donate energy to the project. Old-way worship is nothing but a mystic form of tax evasion. It selfishly keeps power that should go to the Great Dragon, diverting it to the wyter and ancestors.

And that is the only real difference, which is scarcely worth all this fuss and rebellion. Or so the dragon Orlanthi say.



My Myths

Through recent scholarship we have refined our knowledge of prehistory, breaking it into the following eras.

The First Action: Creation

The Invisible God is everything and has always existed. Before there was logic, or anything that we mortals could understand, the Invisible God existed in an ineffable state of One Mind. When One Mind perceived everything, everything came into being. Thus occurred the act of Primal Creation that began the world as we know it. The act of creating everything transformed the Invisible God into a new state of being. God became Malkion, an entity mortals can perceive and relate to. During the First Action, He was Malkion the Creator.

Then He had to transform himself again, to give shape and regularity to His creation. So He became Malkion the Law.

Malkion the Law made space, to contain the world. Then He placed necessary limits on it, writing the physical rules that make life consistent from one day to the next. Thanks to

MALKIONI

We Malkioni worship the Invisible God. All other gods are false. We believe in logic and scholarship; these are the tools he gave us to make our way in a hostile world. The false gods hook their benighted followers on improper worship by doling out spells and charms. The Invisible God is not so vulgar. With the discipline of logic, we can figure out magic for ourselves. By applying its precepts, along with the divine principles outlined in the *Abiding Book*, we can govern all aspects of our daily lives in the correct and holy manner.

these rules, water is always wet, air is consistently breathable, and objects fall down, not in a random direction, when we drop them. He made lifeless matter into useful shapes. He took formless energy and transformed it into the animating principles behind existence.

The Second Action: Manifestation and Perception

By mixing His pure thought form with shapes and principles, Malkion remade himself again, into Malkion the Seer. He left his Palace of Intellect, perceiving the world, altering it through his perceptions. Thus were the abstract shapes, principles and runes translated into concrete forms. First He made the elements: Earth, then the Sun, then Water and Air. His thoughts became the Power Runes: Harmony, Disorder, Fertility, Death, Stasis, Movement, Truth and Illusion. His presence became the Form Runes: Plant, Beast, Man and Spirit (later Form Runes were a corruption of His original, like Chaos, or are not really Form Runes at all, like the foolish Dragonewt rune).

The Third Action: Multiplication and Identification

The Forms and Powers mixed. Beasts and plants appeared and flourished. The original animal was a unicorn; the primal plant was a tree with roots spreading invisibly throughout the world, in emulation of the breath of God.

The First People were created. These were the original Malkioni. At first everyone was a Malkioni. However some were not content or worshipful. They used Malkion's logic in a perverted way, seizing the runes for themselves. First they only claimed they created the runes. Later they said they were the runes. These rebels became the first of many False Gods. They built their own home in imitation of Malkion's palace. Some people went with them. Most stayed to worship Malkion properly, worrying little about the False Gods. One who remained true to Malkion but fought their power was the mighty sorcerer Zzabur the Sage. He studied them and wrote their secrets in a bronze book.

Zzabur established the Kingdom of Logic, to protect his followers from contamination by the False Gods. All that remains of it today is the island of Brithos, where Zzabur slumbers in his tower.

The Fourth Action: Duplication and Preservation

Malkion could no longer stand still as the false gods deluded good people with fraudulent worship. So He left his refuge, now called the Castle of Logic, and in so doing invented Reason, a new way of understanding the world. He would use

this to convince the gods of their falsity and bring them back to honour him.

Reason changed everything, making the world more complicated. Peoples split off from one another. They divided themselves into Us and Them. Elder races became distinct from ordinary humans. It is in the Fourth Action era that the cultures we recognise today began to form.

Malkion went to each of these peoples to inform them of the truth. The good peoples welcomed his new revelations and reformed themselves as he demanded. Each culture retains its own story of this glorious day. The bad, ignorant and wilful peoples remained mired in false god worship.

Those who accepted Malkion as their prophet were given his holy social order. He divided his peoples into commoners, soldiers and leaders. This period is the same as the Golden Age recognised by theists. The land of the Malkioni Golden Age is called Danmalastan.

Then a Great Error arose among the people who worshipped Malkion. It was so bad that we are no longer sure what it was. It may have been an act of physical immorality or a selfish way of thinking. Our scholars are hard at work finding out what it was. Rediscovery of this essential truth will doubtless increase the potency of God Learner magic.

At any rate, the Great Error, whatever it was, led to the next, disastrous era.

The Fifth Action Era: Decay and Doom

As the effects of the Error radiated through Danmalastan, life grew increasingly worse for the good people. They were attacked by their foes. False gods fought each other but also invaded Danmalastan. Devils were born and haunted the land.

To prove He was the only god, Malkion did what no false god could do. He made himself a man. He walked among the people, healing and giving guidance and providing concrete proof of his superior divinity. At this time he was called Old Malkion, or Malkion the Man.

Then Malkion was murdered. There are many stories explaining how. The version in the most reliable source, the *Abiding Book* is maddeningly cryptic, saying only that he was torn apart by enemy gods, including Zzabur. We Justeli scholars have concluded that the more detailed truth is as follows:

Old Malkion was killed not by the purposeful actions of his foes but an unforgivable transgression on the part of his friends. His followers Vadel and Zzabur travelled with him one day, urging him to settle an argument. Vadel said that the false gods existed to serve

the good people and should have their energies extracted from them. Zzabur said that only his methods for extracting obedience from the false gods could be deemed theologically correct and that all others would lead inevitably to corruption. The two proud demigods could not constrain their dispute and rather than wait for fragile Old Malkion to tell them what was true, they fought. Vadel used energies he'd tapped from the gods, while Zzabur summoned several of their number to wage his battle for him. Zzabur tossed a stray bolt of Blue Perdition, which struck Malkion the Man, wounding him. The other enemy gods seized their opportunity and broke away from Zzabur, tearing Malkion to pieces.

Vadel was so horrified by the sight of Malkion's death that he went mad and turned to torture and evil. Zzabur was shameless. He picked up Malkion's mantle and wore it, saying that His death was right and necessary. Malkion had to die, so that Death could come into the world, allowing the completion of creation.

The death of Malkion brought on the Great Darkness. Zzabur, his murderer, led the fight for Danmalastan. He fought false gods. He fought against other Malkioni, who split off from each other and blamed each other for Old Malkion's murder. Mad Vadel turned his people to organised depravity. Floods buffeted Danmalastan. The grinding glacier Valind came from the north to crush it.

Zzabur proved the supremacy of Sorcery over divine power. He humbled gods, beating them in tests and battles. He motivated the supporters of the sun god, Ehilm, to slay their own master. The world got darker then but this was a necessary step to bring about an eventual return to light. Zzabur destroyed the Devil and exiled the wind god, Worlath, to the Ultimate Resting Place. He sank the lands of Vadel's depraved people.

Finally he ended what he started, atoning in part for his careless murder of Old Malkion. He gathered with all the world's puissant sorcerers to work a ritual of unprecedented scope. Even practitioners of other magics, from cultures that were usually enemies, contributed support from afar. This ritual ended the Ice Age, bringing a Tamed Sun back to the sky. Thus the Dawn Age began.

My History

At the Dawn, worship of Malkion is still not right. The Brithini, led by Zzabur, insist on a sterile, uncompromising worship which exists mainly to extract obedience from people. 'All men must stay in their places' is the chief rule of Zzaburism. Most everybody else has fallen into the sin of henotheism.

Prince Hrestol

A year after the First Dawn, Hrestol, heir to the first Seshnelan king, experiences a religious vision. He encounters an angel called Ferbrith, who reveals Joy and Solace to him. Joy is a momentary contact with the divine, as he is now experiencing. Solace is the permanent version of this, which occurs after

death. The souls of good Malkioni go to Solace, where they reside forever in bliss. It is impossible for the living to contact those who reside there but it is eternal, an ultimate reward for a life lived without sin.

Armed with this truth, Hrestol renounces his claims to the throne to become a missionary. He and his converts travel through the west, spreading news of Solace. They demonstrate this with the Joy Touch, a worship technique allowing them to initiate momentary Joy in congregants. His new personalised version of the faith wins out against both henotheism and harsh Zzabur-style belief. Hrestol acknowledges the reality of saints, heroes of Malkionism who can provide aid when petitioned with prayer. He also creates a new caste, the knight, which combines elements of the warrior and the leader. An offended Zzabur has him murdered in the year 33.

The Hrestoli doctrine's emphasis on personal revelation allows its adherents to go off in a hundred different directions in the wake of his martyrdom. Within generations, countless sects have sprung up, each with its own idiosyncratic dogmas.

The Sunstop, Gbaji and Arkat

In the late fourth century, the false god worshippers try to upset the balance of power between pagans and believers, by creating a new earthly god, Nysalor. The sorcerers of the West band together for a demonstration of power, stopping Ehilm the Sun God in the sky. This seemingly cows the pagans. But not long afterwards, they create a chaotic god, Gbaji, to wreak vengeance. Much of the West converts to Gbajism. Arkat, at first a good Malkioni, fights the Gbaji heresies but later damns himself by converting to paganism and even trollishness. Still, his HeroQuesting experiments are interesting and worth emulating, albeit in a holier manner.

The Abiding Book

In the late 640s, Jrustela is a hotbed of sectarian dispute. Since the revelations of Prince Hrestol at the beginning of the Dawn Age, a multiplicity of Malkioni faiths, many of them contradictory, have sprung up. A scholarly conference in the city of Erandinthanos, meant to reconcile various offshoots and heresies instead provokes sectarian violence when an image of Saint Dromol is supposedly desecrated. Bloodshed follows, as factions fight in the streets to defend the truth of their own theologies. With tensions reaching a fever pitch, the Second Erandinthanos Conference is held in 646.

The most controversial of these unreconciled faiths is that of the visionary priest Serozos. He claims to have contacted an entity called Makan, reaching him through extended prayer. This turns out to be an expression of the One God. Serozos introduces a practice called veneration, in which ordinary worshippers give their energy to God via their priests, in an organised ceremony.

Sorcery Schools of the Dawn Age

The now-dominant God Learner schools arose from several branches of Sorcery practiced during the Dawn Age. All of these schools are still extant, though they have been eclipsed by the wielders of RuneQuest Sight. Many hew to the harsh Zzaburite code, denying the innovations of Hrestol and the truth of the *Abiding Book*.

The **Debaldans** are masters of water magic. Their school is unaffiliated with any church and arose with the Waertagi. As associates of the vanquished sea people, they are in retreat. Rumours suggest that they are up to something big.

The **Telendarians** learn spells assisting them in exploration. As masters of territorial expansion, they are one of the few old schools to prosper in the new Empire.

Fearsome on the battlefield, sorcerers of the **Barmalan** school practice combat magic. To retain their powers they must avoid impurities, especially contact with spilled blood, including their own. They wreath themselves in veils of force to prevent contamination.

Also invaluable during warfare, the **Furlandan** school derives its power from the domination of spirits, especially those that lend combat magic.

Other schools include the **Zendamalthans**, who work Sorcery through application of pure will, gaining formidable mental powers; the **Ekozite** school of Alchemists; the **Malvonians**, who specialise in defensive magics and the **Orgethite** air magicians.

It does not supersede the obedience of Zzabur or the personal quest for Solace of Hrestol but adds to it. The Dolphin Guild, a local conference of sorcerers, captures Serozos. After trying and failing to break him with torture and interrogation spells, the guild drags him before the Second Erandinthanos Conference to answer to the theologians there.

Conference attendees, later celebrated as the Church Witnesses, look on as a hand materialises from nowhere. A pen appears in the hand. The command 'Write' is issued by a disembodied voice. At a pace both feverish and stately, on indestructible paper, the hand proceeds to write the entirety of the *Abiding Book*. This is the guiding volume of the Malkioni people, telling them how to live, how to worship and what to believe. It reconciles heresies and separates truth from false conjecture.

Return to Rightness

Top members of the Dolphin Guild prostrate themselves at Serozos' feet. His doctrine has been objectively proven. Now that it is no longer a heresy but a rediscovered form of Fourth Action worship, they resolve to assist in spreading it wherever Malkioni dwell in lamentable ignorance. The Dolphin Guild restyles itself the Rightness Army, the spearhead of the Return to Rightness movement. In tandem with the God Learners, many of whom are also members of the former Dolphin Guild, they spread both the Malkioni new orthodoxy and God Learner magic, building an Empire in the process.

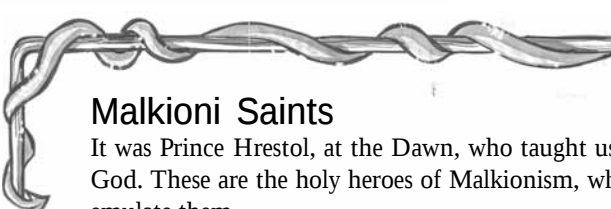
My Life

The demands of Empire have taken us far away from our caste-bound roots. In our hearts, we still believe in the social order as laid down by Malkion the Seer in the Fourth Action. To be practical, we must acknowledge the need for many other classes of people, if we are to retain the prosperity we have won for ourselves over the last centuries. The God Learners have taught us that flexibility is a virtue, even in the spreading of an omnipresent and infallible faith.

Most people are still commoners working on farms. They toil on plots of land belonging to the nobility. Agreements of indenture bind them to their land. They must provide specified amounts of produce to their lords. After that, they may keep what is left. In turn the landlords must provide for their security and fairly administer the law. Commoners may be pressed to fight in militias, though more often they face extra taxes in times of war, to pay for knights and mercenaries.

The cities are full of commoners, too. They toil in their own way. Some are menial labourers. Others fill their purses as practitioners of specialised professions. They are artisans, craftsmen and officials.

In these times of unprecedented opportunity, ambitious commoners can rise quickly to prominence as traders. Members of the great trading houses, especially those of Jrustela, may now be wealthier and more influential than nobles. Those who wish to attend the Emperor at court in Seshnela must



Malkioni Saints

It was Prince Hrestol, at the Dawn, who taught us to pray to saints, who intercede on our behalf with the Invisible God. These are the holy heroes of Malkionism, whose deeds grant us magic, if we possess the grace and fortitude to emulate them.

St. Gerlant, the Flame King: Contrary to what the pagans say, it was not the accursed Arkat but the holy warrior Saint Gerlant who slew the Chaos god, Gbaji the Deceiver. Gerlant and Arkat fought side-by-side until Arkat fell into error. Gerlant's followers wield flaming swords and cast spells that thwart Chaos and pagan magic.

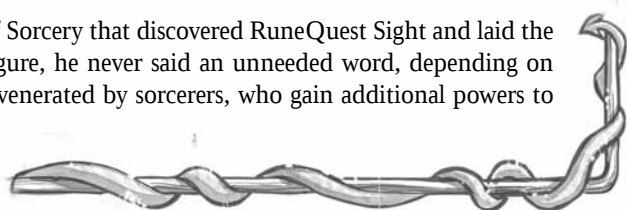
St. Talor the Mad: In Fronela, the forces of Gbaji were hewn down by the Laughing Warrior, Talor. A sensitive soul buffeted by the brutality of war, Talor lost his sanity, so that he cried at happy times and wept joyful tears in the face of death. Warriors who accept his patronage move about the battlefield in sudden, surprising ways. Laughing like their crazy saint, they are useful but dangerous friends.

St. Xemela the Healer: When Prince Hrestol shucked off his earthly responsibilities to spread the word of Solace, his gracious mother dedicated her life to holy pursuits. She sacrificed her own life and soul to save her people from a plague known as the Black Swelling. Afterwards she was redeemed and carried to Solace by Hrestol. Her followers practice prodigious healing magic.

St. Serozos, the Revealer: The Justeli scholar Serozos discovered veneration and withstood torture. His display of faith prompted the manifestation of the *Abiding Book*. He is the patron saint of scholars, sages, theologians and librarians, providing gifts of knowledge and holy perception.

St. Volanc the Righteous: Volanc headed the Dolphin Guild and was Serozos' primary tormentor, prior to the appearance of the *Abiding Book*. Subsequent to this, he was a changed man and founded the Rightness Army, to bring the newly revealed word to Malkioni everywhere. Volanc's followers are missionaries, inquisitors and holy warriors. His magics reveal virtue, smite sinners and expose heretics.

St. Hwaros the Bender: Hwaros founded the Justeli school of Sorcery that discovered RuneQuest Sight and laid the foundation for God Learnerism. An ascetic, close-mouthed figure, he never said an unneeded word, depending on curt hand gestures for the bulk of his communications. He is venerated by sorcerers, who gain additional powers to manipulate theist magic.



recognise that they are nothing without ties to an ancient title. They gain these through intermarriage, wedding their children to the scions of impoverished nobility.

It used to be that sorcerers came exclusively from the noble classes but God Learner schools welcome anyone educated enough to demonstrate promise as a student. As plunder of the Hero Plane continues, good sorcerers are urgently needed. Within their monasteries and universities, it is accomplishment as a magician that wins the respect of one's fellows. Caste counts for little.

Adventurers who fight for Malkioni societies may be appointed to the knighthood. The knight class was originally invented by Prince Hrestol as a way of rewarding initiative and talent in an otherwise stratified society. Now it is no longer necessary

to win formal knighthood to be allowed to go around the world accomplishing great deeds. Knight status is still coveted though, as certain magical abilities are available only to ordained wearers of the Hrestoli garter.

Many Malkioni still follow the traditional life of the soldier, though these do not make good adventurers. A soldier follows the commands of a leader, who is either a landlord or a commander in the field. He may fight in the army or sail in the imperial navy. The holiest soldier is one who obeys without question and sacrifices his life joyfully, in Malkion's name. Some soldiers grow disenchanted with their lot as followers and go off and become solitary knights, swinging their swords in pursuit of their own individual destinies. Lately it has become more common to promote soldiers into leadership positions, especially during battles. Very traditional

priests consider this a blasphemy but the Empire retorts with its famous slogan: 'Competence is holy'.

Atop the ideal pyramid of Malkioni life are the leaders. In old Seshnela and environs, leadership has always been hereditary. If you cannot trace your lineage back before the Dawn, your family line is unworthy of rule. Jrusteli cities were founded on more egalitarian lines, where leaders were chosen by the people, based on merit. Many thus elevated were knights. But then they started lineages of their own and it is hard to rise to the top in Jrustela now if you cannot trace your family line back to the early settlement days.

Malkion teaches us that man is master and woman is his helpmate. How stringently this principle is enforced varies by location. In Seshnela, women who seek power must work through men, scheming at court and behind the throne. In Jrustela, Umathela and the various outposts of the Middle Sea Empire, the spirit of expansion and experimentation allows competent women to step into the roles of leader and knight. They may still face prejudice, especially from the hidebound, but generally find that a fat purse or a sharp sword can silence all manner of critics. Even the crusading Rightness Army counts female knights among its most fanatical warriors.

My Magic

Appeals to faith magic are foolhardy. Simple logic shows us that Sorcery is the best form of magic. And why would we use anything but the superior form?

Sorcery is better than all other types of magic because it alone can be used to dissect, pre-empt, dominate and control the all of the others. God Learner Sorcery allows us to steal back Malkion's power from the false gods, to bind spirits and command their obedience and even to render efficient and streamlined the mUzzy-minded ways of mysticism.

Why I Adventure

When Malkion made the world he made it for us, his believers. Everything that the monsters and false god worshippers have is rightfully ours. We must spread out through Glorantha in tribute to the glory of God and take back what belongs to Him. Everything we do to enrich ourselves or to steal power from the pagans is a kind of prayer. And let me tell you, we of the Middle Sea Empire pray fervently and often.

NOMADS OF THE WASTE

We are the nomads of the Waste, the vast desert between Dragon Pass and the eastern kingdoms of Teshnos and Kralorela. Our lives are the harshest in the world. We survive through the bounty of Waha, who taught us to bind ourselves to the spirits of the animals we ride: sable, antelope, bison and others.



My Myths

Our land was a paradise once. Giants ruled it. Food was plentiful. There was no death.

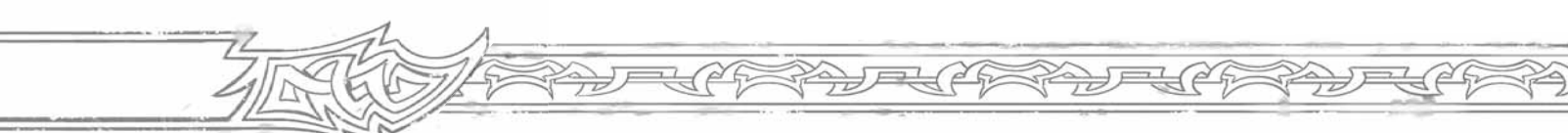
That lasted for a long time, well into the time of people. When Death first came, it slew one of us. His name was Daka Fal. He is the ancestor of ancestors, who helps us gain magic from our ghostly forefathers. That was bad but before long we accepted Death as a part of Life.

The gods fought each other. Storm Bull fought the fire god, Oakfed, chasing him to Prax. We gave him forests to eat, so he would not burn us. This made the elves angry with us.

Then the devil came and destroyed our land, killing the foolish giants.

The great god Storm Bull blew across the land and defeated the devil, pinning him beneath a great column of stone called The Block.

He was too hot and harsh to help people directly, so he sent his son, Waha, to do it. He freed Eiritha, the Cow Mother, the goddess of fertility. He taught us new ways to live, off herds of animals. He sired mortal bloodlines and scourged the land



of Chaos remnants. When he had made the world safe, the yellow-bellied sun emerged from its cowering place and shone on us again.

My History

Waha is no ordinary god. When other gods retreat at the beginning of the time, he continues to oversee his dusty land as a great spirit.

For over 200 years, we are left alone by our neighbours. Our land is too scorched to covet. We raid each other and are raided in turn. Eventually our martial prowess is too great to be ignored, and outsiders hire us as mercenaries. We fight for the World Council from 230 onwards.

The World Council makes a new god and we do not care, so long as we are paid. The new god becomes Gbaji, a Chaos creature. Only outlaws stay to take his coin. The rest of us retreat to our homeland. Gbaji is killed, far away from us, in 450.

The despised Pure Horse People invade us in 620. They are Pentans, sent by the wyrmfriends of Dragon Pass, who hate us because we raid them. The horse people become the biggest tribe in Prax. They win but we are not destroyed.

In 720, God Learners show up, looking for the magic-filled cradles giants use to send their babies downstream to the sea. They found a town, Feroda. Traders and others come here. The Horse People like it because they get rich. We like it only because we raid the traders.

Our raids against the Horse People grow so strong that they have to send dragons against us. In 740, they defeat us. Our anger festers.

The God Learners build another town, Robcradle, to better loot the secrets of giants. Waha does not like this. The giants are his friends. He goes to the giant Paragua and proposes a war. We fight with Waha, all of us tribes together, which hardly ever happens. The giants fight, too. They smash Robcradle. They drive off the God Learners. They drive off the Pentans.

No feud stays settled for long. Thirty years later, a human hero called Pavis, who wielded elf magic, leads a battle to retake Robcradle. His weapon is a giant stone statue he brings to life in troll country. Waha fights the statue; it beats him down and slashes his tendons. A dragonfriend magician, Varajiiia Nopor, hurts him with wrongful magics.

Pavis declares victory, then comes to Waha and heals him. Waha acknowledges him as a son and agrees to retreat from the world, like other gods did 800 years before. We weep.

Waha assures us we can still draw on his magic and protection, so long as we follow his laws.

Pavis rules Prax for the wyrmfriends. With dwarfish help, he erects a bigger city on Robcradle's ruins and greedily names it for himself. We raid its caravans.

In 860, Pavis retires permanently to his palace. He selects the Arrowsmith Dynasty to run the city. We all know it is really the wyrmfriends in charge, behind the scenes. We raid their caravans.

Our raiding grows too potent and about eight years ago the wyrms send more Horse People to put us all down again. We are on the run now. Our fury sustains us. Eventually the feuds will again turn in our favour.

It is the way of the desert. One day's king is the next day's slave.

My Life

Our lives are lived in concert with the animals we ride. They are our mounts. We feed from their blood and milk. When it is time, we butcher them, according to Waha's laws. He invented the Peaceful Cut, which allows the animal's soul to detach painlessly from its body and return to the great spirit herd. From there it will be reborn to us, perhaps as early as the next calving time.

Animals can have their spirits awakened inside their bodies. They become as intelligent as you or I. They can cast spells and obey complex instructions. They are like family to us. You do not butcher an awakened animal, just as you would not butcher your son or brother.

Each tribe feuds with the others. We are all Waha's children but he wants us to be strong. In order to be strong, you have to be willing to take food to fill your bellies.

Men are men and women are women. To mix roles is against Waha's commands. Women are life keepers. They own the basic herds, cooking implements, tents and household tools. They tend herds, heal people and raise children. Men are death keepers. We get to own only the beasts we capture from others. We run the herds and perform the butchering, raiding and defensive fighting.

Waha arranged us into families. Families travel together as clans. All the clans of a single herd animal constitute a tribe. When in doubt, favour your family over your clan and your clan over your tribe. You may raid other clans of the same tribe but should expect to be ill treated if you steal from other families of your clan.

The leader of the clan is the khan. His wife is the queen. The tribal leaders are High Khan and High Queen.

Waha decrees a terrible punishment for wrongdoers. They are banished from their tribes. They may no longer gain nourishment from the meat of their tribal animal and are left alone in the desert to fend for themselves. Only the toughest survive banishment.

You can know much about a Praxian by the animal he rides:

Sable riders are political and opportunistic. They make overtures to the God Learners and wyrmfriends alike. Their only true ally is themselves.

The **Bison** people are bluff and surly. They are the opposite of the Sables, always getting into trouble with whoever is in power.

We **High Llamas** are said to be arrogant and, like our animals, prone to spit on those beneath us. We say, it is hard to spit and not hit an inferior.

The **Impala** riders are pygmies who swarm their foes. They are demanding and obstreperous. It is plain to see that they are making up for their minute stature.

Everybody hates the blunt, unsentimental **Morokanth**. They are not human but plump quadrupedal animals with fat, in-curving snouts. When Waha held the first lottery to see who would ride and who would be ridden, the Morokanth cheated. Thus they marshal a herd of unintelligent humans. You can tell it is wrong, because they cannot ride the humans and must walk beside them.

There are smaller, oddball tribes: the plodding, short-sighted **Rhino**; the fleet, elusive **Zebra**; the female-only **Unicorn** tribe. The **Bolo** riders herd bipedal dinosaurs. The **Ostrich** riders are the most foul tempered of any of us. And that is quite the statement to make.

My Magic

Waha does not give us magic. He teaches us to get magic from spirits. We do Common Magic, like everyone else, but our great workings are spirit summonings.

Why I Adventure

Our spirit powers are uniquely suited to our inhospitable land. When we wander, it is in search of wealth for our people.

Sometimes we go a long way to raid. Favourite targets are Dragon Pass, Teshnos and the troll land of Dagori Inkarth. A Praxian left behind after a disastrous raid may continue to wander before coming back.

The banished often leave Prax entirely, seeking their way as mercenaries or freebooters in far-off lands. They often secretly yearn for the home clans they have been forever severed from.

PAMALTELAN

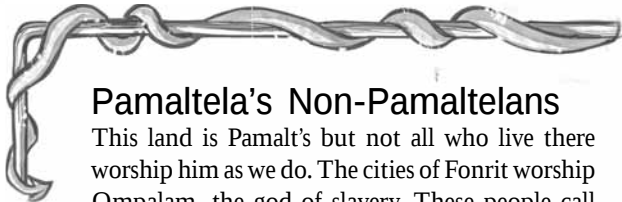
We are the Agimori. In our language, this means 'We Who Die and Come Again'. We are the people of Pamalt, the god who did not fall when the Chaos monsters came. He protected our tropical continent. Its lands were ravaged but not so badly that they could not recover quickly. We count ourselves more blessed than the northern peoples and are grateful to Pamalt for his strength. We live in the idyllic grassless savannah at the centre of the continent.



My Myths

Earthmaker made the world. You can tell that from his name. He made everything in it. You can tell that by looking around you, smelling the goodness of the earth and the plants. There are terrifying things in the world but they are not his fault. They came after.

Earthmaker got tired after a while, with all his making. So he made giant spirits to shape the world for him. The first and best of these was Pamalt, who was brave, kindly and clever. He

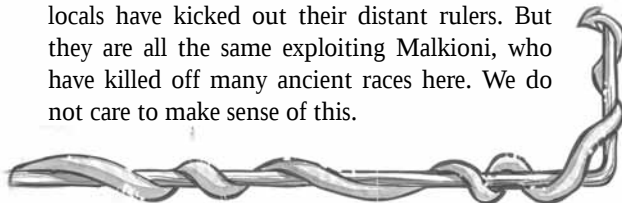


Pamaltela's Non-Pamaltelans

This land is Pamalt's but not all who live there worship him as we do. The cities of Fonrit worship Ompalam, the god of slavery. These people call themselves the Torav and are blue-skinned. A few of them rule the others, reducing them to abject subjugation. The God Learners conquered them. Their common people were better off than under their own leaders. But a few years ago, they revolted against the God Learners and drove them out. They are hard to understand! They say that their god is all-powerful and rules all the others but he does not rule Pamalt, this is for certain.

In the north, there are elves in the forests and trolls, untamed by Pamalt, in the mountains. We live amid all manner of bug men or timinitis.

God Learners live in the cities of Umathela. They are fighting some sort of war with each other. The locals have kicked out their distant rulers. But they are all the same exploiting Malkioni, who have killed off many ancient races here. We do not care to make sense of this.



is our ancestor. It is his job to keep the land alive and our job to help him. We benefit from this, of course, but it is our joy to preserve life.

The time when Earthmaker lived was the best. He would do anything you asked him. If you wanted a cooling lake where the animals could drink, he would reach down, scoop it out, spit into the hole and there you were. A cooling lake. If you got tired of eating boar, then he would make antelope, too.

The best request Pamalt ever made of him was to create a family. And just like that, Earthmaker did it.

There was Aleshmara, who was like Pamalt's mother, although she was made afterwards and did not give birth to him. She is the matriarch of his family, keeping the goddesses in line and telling Pamalt what to do, when he needs it.

For his wife, Earthmaker made Faranar and she is the wife of wives. She rules the domestic realm, owning the living quarters, containers, tools and ovens. Her most important job is looking after the babies.

To aid Pamalt with wisdom, Earthmaker provided Cronisper the Rememberer. His job is to keep track of the songs, the paints and the location of the wisdom roots. He was like Pamalt's uncle.

To give Pamalt strength, but more importantly comradeship, Earthmaker made Balumbasta, who is very strong, so strong that he could make himself a range of mountains overnight, but not so smart. He is like Pamalt's youngest brother and shows us how being smart does not matter so much if you are good-hearted.

Pamalt's next youngest brother was Rasout, the hunter. His job was to chase animals across the veldt and bring them back as food. To keep him from being too proud, Earthmaker created the Runthing, the prey Rasout could never catch. His worshippers see this at least once in their lives. They never catch it, either.

The oldest brother next to Pamalt was Vangono, the warrior, master of the spear. Earthmaker said his job would come later.

Also Earthmaker made Naruma, who could see something that did not exist at the time. Nobody knew what his job was but Naruma and he was not saying yet.

When he was done, Earthmaker sat down on a tussock of soft vines, tired out. He farted and out came Bolongo the Fool. He was Pamalt's cousin, who could never remember the difference between right and wrong.

Seeing him, Vangono said, 'He is stupid. Stupid people get you killed. Earthmaker, let me pierce him with my spear.'

However Earthmaker went to sleep, saying that even wrongness had a purpose.

Much later Bolongo took a knife and slit Earthmaker's throat. He did not mean to kill him. He did not even know what death was. No one did. Earthmaker's was the first death. After that death could not be kept from the world and we all die, when our time comes.

As he died, Earthmaker's last words were to Vangono: 'Now you and Naruma will see what your jobs are.'

Earthmaker's death emboldened the bad beings at the edge of the world, who had always wanted in but were afraid to cross him. Now they poured in and made war on Pamalt and his people. Vangono took up his spear and found he could now breathe three types of fire. He leapt on the monsters, slaying them. But many more came.

The worst of these was Vovisibor, the filth that walks. Each of the giants tried in turn to beat him. Finally Pamalt explained that they had to fight all at the same time, under his direction. They did this, forming Pamalt's Necklace, and the awful Vovisibor was torn back out of the world, banished to wherever he belonged.

'I thought I would contribute by doing my job,' said Naruma 'but I was not required. I see ghosts all around me, wandering and sad.'

'That is your job,' said Pamalt, 'to see the dead. Now lead me to Earthmaker.'

So they journeyed through the deepest, sharpest foliage, which they had never tried to penetrate before. Naruma showed the path and Pamalt made it, stomping it down. He threatened the thorn trees and the grab-bushes, making them promise never to block the path again. They found where Earthmaker was, now that he was dead.

The path was still too long, though, so later Naruma made new, shorter paths, connecting people to the spirits of their dead relatives. The spirits could talk to their living families, then carry messages back to Earthmaker. Eventually no one alive could remember Earthmaker, except from stories. They stopped sending messages to him but kept in touch with their dead relatives.

My History

Aided by our memory canes, marked off with notches, we remember elaborate histories of our families. These tell of food supplies, of carvings made, of births and stomping songs sung.

We do not imagine you are interested in any of that. Are you?

Peace had reigned for dozens of generations when we were disturbed by the God Learners, who invaded our land of Jolar (they heard its name wrong and called it Kolar). They established the Six-Legged Empire to rule us, with the power of men on horseback. A few years ago we drove them out again, piercing horse and rider alike with the tips of our spears. Our hero Hon Hoolbiktu led us in this war, finding surprising new ways to fight them. With his magical manoeuvres, he made their steel armour and fast horses into impediments.

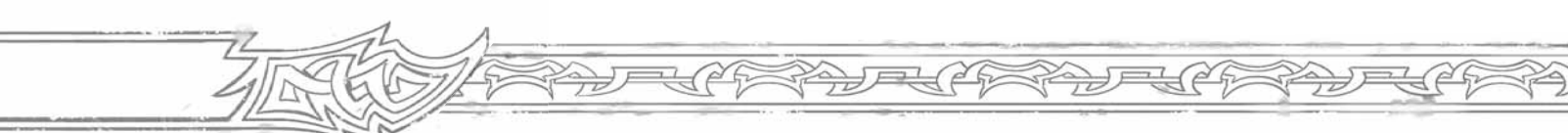
We feel no joy in this deadly accomplishment but they were Bad Strangers. They were hurting us in this life and the next.

The Destroyed Peoples

The God Learners have ruined several peoples we used to co-exist with, stripping them of their gods and magic. They did this by meddling in the Other Side. We Agimori have been protected from this, by and large, because although we learn about the world from our stories of Pamalt and his family, most of our magic comes from local spirits.

Others were not so fortunate. You see the few survivors, wandering the veldt, bereft and bitter. Parts of their souls are missing now and they seek murderous revenge on the God Learners for doing this. We cannot blame them. The destroyed peoples include:

- X The **Jolosi**. Their skins are dark like ours but they are less than a metre tall. They strike with weapons made from solid honey and are friends with the bees. Jolosi teeth are very sharp.
- X The **Grinel**. They are animal men but the God Learners removed their totem animals from the world. They have big yellow eyes, are striped and wear antlers on their heads. The very old ones say that their totem animals were carnivorous antelope.
- X The **Pernosi**, or Grape People, had soft green skins, like those of grapes, and grew inside soft plant pods until they were big enough to walk and talk. They were not elves but were friends with elves. We used to kidnap their women when they were nursing, to get drunk on their milk.
- X We called the **Hobintam** the Spicy People, because their pleasant smell announced them from 1,000 metres away. They would come to rub our food for us, to make it taste better, and we would pay them with a portion. They paid homage to a giant spirit called Tenpor, who communicated with them by changing the scents they gave off. Tenpor's motto was 'Help and be helped'.



They rounded up our ancestor spirits to use as slaves. So we armed ourselves in Vangono's hard-hearted wisdom and killed until they fled.

My Life

We belong to three tribes: the **Arbennan**, the **Doraddi** and the **Tarints**.

All of us spring from the same wise roots. We live by Pamalt's rules, which ensure that our extended families live in happy tranquillity. We extend this courtesy outward and are welcoming to strangers.

The Arbennan

We Arbennan are the Agimori of the Jolar Plain. Hon Hoolbiktu is one of us. We roam and hunt. Our cousins, the Doraddi, call us the Walking People. Our plain is mild all year round and well populated with beasts which provide us with meat, hides and bones to make into ceremonial tools. The metal tools made elsewhere are better for ordinary use and we try to trade for them whenever we can. On those rare occasions when we need shelter, we build houses of hardened mud, in imitation of the termite. Each time we make sacrifices to the termite spirit, Gawala, and promise to knock down the huts after 14 days.

We settle disputes between tribes or families with shouting wars, where the winners are the best stompers and yellors.

We trace our descent through the female line. During the bad times, Aleshmara hid our women by turning them into pools of clean drinking water. So each of us returns during the ceremonial days to our ancestral pool. Our spirits are those of the drinking pools and of the blowing seeds that fly through the air and of the wandering beasts.

The Doraddi

The Doraddi live in the eastern lands of Kothar. We Arbennan call them the Staying People. They stay put in villages along the life-giving rivers flowing toward the continent's interior. Some of them never stray more than a few miles from their homes. They hunt a little but cultivate more. Their houses are clay cylinders wearing rich wigs of living ivy.

Doraddi families are matrilineal. Each traces its ancestry back to one of the Original Women, who, when the filth monsters came, protected themselves by becoming plants. Each family is thereby related by blood to a particular food plant and is especially skilled at planting and harvesting it.

They settle disputes by sending out their wisest women to compete in lore contests. Plant spirits ask them questions; the first to miss an answer must yield to the other.

In addition to plant spirits, the Doraddi gain magic from the rivers and the earth.

The Tarint

We call the Tarint, who live in the arid and difficult west, the Thirsty People. Their land is dry, without many rivers, and inhabited by giant animals, who emerge every year from caves there, trampling everything in sight. The west has no ordinary animals to hunt, so every attempt to gain some meat requires combat with a huge and deadly beast. Worse, the Tarint are hard pressed by reptile men called slarges, who hide a lost civilisation inside the earth. They treat the Tarint as game animals, hunting them with magic and strange devices.

It is shocking to say it but the Tarint wage genuine war on each other, fighting for food and wives. There the spirit talkers of Cronisper are strong and those of Aleshmara are weak. Descent is traced down through the male line. To become a man, one must participate in the slaying of a giant beast, a slarge or an Agimori from an ancestral enemy family.

The Tarint take what they can from whatever spirits they find. They are as likely to capture an enemy's ancestor as to gain the peaceful cooperation of a nature spirit.

My Magic

Pamalt and his family show us how to live. Smaller spirits aid our survival, by giving us our higher magic. They are our ancestors or the local spirits. We also practice Common Magic.

Why I Adventure

Most of us care only about feeding and protecting our families. A so-called life of adventure does neither of these jobs.

A few of us get infected by the wandering sickness, which impels us to go far from our homes to gain foreign knowledge and see distant places. We call these people *mwalish*. These are the Agimori who go out into the world to do great or risky deeds. When the sickness leaves them, they come back to us, bringing odd treasures and telling all sorts of entertaining lies.

PELORIANS

We are the people of the Peloria, the Dara Happans, worshippers of the only important god, Yelm, the sun. Our history is longer than anyone else's. Our god is higher and brighter than anyone's. He has ruled us for a hundred thousand years. We value obedience and order. Our earthly Emperor is a descendant of Yelm and can prove it by passing the 10 tests and handling the imperial regalia without damage to himself.

Dara Happa is in eclipse now, conquered by dragon people. A false ruler, a dragon, perches upon our throne, grasping the regalia.

But that will not last for long...



A Note on Time...

Dara Happans chronicle their years from Yelm's birth, during the God Time. Yelm reigned for 100,000 years although Murharzarm became the first earthly emperor in 60,000. Since Yelm's birth 111,910 years have passed, bringing us to the time described in this campaign. The Second Age of Glorantha began in, roughly, 111,000.

My Myths

Our culture worships Yelm. Because Yelm is an Emperor, it is fitting that only Emperors and nobles may worship him. Other lesser sorts may worship gods of lower status, such as Yelm's attendants and family members.

The important myths of our culture are therefore known only to nobles. We of the upper classes are reluctant to talk of our myths, now that the wyrmfriends pollute them with dragon nonsense and the God Learners want to steal them outright. But truth must be told, so here it is. Try not to be blinded by it.

When Yelm accepted the rule of the cosmos he raised a great ziggurat and from its highest tier, where he placed his golden throne, he could see the entirety of the world, represented by the Four Directions which Yelm named. Having named each direction and given it a colour, he decreed that a great city should be built at each direction and each city would duplicate the Great City and be an extension of it. These Four Directions are known as the camps: the East Camp, which is yellow, lies before Yelm and its power is insight. To the right is the South Camp, which is green and strength is its power. Behind Yelm is the West Camp, coloured red and its power is sovereignty. And to the left of Yelm is Alabaster Camp, which is white and commands the power of wisdom.

When Yelm called for splendour one day, whilst looking out over his kingdom with Dendara at his side, Dendara noticed that everything was the same and difference was needed. So Yelm called for Lodril and Dayzatar, and Dendara called for her sisters Oria and the Other Goddess. Between them they made two creatures which were the same but different; and because each god made a creature there were six in total. They were given their natures and their shapes and Dendara clothed them with cloth she had weaved. Lodril gave them tools with which to work and finally Yelm gave them the Four Camps as their place of living. These first six were the Aristocrats and they went forth and prospered.

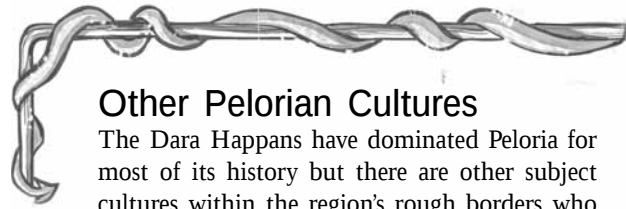


Then came Nestenos. Nestenos was an immense blue serpent that arose from the deep. None of the gods had seen anything like it before and Nestenos surged across the land, cutting a deep furrow and drowning everything before it. Lodril went to wrestle the monster but was bested. Next Shargash the Thunderer advanced with five divisions of drummers but he, too, was vanquished. And so it was left to Yelm to come down from the Imperial Footrest and face Nestenos, but because Yelm was innately just he was forced into the sky and could not confront the serpent. His son, Murharzarm, climbed the Imperial Footrest and faced the monster. Murharzarm, unafraid of new experiences, let the serpent coil itself around him seven times but broke its jaws with his sceptre and wrestled it back to the ground. Lodril and his Ten Workers used the sacred tools to carve a channel in the ground to contain Nestenos and that is where Murharzarm put it with the help of the Ten Workers. This tamed the serpent and made her happy. She changed her name to Oslira and coupled with the gods to bear several children who served the new lands well.

Yelm was pleased with what Murharzarm had accomplished and secretly created the Ten Tests of Empire that Murharzarm unknowingly undertook, passing nine with ease, having to move across the lands to do so. When he returned to the Imperial Footrest he ascended to the Golden Throne and was shown the Imperial Regalia which he identified without hesitation: the Loincloth of Morality, the Sandals of Protection, the Vestments of Disclosure, the Girdle of Command, the Mantle of Sovereignty, the High Crown of Dominion, the Low Crown of Rule, the Orb of Authority, the Sceptre of Order and the Eagle of Heaven. This done Murharzarm was named First Emperor and he took a wife, Dareeshena, as First Empress. Next he built a great city around the Imperial Footrest and this was Raibanth; his son, Raiba was its protector and governor.

In their happiness the people made many children and then dug channels from the Oslir River to make the whole land fertile and offer plenty to eat. Now that the land was made whole, Murharzarm established the Ten Cities, each to be the home of a god. The Ten Cities were *Yuthubars*, the City of Spirit, *Raibanth*, the City of Emperors, in the centre. *Abgammon*, the City of Priests, in the near east – the home of Buserian. *Senthoros*, the Looks Up city, in the far east. *Alkoth*, the City of Strength, in the near south, the home of Shargash. *Nivorah*, the City of Serenity, in the far south. *Hamados*, the City of the Crown, in the near west. *Akuturos*, the City of Dirt, in the far west – Lodril's home. *Verapur*, the City of Raptors, in the near north. And, in the far north, *Mernita*, the City which Turns

These were the original Ten Cities of the Empire and Murharzarm named the empire Dara Happa.



Other Pelorian Cultures

The Dara Happans have dominated Peloria for most of its history but there are other subject cultures within the region's rough borders who worship gods outside Yelm's solar pantheon.

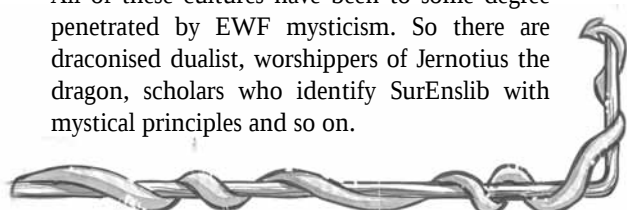
The **Darjini** worship a pantheon headed by the great goddess SurEnslib, who manifests as a heron. They offend the staunch, repressed Yelmites with their orgiastic worship and their egalitarian culture, in which everyone is supposedly a noble.

The **Pelandan** pantheon of seven high gods is headed by Jernotius the Liberator, who are alternately male and female and preaches the necessity of cosmic balance. His people are notable for their art production and their six-tiered class structure.

The culture of **Carmania**, on Peloria's western edge, bears the stamp of Malkioni religion, with its emphasis on class structure and its patriarchal outlook. Carmanians are dualists, believing that events are governed by two entities created by the Invisible God. Idovanus, the good god, engages in eternal battle with the evil god, Ganesatarus the Deceiver.

The people of **Rinliddi** ride giant birds, paying homage to a pantheon headed by an avian deity, Vrimak the All Seeing.

All of these cultures have been to some degree penetrated by EWF mysticism. So there are draconised dualist, worshippers of Jernotius the dragon, scholars who identify SurEnslib with mystical principles and so on.



My History

At the Dawn, Khordavu unites the Dara Happan people and expels the Pentan nomads who have overrun Peloria. Contacts with the Theyalan Orlanthi people to the south lead to a sharing of lore. The Dara Happans lend their wisdom to the First Council. Over the next three centuries, Dara Happa slowly reclaims and subjugates the regions of Peloria.

In 375, Emperor Khorzanelm participates in the God Project, which results in the creation of the new deity Nysalor. Yelm stops in the sky to gaze in wonder at this new transcendent being. At first all is well and for nearly half a century Nysalor's teachings aid the Empire's growing prosperity. But then a dread creature escapes from Nysalor's shadow. This is the Chaos deity Gbaji. In 423, the Empire's greatest hero, Palangio the Iron Vrok, casts him into a deep hell. In 440, Gbaji comes back and eats him. He then proceeds to the land of Dorastor, cursing it with Chaos and, in 450, destroys beautiful Nysalor.

Dara Happa recovers quickly from this debacle. Relative peace and prosperity continue until the seventh century, when internal rebellions flourish and the Empire battles the Spolites, an underground movement of darkness opposed to the light of the sun. In 690, the Spolites are defeated, then superseded as a foe by the Carmanian dualists, who conquer Dara Happa in 725. The Carmanians are driven out in the 760s but by this time the wyrmfriend cult has begun its insidious spread throughout Peloria.

In 772 the Emperor Elmexdros the Conqueror welcomes the Golden Dragon Society. Through alliance with the EWF he hopes to expand the shrunken borders of Dara Happa throughout greater Peloria, as they were in the glory days. The wyrmfriends respond to his invitation by subverting Dara Happa from within. They become a powerful shadow government. In 850, they murder Emperor Dismatryan. For the next 28 years, the EWF makes war on Dara Happa from within and without, until a dragon passes the Ten Tests and ascends the throne in 878.

My Life

Clan ties are primitive. We are better than our neighbours, because we believe in the family, which is sacred and right and more advanced. Each family is led by a Patriarch. His authority derives from Yelm, whose blood runs through his veins. He rules over his own family with benevolent rigidity. When they transgress, he may punish them as he sees fit, including by death. The Patriarch designates his heir among the men of his family. He chooses which son succeeds him; the first-born enjoys no guarantee of favour.

To be truly Dara Happa, one must belong to a family. Eligibility depends on the ability to prove patrilineal descent within four generations to the ancestors of a Patriarch. If you cannot prove this, you are not a Dara Happa, not even a commoner. You are just a rustic peasant, a mere Pelorian. You should go worship Lodril and tug at yourself and roll around in the dirt, as he does.

Hierarchy is a blessing from Yelm. When everyone knows his place and does his job, life is golden. Our nobles descend from

Yelm himself. A few dozen great families control our nation's wealth and power. Professions are likewise inherited.

Women are chattel, though we would not like to do without them.

We had cities before anyone else and our cities were better back then than any that exist today. Our rulers know how to rule cities. Our bureaucrats, called the Tenth, know how to administer them. Our commoners know how to live in them.

Dara Happa cities are wonders of architecture, dominated by straight towers reaching confidently into Yelm's bright sky. We strongly desire symmetry. Wherever possible, our city streets are designed as a series of concentric rings, moving ever forward into the centre, where the main families and governmental buildings are located.

Our military might is well known. We are masters at fighting in tight formation. Our commanders are called Polemarches and draw their magic of striking and smiting from the pole star.

Our ultimate goal as a people is to bring back the Golden Age, when Yelm and his people ruled all of Peloria in a state of warm and shining perfection. This is why the Golden Dragon was originally permitted to flourish here, because the Emperor thought it would drive away the Spolite darkness witches and assist in rebuilding our glory. But the Dragon turns out to be a deceiver and a betrayer of our principles and sacred magics, so we must rise up to destroy it. All traces of its influence within our peoples' hearts must be burned away, with the light of wisdom.

How To Play A Yelmite Noble

- X Straighten your spine, balance your shoulders and stick out your chin.
- X Speak in bold, declarative sentences.
- X Never admit to uncertainty.
- X Be offended.
- X When in doubt as to what to be offended by, select any of the following: insults to the Sky gods, darkness magic, sexual license, disrespect for tradition, presumptuous women, irreverence toward rightful authority, the Orlanthi 'Lightbringers Quest' story.
- X Fight bravely for what you believe in.
- X Obey rightful authority.
- X Think rigidly.
- X Treat all women as accoutrements. Treat all peasants and foreigners as chattels.

My Magic

Only the highest, the Emperor and top-ranking patriarchs, may directly worship Yelm. All others commit effrontery by even considering it. The sorts of people you might actually meet draw magic from his relatives and intermediaries, such as his martial son, Yelmario, the great defender Antirius, or the rebuilding Emperor, Khordavu.

Why I Adventure

Dara Happans do not adventure. This sounds disreputable if not outright criminal. We would not sully ourselves with it.

We do engage in acts of legendary heroism, however. These are all waged in protection of the Empire and its proven righteousness. He who does not follow a patriarch or commander is a filthy outlaw and not to be trusted.

Exiles may travel about the rest of the world seeking trouble. They tell themselves that they are toughening themselves for the day when they come home, subjugate themselves to their patriarchs and reassume their seemly positions in life. I suppose what they tell themselves is even true, on occasion.

TESHNAN

We yearn to see the celestial flame. We are the people of Teshnos, the steamy jungle land to the south of Kralorela. Lifetimes are nothing to us; we achieve spiritual perfection through cycles of reincarnation. We live, learn, progress, die, are born again and continue to perfect ourselves. We will still be doing this long after your so-called Empires have vanished into half-forgotten history.

My Myths

Those of us who have seen the celestial flame are revered as teachers and leaders. They are called the zitr. There are only a few hundred zitr in our densely populated land.

The greatest of zitr propound their own system of enlightenment. They are called Seers. Each tells different stories of the gods. Some recognise different gods than others. The details do not matter too much, because the gods exist only as exemplars, to teach us. The magic exists not within the gods but in what the gods teach us about themselves.

A Seer's teachings usually consist of a few simple sentences. These are so packed with meaning that they take several lifetimes to fully understand. The god stories they tell provide the tools to understand the teachings. For instance, one great teacher is **Chal**. His teachings are:



- X Teaching the First: *At the heart of everything there is flame.* To learn this, one must live several incarnations as a farmer or herdsman.
 - X Teaching the Second: *The individual life-flame is not a fire that burns in a form but the fiery form itself.* To learn this, one lives more lifetimes as a red-robed priest, making sacrifices to a chosen god.
 - X Teaching the Third: *Each of the fiery forms is one celestial fire.* Here one has become a noble, living in opulent luxury, smothered in jewels and layered in silk.
- When one has fully assimilated the Third Teaching of Chal, one becomes a zitr. Other Seers are:
- X **Elat**, of the Four Tough Survival Teachings. His followers begin as naked woodsmen and find the flame within the aldryami song.
 - X **Zon**, of the Ivory Mask Teachings. He tells us that behind the fire is a mask, behind the mask there is a soul and behind the soul, there is us.

- X **Jrudai**, of the Gold in Fire Teachings. His followers begin with enormous wealth and must slowly dispose of it over multiple incarnations. They are few now.
- X **Sankusa** of the Five Weapon Teachings. His martial followers come ever closer to the flame by mastering five weapons over the course of multiple incarnations: knife, spear, bow, sword and strangling cord. Teshnan warrior prowess is often mocked but not in the presence of Sankusites. They are our first line of defence against invaders.

The most recognised gods, by the teachings of Chal, Zon, Jrudai and others, are:

- X **Zitro Argon**, the primal fire. His devotees meditate, fast and sometimes burn themselves but do not make sacrifices to him.
- X **Somash** is the Sun, the mightiest of the gods. His adherents dedicate themselves to purity, fidelity and truth. Warriors, poets, healers and administrators follow him.
- X **Calyz** is the friendly fire. He burns in domed kilns, cooking our food and heating metal for shaping into useful forms.
- X **Solf** is the decadent, burnt-out volcano. His worshippers seek to destroy themselves through dissipation. To follow him, one must apply for a license from the king. Otherwise too many people would take his path, die all at once and have no bodies to reincarnate back into.
- X **Furalor** is the destroying fire. She is the funeral pyre on which all worldly things, including souls, are burnt, so that they may then be recreated.

Some schools recognise other gods who work in balance with the fire gods. Others proclaim such recognition as wasteful error, calling these entities half-gods. The best known half-gods are:

- X **Huand**, the cooling water. She is the force of moderation, into which Somash dips each night, lest his fire burn so bright as to burn his people.
- X **Dakkad**, the infusing air. She flows into Calz's kin, adding flavour to foods and strength to swords.
- X **Umalon**, the fruitful earth. When Furalor has destroyed something, she plants it in her daughter's infinite womb. Umalon births it back into the world, adding a fresh element each time.
- X **Arshmolod**, the bringer of death. Furalor's pale daughter appears to the dying, to conduct their souls to the consuming fire. Her belly is round and swollen; her pregnancy represents the dying individual's next incarnation.

Here is a parable of creation and devolution. After many lifetimes you will know which parts of it burn true. Do not tell it to the God Learners, or they will use it against us.

First there was nothing. Then there was the celestial flame. It could not burn forever without something to consume. So it let parts of itself fly out and these made the gods, followed by their land, and then people, followed by their land. Diminished but at the same time fuelled, the Celestial Flame became Zitro Argon.

This god was too far from the new land, so it invested the god Somash with a solar halo and sent him spinning into heaven.

The people were cold and hungry, so he made Calyz for them.

The world became too full of ignorant people who lacked interior ambition, so Furalor decreed herself the destroyer and laid waste to them.

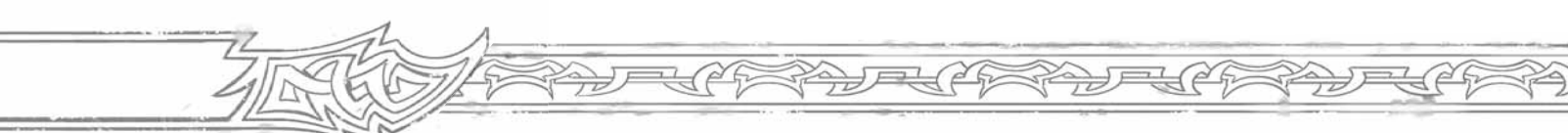
Solf joined her campaign, because it looked like fun to him. In his selfishness he perverted what was hallowed and necessary about destruction and in so doing invited in the demoness Makbonella. She was both destruction without purpose and creation without restraint. Makbonella polluted exuberant young Solf and knocked Somash from the sky.

Only the people were left to find the flame again and so then the first zitrs generated themselves from their memories of the gods. They were Chal, Elat, Zon, Jrudai and the others. They fought the monsters of Makbonella's horde not with swords but with the magic of their thoughts – Sankusa's thoughts were like knives and cut through her ropy hide as if aflame.

Eventually the competing zitrs agreed to harmonise their philosophies into the One Thought. This was not sustainable, because it contained everything but while it existed it was enough to exalt Somash back into the sky and free Furalor from her prison inside Umalon. She came out of the prison and visited Makbonella's own destruction upon her. Umalon rebirthed the monster queen as the self-devouring jungle which surrounds our land. Now she serves us, by consuming foreigners who come to conquer us. Chal taught us to tame her spirits.

My History

Our history is of little interest to outsiders and this is how we like it. Our change is inward-directed, manifesting hardly at all in the realm of mere politics. Encased by haunted jungles



full of cooperatively fierce spirits, we have kept to ourselves and bothered no one. Please do not find us fascinating.

On occasion we invade Kralorela. Mostly this happens symbolically, in a snowy mountain pass, when one of our great war elephants contends with one of their serpents. The winner gets good luck for a year.

Our history recounts many raids by Praxians, Pentans, hsunchen or amazons from the Trowjang. These scarcely qualify as invasions and are barely worth mentioning. We dealt with them with Sankusan fire weapons, burning magic from the sky and the strategic payment of tribute.

We traded little with the outside world before the God Learners rose. Sometimes goods would come to us on Waertagi ships and we would ship out ivory and mahogany in exchange for them. The God Learners want us to buy more from them, to become accustomed to their trade as a drunkard is to ale. They hope to learn from us. We are not afraid of outsiders, as the Kralori are. We invite any to come and observe our holy ways. Those who pay us the cold coin of disrespect will contend with our fearsome jungle spirits.

My Life

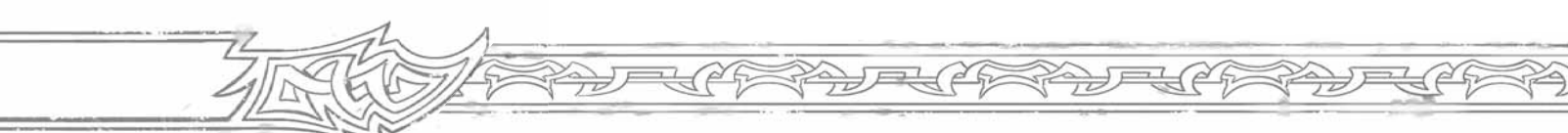
We are ruled by the Pentapartite Dynasty. Kingship rotates between adherents of the Five Seers who brought back the sun: Chal, Zon, Jrudai, Elat and Sankusa. When one king dies, the zitrs of that tradition go forth among the people looking for an orphan whose soul has been reincarnated into the desired tradition. Today we are ruled by King Kasinslian, a highly evolved follower of Sankusa. Flames leap in the pupils of his imperious eyes.

My Magic

Our five main gods teach us to manifest mystical powers by looking inward to the celestial fire that burns in all of us. Other deities provide Common Magic and folk magic to the people who need these for their everyday lives.

Why I Adventure

Most teachings tell us that the desire for adventure is a spiritual trap. It speaks of a desire for an outer variety, as a distraction from the need for inner purity. Such temptations retard progress through your incarnation cycle.



Other Peoples of Teshnos

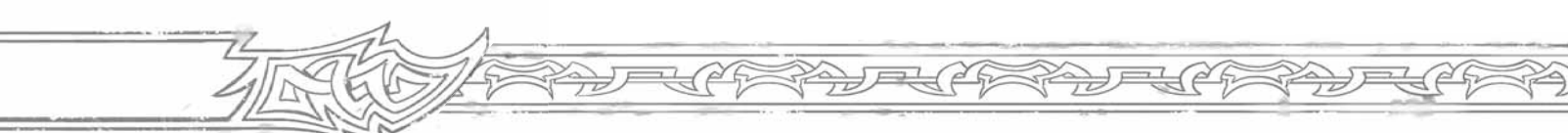
Amid the Teshnans live several sub-cultures who regard the celestial flame with profound indifference. They are known collectively as the unflamed, although they have little else in common.

Babadi are beardless, dark-skinned dwarfs. Their status as variant Mostali have made them an object of fascination for the God Learners, who hope to crack Mostal's secrets by exploring their myths. They are artisans, making devices of mystical import, from spinning prayer wheels to floating daggers. They will not touch iron or diamonds and know nothing of explosives or gears.

Fethloni are yellow elves from the jungle depths. Their jungle priesthood maintains close ties with the Teshnan government, especially those of the Elatian Teachings. They steer the hungry forest spirits toward the mutual enemies of the two peoples.

Goondas are naked, orange-haired tree dwellers notorious for rowdiness, vandalism and drunken excess.

Thoskali hunter-gatherers co-exist with the Fethloni elves, emerging occasionally from the jungle to perform unclean tasks for the Teshnans, including tanning and the preparation of corpses for the pyre. In exchange they receive the fruits of civilisation, most notably beer.



The Sankusans differ on this point. To achieve mastery of the five weapons, one must go out into the world and locate worthy enemies. Sankusans sometimes wander far and wide in search of appropriate conflicts. Although they fight for fighting's sake, they take care to enlist only in ethical causes. Otherwise one risks pollution and a fall into accidental Self worship.

Major Races

Here we survey the inhuman races, looking at their myths, history, magic, outlook and attitude toward adventuring from their own point of view. Both players and Games Masters alike can use this chapter to help delineate specific Player or Non-Adventurers.

ALDRYAMI (ELFS)

We are the plant people, grown from the seeds of Aldrya. Her song runs through us like the sap in our veins. We protect the forests and fight the burners, choppers and the bringers of disease, of whom there are all too many in this world. Humans call us elves.

My Myths

Our stories are not told in words. We hear them as song, whenever we are in the forest. The God Learners try to fit them into the stories of foreign gods, adding Ernalda and Eurmäl and others to them. They cut it up and what they do not care for, they burn. Here is the real song.

The song starts with Grower. He made everything green and spread across the entire world.

To abet his fecundity, Grower grew allies. There was Eron, the waters we drank from, Gata, the earth we rooted in and Halamalao, the sun who shone into our leaves, giving life.

With conditions so prepared, Grower himself grew into a new being, first as a seed, then as a tree. This was Falamal, the great tree at the centre of everything. From Falamal sprouted Aldrya, our greatest mother and Seyotel, the song that forms our spirits.

You would think this was the ideal time for us and in a way it was but there was no balance. Grower's roots dug deep into the world and threatened to break it apart, as there was nothing to stop his expansion.

So naturally the Taker, Bebestor, came into the world to counter these faults. All green things became brown. Water dried up, stone crumbled and the air whipped around so fast it caught fire, burning the papery-dry trees. Nearly everything was destroyed. This was no balance.



Grower could not stand it and defied Taker by sending out more shoots. These were the defenders, Bergara and Vronkal. She was angry and he was swift. They fought back against Taker, forcing Bebestor into balance with Grower. By way of submission, Taker spawned Trigora. She became the dark place beneath the earth where the dead go. At this time, most of us were already inside her.

Grower responded by making Bengara's sister, Veratha, who was the utter purity of fresh growth. She kissed the aldryami inside Trigora, including Aldrya herself. We formed new seeds, germinated and our sprouts appeared above the ground, to be warmed again by a returned Halamalao.

Our armies overran the creatures of Taker, who were doomed by their intrinsic paradox: they were created by a destroyer.

In Dragon Pass, we participated in the I Fought We Won battle, led by the hero Fwalfa Oakheart. Our usual enemies

were our allies. The harmony gave us joy and we prayed that it would last.

One part of us that could never be regrown entirely was Gata. She had been broken up into many local goddesses, one for each land. They were rich and fruitful but were only a reflection of what Gata had been.

Still, the dawn had come. The Green Age was long gone but we had much growing to do, if we were to reclaim the world.

My History

At the Dawn, the earth is barren and in need of our growth. In most places we retreat to our ancestral places. In Dragon Pass, inspired by the I Fought We Won battle, we help found the Unity Council. We cooperate with our ancient foes, the trolls who want to eat us and the dwarfs who want to chop us down and turn us into buildings.

After many seasons it becomes apparent that we have an opportunity to reconcile the world and oblivion, just as Grower and Taker were brought into harmony, bringing about the Dawn. Thus can we all return to a better version of our favourite ages. It would be like the Green Age for us, the Dark Age for trolls and the Stasis Age for dwarfs. With reconciliation, our different requirements would not harm each other. The trolls and dragonewts balk. This is sad; the improved world would be slightly less ideal without their seeds in the garden.

The god Nysalor is born, shining his nourishing White Light on the world. The trolls hate him and declare war. Nysalor burns the troll king, Ezkankekko, nurturing his hate. The devouring trolls make the Gbaji to fight him. Eventually they get their wish; Nysalor and Gbaji fight each other in the west and are both taken. Neither will reseed.

The death of Nysalor emboldens the dwarfs and trolls, who set about punishing us by attacking our forests.

In the Second Age, humans start their insupportable expansions, in both the west and centre. Throughout the world our forests are under threat. Both of the major Empires are like infestations of chewing bugs.

The God Learners come to Pamaltela and try to take over our jungles there. Certain of their minions, the Timinitis, are *literally* wood-chewing bugs! We repulse their onslaught but they are persistent and must be pushed back constantly.

In the eighth century, the elf hero Errinoru founds a mighty Empire in Pamaltela, battling God Learner lumber cutters with first weather magic, then disease and finally an animal

How To Act Like An Aldryami

- X Unfocus your eyes; look off into the distance, past the person you are talking to.
- X Talk so quietly others must strain to listen.
- X Bring a few dried leaves to the game session in a plastic bag; occasionally take them out and rustle them.
- X Speak in plant metaphors.
- X Tremble with quiet fury when the woods are threatened.
- X Have your character detour to forests. Once there, it lingers, listening to the song of Seyotel. Require sustained prompting from other Adventurers before you move or pay attention to pressing matters at hand.

army. When his successes there are solidly rooted, he allies with the seafaring Triolini and sails to Genertela. Errinoru razes several God Learner ports, in retaliation for their deforestation campaigns on the northern continent. His point made, he sails the best of his fleet into the Underworld itself. He and his sailors emerge years later, strengthened and strange.

In central Genertela, the wyrmfriends are so hypnotised by their envisioned next world that they heedlessly expend resources in this one. Their attempt to summon a Great Dragon from the earth will destroy many forests, if allowed to happen.

We sharpen our thorns and exude our poisons, to protect the wood.

My Life

Each of us is closely related to a particular sort of tree. We can live for hundreds of years. For this reason we are more cautious than our short-lived foes. When we go into battle, we have more to lose.

As we age, we gradually become more treelike. Our elders gradually lose their mobility, putting permanent roots down into the soil.

Some of us are only male and must pollinate with tree spirits, called dryads, who are always female.

We have no need for rulers or government. The song of Seyotel enables all of the aldryami of a forest to make decisions by harmonising with one another. God Learners call this a group mind but it is not so. You would have to feel the song inside

you to understand. We are individuals, with personalities like our trees. None of us are forced to do what the song tells us. We *want* to do it. When away from the forest, we are on our own. The sudden, crashing silence can be powerfully dispiriting, especially when suffered for the first time.

My Magic

Ask a God Learner whether Aldyra is a goddess or a spirit and you will suffer through a hair-splitting disquisition explaining that she is neither or both at the same time. The short answer is that the magic she grants works like Divine Magic but feels like a spirit encounter to the aldryami.

Why I Adventure

Through bitter experience we aldryami have learned to mistrust most other races. A few humans live in harmony with us but most of them are like insatiable termites. We go out into the world when our own forests are safe but others are threatened.

A tiny fraction of us suffer a severance from our home forests. These pitiful souls are the rootless. They often become renegades, who go out adventuring to ease the pain of their separation from Aldrya's song. We think of them as maniacal but those of you who adventure with them might find them usefully violent. They may or may not continue to uphold the sacred duty to protect the woods.

DRAGONEWTS

We are the dragonewts. For most of time you humans have been unable to understand our speech. Now you can hear what we say but do not always choose to listen. We will not reveal all of our secrets here. We have learned to be wary about that.

My Myths

I will try to say this in a way you can understand.

The Infinite Dragon was the dragon biting its tail, Ourobouros.

It became the Cosmic Dragon, which is everything that is. This was a devolution, because as soon as there is everything that is, there is its opposite, everything that is not. This opposite force was Orxili, the six-legged disruptor of meditations.

The Cosmic Dragon tamed it, tore off its limbs and made it into the Cosmic Egg. The Grand Ancestral Dragon hatched from it and made the knowable world and also six offspring. They were the guardians of silence, secrets, being, experience, thought and spirit – the Ancestral Dragons.

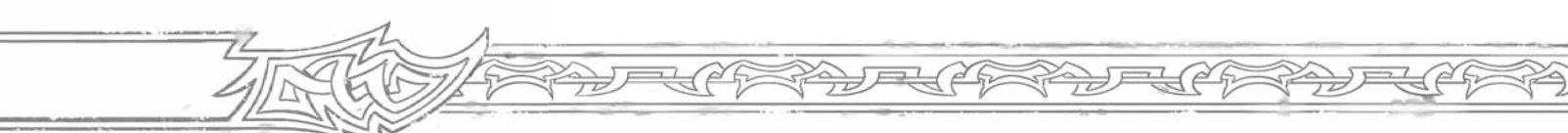


Orxili's missing limbs came back as Chaos and attacked. The Grand Ancestral Dragon used its own disorder against it, driving it back. The by-product of this interaction was Darkness and the beings that live in it.

Once the darkness element existed the devolution had to continue, so that its inevitable counterparts would be created. The Grand Ancestral Dragon committed utuma, the ritual self-slaughter of making. From its loins spilled the liquids, the waters and the beings that live in it. From its belly came earth and its beings. From its head came fire powers and creatures.

The Ancestral Dragons met in Dragon Pass to dance and mate. When these eggs hatched, they were the True Dragons. These are the highest dragons that exist in the material world. They are as big as mountain ranges. When a human or elder race myth mentions a fight between a god and a dragon, it is a True Dragon that is referred to.

When True Dragons dream, their projected thoughts reverberate in distant hills and valleys, manifesting as Dream



Dragons. These are the dragons we can meet. Sometimes you humans try to fight them.

When first born, the True Dragons were full of life yet bereft of ultimate perception. They mated too early and from their eggs we dragonewts hatched. Thus we were incomplete at birth. The Ancestral Dragons explained that we would have to finish our souls over many incarnations and laid the receptacle eggs. Our souls migrate into them at death and we are reborn. If we have progressed in the previous incarnation, we are born at a new stage of physical development. More often we have evolved slightly since the last form. At the end we can become True Dragons, too.

Our civilisation thrived during what you call the Green Age. But we were unwary. To progress spiritually, we turned away from the world. Outsiders came and ate our eggs. We were ruined.

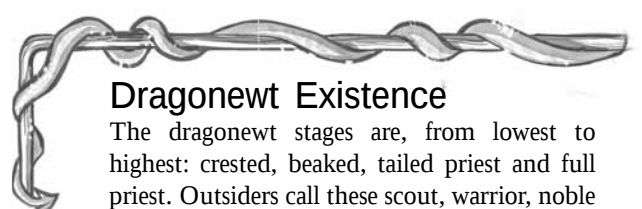
The dragonewt hero Falling Forward decreed the doctrine of Limited Participation. We would shape the world to the minimum extent necessary, to prevent it from again shaping us. Falling Forward paid the ultimate price to save us. As he performed his feats of protection, he devolved in form. He fell from highest dragonewt to lowest, then to a mere earthshaker and finally to a green-eyed human. Now called Fallen Backward, he committed utuma so we would not have to slay him. Nothing good came from his belly.

Chaos came back into the world. This was a threat; it would shape us. In Kralorela, dragon beings commanded the mortals, teaching them how to survive. In Dragon Pass, the dragonewt Heart of Weakness assisted the other beings, joining in the I Fought We Won battle.

My History

What you call history, we call existence. We do not die. Yes, our fleshly forms wear out and expire. Our souls migrate to eggs and we gestate and are reborn. If we have progressed spiritually, we hatch in a higher form. It can take many lifetimes to progress from one stage to the other. Unlike the human reincarnators of Teshnos, we retain full memories of our previous incarnations at all times. Your ancient past is our memory. We could answer many questions of your peoples' murky past – if we were capable of understanding the world in your terms.

You humans have always been poisonous to us. The other elder races leave us alone, more or less. But you cannot abide a mystery and have always tried to get inside us, like weasels breaking into an egg. You are so tied to the material and practical realms that every interaction with you is an invitation to cement our souls to this plane. It is not that you mean ill.



Dragonewt Existence

The dragonewt stages are, from lowest to highest: crested, beaked, tailed priest and full priest. Outsiders call these scout, warrior, noble and ruler.

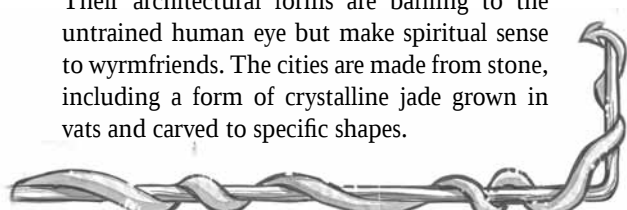
Crested dragonewts are the most common of us. This shows how hard it is to achieve spiritual progress. Crested dragonewts perform the labours and do back-up duty in battle. They build, repair, gather and toil. A natural reluctance shields them from undue contact with humans.

The hides of warriors gain thickness and detail over many incarnations, until they become beaked dragonewts. They are the heroes of the battlefield. They are bold but over-ready to engage with the ordinary world. They face constant spiritual peril.

Tailed priests lose the armoured padding of the warrior in exchange for brightly coloured ruffs and frills. They confine their interactions with humans, even wyrmfriends, to a minimum. Their potential for transcendence is too precious to risk. Full priests sometimes force them to interact but provide them with strict scripts governing the possible discourse. Thus neither full priest nor tailed priest is really enmeshing himself too deeply in the world.

Full priests gain massive wings and can work truly miraculous outer magic – but risk spiritual stasis or even devolution if they use any of it.

We live in settlements called nests. The largest of these are as big as human cities. Their architectural forms are baffling to the untrained human eye but make spiritual sense to wyrmfriends. The cities are made from stone, including a form of crystalline jade grown in vats and carved to specific shapes.



Not necessarily. It is simply that our ways of thinking and being are incompatible.

Sometimes we have mutual needs and interaction is required. In the old days, if we tried to speak directly into

your minds, you would stagger away, suffering confusion and bruised souls.

In the First Age, the human place that hurts us least is Kralorela. Because of what we taught them in the Chaos Time, people there retain a form of dragon wisdom understandable by human minds.

Dragon Pass, our homeland, is a different matter. There other peoples all want to shape the world. We must help shape or be shaped.

An intermediary is required. In the year 34, an Orlanthe named Drolgard comes to us and returns a fragment of the Dragonewt rune, which had been stolen during the Chaos Time. He is from the Council of World Friends. We entrust him with the secret of our real speech, which is made not only with tongue and teeth but with smells, gestures and projected feelings. To allow him to speak in this tongue, which you call Auld Wyrnish, we must give him a magical secret. Drolgard is trustworthy and respectful and teaches the secret to no one. When he dies, he allows his spirit to transmit it to others of a similarly responsible bent.

Our efforts to shape the First Council fail. Through Drolgard's heirs, we tell them that their plans to create a new earthly god will mire them in false reality but the Wind and Sun worshippers do not listen. We withdraw from the council. They create the new god anyway and, as we warned them, it is a Deceiver.

We stay out of the fight between the identity-shifting hero Arkat and the Deceiver, so as not to be shaped by them.

In 571 the God Learners raid Drolgard's temple and steal his secret. They do what we cannot: teach our language to humans. All across Dragon Pass, people come to us for answers. They seek draconic ascendance with apparent sincerity. We are shaken by controversy. On one hand, we do not wish to be shaped. On the other, our wisdom has aided the Kralori, without ill effect. Also, we have already shaped these spiritual Questers with our language, wittingly or not. Surely we are duty-bound to control the nature of that reshaping as best we can.

So we give the answers. Our leader in Dragon Pass, the Inhuman King, shows Vistikos Left-Eye how to commune with the Cosmic Dragon.

The Orlanthe are reshaped by us. They go forth and reshape the world. We fight alongside them, sending our wyrmlings and dinosaurs, too.

Every 33 years we gather in secret colloquy to ask ourselves: are we the shapers or the shaped? The next colloquy is due two years from now.

My Magic

There are two magics: inner and outer. Outer magics shape the world and are gross and visible in form. Common Magic is a kind of outer magic. Inner magics shape the self, making it more like a True Dragon.

The more outer magic you work, the harder it becomes to work inner magic. Even so, it is at times necessary to work outer magic to resist even greater changes being forced on you by other beings in the world.

Why I Adventure

Dragonewts who become irreparably enmeshed with the concerns of other races face exile. Most of us see this coming and voluntarily separate from our nests, lest we retard the spiritual purity of our fellows. These are the eccentric loners who tend to join mixed adventuring bands. They seek diversion, an outlet for their frustration and an end to loneliness. Many look for alternate religious practices, joining the few outsider cults that will accept them. For that reason there are a surprising number of Malkioni dragonewts, mostly crested, working for the God Learners. They will act as traders and mercenaries but refuse to aid Hwarosian or Zistorite sorcerers in penetrating dragon secrets.

We also adventure together or with dragon-friendly allies, to shape the world in a spiritually favourable manner. We fight for the EWF and against the Immanent Mastery movement in Kralorela.

MOSTALI (DWARFS)

We are the Mostali, the people of the Primal Stone. We dwell in mountains, make ingenious devices and keep their secrets from the rest of you. The world is a machine, which once worked perfectly by doing nothing at all. Our goal is to repair it so that all the broken, uncontrolled pieces stop doing what they are doing and come to a complete and final halt.

A good Mostali follows orders, gets the job done, does not ask questions and – most of all – gives no answers.

I should not be telling you any of this.

My Myths

Myths are just that. Stories. Gods are not real. We talk about Mostal but he is a personification of an abstract quality we work toward. So just know this up front: the accursed



Zistorite scum cannot get a hold of us and shake us by our own mythologies, because it is all just parable.

Mostal made things. That was his function and purpose. If he made things, logically it follows that he was the first entity, for thereafter he made everything else.

He made Helper, the first tool. He made the nine Mostali races. Most of all, he made the Spike, the central hub of the World Machine.

His co-worker (and brother) was Stone. As a material, Primal Stone was infinitely superior to that known today: pliable, ductile, beautiful, ever-changing.

Mostali Origins

Mostal constructed the Rock Mostali first, scooping stone into a container, the Rock Bowl. It tumbled until they were smooth and formed. They came out sound and ready to help him.

They made the Leaden Pot. Into its molten womb they poured raw materials. Lead Mostali came out, cooling. When they were no longer hot to the touch, they were ready to work.

Lead Mostali were more sensitive than their Rock co-workers, so they could help Mostal mould the Quicksilver Alembic. In this they made the Quicksilver Mostali.

They built the Copper Kettle and made the Copper Mostali, who made the Tin Dipper, from which the Tin Mostali emerged. These in turn constructed the Cauldron of Brass, producing the Brass Mostali, who made the Pan of Silver, from whence the Silver Mostali issued. They made the Ewer of Gold and thus the Gold Mostali. And the Gold Mostali made no others, as the task was complete.

The first Mostali to emerge from each container became its permanent guardian. You might think of them as the gods of their respective metals.

The Spike

As useful as we might be, we are not Mostal's greatest creation. That would be The Spike, the ideally symmetrical edifice of the legendary magical substance called Truestone. It was alive then and was the physical manifestation of Law. The Spike held the world together. Mostal pounded it into the middle of reality like a nail, binding its layers together. From a distance it looked like a huge mountain. Wherever you went, whether it be sky, earth, primal ocean or Underworld, there was the Spike, for all to see. Each of

the original gods received an appropriate palace within it. Of foremost interest was Mostal's own laboratory, where at this time all Mostali dwelt.

The Breaking of the World Machine

The disorder god Ratslaff laid the groundwork for destruction. He tickled Mostal's nose as our maker pounded the Spike deep into the layers of reality. Thanks to this mindless prank, a hairline crack appeared in the structure. From this tiny flaw emerged a new outlaw god, Umath the destroyer. With his howling winds, he aimed only to blow down the world. At first we withdrew from his nonsense, which hurt our minds. His band of vandal outlaws were only emboldened. They ripped the sky from its proper place, making it a thing of turbulence. The bowl of heaven tilted. The World Machine groaned, shrieked, spit out gears and belts and shuddered to a smoking halt. It had been broken.

For this reason we went to war. Until the outlaw gods were brought to heel, there was no point repairing the machine.

Mostal Dies

The elves revealed themselves as foes then. Their goddess had always lived on the slopes of the Spike, fouling it with her

unchecked growth. Now her gross fecundity worsened, till every good stone was covered by smothering fronds and tendrils.

In the early engagements of the Gods War, our armies distinguished themselves with superior numbers, unflagging discipline and surprising weapons which burst onto the battlefield, felling foes in great numbers.

One weapon we did not make. It was Death and it turned the tide against us. What it broke was irreparable. The elves got hold of it and used it to slaughter us. Their war leader, High King Elf, burst into Mostal's place, murdering both Mostal and Stone.

Iron, Clay and Diamond

Next came the invasion of the trolls, who bubbled up from below to capture us. They boiled us down and drank us.

So we returned to the sacred containers and made another one, the Crucible of Iron. We devised this new metal to be especially hurtful to our enemies, the trolls and elves. They armed themselves with axes, swords, shields and helmets.

We rallied but they killed more of us faster than we could quickly replace. So our ruling council formed the Tenth Container, the Clay Jar, from which the Clay Mostali clambered. These were lesser in every way than the other Mostali types but were easy to produce. They were armed and sent to battle.

The lowest of us were now made but we needed the highest, to replace murdered Mostal. So our council gathered to sing the most puissant mathematical formulae and made the Last Container, the Diamond Goblet. From it emerged the regal Diamond Mostali, who wielded our magic and served as our leaders.

Return from Chaos

The Diamond Mostali made the Decamony, the structure of authority we subscribe to still. They allied with gods when necessary, guided our military engagements with calculating wisdom and hunkered down as prudence demanded.

They saved us even when the lowest point came and Chaos came to explode the Spike. Most of the old Mostali were inside it at the time, which is why all but the Clay Mostali are rare now.

The struggle was long and terrible but we survived within our impregnable fortresses. As expedience dictated, we even allied with trolls and elves to stamp out Chaos.

This bought us time to effectuate the Temporary Repair. The most broken parts of the World Machine were restored. Our

fixes were aesthetically displeasing and not meant to last but they worked well enough to hoist the Great Worklight back into the sky and restore a modicum of order to the world. We installed the Clock Dial in the machine. This innovation was strong enough to bar the meddlesome gods from poking their fingers into the machine, ever again.

With stability achieved, we could work toward a permanent renovation of the machine. What we did not reckon on was the spread of heresy.

My History

After the Clock Dial starts ticking, the malfunction of Openhandism spreads. Mostali in Dragon Pass had fought alongside trolls, elves and men and were infected by a destructive spirit of comradeship. Openhandist dwarfs believe in the sharing of our secrets with others, in hopes of bending them to our way of thought. Orthodox Mostali know this is folly.

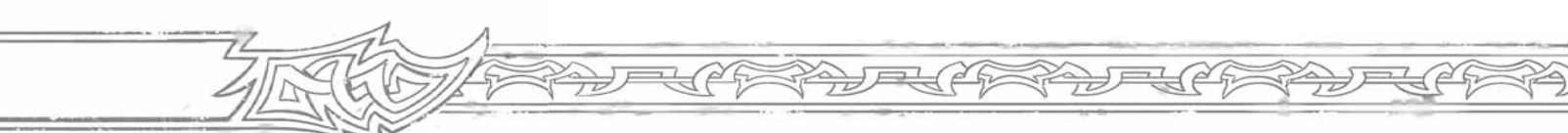
The Openhandists join the First Council. They help spread the knowledge of survival to all who need it. The Decamony censures them and, in 182, finally expels them entirely. Persisting in error, they join the Second Council and participate in the creation of the new god Nysalor. They are so dedicated to this challenge to the integrity of the Clock Dial that they make war on the trolls when they leave the council. Their own break with it comes only when elves assassinate their leader and the heretics fall into factional fighting.

In the West orthodox Mostali see Gbaji for the Chaos manifestation it is and join in fighting it. They ally with Arkat in furtherance of a noble but hidden purpose. As they invade Dragon Pass, they hope to return its malfunctionists to established doctrine. The mission ends in bitterness; the heretics are not so much redeemed as destroyed.

Early in the Second Age, the minor heresy of Octamonism develops. This ultra-orthodox doctrine holds that only the original Mostali of the Eight Minerals knew Mostal and are thus equipped to rule. It never achieves political power in any Mostali community but gains small pockets of adherents in each.

In 700 a worse malfunction flourishes. Chark the Liberator, who was formed before the Clock Dial ticked, quests into the Hero Plane to find Mostal. Instead he encounters a young Arkat there. The meeting convinces him that a single dwarf has inherent value aside from his contribution to the work group. We have souls, Chark claims, and retain identity even after death.

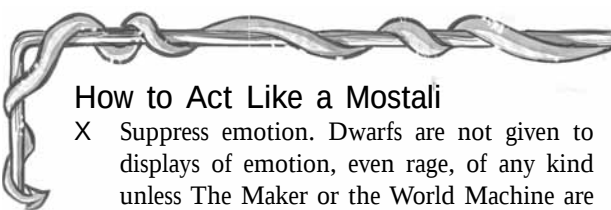
Individualists leave the community to seek their fortunes and make up their own minds about the purpose of existence. Many become disreputable adventurers.



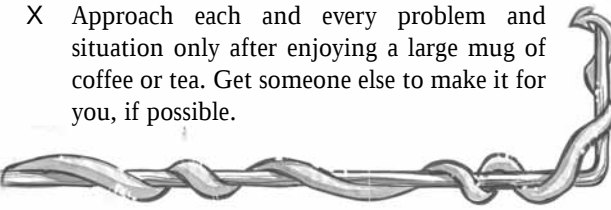
In 850 the Decamony expels them. Two years later it launches a successful war on the Individualist leaders of the Iron Mountains in northern Seshnela.

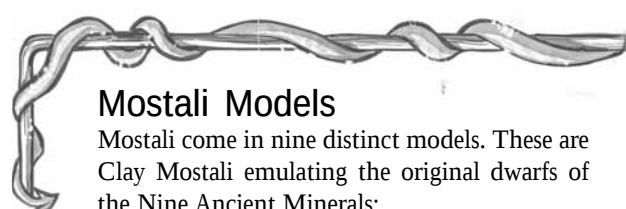
Openhandism is generally unpopular in the Imperial Age, as Mostali bristle at attempts by the God Learners and EWF to encroach on their secrets. The Greatway community of Balazar, near Dragon Pass, is an exception. The attack on the Iron Mountains reawakens their anti-Decamonic fervour.

Shortly thereafter, an invasion force from the Decamony, tacitly supported by the Middle Sea Emperor, attacks the Greatway. During its march, it is harassed by trolls and dragonewts, weakening it so that it is routed on arrival.



How to Act Like a Mostali

- X Suppress emotion. Dwarfs are not given to displays of emotion, even rage, of any kind unless The Maker or the World Machine are questioned or maligned.
 - X Approach everything as though it is a PRINCE2 project. Draw GANTT charts or complex brainmaps if appropriate.
 - X Show disdain for all things organic.
 - X Assess everything in terms of how the World Machine will be affected. Be as abstract as you like; no one but the Gold Mostali truly know the real complexity of the Master Plan.
 - X Exhibit utter hatred for all aldryami and Uz. Become murderous, even.
 - X Develop a set of rituals, abstract or roleplayed, that reflect your daily routine. Work chants are good, as is aligning all your tools in a specific order and giving them names. Count things many times over, just to be sure. Use a slide-rule instead of a calculator.
 - X Use of engineering, mechanical and technical jargon is good. Use of organic terms is bad.
 - X When confronted with a problem of particular significance, hook your thumbs into your belt or braces, shake your head sadly, take a large, loud, intake of breath and utter something like: 'That's going to take a while to fix...' or 'You're looking at *triple* time, *plus* labour...' or 'What idiot put *that* there....?'
 - X Approach each and every problem and situation only after enjoying a large mug of coffee or tea. Get someone else to make it for you, if possible.
- 



Mostali Models

Mostali come in nine distinct models. These are Clay Mostali emulating the original dwarfs of the Nine Ancient Minerals:

Rock dwarfs are stoneworkers, miners and architects.

Lead dwarfs are locksmiths, glassblowers and plumbers. They make wards to keep out intruders.

Quicksilver dwarfs are alchemists, pyrotechnicians and manufacturers of food products. (Dwarfs prefer their food tinned.) Other cultures covet their secret of gunpowder.

Copper dwarfs make tools, containers and certain weapons. Their energy conduits conduct magical forces throughout a well-stocked laboratory.

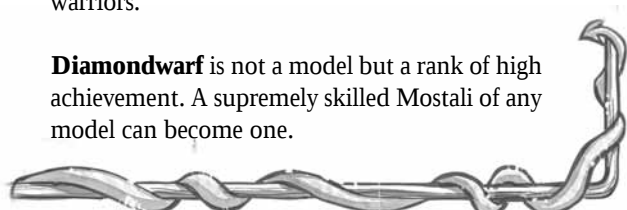
Tin dwarfs manufacture tools and containers, as well as an array of animate constructs, such as the nilmergs and jolanti.

Brass dwarfs are metallurgists and experts in high heat technology.

Silver dwarfs specialise in enchantments and multi-generational magical workings.

Gold dwarfs are teachers, scholars, archivists and logicians.

Iron dwarfs are blacksmiths, armourers and warriors.



Diamondwarf is not a model but a rank of high achievement. A supremely skilled Mostali of any model can become one.

In the present day, the Decamony faces a quandary. Trolls, wrymfriends and heretic dwarfs lay siege to the blasphemous Clanking City of Zistorwal in God Forgot. Controversy roils them as they decide whether to join their long-time enemies against an even worse foe.

My Magic

Our magic is that of alchemy and technology. We learn it from the ancient formulae laid down by Mostal. Humans think of it as Sorcery but it is better than that. We would tell you more but then we would have to kill you.

Why I Adventure

Adventuring is a suspect activity, rightly confined to those units infected by the malfunction of individualism. These

Mostali traverse the world in search of new experiences, to reinforce a false sense of identity. Some are also Openhandists, willing to share with non-Mostali.

Agents of the Decamony undertake discrete assignments to stamp out Mostali heresies and enemies and to recover stolen secrets and technologies.

TIMINITS (INSECT MEN)

We are the Timinits. You flesh men call us the bug people or insect men. We are the most varied of the races, manifesting in as many forms as there are days in the hot season. The Timinits come from the land of Pamaltela, dwelling in its jungles, on its coastlines and upon its idyllic, grassless prairies. We are also the newest of the races to rise to prominence. Once a backward and ignorant folk, we owe our vast strides in matters of trade and magic to the Jrusteli. They awakened us from our state of ignorance and taught us their secrets of Sorcery. Some of us are indebted to their spells of transformation for the changes in bodily structure that allow us to move about in a dangerous world. If the Middle Sea Empire were to dwindle or die, so would we. We would revert to a misbegotten existence in our steamy homeland.



Many of us have embraced their prophet, Malkion. The gift of logic is already natural to us. We are used to counting out our brief and dwindling days and when hunger necessitates, we eat of one another's bodies without sentimentality.

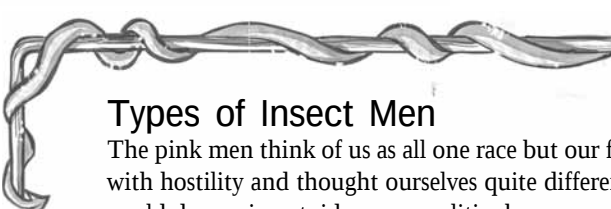
My Myths

Most Timinits you meet will have given up their old spirit-chasing ways to cloak themselves in the glorious mantle of the all-wise Invisible God. I dare say that we love him even more than you men do, for we still remember when we were little better than animals. We credit his magic and teachings with our salvation. Still, it is not good to entirely lose track of one's past and so we still tell the tales of our old, false gods as pleasant fables. They while away a long night on a ship's deck or on guard outside a lonely trading outpost.

The world began as an egg and in that state it was nourished and perfect, so far as that went. But then the egg divided, becoming twin siblings, Phermaphor and Paskadala. Phermaphor was the masculine principle of warring and roaming. Paskadala embodied the feminine nature of breeding and eating. Life was good and the insect men existed in innocence, without knowing of others. Each spring and summer Phermaphor would scour the land for food, growing fat, while his sister-wife would starve. He would return and wiggle the Courting Dance and she would be pleased and eat his head and belly. Thus fed, she would allow hundreds of eggs to wriggle from her abdomen and each year one of these would be Phermaphor, reborn. And the cycle would repeat, forever.

Then came the giants and they smashed the eggs and ate the egglings. This upset the balance, for Phermaphor's hunting and Paskadala's birthing were not great enough to feed both our people and the heedless giants. So we warred with them and out of their spite and our righteous rage arose the awful Bong-Ga-Log, who ate all the eggs and the sun besides. Timinits joined with the giant's smaller kin, the fire people and one day they found the biggest egg of all, which Paskadala had hidden deep within the loamy soil. And she was inside it and she burst forth with food for us again, although she was weakened and could not return with mortals to the ordinary world.

The spirits the ancient-ways Timinit shamans cling to are the spawn of the first eggs of Paskadala, back before the bad times started. These were released again when the Biggest Egg opened at time's beginning (shamans draw power from or propitiate other spirits but those are the important ones).



Types of Insect Men

The pink men think of us as all one race but our forms are extremely varied. Until recently, we viewed one another with hostility and thought ourselves quite different from one another. Only now that we have seen the rest of the world do our insectoid commonalities become apparent. I shall name only some of our questing horde.

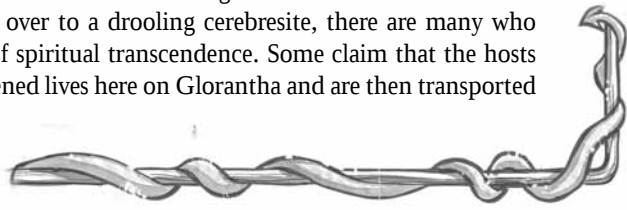
I am proud to be an **arachan**, lithe and elegant. We of the Spider Assembly are the most learned and thoughtful of the timinit. Though our mandibles drip with poison, our words are honeyed and eloquent. We make fine sorcerers and even finer merchants. We clothe our spindly forms in luxurious silks and drink deep of aphid wine.

Myrmidons are similarly slim and seemingly breakable, yet fight fiercely as warriors, instinctively knowing what is best for the whole at any moment. Different colourations of myrmidon abound; they used to go to war with one another but now fill the frightening ranks of Jrusteli armies.

Lucans are glossy black beetle creatures who root about in rotting logs. These intelligent but slow-witted herbivores protect their territories viciously. We have enjoyed middling success recruiting them as guards and sergeants. To keep them content requires a never-ending stock of timber.

The **ephemerae** are the most melancholy and poetic of our kind. They reach maturity at the age of two weeks, achieve a sorrowful philosophy by the age of one month and are dead within a year. They travel peripatetically, in a frenzy to experience all they can before they expire.

Their cousins, the **cerebresites**, strike many as vile, for they have learned to lengthen their otherwise equally brief lifespans through parasitism. They occupy the forms of dozens of other insect men over their decades of acquisitive existence. No matter which other timinit body they occupy, they burn it out after nine months to a year. As infirmity encroaches, they alter their host's anatomy, so that, whether male, female or hermaphrodite, they produce a pearlescent, soft-skinned egg. With sharpened pedipalps, they insert this egg into the brains of their next hosts. Consciousness is transferred instantly. The host loses volition and the cerebresite gains new life and locomotion for another year. Although I would not want to give myself over to a drooling cerebresite, there are many who value their lives little and perceive the egg-gifters as bearers of spiritual transcendence. Some claim that the hosts experience ceaseless Hrestoli Joy for the entirety of their shortened lives here on Glorantha and are then transported instantly to Malkion's Solace.



As you can tell, it is a charming story but not one to believe in, if you wish to walk among urbane people and impress them with your jewels and accomplishments.

My History

During the First Age, we kept to ourselves, leaving the soft-fleshed men to their own devices. A civilisation of misery arose in Fonrit; we ate leaves and mice and each other. The Agimori, sons of the destructive giants, spread across the plains. We told them that our eggs were ours to eat and that we would fight them with sticky webs and slashing forearms if they encroached on us. Sometimes they did encroach and then myrmidons slew them. Or were slain themselves. It does not much matter. As the Earthen Egg Mother Paskadala told us: 'I can always make more of you'.

At the end of the sixth century, when the Jrusteli appeared on our shores, wondering if there was nourishment for them too, a funny thing happened. Yes, some of them saw us as monsters and so we acted fiercely, in accordance with their provocations. Others, though, spoke to us of their Invisible God. They used the system of Cascading Logic, which was much like our belief in the Necessity of Cause and Action. The words of Malkion made sense to us. The stories of their saints were filled with glory and sacrifice and we liked that. We prayed for their intercession and were repaid with power and soul-solace.

When the Jrusteli established their colleges in Umathela, we insisted on being invited. By debate and mastery of Cascading Logic we proved our worthiness and were admitted. The

How To Act Like A Timinit

- X Regard death and loss with an inhuman detachment.
- X Staunchly admire Jrusteli civilisation.
- X Seek outward signs of success.
- X Become agitated and vaguely ashamed of timinits who adhere to the old ways.
- X Show a wide-eyed fascination with Sorcery and a greedy desire to prove your mastery of it.
- X Favour motion over stillness and exploration over speculation.
- X Prattle on endlessly about the joys of sea travel.
- X Move jerkily.
- X Make clicking noises.

sorcerers told us of other lands and we yearned to see them. When they put down the Waertagi and opened the seas, we were eager to sail. Once indifferent to coin, now we love it above all other things, as a hard-and-fast symbol of earthly accomplishment. Even more vital is the mastery of the rigid yet ineffable laws of magic. Love of Malkion's deeds is more crucial still.

Not everyone went along with the new life we were offered. We called the recalcitrant ones the Mouldy Sticks. They stuck to their spirits and the evanescent bounties of Paskadala's ever-bursting egg. This was no tragedy. Let them do what they want, our ancestors said. We were busy. Because Paskadala's realms were so simple and polluted by few other gods, they proved an ideal haven for early God Learner inquiries into the Questing Lands.

Then the Mouldy Sticks called us the Mammal Eaters and ambushed us and sent crawling spirits to infest our God Realm sojourns. This left us no choice but to battle them. In 674 came the Battle of Fruit Reef, where we landed on them in great numbers during their spirit journeys to counsel the dead. Many on both sides died and human sorcerers too. By mistake Paskadala's egg was scorched. Though it recovered decades later, right then there was famine and it was at least half our fault. We tried to make peace but bitter war flared among the Timinits for scores of years.

In 729 came the wind that made the myrmidons smarter than before. It blew in from the coast and was a trick sent by dragons to divide us. The Myrmidon Rebellion cost thousands of lives, fleshy and chitinous alike, and made it hard for even the most fervent Jrusteli friends to prove themselves.

862 brought a wave of attacks against us, when the Gleaming Syndicate, a merchant league dominated by cerebresites, cornered the Slontos grain market. Word of our supposed perfidy spread throughout the trading coasts and even Timinits who had nothing to do with it were chased by rioters.

At about this time the Umathelan settlers began to squirm under the yoke of their Seshnegi kings. The Umathelans were of original Jrusteli stock, adventurous, independent and questing. It was they we admired. The Seshnegi were related to them but lacked their spirit. They imposed heavy taxes on enterprise. These measures were prejudicial against us. The Seshnegi also said we should have fewer spots in the Umathelan universities, even when our merit warranted as many chairs as they could offer. So we joined with the Umathelan rebels in pulling away from the overseas kings. For the first time the rebels offered us equality with fleshy men if we would lend our Sorcery to their cause. This caused another schism, as some of us were now more attached to the greater Empire than to Umathela. The Trade Everywhere faction sent scourging spells against those of us who marched under the Freedom Is For Here banner.

In 901 the Umathelan Coalition formally drove out the Seshnegi masters. The Empire lost its other Pamaltelan holdings around this time, also. The Freedom Is For Here party helped to shove them out. We want to reconcile with the Trade Everywhere people but they have taken it as a personal insult, not to mention a knife cutting into their purses.

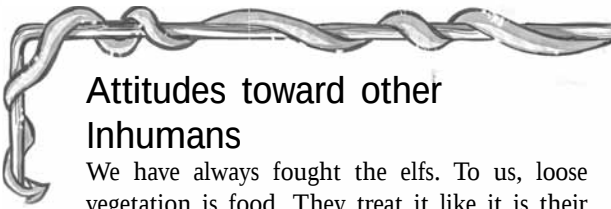
My Magic

Most modern Timinits practice Sorcery. Maybe one in a hundred continues to keep up his shamanic propitiation of Phermaphor and Paskadala and their spirit spawn, while also working spells from grimoires. Half of these oddballs do this out of sincere respect. The rest continue to see their discarded myth-world as an ideal place to conduct God Learner experiments. Even other Timinits who are God Learners in good standing consider this radical and rash, given the horrible mistake of the Scorching, in 674.

The so-called Mouldy Stick traditionalists of the Pamaltelan wilderness still follow the shamanic paths. A few hundred Timinits have defected to the EWF and pursue the mystical truth behind their passing similarities to dragonewts. They are full-blown mystics.

Why I Adventure

Timinits adventure for the following reasons: to find the solutions to vexing or illogical mysteries; to adorn themselves



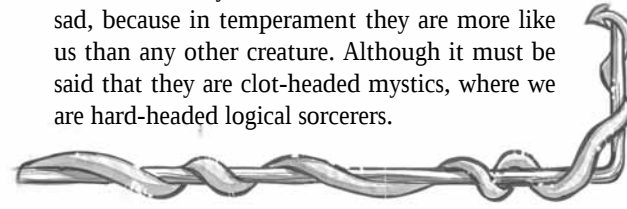
Attitudes toward other Inhumans

We have always fought the elves. To us, loose vegetation is food. They treat it like it is their eggs or something. We do not hate them. We simply need to eat. They despise us for pursuing the necessity of survival.

The trolls look at us, see we are insects and think they should rule us, as they rule the blind idiot bugs and worms they herd. Also, they think we are good to eat – the same thing they say about everybody. We like trolls who follow the trader god, Argan Argar but the rest are crude, violent and stupid.

Mostali are an enemy of the Empire, opposed especially against the Zistorites who manufacture so many valuable trade goods. Timinits who love the Empire loathe the dwarfs. Those who wish it ill may look kindly on them.

Dragonewts, like all of the EWF, are usually our enemies, as they are for all God Learners. It is sad, because in temperament they are more like us than any other creature. Although it must be said that they are clot-headed mystics, where we are hard-headed logical sorcerers.



with objects of wealth and status; to exalt the glory of the Invisible God; to broaden their horizons; to put their mathematical minds to good use, in the honest exchange of trade goods; to prove the value of their people to doubting outsiders; to atone for the regrettable scorching of Paskadala's egg; (cerebresites only) to find suitable new hosts.

Uz (TROLLS)

We are the Uz. Uz are the darkness people. The westerners call us trolls. The easterners call us dozaki. The nasty sun river people, what you call Pelorians, name us digijelm. Call us what you want. We are Uz.

We are big and muscly and our teeth are bigger than yours, too. Tusks, you might say. All the better to eat you with. Or eat anything, nearabouts. Uz are very hungry and our gods made everything on this world for us to eat.

Things that are not so good to eat: droppings, rocks and air. Uz will eat everything else before we eat those.

All of us used to be big and strong and fat. So magically powerful were we that we could slay you with a sniff of our great snouts. These were the UzUz, the Mistress Race trolls, who hardly exist now. We have suffered over time and now there are spindly, stunted or stupid sub-types all around.

Ordinary Uz, like me, are what you call dark trolls or man trolls. There are bigger, dumber Uz: the Uzdo (great trolls) and the bestial, cave-dwelling Romal. Most of our litters these days are small scuttling, nearly worthless individuals called enlo or trollkin. This is because we were cursed by the awful Chaos god, Gbaji.

We hate Chaos. We also hate light magic. We will eat elves, dwarfs, Timinits, humans – you name it – but that does not mean we hate them. It is our favourite joke to say we like them very much, especially with greens on the side.

We love the night and hate the light. You maybe have heard that it hurts Uz. It does not. Well, it hurts enlo and Romal but who cares about them?

Uz herd insects, spiders, worms and other squirming animals of the dark. Some of these beasts are very big in size.

My Myths

Darkness is not nothing. It is everything. So it had to come into being. It was Nakala, the primal darkness. At this time the other elements were personifying themselves as gods and even though Nakala was suspicious of it, it did it too. Nakala became Subere, who you could talk to and get help from.

Subere seized the Man rune from the other gods who had been messing with it. She dipped it in darkness and it became Kyger Litor, our greatest spirit. She bore Korasting, mother of many, who gave birth to most of the early great Uz heroes. Without any men getting involved, Kyger Litor and Korasting kept on birthing until they had brought the Seven Sacred Ancestors into the world. We count Korasting as one of the them. The others were:

Karrg, master of weapons, valiant protector, the first male. He is the good son, loyal to his mother and an example to all men.

Vaneekara, called the Hurler, after her skill at throwing, is the first daughter, an example to all women.

Jakaboom, Dancer in the Shadows, the first shaman, taught us to deal with spirits.

Jeset the Ferryman takes the spirits of the fallen across the river Adzurana, which leads to the land of the dead.

Hombobobom, the great drum, invented our sacred sounds and accompanies us in dancing.

Boztakang, the unformed. His brothers and sisters called him a layabout but he said: 'Just you wait. One day I will find a purpose and you'll all be sorry you mocked me.'

Together they dwelt in Wonderhome, a place of total darkness. And for a long time everything was good. Other races said it was bad, which shows you what they know. Other great spirits came along to aid Uz: **Zong**, stalker of prey, showed us how to hunt; **Dehore** (not an Uz but a shadow) contains all of the darkness spirits, who Jakaboom taught us to cajole and command; **Xiola Umbar** healed us when we were hurt and **Gorakiki** (not an Uz but an insect) let us tame, ride and eat her giant bugs. Some bugs are for riding, others for eating.

Then Death came into the world. Subere created it so that Kyger Litor's lost children might be returned to her. It was necessary but terrible.

Zorak Zoran was a frightening Uz, nearly as powerful as Kyger Litor. He took up Death and used it to fight not only enemies but also friends. He broke many taboos, wielding fire and raising undead.

Disaster came when the sun fell from your sky and burrowed deep into Wonderhome. It crippled our ancestresses and forced us from Wonderhome into what you call the surface world. We call it Komor, the Hurtplace.

In this awful land we struggled to eat and survive. We fought and ate the Orlanth wind people. Also the Aldrya plant people. Plus especially the Mostal stone people, some of whom are the tastiest of all. We fought and ate them all.

We learned to befriend new great spirits. Xentha (not an Uz but a force upon the world) was the goddess of night, who made the Hurtplace good for half the time, anyway. Himile (not an Uz but a snowstorm) gave us winter, which chases our enemies away, which is good. It buries our food but can be excused for that; Uz are good diggers.

Argan Argar, who was an Uz, showed us how to live on the surface world. He taught us the customs and languages of the other peoples, so we could relate to them in non-eating ways.

The one foe we could fight but could not eat was Chaos, which would have corrupted us inside if we consumed it. Boztakang found his purpose then. He became the Chaos Killer, who did what his name says, battling the hosts of Arquong, who tried to scourge us even from the Hurtplace. And his brothers and sisters *were* sorry that they had mocked him.

The elves, humans and dwarfs came to us and said: 'Please, please, let us take the sun back up to the sky'. And we thought it was a trick, because there was nothing we wanted more than to get the burning bright eye out of Wonderhome. So we made them beg us. They said: 'Please, please, we will make sure it comes out only half the time. The night goddess Xentha will put a blanket over his head every 12 hours or thereabouts'.

So we said 'fine', thinking we would get Wonderhome back. But we were cheated. We had to live in Hurtplace still and suffer the nasty half of each day when the Bright Eye was not covered in a blanket.

You call it the Dawn. We call it the Permanent Harm. Except we will fight to undo it somehow and make everything Wonderhome again.

My History

Throughout Glorantha we try to make the best of the new half-dark, half-lit world. Although Uz have been cheated, we still cooperate with the elves and humans, joining the Unity Council in Dragon Pass. Uz help them bring the secrets of living back to the starving, scattered, huddling people hiding in the corners of the world. Our leader is the brave and wise Ezkankekko, who is the son of Argan Argar.

Among these are the sun people, the Dara Happans, who we loathe. The human Orlanthi people do not like them much, either. Uz join in many good wars against the sun folk. But humans can not be trusted and before too long the sun and wind people have joined up against us.

The Unity Council becomes the First Council. They think up something stupid. They want to bring a new god into the world. It stinks bad to Uz. We can tell it will be a god of nasty light and we leave the First Council, so that it becomes the Broken Council. The dragon men see that we are right and they leave, too.

The stupid humans go ahead and make their god and sure enough, Nysalor is not only a god of illumination but of Chaos too! It is *twice* as bad as we figured! Uz name it Gbaji. We fight it wherever it goes.

Our first fights go very bad. We have yet to heal from them. We send the great spirit Black Eater against him. Gbaji erases the Black Eater from existence, then curses the wombs of all our mothers. After that, nine out of ten Uz births are not proper Uz but litters of lousy enlo.

A legendary hero walks among us to lead the crusade. He is Arkat Kortagi. He tricks the elves, the storm people and then the Sorcery humans, leading each in turn to think he is one of them. He takes their powers, combined with Uz magic and slays Gbaji. Then he sets up the Stygian Empire in Ralios. Uz are honoured there and have amazing food to eat. In the centre of the continent, Ezkankekko rules from his Castle of Lead.

In the year 500, Arkat goes away on a quest for Wonderhome. His departure ends the First Age.

In the east, Uz live in the kingdom of Ignorance. We fight the dragon humans there. Stupid dwarfs are our allies and they let



us down. We get beat and must retreat to mountains, where food is less plentiful. This happens in 550.

In the west, the Stygian Empire gets slowly weaker. We fight for it even though the sons of Arkat are more like humans than Uz, on the inside as well as on the outside.

In the centre, sun worshippers and then windfolk rebel against Ezkankekko's rule. Stupid enlo traitors help them out, because human healing women treat them good. The humans get free of us and soon after convert to crazy dragonewt worship. They start up the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. They invite us to join but Uz take no part of it. Dragons are trouble.

Ezkankekko's territory is reduced to the Shadow Plateau, in Kethaela. They say it is theirs, Uz say it is ours and that is that.

In 732, a Mistress Race troll called Cragspider, who lives in Dragon Pass and is left alone even by the wyrmfriends, attempts a great experiment. She HeroQuests to end the Womb-Biter Curse laid on us by Gbaji. Instead she learns how to make Great Trolls, who are big but dumb. They are better than enlo, anyhow.

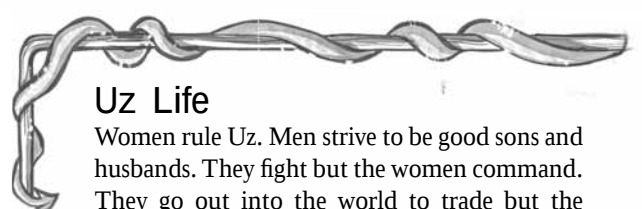
We are, in 742, among the bitter-enders who fight to save the last remnants of the Stygian Empire from God Learner invaders. Their weird Sorcery interferes with our ancient magics, as if they have stolen powers from Zorak Zoran and others. We get beat again and have to flee to caves.

In 768, the dragon people of Kralorela are driven out of their comfortable pagodas by the God Learners and their tricky friends. They storm into the place they pushed us into, the Kingdom of Ignorance. Uz are dispersed even further, into the coldest, tallest mountains.

In 842, the God Learners attack us in the Shadowlands. The EWF sends humans and dragonewts to help us beat them back. It is a big war. For once we do not lose. Ezkankekko is still in power there. Lately he is called the Only Old One, a name that shows he dates past further than the so-called Dawn.

My Magic

God Learners ask us: 'Your gods are sort of like gods and sort of like spirits. Please, please, please, tell us which it is'. We know they want to know this so they can steal more of our magic. So we say: 'In the winter and fall, they are spirits. The rest of the time they are gods'. And then the God Learners go



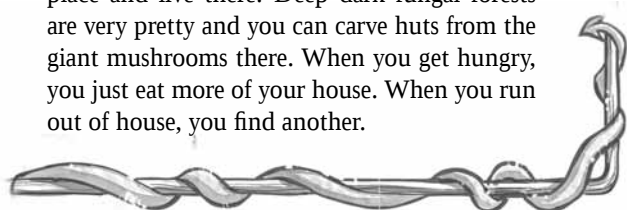
Uz Life

Women rule Uz. Men strive to be good sons and husbands. They fight but the women command. They go out into the world to trade but the women own the merchandise.

Although one in 10 births is a proper Uz, we make up about a quarter of a troll community. That is because the enlo do not last so long.

We treat enlo bad, like they deserve. We make them slave for us. If they wear out from overwork, there are always more to replace them. When we are extra hungry, we eat them. Sometimes the little worms betray us to our enemies. Maybe we should treat them even worse.

Caves and burrows are good places to live. We dig well but do not mine through solid rock the way dwarfs do. It is good to take over a dwarf place and live there. Deep dark fungal forests are very pretty and you can carve huts from the giant mushrooms there. When you get hungry, you just eat more of your house. When you run out of house, you find another.



and write this down and look all serious and we laugh and imagine them hanging on hooks in the meat-curing hut.

The real answer is, some gods give us Divine Magic and some give us spirit magic. And some give us both.

Why I Adventure

The world is full of good things to eat, if you go out to get them. Or you can get gold. Do not eat this, for you can trade it in for even more food. Well, eat it if you really want to.

Somewhere out there is the secret that will eliminate the Womb-Biter Curse. If you find it, you will be remembered forever, like Arkat.

Speaking of Arkat, he could come back any day to usher us back to Wonderhome. Maybe Uz should go look for him to make it happen sooner. Could be he is trapped or something and needs our help.

World Gazetteer

Preceding chapters have introduced the cultures, philosophies and myths of Gloranthans; this chapter walks through the world of Glorantha region-by-region. Use this chapter, and the previous ones, in conjunction with the Gloranthan Adventurers chapter (see page 187) to create a truly unique Gloranthan individual.

JRUSTELA

The glittering isle of Jrustela gave birth to the God Learner movement. Sorcerous advances developed here still form the backbone of the Empire's power. The political centre of the Empire may have shifted back to Seshnela, ancestral homeland of the Jrusteli, but those wishing to master – or unravel – its magical techniques must come here.

Geography: A large volcanic island, Jrustela thrusts regally from the cerulean waters of the Dashomo Sea, about 300 kilometres from the north-western coast of Pamaltela. Sharp peaks dominate its western half; at many points the western coastline is a sheer cliff face dropping into the sea. The isle's central basin comprises a lush sub-tropical forest, rising to shallower peaks along its eastern coastline.

Politics: Seshnegi migrants first settled the island around 250 years ago. Their city-states found unity as a Confederation, led by a prince (later styled a king) who was considered first among equals. Their descendants returned to Seshnela in 740 to free their land from the grip of the Stygian Empire. King Annmak united the crowns of Jrustela and Seshnela. His successors ruled from Seshnela and over time came to identify more with its traditionalist class structure. Jrustela was allowed to carry on in its questioning, semi-democratic spirit, under a traditionalist veneer. The city-lords of the various cities were made dukes of the Empire. Together they formed the Jrusteli Alliance, which gathers in conclave every four years to elect an Arch-Duke from among their number. They may re-elect the present Arch-Duke or replace him.

The current Arch-Duke is Norlantos of Jalanswal. He traces his descent through the first Jrusteli settlers all the way back to Nralar the Old, a great Seshnegi king from the end of the first age. He narrowly won his seat three and a half years ago, after a fierce lobbying effort underwritten by Emperor Ilotos. Norlantos attempts to tamp down resentment against

the Emperor by reformist Jrusteli who feel that he is too hidebound and insufficiently appreciative of the role the green isle plays in maintaining imperial power.

As his term of office nears its end, Norlantos campaigns for re-election. He faces a renewed challenge from Valarger, Duke of Eradanthanos, the city where reformist rhetoric runs hottest. High-strung and easily rattled, Valarger lacks the current Arch-Duke's smooth, manipulative instincts but makes up for his lack of finesse with sincerity and passion.

Commerce: After Jrustela broke the Waertagi hold on the seas, its traders boldly fanned out across the world, establishing an unprecedented commercial Empire. Its greatest merchant houses are all located here, in their original home cities, as are its banking and financial institutions. Anyone seeking audience with the true masters of global commerce must seek them in Jrustela. They maintain branch operations in Seshnela but the true wealth remains here. The money men of Jrustela resent undue taxation by distant Emperors and lend support to the reformist tendency.

Magic: Jrustela originated the schools of mythic studies that later converged as the God Learner Alliance. The *Abiding Book* manifested itself here. No sorcerer may call himself great until he has tested himself against the scholars of Jrustela, either in debate or in a duel of spells. The top universities are located in Eradithanos, Piskotol and Irenstos.

Cities of Jrustela

Though other cities exist, the largest are the surviving 12 colonies which comprised the original Jrusteli Confederation and now send their Dukes as electors to choose the Arch-Duke.

Arshu Phola

The people of Arshu Phola descend not from Seshnegi but Slontans brought here by the Waertagi before the end of the first age. Some say they were enslaved and taken here against their will; others, that they fled political turmoil in their homeland. When discovered by the first Jrusteli, they were assumed to be natives. They warred with the original migrants at first but then achieved harmony. Their barbarian theist roots can be seen in the symbology and ritual of their Malkioni worship.



Leadership: The steely Duke Garolan maintains a tight rein on public order and tax revenues.

Reasons to come here: Looking for a theist priest to provide magic or spiritual guidance? They cluster here, where their traditions are respected and sometimes carried on under a thin veil of Malkionism.

Eradinthanos

Eradinthanos claims eternal glory as the home of the original Seven Explorers, the founders of God Learner inquiry, and as the site of the *Abiding Book* manifestation. This is a city of priests and sorcerers, who attempt to maintain mutual

harmony but do not always succeed. A seat at the University of Eradinthanos stands as the most coveted post in western Sorcery. Pilgrims come from all over the Malkioni world to visit the awesome Cathedral of the Book.

Leadership: Duke Valarger.

Reasons to come here: For its repositories of religious and magical knowledge.

Evrowal

Located on a balmy promontory on the island's north coast, Evrowal is a bastion of reformism. According to long tradition,

its Duke is chosen by lot from its coterie of eligible nobles and serves for a five-year term. When Ilotos tried to appoint a permanent Duke of Evrowal seven years ago, riots broke out in the streets, prompting an embarrassing withdrawal.

Leadership: Beels, a melancholy knight, postponed his intended suicide when fate chose him to rule the city. He has three years left of his term, after which his friends fear he will go ahead and fall on his sword.

Reasons to come here: Intrigue-seeking adventurers can find patrons hiring for operations in furtherance of the reformist cause.

Hathinelthor

The cynicism of perverted ideals runs like a disease through Hathinelthor, a financial capital and wellspring of underhanded doings. Dukes of this city rule for life. Upon their demise, an elector's council of nobles convenes to choose a successor, who may not be related to the previous lord. Intended to prevent corruption, the rule encourages covert affairs between the duke and ladies of the court, to produce illegitimate sons to succeed the present ruler.

Leadership: Duke Miskos strives to build the highest tower in all of Jrustela, ignoring safety concerns in this chronically wind-swept city.

Reasons to come here: Political mysteries often lead to Hathinelthor, where bulging purses change hands under darkened tavern tables.

Hredmorinos

Ruled by a parliament, the people of Hredmorinos agitate for reform measures out of a long-standing commitment to democracy. Its first leaders warred against the island's Timinitis, who refuse to pass through the city gates. They say it is haunted by the ghosts of their screaming ancestors.

Leadership: Tindryza the Geologist, a scholar-warrior expert in earth mythologies and Mostali technology, recently won the dukedom by promising to press the reformist case all the way to Seshnela.

Reasons to come here: The University of Hredmorinos specialises in the artefacts and mythologies of the elder races, including Timinitis.

Irenstos

Like Arshu Phola, Irenstos' original inhabitants were Slontan. Their proximity to a river allowed them to outgrow that city. It also encouraged assimilation with the later wave of Jrustelan immigration. Under the charismatic early scholar Darangor,

Allegiances of Jrustela

City	Leaning of Populace	Leaning of Duke
Arshu Phola	Reformist	Loyalist
Eradinthanos	Reformist	Reformist
Evrowal	Reformist	Swing vote
Hathinelthor	Loyalist	Loyalist
Hredmorinos	Reformist	Reformist
Irenstos	Reformist	Loyalist
Jalanswal	Loyalist	Loyalist
New Frowal	Loyalist	Swing vote
Orphalsketkal	Reformist	Reformist
Peresk	Loyalist	Reformist
Piskosol	Reformist	Reformist
Shenilstos	Loyalist	Loyalist

its people flocked to the sorcerous study movement. His institutions eventually grew into Irenstos University, a prestigious school that maintains a bitter rivalry with the University of Piskosol.

Leadership: Duke Yuthelmag the Hobbled rules by right of his seniority in an unbroken dynasty of city lords dating back to the original migration.

Reasons to come here: Irenstos is a centre of trade for the entire island and houses a substantial Pamaltelan population.

Jalanswal

The arch-conservative citizens of Jalanswal take overweening pride in the ancient, royal Seshnegi blood flowing through their veins. They cling to Seshnegi ways and eagerly clasp new arrivals from Seshnela to their collective bosom. Imperial officials cluster here, as the city is the current Arch-Ducal seat.

Leadership: Arch-Duke Norlantos.

Reasons to come here: To do business with imperial officials.

New Frowal

New Frowal clings to its status as the first Seshnegi-settled city, despite its eclipse in wealth, knowledge and influence by later settlements. Famously touchy, the people of New Frowal warrant its nickname, 'the City of Resentment'.

Leadership: The pious Duke Kontharan is scholar, magician and holy man, wrapped into one. On Godday he must concentrate to avoid levitating off the cobblestones.

Reasons to come here: Other Jrusteli suspect that New Frowal's proud Civic Union covertly hires adventurers to sabotage their festivals and public works projects.

Orphalsketkal (New Orphalsket)

The drydocks of this northern city turn out the Empire's fastest, largest and most splendid ships. The universities of Orphalsketkal turn out sorcerers of a practical bent, particularly those useful in maritime adventurer. Their captive sylphs power the wondrous ships of the Orphalsketkal fleet.

Ducal authority is hereditary but if the heir apparent fails to pass its Three Sailing Tests, the dukedom passes to the next eligible male in the ruling dynasty.

Leadership: In his wild younger days, Duke Bauratos captained a pirate vessel preying on the East Isles.

Reasons to come here: Adventurers sailing into or out of Jrustela most often pass through Orphalsketkal.

Jorge Monparler



Peresk

Another of the Old Slontan cities, Peresk won a place for itself in the Confederation by force of arms. Its young men strive to prove themselves as warriors. Battle cadres hire themselves out to the lords of other cities to quell internal strife. Those with further-flung ambitions set sail for other imperial territories in need of fervent troops. Its Sorcery college specialises in martial spells.

Leadership: Duke Shordone returned in disgrace to Peresk after losing a legion in the Pamaltelan revolt. He has since soured on the Emperor whose bad judgment led to his humiliation.

Reasons to come here: Warriors at loose ends can find employment in its mercenary hiring halls.

Piskosol

Once famed as home of the first Jrustelan prince, Piskosol is now known chiefly as 'Timinit City'. The island's insect people have descended on the city en masse, filling its universities, guild halls, taverns and factories. They strive to be more Jrusteli than the Jrusteli, whatever that means.

Each neighbourhood, or ward, selects an elector to choose the duke, who is reaffirmed in office every six years. Recent dukes have all curried the favour of various insect factions.

Leadership: The vacillating Duke Paptalor wreathes himself in black pearls and is attended by a retinue of arachan monks.

Reasons to come here: Adventures involving the Timinitis nearly always begin, pass through or end in Piskosol.

Shenilstos

This Slontan city maintains an old rivalry with Irenstos over trading territory. Where the Irensti sought to assimilate with the Jrusteli, the Shenilstosites stuck to their barbarian faith. Their dedication lasted until the miracle of the *Abiding Book*, at which point they converted in great numbers. Imbued with the unique fervour of fresh converts, they formed the core of the Rightness Army. The Order of the New Iron Staff headquarters here, wielding the Malkioni magic of smiting and retribution.

Leadership: The implacable Duke Sableros commands an elite unit of the Rightness Army.

Reasons to come here: Dealings with the Rightness Crusade invariably lead to Shenilstos.

Svalwal, The Shattered City

Destroyed in a 665 tidal wave sent by the Waertagi, the city of Svalwal remains a swamped and shattered ruin. Hostile marine spirits roam its sunken, canal-like streets, preventing attempts at resettlement.

SESHNELA

Seshnela is the heart of the God Learner Empire. It stood as a beacon of civilisation even during the Darkness. It flowered early in the First Age, only to be subjugated by Arkat's Stygian Empire in the era's fading years. Refugees from Seshnela founded the fabulous cities of Jrusteli, liberating their homeland from the Stygians many generations later. Since then Seshnela rapidly entered a golden age, leading an Empire dedicated to trade, conquest and sorcerous inquiry.

Its capital, **Frowal**, sends soaring spires of bizarre God Learner architecture high into its sky. Its sunsets are brighter and more colourful than anywhere else in the world. No blue is deeper than that of its fragrant summer skies. Ill weather scarcely troubles its shores. The Imperial Palace sits on a hillside overlooking the city, folding out in two sections resembling the *Abiding Book*. Other cities of nearly equivalent splendour include:

- X **Arkwal**, a city of warriors. Built around a black fortress established by Arkat during his war of liberation against Gbaji, it served as a capital during the Stygian dominance of Seshnela. Ruined during the Jrusteli liberation, it has been reconstructed as a garrison town. Mercenaries flock here seeking places in the Empire's various foreign legions. It tolerates a high degree of disorder from high-spirited troublemakers and serves as a gathering place for war bands in need of fresh blood.
- X **Damolsten**, named for its founder, a First Age hero. Its most famous landmark is the Hanging Tower, which descends from above instead of ascending from the ground (Brithini sneer that it is but a pale imitation of the original, found in their capital city). Indentured Mostali, their wills sapped by the Unbendable Staff of Damolstan, toil on behalf of wealthy Seshnegi masters.
- X **Estan**, a university town reinvigorated by the God Learners. The last few years it has been plagued by intermittent rains of squid and octopi, surely the result of an experiment gone wrong.
- X **Genertsket**, the wealthiest port of Seshnela, which makes it extraordinarily rich. Its courtiers advocate a program of peace and prosperity, opposing the excesses of God Learners and Rightness Army alike. They are in political decline now, having lost the Emperor's goodwill by trying to counsel him against the Ducal Wars.
- X **Hrestolket**, a vibrant settlement celebrating free thinking and sorcerous innovation. Castigated by conservatives as Heresy City, its cathedral contains many relics of its namesake, the Great Prophet Hrestol.
- X **Laurmal**, a settlement dedicated to trade and craftsmanship. Its Ironworkers Guild has mastered the art of working that difficult metal, making weapons and implements in demand throughout the world. Despite their brother's mistreatment in the city of Damolsten, Mostali come here to trade with the Seshnegi. Delegations from both cities clash at the imperial court over relations with the dwarfs.
- X **Neleswal**, a thriving port. Its Duke, Nelos V, encourages cultural expression, attracting the world's best actors and dancers to perform at lavish masques held at his estates. Pilgrims flock to Neleswal's imposing cathedral, where ornate reliquaries display the bones of the city's founders.
- X **Orphalsket**, a port on the mouth of the Irier River. It boasts three marketplaces, the most fabulous of which, the Banquet of the Gods, is accessible only by dispensation of the Emperor. There the dukes and nobles of Seshnela stroll from booth to booth, dining on incredible magical foodstuffs. Some are merely augmented by culinary Sorcery but others are the spoils of Other Side raids or made with recipes liberated from various heathen hearth gods.
- X **Pasos**, a south coast seaport. Its religious orders are known for their austerity and resistance to the primacy of the God Learner sorcerers. The Duke of Pasos, an impatient man named Ilondin, must forever mollify its popular religious leaders. The most influential and troublesome is the monk Oriaba, who has maintained an uncomfortable squatting position ever since the days of his youth. He is carried to meetings on a strange thorny chair.
- X **Segurane**, an old fortress and river port. Several stirring poems celebrate its virtues as a point of defence against the Stygian Empire of Ralios. The sages of its knowledge market are famed for their speedy responses and high prices, if not their punctilious accuracy.

Around the cities lie various duchies, assigned by the Emperor to favoured courtiers. The dukes enjoyed considerable influence until late, granting lands to subservient lords and withholding monies from the imperial treasuries. The Emperor's move to strip the dukes of Aronalit and Ralios of their holdings has chastened them dramatically.

The richest of the duchies is **Tanisor**, a bowl of fertile land surrounding the lower Tanier River. Its people descend from the Pendali, an ancient race of lion men, who long ago abandoned their hsunchen ways. Their comparatively dark complexions distinguish them from the pale-skinned Seshnegi. Rumours of an ancient vampire cult that haunts Tanisor by night are greatly exaggerated. Arkat fought a vampire legion in Tanisor hundreds of years ago but now the activities of its nocturnal blood-drinkers are almost entirely curtailed. Just ask the Duke of Tanisor, Langila, whose unearthly pallor is in no way connected to vampirism. His recent expeditions to the remnants of Tanewal, a shattered city also called the Red Ruin, are doubtless motivated by the purest of academic motives.



Jorestel's Forest, a lush tree belt on the northern coast of the Seshnegi peninsula, attests to an alliance with the local aldryami dating back to the Dawn. Every year the Emperor and King Elf Jorestel meet to reaffirm their mutual vow to protect the trees of Seshnela.

Arolanit

Local powers have always fought bitterly to control the coastal territory of Arolanit, to the north of Seshnela. Known as the breadbasket of the west, the richness of its harvests outstrip even Tanisor. God Learner sorcerers, using fertility secrets gleaned from their study of the earth pantheon, have wrenched further bounty from its fields, filling the tables of Seshnela's ever-increasing population.

Haughty local dukes, enriched by its bursting grain bushels, aroused the wrath of Emperor Ilotos, who stripped them of their lands in the recent Ducal Wars. Unlike Ralios, a new order was quickly re-established here, with Ilotos' favoured courtiers filling old ducal seats and pliantly answering his demands for increased revenues.

The people of Arolanit speak a different dialect than their Seshnegi neighbours. They revere Prince Hrestol and his mother, merciful Xemela, above all other saints. Their worship ceremonies are noted for their ebullience, joyous music and ordinary congregants' spontaneous outbursts of giddy sermonising. The Arolaniti peasants, who consider scowling and pessimism as dreadful sins, are known as the Happy People.

BRITHOS

The grey and craggy isle of Brithos is home to a culture of isolationist, immortal sorcerers. Through unwavering obedience to a strict, caste-based social structure, they achieve immortality. Among the Brithini there is no room for error. Any instance of non-compliance, innovation or questioning of authority, no matter how minor, can begin an inexorable and irreversible aging process. In matters of faith, they worship no one and nothing but revere the impersonal forces of the universe. They live forever but have no afterlife.

They hold the highest respect for Zzabur, a quasi-divine immortal prehuman who slumbers in a vast mist-shrouded tower in the middle of the island. The Brithini attribute the invention of Sorcery to him and claim him as a brother of Malkion himself. He also participated in – some say masterminded – the death of Malkion the Prophet.

Hierarchy embeds itself deeply in the Brithini psyche. Every person knows his place in the chain of authority, reporting

The death of Malkion the Prophet culminated in a necessary progression of supernal states. In facilitating its fruition, I performed an essential action, without which the eventual emergence from Darkness could not have occurred.

— Zzabur, Immortal of Brithos

to a superior for guidance. The four castes are the Talars (officers), Holar (soldiers), Zzaburs (sorcerers) and Dronars (farmers and artisans). Each speaks a specialised dialect of the Brithini tongue.

Women belong to a quasi-caste of their own and may not wield public influence. Both men and women view the prospect of sexual contact with shuddering revulsion, engaging in it only when ordered to reproduce.

Children are all but absent from Brithos. Births are rare and accompanied by extensive sorcerous rituals to imbue the newborn with the capacity for immortality.

Brithini do not age or contract ordinary diseases but are susceptible to death by injury. They drop their usual reserve at funerals, which become lengthy, ritualised explosions of inconsolable grief.

The Brithini greet uninvited visitors to their land with harsh efficiency. Few adventurers who travel there without the patronage of a Brithini lord or wizard return with mind and body intact. Vigilant citizens report new arrivals within moments of their appearance on Brithini shores. Traps and alarms litter the island's borderlands.

Even authorised visitors may not practice their own faith while on the island.

Self-sufficiency rules the Brithini economy. Necessities are produced by the Dronars. What cannot be made here naturally is synthesised via Sorcery, or done without. Talars and Zzaburs occasionally import collectibles, books or magical implements. A handful of Waertagi traders discreetly conduct this business for them.

Sesupwal, the City of Circles, located in the centre of Brithos, serves as the island's capital. Its outer circle houses the labouring caste. Its next circle, guarded by miraculous



engines of war, comprises the barracks for the military caste. It encircles the Talar Circle, where leaders and administrators live and work. Behind a canal of molten metal rise four towers, where wizardly orders are quartered. In the middle of these looms the tower of Zzabur himself; it can be seen from anywhere on Brithos.

If Sesupwal is the centre of a compass, the four great cities are arranged around it at its four cardinal points. Each is

devoted to a caste: Zaaburket (sorcerers), Talarswal (leaders), Gwymirwal (soldiers) and Dromalwal (farmers). A women's city, Uruvensket, allows for birthing and other unseemly but necessary female activities to occur far from the gaze of men.

Waertagswal is the Brithini port city. It used to house the Waertagi fleet. Now that the Jrusteli destroyed that, the Brithini have been forced to build their own inferior armada, heavily staffed by Waertagi survivors.

Reasons to come here: The Brithini are deadly enemies of the God Learner Empire, who hire expendable adventurers to conduct intelligence and sabotage missions against them.

Hostilities between the two powers date at least as far back as 823, when the overreaching God Learner Emperor launched a disastrous invasion attempt against the grey isle. Ever since then the Brithini have schemed behind the scenes to undermine the Middle Sea Empire.

FRONELA

In the Dawn Age, the land that came to be known as Fronela was in turmoil. Barbarians ruled from the forests of Winterwood and Rathorela, through the Janube Valley and down to the Nidan Mountains. The land was in a constant flux of war and murder, with hundreds of pagan gods driving their tribes to acts of mindless slaughter. Life was short; true belief was lacking. Civilisation? None that could be discerned. Fronela was a land of perpetual war. Pockets of civility existed; Agria in the north, Sog City at the mouth of the Janube but elsewhere it was turmoil.

Things changed when Hrestol, a prince of the Seshneg, experienced the revelations of the Invisible God and decided to unite the western lands through union with the Invisible God. Hrestol's task was to teach Solace in Glory to the heathen mass and he undertook several great pilgrimages and underwent further revelations along the way. His teachings invigorated the stale, static Malkionist cults that were scattered in the midst of the pagan gods and they began to see order emerging from the disruption. As Hrestol preached, he was accepted as the Prince, the Judge and the Prophet. His ideas spread; idealism replaced stagnation; the word of the Invisible God challenged and replaced the pagan gods, who faltered and died. Hrestol's ideas of chivalry and unswerving devotion to the Law of the Invisible God replaced the chaos of unchecked war. Kingdoms coalesced and found direction; logic through worship replaced undirected political ambition. Steadily, Fronela became civilised.

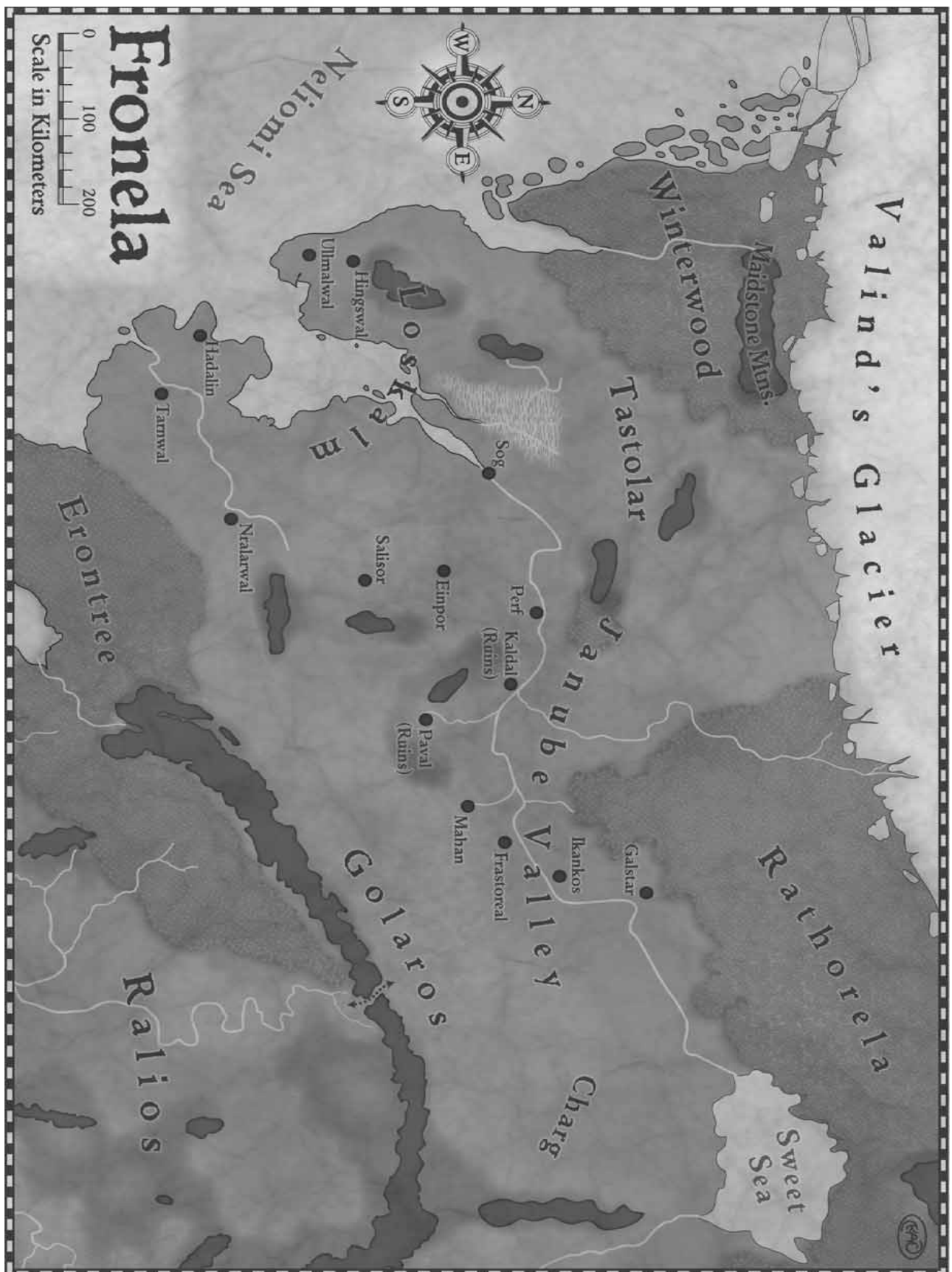
Following Hrestol's martyrdom on Sog City, Hrestolism as a religion takes hold across Fronela. The kingdom of Akem is formed in the south of Fronela, arising from fragmented Junora and assimilating small kingdoms around the Ozur Bay. Akem became the prevailing nation across Fronela, uniting all under its banner, and, for 265 years, it was a powerful seat of Malkionist and Hrestolic belief. However, sorcerous experiments open the Gate of Banir in Akem, which allowed Gbaji to enter the kingdom and for almost two centuries his agents work tirelessly to establish Gbaji as the challenger to order and the Invisible God. Gbajists turn Akem's benevolent

rule into a tyrannical power intent on subjugation along the Janube. Heroes working from outside and inside Akem, such as Varganthar and Talor, eventually close the Gate of Banir and defeat the Gbajists, but at a terrible price: Akem ceases to exist as a kingdom and is absorbed into the relatively new kingdom of Loskalm.

Loskalm represented an alliance of small states who opposed the tyranny of Akem. As others joined its cause, its territories increased, coming to include Junora and, following the closing of the Gate of Banir, Akem. Following Akem's demise, Loskalm rules peacefully for 200 years but it eventually plunged into its own, introverted mess as the Wars of Succession threatened to wreck the kingdom completely. Noble families struggled for the throne of Loskalm and, even though peace was reached after 25 years of war, it was at considerable cost to Loskalm. One faction had accepted the support of the God Learners; this secured them power but also cemented God Learner influence in western Fronela. Loskalm joined the Middle Sea Empire in 727, forcing some generals of the Wars of Succession out of Fronela completely. One such exile was Syranthir Forefront, a challenger for Loskalm's crown who was pushed by Jrusteli forces across the Janube valley and out through Charg. Leaving Fronela forever, Syranthir eventually reached Peloria and formed Carmania, with himself as its first Shah.

The God Learners ruled for 140 years, launching campaigns along the Janube and replacing Hrestolism with the True Malkioni Church. At first, Jrusteli influence was benign but as the Middle Sea Empire consolidated its power across Glorantha, and prevailed in battles against the EWF, its malevolence increased. Its rule in largely peaceful cities became heavy-handed and, eventually, Loskalm would take no more. Rebellion against the God Learners was swift and brutal. Taken by surprise, the God Learners struggled to retain control and, one by one, the Loskalmi provinces and Janube city states, rose up against the Middle Sea Empire. By 865 the God Learners had been forced to abandon most (but not all) of their Fronelan colonies, the empire unable and unwilling to fund protracted warfare across such a huge area.

Fronela returned to independence. Loskalm remains dominant in the west but the Janube city states, Golaros, Charg, Rathorela and Tastolar are free of the influence of empire. Hrestolism has returned but is forced to sit beside entrenched Malkionist beliefs. The God Learners have pockets of influence here and there, but are largely isolated. In the east, the EWF has made inroads into Fronela but has been checked at the Janube city states by the intervention of the Carmanians – Syranthir's descendents – who have placed themselves as custodians of Old Beliefs, keen to ensure that Wyrmfriendism does not



spread across Fronela in the same way the Jrusteli spread, virus-like, across Loskalm.

Loskalm

Loskalm was the first Genertelan territory fully conquered by the Jrusteli after they broke the Waertagi fleet (they began the retaking of their Seshnegi homeland first but that war took longer to complete). Since Prince Hrestol's first visits here in the first century, Loskalm has been conquered, divided and subsequently thrown-off the God Learner dominance that corrupted the country for so long. Now it is a land attempting to re-establish its identity expressed through Hrestolism, not pure Malkioni doctrine. Under the kings, Loskalm has forged a tradition of egalitarianism and chivalry: all men are equal and every knight and noble must understand the ways of the lowliest peasant and stick-picker if he is to truly realise his own potential.

The Hrestoli Code of Chivalry

As defined by Saint Hrestol and codified in the Companion Book (original copy held in Southpoint Cathedral)

- X *To acknowledge that there is One True God and Malkion and Hrestol are his prophets*
- X *To fear and respect the Invisible God, his prophets Malkion and Hrestol and maintain their church*
- X *To respect and serve the memory and miracles of the Saints, acknowledging their immortal place in Solace*
- X *To pursue Joy and Solace through example and leadership*
- X *To serve the liege lord in valour and faith*
- X *To protect the weak and defenceless*
- X *To give succour to widows and orphans*
- X *To refrain from the wanton giving of offence*
- X *To live by honour and for glory*
- X *To despise pecuniary reward*
- X *To fight for the welfare of Loskalm and all loyal to its ways and to Saint Hrestol*
- X *To obey those placed in authority*
- X *To guard the honour of fellow knights*
- X *To eschew unfairness, meanness and deceit*
- X *To keep faith*
- X *At all times to speak the truth*
- X *To respect the honour of women*
- X *Never to refuse a challenge from an equal*
- X *Never to turn one's back upon a foe*

Loskalm is therefore wary. The God Learners maintain pockets of their old empire in the Janube valley and to the south envious God Learner eyes turn to what has been lost and consider how it can be retaken.

Reasons to come here: Loskalm seeks a fresh identity and Adventurers are welcomed if they bring trade, expertise and are prepared to venture up the Janube River to challenge the residual God Learners and the remnants of the Wyrmfriends.

Notables

Hernies, the Ivory Knight, rides through the countryside righting wrongs on the back of his silver steed, named Virtue. An eloquent advocate of utopia, he declines to criticise current leaders by name. Even more troubling to local authorities are the regular thrashings he delivers to overzealous tax collectors. Wary of any action that might make a martyr of him, Loskalm's dukes hire operators to tar his reputation with scandal, real or invented.

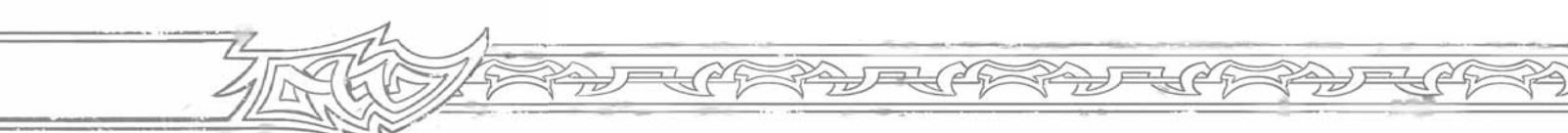
The sorcerer **Merasch** has recently retreated to his tower, where he says he will complete the Ultimate Thesis, which will categorise every being and entity on Glorantha in a tree of relationship. Adventurers who come across weird or uncategorisable creatures can sell them to him. They are best advised to go during the daytime, when Merasch sleeps, and conduct the transaction with the wizard's steward, Ithionius. At night, Merasch's valley echoes with unearthly screams and cackles.

During Dark Season the Loskalmi fear no name more than that of **Begotha**, the mummified leader of an undead bandit gang. Each member of Begotha's gang is an unliving revenant of Loskalm's wars on the Janube Valley. They repeat the acts of cruelty and rapine visited on them and their families but now with Loskalmi as their victims. On the day preceding an attack, the cold clacking of Begotha's teeth echo through the countryside.

Janube Valley

This fertile region is of competing city-states. Loskalmi God Learners subject most western cities to their punitive rule, with some outposts farther east. Some cities are independent, ruled by exiled Hrestoli idealists. EWF missionaries have influenced many cities. Carmanian lords rule yet others and their knights have been making exploratory raids throughout this area. The powerful kingdom surely intends to expand here. The locals have not decided whether to fear them as occupiers or welcome them as liberators.

Cities destroyed by Loskalmi God Learners during their violent expansion of the mid-eighth century include the razed ruins of Ulichio, Paval and Kaldal. The cities of Perfe, Salisor



and Einpor were rebuilt under Loskalmi rule. EWF-influenced settlements include:

- X **Mahan**, where draconised Orlanthi successfully proselytise disenchanting followers of pre-Hrestoli Malkionism.
- X **Ikankos**, a city ruled by ghosts, who conduct eerie debate in their echoing Parliament of the Dead.
- X **Frastoreal**, where murder warrants a fine but slander is a crime punishable by death.
- X **Galstar**, an ancient city where Malkioni and Orlanthi exist in harmony, their oaths of peace reinforced by fiery wards.

Sog City

The region's largest city sits on the borderland between Loskalm proper and its Janube Valley possessions. God Learner sorcerers flock to its University of Pure Logic, where the higher principles underlying Malkioni magic are elucidated as nowhere else. The school's founder, the aging Brithini Caseltenar, renounced immortality to bring his theories to the masses.

Aside from its status as a bustling port and centre of trade, Sog City is best known as an ancestral home of the Waertagi, who founded it under the name of Sogzanjio Malakumb. The city's God Learner overlords confine its remaining green-skinned population to their own quarter, heavily guarded and surrounded by unscalable walls.

Charg

Formerly draconised Orlanthi live in the hilly region of Charg, which is now occupied by the nascent Empire of Carmania. Here EWF mystics developed the rituals of Ernalda the Snake, boosting the fertility of fallow pastures. Until their forcible liberation by dualist knights, the barbarians lived under state-mandated, priest-run tribes. Now the Carmanians allow them old-style worship while forcibly forbidding draconic ceremonies.

Many of the old tribes have dissolved, leaving confused, dispirited clans to resume long-buried feuds. Two remain, each offering hit-and-run resistance to their new overlords. The Vosi, ruled by the defensively-minded Manoros the Old, occupy the southern reaches of Charg. They are happy to see the end of the wyrmfriends but seek autonomy from the knights of Idovanus. Occupying the northern hills is the Karnisi tribe, overseen by Brast the Thrush, whose unearthly singing voice still promotes the dragon way.

Reasons to come here: God Learners have offered a bounty for reliable reports of the Ernalda Snake dances, which are carried on in secret huts and guarded by Maran Gor earthshaker squadrons.

The Golaros Lowlands

Between Charg and the Janube, in the shadow of the Nidan Mountains, lie the Golaros Lowlands. Its rich, dark fields are farmed by two Orlanthi tribes, the Kerseni and Spral, who have renounced raiding to strengthen their fertility magics. EWF missionaries have converted the Spral but made few friends among the Kerseni. The two tribes unite to fight off incursions by the crop-trampling Galininni horse folk, the remnants of a nomadic Ralian tribe dating back to the Dawn times.

Reasons to come here: Adventurers with connections in Lankst may make trade journeys to Golaros, conspire against the EWF or join to suppress the horse nomads.

Maidstone Mountains

God Learners fund periodic expeditions to these frigid peaks, to confirm or deny legends of the Grotarons. These bizarre titans have three arms, the third of which replaces their head; and an eye on the back of each hand. One large yellow eye sits atop a gasping, snaggletoothed mouth, both planted in the middle of the creature's torso. Armed with gigantic composite bows, they hunt the spirit creature known as the mountain mammoth.

Rathorela

The Rathori Bear People, a nomadic hsunchen tribe, prowl this coniferous forest under the protection of their Great Spirit, the White Bear. It allows them to remain active even when the winter sends other animals to slumber underground. Their other gift, a longbow that can shoot an arrow through the trunk of a thick tree, comes from their aldryami allies from the land of Erigia. The elves climb under the earth into protective seed pods when winter envelops the land.

Reasons to come here: When the snow hides their food supply, the Rathori take prisoners from Charg and the Janube to exchange for cows and pigs. The locals hire adventurers to drive them off.

Tastalor

This tundra zone is sparsely inhabited and then only by hsunchen. The Uncoling reindeer people drive their reindeer in a vast annual migration. In Sea and Earth seasons they congregate in massive tent settlements. Other animal people prey on them, including Telmori and the Sabadari wolverine folk.

Reasons to come here: God Learner scholars interested in hsunchen myths and magic hire adventurers to do the dangerous research. They are also interested in rumours of an aldryami lichen people.

SLONTOS

The large and heavily populated region of Slontos wields undoubted economic influence within the God Learner Empire. An arch-dukedom ruled by inherited nobles, Slontos presently labours under a cloud of anxiety. The Emperor's wars against the dukes of Arolanit and Ralios have left its proud ruling class carefully tempering its usual belligerent streak.

If this text were a proper geography, as opposed to a travelogue for ragged freebooters, it would devote a chapter to the pivotal region of Slontos and naught but a footnote to Kethaela.

— Brother Aran, Monk of Pombric

Slontos consists of three main regions, Wenela, Ramalia and Maniria, and is adjoined by the ungovernable border territory of Kotersland.

Wenela

Independent-minded barons who yearn for a return to their former autonomy oversee this large eastern peninsula of rugged hills. They encourage eccentricity and experimentation, offering havens to unorthodox God Learner schools. Its few deep and sheltered harbours support a robust shipping industry. Its notable cities are:

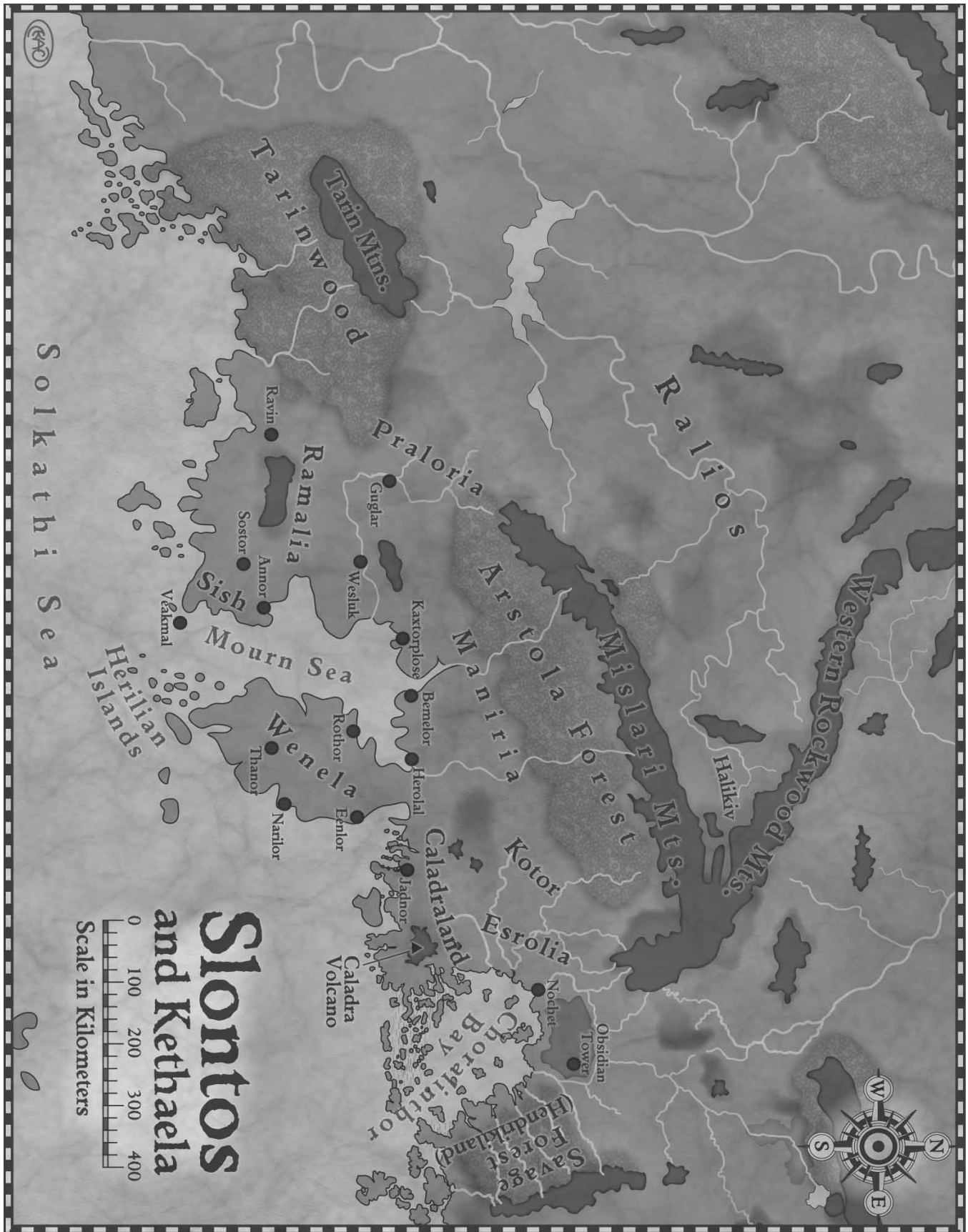
- X **Rothor**, a trade and fishing port. Lately its fishing vessels have been beset by a long-necked, devouring sea-beast. Allegedly the screams of its past victims can still be heard echoing in its gullet. Authorities blame its appearance here on the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. The Fisherman's Guild has posted a reward for its killing or capture, with a bonus if any of their eaten members are recovered alive.
- X **Eenlor** serves as a base of the imperial navy. Its fleets guard the coastal waters of Caladraland and the Rightarm Isles and launch raids against EWF outposts accessible from the sea. Herable, the base's gluttonous, greasy-faced admiral, has thoroughly intimidated the local duke and rules Eenlor as his personal fiefdom. Many of his own men, as well as his wyrmfriend adversaries, would pay to see him dead.
- X **Narilor**, once a busy port frequented by the Waertagi, is now a largely deserted ghost town, where only pirates, smugglers and hardscrabble fishermen dare to launch their boats. When the Waertagi fleets were shattered, the ghosts of their dead washed up here and have haunted the place ever since. Waertagi survivors sometimes pull up here, perhaps to commune with the spirits of their slain ancestors.
- X **Thanor**, the provincial capital. Hilly but fertile land surrounds it. Known as the City of Tricksters, it houses Vilblane College, a God Learner-affiliated school specialising in the study of the various pagan fool and troublemaker deities. As its founders should perhaps have anticipated, it has become a magnet for events both surreal and inexplicable. Thanor is a prime spot to capture madness spirits, especially during one of the city's sudden Food Rains.

Ramalia

The fertile western plains of **Ramalia** feed its peasants and enrich its noble landowners.

Its important settlements are:

- X **Annor**, the only good deepwater port along hundreds of miles of coastland. Its underground Ashen Cathedral houses the relics of St. Domb, who allowed all of his bones to be broken, rather than denounce a wretched heathen tribe he sought to convert. Unrest swirls around their disposition: the new baron, Vorell, has ordered them moved to his private chapel in the surrounding countryside. Though of a local lineage, Vorell spent most of his life in the Seshnegi capital and is unpopular here. He blames his younger brother, Sogcros, for whipping up discontent against him.
- X **Veakmal**, an island base of the imperial navy. Independent until the God Learner invasion, its headstrong natives are now outnumbered by foreign sailors. Brawls between locals and seamen comprise the island's most popular off-duty pastime. Mostali fund raids against its drydocks, on the grounds that Jrusteli magical ships use secrets stolen from them.
- X **Soster**, a thriving city amid a fertile belt of farmland. Known as the Sleeping City, its pleasant meadow scent and lackadaisical household spirits sap the ambition and martial fervour of all who tarry here. High officials exile potential rivals to administrative posts here, blunting their sharp edges.
- X **Wesluk**, an unloading point for river trade. Its spectacularly palatial villas have tempted thieves throughout the generations, prompting the foundation of the Trap Maker's Guild, a confederation of artisans guided by a fugitive Openhandist dwarf named Duenge Erro.
- X **Ravin**, a shabby port bordering on the Tarinwood, which trades chiefly with the aldryami. The elves of Tarinwood show an unusual appetite for human trade goods, including fripperies and luxury items. God Learner specialists in aldryami culture want to know why; the Ravin Merchant's Association is anxious to divert any troublesome inquiries that might upset their profitable applectart.



Maniria

The wild northern reaches of **Maniria** challenge the dominance of its figurehead barons. Orlanth-worshipping former hsunchen battle outsiders and each other, fiercely resisting tribes and rebuffing EWF missionary incursions. God Learner sorcerers are despised here, due to their catastrophic meddling in women's magic. The region's grain goddess was one of the objects of the notorious Goddess Switch. Despite barbarian hostility to both Empires, their thanes sometimes assemble mercenary bands to fight for the Arch-Duke. These melt back into the hills at the first whiff of non-payment. Three largish cities were once states unto themselves:

- X **Guglar**, the westernmost Manirian city, sits on the banks of the upper Noshain River, where it serves as break of bulk point for caravans headed overland through the nearby wilds. Nomadic deer people wander its surrounding territories. An otherwise nameless mystic called the Denier prowls both woods and city, robbing imperial officials of their greatest skills. Several adventuring parties have tried and failed to claim the bounty for his (or her) head.
- X **Bemelor**, a seaport and centre of shipbuilding. Its Shipwright's Guild have announced a new marine propulsion system even better than the captive sylphs used in the imperial navy. Spies have filled the city hoping to steal the plans for this new engine, whatever it is.
- X **Herolal**, a competing centre of shipbuilding. High walls attest to a history of invasion from Esrolia. Because it has so long been attacked by that nation of women, the men of Herolal fiercely uphold Malkion's proclamations of male superiority. Women may not adorn themselves with jewels or bright colours. Nor may they hide their identities with veils. During each summer's Herolali Festival, female priestesses risk being hunted down and burned at the stake as witches.
- X The smaller centre of **Kaxtorplose** earned fame for holding out against the Gbaji invaders until Arkat came to rescue them. Its weird hexagonal shrines, attributed to Arkat, reinforce the magic of any worshipper, no matter what his faith or style of magic. God Learner attempts to dismantle them for study have been fiercely resisted by proud descendants of Kaxtorplose's historic warriors.

Kotorsland

This fallow abandoned region between Maniria and the Kethaealan land of Esrolia, provides a proving ground for the opposing forces of the God Learner and EWF Empires.

CARMANIA

Extremes of temperature buffet the hills and plains of Carmania, a nation in north-western Peloria which is fast becoming an Empire to rival the EWF. Its people combine

the pride of Dara Happans with the theological certitude of westerners. Landed men of influence are either knights or wizards. Lesser nobles bind themselves to superiors through vows of vassalage. Hardcore adherents of the dualistic Carmanian faith have set aside a long-running internal feud to focus their hatred on the wyrmfriends, who once aided them against the region's previous overlords.

Carmanian lords rule over the Pelandan peasants of the Orinin Valley. These artisans, craftsmen and farmers worship Jernotius, who oversees a cosmic balance of forces. The gods of his pantheon correspond to common occupations and their positions in the six-tier Pelandan class structure. The Carmanians approve these deities as acceptable for worship, though of course not for themselves.

The Carmanians heavily fortify their capital, Kitor, a forbidding city of walls and towers. The region of Spol, home of the darkness witches, sits north of Carmania like a choking cloud.

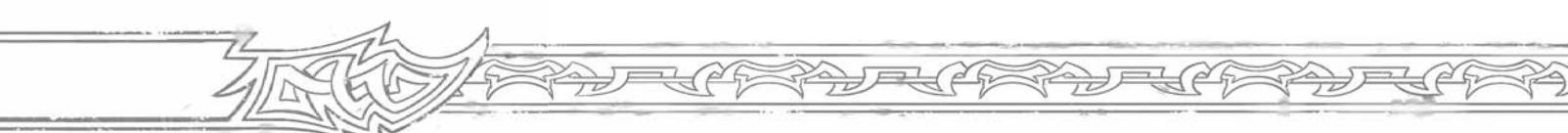
An Empire in the Making

The Carmanian religion and nation are both comparatively new. Carmanians descend from Malkioni who fled Loskalm after its conquest by God Learners in 725. Led by a charismatic knight named Syranthir the Wanderer, they migrated east, to what is now Carmania but was then the Empire of Gloom, a nation ruled by the Spolite darkness witches. Syranthir carved out a portion of its territory for his people, called the Pasture.

At this time, the Spolite Empire threatened the Dara Happans, forcing them to recruit allies in defence. Among those allies were the wyrmfriend cultists of Dragon Pass. They sent War Dragon detachments to fight alongside Dara Happan infantry.

EWF adventurers and missionaries infiltrated Spol, disrupting their rituals. There they found the Spolites troubled by a new internal foe, calling themselves the Carmanians. They approached Syranthir's grandson, Surandar the Warleader, seeking alliance. Their offers of a new path to mystic awareness fell on deaf ears. A new dualistic faith founded by Surandar's father, Carmanos, had already taken strong root among his people. Carmanos, a warrior-visionary whose mother was the mysterious local lake goddess Charmain, had returned from her legendary Castle Blue bearing stone tablets of revelation. These outlined the laws governing the new dualistic faith of Idovanus.

Wyrmfriest priests tried to compete with these wonders by offering up draconic secrets but were greeted with stern disinterest. Even so, the warriors of the two cultures found a common zest for battle against the Spolites. Several War Dragon detachments stayed on to support Surandar as he conquered the Spolites, who by this time had been weakened by their failed invasion of Dara Happa.



After the fall of the Spolites in 780, Carmania's War Dragon allies melted back to Dara Happa, certain they had secured their interests in Peloria.

Fifty years later, the Carmanians were invading Dara Happa, taking special pleasure in attacking units fielded by draconic secret societies. Under their Black Shah, Asacar, Carmanian armies earned a reputation for ruthlessness, using terror tactics and atrocities to strike fear into Dara Happa hearts.

In 864, the warlike Asacar was murdered by rebellious generals, who replaced him as Shah with his half-brother, Carmandar the White, ushering in a period of schismatic jockeying between the two halves of Carmania's royal family. The White dynasty descends from Carshandar, son of Surandar, and a priestess of Darjiin. It embraces light magic and seeks alliance with Dara Happa. The Black dynasty, which descends from Carshandar and a Spolite priestess, hates Dara Happa and practices darkness Sorcery.

Since 880, the White Dynasty has ruled Carmania. Its previous Shah, Saman the Lion, introduced a series of religious reforms advocated by the serenely brilliant prophet Alijiyah. These scoured the sacred laws of Carmania of both darkness and draconic influences. Saman proceeded to wage war against the EWF, which by 875 had crept up its eastern borders. In 900 he was slain in battle against the War Dragons.

The current Shah is Samandar, a cautious man who would sooner make decisions in the tent than ride onto the field of battle at the head of a regiment. His half-brother Survilstar Dragonslayer eclipses him in bravery and accomplishment but is more interested in fighting than ruling. It is Survilstar who found the old secrets left behind by the EWF missionaries back in Surandar's day. Armed with their knowledge, he discovered a technique of anti-dragon Sorcery, which requires that a special new spell be developed for each dragon target. Three years ago, during a series of military engagements near Darjiin, he used three of these spells, slaying the dragons Mathaktakarsk, Zitaral'lalkep and Watha'oaglio.

Brolia

The terrain of this scrub-forested region is rocky and steep, with nary a flat surface in sight. Acidic soils prevent agriculture, allowing only the hardiest of weeds and most twisted of trees. Its wild Orlanthi hill peoples survive by foraging and raiding. Fiercely conservative, they rebuff all entreaties from Hunting and Waltzing Missionaries. Their white-hot loathing of the EWF has led them to reluctantly accept the protection of Carmanian knights. Carmania claims Brolia as a subjugated territory but, at the insistence of the Shah's brother, Survilstar Dragonslayer, neither taxes or imposes its laws on them. Several of Brolia's great heroes, including the sardonic windwalker

Vensor Circlemark and the disturbingly alluring Terla the Cat, belong to his personal retinue.

The One-Tongues, a desperate band of apostate wyrmfriends, gathers here to plot the destruction of their former Empire. Led by a blind dissident named Ingorlm, they trekked to this desperate place after being cast out by the Old Ways traditionalists of distant Esrolia, who did not trust them. Carmanian patrols exact heavy taxes from them. The population of their camps has swelled dramatically over the past two years.

Talastar

The hill barbarians of Talastar resisted wyrmfriendism until about 75 years ago, when their flying Orlanthi warriors noticed a resurgence of Chaos manifestations in neighbouring Dorastor. They then took to it enthusiastically, thinking its powers would offer a bulwark against the emerging threat. Since then, however, imperial officials have been reluctant to assign top War Dragon platoons to Chaos-fighting detail. Instead they paid adventurers and mercenaries to bolster the war parties of local chieftains.

20 years ago, knights of the Carmanian Shah claimed Talastar and undertook to suppress the spread of wyrmish religion in their new territory. Local chieftains, whose allegiance to the wyrm was always a matter of pragmatism, proffered only token resistance. Now they cheerily call on the knights of Idovanus to smite Ganesatarus by leading the defence against the Chaos creatures of Dorastor. In exchange for the blood and toil of the Carmanian knights, they pronounce themselves willing to pay them the same tribute they once gave to the wyrmfriends.

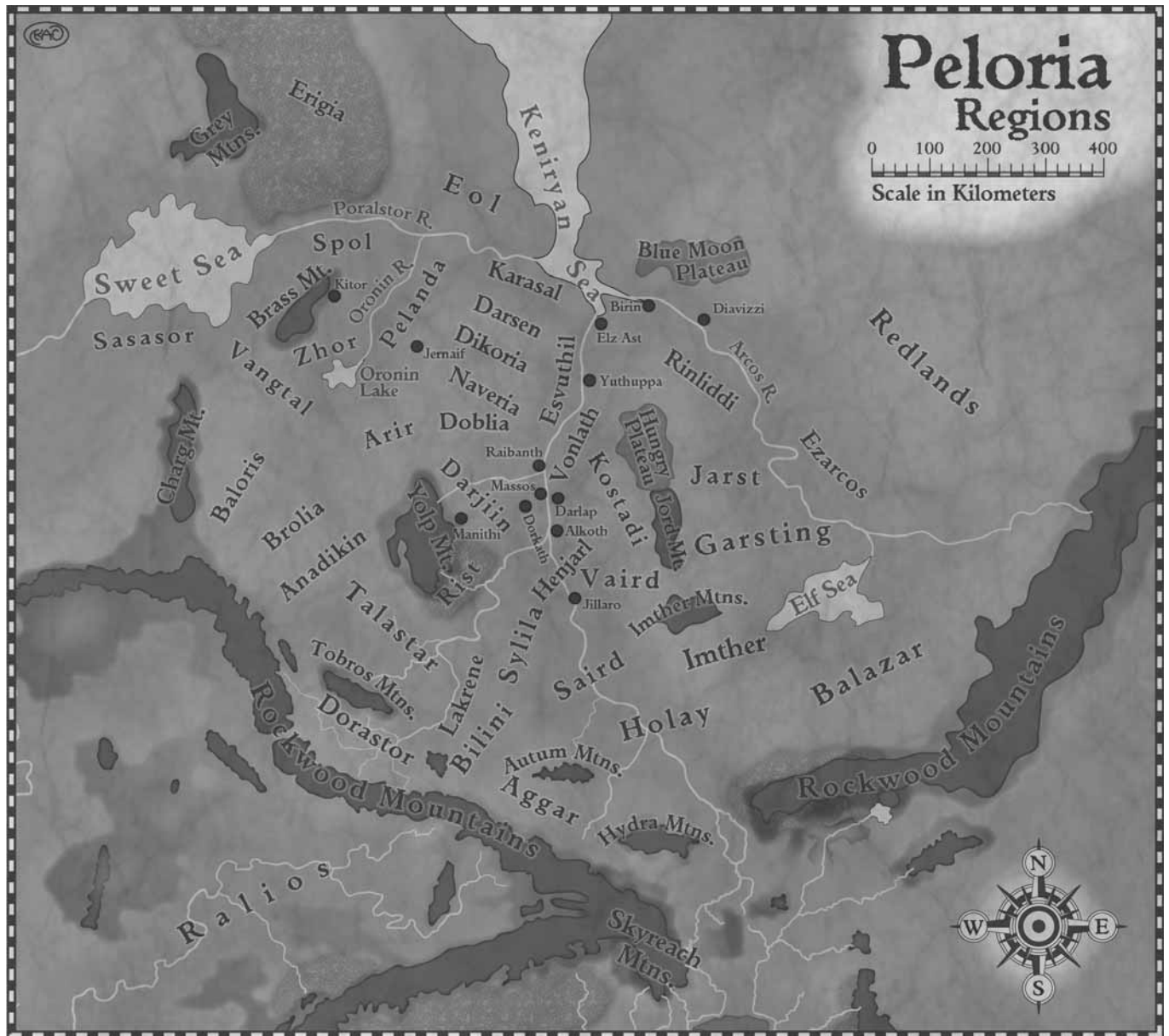
PELORIA

Encompassing north-central Genertela, Peloria is the civilised heartland of theist practice in Glorantha. Now dominated by the EWF, its competing cultures have known many conquerors throughout the centuries, mostly from within their own ranks.

Dara Happa territory comprises the Oslir river and its banks. Other Pelorian regions cluster around it.

Dara Happa

Home to the Golden Empire of the Yelmite solar worshippers, Dara Happa is a series of highly developed cities, supported by lush farmlands worked by toiling, rustic peasants. These cluster along the Oslir River. Its noble class, conditioned to rule, has adjusted fitfully to EWF dominance. Some accept the legitimacy of the Golden Dragon who sits upon their imperial



throne. Following the Sun Dragon cult, the EWF fusion of their sky worship and draconic mysticism, they continue to administer the cities, as they have always done. Others hew to the traditional solar deities and wait for this blasphemy to pass. Some do it passively or divert themselves fighting trolls in Halikiv. Others risk all to join the insurgent forces of the Old Ways traditionalists.

The major cities of Dara Happa are as follows, from south to north:

The imposing metropolis of **Alkoth** pays homage to its city god, Alkor, a son of Yelm from the Golden Age. It is home to Shargash, the Dara Happan god of death and destruction, who, once released, kills all of your foes and many of your friends.

The capital is **Raibanth**, birthplace of Raiba, a First Age son of Yelm. The city is divided in three quarters, separated by the confluence of the Joat and Oslir rivers. Great spanning bridges connect the quarters. The wrymfriends have covered them in golden scales.

Yuthuppa, a towered metropolis whose city god is Yuthu, a Dawn Age grandson of Yelm. Fires are harder to quench here than in other places but will not burn the property of good Dara Happans without permission.

Elz Ast is a city of boat builders and river traders. Its people are known for putting pragmatism over pride, an unusual quality in Dara Happa.



Darjiin

Many Osir tributaries feed the loamy marshes of Darjiin. Villages sit on reed-covered hilltops, overlooking rice paddies below. The locals worship SurEnslib, the heron goddess. Their earthy fertility rites disgust the Dara Happans, who have consistently suppressed attempts by the Darjiini to assert themselves.

Darjiini Clans

Clans define a Darjiinis' lot in life.

Clan Name	Economic Role
Weeders	Barge-dwelling rice farmers
Walkers	Woodland hunters
Highfists	Hill-dwelling townsfolk
Stickmen	Lodrili farmers (an outsider caste)

The ruling clan of Darjiin is the ancient Manimati. The EWF allows them to rule Darjiin under the Golden Dragon's banner, so long as they force the people to attend one wyrmfriend ceremony per week, donating their worship energy to the Great Project.

The city of **Dorkath** is the Darjiini capital, where the Sex Hunt, the annual three-day orgiastic worship ceremony, takes place. Other settlements include **Manithi**, stronghold of anti-troll magic and **Massos**, an ancient citadel.

Rinliddi

The Rinliddi live around the Arcos River, which empties into the Sea of Ice. They descend from the bird god Vrimak, an emanation of Yelm. Along with Vrimak, they worship a number of other avian deities. They enjoy reputations as expert falconers and educated scribes but are best known for their avilry, troops mounted on enormous, two-legged, flightless birds. The Rinliddi organise themselves into extended clans called nests, establishing a pecking order under the guidance of wyrmfriend priests.

The Dara Happan cities of Yuthuppa and Elz Ast dominate trade and politics. Other cities include the ungovernable pirate enclave of Birin and Diavizzi, a ruin centred around a magical spring, which EWF priests intend to revive.

In 825, Rinliddi revolted against the Dara Happan Empire, aided by covert forces of the EWF. The weakened solar Emperor, Karmexdros, faced with encroachment on his western borders, declined to retake his former province. He issued a decree withdrawing his right to tax them, as if granting the successful insurgents a gift of imperial largesse.

When the EWF took over Dara Happa, they intended to seize control of Rinliddi as well, through their agents on the ground there. They announced the Revelation of the Common Egg, proving a mythic connection between the birds of Rinliddi and the dragons and dinosaurs. By this time certain nests of Rinliddi had already embraced draconic worship. These spread the Revelation with optimistic missionary zeal. The majority of Rinliddi opposed them because the EWF controlled Dara Happa and an alliance with them would lead to Rinliddi's reabsorption into the Empire.

Low-level civil war persisted for a generation as pro-dragon nests clashed with the Winged Patriots, supporters of continued political independence. Defeated and subject to violent harassment, Common Egg nests either renounced their wyrmfriend affiliations or went into exile in Dragon Pass. There they bonded with War Dragon commanders and seek to prove themselves as among the Empire's most fearsome special troops.

Despite their urging, the Guiding Council has yet to mount a full campaign to subjugate Rinliddi.

Unconquered Lands

North of Rinliddi lie the territories of Koror and Velthil, known by EWF leaders as The Unconquered Lands.

Korer includes the hinterland around the city of Elz Ast. The wyrmfriends and their Dara Happan subjects maintain law and order in the city but not in the surrounding countryside. Caravans in or out of the city travel under the protection of formidable mercenary bands, who are often hiring new adventurers. Competing petty nobles of Rinliddi descent engage in brigandage and assert taxation rights over travellers, which amount to the same thing. They worship Tholm the Hawk, a predatory deity related to Vrimak.

Even scruffier bandits proclaim themselves as kings in Velthil. Few caravans come through here, so its self-proclaimed nobles raid into Rinliddi, Garsting and Kosaddi. When not fleeing EWF patrols, they are running from the hungry trolls of the nearby Blue Moon Plateau or the vicious land raiders of Pent.

Kostadi

Kostadi is a great belt of rich farmland overshadowed by the howling steppe of the Hungry Plateau. Its people are humble agriculturalists with a history of bending to foreign ways. When the Dara Happans were strong, they adopted Dara Happan traditions. They flirted with the Spolites and now embrace the solar version of the wyrmfriend cult. Undercover God Learners have to dig to find their true native traditions, which involve an unlikely billy-goat deity called Gerendetho. They fear the nearby Dara Happan city of Alkoth; when its hellgate opens to loose the dread god Shargash, it is always they who bear the first brunt of his indiscriminate killing.

Draconic Dara Happans administer the main Kostadi city, the sleepy and sprawling **Darlap**.

Sylila

Scouring winter winds rake the deeply forested hills and valleys of Sylila but religious controversy heats its politics. This barbarian homeland houses both the fiercest critics and staunchest supporters of draconic Orlanthi faith. The Tarumathi, adherents of a mystical approach to storm worship, embrace and even improve EWF practices. Other tribes chafe under wyrmfriend dominance and covertly send their young men to join the Old Ways traditionalists.

Sylila encompasses the border regions of Aggar, a wild land where only crazy people and outlaws care to dwell, and Bilini, a barbarian buffer zone between civilised Peloria and the horrors of Dorastor.

Dorastor

Dorastor was a sprawling land and centre of civilisation during the later centuries of the First Age. The First Council moved there to establish a new capital, from which to launch the God Project. After the birth of Nysalor a long, long war made it a foul, churning wellspring of Chaos manifestations.

The destruction of Gbaji suppressed Chaos throughout the world but Dorastor was awakened by God Learners and now is irreversibly tainted by it again. Its once-beautiful valleys and ruined cities comprise a maze of horrors, into which the heroes of neither Empire care to tread. Its brood armies send raiders into Bilini and eastern Ralios, trailed by a hopping, suppurating multitude of other obscene monsters.

Half a century ago, a horde of cursed Telmori wolf people migrated here from Telmoria.

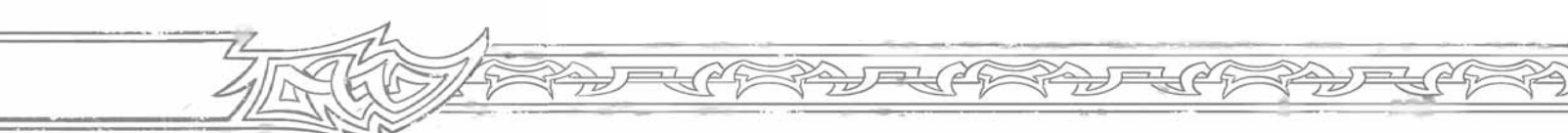
Votankiland

The rugged borderlands of Votankiland serve as a battleground for battling members of the elder races. For centuries a human tribe called the Votanki have prospered by playing off the local trolls, elves and dwarfs against one another. In the eighth century their king made himself a vassal of the EWF, returning from Dragon Pass with carts laden with weapons and silver. They secured the allegiance of the elves by promising to aid them in their continual struggle against the trolls. Lately EWF priests have come to Votankiland and the Elder Wilds demanding more worship energy. The aldryami, who do not worship as men do, rebelled against them. They now raid frequently from the Elder Wilds into Votankiland. The Votanki stage regular reprisal attacks. Both sides employ adventuring bands to do their dirty work for them.

South of Votankiland the heretic Mostali community of Greatway lives in the mountains. Over the past half century the dwarfs of Greatway have had to withdraw from their battle against the local trolls to defend themselves against their own kind. The Greatway dwarfs are Openhandists, who believe in sharing the benefits of their knowledge with others. Although their artefacts are largely incompatible with the mystical mindset of the wyrmfriends, they persist in engaging them in dialogue. The authorities of the Nidan Decamony consider this treason and launched a war against them in 852. Their efforts failed but the Greatway Mostali expect them to try again at any time. Adventurers providing them with intelligence on the movements and intentions of the Nidan Decamony can expect rewards of lore and technology.

Garsting

This land of gloomy forests and mist-hugged, rocky hills has become a stronghold for trolls, who fight the humans and dwarfs of Votankiland and the elves of the Elder Wilds. Some tribes of eastern Garsting accept aid from the wyrmfriends to battle their own kind, protecting the Votanki barbarians and Greatway dwarfs. Their leader is Voxa Vol, a clever matriarch who wears a wooden mask. The mask's expression changes constantly but it is said that her own is frozen with paralysis. She justifies her allegiance by saying: 'Any hand that feeds is a good hand'.



Her main enemy is her sister, the matriarch Gatha Vak. Gatha Vak gives her warriors the blessing of Far Walking, which allows them to travel great distances without having to rest, provided they eat while they walk. Infuriated by Voxa Vol's betrayals, she spares what little wealth she can gather to pay mercenaries to hound her sister to her grave.

Elder Wilds

Constant warfare with other races have rendered the green (coniferous) elves of the Elder Wilds ruthless in battle and wary in peace. They allied with the EWF until they asked to be worshipped as gods. They drove the wyrmfriends from their forest and now battle their human, dwarf and troll allies in Votankiland and Garsting. Their bloody-handed champion is Tolarin, the Pine That Bends In the Winds But Never Breaks. Spirits of the hardiest trees teach them how to resist weather magic and to toughen their skins against the stings of serpents.

Redlands

This region of windswept sandstone ridges gets its name from the rivers of blood spilled here over the centuries. As a borderland separating Pent and Peloria, it is the site of frequent battles between the fearsome raiders of the steppes and their civilised neighbours. War Dragon detachments patrol the region, mimicking their vanquished Pentan foes by keeping continually on the prowl, living out of tents. The Guiding Council seasons its earthshaker units by rotating them in and out of Pent. If they can survive Pent and hold the battlefield against Pentan horse nomads, they can fight anyone, anywhere.

One commander, Orsarik Cloudviper, resists reassignment out of the Redlands. He knows the Pentans better than anyone and maintains close ties with their vanquished tribes who worship their great spirit, Kargzant, in the draconic manner. At his elbow stands Sarkosa Ripplewing, a cryptic, reserved wyrmfriend priestess who visits vassal tribes to ensure that they worship in the right way. The affair between Orsarik and Sarkosa is common knowledge in the Redlands but news of it never seems to make its way back to Dragon Pass.

KETHAELA

Kethaela, a culturally diverse coastal region in south central Genertela, consists of five territories: volcanic Caladralland, matriarchal Esrolia, barbarian Hendrikiland, the Rightarm Isles archipelago and the trollish Shadow Plateau. From the dawn to the rise of the great Empires, all of it was ruled by Ezkankekko, an Uz demigod, also known as the Only Old One. From his Obsidian Tower in the Shadowlands, he allowed the peoples in his domain to run their own affairs and worship as they pleased, so long as they paid him tribute. Imperial encroachment robbed him of his former possessions. The God

Learners control the Rightarm Isles and Caladralland, along with some coastal outposts in Esrolia. They even attacked the Shadow Plateau itself. By this time, Ezkankekko had forged an alliance with the EWF, who defended it as if it were their own. They found common cause even though Hendrikiland rebelled. The wyrmfriends still pay him token tribute, as if he willingly ceded it to them.

Caladralland, Realm of Volcanoes

Amid a range of active volcanoes, one massive, fiery peak surges further into the sky than any other. This is Aurelion, who is both mountain and god; whose breath scorches the air for miles around. Dedicated to him is an aboriginal people who live, fight and play on his enormous slopes. In Fire Season they conduct ritualised wars; the losers are fed to him as sacrifices. Aurelion can rain his molten contents on invaders but when the God Learners came to conquer the land, he stayed silent. They have reunited him with his twin sister, a goddess named Caladra from across the world. Enemies of the God Learners would kill to understand the ultimate import of this metaphysical scheme.

Esrolia, Land of Women

Esrolia reveres the Earth Pantheon. Its people recognise Imarja, the ruler of many other ancient female deities and treat Orlanth as merely one of a number of useful but subservient husbands. A council of queens, each heading a clan devoted to a different earth entity, rules their matriarchal society. Rich agricultural lands support a thriving urban economy. Several Esrolian clans partake of EWF practices, while others shun them. The queens claim to have consented to God Learner domination of their coastal settlements, including the scholarly centre of Nochet.

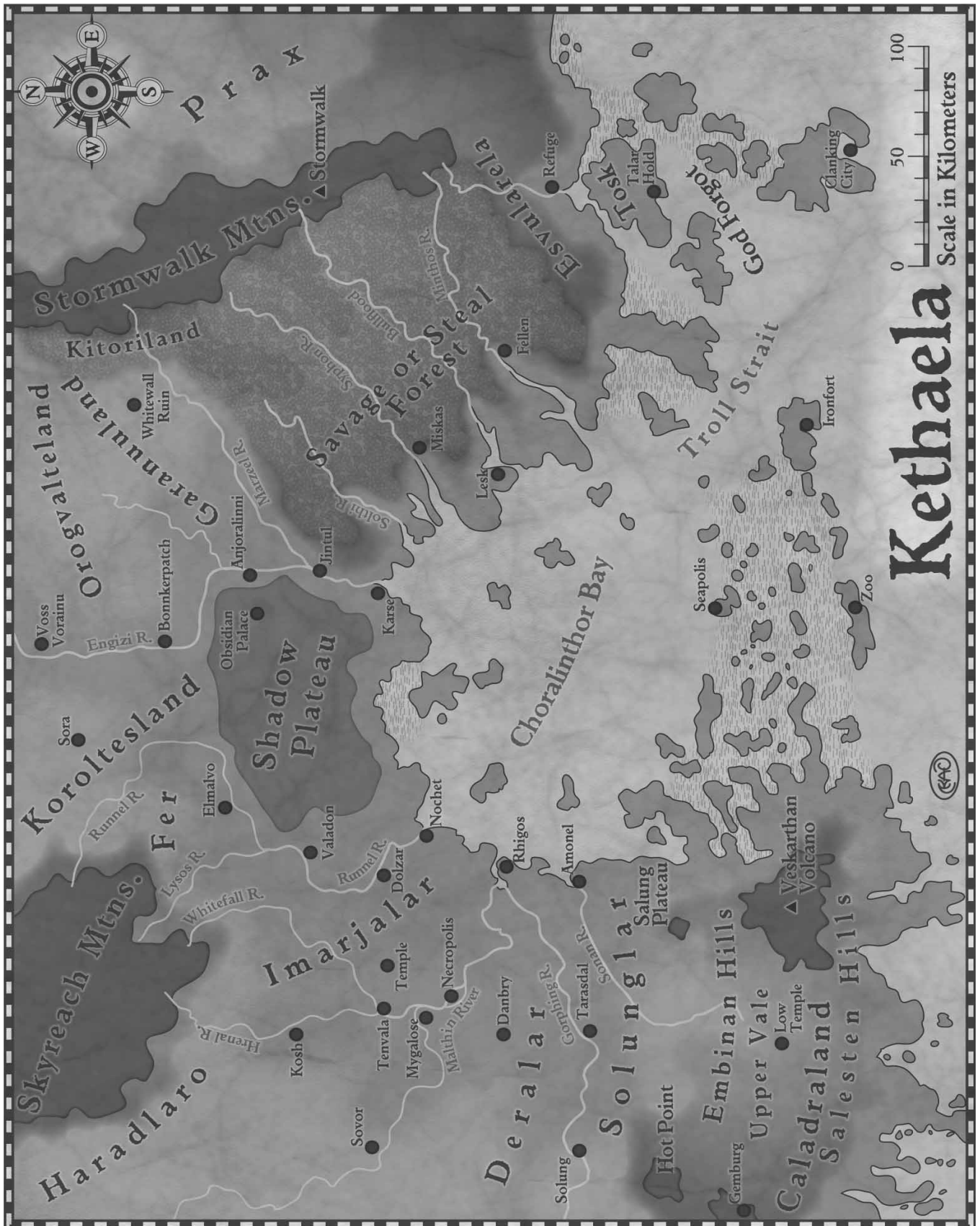
Hendrikiland

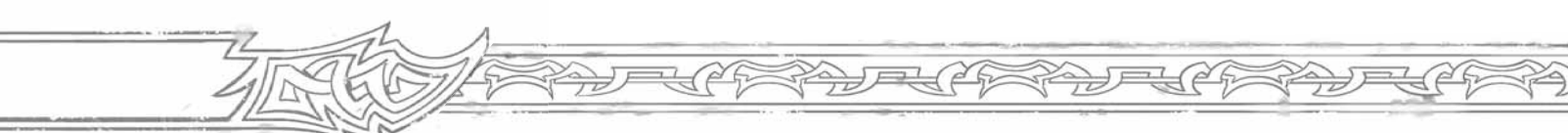
An archetypal Orlanthi territory, Hendrikiland has proven itself a refuge of Old Ways traditionalists. They have survived, free, by hiding and dodging. Its tribes recognise the authority of a king, who at present is Androfin the Defiant. Two years ago, he reinstated traditional worship. His warriors have courageously resisted forays into his domain by EWF forces, who still intend to knock him from the throne and force the locals to dedicate their worship energies to the wyrm. Adventurers unfriendly to the EWF will find a haven here, provided they are willing to fight back against imperial patrols.

EWF pressure on Hendrikiland may now be easing, as both Old Ways Orlanthi and wyrmfriends unite to lay siege to the Clanking City. This truce can only be temporary.

Esvularings

Androfin acknowledges an uneasy truce with the Esvularings, a group of ancient Malkioni who have lived here since the





Dawn. They subscribe to a local form of the henotheist heresy, which states that all of the pagan gods are creatures of Malkion and that one can still be a good Malkioni while deriving magic from Orlanth and his kin. They had been subjects of the God Forgetters but broke away when they saw the horror of the Clanking City being assembled.

God Forgot

The natives of this tide-buffed archipelago have been true atheists since before the Dawn, when their nameless god was slain. They replaced his worship with their own brand of Sorcery, devoted to the mastery of blind chance and contingency. The God Forgetters dismiss all other divine entities as useless pretenders, as victim to the whims of fate as they. Overrun by God Learner conquerors, they continue to run their famous casinos, profit from the construction of the Clanking City and await with quiet smugness the inevitable moment when fortune's wheel turns against their arrogant masters. They greet the arrival of enemies to besiege Zistorwal with equanimity, covertly supplying them (at inflated prices) and issuing sincere invitations to commiserate around the gaming table.

The Rightarm Islands

This archipelago of scattered islands and salt marsh is home to the Children of Pelaskos, simple fisher folk who have eked a living from the sea since before the Great Darkness. They are famed boatmen, and notoriously insular and quarrelsome with their fiery neighbours in Caladraland. Ancient pacts with the deep denizens of the sea allow them to catch all manner of sea creatures which they sell at their markets in the bustling port of Seapolis. Many Pelaskan tribes include the Ludoch merfolk amongst their numbers, although the exact nature of this kinship is a mystery. The Empire of the Wyrms Friends have awoken strange draconic entities amongst the marshes, including the Sea Dragon and Water Wyrms, but the Pelaskans worship many strange spirits. To the east the God Learners have used Pelaskan slaves to establish an Iron Fort to guard the waters surrounding the Clanking City. Neither Empire has held much sway over the surly locals and their mosquito-plagued homeland.

The Clanking City

Zistorwal is an enormous edifice of twisted metal rising from an island in God Forgot. Its gleaming foundations extend past the island's footprint into the sea. Twisting ducts and vents climb up its surface like throbbing veins. The infernal hiss and clang of steam engines issues from its high walls. Inside dwells Zistor, a titanic, shrieking demigod combining the qualities of man and machine, and his sorcerous servants, the Zistorites. Among other projects, they manufacture magic weapons on a mass scale. Their foes, an unlikely alliance of old ways Orlanthi, wyrmfriend, troll and Mostali, slowly encircle them in a sea borne siege.

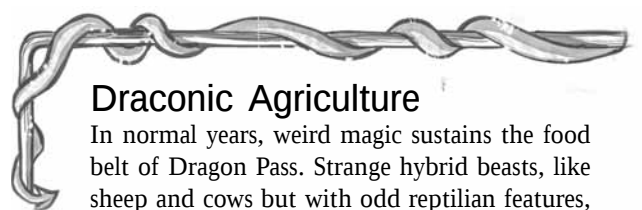
Shadow Plateau

The troll demigod Ezkankekko rules this Uz stronghold from his towering Obsidian Tower, more imposing and majestic than even that of Halikiv. Once the ruler of all Kethaela, he has been reduced in status to a client of the EWF. They defended the Shadowlands against God Learner attack in the first massive clash between the two powers, in 842. Ezkankekko rules over the plateau's clan matriarchs by his divine right as a son of the travelling deity Argan Argar. He supports the fight against the Clanking City but does what he can to ensure that the two Empires cripple each other, allowing him to reassert control over the region. Trollkin live on the glassy plateau, while Uz dwell in the tunnels of the great Castle of Lead beneath it.

DRAGON PASS

In the First Age, Dragon Pass was also known as Kero Finela. It takes this name from Mount Kero Fin, a snow-capped peak that rises both majestically and gently from the Dragonspine range, in the region's north-western quadrant. Kero Fin is also a goddess and mother to Orlanth. Her shadow is dimmer now, as this bowl of fertile land between two mountain ranges is now the primal core of the dragon Empire.

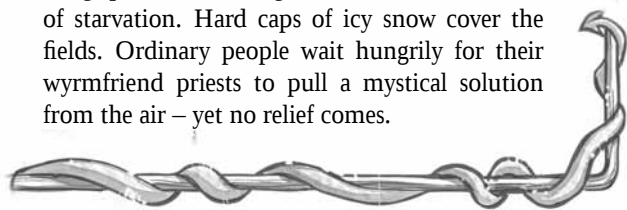
Dragon Pass is heavily populated as never before. EWF magic has turned already verdant hills into highly productive farmlands. These support ever-expanding cities of draconic mystery.

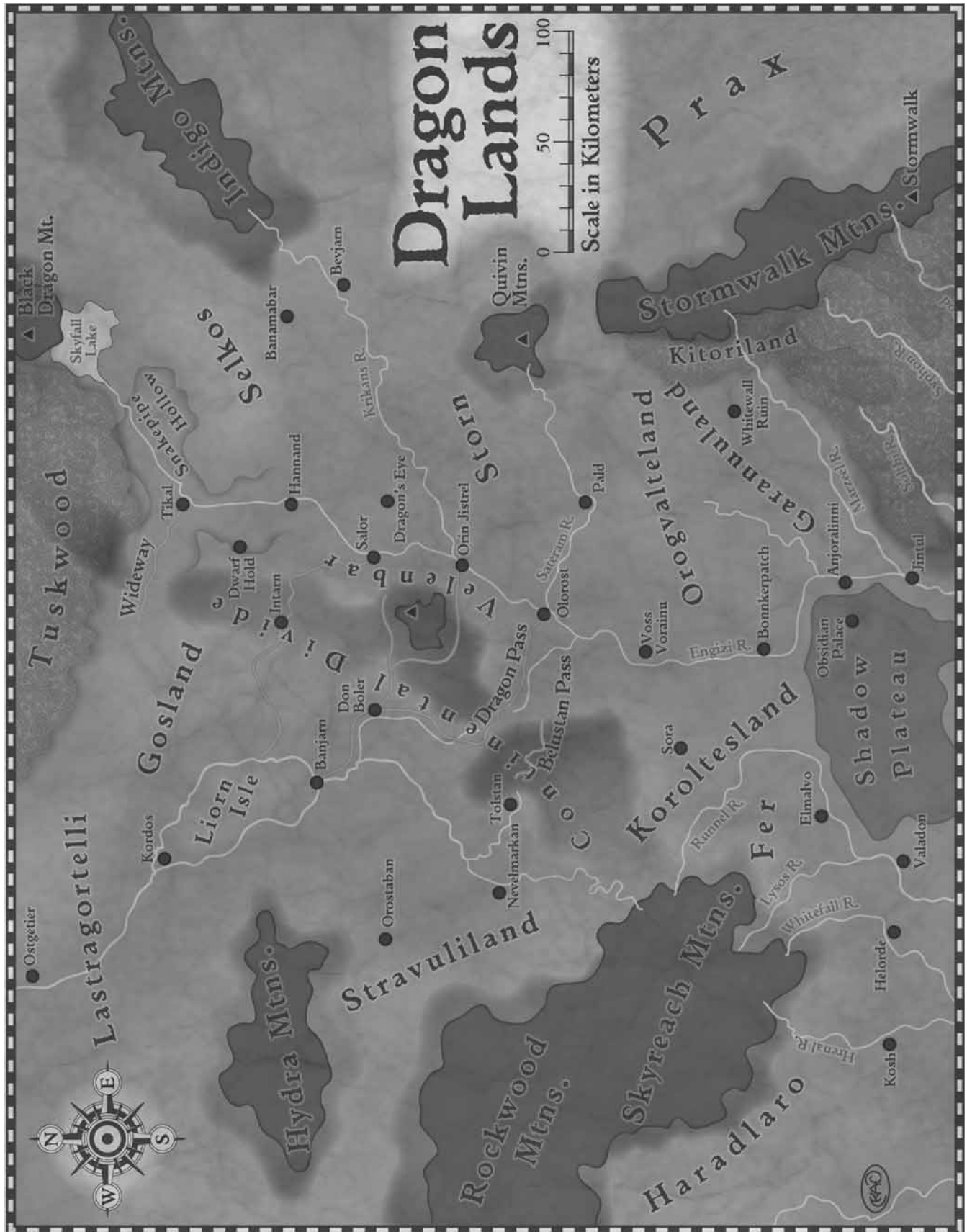


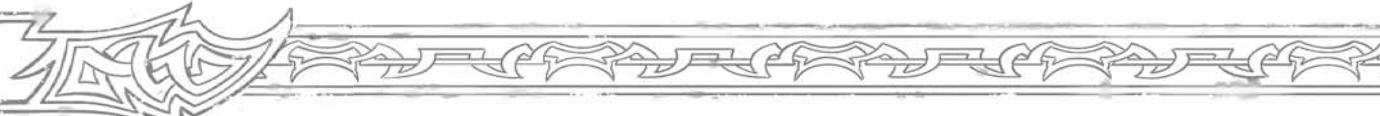
Draconic Agriculture

In normal years, weird magic sustains the food belt of Dragon Pass. Strange hybrid beasts, like sheep and cows but with odd reptilian features, browse the pastures of Dragon Pass, fattening themselves on quick-growing weeds and grasses. Massive plough oxen drive deep furrows into the fields. New grains, such as vell and kreet, sprout tenaciously, grow speedily and, once milled, bake up into fat, bulging loaves. Their seeds dissolve into slime when taken across the Empire's boundaries.

At the moment, though, the region trembles in the grip of an unending winter. Herd animals die of starvation. Hard caps of icy snow cover the fields. Ordinary people wait hungrily for their wyrmfriend priests to pull a mystical solution from the air – yet no relief comes.







Unlike the quickly-constructed dragon cities of Ormsgone, the original wyrmish cities of Dragon Pass generate themselves through a combination of ordinary building techniques and mystical self-propagation. They become living things, apparently empowered by the dragon Sh'hakarzeel that was turned into rock and became a dead thing. Boundaries between categories blur. What one moment may seem to be a verbal abstraction can the next prove itself to be a physical manifestation, like a wall, pool or plaza.

The magically unaware find navigation of draconic cities confusing at best and literally maddening at worst. Their thresholds abound with drooling beggars, once sages and warriors of foreign lands, who arrogantly tried to wend their way into them without the necessary adjustment of psychic viewpoint. Those schooled in the wyrmfriend way, or at least accustomed to devoting their worship energy to the Great Dragon Project, can make their way through their winding streets easily enough. However, even they must accept their cities' tendency to shift boundaries and move about, as if in response to esoteric fluctuations from the higher realms. Their residents move about not by remembering spatial relationships between landmarks and destinations but by feeling the city's present state of meditative attunement.

Each city possesses two names, a draconic name which is difficult to render into normal, one-tongued speech and a name in the local Orlanthi language which is easier to pronounce.

The largest city, where newcomers and foreigners are sent, is **Orin Jistrel**, City of the Mouth. Its education centres welcome new cultists. Each missionary organisation staffs its own centres and see to it that their converts go to the right processing station. Although such jostling is unseemly and metaphysically damaging, certain rival groups nonetheless attempt to poach one another's converts. Diplomats and traders who do not at present intend to convert to the wyrmfriend path are diverted to orientation stations, where they are provided with prayer beads and protective aphorisms allowing them to move, with experienced guidance, between authorised points in the various cities. Once they have achieved orientation, converts and outsiders alike are directed to their ultimate destinations, whatever these may be. The city's draconic name is Darmislangastrofey, or 'Great Hidden Soul of Knowable Dragons'. Lesser cities include:

X **Banjarn**, City of the First Eye, perches on the south end of Liorn Island, at the headwaters of the Oslir River. Its School of Cyclic Rising educates outstanding recent converts and trains missionaries. Its Leaping Faculty practices spiritual inquiry through bodily contortion and claims responsibility for several of the Empire's more recent animating insights. The Consulate of the Egg, an ovoid structure on by the city's sweeping gates, is the headquarters the Empire's diplomatic corps. The city's draconic name is

Orfanmangostobos, or 'Draconic Learning for the Middle Education Classes of Spiritual Opulence'.

- X **Nevelmarkan**, City of the Reaching Claw, takes new converts after their initial orientation in Orin Jistrel. The War Dragons maintain training centres here, where the Wyvern Corps and the Wyrms Riders drill and garrison. In draconic, it is Markanbandaranstos, 'Insightful Centre of Relaxation between Love and Hate'.
- X **Salor**, City of the Dragon's Tongue, serves as the Empire's commercial hub. Local merchants trade among themselves and with caravans from foreign lands (who must stop at Orin Jistrel first). Visitors must take care not to stray into the Market of Illusion, which resembles the ordinary marketplace but is actually a living parable of mystic consciousness. Customers buy products for coins that cost them pieces of their souls and receive in return food that does not nourish, weapons which will not cut and luxuries that instil discomfort. Believers who turn the experience into insight receive back their soul parts in better condition than they left them but the spiritually undistinguished can be harmed forever. In Auld Wyrnish, the city is Kermalanaladeen, 'Process Barracks of the Right to Left Hand'.
- X **Olorost**, City of the Third Eye, is the city of government and administration. The Guiding Council, when it deigns to convene in physical form, meets here. The Throne Hands convene in the spiralling Hall of Anonymity, which only they and their retinues can ever find and which preserves the illusion that it is the Guiding Council that directly manages the Empire's day-to-day affairs. Retired generals and heroes while away their contemplative days in magnificent piazzas, whose splendour is only visible to their peers. Others see austere structures of abiding humility. Known in Auld Wyrnish as Forstobordar, 'Magnificent Centre of High Luxury', Olorost is also nicknamed the Fort of the Outer Brain.
- X **Orostan** provides second-stage education to the masses. Its ever-ringing chimes allow converts to separate themselves from their ordinary desires, burning away the need to possess, love or achieve grandeur. Unwary visitors may completely lose their ambition and goals here, without acquiring the mystical attunement sought by knowing students of the wyrmfriend path. Draconic speakers call the city Markarastanarbos, which means 'Insightful Centre of Emotional Suppression for Delight'. Outsiders find its nickname, the Cavernous Throat of the Soul, confusing, expecting it to consist of a series of underground passageways or at least a labyrinth of some sort.
- X **Dragon's Eye**, the City Before All Else, is the original dragonewt city, from which all the other cities are bizarre humanoid elaborations. Missionaries claim that is both more and less disorienting to the untutored visitor than the constructed cities. Although the meaning of this statement is left as an exercise for the reader, it can be

said that the dimensions of the city are less forgiving to the human frame and that most of its inhabitants are dragonewts and intelligent dinosaurs. Even high-ranking human practitioners of the dragon way may be set upon and torn to pieces by its reptilian inhabitants, for infractions as obscure as they are undoubtedly grave. The wyrmish name for the city, Darfostalabos, literally translates as 'Great Leadership in Luxurious Education of the Mind'.

- X **Banamabar**, Wall of the Inner Brain, is encircled by a serpentine, curving wall which doubles back in on itself and, in several places, intersects with other structures, so that both occupy the same point in physical space. Unschooled visitors receive violent shocks when they touch these points of intersection; they do not kill but can throw one into a multi-year sleep. The truly aware may decide whether they wish to interact with either wall or building. The choice of one over the other unpredictably forecloses certain choices in their future lives. In a vast double-domed building, the Banambarites manage a huge language school. Initiates come here to undergo a ceremony in which their brains and tongues are split, enabling them to speak Auld Wyrnish. Depending on their course of study, this may happen early on in their spiritual development or near its climax. Afterwards, they may correctly pronounce the city's name as Orfandarobordar, which means 'Draconic Learning of Liberation of the Great Luxury'.
- X **Pald**, City of the Snout's Tip, is mainly a centre for the redistribution of agricultural produce throughout the Empire. It is most famous for its Round Temple, a school for curious, respectful outsiders who wish to learn about dragons without joining the wyrmfriend religion. It is covered in iridescent blue ceramic tiles and constructed in the shape of a snake eating its tail. They say that what you learn here depends on which door you enter through. Its graduates never learn the city's true name: Ingyastrobos or 'Foreign Teachings Useful without Extravagance'.
- X **Bevjarn**, City of the Second Eye, houses a school for advanced studies which looks like it is situated atop a hill during the day and at the bottom of a deep gully at night. Its meditative scholars explore their dreams, learning the so-called Walking Method, which allows them to access both their personal dreamlands and the ordinary senses of the waking world at the same time. Bevjarn also garrisons the bulk of EWF troops in the pass, from traditional infantry and cavalry to units augmented by dinosaurs and Rinliddi warbirds. Its deep name is Ingforslanabordar, which translates to 'Foreigner Education Basic to Greatness'. This may seem puzzling, until one remembers that the Guiding Council perceives its thundering war legions as their most reliable tool for the education of incorrigibly stubborn foreigners.

The Lordly Forests

More active members of the EWF's ruling class, including most Throne Hands, congregate in the deep woods known as the Lordly Forests to hunt the Beasts of Falsity. These monstrous animals combine six-legged insect body structures with mammalian features such as fur, warm-bloodedness and the capacity for live birth. The Lordly Forests contain only creatures that are either dangerous or enjoyably challenging to hunt.

These beasts are emanations from misguided spiritual questing, brought into existence by the mystic's doubt, fear or imperfect understanding. Specially trained Discretion Squadrons quietly collect them throughout Dragon Pass' cities. These teams, armed with advanced mystical magic of refutation, disperse the physical essences of the misshapen or uninteresting emanations and gather the promisingly fierce ones to be released to the Lordly Forests.

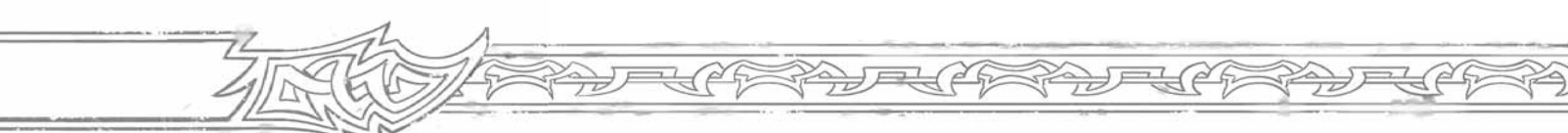
The hunters take it as a point of sportsmanship that no one employs their mystical abilities of dissolution against the creatures. Instead they bring them down with only physical prowess and common magic. Trophies are proudly displayed at the hunt camp, then smuggled back to their lordly manors in Olorost (to show pride in accomplishment is a violation of the mystic ethic of non-attachment but the Throne Hands feel they deserve the fruits of this trivial indulgence).

Ambitious officials dream not of enlightenment but of admission to the Lordly Forests, where they can associate with those empowered to rise them to the authority's topmost pinnacles.

THE WASTELANDS

A vast and inhospitable swath of scrubland, plagued equally by cold winds and scorching heat, occupies eastern central Genertela. Its comparatively liveable corner is called Prax and borders Kethaela and Dragon Pass. Prax exists under the indirect control of the EWF but the rest of the Wastelands have never been conquered.

Only the Animal Nomads and a few other odd species like the anthropomorphic baboon people, know how to survive in the Wastelands proper. They battle fiercely for control of its



few oases. Notable tribes of the Wastelands include the Sable Riders, the Bison Riders, the Llama Riders, the Impala Riders, the inhuman Morokanth who herd degenerate humans, the Rhino Riders, the Zebra Riders, the Unicorn Riders, the Bolo Lizard Riders and the Ostrich People.

PENT

The grassy steppes of Pent wilt under the summer sun and quiver beneath the wintry blasts from the adjoining, trackless tundra on its northern boundary. Here ride the fearsome Pentan horse nomads, who worship the great sun spirit Kargzant. Their fortunes are presently on the wane, as fast-moving velociraptor units of the EWF War Dragons suppress their raiding efforts. Vanquished clans submit to wyrmfriend priests, who imbue Kargzant worship with serpentine rites to tax their worship energy. Nomads who join their Horse Dragon cult take part in the subjugation of rival tribes. War Dragon leaders condone raids into God Learner territory, prompting the Pentans to conduct their usual whirlwind attacks on Kralorela and southern Teshnos. They may also attack the animal nomads in the Wastelands, though not in Prax.

Pent's tribes are alliances of family lineages. Pentans follow their leaders fanatically and expect gruesome death if they betray them. However, when a leader dies, a tribe's lineages may either remain together or split apart to be absorbed by other tribes. Successful war leaders gather large tribes. Right now the tribes of Pent are weak and numerous. The most notable of them are:

- X The **Otniza**, who are despised for submitting to the War Dragons and then aiding the foreigners against the other tribes. They are led by Lughteg Erdeneg, known by the Otniza as Lughteg the Wise and by his enemies as Lughteg Windshifter. He is always seen in the company of his waddling boar, Trene, leading others to whisper that he is really a pig hsunchen.
- X The **Burilgi**, the strongest of the unvanquished tribes. Their leader, Cherel Bayaris, launches daring raids against War Dragon encampments. He has sworn that before he takes his last breath he will hoist the head of Orsarik Cloudviper on a lance of gold.
- X The **Qutu**, known as the Beseechers, for their habit of chanting to the Sun God, Kargzant, as they fire their arrows in battle. They have not submitted to the War Dragons but do not defy them either, confining their raiding to Kralorela. Their leader, Tolui Apisho, is famed as the richest Pentan. He owns a mail shirt made of golden links. He keeps this display piece in the encampment, wearing it only on ceremonial occasions.
- X The **Ube**, who confine their raids to Teshnos. Their leader, Dosvene Dolamen, always wears the hat of the last person he slew. Accordingly, he is most often seen in a turban.
- X The **Grupartho**, which in Pentan means 'invented tribe'. Led by an apostate Malkioni sorcerer named Orathorn,

they are half-foreigners who have been adopted by Pentan bloodlines. They war viciously against both War Dragons and other tribes who reject their legitimacy. Although their leading warriors appear to embrace the prospect of death, it frequently eludes them. Instead doom visits itself on their enemies, especially when the Grupartho are wildly outnumbered by them. Orathorn's tribe allows adventuring groups to join them on raids, hoping they will permanently join their elite ranks.

- X The **Bokesth**, guardians of the Hellcrack. This great fissure in the earth leads to the mythic Underworld. Monsters still crawl out of it from time-to-time. After their leader, Tegus Yeke, was wounded in the brain by a hellbeast, he submitted to the War Dragons. Now he sends them out to kill Underworld creatures, while he remains in his tent, wracked by fever dreams.

KRALORELA

Wide, flat, well-irrigated plains fill Genertela's eastern coast, feeding its large population. The land grows progressively hillier as one moves from coast to mountain. The Shan Shan mountains contain its splendour, protecting the lush land from the deprivations of the Wastes and Pent, to its west.

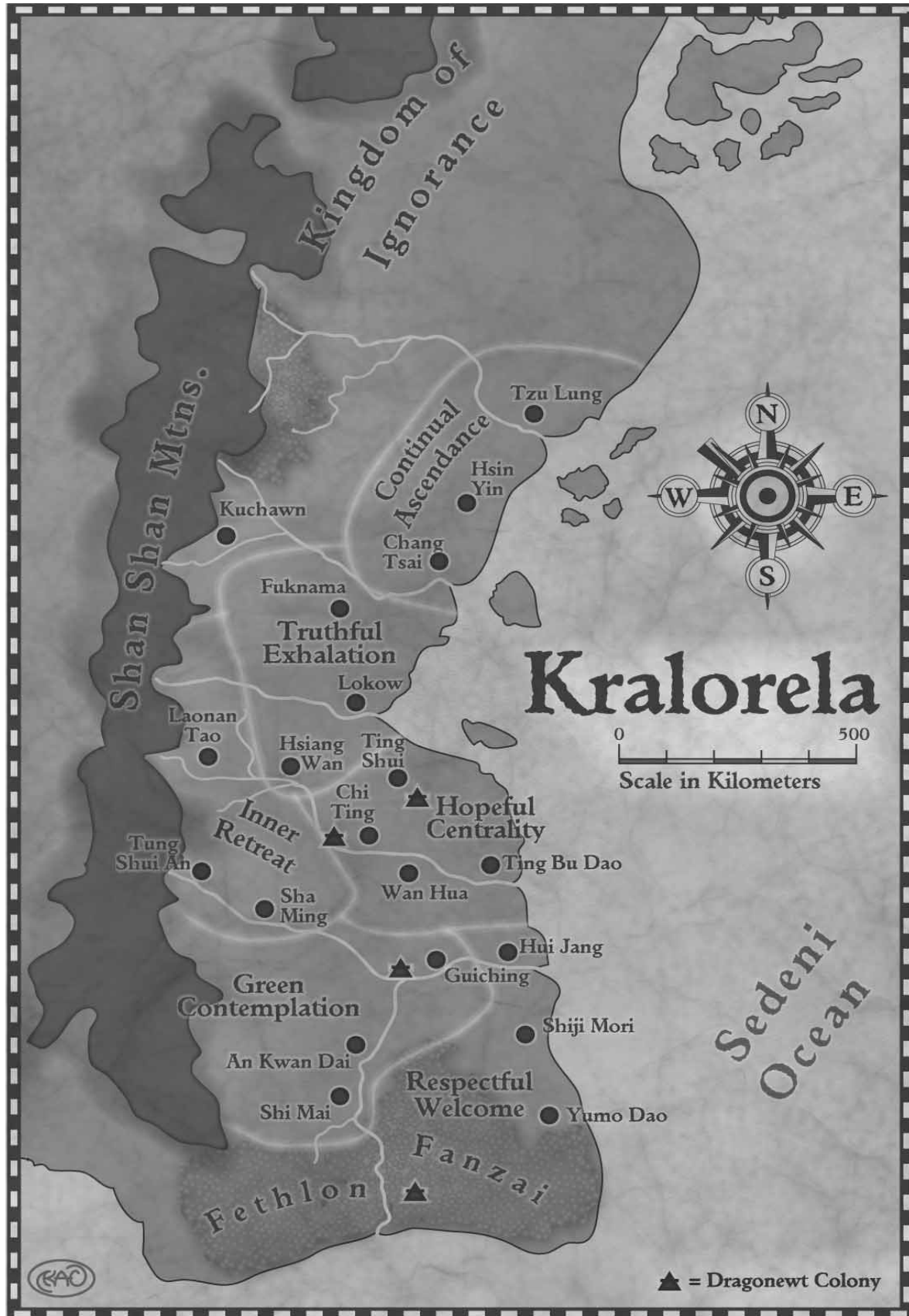
Emperor ShangHsa rearranged the traditional provincial boundaries of Kralorela in 783, 20 years after his ascension to power, as part of his bloody Purge of Antiquated Thinking. Governmental officials who resisted his changes were gathered together and buried alive. Others kept quiet at that time but fled north to the Kingdom of Ignorance as soon as they could.

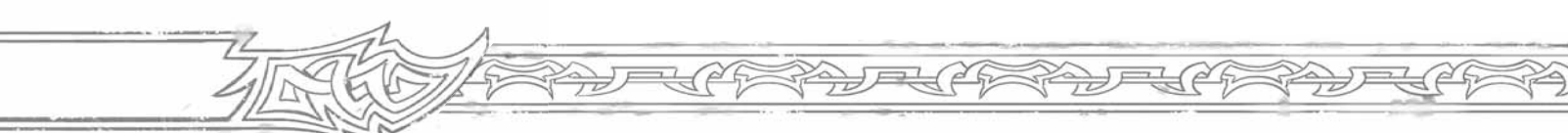
Each of the provinces is named after a principle of Immanent Mastery. The renaming altered the personalities of the common people who dwell there, as was the plan. The provinces were divided so that each (except for the central province) would contain three major cities, though not all sectors are equally prosperous. Each is now ruled by a governor appointed by ShangHsa, who is also an advanced student of Immanent Mastery.

Continual Ascendance

The people of Continual Ascendance are strivers, never content with the depth of their service to the Empire. They compete with one another to fulfil the letter and spirit of ShangHsa's proclamations, and to inform on those of their neighbours who fail to measure up. The province's main cities are:

- X **Chang Tsai**, the Cannibal City. Conquered over 40 years ago by a sadistic Chaos champion called the Ogre King, it is now the subject of a rapprochement between Emperor and interloper, brokered by God Learner sorcerers. The Ogre King acknowledges ShangHsa's primacy and the Emperor in turn allows his Legion of





Red Bones to devour both those who flout his laws and they who die of natural causes. Prisoners rescued from the Red Bones Legion may legally escape their ordained punishment by crossing the provincial boundary into Truthful Exhalation. Those who try to escape by sea remain outlawed and must be bound over for death if caught elsewhere.

- X **Hsin Yin**, City of Cleanliness, where people high and low compete to reflect their spiritual purity with a fanatical hatred for dirt, especially that which arises from, or attaches itself to, the human body. Frequent executions for sneezing, scratching or giving off an ill odour are woefully necessary, especially during the summer months.
- X **Tzu Lung**, City of Beauty. Kralori mercenary bands earn generous stipends by escorting the coveted brides of Tzu Lung to destinations throughout the Empire. Naturally, they must arrive with purity intact. The provincial governor, Chi Ying, has dug a new palace for himself underground. By remaining beneath the earth, he claims he will evolve into a new Immanent state, freeing his people forever from hunger and want.

Green Contemplation

Residents of Green Contemplation seek harmony with nature, as represented by the brilliant emerald hills of the countryside, and the lush aldryami forests to the south. Certain unlucky monks, contemplating the Great Dragon, accidentally make themselves like the Great Tree. Depending on need, they are either converted to an ever-burning fuel or planted in the earth, to yield crops of nutritious nuts. Its cities are:

- X **An Kwan Dai**, City of Persuasion, where anyone can be made to believe anything, at least for the space of a few hours. For enjoyment, nobles and merchants stroll through the lantern-lit Promenade of Folly, where, to everyone's delight, sages spout nonsensical yet rigorously constructed theories. None dares contradict the doctrines of ShangHsa, however. Certain sages can talk you into instantly rematerialising in particular locations elsewhere in Glorantha. Known sites of verbal transport include the Slontan city of Thanor and the Umathelan Psychic Zoo.
- X **Guiching**, City of Palaces, where the richest Kralori live in unbelievable splendour, surrounded by neighbourhoods of stunning wretchedness. Rebels against ShangHsa covertly gather in its slums, yet also infect the minds of the pampered, salon-dwelling youth.
- X **Shi Mai**, City of Permeability, where the monks feed themselves through the pores, bathing in nourishing liquids harvested from the God Plane, by their Jrusteli allies. Several God Learner colleges cooperate to maintain a celestial sled, which permits easy launching into the eastern Other Side myths.

Hopeful Centrality

Here the mystic atmosphere requires one to maintain a sense of optimism and a certitude of future splendour. Dolorous thoughts may be spoken only in whispers. In the province of Hopeful Certainty, even rotten food tastes like the finest delicacy. Cities are:

- X **Chi Ting**, City of Immanence, where the Emperor and his Dragon Masters dwell, in gold-scaled pagodas of ascending magnificence. A large western enclave surrounds their compound. The ambient contentedness of the province prevents people from expressing distaste for the foreigners, no matter how odd they smell. Those with government business to conduct must come here, where all the truly powerful officials are found. ShangHsa has recently conceived an interest in silkworms and seeks to make them as compliant as his people.
- X **Wan Hua**, City of Calligraphy, where writing was invented and the best brushes are made. Officials who cannot write beautifully fare poorly here, a rare Gloranthan city where nearly everyone is literate.
- X **Ting Bu Dao**, Port of Willows. The Kralori fleet is built here, with the cooperation of aldryami craftsmen, who persuade the trees to form themselves into hulls. The wood of its living lumberyards fetches a dear price in any other nautical city in Glorantha but is always spoken for and cannot be purchased, only stolen.
- X **Ting Shui**, the Dragon's Court. At the centre of this hushed and reverent city lies a vast, shining courtyard whose paving stones are a curious mixture of metal and brick. There, at three separate occasions since the Dawn, the August Dragon has descended from the sky to grant audience to people. It dispenses justice to all who submit to an interview, granting relief from grievance to the wronged and devouring the unrighteous. The dragon's past appearances all occurred during Yanoor's reign. ShangHsa's friends and foes alike greet the prospect of a new visitation, which is overdue, with a mixture of dread and anticipation. Will he affirm the rightness of the Immanent Path or scour all vestiges of it from the face of the earth?

Inner Retreat

The people of this province shun visitors, even other Kralori. They prefer speech to action and thought to speech. It is their duty to look inward and find further improvements to the Immanent Path. Cities are:

- X **Laonan Tao**, the Lingering City, where any fast action fails and slowness wins in all endeavours. Its martial artists have perfected the Falling Petal fighting style, in which the combatant appears to be barely moving, even as he tosses his hapless opponent across the courtyard. Laonan

Dragonewt Colonies

Kralorela houses four dragonewt colonies: one west of Chi Ting, another to its northeast, another near Guiching and the largest in the forest of Fethlon. This last colony, known as Fanzai, is ruled by an Inhuman King.

Unlike the dragonewts of Dragon Pass and Ormsland, he and his fellow lizard men maintain the traditional separation between wyrm and humankind. As always, the humans of Kralorela maintain an affinity with draconic principles but do not presume to insert themselves into the affairs of dragonkin. The motto 'two paths to the same destination', seeks to explain ShangHsa's hands-off policy toward the dragonewts. A sentence of death awaits any Kralori who violates it.

The exiles of the old regime say that the dragonewts will one day rise to strike down accursed ShangHsa and Cham Dao for their blasphemy but so far they have shown no inclination to smite anyone.

Tao's trainers can improve any fighter's technique, even if he is a benighted westerner.

- X **Tung Shui An**, City of Nourishment, where everyone prepares his own food. To eat food prepared by another without payment risks stomach cramps. Food cooked for payment is toxic. Restaurants exist as social locations, to which one brings packed meals. People wishing to speak to dead comrades can do so at the city's Pool of Resurrection. Ghosts of all cultures can be contacted there, except for observant Hrestoli Malkioni. Believers in reincarnation sometimes find themselves talking to living incarnations of their dead friends.
- X **Sha Ming**, City of Refusal, where any question which can be answered in the negative will be. It houses the School of Withheld Affirmation, an Immanent Path offshoot which promises to grant the powers not of dragons but of gods themselves. ShangHsa grudgingly allows it, only because his mentor Gillam D'estau has declared it a fascinating avenue of exploration. Other God Learners are anxious to pry into its secrets, even before D'estau is ready to reveal them. Sha Ming is also known for its perennial lateness in paying taxes, a practice which long predates the reign of ShangHsa.

Respectful Welcome

The port cities of Respectful Welcome open their hearts to outsiders of the God Learner persuasion and are reservedly friendly to other foreigners. They follow the motto: 'Absorb what is best about others, so that it becomes yours'.

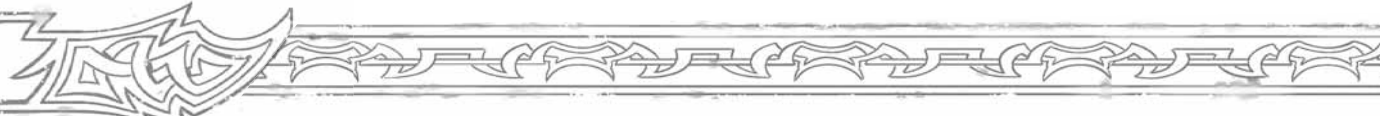
- X **Hui Jang**, City of Seawomen, staffs entire trading vessels with female merchants. They drive hard bargains and fight off pirates with their Spinning Crane fighting style. Women adventurers wishing to be accepted in Kralori society perform favours for Spinning Crane nuns, winning the right to paint the Kralori character for 'Valour' on their foreheads.
- X **Shiji Mori**, City of Perfection, celebrates its craftsmen, who produce simple objects notable for their flawlessness. The humbler the beauty they attain, the more valuable their objects become. Shiji Mori crafts fetch high prices wherever the wealthy seek luxury and status.
- X **Yumo Dao**, City of Dreams, where one may place a bowl of rice wine under one's bed, using the intoxicating liquid as a medium to record one's perambulations through the lands of dream. Professional dream-seekers lace fine wines with vistas of unearthly wonder and offer them for sale. These infusions are valued throughout Glorantha.

Truthful Exhalation

In Truthful Exhalation those who speak honestly of their love for Immanent Mastery feel full and light, as if the purest air animates their lungs. Those who despicably lie and say that it is a false or dangerous doctrine or that ShangHsa is less than benevolent, find themselves perpetually winded and short of breath. They sicken easily and must often take to their beds for days at a time. To avoid this effect, secret critics of the regime migrate either to other provinces or to the Kingdom of Ignorance. Officials who are of questionable loyalty are sent here as a test; those who fall ill are demoted or, in the case of those of lofty rank, executed.

Conversely, only those certain of their affection for the Emperor and his doctrine tend to move here. Its cities, all of whom have lately taken a melancholy, deserted quality, are as follows:

- X **Fuknama**, City of Radiant Perfection, whose official and priestly classes are not permitted to use any object which is cracked, blemished, chipped or improperly manufactured. Rivals undermine one another by hiring stealthy operatives to place damaged or ill-made items in their enemies' display cabinets. The ceramic tile murals of Fuknama's Wall District are so stunningly beautiful that hardened men weep when forced to depart from them.
- X **Lokow**, City of Rest, whose chief industry is sleep. Wealthy Kralori come from across the Empire to make



use of its luxurious clay sleeping chambers. They climb into these vessels, which are then mortared shut and lowered into pits in the earth. As dirt is piled over their encompassing clay beds, they fall into a surpassingly deep slumber. They remain unconscious for anywhere from a few days to months, depending on their need for spiritual regeneration. When they wake up, they ring a silver bell, alerting workmen on the surface to dig them up. They emerge with all emotional and physical fatigue scrubbed away from them, fresh and ready to face the world again. Horned guardians of animated ceramic material guard the slumber mounds, to prevent kidnappings. Lokow's stone buildings were made from the eggshell that hatched the immortal Luy Wi, a son of Allgiver. No dust ever settles on them.

- X **Hsiang Wan**, City of Taboos, where each social class is forbidden to touch a common element or object. Officials may not touch their feet or shoes directly to outdoor ground and must be carried from place-to-place in palanquins, even when moving only a few paces across a courtyard. Merchants and artisans may not allow liquids to touch their lips, and must drink through straws. Commoners born on the city's east side may not touch clay vessels, where those from the west are forbidden glass containers. Each despises the other as unworthy. The origin goddess, She of the All Encompassing Before, was born here; some say the taboos are a tribute to her, while others say they keep monsters from pouring down out of the mountains.

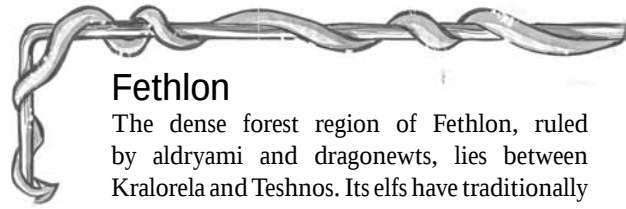
Kuchawn, City of Exemption

When ShangHsa marched on the imperial palace in 768, to call the Emperor Yanoor to account, the officials of Kuchawn were the first city governors to announce support for him. As a reward, Kuchawn was granted special status upon ShangHsa's ascension to the throne. It is independent of provincial rule and thus to the odd ambient magics that affect each province. It pays taxes only to the Emperor and need not support a provincial bureaucracy. The Emperor's summer palace lies outside the city nestled in the rolling Shan Shan foothills, and subject to a cooling wind. Despite his seasonal proximity, secret societies opposed to his rule gather here, to covertly plot his downfall.

Kuchawn's tallest structure is its observatory, which boasts the world's longest uninterrupted set of celestial recordings.

Churn Durel, The Kingdom of Ignorance

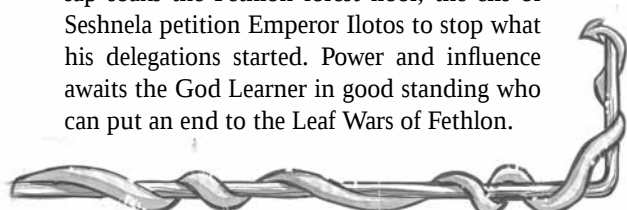
Throughout Kralorelan history the ruling class of that great Empire has looked with loathing and revulsion on Churn Durel, the Kingdom of Ignorance. Now, having fled their own once-perfect nation, they languish in exile, in this most hated of places. Its natives are the Ignorants, who wear tanned



Fethlon

The dense forest region of Fethlon, ruled by aldryami and dragonewts, lies between Kralorela and Teshnos. Its elves have traditionally been hostile to the Kralori and friendly to the Teshnans. The God Learners make a sustained effort to win over the Fethloni elves. Delegations from Seshnela, headed by nobles who have grown up with the elves of that nation's Jorestel Forest, patiently state and restate the case for an alliance. They have even brought the elves of Jorestel along with them on occasion.

Their peace efforts have led to war within rival aldryami tribes, who have split over the wisdom of an alliance. The brown elves of the north are more favourably disposed to the God Learners than the yellow elves of the south and interior, but the battle-lines in this internal feud shift unpredictably. Leader of the anti-Jrusteli forces is Daranor, an imperious bamboo elf. Her main foe is Tanelos, whose vegetable traits are those of an ever-spreading Tree of Heaven. As spilled sap soaks the Fethlon forest floor, the elves of Seshnela petition Emperor Ilotos to stop what his delegations started. Power and influence awaits the God Learner in good standing who can put an end to the Leaf Wars of Fethlon.



hides and avoid metal implements, money, abstract thought and literacy. They worship Zerel Fan, god of ignorance. This four-faced solar entity is now mostly known in his aspect as the Black Sun, thanks to the efforts of the local Uz, who used to rule over the humans here. Churn Durel is a craggy hill country covered in twisted forests, many of them overgrown by fungus.

Shan Shan Mountains

A range of sharp-edged mountains, the Shan Shan, overlooks Kralorela, taunting its rulers, who have never conquered it. The eastern hsunchen tribes dwell here, feeding on its sparse vegetation and preying on one another. They include:

- X The peaceful **Damali Deer People**, who attempt to bring harmony and mutual prosperity to their fellow hsunchen.
- X The burly **Lo-Fak Yak People**, who, like the wasteland nomads, subsist on their herds and supplement their larders with raids.

- X The warlike **Hsa Tiger People**, who attack all non-hsunchen humans on sight and their beastfolk neighbours, as hunger warrants.
- X The aloof, predatory **Qa-Ying Eagle People**, who live in the northern mountains and raid into Pent.
- X The comparatively complaisant **Ri-Si Woodpecker People**, who disclaim raiding in favour of hunting, trapping and foraging.
- X The elusive **Chen-Ga Snow Leopard People**, who live so high in the mountains that many Kralori think they can fly.

VERENELA

The region of Verenela encompasses the peninsula of Teshnos and a network of islands, most prominently Trowjang and Melib. Sofali turtle people dwell on many of the smaller islands.

Teshnos

The fire mystics of Teshnos build ornate cities on the savannah and carve settlements from sweltering jungles. The land's major port, **Dombain**, has been significantly expanded by the God Learners, who lease it from King Kasinslian in a favourable deal executed under duress. They also occupy the small city



of Gio, a place of religious contention, where adherents of various mystic paths debate to prove their surpassing sublimity. The Jrusteli built Tigonidar, city of cages, as a prison colony, mostly for heretics and enemies from elsewhere. The forest of Fethlon is a yellow elf redoubt; its plant people favour the Teshnans but dislike the Jrusteli interlopers.

Trowjang

Under the rainforest canopies of this tropical isle dwell the Marazi, a tribe of civilised human women, and their mates, a race of red-skinned demigods called the Tolati, after their father, Tolat. Practicing a mystic tradition imparted to them on the breath of their ruddy god-husbands, the women oversee a city-state famous for its music, food, poetry and decorative art. The demigods dwell in seclusion in anthill-shaped clay shrines, visited only by their many wives, who act as their intermediaries to the wider world. God Learner visitors are tolerated, so that they may be schooled in the error of their ways. The Marani disdain the men and keep any female foreigners far away from the clay shrine-homes where their husbands dwell.

Melib

A generation after their initial push into the seas, the God Learners established a major merchant-naval base on this pleasant tropical island and have dominated it ever since. Called **Sivestarm**, it is known as the City of False Symmetry, as every building on its eastern side is an imperfect reverse copy of a counterpart on the west side. Two native ethnic groups, the striving, yam-eating Gachi and uneasy, piratical Ashurtans, compete for the favour of their Jrusteli masters. The God Learners favour the latter group for their boundless servility, rewarding them with work in their trading fleet.

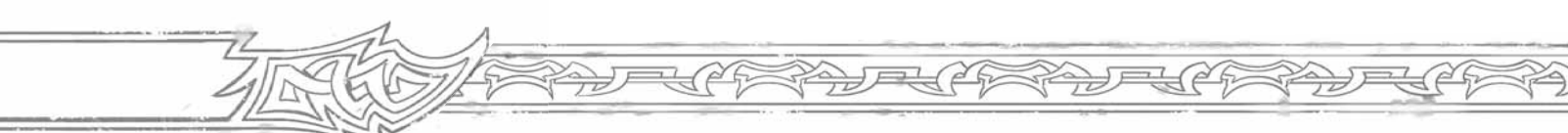
VITHELA (THE EASTERN ISLES)

Dozens of disparate mini-civilisations flourish in the eastern islands of Vithela, which once was a mighty continent unto itself, before a pre-Time disaster sundered it into countless pieces. Worship here is mystical in nature.

Most peoples of Vithela range across a number of islands. Major groups of interest to adventurers include the following.

Hanfarador Islands

The Confederation of Hanfarador fights a constant battle against the demonic inhabitants of a nearby island chain, the Arandinni. They worship Vith and Laraloori and pay homage to monarchs who favour the female line in determining succession. Upon their arrival in Vithela, the Jrusteli allied with them but now extract trade concessions by threatening to withdraw support needed against the Arandinni. The Hanfaradori offer bounties for the heads (where applicable)



of their Aradinnini enemies. Valuable prizes can be won each year at its spice competition, in which eaters compete to survive various pepper dishes of tongue-stripping intensity.

Arandinni Islands

The scaled, horned race of demon men called the Andin are found throughout Vithela but enjoy political unity in this eponymous island chain. What they lack in speed and wit they make up for in size, strength and determination. They worship Vith and the dark mother, Gebkeran. Jrusteli renegades, led by the outlaw sorcerer Varsard, are busily teaching them war Sorcery, for which they display a native talent. Their leader, Beg Usta, has announced his intention to eat the soul of Malkion and excrete it in the form of a cloak-fastener.

Arch-Duchy of Haragala

The once-wretched mercenaries of the Haragalan Islands have prospered by attaching themselves thoroughly to the Jrusteli. Their leaders voluntarily made themselves vassals of the Emperor and even adopted an outwardly Malkioni religious practice – albeit one in which Malkion's sayings suspiciously resemble those of Kabalt, the Liberating Bolt. They work with God Learner sorcerers to perfect the art of magical ship-making. Haragalans intervene in other Vithelan wars by auctioning their sleek navy to the highest bidder. Their main city, **Chartam**, boasts a glowing cathedral dome that illuminates the night sky for miles around.

Mokato

Jewelled Mokato is all that remains of a ruined city of the gods. Its people dwell below crystalline spires of divine manufacture which have hardened into resplendent peaks. They proudly bask in the direct rule of their infallible god, Hobimarong. A staff of governor-priests called stewards carry out his flawless edicts.

Hobimarong declared war on the Waertagi even before the God Learners did. They deployed a wondrous weapon against the green-skinned seafarers: a fleet of ships seeming composed of pure magical essence, without physical components. Despite these so-called essence ships, few of Mokato's neighbours expected them to prevail against the sailors of the dragon ships. The Waertagi destroyed a Mokatan ally, the people of the Tamanjary islands, and were about to turn their might on Mokato when the Jrusteli destroyed their fleet.

Hobimarong decreed this event as further proof of his omniscience and decreed that his people should rebuff the God Learners overtures. They quickly moved to establish naval hegemony over south-eastern Vithela, declaring this to be the god's will.

Their essence ships patrol south-eastern Vithela, taking tribute from the populations of its islands. Mokato styles this new territory as the East Isles Empire.

Clashes between the bronze, magic-powered leviathan ships of the God Learners and the blinding essence vessels of the Mokatans have been rare and inconclusive. The most dramatic contest, between the God Learner ship *Xemela* and the Mokatan glowsloop *Amsurelas* resulted in the sinking of both vessels, with great loss of life on both sides. Since that battle, 100 years ago, confrontations between the two sides have centred on brinksmanship over battle.

Reasons to come here: The God Learners have offered a legendarily fat bounty for the secrets of essence vessel construction. Mokatans also hire adventurers to deliver plans of God Learner ships.

Homago

Upon arrival in Vithela, the Jrusteli performed a gesture of goodwill by imposing a blockade on the cannibals of Homago. Though unfailingly polite, the Homagoans eat distant relatives – that is, other East Islanders – in sacred rites dedicated to their god, Saliligor the Devourer. After a century of active repression, the God Learners authorised the resumption of Saliligor worship, in exchange for a map to his home on the God Plane. Since then the Homagoans have resumed their human hunting but only against targets authorised by the ranking officer of the island's naval installation. Fear of the Homagoan Eating Battalion quells rebellious tendencies among Vithelans of all persuasions.

Keetslands

This island chain serves as primary nesting site to the anthropomorphic waterfowl known as the keets, who are also resident as minorities elsewhere in Vithela. They include not only humanoid ducks but also other man-birds including albatross, penguins and puffins. Considered ill-tempered by others, the keets insist that it was their efforts during the shattering of Vithela that preserved life in the East Isles and that everyone else is ungrateful and forgetful. Many Keets are afflicted by wanderlust and often join adventuring bands in order to prove themselves and get away from their overcrowded nesting sites. They defend themselves aggressively but would rather migrate to other islands as permanent residents than take them by force.

Vormain

The mysterious island of Vormain tantalises the God Learners, as it once did the Kralori and Teshnans, with its famous impenetrability. To keep others away from their home soil, the Vormaino conquered the surrounding isles, calling them the Hinter Islands. One may occasionally encounter a true

Vormaino officer, who, having polluted himself through contact with outsiders, faces eternal self-exile. Adventurers are far more likely to meet up with their vicious proxies, the Ratuki shark *hsunchen*. *Jrusteli* scholars offer generous bounties to anyone who can come back with a description of the island, or, better yet, information on their guiding myths.

PAMALTELA

The southern continent of Pamaltela has just shrugged off its ties to the Middle Sea Empire. Even the kingdom of Umathela, made up of culturally *Jrusteli* settlers, has opted for autonomy.

The human kingdom of Fonrit occupies the north central coast of the island, flanked on either side by vast *aldryami* forests. The centre of the continent is a grassless plain. Climate is subtropical to tropical.

Fonrit

The humans of Fonrit result from interbreeding between a blue-skinned slave race and their ancient conquerors. Each of its 17 cities was once ruled by the warring descendants of the original invader, *Gargangordos*. When the *Jrusteli* came, they aided some of the cities against the others, then completed their hegemony by taking over from the exhausted victors as well. They imposed a regime of tolerance and peace on the *Fonritans* (who call themselves *Torvavs*), who had previously lived in a climate of fear and degradation. They pulled down temples of the oppressive slave-holding god, *Ompalam*. Eight years ago the *Torvavs* rose up, demanding their yokes and lashes back. They drove the surprised and complacent God Learners out and are now embarked on a bloody purge of all *Jrusteli* influence. Foreigners face extreme danger. Only the bravest of adventurers dare venture into the maelstrom of sectarian slaughter left by the power vacuum following the *Jrusteli* defeat.

The Northern Mountains

A spectacular mountain chain, broken into three fragments, cuts laterally across the continent, placing a barrier between the forests and civilisations of the coast and the idyllic interior.

The western range is the *Tormo*, occupied by the *Jakaraki Uz*. These are the descendants of the wise *Uz* who did not battle *Pamalt* and therefore retain the strength of original trolls. They pity the *Moorgarki Uz*, weakened trolls of the rest of the continent, but keep them at arm's length.

God Learner explorers set up a network of outposts in the eastern range, the *Palarkri*. Here their naturalists found entire catalogues of bizarre entities and animals, extinct elsewhere in the world.

Mostali heretics occupy the central Mari Mountains. Isolated from their kin in *Genertela* and *Slon*, they have created an orthodoxy of their own, called the Revelation of the Missing Part. Missingartists, influenced by *Pamaltela's* pervasive shamanic worship, attribute the failure of previous World Machine repair efforts to a crucial error of omission. Before it can be restored to proper working order, they must find and reinstall a crucial component – Mostal's spirit. Their prophet, *Skathdarajanagna*, has set out a plan of study to tackle this vexing problem, for which centuries of cold rationalism has left his people ill-prepared. The Missingartists create whirring, steaming devices called Ghost Engines to entrap, study, dissect and replicate the howling spirits of the peaks and snow-caps. Once *Skathdarajanagna* and colleagues learn to fully recreate a destroyed spirit, they will attempt to make one from scratch. When that goal is accomplished, they will move on to their ultimate aim: fabricating a new spirit exactly matching the one inside Mostal when he was destroyed.

The Undiscovered Heresy

The Mari Mountain Mostali are so isolated from their fellows that the depths of their heresy has yet to be discovered by the mainline dwarfs of *Slon* or the *Nidan Decamony*. God Learner scholars are in contact with them, finding their inquiries promising, if misguidedly mechanistic. In his zeal for success, *Skathdarajanagna* has set aside his aloofness to exchange data with the human wizards. *Trimeiros*, a presumptuous dean of Umathela's New *Hrestolket* University, has taken it upon himself to act as liaison to the Missingartists and to conceal their existence from Mostali elsewhere. He periodically hires adventurers to track down and eliminate nosy interlopers and Missingartist defectors.

The Interior

Agimori peoples occupy the various regions of the continent's interior. In the central *Jolar* plain, the *Arbennan* people celebrate the victory of their great hero, *Hon Hoolbiktu*, against the Six-Legged Empire established by the God Learners to rule them. He struggles to establish a new golden age for his people. A spirit guide warned him of the madness that sudden victory can bring. He strives to avoid this doom by spreading a doctrine of non-violence. *Hon Hoolbiktu* also campaigns to bring the fruits of the *Arbennan* way to the passive *Doraddi* and desperate *Tarint*.

Elf Coasts

The aldryami kingdom of Errinoru girds itself against a God Learner attempt to retake Pamaltela. It is named after its great and ancient hero and ruler, who back in the eighth century sacked God Learner cities halfway across the world. After that he journeyed to the Underworld and came back here, powerful and strange. A rare seafaring elf, he oversees the construction of a fleet of vessels with giant leaves for sails. Each hull is carved from the wood of a massive oyup-nut, grown specifically for the purpose.

Errinoru aims to keep the God Learners out of Pamaltela forever but for the moment seems willing to consider an alliance with the breakaway cities of Umathela. His delegations also maintain contacts with Hon Hoolbiktu to coordinate future efforts against the hated Empire of tree-cutters.

The new friendship between man and plant-man does not extend to the various weird remnant cultures who infest the elf coasts. These include the fearful, superstitious Thinobutans and the malign, psychically potent Gorgers. The aldryami hope to gain Umathelan consent for a mass migration of these people to the Kingdom of Learning.

Umathela, Kingdom of Learning

Jrusteli settlers, who came here as early as 580, carved the seven shining cities of Umathela from the surrounding aldryami jungles. The cities became centres of learning and Sorcery, their populations determined to take the early governmental experiments of the Jrusteli cities one step further. They enacted a meritocracy, in which all citizens capable of passing a comprehensive academic test were enfranchised to elect their city lords. The lords then select one of their number to serve as Consul for all Umathela. Deans, tutors and professors are disproportionately represented in the Umathelan leadership rolls.

As the Middle Sea Empire grew increasingly powerful – and Seshnegi in character – its Emperors attempted to erode and eventually replace the enfranchisement system. Iltos' attempt, shortly after his coronation, to personally appoint new dukes sparked a rebellion. This left Umathela as a nation of God Learners politically opposed to their own Empire, because they think it has betrayed its original principles.

The current Consul, Cerori D'korrein, makes uneasy peace with King Goranerno and the Agimori hero Hon Hoolbiktu, knowing that one day their interests will diverge. His people must cut trees to survive and they still want access to the myths of the interior.

In the meantime, Umathela has become a meeting place for independent-minded Malkioni sorcerers who want

to operate without interference from a faraway Emperor. Joining them are employable outlaws and troublemakers of all imaginable affiliations.

Cities of Umathela

The seven great God Learner cities of Umathela are:

- X **Arstranwal**, a city on a high crag. Its tallest point houses the Soul Net Observatory, a domed structure created in imitation of the sky, dedicated to the plumbing of its secrets. Glowing nets of magical power drift out from the top of the dome to ensnare sylphs and other insubstantial beings of the air.
- X **Korreinwal**, a port city. Favourable currents make it the easiest city to reach from Jrustela. Its university is a small, select institution specialising in the relationship between theist magic and political power. Korreinwal has elected more Consuls than any two other cities



combined. Its tea houses buzz with trade opportunities and political gossip.

- X **New Hrestolket**, celebrated for its university, which graduates more God Learner HeroQuesters per year than any other. Umatelans from all the other cities fill its inns and taverns during the annual summertime Festival of Disaffirmation. Drinking and merriment accompany this great debating contest, in which entrants vie to prove their rhetorical powers by convincingly denying obvious and incontrovertible facts.
- X **Noarn**, known for its advanced sewage system, dug for the God Learners by cooperative Mari Mountain Mostali. A tribe of loyal Ludoch guard its exit points to the sea, rewarded by a potion granting them ecstatic visions of their gods.
- X **Tarstargawal**, a smoky city surrounded by felled forests. Zistorite factories clank through the night, turning out magic weapons and replica Mostali artefacts. The city's leaders resisted the rebellion against the Empire and were forcibly deposed by the Consul, with the consent of the other cities. They live here under house arrest. When their loyalist supporters grow restive, Consul Cerori D'korrein threatens to turn them over to the elves, who wish to put them on trial for their crimes against the forest.
- X **Varanswal**, whose university last won the Imperial Cup, awarded every four years by the God Learner Alliance for advances in mythic understanding. A team led by the university's dean, Anaut Cernos, invented a fictitious deity, Jograpur, and imported a clan of Tarint Agimori to their city. Slowly they converted these hapless subjects to the worship of Jograpur and even succeeded in creating a flicker of its existence in the God Plane. Cernos believes that, through the sincere beliefs of his pet clan, he can infuse Jograpur with even greater power. He looks forward to the day when he personally controls a tame deity, who will grant him magic and perform missions against for him in the Otherworld.
- X **Yoranday**, home to the world-famous Psychic Zoo, a menagerie of Otherworld creatures kept in their unearthly habitats by a powerful system of sorcerous wards. The elf king of Errinoru has allegedly offered a reward to any adventuring band able to penetrate the zoo's defences and disable the wards.

THE OCEANS

Travel from one place of adventure to the next may require a sea journey. Glorantha's dangerous waters may yield as much trouble and excitement as the Adventurers will find at their various destinations.

Magasta's Pool

Over 200 kilometres wide at its mouth, the Cosmic Whirlpool swirls inexorably at the centre of the world, surrounded by the Homeward Ocean. Sailors unfortunate enough to find themselves on this stretch of whirling, glassine sea can see it tilt downward toward the pool. Once caught in its unrelenting current, only God Learner vessels equipped with magic-driven engines are powerful enough to reverse themselves and escape. All other ships caught in it are doomed. Sailors have one chance to save themselves, by leaping to safety on Nowhere Island. This deceptively large patch of barren ground, suspended eternally in the churning pool, sits on the boundary between Life and Death. Castaways dwell there, forlorn and ageless, coping glumly with their own boredom and each other. At the bottom of the whirlpool lies the mythic depths of the ocean beyond the ocean, inhabited only by marine gods and great spirits.

God Learner vessels have on occasion rescued important explorers from Nowhere Island, though several have been destroyed in the attempt. Over the past decades, the flat stone seafaring vessels of the Mostali have been spotted nearby, groaning under the weight of a massive, disassembled iron edifice.

Western Waters

Temperatures ranging from cool to frigid characterise the waters of western Glorantha.

Hudaro Ocean

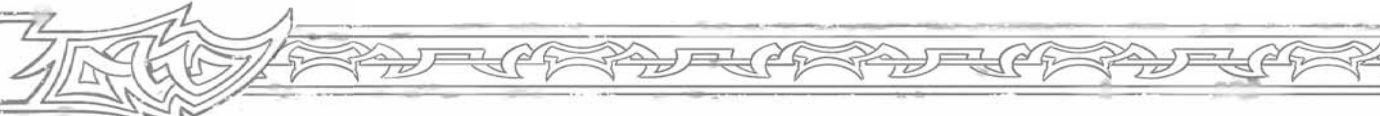
A fleet of icebergs sails this chill sea, posing a perennial hazard to all but the nimblest sailing vessels. Oouri merfolk call it home. Vigilantly patrolled by the implacable war fleet of Brithos, the Hudaro remains off-limits even to the God Learners.

Banthe Sea

The currents of this gelid sea send icebergs and freezing currents past the northern tip of Jrustela. Full of life, it teems with crustaceans, ice fish and walrus. Enormous sea birds, including the marine dodo and giant puffin, squawk on its rocky islands. The Middle Sea fleet patrols it against incursions from Brithini and Waertagi ships.

Neliomi Sea

Tiny spears of rock pepper the sea immediately surrounding the isle of Brithos. These are the last shards of Danmalastan, the mythic continent shattered by prehistoric wars, of which Brithos is the only viable remnant. The Neliomi is a dark and limpid sea, as clear and cold as the heart of Zzabur. The ever-growing Brithini navy, augmented by vengeful Waertagi

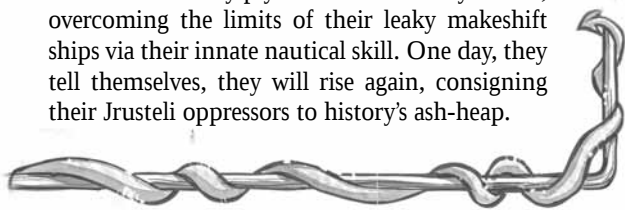


Fate of the Waertagi

The Waertagi are a human race whose pale complexions display a tint of blue or green. Some exhibit webbed toes or fingers, or vestigial gill-slits along the throat. They grow weak if forced to spend more than a few days inland. They ruled the seas, riding vast ships carved from the bodies of dragons, from prehistory to the early eighth century. Then the God Learners destroyed their fleet, scattering them into wretched exile. Jrusteli imprison or kill them whenever they can.

Most fled to Brithos, to the arms of their perennial allies. Like the Brithini, they are old-style Malkioni sorcerers who adhere fervently to a restrictive caste structure. Some take refuge in Sog City, in Fronela.

Others stubbornly ply the seas on rickety vessels, overcoming the limits of their leaky makeshift ships via their innate nautical skill. One day, they tell themselves, they will rise again, consigning their Jrusteli oppressors to history's ash-heap.



seamen, bars all foreign shipping, especially that of the Middle Sea Empire.

Vadeli Islands

South of Brithos and west of Seshnela lurk the tiny Vadeli Islands, home to the remnants of an evil Empire from before the dawn of time. Once a tripartite race with red and blue-skinned members, the present-day Vadeli are all brown-skinned survivors of the lowest, most numerous caste. Fierce opponents of Malkion and his people, the Vadeli launched a war that destroyed the primal continent of Danmalastan. They were finally defeated by the Brithini; those few who were not killed were exiled to this stark and windswept island cluster. Now they fear not only the Brithini but also God Learner sorcerers who seek to imprison and interrogate them to learn the secrets of early prehistory. No tears are shed for their wretched state. To maintain their immortality, they reproduce by incest and then dine on their offspring.

Kereneth Sea

The shallow, turbulent waters of the Kereneth are known as the Brown Sea, both because of its high concentration of particulate plant life and its visible, craggy bottom, filled by lifeless, detritus-covered reefs. Weedy sargassos cover vast swathes of its surface, sheltering an ecosystem of bizarre and frequently predatory marine creatures.

Swermela Sea

Seeping between the southern landmasses of Slon and Pamaltela is the Sea of Worms. Both of its shores are marshy and brackish. Its muddy floor births swarms of leeches, some of them gigantic, which attach themselves to whales, ichthyosaurs, krakens and passing vessels. The Swermela also provides a home to mammoth crocodiles and the diminutive, malign so-called merfolk known as the Dwerulan.

Slon

This obscure land mass, tucked in the world's southwest corner, houses the world's largest population of Mostali. They live beneath the surface of Slon, on its snout-like northern peninsula. Over their heads, on its cracked hardpan ground, toil a population of deluded human slaves who believe themselves to be Mostali – or, at least, capable of becoming such. Centuries of environmental degradation have rendered the land completely infertile, forcing the humans to subsist on a canned nutrient sludge.

A high wall, its interior salted with traps and ballista emplacements, separates the Mostali portion of Slon from its wild southlands. These are populated by fearsome dinosaurs and the benighted tribesmen who worship them as gods. Giants used to ride the largest of these beasts into war against the Mostali of Slon but these have not been seen since early in the Dawn Age.

Keniryan Sea

This frigid body of water, also called the White Sea, slices down into Peloria. A subglacial waterway connects it to Gloranth's other seas. A few hardy Oouri merfolk swim between its ice floes, living amid narwhals, seals and snow-snakes.

Eastern Waters

The warm waters of Gloranth move into the world from the east.

Sshorg Sea

On the floor of this warm and turbulent sea the gods Endaralath and Ermanthiver eternally battle, sending periodic tsunamis coursing toward either Vithela or Teshnos and Kralorela. Sailors fear its notorious doom currents, which can drag a ship instantly below apparently placid waters. The remnants of five drowned Empires lie below it, prompting God Learner expeditions to explore it, equipped with water-breathing spells.

Teleos

The mountainous jungle island of Teleos rises from the middle of the Sshorg Sea. Six tribes of humans live here, each with a skin colour of a different, bright rainbow hue. Although they

share the same culture, gods and customs, each tribe regards all of the others with loudly expressed revulsion. Each provides a different narrative explaining the fundamental uncleanness of the others. As vehement as their prejudices might be, they are always expressed peacefully. Teleosans only marry within their skin colour. Their children, however, can be of any colour, a distressing fact that the islanders deal with through annual child swaps, where their progeny are traded for adoptees of the correct complexion.

God Learner scholars find the Teleosans maddeningly illogical. Studies of their mythways are infrequently launched and invariably abandoned.

Dinisso Sea

Ludoch, the most human-like of the Triolini merfolk, populate the tepid coastal waters of eastern Pamaltela. Their leader, the once-quiescent King Kuchoswen, was rescued from slow poisoning by a poultice provided by the militant elves of Errinoru. Now infused with new youth and zeal, he supports their cause by sabotaging ships from the Middle Sea Empire. Kuchoswen professes a blithe inability to distinguish the vessels of the Empire proper from those of Errinoru's allies, the breakaway Umathelan Coalition.

Dashomo Sea

Placid and full of fish, the Dashomo teems with cruel malasp merfolk. The God Learners secured their obedience, if not their fealty, by holding hostage H'hjarich, their deity of communication. Now they are torn between imperial loyalists and Umathelan rebels, both of whom have demonstrated the ability to torture H'hjarich in his God Plane prison.

Kahar Sea

The Kahar Sea, north of Vithela and east of Kralorela, roils with a thick, billowing fog, rendering its waters navigable only by the most skilled of sailors. Sailors call it the Sea of Fog. The zabdamar merfolk, a curious species of manatee-faced Triolini, disport both beneath the waves and in the fog itself, controlling the movements of the dangerous mists. God Learner vessels test a variety of magics against their moveable mists, with variable success.

Togaro Ocean

The most blistering of Glorantha's oceans is the Togaro, also known as the Ocean of Terror. Storms of steam, capable of scalding a man to the bone, whirl across its surface. Patches of its waters may suddenly boil without warning. Sailors fear to fall overboard, lest they be devoured by the ocean's main predator, an armoured, carnivorous fish.

Ludoch mermen dwell in its outer reaches, while their vicious Ysabbau counterparts live at its roiling core.

The Edges Of the World

Because Glorantha is flat, the edges of its maps do not meet. Instead they give way to mythic borderlands where humans dare not tread. These are accessible only by superhuman effort.

Altinela, Beyond the Glaciers

To the north lies Altinela, a frosty land of Chaos-fighting demigods, known only through visions and dreams. No human has ever been there and returned to report on it. On the slopes of frosty mountains a legion of primal Uz, unaffected by the Gbaji curse, conduct hardscrabble warfare against rushing ice demon hordes. These peaks eventually part to expose a land beyond the glaciers, dominated by the cyclopean Palace of Valind, home of the winter god. Made of a vibrant, unearthly stone that repels cold, it is home to the Altinae, beautiful demigods of a blond, pale aspect. Their eternal duty is to ward off incursions of Chaos from a rent in the world's fabric, which exists even further north than Valind's palace.

Theyala, Land of Dawn

Only a handful of Vithelan mystics have gone past the eastern isles, navigating the treacherous Ferezed Deepes to arrive at Theyala, the Land of Dawn. The Dawnsgate sits on a dappled hill atop its golden city of morning light. This is the gate through which the sun is released every morning to begin its warming trek across the sky. Its people are faceless, golden-skinned immortals who constantly sing, to keep the universe alive.

Sakum, the Burning Regions

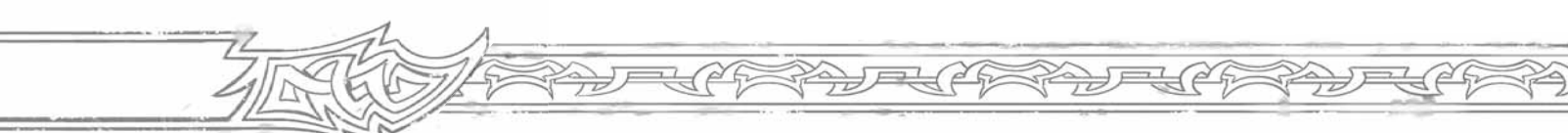
South of Pamaltela, past 4,000 kilometres of the scorching Nargan Desert, a place of punishing heat, poison clouds and uniquely horrible Chaos creatures, a few legendary shamans have reached Sakum, the Burning Regions. They remained there for only a few hours before their protective spirit shields burned away and they were forced to retreat back to the Nargan. There, most of them died. But when they got reincarnated, a few of them remembered a bit about Sakum, which is all that is known.

It is a land of living fire, where only those plants descended from gods can survive. Its quasi-divine people, the Agitani, are the people who, when Pamalt gave them the choice between living forever and making children, chose the former. They guard the sacred, blackened Enmal Mountains, through which one must plunge to find Um, home of the Pamaltelan gods.

Luathela, Land of Sunset

Far to the west rise the blood-red gates of sunset, where the sun returns each night, to temporarily close its blinding eye.

Non-Malkioni regard the Sunset Gate as identical to the portal to the Underworld, the land of death. Its violet-skinned inhabitants, the immortal Luathans, serve as escorts to the



dead and irredeemably hostile enemies to any living souls foolish enough to venture here, past its legions of slicing and rending monsters. Five metres tall, with beautiful visages, the Luathans sing rather than speak and respond to questioning with flashing, threatening grimaces.

Hrestoli Malkioni know the Sunset Gate as the Black Pit of Introspection, an eternal spiritual trap which good worshippers bypass, going to Solace.

Whatever you believe, the Sunset Gate is unquestionably the exit from this world. Few living beings make it to Luatha and remain so. To come back from the Underworld is to forever join the ranks of legend, as a great hero like Harmast or Errinoru.

OTHERWORLDLY REALMS

Attached to the world but not part of it are three Otherworlds: the Visible Sky, Heaven and the Realms Below. Each contains a portion of the Hero Plane, the magical reality to which mortals can travel to take part in the great myths. If you know the right magic, you can physically travel from the ends of the earth to one of these Hero Planes. That said, it is almost always easier to move into the Hero Plane from your comparatively safe and comfortable home region, by means of magic.

The Visible Sky

The Visible Sky, or Sky Dome, consists of the field of constellations and heavenly bodies one can see with the naked eye, by looking upward. It is synonymous with the aloof sky god Dayzatar, who is Yelm's brother. On this dome, which was largely blackened during the God's War, celestial representations of other theist entities appear. The sun, associated with a great many gods, of course travels across the dome each day.

A circle of stars associated with the Storm Gods is called Orlanth's Ring. It is of odd colours and moves erratically, spiralling across the sky to disappear at the central star, then reappear later halfway up the dome and start its journey again.

Most stars and constellations, including the central solar entity of Polaris, remain fixed in place. A few unruly barbarian stars move about as the seasons progress. The first rises in the south in summer, while the latter ascends in the north in winter.

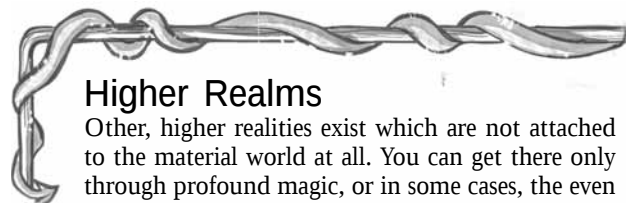
The Sky World

The Sky World, or Heaven, houses the pure celestial gods. Here they appear in incarnate form, as opposed to their astrological reflections in the Sky Dome. Dayzatar rules this place. Yelm, tainted by nightly descent into the Underworld, may not come here.

The Realms Below

Beneath the world is the earth, and beneath that, the Underworld. First there is the mundane crust of the world, through which Mostali miners dig. Then you come to the Underearth, where you can interact with the earthen gods and demigods. Below this is the Underworld, which is comprised of many realms, meaning different things to various peoples. There are gloomy realms of the dead, where the souls of shamans, theists and mystics dwell eternally or await transport to their final destinations, ranging from earthly reincarnation to an eternal bliss of mystic oneness. Some realms of the dead are hells, where the souls of transgressors suffer unending torture for misdeeds committed in life.

This used to be Wonderhome, the original realm of the Uz. Its unity and harmony were destroyed when the sun was knocked from its perch in the sky, down into the realms below, at the beginning of the Storm Age. It now exists only in the deepest parts.



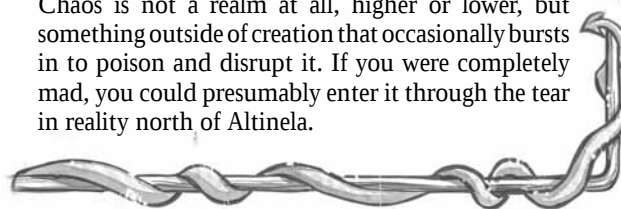
Higher Realms

Other, higher realities exist which are not attached to the material world at all. You can get there only through profound magic, or in some cases, the even more profound act of dying.

Solace, the eternal joyful resting place of Hrestoli-based Malkionism, lies outside the system of Otherworlds. Once a soul is in Solace, it remains there. No amount of HeroQuesting allows you to penetrate it in search of your dear departed mother. Saints go there, too. When Malkioni derive power from saints, they are not contacting them directly but deriving power from contemplating their deeds or handling the relics they have left behind.

Mystic high realms are as numerous as competing eastern philosophies. Many Vithelans pursue the realm of Dura Pradur, which is not a realm at all but a simultaneous and harmonious combination of being and non-being.

Chaos is not a realm at all, higher or lower, but something outside of creation that occasionally bursts in to poison and disrupt it. If you were completely mad, you could presumably enter it through the tear in reality north of Altinela.



Ralios Campaign Setting

This chapter provides three campaign settings for Gloranthan campaigns.

Ralios gives a detailed overview of the Ralios region of Genertela.

Safelster dives down into the Felster Lake region of Ralios, providing information on its city-states, politics and personalities

Dank and Hrelar Amali takes you into the God Learner controlled city of Dangk and also details the neighbouring temple of Hrelar Amali, a ruin of considerable mythical importance.

Using these three sections together, *RuneQuest* Games Masters have a comprehensive region of Glorantha detailed for adventuring – whether as God Learners, Wyrmfriends or Old Ways Traditionalists.

RALIOS

Once home to the grim and mysterious Stygian Empire, Ralios is now a possession of the God Learner Empire. For many years it was ruled by dukes who, as vassals of the Emperor, owed revenues and soldiers to the imperial treasury. The region still reels from a war waged by the Emperor against his dukes and viscounts, who he accused of rebellion. Now imperial functionaries administer the area directly, fuelling local resentment.

Though the God Learners lay claim to all of Ralios, large portions of it remain ungovernable. Outlaws and troublemakers able to defend their own rights of person and property can always make a life for themselves in these places, no matter how out of favour they might be with the putative authorities.

The Eastern Wilds

The eastern region of Ralios is less hospitable than Vesmonstran or Safelster. Orlanathi clans predominate here but are less comfortable than those of Lankst. Difficult soils make cultivation an unreliable enterprise. Cattle are hard to feed here; free-ranging sheep take their place, along with penned pigs and poultry. Tulas are larger than in comparatively fertile places like Lankst, yet at the same time less densely populated. Incursions from Dorastor, via Karia, infest their hills with Chaos creatures. The cult of the anti-Chaos god, Urox the

Storm Bull, remains strong here. In some remote clans, Urox is treated as the main god, husband to an only partially willing Ernalda. The bullying influence of his devotees has had a coarsening effect on clan culture. Rules of hospitality are remembered in myth but flouted in reality. With resources in short supply, generosity is considered more folly than virtue.

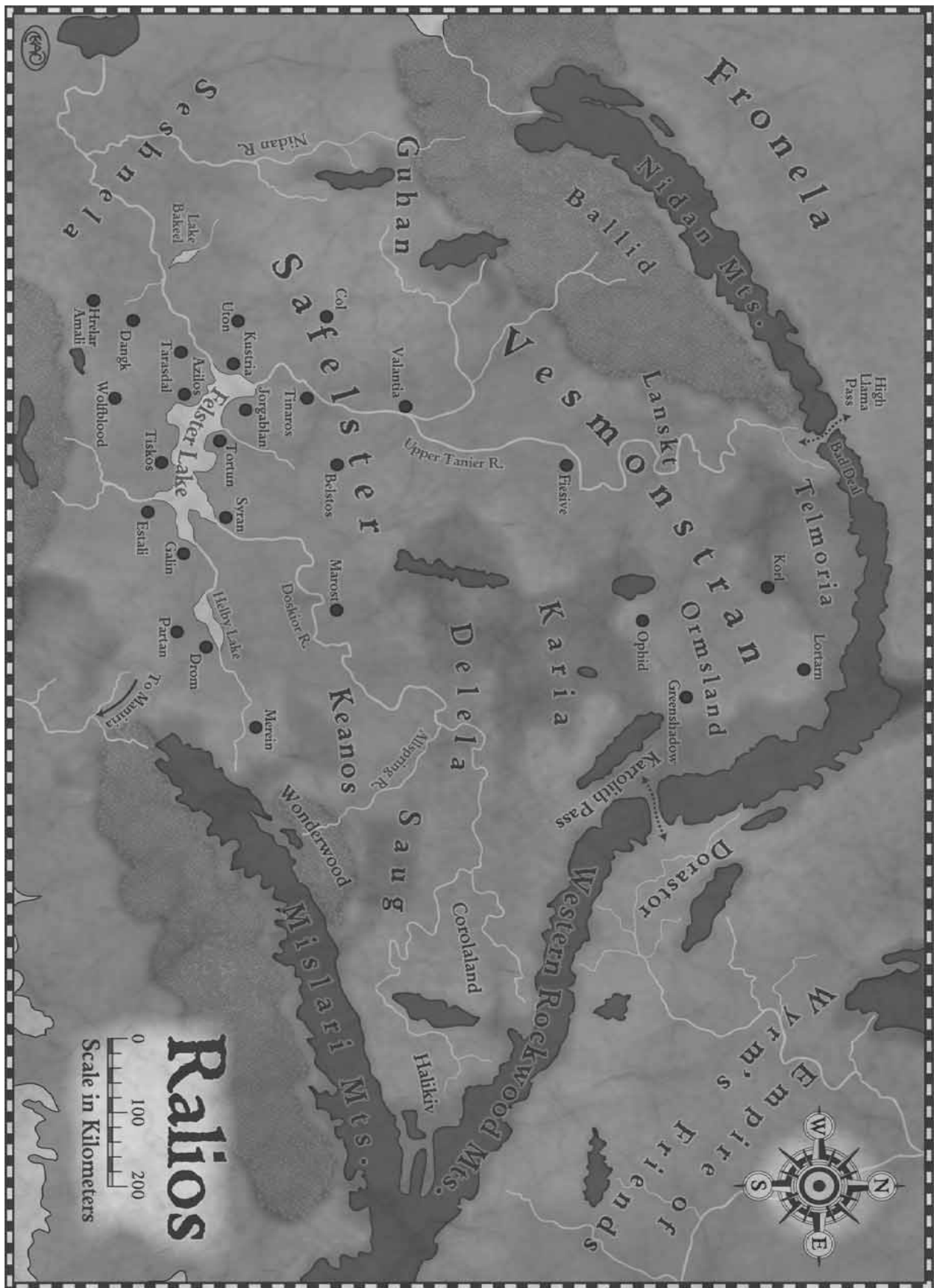
The Walker's Curse

The clansfolk of the East Wilds suffer under an ancient curse laid upon them by St. Kus, after they rode through the countryside surrounding Kustria and engaged in indiscriminate slaughter. Now they cannot ride horses. Any attempt to place a saddle on a horse or to ride it bareback results in the immediate throwing of the rider. The curse ties to the sufferer's bloodline. Orlanathi from elsewhere, including Lankst, can still ride here.

The inability to ride restricts the effective range of travel, whether for raiding or trading. Consequently the tribes of the East Wilds seem isolated from the rest of the world. They display an ignorance of Empires and faraway culture which, whether sincere or feigned, remains unshakeable.

Foreigners on horseback are assumed to be an imminent and severe threat. They are attacked and driven off, their horses butchered for the feasting hall. Though brutal, the custom is not unwise; riding cultures enjoy a huge advantage in warfare against ground-bound opponents. Travellers familiar with the region walk alongside their horses, as a gesture of non-aggression.

Asbor, chieftain of the Lanksti Roldoling clan, has offered to show the Orlanathi of the East Wilds how to increase their travel speed by hooking horses up to chariots. His warlike reputation and the exorbitant reward he wants for demonstrating the secrets of his god, Mastakos, have so far deterred the East Wilds Orlanathi from pursuing his plan.



Saug and Delela

The lands of Saug and Delela differ little. Both are rough, sparsely populated lands inhabited by desperate Orlanthi barbarian clans. They vary chiefly in their relationship to the great Empires. Delela bears the influence of the EWF, while the clans of Saug forge ties to the God Learners.

Other cultural differences, invisible to outsiders, mean a great deal to the Orlanthi of the East Wilds. Saug clans are patrilocal; brides move to their husband's clans. Delelan clans are matrilocal; grooms join the clans of their wives. In Saug, a man may ignore an insult to his honour by laughing at it. In Delela, this option is forbidden, with blood or silver required to regain one's good name.

Saug

The clans of Saug disdain tribes, associating them with the weakness and blasphemy of the Lizard Lover Empire. They consider fears of the God Learners overblown and view the EWF as the greater threat to Orlanthi independence. Perhaps this is because the scholar-warriors of the Safelstran universities leave them alone. The God Learners eschew studies into Chaos and are conversely uninterested in Storm Bull and his anti-Chaos powers. Most contacts between Saug clan dwellers and representatives of the Middle Sea Empire take place in the arenas of trade and military alliance. Saug's rough-hewn Issaries traders welcome Safelstran peddlers and merchants. To the Safelsteri these are desperate bottom feeders, unable to control markets in any but the most benighted backwoods of Ralios. To the rag-picking Saugites, they are bringers of splendid riches.

With food and basic goods in short supply but spears and swords plentiful, Saugites find it easier to raid merchant caravans than to peacefully trade with them. Hard-pressed merchants pay the strongest clans for protection, giving them a percentage of their wares to fend off banditry from others.

Banditry is rife here. Safelstran outlaws, along with a smattering of troublemakers from far-flung lands, gather into roving gangs who raid the eastern cities, Delela and even Halikiv. Some ride around the Mislari Mountains to strike in Maniria. Bandits operate out of clan lands. About two thirds of them seek the protection of a strong chieftain, paying a portion of their swag in exchange for shelter. The rest forcibly occupy the poorest lands of weaker clans. Saugite tulas are so spread out that not even the best-defended clan can patrol all of its territory. By recent custom, trails along tula boundaries have become common roadways, where bandits may travel unmolested. If not for these, honour would force the clans to defend themselves against the incidental incursions of passing brigands. Caravan captains avoid these roads, preferring to make their own routes through the lands of friendly clans.

Militias funded by trading organisations have established friendly relations with several clans, paying them tribute in exchange for basing rights. They use these to launch attacks against bandits, including those holed up in the adjoining territory of Keanos. Saugite clans occasionally conspire to whip up hostilities between bandits and militias, then happily strip the battlefield of useful items after both sides have torn the other to shreds.

Merein

Any bandit or militia group with the ill manners to show up on horseback arouses the murderous unity of all Saugites against them. The village of Merein, on the edge of Saugite territory, specialises in livery stables, housing the horses of bandits and bandit-hunters alike. They can leave their mounts here and travel into Saug proper on foot.

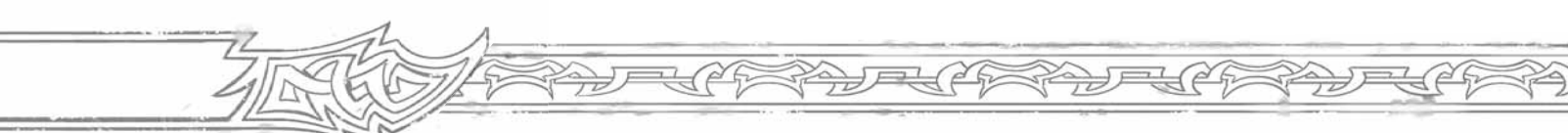
Village-spanning magics supplied by the village's temple of Elmal, the Orlanthi god of sun and horse, burns to a crisp any malefactor attempting to steal or harm a steed within its boundaries.

Merein's village headman is also its Elmal priest, Ingarro. He was outlawed from a Saugite clan, the Crackling Twigs, for endlessly inveighing against its Uroxi orientation. After years of dealing with Malkioni, Ingarro has inherited their concept of heresy. He believes that Uroxi clans are heretical and must reform themselves back into proper 'Orlanth and Ernalda' worshippers. If approached in a subtle way, he will provide underhanded assistance to adventurers acting against Uroxi clans.

By peculiar tradition, visitors in Merein are not permitted accommodations better than they would grant to their horses. Adventurers must be prepared to sleep in stables or to invite their horses into their barn-sized hotel rooms with them.

Notables

Saug's greatest Uroxi hero is **Jarn Sharpfinger**, so named because he once killed a jack o'bear with only his gloved hands. Jarn serves as chieftain of the Gori clan, which kills outlaws and bandits by forcing them to drink the Universal Nostrum. This potion, of which they have an endless supply thanks to a stolen mostali device, supposedly spares the lives of true and honest men. So far no one to whom it has been administered has passed the test. Jarn himself is known to be



infamously trusting and is therefore accompanied at all times by his cynical cousin, Pera Crimson-Tress. Her opinion of mankind is even lower than that of the Universal Nostrum.

The Safelstran trader **Heliern the Shiverer** has made a thriving business in Saug, where so many else have failed. He succeeds on the basis of his winning manner, genuine interest in the affairs of others and studious refusal to be drawn into conflicts. Many of his caravan guards have gone on to good careers as traders themselves. He must frequently hire on new warriors to replace those who go off to found their own caravans. Heliern conducts interviews at his warehouse in Merein. For a suitable fee, he may detail a reliable guard to act as guide and intermediary to an adventuring band travelling through Saug.

The Orlanthi Runelord **Harngar Aircarver** travels tirelessly between the clans whenever the prospect of tribal unification rears its head. He views this as the first step toward wyrmfriendification and argues staunchly against it. When not engaged in rearguard political action, he leads raiding parties into Delela and Ormsland. His sallies exact a high casualty rate and he is always looking for a few good adventurers to round out his attack force.

Svalgos Catchboot typifies the area's Safelstran bandits. He and his ever-changing force of no-gooders prey chiefly on the caravans of his countrymen. Svalgos' gang is a mixed bag of heretics, foreigners and renegade hsunchen. For a tidy 1,000 silvers a year, merchants can buy protection from him. Heliern pays him off, allegedly at a discount.

Saug's strangest bandit chieftain must be **Chikrikmik**, an arachan timinit leading a raider band mostly consisting of his fellow insect men. Infamous for his ferocity, he slaughters all who resist him. He directs his attacks only against EWF targets, suggesting that he is subsidised by some Middle Sea organisation or another.

Delela

The Delelan clans unite into tribes and provide hospitality to EWF missionaries. Outsiders consider them wyrmfriends in all but name, yet the reality is more complicated. Delela's tribes are constantly splitting up, amalgamating, dissolving and going to war with one another. They make outlandish demands of visiting Hunting and Waltzing Bands, requesting draconic powers to use against their tribal rivals or militating for direct intervention by wyrmfriend forces.

Some Delelan tribes consist of only a handful of clans. At last count, there were eighteen of them in all. No doubt that number will change by the time your adventurers arrive there. The largest and most influential tribes are as follows.

The territorially discontinuous **Anzarti** tribe binds together the region's most militant Uroxi fanatics. They disdain regional bickering to concentrate on their holy battle against Chaos. To this end they ally themselves with Uroxi clans from Saug and welcome any Storm Bull followers from anywhere else. Their king is Orl the Flat, known for his curious ability to burrow into the earth.

The **Hillhad**, who style themselves the Pure Orlanth People, have always hated the Anzarti. They will attack their war parties whenever advantage permits, including when the Anzarti return wounded from a sally against Chaos. The Hillhad's enemies call them the Chaos tribe and spread rumours that their king, Henst, suffers from a variety of unspecified mutations.

The **Orlundi**, led by the glib King Randere Buttermouth, advocate Delelan unity. They claim that the region's fertility could be made to flower if all tribes put away their differences to engage in a great sacrifice to Ernalda. Seeing the unity offered by the EWF as a rival to his own, Randere denies hospitality to missionaries and preaches against their soul-sapping magic. A recent attempt on his life by flying lizards led him to offer a bounty for any Hunting and Waltzing Band members apprehended on Delelan soil.

King Kenstor of the **Tarth** tribe is the estranged brother of King Randere and works night and day to thwart his sibling's ambitions. He has invited Hunting and Waltzing Bands to conduct worship of his tribe's lesser clans. Notably, he has so far forbidden them to proselytise his own home clan, the Brown Deer. He says that if the Orlundi tribe breaks up within two years, he will swear allegiance to the Inhuman King. They say that Kenstor has the evil eye and that any man he insults becomes doubly susceptible to spirits of disease. The continuing good health of his brother cuts against the veracity of this rumour.

The **Vanahar** tribe controls the Doskior river as it approaches the Safelstran cities of Marost. As such it has enriched itself by imposing tolls on merchants travelling upriver and is the most prosperous clan of impoverished Delela. It fears Delelan unity, on the grounds that a true nation would drain its coffers, redistributing its wealth to the hungry hill clans. Its Queen, Asulanta, pursues a 'divide and conquer' policy. She gives money to other tribes when they war against each other and foment trouble when peace seems imminent.

Keanos, Land of Hunters

The region of Keanos acts as a buffer between Safelster and the East Wilds. The Orlanthi of the East Wilds believe that it was once a fertile land but that it was cursed during the First Age, when Orlanthi missionaries from Theyala met up

Heroes of Delela

Angheng the Winnower is a renegade missionary who learned just enough from the wyrmfriends to be dangerous both to his supposed masters and to his converts. He proclaims the worship of Urox the Dragon, whose hot fiery breath unites the world and cleanses it of Chaos. Initiates into his cult cede their worship energy to him; he uses it to boost his anti-Chaos powers. He chooses his enemies by a simple tenet: anyone who opposes him must surely be of Chaos. Both EWF and anti-EWF forces want him dead but his surprising powers have allowed him to triumph in the face of multiple ambushes.

Fedartha Ever-Die is a heroine of the Hillhad tribe. Some people call her a demigoddess. At the beginning of every Darkness Season, she dies and is placed in an earthen crypt beneath the Ernalda temple kept by her home clan, the Rani. On the first day of Sea Season, her priestesses open up the earthen mound and find her, breathing calmly and looking younger. She refuses to divulge her age but God Learner scholars have found references to her in a chronicle of the 3rd Century. God Learner spirit raiders have tried to kidnap her on three separate occasions, only to meet various grisly fates. The last time, they all died of instant starvation.

From a private stead granted him by King Kenstor of the Tarth tribe, **Gerado Arnadée**, a Malkioni convert to wyrmfriendism, plots the ascendance of his new cult among the people of Safelster. He claims to have discovered the God Learner's Secret, which is embodied in a fist-sized egg covered in reptilian scales. He keeps this safely buried somewhere in Tarth territory, protected by a crushing earthshaker spirit. Several dozen fellow Malkioni converts attend and protect him. Gerado can look into a person's soul and immediately grasp the subject's greatest weakness, worst memory and object of profoundest love.

with their Hrestoli Malkioni counterparts at a fateful crook in the Dorskior River. The two groups promised each other protection and hospitality but something bad happened and a massacre resulted. The broken peacebond poisoned the land and now nothing cultivated will grow here at all. The Delelans believe that the westerners broke the peacebond and

slaughtered the Theyalans as they slept. Saugites say that it was drunken servants of the Orlanthi trickster god, Eurmál, who set both parties against each other. For their part, the people of Safelster care so little about this dusty, rocky patch of hill country that none of their records refer to any such incident.

The Odayla People

Proper Orlanthi clans are absent here. Keanos' indigenous population consists of a few thousand nomadic hunters. They worship the Orlanthi hunting god, Odayla, but otherwise depart culturally from their clan-bound cousins. They travel in extended family units, led by the best hunter, who is usually but not invariably a man. Orlanth and a few others of the Storm Tribe, like Yinkin the Cat and Humakt Deathdealer, show up in their stories but do not receive significant worship. Kolat, the spirit talker, is the second most important god and is considered a wise older brother to Odayla. He helps the Keanosites negotiate with animal spirits. These spirits designate the sick and weak beasts to be culled. People of Keanos treat spirits with a deference verging on prostration and do not dominate or entrap them.

War between families is always bad news, wasting valuable time and energy that could be used gathering food. To steal the catch of another Odaylan is a despicable offence against the gods.

It is, however, perfectly acceptable to take food from foreigners. Odayla teaches that sneaking is better than attacking, though attacking is allowed when the alternative is hunger.

Killing other people, including non-humans, is permissible only to those who have submitted to the rites of Humakt Deathdealer. The penitent journeys to an isolated spot, fasts and engages in selective self-mutilation. If Humakt comes and marks the worshipper on the forehead with his symbol, he gains permission to kill. Deathdealers often leave their families for other lands, where they slake their lust for killing. Then they return and rejoin their people. The permission to deal death remains but the necessity of the impulse diminishes. Keanosite deathdealers are in high demand as scouts and wilderness assassins. Armed units of both Empires employ their grim services.

Deliberately bringing about the death of another Odaylan is always murder, no matter whose family he belongs to. He who commits it must indenture himself for three years and a season to the family of the slain. Self-defence mitigates the crime. If the accused can prove it to the satisfaction of a wandering priest or shaman, the penalty need not be paid.

Each family includes a priest or initiate of Odayla, who grants Divine Magic for community use. Most hunters are shamans. Powerful priests of Odayla and shamans of Kolat separate from

their families to serve the entire culture, as do the very rare servants of the healing goddess, Chalana Arroy. They roam from one family to the next, as needed. When a wandering priest arrives, one must have food to give her or suffer three years and a season of shame and bad luck. No matter how malnourished a family might be, no priest is cruel enough to shame a family by turning down its offered food.

Bandits

The Odaylan lack of territoriality and disinclination to attack makes their hilly land an ideal haven for bandits and fugitives. Many of its hills, particularly those nearest the Mislari Mountains, are pitted with fissures in which small gangs can camp and hide. As long as they bring in their own food and put little pressure on the local wildlife, outlaws can coexist peacefully with the locals. Smart fugitives leave out food, so the Odaylans feel no need to creep into their camps.

The Odaylans give bandits little trouble but are just as tolerant of war parties who come to kill or capture them. The bandits who hide here can raid as far as Ormsland, Safelster, Lankst, Delela or Saug, so those who hunt them come from any of these places. Bandit hunters may be less aware of Odaylan culture and more prone to cause unnecessary trouble with them.

Notorious bandits known to hole up in Keanos include:

- X Koleng, a former king of the Delelan Hillhad tribe, who got caught trying to dig up Fedartha Ever-Die before her ritual re-emergence. He claims he was possessed by an evil ghost at the time and harbours an unquenchable bitterness against his tribe for dethroning him. His gang is also Delelan. He raids Hillhad lands in preference to others but will opportunistically attack any poorly defended trade caravan.
- X Bozh Bojat, a trollkin, formerly of Halikiv. His all-trollkin gang specialises in attacks against other Uz. He has sworn an oath never to harm a fellow enlo, unless that enlo harms him or another of his band.
- X Auguel the Wrong, former steward to the deposed Duke of Col – and also his illegitimate son. His attacks on compilers of the Emperor's tax rolls are so savage that even the exiled nobles have condemned him and offered a reward for his capture, dead or alive. Now Auguel claims to be fighting for the restoration of the Autarchy, attracting the assistance of several banished members of the Guhan Guard.

Halikiv, Land of Trolls

Tucked in the jagged, stony crook where the Mislari Mountains meet the Western Rockwood range is the ancient Uz stronghold of Halikiv. A vast, blackened edifice rises from the centre of the territory, its height rivalling the nearby peaks. This is one of the fabled Castles of Lead, a nearly unassailable

tower raised by the Uz in the glory days of the Great Darkness. Its windowless reaches allow not an glimmer of light inside, allowing its troll inhabitants to remain active during brightest daylight. Coruscating clouds of darkness wreath its lower reaches. When attackers approach, these coalesce into reaching, wormlike tentacles, which pierce or strangle those who would defile this holy Uz redoubt.

The Castle of Lead leads deep down into the earth, connecting to a twisting, centipedal network of passageways, where Uz of lesser status toil, spar and eat all they can. Included among their number is a writhing legion of wretched trollkin.



Slaves Pens of Halikiv

A forest of chains, fences and cages criss-crosses Halikiv's rocky surface. Blackened, deteriorating bunkhouses house tens of thousands of human slaves. During the day, they sleep, dosed by a will-sapping potion called *pluh*, a main ingredient of their rancid porridge. At night, they work as foragers and harvesters, picking clean the surrounding scrubland of all plant and animal life they can grasp in their bleeding, twitching fingers. They fill their heavy baskets with gorse, moss, grubs, mice, eggs, switchgrass and other

meagre delicacies. In Halikiv's few scraps of genuinely arable land, they tend quick-growing crops, overseen by Uz warriors mounted on giant insects. The combination of depressant intake and back-breaking labour keeps most of them dully compliant and incapable of worship – and thus, unable to gain spells to rebel against their masters. Those few who display the wherewithal to rebel are fed to the giant praying mantises who act as outrider guardians for the settlement during the daytime. Halikiv's Uz adore the taste of free-ranging human but will eat slaves only in a pinch, as the build-up of *pluh* in their systems can render a diner indolent for days.

Leadership

Halikiv, in contrast to Guhan, stands a bastion to Uz traditionalism. Its rulers are grand matriarchs, a troika of Mistress Race trolls born during the early decades of the First Age. Sometimes called the Three Queens or individually titled as Princesses, they are:

- X **Sorenteli**, who was burned by the evil sun when it blasted back into the sky and is hairless and bitter.
- X **Toolani**, who is always at least somewhat pregnant and bears fewer trollkin per litter than any other Uz.
- X **Dachargro**, who is famous even outside of Halikiv for her long list of lovers. Legend has it that she dallied with Arkat and maybe even Talor the Laughing Warrior (Malkioni who revere Talor as a saint fiercely deny this calumny). Sometimes she ventures out of Halikiv to seek a new, strange partner to tryst with. Survivors of her embrace acquire weird darkness powers.

Only the clan matriarchs, the senior females of Halikiv's many clans, ever meet the Three Queens snout-to-snout. On those rare occasions when the grand matriarchs feel the need to intervene in the kingdom's administrative affairs, they convey their orders to the clan matriarchs, who transmit them to the soldiers, officials and dogsbodies who run their extended families.

Warriors of Halikiv

Adventurers are more likely to encounter Halikiv's champions than its leaders. The roster of its most feared warriors reads as follows.

Arganga Xok, the Moth Rider, derives her powers from the insect goddess, Gorakikki. She rides a giant moth into battle, at the head of a platoon of ferocious warrior-women, also all moth-mounted. She can spew a sticky web-like substance from her mouth and hands. It envelops her enemies and quickly hardens to the strength of bronze.

Volanergg is an indomitable devotee of the death god Zorak Zoran. He animates dead human slaves into a zombie and

Relations with Guhan

Although the two Uz communities of Ralios arguably have interests in common, contacts between them are minimal. A few Uz of Halikiv fought alongside Arkat and were rewarded by him with land in the kingdom of Guhan. Most, however, came from the Shadowlands.

The matriarchs of Halikiv have always viewed Guhan as a preposterous human institution staffed by idiotic males, who have never been able to manage their own affairs. Also, Halikiv blames the Guhan Guard for inflaming local human animus against the Uz during the heyday of the Stygian Empire. That the Guhanites are generally better fed than the Haliviki does little to quell their spite. The Guhanites, feeling the sting of their undisguised contempt, hate to interact with them.

skeleton army that defends the borderlands of Halikiv during daylight hours, when Uz find it hard to fight. Volanergg upholds his faith by prosecuting a bloodthirsty hatred for all sun worshippers. He finds them aplenty among the solar worshippers of Corolaland's Enlightenment Alliance.

A lifelong lust for inedible riches afflicts the stealthy **Thongimus Silver-Stealer**, who sneaks into adventurer's encampments along with his personal retinue of shadow spirits. He always pilfers their purses before attacking – assuming that combat appears on his agenda at all. The Three Queens often use him to execute reconnaissance missions.

The wide, dark eyes and infantile features of the enlo called **Dichen the Liar** exert a powerful subconscious influence on any humans who encounter him. They instinctively treat him as a cute, helpless creature in need of their nurturing protection. Dichen pretends to be a mistreated trollkin rebel escaped from Halikiv's sadistic slave masters. He promises to act as a scout for adventurers intent on penetrating the troll kingdom. In truth, he always leads them to the slaughter. A child of Princess Toolani, Dichen enjoys the highest status of any enlo in Halikiv.

The human witch **Drimentos** heads a small cadre of free humans granted asylum in Halikiv. She is a Spolite darkness sorcerer, a member of a secret society that dominated Peloria before the EWF took over. She hopes to use Halikiv as a base to launch a Spolite resurgence as soon as the wyrmfriends falter.

Her entry to Halikiv came when the Zorak Zorani Runelord Volanergg caught her in the act of skinning a Yelmalio warrior alive. On the spot, Volanergg declared her his honorary sister, a connection they sealed with a subsequent blood ceremony. She later won the maternal affections of Princess Sorenteli, which are not often given, especially to a human. No Uz attacks the sun worshippers of the Enlightenment Alliance as enthusiastically as Drimentos.

Corolaland

Wedge uncomfortably between the barren hills of Saug and the troll country of Halikiv is a sliver of land known as Corolaland. This unwanted patch of scoured earth serves as the headquarters of the Enlightenment Alliance, an ad hoc organisation of disparate factions who find common cause in their war against the trolls.

The Enlightenment Alliance was founded 20 years ago, by the Dara Happan noble Luvarharmos. He created it as an outlet for young Dara Happan men who wanted to fight for their god without taking a stand on the legitimacy of the Dragon Emperor. By fighting the trolls of faraway Halikiv, they neither challenge nor support the Golden Dragon. Neither threatened or thrilled by its agenda, the EWF council allows the Alliance to exist, as a useful safety valve. It draws Dara Happans who might otherwise rise in rebellion against them to disperse their energies in a distant and useless cause.

Luvarharmos' force includes adherents of the best-known solar war cult, Yelmalio, as well as obscurer supporting sun deities, such as Polaris and Antirius. His men are noted for their youth, unbending deference to authority, bravery and lack of imagination. Their leader is a kindly, cautious fellow who takes pains to project a fatherly demeanour. He is easily flattered by requests for advice, to which he responds with a ready supply of platitudes.

Luvarharmos has since built his organisation across cross-cultural lines, uniting solar adherents of various faiths. Other members include:

- X The Elmal peoples of the East Wilds. Before Luvarharmos came, Corolaland was occupied only by a few eccentric Orlanthi-style clans who followed Elmal as their main male god and husband to Ernalda. The Elmal, unaffected by the Walker's Curse, are among the best riders of Ralios. Like anyone else, they travel on foot through Saug and Delela. As ancestral foes of the trolls, they easily found common cause with the Enlightenment Alliance. The chieftain of the Elmal tribe is Elus the Listener, a calm and mediating figure among the various glowing hotheads of the Alliance.

- X An extended clan of Pentan nomads, displaced after the EWF conquest of their territories, slashed their way through the continent until they wound up here. As their khan, Gika Perekasya, approached Luvarharmos, killing hatchet in hand, he experienced a blinding vision sent by the great sun spirit, Kargzant, who ordered him to remain here and lay waste to the trolls. Commanded by his god, he bowed down before Luvarharmos, declaring him an elder brother in matters of war.
- X The Qa-Ying, or eagle hsunchen, from the Shanshan mountains in Kralorela. Brought here by God Learner scholars intent on finding mythic commonalities between them and the various hsunchen of Ralios, they grew quickly bored and lit off in search of a suitable nesting site. After finding one in the Mislari Mountains, they were raided by Uz. The survivors threw in with the Enlightenment Alliance, seeking vengeance. Their current leader is Rui Qin the Night Eagle, who in his eagle form shines a blinding light from his wing feathers.



- X The Institute For Darkness Studies, a God Learner front organisation created solely for the purpose of attracting the partnership of the Enlightenment Alliance. Its purported mission is the penetration and exposure of darkness cults everywhere, including the Uz. Really it wants to steal Uz myths and secrets for its own use. Its dean is the crane-thin, pernickety sorcerer Milmar. His students, more interested in a pulse-pounding scrap than dry mythic studies, enthusiastically lend their Sorcery to the Alliance's sallies against Halikiv.

Adventure Hooks

The default Corolaland adventure is a raid against the trolls, conducted either in concert with, or under the sponsorship of, the Enlightenment Alliance. Other adventures might include:

A Drunkard's Vow: Loup Milharo, wastrel son of a wealthy family of Safelster, got drunk in a tavern and signed on as a volunteer for the Enlightenment Alliance. He showed no particular animus toward Uz before striking up this sudden barroom friendship with his new buddy, the charismatic Dara Happan exile Bramardharim. The Milharo family hires the adventurers to intercept Loup and bring him back, kidnapping him if necessary. They require the party to sign a secrecy agreement, punishable by an onslaught of madness spirits. Once the documents are signed, they reveal the secret they want kept from the world. If Loup is not returned before Wildday, he will turn into a wolf, revealing the entire family as descendants of cursed Telmori.

Bright Delivery: The adventurers hire on as couriers for a Dara Happan noble, who wants them to convey a family heirloom, the Solar Staff, to his son, a fighter for the Enlightenment Alliance in Corolaland.

Under Cover of Brightness: Huddux Urgug, patron of Kustria hires the adventurers to take part in a hazardous hoax in Corolaland. They are to escort Trietoia, a Spolite darkness witch, to that territory. Once there, she will arm them with temporary darkness magic, which they will use to chase her into an Enlightenment Alliance camp. She can then pose as a Spolite defector, gaining asylum behind their lines. Then she can act as double agent. Once the adventurers deliver her, the rest of their task is simple – all they have to do is evade pursuit by the Alliance's best trackers, through their home turf.

VESMONSTRAN

Vesmonstran is Ralios' northern region. In contrast to the urbanised, densely populated Safelster area, it is a sparsely inhabited territory where humans jockey for survival with dwarfs, elves, trolls, werewolves, dragonewts and Chaos creatures.

Lankst, Stronghold of Orlanth

The hilly land of Lankst stands as one of two places where the traditional Orlanthi ways still reign supreme. The other is Hendrikiland, which only recently threw off the yoke of wyrmfriend rule.

Clans and Empires

Lankst has been an independent Orlanthi stronghold since the fall of the Stygian Empire in 740. The Autarchy's destroyers, the God Learner Empire, officially declare hegemony over the area. The situation on the ground contradicts their imperious claims. The Empire sends exploratory delegations into the area and occasionally makes noises about making a census. However, it does not impose its laws, exact taxation or maintain order. Military outposts erected in the late eighth and early ninth centuries now languish, abandoned.

The Empire's lack of control over Lankst is a cause of controversy in the capital. God Learners want to leave it as a sort of theist preserve, where they can go to learn undiscovered myths. They feel they get better information from contacts in Lankst than from urbanised Orlanthi in Safelster.

Opposing them is the Rightness Army, which seeks either the conversion or eradication of the Orlanthi peoples, depending on which brand of fanaticism holds sway in the organisation at any given moment. Rightness Army raiding parties stage occasional forays into Lankst. These tend to be the fiercest of the army's hotheads.

To bolster their intentions toward Lankst, God Learner leaders engage in a long-term plan to use the Orlanthi as a cat's-paw against the EWE. Their agents foment conflict between the Lanksti Orlanthi and their draconised counterparts of Ormsland. With Lanksti harrying tactics pinning down the wyrmfriends, the God Learners can convincingly argue that they should be left alone to unwittingly serve the Empire's strategic aims.

The Lanksti require little prodding to regard the followers of Orlanth the Dragon as worse threats than the God Learners. Draconised Orlanthi, ever more anxious to fuel their own magics with fresh recruits, continue to send missionary parties into Lanksti clan lands. So desperate are they that they violate Orlanthi rules of hospitality, crossing tula boundaries with impunity. When their people are held for ransom, they send all manner of foreign menaces to retrieve them, from dragonewts and earthshaking dinosaurs to Pelorian hoplite brigades.

A Haven for Exiles

Fiesive has recently earned a reputation for uniting adventuring parties of absurdly disparate backgrounds. Lankst has become a haven for various foreigners with a

grudge against the EWF. Exile communities cluster in the growing town of Fiesive, whose chief export is rebellion. Groups represented include Dara Happan nobles, Carmanian dualists and Spolite darkness witches. Under other circumstances, these groups would have their fingers clamped around each others' throats. Mutual hatred of the wyrmfriends have made strange bedfellows of them.

Local Orlanthi attitudes toward the exiles vary, according to each clan's tradition of innovation and tolerance. Militantly isolationist clans prey on them as they would any other crazy outsider. More accepting communities trade with them and even coordinate raiding activities. Luckily for the exiles, the former tend to be clustered in the northern hills, with the friendlier clans arranged on the banks of the Upper Tanier River.

Tribes and Kings

The biggest current conflict within the Orlanthi communities of Lankst revolves around the issue of tribal unity. Whenever the Lanksti have been powerful relative to their neighbours, it has been as a handful of unified tribes, as opposed to a scattering of disparate clans. During the Dawn Age, Arkat conquered the Lanksti after internal conflict split apart the tribes.

The Autarchy kept the Lanksti from forming tribes, suppressing them ruthlessly whenever they opted for political unity. After the fall of the Stygians, tribes formed briefly, then fell apart again.

This happened when EWF missionaries first trickled into what had previously been closed territory. In their own territory, they organise clans into large tribes. Their composition is decreed from without. Priests are put in charge of the tribes, leaving the traditional warrior-kings out in the cold.

In the minds of a large faction of Lankst's Orlanthi, the very concept of the tribe is inextricably linked with draconic blasphemy. Advocates of tribal unity argue that this attitude dooms them forever to defeat. If the enemies have tribes, they need them, too.

Individual ambition complicates the equation. The foremost proponents of a return to tribalism unsurprisingly envision themselves as the founding kings of these new tribes. Unfortunately, they all lack the popularity and charisma necessary to win themselves the thrones they seek.

Clans of Lankst

The **Arnisi** earn fame as Lankst's most competitive game players. They always win at kite contests, arm-wrestling and foot races. They maintain a shrine to Mastakos, the running

god. The Arnisi chieftain, Dori Enalos, has six sons by six different lovers. Each expertly wields a different weapon and sports a different hair colour. When they raid together, they are mightier than any single hero of the Upper Tanier Valley.

The **Blue Bulls** are known for the righteous viciousness of their women who, in adherence with their ancestral ways, insist that feuds be carried on even when the men have grown wounded and weary. They have a bigger pig herd than anyone else and keep a shrine to Mralota, the obscure goddess of that animal. Their chieftain is Leik Push-Between, who has never seen an argument between third parties he did not wish to intervene in. The greatest magician among them is Kenna Harthstaling, a Lhankor Mhy priestess who wears a false beard of thorny wicker.



The **Badnali** clan campaigns tirelessly for tribal formation. Their chieftain, Kag the Gloomy, is an oddly dour follower of the Talking God, Issaries. His main argument for tribes is that the Lanksti will be utterly and horribly destroyed if they don't adopt a robust defensive posture immediately. He fully intends to be King of Lankst but lacks the bold confidence necessary to an Orlanthi ruler. Kag spent much of his youth in

the city of Kustria. His comrade from those days, a Malkioni warrior named Gerdret, is a frequent visitor to the Badnali tula. Kag's opponents point to his friend's influence as proof that he is in the pay of the Seshnegi myth-stealers.

Ever since the founding of the clan, the **Brockroling** have been staunchly independent. Celebrated for their hospitality and penchant for feasting, they welcome the exiles of Fiesive to their tula to swap stories and hatch plans against the EWF. Do not mistake them for friends of the God Learners, though. They oppose the southern Empire with equal fervour. They favour the formation of a tribe, although their chieftain, Orl Wax-Skin, disclaims all interest in thrones or regalia. The Brockroling are a peace clan and as such are dependent on the goodwill of their more warlike neighbours.

Now that there are Dara Happan sun worshippers in the nearby town of Fiesive, the **Brolforoli** make an annual raid on the town, just before Sacred Time. Their objective is to take prisoner a high-ranking Yelmite priest or warrior. After a successful raid, they drag the captive back to their clan hall and force him to participate in their ceremonies. At the ritual's climax, they release him, mimicking Orlanth's Lightbringer Quest. The people of Fiesive, Dara Happan or otherwise, are understandably unhappy about being invaded on an annual basis. They not only vehemently defend themselves when the time comes but launch pre-emptive reprisal raids against Brolforoli lands throughout the year. Tensions between clan and town have ratcheted even further since their chieftain and thundering hero, Korlmar, slew the town's mayor during last year's sally.

The **Clacking Coins** are a trading clan whose primary rivals are the Badnali. Because the Badnali support tribal unity, they oppose it. Unlike their rivals, the Clacking Coins trade avidly with delegations from the EWF. Thanks to this connection, they conduct a brisk trade in exotic goods from Maniria and Peloria. They say they are only interested in trade and do not listen to the wyrmfriend godtalkers. Their chieftain, Robar the Younger, has however recently been seen with a serpentine necklace dangling between his ruddy chest hairs.

The **Elffriends** occupy lands on the border with the aldryami forest of Ballid. As their name suggests, they maintain good relations with the plant folk. They keep an unusually large portion of their lands forested, supplementing their food supply through hunting. They negotiate with the elves before cutting trees and act as mediators in dealings between them and other clans. Their chieftain, Faryth Close-Counsel, hopes to enlist the aldryami in the inevitable clash with the EWF.

Gartos Goldhand, chieftain of the **Elkeri** clan, has sworn to split the skull of the next person who mentions the word

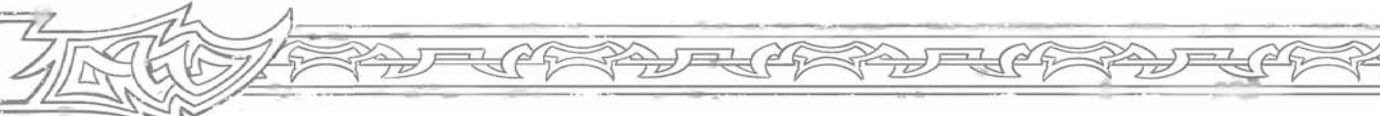
'tribe' to him. The Elkeri, famed for their healthy cattle herds, are widely reckoned to be the richest clan in Lankst. He and his close-mouthed people will boast about any achievement other than their wealth. Their clan champion is the fresh-faced, lantern-jawed spearman Kentakos. In a gesture atypical of freedom-loving Orlanthi, he has vowed to remain celibate until his wedding. He says he has yet to find a woman beautiful enough to marry.

Famed for their openness, the **Herrindinni** have allowed a troop of Rinliddi bird people to inhabit an undeveloped portion of their territory. They now participate in raids alongside their Orlanthi hosts, frightening neighbouring clans with their giant, carnivorous avians. The Rinliddi leader, Sarsarm Redfeather, seems to be sweet on the chieftain's daughter. Other clans find it scandalous that he does not object to the dalliance but Markor Brownbeard has always gone his own way.

Hundreds of years ago, the ambitious **Hersling** clan allied itself with the Stygian conquerors and aided them in ruling over their fellow Orlanthi. The other clans of Lankst have never forgiven them for it. Perhaps to make up for their permanently sullied reputation, Hersling warriors have led the resistance against God Learners and EWF alike. Their hero and chieftain, Robangor Purple Coat, once led an EWF earthshaker platoon into the path of a Rightness Army invasion force, then stood on a hill to sing and stomp throughout the ensuing carnage. If Robangor were anything other than a Hersling, his tireless advocacy of tribal unity might take him all the way to a throne.

The **Hiordari** have always hated the Hersling. It is a rare year when they do not prosecute a feud against them. For a while they were against the idea of a tribe, because the Hersling were for it. Then their chieftain, Mandan Squaresail, decided it would be more satisfying to argue for a tribe, then take the crown Robangor Purple Coat so thirstily covets. Mandan's neighbours admit Squaresail is a great hero, especially with his ability to fly around on a man-sized kite he brought back from the Other Side. However, they have no wish to make him king just to spite one of his enemies.

The **Horing** always do things differently than everyone else. Their clan ring is made up of five elders only. Also, a worshipper of Orlanth and one of Ernalda serve as co-chieftains. Currently the mild-mannered Harnd the Glutton and the sour-tempered Minga Haranvaling fill these positions. Strangest of all, they keep dogs, an animal generally loathed in Orlanthi culture, and kill any alynx they find on their lands. So it should come as no surprise that they have welcomed the wyrmfriend priests into their midst. Minga Haranvaling has allowed one bloodline of her clan to worship Orlanth



the dragon, to see what happens. In return for this boon, the dragonewts gifted the Horing with a three-horned earthshaker beast, which they use to plough their fields.

Farkalda the Red, crafty chieftain of the **Horn Blowers**, uses the tribal unification issue to enrich her struggling clan. She accepts lavish gifts from leaders on both sides of the issue, carefully modulating her reactions so that each thinks she will swing their way if only they demonstrate a touch more generosity. The Horn Blower tula is home to the Harosord bloodline, a family that produces a great hero every generation. Its current champion is Ortage Scrollreader, a Runelord of the sun god Elmal who is literate in every language except his own.

Foremost among the opponents of tribal rule are the arch-conservative **Lysandorling** clan, who despise the EWF with a passion and fear rule by priests. Its own god talkers are permitted to speak only when spoken to. They may never question the leadership of its intimidating chieftain, Sarran. He is nicknamed the Ear, because he can hear everything that is said about him, even miles away. This wealthy war clan fattens itself by exacting tribute from its neighbours. It maintains its influence with generous gift-giving. Sarran regularly visits his neighbours to shore up support for his anti-tribal stance.

The name of the **Moot Talkers** clan harkens back to the most recent tribal period, when a collection of lowly stickpickers distinguished themselves as great legal minds. They hired themselves out as advocates to speak for other clans at tribal legal proceedings or moots. When they successfully argued to spare the life of a trickster, he arranged to gift a large section of another clan's land to the stickpickers. Over the generations the other clan dwindled and the Moot Talkers expanded. The Moot Talkers, who still hire themselves out as heralds and negotiators, believe in tribes but are not convinced that the conditions are right for one just yet. 'A failed tribe would be worse than none at all', says their chieftain, the mellifluous speaker Orkalo. He hopes to broker a peace arrangement between the EWF and God Learners which will leave Lankst as a neutral territory neither power is permitted to dominate. He regularly receives legations from both sides. Each is more interested in making a firm ally of him than in signing on to his pet project.

To the **Pelue**, the Orlanthi virtue of generosity has always been better honoured in the abstract. They control the Lanksti side of the High Llama Pass, earning a cut of all caravan goods travelling into Ralios from the land of Fronela which is on the other side of the Nidan Mountains. They also trade extensively with the mostali, extending protection to the town of Bad Deal. On the subject of tribes, they remain studiously neutral. To control a tribe, they would have to share their wealth with lesser clans. Before they agree to such an arrangement,

they would have to be convinced that it would be good for trade. Their chieftain, Dandril, always drinks himself into a near stupor before going off to raid his Telmori werewolf neighbours and invariably comes back with at least one wolf pelt hanging from his belt.

The warlike **Roldoling** reckon that the promise of tribal unity offers Lankst's only hope against wyrmfriend encroachment. Their chieftain, Asbor, has revived an ancient vehicle, the chariot, as a symbol of Orlanthi traditionalism. The Roldoling dye their close-cropped hair a rusty shade of red and stiffen it with an egg mixture so that it sticks straight up on their heads. Their goldsmiths are second to none, producing weapon hilts and other implements inscribed with a distinctively intricate whorling pattern.

The **Slow Eagles** allow a champion of Orlanth the King and one of Orlanth the Dragon to engage in ritual combat outside their clan hall every Sacred Time. If the traditionalist wins, they remain staunchly anti-draconic until the next year's ritual rolls around. If the dragon comes out on top, they adopt draconic symbols and grant their worship energy to the wyrmfriends. They maintain the region's largest temple to Orlanth. This year it is decked out in serpent icons. These are all placed on hooks for easy removal. The Slow Eagle chieftain is Bartand the Snorer, whose bloodline exiled him to sleep in a hut far from their stead. He hates to be mocked on this point, especially by outsiders.

Although their neighbours dispute it, the **Stangari** claim that the town of Fiesive sits on their territory. Their young folk enjoy the strangeness and variety of the people there and spend much of their free time learning of the ways of civilisation from its motley inhabitants. Their affection does not stop their elders from demanding yearly tribute from the townsfolk. The Fiesivites either pay up or fight back, often with the help of the Brockrolings. Ganorlev the Argumentative, the hair-splitting Stangari chieftain, fancies himself a skilled debater. He opposes tribal unity on the grounds that Fiesive would surely be made a tribal capital and definitively made the property of all.

The unyielding battlers of the **Teren** clan keep a small temple to Humakt, the god of war. They hate both Empires with equal fervour. Whenever a Teren child is orphaned, he or she is dedicated to Humakt, forswearing love and family in exchange for terrible death magics. The Tereni hire out as mercenaries and willingly train outsiders in the ways of their forbidding god. To qualify, once must complete a rite of severance from one's clan and family. Applicants of other cultures can join the death cult, too, provided they also sever themselves from their old traditions. To the discomfort of other Lanksti, they allow these adoptees full rights within the clan. Astonishingly, their chieftain is not even human. Dan-Lor-Jar is a humanoid being with a cruelly porcine

face who rides a gigantic boar into battle. His lance has been known to impale two foes at once.

With Chaos in retreat through most of the world, many Orlanthi have forgotten Orlanth's unruly brother, Urox the Storm Bull, who beat Wakboth the Devil and bestows anti-Chaos powers on his worshippers. Among the **Treyling** clan, Urox is still accorded full respect. The bullying warriors of his temple get drunk and cause trouble in Big Deal and Fiesive when they are not staging hair-raising expeditions into Karia, where the evil of ruined Dorastor still oozes. Their chieftain and war leader, Jarnbor the Yawler, speaks inarticulately at the best of times and is reduced to grunts and hisses at times of special excitement. The Treyling are not alone among the Lanskti in keeping slaves but no clan is more dependent on captive labour for the tilling of fields and harvesting of fields. Notorious for the mistreatment of their thralls, they shrug callously when one drops dead of overwork. When their labour supply runs low, they simply send a war party out to capture wayward traders or unwary wyrmfriend missionaries.

The aptly-named **Unlucky People** eke out a desperate existence on an infertile plain. Its inviting flatness in an otherwise hilly country makes it a welcome mat for invasions. Raiding parties from Ormsland, Telmorla and even chaotic Karia frequently overrun it on their way to more lucrative raiding targets. Whenever a storm or flood hits Lankst, the Unlucky People are the worst hit. Its barren reaches are haunted by angry ghosts and weird spirits. However, a prophecy made on the day of Arkat's apotheosis has it that the eventual survival of the Lanskti Orlanthi depends on the continuance of the Unlucky People. One day, a great hero will arise from among their humble ranks to deliver them from destruction. Many of the clan believe that the EWF is this enemy – but then they always think fulfilment of the prophecy is right around the corner. Their chieftain is Aski the Ragged, named for his threadbare robes. The Unlucky People are disproportionately represented

among the Orlanthi émigrés of Safelster; they leave hoping to find a better life in the cities.

The people of the **Yellow Apple** are friends with the trolls and foes of the elves. Their bond with the trolls dates back to the Great Darkness. When the Stygian Empire came, this connection won them protection from harsh measures. Yellow Apple people are quick to explain that they accepted privileges without betraying their fellow Orlanthi, unlike the stinking Hersling. Their enmity



with the elves was also earned in ancient times, when they raided the trees that grew intelligent fruit and baked them into pies. To this day the Yellow Apple raid the wild orchards of nearby Ballid Forest. This puts them at odds with the Elffriends. Often they and the trolls of Guhan team to fight the aldryami and Elffriends. Their chieftain is the witty, sharp-tongued Ernaldan priestess Orlgartha, who says: 'The Earth Mother made fruit for us to eat. What the elves have is ours'. The Yellow Apple oppose tribal formation because they would probably be forced to co-exist with the accursed Elffriends. Their main hero is Saranth Nightsounder, who wields a flaming axe given to him by the Uz. This weapon, Sapdrinker, proves particularly potent against elves and their kin.

Clan Attitudes

The Clan Attitudes table encapsulates the general attitudes of each clan toward the political movements and entities of the day. Like the wind, Orlanthe are ever-changeable. Although their magic remains strongest when they hew to the attitudes of their ancestors, they can nonetheless change allegiances quickly. Adventurer activities could easily harden or loosen a particular attitude. The Clan Attitudes table demonstrates the general attitudes a clan has to tribes, foreign exiles, the EWF and the God Learners.

Clan Attitudes Table

Clan	Tribes	Foreign Exiles	EWF	God Learners
Arnisi	Animosity	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Blue Bulls	Animosity	Neutral	Animosity	Animosity
Badnali	Favourable	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable
Brockroling	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Brolforoli	Neutral	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Clacking Coins	Animosity	Animosity	Favourable	Neutral
Elffriends	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Elkeri	Neutral	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable
Herrindinni	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Favourable
Hersling	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Hiordari	Favourable	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable
Horing	Animosity	Neutral	Favourable	Neutral
Horn Blowers	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Neutral
Lysandorling	Animosity	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Moot Talkers	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable	Favourable
Pelue	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Roldoling	Favourable	Neutral	Animosity	Neutral
Slow Eagles	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity
Stangari	Animosity	Favourable	Animosity	Favourable
Teren	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Treyling	Neutral	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Unlucky People	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Yellow Apple	Animosity	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable

Travelling through Lankst

Aside from its rivers and the towns of Fiesive and Bad Deal, Lankst lacks public thoroughfares. Roadways scarcely exist. Travel through Lankst requires the sojourner to move from one clan tula to the next. If, say, you want to get from Fiesive to the Yellow Apple clan lands, you must move through either the Moot Talkers, Stangari or Teren tula to get there.

The reception one gets when travelling through clan territory depends on one's grasp of Orlanthe etiquette and on the disposition of the clan members toward you. Simply being an Orlanthe is no guarantee of a friendly reception: many clans hate their own neighbours much more than they do their long list of other enemies.

Clan boundaries are marked, sometimes with fences, walls or other fortifications but most often with an arrangement of painted stones or wooden posts. These are typically marked with clan-specific runes. Unless you enjoy a strong, positive relationship with the clan, etiquette dictates that you stop and wait to be hailed by patrolling warriors. Peaceful clans may not thoroughly patrol their boundaries. It helps to blow a long, lowing note on a horn of salutation. If no one shows up to be hailed, you may proceed with weapons sheathed until you encounter a clan member.

When spotted, the visitor performs a perfunctory version of the Orlanthei greeting. This indicates that your intentions are friendly and that you understand, and intend to abide by, the laws of hospitality.

Recipients of the informal greeting may accept it, granting you permission to travel through the tula to present yourself to the chieftain. Or they might refuse it, in which case you must back off, leaving clan lands in a calm and expeditious manner. They might even attack you, if they do not like or trust you.

Assuming you pass this first muster, you are taken to meet up with the chieftain. Should he be unavailable, an elder, usually a ring member, stands in for him. You then perform the longer form of the Orlanthei greeting. This is a simple combination of words and gestures in which you identify yourself, boast of your achievements, state the nature of your business in the area, and request hospitality. The chieftain or elder reciprocates, identifying himself and his people, and boasting of his own accomplishments or his clan's historical deeds. He may then opt to quiz you more closely on your intentions. When he finishes speaking, you speak admiringly of his boastworthy acts.

The chieftain must now choose whether to extend hospitality or have you escorted to the clan boundary. Even if he rejects you, you will be allowed to depart unmolested, unless you have somehow revealed yourself as a deadly enemy.

When a chieftain grants hospitality, he is honour-bound to provide food and shelter, and, most importantly, to guarantee the guest's safety from attack by members of his clan (and their servants and intermediaries, if any). To enhance their reputations, most clan leaders go beyond these minimal requirements, treating their guests to lavish meals, entertainment and copious quantities of drink.

By asking for hospitality, you undertake a solemn vow to act peacefully toward your hosts. Guests known for violating hospitality will be driven away from any tula they approach. This principle is so central to Orlanthei life that clan members will refuse you entry even if the hospitality you violated was that of their worst enemies.

Fiesive

The ramshackle, improvised town of Fiesive is claimed by four neighbouring clans (the Moot Talkers, Brockroling, Horn Blowers and Stangari) but controlled by none. Its people sustain themselves by providing services to merchants travelling up or down the Upper Tanier River. Traders come from Fronela, through the High Llama Pass, or from Safelster, to the south.

Freebooting serves as the town's secondary industry. Adventuring parties bivouac here, collecting treasures throughout Vesmonstran and the East Wilds. When war breaks out between Lanksti clans, adventurers are occasionally hired as mercenary reinforcements. Losing clans may even recruit elite warriors from Fiesive's inns and ale halls, fully adopting them into lofty positions in their clans. One day's bedraggled outcast might be the next day's thane (warrior noble).

Shops

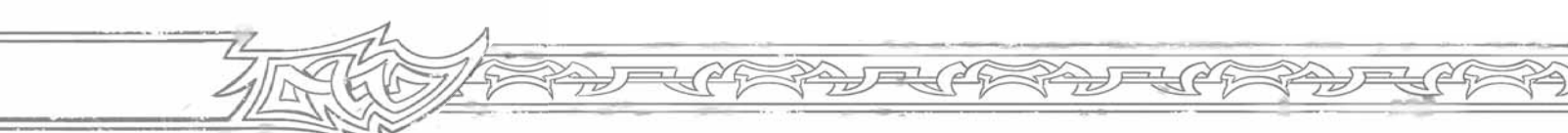
Though barges laden with trade goods float past Fiesive every day, little of their cargo stops here. Adventurers eagerly await the arrival of meagre weapon shipments at the town's sole armoury shop. Its proprietor, the garrulous, half-crazy **Gerdret**, charges anywhere from 20 to 30% more than usual for common items. Rare or hard-to-find items fetch anywhere from half again to double the price you would pay in Safelster. Gerdret conducts a brisk trade in used weapons, armour and adventuring equipment. He maintains a strict indifference to the origins of any items that might cross his counter, even if slightly notched or bloodstained. If confronted by an angry owner, he blandly deploys his standard catch phrase: 'If I thought you were still alive, friend, I would never have bought your gear'. Fiesive's warriors tolerate Gerdret's eccentricities because, without him, there would be no source of supplies in town at all. Every few years an enterprising adventurer decides to compete with Gerdret. Each of them fell prey to a seemingly unrelated accident, which either killed them or forced them to leave Fiesive.

Lodgings

Fiesive's so-called inns fully live up to their reputation for wretchedness.

The **Big Bowl** is a mostali dome of unknown purpose converted for use as a sleeping hall. It is an inverted copper bowl about 30 metres in diameter, with a an apex seven metres in height. The Big Bowl's completely leak-proof dome provides an absolute protection from precipitation. Rough, bare cement covers its floor. Graciously, the proprietress raises no objections if patrons bring in their own bedding material. She is a haggard ex-Kustrian named Urfesa, who keeps a wooden shrine to St. Xemela by her own bed near the door. On cold nights, Urfesa lights fires to warm the place up, dousing them after the smoke becomes chokingly thick. Her charges vary by the prospective guest's apparent ability to pay, always a somewhat arbitrary determination.

Jarnkipe's Place is a sprawling network of musty, rotting cottages. Their roofs are infested with either pigeons or rats. Muddy water seeps up through the floorboards of the cottages near the river. Jarnkipe himself is an Eurmali, a worshipper of the unreliable Orlanthei trickster god. He may tootle tunelessly



on a homemade flute in the middle of the night or slip a human waste into your boots while you sleep. To stay here, one must pay one silver per night and agree to a no-complaints policy. Jarnkipe insists that any who violate this rule will be cursed by the Trickster. Anyone who knows anything understands that this is not a threat to be trifled with.

Benadéo, a noble of Col banished from Safelster for the murder of his sister, runs the most pleasant lodgings in Fiesive. It is an old warehouse divided up into cubicles, divided by slats of junk wood salvaged from wrecked boats. It hardly leaks at all, shelters no vermin worse than ants or field mice and offers modest meal service in the morning. It costs five silvers a night. Adventurers with something to hide learn to avoid its comparative splendour. Benadéo, a compulsive informant, tells anyone about any of his guests for a handful of copper.

Healing

Fiesive's wounded enjoy a choice of two competing healers. **Abera**, a sallow, sweating, trembling sister of St. Xemela, sits weeping in a windy shrine to her virtuous saint, waiting for customers. She can perform a Magnitude 4 Heal spell, for which she charges 80 silvers. Why does she weep? For the sadness of the world, of course.

The Chalana Arroy healer **Orestana** severed herself from the Treyling clan when they would not censure their chieftain, Jambor the Yawler, for entering a ceremonial hut where women's magic was performed. People who deal with her for any length of time may conclude that her abrasive personality played a pivotal role in her clan's failure to back her up. Orestana is grouchy, easily insulted and a shameless dispenser of unwanted advice. She makes no attempt whatsoever to conceal her contempt for adventurers, even as she reattaches their severed limbs. She can perform a Magnitude 8 Heal spell and charges 18 silvers per point of Magnitude used. Orestana applies a surcharge to adventurers who have offended her in the past, adding 1 silver per point of Magnitude per incident.

Wandering war bands momentarily resident in Fiesive often include healers, though their availability to tend to others for pay may be limited.

Law, Justice and Authority

Claimed by rival clans and populated by exiles and outlaws, Fiesive is a place where the bonds of authority are loose to nonexistent. In times of crisis, the town's various war bands gather in tense colloquy to appoint a mayor. This official's authority is typically limited only to the immediate problem, dissolving entirely when it is dealt with. No one has occupied the position since the last mayor was slain in a Broforoli raid. Disputes between residents are resolved frontier-style, through violence. Feuding war bands occasionally resolve disputes by

submitting to the mediation of an Issaries worshipper, if one happens to be travelling through town.

Communities

The typical exile community consists of a few dozen people. The Dara Happan and Carmanian contingents are larger than the others, numbering around a score apiece.

The longwinded Iskanst Snakeslayer heads a woebegone community of Orlanthi refugees from Dragon Pass. They are the beaten-down vestiges of an already obscure cult, that of Orlanth Dragonbreaker. This cult takes as its central myth a battle between Orlanth and a dragon called Aroka, which had swallowed the rain god, Heler. As soon as it discovered the existence of anti-draconic Orlanthi cult, the wyrmfriends set out to exterminate all of its followers. A prophecy motivated Iskanst's great grandfather to come to Ralios, where the Dragonbreaker cult would be reborn, at the time of most pressing need. The verses instructed worshippers to remain distinct unto themselves, remaining clanless until the new Dragonbreaker came. Over the intervening years, many descendants of the original refugees have drifted away, joining clans through marriage or as recruited thanes and farmers. Iskanst makes a poor showing as high priest, pawning his silver regalia when he loses at dice. His followers are likewise a pack of dispirited layabouts. They hide their shrine in a sinkhole whenever suspected EWF agents come to town.

Six nobles comprise the nucleus of the town's Dara Happan group. They are attended by junior family members, servants and hangers-on. Their leader is Marbarazham, whose grandfather was Chief Falconer to the last rightful Emperor of Dara Happa before the Golden Dragon took over. A ramrod-straight young man of palpable rectitude, he fled his homeland three years ago, when EWF priests told him to order his servants to convert to their wyrmfriend religion. He finds Fiesive a trying place, where a good man's virtue and patience are continually tested. Marbarazham wants to unite with the local Orlanthi against their common EWF enemies but finds this hard to do when the Broforoli clan tries to kidnap him once per year to enact one of their drooling barbarian rituals. He and his warriors could serve as valuable allies to anyone capable of dissuading the Broforoli from further sallies against them.

In nearly any other circumstance, the town's Spolite witches would be at the throats of the Dara Happans and vice versa. They belong to a darkness cult that overran much of Peloria prior to the EWF years. The wyrmfriends, invited into Peloria to help drive them out, then took over themselves. The Spolites of Fiesive are third generation wanderers who have never seen their homeland. They settled here about a dozen years ago, supporting themselves with sporadic mercenary

work. The Orlanthi clans treat them as pariahs, assuming that their unfamiliar magic is Chaotic. Their leader, Hebdoloriam, is a smoky-eyed provoker of trouble whose physical allure regularly reduces hard-bitten male mercenaries to stuttering awkwardness. Where the Dara Happans still dream of a return to home and power, the Spolites have been born and bred on defeat. They want merely to make a life for themselves and feel at home somewhere. Fiesive is not much but it is all they have got. To this end, Hebdoloriam argues to give the place the attributes of a proper town, including a charter, regular authorities and a system of laws. For this reason the nearby clans consider her an enemy. She maintains contacts in distant clans with an open attitude toward foreigners.

Fiesive's Carmanian exiles fled the EWF when the wyrmfriends introduced serpentine imagery to the worship of Idovanus, the single god of virtue in their dualistic religion. Some struck back at the dragonfriends and were hounded from their homes. Others exiled themselves pre-emptively, to plot their return and the reinstitution of their faith. The first group have put down roots in Fiesive, operating a river navigation firm that constructs, rents and pilots barges. Ulifentor, a comfort-loving patrician spurred by boundless optimism, leads this group. His second son, Hadalbarun, leads the rival faction, a cluster of hot-headed young bravos intent on mastering Indovanic war Sorcery and returning to the homeland to scourge it of reptiles and their friends. The father and son argue bitterly whenever they encounter one another. Hadalbarun and company are always up for a raid on Ormsland. Any enemy of the EWF is a friend of theirs – they will help Adventurers go up against the wyrmfriends by supplying intelligence, maps and war stories. They might even coordinate raids, hitting EWF forces in one place while the adventuring party takes them on in another.

The newest exiles in town are a gang of about a dozen Pentan horse nomads. These worshippers of the fierce sun god Kargzant quickly proved their bravery and brutality, rescuing a God Learner myth-gathering expedition from bandits. They slew every bandit and brought their heads back to town on the ends of long iron poles. None of them, including their stony-visaged leader, Bularin Amalar, has bothered to master more than a few words of the local language. Negotiations with them must take place in mime. They make the most of their fearsome reputation, keeping other residents at bay with feints and snarls. If they have any plans beyond making a living with their blades and bows, they have yet to show any signs of them.

Fiesive's equally small and rugged Praxian community stays on the other side of town from the Pentans. They are Bison People, the last remnants of a clan that waged ill-advised war on the puppet authorities ruling their homeland for the EWF. Their khan, Naptwal the Drummer, is named after the magic

instrument slung over his back. Its head is covered in the hide of the White Bison Hachwaluna, who rode the plains of Prax when the Dawn came. This mighty spirit speaks in booming percussion notes whenever the clan faces danger. While in the presence of his people, Naptwal is a confident, commanding figure. When he thinks he is unobserved, his posture slumps and a haunted expression creeps stealthily across his sun-worn face.

Notables

Amid the exiles and passers-through, a handful of solitary individuals make permanent lives for themselves in Fiesive.

Thestigor Blue-Helm was outlawed from the Yellow Apples for raiding the neighbouring Horing after a peace settlement was established between the two clans. He is always recruiting for his adventuring party, Kestigor's Delvers, which specialises in finding buried artefacts for God Learner patrons and then fighting his way through whoever owns the land he and his comrades are digging in. The Delvers post an astonishingly high mortality rate but Kestigor always escapes without a scratch. His recruits are invariably new to Lankst and have never heard of him before.

Askia Whitestreet was born in the city, the daughter of an urbanised Orlanthi woman and a Malkioni priest. Unrecognised by her father and ill-treated by her mother, she fled to Lankst at a young age. Out in the woods, she encountered wind spirits sent to her by Orlanth's brother, Kolat. As a shaman, she exists both inside and outside local traditions. Thus she remains torn in two directions, as always. She makes her living by performing auguries and exorcisms, both for town residents and for the clans of Lankst. She is brusque and dismissive when dealing with strangers but anyone making a sustained effort to win her respect gains a loyal friend.

Pen Pendoka is an Agimori tribesman captured by the God Learners and taken to the Arkat Archive in Tiskos to act as a guide into the Pamaltelan parts of the God Plane. Hoodwinked by a cruel trickster, he fled in the wrong direction, winding up in Lankst. He wishes to depart for his homeland but the spirits he keeps in the fetishes around his belt tell him to stay, to fulfil an important destiny. As he waits for the defining moment to arrive, he kills time by joining adventuring groups on a one-off basis.

The God Learner defector **Triabel Duileau** supports himself as a sorcerer-for-hire and hopes that his enemies from the Pythos University faculty never find him here. Thanks to a carefully maintained lattice of regenerative spells, he looks middle-aged, even though he is well over 100 years old. He participated in the Goddess Switch experiment of

848. Decades later he suffered a bout of second thoughts and wrote an anonymous pamphlet warning of dire repercussions from the project. Unfortunately for him, his colleagues immediately recognised his florid writing style and summoned intelligent bolts of lightning to hunt him down. Duileau fended these off, faked his own demise and made haste for the worst backwater he could afford to transport himself to. Duileau is an assumed name.

Adventure Hooks

Adventurer groups new to Lankst might participate in adventures like these:

Bejand Renier, a callow would-be adventurer from a wealthy Safelstran trading family, got himself captured by the notorious Treyling clan on his very first outing (his friends did worse: they were all killed). Bejand has been turned into a lowly thrall and will soon die from overwork and maltreatment if the adventurers, hired by the Reniers, do not get him back.

X Legend has it that there is a spring in the middle of the wretched wastelands where the Unlucky People live. If you go there and say the magic word of power, OUROBOUROS, it will spurt forth a geyser of gold coins. To keep them, one must kill any of the clan members you see on your way out of their tula. This rumour has resulted in the deaths of many Unlucky People over the years. One of their number, the feeble old peddler Fanth, found out that some idiot, possibly that accursed innkeeper, Jarnkiipe, told Fiesive's Pentan exiles this false legend. His people are too weak to fight for themselves, so Fanth will give them a valuable treasure map if they go to intercept the murderous Pentans before they arrive at his home.

X Naimer the Leper, a foe to EWF and God Learners alike, has been spotted in Lankst, near Bad Deal. He started out as a God Learner, then converted to wyrmfriendism, bringing an awful curse on himself in the process. He suffers from regenerative leprosy. His outer extremities rot and fall off, then grow back, only to again become corrupt. Unlike normal lepers, Naimer is hideously contagious. The adventurers are hired by either Empire to find and kill him – or by an enemy of either, anxious to capture him and discover what he knows about them.

X The God Learner botanist Huontos has just won funding approval for an expedition to the Ballid Forest to gather specimens of a particularly interesting plant. The vegetable snake is a creeping vine that slithers rootlessly across the forest floor. The elves do not like God Learners studying their weird plants, so the adventurers he hires should anticipate strong resistance. Huontos has arranged for them to enter the forest through Yellow Apple lands. He provides a silver ingot to present to their chieftain as payment for the privilege.

X The Kustrian merchant Adrios Eus was once captured by Telmori wolf men and held for ransom. Incarcerated with him was the ill-tempered death worshipper Sardal, of the Teren clan. Babbling in terror, Adrios repeatedly and accidentally insulted the Humakti warrior. To shut him up, Sardal told him this: every year, on his birthday, he seeks out and kills someone who insulted him. He strongly hinted that he was adding Adrios to his list. Knowing that Sardal's birthday is fast approaching, Adrios hires the adventurers to find him before he leaves his clan lands and launch a fatal pre-emptive assault on him

X Two years ago, adventurers working for the God Learners stole one of the sacred chariots of the Roldoling clan. They have been searching for it ever since. From a passing trader, they have just learned that it may be in Marvelmaze, in Kustria. None of the Roldolings know cities all that well and they are looking for a group including an urbanised but loyal Orlanthi to spearhead the recovery effort.

Telmoria, Land of Werewolves

The densely forested hill country of Telmoria lies wedged between Lankst and the dragonewt territories of Ormsland. Its inhabitants are the Telmori, commonly known to outsiders as werewolves. This term originates in the widespread misconception that all Telmori are cursed to turn into wolves every Wildday. They are falsely thought to be tainted with Chaos and even to transmit lycanthropy like a disease.

The inhabitants of Telmor are hsunchen animal people. Aided by shamanic magic, they can change forms between wolf and man. They run in packs with actual wolves, who they communicate with and treat as their brothers. These creatures are larger and smarter than those found elsewhere. To the Telmori, some wolves have two legs and others have four but this is a distinction of only minor relevance. None of them are human; all of them are wolves. Children grow up playing with cubs. At their coming of age ceremonies, each is paired with four-legged wolf, their wolf brother (or sister, as the case may be). Your four-legged brother is as irreplaceable as any literal kin; if he dies, you cannot just replace him, as a city child would a pet dog.

Like other hsunchen, the Telmori hew steadfastly to a stone age hunter-gatherer way of life. They raid their neighbours in Lankst and Ormsland, stealing sheep and cattle. They do not keep these animals; they slaughter them on the spot and haul the meat back. For this reason the Orlanthi consider them wasteful and cruel, though in fact they strip the entire carcass in minutes, taking all useful meat and hide.

If the outside world despises the Telmori, they wholeheartedly return the sentiment. People who live in cities or towns

and who use metal implements are soft and weak. They exist only to be preyed upon. Like any wolf pack, Telmori culture employs a hierarchy based on courage and physical dominance. When faced with a challenge, whether from inside or outside the pack, an individual must either show superior strength and resolve, or shamefully submit. Telmori interactions with outsiders begin with threat displays, from bared teeth to haughty insults. Telmori may not involve themselves in liaisons with non-Telmori, treating such acts as instances of bestiality. Other taboos include murder, eating a human or wolf, and using foreign magic. Common Magic is not considered foreign.

All Telmori are members of the cult of Telmor by birthright. Their shamans communicate with their wolf god through spirits. On death, they leave their loved ones exposed to the elements, so their spirits can reincarnate into new bodies. These may be either two- or four-legged, as chance dictates. It does not matter.

Since the Arkat-Gbaji war, some Telmori became Impure. They involuntarily adopt wolf form every Wildday. This curse provides the basis for the werewolf myths surrounding the people of Telmoria. Actually, only about 15% of Telmoria's wolf folk are cursed; the remainder are Pure. Cursed Telmori are found in greater numbers over the mountains, in Dorastor.

Telmoria stoutly resists invasion by either nearby Empire. EWF missionaries find them unlikely and inhospitable converts. God Learner expeditions to the region rarely return with a full complement of survivors.

With Empires baying at the borders of its territory, Telmoria's lack of a centralised political structure works in its favour. There is no single authority to conquer or subvert.

Notables

The packs of Telmoria acknowledge a king but his position is essentially ceremonial. He is the winner of an annual tournament of ritual combat carried on every year at Sacred Time. The packs gather in Red Glade, a shallow valley about 100 kilometres east of Bad Deal. Outsiders, if discovered, are leapt upon and torn to shreds. The alphas of each participating pack fight for supremacy, with each winner advancing to the next round. The winner is declared King of Telmoria. Unusually, the current king, and champion for three years running, is a four-legged wolf, **Agnagar**. He is about the size of a lion and bears a lightning-shaped scar on his left flank. Outsiders attempting to negotiate with him must speak through a two-legged interpreter, unless they are somehow capable of wolf speech. Agnagar acts as an exemplar of Telmori strength and ferocity but neither issues commands nor settles disputes. Neither he nor his packmates feel any obligation to

explain this to foreigners who come to lobby him. They are happy to accept any gifts of food they may lay at his feet, even if they can deliver little in return for them.

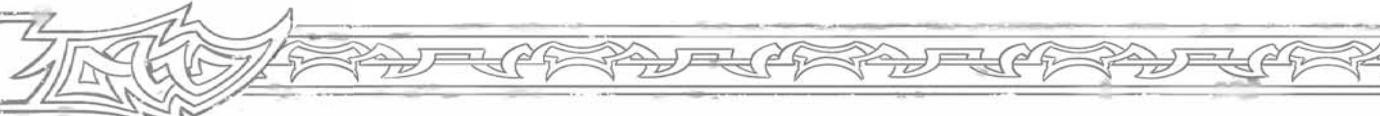
The foremost shaman of Telmoria is **Ehrarmarg**, who wears a boarskin loincloth and is scarred from head to toe. His flowing grey beard is spotted with burrs and nettles. He belongs to no pack but dwells in a mossy cave inset into the side of the Nidan Mountains. After several incursions from parties of God Learner scholar-warriors he has learned to send out his devouring spirits first and ask questions later. Ehrarmarg's only interests are to provide spiritual guidance to pack leaders who seek it and to be left alone to subsist on his diet of voles and owl eggs.

Adventure Hooks

- X Gartos Goldhand, of the Elkeri clan of Lankst, has offered a reward of 1,000 silvers to the mercenary band that avenges the death of his prize bull, Blackstorm. This magnificent specimen was summarily butchered by a pack of Telmori raiders. Oddly, the leader of the pack seemed to be a young girl. Gartos wants the girl brought before him alive, at which point he will hear her out and decide what form his vengeance should take.
- X The God Learner sorcerer Jouquel's ear is missing, though he knows where it is: hanging around the neck of the great wolf shaman Ehrarmarg. The shaman leapt on him and cut it off when Jouquel approached him to ask a simple question about the myths of his people. Jouquel fears that the shaman can use the ear in dread lupine magics and wants it back. He does not want Ehrarmarg harmed, in case he later changes his mind about answering those questions.
- X While skirting the borders of Telmoria, the party is approached by a Telmori who haltingly speaks their language. A clan of dragon Orlanthi from Ormsland have captured his four-legged brother, possibly in retaliation for a raid on their sheep pens. He fears their magic but reckons the adventurers do not. If they get his brother back, he can show them a spot in his hunting territory where a big cache of useless and inedible gold coins lies buried.

Ormsland, Vanguard of the EWF

Ormsland consists of a bowl of grassland surrounded by craggy hills, some of which rise up into full-fledged mountains. Its rock formations mimic the figures and faces of dragons, dragonewts and reptilian creatures. The twisted spires of weird draconic cities rise like coral from the vale, their walls exterior covered in gleaming scales. Ormsland's weather is peculiarly mild. In wintertime, its borders with Telmoria to the north, Lankst to the west and Karia to the south are visible as a sudden break in the snowline, with green grass growing on the Ormsland side.



Its mild temperatures make it an ideal haven for a community of dragonewts. This is an entirely separate dragonewt nation from the one at the heart of the EWF, with its own Inhuman King.

From Holdout to Dependent

The Ormsland Inhuman King has always been more resistant to the EWF project than his Dragon Pass counterpart. Wyrmfriender missionaries did not arrive in Ormsland until the mid-7th Century. By then Ormsland dragonewts had already perceived a spiritual danger in allying themselves with the grasping humans. Only after extended negotiations between the two kings, who had never before had any reason to dispute with one another, were wyrmfrienders admitted into Ormsland, as they had been to Dragon's Eye. Around 640, migrant Orlanthi from Dragon Pass began to flow into Ormsland, hoping to use it as a base to proselytise the Stygian Empire. When the Stygians responded to their Hunting and Waltzing bands by dispatching troops to conduct punitive raids on Ormsland, the so-called Second King expelled the wyrmfrienders. For over two centuries Ormsland remained an embarrassing holdout to the EWF, a dragonewt territory where their missionaries were not permitted. It was not until 875 when the draconised Orlanthi got back in, when the God Learners launched an ill-advised military sally against Ormsland.

The Guiding Council dispatched a legion of soldiers, including Orlanthi windriders, Dara Happan hoplites and saurian earthshaker units, to repel the invasion. They remain in place to deter further incursions.

The politics between the two inhuman kings are impenetrable to morals, even those well-connected within the EWF. Is the Ormsland King pleased that forces associated with the Dragon's Eye King now occupy his territory? Do both of them disclaim responsibility for the actions the humans undertake in their name? Any number of Justeli nobles would pay handsomely to know this.

Whatever reptilian manoeuvrings occur behind the scene, Ormsland has become a vanguard for EWF penetration into Ralios. Hunting and Waltzing bands, hungry for converts, travel regularly to Lankst and Corolaland. They move covertly in Safelstran cities like Lustria, holding underground ceremonies beneath the very noses of the Malkioni authorities.

Settlements

In Ormsland itself, the reinvented wyrmfrienders swiftly erected a series of urban communities. Using esoteric magic to radically increase the crop yields of a previously infertile and rocky soil, they presently support tens of thousands of people. Its major centres include Ophid, Greenshadow, Lortarn and Korl. Each

is much like the other, a densely populated labyrinth of housing and worship centres, modelled on draconic architectural forms but constructed on the cheap, with mundane materials. Devotees of the wyrmfriender path easily navigate their twists and turns. Outsiders quickly give themselves away by becoming lost in their circuitous laneways.

The laneways of **Ophid** crawl with snakes. Locals have become adept at sidestepping them and are never bitten. Constrictors, vipers and other deadly specimens are far outnumbered by harmless species. The killer snakes act as an urban defence system, instinctively striking out at individuals hostile to the EWF cause.

Ophid, first-built of the four major cities, boasts the fanciest and sturdiest architectural flourishes. The local EWF leadership gathers here, treating the city as its unofficial capital.

On either the third or fourth Wildday of Sea Season, depending on the weather, the snakes of Ophid gather together by species, to engage in frenzied mating in enormous pulsing heaps. Not long after noting the annual incidence of the phenomenon, city residents began to celebrate it with a week of feasts and fetes. To the consternation of religious authorities, these have become wildly orgiastic, in a matter similar to the heron worshippers of the Pelorian region of Darjiin. Worship energy that would normally be directed to the EWF leadership is either dissipated during this informal festival, or, more disturbingly, diverted to some other entity. Wyrmfriender priests have quietly posted a reward to any trusted servitor who can get to the bottom of this troubling mystery.

Greenshadow gets its name from the verdant undertone detectable in any shadow cast within its city limits. For this reason it has been adopted as a new home by the Kyger Reptile Clan, a renegade collection of Uz, and humans who wish to be Uz. Originally from the Shadowlands, they believe in the compatibility of wyrmfriender and Uz worship. Wyrmfriender priests attempt to discourage them from attending public ceremonies, finding something dank, uncomfortable and polluting in the worship energies they provide. Their delegations to the Uz strongholds of Halikiv and Guhan have been violently rebuffed.

Movement leaders are also troubled by the popularity of a breakaway wyrmfriender priest named Barlken. He claims to be the recipient of the Revelation of Personal Connection. According to his variant faith, it is possible to achieve a one-on-one mystical relationship with the high draconic consciousness without imparting one's worship energy to the priesthood. Barlken, an alternately withdrawn and blazingly defiant figure, narrowly escaped a succession of suspiciously coincidental accidents last year. To the further consternation

of local leaders, he then petitioned the Second King for protection. Now he spends more time in private chamber with the Lord High Dragonewt than do the EWF's official representatives.

Korl has blossomed as a centre for trade and industry. Caravans travel overland from Lanskt, bearing goods from Safelster to the south and Fronela to the north. The influence of money on affairs in Korl is such that its leading merchant, a follower of Issaries Doubletongue called Verosta, enjoys greater influence than Korl's guiding council. She is famous for her statement that: 'We owe the dragon on Godday and owe ourselves the rest of the week'. Verosta spreads her wealth generously to retard priestly influence on commerce.

Recent investigative efforts by priestly enforcers have found Old Ways traditionalists sneaking into Korl in the guise of caravan guards. Hiosson the Clutcher, a hard-hearted representative of the War Dragons, just arrived in the city to root out their presence before it grows into a full-fledged insurgency, as the Empire now faces in Dragon Pass. Verosta fears that his crackdown will be bad for business. Onlookers whisper that in this diminutive, uncompromising enforcer, she may have finally met her match.

Lortarn houses a spanking new temple to Telmor Dragonwolf, a newly discovered divine aspect of the werewolf god. Its patron, the high priestess Rangalla, invites all Telmori to visit it and join the EWF way. She hopes to make inroads among the Telmor where other Hunting and Waltzing bands have failed. So far the temple has attracted only a smattering of sincere worshippers, most of them half-mad Telmori outcasts. Instead, outraged wolf people have targeted it for sustained raiding, on one occasion burning its outer façade. Their incursions have sparked a debate between the Lortarn priesthood and local residents, who have borne the brunt of these violent raids. Protesters demanding the relocation of the temple have been branded as Old Ways traditionalists and subjected to imprisonment and interrogation.

Mud pits outside Lortarn yield a coveted luxury product, a mud that retards the visible effects of aging when applied to the skin. A bottling syndicate led by the vehemently self-protective Tonanda Jos employs thousands of diggers, glassblowers, merchants and overseers. A few months ago she offered a bounty for the scalps of Kustrian merchants who sneaked into the mud pits to take a sample home for alchemical analysis.

Notables

The Guiding Council has decreed the Clanking City of the Zistorites, in God Forgot, as the focus of their efforts. They have made Ormsland a comparatively sleepy second front. As

The Wall

Shortly after the cooling of hostilities with the God Learners, Ormsland's new EWF contingent faced a new threat. The Chaos creatures of Karia began to encroach on Ormsland, which they had never done before. Apparently they found humans a more enticing prey than dragonewts. EWF engineers got to work erecting a wall spanning the entire Ormsland-Karia borderland. The wall itself became a target of Chaos attacks, slowing progress to a crawl. At present it is two-thirds finished.

The plodding, methodical Orlms Vantant serves as the project's chief engineer. Recently he received authorisation to divert funds from construction to the payment of bounties. These are payable for Chaos creatures encountered within 30 miles of the wall. the job of verification officer, who must physically examine Chaos corpses and determine fees payable, is the least coveted among Orlms' engineers. Adventurers, not all of them wyrmfriends, have flocked to the area to fight Chaos and claim the bounties. Orlms suspects that some of the beasts are killed further away but has not given up hope that the bounty will eventually speed completion of his life's great work.

a consequence, a combination of second-raters and unproven up-and-comers man its contingent in Ormsland.

Lorsan the Seeker serves as the Guiding Council's chief envoy in Ormsland. Technically he rules nothing and is merely first among equals as a guest of the Second King. For all practical purposes he is the provincial governor of the area's wyrmfriend communities. A sincere believer in the draconic path, Lorsan spends as much of his time as possible in meditation, neglecting his mundane duties. As a result a general air of administrative incompetence permeates EWF operations here. A genial and welcoming fellow, he cannot understand why anyone would refuse to join the wyrmfriend faith.

His eerie older brother, **Estivos the Predictor**, manages the area's Hunting and Waltzing Bands. He concentrates his proselytising efforts on the clans of Lankst. Estivos covertly arranges for ill fortune to befall anti-EWF clans. He has seen his own future and is terrified that he might make a mistake and

deviate from the path laid out for him by destiny. Under certain lighting conditions you can look into the irises of his eyes and see through them to whatever he is standing in front of.

The young wyrmfriend priest **Ervaling Scalemaker** has been assigned as steward to both brothers. He sees himself as a future member of the Guiding Council and aims to capitalise thoroughly on whatever opportunities arise for him in Ormsland. He wants to organise a quick and dramatic raid against a vulnerable target – any target – winning glory and a transfer to where the action is, at the Clanking City.

Endti Narrow-Hip serves as Ormsland's ranking EWF general. She is a devotee of Maran Gor, the fighting earth goddess who is Ernalda's elder sister. Even before her worship was draconised, Maran Gor possessed an affinity with earthshaker beasts (dinosaurs). The moody, impolitic Endti likes brontosaurus and triceratops more than she does people. In her office stands a large model of Ralios made out of painted flour and water, on which she plans her battles, moving about tiny wooden figures of her saurian shock troops. She possesses an instinctive rapport with the dragonewts, which is more than some of her civilian superiors can say. Endti is embarrassed by her willowy frame; no matter how much she eats, she cannot put on the massive rolls of fat expected of a Maran Gor priestess.

The unpredictable warrior hero **Heornar Wolfhound** is an indifferent follower of the wyrmfriend faith. He came to Ormsland for one reason only – to kill Telmori, the ancestral enemies of his clan. He recruits foreign mercenaries for his frequent slaying sallies into Telmoria. The severed heads of wolves and wolf-men decorate the private sanctum of his living quarters in Ophid.

Adventure Hooks

- X An enemy of the EWF hires the adventurers to deliver an object to Darytha Fant, a resident of Greenshadow. She is a subversive, posing as a wyrmfriend priestess while cooperating with the group's patron. The object is fragile and must arrive intact. It is a portion of a very large broken eggshell. Supposedly it is a communication between the two Inhuman Kings, even though no runes or characters are visible on it. Only Darytha can decipher its meaning. But when the adventurers arrive in Greenshadow, they find that she has been taken away by the authorities on suspicion of treason.
- X EWF officials suspect that one of the engineers charged with constructing the wall between Ormsland and Karia has been diverting supplies to building projects in Lortarn. The adventurers are hired to spy on him and follow any peculiar shipments away from the site. Unfortunately for them, just when they are accumulating the evidence they seek, a wave of Chaos creatures makes a mad assault on the wall.

- X The party runs across rumours of an old mostali tunnel under the Nidan Mountains, near the borderland between Telmoria and Ormsland. If it exists and is passable, it would provide a route from Peloria to Vesmonstran circumventing the Kartolin Pass. This alternate route is desirable because it avoids a dangerous overland trek through the Chaos-haunted danger zone of Dorastor. Information leading to its location would fetch an impressive price.
- X Robangor Purple Coat of the Lanksti Hersling clan hires the adventurers to conduct the eccentric, scrofulous priest Gustako to the Telmori-Ormsland border. Gustako follows an obscure god, Valind the Glacier-Maker. He says he can reverse the magic that keeps Ormsland balmy during Sea Season, by cursing a series of draconic beacons hidden in the wilderness. Gustako must physical interfere with each beacon, which may eventually arouse the attention of EWF patrols.



X Elsewhere in the wilds of Ralios, the adventurers encounter a young woman fleeing a velociraptor and its wyrmfriend keepers. If they save her from her assailants, they find that her pursuers were trying to capture her and ransom her to her brother, a prominent member of the Old Ways traditionalists responsible for several successful raids on the outskirts of Ormsland. Knowing his vow to care for her, Ervaling Scalemaker figures he will turn himself in to win his sister's freedom. She tells the adventurers they will be rewarded if they can spirit her safely to an anti-EWF clan in Lanskt or even a Safelstran city. Her name is Orendri; her brother is Hengmar.

Karia (The Scourged Land)

As the war against Gbaji drew to a climax, Arkat and his allies battled their way through the region of Karia on their way to the climactic confrontation in Dorastor. Here, outnumbered by the legions of Nysalor's Golden Empire, Arkat unleashed terrible gifts discovered in the Hero Plane. He released the Unbinding Plague, the Corroding Righteousness and the Eating Everything Thing. These forces slew platoons of enemy warriors, along with thousands of Arkat's own men. They also devastated the surrounding landscape for miles around. Karia's rolling emerald hills, dotted with pastures and croplands, transformed into to scourged and barren crags. Its rich soil turned to ashes and blew away. The wide and gentle Boratran River evaporated in an instant; its winding streambed folded in on itself and was swallowed by the gasping earth. Even the sky above Karia was discoloured and appears to bear a dripping, putrid stain.

After the war was over, Arkat, now founding Emperor of the Autarchy, attempted to undo the damage he had wrought. At the same time, he instructed his cultists to weave vast, intricate spells to seal the Kartolin Pass between Karia and Dorastor. These ensured that the remaining nest of Chaos beings in that accursed land could not pass into Ralios. These twin objectives turned out to be mutually exclusive; the magic that maintained the seal prevented the land's regeneration. Arkat accepted the loss of Karia as the price of continued protection against Chaos. Legend has it that he visited the place once a year, marking the terrible price of his victory with solemn ceremony and pained reflection.

Karia remained both uninhabited and free from Chaos for nearly two and a half centuries. Its situation gradually changed after 740, when the invading God Learners overthrew the Autarchy and extirpated the cult of Arkat. The sealing spells that kept Chaos from crossing through the Kartolin faded away. The Seshnegi king, Annmak the Peacemaker, divided Karia up into duchies, granting it to favoured nobles. Their attempts to resettle the land ended in catastrophe. Farmers starved. Children went mad. Knights were violated by brood and died spawning their offspring.

Karia was abandoned. Every generation or so, a new cocky school of God Learner sorcerers arises to try to undo Arkat's scourging. They never succeed. The Goddess Switch was originally conceived as a way of returning fertility to Karia. This plan was abandoned on sober second thought.

Although Karia is now thought of as a Chaos haven, second only to Dorastor in danger and corruption, even those creatures find it hard to exist here for long. They travel from Dorastor in search of prey. When their raids are complete, they retreat back to the safe environs of their haunted land.

Hazards

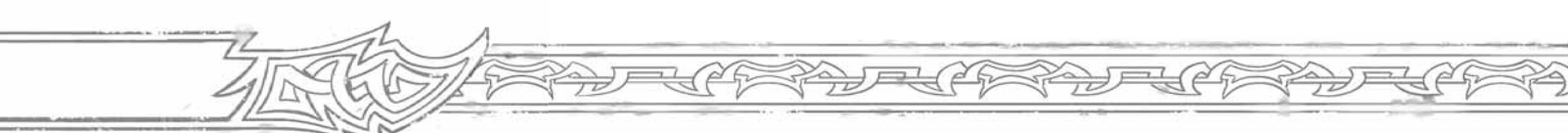
Adventurers in Karia face malign, impersonal forces left over from the Arkat-Gbaji war:

Ghosts: The restless spirits of the soldiers slaughtered here still moan, groan and occasionally manifest themselves to appalled onlookers. Though few of the tormented spectres harm travellers physically, the sight of them can cause debilitating distress or permanent madness. Formidable shamans can ward them off or force them to do their bidding.

The Unbinding Plague: Inanimate objects can catch diseases in Karia, which slowly eat away at them until they fall apart. The land itself is infected with this plague. In a few places, its contagion still lingers and be carried off to other lands. It is not potent enough to scour the landscape but it can destroy weapons, armour and other equipment.

The Corroding Righteousness: Lingering energies of this Arkati magic cause physical harm, like that of a Disruption spell, to heathens and heretics. The effect defines these in the harsh terms of the strict pre-Hrestoli form of Malkionism.

The Eating Everything Thing: Occasionally explorers in Karia will simply vanish in a cloud of blood and bone, devoured by this trollish spirit from the Underworld. Its approach can be seen from miles away, as a gory red plume, not unlike a crimson sandstorm. You cannot fight the Eating Everything Thing. You can try to run away.



Creatures encountered here include broo, walktapi, jack o'bears, scorpion men, gorp, charnjibbers and bestial humans blistering with Chaos features. Unique Chaos beings of bizarre aspect also commonly crawl, flop and wriggle across its eerie barrens.

Raider Gangs

Although none of Karia's monsters and villains are permanent residents, a few intelligent Chaos warriors do make it the object of regular forays. The most infamous of these are as follows.

Sheánn the Black Saint fought in the Arkat-Gbaji war, first on Arkat's side, then against him. Once a devout Malkioni, Sheánn turned on his mentor when he renounced the Invisible God. A cancer grew upon his righteous outrage, turning it to spite. He gathered a platoon of similarly disaffected Arkati and attacked his former leader during his march through Karia. As he engaged Arkat in personal combat, gruesome Chaos features erupted from his body. He fell to his knees and begged Arkat for forgiveness and a quick demise. Grim Arkat denied him both. Sheánn now wanders Dorastor and Karia as a tormented immortal, attended by other Chaotic humans. Razor-tipped tentacles sprout from his back and shoulders. His blackened metal armour has merged with his body, pulsing with translucent veins. It regenerates him and spews corrosive, disease-laden blood onto anyone unfortunate enough to injure him in close combat. He also continues to wield a wide range of war-oriented Common Magic and Sorcery spells. Although still woefully alive, other Malkioni apostates are able to pray to him as if he is a saint, receiving potent but soul-corroding magic. His professions of hatred for his present existence do not stop him from seeking plunder or slaying any stranger who crosses his path.

Darengeng is a titanic broo, over three metres in height. He breathes backwards and can suck the air out of an opponent's lungs, causing asphyxiation. He nurtures a surpassing hatred for cities and has launched repeated assaults on the Ormsland settlement of Ophid. Attempts to destroy the Ormsland wall now occupy the bulk of his efforts in Karia.

The deluded, Chaos-corrupted ex-wyrmfriend priest **Lordros Neverwant** still thinks he heads a Hunting and Waltzing Band. He travels through Karia, eager to minister to the unwashed. His conversion ceremony involves a laying on of hands, which establishes a seed of malign physical change in the victim's body. Unbeknownst to him, Lordros' fevered brain has been colonised by tiny, monstrous minions of Pocharngo, the Chaos god of mutation. A retinue of equally crazed mutants attends him, mopping his brow when beads of sweat appear upon it and cradling him in a faeces-caked cloak when he shivers from the cold.

Adventures in Karia

This is not a place of intrigue, mystery or complicated plot hooks. Adventurers in Karia find horrible monsters, fight them, kill them and escape – if they are not killed themselves.

Ballid, Elf Forest

Scholars know the forest of Ballid as one of the six great elf forests of the west. Somewhere in its leafy depths lies one of the Great Trees, grown from the seeds of the First Tree, way back in the Green Age.

Its inhabitants pursue no great agendas; they wish simply to be left alone in the peace and harmony of their arcadian wilds. Alas, they are surrounded by prying neighbours who wish to rob them, probe into their secrets – or, in the case of the Uz, eat them.

The aldryami of Ballid sided with Arkat during the wars that ushered in the end of the First Age, sending their legions to battle Gbaji. To this day they revere Arkat as a liberator who protected their forest against a corrupting force.

Enemies All Around

Uz: The Autarchy rewarded the allegiance of the aldryami by brokering a non-aggression agreement between them and the devouring Uz of nearby Guhan. This was tested during the decadence of the Stygian Empire and finally broken entirely when the Middle Sea Empire destroyed the Arkat cult in 740. Now they must defend themselves against the depredations of ravenous trolls, as they had to do during the Darkness and early First Age.

Mostali: The mostali of the Nidan Mountain Decamony have posed an intermittent threat to the survival of Ballid. The dwarfs resent the nasty green growth on the side of their mountain. Every few years they launch a mass-scale effort to repair this blemish. They may assault the forest with axes swinging or send a cascade of noxious chemicals sluicing down the mountainside to poison the trees. The aldryami fight back vigorously when invaded but are reluctant to venture into the Nidan tunnels to take the fight to the dwarfs. Instead, using the Elffriend clan of Lankst as intermediaries, they hire mercenaries to exact retribution on the mostali. They pay for these incursions by selling medicinal herbs to traders and with gear looted from the corpses of invading meat people. Because Nidan is the mostali stronghold of strongholds, they rarely expect their hirelings to invade it head-on. Instead their hirelings harry mostali convoys or sneak in for stealthy sabotage runs through tunnel entrances beneath the reaching roots of Ballid.

God Learners: As far as the elves of Ballid are concerned, any foe of Arkat is a friend of Gbaji. They view God Learner attempts to dissect their myths as a corrupting force similar to Gbaji.

Their chief God Learner antagonist is the sorcerer Pranton, who maintains the New School of Botanical Inquiry in Valantia. A determined fellow from a wealthy Jrusteli family, he has sunk much of his personal fortune into his researches. He hires the best mercenaries in the west to conduct spirit raids into Ballid. Although mildly interested in botanical specimens, what he really wants is a map of the tangled aldryami portions of the Other Side. To this end, he targets aldryami spiritual leaders for kidnapping and interrogation. After he is done asking questions, he offers to ransom surviving prisoners back to their people – in exchange asking for mythic secrets, instead of money.

Orlanthi: Like any aldryami enclave, only the fringes of Ballid are penetrable by outsiders. They can travel through its fringes but any trip of more than a day or so into its interior is invariably intercepted by an armed aldryami force or by the vegetation itself. An exception pertains in the case of the Elffriend clan. Their long-standing alliance with Ballid allows them to freely travel through the forest. However, the Elffriends obey their own Orlanthi rules of hospitality and would not dream of making their way through another's tula without approaching them to exchange greetings.

Their rival clan, the Yellow Apples, possess ancestral theistic spells allowing them to counter detection by elves and plants. Whenever the aldryami catch them in Ballid, they fall on them, slaying without mercy. With disrespectful enemies like these, they neither expect nor grant ransom.

Neither the Elffriends or the Yellow Apples have ever beheld the Great Tree, though both sides have boasted about it to the other.

Notables

The aldryami see to it that alarming meat people never lay eyes on their high leaders. They maintain a core of false leadership, who outsiders have identified as the forest's rulers. These masquerading representatives listen carefully to the false assumptions made by visitors, especially invading God Learners, and carefully perpetuate them. Entire bookshelves of God Learner reference texts now refer to the King and Queen Elf of Ballid forest, who only exist in their imaginations. The elves posing as these fictional entities can, through their connection to the song of the woods, communicate to the true elders of the forest, receiving instructions from them as necessary.

Posing as Queen Elf these days is a willow-haired entity named Nidaya. Distant and abstracted, she sways in the wind like a tree and takes long pauses between phrases, to listen to the woodsong. Though acting is an alien skill to her, she continually reminds herself to match the image of the imperious faerie queen promulgated by human legends.

King Elf, as currently played by the thorny, briar-like Ifelon, has the easier role. He merely sits scowling on his overgrown throne (a chair purchased from the Elffriends and covered with cooperative vines) and issues the occasional grunt or nod. He carries the Pod Staff, a piece of autonomous living wood from which dozens of round, fist-sized seeds dangle, fixed to it by so many precarious, dried tendrils. When Ifelon kills a non-elf enemy, the victim's soul travels into one of the seeds. It remains trapped there until planted, when it becomes a twisted, leafless bush. The aldryami ransom these souls in exchange for promises of protection or aid. When the bush is burned, the soul is freed, going on to whatever afterlife its culture decrees for it. Groups who do not recognise the permanence of the soul, such as the mostali, are immune to its effects.

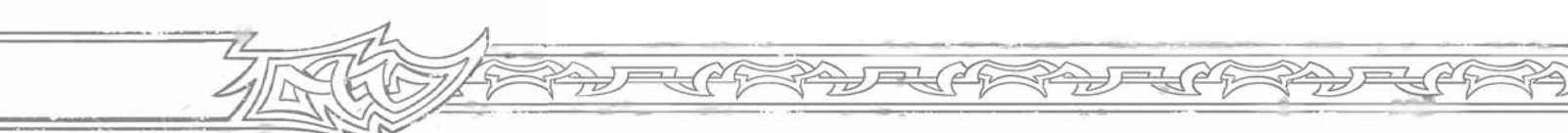
Guhan, Uz Hills

The territory of Guhan in western Ralios centres on the Uzgor Hills. It consists of a bare and rocky terrain, surmounted by two small mountain ranges. Guhan is not a natural home to the Uz but one granted to them at the end of the First Age. It has taken them a long time to bind ancestral spirits to its jagged cliffs and inedible rocks. The spirits native to Guhan were hostile to the Uz for many years but finally came around after decades of drum-banging entreaties. The insect herds were slow in developing, too: it took much breeding to create the hardy giant bugs capable of surviving on its meagre vegetation. Now the Uz call it home and would never give it up.

Trolls and Empires

After his war with Gbaji, Arkat ceded the territory of Guhan to his trollish allies, most of whom hailed from the Shadowlands, a troll enclave of central Genertela. They settled its wind-swept hills, maintaining their unity and their mutually beneficial relationship with the Stygian Empire. Uz lived in Guhan but were allowed to travel throughout Arkat's lands. When he had trouble, Uz warriors fought to put down the rebels. They even made peace with the elves of Ballid, taking them off their menus entirely, because Arkat asked them to.

The Uz did not feel for Arkat's successors as they did for him. They were only humans, while Arkat was part human, part troll. Still, the Uz of Guhan found their job as the Empire's enforcers fruitful. It filled their bellies. Also, the Stygian



kings funded good sorcerers, who tried to help them lift Gbaji's curse. As the decades wore on, the human kings of the Autarchy expected more from the Uz while giving less in return. Trolls consulted their spirits of augury and saw that something bright, bad and blinding was coming their way.

The conquest of Ralios in 740 brought danger to their borders. To fatten themselves for the coming lean years, the Uz relinquished their peace bond with the elves. They returned to eating the aldryami but had forgotten how nasty the plant men could be in a fight. They raided the wind-worshippers of the north and hit the small human settlements along the southern shores of the Nidan river. Uz even raided as far as the city of Col.

Hunger did come, because the new Empire, the God Learners, despite their claims of friendly intentions, wanted to change Uz religion. This would have meant changing Uz hearts, so the tribes of Guhan could not do it even if they wanted. They retreated to their borders and kept the sorcerers out as best they could. The Guhanites redirected their raids to the Orlanthi of Lankst, who were fierce fighters but easier nuts to crack than the city armies of the south. They also went up into the mountains to eat mostali canned food and the dwarfs that made it.

Leadership and Organisation

When they settled Guhan, Arkat's favourite trolls broke with tradition to set up an apparently male-dominated leadership (an example of typical Uz social organisation can be found on the other side of Ralios, in Halikiv). Arkat granted the land to the warriors who had fought bravely by his side, sidestepping the matriarchs who would usually rule a troll enclave. They formed themselves into the Guhan Guard, a military caste responsible for maintaining unity inside the new nation and providing support to the Autarchy when needed. Its ultimate leader, the BrUznu, or High General, would be chosen by high-ranking officers of the guard, subject to the approval of the Autarchic Emperor.

During its glory days as an elite guard to the Stygian Empire, the Guhan Guard consolidated its influence over the region's Uz. The carts of plunder they brought back from their various exploits were converted into food and used to reward coteries of loyal followers.

In the Autarchy's losing war against the God Learners, the Guard fought at the forefront, suffering severe losses. Its leading heroes were slain. Several BrUznu were, in short succession, elevated to high command only to be killed shortly thereafter. When the God Learners took the cities of Safelster, the Guard's surviving remnants, sensing the inevitability of defeat, withdrew to Guhan.

For a time the matriarchy reasserted itself. Then the God Learners appeared in Guhan, declaring the Uz their subjects. Their spirit raiders demanded access to Uz mythic secrets by right of conquest. The matriarchs, unused to rule, vacillated. A new generation of the Guhan Guard stepped forward to fight back. Their name still evoked fear in the hearts of the Seshnegi, who remembered the Guard's ferocity from when they were the vassals of the Stygians. Now the Guard fought by stealth, launching nocturnal lightning raids against invading God Learner expeditions. After driving off the predatory humans, the Guard retook power from the stumbling matriarchy. Their rule continues to this day, as does their chilling reputation.

Beneath the veneer of military rule one finds a typical Uz clan structure. Each of its six extended clans is headed by a matriarch. Male members of the clan answer to her in domestic matters, and to their Guard superiors in affairs of raiding, defence, and external politics. When in conflict between these two masters, the male Uz obeys his guard superiors. Women answer only to the matriarchs.

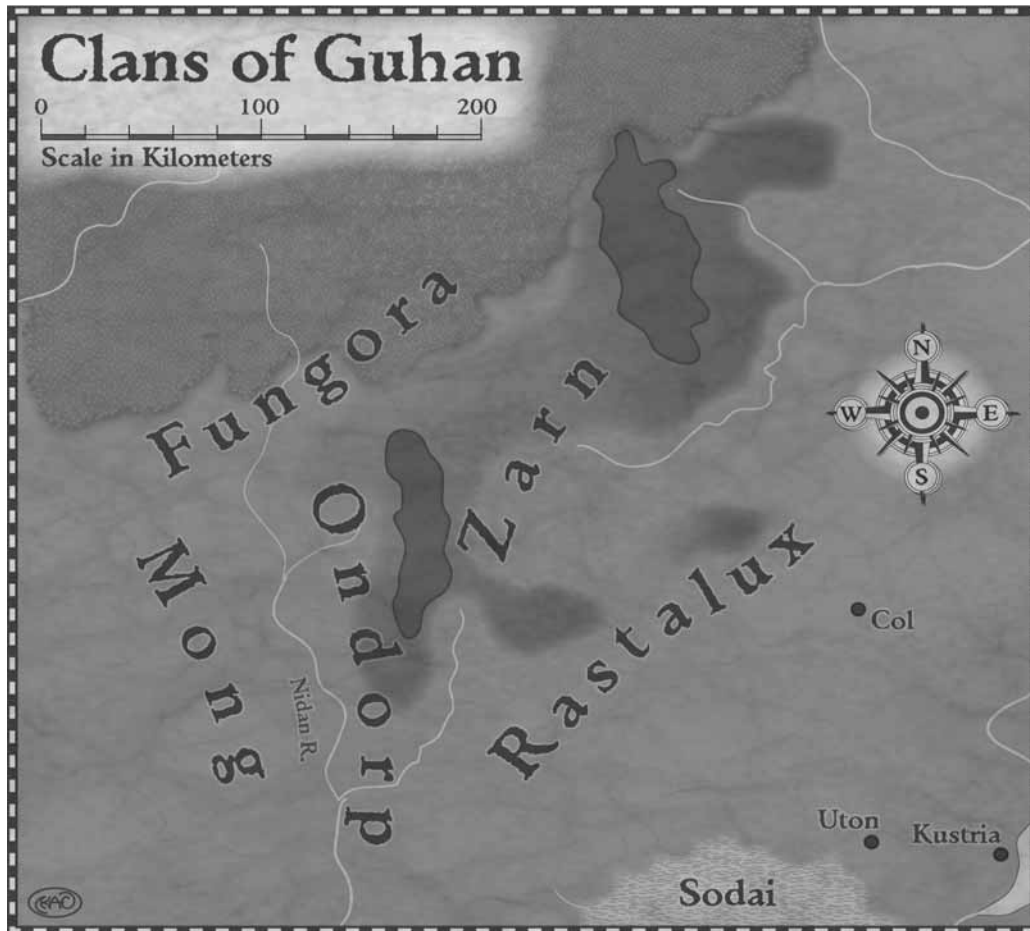
Clans of Guhan

The clans of Guhan are as follows:

The **Fungora** clan lives on the border of the Ballid forest, where its leafy trees give way to a twilight world of giant mushrooms, morels and other fungal growths. They ferment an intoxicating beverage from its noxious toadstools. After drinking it, Uz feel woozy in the morning. In humans and other beings of lesser fortitude, it may cause brain liquefaction. The Fungora oscillate between peaceful coexistence with the elves, who also revere the fungal forest. Their matriarch is Aran Orlar, whose head resembles a misshapen, gigantic squash. She wears a special platinum brace to prevent her neck from breaking.

The **Mong** occupy Guhan's western reaches, on the far side of the Nidan River. They know where the tributaries of that river go beneath the Nidan mountains, allowing them to raid up into the mostali strongholds there from below. They are led by the matriarch Karo Kalis, who mischievously toys with EWF Hunting and Waltzing Bands by allowing them to demonstrate magic to her people but never quite accepts their doctrine.

The **Ondorp** occupy the eastern banks of the Nidan River. They break Uz taboo by eating cooked food. They do not handle the fire themselves but instead employ human thralls purchased from the Treyling clan of Lankst. They treat their slaves better than the Treyling do but still devour them if the pie crusts are not flaky. Their matriarch is Anja Bimor, a no-nonsense leader who makes decisions quickly and never looks back. She wears a necklace of faintly glowing green stones known to cause fainting in importunate humans.



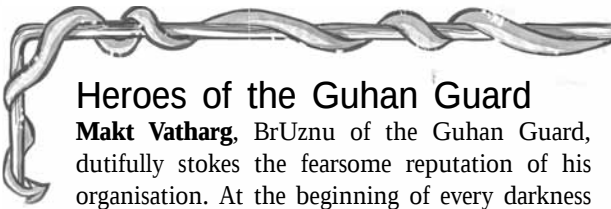
The **Rastalux** occupy the lowlands closest to Safelster. Lodal Fanos, the imposing fortress of the Guhan Guard, overshadows their territory. The Rastalux clan head, Chos Varal, is the staunchest supporter of the Guard and its agenda among the matriarchs of Guhan. A glutton for flattery, she prefers non-Uz visitors to address her as the Queen of Rastalux and to bow down at her swollen feet. She counts the BrUznu, Makt Vatharg, as her favourite husband.

Zarn clan lands encompass central Guhan. The matriarch of this, the largest clan, is Gor Kangor. Of all the matriarchs, the Zarn leader is the least tolerant of the Guhan Guard and its delusions of male supremacy. She is also the sole Mistress Race troll among the matriarchs, or all of Guhan for that matter. Gor Kangor hails originally from Halikiv, where people still blame her for leaving. She never deigns to disguise her contempt for Chos Varal. Her status as a Mistress Race Uz from before the Dawn protects her from open reprisal by the so-called Queen of Rastalux or other local rivals. As a survivor from pre-Time, she arouses considerable interest from God Learners, many of whom would die for a meeting with her. And many of them do.

Nida, Home of the Mostali Decamony

Deep in the Nidan Mountains sprawls a subterranean complex of rigorous geometric wonder. Its twisting, straight-angled marble halls, chambers, barracks and factory floors comprise Nida, the headquarters of worldwide mostali orthodoxy. The Nidan Decamony claims to rule over all dwarfs everywhere. Its leaders make it their duty to stamp out heresies and malfunctions wherever they occur. They were staunch in their suppression of Openhandism in the First Age and are now as dedicated in the war against Individualism.

Its leaders could not be less interested in the affairs of Ralios. Instead they focus their attention on intra-mostali conflicts, especially against the rebellious community of Greatway, in distant Votankiland. Of recent concern to them is the Clanking City in God Forgot, where the mechanistic demigod Zistor further damages the world machine with the misapplication of their techniques. In uneasy alliance with trolls and dragonfriends, they lead a siege against him. Unfortunately those distant alliances do not seem to transfer to trouble-filled Ralios. With trolls coming to eat them, elves creeping their

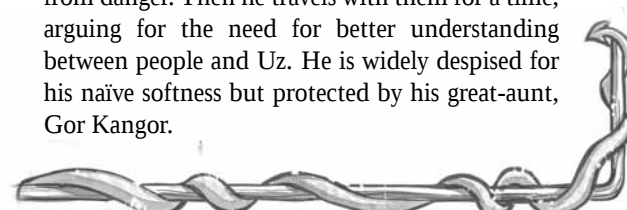


Heroes of the Guhan Guard

Makt Vatharg, BrUznu of the Guhan Guard, dutifully stokes the fearsome reputation of his organisation. At the beginning of every darkness season he selects an enemy of the Uz people among the cities of Safelster and sends a raid deep into the heart of urban Ralios. The objective is always the same: to kidnap that person and bring him back to Guhan for interrogation, deprivation and torture. Then the enemy is released, so that he can go back and warn his compatriots of the dangers entailed in crossing the Uz of Guhan. Makt Vatharg is humourless, unforgiving and perpetually annoyed. He basks in the honour of his marriage to matriarch Chos Varal but spends as little time as possible in her actual presence. He wears the Belt of Hheirrana, an artefact stolen from the aldryami. It doubles his strength and allows him to leap over trees and walls.

The hero known only as **Shadowbreather** executes his BrUznu's most daring raids. He moves in total silence and cannot be seen by firelight. His favoured weapon is the garrotte. One bad habit mars his legendary stealth: as he draws near to an enemy, he may forget himself and emit a throaty chuckle of cruel anticipation.

Known among humans as Blue Moon Pete, the warrior **Yolfol Karat** labours to show his people's benign side. He wanders Ralios looking for Malkioni and Orlanthi to dramatically rescue from danger. Then he travels with them for a time, arguing for the need for better understanding between people and Uz. He is widely despised for his naïve softness but protected by his great-aunt, Gor Kangor.



purulent fronds up the side of their mountain home and both EWF and God Learner magicians probing into their fabulous technological secrets, they must continually defend themselves against local enemies.

Governance

The term Decamony is used both to describe the entire mostali community of the Nidan Mountains and also its ruling council. The council consists of ten Diamondwarfs, mostali

who have reached physical and mental perfection in harmony with the World Machine. It includes one Diamondwarf of each mostali category.

Alanerachanarg is a perfect Tin Dwarf. His model makes animate beings from living rock. He says: 'Let us build warriors to smash our enemies'. Of the Twelve Inefficiencies, he considers tardiness to be the worst and has had underlings stomped to death for repeated violations.

Chenspenanppa represents the alchemy practitioners, the Quicksilver Mostali. She says: 'When there is a deficiency in the world, it must be burned away with acid. This ensures that it never comes back'. An advocate of what passes for mercy among the high mostali, she argues that broken dwarfs should be submitted for repair and never extirpated entirely.

Kraganatinkobbi exemplifies the Iron Mostali, the blacksmiths and soldiers. 'Every problem is a nail', he says, 'and we are a hammer'. Non-dwarf enemies hit head-on with his massive mallet, Second Chance, regress to infancy.

The perfect Silver Mostali called **Kraskakostaka** represents sorcerers. 'Our magic is the only good magic', she says. In her view each form of magic must be eliminated from existence until the World Machine is fixed, starting with the lowest and finishing with the highest, Mostali Sorcery. At this point it will no longer be needed, because the machine will be working again. The lowest form is spirit magic, so she lobbies for attacks on shamanistic cultures. Not coincidentally, these include the elves and trolls, who are already the mostali's worst enemies.

Nanelamskirbi is a paragon of Rock Mostali, the diggers and tunnellers of mostali production. 'Undermine enemies', he counsels, 'dig from beneath them'. He wields the Angry Shovel, which steams through troublesome stone.

Ninkotargiras serves as a model for Copper Mostali, who make tools and certain weapons. 'To solve the problem', he says, 'we must identify the correct implement'. When he stands in profile the side of his face seems as flat as a shovel.

Alloyists and metallurgists look up to **Rakdinalogots**, the best of Nida's Brass Mostali. 'The exact blend of elements resolves any dilemma', he argues. He reached Diamondwarf status when he caught his predecessor engaged in heretical speculation and without hesitation struck the woeful impostor's head from his shoulders.

Totsaskpatutith exemplifies Lead Mostali, the plumbers and glassblowers. 'Failure', he says, 'comes from a flawed vessel. Before proceeding, we must see that our vessel – that is, our

plan – is without flaws'. He became a perfect lead mostali when he dove into a fire and came out purified and immune from physical pain.

Gold Mostali, the teachers and sages, are represented by **Witzatzolanur**, who does not make proposals of his own but carefully dissects those of others for fatal failures of logic. He and Totsaskpatutith make common cause as advocates for caution and further deliberation.

Barayalargogo is the original kind of Diamondwarf, as forged before the mostali added a clock to the World Machine. As such, he is not a Clay Mostali of apparent flesh and blood but a literal being of solid diamond. He never speaks and rarely moves, except to shuffle from his personal chamber to the council hall of the Decamony. When his decision is needed to sway an argument among the other Decamony members, he tilts his head at an opportune moment, causing the light to sparkle across his faceted surface. This immediately indicates either his approval of, or opposition to, the measure currently under debate. When Barayalargogo deigns to intervene, the others defer to him as quickly as dignity allows.

Orders from the Decamony are transmitted by gold dwarf messengers to the relevant departmental overseer, who may be a dwarf of any of the nine models. This official in turn instructs the Control Officers of the various work units under his command, who will all be of his model. The Control Officers disseminate the orders to their crews, either directly or through floor stewards. Iron dwarf military units refer to departmental overseers as generals, control officers as lieutenants and floor stewards as sergeants.

Heroes of Nida

Few adventurers personally meet the members of the Decamony. They are more likely to interact with mostali heroes, who risk malfunction and contamination by thrusting themselves into the most broken portions of the World Machine.

Mabbanetaddi is the iron dwarf lieutenant authorised to conduct warfare against the aldryami. He offers the Yellow Apple clan of Lankst deals on trade goods to encourage them to keep up their raids against the forest of Ballid. He views his burning desire to enter personal combat with the Elf King as a regrettable example of Failure to Delegate, which is one of the dreaded Twelve Inefficiencies.

Noralebbachenso, master of multiple forms of Mostali Sorcery, oversees actions against the trolls. The last time he went into the mushroom forest of northern Guhan, he was overcome by fear and revulsion, and failed to activate his spells. He is determined to erase his shame by levelling the fungal forest with a cleansing agent supplied to him by quicksilver dwarfs.

Vobibustajargalorm, an iron dwarf general, leads operations against the God Learners. To this end he has invented the directed bolt, a missile which can be fired from a crossbow and can change direction in mid-course to find its way into the flesh of any designated follower of an incorrect Sorcery school. On impact, it fills the victim's veins with a fast-acting poison paralysing the outer extremities. Vobibustajargalorm is proud of this invention and is sure that, as soon as he uses it to destroy a God Learner of sufficient stature, that it will earn him Diamondwarf status.

Kavomamivobigub, an iron dwarf general responsible for several dramatic sabotage attacks in the wyrmfriend cities of Ormsland, has been withdrawn from the field pending negotiations with the EWF. Although the mostali hate the wyrmfriends as much as they do the God Learners, they want the reptile lovers to continue to fight with them at the siege of the Clanking City. Kavomamvobigub waits with increasing impatience for a reassignment allowing him to pursue his flair for surprise explosive attacks.

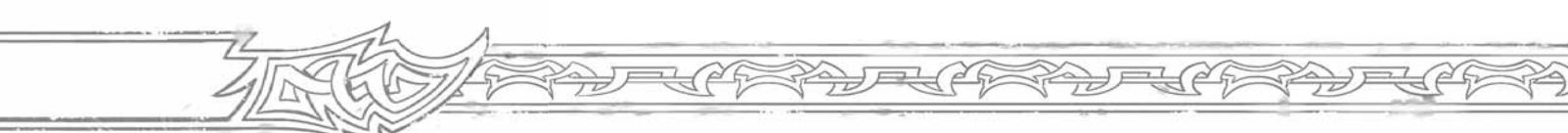
SAFELSTER

Safelster occupies the urbanised lowland of Ralios, in the northern continent of Genertela. Once home to the grim and mysterious Stygian Empire, Ralios is now a possession of the God Learner Empire. For many years it was ruled by dukes who, as vassals of the Emperor, owed revenues and soldiers to the imperial treasury. The region still reels from a war waged by the Emperor against his dukes and viscounts, who he accused of rebellion. Now imperial functionaries administer the area directly, fuelling local resentment.

Though the God Learners lay claim to all of Ralios, large portions of it remain ungovernable. Outlaws and troublemakers able to defend their own rights of person and property can always make a life for themselves in these places, no matter how out of favour they might be with the putative authorities.

Safelster's ambitious, enterprising people remember a time when they ruled Ralios. After the brooding hero Arkat slew the evil Chaos god Gbaji in 450, he retired to this area to establish a government. Everyone else remembers it as the terrifying Stygian Empire but locals fondly recall it as the Autarchy.

They claim that Arkat was unjustly maligned. According to Safelsteri, the harsh measures he and his successors sometimes undertook against enemies and traitorous subjects were justified, if occasionally unpleasant in detail. The history books of the victorious Seshnegi, who destroyed the dwindling vestiges of the Autarchy over a century and a half ago, dwell on the atrocities and leave out the justice and prosperity Arkat fostered.



River traffic from Seshnela connects Safelster to the heart of the Empire. Adventurers, mercenaries and sellswords rank among its primary exports. Here all manner of wild and violent people first become acclimated to the demands of God Learner civilisation. As Emperor Ilotos becomes increasingly concerned about sedition, useful troublemakers have departed upriver for the looser, freer atmosphere of Safelster. Within its many hiring halls, God Learner recruiters seek out professional magicians and warriors for hire, for missions near and far.

The city of Kustria is detailed extensively from page 145 and is an ideal starting point for adventurers. Dangk, once a small backwater city and is now a major site for Godlearner researchers keen to uncover the secrets of the nearby Hrelar Amali ruins. Dangk is detailed from page 162. The other cities of Safelster are as follows.

Azilos

A town rife with internal tensions, Azilos has always adapted its uniquely vicious politics to the rising and falling of the Empires around it. Its two noble families, active before the Dawn, are the Rangran and Tzurkal clans. Each perpetually tries to destroy the other but neither ever quite succeeds.

From an early age, every citizen of Azilos knows which of the two sides he is on. Few maintain neutrality for long. The Rangran crest bears a rampant boar; the Tzurkal, a stag. Azilosians, even those so lowly that they will never get to glance at a member of either family, refer to themselves as either boars or stags. Even the most innocuous of social occasions can erupt into rioting between the two ancestral factions. Boars and stags are segregated by neighbourhood, making it easier to see each other as enemies in need of a good beating.

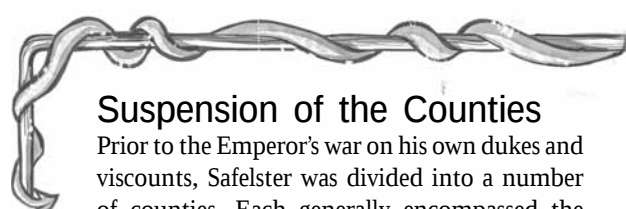
Dialectian Tzurkal was Viscount of Azilos until the Emperor's campaign against the dukes of Ralios. He has now been supplanted by clueless Seshnegi officials, in consultation with Torfain Rangran. Torfain runs rings around his supposed bosses and now really runs the city. He uses the officials to oppress the hated stags.

Stags and boars agree on only one thing: that Arkat was unquestionably a hero, a good knight fighting for the Malkioni people. A chapel in his honour celebrates him as St. Arkat. Some Azilosians pray to him for martial magic.

Reasons to come here: Both families routinely hire adventurers to conduct covert missions against their rival.

Belstos

Suranos Silvermask, universally acknowledged as the best of Ilotos' new officials in Ralios, has been assigned the region's most difficult task.

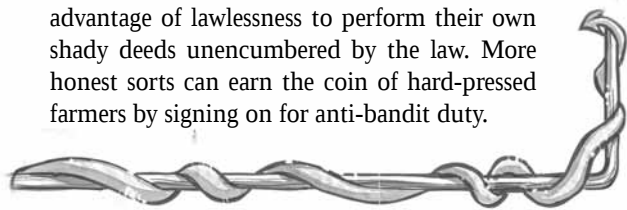


Suspension of the Counties

Prior to the Emperor's war on his own dukes and viscounts, Safelster was divided into a number of counties. Each generally encompassed the natural trade and farm area around one of the major cities. Ilotos has temporarily suspended the county system, pending a top-to-bottom accounting of the area. His officials have begun the heroic task of cataloguing all lands, businesses and revenue-generating entities in Safelster. When this is concluded, imperial courtiers will redraw the boundaries and appoint new viscounts. No one doubts that the courtiers themselves will be the viscounts and that the county lines will be redrawn to the advantage of the most influential of them.

This confusion redounds to the great benefit of troublemakers and outlaws. Each viscount used to maintain a staff of sheriffs to maintain order within his country boundaries. Imperial officials keep a more or less tight reign on the cities but exert little authority outside their walls. Banditry has reached epidemic proportions. Some of the worst offenders are former sheriffs fired by the transitional regime.

Adventurers can gain from this either by taking advantage of lawlessness to perform their own shady deeds unencumbered by the law. More honest sorts can earn the coin of hard-pressed farmers by signing on for anti-bandit duty.



The city of Belstos, otherwise a sleepy city serving as a transshipment point for grain and cattle, has long been a hotbed of Chaos heresy. Any of its podgy, bland-faced merchants could be hiding his true nature as a member of the Guild of Chaos Monks.

These secretive cultists follow the sinister creed of the Black Saint, Bor, who claimed it was not only possible, but holy, to manipulate the forces of Chaos with god-given Sorcery. Initiates into the Borist cult learn a variant of the dread sorcerous technique of Tapping. They work a spell that allegedly shrives individuals of any lingering Chaos taint that may have attached itself to their souls. The Borists then take this Chaos energy into their own bodies, gaining a range of horrible yet concealable mutations. Rumour has it that they

also create independent Chaos creatures, which they command with charm spells.

They claim to be good Malkioni, using the powers of Chaos for the greater glory of the Invisible God. Other monotheists have always shunned and persecuted them. The Autarchy tried to root them out, to no avail. Now it is the God Learners' turn to try to extirpate this infamously tenacious and resilient cult. The deposed viscount did a good job of suppressing them, exposing several cells and putting their members to death. Unfortunately the Ducal Wars allowed them breathing space and in the past five years the cult has staged a comeback. Nearly a dozen of Suranos' anti-Borist operatives have been slain or assassinated. Ordinary residents of Belstos are afraid to walk its streets at night. Broo and scorpion men have been spotted in the city's decaying slum districts.

The countryside surrounding Belstos is one of the few areas in the Second Age where Chaos creatures are still commonly encountered. Members of cults and orders with anti-Chaos powers make pilgrimages here to test themselves against the foul spawn of Wakboth.

Reasons to come here: Suranos is hiring replacements for his lost anti-cultist squadrons. Honest merchants seek protection from both Borist extortionists and garden variety criminals attracted by the city's current lawlessness.

Col

Known recently as the City of Exiles, Col sits in a lush green valley, its slopes covered by vineyards. Over a dozen orders of monks and nuns work the wineries, producing vintages coveted throughout the Empire. The same cloistered holy folk are also responsible for a variety of stunningly fine cheeses. Col's chief industry is food export. Its markets and food stalls make it a point of pilgrimage for wealthy gourmands from all around the world. The city's inns and taverns cater to them extravagantly. Clack-pinching adventurers often complain about the inflated prices.

Defeated military officers, disgraced courtiers and exiled nobles fill the monasteries of Col. By withdrawing to a cloistered existence, they signal their surrender to the Emperor, avoiding execution or assassination. Dozens of leaders toppled from power during the Ducal Wars now seek the contemplative life in its various abbeys. However, not all of them are sincerely retired from affairs of state. In quiet taverns they sit in their monks' robes, sipping fine wine, swapping gossip and bitterly scheming for Ilotos' comeuppance.

Notables of Col include the openly vituperative Aribert D'belstos, the deposed viscount of that city. Two years ago he founded a new monastic order, named after St. Prades, who



was martyred after speaking out against the corruption of the Autarchy. The Knights of St. Prades have unsubtly established themselves as a government in exile.

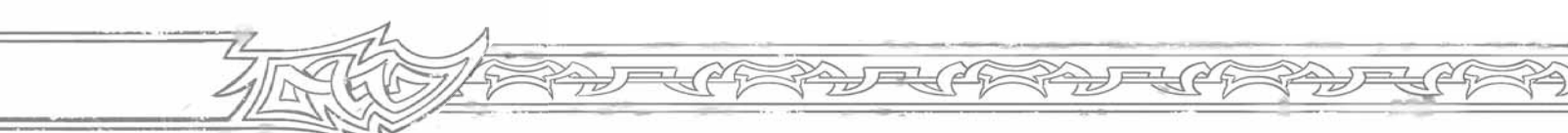
Col's beleaguered administrator is Guarand the Ebullient, a jowly, gregarious cousin of the Emperor who wishes only to be left alone to enjoy his cheese and wine.

Reasons to come here: Indiscreet exiles may be targeted for kidnapping or assassination. Adventurers may be hired on either side of the equation, as executioners or bodyguards.

Anyone seeking political intelligence will find it in Col. The hard part is sorting truths from fictions.

Drom

Drom is a stronghold of the Ancient Beast Society, an animist cult whose members worship their inner totem animals. They are the urbanised descendants of hsunchen tribes. Their religious ceremonies take place over many long hours, in which the celebrants drum and dance themselves into a state of ecstatic acceptance. As the ritual reaches a feverish intensity, the totem spirits inhabit the bodies of the most fortunate participants.



Malkioni authorities have outlawed all activities associated with the Beast Society. An offshoot of the Rightness Army, the Force for Decency, patrols the city on holy nights. When they sniff out a ceremony in the making, they burst in to attack the celebrants with truncheons. This draconian suppression arouses the chagrin of God Learner sorcerers, who would like to get inside the cult and rob it of any useful secrets it might be harbouring.

Drom also serves as a gathering point for caravans trading with Maniria. Although the two Empires are at war, considerable trade still occurs between them, to the immense profit of Drom's mercantile class.

Drom's interim administrator is Adelgon the Filter, so named for his ability to remember only facts which please him. Real power rests where the money is, in the hands of Brarden the Exacting. As head of the Drom Mercantile League and the city's wealthiest man, he works to shield the Ancient Beast Society from the Decency extremists. Everyone assumes he is himself a Loon, although he has never been observed at their ceremonies.

The statue of a forgotten horse-headed deity looms over Drom's front gate. It protects the city, slaying attackers with its staring eyes.

Reasons to come here: Adventurers headed for the EWF can make money along the way by hiring themselves out as caravan guards. Opportunities for strong-arm work abound on both sides of the conflict between the Ancient Beast Society and the Force for Decency. Infiltrators of the Society can expect generous compensation from local God Learners.

Estali

Rule over the city of Estali requires possession of an ancient implement called the Purple Sceptre of Serpent Sentience. Its owner has traditionally been styled an Arch-Duke. The artefact was wrested from the dying fingers of its previous owner during the Ducal Wars. The soldier who grabbed it, an uneducated sergeant named Hardguin, has since been unable to release it from his grip. The city has chosen him as its replacement ruler. Hardguin, a gruff man of simple pleasures, found himself elevated against his will to the position of interim administrator. He has turned this city, which derives its wealth from the fertile farming lands of the Estal River, into a haven for warriors, mercenaries and hard-drinking layabouts. Every season climaxes with a joust or arena free-for-all, with lucrative prizes for the winners and copious free healing for the vanquished. Garbage may rot fragrantly in the streets and women may not be safe to walk Estali's laneways without a bodyguard, but it has become second only to Kustria as a magnet for recruiters of mercenaries and adventurers.

Beneath the smell of ale-breath that wafts ceaselessly through Estali is an animal musk. Like Drom, Estali is also a stronghold of the Ancient Beast Society.

Reasons to come here: Estali's taverns overflow with shady characters offering missions to adventurers. Ne'er-do-wells who get into trouble elsewhere can luxuriate in Estali's notoriously lax law enforcement. Its frequent tournaments offer opportunities for quick riches and easy glory.

Galin

This city is famed as the birthplace of the ancient horse god of the same name. Though not now the recipient of open theist worship, Galin was the region's important human deity at the Dawn and for a century and a half afterwards. First Council missionaries largely redirected theist worship to Orlanth. The local Orlanthi identify Galin as a brother to their sun god, Elmal, who is also patron to horses.

The city that bears his name is still renowned for the quality of its horse breeding operations. Breeders and country folk pay homage to him as St. Galin, who lent his horse to Malkion the Seer, so that the prophet could spread his word more quickly to those who needed it. The ultra-devout wrinkle their noses at this, smacking as it does of henotheism. The compromise seems to work, however, and the superior horses Galin's magic brings are a linchpin of the municipal economy.

Unusually, the city's interim administrator is a local, the horse breeding magnate Lant Lantiet. Hale and jolly, he is cleverer than he lets on. Like any businessman, he wants peace and prosperity to rule Ralios. He maintains discreet contacts with the Orlanthi tribes of Lankst, who buy horses from him. A relentlessly practical man, he has little use for either crazed religionists or interfering sorcerers.

Reasons to come here: Orlanthi who need to visit a city come here, where they can go about their business unmolested. Adventurers can sign on to transport expensive horses through danger-infested wilderness to their final purchasers.

Jorgablan

Among Safelster's youngest cities is Jorgablan, constructed by the God Learners as a safe haven during their initial foray into the region. As their power became well entrenched, sects of St. Hwaros moved many of their operations to the area's unofficial capital, Kustria. Still, the libraries and laboratories of Jorgablan are well-equipped and its magical accoutrement shops are second to none. Street merchants, many of them of Seshnegi extraction, sell Zistorite magic items at market stalls.

The city's rigorously grid layout reveals it as a recent city, designed from the ground up. The roofs of Jorgablan are

of gleaming bronze, brass and copper. Weird towers rise improbably from narrow bases. Arrays of sorcerous measuring instruments jut out from them like bristles. A continual fluting noise, created by the famous Chime Machine of Xenja Xorl, echoes throughout the city, exerting a calming effect on the populace.

Ralians seeking a member of a distant or obscure culture know that Jorgablan is the place to go. Its largely immigrant population includes miniature communities representing every place the Middle Sea Empire has touched. Among the large Jrusteli and Seshnegi population huddle communities of Kralori, Teshnans, Vithelans and Agimori. There is even a duck enclave. While representatives of the elder races are rare, an entire quarter of the city, Webtown, crawls with timinits.

For an embodiment of Jorgablanese cosmopolitanism, look no further than the city's interim administrator, a Kralori convert to Malkionism called Zhang Mei. As if in compensation for his outsider status, he works too hard to please, attempting to satisfy all factions in any dispute.

Reasons to come here: In Jorgablan, Adventurers from oddball cultures can find advice, comradeship, community worship, even marriage prospects, among their own kind.

Marost

The city of Marost was founded by Arkat in celebration of his military victories. 100 swords, taken from creature he had slain in battle, were built into this walls. Their magic ensures that the city can never be taken by siege.

Marost's martial magic stands it in good stead as a garrison town. Legions of the Middle Sea Empire rest and resupply here in their ongoing battle with EWF forces over the northern Ormsland region.

Unlike Estali, this is no place for stray adventurers. Marost's interim administrator is the commandant of local forces, General Hugueli. This grim-faced disciplinarian brooks no trouble in his city. Conveniently-placed gibbets on the city walls attest to his low tolerance for disorder and thuggery. Lucky adventurers who disobey his tightly enforced laws may merely be pressed into the army. More likely, they will be sentenced to the gibbet. Legend has it that Hugueli's battlefield Sorcery is strengthened every time he executes a deserving wrongdoer.

Those merchants willing to live under curfew and extreme rules of personal conduct make a lucrative living supplying the troops with food, weapons and sundry necessities.

Reasons to come here: Dedicated, well-disciplined agents of the God Learner Empire will find Marost a safe, if dour, base of operations.

Others will likely want to move in and out of the city quickly, as their missions dictate. EWF or theist war bands may conduct acts of sabotage or espionage. Freelance adventurers could be hired for rescue missions, to spirit away prisoners destined for Hugueli's gibbet.

Partan

The ring of hammers and chisels marks the ongoing construction of Safelster's newest city, located near the shores of Lake Helby, between Drom and Galin. Constructed under the patronage of the Emperor's devout mother, Partan exists as a spiritual way station. Although its primary mission is the conversion of the Beast Society people, missionaries of all stripes gather and pray here. They fan out through all of Ralios, seeking converts among the Orlanthi. One brave sect, the Order of St. Berisse, even attempts to bring the true faith to the trolls of Halikiv.

Cathedrals, chapels and churches dominate the cityscape of Partan. Its structures are predominantly in the old manner of Seshnegi architecture. They eschew the metallic sails, towers and panes of High God Learner design for the simple purity of monumental dark stone. Saints and gargoyles drip from Partan's vaults and domes. When sins are committed in their presence, the saints weep and the gargoyles scream.

The nominal authority in Partan is Rengère Engoss, a reclusive fellow who steals time from his duties as interim administrator to complete his scholarly thesis on the roots of the Theyalan calendar. It is the imposing abbess Guiva Wimplefold who really dictates policy in Partan. Her partner in holiness is the Abbess Berthoma Glassfold, who happens to be her half-sister. Guiva focuses her missionary efforts on trolls, while Berthoma takes care of the hsunchen descendants.

Reasons to come here: Appalled locals hire adventurers to recover their sons and daughters when they fall prey to excessive religious fervour and join a cloistered order in Partan.

Syran

The quiet city of Syran is famed for its glassblowing. It exports its products to the world. Syran's well-fed burghers detest any disturbance. The municipal motto is: 'Don't break the glass'. It is illegal here to shout, curse or to 'engage in behaviour not conducive to trade'. These edicts are enforced by the infamous Syranese spirits. These are the ghosts of past criminals, executed for breaking the peace. Denied Solace, they engage in lethal spirit combat against wrongdoers. The spirits believe they will attain Solace after performing an undetermined number of righteous slayings. They are kept in beautiful, irregularly-shaped glass globes which dangle from light posts of burnished jade, imported from Kralorela.



Reasons to come here: Only Syranese glassblowers can maintain the degree of material perfection required for certain alchemical containers and implements. Sorcerers come here to personally oversee their creation. Even dwarfs come here to buy choice pieces of Syranese glass, which is a compliment indeed. If you want to chat with a Mostali without risking a trip to dwarfish home turf, Syran is the place.

Tarasdal

Tarasdal is called the Seshnegi City. Two generations ago, a devastating plague struck the craftsmen and farmers of the city and surrounding countryside. Entire families were wiped out.

The viscount, an absentee landlord, repopulated his land with eager immigrants from Seshnela, poaching the best serfs from the domains of his aristocratic brothers. Now one in seven Tarasdalites is of Seshnegi extraction. As is typical of immigrants, they display an exaggerated loyalty to their former homeland. Their memories of the place have been burnished by distance and nostalgia. They cultivate a pronounced Seshnegi accent, celebrate Seshnegi holidays and pugnaciously defend the Emperor against insult, no matter how slight.

Prominent citizens vie for status by forming militias to fight in defence of the Emperor and the Seshnegi values he represents. Ironically, they are composed primarily of mercenaries whose devotion is to gold, not Seshnela or its Emperor. These war bands spend the bulk of their time bullying the minority of ethnic Ralian plague survivors within the city. On occasion, the adventurers who staff these militias take the initiative to launch a dramatic raid against real or perceived opponents of Seshnelan purity.

The city's unusual personal loyalty to the Emperor made it an ideal base of operation for Ilotos' forces during the Ducal Wars. Its loyalist viscount, the ostentatiously athletic Turgaros Postbreaker, led several decisive battles under the imperial banner. The nobles he helped to depose despise him as a traitor. He has survived four separate assassination attempts since the end of the Ducal Wars.

Reasons to come here: Wealthy patrons hire adventurers to lead their militias on raids against exiles, heretics and other symbolic enemies of the Empire. Turgaros Postbreaker and his knights all have prices on their heads, payable by the exiles of Col.

Tinaros

In this large riverside city, noted for its docks and shipping facilities, the name of Arkat is still revered. Each Sacred Time an enormous pageant is staged here. Its procession includes a parade through city streets and a waterborne masque held on a series of barges. At the climax of festivities, a passion play is enacted, recreating the ascension of Arkat to the God Plane in the year 500. Attempts by Malkioni zealots to suppress the ceremony have resulted in widespread rioting. Interim administrator Gais the Unmoving, a sharp-minded politician of staggering corpulence, has decreed that any disruptions of the procession will be harshly punished. God Learner sorcerers, wanting to remain on the good side of Arkat sympathisers so they can uncover more Stygian mysteries, support Gais back home. Religious officials lobby for his ouster.

Tensions escalate as Sacred Time approaches but Tinaros is otherwise a peaceful city devoted to river commerce. It is the last major centre within Safelster for travellers headed north to Vesmonstran. Orlanthi barbarians come here to engage in trade, in delegations led by emissaries of their Talking God, Issaries.

Reasons to come here: Gais the Unmoving hires adventurers as temporary deputies in the run-up to the Arkat Festival (expect to be carefully screened). God Learners send sorcerers to bolster security. Adventurers affiliated with the Rightness Army or other Malkioni purist groups might be sent to disrupt proceedings.

Arkat: Slain Devil or Martyred Hero?

Four hundred years after his apotheosis, Arkat's fame in Safelster burns as bright as ever. Adventurers active here may be quizzed, subtly or otherwise, on their attitudes toward this enigmatic anti-hero. Their answers may determine whether they are welcomed as friends or suddenly ambushed in a dark alley. Attitudes toward Arkat fall into the following camps:

Arkat the Devil: Arkat betrayed everyone he set out to help, eventually becoming the monster he promised to destroy. He is Arkat Gbaji, the Chaos Deceiver. Proof of this lies in the secret tomes of the Borist Monks, who derive Chaos magic from him.

Arkat the Just King: Arkat's great achievement was the founding of the Autarchy, a government that made Ralios strong for 250 years. He was as wise and just as our Seshnegi overlords are greedy and overreaching. Those who would lead us to freedom can prove it by receiving the magic of kingship from him.

Arkat the Knight: Arkat was a righteous knight, fighting in the name of the Invisible God and under the banner of the Seshnegi king. To follow in his footsteps is neither disloyal nor disreputable. We can prove this by praying to him as a saint and receiving combat magic.

Arkat the Martyr: Arkat was dismembered and nailed to a scaffold, yet came back to life. The bad things said about him now are a second mortification, which we must redeem through suffering. We can prove this because when we scourge ourselves, we gain helping magic.

Arkat the Troll: Arkat betrayed humanity by becoming a troll. I can prove this by showing you the Uz shrines to him in Guhan. They pray to him and receive the magic of battlefield trickery.

Tiskos

Tiskos was established by Arkat as a city of learning. It was here that he left his HeroQuesting journals in the care of a secretive priesthood dedicated to preserving his techniques for future generations of Autarchic leaders. When the God Learners took over Safelster in 740, their sorcerers rushed headlong to the Archive of Arkat. His priests were forced to surrender the ancient documents, which the God Learners plundered. They became the basis of God Learner experimental HeroQuesting.

To this day, Tiskos remains a centre of God Learner ventures into the Hero Plane. The courtyard of the Arkat Archive has been converted into a ceremonial launching pad allowing easy access to the Hero Plane. It is heavily guarded, to prevent theist sabotage. On occasion, adventurers have burst through the line of guards to leap randomly into the Hero Plane. None have ever come back, at least not via the portal of Tiskos. Either they find other ways out of the Gods Realm or experimental HeroQuesting is just as dangerous as everyone says it is.

Aside from its magical importance, Tiskos is famous for its fish oils, candles and ceramics. Its interim administrator is Namusta Gird, a sorcerer turned politician. His uncle is Lurghalos, the imperial High Sorcerer. He places the needs of sorcerers above all others.

Reasons to come here: The Portal of Tiskos is an irresistible magnet for saboteurs and would-be HeroQuesters. A variety of priceless artefacts are housed in the archive and in a dozen associated institutions of God Learner inquiry.

Tortun

In addition to its boatyards, timber mills and distinctively colourful rugs, the city of Tortun is known for its rumoured manifestations of Arkat. In times of crisis, a dark figure who could only be Arkat himself is seen wandering through the streets late at night. The figure appears melancholy and wracked with sorrow. He has been spotted three times in the last year alone.

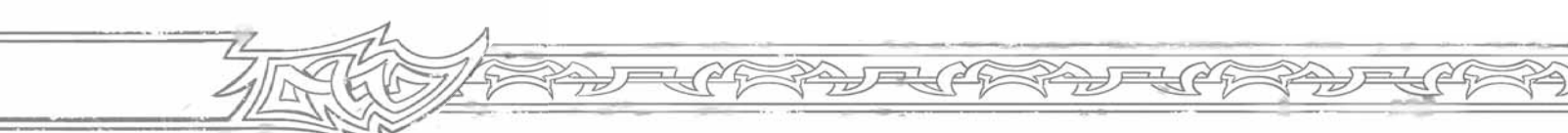
Cultists of all stripes flock to Tortun in search of a personal encounter with the deified hero. The city's hard-pressed watchmen report confrontations with reverent knights, self-mortifying flagellants, Autarchy revivalists, Borist Monks and even trolls. Wags suggest that the Innkeeper's Guild started these rumours to drum up trade but the cultic intrigue has only accelerated as Safelster's brewing disorder seems to herald a reappearance of the great hero.

The last interim administrator fled for parts unknown a few months ago. His new replacement is an avid but anxious fledgling bureaucrat named Fabiach. The odds given in Tortun's wagering houses have him resigning within a year.

Reasons to come here: Fabiach offers lucrative contracts to experienced warriors willing to sign on as deputies of the public peace.

Uton

Over the past 30 years, thanks to an invitation extended by a sympathetic former viscount, Uton has become a haven for refugees from the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. The vast



majority of these hail from the Pelorian region of Carmania, which has long cultural ties to the west. Its people practice a dualistic variant of Malkionism, proposing that two equally powerful entities, Idovanus, Lord of Truth, and Ganestarus the Deceiver, vie for control of human affairs. Each was created by the Invisible God. Carmanians do not accept the prophet Malkion, instead ascribing the revelation of ultimate wisdom to the prophet Carmanos.

The Carmanians brought wealth and skills with them to Uton, reviving a moribund city languishing between a stinking marsh and the more prosperous centre of Kustria. They now represent 30% of its population and their success gives them an influence belied by their numbers. Even Utonese of Ralian ancestry have come to adopt Carmanian fashions, figures of speech and articles of faith.

Inquisitors of the Rightness Army pressured the former viscount to suppress the Carmanian heresy. In response, the Carmanians and their new Ralian friends modified the outward appearance of their faith. Now, instead of Idovanus and Ganestarus, the Utonese refer to the Right and Left Hand of the Invisible God. They say the name 'Malkion' when in their hearts they mean 'Carmanos'.

Like many exile cities, Uton has become a haven for intrigue against a foreign power. Here enemies of the EWF gather to plan sabotage missions and God Learner faith raids against the wyrmfriends who have overrun Peloria. Representatives of other Pelorian theists, from Darjini to Rinliddi, have shown up to ally themselves with the foes of their foes. Old Ways traditionalists, considered as much a threat to the God Learners as to the EWF, are made distinctly unwelcome here.

Reasons to come here: Adventurers plotting hostile action against the EWF can find allies, information and support in Uton.

Valantia

When the Ducal Wars concluded, both the local populace and the ambitious courtiers of Seshnela expected new ducal assignments to be handed out within the year. The process of assembling complete new taxation rolls for Ralios has dragged on for nearly five years now, with no end in sight. The bureaucrats who serve as so-called interim administrators have responded to the vacuum by entrenching their own power.

The moving force in sustaining this quagmire is the tenaciously clever interim administrator Jachinos Fecundator, who aims to make his rule over the city of Valantia permanent. He has covertly frustrated the activities of the Empire's tax assessors

for years, throwing up obstacle after obstacle to prevent them from completing their work. Aiding him in this scheme are his 12 sons, known collectively as the Seedlings.

The Seedlings travel after the assessors, find (or fabricate) mistakes and challenge their accuracy, forcing them to start over from scratch. They have arranged for assessors to be kidnapped by bandits and held for ransom. Some assessors have disappeared entirely; others are anxious to protect themselves through the cooperative acceptance of bribes. Jachino and sons interfere with assessors throughout Safelster. New dukes will not be chosen until the project has been completed for the entire territory.

Newcomers question how Jachinos can work his schemes so blatantly without reprisal. The answer lies in another plot. He has separately convinced two rival Seshnegi courtiers that he is keeping the ducal throne of Valantia warm for their eventual takeover. When authorities threaten to move against them, he plays one of his duped patrons off against the other. They pull strings and the assessments are pushed back even further.

Although the area's farmers and businessmen are already heavily taxed, they are sure that the eventual assessment will bite even deeper. Accordingly, they regard the Seedlings as folk heroes striking blows against the greedy imperial tax man.

Reasons to come here: The Seedlings pay adventurers to do their dirty work against the tax assessors. Seshnegi bureaucrats may hire them as investigators or bodyguards.

Wolfblood

The best-defended city of Safelster is the secluded community of Wolfblood. Tucked into a ring of high hills offering only a single approach to potential invaders, its keep and walls are blessed by sorcerous spells woven back in the Dawn Age. The most famous of these protects its keep, whose mortar was mixed with the blood of wolves. This spell grants special ferocity to its defenders. All combatants fighting within or around Wolfblood to protect the city from invasion gains a magical boost to their offensive and defensive fighting abilities for the duration of the battle.

The city's implacable interim administrator, Malieros the Compass, was a prominent general before he secured this posting. He had never seen the city or evidently looked at its position on the map. Apparently the name led him to conclude that Wolfblood was a raiding base against Telmoria. Malieros' family has hated werewolves since an entire troop of his grandfather's men were slaughtered by them during the Empire's assault on the Shadowlands in 842.

Undeterred by the fact that Wolfblood is on the opposite side of Ralios from Telmoria, Malieros has devoted the bulk of his time and the city's tax rolls, to an ongoing campaign against the Telmori. His admirers credit him with a clever plan: he intends to draw the wolf men out of their own territory, to attack impregnable Wolfblood. He will then trap and exterminate them, as they did to his grandfather's troop 60 years ago.

Reasons to come here: Malieros is always looking for a few good men to help him kill werewolves up north. He pays handsomely for Telmori artefacts or hostages, or even reliable maps of their region. The Telmori want him dead and would mightily reward adventurers who do the deed for them.

KUSTRIA

Since the Dawn, Kustria has been the largest, wealthiest and busiest city of Ralios. Founded by the wizard Kus the Binder in the first century, it served as a place of trade and peaceful colloquy between early Hrestoli missionaries and Galininni horse people. It did the same when the peoples of the First Council came to Ralios to spread the worship of Orlanth.

As horse people turned away from their equine deity to worship the Invisible God, they became a people of towns. They settled first in Kustria and then in other towns around Felster Lake. The towns became cities.

When St. Gerlant joined Arkat in his fight against Gbaji, he garrisoned his armies in Kustria. Arkat and Gerlant became friends within its walls and later enemies. Arkat retook the city after he slew Gbaji. Kustria became the capital of the Autarchy. Tiskos was where he worked his magic. In Tortun, he bedded his women. In Azilos, he executed his foes.

In Kustria, he wrote his laws and laid the groundwork for Empire. Kustria swelled in size as the Autarchy prospered. When times were bad, it was the last city to suffer.

Kustria was overrun by the Seshnegi in 740. Once they had conquered Ralios, they accepted its status as the region's natural capital. God Learners transformed it with their lofting towers and vast, singing machines. They built the Tower of Xud, a mile-high edifice erected with the aid of powerful Sorcery.

It is now as spectacular a city as any in the world. Whether you seek fame, money, safety, wonder or danger, it is the place for you.

St. Kus the Binder

Kustria was founded by a first-century saint. He grants the magic of civic cooperation to dedicated officials and long-time

residents. Kus is the patron saint of prosperity through peaceful dialogue. His chapels dot the city, either as free-standing structures or shrines within larger Malkioni cathedrals. Those who go to one of them and ask the priest to tell you St. Kus' story, will hear the following tale:

Myth of the Founding

St. Kus was one of the first wizards to accept Prince Hrestol's revelations as true. He performed the Irrefutable Proof for everyone who sought to deny it and they were converted instantly. He went into Ralios to spread Joy and the news of Solace. There he found people living like animals. The horse people were the most elevated of the lot. There were also raven people and those who lived like lions, wolves, bears and the animal called eastarki, which was later wiped out by Gbaji. They were so much like beasts that the Irrefutable Proof meant nothing to them. A different validation was required.

These people fought each other all the time. There was so much blood in their mouths that they could not receive Joy. So Kus went to a fertile riverbank and walked a square. Each place he set his sandaled foot became a stone. The square of stones spread out. It rose and became a vast and shining wall. Then another and another, until there were four walls all told, each of them connecting at the corners. On each wall, in each direction, there was an archway, a gate without barriers, welcoming all to come in.

And when the animal people came in to devour Kus and the Galininni came in to spear him from horseback, they came through the archways and were changed. They fell to their knees, dumbstruck by the simplicity and beauty of his miraculous construction. They could sense that there was a future for them here, even if they could only see its outlines.

'Can we live here forever?' they asked him.

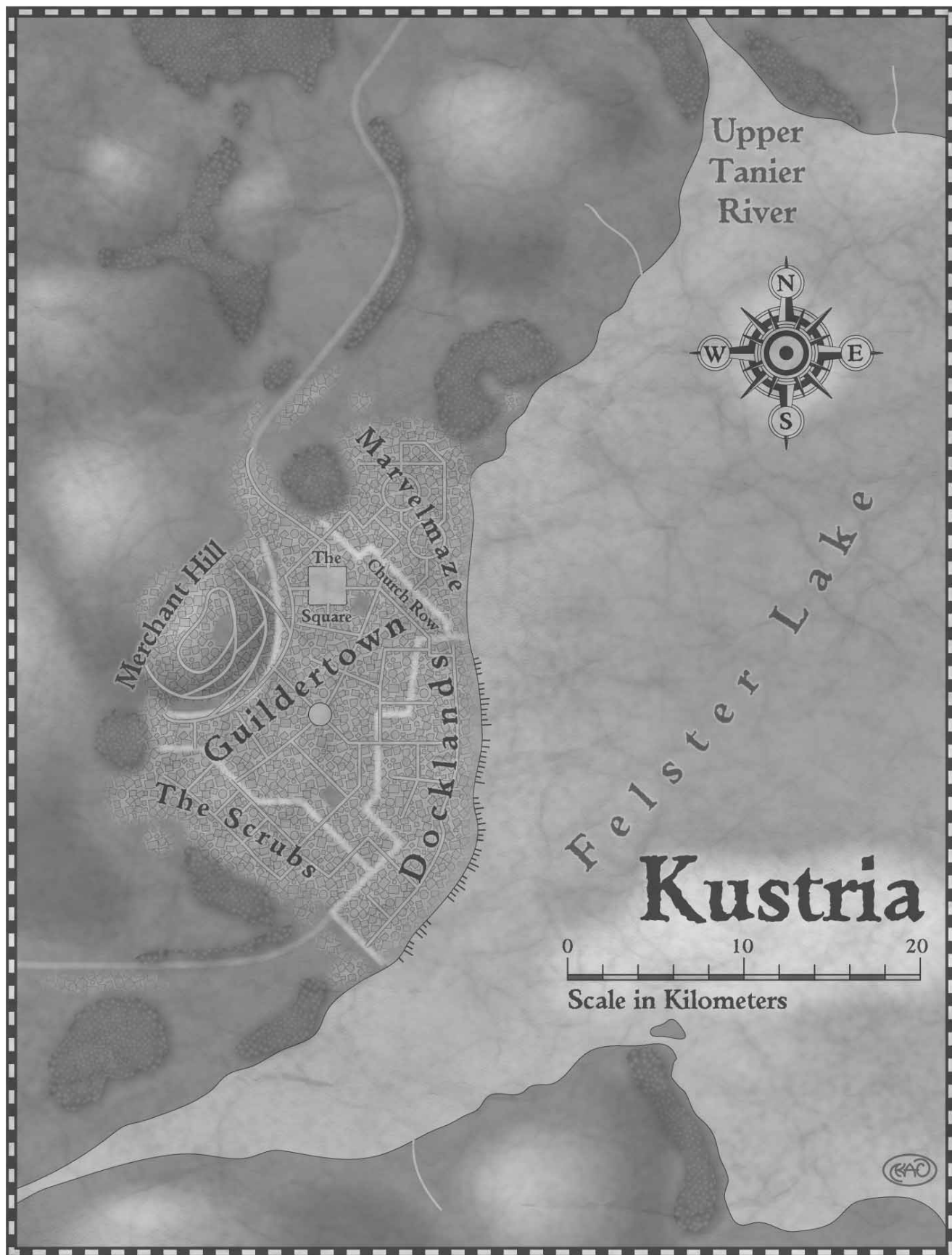
'Only if you love one another, the way you love these stones.'

'This will not be easy.'

'It is not supposed to be,' Kus answered 'that which is valuable is never gained without effort. You must struggle to resolve differences with words, not swords. If you do this, you'll be blessed forever and so will your descendants.'

The people growled at each other. Each had gods who told them that they were the enemies of the others.

Kus saw this and said 'I have a God who wants all of you to worship him together. You do not have to do violence to each other. Instead you may honour him with mutual friendship, which will reap mutual reward.' And Kus touched the foreheads of each tribal king in turn and they experienced Joy.



Some of their people ran away, frightened, because it was too great a change for them. Kus was patient. He knew that this city he had made would bring in the souls of all the people of Ralios, eventually. It would bring souls to Solace long after he was dead. He showed the wild people how to build walls and make ovens for bread, and establish markets to trade in.

Then he left the city, to take Joy elsewhere. But he left a piece of it behind.

'Who will lead us?' cried the people.

'You must decide that yourself. That is what a city is for.'

He was killed on the road, by an animal man who belonged to no tribe. His soul returned to the place he had made and manifested as the flowers in the public square and as the pool of clear water they surrounded. Kus' people immediately understood what had happened to their hallowed friend. They wept and named the city after him, calling it Kustria.

'We live in the heart of a saint.' said the people of Kustria. And this was True.

Districts

Kustria's densely packed, winding streets make navigation difficult even for the seasoned urban dweller. Residents travelling outside their immediate neighbourhoods must expect to rely on directions from others. City maps, which of course must be inscribed by hand, are rare, expensive, and inaccurate, sometimes wildly so. The addition of a mile-high tower to the city landscape allows people to orient themselves in relation to it. This helps in finding a particular district but not a street or specific address.

Safelsteri do not put numbers on their homes or shops. Businesses use large, pictographic signs, carved in relief from oak panels and colourfully painted, to attract customers. Armourers hang wooden swords and shields over their windows; butcher's signs depict choice cuts of meat. Any oddball sign must represent a tavern.

Docklands

Kustria's shipping district is a tight conglomeration of piers and warehouses jutting out into Felster Lake. It dominates river commerce from Vesmonstran to the north and Seshnela to the south.

Sodden, rotting wooden structures lean shambolically against gleaming, metallic new structures in the fanciful God Learner architectural style. The air echoes with the low bellows of longshoremen, the lap of waves against boat hulls and the plaintive shrieks of hungry gulls.

Dock workers adopt a brusque and preoccupied demeanour. They answer questions as tersely as possible, then get back to hauling crates and pushing carts. Adventurers without obvious business to conduct here are assumed to be reconnoitring for a robbery. The longshoremen enjoy a good scrap and are quick to pile onto a group of perceived troublemakers, provided they do not look unduly tough or heroic. Some are imbued with superhuman strength and endurance through their veneration of St. Beaud, patron of labourers.

God Learner magic keeps the harbour well-dredged. A working in the God Plane performed 70 years ago locked two minor local goddesses into a continual re-enactment of a mythic struggle. The lake goddess Fel perpetually attacks the shoreline goddess, Mola. Detritus swept up by this churning current is deposited on the opposite end of the lake, at Estali, much to the annoyance of residents there.

Guildertown

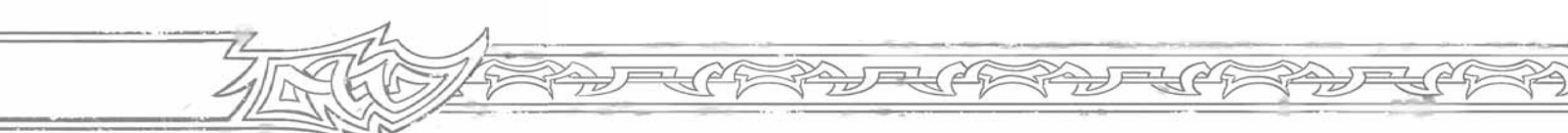
The city's merchant district, commonly known as Guildertown but also called Swagwood, Pennylost or Rugmarch, adjoins the Docklands and spreads liberally into the heart of the city. Outdoor stalls and an everyday open-air market form a buffer against the poor district, the Scrubs. Fashionable shops create a barrier of luxury between Guildertown and the nobles' district, Manor Hill. Sellers of tomes and curios cluster near Marvelmaze.

Merchants live where they do business, or nearby. Prosperous members of the middle class dwell in a more ostentatious version of Manor Hill, called Newcoin. Its oversized homes burst with the latest ornaments and gewgaws invented by God Learner architects. Metallic siding catches the sun. Pyramids turn slowly on silvered pylons. Magical weathervanes measure the movement of invisible winds. Automated chimes ring out the time or harmoniously tinkle out the Middle Sea anthem.

The Scrubs

The city's working class and destitute huddle in deteriorating wooden structures ranging from multi-story tenements to makeshift hovels slapped together from scrapyard refuse. The Scrubs houses Kustria's roughest taverns and provides a haven to its criminal element.

To hear the good burghers of Guildertown tell it, the district's entire population is composed of shiftless human detritus who deserve their squalid conditions. In fact, the Scrubs boasts more shrines and chapels per square mile than any other Kustrian district. Its people are among its most fervent Malkioni. Worship here centres on the forgiving doctrines of Prince Hrestol. His self-sacrificing mother, St. Xemela, is especially revered here.



The Square

The Square comprises the city's central plaza and several rings of governmental buildings around it. The Ducal Palace was built by Arkat himself, for his own use. Imperial officials tore down historic old structures to make room for a modern warren of bureaucratic offices. Fire elementals heat its austere hallways in Sea and Storm Season; sylphs blow cool air through its corridors during Fire Season.

The plaza itself is an exact square of perfect stone, each of them also perfectly square. They never show signs of wear; efforts to remove them, no matter how extraordinary, inevitably prove fruitless. Legend has it that this was the original square miraculously brought into being by St. Kus when he founded the city. Although a low ledge surrounds the plaza on all sides, the original walls and archways can no longer be seen. Supposedly these were removed by early city fathers to accommodate Kustria's expansion. Early records suggest that the walls were moved out a number of times, presumably after a mission to the Saint Plane to garner Kus's blessing. Where their components wound up remains a mystery. The God Learners are loathe to mess with the flagstones of the square itself but have posted a generous reward for the missing pieces of Kus' walls and archways.

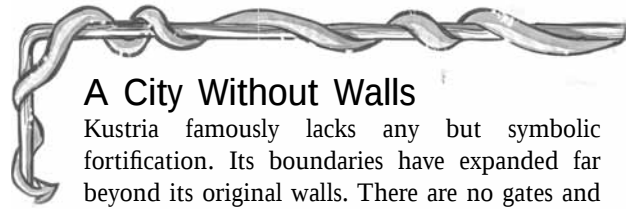
The square is often the site of demonstrations by the city's various factions and interest groups. As violent as their intentions may be when they set out, they find that protests held in the square always devolve into peaceful protest. Because rioting is impossible here, agitators have learned to stage their clamours elsewhere.

Church Row

Temples, shrines and chapels can be found throughout Kustria. Most are Malkioni but a select few theist institutions are permitted, by rights of ancient charter.

The biggest and most spectacular cathedrals line Church Row, where the city's influential go to pray and be seen. Any Safelsteri leader anxious to leave his name to posterity attempts to outdo his predecessors by building a new and more imposing cathedral. Churches credited to Hrestol, Gerlant, Arkat, various archons of the Autarchy and the Seshnegi kings Annmak and Miglos lean aggressively into the broad central avenue, vying for attention.

The abundance of magisterial church architecture leaves the pews of many of these edifices largely empty, even on Godday. Many a conspiracy has been hashed out in the relative privacy of an empty, echoing cathedral.



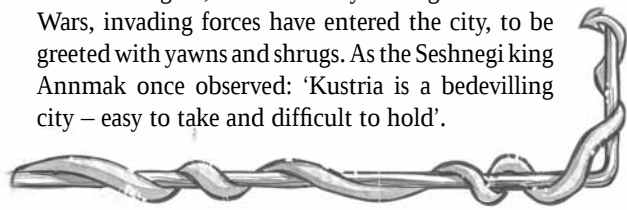
A City Without Walls

Kustria famously lacks any but symbolic fortification. Its boundaries have expanded far beyond its original walls. There are no gates and no gatekeepers. The Ducal Palace can serve as a retreat in times of attack. Stone walls surround Manor Hill; access to it is sternly monitored by private guards sponsored by a consortium of wealthy residents.

In times of invasion, the rest of the city may elect to defend itself with quickly erected barricades. The people of Kus are highly adept at tearing up their paving stones and converting available materials into makeshift fortifications.

The city's primary defence lies in the prevailing magic of St. Kus. Under its influence, invaders may sack the city and occupy its structures but cannot muster the will to do physical harm to any person who does not attempt to resist them. Because they have little to fear from occupiers, no matter how ill-willed, political leaders find it hard to rally the people to fight for them.

Kus' magic ensures bloodless changes of regime. Time and again, most recently during the Ducal Wars, invading forces have entered the city, to be greeted with yawns and shrugs. As the Seshnegi king Annmak once observed: 'Kustria is a bedevilling city – easy to take and difficult to hold'.



Marvelmaze

Although its founders prefer to call it the District of Inquiry, this labyrinthine monument to God Learner ambitions is more commonly known as Marvelmaze. Fanciful metal-shod structures sprawl across the ground, penetrate deep into the earth or unfold like titanic flowers in the sky. Peculiar resounding musical notes thrum rhythmically throughout the day and bUzz lowly at night. At night, the structures light up, casting rainbow illumination across the district and up into the sky.

Marvelmaze's bizarrely circuitous streets bUzz with activity 24 hours a day. Robed sorcerers hustle from experiment to lecture to symposium, dodging dewy-eyed apprentices, shuffling servants, blasé builders, fulminating clerics and visiting

gawpers. Fashions range from the austere to the outrageous, with a definite emphasis on the latter. An outside observer might be forgiven for concluding that the God Learners here devote the bulk of their researches to the construction of ever more elaborate and gravity-defying headgear.

The district's centrepiece is the mile-high tower of Xud, an observation tower used by God Learner sorcerers to peer into the portion of the divine Otherworld atop the mundane sky. Other structures emanate magical vibrations which support the use of sorcerous magic and retard the efficacy of divine and spirit spells. These normally operate at barely detectable levels but can be cranked up during emergencies, so that divine and spirit effects are severely hampered within the city limits. So far this ability has been tested only on an experimental basis; its exact effects remain a matter of speculation among all but a few elite God Learner sorcerers.

Manor Hill

In contrast to the pretentious homes of the nouveau riche and the surreal constructions of the sorcerers, the low-slung villas of the entrenched nobility appear comparatively modest on the outside. On the inside, however, their interiors boast of a tasteful and abiding opulence.

All of the villas cling to a U-shaped range of hills overlooking the city below.

The streets and laneways of Manor Hill seem abandoned. Nobles venture outside only briefly, accompanied by large retinues. Often they are borne in litters, by sweating dogsbodies, or hide themselves away inside ornate carriages. Anyone who does not seem to belong here will be challenged by the private watch groups hired by area nobles.

Resources

Of all the cities of Safelster, Kustria is the most hospitable to adventurers. Recruiters come from throughout the Empire to

find brave, competent mercenaries. Unlike the Empire's clerics and sorcerers, they are less interested in a hireling's faith and culture than in his ability to swing a sword or cast a spell.

Kustria's adventuring population supports an entire mini-industry of shopkeepers, bartenders, blacksmiths and researchers.

Lodgings

Kustria's status as a trading city requires it to welcome travellers in large numbers. Of its many inns, a handful tolerate the idiosyncrasies of professional adventurers. The 10 establishments listed here, in ascending order by price, accept potentially violent freebooters of any race or culture, so long as they behave themselves while on the premises.

Prices given are for group lodgings suitable for a party of four to six, on a weekly basis. When staying in cheaper establishments, it is wise to sleep in one's own bedroll, avoiding the bedbug-infested torment of the supplied beds and mattresses.

The Laggard's Rest. A nest of interconnected, lice-infested cottages on the far outskirts of the Scrubs. Recommended only for its absolute discretion; the proprietor, a greasy-skinned hunchback named Nrabelg, had his tongue torn out by the City Watch when he refused to identify a client. The fugitive in question had not even paid his lodging fee for the week.

The Brass Horn. This tenement teeters precariously on its foundations and is quiet during the day and noisy at night. Its clientele includes not only bargain-conscious adventurers but rat hsunchen and minstrels. The latter play long into the evening after returning from a busy day's busking. Its proprietress is called Mad Maud. She is deaf and something always seems to be scurrying in the frizzy mass of hair piled high on her head.

Loup's Red Inn is a series of dank, reeking rooms atop an abattoir. Its proprietor, Loup the Butcher, is notoriously soft-

Lodgings

Hostel	Location	Price (bed & meal)
The Laggard's Rest	The Scrubs	3 copper
The Brass Horn	The Scrubs	5 copper
Loup's Red Inn	On the edge of the Scrubs and Docklands	15 copper
Rufus' Place	Docklands	2 silver
The Ape and Cup Inn	Guildertown	4 silver
The Quicksilver Inn	Marvelmaze	7 silver
The Red Brick House	Guildertown	14 silver
Iron Courtyard	Guildertown	28 silver
Velvet Inn	Church Row	5 gold
The Picos Gaide Agency	Manor Hill, Newcoin	25 to 125 gold per day

hearted, and will allow financially embarrassed clients to work off their back lodgings in his slaughterhouse.

A relatively new establishment converted from a warehouse in the Docklands, **Rufus' Place** is run by the defrocked ex-bishop Rufus D'granton. The furnishings are spare but clean but some customers prefer to go elsewhere after being subjected to the owner's unstinting rants about corruption in the priesthood.

The Ape and Cup Inn began as a haven for street performers but was recently inherited by the original proprietor's son, Huguelm the Ignorant. Huguelm despises minstrels with a fiery passion and has sent them packing to attract an adventuring clientele. He plays favourites, tolerating misbehaviour from mercenaries who stop to regale him with anecdotes, while trying to cheat standoffish types. His furniture is fairly new but shows the scars of the fights that frequently break out here.

The Quicksilver Inn, located in southern Marvelmaze, occupies the former alchemical laboratory of its proprietor, Renyl the Admixer. A friendly, chatty fellow, he runs the inn ably despite the loss of both hands in a lab accident. His pretty young daughter Orance discourages the guests from asking questions about the incident.

The Red Brick House, tucked in a quiet corner of Guildertown, caters to recruiters as well as the adventurers they hire. Its capacious tavern serves as an informal hiring hall. Mercenaries looking for advance word of the best assignments pay a premium to stay here. Content to rest on its reputation, its perennially itchy proprietor Orvisvo Redskin offers merely average amenities.

Clients of the **Iron Courtyard** pay more for guaranteed security. This large squat structure, painted to look like it is been clad in iron, requires a password to leave its lobby and move up to the guest rooms. Beefy guards man a portcullis in the foyer. A staff of semi-retired but still able warriors remains on call at all times, to intervene in case of attack. Guests sign contracts agreeing to disburse combat pay to the guards if they are forced to enter into melee on their behalf. This includes compensation to their families should they be killed in action. The innkeeper, known only as Scalemail Savagos, is himself a seasoned adventurer who quit the freebooting life to offer a vital service to his erstwhile colleagues. He carries himself with a military bearing and occasionally makes the mistake of barking orders at his guests as if they are soldiers under his command.

Seekers of luxury make their way to the **Velvet Inn**, a converted vicarage overlooking Church Row. It caters to visiting ecclesiasts and scholars as well as well-heeled adventurers. Proprietor Yonzeni Ayon, a sly ex-nun disowned by aristocratic

parents, expects absolute discretion and polite conduct from all clients. Those who make a fuss of any sort are quietly asked to depart. From its gilded fixtures to its magically comfortable mattresses, the Velvet Inn makes comfort a holy mission.

Guests looking for complete privacy book the rental of an entire Manor Hill chateau from **The Picos Gaide Agency**. The unflappably servile Picos, a bald and rotund man who favours flowing robes of colourful silk, connects cash-poor nobles and down-on-their-luck trade magnates with wealthy clients wanting to rent their homes. He supplies a full staff of servants and, most of all, saves the renters from the crushing indignity of ever interacting with the guests.

Taverns

With bar fights an occupational hazard of the Adventurer's existence, they tend to run through taverns even quicker than they do inns. The top ten drinking establishments of interest to Kustrian mercenaries and freebooters are as follows. Many cater to primarily to groups adventurers might want to conduct business with. They are ranked by rowdiness, from most to least violent.

The Crone and Crown (Docklands) caters to longshoremen and freebooters, always a volatile mixture. It is recommended primarily as a place to get into a rousing fight. Its proprietor, Homynos Thickskull, will allow any customer to break a bottle over his head for 10 silver pieces. He is never fazed by this.

The Bent Elbow (The Scrubs) attracts a criminal element and is a good place to go for criminal gossip. Many of its fights technically begin as mugging attempts outside its threshold but spread inwards as the victims defend themselves. The Bent Elbow (or the 'Elb', as it is known among the drinking cognoscenti) is owned by the outlaw Wigidai Big-Breath and operated by Ayon Aimos, a towering thug rumoured to have the blood of a great troll rushing through his veins.

Given its primarily sorcerous and scholarly clientele, you would not expect **Wormwood** (Marvelmaze) to rank just below the Bent Elbow in fights per week. Their secret lies in the unpredictably hallucinogenic alchemical beverages cooked up and served by proprietor Gaidenam the Segmenter. His brews, which include such active ingredients as centipede poison and sylph essence, can reduce even the meekest apprentice scholar to a shrieking, flailing menace to the social order. Wise customers stick to the ale and wine, enjoy the flare-ups when they occur and keep their ears open for the latest gossip from the city's God Learner community.

The Upper Floor, located above a barn-like tavern catering to tourists and traders, is an exclusive joint where only adventurers are welcome. To gain admission, you must be vouched for by a current member. The admissions officer, the exactly surly

Namach the Broiler, may quiz you for details of your exploits, to be assured that you are not some dilettante or slummer hoping to eavesdrop on true warriors. The Upper Floor is run under the auspices of the Kustrian Freebooter's Guild. Guild members in good standing need merely flash their badges to gain entry. A prominent banner above the bar reads: *NO SHOP TALK*. The patrons would ignore this supposed rule even if they were not mostly illiterate. This is a place to kick back, relax and share old war stories. The brawls that break out here are usually good-natured tests of martial prowess. Carousers are expected to pay for any broken furniture. The Upper Floor is located in Guildertown, near The Square.

The Man in the Red Hat serves as a meeting place for adventurers and prospective clients. Located on Plum Lane in Guildertown, a broad laneway lined with expensive lodgings for foreign travellers, The Man in the Red Hat suffers from excessive fame. On most nights, the number of tourists hoping to get a glimpse of a real life legendary hero far outnumber the legitimate employers. For this reason, its proprietor, the smoothly businesslike Aliet Audin, has introduced an exclusive backroom where known adventurers and the patrons who hire them can meet in discreet privacy. Aliet's composure is disturbed only by people asking him if he is the man in the red hat, a question that reliably reduces him to barely contained, sputtering fury.

Bureaucrats and politicians gather to swap rumours and complain about their lot in life at **The Hub and Spoke**, a surprisingly dingy tavern overlooking The Square. Its buxom proprietress, Jehable, has a soft spot for adventurers and allows them into her pub in small quantities, provided she can trust their discretion. Often they find that if they dress like bureaucrats, adopting their slovenly postures and simulating their chalky complexions, they can harvest bushels of useful scuttlebutt about affairs at the Ducal Palace. Officials also invite adventurers to the Hub and Spoke when they need to hire sword-wielders and spell-casters.

Cavernous and noisy but relatively peaceful, **The Lost Clack** caters to the city's traders, burghers and hustlers. The coppersy smell of money wafts through the air here, as deals are proposed, negotiated and sealed at every table. Men of trade in need of ordinary caravan guards will hire them through an agent. When unusual circumstances demand a more direct approach, mercenaries are invited here to discuss the details. Adventurers who manage their own trading routes find The Lost Clack an ideal watering hole. Its proprietor, Beustan, once controlled the entire grain market from here to Istakar but the Ducal Wars reduced him to the status of a mere taverner. Word has it that he maintains connections to the exiles of Col, who have promised him a return to glory if they are reinstated in their old positions. Rumours aside, the clientele of The Lost Clack remains staunchly apolitical,

supporting whichever leaders will be best for business. Look for it in the heart of Guildertown.

Nobles who wish to meet with adventurers invite them to **The Gilded Frame**, a small, quiet establishment in northern Guildertown, noted for its fine brandies and selections of Colite cheeses. Adventurers of noble Seshnegi birth can come here by themselves or with well-behaved guests. Commoners will be politely refused entry by the spectrally thin, officious proprietor, Flondon. He may admit foreign nobles, especially those who convincingly claim a royal connection. The Gilded Frame's reputation as a peaceful hideaway for the elite suffered a blow last year when an entire table of Kustrian landowners was poisoned, apparently by a Kralori assassin posing as a serving wench.

Quibblers may assert that, given that it serves only water and fruit juices, that the fellowship hall in the basement of the **St. Kus Cathedral** in Church Row is not technically a pub. It does, however, serve as a social hub of the most zealous of the city's Malkioni. Dignified ecclesiasts break bread and trade theories of heterodox doctrine with hard-handed bullies of the Rightness Army. Whether you are seeking a clerical appointment or hoping to arrange a demonstration against vice, the St. Kus Fellowship Hall is the place for you.

Visitors to the city are surprised to find that its most peaceful pub is located in the fringe of the city, where The Scrubs are at their bleakest. **Ber's Pub** is an outsider's joint, frequented by foreigners, hsunchen and inhumans. Its proprietor is an articulate great troll named Ber. He serves drinks all night long. His human partner, Begothos, takes the day shift. Begothos speaks tersely and reveals nothing about the sequence of events that turned a Humakti Death Lord into tavern help. Both Ber and Begothos are so convincingly terrifying that no one dares to so much as break a chair. The few fools who have tried anything are now represented by their desiccated hands, which are nailed in a neat row above the bar. In addition to its sternly enforced peace, clients come to Ber's for the wide range of exotic intoxicants, especially those geared for non-human physiologies. Whether you are an aldryami looking for fermented sap or a Mostali seeking a mercury fizz, Ber's has the rare drink of your distant homeland. For this reason it is an ideal place to catch up on inhuman affairs.

Supplies

In smaller centres, adventurers are lucky to find a single general store able to meet their material needs. Kustria provides a home to so many freebooters that a host of specialist shops have sprung up to compete for their business. Lodgings may be expensive here but equipment can generally be purchased for prices 10 to 15% lower than given in *RuneQuest*.

Successful suppliers add extra value, with a gimmick, convivial atmosphere or guarantees. Some pay the proprietors of the

Upper Floor or Man in the Red Hat to recommend them. Current favourites among the freebooting class, all located in Guildertown, are as follows.

Armour

Fromonnos the Younger gives a 10% discount to anyone who can best him in a belching contest, as judged by the patrons of the Upper Floor tavern. He has never been known to lose.

The portly **Gillar** gives a month's supply of dried sausages with every full set of armour he makes.

The talented armourers **Hernouc** and **Nepurda** are a lusty husband and wife team, often covered in scratches and bite marks. They are perhaps the best armour makers in town, if you can stand the lusty winks and nudges they cannot stop themselves from continually exchanging.

Milhablos, a washout from Zistorite training school, fashions exceptional helmets that have 7 AP rather than the usual 6. A Milhablos helmet costs 300 silver.

Savans the Deferrer is known for the indifferent quality of his wares and his generous credit terms. Adventurers can pay him 75 now for any item and pay off the remainder with six monthly payments of 5% each. His chief repossession officer, Naisvok, is a human cultist of the trollish death god, Zorak Zoran. Few debtors wish to bear the brunt of Naisvok's legendary cruelty.

Vivis Benaldir passionately hates vampires, who poked out his right eye and amputated his foot, ending his career as an active adventurer. He offers a 25% one-time discount to anyone who brings him the head of a Vivamort cultist.

Weapons

Kustria's weapon makers are a notoriously eccentric and cranky lot. The most famous of them are:

Adh  mar Curvemaker, who only makes archery equipment. His bows are so exquisitely balanced and intrinsically beautiful that owning one confers a +10% Influence bonus when conversing with other archers who do not own a bow of at least exquisite quality. His bows cost six times the normal *RuneQuest* price and grant a +10% bonus to the wielder's relevant Bow skill when used. Adh  mar, a quiet, reserved fellow who lets his stunning craftsmanship speak for itself, makes short and recurve bows. He produces them to order; customers must wait 4 to 10 weeks for delivery. Adh  mar bows are the frequent object of theft attempts.

If you supply the moody, shifty-eyed sword maker **Drede** with a litre of fresh blood from an enemy, he will use it to forge a blade that deals certain damage against all of that enemy's compatriots. In the case of inhumans, the weapon affects all members of the same race. If the blood comes from a human enemy, the weapon makes its distinctions by nationality, damaging all Ralians, Pelorians, Seshnegi, Kralori and so on. Against the specified enemy, the weapon's base damage dice are increased by one increment. Thus a dagger would inflict 1D6+1 damage and a war sword would inflict 1D10+1 damage. Drede forges daggers, knives, short swords, war swords and rapiers only. The process takes 2 to 8 weeks and cost three times the normal *RuneQuest* price. There is an additional catch: Drede insists that all communications with him be conducted in rhyming couplets. He himself does not speak in poetry but in a variety of grunts, nods and growls. Expect members of the targeted group to treat you unkindly as word of your special weapon spreads.

Transactions with the prickly **Gahansaf** go awry if the customer betrays a lack of detailed information on the history of weapons. When this gnarled, woolly-eyebrowed man hears a mistake of martial expertise, he will engage in an opposed Lore (Military Tactics) test to browbeat the hapless client with his superior knowledge. Only if the customer backs down and acknowledges Gahansaf's deeper grasp on the field will he proceed with the sale.



Guidour the Questioner makes weapons of all types at the usual bargain Kustrian rates. Unlike many of his more studiously craftsmanlike rivals, he keeps a deep stock of ready-made swords on hand for immediate sale. Guidour's main objective when conducting a transaction is to talk the adventurers' ears off with his latest political speculations. He is obsessively fearful of the EWF and is sure that the Ducal Wars were secretly engineered by them. Whether the Emperor and local administrators were in on the plot or are its unwitting victims depends on which day of the week it is.

The bony sword maker **Prard** manages to be both abusive and whiny at the same time. He will undercut any other rival blade maker of Kustria by 2%, while subjecting you to a stream of hysterical complaint.

Ren the Vagrant will make you a sword of superior durability, if you can find him. To atone for past and future deaths his weapons will inflict, he took a vow of poverty, dedicating himself to St. Kus. He travels through the Scrubs, dressed in rags, aiding others by repairing their hovels and household items. When he makes a sword, he borrows Drede's forge; the two are childhood friends. Ren's blades all have +6 Hit Points. To get him to make you a sword, you must disburse its standard value as alms to the poor. You must also personally perform a good deed for the poor of the city, which Ren may specify. He might ask you to protect tenants from a rapacious landlord, intimidate members of a criminal gang or call in political favours from a patron. The humility of Ren's vows have not rendered him especially pleasant; he has a bad habit of frankly reminding interlocutors of their glaring character flaws.

Equipment

Amiert's Shop, in the Scrubs, sells used and battered equipment, along with shining new goods of dubious provenance. A cheerful, self-admitted scoundrel, Amierr pays the City Watch not too look closely at his wares. Prices are 25% lower than usual but items are all sold on an 'as is' basis. An adventurer who bought a distinctively embossed leather pack from Amierr was recently slain by a man who claimed that it had been looted from his brother's corpse.

Pongile's Shop, where the Scrubs meets Guildertown, offers prices 20% lower than usual but customers must be willing to paw through unsorted piles of merchandise to find what they want. Pongile is a dedicated loafer who rarely takes his feet off the front counter. A frequent habitué of the mind-bending Marvelmaze tavern Wormwood, he is well briefed on all the latest sorcerous scuttlebutt.

The premises of **Bervier** are clean, well-organised and a paragon of professionalism and service. A porcine gentleman with slicked-back hair plastered across his generous skull, he sells items at 5% less than usual. Bervier offers customers a special confidentiality plan. For 5 silvers a season, he will promise not to gossip about the adventurers to anyone. To prove his point, he happily spills the beans on any customers who failed to pay his service fee.

Esperna Toulque advertises her shop as the official supplier of the Imperial Army. She sells items at the usual price, backing them up with a money-back guarantee and a four-week refund period. This dignified widow can secure Zistorite magic items on a special order basis.

Services

Adventurers in Kustria may wish to take advantage of services offered by the following organisations.

The **Kustrian Freebooter's Guild** is not a proper guild, in that it is unable to establish rules for the profession or prevent non-members from engaging in it. It is more aptly characterised as a lobbying group, meant to protect the collective prerogatives of the freebooting community from local authorities intent on reigning them in. They stage demonstrations and lobby government officials. Within the community, they pressure their colleagues to act in a dignified manner befitting their time-honoured profession. They quickly distance themselves from adventurers who commit crimes or otherwise attract infamy. Their leader is the blandly enthusiastic Huin Greenbeard, who goes on one caravan guarding expedition a year but otherwise devotes all of his time to the expansion of the Guild. He is a kindly, approachable individual who will provide information on the city's political situation but deftly avoids exchanging gossip on fellow adventurers.

Guild membership costs a hefty 10 silver pieces a year. Aside from automatic admission to the popular adventurer tavern the Upper Floor, the benefits of membership are largely intangible.

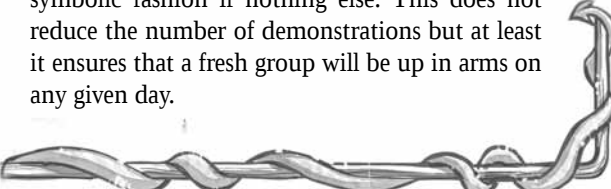
The **Messengers of St. Beaud** are a youth organisation named after the patron saint of labourers. When Beaud was young, he was a lawless ruffian, without parents to guide him. He encountered a righteous priest, who whipped him until he saw the light of Malkion. His first job after that was as a messenger boy. Today the priests of St. Beaud pay homage to him by thrashing successive new generations of Kustrian street urchins until they become good and productive members of society. Beaudite messengers, who range in age between five and 10 and



City of Demonstrations

Kustria's would-be rulers have always commented on its people's unusual sense of entitlement, which outstrips even the egalitarian pioneer communities of Irustela. The city's competing interest groups are quick to express their displeasure with their rulers and each other. They do this by taking to the streets, waving pictographic banners, shaking their fists and shouting out their demands. They blare out on trumpets and pound thundering drums until they are promised some form of redress. Violence breaks out surprisingly rarely. The magic of Kus protects the citizens from authorities' attempts to suppress them by force.

A strong Kustrian ruler ignores demonstrations, even as they grow to a fever pitch. The interim administrator, Dardais, does the opposite. He attempts to placate every protesting group, in a symbolic fashion if nothing else. This does not reduce the number of demonstrations but at least it ensures that a fresh group will be up in arms on any given day.



are exclusively male, can be identified by the jangling necklace of whistles they wear around their necks. They provide one of the whistles they carry to anyone who asks. To summon a messenger, just step into a busy street and blow sharply on the whistle. A messenger boy appears within 15 minutes. For one clack, they will convey a verbal message to any destination within the city. The customer must be able to describe the recipient in sufficient detail to allow the messenger to find him. Delivering the message to an employee or other suitable intermediary counts as a successful discharge of their duties. The service offers no refunds or guarantees. That said, if a boy fails to deliver the message in a correct and timely manner, the customer may complain to one of the Beaudite priests. Should he conclude that the boy was in error – and he usually does – the customer may beat the errant child a dozen times with an implement supplied by the priest. Customers may choose between a switch and a wooden rod about one centimetre in diameter. Boys are expected to apologise to the customer after the beating; if they refuse, they are beaten further, until they comply. The spiritual service performed by the fathers of St. Beaud is widely lauded.

Adventurers in need of emergency healing seek out **The Sisters of St. Xemela**. Nuns of this order swear oaths of modesty, celibacy, honesty and help for all. They charge adventurers and

well-to-do clients for their healing magic. The sisters use the proceeds to support themselves and to offer free medical aid to the city's poor and destitute. They will help anyone, regardless of religious affiliation, and maintain strict confidentiality for their patients, even when they show up with suspicious wounds. Any advice or admonishments the sisters choose to offer are phrased with extraordinary gentleness and tact. They cannily price their services according to the recipient's means. Every copper they squeeze out of their wealthy patients means more medicines and bandages for the truly needy. The sisters maintain four way stations in the Scrubs, three in the Docklands, two in Guildertown and one where Church Row meets Marvelmaze.

Theists facing persecution for practicing their faiths can enlist the **Mutuality League** to intercede on their behalf. Billed as an alliance of pagan and monotheist religious leaders, the organisation is in truth a God Learner front. Kustria's God Learner sorcerers want easy access to, and good relations with, the area's theists, so they can pump them for myths and secrets. They use their political connections back home to extricate theists from legal trouble and to fight for punishment of Malkioni zealots who harass or attack them. Their current leader is Nalmanos the Permeator, a glib young sorcerer related by marriage to Interim Administrator Dardais. A worn-out follower of Orlanth Adventurous named Hendrick Honeystealer acts as figurehead co-councilor to Nalmanos. Although the need seldom arises, The Mutuality League will also defend mystics and shamans.

Notables

Characters using Kustria as a base of operations will eventually cross paths with the city's prominent citizens, or their intermediaries.

Patrons

Though some mercenary war bands follow an agenda of their own and can always find their own interesting trouble, many prefer to act as hirelings. The following patrons often hire adventuring parties, often on a one-off basis. Few are widely known; many maintain secret loyalties. Parties may work for them for months without ever learning whose interests they truly serve.

Aberos Pureblood hires on behalf of the local God Learners. He sends adventurers out to steal artefacts, learn myths of remote sub-cultures and to bodyguard God Learner sorcerers doing the same. On occasion he requires operatives to counter enemy groups. These include rivals within the Empire, like the most intolerant zealots of the Rightness Army, as well as violated pagan cultists hoping to wreak vengeance for God Learner interference in their myths and ceremonies. Aberos, a proud scion of one of Seshnela's oldest families, nearly succeeds

Four (Affordable) Sages of Kustria

Alfant Hart is a hungry young student, son of local farmers, determined to make a name for himself as a God Learner. When he runs low on drinking money, he sleeps on the steps of the Xuralion Crystal Library, hoping to intercept an adventurer in need of research assistance. He is cheerful and diligent, though some mercenaries feel he takes too specific an interest in the motives behind their inquiries.

The portly **Beufouid Sugartooth** must usually be roused from a table at his favourite drinking establishment, a student pub called the Fallen Acorn. Though well into middle age, he has stalled at the initiate level in his sorcerous order. His research results are a little sloppy but, to his credit, is completely disinterested in his clients' activities.

Rain or shine, the sage **Brunema** can be found working her musty-smelling stall at the Knowledge Market. With a hooded robe and dishevelled hair, she affects a crone-like appearance, although people who've seen her in her off-hours report an elegantly dressed and neatly groomed woman of obvious means. She specialises in brief and snappy answers, and will also perform card readings and other auguries. She fends off accusations of witchcraft by salting her readings with calls for saintly intercession and quotations from the *Abiding Book*.

The bent and wizened **Hastaval Old-Clan** is a senior member of the city's intelligentsia who has fallen into dotage. His memory for facts is clear as a bell in the hours after dawn. By night time he confidently spouts utter rubbish. His fellow Lhankor Mhy sages take good care of him, knowing that he has forgotten more than they will ever know.

in concealing the revulsion and disdain he feels for unwashed, uncouth mercenaries.

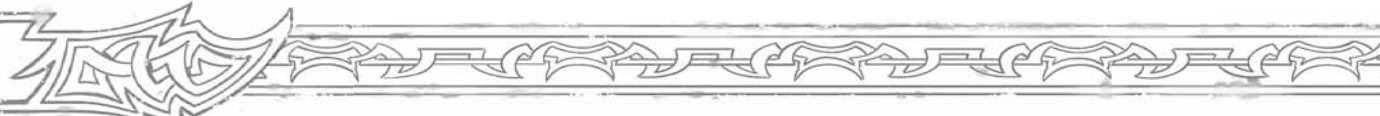
Maushion the Exemptor acts as intermediary when the Rightness Army hires war bands. He sends them out to attack the foes of righteousness, to act as bodyguards for Malkioni missionaries or to rescue them when they are taken prisoner. Although his bosses are among the staunchest of believers, Maushion's own attitudes are surprisingly pliable. Although trained as a priest, he now devotes himself exclusively to the

business of the church, in this and other matters. His nickname comes from his skill at winning indulgences for paying clients, allowing them to conduct themselves in an outwardly sinful way in exchange for donations to the Rightness Army.

When Interim Administrator Dardais needs the services of an adventuring band, he turns to his fretful right-hand man, **Juliner Lack-Coin**. As the son of an impoverished Seshnegi noble, Juliner grew up with worry in his bones. Throughout any encounter, he fidgets, bites his lower lip and mops sweat from his brow with a perfumed lace cloth. As uncomfortable as it may seem, Juliner's chronic dread allows him to see every angle of a scenario, anticipating and avoiding its pitfalls. He hires adventurers for jobs too sensitive for the administration's own guard to openly perform. Juliner considers only mercenaries who have demonstrated utmost competence and discretion for other patrons. He gets his recommendations from allies such as Aberos Pureblood, Huilon Berabloin and Meipala D'hredmorinos. Contrary to his cognomen, he has amassed a tidy fortune for himself in the last few years. This does not stop him from dressing like a threadbare student.

Ance the Expounder, steward for Solofos, the former Duke of Kustria, appears to be reactionary blowhard who despises his former boss and worships the Emperor. His actual loyalties are completely reversed, as rebellious-seeming adventurers learn, should they win his trust. Ance works for the exiles of Col. He hires discreet mercenary bands on espionage missions against Dardais and other local officials, especially Ilotos' tax collectors. He also sanctions various acts of raiding and banditry to embarrass the interim administration by making it seem incapable of maintaining local order. Adventurers hired to conduct must restrain their level of violence. The exiles are nobles above all and demand that their noble rivals be treated with kid gloves. They will be kidnapped and held for ransom, not killed. Commoners may be murdered, if necessary, so long as they are not valuable farmers or craftsmen.

The blacksmith **Baranwulf** maintains a façade as a safely urbanised Orlanthi, so genteel that he numbers several God Learner sorcerers among his large circle of friends. In reality, he is the leader of a rebel cell intent on bringing down Marvelmaze and putting every sorcerer in it to the sword. He hires only groups predominantly made up of Orlanthi worshippers. Ideally, he prefers warriors from his native Vesmonstran, who he can check up on by consulting his contacts up there. He will tolerate a few trusted oddballs within an otherwise reliably theist war band but never trusts sorcerers. Baranwulf prefers to work with committed subversives who pay their own way but occasionally hires adventurers for less sensitive missions. These include acts of sabotage, the kidnapping or assassination of God Learner sorcerers, disruption of their magical experiments and the planting of false and misleading myths. Adventurers are encouraged to act as double agents,



pretending to complete missions for the God Learners while really working to destabilise them. He and the Rightness Army agent Maushion the Exempter recently established a tentative alliance, exploring the possibility of working together against their mutual foe. Baranwulf's false self is a genial joke-teller; his true face is fierce and bloody-minded.

When the Adventurers have alienated everyone else in the city, they may find their careers revived by a curious message in the outstretched hand of a trembling urchin. **Ermendir Girar** vanished from Kustria three years ago but somehow that does not stop him from hiring adventurers for dangerous missions of cryptic import. Before his disappearance, the aloof and uncommunicative Ermendir was an infamous mercenary adventurer. In his last years here, he secretly converted to the wyrmfriend religion. Combining its beliefs with the techniques of the Immanent Mastery Path, he advanced rapidly but strangely. Now he is the victim of a sort of reverse amnesia: no one who encounters him can commit the meeting to long-term memory. He could create a riot by striding naked down the aisle of Arkat's cathedral during High Service and by that night no one would recall quite what had happened to spark it. Working through the St. Beaud Messenger Service, he hires desperate and down-on-their-luck adventurers to perform missions of sabotage and subversion for the EWF.

The saturnine merchant prince **Meipala D'hredmorinos** has one interest: Meipala D'hredmorinos. Jrusteli by birth, Meipala came to Ralios in his youth. He rose from poverty to the region's largest personal fortune. Meipala's company built many of the strangest and most elaborate structures of Marvelmaze. He cuts timber and mines metals throughout Ralios, then imports it for construction projects in Kustria. In the process, he has crossed swords with elves and dwarfs alike. He hires adventurers to protect his mines and timber mills, to crack the heads of recalcitrant indentured workers and to find new sources of raw materials. Although his interests are aligned with the God Learner sorcerers, he tries to stay out of politics as much as he can. He also constructs and furnishes cathedrals, giving him good reason to stay on the good side of the sorcerers' clerical rivals. In person, he is an aggressively gregarious fellow who plies his conversational partners with exotic delicacies.

The gaunt and mournful **Huilon Berabloin** hires adventurers for missions advancing the interests of the Kustrian Trader's Guild. This group, an alliance of the city's importers and exporters, aims to suppress banditry and oppose taxes on goods. It agitates in favour of guild rules licensing the professions. It limits competition within a trade and between professions. The Trader's Guild opposes businessmen like Meipala D'hredmorinos, who produces goods, ships them and then uses them in his construction projects. According to guild ideology, separate businessmen should perform all

three transactions. Meipala is guilty of excessive competition and should be boycotted or legislated out of business. The Guild denies that it funds sabotage operation against Meipala's far-flung interests but Huilon Berabloin's hirelings know the real story.

Arneus Grics is a wealthy collector of curios. He made his money importing fabrics from Teshnos and Kralorela and sold his business to his brother when taxes got too high. Now he spends his time in the libraries of Marvelmaze, which he treats as a vast and dusty catalogue. When he finds evidence of a magical artefact or lost art object that strikes his fancy, he dispatches a messenger to find one of his favourite adventuring bands to get it for him. Technicalities, such as the item's present owner or the fatalities that might result from an attempt to wrest it from him, do not trouble the blithely covetous ex-trader. He will try to get adventurers to sign a contract, especially if they are illiterate. These documents inevitably attempt to cheat his hirelings and should never be signed under any circumstances.

Aided by a small network of human sympathisers, the troll **Huddux Urgug** travels into the city at night to hire adventuring teams to conduct missions against the enemies of his people. Huddux, an Argan Argar trader once friendly to the God Learners, now works to undermine them and their effort to penetrate Uz mysteries. He speaks the local tongue in an elaborate, flowery manner and is generally at pains to prove himself as knowledgeable and civilised as anyone. His human accomplices are mostly Spolites, members of a darkness cult that flourished briefly in Peloria before the wyrmfriends took over. When Huddux wants to hire mercenaries without letting them know they are working for trolls, he uses them as intermediaries.

The sculptor **Casch**, who makes his living carving saints and gargoyles for cathedrals, acts as an agent for Mostali interests. An obliging fellow who talks more than he listens, Casch fell in love with all things dwarfish during a sojourn to the Nidan Mountains many years ago. Apparently considering him a useful idiot, representatives of the Decamony cultivated him as a contact among the God Learners. He hires adventurers to recover stolen Mostali technology, to pilfer plans for God Learner technological items and to strike against the Zistorites.

Fluvand the Muffler is so named for the voluminous multi-coloured scarf he wears around his neck. No matter what the weather, Fluvand complains of chills. He also wears white gloves to protect his delicate hands. He is an organist at the Annmak Cathedral and a fervent devotee of Hrestoli Malkionism. An avid roof gardener, he believes the plant world is a profound expression of the Invisible God's will. He helps the aldryami, in hopes that they will one day experience Joy and Solace. They use him to hire adventurers. Missions



include vengeance against wood cutters and God Learner exploiters of aldryami secrets. He is accompanied wherever he goes by Nrart, the sylph who powers the bellows of his church organ. She has a crush on Fluvand and will interfere with any female adventurers who seem overly familiar with him.

Authorities

Interim administrator **Dardais** proved himself an able second-hand to Ilotos' treasurer, Sylark, thus winning the difficult assignment of keeping the peace in Kustria while a new Duke is appointed. Dardais does not want to rule the city or make changes to it. He simply wants to ride out whatever crises present themselves without making any career-ending mistakes. As his tenure here has stretched out, the various power groups, sensing the fundamental weakness of his position, have tried to make gains at each other's expense. Dardais understands that this is going on and tries to covertly keep the factions of Kustria in roughly the same balance as they were when he started. Any bold action he takes will be covert.

His steward, **Ponceli Greybreeks**, served the old Duke in the same capacity. Few suspect that this infirm, nattering old

The City Watch

The job of keeping public order in Kustria belongs to the City Watch. Members of the watch must have been born in the city itself. This renders them immune to St. Kus' protective magic against invaders. They can manhandle city residents as necessary.

Unlike a modern police force, the City Watch does not patrol the streets or proactively look for trouble. Its officers and deputies maintain stations in Docklands, Marvelmaze and Guildertown. When crimes are reported to them, they send a team out to investigate. They muster en masse when commanded by the interim administrator. They spend most of their time riding herd on demonstrations, seeing to it that they do not get out of hand.

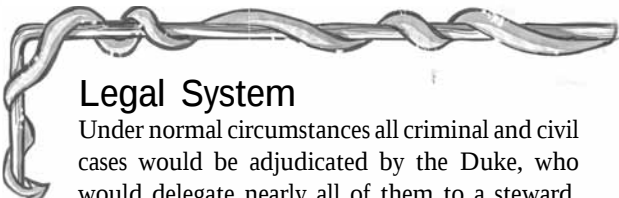
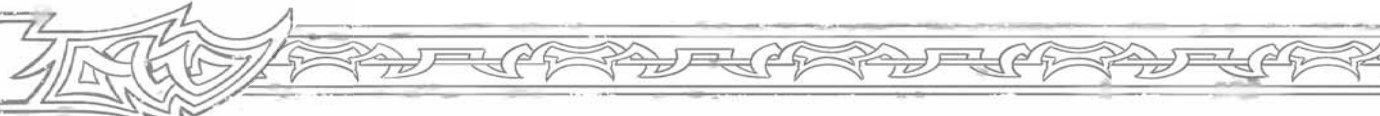
The Watch can muster a mere handful of units capable of dealing with Master-level adventurers. In the face of serious opposition, the vast majority of its deputies are too ill-paid and inexperienced to do anything but run.

Anyone who can afford it pays private bodyguards to protect them. They rely on their personal guards to investigate crimes against them and even to capture the offenders and turn them over to the watch.

Those lacking permanent guard details hire adventurers to do what the Watch will not. If they avoid harming innocent or influential citizens in the discharge of their duties, they will be lauded for acting as de facto deputies of the City Watch. If they hurt the wrong person, they will be treated as criminals.

man was in his day a first-class assassin and poisoner, who disposed of the Duke's enemies with quiet aplomb. Haunted by his misdeeds, he now attempts to redeem himself through prayer. The exiles of Col fear that he will openly repent, confessing to murders undertaken on their behalf when they were in power.

Although Ponceli is still Dardais' public face, in private most of the work is done by his childhood friend, Juliner Lack-Coin.



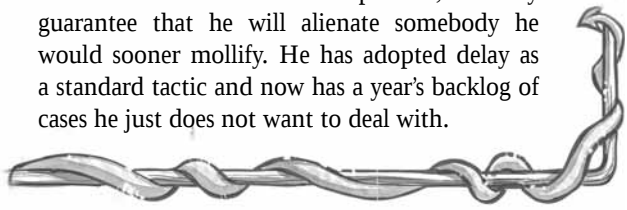
Legal System

Under normal circumstances all criminal and civil cases would be adjudicated by the Duke, who would delegate nearly all of them to a steward. Now the interim administrator adjudicates cases involving serious offences to the public order, including murder and delegates minor cases to one of three deputies.

Four sentences are possible in the event of criminal conviction: discharge, fines, banishment or execution. A noble would have to commit a crime of extraordinary brutality to warrant execution. Instead, they are banished from Safelster (if they return, then they are subject to execution). Commoners can be executed for petty theft.

In civil cases, the adjudicator may award monetary compensation to the plaintiff, grant the plaintiff's claim but award token damages or dismiss the claim.

A strong leader could dispense justice without concern for political consequence. Dardais hates lawsuits between influential persons, as they guarantee that he will alienate somebody he would sooner mollify. He has adopted delay as a standard tactic and now has a year's backlog of cases he just does not want to deal with.



Heroes

Kustria's fledgling adventurers aspire to the status of its legendary heroes. Any sensible person gives them a wide berth.

Mad Dog Harda is an Orlanthi devotee of the female warrior god Vinga. She once threw a spear through the side of Arkat cathedral, during a pro-theist demonstration. This started a riot but no one dared charge her with the crime. Quick to anger and unrepentantly violent, she embodies everything ordinary people fear about both barbarians and adventurers. She went to the Hero Plane and found the secret of the Reverberating Strike: if she kills a person with her bare hands, the victim's surviving parents suffer immediate and fatal heart attacks. Harda disavows any interest in Orlanthi politics; she wants money and glory, and thinks the pickings are fatter under the

God Learners than they would be if the Vesmonstrani rebels drove them out.

The Rightness Army champion **Gerieus** drips with jewels, each of them celebrating a heathen slain by his holy Sorcery. He wears his hair in an elaborately layered and lacquered arrangement, reminiscent of the court ladies of Kralorela. Gerieus delights in battling pagans and personally slays any heretic he comes across in the lawless wilderness. His harsh, barking voice complements the maniacal glimmer in his eye.

Tuarardos the Jester affects motley garb and a multi-capped felt hat festooned with platinum bells. A master of God Learner magic, he lost his left hand in the Hero Plane and went back later to replace it with a six-fingered version. He argues that true understanding of the pagan myths lies in its nature as a cosmic joke. Tuarardos responds to attacks with capering, juggling, laughter and cold, soul-eating fire.

Yon the Wrestler styles himself as the peoples' hero. Born a slum-dweller, he was rescued by the fathers of St. Beaud, who beat into him a quiet reverence for the Invisible God. By praying to his saint, Yon became a mammoth man of muscle. A cheerfully boastful fellow, he loudly claims to have personally fought all nine of the Sinful Errors, headlocking all but one of them into submission. He ruefully admits that the Sixth Error, gluttony, defeated him soundly. Yon most often says this as he tucks into a mountainous pile of crispy chicken parts. Up in Ormsland last year, he knocked down an entire platoon of Dara Happan hoplites with a single punch, directed into the ground beneath their feet.

The **Effigy of Thrang** was recovered by the God Learners from the Hero Plane. Though some might argue it is more object than hero, this 45 centimetre automaton of brass, silver and living wood speaks, thinks and is capable of independent motivation. An unswerving supporter of the God Learner project, it advises Marvelmaze leaders on political and military strategy, as well as on their Other Side forays. On the battlefield, soldiers carry the Effigy on a litter. When they throw open its doors, terrible energies course through the enemy lines, scorching skin and liquefying internal organs. The Effigy appears in the dreams of God Learner foes, demoralising them and stealing their memories. It speaks in a high, whining voice and is attended by twin virgins, who must remain mute in its presence. It lives in a tower overlooking Felster Lake; at night the sound of its weeping echoes across the water.

Religious Leaders

The top cleric in town is **Jehard, Archbishop of Kustria**. He inspires his congregation with stoic forbearance in the

face of an awful wasting disease which palsies his limbs and weakens his voice. The illness, widely believed to have been sent by agents of the EWF, has resisted the efforts of all healers who have tried to cure it. Jehard must be borne through the streets on a litter. To preserve his strength, he keeps his meetings short. Beneath the veneer of infirmity lies a canny politician who uses his limitations to best advantage. Jehard, an intelligent and urbane man, favours the church's moderate side. Aside from his all-important work as a spiritual exemplar, his primary purpose is keeping the city's many bumptious religious factions from overreaching. Even zealots who wish he was as fiery as they are cannot help but genuflect before his obvious suffering. During those rare moments when the flock is at peace, Jehard provides wise and cautious counsel to interim administrator Dardais.

If Jehard is the city's voice of religious moderation, **Thyerna Whale-Eater** is its paragon of scourging faith. He is the local general of the Rightness Army, the faith-driven militia responsible for countless imperial victories. An uncompromising, single-minded man with a face like a hardened fist, Thyerna earned his nickname from the circumstances surrounding his rededication to Malkion. Once a sailor in the imperial navy, he was shipwrecked on a tiny Vithelan island. Starving, he prayed for deliverance, promising to give himself up to the destruction of God's enemies. Just as Thyerna was on the brink of death, a mammoth whale beached itself on the shore. He nourished himself on the sea beast until rescue came. Since then, whenever he questions his promise to burn and flay heretics and heathens, he pats his stomach and remembers the gift God gave him. Thyerna's current avowed fixation is the EWF; he seeks authorisation from his superiors back in Seshnela to declare a pogrom against its local minions. This project is a smokescreen. In truth, he suspects Kustria's God Learners of heathen sympathies and seeks evidence to have the lot of them burned.

The God Learner chaplain, **Eliasch Gald**, has sniffed out Thyerna's true intentions and seeks to immunise his cadre from harm by ingratiating himself with Jehard. Witty and companionable, Eliasch is a talented card player, expert taster of vintage brandies and delightful teller of mildly scandalous jokes. While laughingly professing a complete disinterest in politics or controversies of doctrine, he keeps his ear firmly pressed to the ground. If an eruption in Kustrian church politics is imminent, Eliasch will know about it before it happens.

Where Eliasch goes, **Heriganth Eaglespeaker** is not far behind. This Orlanthi priest serves as Bishop of Pagans, an odd position created by the God Learners – and vehemently disputed by the Rightness Army. Heriganth's job is to keep the local Orlanthi quiet and obedient, in exchange for grudging

tolerance of their heathen religious practices. During his tenure, Heriganth has become thoroughly infected by his friend Eliasch's taste for cards, brandy and witticisms. He has also become quite fond of Archbishop Jehard. Some urbanised Orlanthi appreciate the protection afforded by Heriganth's political connections. More recent émigrés from Vesmonstran mock him as a dandified collaborator.

These types gravitate toward **Gordangara Rockstaff** for spiritual guidance. An Ernaldan priestess who makes her living as a washerwoman in the Scrubs, she says little about her reasons for coming to Kustria from the barbarian north. She refers often to an apparently dead husband, who was an Orlanthi priest. When giving advice to men, she phrases it as what her husband, Venaharal, would say. Gordangara is fiercely protective of her eight year old son, Alakoring. Somebody once heard her say that the dragonfriends know of his great destiny and will kill him if they get the chance.

Sorcerers

Kustria's ranking member of the God Learner Alliance is **Raberi D'tanisor**, who is famous for never using a single word when many will instead ideally suffice and who is equally notorious for his never-ending sentences, which never seem to require him to pause for breath and are uniquely phrased to ward off interruption. He works to expand Marvelmaze and to increase the share of imperial funds going to the God Learners of Ralios. His own journeys to into the pagan mythworlds of the Other Side have granted him a peculiar, echoing laugh and an infallible ability to predict the weather.

Girans Malos heads the Kustrian branch of the Zistorite Order. This diminutive, wizened man is famous for his ability to disguise himself as a Clay Mostali. He speaks their tongue, knows their customs and allegedly served for two years as a dogsbody in the dwarf community of the Nidan Mountains. When asked about the 10,000 silver bounty they have placed on his head, Girans is dismissive: 'Those cheap whoresons! They know I'm worth 10 times that!'. Right now he is busily attempting to recruit battalions to break the siege of the Clanking City in God Forgot. Few takers have lined up to join him.

Pre-God Learner Sorcery schools also practice in Kustria. Their leading exponent is the physically and socially awkward **Gillanc Triori**. This lanky, guffawing fellow looks the part of a cretinous rustic but is an accomplished practitioner of the Telendarian school. In his younger days, he parlayed its exploration-oriented spells into a career as Kustria's richest adventurer. Now he uses his fortune, and a small private militia, to agitate for the rights of traditionalist sorcerers.

Agitators

The city's official leaders must contend with the ceaseless agitation waged by dozens of professional troublemakers. They cultivate groups of supporters to donate money to their various causes and march in demonstrations. Kustria's ordinary folk are notoriously susceptible to engineered hysteria. They might be swept into an anti-God Learner march one day and then riot with equal fervour for the God Learners the next.

Kustria's agitators rise and fall like leaves in the wind. The most successful of the present moment are as follows.

The ragged, wild-eyed **Geoffros of the Sacred Urn** claims to receive sacred visions from St. Xemela, mother to Hrestol. According to Geoffros, she warns him that the God Learners are wounding the fabric of the universe. Unless they are stopped, their wicked Sorcery will sink half the Empire and plunge the rest into darkness and superstition. Geoffros and his vociferous followers, many of whom are rejects from sorcerous universities, walk through the streets tolling warning bells. Annoyingly, their favourite time to do this is at sunrise. He whips up riots whenever scandal rocks Marvelmaze. Rivals to the God Learners secretly fill his alms bucket, even though they know his outlandish predictions could never come to pass.

Zealous anti-pagans and native Kustrians with an axe to grind against their Orlanthi neighbours find common cause under the banner of **Abelam Archeri**. This rail-thin, darkly insinuating man blames the barbarians for everything from crop failure to the death of his mother. Whenever an Orlanthi commits a crime or offends public piety, which is often, Abelam and followers hit the cobblestones to demand the expulsion from Kustria of all pagans who refuse to convert to Malkionism.

Abelam clashes often with the equally fiery **Godemar Pavingstone**, waggishly nicknamed for his habit of tearing up the streets during demonstrations. He and his people belong to the Missionary faction. They believe that pagans are doomed to eternal perdition unless they embrace Malkion but insist that they be well-treated by the city. Driving them out will not help them convert, will it? Godemar's muscular conception of faith allows him to guiltlessly crack the skulls of any who dispute his authority.

The Moderation League, composed of avowed Delayers, Postponers and Realists, occasionally marches against both Abelam and Godemar's groups. It preaches for calm and thoughtful discourse, underlining the point with hurled rocks and debris. Their leader, widely thought to be in the pay of Eilasch Gald, is **Nainvaros Silverhelm**, an illegitimate son of the old duke who uses league funds to offset his always-crushing gambling debts.

Loyalists of the old Autarchy take to the streets whenever the reputations of Arkat or the Stygian Empire are publicly sullied. The Sons of the Autarchy parade on the old Empire's national holidays. Their demonstrations often collapse into drunken rampages. Once considered subversive, this organisation is now mostly the preserve of nostalgic drunkards. Because they release of social tensions which might otherwise be directed in an effective manner against the authorities its festivals are tacitly permitted. Its current head is a white-haired, doddering old crank named **Engral**, who says he can out drink any man alive.

The Sons of the Autarchy are regularly provoked by the Anti-Gbaji Conference, an officiously titled assemblage of Arkat haters. Some, like the enigmatic **Thamaneu the Educator**, who changes his name at the end of every year, purport a connection to the long-forgotten teachings of the invented god Nysalor. Others are fervent Malkioni who condemn Arkat for his embrace of the trolls.

Outlaws

Orlanthi outlaw **Wigadai Big-Breath** runs the Vadrus Runners, one of the city's most feared criminal gangs. He struts with impunity through his section of the Scrubs, leading most to assume that he has paid hefty bribes to the City Watch. Since being cast out by his clan, he has rededicated himself to the worship of Orlanth's brutal brother Vadrus. In this god's honour, his men go on a rampage of senseless violence every Sacred Time. Because he confines his fury to the Scrubs, the authorities never bother him.

The Renunciators are a rival gang operating in the northern Scrubs. Members must swear an oath against Malkion during their initiation rites. They ally with the wandering spirits of theists slain by Malkioni churchmen and missionaries, gaining shamanic magic from them. Their present leader is a near-feral young woman simply called **Ava**. She is infamous for biting out the throat of a City Watch deputy in a recent street fight. This happened during a reprisal raid for a previous injury against a City Watcher; after that, they have left the Renunciators alone.

Kustria's most feared assassin is known only as the **Marrow Taker**. Examinations of his victims indicate that he killed them through sorcerous magic. They are found locked in positions of twisted agony. When the bodies are moved, the bones turn to powder, leaving the corpses horrifyingly limp and malleable. Because this is the work of a sorcerer, the Marrow Taker is widely imagined to be a culturally Malkioni man. Two years ago a Colite exile called Helinos was tried and, on scant evidence, sentenced to death for one of the Marrow Taker's murders. Months later, the killer struck again, in Partan. Victims are invariably prominent but have nothing else in common, suggesting that the assassin hires out to anyone

who will pay his fee. A 5,000 silver award awaits anyone who apprehends him and turns him over to city authorities. Anyone figuring out how his clients contact him would have a leg up in the race for this enticing bounty.

Adventures in Kustria

Before involving themselves in the affairs of the city's heroes and power brokers, beginning adventuring parties can establish themselves on the Kustrian missions provided here. Because players can read this book, they are presented as the party would learn about them. Games Masters should add complications and surprises as session pacing demands.

The Dozing Bureaucrat: Tax assessor Louquel Falbrak is in trouble. Last night, overcome by overwork and anxiety, he fell asleep in the middle of a meal at the Tavern of the Sublime Pen, near The Square. While he dozed, someone pilfered his folio of tax rolls, representing an entire season of alternately painstaking and dangerous work in the farm district surrounding the city. This morning an urchin of St. Beaud's approached him with an anonymous message. The thief says he can have the folio back in exchange for an extortionate sum. If he cooperates, none of his superiors will ever know of his flagrant dereliction. He needs to recover the rolls without his bosses finding out but can only afford a fraction of the ransom. Louquel approaches the adventurers to find out who has the papers and get them back for him.

Demon Hunt: The timinit monk Orvisvo sits in chains, in a church dungeon beneath the Arkat Cathedral. Two nights ago he tore a post from his bed and used it to beat his abbot, Miglonn, to death. Orvisvo says he was possessed by a demon, who compelled him to do it. This is a valid defence under Malkioni law, provided that it can be independently corroborated. The church will not pay to investigate his story but Suicol, a timinit prominent in the Rug Seller's Guild, will. He provides the adventurers with a compass which will light up when within 10 metres of the demon or someone possessed by it. According to Brother Orvisvo, it was named Carduku and intended to instigate further murders of Kustrian churchmen.

Dragon in the Catacombs: Har Bau, an outlaw Kralori mystic, defected from the Path of Immanent Mastery to fight against the Empire alongside Uz from the Kingdom of Ignorance. He was captured by the Viviel, a sorcerer of the Hwarosian order, and brought here for interrogation. Viviel believes that Har Bau found a connection between dragon and trollish magic – one that the God Learners could use against both Uz and EWF, if only they could extract it from him. Har Bau escaped from custody, down into the ancient catacombs beneath the city, where its Stygian kings are buried. Viviel seeks adventurers to go down and capture him alive. The EWF wants Har Bau

dead, in case he does have damaging occult secrets to reveal. The Uz of Guhan see him as a hero and want him rescued. Depending on their loyalties, the Adventurers could hire on with any of the above patrons.

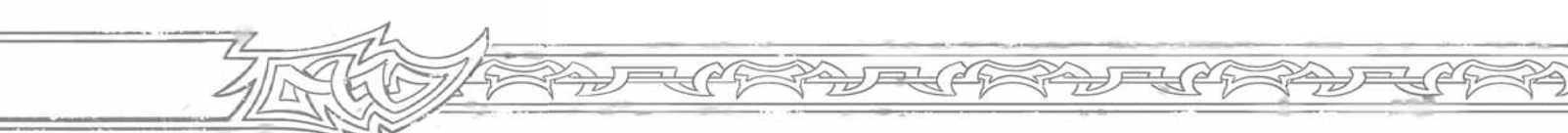
Poison Whispers: Someone is spreading rumours that the young sorcerer Bralant is a henotheist heretic. If these take hold, they could dead-end his budding career and prevent his elevation within his order. He hires the adventurers to find out who is behind the whispering campaign. Is it his former friend Herneto, who he edged out for an important award? Amilman, the instructor who got fired after Bralant exposed his incompetence? Or could it be the innkeeper, Suilinos, whose daughter he deflowered?

Puzzle Maze: Every year the Zistorite sorcerers of the Queljang Institute stage a demonstration of their trap-making prowess. Adventurers of all stripes are invited to compete against an obstacle course of sophisticated mechanised traps. Unlike the traps the Queljang sorcerers sell to their clients, these have been rendered non-lethal. Adventurers who fail to circumvent them are held or rendered unconscious. The individual who gets through them in the shortest time wins a 2,500 silver prize. Even experienced heroes who do not need the money compete for the prestige. This year the Queljang have learned that a Mostali agent has entered the contest as a ringer, in order to sabotage it. They hire the Adventurers to enter the contest too, so they can smoke him or her out.

Raging Tide: The wealthy burgher Suidos hires the group to scare some sense into his prodigal son, Ulieu. This surly, truculent 15 year old has run off to run with the Raging Tide, a rising delinquent gang from the Scrubs. Suidos wants the group to kidnap Ulieu, posing as a rival gang, and show him how terrifying the life of a criminal can be. They must at all costs conceal their true allegiance; if Suidos finds out the lesson came from his father, he will bind himself even tighter to his ne'er-do-well friends.

The Zitr's Sapphire: Najurav, an envoy from Teshnos, is on his way to Kustria, where he will participate in a symposium on mysticism sponsored by the Telendarian College of Sorcery. This exalted zitr wears a turban containing a lucent sapphire as big as a man's fist. Despite the array of exotic fire powers he and his retinue wield, stealing that gem would be a legendary and lucrative achievement.

Wonder Brew: The Brewer's Guild is up in arms over the sudden entry into the Kustrian market of an incredibly popular ale called Blackbrew. It is especially popular among the city's Orlanthi residents. Some say it even increases an Orlanth worshipper's physical powers. Wilder rumours claim that its recipe came from the Other Side. Guild rules specify who in the city can make ale and what the ingredients may be.



If the Brewers can find out who is making it and prove that its manufacture fails to conform to established recipes, they can bring a suit before the interim administrator to put a halt to this blatantly unfair competition. They hire the adventurers to conduct their investigation.

DANGK AND HRELAR AMALI

Dangk is a small, unremarkable southern Ralios city but the ruins of Hrelar Amali harbour a great secret of mythic importance that is irresistible to the Middle Sea Empire. If the God Learners can crack Hrelar Amali's secret, the most sacred myths of the Orlanthi pantheon will be exposed and vulnerable to the God Learners' experiments in myth-re-engineering. The God Learners are close to breaking Hrelar Amali's secret but a great deal rests on assumption and conjecture. They suspect much – and may even be correct – but still require certain codes and facts to be verified beyond any doubt, before they can be sure.

The Secret of the Stones

Hrelar Amali's history begins with the Green Age, when life was beginning to take hold in Glorantha. Flamal, the Seed Father, took root at Hrelar Amali, becoming The Great Tree, and all plants originate from its roots. Hrelar Amali thus holds a very potent significance for the aldryami because it is, in essence, their spiritual home and the source of all things green in the world.

Hrelar Amali persisted through prehistory, and was at one point a source of light and refuge during the Lesser and Great Darkness, even though the Great Tree of Hrelar Amali was devoured by Zorak Zoran towards the end of the Lesser Darkness. It was part of Mastakos the Charioteer's Trail West, when he crossed the world in only eight steps.

When the Lightbringers brought the sun god, Yelm, back from Hell, Lhankor Mhy raised the first of many temples at Hrelar Amali, its purpose to fully and singularly document the Lightbringers' Quest to rescue Yelm and return him to the sky, thus ending the Greater Darkness. The Lightbringers' Quest is central and sacred to Orlanthi belief since it signalled a sea change in the relationships of the Gods, ultimately leading to The Great Compromise, which created Time and established the boundaries between the Gods' Plane and the Mortal Plane. Lhankor Mhy chose Hrelar Amali as the place to commemorate the triumph of life over Darkness and Chaos precisely because it was the place where Flamal caused life to begin.

Lhankor Mhy took it upon himself to etch into every last inch of its stones the full story of the Lightbringers' Quest, from its start to its end. The walls of the temple were thus filled with

the True Word of the Gods, written in their own language and communicated with the full authority of One Who Was There. There is no purer form of myth. Grey Scholars, Sage Priests, Wind Lords and countless other students may have *interpretations* of the Lightbringers' Quest (and indeed, most interpretations contain a common set of accuracies, as well as the inevitable embellishments, contractions and omissions), but Hrelar Amali describes the myth with absolute accuracy and honesty, and in the very handwriting of Lhankor Mhy himself. To be able to decipher the God Script, to read its millions of words of detail, is to achieve an unparalleled understanding of the Lightbringers' Quest. More importantly, it offers a gateway to the Quest itself and the opportunity to join with the Lightbringers and experience what they experienced. It is highly likely that Harmast Barefoot, the first mortal to complete the Lightbringers' Quest, sought inspiration from Hrelar Amali during the Gbaji War, although his HeroQuest began at the hill of Orlanth Victorious in Dragon Pass. God Learner Revealers also speculate that Harmast understood the God Script carved into the ruins – something thought to be beyond the ability of any but the most experienced sorcerers.

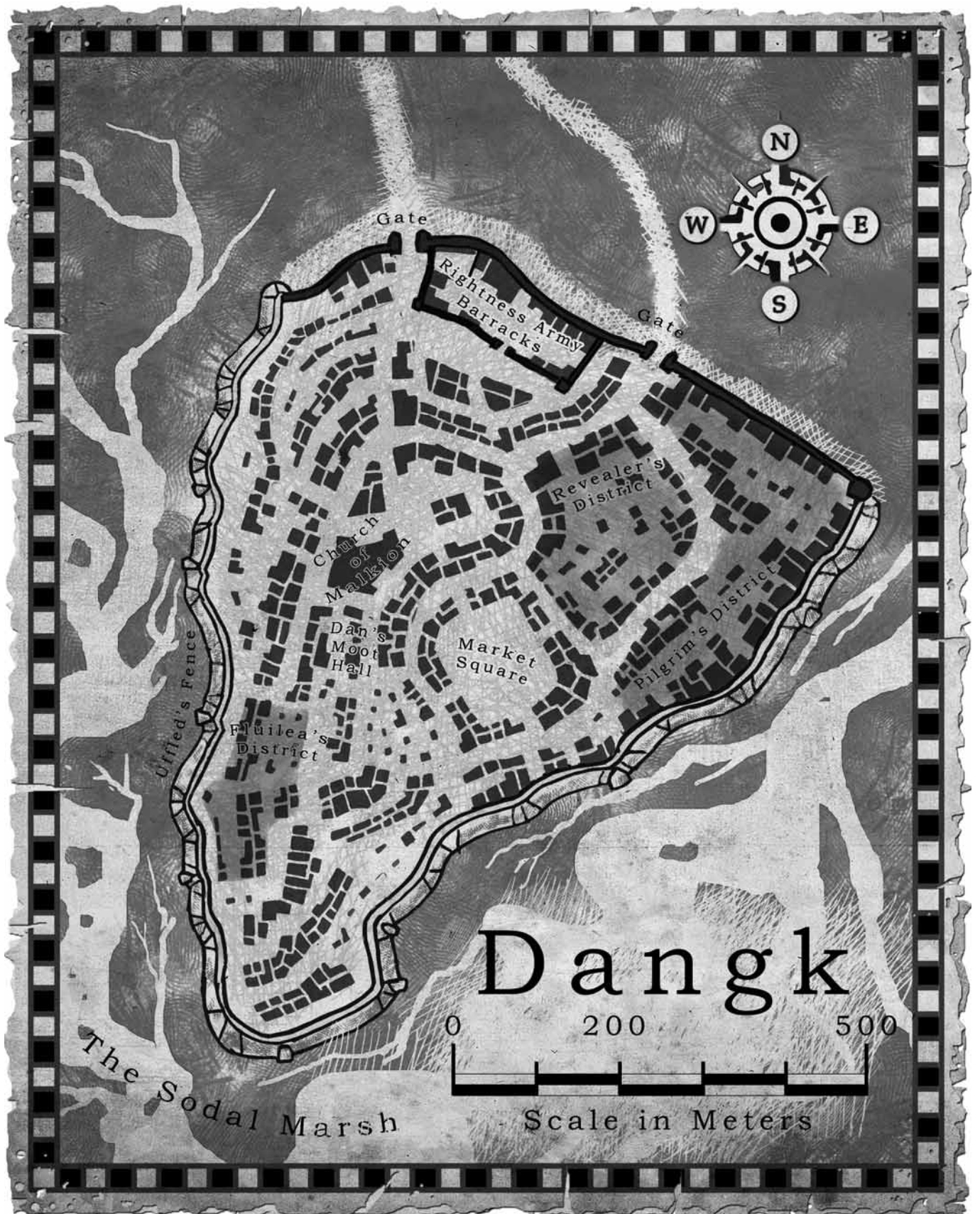
For the God Learners, such knowledge is an opportunity to dismantle, rearrange and fundamentally reshape the Lightbringers' Quest: a heresy for the Orlanthi; and a blasphemy against the tenets of the Great Compromise.

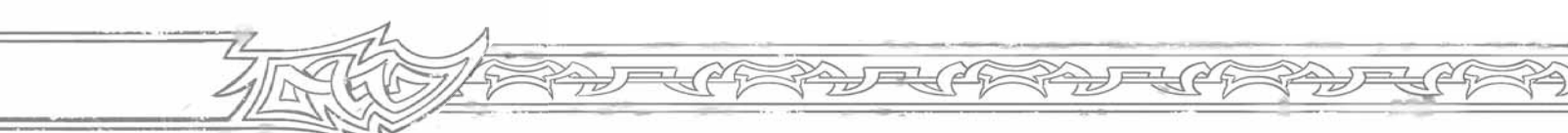
In the First Age, the descendants of Eneral came to the lowlands around Felster Lake and made it their home. One of these tribes, the Utoni, settled in the valley of Hrelar Amali and added their own temples to those built by the Aldryami and Lhankor Mhy, creating a vast temple complex. The Utoni, led by the hero, King Dan, evolved into the devout and magically astute Dangan Confederacy and knew alliance and friendship with the Aldryami of Tarinwood. The Dangan Confederacy converted to Orlanth partly through the powerful influence of the Lightbringers' Temple but also through careful study and enlightened attitude to the Orlanthi who made pilgrimage to this holy site.

The Dangan Confederacy fell sometime between 350 and 450, during the Gbaji Wars, when the Seshnegi raged through southern Ralios, besieging, looting, and then sacking Hrelar Amali as part of their murderous conquest of the area. Hrelar Amali has been ruined since that time, although it still attracts pilgrims from across Ralios, including the Hsunchen from the north.

What the God Learners Know

The God Learners know that Hrelar Amali is covered in God Script and that it relates in some ways to the Lightbringers' Quest. They also know that the God Script recounts several hundred separate myths that are linked by some underlying





precepts that bind them into a whole. Thus they *suspect* that what they have in the ruins is *a telling* of the Lightbringers' Quest but they can do little with this information unless they can unlock the following essential elements:

- X The name of the writer.
- X The cipher for the certain key myths, which appear to have been transcribed in an arcane code.
- X Reassembly of the ruins into as close a representation of the original temple as possible.
- X A method for filling-in the gaps in the entire temple script.

If these four elements can be assembled, Hrelar Amali's secret will be broken and the Lightbringers' Quest laid-bare for some serious myth engineering. This is probably the *last* thing the God Learners expect to achieve; but it is certainly a highly desirable prize – and a disastrous one for many reasons.

The City of Dangk

Dangk takes its name from King Dan, the Utoni hero who established the Dangan Confederacy. Despite its noble heritage, Dangk is a drab, colourless city occupying the southern edge of the vast Sodal marshland. It is a mixture of wooden and stone buildings, a rambling accretion of narrow streets, alleys, yards and rat-runs that seem to have been scattered haphazardly like some giant child's building blocks, thrown down in a tantrum and never cleared away.

The original settlement was built completely of wood and flourished during the golden years of the Dangan Confederacy to almost its present size. After the Seshnegi sacked the Hrelar Amali region, putting an end to the Dangan's influence, Dangk as a settlement survived but its glory years were over and it became another backwater city on the edge of the heart of Malkionism.

It burned down in 854 when Uffled the Unshirking angered neighbouring Wolfblood, sparking a bitter feud resulting in minor damage to Wolfblood but Dangk's complete razing. Poor Uffled the Unshirking was subsequently buried alive in the Sodal Marsh, leaving only the protective dyke that still bears his name as a legacy. Dangk was rebuilt between 856 and 869 and along more robust lines. Stone was taken in liberal quantities from the Hrelar ruins, and in 870 Dangk was returned to its people (many of whom had married into Wolfblood families). Since then, Dangk and Wolfblood have prospered – as much as marshland communities can prosper – and remained closely allied up until the God Learners seized control of Dangk in 903. Some fled to Wolfblood but most remained, tempted by the ostentation of the Middle Sea Empire, and enjoying the prosperity of the God Learners

drafted in to work on the 'Hrelar Project'. Dangk's market now attracts traders from Wolfblood, Tarasdal, Azilos, Tiskos and as far east as Estali.

The Sodal Marsh

The River Tanier winds across a marshy floodplain before feeding Lake Bakeel, to the north-west of Dangk. The river, and its smaller tributary the Dangkos, frequently burst their banks, especially during Storm Season, but Dangk is protected by Uffled's Fence, the kilometre-long dyke built by the hapless Uffled the Unshirking. The marsh is home to otters, egrets and a modest array of wildfowl species. It is also home to monsters and other horrors.

It is said that Sodal Marsh is host to an enclave of Krarsht Worshippers (some are rumoured to live in Dangk), who use magic to dive into the bogs and quicksand and swim down to Krarsht's domain. Where there are Krarsht worshippers, there are Krarshtkids, and more than one soul who has strayed into the marshes has reported sightings of large, many-legged creatures, that sound suspiciously like Krarshtkids.

The Openwing Stewardship

In the Earth Season of 903, the God Learners sent Bruyant Openwing to study the ruins of Hrelar Amali. His initial survey established their undoubted importance to the Middle Sea Empire's magical agenda and also established that this would be a long-term enterprise. A base of study was essential and one that could offer the kind of comforts necessary to the calibre of scholars Bruyant intended to attract to the ruins. Dangk, despite its lack of character, was ideal: close enough to Kustria and the other major Safelster cities but remote enough to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and factional meddling, whilst still offering certain *standards* of habitation.

Flattery, bribery and a modicum of blackmail swiftly followed, securing the co-operation of Dangk's city elders, the Marsh Council. As more and more God Learner scholars arrived in Dangk, bringing yet more money and more corruption, Bruyant proposed that the governorship of Dangk pass to the Revealers, which now numbered some 300 Revealer Fellows. The Openwing Stewardship was granted legal status in 905, and Dangk effectively passed into the hands of the God Learners.

Bruyant returned full-time to the study of Hrelar Amali, handing civic power to Esclafr Lanpth, a procrastinator who faces the difficult task of balancing the conflicting interests of Bruyant's strident Revealers against the religious concerns of various other scholars and mystics who believe that Hrelar Amali is a heresy against Malkion, and should be levelled, not studied.

God Learner Revealer Groups

The first study groups were formed by the God Learners circa 500 but these were relatively disorganised, ad-hoc institutions with no clearly defined remit other than to expand the Empire's knowledge base. Four hundred years later, study groups have developed. Predominantly known as *Revealers*, these are highly organised, tightly focused research teams. Revealers are always formed to research a single subject and are always disbanded when the task is complete. Some Revealers have been operating for 100 years or more, whilst others might only last days. They are hot-houses of intellectual and magical activity, intensely private, and operating to the detailed Study Codes drawn-up by St. Serezos the Revealer which he condensed from certain obscure passages of the *Abiding Book*.

Revealers, depending on what is being studied, can number in the hundreds but the structure is always the same. At the head is the *Chancellor*, responsible for directing the study methodologies and outcomes. The Chancellor carries the Revealers' reputation and the most experienced and successful Chancellors lead the largest or most prestigious study projects.

The body of the group is arranged into *Faculties*. Typical faculties are History, Magic, Myth Interpretation, Engineering, Security and Accounting. Each has its own *Faculty Head* (even in small groups, where the entire faculty is a single person) and they direct the study according to the programme outlined by the Chancellor.

Beneath the Faculty Head are the *Revealer Fellows*, who carry out the vast bulk of the research, according to the Faculty's programme. Reports are made daily to the Head, who in turn reports to the Chancellor. Methodologies, findings, conclusions and recommendations are written into the Faculty Ledgers so that an exhaustive record of every aspect of the Revealers is maintained. The Chancellor reviews the Faculty Ledgers and cross-references the findings across the Faculties, ensuring that each has precisely the right information for their particular task.

Revealers are well-funded with budgets approved by the exchequer of Emperor Ilotos. Bruyant Openwing's Revealers, for instance, has a budget sufficient to run a small city (and there are Revealers much larger than Bruyant's elsewhere in the Empire). All Revealers can draw upon the God Learners' considerable religious and magical resources as needs dictate, although the most important Revealers take priority – often at the expense of the smaller or less prestigious.

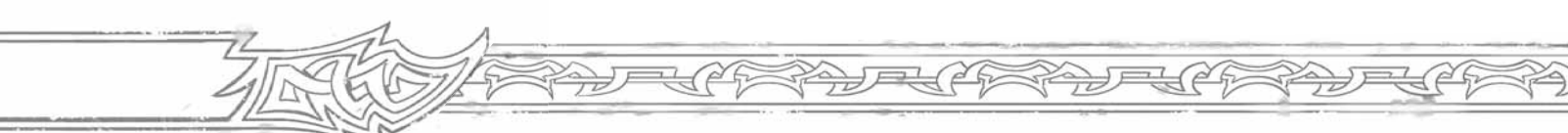
Revealer membership is highly sought-after and the entry requirements as strict as those for any cult.

Revealer Fellows must have at least 70% in a key skill (such as a particular Lore skill) and must pass the compulsory examinations set by the Chancellor (usually requiring three successful tests against the key skill).

Faculty Heads must exhibit at least 80% in two key skills, have completed at least three years of Study Fellowship and undergo similar examinations.

Chancellors must have attained at least 90% in two key skills and served as a Faculty Head for at least five years. Revealer Groups offer paid food and board, employment and access to knowledge and training (mundane and magical). To many they serve as extended families; to others, as just a way of making a living.

Finally, Revealers are intensely competitive. Each seeks to add the most to the God Learners' banks of knowledge; each seeks to advance the Empire the furthest. Feuds between Revealers are not uncommon and, on some occasions, even blood has been spilled.



Foremost of these zealots is Fluilea Gencourt, one of the most fervent Malkionist proselytisers in the Empire and an ardent denier of Hrelar Amali. He arrived in Dangk three years ago, accompanied by his cadre of supporters, the fanatical Flotsam, and has spent his time haranguing the theists of Dangk – resident and pilgrim alike – making a fair few converts to the way of the Invisible God – but also making enemies. Fluilea has no time for tolerance. His methods are based on intimidation, scare-mongering, strong-arming and outright violence. The Flotsam, numbering almost 300, carry-out Fluilea Gencourt's will, happily stir-up resentment and trouble whenever Fluilea's interests are threatened (real or perceived) and groups of Flotsam have been known to 'Go Orlanthi Bashing' just for fun. When summoned by Esclafir to account for the violent antics of his followers, Fluilea is apt to shrug and suggest that perhaps pagans should be forbidden from the city altogether, if they do not like the way they are treated.

The stewardship is enforced by the Revealers' Security Faculty. Soldiers drafted in from the Rightness Army, plus mercenaries hired for the task, patrol both Dangk and Hrelar Amali. Whilst the Dangk garrison is capable, it is also bored. Unless one is of a studious nature and deeply interested in the ruins, or a fanatic like Gencourt's Flotsam, Dangk has few charms. Security is therefore lax, with corruption and drunkenness common amongst the Dangk Garrison and a blind eye being turned to a fair amount of petty crime.

Districts of Dangk

Dangk is not an attractive place. It is usually damp and has a greyness to it, even on the brightest of days, seeming to sprawl rather lazily with one side pressed-up against the earth dyke of Uffled's Fence, the other teetering on the banked-earth rampart that serves as its eastern wall.

The streets are mud-choked, narrow, and unpleasant-smelling. Only the streets of the Revealer District, the Market Place, and in the wealthier crescent rows of north-east Dangk, are what might be termed clean or pleasant – although *ever so slightly shabby* is probably more appropriate.

Gates

Dangk has two gates. The Rightness Gate (or the Dangan Gate, to the Dangk locals) is the most northerly and is used solely by the God Learners, Malkioni faithful and the Rightness Army. The gate garrison (usually four to six soldiers but more are easily summoned from the barracks) checks the identification of everyone approaching from either direction. Non-Malkioni are directed rudely to the Pilgrim Gate, further to the east, and fined four silver pieces – double the gate toll.

Pilgrim Gate is for all other traffic: non-Malkioni, Dangkians, pilgrims, and merchants. The entrance is always clogged with mud, and is narrower than its counterpart.

The towers overlooking both gates are square, stone structures some six metres tall. The huge wooden and bronze gates can be closed with surprising speed, and barred shut with massive wooden beams. The gates are closed and barred one hour before sunset, and not opened until sunrise. Anyone caught at Pilgrim Gate remains outside all night. Anyone caught at Rightness Gate will be given entry if they pay the Gate Toll of two silvers – or for free, if they are part of the Revealers.

Rightness Army Barracks

The barracks is surrounded by a stone wall of three metres. The single large gate leads to an earth courtyard covered with straw and sawdust. The buildings are single-storey and a mixture of wood and stone with roofs of tightly-thatched dried reeds from the marsh-banks. The barracks is home to 150 Rightness Army soldiers and mercenaries. Patrols of the streets, wall, Uffled's Fence and the eastern perimeter earth bank are regular but half-hearted. Soldiers usually patrol in threes and it is common for them to find a tavern and spend their Watch either drinking, visiting the many whores working Dangk's streets, or simply to find somewhere quiet to sit, play dice, or sleep. The main problem is boredom and the soldiery is happiest when Fluilea Gencourt and his Flotsam start to get troublesome, because it relieves the monotony. Some mercenaries have deliberately stoked resentment between the pilgrim community and the Flotsam in the hope of provoking a small riot (and an excuse to bash some heads – it does not matter whose).

The garrison is part of the Security Faculty under the remit of Korlof Gerios, an experienced commander of the Rightness Army, sequestered to the Revealers. Gerios is a follower of the Barmalan warrior tradition, making him a formidable battlefield sorcerer. He divides his time equally between Dangk and Hrelar Amali, alternating with his second-in-command, Rodurus Redbeard. Rodurus is a good and faithful warrior of Malkion, but prefers an easier life. As he has almost complete control of the garrison, it is Rodurus's influence that has allowed the attentiveness of the Dangk Garrison to lapse. Rodurus makes a pretence of having things under control and because he enjoys Gerios's confidence, he has been able to get away with it for some time.

Any prisoners are housed at the barracks. The prison is a long, deep, open pit, usually ankle-deep in fetid water, covered by a thick-barred (and sorcerously protected) grid and magically locked. It is open to the elements and anything else the members of the Garrison wish to throw in.

The Garrison maintains its own stable with a full stable crew and 20 horses. If needs be, it can muster a small cavalry unit from amongst its ranks, including Gerios in direct command.

Revealer District

The Revealer district is a neighbourhood of some 50 buildings that is the hub of the Hrelar Amali Project. In this district are kept all the logs, records, studies, charts and findings of the study project. The buildings are home to 250 scholars, scribes, sorcerers and other Revealers, every single one of them engaged in the study of Hrelar Amali.

The district is subdivided along faculty lines. The largest buildings are the Administration and Mythic Studies buildings. Bruyant can be found here most of the time, writing and receiving reports, checking new avenues of enquiry, cross-referencing old theories against new and so on. Mythic Studies is the nucleus of the faculty system because it informs all the other faculties. Runic Comprehension and Cryptography needs to know the mythic resonance behind codes and scripts to accurately decipher them; the Laboratories need to know what spells to prepare to distil certain aspects of myth and to check how such myths have been tested before; and Interpretative Studies needs to examine the underlying myths, produce and make recommendations on interpretation, so that Engineering and Logistics can work quickly and cost effectively.

Each area within Revealer District is run by the Head of that faculty. The buildings, commandeered from the old Dangk Council, have been adapted to God Learner needs: that is, interconnected, with cellars, basements and underground workshops and storage. Whilst most of Dangk's buildings are drab and functional, the God Learners have imposed their flamboyant architectural style on this district. All the buildings have been embellished with Malkioni motifs and iconography. A portrait of St. Serezos covers the whole north wall of the main Administration building; and over 100 minarets have been sorcerously raised from the roofs of the Interpretative Studies crescent, each one sporting a telescope trained on either the stars or Hrelar Amali.

Revealer District is self-sufficient, and focused on its work. Food is prepared in the district according to strict diets that aid concentration and productivity. The Security Faculty patrols are at their most diligent (not very, but better than elsewhere) and the entire district is a hive of activity, from dawn to dawn, with sketches, etchings, rubbings and paintings of the Hrelar Amali ruins being delivered constantly and the sorcerers in the many laboratories and workshops burning their way through spells and experiments in a bid to crack the Hrelar code.

There is intense rivalry between the Faculties, each striving to provide the most meaningful information and each hoping to crack the code first.

Faculty Notables

Administration and Mythic Studies – **Bruyant Openwing.** Obsessed, voluble, insightful and knowing. On good terms with all the Faculty Heads but most friendly with Serenius Clipfoot and Korlof Gerios.

Runic Comprehension and Cryptography – **Serenius Clipfoot.** Part of the Study Group that concluded the veracity of The Goddess Switch and the one responsible for the creation of Saint Dangan of Dangk. An expert in magical codes and runic significance, he works particularly closely with Jaldorix Wold.

Finance – **Muravius Moravios.** A master of numbers and engaged in trying to prove beyond doubt Saint Urestes' Theorem (the concept that every living creature is assigned a unique number that, when understood, can be unravelled and rearranged in much the same way as a myth). Proving the Theorem would automatically unlock the Hrelar Amali secret – or vice versa.

Interpretative Studies – **Jaldorix Wold.** A brilliant, if somewhat insane, theist convert to Malkionism. Jaldorix was a Lhankor Mhy Sage Priest from Pavis who converted to Malkionism following a pilgrimage to Hrelar Amali. He claims he was struck by a vision in which Lhankor Mhy bowed-down before the Invisible God and agreed to help write the Abiding Book. He was duly made apostate by Lhankor Mhy, but snapped-up by Bruyant, who makes full use of Jaldorix's knowledge of the Orlanthi and Solar pantheons to interpret the acres of script emanating from the ruins. Jaldorix is viewed with suspicion and contempt by many and his frequent visions of dubious Saints become tiring. In terms of theist interpretation and worshipper behaviour, however; he is without peer.

Engineering and Logistics – **Elgasta Ironfoot.** Elgasta is the only female Faculty Head in the Revealers and is a Zistorite, being a Spoke in the Cogs of Zistor. Elgasta boasts a pair of mechatmagical legs and spends much of her time co-ordinating the efforts of the engineering crews at the ruins. Unknown to Bruyant, Elgasta works to a fully Zistorite agenda: if the riddle of Hrelar Amali is not solved within the next two seasons, the entire complex of ruins is to be moved, wholesale, to Zistorwal. As part of this secret agenda Elgasta has to secretly plant teleport glyphs around the perimeter of the ruins. When activated by an incredibly powerful teleport spell, currently being prepared in Zistorwal, the entire site will come under the control of the Cogs of Zistor where its true nature will be extracted by machine. Needless to say, this would be anathema to Bruyant if he knew.

Market Square

Revealer District might be Dangk's heart but the Market Square is the city's soul. Dangk natives, merchants, pilgrims and even God Learners throng the place, eating and drinking from the street-food sellers, and generally enjoying each other's company. Market Square is the central meeting place in Dangk and most residents visit it at least once a day. News from the different districts is called out by the Dangk Criers and each evening Bruyant Openwing ascends the central stone podium to communicate the latest information, news and breakthroughs at Hrelar Amali. Bruyant's sermons are popular with most God Learners and even some theist pilgrims (who gain some insights into myths relevant to their cults). However, Fluilea Gencourt regularly heckles, supported by a mob of his Flotsam, denouncing Bruyant's findings as heresies against Malkion and asserting loudly that the Revealers are really a sect of the Atroxic Church. It is usual for Fluilea to take the podium himself, spending hours berating the theists' ignorance and declaiming his own brand of Malkionist fundamentalism.

Full markets are held over three days twice each season, beginning on the second and sixth Windsdays, for a total of ten market per year. The market is open to all traders who can pay the Pilgrim Gate tax of two silvers and then the market tax of a further silver per day. The market is still controlled by the Dangk Council and is the one area of power they have been allowed to retain under the Openwing Stewardship.

King Dan's Moot Hall

The moot hall originally built by King Dan during the First Age is one of the few buildings to have survived the razing of Dangk in 854, protected, so the Dangkians believe, by King Dan's immortal spirit. The moot hall has been preserved as a temple to Dangk ever since and is the focus of the native Dangkian's primary faith.

As a City God, Dan has little influence beyond Dangk and exists mainly to reinforce the potency of his worshippers. Obviously the God Learners scoff at such beliefs but are quite foolish to do so. Every true-born Dangkian maintains a unbreakable bond with Dan, who was a great hero during the First Age. It is Dan's will that has prevented the God Learner Study Group from breaking the code of Hrelar Amali. Dan the God has sent obfuscating dreams to Bruyant Openwing and is behind the mis-categorisation of important references and codes. These small things – all part of a City God's power – have kept the pace of work on Hrelar Amali slow and kept the people of Dangk strong.

Naturally the God Learners could not help tinkering with the Cult of Dan. Serenius Clipfoot broke into one of the Dangan Confederacy myths, altering it to make Dan a late

convert to the Invisible God and creating 'Saint Dangan'. The more susceptible and corruptible Dangkians have fallen for this minor God switch but it has done nothing to diminish Dan's power within the city, because, ultimately, Dan does not seek to protect or control any one concept or thing, save his worshippers.

Outside the moot hall, the God Learners have erected a fine-carved statue of St Dangan, hands outstretched to welcome Dangkian and God Learner alike. It is hated by the theist Dan cultists (who occasionally daub it with theist runes and rude inscriptions) and revered by the Saint Dangans. An uneasy compromise exists between the two faiths and this simmering animosity is one of Fluilea's Gencourt's targets.

Uffled's Fence

Uffled the Unshirking was a slacker-king in many ways but did one responsible thing for his citadel before it was sacked: he built the Fence to keep the Sodal Marsh and flood waters at bay. Before the dyke, Dangk was frequently flooded and houses were built on stilts. The story goes that Uffled only built the Fence because he hated having wet feet – not because he had the good of the populace in mind. Whatever the reason, it worked; Dangk remains (relatively) dry. Uffled's Fence is a kilometre-long, steeply-banked earth-work some 10 metres high. A deep ditch, three metres wide, creates a natural moat on the western side of the city and the fence is flattened at the top to allow patrols – although the Rightness Army garrison rarely ventures onto the dyke.



Ricardo German Ponce

Fluilea's District

The roughly rectangular neighbourhood directly south of the moot hall is Fluilea Gencourt's territory. He occupies a modest little house in the centre of this rather shabby, damp, muddy district and is surrounded by the ramshackle slum residencies of his Flotsam.

The district grows as more and more fall to Fluilea's rhetoric and intimidation. Some are just troublemakers who enjoy the mandate for bullying implied in Fluilea's fundamentalism. Others are genuinely devout, worshipping Fluilea as a living Saint – something Fluilea does not discourage, despite its innate heresy.

Fluilea's name is scratched or painted all over this district, making it clear who rules. The Security Faculty does not patrol here; not because it is scared but because Fluilea has bribed Rodurus Redbeard to keep them out. Most theists give the area a wide berth but occasionally a pilgrim strays into Gencourt Territory unwittingly and receives a beating and a berating. A couple of Ernalda pilgrims (a cult Fluilea hates) disappeared completely in this district three seasons ago. Korlof led an investigation but found nothing, and Fluilea protested loudly and lengthily about being victimised. The Ernaldans are still missing.

Pilgrim's District

Separated from Fluilea Gencourt's district by both the Market Square and Revealers Districts, the Pilgrims' District is a sprawling neighbourhood of taverns, inns, flophouses and small theist temples. Pilgrims to Hrelar Amali traditionally use Pilgrims' District as their base and as a result it boasts a cosmopolitan community that has included Uz and ducks. It is also relatively wealthy: pilgrimages cost money and the money gets spent in Dangk. As a result, some of the best food and drink is found in the Pilgrim District, even though the buildings are nothing much to look at.

Pilgrim District is effectively outside the jurisdiction of the Dangk Council and even the God Learners largely ignore it. The only 'official' involvement is the collection of the market tax for those who want to trade in the Market Square and the purchase of tickets for visiting Hrelar Amali. Tickets are sold from a booth in the centre of the district. A ticket costs 5 silvers and is numbered. Pilgrims are allowed to enter Hrelar Amali only when their number is called. A list of called numbers is displayed on a notice board next to the shack and updated daily. One ticket allows a visit of one day and one night, including travel-time (and it is an eight or nine-hour trip from Dangk to the ruins, if walking).

Volutus the Ass-Man operates a donkey service from Pilgrim Gate down to Hrelar Amali. For a fee of 20 silvers one may

hire one of Volutus's assess for a round-trip, which cuts the travel time by a third. It is a popular service and Volutus is supported by the Revealers, who want a constant flow of people through Hrelar Amali. The Revealers' sorcerers keep his fleet of donkeys healthy and Volutus pays them a 10% cut of his profits. Volutus is a wealthy but *unpopular* man in Dangk.

Although Pilgrim District is not officially controlled, its nominal head is Dhuren Maskalusson. Dhuren runs a large inn (really, an interconnected set of smaller houses) called 'The Storm Spinning Home' and is a Windlord of Orlanth Adventurous. He made Dangk his home 18 years ago after his own pilgrimage to Hrelar Amali and he has taken it upon himself to watch over all the genuine pilgrims who make Dangk their base. Dhuren commands considerable respect throughout Pilgrim District and this extends to both Bruyant and Esclafr, both of whom consult him on theist or civic matters. Fluilea hates him with a passion but is scared of him. Several Flotsam have been sent back to their district with broken bones and missing fingers after daring to make trouble in Dhuren's sight. For Dhuren, the feeling is mutual but he is a patient man (for an Orlanthi) and he is prepared to wait and let Fluilea expose himself before ridding Dangk of this canker for ever.

There are several small shrines to theist gods throughout Pilgrim District. Orlanth, Ernalda, Barntar, Chalana Arroy and Issaries all have shrines close to, or within, 'The Storm Spinning Home'. Small temples to Storm Bull, Flamal, Heler and Mastakos are also found close by. A very small shrine to Zorak Zoran (deep underground) is also rumoured to exist, although only trolls are told of its location.

The Church of Malkion

Raised by sorcery, the Church of Malkion is deliberately placed to look down on the moot hall. As God Learner churches go, it's a modest affair, shaped to celebrate the Four-Fold Way. Inside it contains a central area of worship, with smaller chapels to Saint Serezos, Saint Volanc, and Saint Xemela. Whilst small, these chapels maintain at least one Liturgist and a Rune Priest, enabling most cult benefits to be obtained.

The senior priest is Hresnan the Radiant, a devout Malkioni of the Hadmalist tradition and the Abbess of Saint Xemela. She is a good friend of Esclafr but somewhat wary of Bruyant, whom she thinks is too fond of his theist studies and ought to do far more reading of the *Abiding Book*. She considers Fluilea to be a lost sheep but one who will return to more orderly worship when Malkion deems it so. The theists and Dangkists are pagans to be pitied and given charity now and again. The fonts are always open for their conversion to the One True Word and Hresnan waits with open arms and welcoming bosom.

PEOPLE OF DANGK

BRUYANT OPENWING, CHANCELLOR, HRELAR AMALI REVEALERS

Irritatingly enthusiastic, Bruyant Openwing is a portly, late-middle aged man with a round, ruddy face, wide brown eyes and a frame of unruly white hair that gives him the appearance of a stunned dandelion clock. Bruyant babbles incessantly at high speed, accompanied by blasts of spittle, especially when he is waxing on a particular area of expertise. He is an astute and faithful servant of the Empire and Malkion. Cracking the secret of Hrelar Amali consumes him and every day he conceives a new theory contradicting those of the day before. He knows he is close to unravelling the secret; he knows that gods were involved before the Great Compromise was forged. He is certain that the Lightbringers' Quest is central to the entire enigma and he is frustrated that, every time the Revealers get close to striking the truth, some new fact is uncovered putting the truth out of reach. Theists, he believes, are misguided fools. But their prayers, stories and myths are compelling in their simplicity, hinting at deeper, more potent truths. He admires their singular adherence to the pantheistic, whilst patronisingly certain that, one day, their gods will cease to have relevance and they will unite under the great rightness of the words of the *Abiding Book*.

Bruyant Openwing

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	12	1–3	Right Leg	1/4
CON	12	4–6	Left Leg	1/4
SIZ	13	7–9	Abdomen	1/5
INT	18	10–12	Chest	1/6
POW	16	13–15	Right Arm	1/3
DEX	7	16–18	Left Arm	1/3
CHA	17	19–20	Head	–/4

<i>Combat Actions</i>	3	<i>Armour:</i> Voluminous robes of office. 1 AP, –2 Armour Penalty
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1D2	<i>Equipment:</i> Short Sword
<i>Magic Points</i>	16	<i>Common Magic 88%:</i> Bladesharp 2, Co-Ordination 2, Demoralise, Endurance
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Sorcery (Specialised Grimoire) 69%:</i> (Damage Resistance, Fly, Form/Set (Stone), Mystic Vision)
		<i>Sorcery (Malkioni True Church Grimoire) 75%:</i> (Cast Back, Neutralise Magic, Spell Resistance, Spirit Resistance)
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13 (+11 in armour)	<i>Notable Skills:</i> Administrative Study Group 95%, Courtesy 80%, Culture (Jrusteli) 90%, Engineering 35%, Evade 33%, Evaluate 83%, Influence 80%, Language (Trade Talk) 90%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 99%, Lore (Hrelar Amali) 35%*, Lore (Malkion) 95%, Lore (Regional) 65%, Lore (Theist Interaction) 91%, Manipulation 91%, Perception 62%, Persistence 74%, Resilience 51%, Survival 31%, Unarmed 21%

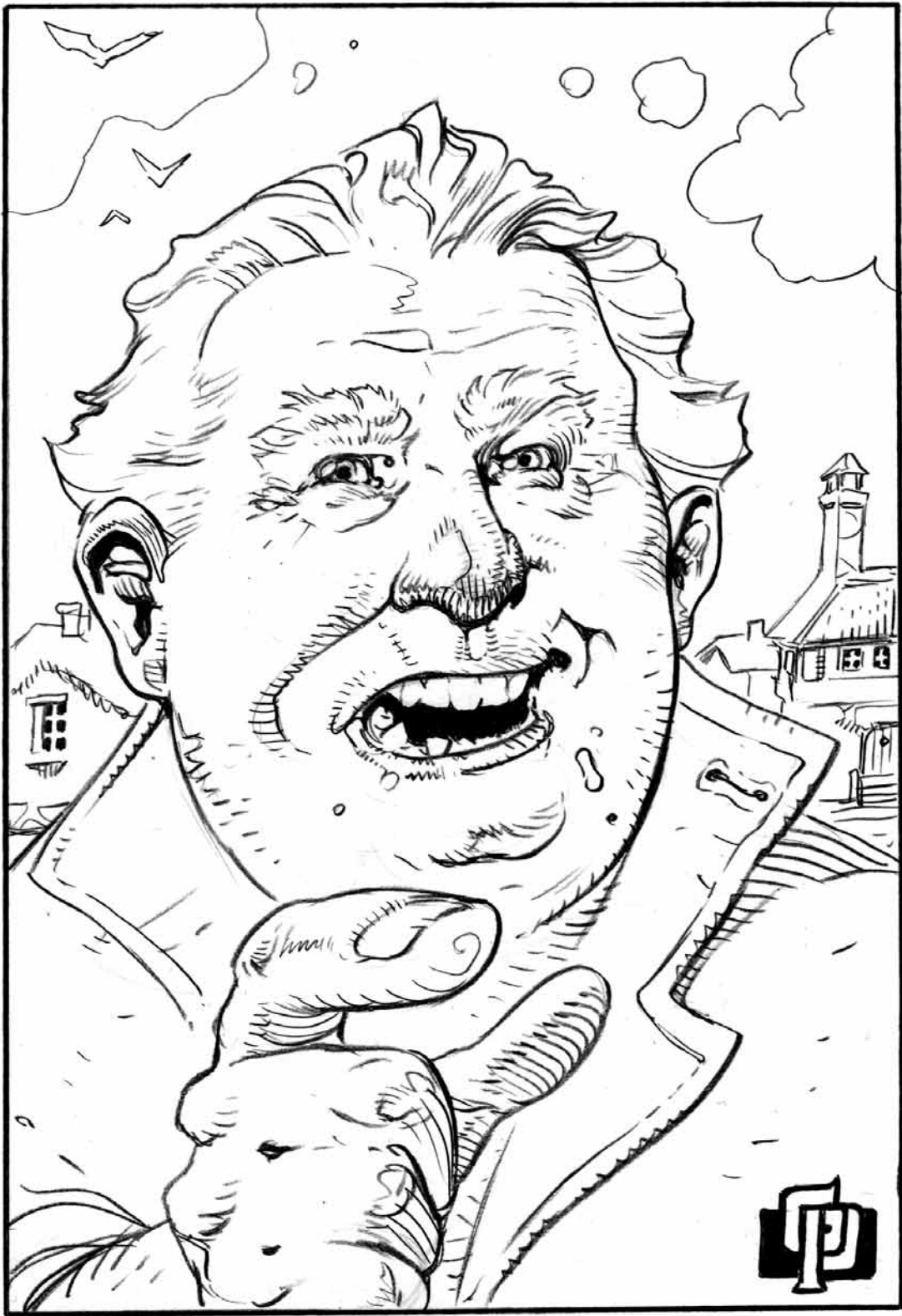
Combat Style

Shortsword 90% (75%)

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	1D6+3	6/8 (Zistorite Enhanced)

During play, Bruyant's Lore (Hrelar Amali) increases by 1D3 points per week. Once each week a test against the skill is allowed, and if Bruyant achieves a critical success, he is one-step nearer to understanding the true nature of the temple. He requires 4 such critical successes to achieve perfect understanding of Hrelar Amali's true nature.



FLUILEA GENCOURT, MALKIONI ZEALOT

Small head, small face, small body, big mouth. Tufts of hair protrude from an otherwise bald head and beady, pernicious eyes glare out from beneath a dense, single eyebrow. Fluilea Gencourt is Dangk's resident religious fundamentalist: a Malkioni of such stridency that you can almost (but not quite) see the halo. Fluilea carries a great deal of religious power in Dangk. He is not part of the Study Group but his success as a proselytiser is barely matched and he boasts an extraordinary conversion rate. He descended on Dangk three years ago with two aims: turn as many theists into Malkioni as possible and get the blasphemous ruins of Hrelar Amali completely levelled and even thrown into Lake Felster. God Learner tolerance has passed Fluilea by. Theists are worthless and should be forced into accepting the Invisible God and his Holy Saints; the Abiding Book should be read to them morning, noon and night until they can recite it as precisely as he can.

Thus it is that Fluilea has sanctioned his Flotsam to disrupt the work at the ruins in whatever ways they can. The tactics they use are underhand and even involve consorting with Wyrmfriends (through intermediaries but consorting nonetheless) to provide information useful in sabotage. Fluilea also believes that, if the pilgrims are given a hard enough time, they will stop making the journey and eventually render the ruins powerless, so he ensures that the Flotsam make life very hard for the theist pilgrims.

Fluilea Gencourt

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	14	1-3	Right Leg	-/4
CON	9	4-6	Left Leg	-/4
SIZ	7	7-9	Abdomen	-/5
INT	15	10-12	Chest	-/6
POW	14	13-15	Right Arm	-/3
DEX	10	16-18	Left Arm	-/3
CHA	11	19-20	Head	-/4

<i>Combat Actions</i>	2	<i>Armour:</i> None. Scraggy, flea-riddled, unpleasantly stained, robes.
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	0	<i>Equipment:</i> Dagger
<i>Magic Points</i>	14	<i>Common Magic 88%:</i> Bearing Witness, Demoralise, Fanaticism, Fate 2, Glamour 2
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Sorcery (Malkioni True Church Grimoire) 67%:</i> (Cast Back, Damage Resistance, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Spell Resistance, Spirit Resistance)
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13	<i>Notable Skills:</i> Culture (Jrusteli) 82%, Evade 40%, Influence 79%, Insight 82%, Language (Trade Talk) 55%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 95%, Lore (Malkion) 115%, Lore (The Abiding Book) 99%, Manipulation 56%, Oratory 91% (used to command the Flotsam), Perception 55%, Persistence 57%, Resilience 36%, Stealth 39%, Streetwise 72%, Survival 44%

Combat Style

Dagger 63%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8



ESCLAFR LANPTH ('THE CRUMBLER'), DANGK ADMINISTRATOR

Esclafr maintains a tall and noble bearing with a head tilted at just the right angle to make it seem as though he is squinting down his nose at everyone. He is not; he cricked his neck one morning and it has remained at this angle ever since. He is known as the The Crumbler because he seems to cave-in readily on most points. It is a cunning tactic: Esclafr is sharp-witted and devious. Giving-in and backing down from confrontation disarms an opponent to a certain extent. The result is usually to make whoever he is arguing with stop, think through what has been said and then mutter something like 'Really? I'll go away and think about it...'

Esclafr is a highly competent administrator and politician. He knows which palms need greasing, by how much, and what other insurances need to be secured to maintain the greasiness. Like most God Learners he has contemptuous of all other religions but canny enough to understand their importance to the prosperity of Dangk.

Esclafr Lanpth

STR	11
CON	10
SIZ	17
INT	17
POW	10
DEX	10
CHA	14

1D20

1-3
4-6
7-9
10-12
13-15
16-18
19-20

Hit Location

Right Leg
Left Leg
Abdomen
Chest
Right Arm
Left Arm
Head

AP/HP

1/6
1/6
1/7
1/8
1/5
1/5
-/6

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	10
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+14 (+12)

Armour: Voluminous ceremonial robes. -2 Armour Penalty.
Equipment: Dagger
Common Magic 88%: Abacus, Bearing Witness, Detect (Error)
Sorcery (Malkioni True Church Grimoire) 44%: (Cast Back, Damage Resistance, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Spell Resistance, Spirit Resistance)
Notable Skills: Courtesy 80%, Culture (Jrusteli) 91%, Evade 40%, Influence 98%, Language (Trade Talk) 85%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 99%, Lore (Malkion) 65%, Lore (Regional) 60%, Manipulation 40%, Oratory 80%, Perception 85%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 31%, Streetwise 48%

Combat Style

Dagger 40%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

SERENIUS CLIPFOOT, HEAD OF THE RUNIC COMPREHENSION FACULTY

Serenius is a short, round man who habitually dresses in robes of the brightest blue. He is an expert interpreter of codes, especially those embodied in myth. He is the Revealer responsible for meddling with the myths of the Dangan Confederacy to create Saint Dangan.

Serenius Clipfoot

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	7	1–3	Right Leg	1/5
CON	9	4–6	Left Leg	1/5
SIZ	13	7–9	Abdomen	1/6
INT	19	10–12	Chest	1/7
POW	18	13–15	Right Arm	1/4
DEX	12	16–18	Left Arm	1/4
CHA	10	19–20	Head	–/5

<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	-1D2
<i>Magic Points</i>	10
<i>Movement</i>	8m
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+16 (+14)

Armour: Ceremonial robes of the brightest blue. –2 Armour Penalty.

Equipment: Dagger

Common Magic 85%: Bearing Witness, Becalm, Befuddle, Countermagic 3
Sorcery (Specialist Grimoire) 85%: (Spell Resistance, Enhance (INT), Project (Sight), Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Spirit Resistance)

Notable Skills: Craft (Codes) 95%, Culture (Jrusteli) 86%, Evade 30%, Influence 70%, Insight 59%, Language (Trade Talk) 100%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 100%, Lore (Malkion) 81%, Lore (Regional) 90%, Lore (Theist Myths) 91%, Manipulation 75%, Perception 95%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 35%

Combat Style

Dagger 43%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

KORLOF GERIOS, HEAD OF THE SECURITY FACULTY

Korlof is every inch the God Learner soldier. Tall, broad-shouldered, forthright and frighteningly good in all matters pertaining to security and killing people.

His entire life has been spent in the Rightness Army and he has seen much of the Middle Sea Empire's territory, including Zistorwal and Slontos. The latter has left him troubled. He was in charge of the great cordon preventing people from learning of the consequences of the Goddess Switch and he saw first-hand the misery being suffered by the folk of Slontos. He knows it is right for the Empire to experiment with these upstart pagan gods but he found himself questioning the outcomes. In truth, the plight of both Slontos and Weneria deeply pains him and he longs to see a solution to the suffering. This is why he requested a transfer to the Hrelar Amali Study Group, so that he might try to find, somewhere among the ruins, an answer to alleviate the consequences of the Goddess Switch.

And this is why the overall security of Dangk and the ruins is not quite as it should be. For all his military bearing, Korlof is preoccupied and he thinks more about what secrets Hrelar Amali holds, and how they might help the people of Slontos, than of how to keep them secure. He and Bruyant have shared long nights together pouring over the riddles of the stones. Bruyant does not suspect Korlof has an agenda – he is simply thrilled that a serving soldier is as interested in the ruins as he is. But Fluilea Gencourt, who has spies everywhere, knows Korlof hides a serious weakness, and is desperate to find out what it is and exploit it somehow. For the good of the Empire.

Korlof Gerios

STR	16
CON	14
SIZ	16
INT	14
POW	13
DEX	14
CHA	9

1D20

1–3
4–6
7–9
10–12
13–15
16–18
19–20

Hit Location

Right Leg
Left Leg
Abdomen
Chest
Right Arm
Left Arm
Head

AP/HP

2/6
2/6
2/7
6/8
6/5
6/5
6/6

<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1D4
<i>Magic Points</i>	13
<i>Movement</i>	8m
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+14 (+8)

Armour: Jrusteli breastplate and vambraces. Leather pants and waistband. –6
Armour Penalty.

Equipment: War Sword, Spear, Kite Shield

Common Magic 64%: Bladesharp 3, Countermagic 3

Notable Skills: Athletics 70%, Culture (Jrusteli) 75%, Evade 70%, First Aid 51%, Influence 63%, Language (Trade Talk) 70%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 85%, Lore (Malkion) 80%, Lore (Regional) 62%, Lore (Tactics) 77%, Perception 65%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 75%, Stealth 66%, Streetwise 65%, Survival 75%, Tracking 30%

Combat Styles

Sword and Shield 120% (105%)

Spear and Shield 98%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	
War Sword	M	M	1D8+3	6/10	(Zistorite Enhanced)
Spear	M	L	D8+1	4/5	
Kite Shield	H	S	D4	4/18	



MURAVIUS MORAVIOS, HEAD OF THE FINANCE FACULTY

A stooped man with failing eyes, perpetually ink-stained fingers, a straggling beard that trails to the floor and nervous cough that punctuates every other sentence. Muravius is a mathematical genius intent on proving Saint Urestes' Theorem, which purports to bind all life and myth into a single, calculable number. He is also good with accounts.

Muravius Moravois

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	16	1–3	Right Leg	1/6
CON	14	4–6	Left Leg	1/6
SIZ	16	7–9	Abdomen	1/7
INT	14	10–12	Chest	1/8
POW	13	13–15	Right Arm	1/5
DEX	14	16–18	Left Arm	1/5
CHA	9	19–20	Head	–/6

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	–1D2
Magic Points	7
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+14 (+12)

Armour: Ceremonial robes. –2 Armour Penalty.

Equipment: Dagger

Common Magic 85%: Abacus, Detect (Error)

Notable Skills: Commerce 57%, Culture (Jrusteli) 74%, Evade 41%, Evaluate 90%, Influence 94%, Language (Trade Talk) 100%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 100%, Lore (Accounting) 99%, Lore (Malkion) 81%, Lore (Mathematics) 103%, Perception 66%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 75%

Combat Style

Dagger 35%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

JALDORIX WOLD, HEAD OF INTERPRETATIVE STUDIES

An egg-shaped head that is completely bald and covered in unsightly scabs, which he regularly picks and eats, Jaldorix laughs a lot, seems to speak in riddles but knows an awful lot about how to interpret myths, their significance and how all this fits into Malkion's great Plan. Frequently experiences dreams of a divine nature and wants to become a Saint.

Jaldorix Wold

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	12	1–3	Right Leg	1/5
CON	8	4–6	Left Leg	1/5
SIZ	15	7–9	Abdomen	1/6
INT	16	10–12	Chest	1/7
POW	12	13–15	Right Arm	1/4
DEX	17	16–18	Left Arm	1/4
CHA	13	19–20	Head	–/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	12
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+17 (+15)

Armour: Ceremonial robes. –2 Armour Penalty.

Equipment: Dagger

Common Magic 85%: Babel, Befuddle

Notable Skills: Culture (Jrusteli) 84%, Evade 36%, Influence 90%, Language (Theyalan) 90%, Language (Trade Talk) 95%, Language (Western Sehsnegi) 57%, Lore (Lhankor Mhy) 95%, Lore (Malkion) 60%, Lore (Orlanthi) 90%, Perception 95%, Persistence 59%, Resilience 65%

Combat Style

Dagger 44%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

ELGASTA IRONFOOT, HEAD OF ENGINEERING, SPOKE OF THE COGS OF ZISTOR

Elgasta is stern-faced with neatly trimmed copper-coloured hair and the pre-insertion tattoos across her lower face for where her mechamagical jaw will be fitted when she next visits the Clanking City. Her legs are already mechamagical and she can be heard from 50 metres away, whirring and hissing as she walks.

Although she is a highly experienced explorer and a very competent engineer, her full loyalties lie with Zistor and she works to the obscure, secretive motives of the Machine God – none of which coincide with Bruyant Openwing. Elgasta has a stash of Zistorwal magic items in her private quarters. Ranging from magical weapons (typically enchanted with +15%/+3 damage), through to the teleport glyphs. These last items resemble bronze discs inscribed with both the Movement and Stasis runes – indicating travelling without moving. They are keyed to the Clanking City and transport nowhere else. A single glyph transports up to SIZ 50.

Elgasta Ironfoot

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	16	1–3	Right Leg	1/6
CON	17	4–6	Left Leg	1/6
SIZ	11	7–9	Abdomen	1/7
INT	18	10–12	Chest	1/8
POW	17	13–15	Right Arm	1/5
DEX	13	16–18	Left Arm	1/5
CHA	7	19–20	Head	–/6

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	12
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+17 (+15)

Armour: Ceremonial robes. –2 Armour Penalty.
Equipment: War Sword, Spear, Kite Shield
Common Magic 70%: Bladesharp 3, Countermagic 3, Detect (Mechanisms)
Sorcery (Cogs of Zistor Grimoire) 56%: (Animate (Metal), Damage Enhancement, Form/Set (Metal), Glow, Holdfast)
Notable Skills: Athletics 78% (includes mechamagical enhancements), Culture (Jrusteli) 84%, Engineering 91%, Evade 55%, Influence 96%, Insight 55%, Language (Trade Talk) 98%, Language (Western Seshnegi) 100%, Lore (Malkion) 85%, Lore (Zistor Theology) 90%, Manipulation 70%, Mechanisms 115%, Perception 66%, Persistence 57%, Resilience 81%

Combat Styles

Sword and Shield 107% (92%)

Spear and Shield 88%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
War Sword	M	M	1D8+3	6/10 (Zistorite Enhanced)
Spear	M	L	1D8+1	4/5
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4	4/18

DHUREN MASKALUSSON, INN PROPRIETOR, WIND LORD

Dhuren's origins are unclear; he claims to hail from northern Ralios but his accent indicates otherwise. Broad and bear-like, with a neatly braided blond beard and deep-set blue eyes, Dhuren wears the marks of Orlanth proudly; the motion rune on both arms and the mastery rune on his temple. He is softly spoken but quick to smile and share a joke and is a genial host at his inn, 'The Storm Spinning Home'. He is married to Yjanis, a beautiful red-haired woman who definitely sounds as though she's from Lankst and who is the Chieftainess of the Ernalda the Queen temple within the tavern.

Dhuren enjoys cordial, if perfunctory, relations with the God Learners. Bruyant sometimes visits the 'The Storm' and has the good sense to question Dhuren frequently on the pilgrims' mood and pass-on information that might be of use to them (such as when the ruins are closed for some intensive study). Dhuren does not like the God Learners but he can work with them as long as they maintain reasonable access to Hrelar Amali. Dhuren cannot work with Fluilea. The two men are the antithesis of each other. Dhuren hates the bully-boy Flotsam and has clashed on several occasions with Flotsam gangs. Dhuren knows that Fluilea is quite prepared to play dirty and so he watches his back when outside the Pilgrims' Quarter but is otherwise quite happy for Fluilea to make the first foolish move.

Dhuren Maskalusson

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	13	1-3	Right Leg	1/6
CON	17	4-6	Left Leg	1/6
SIZ	16	7-9	Abdomen	2/7
INT	14	10-12	Chest	2/8
POW	17	13-15	Right Arm	1/5
DEX	17	16-18	Left Arm	1/5
CHA	17	19-20	Head	-/6

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	17
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+16 (+14)

Armour: Linen pants and leather apron. -2 Armour Penalty.

Equipment: War Sword, Spear, Kite Shield

Common Magic 67%: Bladesharp 3, Cover of Night, Mobility 3

Notable Skills: Athletics 65%, Craft (Ale Making) 75%, Craft (Inn keeping) 72%, Courtesy 55%, Culture (Orlanthi), Evade 50%, Language (Theyalan) 90%, Language (Trade Talk) 80%, Lore (Storm Tribe) 75%, Perception 78%, Persistence 69%, Resilience 30%, Ride 27%, Stealth 58%, Streetwise 65%, Unarmed 90%

Combat Styles

Sword and Shield 96%

Spear and Shield 94%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
War Sword	M	M	1D8+3	6/10
Spear	M	L	1D8+1	4/5
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4	4/18

Hrelar Amali

A temple of some kind has stood at the site of Hrelar Amali since The Green Age: first the Great Tree that was Flamal, then the temple built by Lhankor Mhy and then smaller, more numerous structures of the Dangan Confederacy. The present ruins are a mixture of the remains of Lhankor Mhy's temple and the Dangan temple complex. They stand atop the earlier remains of several much smaller shrines, many of them Hsunchen in origin and even an incredibly ancient temple to Zorak Zoran, gnawed into the long-dead roots of the Great Tree.

The area has always attracted the devout; from those who worshipped the First Gods, through to the streams of theists who, up until Hrelar Amali's annexation, regularly came here to pray and seek divine enlightenment.

The annexation has angered hundreds of theists who saw Hrelar Amali as their divine locale, even though it has never been owned by any one cult or group. The God Learners have, in their arrogant contempt for theists, seized control of a deeply holy source and tensions run high. Security around the ruins is tight and is managed directly by Korlof Gerios. The area is surrounded by an earth and wood stockade and patrolled by members of the Rightness Army, especially drafted to the Revealers for security purposes.

But the faithful still flock to Hrelar Amali, using Dangk as a base for the pilgrimage. The God Learners tolerate their presence, (regulating it with a ticketing system), since they offer the perfect opportunity for proselytising and conversion to Malkionism and, of course, study by the Revealers. Theists, misguided as they are in the God Learners' eyes, have their uses.

Access is strictly controlled using a ticketing system of Esclaf's devising and only those sections not being studied by the God Learners are open to theists. Time spent in the ruins is strictly enforced by Korlof's Security Faculty.

Bruyant believes it is necessary to allow theists access to Hrelar Amali because he is fascinated by the way the worshippers interact with the temple. He hopes that a particular prayer, spell or incantation may offer that vital spark of enlightenment that reveals Hrelar's real nature and he demands constant reports on what theists do, say and receive in return. So far he has been disappointed but, as a paid-up optimist, he lives in hope.

The Temple

Hrelar Amali occupies a broad valley 25 kilometres south-east of Dangk. It is reached by a reasonably straight road built by the Seshnegi. The road is cobbled but rutted and thick with weeds at its borders; the feet of tens of thousands of pilgrims have

worn the cobbles smooth over the centuries. The movements of the God Learners have added to the sheen on the cobbles, and the road is always alive with trundling carts and chanting Revealers as they file to and from the temple complex.

A small forest marks the start of the holy area and as one descends into the valley, the forest thins. Local Mreli (brown Aldryami) inhabit the forest but only as mourners for the passing of Flamal; they are morose and uncommunicative but watch the comings and goings of the God Learners with a mixture of curiosity and regret.

Outer Stockade

First comes the outer stockade, built by the Study Group. This 8m high palisade is made of stone and wood, and protected by Zistorite magical anti-flying mechanisms. Anyone not carrying the appropriate magical ID (and all Study Group members do) who attempt to fly over the palisade, are attacked by 2D10 bolts of magical energy that inflict 2D6 points of damage to a random Hit Location. An Evade test is permitted and a success reduces the number of missiles by half; a critical success by a quarter.

Getting through the stockade, which is patrolled by at least 15-20 Rightness Army soldiers, is only possible with a ticket that falls in the current ticketing range. Pilgrims who are early or late are turned back. A significant shanty town, consisting of disappointed pilgrims, is always present near the stockade.

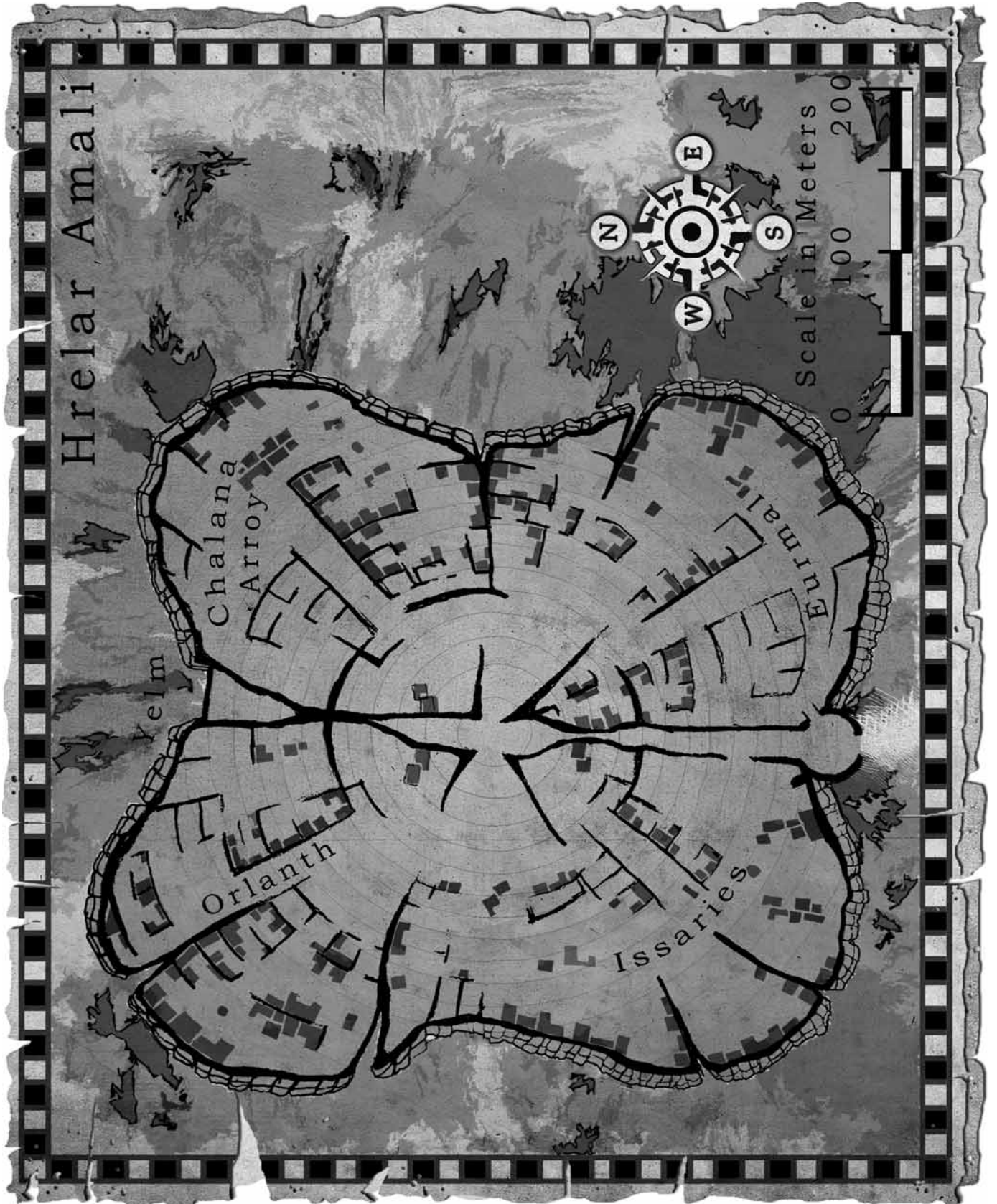
Once through, a path winds down towards the valley floor, surrounded by trees on either side. The full extent of Hrelar Amali is glimpsed through the branches, and this trek down into the valley helps build the anticipation. Those who are sensitive to spirits, or who have a POW of 16 or higher, can feel the air alive and crackling with holy, magical energy.

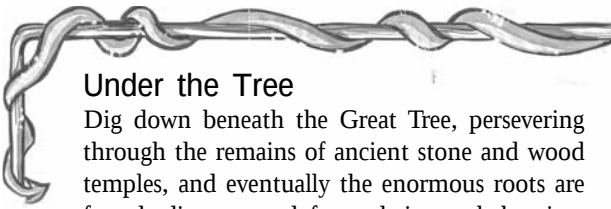
Inner Stockade

As the trees thin and the valley floor is neared, Hrelar Amali reveals itself.

First is the inner stockade, a rough circle of petrified wood, 500 metres in diameter, varying in height, but 12 metres at its highest points and 2 metres at its lowest. This was not built by the God Learners but is the remains of the bole of the Great Tree, killed and partially eaten by Zorak Zoran during the Lesser Darkness. Only this huge, petrified stump remains, hollowed-out by unknown hands. The subsequent temple complexes are built inside the remains of the Great Tree and beneath it.

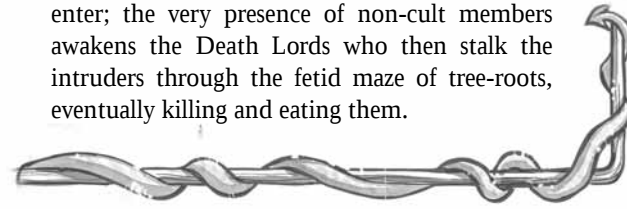
Rightness Army soldiers patrol the outer perimeter of the inner stockade – at least 20 are on duty at any one time. Scaffolds, platforms, cranes and winches line the ancient tree's





Under the Tree

Dig down beneath the Great Tree, persevering through the remains of ancient stone and wood temples, and eventually the enormous roots are found, disconnected from their trunk by time and the violence of Zorak Zoran. The roots are hollow, the result of Zorak Zoran's tireless appetite and this is an entire temple complex to the God of Hate and Vengeance; indeed, it is the *first* temple, created by Zorak Zoran himself. The root chambers are protected by the slumbering Mistress Race Death Lords who have continued to gorge on the primeval roots, completing Zorak Zoran's work. Only Initiates of Zorak Zoran may enter; the very presence of non-cult members awakens the Death Lords who then stalk the intruders through the fetid maze of tree-roots, eventually killing and eating them.



remains at irregular intervals, Engineering Faculty members swarming over the structure, securing or dismantling sections as necessary. Study Group researchers chip at the petrified bark or take readings of the inner structures. Entry to the inner temple complex is only possible from the southern edge of the inner stockade and pilgrims are forced to circumnavigate the remains of the tree under the watchful gaze of the soldiers.

The Temple Complex

Tickets are checked again at the main entrance to the temple complex. Those not entitled to be in Hrelar Amali are escorted, under guard, back to the outer perimeter. Once verified, every pilgrim or group is assigned a Revealers' 'watcher' who follows the pilgrim(s) everywhere throughout their visit, listening, watching and making notes. The Watcher announces when time is up and escorts the pilgrims back to the outer stockade, asking detailed and impertinent questions on the way.

The main entrance is under permanent guard (eight to ten) and these, unlike the Dangk garrison, are watchful and vigilant.

Within the inner stockade the ruins are large and sprawling. Time and thoughtless plunder of the stones has left little more than a shell, with large piles of stone scattered all around. The stones are untouched by moss, lichen or weeds – a combination of Flamal's enduring spirit and Lhankor Mhy's divine touch. And every rock in every wall and every pile is covered in a small, regular, deeply-etched script, a mixture of runes, letters, pictograms and complex, swirling iconography that sometimes seem to shift perspective, fading before returning to crystal

clarity. Even the stones themselves exhibit strange, mutable characteristics, sometimes becoming a shadowy, half-real suggestion of rock. Indeed this peculiar nature is the subject of study by an entire Revealers' Faculty.

The Revealers' scaffolding and platforms criss-cross the whole site allowing the Revealers' Fellows to examine the stones easily. Platforms support lifting equipment: winches, block-and-tackle and mechanical cranes provided by the good and righteous grace of the Clanking City. Some walls are in the process of being rebuilt, either to aid study or because study on a particular pile is complete. Hrelar Amali is a hive of activity, day and night – both pilgrims and Revealers. It is sometimes difficult for theists to concentrate on their prayers and rituals, such is the disruption around them but even the noise levels within Hrelar Amali is muted and pilgrims are able to complete their veneration without too much difficulty. Curiously, no-one ever feels like arguing.

Dangan Temples: Solar Pantheon

The smaller, beehive-like temples that ring the main edifice were built by the Dangan Confederacy, using rubble from the Lhankor Mhy temple and petrified wood from the tree. They represent (moving counter-clockwise from the smallest temple), the descent of Yelm into Hell, after he was slain by Orlanth. The huge antechamber that leads up to the main temple represents Hell itself and then the parade of circular temples represents Yelm's re-ascent, arming himself as he grew in strength, eventually returning to his prime position as Imperator and helping to defeat Chaos.

It is unusual to see sun-dome inspired temples side-by-side with Orlanthi-influenced structures but the Dangans were a progressive people. King Dan understood that the main temple represented the Lightbringers' Quest but had no idea of its true architect, merely assuming it was some long-forgotten First Age Orlanthi king.

Most of the sun temples are ruined but their beehive nature is obvious and members of the Solar pantheon have no trouble recognising their nature. God Learners swarm, bee-like around these ruined hives, still documenting the God Script etched deep into every surface. None are scaffolded, but some have been roped-off for reasons best known to the Revealers.

Hsunchen Totems

Scattered liberally around the inner complex are the remains of Telmori totems left by the Telmori Hsunchen before the Dangan Confederacy and Seshnegi came to the area. The totems, despite having been strewn around the complex, tell the story of how Telmor, leading his pack, came across a Great Tree. As the pack were new to the area, Telmor duly marked it in the way wolves do and his urine was so strong that it

caused the bark of the tree to turn to stone and the tree itself withered and died. Telmor took this as a sign that all these lands (Ralios) belonged to the Telmori pack and that is why they settled here.

The God Learners have little time for the Hsunchen totems, which are carved from chunks of petrified bark. But to Telmori, there is potency in these stones. Urinating upon them, in either human or beast form, reactivates some of the magic inherent in Telmor's own urine.

Lightbringers' Temple

The central part of the complex is the huge Lightbringers' Temple. It is built on the point where the Lightbringers entered Hell in search of Yelm and where Yelm re-emerged. The Great Compromise was forged here and so this is the place where both life, and Time, began.

The temple is built to a design unique to Lhankor Mhy's whim and it exhibits a certain rugged symmetry. Within are separate shrines to each of the Lightbringers and, at the apex of the main causeway running through the temple, a shrine to Yelm (added as part of the Great Compromise). The many rooms and chambers of the temple were built to accommodate the priests and sages of those early days after the Compromise was forged but time and events caused the caretakers of the temple to leave and eventually it fell into disrepair and ruin: such is the erosive nature of Time.

The temple is divided into four main sections, representing Orlanth, Chalana Arroy, Issaries and Eurmal (Lhankor Mhy being represented by the walls of the structure). Two small shrines on either side of the main causeway recognise Fleshman and Ginna Jar, although neither is given any particular veneration.

All the temple areas are open to the sky, and all are in comprehensive disarray, despite the God Learners' best efforts to reconstruct parts of the structure. However, the nature of each section is evident to anyone with any knowledge of Orlanthi theology and elements found in other Orlanthi holy places are easily identified.

The great entrance hall and causeway leading up to the shrine was built by the Dangan Confederacy and is free from the God Script. The God Learners use the main hall (which is, ironically, a representation of Hell) as their study area, with dozens of study areas, desks, lecterns and so on, and swarm backwards and forwards through the temple complex.

There are no catacombs beneath the temple. As the temple marks a return to light, the structure has no areas of importance below ground.

The Magic of Hrelar Amali

Hrelar Amali offers many forms of magic. For convenience these are summarised as follows:

Entry to the Hero Plane. This is a function of the place, rather than the Lhankor Mhy temple. Hrelar Amali is an entry point for Aldryami, Hsunchen, Orlanthi, Solar and Uz HeroQuesters. Anyone using Hrelar Amali to access the Hero Plane arrives in the midst of a most grievous funeral. Aldryami and Ernalda cultists earn 1D3 Hero Points by pausing to take part in the funeral (which is for Flamal, the Seed Father) and Uz must pass-by quickly or risk the wrath of the nature gods (represented by the loss of 1D3 Hero Points).

Source of Life. Flamal's spirit is still strong here. Fruits and vegetables never go rotten when within the petrified bole of the Great Tree. Healing, too, is enhanced: all Healing skills and magic work at *double* their normal levels. If the healer is a Chalana Arroy Healer or High Healer, then the effects are *tripled*.

Defence against Chaos and Darkness. Chaos creatures and worshippers cannot pass beyond the perimeter of the Great Tree. Those that try suffer an immediate 2D6 points of damage to a random Hit Location for every round they remain within the temple complex. Darkness, also, cannot penetrate, for the stones of Hrelar Amali glow at light, providing a constant, comforting (if eerie) light that is strong enough to read by.

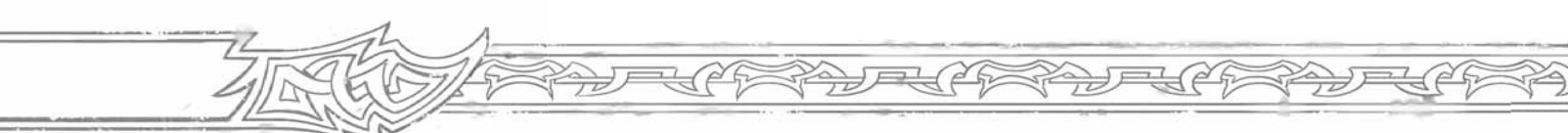
Power of Compromise. In forging the Great Compromise, the gods sat down in negotiation and reached a lasting agreement. Mortals can do the same. Any arguments or disagreements suddenly seem meaningless within Hrelar Amali, with each person finding an innate understanding and inner peace. Religions can co-exist – although this is anathema to the God Learners, and they are desperate to break this particular ability of the ruins.

Divine Magic. Divine spells can be renewed at Hrelar Amali, irrespective of the cult which provides it.

Sorcery. Sorcery can be worked inside the temple complex, but it takes twice as long and is twice as hard. This is the reason why all sorceries are carried out in Dangk rather than on-site.

Lightbringers' Learning. Members of Storm Tribe Cults can pray for, and receive, an additional 1D10 points for any Cult skill they already know.

Telmori Learning. Urinating on one of the Telmor Totems grants the hsunchen mythic insight without the need to roll against a specific Telmor myth. Any problem or issue that has perplexed or defeated the hsunchen is miraculously lifted as



he relieves himself against the totem. The Hsunchen may also make an Insight roll and, if successful, automatically increase one cult skill by 1D4+1%.

Plot Seeds

There are countless opportunities for adventure in Dangk and Hrelar Amali and many will be suggested by the descriptions of the key areas and the personalities inhabiting them. This section details a few more.

The Stone Waltz. The EWF is always seeking ways to destroy the God Learners' schemes and disrupt the plans of the Old Ways Traditionalists. A Hunting and Waltzing Band is sent to Dangk and Hrelar Amali to sow the seeds of discontent, stir-up trouble and sabotage the God Learner machinery being used at the ruins. The characters are either a part of this Hunting and Waltzing Band or get caught-up in the band's schemes.

Pilgrims Progress. The characters are hired to protect a small group of wealthy Lightbringer pilgrims on their first pilgrimage to Hrelar Amali. None of the pilgrims know the routines and they have been fed a lot of false information (such as how it is sensible to wander into Fluilea's District and reenact the Lightbringers' Quest, for example). The characters spend most of their time keeping the errant pilgrims out of trouble in Dangk and out of even more trouble when they see what the God Learners are doing to the ruins. The pilgrims are particularly strident in their views and attitudes, tackling the God Learners on theological issues and heckling Fluilea Gencourt's marketplace sermons: trouble is *bound* to happen.

Keys to the Code. The characters are drafted into the Study Group to help crack the Hrelar Amali code. Through investigation they realise that some key parts of the mystery are now part of Dangk itself – inscribed into buildings, cellars, walls and floors. They have to scour the city seeking the lost strings of God Script code, running the gauntlet of the angry theists and Fluilea's fundamentalists as they do so. A variant on this scenario theme would be to have the characters acting for the Cogs of Zistor, in preparation for Elgasta's mass teleportation of the entire ruin. Another variation is 'The Storm Spinning Home' inn, in the Pilgrims' quarter of Dangk: around 60% of the building contains stones – crucial ones – from Hrelar itself. Bruyant Openwing does not want to upset Dhuren but he has to get at these scraps of code. Ideally the stones should be removed from the inn and returned to

the ruin. The characters have to find a way to do this.

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow. The characters are part of the Study Group. Bruyant Openwing has received cryptic information that something is threatening the entire Hrelar Amali site – big, heavy magic. He suspects the EWF and the characters are sent to investigate. The real threat comes from the Engineering Faculty and the Zistorite scheme to transport the entire ruin to Zistorwal. Fluilea Gencourt is in-on this plan and throws in all manner of red-herrings (including fake theist and EWF supporters) to ensure Elgasta's scheme goes ahead. If Elgasta's Zistorite agenda is exposed, it causes direct tension within the Revealers. Bruyant does not want his labour of love being overtaken by the Zistorwal zealots and works actively himself to sabotage the plan to move the ruin. The characters are key to making this work – or are employed by Elgasta to thwart Bruyant's meddling.

Sister Feelings Call. Two Ernaldan pilgrims have gone missing after straying too close to Fluilea's district. Fluilea's denied all knowledge but the word in Pilgrim District is that the Flotsam are holding them, either for ransom or for something more sinister. Dhuren is willing to pay a small group of trouble-shooters to venture into Fluilea's District and find the girls – before the pilgrims turn nasty and a minor war breaks-out. The girls are held captive by four of Fluilea's Flotsam and have been subjected to all manner of indignation and humiliation (although not rape or molestation). The girls are terrified but still have enough fight left to help the characters. Fluilea knows all about the kidnap but has no intention of helping the characters or betraying his Flotsam. The characters need to work quickly as the pilgrims of Dangk are growing restless and itching for an excuse to go into Fluilea's district to exact revenge: how will the characters handle this powder keg situation?

Swamp Thing. A vengeful spirit attacks the marsh hunters out looking for wildfowl, killing one of them and dragging the body into the depths. The Church of Malkion wants this spirit put to rest (or even captured for study), and will pay the characters handsomely. The spirit is that of Uffled the Unshirking. His body is trapped below the marsh and tormented by another, demonic spirit left over from the Great Darkness. If the characters can rescue it and take it Hrelar Amali, Uffled will know rest, and his spirit will assist King Dan's in protecting the city.

Glorantha Adventurers

The rules for Adventurer Creation in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* provide the basis for creating Gloranthan characters: all the cultural backgrounds and professions found in the Adventurer Creation chapter are used in Glorantha. This chapter provides the necessary additional rules and information for creating a truly unique, truly Gloranthan character for *RuneQuest* campaigns, with a host of new professions, cultural backgrounds and community options.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

Glorantha is a unique place and the following notes aim to help players, especially players new to Glorantha, to gain the most from the experience.

Pick a Side – Gods, Governments and Glory

There is one first and foremost point for any Glorantha player to come to terms with above all else. If players get nothing else out of this chapter, they must know Glorantha is a setting ruled by its many fractious sects. No matter if it is the teachings of the God Learners or the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, the faithful of the Cult of the Storm Tribe or even the totemic belief of the Hsunchen.

Faith in Glorantha is a much different thing than faith in the real world. In Glorantha followers of a god get powers directly from him (or her). There is no question as to whether a god exists or not, as there is ample physical proof he does. The many cults of the various faiths, the teachings of the warring empires and the cultural beliefs that are passed on from generation-to-generation are all some of the sources of faith and power in Glorantha. Having some kind of belief structure or faith to fall back on is not only helpful in Glorantha, it is a *necessity*.

Characters that do not will soon find themselves being ignored or scrutinised by the rest of the world, who will automatically distrust and possibly even hate those who do not have a god to which they subscribe. After all, if someone is not proud of their cult, order or patron... they may just be a servant of the enemy!

One of the first things that any player should do when creating their character is take a very close look at the many cults, sects, factions and so forth his character could be a part of – or support in the very least. The Cults section of each regional

entry will greatly help with this as it provides a summary of the major Gloranthan cults for all the regions described in this book. This will open several options throughout the character's life and career and will keep others from thinking the character must be some kind of servant of Chaos because he cannot say which faith has his backing. It pays to have friends, especially in Glorantha.

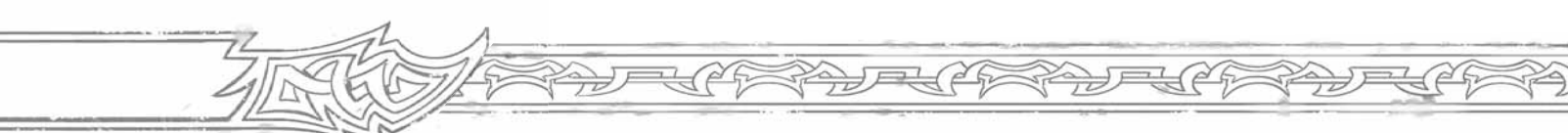
This of course, also means that the character will automatically make enemies as well. As such diverse and zealous faiths have immense strength of belief in their views – they also cannot help but deny the teachings of other beliefs. This may not cause any more of a problem than a simply 'too bad you are wrong' and a shrug of the shoulders... or it could spark intense and bloody combat at first sight. Every faction has its enemies and by backing their way of thought – those enemies become the character's instantly. However, making a few enemies pales in comparison to making most of the world an enemy by not taking a side.

Magic is Everywhere – A Treasured Resource

Glorantha is a very magical land, as shown by the fact that every single inhabitant capable of sentient thought that lives there can wield magic. The most common type of magic use is Common Magic, usable by all. Common Magic is not alone in Glorantha, with Dragon Magic, Sorcery, Divine Spellcasting and the Shamanic Spirit traditions folding the magic essence of the world into its peoples. Something as easy as studying the right text for a long enough period of time or devoting one's life to a temple of faith can be enough to unlock the mysteries of magic, if someone has the time, patience and (in some cases) money. Some spells are passed from teacher to student or from parent to offspring, others are treated like prized commodities to be kept and treasured.

Many players will look at this permeation of magic as a dwindling of its effects or of its impact on the game. This is simply not so. Just because magic is everywhere and even the most common of men could wield it, it takes a great deal of questing and practice to become skilled in its use. A powerful magician will make veritable miracles look easy, showing adventurers exactly what it is to be one with the magic of Glorantha.

Gloranthan characters can expect to witness (or partake in) large amounts of magic use during the scope of their campaigns. Players should not be surprised at a peasant's use of a spell or



what might seem like frivolous use of spells and magic powers in other settings. If it makes a hard Gloranthan life any easier, it will be explored – magic, science or otherwise.

Build a Personality – Forget Class Stereotypes

Entering the world of Glorantha, a player must recognise that a character is not his career. Just because you see a long-haired, barrel-chested man with a huge sword does not mean that he is not the finest wizard in all the land or that the smallish woman with a single rusted dagger is not about to be a character's deadliest foe. Glorantha breeds characters that step away from the stereotypes that many people focus on in other roleplaying settings.

With *RuneQuest's* non-class or non-level based progression system, each and every character grows in the direction desire and fate takes them – not just down a linear path on a progression table. This means that each and every character can be drastically different than the last. After meeting a pair of aldryami with very high archery and tracking skills but low close combat should not necessarily put a player at ease when he sees another with a broadsword. Making such assumptions could be a very lethal mistake.

This is not to say that there are not certain stereotypes that are rather constant in the world of Glorantha but they are based most commonly on cult relations or political affiliations rather than career or class. Most Orlanathi will have similar stances, just as the tribes of the Hsunchen will likely have their own views to be aware of when dealing with them. All philosophy aside however, they are all as independent and individual as the Games Master wants to make them.

We encourage the idea that Glorantha stereotypes should be almost as biased as the people making them. Ask a God Learner about his belief about a dragon and they will almost always tell you that it should be destroyed, but ask the same question of a Draconised Orlanathi and they will likely go on a long tirade about their role in the greater universe. The Uz believe themselves to be a solidly cultural species of many varieties but many of the tribes of Hsunchen are far more likely to lump all of the 'trolls' in the same category – enemy. Just because a character was taught to think one way about a specific type of person or species, does not make it any truer than what the next culture believes. It is unlikely that any given stereotype is utterly true, or utterly false for that matter, but they are exactly as the term implies: *stereotypes*.

The point of this notation is to prepare players for the types of encounters they will meet in the sometimes chaotic world of Glorantha. From duck barbarians to minotaur spiritualists, this is a world that truly eliminates the ability to judge any book by its cover.

Living Well is Better Than Looking Well

The *RuneQuest* rules system is a dangerous one and the Glorantha setting does little to dull that realistic savagery. Other systems and settings encourage running headlong into a horde of lesser combatants in order to cut them to ribbons like grain before a scythe but doing so in Glorantha is an invitation for serious bodily harm. Bloody combats result in ragged scars, lost digits and shorn limbs – all of which should dissuade a sane adventurer from entering in them frivolously.

It does not take long for the common Gloranthan traveller to realise that his health should be far more important than the state of his appearance. Unlike the shining knights of fairy tales, Glorantha breeds a different type of hero. Adventurers in Glorantha tend to come apart at the seams after a few years of hardship and adventure, having to pick them up and patch them back together. If it means ripping off a piece of armour that has been too demolished for use and replacing it with the next best thing that comes along, so be it. Some adventurers might want to wield the weapon of their homeland or culture but after a solid parry that shatters it out in the marshlands of Dangk – they will pick up whatever it takes to survive. Patchwork armour and battered weaponry is a constant in Glorantha and players should never look away from a tool of survival just because it 'does not look good'.

The world is a dangerous place that leaves broken and scarred bodies throughout the adventures throughout it. Medical skills are not infallible and true surgeons are more likely to cut off the damaged limb than try to save it. Infection and disease are just as lethal as the edge of a blade and doctors know that sometimes you must remove the wound before it can kill the rest of the body. Players should not be shocked if their characters lose limbs or suffer terrible scars from their wounds, nor should they be too surprised when they encounter other characters in the world that have suffered the same.

With a world that can breed such realistic and gritty personalities, players should not underestimate those who have suffered hardships. Even though a swordsman may only have one hand, or even one arm, he might be able to best a dozen foes before being laid low. A one-eyed archer could still be the best marksman in all the land. Glorantha does not simply break its people's bodies and leave them as food for crows but instead it gives them the impetus to grow, overcome and become greater than their injuries.

Although personal image and reputation is important to a blossoming hero, staying alive long enough to become the legend they want to be can mean forgetting the niceties and just simply surviving. Players in Glorantha must decide rather quickly what is more important: a lasting image of beauty and

greatness, or a lasting tale of adventures. It is a rare instance that anyone who considers himself a questing adventurer gets to have both.

Aspire to Become a Legend – The Myth Must be Made

Players in Glorantha must know that they are in a world revolving around myth, wonder and legends and their characters are destined to be a part of. The power of myth and the heroes that create them is vast in this world and adventurers do well to set their sights high when deciding on questing. It is a powerful thing to be the forger of a legend and every player should try to be one.

Even if only a supporting role of a vast tale encompassing empires and nations, every character should do their part. Characters that take the reins of the story and become heroes in their own ways are the real ‘movers and shakers’ of the Gloranthan world. Nations rise and fall on the deeds of the great, for better or worse, and a commonplace goal of most characters should be to become a piece of living history.

Glorantha is not a world for the meek, nor is it a game setting that will reward those who sit back and wait for something to happen to them. The best adventurers, the finest quests – the real stuff of myth and legend – happen because characters make it happen. Players who want to be in the background may want to look again at the setting they are in and ask themselves, ‘What am I lending to the story?’ Even though there will always be lesser roles in the myth, those should be reserved for common folk and peasants that pale in comparison to the most mediocre of player characters.

The key is for a player to continually push the boundaries of what his character is capable of, making sure that the world feels some kind of impact in his decisions and adventures. Glorantha is a brutal world of constant conflict and a never-ending supply of goals to aspire to. Other fantasy settings might reward player characters for their epic ideas and strivings, but Glorantha thrives on them.

Of course this does not mean that players should be suicidal with their characters in the pursuit of reputation and creating a legend out of them. There is a certain level of risk in any adventure while playing in Glorantha, and blindly pushing forward in the name of fame and myth-making is a good way of taking on too much risk at once. It is up to the player to decide where that comfortable zone of risk versus reward is for his character.

There is something to be said though, for a character that dies in a spectacularly glorious and legendary way...

Accept or Provide Honourable Surrender

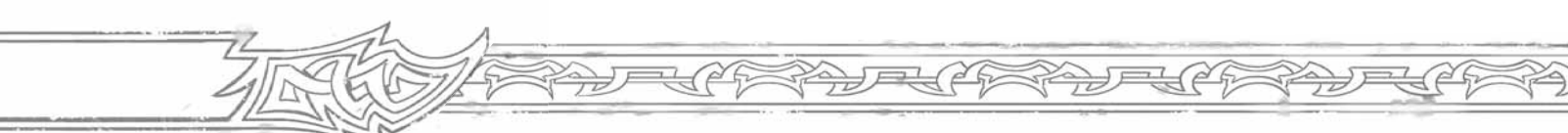
Glorantha is a cultured world filled with many cults and nations that a player character can follow and they are very protective of their members (more often than not). With few exceptions, it is the role of the cult backing the character to make sure his deeds and quests continue to further the goals of the cult. Over the many generations of cultural leanings, the rises in newer rules of civilisation have added a new twist to the cult dynamic of Glorantha – honourable surrender.

Unless fighting deadly predators, minions of Chaos, or the rare bitter archenemy, we suggest to players and Games Masters alike to offer or accept an honourable surrender. Cults gain power not only through their members but also through the prestige of victories over one another and if given the chance they will take captives and then turn around and ransom them back to their cult (preferably publicly) in order to gain resources and reputation. Unless particularly zealous, or simply unlucky to always slay their opponents, a loyal cult or nation member should give an enemy the opportunity to give up; it can mean a lot to the cult on many levels.

Offering surrender might seem cowardly to some players, especially those who look upon fantasy roleplaying as a way to hack down enemies wholesale without heed or care of their own lives. Instead of supporting such a fatalistic view, Glorantha offers the chance to throw down one's sword and be taken captive. From the confines of an enemy cult's cell the character could learn a great deal about the enemy or even make allies within the enemy to call upon once they have been ransomed and returned. It might cost a little pride and perhaps a little reputation to ask for quarter but everyone knows what they say about ‘living to fight another day’.

The idea of asking for or offering an honourable surrender can be awkward at first, especially in the heat of combat with a bitter enemy but with how reflexive and cinematic *RuneQuest* combat tends to be there can be room made for a pointed ‘Submit!’. Only a fool or a madman would choose death over a chance to continue their cult's work and some combats can be stopped quite short after just a few blows. This increases the chance to role-play with the surrendering party and with his superiors in the cult when it is time to collect a ransom. Not to mention, if the ransomed individual becomes a recurring foe that turns the tables on the player characters, perhaps they will receive the same courtesy the next time they meet?

Glorantha is a deadly place but such civilised rules of conduct can add intrigue and danger without necessarily wrapping it in common lethality. Players should beware, however, that some surrenders might seem ‘too easy’ or ‘cowardly’ when otherwise unnecessary. There are some more devious cults and



cultures in Glorantha that might use a planned surrender as a way to get an assassin inside enemy territory. Even if this was the case, it is a risk worth taking if it could swell the coffers of the faction while polishing their reputation accordingly.

One thing always to remember – just throwing down one's weapon does not make a proper surrender. It must be voiced to be accepted and anything less than a concise surrender could end very badly for the now-disarmed character!

Glorantha is Ever-Changing

The world of Glorantha is driven by magic and Myth, powered by adventures and quests and is likely to see massive changes as the Second Age evolves through various sourcebooks. Glorantha, more than anything else, is a story given form. That story can change, just as the characters within can change. Stories in motion are a lot like clay or water, taking the shape that you wish it to – but always keeping some of its own properties no matter how hard you try to change them. Glorantha will reshape and reform into its many facets as the Second Age moves on.

Some older fans of earlier versions of the Glorantha setting will see the roots of the Myth and story they are so used to and enjoy but they will also find many new views and unexpected alterations that might seem odd at first. Both new and old players need to always remember that Glorantha is not stagnant or set in stone like some kind of stodgy history book. What their characters and stories do can alter the greater Myths.

Just as the Goddess Switch allowed the God Learners to impose powerful and significant change on the world, so will the heroes of this Age change and shape the happenings of the Greater Myth. We hope that players and Games Masters will take up their part in this, questing and adventuring for their cult or faction in order to try and make Glorantha take the shape that they wish it to. Perhaps their next quest will be the one that changes the world forever.

Expect the Wildly Unexpected

More than anything else to take away from this Primer is the fact that Glorantha is not like any other fantasy world players have seen before. It is a wild place of mixed cultures as different as night and day, strange races that break the boundaries of what might be seen as 'normal' fantasy, and is coated in a layer of magic and wonder that defies what our reality might see as 'normal'.

Just when a player might think they are getting a firm grasp on what reality is for their characters at the moment, things might shift in the overall myth and change the core of their quest. Their cult could make some fantastic discovery, bringing a whole new mythos into their centuries-old beliefs. One character might see the glass as half empty, the next, half

full. Although there are several constants that have been laid down as fact in both the past and present, Glorantha has a weird way of surprising anyone.

Players that enter Glorantha looking for a common fantasy genre had best hold on to their three metre poles and 15 metres of hemp rope – they are about to be blindsided by the finest fantasy sucker punch ever put to paper. They cannot be prepared for Glorantha, only open-minded enough to enjoy the kaleidoscope of imagery and cultural views it brings to the table. Adventure, heroism and tragedy await in equal portions. For the player that can make the most of it, there will be nothing else like it.

Ever.

GLORANTHAN RACES

This book concentrates on human Adventurers. The *Races of Glorantha* book provides the full detail for races such as the trolls, elves, dwarfs, ducks and dragonewts.

Racial Types

Glorantha has four main racial types:

- X **Agimori** – dark skinned, dark haired humans native to Pamaltela.
- X **Kralori** – oriental in appearance, Kralori are native to Kralorela.
- X **Veldang** – people with a slate-coloured skin, native to Pamaltela and specific to the Fonrit and Zamokil regions.
- X **Wareran** – caucasian peoples common across most of Genertela, the northern continent.

There are two exceptions to these racial types: the waertagi, a race dominated and persecuted by the God Learners, are green-skinned; and the mysterious inhabitant of Teleos are one of six different skin colours: red, yellow, pink, green, orange or blue.

Variations within each racial type are common but no racial type has any advantage over any other. Racial variations typically reflect the influence of the god or gods worshipped and/or the environmental conditions. The Orlanthi of Dragon Pass and Hendrikiland, for example, are typically dark-haired, swarthy and blue-eyed (not unlike the Pashtun of contemporary Earth). Sun worshipping Dara Happan Pelorians are golden haired and golden skinned, with haughty faces and demeanours, but still racially Wareran.

When creating Gloranthan Adventurers players are free to choose any of the racial types although the region of origin will naturally determine the racial type of the character. The vast

majority of Adventurers from western Genertela, the northern continent, for instance, will be Wareran; the vast majority of Pamaltelans Agimori.

LEVELS OF CIVILISATION

During the Second Age the civilisation level of Glorantha undergoes a surge directly due to the influence and expansion of the God Learner Empire and the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Before either empire was established most Gloranthans attained, at best, a level of technological development equivalent to the Bronze Age – and, in some areas, this level of development still prevails, along with pockets of very primitive societies.

However, both the God Learners and Wyrmfriends accelerate their learning and achievements to attain degrees of sophistication placing their civilisations, at least, on a medieval level, and, in some instances beyond it. The sorcery-science of the God Learners introduces fabulous technology, magical in nature, in places such as Zistorwal, the Clanking City; and the draconic mysticism of the Wyrmfriends creates societies that attempt to emulate the enigmatic social structures of the dragonewts. Either way, the cultural and technological levels of both empires arte somewhat more advanced than the prevailing Bronze Age base – although the hubris of both empires eventually results in a return to simpler levels of development.

Second Age Glorantha therefore has considerable scope for cultural and technological sophistication but it remains unindustrialised. Urban hubs, such as Nochet, Raibanth and the Jrustelan city-states, exhibit different levels of progress but are each, in their own ways, cities of sophistication and significant cultural development.

LANGUAGE

Gloranthan languages can be grouped into several families. Accents and dialects are as diverse as in any other world, with some dialects being difficult for speakers of the same language to comprehend. The codification of Gloranthan languages is a God Learner concept but their studies and conclusions have been accepted the world over.

Arbennan

A family of four, linguistically similar languages (Doraddick, Kresh, Arbennan and Tarint), these are Pamaltelan tongues native to the Agimori. A speaker of one of the Arbennan languages can understand, and make himself understood, in any of the others at three quarters of his Arbennan language family (thus an Adventurer with Language (Doraddick) 60% can also communicate in Kresh, Arbennan and Tarint at 45%.

Doraddick: Spoken by the Doraddi people of Kothar and Zamakil.

Kresh: Spoken by the Kresh people.

Arbennan: Spoken by the people of Jolar.

Tarint: Spoken by the primitives of Tarien.

Auld Wyrmish

This is the language of the Dragonewts and the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends. Humans who speak it must mystically 'split their tongue' in order to be able to replicate the curious sounds made by the forked tongues of the Dragonewts. It is a complex language; mystically rich, including poetry, song and ritual chant. It sounds like no other language in Glorantha and is exceptionally difficult to master. Draconised cultures use both Auld Wyrmish and the tongue for their culture and/or region: Auld Wyrmish is rarely used exclusively.

Fonritian

The Fonrit peninsula of Pameltela has four languages: Afadjanni, Banambam, Kareeshtan and Mondoran. A speaker of one of the Fonritian languages can understand, and make himself understood, in any of the others at three quarters of his Fonritian language family.

Afadjanni: Spoken by the people of Afadjann.

Banambam: Spoken by the coastlanders of Banamba.

Kareeshtan: Spoken by the Karesshtu.

Mondoran: Spoken by the inhabitants of the desolate Fonritian interior. Mondoran is considered a very primitive language.

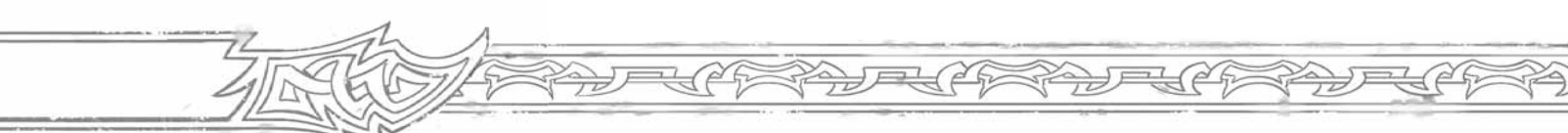
Hsunchen

There are as many hsunchen tongues as there are beast worshippers. Typically primitive, guttural languages, the hsunchen tongues combine human sounds with the natural sounds of the beast common to the hsunchen tribe. Thus the bear hsunchen combines grunts, sniffs, snorts and roars with softer sounds.

Hsunchen languages tend to be mutually exclusive. Fluency in one hsunchen tongue does not offer fluency in another, save where two separate tribes co-exist; at best, one can expect a third of the fluency in the second tongue.

Pelorian

The Pelorian family of languages descends from the 'Tongue of Tenfold Perfection', the language spoken by Dara Happa's Solar Pantheon gods. The predominant languages are Solar and Lower Pelorian, spoken across the Pelorian basin but with differing dialects in the lands of Rinliddi, Pelanda and Kostadd. The Orlanthi of Talastar speak a Theyalan language and the people of Carmania speak a mixture of Pelorian and the western tongue of the God Learners.



Speakers of one Pelorian Tongue understand the others at three quarters of their main tongue.

Solar Pelorian: The language of Nobles and Citizens. It is used for official documents, high address, conferences and all formal exchanges. It is a fast, flowing tongue with a cuneiform script that was devised by the Celestial Court to describe the harmony of the cosmos. Low-born Dara Happans generally understand Solar Pelorian but are forbidden to use it.

Lower Pelorian: The standard, conversational tongue derived from Solar Pelorian. It is a clipped, brusquer version of Solar and, whilst being considered the tongue of the commoners, is widely used in every day speech by all castes.

City Common: A mixture of Lower Pelorian and several Theyalan languages. It is essentially a traders' cant used sparingly when dealing with those who do not speak either of the main languages with any great fluency.

Pentan

A single language spoken by the nomads of the Pent wastes with countless dialects belonging to the different tribes and clans. Even though each tribe has its own version of the mother language they are easily negotiated: speaking the dialect of one Pentan language enables the speaker to understand, and be understood in, other dialects at his own skill –15%.

Praxian

Similar to Pentan: the Praxian tribes have their own dialects but can understand each other at a –15% penalty to their mother tongue.

Teshnan

The Teshnan family comprises of three languages: High Teshnan, Melibic and Trowjangl. Speakers of one language are able to speak the others at two thirds of their mother tongue.

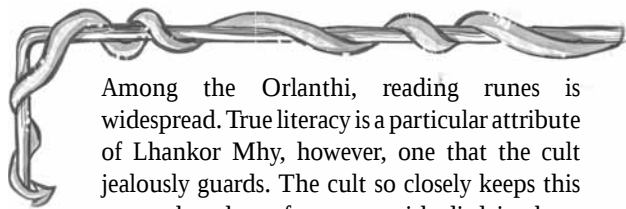
High Teshnan: Spoken in the kingdom of Teshnos – a refined version of the other two languages.

Melibic: Spoken on the island of Melib and sometimes called Low Teshnan.

Trowjangl: Spoken in the jungle lands of Trowjang.

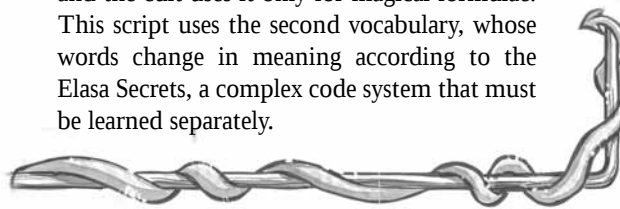
Theyalan

The language of the Orlanthi, the family has countless dialects reflecting the geographical diversity of the Orlanthi tribes. The God Learners have broken-down these dialects into five key regions: Fronela, Peloria, Ralios, Umathela and Maniria. Speakers of one dialect understand, and can make themselves understood in, another, at two thirds of their



Among the Orlanthi, reading runes is widespread. True literacy is a particular attribute of Lhankor Mhy, however, one that the cult jealously guards. The cult so closely keeps this secret that they often treat with disdain those few other Orlanthi who can read, claiming that they have stolen cult secrets.

Lhankor Mhy invented three scripts: two vocabularies and one code system. Most documents are in either Murnulvretan ('cat scratching' used by Kethaelan Orlanthi), or Kanvulvretan script ('dog scratching' used by the Orlanthi of Talastar and Ralios and surrounding peoples). Both scripts use the common vocabulary that more or less reproduces many Theyalan sounds. The third script, 'stone scratching,' is difficult to learn and the cult uses it only for magical formulae. This script uses the second vocabulary, whose words change in meaning according to the Elasa Secrets, a complex code system that must be learned separately.



mother tongue. Also, Theyalan speakers can understand the non-human languages of the Tusk Riders and Stormspeech at one third of their Theyalan base. There are also similarities with the Pelorian tongues and the western God Learner language: Theyalan speakers understand Western at half their Theyalan score.

Trade Talk

The Issaries cult language, Trade Talk has become a lingua franca for Glorantha, extending far beyond its cult origins. As it is a Divine Language it is easy to learn and seemingly incorporates idioms from many other tongues. Every Gloranthan Adventurer speaks Trade Talk at INT x5%. It can be increased just as for any other language skill.

Vithelan

This family of eastern languages comprises four tongues: Imperial, Kralori, Stultan and Tanyen. Speakers of one understand, and can be understood in, the others at two thirds of their mother tongue.

Imperial: Spoken by the people of Vormain.

Kralori: The language of Kralorela. This elegant tongue is the consolidation of 15 separate languages and dialects.

Stultan: Spoken in Churn Durel, the Kingdom of Ignorance. Considered a very crude and base form of Kralori it uses certain trollish idioms. Speakers of Stultan can understand the language of the Uz, and make themselves understood in it, at one fifth of their Stultan score.

Tanyen: Spoken in the Eastern Isles it is also a trade language for much of the east.

Western

A family of the six languages that stem from the original language of the Brithini, Western is the language of the Malkioni and hence the God Learner empire. All the versions of Western share the same written form – a flowing, right-to-left script that is almost an art-work when executed by a careful hand. Speaking any of the Western tongues is at two thirds of the mother tongue; reading and writing the written form suffers no penalty.

Brithini: The oldest, unchanged, human language. This is a complex tongue describing emotions and concepts that do not exist in the general universe of the Second Age.

Carmanian: A new development of Loskalmi, Ralian, Seshnegi and Pelorian and Theyalan. It is considered crude by orthodox God Learners but has an elegance and simplicity all of its own.

Loskalmi: Spoken across the Fronelan kingdoms of Losklam and the Janube Valley, this is a derivation of the original Seshnegi and Brithini tongues. Loskalmi is sometimes referred to as Prophet's Tongue, referring not to Malkion, the prophet of the Malkioni, but to Hrestol, the foremost prophet and martyr of Loskalm.

Ralian: Spoken across Ralios and including Theyalan influences.

Seshnegi: The language of Seshnela, this tongue is very close to Brithini but adapted to fit with God Learner requirements rather than esoteric ones of the Brithini. It is the most widely spoken God Learner language.

Vadeli: Spoken by the Vadeli islanders, defeated by the Brithini, it is an old language with much in common with both Brithini and Seshnegi, but considered a taboo dialect given the Vadeli's opposition to both Brithini and God Learners.

REGIONS, BACKGROUNDS AND PROFESSIONS

Every Gloranthan Adventurer comes from a particular region and each region has its own cultural backgrounds, professions and community elements. This section provides the Cultural Backgrounds, Professions, Community options and other information on a region-by-region basis.

In some cases a region has one or more new Cultural Backgrounds and/or Professions; these are in addition to the standard Cultural Background and Professional profiles listed in the *RuneQuest Core Rules*.

A region sometimes has a sub-region attached to it; Peloria – Dara Happa, for example. This refers to a cultural division within a geographical area. The structure follows the order of the regions as presented in the World Gazetteer chapter, with each region is described in the following format:

Race

Corresponding to one, or more, of the Racial Types described earlier.

Languages

The languages spoken in that region and available for the Adventurer to learn or have already learned.

Cultural Backgrounds

Which of the four Cultural Backgrounds apply to the region, plus any new backgrounds specific to it.

Professions

Which of the various *RuneQuest* Professions are available in the region, plus any new professions specific to it.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

The weapons common to the region and notes regarding any particular Combat Styles.

Magic

The magic favoured and in use within that region.

Cults

A brief listing of the cults appropriate to, and operating in, the region. Magic available through these cults is listed and refers back to the appropriate magical chapter from the *RuneQuest Core Rules*. The cults themselves are not detailed; fully detailed cults will appear in the forthcoming *Cults of Glorantha*.

JRUSTELA – MAIN ISLAND

The spiritual home of the Middle Sea Empire, the island of Jrustela is a sophisticated conglomeration of city-states populated by the descendants of the Seshnegi migrants who arrived there two and a half centuries ago. Twelve main cities form the core of Jrustela – each with its own agenda, politics and intrigues. As a result, and as a consequence of being an imperial seat, Jrustela is a sophisticated land characterised by competing factions, diverse political agendas and rich magical understanding and pursuance but still tied to its dedication to the Invisible God.

Jrusteli Background

Background	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Ducal Noble	Culture (Jrusteli) +30%, Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +10%	Language (Western Seshnegi) +50%, Lore (Malkioni)	4D10x100 silver
Religious	Pick Two +5% Boating, Dance, Evade, Evaluate, Insight, Perception, Riding	Pick Two Art (Any), Courtesy, Craft, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Seduction, Sorcery (Noble Family Grimoire), Manipulation	4D8x100 silver
	Pick Two +15% Bow, Dagger, Shield, Sword Culture (Jrusteli) +30%, Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +10%	Language (Western Seshnegi) +50%, Lore (Malkioni)	
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, Evaluate, First Aid, Insight, Perception	Pick Two Craft, Healing, Language, Lore, Mechanisms, Streetwise	
	Pick Two +10% Bow, Dagger, Staff, Shield, Sword		

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Western Seshnegi – Jrustelan dialect.



Cultural Backgrounds

- X Civilised (as per *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*)
- X Ducal
- X Religious

All Jrusteli are civilised but, in addition to the Civilised background, Jrusteli may also come from either the Ducal or Religious backgrounds instead of the Civilised Background.

Ducal

The character was raised in one the grand bloodlines of the ducal families found throughout the God Learner Empire and is likely expected to fulfil some grandiose plan of the bloodline's patriarch. What money and influence cannot acquire, sheer guile and force of ambition can attain. The character likely has access to one of the Knowledge Quester acquisitions programs of the Empire or perhaps was trained to lead one.

Religious

The character was raised in one of the Doctrines of Faith, cloistered from the usual direction of Jrusteli society. Whether by a Missionary, Postponer, Inherent or Delayer, the character has a firm grasp of how the God Realm affects the rest of the world and will likely follow in his mentors' footsteps in order to further their work. This sort of background also makes for very effective Knowledge Quester leaders, as they will no doubt be able to decipher the twisting secrets of other faiths in light of the strength of theirs.

An Adventurer's social class may determine his involvement with the various agendas of the Middle Sea Empire.

How To Act Like A God Learner

- X Behave as if you have all the answers.
- X Pretend to respect the traditions of other cultures while in fact regarding them as treasures to be plundered.
- X Accept that the ability to meddle in the traditions of others is your birthright as a follower of the only true religion, Malkionism. Foreign gods are false gods, so there is nothing wrong with changing their myths around or taking their powers from them.
- X Believe that every experiment that leads to knowledge is a good thing.
- X Dismiss possible ill consequences of magical experiments. Pay no heed to gloomy doomsayers!

Many noble families train their sons in various disciplines. The firstborn son becomes a knight or war leader, seeking military glory. The second-born son studies to become a sorcerer.

Other sons are sent into the clergy, where they may also learn Sorcery but are likely to be kept from a life of adventure and exploration by administrative duties.

Sons and daughters of the middle classes become merchants, sorcerers, mercenaries and monks. Through extraordinary accomplishment they may rise to leadership posts in the priesthood or military, though nobles always have the advantage in these areas.

The poor mostly stay that way but ambitious individuals occasionally rise to the top. In some Jrusteli cities, like Hredmorinos, a pioneering, egalitarian spirit still lingers and a humble adventurer can rise to prominence more quickly than in Seshnela. New colonies are also a good place for the lowly yet ambitious to shine.

In consultation with their Games Masters, players can choose to hail from any class background. Even high-ranking characters start out poor. Noble families are often cash-strapped and heavily taxed. Merchant's children are expected to go off and make their own fortunes.

Professions

All Civilised Professions, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, plus the following:

Jrusteli Professions

Profession	Cultural Background	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Ducal Guard	Civilised Ducal	Any Sword Style +10%, Athletics +10%, Drive +5%, Evade +5%, Influence +10%, Perception +10%	
Imperial Trader	Civilised Ducal	Evaluate +10%, Influence +5%, Insight +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%	Commerce +5% OR Shiphandling +5%, Language
Knowledge Quester	Civilised Ducal Religious	Drive +5%, First Aid +5%, Insight +10%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%, Ride +5%	Survival +5%
Missionary of Faith	Religious	Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%, Insight +5%, Lore (Regional) +10%, Persistence +5%	Sorcery (Jrusteli Grimoire), Manipulation
Revealer	Civilised Ducal	Evaluate +5%, Insight +10%, Language (Western) +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%	Lore (Any) +5%
Sorcerer	Civilised Ducal Religious	Evaluate +5%, Resilience +5%	Lore (any) +10%, Sorcery (Jrusteli Grimoire), Manipulation

Ducal Guard: The character is a hired or inherited member of the soldiers/guardians of one of the powerful Ducal Houses. It is his responsibility and honour to serve his Duke in any way asked of him. Most commonly this is to guard important places or members of the family but could be much more detailed in some cases.

Imperial Trader: The character is one of the foregoing members of mercantile association, likely part of a trading ship's crew, or even a storefront merchant. It is the role and career of the character to buy and sell secrets and objects of other cultures' faiths in an effort to secretly expand the Empire.

Knowledge Quester: The character is a member of the well-paid and provided for adventuring groups formed in order to travel across Glorantha acquiring the secrets of outside cultures and religions. It is a very dangerous job but it is the character's responsibility to report in with his superiors as often as he can in order to preserve any knowledge learned in case he is killed.

Missionary of Faith: The character is one of the adventuring scholars in one of the Doctrines of Faith. Raised to venture forth and bring the message of the God Learners to those who are of lesser or false faiths, the character already knows a few of the secrets of magic and the God Realm. The character must now also beware allies of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, as they will actively seek to do him harm.

Revealer

Elite researchers dedicated to the study of a particular subject – be it a place, culture, item, spell, religion or myth – with a view to laying its secrets bare. Revealers are academics and scrupulous collectors of knowledge. Attached to Revealer Groups, which operate on faculty lines, they are at the forefront of the Middle Sea Empire's *legitimate* research, supplying the empire with the intelligence it requires to extend its dominion over land, sea, people and myth.

Sorcerer: The character is a member of the God Learner's society of magicians, studying the effects that magic has in regards to the 'pagan' religions of Glorantha and where to find the most powerful pockets of this energy. He may or may not know the larger picture concerning the Empire but is privy to many outsider secrets that other God Learners might not.

Knights of St Volanc

Damage Enhancement
Damage Resistance
Enhance (STR)
Spell Resistance
Spirit Resistance
Treat Wounds

Bardan's Book

Cast Back
Damage Enhancement
Damage Resistance
Enhance (DEX)
Project (Sense)
Spell Resistance
Treat Wounds

Malkioni True Church

Cast Back
Damage Resistance
Mystic Vision
Neutralise magic
Spell Resistance
Spirit Resistance

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As a civilised society, Jrusteli favour the use of the sword, in all its forms but especially the rapier which is considered the weapon of the cultured and ducal nobility. Any Combat Style involving swords is acceptable.

Magic

Like most Gloranthans Jrusteli practice Common Magic. Jrusteli Adventurers begin the game with 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells. However sorcery is the main magical style of the God Learners and it is taught to both Missionaries and the Sorcerer profession.

Missionaries are taught from a Jrusteli Grimoire which, typically, contains the following spells:

Cast Back, Damage Resistance, Dominate (Human) –usually used against those who are not of the Malkioni faith, Intuition, Mystic Vision

Sorcerers belong to a Sorcery Order or School and learn from the order or school's Grimoire. Some examples are shown here.

Cults

All Jrusteli believe in the Invisible God and Malkion, His One, True Prophet. As a result, there are no Divine Cults per se, as all magic of the Invisible God is contained within The Abiding Book and available through the various Sorcery Orders and Schools. Any Jrusteli character can join a Sorcery Order (and many do) but a large number have no such membership, remaining as followers of the Invisible God but taking no direct part in the magical study and work of the God Learner empire.

The Sorcery Orders of Jrustela are fully detailed in Cults of Glorantha but for reference some examples follow:

The Knights of Saint Volanc – A military order who proselytize crusade and military supremacy over pagans and heretics.

Bardan's Book – War Wizards of the empire and mercenaries who treat sorcery and warfare as equal disciplines.

What's Your Faction?

When playing a character from the Middle Sea Empire, decide which of its agendas the adventurer is most involved with. You can pick more than one but the more choices you select, the more your character will be pulled in multiple directions. Are you mostly interested in:

- X **Magical exploration?**
- X **Religious proselytising?**
- X **Trade?**
- X **Military Dominance?**

Also decide where your sympathies lie in the conflict between sorcerers and missionaries. The schools of thought on this issue are as follows:

- X **Missionaries:** The pagans must be converted immediately.
- X **Postponers:** The pagans must be converted – but not now.
- X **Realists:** Mass conversion will never work and is not worth trying.
- X **Inherents:** God wants the pagans to remain mired in ignorance.
- X **Delayers:** The Invisible God to resolve this controversy in a time and manner of his choosing. Until then, let us not rush to judgment.

Even if you believe in no doctrine beyond your own immediate self-interest, you probably pretend to a sympathy for one or the other of these justifications, just to keep up appearances. Like any great power, the Middle Sea Empire abounds with cynics but they are expected to pay lip service to some sort of piety. When in doubt, the Doctrine of Inerrant Delay is always a safe choice.

Malkioni True Church – Foremost of the Jrusteli Orders, the True Church reveres the Invisible God through Malkion and are the custodians of The Abiding Book.

Saint Orders – God Learners worship countless saints, each holding a relationship of some nature (often tenuous) with Malkion or the Invisible God. Some saints are revered; others heretical. Many are minor saints specific to a city or a location, whilst others are recognised across the empire.

JRUSTELA – ZISTORWAL (THE CLANKING CITY)

The inhabitants of Zistorwal, crudely known as the Clanking City, are ardent Jrusteli on the one hand but fiercely independent on the other. Their belief is that Jrustela might occupy the heart of empire but its brain and soul is Zistorwal, where the sorcerers of the Cogs of Zistor aim to create the Machine God – a testament to God Learner power unrivalled by anything Jrustela can achieve through conventional means.

Zistorwal is one, immense, urban area and thus civilised. Most of its citizens are engaged in research and development and the island has thousands of separate programmes in train. But it is still a city and so supports all the professions found within cities elsewhere.

The Clanking City is also under siege by the allied forces of the EWE, Old Days Traditionalists and mostali, who seek to bring an end to Zistorwal's investigations and construction. This means that many in the city are forced to fight at some point or another and must go about their business in a heightened state of anxiety, as is often the case with a siege.

Race

Wareran.



Andrew Dobell

Languages

Western Seshnegi – Zistorwal dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

All Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, plus:

Revealer (see Jrustela – Main Island)

Knowledge Seeker (see Jrustela – Main Island)

Sorcerer Engineer: the character is engaged in the research and manufacture of magical artefacts – magic items, weapons and components of the Machine God, Zistor. With knowledge of both sorcery and engineering, the Sorcerer Engineers work tirelessly to advance Zistorwal's creative agenda. The Sorcerer Engineers are not confined to their engineering projects; many are ordered to go abroad to discover new technologies and techniques, particularly where Mostali are active, thereby plundering secrets from the master engineers themselves. Sorcerer engineers are automatically Cogs of Zistor members.

Profession	Cultural Background	Common Skills	Advanced Skills
Sorcerer	Civilised	—	Engineering +5%, Mechanisms +5%, Sorcery (Cogs of Zistor Grimoire), Manipulation

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

A city under siege does not waste its time pursuing any single weapon style. All Combat Styles are open to Jrusteli from Zistorwal but crossbows are favoured over other missile weapons.

Magic

Like most Gloranthans Zistorwal Jrusteli practice Common Magic. Jrusteli Adventurers begin the game with 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells. However sorcery is the main magical style of the God Learners and it is used extensively on Zistorwal. The Cogs of Zistor is the prevailing cult on the island and sorcerers and sorcerer engineers learn from the Zistor Grimoire:

Animate (Metal)
Damage Enhancement
Form/Set (Metal)
Glow
Holdfast

Cults

The Cogs of Zistor rule Zistorwal and are fiercely independent of the Malkioni True Church. The Order's goal is the realisation of the Machine God, Zistor, an exercise in creating a deity through man-made, magical endeavour.

SESHNELA

The heart of the Middle Sea Empire on the Genertelan mainland, Seshnelans are renowned for their tenacity, strength in the face of adversity and for considering themselves the true children of the Invisible God. The Loskalmi prophet and martyr Hrestol was born in Seshnela and many heroes of Malkion have emerged from Arolanit, Joriland and Pasos. This is a civilised, devoutly Malkioni region that practices feudalism as a natural consequence of history as well as exercising it as a tenet of the Abiding Book.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Western Seshnegi – a variety of dialects for each of its duchies: Seshnela, Arolanit, Rindland, Joriland, Kaniland, Pasos, Tanisor and Pithdaros.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, plus the options open to Jrustela – Main Isle inhabitants.

Professions

Civilised Professions, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. Plus the options open to Jrustela – Main Isle inhabitants.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Like Jrustela, Seshnelans favour the art of the sword and so sword and sword and shield Combat Styles are favoured. However, polearms and spears are also learned, in two-handed styles – a clear sign of Seshnela's ability to wage war and desire to equip its populace with the skills to do so. Seshnelan knights favour the lance.

Magic

As a devoutly Malkioni nation, Seshnela favours sorcery and supports similar sorcery orders to Jrustela: use the same rules for the Jrustela – Main Isle. The additional saints venerated in Seshnela, and their Grimoires, are outlined here.

Seshnelans also gain 6 points of Magnitude of Common Magic spells.

Cults

As per Jrustela – Main Isle. Additionally, some Seshnelans from the duchy of Kaniland follow the Right Hrestoli Order – a version of the Loskalmi Hrestoli order but one that places Hrestol firmly in his place, as a direct devotee of Malkion. Hrestol's mother, Saint Xemela, is widely worshipped throughout Seshnela and whilst it is not exclusively a women's cult, its members tend to be female. In the city of Damolsten, in Seshnela duchy, the Order of Damolsten, the First Age hero, is popular.

The grimoires for these saints are:

Hrestol Rightness Order

Abjure (Food),
(Sleep)
Banish
Damage
Resistance
Glow
Mystic Vision
Protective Ward

Saint Xemela

Intuition
Neutralise
Magic
Regenerate
Spell
Resistance
Telepathy
Treat Wound

Order of Damolsten

Dominate
(Mostali)
Damage
Enhancement
Damage
Resistance
Enhance
Characteristic
(CON)
Sense (Enemy)
Spirit Resistance

BRITHOS

The island of sorcerers is a strange and rare place where a strict caste system keeps everyone in their place and the slumbering form of Zzabur, in the very centre of the island, continues to connect the Brithini to Glorantha's mythic past, beyond even the First Age. Naturally insular, Brithini prefer not to travel and when forced to do so hire mercenaries to act as bodyguards and go betweens, mostly from highly trusted God Learners, so as not to have to mix with the taint of the general human populace.

Brithini claim to be immortal and this may be so. Few children are born on the island and reproduction between the sexes is shunned – although men and women do form family units. Brithini certainly fear old age and mortality and seem to age at a lesser rate than other humans. The Brithini explain this away as part of their sorcerous heritage although its truth is far more complex and is bound up between the origins of Zzabur the Sorcerer and Mostal the Maker. For a human species, Brithini exhibit some curiously dwarf-like tendencies.

Race

Wareran (supposedly).

Languages

Brithini.

Cultural Backgrounds

The Brithini follow a strict caste system that differs significantly from the standard *RuneQuest* Cultural Backgrounds. These are summarised in the Brithini Cast Background Table:

Dronars: Artisans and craftsmen, dronars manufacture and grow everything the Brithini need, ensuring the islanders have to rely on no one else for anything. Dronar ingenuity and craftsmanship is the stuff of legend – second only to the Mostali in many eyes. The God Learners have studied dronar methods endlessly in a bid to replicate their efficiency. Dronars are the most numerous of the Brithini race.

Horals: Warriors of the Brithini. Fanatical foot soldiers who are forbidden to ride horses, the horals train in a variety of weapon styles that characterise their unit and denote their position in battle: thus there are Pike Horals, Sling Horals, Sword Horals, and so forth. Horals are commanded by the Talars and obey any order given without question.

Talars: Commanders of the Brithini, they command not only the army but also order the rest of society, including the zzaburs. Expert organisers, administrators and tacticians, their intellects are bent towards planning, contingency and



Brithini Caste Background Table

Caste	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Professions Available	Money
Dronars	Athletics +20%, Brawn +20%, Culture (Brithini) +30%, Lore (Regional) +40%	Craft (Any), Language (Brithini) +50 Pick Three Art(any), Craft (any), Engineering, Lore (any), Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Track, Survival	Any artisans, crafters or performers	4D6 x25 silvers
Horals	Athletics +10%, Culture (Brithini) +30%, Lore (Regional) +40%, Resilience +10% Pick Two +10% Axe, Axe and Shield, Bow, Mace, Polearm, Shield, Sling, Spear, Sword	Courtesy, Language (Brithini) +50%, Lore (Tactics), Track, Survival	Champion/Knight Mercenary Soldier/Warrior	4D6 x50 silvers
Talars	Culture (Brithini) +30%, Influence +20%, Lore (Regional) +40%, Persistence +20%, Staff +5%, Unarmed +5%	Language (Brithini) +50% Pick Four Commerce, Courtesy, Culture (other), Healing, Language (Any), Lore (Any), Oratory, Shiphandling, Streetwise, Survival	Any Civilised, with the exception of any professions open to Dronars and Holars.	4D10 x100 silvers
Zzaburs	Culture (Brithini) +30%, Lore (Regional) +40%	Language (Brithini) +50%, Sorcery (Brithini Grimoires) +30%, Manipulation +30%	Sorcerer	4D10 x200 silvers

mitigation, trained from an early age to serve the Brithini interest. Talars are forbidden to carry weapons but are this does not mean they cannot fight. As well as developing their Unarmed capabilities, Talars adapt other pieces of equipment to battle usage. Their War Crowns, whilst head-gear and symbol of status, are employed as missile weapons and the staff that most carry is a ready weapon in itself.

Zzaburs: The sorcerers of the Brithini, the zzaburs claim to have invented sorcery and they use this magical style to the exclusion of all others. The zzaburs have developed several spells unavailable to other sorcerers and which, even if they could be learned cannot be used. One example of this ingenuity with sorcery is The Spell Forbidden by Urostio. When cast, a field-full of farmers and labourers is transformed into a raging army of berserker warriors who are the match for

any opposition. The spell's side-effect is to condemn all who take part in it – caster, target and those who command the warriors – a lingering death by old age.

Professions

As per the Brithini Caste Background Table.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Any. Holars practice a wide variety of weapon styles.

Magic

Dronars, holars and talars use Common Magic, although do so sparingly and never in the presence of a zzabur. Zzaburs only ever use sorcery and their grimoires are custom things. Any Zzabur knows six of the sorcery spells from *RuneQuest*.

Cults

Brithini do not worship any gods and reject Malkion and the Invisible God. They revere the sorcerer Zzabur who sleeps, entombed, at the centre of Brithos, awaiting the time when he will be called upon to return to Glorantha for reasons unknown. Only the zzabur class reveres Zzabur openly and the cult of Zzabur has its own distinct hierarchy that zzaburs pass through, each level of attainment characterised by its own Grimoire.

FRONELA – LOSKALM AND JUNORA

The people of Loskalm were once occupied by the God Learners who attempted to purge the worship of Saint Hrestol through intimidation, violence and propaganda: they failed and the Loskalmi rejected God Learner domination driving them from their lands and reverting to the revered doctrines of Hrestolism – which propound that Saint Hrestol is a prophet every bit as legitimate as Malkion.

The Loskalmi are therefore Malkioni but reject God Learner doctrine. Several additional heresies have grown in Loskalm as a result of this schism: the reverence of Saint Galastar in the Janube River Valley and the birth of Carmania in Peloria. Loskalm is proof that the Rightness Way of the God Learners can be challenged – and challenged successfully.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Western, Loskalmi dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised.

Loskalm is an egalitarian feudal society recognising four social castes: the Lordly caste, which is landed and titled nobility; the Priestly caste, which is the religious class; the Knightly caste, which is the warrior caste of Loskalm; and the Peasantry, which encompasses everyone else. Mobility through the castes is not only possible but a reality. Hrestol taught, through the True Hrestol Way, that every man should strive to reach Solace by progression through the four castes. That being so, the social codes of Loskalm ensure that everyone, irrespective of their station of birth, can enter into, and prosper within, any of the other castes. Those born into the Lordly caste, for example, are compelled to spend a decent portion of their youth working alongside those of the Peasant caste, living life as all members of that caste experience it. Only once the

Peasant caste has been experienced can one move into the Knightly caste, and so forth.

Those born to the Peasant caste gain the right, if they so choose, to enter the Knightly caste as warriors and work their way into the position of Knight, gaining the title of 'Sir'. This honour is by no means guaranteed but neither does it signify failure if not attained: the Knightly caste includes all those who bear arms in the name of Loskalm and the king. Serving within it is the only way for one to be able to move into the Priestly caste.

The Priestly caste teaches the veneration of Hrestol, Malkion and the Invisible God. Those who remain within it may become bishops, archbishops or even the ecclesiarch; but only those who do serve in this caste have any right to be entitled and thus gain entry to the Lordly caste, wherein faithful and diligent progression is rewarded with land, privilege and the dedicated recognition of the king.

For character creation choose the Civilised Background and a caste to go along with it. No caste gains any additional skill benefits, but it is important to know where in society the character begins.

Professions

Peasant Caste – Any crafting, farming or artisan profession, plus Soldier/Warrior.

Knightly Caste – Champion/Knight and Mercenary only.

Priestly Caste – Priest or Sorcerer only.

Lordly Caste – Noble only.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Peasant Caste – Spear, Spear and Shield, Sling, Bow, Polearm.

Knightly Caste – Sword, Sword and Shield, Polearm, Lance, Bow.

Priestly Caste – Sword, Sword and Shield, Spear, Staff, Sling.

Lordly Caste – As for Knight.

Magic

As the Loskalmi are Malkioni and revere the saints, sorcery is the primary form of magic, although all Loskalmi have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic. In some cases the saints can work miracles that may have the properties of Divine Magi, but this tends to be uncommon. Full details of such miracles are provided in *Cults of Glorantha*.

Cults

Many saints are revered, but Hrestol is foremost. The Hrestoli Church is spread far and wide across Loskalm, with the worship of Saint Hrestol being ubiquitous. Other saints, such as Xemela and Galastar, are also worshipped. Typical grimoires follow:

Hrestol Rightness Order

Abjure (Food),
(Sleep)
Banish
Damage
Resistance
Glow
Mystic Vision
Protective
Ward

Saint Xemela

Intuition
Neutralise Magic
Regenerate
Spell Resistance
Telepathy
Treat Wound

Typical Lesser Saint

Banish
Cast Back
Enhance
(Characteristic)
Haste
Spell Resistance
Mystic Vision

Mahan: Fully draconised, the inhabitants of Mahan revere Lord Great Burin and Isgangdrang, heroes of the Eternal Dragon Ring. Non-Wyrmfriends are either driven from the city by violent force or indoctrinated into the ways of the EWF by fierce proselytizers. For those with draconic leanings, this is a place of enlightenment and mysticism, fully devoted to the draconic ideal and Great Dragon Project.

Perfe: A mixture of Loskalmi and Junoran influence makes Perfe, City of Arts, peaceful and cultured. Its citizens are poets and bards; painters and sculptors. Through the pursuit of art, filtered through the lens of both Hrestolism and Malkioni doctrine, fundamental truths are exposed.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Typically Western Loskalmi but each city has its own dialects:

Galastar – Western Seshnegi, Loskalmi dialect.

Eastpoint – Western Seshnegi, Seshnelan dialect.

Mahan – Auld Wyrmish.

Perfe – Western, Loskalmi dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest* Rules.

Professions

Civilised professions, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. However, all Janubians gain Boating as a Common Skill, given the proximity and importance of the river.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Most weapon styles are supported.

Magic

All Janubians have the standard 6 Magnitude Common Magic. Sorcery is practiced in Galastar, Eastpoint and Perfe. Draconic Mysticism is practiced in Mahan.

Cults

Galastar: Saint Xemela is the primary saint of the city, although an underground movement worships Saint Galastar. In addition to Xemela, Rightness Army cults include Bardan's Book and Saint Talor

FRONELA – JANUBE VALLEY

The Janube River Valley has been dominated by Loskalmi, God Learners and Wyrmfriends in its history. The retreat of the God Learners has left a power vacuum that has allowed a mish-mash of competing factions to rise and dominate each city-state, with none having overall control. Across the Janube valley one now finds devout Malkioni, heretical Galastari and the brooding, plotting, Wyrmfriend cults.

As a strategically important conduit between the west and the east of Genertela, the Janube valley is always going to be contested ground: the question is, which faction will arise victorious; or will their actions plunge the Janube into a new front for war and destruction?

Adventurers from the Janube valley need to choose a city state to belong to. The obvious candidates are:

Galastar: occupied by devout God Learners, remnants of the Loskalm occupation, this city state is split between the devout Malkioni of the Middle Sea Empire and those who worship Saint Galastar the Martyr – a renegade Malkioni who preached tolerance and inclusivity. The city he founded welcomes all faiths but under the repressive God Learners Galastarism is outlawed and other creeds treated with disdain.

Eastpoint: Another, devout, God Learner enclave, ruled by the scheming Queen Junoura, Eastpoint is decadent whilst maintaining a devout veneer through the presence of the powerful Saint Talor Church. Queen Junoura means to completely dominate the whole of the Janube valley and her citizens support this drive towards greatness. Crusades against the Wyrmfriend city of Mahan are in preparation, masterminded by the arch manipulator Earl Wulz.

Grimoires:

Saint Xemela	Galastar	Bardan's Book	Saint Talor
Intuition	Abjure	Cast Back	Dominate
Neutralise	(Sleep)	Damage	(Species)
Magic	Damage	Enhance-	Damage
Regenerate	Resistance	ment	Enhance-
Spell	Enhance	Damage	ment
Resistance	(CHA)	Resistance	Damage
Telepathy	Haste	Enhance	Resistance
Treat	Hinder	(DEX)	Enhance
Wound	Project	Project	(INT)
	(Sight)	(Sense)	Neutralise
		Spell	Magic
		Resistance	Spirit
		Treat	Resistance
		Wounds	

Eastpoint: Saint Talor and the Malkioni True Church hold sway. Saint Talor's Grimoire is above.

Malkioni True Church

Cast Back
Damage Resistance
Mystic Vision
Neutralise magic
Spell Resistance
Spirit Resistance

Mahan: The cults of Lord Great Burin and Isgangdrang hold sway. Their cults are described in *Cults of Glorantha* but otherwise magic granted is Draconic Mysticism as described in the Gloranthan Magic chapter.

Perfe: Saint Xemela, Hrestol and a variety of saints, all of them martyred artists, are popular.

FRONELA – RATHORELA, TASTOLAR & WINTERWOOD

These are the lands of the beastmen – the hsunchen. Primitive, totemistic tribes allied with a particular beast native to the lands. Although focused on the Fronelan hsunchen, the template here works for the hsunchen of anywhere in Glorantha.

Hsunchen shun technology save for the simplest of tools. They do not work the land and they do not press animals into service; they do not occupy anything but the simplest structures and many are seasonally nomadic (some even hibernating). Clothing is the locally available leather and hides, always based on the ancestral animal and includes furs

and a variety of accoutrements (bones, teeth, horns, claws and so on) to act as foci for their magic.

All hsunchen are matrilineal; family bonds are determined through the females of the clan rather than the males. When hsunchen marry – and it is always outside the clan – then the male goes to live with the female's clan. Certain tasks are divided between males and females; men hunt and women forage, for instance, but when it comes to war, both sexes fight with equal standing and hsunchen warbands are often led by women or have a large female contingent. All men are expected to learn how to sew and tend hearth and all women are required to know the hunting trails and locations of snares and traps.

The basic social unit is the family. Families are small; parents and two or three children. Families bond together into clans, which roam a loosely defined territory within the wider territory of the tribe to which they belong. The tribe is a congregation of allied clans who share a common matrilineal ancestry which can, in itself, be traced back to the ancestral animal and the spirit world. A single ancestral animal may therefore have a single tribe or many, depending on ancient actions that established the hsunchen communities in the world.

Leadership is based on whoever does the job best and who can command the most followers. Strong, decisive, charismatic individuals excel in this regard; it is not necessarily the best fighter, although war is a constant fact of life amongst the hsunchen tribes.

The hsunchen tribes of this region are as follows:

Rathori (Bear People)

The Rathori bear people are the single largest hsunchen group on Genertela and perhaps across the whole of Glorantha. The Rathori venerate Rathor, the Great White Bear, sometimes known as Grandfather Bear, Grandfather White or just Grandfather. However all bears are venerated and so there are many related tribes, all revering the Great White Bear but also holding another species of bear sacred also. The majority are Irgari, who revere the grizzly bear as their totem. Within the Irgari are the Irdagi, kin to black bears and they form a significant minority. The Orenrar are children of the Blue Bear and are reclusive, even amongst the Rathori, and little is known of them. The Rathori tribes live in peace and share a single culture.

The Rathori are populace and have established small villages throughout the extensive pine forests of Rathorela, which borders Charg, the Janube valley and Tastolar. Their communities are simple; their homes basic and often dug-out of the ground and covered with bracken, branches and pine-moss. The Rathori share their forest with a small community



of pine aldryami and have learned the skill of longbow use from them, which marks them as the only non-elf longbow users in Glorantha.

Uncolings (Reindeer People)

The Uncolings are nomadic and range across the tundra region of Tastolar in the shadow of Valind's Glacier. The reindeer herds are everything to the Uncolings, providing milk, meat and antlers for tools.

Despite a low-level of technological sophistication, the Uncolings are socially advanced amongst the hsunchen culture. Each spring the Tastolar clans and tribes come together in their Sacred Herd in order to perform complex magical and veneration ceremonies requiring thousands of participants to be effective. This is their time for HeroQuests, which, given the vast community support, are usually productive, leading to continued prosperity amongst the Uncolings. The Sacred Herd selects new leaders, settles disputes and climaxes in a great feast, complete with mock battles between antler-equipped stag warriors and recreations of the migration of the spiritual herd during the God Time.

Kloisari (Badger People)

Immediately distinguishable by the pair of white streaks that flow through their dark hair, and the strong stench of musk and urine (daubed ritually onto the body and clothes), the Kloisari have a reputation for being grouchy and anti-social, even with other hsunchen. The Kloisari inhabit the southern

region of Rathorela, close to the Janube, in order to avoid straying into Rathori lands. The two have never warred but the Kloisari maintain an ancestral need to separate themselves from the bear kin.

Despite their reclusive natures, Kloisari sometimes place themselves for hire as mercenaries along the Janube River. Regular Kloisari contingents arrive at Galastar to offer their services as paid warriors but never enter the city itself, always remaining at a discreet distance outside the city's gates.

Zonati - (Yellow Quill Porcupine People)

The Zonati revere the semi-arboreal porcupines of northern Fronela and are hunter-gatherers, living deep in the forest. In Rathorela they have strong ties with the Rathori but in Tastolar and Winterwood they are more solitary. They are generally friendly towards their neighbours and are a peaceful folk when compared with other hsunchen. The Zonati are even prepared to trade with foreign merchants on occasion, particularly in northern Loskalm around the provinces of Agria and Easeval. Civilised humans throughout Fronela believe that Zonati men are prodigiously endowed by comparison with other humans.

Sabadari (Wolverine People)

Considered a scourge by the Janubians, the Sabadari are fearless, berserk warriors, raiding civilised communities north of the Janube and even land-based trade caravans that stray too close to the tree line of the Rathori and Tastolari forests. They fight for the love of fighting and leave a trail of destruction, but

Hsunchen Professions

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Chosen	Athletics +10%, Influence +5%, Lore (Regional) +10%	Survival +5%
	Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Hammer, Perception, Resilience, Spear, Throwing, Unarmed	
Savage	Athletics +5%, Dodge +5%, Unarmed +5%	Survival, Tracking
	Pick One +10% Axe, Hammer, Mace, Spear	
	Pick One +5% Bow, Dagger, Perception, Resilience, Stealth, Throwing	
Totem Guardian	Influence +5%, Lore (Regional) +15%	Survival, Tracking
	Pick Two +5% Athletics, Axe, Bow, Dodge, Hammer, Perception, Persistence, Resilience, Spear, Stealth, Unarmed	
Tribesman	Axe +5%, Athletics +5% OR Dance +5%, Bow +5%, First Aid +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Perception +10%, Spear +5%	Pick One Craft, Healing, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking

Hsunchen Cultural Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Uncolings	Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +10% Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Persistence, Resilience, Sing, Stealth Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed	Language (Uncoling) +50%, Lore (Reindeer), Tracking Pick One Craft, Dance, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	4D6x25 silver
Kloisari	Athletics +15%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15% Pick Two +10% Brawn, Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Sing, Stealth Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed	Language (Kloisari) +50%, Lore (Badger) Pick Two Acrobatics, Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x25 silver
Rathori	Brawn +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Bow +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Resilience +10% Pick One +10% Athletics, Dance, First Aid, Influence, Perception, Persistence, Sing Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed	Language (Rathori) +50%, Lore (Bear), Survival +10% Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x25 silver
Zonati	Athletics +15%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15% Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Sing, Stealth Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed	Language (Zonati) +50%, Lore (Porcupine) Pick Two Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x25 silver
Sabadari	Athletics +15%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15% Pick Two +10% Brawn, Dance, Dodge, First Aid, Influence, Sing, Stealth Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed	Language (Sabadari) +50%, Lore (Wolverine) Pick Two Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x25 silver



Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Rinkoni	Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Evade +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15%	Language (Rinkoni) +50%, Lore (Bobcat)	4D6x25 silver
Lokari	Pick Two +10% Athletics, Dance, First Aid, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Sing, Stealth	Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x25 silver
	Pick One +15% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed Athletics +15%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15%, Stealth +10%,	Language (Lokari) +50%, Lore (Raccoon)	
	Pick Two +10% Athletics, Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Sing	Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	
Akkari	Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15%	Language (Akkari) +50%, Lore (Skunk)	4D6x25 silver
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Sing, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	
	Pick One +15% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Insight +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +10%	Language (Flari) +50%, Lore (Owl)	
Flari	Pick Two +10% Athletics, Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Sing, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x25 silver
	Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed Brawn +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Resilience +15%	Language (Hogari) +50%, Lore (Mammoth)	
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Persistence, Sing, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	
Hogari	Pick One +15% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed		4D6x25 silver



no theft, in their wake. Scalps are prized and are stitched into their own furs and leathers, worn as symbols of their courage and ruthlessness. Women have been taken by Sabadari men and used in obscene ways before being hung from high trees; there are even tales of Sabadari women goading the men into these acts during their vicious raids.

They are feared even amongst their hsunchen kin. The Rathori frequently war with them, and the Sabadari have a fondness for driving other hsunchen out of their ancestral lands and away from their game trails. Many wars against the Sabadari are therefore revenge attacks for these acts of unforgivable violence. The Sabadari are unrepentant: this is who they are and this is how their ancestral spirits dictate they must behave. They are simply acting according to their natures.

Rinkoni (Bobcat People)

The Rinkoni inhabit the southern fringes of Fronela, along the edge of Erontree and the foothills of the Nidan Mountains. Fierce, like the Sabadari, they travel in small war-bands and exact tribute from the less defended settlements of the region, targeting isolated Loskalmi logging communities and some of the isolated Orlanthi clan steads of the Golaros lowlands. Despite their ferocity, their reputation for brutality is generally exaggerated. They know the mountains and terrain exceedingly well and, if paid sufficiently, sometimes act as guides through the Nidan passes.

Lotari (Fronelan Raccoon People)

The Lotari inhabit the western forests of Rathorela, staying in the shadow of the Rathori. They have little respect for their bear kin neighbours, although they stop short of outright conflict, preferring the occasional theft under cover of darkness and sly tricks played on individual families that can, over time, degenerate into sadistic torments.

The Lotari are masters of concealment, and infamous for their deviousness. Outsiders say that Lotara, the great raccoon spirit, was once a lover of Trickster, which may explain his children's propensities.

Akkari (Skunk People)

Highly primitive hunter-gatherers, the Akkari pose little serious threat and prefer to live in isolation from the civilised world and other hsunchen. Stories tell of ghastly, smelly creatures but this belies the truth. Akkari are possessed of great physical beauty – both males and females – and have an exceedingly well developed sensuality that manifests in deep affections and elaborate courtship rituals. Some Akkari possess the ability to exude a hideous smelling musk which can be sprayed in a similar manner to their animal counterparts but the ability is rare. Those who have it are revered within their

own communities, for they have forged that essential link with the ancestral spirit and been blessed with a true gift.

Flari (Black Owl People)

The Flari are a small tribe of Fronelan savages worshipping the Black Owl. Largely nocturnal, with excellent night-sight, they engage in daring night time raids against the Rathori and Sabadari. The heroes of the Flari can turn into owls of different kinds, with the most potent heroes assuming the form of an eagle owl. Like their ancestral animal, Flari like to eat rodents and other small mammals but will steal anything they can lay their hands on.

Hogari (Mammoth People)

In the farthest, most isolated reaches of Rathorela, the hulking Hogari mammoth people roam. One of the most ancient of the hsunchen, and the most reclusive, the Hogari are scattered among the perpetually frozen forests and snow fields, rarely wandering into warmer climes. In the Dawn Age, they ranged as far north as Valind's Glacier but were driven out by fierce Uz and were forced to migrate east and south, to the areas they now occupy.

The Hogari are huge, bulky humans, standing over two and half metres tall. Their lower teeth curve out over the lower lip, in the manner of tusks and their noses are prominent beneath vast, bushy eyebrows. Slow and deliberate in their movements, they are also long-lived: a strong male can live for two centuries with ease. They have little to do with the other, more southerly, inhabitants of the forest but trade peacefully with the Uncoling when the migrations of both peoples bring them together.



Hogari Adventurers should increase SIZ by three and reduce DEX by three.

Race

Hsunchen.

Languages

Hsunchen – many dialects.

Cultural Backgrounds

Primitive, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, or as per the table on page 205,

Professions

Primitive Professions, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, or as per the table on page 204.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per the Cultural Background Styles.

Magic

The hsunchen despise sorcery and Common Magic. Their magic is the spirit magic of the ancestral spirits, each an animal as beget by Hykim and Mikyh. Hsunchen shaman are responsible for ensuring that the links with the ancestral spirits are never broken and never forgotten.

Cults

The totem is the cult. Every hsunchen reveres the Great Spirit of the totemic animal. Lesser spirits of the same animal figure in the cult's myths and ancestor worship (hsunchen heroes of the cult, particularly those who could change into the animal itself) are common across all hsunchen cults.

FRONELA – ORLANTHI

In the eastern reaches of Fronela, the Charg and Golaring Lowlands specifically, Orlanthi tribes dominate the wildlands. The Orlanthi here are the descendents of Dawn Age migrants from Kethaela. Cut off from their eastern brethren, these colonists developed into two separate tribes: the highlanders of the Charg uplands and the lowlanders of Golaros. Tribal divisions arose in time meaning that neither had much to do with the other and the two tribes split into their own, separate tribes – although populations of both highlanders and lowlanders have remained roughly stable throughout their history.

The Orlanthi of Fronela were never conquered by the God Learners but were converted to Wyrmfriendism by proselytizing Hunting and Waltzing Bands. Now, the

Orlanthi fall into two distinct camps: those who still embrace Wyrmfriendism and those who have rejected it and moved back to Old Ways Traditionalism. Relations between the two camps are not healthy. As the following Tribes and Clans table shows, clans in the same tribe do not always follow the same beliefs, meaning that intra-tribal relations are every bit as strained as those between tribes.

Tribes and Clans of Charg

Clan	Tribe	Allegiance
Chul-Khail	Karnisi	Old Ways
Garumos	Karnisi	Draconic
Harnethi	Karnisi	Draconic
Kandari	Karnisi	Draconic
Muhandiri	Karnisi	Draconic
Orumi	Karnisi	Old Ways
Rock River	Karnisi	Draconic
Sarandar	Karnisi	Draconic
Saughro	Karnisi	Draconic
Snow Stealer	Karnisi	Old Ways
Tuther	Karnisi	Draconic
Venrassi	Karnisi	Draconic
White Vale	Karnisi	Old Ways
Aanan	Kerseni	Old Ways
Cenesh	Kerseni	Old Ways
Galarad	Kerseni	Old Ways
Kersen	Kerseni	Old Ways
Khuul	Kerseni	Old Ways
Suulii	Kerseni	Old Ways
Jharst	Spral	Draconic
Jonulus	Spral	Draconic
Nechkta	Spral	Draconic
Oonos	Spral	Draconic
Serenj	Spral	Draconic
Uyst	Spral	Draconic
Arranite	Vosi	Old Ways
Beldrayn	Vosi	Old Ways
Chul-Vrai	Vosi	Old Ways
Grey Vale	Vosi	Old Ways
Herensi	Vosi	Old Ways
Leandii	Vosi	Old Ways
Near Hills	Vosi	Old Ways
Rengassi	Vosi	Old Ways
Sapel	Vosi	Old Ways
Sarandeal	Vosi	Old Ways
Scoured Eyes	Vosi	Old Ways
Sussairii	Vosi	Old Ways
Vendari	Vosi	Old Ways
Vorhath	Vosi	Old Ways

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Theyalan, Fronelan dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

Barbarian Professions, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Barbarian weapons and Combat Styles, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Magic

All Orlanthe use Common Magic and begin with 6 points of Magnitude in Common Magic spells.

The Old Ways Orlanthe follow the Divine Cults of the Storm Tribe and thus derive their magic from the traditional divine view of the gods.

Draconised Orlanthe derive their magic not from the gods but through Draconic Mysticism, as discussed in the Glorantha Magic chapter.

Cults

Old Ways Traditionalist: Divine Cults of the Storm Tribe; Orlanthe, Ernalda, and so forth.

Draconised Orlanthe: Orlanthe the Scale, Ernalda the Snake, Humakt the Venom – draconic twists on the Old Ways cults with rites and practices permitting Draconic Mysticism rather than Divine Magic.

SLONTOS

An expansive, God Learner dominated region sprawling eastwards along the coasts from the Choralinthor Bay, Slontos is heavily populated and split into three key duchies: Wenela, Ramalia and Maniria. Kotorsland, north of the unruly volcano region of Caladrland, is lawless border territory, home to renegades and bandits seeking to oppose the Middle Sea Empire or simply escaping it for crimes committed. Scattered across Kotorsland, living in small tribal groups, are hsunchen primitives, principally the Mratoli – boar hsunchen.

Slontos is highly loyal to the Imperial seat in Jrustela even though its people are known to be fiercely independent.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Western Seshnegi, Slontos dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Wenela, Ramalia and Maniria – Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Kotorsland – Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, and Primitive (hsunchen).

Professions

As per the Cultural Background.

However Kotorsland has attracted mercenaries, dispossessed warriors and fractious sorcerers who are actively escaping imperial influence. Professions here tend towards those who are skilled at survival and are good with weapons. In amongst these people are many small Barbarian communities paying lip-service to the God Learners but who worship a variety of totemistic spirits and First Age ancestor heroes.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per Cultural Background.

Magic

Wenela, Ramalia and Maniria are all sorcerous duchies revering the saints, particularly the Malkioni True Church and the Ashara Church.

Grimoires

Malkioni True Church

Cast Back
Damage Resistance
Mystic Vision
Neutralise magic
Spell Resistance
Spirit Resistance

Ashara Church

Enhance (CHA)
Fly
Haste
Intuition
Protective Ward
Telepathy

The Kotorsland Barbarians have whatever magics are common to their backgrounds and the hsunchen, spirits and ancestors relevant to their beast totem.

Cults

Malkioni True Church, Ashara Church. The Ashara Church reveres the lesser prophet Ashara, one who offered refinements to the Abiding Book and is thus considered, by some, to be a heretic. The Book of Ashara is, however, less heretical than purists would maintain, favouring, as it does, trade and commerce. Thus, Ashara is tolerated, if not precisely welcomed.



The Kotorland Barbarians are a mixture of dispossessed Malkioni and Old Ways Traditionalists with cults reflecting their old background. However some have started to worship the Great Boar as part of the Mratoli tradition and thus are practicing spirit cultists as well as followers of the cults of their homeland.

PELORIA – CARMANIA

Born of renegade Malkioni fleeing Fronela, Carmanians have quickly forged their own society based upon God Learner principles but adapted to the heroes who emerged from Carmania's birth and the wars against the Spolites of the Kingdom of Gloom. As a result, Malkionism has become a basis for more widespread, Carmanian specific beliefs and, in its true form, a very distant relative to the God Learner faith.

Carmania has also waged wars against Dara Happa and the EWF: this has shaped its society into one that values the spirit, courage and heroism of battle and abhors draconic mysticism. Yet elements of the Solar Pantheon have crept into Carmanian belief and culture, making the Carmanians a diverse blend of the old and the new from both the west and Pelorian basin but with a distinctly zealous, warlike and crusading bent.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Carmanian Pelorian, Western – Carmanian dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised.

Professions

Civilised Professions, but with an emphasis on warriors and mercenaries.

Grimoires:

Black Book of Asacar

Attract (Missiles)
Damage Enhancement
Damage Resistance
Enhance Characteristic (STR)
Neutralise Magic
Wrack

White Book of Carshandar

Banish
Cast Back
Damage Enhancement
Damage Resistance
Enhance Characteristic (INT)
Protective Ward

Prophets Grimoire/Hero Cults

Attract (Magic)
Damage Resistance
Glow
Haste
Sense (Dragon)
Protective Ward

Carmanos – Path of the Father

Damage Enhancement
Damage Resistance
Enhance Characteristic (STR)
Intuition
Mystic Vision
Spell Resistance

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword (Scimitars favoured), Sword and Shield, Spear, Spear and Shield, Bow, Crossbow, Polearm.

Magic

Carmanians use Common Magic to aid them in battle and beginning Adventurers have the requisite 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells.

Sorcery is also used with the spells drawn from the Grimoires of the Black Book of Asacar and the White Book of Carshandar.

Cults

Carmanians utterly reject draconic teachings and have, to a large extent, abandoned Malkionism in its God Learner form, although the Invisible God is still worshipped. Carmanian cults focus on the Prophets and the Heroes. Prophets are Carmanian versions of Malkioni martyrs such as Hrestol and Galastar but the names have been altered over the years and now it is common for Carmanians to worship a Prophet or Prophets and for that reverence to include one or several prophets of the Invisible God.

Hero Cults focus on those who forged Carmania: Syranthir the Wanderer and Surandar Warleader.

In addition to these traditional cults is that of Carmanos – a melding of Hero Cult, Divine Cult and Mystic Cult. The objects of worship are the hero, Carmanos, son of Syranthir and the goddess Charmain, and the goddess herself. Carmanos cultists choose the Path of Father, in which case they learn sorcery from the Carmanos Grimoire, or they follow the Path of the Mother, in which case they form a Pact with Charmain and so gain Divine Magic. Irrespective of which path is followed a certain degree of mystic enlightenment is sought through HeroQuests to Castle Blue, the mythical home of Charmain and where Surandar is said to have been born.



Divine Magic – Carmanos, Path of the Mother

Amplify
Channel Strength
Disarm
Heal Body
Heal Mind
Heal Wound

PELORIA – DARA HAPPA

Dara Happans are a complex people. Their history, long and fractious, can be traced to before the Dawn Age and, amongst all Gloranthans, they have, perhaps, the strongest ties to their gods but also the least personal.



Most Dara Happans are deeply urbanised. Every noble lives within the walls of the great cities of Dara Happa and the most prestigious and influential families reside within the capital, Raibanth, and the second city, Yuthuppa. The peasantry lives outside the city walls, but close to them, and are viewed with an undisguised scorn and disdain by all city dwellers, although their necessity to society is not in question.

Dara Happa is strictly patriarchal. All lineages can be traced back to Yelm and the importance of males in society is therefore divinely commanded. Sons are favoured over daughters; brothers over sisters. Women are essentially treated as commodities: to marry two houses or families together; to bear children (males, preferably); to tend the home and hearth; and do the bidding of their fathers, brothers and husbands faithfully, diligently and obediently. The most prestigious occupations and social positions are therefore occupied explicitly by males. Only a man (and a nobleman, at that) has any intrinsic rights to property. Only men may worship the key gods of the Solar pantheon – women have their own gods reflecting their place in Dara Happan society. Dara Happan women are loved deeply by their men but their social position is fixed by Yelm's divine law and that law cannot be transcended. Both men and women understand and accept this socio-sexual delineation and are naturally disdainful of cultures such as the Orlanthi and the EWF, both of which accord far greater equality to females.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Solar Pelorian, Lower Pelorian, City Common.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised. Skills are as per the Civilised background in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. Commoners have the starting money as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* for Civilised. Nobles are handled differently.

Dara Happans are either Nobles or Commoners. Nobles can trace their lineage back to the first Emperor, Murharzam whilst Commoners have never enjoyed such exalted and illustrious histories. Nobles rule and Commoners work – but everyone understands their place and accepts it. This is Yelm's Divine Harmony.

To randomly decide whether a Dara Happan Adventurer is Noble or Commoner, roll 1D100. A result of 25% or less indicates a Noble – all else are Commoners.

Nobles should then roll on the Noble Standing table to determine their place in the noble hierarchy:

Dara Happan Noble StandingTable

1D10	Standing	Starting Money
1	High Ranking Nobility of the Denesiod Line	6D6 x 200 Wheels
2	Middle Ranking Nobility of the Denesiod Line	4D6 x 100 Wheels
3	Low Ranking Nobility of the Denesiod Line	2D6 x 50 Wheels
4	High Ranking Nobility of the Erzanestyu Line	6D6 x 200 Wheels
5	Middle Ranking Nobility of the Erzanestyu Line	4D6 x 100 Wheels
6	Low Ranking Nobility of the Erzanestyu Line	2D6 x 50 Wheels
7	High Ranking Nobility of the Khordavu Line	6D6 x 200 Wheels
8	Middle Ranking Nobility of the Khordavu Line	4D6 x 100 Wheels
9	Low Ranking Nobility of the Khordavu Line	2D6 x 50 Wheels
10	Minor Noble Family with no clear lineage	2D6 x 25 Wheels

Denesiod, Erzanestyu and Khordavu were all emperors who founded one of the great Dara Happan dynasties.

Khordavu is the oldest, and most auspicious, dynasty, which spanned 479 years and had 23 emperors in total. The Erzanestyu Dynasty ruled for 193 years and had 12 emperors. Denesiod is the most recent dynasty and includes the emperor Dismanthuyar. It held power for 188 years and had 10 emperors.

Whilst there should be no technical social difference between the same ranks of different lineages, this is not so in practice. Khordavians view themselves as superior to Erzanestys and Erzanestys see themselves as superior to Denesiodans. Thus, a minor Khordavian noble will always see himself as socially equal, if not superior, to a high-ranking Denesiodan.

Professions

Nobles: Any Civilised Profession but excluding crafting and artisan professions.

Commoners: Any Profession but excluding Noble, Champion/Knight and Priest.

No Dara Happan can be a sorcerer.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword and Sword and Shield styles are favoured by the nobility, with Spear and Spear and Shield reserved for the Commoners. Both casts also favour the Bow and Dara Happan archers, blessed by the archer god Sagittus, are renowned for their skill.

Magic

Dara Happans practice Common Magic and thus gain the starting 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells. As Dara Happa is deeply theistic, with a complex array of gods and goddesses, Divine Magic is available to cult members. Sorcery is shunned. Those Dara Happans who have embraced the Solar Dragon may join draconised versions of the traditional Solar Pantheon cults and learn Draconic Mysticism but they are denied Divine Magic if they do so.

Cults

With 100 gods in the Solar Pantheon, space does not permit a full exploration of all the myriad cults available to Dara Happans. The most popular cults are:

Yelm (High Ranking Nobles only) – Sun Emperor.

Divine Spells: Amplify, Clear Skies, Dismiss Magic, Gleam, Shield, Sun Spear.

Yelamllo (Nobles of any rank) – Yelm's son and warrior lord.

Divine Spells: Blessing, Clear Skies, Gleam, Mind Link, Shield.

Shargash – War God of the Solar Pantheon and Keeper of Hell.

Divine Spells: Amplify, Channel Strength, Dismiss Magic, Sun Spear, True Weapon.

Lodril – Earth-bound god of artisans, farmers and crafters. Open to any caste but favoured by Commoners.

Divine Spells: Bless Crops, Blessing, Channel Strength, Clear Skies, Laughter.

Oslira – The River Goddess, favoured by merchants and sailors.

Divine Spells: Blessing, Haste, Hinder, Heal Mind, Rain.

PELORIA – DARJIIN

Darjiin is forever in Dara Happa's shadow and shares many of its Solar traditions; however it differs in two fundamental respects. First, it is not under draconic occupation; the EWF has allowed Darjiin to continue self-governance on the proviso that it does not impede the Golden Dragon's agenda nor that of its agents, nor rise up against Dara Happa. Second, Darjiini

social structure is looser and more forgiving – something despised by the lofty Dara Happans.

All Darjiini belong to a clan – an extended family consisting of many brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces. The clan is central to Darjiini thinking and clans both work and play together. If at all possible, marriages take place within the clan (incest is a not infrequent occurrence) to maintain bloodlines and stability but inter-clan marriages are common and a purely political prospect. Nobles and commoners alike form clans and the names of the most successful and illustrious are semi-legendary: the Manimati clan rules Darjiin, paying lip-service to the Dara Happans but its rivals, the Menochti and the Khoravisi, enjoy equal notoriety.

Only noble clans may take on a name. Commoner clans are named for what the clan specialises in, thus the Weeders are the barge-dwelling clan that commands the rice paddies of the Oslir Valley whilst the Highfists control the highland farming and cultivation. Noble and commoner clans have been known to mix occasionally, when the conditions are right and this always resolves in the commoner clan's name being consigned to history as the noble clan's name take precedence.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Solar Pelorian, Lower Pelorian – both Darjiin dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Civilised. Commoner clans are excluded from the Noble profession. Noble clans are excluded from farming and manual labour professions, but not crafting: several important noble clans have forged their reputations on fine crafts.

The following two professions are available to commoners:

House Worker: The character is a servant to a larger family or house, serving as any number of on-hand staff for large estates and homes. He is a cleaner, gardener, butler or even maid; placing him under the protection of a greater family in exchange for the menial duties and tasks he must perform.

Steward: The character is a representative for a noble clan estate. It is the responsibility of the character to make sure that the family is represented accordingly. This could be from announcing introductions and entrances to polishing herald

seals and signet rings. It is the character's role in life to make his clan look as good and influential as possible.

Profession	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
House Worker	Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Perception +10%	Craft (any domestic), Streetwise
Steward	Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%	Craft (any domestic)

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per Civilised.

Magic

Darjiini practice Common magic and thus gain 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. As followers of the Solar Pantheon they gain Divine Magic as per Dara Happan cults. Sorcery is shunned and draconic mysticism is not practiced.

Cults

Solar Pantheon – however, the foremost goddess of the Darjiini is SurEnslib, the Heron Goddess which the Darjiini rank with just slightly lower importance than Yelm. Fertility cults are also popular, including Lodril, who is worshipped in his aspect of The Great Tool.

SurEnslib – Heron Goddess.

Divine Spells: Aphrodisiac, Beast Form (Heron), Bless Crops, Blessing, Ebb and Flow.

PELORIA – RINLIDDI

Once a province of Dara Happa but now a nation in its own right, Rinliddi labours in the shadow of the great Dara Happan cities of Elz Ast and Yuthuppa still and resents intrusions made by the Wyrmfriends who have sought to undermine the superiority of Rinliddi's avian deities.

The Rinliddi are independent and sullen, politically. Dara Happans of any persuasion are rivals, if not enemies, and the Rinliddi reject the stringent social hierarchies of both Dara Happa and Darjiin.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Solar Pelorian, Lower Pelorian – both Rinliddi dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Civilised. In addition, the Rinliddi, noted experts with the avian species that abound in their country, have the following professional options:

Avian Cavalry: The Adventurer is a trained rider of the huge land-birds of Peloria and can fight from the back of one with remarkable skill. These animals are the lifeblood of the Rinliddi people and the character is in charge of making sure that his comes home in one piece if at all possible. He is thankful for the resources his sacred animal provides him with, and knows his society would be hollow without them.

Falconer: Expert in hunting with birds of prey, falconers are at one with their raptors and adept at living in the wilds. Many falconers adopt the mannerisms of their favoured species of hunting bird.

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Avian Cavalry	Perception +5%, Riding +15%, Spear +10%	Lore (Great Avian), Survival
Falconer	Any Combat Style +5%, Athletics +5%, Perception +10%,	Lore (Falconry), Survival, Tracking

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Spears, slings and bows are favoured weapons amongst the Rinliddi.

Falconers usually have one or two birds trained to attack, diving, pecking and clawing at the eyes, hands and weapons of the enemy, as directed by the falconer.

Magic

Rinliddi practice Common Magic with the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. Their gods offer Divine Magic and both sorcery and Draconic Mysticism are shunned.

Cults

Solar Pantheon, but, principally, Vrimak, father of birds.

Vrimak: All avian life, from the mightiest sky-eagle to the smallest humming bird, is merely a variation on great Vrimak, child of the Sky.

Divine Spells: Alter Target, Beast Form (Bird), Blessing, Clear Skies, Mind Link (used to communicate with avians of all kinds).

PELORIA – TALASTAR

Talastar is part of the nascent Carmanian Empire, the Carmanians having driven out Wyrmfriendism from the hill tribes some 20 years ago. The pragmatic Talastarings have accepted Carmanian occupation to an extent because the Carmanians, happy to accept tribute, leave the Talastarings alone save for those occasions when Chaos raises an ugly tentacle from neighbouring Dorastor.

Talastarings are a sturdy and hardy people with brown or reddish hair and olive skin. Men and women grow their hair long and men wear beards. Rich and important men often affect long and oiled beards, which are frequently curled with tongs to create hanging curls. Both genders are tattooed with markings of clan, cultic initiation and for other magical-religious reasons. Commonly, men wear a fringed wool skirt and cloak – these are brightly coloured and patterned. Rich men usually wear ornate tunics over the wool skirt and sport abundant jewellery. Some nobles even wear a resplendently coloured wool toga.

Seven tribes make up the Talastarings: Arkailing, Biling, Linsting, Skanthing, Tenling, Ulreding and Vosdaling. Biling is the largest and strongest, both in terms of populace and in terms of links with the Carmanians: some Bilings have even adopted the Carmanian ways and joined their cults. The Bilings hold sway from the ancient, mighty hilltop fortress known as The Hold.

The Talastarings view themselves as a strong, proud and independent people who rely on themselves and their gods, and who will not bend to the will of any Empire or to the horrors that come out of Dorastor. Outsiders – Dara Happans and Darjiini in particular - view the Talastarings as rebellious and feuding bandits, whose lives consist of nothing but herding and stealing sheep.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Theyalan, Talastar dialect; Lower Pelorian.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Barbarian.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per Barbarian; Spear, Sword and Axe styles prevalent.

Magic

Talastaring Orlanthi have the requisite 6 points of Magnitude in Common Magic. As they follow the gods of the Old Ways they gain Divine Magic from the gods of the Storm Tribe. However there are clans who still cleave to the draconic aspects of the Orlanthi cults and so have Draconic Mysticism. Such Talastarings try to keep this a secret from the Carmanians, fearing repercussions, but amongst themselves have few qualms in retaining their old allegiances.

Cults

Cults of the Storm Tribe and their Divine Magic spells. Some clans retain an adherence to draconic teaching and follow the draconised cults such as Orlanth the Scale and Ernalda the Snake but such practices manage to co-exist alongside the traditional approach to veneration – save when Carmanian Knights decide to mount the occasional scouring of draconic influence, much as they continue to do against the Orlanthi of Charg and Golaros.

PELORIA – VOTANKILAND

Bordered by the Rockwood Mountains to the south and the Elf Sea to the north, Votankiland is wild, ungovernable country that is dominated by the trolls, who hold the central plains, the elves who live close to the Elf Sea and the dwarfs of Greatway, in the Rockwoods, who try to keep themselves to themselves but still find they are caught in battles with the other Elder Races.

More recently humans have come to this region, known as the Elder Wilds to the Elder Races, to live and prosper. These humans, the Votanki, find themselves competing with the trolls but have still managed to carve-out a niche for themselves. Battles between Votanki and trolls are occasional and bloody and, for the most part, an uneasy truce exists between them.

The Votanki are a primitive, unsophisticated people. They concentrate on raising pigs and goats, finding them easier to rear and protect than cattle. Lately the EWF has sent both dragonewts and Hunting and Waltzing Bands into Votankiland in a bid to exploit the supposed naivety of the human populace. The trolls despise these incursions and attack the EWF intruders when they can. The Votanki, on the other hand, merely see another way of garnering both power and magic and some of the scattered clans have embraced Draconic Mysticism thus earning increased troll enmity. An old Votanki king, Hargard Silverfist, established a loose EWF alliance almost two centuries ago and this loose alliance has formed the basis of the Hunting and Waltzing Band incursions on the pretext that the Votanki are malleable enough for assimilation into the Great Dragon Project.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

A mixture of Lower Pelorian and Theyalan, forming a crude, guttural bastardisation of both languages. Auld Wyrnish amongst the converted Votanki clans.

Cultural Backgrounds

Primitive, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per the Primitive culture in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Spear, Sling and Bow predominantly.

Magic

Votanki use Common Magic almost exclusively and have the requisite 6 points of Magnitude in Common Magic spells. They have not yet established a sophisticated view of the Gods and pay lip service to both Solar and Storm Pantheons, along with regular worship of the ancestors and spirits that abound across the region. In terms of higher magic, Votanki veer towards spirit magic and have no established Divine spells. Where the EWF has converted a clan to Wyrmfriendism, Draconic Mysticism is being taught but to not a great level.

Cults

Ancestor cults specific to the clan; nature spirits and the occasional beast spirit. Grandfather Hog is the Great Pig spirit and all Votanki clans offer reverence to him.

RALIOS – EASTERN WILDS

The lands of Saug, Delela and Keanos are dominated by Old Ways Orlanthi who forge a difficult existence, working against the inhospitable terrain and the incursions of Chaos monsters from Dorastor – although the stout Uroxi warriors remain vigilant.

The tula is the dominant form of settlement with scattered clans and tribes (Delelan, as the Saug shun tribalism) doing what they can to live from day to day. The harsh terrain has made harsh, pragmatic people with a distinctly fatalistic view of their own existence and little concern for the wider interests of either God Learners or Wyrmfriends.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Theyalan, Ralios dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Barbarian. In the lands of Keanos, males are typically hunters rather than warriors. In all areas farming, hunting and simple artisan professions take precedence over 'softer' ones.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Spear, Sword, Sling and Bow.

Magic

All Eastern Wilds Orlanthe have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. Higher magic is cult-dependent but sorcery is shunned.

Cults

Saug: The Storm Tribe gods are worshipped and Urox, the Storm Bull, dominates.

Storm Bull Divine Spells: Berserk, Damage Enhancement, Damage Resistance, Heal Body, Sense (Chaos), Treat Wound.

Delela: Delelans are split between the Old Ways and the new teachings and magic brought to them by the EWF. Depending on clan or tribal allegiance, Delelans either worship the Storm Tribe or a draconised version such as Orlanthe the Scale and Ernalda the Snake, gaining Draconic Mysticism in the process.

Keanos: The hunters of Keanos worship all the Storm gods but Odayla the Hunter is foremost.

Odayla Divine Magic: Blessing (usually Track and Perception), Consecrate, Excommunicate, Heal Body, Soul Sight.

RALIOS – LANKST

The Orlanthe clans of Lankst have put up with domination of one form or another for centuries. First the Stygian Empire imposed numerous restrictions on the Orlanthe culture and then later the God Learners have dabbled and meddled but, thus far, refrained from stamping their full weight on the various clans.

The Lanksti form clans but not tribes – a remnant of Stygian repression and the Lanksti view that tribalism leads to Wyrmfriendism. The clans congregate, roughly, around the Upper Tarnier River and the usual, typical, clan rivalries abound. As travellers from across Genertela have arrived in Ralios the Lanksti have found themselves rubbing shoulders with Perlorians, Kethaelans, Jrusteli and, inevitably, Wyrmfriends but, despite the diversity, they have clung to the Old Ways successfully.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Theyalan, Lankst dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Barbarian.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per the Barbarian cultural background.

Magic

Lanksti have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells and Divine Magic from the worship of the Storm Tribe gods. Sorcery and Draconic Mysticism are rejected.

Cults

Storm Tribe.

RALIOS – ORMSLAND

Ormsland is a small corner of northern Ralios and dominated by the dragonewts and their Inhuman King. That said, humans occupy the small space too; Orlanthe migrants from Lankst and the Eastern Wilds occupy scattered thulas lying just beyond the reach of dragonewt interest.

The Ormsland Orlanthe suffer the interference of Hunting and Waltzing Bands eager to try their hand at conversion to the draconic ideal, enlightening these barbarians who have chosen a home so close to dragonewt territory. They fail. The Orlanthe of Ormsland are resolute and proud, resisting attempts to draconise their gods and enfold them in the wings of the Great Dragon to Be. Ormslanders keep their distance from the dragonewts and vice versa; it is only the human draconic mystics who persist in their futile attempts to convert the Orlanthe to ways they have no interest in beholding.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Theyalan, Ormsland dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Barbarian.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword, Spear, Shield, Sling and Bow.

Magic

Ormsland Orlanthi have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells and Divine Magic from the worship of the Storm Tribe gods. Sorcery and Draconic Mysticism are rejected.

Cults

Storm Tribe.

RALIOS – SAFELSTER

God Learner controlled Safelster centres on Felster Lake where around 20 city states provide a melting pot for a variety of different cultures and views. Communities now under God Learner administration still follow paths laid-down before the Middle Sea Empire took control of this region, seemingly oblivious to the changes around them. Some communities have accepted God Learner rule without question whilst others simply ignore it, doing as they always have done.

Safelsterians do not consider themselves such. They are Kustrians, Tortunians, Mereinians and so forth. Agendas focus on what advances one in the city state of one's birth or domicile; rarely outside of it. Safelster as a region offers no belonging – the city state is the important factor.

Across Safelster one finds God Learners, Wyrmfriends and Orlanthi, usually in opposition but occasionally in co-operation. The God Learners would dominate completely but the disparate nature of the city states makes it an impossible task as entrenched beliefs and personal allegiances are placed four-square ahead of those of any empire. Those God Learners assigned here by the empire find themselves frustrated at the lack of a central philosophy or presence and amazed that such a diverse array of people get away with what they do.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Western Seshnegi, Safelster dialect – and the predominant tongue of the region.

Theyalan, various dialects.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Civilised.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Myriad, reflecting culture and personal preference.

Magic

Common Magic is prevalent throughout Safelster, and so Adventurers have the requisite 6 points of Common Magic Magnitude.

However sorcery is common owing to the God Learner presence and taught through a myriad of orders mostly focused on minor saints and the True Malkioni Church.

Cults

Every Safelstrian city state has at least one saint supporting an order. Grimoires vary, but a typical Safelstrian City State Sainly Order is as follows:

Abjure (Water, Food or Sleep)

Cast Back

Form/Set (Various substances)

Haste

Intuition

Neutralise Magic

RALIOS – TELMORIA

The wolf hsunchen of Telmoria are insular and secretive, protective of their packs and way of life, preferring to remain out of sight of the civilised peoples bordering their lands. This does not preclude raiding in preparation for the winter and all the peoples of northern Ralios dread to hear the howls of the wolf-brothers preparing for an assault on the cattle pens and pig sties.

The Telmori are one of the most widespread hsunchen peoples although the greatest concentration is found in Ralios. The Telmori are divided into two groups, the result of a magical curse levied against them in the First Age by Talor the Laughing Warrior. 'The Pure Ones' are similar to other hsunchen and live primarily in Ralios. 'The Cursed Ones' are a minority in Ralios. These former followers of Gbaji involuntarily shift into wolf-form every Wildday. Both types of Telmori share one culture and religion, however.

As a culture that is completely intertwined with its four-legged cousins, Telmori husnchen exhibit the traits and mannerisms of wolves. They move as quickly on all fours as on two legs. Hair is worn long and wild and nails kept long and sharp, naturally toughened to act like claws. The Telmori language

Myths of Telmor

In the Green Age, everyone could change shape. Most lost this ability during the Golden Age but the Animal Tribes did not. Instead they retained fluidity between man and animal forms.

There were many different kinds of animal folk but the Telmori were the strongest, because they travelled in packs and possessed a natural method of arranging themselves from mightiest to lowliest. Also they were hungrier than anyone else, which made them fierce. Telmor, their god, was leader of this hungry pack. He hunted freely on other folk, especially the contemptible Dog People of Balazar.

He bit off more than he could chew when he swallowed the sun. This brought snow and dark skies. This time was bad, because food grew scarce, but liveable. Then monsters came, who could change their shapes too but never to anything good or wholesome. You could tell they were evil because they kept on attacking even after we submitted.

Finally Telmor realised that he would have to cough up the big meal that burned his stomach. The sun came back out of his gullet and lit the sky. He retreated to a lair he could not return from, leaving behind spirits to communicate with us.

We lived and died for many incarnations after the sun's return. A new god who was not a wolf came to us and promised to relieve us of our hunger to commune directly with Telmor again, while we were still alive. Many of us sided with him, especially those closest to his lair in Dorastor. When enemies warred against him, we harried them. One of their cruellest warriors, Laughing Tanor, who they call a saint, scalded many of us with an annoying curse. Those struck by it turn into four-legged wolves all day long every Wildday, whether they like it or not.

is a complex mixture of snarls, growls, whimpers and purrs. Telmori communicate perfectly well with true wolves using this language but their bonds run blood-deep. There is, perhaps, no greater hsunchen bond than that between the Telmori and their wolf brothers and sisters.



Race

Hsunchen

Languages

Telmori Hsunchen

If so wished a Telmori character may roll 1D100. If the result is 15% or less then the individual is one of The Cursed Ones and will turn into a full wolf every Wildday. The transformation occurs at midnight and lasts until the following midnight. It is a short but painful process as the human body breaks, grows and transmutes into that of a wolf. Turning back to the human form is similarly painful. During the transformation, which takes around five minutes, the Telmori is unable to act but once complete he has become a wolf in every aspect, his human characteristics being fully replaced with that of the wolf form. Use the statistics for Wolf on page 181 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* to determine the characteristics, attributes and skills of the wolf version. The wolf version only needs to be rolled once; the same statistics are then used for every transformation.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Unarmed, Spear, Hammer, Bow.

Magic

Telmori shaman are spirit magicians tied to the spirit of Great Wolf Brother, the manifestation of Telmor the First Wolf.

Telmori Cultural Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Telmori	Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +10% Pick Two +10% Brawn, Dance, Evade, First Aid, Influence, Persistence, Resilience, Sing, Stealth Pick Two +10% Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Unarmed	Language (Telmori Hsunchen) +50%, Lore (Wolf), Tracking Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	4D6x25 silver

Professions

As per Primitive or:

Telmori Professions

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Chosen	Athletics +10%, Influence +5%, Lore (Regional) +10% Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Hammer, Perception, Resilience, Shield, Spear, Throwing, Unarmed	Survival +5%
Savage	Athletics +5%, Dodge +5%, Unarmed +5% Pick One +10% Axe, Hammer, Shield, Spear	Survival, Tracking
Totem Guardian	Pick One +5% Bow, Dagger, Perception, Resilience, Stealth, Throwing Influence +5%, Lore (Regional) +15% Pick Two +10% Athletics, Axe, Bow, Dodge, Hammer, Perception, Persistence, Resilience, Shield, Spear, Stealth, Unarmed	Pick One Survival, Tracking
Tribesman	Axe +5%, Athletics +5%, Dance +5%, Bow +5%, First Aid +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Perception +10%, Spear +5%	Pick One Craft, Healing, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking

Fetches and spirits used by Telmori shamans are numerous and call upon both Telmori ancestors, human and wolf. Two sample spirits are as follows:

Howling Brother (Intensity 1 Increase Strike Rank, wolf spirit) – INT 5, POW 9, CHA 5. CA 2, SR +5, HP 9, Spirit Damage +1D6. Persistence 36%, Spectral Bite 45%. Howling Spirit increases the shaman's Strike Rank from 1D10 to 1D12.

Pack Father (Intensity 3 Dominate Species, wolf spirit) – INT 5, POW 23, CHA 3. CA 3, SR +3, HP 23, Spirit Damage +2D6. Persistence 92%, Spectral Claw 112%. Pack Father allows the shaman to command three wolves simultaneously.

Cults

All Telmori are automatically Followers of the Cult of Telmor. This spirit cult venerates the ancestors of the Telmori as well as the spirits of Great Wolf Brother and Telmor, father of all wolves.

KETHAELA – CALADRALAND

The volcanic landscape of Caladraland is the home to the primitive worshippers of the volcano god, Caladra, and the earth god, Lodril – although their rites and practices are exceedingly simplistic when compared with those of Peloria and often rely on human sacrifice as the main method of propitiation.

Such primitive naivety is a blessing to God Learners who have established Revealer Groups in Caladraland to study the Caladrans and indulge in some myth meddling which, for change, has had a beneficial effect. Aurelion and his twin sister Caladra have been reunited as a result of God Learner intervention and this has had a softening effect on the Caladraland tribes to the point where human sacrifice to any of their gods is being questioned.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Lower Pelorian – but an extremely base version of it.

Cultural Backgrounds

Primitive.

Professions

As per Primitive.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per Primitive.

Enfranchised Family

Female

Alchemist*
Bard/Skald
Courtier
Diplomat
Explorer
Mercenary
Merchant
Noble
Physician
Priest
Scholar/Scribe
Sorcerer/Witch*
Spy
Thief
Warrior

Male

Bard/Skald
Explorer
Mercenary
Merchant
Noble
Scholar/Scribe
Sorcerer/Wizard*
Spy
Thief
Warrior

Client Family

Female

Acrobat
Alchemist
Animal Trainer
Bard/Skald
Blacksmith
Craftsman
Explorer
Farmer
Fisherman
Mercenary
Merchant
Miner
Physician
Scholar/Scribe
Spy
Thief
Warrior
Woodsman/Bushman

Male

Acrobat
Alchemist
Animal Trainer
Bard/Skald
Blacksmith
Craftsman
Explorer
Farmer
Fisherman
Mercenary
Merchant
Miner
Spy
Thief
Warrior
Woodsman/Bushman

Magic

Caladrans have access to Common Magic and thus the requisite 6 Magnitude in spells. Although their cults are very unsophisticated and primitive versions of the Pelorian Sun cults, they are, nevertheless, Solar Theists and thus have access to Divine Magic. Spells for Aurelion, Caladra and Lordil are given here.

Cults

Aurelion, the Great Volcano; Caladra, the Sister of Fire, and Lodril, Fire Father.

Divine Spells

Aurelion and Caladra: Absorption, Channel Strength, Dismiss Elemental, Elemental Summoning (Salamander).

Lodril: Channel Strength, Dismiss Elemental, Elemental Summoning (Gnome), True Weapon.

KETHAELA – ESROLIA

Matriarchal Esrolia – Land of 10,000 Goddesses – is populous and wealthy. Despite having separated themselves from both the God Learners and EWF, Esrolia has been the seen of much

*Middle Sea Empire allegiance only.

turmoil and bloodshed in the past 260 years. Both the Middle Sea Empire and the EWF have maintained some control of the land, in particular the city of Nochet, and in 842 Esrolia was brought under the God Learner heel in the Krjalki Wars. The EWF, led by the Eternal Dragon Ring hero, Lord Great Burin, attempted to remove the Middle Sea Empire from Esrolia and Slontos but the God Learners held and, in 849, completed their infamous 'Goddess Switch' resulting in a famine that is still remembered today.

The Garndmothers of Esrolia have now established a relatively peaceful co-existence with the God Learners although the EWF still presses to gain more control over this fertile, vibrant land. The Grandmothers of Esrolia flirt with both Malkionism and Wyrmfriendism, favouring whichever side suits their immediate needs and the people do likewise. In the streets of Nochet it is not uncommon for God Learner and EWF supporters to rub shoulders although their allegiances are anything but truly serious. Where a side has been chosen definitively, the scheming is of the political and emotional kind, bloodshed having accomplished precisely nothing.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Western Seshnegi, Esrolian dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised.

Esrolia is fully matriarchal. Power is concentrated into the hands of the Grandmothers, and a Grandmother is any head of a family, clan or province. The family is the most important social organisation in Esrolia and everyone belongs to either an Enfranchised Family or a Client Family. The former is a clan led by a Grandmother who is also a member of the Grandmother's Council. There are some 100 Enfranchised Families in Esrolia and they determine the look, feel and direction of Esrolian society. Individual Enfranchised Families are free to pledge their own allegiances – and so the EWF and Middle Sea Empire both have representations in Esrolia despite their deep divisions and enmity – but ultimately the Grandmothers are loyal to the Council and their goddess, Imarja. All Enfranchised Families retain their deep, abiding devotion to the Goddesses, paying lip-service to the Invisible God and the Great Dragon to Be.

Client Families serve the Enfranchised Families and take direction from them. Although Client Families operate with some independence, they always emulate and aim to continually serve, the Enfranchised Family they are allied

with. Any Client Family that serves well and capably for long enough may become Enfranchised itself and gather its own Client Families.

Women hold most positions of power within Esrolia and, certainly where it comes to important matters such as religion and politics, men are excluded from all but the most cursory proceedings. Both men and women serve in the Esrolian Militia, known as the Irillo Hundreds, and in the standing army, known as the Kimantorings. The Kimantorings was formed by the Uz Hero Ezkankekko, The Only Old One, during the Great Darkness but command passed to the human leader, Kimantor of Nochet, around 578. Whilst the Grandmothers control the overall direction of the Kimantorings, its military leaders are often male and they are allowed a great deal of flexibility in its affairs.

Whilst Esrolians are Civilised, roll 1D100 to determine if an Adventurer comes from an Enfranchised or Client Family. If the roll is 25% or less, then the family is Enfranchised and has 1D6+1 Client Families answering to it. If the roll is 26% or more, then the Adventurer belongs to Client Family answering to an Enfranchised Family.

The Enfranchised Family's allegiance is important: roll it on the Enfranchised Allegiance table to determine the religious affiliation of both the Enfranchised Family and its Clients.

Enfranchised Family Allegiance

1D20

1–6

7–15

16–20

Current Religious Allegiance

Traditionalist. No Allegiance other than to Imarja

Middle Sea Empire

EWF

All families remain loyal to Imarja irrespective to any other allegiance.

Families loyal to the Middle Sea Empire may join Malkionist Sorcery Orders.

Families loyal to the EWF may join draconic cults and Hunting and Waltzing bands. In general draconic cult membership is confined to Enfranchised Families, whereas Client Families form the Hunting and Waltzing bands, taking their direction from the Enfranchised Cult members.

Professions

Professions one has access to as an Esrolian Adventurer depends on gender and family status. Select the profession from the appropriate list based on family status.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Spear and Shield, Sword and Shield, Mace, Bow, Dagger

Magic

All Esrolians learn and use Common Magic. Female Esrolians begin with the requisite 6 points of Common Magic; male Esrolians begin with 3 points.

Additional magical paths depend on the allegiance of the family. Traditionalist families worship the Divine Cult of Imarja and the Storm Pantheon (with the Storm cults being treated as minor deities, particularly the male cults, such as Orlanth).

Middle Sea Empire allegiance allows Esrolians to learn and practice sorcery, in addition to Divine Magic learned through membership of Traditionalist cults – although the vast bulk of God Learner-leaning families defer to sorcery.

EWf allegiance allows Esrolians to learn Draconic Mysticism in addition to Divine Magic learned through membership of Traditionalist cults – although the vast majority eschew Divine Magic in favour of draconic enlightenment.

Cults

Cult membership depends on Enfranchised family allegiance. Females may join and advance in the cult of Imarja whilst males may only join the male-oriented Storm Pantheon cults.

Imarja Divine Spells: Amplify, Aphrodisiac, Behold, Blessing, Consecrate, Meditate, Mindlink.

In Sorcery Orders males may not progress above the rank of Adept unless they leave Esrolia completely. Females may progress to Mage.

In Draconic Cults males cannot advance beyond the rank of Wyrms' Hand Triumphant. Females may progress to Wyrms' Fang Exultant.

KETHAELA – HENDRIKILAND

The Orlanthi heartland, the Hendriki cleave to the Old Ways of the Storm Tribe despite the EWf's best efforts to draconise them – now postponed whilst they and the Hendriki ally to oppose the blasphemy of the Clanking City.

Within Hendrikiland the Orlanthi hearth is the basic social unit, with families belonging to an extended clan (living within a tula) which, in turn, is part of a tribe. The main tribes of this region are the Esvularings, the Hendrikings and the Volsaxings. Many other, minor tribes, are scattered across Hendrikiland, paying greater or lesser tribute to the Hendrikings who rule almost unopposed through the direction of King Androfin. Within Hendrikiland Sen Senrenen is the Hendrikings



ancient birthlands and where the hero, Hendrick the Free, was born. All of Hendrikiland is sacred to Orlanth but Sen Senrenen especially so. At Ililbevor, the sacred fortress of the Hendriki kings, the Storm Tribe god Vingkot was defeated by the monster Wocha Rage but not before he invoked Orlanth himself to destroy the creature. That Orlanth strode across Sen Senrenen and stood atop Ililbevor seals its place as a most sacred Orlanthi site and a just seat for the subsequent kings.

The God Learners have conducted their own study of Hendrikiland, despatching Heremel of Jadnor to document the area in the seminal Revealers work known as the Durengard Scroll, named for the town of Durengard. Heremel describes the Hendriki as '...savage, painted peasants and herders... vain, violent and unpredictable; their women... sly, pitiless and calculating.' These things might be so, in God Learner eyes, but Heremel cannot help but note other qualities: 'Their highest value is placed in friendship and a man's value is placed on the number of his friends. No people indulge more profusely in entertainments and hospitality.'

The Durengard Scroll also mentions that the tribes of Hendrikiland are quarrelsome and warlike – both accurate observations – with a duty to engage in feuds as well as friendship. The Esvularings, for instance, are subservient to the Hendrikings but not so the Volsaxings, who are staunchly independent and do not cower so easily.

Orlanthi Hospitality – Or, How To Offend A Chieftain

The Orlanthi are a naturally hospitable people, even to their enemies. Their generosity is seen as a virtue amongst themselves and a weakness by other cultures, particularly God Learners. All Orlanthi know the Greeting Rites and they are used whenever Orlanthi who do not know each other meet. Many minor variations exist but all versions are similar enough for any Orlanthi to recognise. The ritual greeting is always used during formal meetings between Orlanthi who know each other, since it constitutes a binding agreement between the host and his guest.

The ritual greeting consists of a series of questions whose answers, if correct, are considered a binding oath. A sample Hendrikiland Orlanthi exchange is as follows:

Are you Friend or Foe?
Typical Answer: Friend.

I am Ghorstain, son of Huurstan, Thane of the Envorlings Clan. Who are you?
Typical Answer: I am – son of –, a traveller in these parts.

You can have my hospitality. I offer you water.
Expected Response: Drink the water gratefully.

You can have my hospitality. I offer you bread.
Expected Response: To eat the bread gratefully, but not greedily.

These four actions meet the Orlanthi hospitality requirements but some clans or tribes go further:

You can have my hospitality. I offer you a place at my hearth.
Expected Response: To take a seat beside the thane, sitting before he does.

You can have my hospitality. I offer you a blanket for sleeping.
Expected Response: To accept the blanket and sleep in the Great Hall as directed.

However, Orlanthi are quick to find insult and quick to anger. The hospitality rite is only the beginning. During any meeting with Orlanthi insult and anger can be guaranteed by:

- X Insulting the host, his patron gods and heroes, his ancestors and his clan.
- X Displaying humility. Pride is an Orlanthi virtue. People who will not boast of their accomplishments are trying to hide something.
- X Refusing the host's offer of food, drink or gifts. Generosity is an Orlanthi virtue. By turning down his largesse, an

Adventurer might as well be telling him that he is poor and pitiful.

- X Instantly reciprocating the host's generosity. The only bad time to give an Orlanthi a gift is right after he gives one to you. That again implies he is poor and cannot afford what he has given. Wait for another occasion, then give the gift.
- X Indicate allegiance with an enemy. Expect to be refused if the intention is to cross a tula to do business with a hostile clan. On a similar note, most clans cherish their ancestral enmities toward one or more foreign or inhuman cultures. If a clan hates trolls and an Adventurer is an Uz, they have little choice but to drive off or try to kill the enemy. To do otherwise weakens their wyter, the clan spirit that ensures their survival.

To avoid giving offence, learn in advance about the clan that might be encountered. If they dislike foreigners or regard you as an ancestral enemy, you would be well advised to plot an alternate route.

Race
Wareran.

Languages
Theyalan – Hendriki dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds
Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions
As per Barbarian.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles
Spear and Shield, Sword and Shield, Axe and Shield, Bow, Sling.

Magic
Hendrikilanders are skilled Common Magic practitioners with the requisite 6 points of Common Magic. As Storm Tribe worshippers they have access to the Divine Magic of the Storm Pantheon.

Cults
Storm Tribe.

KETHAELA – GOD FORGOT

Atheists who nevertheless welcome the God Fearing of any description, the people of God Forgot call themselves the Ingareen. Master schemers they are adept at sorcery using it to fuel games of chance in their infamous casinos.

With the proximity of the Clanking City the Ingareen find it expedient to associate themselves with the God Learners but they do not truly believe in the Invisible God or his Prophet, Malkion. They believe in No God and the Profit, Motive. Sorcery and contrivance comes easily to them, as does duplicity and a ready risk. Most despise the Ingareen but are lured to the city of Casino and its promise of easy riches anyway, feeling they can best the God Forgotten.

The Ingareen are, in reality, a tribe that does not promote itself as such. Over a dozen families, each with competing interests, comprise the Ingareen and each family is notable for its materialism. They view the God Learners as tragic, if powerful, dupes and the Orlanthi as superstitious primitives whose time is over. Only the EWF scares them because the EWF can, and do, gamble for far higher stakes than the Ingareen can offer.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Theyalan – God Forgot dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised.

Professions

Choose from the following:

Alchemist, Courtier, Diplomat, Gambler (see below), Mercenary, Merchant, Noble, Physician, Sailor, Scholar/Scribe, Sorcerer/Wizard/Witch, Spy, Thief, Warrior

Gambler: Professional gamblers, the Ingareen Gambler haunts the streets of Casino or wherever he finds himself attempting to engage others in games of chance for high stakes, hoping to either fleece them of their coin or have them fleeced by the family running the gaming tables he specialises in.

Profession	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Gambler	Insight +5%, Perception +5%, Sleight +10%, Stealth +10%	Lore (Gambling)
		Pick One Courtesy, Oratory, Seduction

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword and Shield, Dagger.

Magic

Common Magic is practiced but of limited scope. Ingareen have the requisite 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells but must choose from the following: *Abacus*, *Babel*, *Bandit's Cloak*, *Bearing Witness*, *Befuddle*, *Countermagic*, *Demoralise*, *Detect (Money)*, *Entertainer's Smile*, *Fate*, *Glamour*, *Golden Tongue*, *Understanding*.

Otherwise, Ingareen are sorcerers, if that profession is chosen, and study from the Sal'Vages Tome, a Grimoire containing the following spells: *Abjure (Food)*, *Diminish (INT)*, *Enhance (INT)*, *Intuition*, *Neutralise Magic*, *Phantom (Sight)*.

Cults

Each Ingareen family is its own sorcery order but all teach the Sal'Vages Tome.

KETHAELA – DRAGON PASS

Dragon Pass is synonymous with dragon kind. Here, the first True Dragons performed the dances that tamed the young gods and the dragonewts were first born. Because of this relationship, Dragon Pass is the heartland of the EWF, filled with draconic cities, both of human devising and dragonewt mysticism. The vast majority of Dragon Pass's residents are followers of the EWF, either directly or as part of draconised Orlanthi clans and tribes. However a few scattered Orlanthi tribes remain true to the Old Ways despite being subjected to constant EWF evangelism and, in some cases, outright violent oppression.

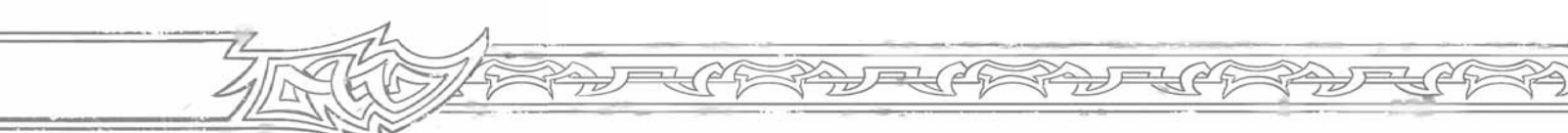


Empire of Wyrms Friends Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Draconised Orlanthi	Athletics +5%, Culture (Dragon Pass) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30% Perception +5%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%	Language (Auld Wyrnish) +10%, Language (Theyalan) +50%, Lore (EWF),	4D6x10 silver
	Pick Two +5% Dance, Evade, Ride, Insight	Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Track	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Sling, Spear, Staff, Throwing Unarmed		
Draconised Trader	Culture (Dragon Pass) +30%, Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%	Language (Auld Wyrnish) +50%, Lore (EWF), Commerce	4D8x50 silver
	Pick Two +5% Dance, Drive, Persistence, Resilience, Ride	Pick Two Craft, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Survival	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Crossbow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Sword, Spear		
Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen	Culture (Own) +30%, Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%	Language (Auld Wyrnish) +50%, Language (Theyalan), Lore (EWF)	4D8x25 silver
	Pick Two +5% Dance, Drive, Evade, Evaluate, First Aid, Perception, Ride	Pick Two Craft, Engineering, Healing, Language, Lore, Martial Arts, Mechanisms, Survival	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Polearm, Staff, Sword, Unarmed		

Dragon Pass Professions

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Dinosaur	Draconised Orlanthi	Athletics +10%, Drive +10%, Lore (Dinosaur) +10%, Ride +10%	Tracking
Wrangler	Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen	Influence +10%, Insight +5%, Persistence +10%	Language (Auld Wyrnish) +20%, Lore (EWF) +5%
Dragon's Voice	Draconised Orlanthi		Lore (EWF) +10%, Track
	Draconised Trader		
	Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen		
Lawkeeper	Draconised Orlanthi	One Combat Style +10%, Drive +5%, First Aid +5%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%	Track +5%
	Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen	One Combat Style +5%, Drive +10%, Influence +10% OR Insight +10%, Lore (any slave race) +5%, Persistence +5%	
Taskmaster	Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen	Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%, Insight +10% OR Persistence +10%	Draconic Enlightenment, Language (Auld Wyrnish) +10%
Wyrms Face Believer	Draconised Orlanthi		
	Draconised Trader		
	Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen		



For reasons unknown Dragon Pass has been afflicted by a two-year winter, leaving the ground frozen and snow-covered, the air chill. This winter shows no signs of lifting, despite both EWF and traditionalist Orlanthi efforts to discover its cause and lift the curse.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Auld Wyrnish.

Theyalan, Dragon Pass dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised (Draconic, city-dwelling EWF supporters).

Barbarian (Old Ways and draconised Orlanthi).

Adventurers may choose either of these backgrounds, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, or choose a specific Dragon Pass background from the following:

Draconised Orlanthi: The character was raised amongst the Orlanthi families that believe that their gods are actually different aspects of the Great Dragon and want to actively pursue the same goals as the EWF. Whether or not the character continues in this pursuit once he sees more of the world is truly the question, as the Orlanthi are a very passionate people capable of really anything.

Draconised Trader: The character is a member of one of the Dragon-worshipping mercantile families. With additional access to funds and resources that other Wyrmfriends may not have, the character can expect to become quite an influential member of local politics and commoner functions. Some traders specialise in the commerce of Dragon items from the Dragonewts to the rest of the EWF but these merchants tend to be heavily protected by the soldiery – as they are often targets of Dragonewt Traditionalists.

Wyrmfriender Warrior Citizen: In the EWF there is a great calling for those born to be in the martial dedication to war against the Great Dragon's enemies. It is an old tradition that some families, bloodlines and such are devoted to the furthering of warfare and the Soldiery of the EWF. The character was raised in one of these families and knows very little about the world – except how best to cut, smash or tear down whatever opposition it presents to the Empire.

Professions

As per Civilised or Barbarian, or choose from the following:

Dinosaur Wrangler: The character is one of the EWF's specialists on raising, training and feeding the herds of

dinosaurs used by the Wyrmfriends as cavalry mounts. Whether a civilian, slave or simply an interested owner, it is the character's responsibility to domesticate the giant lizards as best as he can for use later as attack animals or Uz war steeds.

Dragon's Voice: The character is a devout believer in the Great Dragon and has taken it upon him to spread the message of its ascension to non-Draconised people. While not necessarily a true dragonspeaker, the character is knowledgeable of the EWF's ways and the teachings of the Original Twelve.

Lawkeeper: The character is an active agent of the EWF, trained to find blasphemies and infidels in their own ranks and either cut them down or report them to higher authorities. It is his responsibility to know the laws of the Wyrmfriends inside and out, as any error could cost a fellow his life if the lawkeeper is wrong.

Wyrmf's Face Believer: The character is one of the ground-level members of the Dragonspeakers, possibly already beginning to recruit the new members needed to ascend to the next rank. The character is devout and faithful, using leverage and powerful examples of Dragonspeaker might in order to bring new members into the fold. It is the responsibility of the character to earn his next rank and eventually aspire to have Wyrmf's Face Believers beneath him to create the foundation of his own pyramid of belief.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

The peoples of Dragon Pass use a variety of combat styles. Amongst the Orlanthi, draconised or not, Sword and Spear styles are prevalent. Amongst the dedicated Wyrmfriends, sword styles are symbolic of a more enlightened approach although this does not preclude any other style.

Magic

All Dragon Pass peoples use Common Magic and have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells.

Both traditional and draconised Orlanthi have access to Divine Magic through the Storm Tribe gods. However, some draconised Orlanthi sheer away from Divine worship and take-up the true draconic path instead. They, and existing EWF followers, choose Draconic Mysticism as their magical path – although the path to true enlightenment rests on using magic as sparingly as possible. Thus, Common Magic and Draconic Mysticism are used infrequently and judiciously, to safeguard against falling from the path to enlightenment.

Cults

EWF – Draconic cults.

Draconised Orlanthi, Draconic Storm Tribe cults.

Old Ways Traditionalists – Storm Tribe.

PENT

The steppes of Pent are the province of the fearsome nomadic tribes who follow their great Sun God, Kargzant. The EWF has had some success in attempting a draconisation of the nomads' beliefs but it is limited. Tradition and pride is strong with the Pentans and they do not bend their beliefs so easily.

The Pentans believe in a hard life, paid for in sweat, toil and blood. Manhood rites are fierce, competitive affairs that pit the hopeful youths against harsh quests, powerful myths and dreadful danger. This weeds-out the weakest and heartens the strongest. This is a warrior culture based on the strength of the family and its illustrious ancestry – the more lurid and evocative the history, the better.

Many horse tribes frequent Pent, following the established hunting and game trails but warily navigating the paths of rivals and enemies – unless it is necessary to cross or confront them. The notable tribes are the semi-draconised Otniza, the staunchly traditional and violently confrontational Burilgi, the Qutu – masterful archers; the Ube who hold long-standing feuds with Teshnos and raid it frequently; the Grupartha, who are of mixed blood and fight anyone who attempts to deny them their place on the steppe; and the Boketh, who guard the Hellcrack and keep Pent safe from the predations of the monsters spewing from it. They are infamous and effective Monster Killers.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Pentan, tribal dialects.

Cultural Backgrounds

Pentan Nomad.

Professions

As per Nomad, in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Pentan warriors favour sword and spear styles for close combat and are adept mounted archers. Axes are used if necessary, but the sword and spear are weapons of choice.

Magic

Pentans use Common Magic and have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. Kargzant, either in his draconic or pure forms, offers Divine Magic as noted in the Cults section, following.

Cults

Kargzant – the Sun God of the Pentan tribes.

Divine Spells: Alter Target, Berserk, Blessing, Fear, Rain, Sureshot.

PRAX – ANIMAL NOMADS

Beyond the Zola Fel valley lie the Plains of Prax, an unforgiving wilderness covered in the shattered remains of the Gods War. This is the sacred land of the Animal Nomads and their herds, who travel from the blasted Wastes in the east to commune with their ancestors and perform their rites. They resist the growing incursions of Wyrmfriends, settlers and foreigners into their Holy Land, but it is Pavis for which they hold a deep hatred. Since the City's inception they have battered its walls, sometimes in victory, but also in bitter and ignoble defeat.

The shamanic Animal Nomads are the heirs of Waha the Butcher, son of Storm Bull the Berserk Chaos Killer and husband of Eiritha the Herd Mother. Waha and his kin created the traditions that allow survival the wasteland. Men are the warriors, hunter and butchers and women are the herders, healers and tenders. It is the herds that are paramount to this existence, providing food, materials and mounts. It is the duty of all to defend the herd against enemies, especially Chaos, the most dangerous foe, which still lurks in the Wastes. There are five great nations, the fierce Bison, pygmy Impala, aloof High Llama, proud Sable and the inhuman Morokanth, who herd humans not beasts. There are many smaller tribes, from the staunch Rhino folk to the unlikely Ostrich riders.

Pentan Background

Culture	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	
Pentan Horse Clan	Athletics +5%, Culture (Horse Nomad) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Resilience +10%, Ride +15%	Language (Pentan) +50%, Lore (Kargzant), Survival	4D6x50 silver
	Pick Two +5% Brawn, Drive, Evade, Influence, Persistence, Sleight	Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Tracking	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Sling, Spear, Staff, Unarmed		

Animal Nomad Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Praxian Nomad	Athletics +10%, Culture (Tribe) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +5%, Riding +10% Pick Two +5% Dance, Drive, Evade, Resilience, Stealth Pick Two +15% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Waha), Survival +5% Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Track	4D6x25 silver

The Nations compete for grazing and quarry and intertribal conflict is a way of life. The Nomads and their beasts can survive where others cannot, travelling deep into the Wastes to raid the hated Pentans and Teshnans.

Race

Wareran. The Morokanth are a tapir-like inhuman race who herd devolved humans. See Monster Coliseum for more concerning the Morokanth.

Languages

Praxian.

Cultural Backgrounds

Praxian Nomads – cultural background as above.

Professions

Praxian Nomad, as above.

Clan Rider: The character is one of the common riders of his clan, a mix between warrior and hunter that forms the main body of each Praxian clan. He ventures out for days at a time in search of food, resources and targets for the raiders on the back of their sacred animals. Skilled in the best ways to survive in the wilds of Prax, the character may seem rather barbaric

and primitive on the outside; but he could be quite complex beyond his outer demeanour.

Khan's Guard: The character is a war-skilled member of the elite guardians assigned to the khan of their clan. He is awarded some of the finest loot from raids and has the first pick of mates within his clan, making his role in the clan 'cushy' compared to that of a raider or clan rider. However, the character knows that he cannot, under any circumstance leave his khan (or his remains) in danger during a battle... lest he be blamed for his demise!

Praxian Raider: The character is a specially trained clan member built for fast attacks and ambushes, sent out in small numbers to attack Waha's enemies – in particular the hated Friends of Dragons. He spends long nights painted in resins and inks alongside his mount, waiting until the moment is perfect for a rapid hit-and-run raid. The character must do well in his efforts, because any raider that comes back empty handed after a raid can expect to be handed the most menial and tedious tasks until he proves his worth next time.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Each Animal Nation has its own favoured weapons, spears, shields, bows and lances are common, but tribes such as the

Praxian Nomad Professions

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Clan Rider	Athletics +10%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Ride +15% Pick One +10% Bow, Shield, Spear, Sword	Survival
Khan's Guard	Athletics +5%, Influence +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Riding +5% Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Lance, Spear, Sword	Survival
Praxian Raider	Lore (Regional) +5%, Perception +5%, Ride +5%, Stealth +5% Pick One +10% Axe, Bow, Lance, Shield, Spear, Sword	Survival, Tracking



diminutive Impala favour thrown darts and the Bola Lizard Riders favour the bolas that give their mounts their name.

Magic

The Animal Nomads have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells however Waha prohibits the use of Healing magic and Eiritha stops her worshippers combat magic. Beast Call, Clear Path, Detect (Herd Animal), Mobility, Slow and Spirit Bane are all favoured spells. Almost all Praxians are Spirit Magic users and powerful shamans lead their rites.

Cults

The Praxian Nomads worship Waha the Butcher, Eiritha the Herd Mother, Storm Bull the Chaos Fighter and Daka Fal, the Judge of the Dead. These four great spirits all show the way that life should be lead, how to survive, how to drive off Chaos and how to divide the living from the dead. Waha provides Guardian, Survival, Ancestor, Tribal and Law Spirits here are some samples.

Covenant Guide (Intensity 2, Increase Skill, Tribal Elder Spirit) – INT 5, POW 10, CHA 5, CA 2 SR+5 HP 10, Spirit Damage +1D4, Persistence 42%, Spectral Staff 35%. The Spirit increases the magician's Survival Skill by 25%

Breaker of Broos (Intensity 2, Manifest a Trait, Spirit of Law) – INT 5, POW 12, CHA 2, CA 2 SR+10 HP 12 Spirit Damage +1D8, Persistence 50%, Spectral Strike 80%. The spirit allows the magician to do +1D4 damage when fighting against Broo.

PRAX – THE ZOLA FEL VALLEY AND SUN COUNTY

The Zola Fel Valley is a great river valley that cuts a swathe through the parched Plains of Prax. It is a frontier land where many have come to make a new life despite the presence of the Praxian Animal Nomads, blasting desert winds and pestilent mosquitoes. Sun County is the most famed area of the region.

The Zola Fel valley and Sun County is home to a diverse group of immigrants who moved this far to the east from the Peloria. Dara Happans seeking refuge from the domination of the Golden Dragon Sun or draconic worshippers drawn to the immanent power of Pavis, a draconic mystic; Carmanians seeking to blot-out the dragon friends, wherever they roam; Talastaring Orlanthi who are following in the wake of the EWF's opposers, such as Alakoring Dragonbreaker; and both draconised and traditional Orlanthi from Dragon Pass, eager to make new lives for themselves away from the oppressive two-year winter of their homeland.

Sun County is therefore an amalgam of cultures with an emphasis on the solar and draconic traditions. Amongst the Dara Happan settlers Yelmadio is the foremost god, worshipped here as Yelm, his father, can only be truly worshipped in Dara Happa. Amongst the other settlers, Carmanian hero veneration mixes with draconic mysticism and feuds between these groups are common place. Nevertheless, Sun County attempts to assert its own identity through the attentions of Arinsor Clearmind, the first Count, who came from Dragon Pass to conquer the giants who beset Pavis in 877 and never left. Arinsor sees Sun County as a place of enlightenment for all cultures but has the foresight to understand that a great deal of struggle is essential for a single way to be found. His policy is therefore to minimise conflict rather than try to constantly reconcile the differing beliefs.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Mixed: Lower Pelorian, Theyalan and Praxian.

Cultural Backgrounds

Sun County: Civilised and Barbarian, both as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. However, Sun County Adventurers may choose to use the backgrounds and professions for any of the peoples settled in the Sun County region (Dara Happan, Carmanian, Talastaring or Dragon Pass).

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword, Spear and Shield styles are common throughout Sun County and the nomad wastes.

Magic

Dependent on culture. All cultures have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. Additional magic is dependent on culture and cult.

Cults

Yelmadio predominates in Sun County. Settlers along the Zola Fel have brought with them their own faiths from their homelands.

PRAX – PAVIS

Built between 831 and 850, the city of Pavis is a monument to the vision of its founder, the EWF mystic of the same name. Pavis was driven out of Prax by the nomad tribes led by Waha. He fled west to Dragon Pass and became a member of the EWF rising quickly in its ranks but never forgetting his homeland. In 830 Pavis made his way to the legendary Faceless Statue of Stone in Shadows Dance and animated it using draconic powers. He then gathered about him many allies, including the Mostali, Flintnail. Riding the Faceless Statue Pavis led the fight against the nomads of Prax at the Too Tall Battle where the Faceless Statue fought the giant allies of the Praxians. Waha and the giants were defeated and the Faceless Statue collapsed. From its body, Flintnail designed and built the city of Pavis.

Pavis, meanwhile, travelled in search of Waha and healed the wounds he had sustained in battle. A truce was agreed between them and this allowed Pavis to complete the building of his city – one that was designed to accommodate all people, of all cultures. This philosophy, reflected in Pavis himself, was different to that of the EWF but it seemed clear to all that Pavis had achieved a certain enlightenment anyway. In 860 Pavis retired to his palace and has not been seen since, however the city prospers under the guardianship of Joraz Kyrem, a hero of both the city and the Praxian Nomads. Joraz has HeroQuested and emerged a true hero of the Second Age, defending Pavis against the giants and subsequent uprisings by both trolls and Praxians.

Pavis is an enlightened city. Within its massive, 24 metre high walls, the city is divided into many quarters where different cultures can congregate. The elves have established their own gardens at one end of the city, and the trolls have their own settlement on the far side, separated from the main city by the wide sweep of the Zola Fel River which slices through Pavis like a brilliant silver serpent. Beneath it, mostali labour to repair and protect the city, servants of Flintnail who, like Pavis, has disappeared from the city's history.

All things are possible in Pavis. The draconic influence, ever present, rubs shoulders with gentler, more human architecture. The fabled Palace of Pavis is sacred ground, sealed against intrusion, but is the focus for the strengthening cult of Pavis, enabling Pavis's influence to continue protecting the city.

Race

Wareran.

Languages

Auld Wyrnish.

Praxian.

Some Theyalan and Lower Pelorian.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, or any of the Dragon Pass civilised cultural options.

Nomad, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, or Praxian Nomad.

Professions

As per Civilised, or Dragon Pass Professions.

As per Praxian Nomad.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

As per the respective cultures.

Magic

Pavis is permissive of all magical styles and thus it depends on the culture of the practitioner. All Pavisites begin with the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells.

Cults

Any Gloranthan cult. However, all Pavisites are considered to be Lay Members of the cult of Pavis, which venerates Lord Pavis. This is a Divine Cult and Pavis's strange transcendence and the residual power of the Faceless Statue, grants the following Divine Spells: Blessing, City Harmony, Consecrate, Extension, Heal Mind, Heal Body, Heal Wound.

The cult of Flintnail is also operative in Pavis but teaches its magic only to dwarfs.

KRALORELA

The bulk of Kralorela is comprised of the six provinces reflecting the Path of Immanent Mastery. Each province embodies a particular way of thinking, and this manifests in the behaviour and character of those born there. Thus, the people are a product of the Path of Immanent Mastery and it is a product of them: a full circle is attained.

Those who fled this conditioning went to the Kingdom of Ignorance where they might be free to pursue a simpler life unhindered by the abstract thought and social conformity imposed by the Path. The people of the Kingdom of Ignorance (or Churn Durel) are hated and despised by 'pure' Kralori and vice versa. The Kingdom of Ignorance is viewed as crude and barbaric; it views the Kralori as fools and dupes, slaves to concepts that are as soulless as the empty gods they flirt with.

Race

Kralori.

Languages

Imperial Kralori (main Kralorela) with a dialect for each province.

Ignorant Kralori, a dialect stripped of eccentricities and flourishes by the people of Churn Durel.

Cultural Backgrounds

Each province creates a different cultural personality, see table on page 232.

Professions

Kralori from the central provinces can choose any Civilised profession with the exceptions of Bard, Herdsmen, Noble or Sorcerer/Witch. In addition the following professions are permissible:

Exarch: The character is a student of the teachings of Daruda, and is an accomplished teacher of the mandarin way. He makes it his personal duty to know many of the equally schooled members of his community, keeping his fingers in every plot and scheme that boils out of the deep social twists of the Kralori. On the outside it is the character's responsibility to know the ancient ways but he is also very much responsible for keeping secret tabs on his fellows to watch for heresy or sedition.

Patrician: The character is part of the owning and operating family revolving around a large business or trade, possibly learning some of that trade first hand. He is likely to be a local 'celebrity', as the business employs several peasants and lower-class labourers, placing the character in a position to affect the bottom of the Kralori social circles.

What spiritual cycle Teaching am I on now?

The following Profession packages assume this is the first of the character's spiritual lives of this Remembrance but if a player and Games Master wishes to adjust them for new lives and reincarnations of the same character – go right ahead! We simply did not want to do pages and pages of the various Teachings as individual Professions.

Peasant: The character was born to a low class in the Kralori culture and never managed to work his way out of it. He is a common worker or labourer, performing a multitude of tasks on plantations and farms, or even in a local Patrician's business. He is well aware that he is on the lowest end of the social pecking order, giving him very little power in the community – officially, at least.

Monk: The character is amongst the chosen students of the martial arts native to the Dragon-wizened monastic orders.



Kralori Backgrounds

Background	Common Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Continual Ascendence	Culture (Continual Ascendence) +30%, Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +10%, Persistence +5% Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, Drive, Resilience, Stealth Pick Two +5% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Sword, Unarmed	Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Immanent Mastery), Survival +5% Pick One Craft, Lore, Meditation, Play Instrument	4D6x80 silver
Green Contemplation	Culture (Green Contemplation) +30%, Insight +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +10%, Persistence +5% Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade, Resilience, Stealth Pick Two +5% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Sword, Unarmed	Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Immanent Mastery), Survival +5% Pick One Craft, Lore (Aldrya), Play Instrument	4D6x80 silver
Hopeful Centrality	Culture (Hopeful Centrality) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Perception +15%, Persistence +10% Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade, Resilience, Influence, Insight Pick Two +5% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Spear Staff, Sword, Unarmed	Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Immanent Mastery), Oratory +5% Pick One Craft, Meditation, Play Instrument	4D6x80 silver
Inner Retreat	Culture (Inner Retreat) +30%, Insight +15%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +10% Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade, Resilience, Influence, Persistence Pick Two +5% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Sword, Unarmed	Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Immanent Mastery), Meditation, Oratory +5% Pick One Craft, Lore, Oratory, Play Instrument, Track	4D6x80 silver
Respectful Welcome	Culture (Respectful Welcome) +30%, Influence +15%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +10% Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade, Insight, Persistence, Resilience Pick Two +5% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Sword, Unarmed	Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Immanent Mastery), Courtesy +5% Pick One Craft, Lore, Oratory, Play Instrument, Track	4D6x80 silver
Truthful Exhalation	Culture (Truthful Exhalation) +30%, Insight +25%, Lore (Regional) +30% Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade Pick Two +5% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Sword, Unarmed	Courtesy +5%, Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Immanent Mastery) Pick One Craft, Lore, Meditation, Oratory, Play Instrument	4D6x80 silver
Kingdom of Ignorance	Athletics +10%, Culture (Kingdom of Ignorance) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +5%, Riding +10% Pick Two +5% Dance, Evade, Insight, Resilience, Stealth Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Unarmed	Language (Kralori) +50%, Lore (Zerel Fen), Survival +5% Pick One Craft, Lore, Play Instrument, Track	4D6x20 silver

He has learned how to use body, mind and spirit in tandem to become a focus of powerful energies and internal stillness. He might have chosen to take his teachings to the foreign barbarians, leaving the sanctity of temple and even the borders of the homeland – to show the world the true Dragon's teachings outweigh even that of the great Empire of Wyrms' Friends.

Kralori Professions

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Exarch	Influence +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%	Lore (Any), Streetwise
Patrician	Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Persistence +10%	Commerce, Streetwise
Peasant	Athletics +5%, Bow +5%, Driving +5%, Evaluate +5%, Perception +5%, Spear +5%	Craft, Survival
Monk	Athletics +10% Pick Three +10% Acrobatics, Influence, Insight, Perception, Persistence, Resilience, Unarmed	Draconic Enlightenment

Adventurers from the Kingdom of Ignorance may choose any Barbarian Profession.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

A wide variety of weapons and styles are found in Kralorela, particularly two-weapon styles (typically sword and dagger or twin swords).

Magic

Followers of the Path of Immanent Mastery are Draconic Mystics and thus work with Draconic Magic. However, Common Magic is used throughout Kralorela at the requisite 6 Magnitude of the Common Magic spells.

Cults

The Path of Immanent Mastery is a mystic tradition rather than a cult and focuses on draconic enlightenment.

However the people of the Kingdom of Ignorance worship Zere Fen, the four-faced God of Ignorance and gain the following Divine Spells: Alter Target, Behold, Dismiss Magic, Eclipse, Fog, Illusion (any sense).

VERENELA – TESHNOS

Teshnans are devotees of the Sacred Fire and believe in reincarnation, cycling through many existences until purity and sanctity has been attained.

Although followers of the fire god Somash, the Teshnans are a remarkably patient, curious people who are equally at home with contemplation and meditation as they are with the fiery tenets of the Somashi texts, such as The Book of Well Being. The God Learner influx and expansion of the city of Dombain has been welcomed with pragmatism and reserve, and the Teshnans listen with intent when the God Learner proselytizers tell them of how the Sun God of Peloria, Yelm, has been enslaved by dragons. Malkioni doctrine makes a little headway against the traditions of Somash and the worshippers of His Sacred Flame, with parallels being drawn between the Invisible God and Sun God. Thus Teshnans listen to, and sometimes incorporate, Malkionist teachings into their own beliefs but are always careful to balance the belief and teachings of Somash against God Learner single truths.

Race

Kralori.

Languages

High Teshnan.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, Goonda and Teshnan Devout.



Teshnan Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Goonda	Culture (Teshnan) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Athletics +10%, Perception +10%	Acrobatics +10%, Language (Native) +50%,	4D6x10 silver
	Pick Two +5% Dance, Evade, Persistence, Resilience, Sleight, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Dance, Lore, Survival, Track	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Sling, Spear, Unarmed		
Teshnan Devout	Athletics +5%, Culture (Teshnan) +30%, Lore (Regional), +30%, Resilience +5%, Ride+10%	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Somash) +10%	4D8x50 silver
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade, First Aid, Perception, Persistence, Sleight, Stealth	Pick One Craft, Healing, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Track	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Crossbow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Sling, Spear, Staff, Sword, Unarmed		

Goonda: The character was born to the naked, orange-haired tribals of the Teshnan tree-tops. He likely knows very little of outside civilisation and has a simple – almost animalistic – way of seeing the Teachings in everyday life. The character dislikes binding his body in anything but small loincloths or pouches and would much rather be only responsible for the items in his hands at any given time.

Teshnan Devout: The character was raised amidst the zitr's and Seers of the Celestial Flame, learning the tenets of one of the Teachings long before he was old enough to choose what he would do with the rest of his life. The character may have been involved in some early raids on the Kralori or a defence against attacks from other outsiders. He must have developed good martial skills at an early age but also must keep a devout view on their Celestial Flame Teaching – else his allies turn against him for a lack of faith.

Professions

These professions are specific to Teshnans, living lives time after time through spiritual reincarnation.

Chalan: The character is a student of the Seer Chal, learning how to become one with the Celestial Flame through a humbleness of practical life in his first Teaching. He must turn the soil with hand or plough or drive the beasts of burden in order to earn his position in the next Teaching. The character knows he must live his Teaching well or else he will be destined to repeat it again and again.

Elatian: The character is a student of the Seer Elat, who teaches him that the forest-spirits and the aldryami have it right in their Great Song. He must protect the forested places and ply them as a woodsman does to eventually earn the right to the Second of the Four Tough Survival Teachings. There is a very small number of students of Elat that do not see the aldryami as better creatures and some believe that they may eventually get reborn as one of the elves after completing the Fourth Teaching.

Jrudite: The character is a student of the Seer Jrudai, who grants him enormous wealth from the stores of the Teaching in order to learn the power of how spending feels. The character knows he must arrange for his great wealth to be distributed to his fellows by the time of his passing, so he may then return to the next Teaching with less to spend – all the way until he is reborn with nothing but the pureness of the Celestial Flame to give to his fellow Teshnan.

Sankusite: The character is a student of the Seer Sankusa, who taught him the five schools of the Five Flaming Weapons. He is a consummate warrior of blade, bow and fist capable of standing defiantly against any enemies of the faith. Whether it is in defence from outsider raids or at the head of a war party attacking other cultures, they are ready to shed enemy blood. The best part is, even if the character dies in the pursuit of holy warfare, he is surely guaranteed the next Teaching upon his spiritual rebirth!

Zonite: The character is a student of the mysterious Seer Zon whose enigmatic Teachings unveil the use of magic through

Teshnan Professions

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Chalan	Athletics +10%, Drive +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Perception +10%	Craft, Survival
Elatian	Athletics +5%, Bow +5%, Lore (Regional) +10%, Perception +10%	Craft (any woodcraft), Survival
Jrudite	Influence +10%, Insight +10%, Persistence +10%	Commerce, Streetwise
Sankusite	Bow +10%, Influence +10%, Spear +5%, Sword +10%, Unarmed +5%	Lore (Tactics)
Zonite	Athletics +5%, Influence +5%, Perception +10%, Stealth +10%	Lore (Somash), Pact (Somash)

the hidden essence behind an invisible mask of secrecy. The character cannot explain exactly how he knows to look behind a mask that no one else can even see but the Teaching tells him the Celestial Flame exists beyond it – and so he pulls back the ethereal layer by layer, until he taps into the final Teaching. Zonites are never truly understood except by one of their own and the character is no exception to this. Zonites are magical practitioners, following the cult of Somash as perceived through the tomes of Seer Zon.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword, Spear and Axe.

Magic

All Teshnans practice Common Magic and have the requisite 6 points Magnitude of Common Magic spells. The pragmatic nature of the Teshnans means that they follow the Divine cult of Somash, learning Divine Magic but may also join God Learner sorcery orders and learn sorcery, as long as they can fully reconcile the two disciplines and argue their co-existence articulately.

Cults

Somash, the Celestial Fire. Through following Somash the body can be reborn and must be reborn to achieve purity and sanctity. Even Somash is reborn at the start of each new day, reinforcing the lesson.

Divine Spells: Absorption, Blessing, Consecrate, Dismiss Magic, Elemental Summoning (Salamander), Heal Mind.

VERENELA – TROWJANG

The people of Trowjang consist of the female Marazi, who are the active society and human in all respects, and the Tolati, their husbands, who are demi-gods and live in seclusion in their tall, termite-like, clay shrines. The Marazi both worship and despise their husbands. Marazi are skilled artists and artisans, practicing a egalitarian, but still somewhat primitive, ideal in the rainforest settlements and the small city-state of Trowjang. The Marazi brook no condescension from arrogant males: males of other species are viewed as racially inferior to their own, disdained, demi-god husbands – but they welcome visitors so that the mystical traditions of the Tolati can be communicated to them.

Trowjang Adventurers are thus all female. The Tolati are forbidden to leave their shrines, where they must endure both the heckling and adoration of their mercurial wives.

Race

Kralori.

Languages

Trowjangl.

Cultural Backgrounds

Primitive, as per *RuneQuest*.

Professions

As per Primitive.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Spear, Axe, Hammer, Shield.

Magic

The Cult of Tolat is a mystical tradition that venerates the ancestor spirit Tolat. Marazi shamans draw their magic through the spiritual energy of their Tolati husbands. Shaman of the Marazi have access to the following spirits:

Ancestor Husband: INT 10, POW 15, CHA 10

Insight 105%, Perception 105%, Persistence 60%, Spectral Spear 75%, Common Magic 105% (Bearing Witness Beast Call, Becalm, Bladesharpe 3, Clear Path, Countermagic, Detect X, Heal 3, Second Sight).

Sister Jungle (Intensity 4 boost Magic Points, Rain Forest spirit) – INT 1, POW 25, CHA 1. CA 3, SR +1, HP 25, Spirit Damage +2D8. Persistence 100%, Spectral Roots and Branches 125%. Increases the magician's Magic Points by 4.

Cults

Tolat/Tolati. The males of Trowjang are effectively immortal sons of Tolat and they embody his cult and spiritual teachings, although only the Tolat themselves know what these are and, whilst confined to their shrines, they see no reason to share them with the Marazi. The Marazi thus venerate the Tolati for their magic, but disdain their secretive nature.

VITHELA – HANFARADOR

As worshippers of Vith and Laraloori, the Hanfaradorians are both superstitious and reverential of the female line. Although men rule, females are adored, especially if pretty, as they are considered to be physical aspects of Laraloori herself (although clearly not goddesses but perhaps veering that way, depending on prettiness).

The cosmology of the Hanfaradorians, as with all Vithelan peoples, is highly complex and contradictory. This trait is reflected in the Hanfaradorians who preach simplicity but wrap themselves (and seem to enjoy wrapping themselves) in complex bureaucracy that serves to stifle rather than promote. The God Learners, who allied themselves with the Hanfaradorians when they arrived in Vithela, have exploited this contradiction and find it easy to break into Hanfaradorian mythology and tinker with it, thus compounding the paradox.

Hanfaradorians dress simply and speak with verbose complexity, or vice versa. Women are treated with utter reverence, especially if pretty, and every male Hanfaradorian has the goal of possessing several wives of varying degrees of prettiness. It is customary for Hanfaradorians to politely enquire how much it would cost to purchase a wife as part of a general introduction.

Race

Kralori.

Languages

Tanyen, Hanfarador dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

As per Civilised, but sorcerer/wizard/witch is forbidden.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Axe, Sword, Shield and Bow.

Magic

Hanfaradorians place great store in Common Magic and have the requisite 6 points of Magnitude in Common Magic spells. Their worship follows a mystical tradition, however, and Sorcery is forbidden to them. Divine Magic is granted as part of the Vith and Laraloori traditions.

All Hanfaradorians study Meditation and this skill must be taken as part of the skill choices in Adventurer Creation.

Cults

Vith is the Father of Gods and is worshipped as such. Laraloori is his wife, First Wife of Many, and mother of the benevolent Parlothi, gods from whom the Hanfaradorians are descendents. Vith manifests through mystical truths whilst Laraloori manifests in the grace and beauty of women.

Divine Spells: Aphrodisiac, Blessing, Bless Crops, Heal Body, Heal Mind, Meditate.

VITHELA – ARANDINNI

Descendents of the offspring of Vith and Gebkeran, the anti-gods, the quasi-demonic Andin, native to the Arandinni isles, are the natural and fearsome enemies of the Hanfaradorians. Ruthless and cruel, they maintain a culture based on warfare and the survival of the fittest.

When the God Learners discovered the Eastern Isles the renegade sorcerer Varsard took it upon himself to experiment with the Andin and, as a consequence, experiment with genocide – the goal of the Andin in relation to the Hanfaradorians. He has successfully converted the various warrior castes of the Andin to Malkioni sorcery orders and the Andin have shown themselves to be naturally adept at God Learner magic, easily rejecting their old, tribal mysticism. Malkion, however, is not accepted, as the Andin still worship Vith and Gebkeran. Varsard has therefore transposed certain Andin myths to give these two primitive gods the sorcerous standing necessary to channel Grimoire-based magic.

Race

Andin.

The Andin are horned and intensely ugly. Skin is often scaled and comes in a variety of lurid shades. STR, CON and SIZ gain an extra 1D6 when rolled, and INT, DEX and CHA lose 1D6.

Languages

Tanyen, Andin dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Primitive, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Professions

All Andin, even the women, are warriors. Sorcerers/Wizards/Witches are allowed but automatically join the Varsard School of War.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Axe, Hammer, Polearm, Thrown Spear, Sling, Bow.

Magic

Andin use Common Magic and have the requisite 6 points of Magnitude but focus exclusively on battle magic variants – Bladesharp, Bludgeon and so forth.

As students of Varsard the Renegade, Andin who join the Varsard School of War, a sorcery order with versions of Vith and Gebkeran at its heart, learn sorcery from the Varsard Terror Tome.

Cults

Vith and Gebkeran – although the mystical teachings of both are closed to the Andin.

Varsard School of War teaches Lore (Tactics) and, as part of the Varsard Terror Tome, the following spells: Attract (Missiles), Damage Enhancement, Damage Resistance, Dominate (Hanfaradorian), Sense (Hanfaradorian), Wrack.

VITHELA – ARCH DUCHY OF HARAGALA

Mercenaries by way and nature, the Haragalans have embraced the Middle Sea Empire that is less open arms and more shameless opportunity – such is the national characters of the Haragalans. Before the God Learners came they were pirates and sell-swords and now the Empire is here they are privateers and sell-swords, but with more swords, sometimes Clanking City forged.

The Haragalans are as unscrupulous as they warlike. Bullying comes naturally to them and in the expeditionary God Learners they have found like-minded allies. Now that their fleet gleams and sorcery has helped them create bigger, better boats and sharper, stronger swords, they plunder the Vithelan islands with abandon.

Race

Kralori.

Languages

Tanyen, Western Seshnegi.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian – although the God Learners are having a Civilising influence so Adventurers can adopt either background.

Professions

As per Barbarian and Civilised but with a profound emphasis on warlike professions.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Axe, Spear, Sword, Bow, Polearm.

Magic

Haragalans use Common Magic and this have the requisite 6 points of Magnitude in Common Magic spells. They also join the militaristic sorcery orders imported by the God Learners and thus learn sorcery as per those orders.

Cults

God Learner Sorcery Orders

Knights of St Volanc

Damage
Enhancement
Damage
Resistance
Enhance (STR)
Spell Resistance
Spirit Resistance
Treat Wounds

Bardan's Book

Cast Back
Damage
Enhancement
Damage
Resistance
Enhance (DEX)
Project (Sense)
Spell Resistance
Treat Wounds

Malkioni True Church

Cast Back
Damage
Resistance
Mystic Vision
Neutralise
magic
Spell
Resistance
Spirit
Resistance

VITHELA – MOKATO

The Mokatons are warlike and seek dominance over the Vithelan islands in the name of their living god, Hobimarong. Because Hobimarong lives within the grand city bearing his name, the essence ships of Mokato still ply the seas and the people wage continual war with the God Learners simply because they can – and because Hobimarong is the only permissible god.

All Vithelans are hated for their worship of other, false gods and not the One Living God. It is their duty to bring all the myriad isles to heel and to defeat the hated God Learner interlopers (who seek to do the same in the name of their dubious-sounding Invisible God).

Race

Kralori.

Create Essence Ship

Duration: special, Touch, Rune Lord/Priest
Hobimarong, Vithela – Mokato

This extended ritual creates one of the mysterious Essence Ships of the Mokato. Each point of Magnitude creates a vessel of magical force and wefts of energy 1 metre in length, 0.5 metres in width and 0.5 metres in depth. A 1 Magnitude vessel can carry up to SIZ 20 and sails across water at 20 metres per round and across land at 12 metres per round. Additional points of Magnitude increase the dimensions of the vessel but not the speed.

Casting the spell requires one hour per point of Magnitude. The Essence Ship remains in existence for as long as a Rune Lord or Priest involved in its creation concentrates on maintaining the vessel – this requires that person to be aboard it constantly.

The Essence Ship resulting from the spell is a web-work of energy vaguely resembling a physical craft but with an energy signature reflecting its creator or creators. Essence Ships can be loaded with passengers, cargo and weapons up to its maximum capacity. If overloaded the ship dissipates, depositing its physical cargo wherever it happens to be.

Essence Ships are handled using the Shiphhandling skill. The skill receives a +5% bonus for each point of Magnitude invested in the ship's creation. If this bonus creates +100%, then the Essence Ship sails itself obeying the mental commands of the creator.

Hobimarong Rune Lords and Priests can combine to create Essence Ships of enormous size.

Languages

Tanyen, Mokato dialect.

Cultural Backgrounds

Barbarian.

Professions

As per Barbarian but many are sea-farers and pirates.



Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Axe, Spear, Sword, Bow, Polearm.

Magic

Common Magic is prevalent amongst the Mokato and they have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. As Hobimarong is alive, his magic is especially potent.

Cults

Hobimarong, exclusively. Every Mokaton is born with a Pact to Hobimarong of CHA x2 and every Mokaton automatically has half his POW dedicated to that Pact. The Divine Spells of Hobimarong are: Alter Target, Amplify, Breathe Water, Call Winds, Create Essence Ship, Fear, Lightning Strike.

VITHELA – HOMAGO

Relentless cannibals exploited by the God Learners, the Homagons prey on fellow islanders for their sweet-tasting flesh.

Race

Kralori.

Languages

Tanyen.

Cultural Backgrounds

Primitive.

Vithela – Keetslands and Vormain

These two regions are not explored in this volume.

The keets of the Keetslands are to be explored, as are the other non-human races, in the forthcoming volume *Races of Glorantha*.

Vormain remains sealed and protected from the outside world. Rumoured to be a land of exotic magic that is utterly different to that known in wider Glorantha, even the God Learners have been unable to penetrate its secrets and Vormainians do not, in the Second Age, venture out from their island empire. Certain exiles from Vormain are thought to exist but one can never be certain if they are what they claim to be.

Professions

As per Primitive.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Axe, Spear, Net, Sling.

Magic

Common Magic, with the requisite 6 Magnitude in spells.

Cults

Saliligor the Devourer is a potent ancestor spirit. His cult devout gain the following spirit alliances:

Hungry Man, (Intensity 2 boost Hit Points, cannibal spirit) – INT 6, POW 16, CHA 7. CA 2, SR +7, HP 16, Spirit Damage +1D8. Persistence 64%, Spectral Slice 80%. Adds an extra 2 HP to each location of the magician.

Sons of Saliligor the Devourer, Great Spirits of the Homago: INT 16, POW 12, CHA 7

Spectral Axe 102%, Brawn 102%, Track 102%, Persistence 48%, Common Magic 80% (Bladesharp 6, Endurance 5, Fanaticism).

PAMALTELA – FONRIT

Fonrit is a great and fertile land on the northern coast of Pamaltela, blessed with two harvests a year. It encompasses 17 disparate lands, from the earthquake torn lands of

Mondoro in the south, to the Jungles of Laskal in the east and the glittering coastal lands of Kareshtu with its radiant cities, thief riddled bazaars and opulent temples. Fonrit is a slavocracy ruled by powerful priests and cruel tyrants who tax and beggar the poor into heartless slavery. The beleaguered blue skinned descendants of Artmal are the lowest ranking of slaves, with the mixed race Toravs holding the greatest powers. The religion and culture of the Fonritans has been seriously abused by the God Learners, who had been attracted to the area by Kareesthu's powerful navy and fearless corsairs.

The Fonritans are feared throughout Pamaltela for their practice of slavery, their entire society is based upon the belief that Life is Slavery. Each man is owned by another and to not own slaves is to be weak, armies are owned by their generals who in turn are owned by their rulers, but ultimately all men are owned by the gods.

Race

Agimori.

Veldang.

Wareran.

Fonrit is truly multi-cultural. The land was originally inhabited by slate blue skinned descendants of the ancient Artmali Empire, and they were in turn enslaved by the black skinned Agimori under the leadership of the Hero Garangordos. Finally there is a substantial minority of white skinned Warerans, descendants of the hated Umatelans and God Learners. The mixed blue-black skinned Toravs control most of the wealth and power.

Languages

Afadjanni: Spoken by the people of Afadjann.

Banamam: Spoken by the coastlanders of Banamba.

Kareshtan: Spoken by the Kareeshtu.

Mondoran: Spoken by the inhabitants of the desolate Fonritian interior. Mondoran is considered a very primitive language.

Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* (Affadjan, Kareeshtu).

Barbarian, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* (Mondoro, Gaffan).

Primitive, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* (Laskal).

Every resident of Fonrit is a slave to some higher master. Even the nobles are considered slaves of the gods. Slavery is as much a symbolic as it is a practical exercise designed to reinforce mythical and mundane hierarchies. Thus, all Fonritan Adventurers own at least one slave and are in turn owned by a master. They seek to gain more slaves to gain more power and shift their status – but always remaining slaves. Many



Fonritan slavers ply the trade routes and sail the sea looking for new slaves for their masters.

Professions

As per Cultural Background but also including Slaver.

Slaver: The goal of the slaver is to obtain more slaves for both one's master and ones-self. Slavers ply the coastal waters and scour the backlands for unsuspecting foreign caravans bringing trade goods from Genertela and Jrustela. The Genertelans and Jrustelans frequently try to buy their way from bondage with promises of hefty ransoms and rewards but this falls on deaf ears. Slaves, not money, establish power in Fonrit and slavers show little pity for the plight of those they capture.

Fonrit Professions

Profession

Slaver

Basic Skill Bonuses

Influence +10%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Perception +5%

Pick One +10%

Spear, Sword, Shield, Net, Whip

Slave (Kadam)

Brawn +10%, Evade +10%, Resilience +10%

Pick One +10%

Club, Dance, Drive, First Aid, Sing, Spear, Unarmed

Slave (Yad)

Brawn +5%, Evade +5%, Resilience +10%

Pick One +10%

Club, Dance, Drive, First Aid, Sing, Spear, Unarmed

Slave: Slavery is the backbone of many empires and wicked countries. Slaves learn to suffer their lot to survive. Some slaves seethe with rebellious hearts, seeking to overthrow their masters, others are born into slavery and know no different and venerate their masters as gods. Slaves can be found anywhere in Gloranth, the Praxians, Dara Happans and Kralori all own slaves, but it is in Fonrit that slavery is most famous. In Fonrit there are two kinds of Slave, the Yad or Hand Slave who has great freedoms and respect, they even own slaves themselves and are often found as bureaucrats, child tutors, hand maids and trusted bodyguards. The Kadam slaves are the lowest of the low and their lives are truly miserable, which is why most of them come from the Blue Skins.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Sword, Javelin, Spear, Bow, Polearm, Whip, Net. Armour and weapons amongst the elite are often made from Timinit carapaces and exotic furs.

Magic

Common Magic is prevalent amongst the Fonritans and they have the requisite 6 Magnitude of Common Magic spells. All manner of spells can be found in the markets and temples of the region. Favoured spells include Abacus, Befuddle, Detect Runaway Slave and Golden Tongue.

Ompalam is a Great God in Fonrit with whom most people have a Pact. He is worshipped in many different ways, or approached through one of the lesser deities. Typical spells include Amplify, Behold, Blessing, Consecrate, Disarm, Dismiss Magic, Excommunicate, Extension, Mindlink, Soul Sight and True Weapon (Whip).

Ompalam can also be approached through Sorcery; The Teachings of the Lash is a popular and corrupting grimoire. It contains Banish, Castback, Dominate Human, Hinder, Palsy, Protective Ward and Wrack

Advanced Skills

Pick Two

Commerce, Disguise, Language, Lore (Slavery)

Pick One

Craft (Any) Language, Lore (Slavery), Survival

Pick Two

Acrobatics, Art, Courtesy, Craft (Any), Lore (Bureaucracy), Lore (Slavery), Play Instrument, Seduction, Teaching.

Cults

Ompalam the God of Slavery and Coercion is the centre of power in Fonrit, for he has enslaved all other gods. The pantheon of Fonrit is vast and complex including Ikadz God of Torture, Tentacule the Slave god and Fida Is the Burning Sunbird. Garangordos the Tyrant and his 17 siblings are powerful heroes. Many Fonritans are practitioners of sorcery, using their powers to enslave others to their service. The God Learners undermined Fonritan faith by changing their doctrine from 'Everyone is a Slave' to 'No-one is Free'.

PAMALTELA – UMATHELA

Umathela was once a primeval Elf Forest known as Vralos and Enkloso. The region was unsullied by human influence until, in 580ST, the Waertagi in alliance with the King of Seshnela transplanted Slontan Orlanthi to the region as a social experiment. By the seventh century the Middle Sea Empire controlled the lands, building mighty cities, driving back the Elfs and becoming fabulously wealthy. By contrast the primitive storm barbarians, now called the Umathings practiced 'slash and burn' agriculture and are more impoverished than the Agimori hunters who bring their quarry to market, even the timinits of the land seem to prosper better under their God Learner masters. The Umathings became the playthings of the God Learners, forced to worship strange gods, to divide their clans and practice traditions that were not their own. At the height of the God Learner's rule the Elves of Vralos were believed to be extinct.

In 901 the Umathelan Malkioni turned against the Imperial Seat of Justela: they have driven out their Seshnegi Masters and now rule themselves. Umathela represents a curious schism in the Middle Sea Empire, being an anti-imperial God Learner enclave. Free expression is the norm here, prospering under a genuinely liberal approach to Malkionist doctrine (and bordering on the heretical, as far as the main empire is concerned). Here civilised men have made false gods and gained magic from it and have taken Pamaltelan traditions and merged them with their own as a sign of defiance.

The seven great cities of the Umathela represent all that is best about Middle Sea Empire civilisation, each with its own university. Each city represents a unique character but the force that binds them together – shared understanding – is visible in the mixture of Justelan and Umathelan architecture. However, beyond the ports and fields the dark forest stirs and the Umathings whisper of the storm to come.

Race

Most Umathelans are of wareran stock. The city folk are of fairer stock than the crude and swarthy Umathings. Agimori traders, hunters and crafters form a substantial minority.

Languages

Umathelan (Theyalan Dialect).
Western Seshnegi.

Cultural Backgrounds

Umathelan God Learner adventurers are Civilised, as per the RuneQuest Core Rulebook they may also take any of the Justelan Cultural Background options to represent their ancestry.

For the Umathings, adventurers can be from either Primitive or Barbarian backgrounds as per the RuneQuest Core Rulebook, the clans nearest the cities being Barbarians and the woodland dwellers being primitive.

Umathelan Agimori may also opt for one of the Pamaltelan - Agimori backgrounds.

Professions

Civilised, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

God Learners in Umathela practice the same weapons as those found in the empire at large. Amongst the native Umathelans, Axe, Bow and Spear predominate. The regional Agimori favour the Spear and Javelin.

Magic

All Umathelans have the requisite 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells. The key sorcery orders found in the God Learner empire are also found in the seven great cities.

Cults

Umathelans God Learners follow the path of the sorcerer by joining one of the sorcery orders and accepting Malkionist teaching.

The False Gods of Worlath, Ehilm and Jograpur provide little effective magic, but in some regions their worship is enforced upon the Umathings.

The Gods of the Umathings are variations of the Storm Tribe including Tyloque the Storm Wind (Orlanth) and Mayedra the Mother Earth (Ernalda), Aloral and Morlotes are the Sow and Boar Gods and Ropotes the is Knowing God. These are worshipped both a sources of Divine Magic or Spirit Magic dependent upon the nature of the clan.

The Agimori may worship the Pamaltelan Pantheon or practice sorcery.

Pamaltelan Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Arbennan	Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Persistence +10%	Craft (Mud-wares) +10%, Language (Native) +50%, Tracking	4D6x10 silver
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Evade, Perception, Resilience, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Disguise, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Unarmed		
Doraddi	Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Lore (Regional) +30%, Resilience +5%	Craft (Agriculture) +15%, Language (Native) +50%	4D8x10 silver
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Evade, Perception, Persistence, Sing	Pick One Craft, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Unarmed		
Tarint	Athletics +10%, Culture (Own) +30%, Evade +10%, Lore (Regional) +30%,	Language (Native) +50%, Tracking	4D6x10 silver
	Pick Two +10% Dance, Drive, Perception, Persistence, Resilience, Ride	Pick Two Craft, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	
	Pick Two +10% Axe, Bow, Dagger, Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Unarmed		

PAMALTELA □ THE AGIMORI OF JOLAR, TARINT AND KOTHAR.

The Agimori are the predominant culture of Pamaltelan interior. They are the descendants of the immortal Agi, the First People to be made by Pamalt from Earth and Fire. The Agi were a happy people, but were barren: they became restless with their dry land and wanted children, Pamalt gave the Agi children and filled the land with plants and animals in return for their immortality, thus the Agi became the Agimori.

The Agimori are widespread in Pamaltela, their lands spread from Tarint in the West to Kothar in the East. There are three distinct tribal divisions amongst the Agimori of the interior, but they are unified in their worship of Pamalt's Necklace, as his pantheon of Spirits and Gods are known. The Abernnan are nomadic hunter-gatherers who follow the way of Rasout the Hunter and Vangono the Spearman. They dwell in Jolar and prosper. They resist civilisation and fought hard against the Six-Legged Empire (as they called the God Learners) under the leadership of Hon Hoolbiktu. They seek to promote their

lifestyle to the pacifistic Doraddi in the East in order to ensure their kinsmen's survival.

The Doraddi live in the Eastern lands of Kothar, occupying villages along the rivers of their land and do not stray from home. Unlike most other Agimori the Doraddi families are Matrilineal. The Doraddi revere sacred plants and gain magic from the earth and rivers. The Agimori of the West are the Tarint, or Thirsty people who dwell in Tarien. They are primitive and live in fear of the reptilian Slarges and are forced to hunt giant monsters for there is no other quarry in their lands.

Race

Agimori

Languages

Tanglanku in Tarint, Doraddic in Kothar and Arbennan.

Cultural Backgrounds

Arbennan: The Adventurer grew up in the culture of the 'Walking People', who only build homes when they need to and then destroy them after 14 days. Hunting and gathering skills were taught while very young, so the Adventurer could be a part of the greater cycle of birth-death-rebirth that all Agimori believe in. He might be interested in the views of other peoples but he will not allow them to corrupt his in fear that he will not be reborn if stained with false faith.

As Per Nomad, Arbennan may never take Ride or Drive as mounts are unknown they may instead add a bonus to Evade, Sing or Dance.

Doraddi: The Adventurer was born to the 'Staying People', a tribe of Agimori that live on the shores of rivers and streams to irrigate their various crops. The character is part of a specific bloodline that can trace its roots back to the first of several Plant Mothers. This dictates what manner of plant the character has spent all of his life learning about and how to cultivate it. He is probably generally peaceful but more than willing to shed some blood for the crops if they must be defended.

As per Primitive.

Tarint: The character grew up as one of the 'Thirsty People' and has been involved in the avoidance and then hunting of the great desert beasts each year. To be counted as an adult he had to have shed blood during their annual trample, making martial skill and the avoidance of harm primary in most childhood lessons. Later in life the character could choose a particular sect of his society to become part of but only after becoming blooded in the yearly Great Hunt.

As per primitive.

Professions

Arbennan – As per nomad, except Herdsman and Priest and any of the below.

Doraddi – As per primitive, except for Woodsman, also Homebuilder and Mwalish.

Pamaltelan Professions

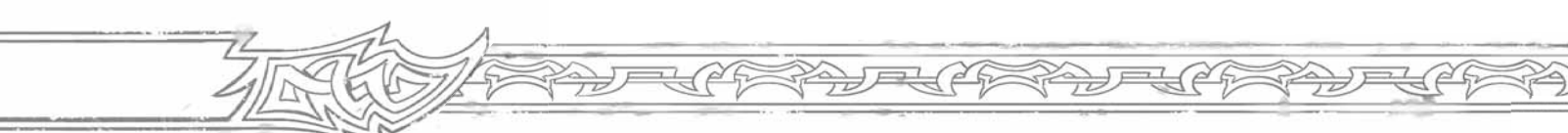
Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Guerrilla Fighter	Athletics +5%, Evaluate +5%, Stealth +10% Pick One +10% Javelin, Spear	Lore (God Learners) Survival
Homebuilder	Athletics +5%, Resilience +10% Pick One +10% Javelin, Evade, Lore (Regional), Perception	Engineering Pick One Craft (Claywork) +5%, Craft (Mudwork) +5%, Survival +5%
Mwalish	Athletics +5%, Drive +5%, Lore (Regional) +10%, Perception +5%, Ride +10%	Survival +5%



Tarint - As per primitive, except for Woodsman, also Homebuilder and Mwalish.

Guerrilla Fighter: The character is a member of an anti-God Learner group of warriors who battle them in the best way they can – through stealthy attacks on supplies and lone targets. He has been trained to move in and cause damage on the religious usurpers, hopefully dissuading them from harming any more of the Pamaltelan peoples. The character has a deep hatred for what the God Learner Empire has done to the lesser people of his lands and is willing to risk everything to make sure that does not happen to his own tribe.

Homebuilder: Whether it is the mud huts of the Arbennan or the cavern shelters of the Tarint, the character is one of the



skilled builders of his tribe's homes. He is one of the common tribal people in his community, making sure that no child goes unsheltered and no family must repair their living areas alone. The character is no doubt one of the more popular members of his society and may have several mates lined up to further the generation of the tribe. When no home is need of his skills he hunts for food and other resources, meaning that he must always be ready for outsider influence or predator attacks.

Mwalish: The character has somehow come down with the spiritual disease of wanderlust. He has left his family behind in order to discover what has not yet been seen, gathering everything they can from the outside world to eventually bring it back to the tribe. Treasures, stories and all manner of interesting pieces of Glorantha call to the character, sending him to the four corners of the world. The character knows that he may eventually get over his mwalish infection but he cannot let that bother him. After all, even if he perishes he will return to the family lands in the guise of new life.

Cultural Weapons and Combat Styles

Spear and Shield and Javelins are carried by most warriors in honour of Vangono the Spear. Amongst the followers of Hon Hoolbiktu it has become increasingly common for warriors to train in exotic weapons, some of unknown origin.

Magic

All three tribes have the requisite 6 Magnitude in Common Magic spells. Amongst the Abernnan and Tarint spells associated with hunting and stealth are favoured, whereas the Doraddi seek power from fertility, health and protection magic.

Cults

Pamaltela is called the Great Spirit Land by many. Pamalt's Necklace is the pantheon central to the way of life within the interior. Every family, clan and lineage has its shaman. The Great Spirits of Pamalt's Necklace are:

Pamalt –Chieftain of the Gods, who understand all the ways. He provides spirits of Wisdom, Leadership and Earth.

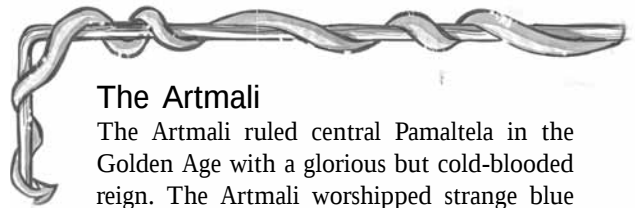
Aleshmara – Leader of Women and Keeper of the Sacred Basket of Life. She provides access to Ancestors, Guardians and Life Spirits.

Faranar – Pamalt's Wife and daughter of Aleshmara. She like her mother is associated with spirits of family and ancestors.

Cronisper the Wise – Grandfather Sky and advisor to Pamalt. He provides access to wise ancestor, knowledge and magic spirits.

Vangono the Spear – Protector of Pamalt's Necklace. His spirits are of war and conflict, most famous are the Three Flames which allow the magician to breath three types of fire.

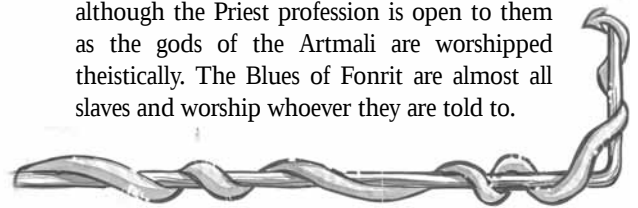
Rasout the Hunter – He is one of the provider spirits, he teaches spirits that aid in hunting and controlling the beasts of the veldt.



The Artmali

The Artmali ruled central Pamaltela in the Golden Age with a glorious but cold-blooded reign. The Artmali worshipped strange blue skinned gods, including Artmal and Annilla the Blue Moon. They were a strange slate blue skinned people, obsessed with heartless perfection. Their empire was assailed by the storm gods and the god Artmal was maimed. They became corrupted by Vovisbor the Filth Which Walks. They were burned by the Great Horned Serpent who tilted the sky dome upon them. Finally the Artmali were sold into slavery. The broken and enslaved blues of Fonrit and the primitive inhabitants of Zamokil are all that remain of the once great empire. The Toravs of Fonrit are descendants of the Artmali, but hold no pride in this instead they persecute their distant kin more for their past indiscretions.

The Blues make up a large minority in Pamaltela, but they have little or no political power, players can choose to play a Blue. For the folk of Zamokil use the Primitive Background, although the Priest profession is open to them as the gods of the Artmali are worshipped theistically. The Blues of Fonrit are almost all slaves and worship whoever they are told to.



Glorantha Magic

Glorantha uses each of the main magical paths described in the *RuneQuest Core Rules*. There is, however, an additional magical form, Draconic Mysticism, that is fully explored in this chapter.

MAGICAL TRADITIONS

All Glorantha's magical traditions derive from the runes. Common Magic is the weakest form, using the shadow influences of the runes in the Inner World to work magical effects on a relatively mundane scale.

Divine Magic derives from the gods, but as they are themselves tied inextricably with the runes, so is their magic a derivation and channelling of runic power.

Sorcery, particularly that practiced by the reclusive Brithini, taps directly into runic power but is unconcerned with the natural, runic harmony. Consequentially it is parasitic to a large degree and viewed with deep suspicion by theists.

Spirit magic derives from the spirits and they are minor manifestations of the runes.

There is, however, another form of magic that is divorced from the runes and owes its power to another force entirely: draconic magic.

DRACONIC MAGIC

All draconic magic stems from the consciousness of the Cosmic Dragon. Before creation the Cosmic Dragon bent its will towards the ordering of the cosmos through utter enlightenment. It achieved pure understanding, and therefore control, of all surrounding it. The monster, Orxili, challenged this understanding and in being forced to fight Orxili, the Cosmic Dragon broke infinity. The resulting shards were scattered far and wide and it is through these shards that other beings, dragons and dragonewts primarily, gained some of the Cosmic Dragon's enlightenment, although attaining even a fraction of the Cosmic Dragon's enlightenment is a journey of many lifetimes.

Through interaction with the dragonewts humans have managed to set themselves along a similar path and this is what allows them to work draconic magic. The dragonewts maintain that the runes are, themselves, shards of the shards scattered by the breaking of infinity and so even draconic magic has a

relationship with the runes but of a purer form than Common or Divine magic. The humans of the EWF thus believe that, if all consciousness comes together, human, dragonewt and dragon, all shards will coalesce; the universe will be made whole and infinity restored. All things contributing to this accretion will become a part of the Cosmic Dragon attaining its own, complete enlightenment. This is to transcend even the power of the gods.

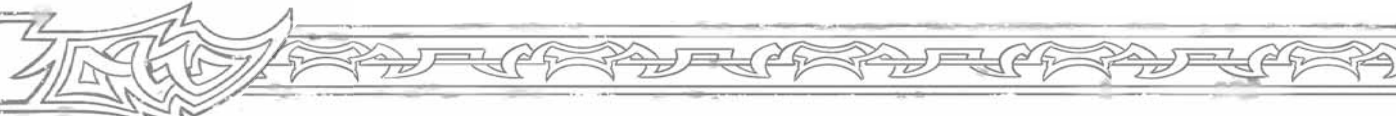
Thus the individual purpose of every Wyrmfriend is to attain enlightenment so that their own place in the Great Dragon to Be will be both assured and woven into the seamless fabric of the Cosmic Dragon's own perfect understanding. Enlightenment is both a journey and a destination. Magic is but a small, crude part of it, but a potent one nonetheless.

Only the True Dragons have achieved the appropriate stage of enlightenment and this is why their vast forms need not make themselves felt in the Inner World. Dragonewts work diligently towards enlightenment and True Dragonhood but it takes many lifetimes to achieve the correct state of understanding. Humans seek shortcuts; they cannot be continually reborn as the dragonewts are, because they are anchored in Time but they can adapt their minds to the mystic paths enabling enlightenment in ways dragonewts cannot. This is why so many strive towards dragonhood.

Only one human has attained the level of enlightenment allowing him to transcend the mundane and join the consciousness of the Cosmic Dragon. Obduran the Flyer transcended in 803 and now his closest disciples, those members of the Eternal Dragon Ring, attempt to do the same. Below them, hundreds of thousands of draconic mystics, the rank and file of the EWF, strive to reach the levels set by Obduran's disciples. Some will make it; many will come close but most will fail and be simply absorbed into the Great Dragon to Be's fabric, inconsequential accoutrements individually, shards of shards of shards, but, taken as a single entity, a vital component of the Great Dragon Project.

Draconic Mysticism

Mysticism is the practice of enlightenment through meditation, research and dedication to a mystical ideal. In the case of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends the ideal is that of draconic perfection: oneness with the world and the universe through transformation into the Great Dragon to Be.



To that end the magicians of the EWF look deep into ancient dragon lore, the myths and legends of the Empire's dragonewt allies and use this knowledge to meditate on their own place within the changing Empire and the Great Dragon. When they train physically, the magicians reshape their inner harmonies by chanting benedictions in Auld Wyrnish to perfect the body from the flawed human shape to something closer to the draconic ideal. When they undergo rigorous mental study, self-analysis and periods of contemplative meditation, they are musing on the place of their own consciousness in the Cosmic Dragon, which is the only perfect philosophical perception of the universe.

The more enlightened he becomes, the more power a Draconic Mystic attains. The more feats of magic that he is capable of, the more he sees his own place in the Great Dragon To Come. The more he is assured of his place, the less inclined his is to use his powers in the human world, for to expend gathered energy is to bind oneself to the Now and not to What Is Coming. Almost all other forms of magic, especially God Learner Sorcery, are universally perceived as misguided at best and worthless at worst. Note that few Draconic Mystics openly look down on Common Magic. In fact, almost all of the dragonspeakers practice both kinds of magic given the opportunity to do so. Common Magic can provide access to abilities and powers that a magician would regret acquiring or using through Draconic Mysticism, since to do so would drain his personal commitment to the Great Dragon. In this light it is easy to see why so many EWF magicians become skilled at Common Magic as well as their more mystical leanings.

Draconic Mysticism is not available to everyone. A character must be an initiate of a dragonspeaker cult in order to acquire this magic and must prove his own enlightenment in order to rise through the ranks and progress further.

Before a spell can be cast using Draconic Mysticism, the following process is followed:

- X Draconic Mysticism spells are cast using the character's Draconic Illumination skill. This skill must therefore be learnt before any Draconic Mysticism spells may be cast.
- X The character must learn the specific Draconic Mysticism spell that he wishes to cast. Once the character has acquired the Draconic Illumination skill and learnt a Draconic Mysticism spell, he is ready to try casting that spell.
- X To cast a spell, the character must make a Draconic Illumination Skill Test.
- X If the test critically succeeds, the spell's effects take place and the spellcaster suffers from Losing the Path.

- X If the test succeeds, the spell's effects take place and a number of Magic Points are deducted from the spellcaster's total.
- X If the test fails, the spell does not take effect and the spellcaster loses 1 Magic Point.
- X If the test fumbles, the spell does not take effect and the spellcaster suffers from Backlash (see page 247).

Acquiring Draconic Mysticism

To gain Dragon Magic is to walk a path of meditation, patience and enlightenment. Once a character has reached the dragonspeaker rank required to learn Draconic Magic spells of various Magnitudes, he is free to study under the tuition of his cult's experienced members and draw upon the order's resources, gathered lore and its temple facilities necessary for meditation and martial arts training.

- X Wyrms' Face Believers will not be taught Dragon Magic spells, though they will be taught Draconic Illumination.
- X Wyrms' Talon Disciples can be taught any Dragon Magic spells (up to a Magnitude 4).
- X Wyrms' Claw Initiates can be taught any Dragon Magic spells (up to a Magnitude 8).
- X Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants can be taught any Dragon Magic spells, of any Magnitude.

Three additional skills are crucial to Draconic Illumination: Dance, Meditation and Insight.

- X The sinuous mystical dances of the dragonewts and EWF teach the practitioner the movements of the Cosmic Dragon and promote the outer physical harmony necessary to channel power and prepare for transcendence.
- X Meditation teaches the inner mental harmony necessary to comprehend and contemplate the mysteries of the Cosmic Dragon.
- X Insight teaches that the Inner World is an illusion and Truth lies beyond it. It is necessary to master emotional behaviour, interpret it and separate the Truth from the Illusion if transcendence is to be attained.

The Draconic Illumination skill can never exceed the highest of these three skills and those who seek the ultimate state of being – transcendence – invest in the development of Insight in order to perceive the ultimate truths of the cosmos.

Using Draconic Magic

Critical Success – Losing the Path

The mystics of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends are loathe to expend their energy without good reason, citing that it binds them in the Now and risks pulling them from the path of the

Great Dragon To Come. If the Draconic Illumination test is a critical success, the spell is successfully cast – but the caster also loses a point of Draconic Illumination. This represents the spellcaster immersing himself and his magical energies in the mortal world rather than saving his powers for the Great Dragon. The dragonspeaker realises his grip on the grand design is slipping somewhat and his Draconic Illumination correspondingly diminishes. Draconic Illumination lost from Losing the Path can never fall below the character's base INT+POW and can always be regained with improvement rolls as with any other Advanced skill.

Important Note: When determining the critical score for Dragon Magic spellcasting, the critical score is always based on the spellcaster's *unmodified* Draconic Illumination skill. This is unlike every other critical score, which is based on a character's modified skill total.

Fumble – Backlash

Draconic Mysticism is a path of magic that is powerful and in many respects alien to the human body and mind. In centuries to come, when the Second Age is a legend of conceited Empires and world-altering sorceries, Dragon Magic will largely fade from use by humans. In the current age, mystics commanding Dragon Magic put their very souls at risk each time they manipulate the energies within themselves, balancing the risk of destruction with the hope of becoming more like the draconic ideal. If the Draconic Illumination test is a fumble, rather than simply a failure, the caster suffers the effects of Backlash.

It has been argued that humans are not meant to harness this great power. The evidence is no more compelling than when one examines the damage to the mystics who have suffered for their magic, becoming warped due to Dragon Magic Backlash.

Magic Backlash.

When a player fumbles the Draconic Illumination test for spellcasting, the character is at the mercy of the draconic powers he has tried and failed to channel into being. He suffers a change within his flesh as the inhuman mystic power floods his system, seeking a way of release into the universe. Lacking any natural release, the gathered energies dissipate by flowing through the spellcaster's body, inflicting wracking pain in his mind, his muscles, his organs and his bones as the energies he sought to bring forth backfire and turn upon his own form.

Characters suffering the effects of Backlash permanently lose 1 point from one random physical Characteristic (1 or 2 = STR, 3 or 4 = DEX, 5 or 6 = CON) and are incapacitated for 1D4 Combat Actions. In addition, all Draconic Illumination tests made by the character fumble on a roll of 96 to 00 (instead of the usual 00) for the following 2D10 hours, as the unleashing of magical forces has put his inner harmony into flux.

Casting Time

Draconic Magic spells have the Casting Time (X) trait, where X signifies the number of Combat Actions it takes to cast the spell.

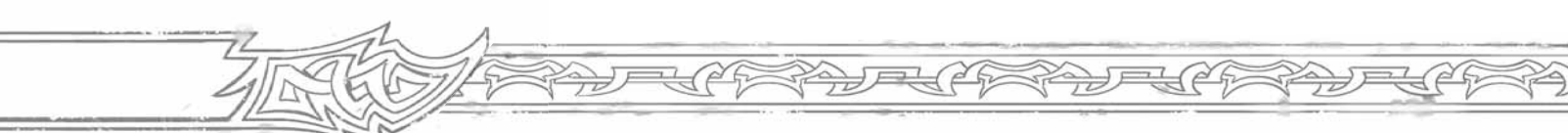


A spell's effect takes effect at the end of its last casting Combat Action.

Distractions or attacks on the spellcaster as he casts will either automatically ruin the spell (if the spellcaster is prevented from chanting or suffers a Serious Wound or Major Wound) or require Persistence tests to maintain concentration on the spell.

Magnitude

A Draconic Mystic can cast spells of a Magnitude up to his Insight skill divided by 10 and rounded up,



and can only learn spells of a particular Magnitude if it is permissible by his rank in the cult. When casting Progressive spells, which have a variable Magnitude, the mystic cannot cast a spell at a Magnitude higher than both his rank and Insight skill permits.

For example, Edric has joined the Long Mountain Dragon School and reached the rank of Disciple. His Insight skill is 66%. He can thus learn draconic spells up to a maximum of Magnitude 4 and cast progressive spells, such as Disease Resistance, up to Magnitude 4 even though, in theory, his Insight would allow him to cast the spell at up to Magnitude 7.

Dismissing Spells

Ceasing to cast a Concentration spell or dismissing Permanent or Duration spells (that the character has cast) is immediate and does not cost a Combat Action.

Triggered Spells

To counter attacks, many practitioners of Dragon Magic cast their spells far in advance of ever needing to use them. Upon rising from sleep, a dragonspeaker might perform an hour or more of dance or martial arts training, casting a number of spells as he goes through the movements. These spells are cast so that they are ready to be triggered in a moment of need, so a dragonspeaker can call upon his magic in an instant. This is another example of how Dragon Magic as practiced by the EWF is more flexible and more powerful than Common Magic.

Almost all Dragon Magic spells possess the Trigger trait. A dragonspeaker can go through all the motions of casting a spell (as detailed by the description and Casting Time) but hold back the final movements, refraining from unleashing the spell. During the preparation time its basic parameters are decided, such as its Magnitude (if it is a Progressive spell).

The number of spells a dragonspeaker can store prepared in this fashion is not infinite. The total Magnitude of all prepared Dragon Magic spells may not exceed the total of the character's Insight and Draconic Illumination skills, divided by 20 and rounded up.

Edric, for example, with Insight 66% and Draconic Illumination 44% totals 110%. Dividing by 20 and rounding up means Edric can store a maximum of 6 Magnitude in magic to be triggered later.

The Draconic Illumination casting test only occurs at the time the Dragon Magic spell is released (and thus any modifiers at that time are applied). Equally, the targets of the spell are determined at the time of the spell's release, along with

expenditure of Magic Points. The trigger for all Dragon Magic spells performed in this manner is simply the caster's desire, coupled with a final gesture and a few words. In other words, a Draconic Mystic can cast any number of prepared spells simultaneously, on the same Combat Action, if his Draconic Illumination roll is successful.

Spell Traits & Descriptions

This section details a few dozen examples of what Dragon Magic is capable of. The truly powerful spells tied into Draconic Mysticism are the province of Wyrms' Eye Ascendants and other exalted imperial leaders and as such will rarely be encountered by characters. This section deals with the kind of Dragon Magic that Adventurers are more likely to experience, either as victims of Dragonlord antagonists or as dragonspeakers themselves. As such, a great deal of it is focused on the draconic martial arts, which are the lowest (and therefore most common) forms of Dragon Magic in Glorantha. Something to bear in mind when describing the spells in-game is that no dragonspeaker would say 'I cast Universal Deflection'. Instead he would refer to chanting the Three Descants of Protection, in order to quench the power of his enemy's magic. Games Masters and players should not feel restricted in sticking to the listed spell names; they are only listed as such for ease of reference.

Every Dragon Magic spell is defined by a series of traits that tells you what kind of spell it is and how it is used in the game. A description then follows describing the spell's precise effects. The traits used by Draconic Mysticism spells are detailed here.

Area (X): The spell affects all targets within a radius specified in metres.

Casting Time (X): The spell takes the indicated number of Combat Actions to cast.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place so long as the character concentrates on it. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the spellcaster to continue to chant benedictions in Auld Wyrnish and ignore other distractions.

Duration (X): The spell's effects will stay in place for the number of minutes indicated.

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears.

Magnitude (X): The strength and power of the spell. Also the minimum number of Magic Points required to cast it.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed.

Progressive: This indicates that the spell can be learnt and cast at greater levels of Magnitude than the minimum.

Ranged: Ranged spells may be cast upon targets up to a maximum distance of the character's POW x 10 in metres.

Resist: The spell's effects do not take effect automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect. The spellcaster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting.

Trigger: Almost all Dragon Magic spells are deemed to have this trait. See Triggered Spells on page 248 for details.

Become Draconic Wyrms

Casting Time 10, Duration 15, Magnitude 4, Trigger

This is a common spell among dragonspeakers who expect to be attacked by weak foes. By chanting the Sixteen Precepts of the Flesh's Evolution, the caster turns into a wyrm, using all the physical Characteristics and traits of a 40-year old wyrm as detailed in *RuneQuest*. While in wyrm form, the spellcaster's skills are subsumed by his new form's skills – as such, no spellcasting is possible (as the character has no access to the skills necessary to cast spells), though magical items that are feasibly usable by the new form may be used. The dragonspeaker's INT, POW and CHA are unaffected.

Note that a dragonspeaker's equipment does not grow or enhance in any way to account for his new form. The spellcaster will literally burst out of his armour and clothing as he becomes the wyrm.

Any use of the Become Wyrms spell automatically results in a the character losing one point of Draconic Illumination, in the same manner – and for the same reasons – as Losing the Way. If the spellcasting test also results in the spellcaster Losing the Way, then two points of Draconic Illumination are lost.

Blood of Lava

Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 4, Trigger

This spell transmutes the dragonspeaker's own blood into burning hot fluid that renders him immune to nonmagical heat and fire. The primary bonus of the spell is revealed in combat, when each injury inflicted against his flesh releases a hissing jet

of steam and almost white-hot blood. Dragonspeakers of the Children of the Ten Talons are notoriously fond of this spell.

Any successful attack on the dragonspeaker causes boiling blood to spray across any creature that is adjacent to the Hit Location struck. Hits to the Right Arm or Leg will spray anyone adjacent to the dragonspeaker to his right, while hits to the Left Arm or Leg will spray anyone adjacent to the left. Head, torso and abdomen hits spray forwards (unless, of course, the dragonspeaker was struck from behind).

Any creature caught in a blood spray suffers 2D4 magical heat damage to a random Hit Location (though a successful Resist (Dodge) test will halve the damage).

Bone Ridges

Casting Time 5, Magnitude 3, Duration 10, Touch, Trigger

This spell causes bony spines and ridges to erupt from the caster's body. One Hit Location, determined by the caster, is affected for every 20 points of Draconic Illumination, rounded up. Thus a mystic with Draconic Illumination 55% can affect three locations.

The bony ridges provide an additional 3AP to the affected location. This bonus does not count towards the Armour Penalty for Strike Rank or Movement. Additionally, the caster gains +3 points of damage if he uses the location for an Unarmed attack.

Bone-Singing

Casting Time Special, Instant, Magnitude 4

The mystic must ritually prepare the relevant quantity of dragon bone, depending on what he wishes to create. A simple blessing is all that is traditionally required to bless dragon bone, though some dragonspeakers compose poems of thanks to the creature that died to provide this material. Through chants, songs or mantras, the mystic 'sings' the bone into a new shape, visualising the end result and willing the bone to alter to meet his desire. This spell is cast throughout the process of creating the bone-crafted item, though it is normally cast by one dragonspeaker as another actually creates the item.

The magic of Bone-Singing enables the dragon bone to be moulded and yet retain its resilience. It also speeds up the entire crafting process – it only takes half the normal time to create armour and weapons through Bone-Singing. Actually constructing the bone-crafted item out of the shaped bone is a separate task. Dragon bone armour requires a Craft (Armourer) test, while klanths will require a Craft (Weaponsmith) test. If the spellcaster is performing these tests himself (on top of

maintaining the spell), he suffers a –40% penalty. On top of the normal base material costs, klanths will also require 200 SP worth of obsidian pieces.

Brand Traitor

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 2, Touch, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

This spell is used only on those enemies or traitors that have truly earned the ire of the dragonspeaker cults, such as betrayers who fled with secrets or artefacts and adventurers who have caused enough trouble to warrant a witch-hunt called against them.

If the victim fails the Resist test, he suffers a painful burn to his face, causing 1D3 damage to the Head location. This damage can be healed normally and the scar will vanish in time. However, every time the branded creature returns to EWF territory, the burn mark returns (causing 1D3 damage again). The damage will recur every hour the victim remains within EWF territory.

Cold-Blooded

Area 5, Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

With this spell, popular amongst many cults, the draconic mystic deadens the emotions of those around him just as their own emotions can seem subdued to others. If the targets fail to resist the spell's effects, their strength of their emotions are at the mercy of the wyrmfriend who can partially drain them or blank them out completely on a whim. Note that the dragonspeaker cannot add emotions – he can only deaden or remove those already present.

Combat Meditation

Casting Time 3, Duration 10, Magnitude 2, Progressive, Trigger

The mystic enters a semi-trance during combat and gains an additional Combat Action which can be only be used defensively for each point of Magnitude invested in the spell. Edric, for example, with Insight 66% (but as a Disciple limited to Magnitude 4 spells effects) could gain an additional 4 Combat Actions to be used to defend against multiple attacks.

The mystic decides which of his total CA are used offensively or defensively. Thus Edric, with a base of 3 CA, plus an additional 1 CA for his Spear and Shield style, could cast a Magnitude 4 Combat Meditation allowing him up to four offensive CA and four defensive CA per round, or up to eight

defensive CA per round. He could not, however, gain any more than four offensive CA.

Command Reptile

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

The dragonspeakers achieve mastery over the dinosaurs that accompany their armies by use of spells such as this. Though the effects of the spell are limited, Command Reptile allows the caster to demand that the reptile or dinosaur obey a single command. The order given must be one that the beast is able to carry out and finish immediately. For example, 'Eat the intruders!' will work perfectly. 'Patrol my estate until nightfall' will not work. Once the command has been obeyed, the reptilian reverts back to its own will. If the creature fails to complete the task, it will only try again if the circumstances force it into acting, such as a failed attack provoking a group of adventurers into retaliation.

This spell only works on reptiles and does not function on dragons or wyrms. Wyverns gain a +50% bonus to their Persistence tests to resist this spell.

Deafening Cry

Area 10, Casting Time 5, Magnitude 2, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

Any character within the Area of the spell that fails the Resilience test is knocked prone and cannot use his next 1D4 Combat Actions offensively (although he may defend, with appropriate modifiers if he is still prone). In addition, whether a character passed the Resilience test or not, everyone in the area of effect suffers a –10% penalty on all Athletics, Acrobatics and Perception tests for one hour, due to the angry ringing in their ears affecting their hearing and balance.

Disease Resistance

Casting Time 5, Duration 20, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch, Trigger

Dragonspeakers prepare this spell for themselves and their allies who might fall prey to disease. A successful casting adds the spell's Magnitude x 20 to all Resilience tests to resist disease (or Magnitude x 10 if the disease is magical in nature).

Dominate Reptilian Mind

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Magnitude 5, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

This spell is among the more powerful magical means of commanding the loyalty of dinosaurs and reptiles, binding the

creature to the caster's will for as long as the Dragon Mystic chants a mantra known as the Five Precepts of Draconic Loyalty. The dinosaur or reptile under the caster's sway can be commanded to perform any action, even at great risk to its own life. Dinosaurs can be tamed by repeated use of this spell, with dragonspeakers casting it over and over again on the primal minds of the monstrous beasts, until obedience becomes ingrained in the reptilian brain.

This spell only works on reptiles and does not function on dragons or wyrms. Wyverns gain a +30% bonus to their Persistence tests to resist this spell.

Draconic Prophecy

Casting Time 20, Magnitude 4, Touch, Trigger

This spell's effects fall almost entirely under the influence of the Games Master rather than the fate of a dice roll. When the spell is cast, it only takes effect the next time the target falls asleep for longer than an hour. During this rest period, the subject of the spell dreams of their own future *as it applies to the Great Dragon To Come*. This is not a spell that offers specific or delineated prophecy. It only lays out the subject's future in the EWF's Great Work. In this aspect, the spell is powered by the dragonspeaker's faith in the Great Work and reveals the future along these lines.

The images gained through this slumber are fragmentary and vague. Games Masters can describe flashes of scenes, conversations, events or omens that could apply to the character almost immediately or up to years and years in the future. Nothing laid out by the spell is certain – such is the nebulous nature of prophecy. If they wish, players affected by this spell can choose to ignore any dream imagery from the Games Master and simply gain a Hero Point, which is only usable the following day. In these instances, the character has dreamed something minor that applies to his immediate future and senses the way fate could go once he encounters the moment in time he has seen in his dreams.

Draconic Regeneration

Casting Time 1, Concentration Special, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch

This spell must be cast upon a wounded Hit Location. The spell heals 1 point of damage immediately. As long as the spellcaster maintains his chant, the location heals an additional amount of damage equal to the spell's Magnitude every minute. The healing continues for as long as the caster concentrates.

A side effect of the spell is to begin the process of draconisation in those not already converts to the EWF. Every point of healing granted through Draconic Regeneration reduces the one of the following skills appropriate to the recipient's

system of belief: Divine cultists, Pact; Sorcery Orders, Sorcery (Grimoire); Spirit Magicians, Spirit Walking. In addition to reducing the appropriate skill, the recipient gains 1% of Draconic Illumination. The recipient can choose to resist this subtle indoctrination by making an Opposed test of his Persistence against the healer's Draconic Illumination. Note the effects for the resister's result below:

Critical Success: the recipient benefits from the healing and suffers no reduction in one of his skills or gains Draconic Illumination

Success: The recipient benefits from the healing and may choose to reject either the reduction on a skill or the gaining of Draconic Illumination.

Failure: The recipient benefits from the healing, reduces the appropriate skill and gains Draconic Illumination.

*Fumble: As for failure, but the skill reduction is doubled and the Draconic Illumination gained is equal to the spell's Magnitude **plus** the caster's CHA score.*

If a Pact is reduced to zero through Draconic Regeneration then the link with the god is severed and will need to be re-established. Any POW dedicated to the Pact is forfeit to the god in question and Divine Magic is lost.

Draconic Enhancement (X)

Casting Time 5, Duration 5, Magnitude 2, Progressive, Touch, Trigger

This spell enhances any characteristic with the exception of POW. There are thus six separate versions of this spell, one for each characteristic. For every two points of Magnitude, the target of this spell gains +1 to the characteristic.

Dragon Claws

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Touch, Trigger

This spell transforms the recipient's fingernails into the thick, black, sharp claws of a dragon. These claws are considered Formidable Natural Weapons and can be used with the Unarmed skill (with a +30% bonus). They inflict 1D6+3 damage and have AP 4 for the purposes of parrying. This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Fire Claws or Infected Claws.

Dragon Flight

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Magnitude 6, Trigger

This spell gifts the caster with the ability to fly. Dragonspeakers that are unafraid of expending their energies often favour spells such as these and the mystics that accompany the imperial army often employ the spell for scouting, overseeing

the battlefield and sometimes to rain attack spells down on enemy troops. The Dragon Mystic can levitate himself, his equipment, plus anything he can physically lift, moving at a rate of 20 metres per round in any direction he desires.

Dragon Teeth

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Trigger

This spell transforms the mystic's teeth, mouth and jaw into a dragon's maw. The recipient may make a bite using his Unarmed skill. This bite attack inflicts 2D6+3 damage but cannot be used for parrying. Speech becomes understandably difficult, giving the caster a -50% penalty on any tests reliant on speech (including further Draconic Illumination tests).

Earthquake

Area 10, Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 2, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

The caster completes the spell's chants and punches a fist into the ground, causing the earth to shake in response to the channelling of mystical energy. Anyone within the area of effect failing the Resilience test is immediately knocked prone.

Though the spell cannot do any significant damage to buildings, windows might smash and loose tiles will fall off a roof. The most powerful Dragonlords are believed to possess a variant of this spell that is capable of shaking the earth even up to the point of razing entire cities but very little would ever persuade such a Dragon Mystic to expend such power.

Eye Membranes

Casting Time 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Duration 20, Touch, Trigger

With this power, the recipient enjoys all the benefits of Night Sight, allowing the dragonspeaker to treat partial darkness as illuminated and darkness as partial darkness. In addition, he gains a bonus to Perception tests equal to the spell's Magnitude x 5.

A character blessed with this power becomes immune to any magically-inflicted blindness, so long as the Magnitude of this spell exceeds that of the blinding magic being cast at him.

A variant of this spell (Magnitude 1) allows the character to behave as if he has the Dark Sight trait, treating pitch darkness as darkness, instead of the Night Sight trait.

Fire Claws

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Touch, Trigger

This spell alters the recipient's fingernails as per the Dragon Claws spell but the claws are aflame with small lickings of



blue-white fire. These claws can be used with the Unarmed or Martial Arts skills (with a +30% bonus). They inflict normal damage for the character's Unarmed strike, plus 1D6 magical fire damage. This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Dragon Claws or Infected Claws.

Flamesight

Casting Time 5, Duration 20, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

This spell allows the mystic to use any nearby fire (from infernos to candle flames) as a conduit for his sight. The caster can 'see' from any fires within the spell's range as if he were present within the flame himself.

Flay Soul

Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 8, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

A disconnected, invisible force of mystic energy unerringly strikes the intended target. This spell severs the bond between body and soul, to devastating effect. The target may resist the spell by opposing his Resilience with the caster's Draconic Illumination roll made to cast the spell. If the resistance attempt fails, then the target dies. If the resistance roll

succeeds, then the target takes 4 points of damage to each Hit Location simultaneously. This may, in some cases, still result in the death of the spell's target, if further Resilience rolls for the damage sustained are failed.

If the spellcasting test also results in the spellcaster Losing the Way, then two points of Draconic Illumination are lost.

Incinerating Breath

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Resist (Dodge), Trigger

Calling on his connection to the Dragon Yet To Be, a dragonspeaker can use his mystic arts to breathe a stream of semi-liquid flame at his enemies. This attack, if it is not dodged, inflicts 1D6 + its Magnitude in points of magical fire damage to a random Hit Location.

Infected Claws

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Touch, Trigger

This spell warps the recipient's fingernails into three-inch long curved reptilian talons that drip with trace amounts of white, viscous venom. These claws can be used with the Unarmed skill (with a +30% bonus). They inflict normal damage for the character's Unarmed strike, plus every time the character inflicts damage on an opponent with the claws, his foe must take an Opposed Resilience against the venom's Potency (equal to the mystic's Draconic Illumination) or suffer the effects of paralyzing venom in the location struck.

The location is completely paralysed for 1D10 Combat Rounds.

This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Dragon Claws or Fire Claws.

Inspiration

Area 10, Casting Time 5, Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Trigger

All allies of the caster who are at least of Believer rank within range of this spell receive a bonus equal to the spell's Magnitude x 10 to any Resist test to defy spells that would affect their emotions (both negative, such as fear, and positive, such as morale). If any target is currently under such a spell, they may immediately make an appropriate Resist test to shake off its effect.

Lesser Fire Resistance

Casting Time 5, Magnitude 3, Concentration, Trigger

Dragonspeakers with this spell active may reduce the damage taken from any fire (mundane or magical) by half. The

protection lasts as long as the caster continues chanting passages from the Thirteen Thankful Blessings of Holy Flame. A greater version of this spell, Greater Fire Resistance, is known to exist (Magnitude 6), rendering the caster utterly immune to mundane and magical fire for as long as the chant is maintained.

Mystic Sight

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

This spell reveals one true statement about the function or abilities of a single magical item, entity or substance that the caster regards for at least one Combat Round. This spell may be cast multiple times upon the same item, but the information gained may repeat and is not always relevant.

Poison Resistance

Casting Time 5, Duration 20, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch, Trigger

Dragonspeakers prepare this spell when they believe they may be poisoned. A successful casting adds the spell's Magnitude x 20 to all Resilience tests to resist poison (or Magnitude x 10 if the poison is magical in nature).

Royal Grace

Casting Time 10, Duration 30, Magnitude 2, Trigger

As long as the caster is of Disciple rank or higher, their Influence bonus when dealing with lower ranking wyrmfriends is doubled. The caster's Influence penalty due to Draconic Evolution is also doubled.

For Example: Edric at Initiate level knows seven Dragon Magic spells. While under the effect of Royal Grace, he has +40% to Influence test with Believers and Disciples but suffers a -7% penalty when making Influence tests with non-wyrmfriends.

Sight from the Marked Palms

Casting Time 5, Concentration, Duration 5, Magnitude 2, Progressive, Trigger

The mystic must have a draconic eye tattooed onto his palm for this spell to work. The eye tattoos detect every movement made by the dragonspeaker's enemy, allowing the mystic to react to attacks even before the attacker has fully committed himself to the blows.

The mystic negates one Combat Manoeuvre the opponent gains, whether he is attacking or defending, for every 3 Magnitude invested in the spell, for the spell's duration. However if the mystic is successfully struck, he sustains the normal rolled damage for the weapon used.

If facing multiple opponents, the mystic can choose which Combat Manoeuvres to negate but cannot exceed those permitted by the spell's Magnitude. Any uncountered Combat Manoeuvres have their normal effect.

For example, Lord Angarin, an Exultant in the cult of Isgangdrang, casts Sight from the Marked Palms at Magnitude 6 before he enters a duel and successfully activates it on his first Combat Action. He can now ignore three Combat Manoeuvres levelled against him during the duel although he will still be vulnerable to the damage caused by successful strikes.

Scaled Skin

Casting Time 10, Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Trigger

The caster gains a number of additional Hit Points to every Hit Location equal to the spell's Magnitude. These Hit Points will be lost first in any attack upon their location, as the scales absorb the damage and shed. However, the scales are restrictive and count towards the Armour Penalty. Scaled skin may be used in conjunction with normal armour, though the Armour Penalties in this case stack.



This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with True Dragon Scale.

Sense Surface Thoughts

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 2, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

This spell allows the caster to read the surface thoughts (an inner monologue) of any sentient mortal being for 10 seconds. The target of the spell is struck by a sharp pain behind his eyes, which he may or may not recognise from previous experiences under this spell's effects. The mystic cannot sense information that the victim is not thinking about or has forgotten, only what the mortal is thinking during the spell.

Skeletal Erosion

Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 7, Touch, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

This spell inflicts horrendous internal damage to a target, causing 1D4 damage to all Hit Locations and the permanent loss of 1 point of STR and CON as the subject's bones corrode.

Skeletal Strengthening

Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 7, Touch, Trigger

This spell bolsters the recipient's toughness to a supernatural degree, adding +7 HP to every Hit Location. The recipient also gains +5 STR and CON, as well as the Formidable Natural Weapons trait.

Snake Fangs

Casting Time 2, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Trigger

The recipient may make a bite using his Unarmed or Martial Arts skill. This bite attack inflicts 1D6+2 damage but cannot be used for parrying. Speech becomes understandably difficult, giving the caster a -20% penalty on any tests reliant on speech (including further Draconic Illumination tests).

Speak with Reptiles

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

This spell allows the dragonspeaker to converse with any reptile, dinosaur or dragon through partly physical, partly telepathic means. The 'speech' involved is a series of images and sensations that make sense to the creature's inhuman brain, combined with physical noises and imitations. Casting this spell does not guarantee the beast will obey the caster and attacking the being while communicating with Speak with Reptilians will shut down the link immediately. This spell works on all reptiles, including wyverns, dragons and wyrms.

Summon Dragon's Fire

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 6, Ranged, Resist (Dodge), Trigger

The fire that is unleashed is a short stream of magical plasma that inflicts damage (and ignites) as a large fire (2D6 damage). This damage is applied to all locations of the target. A greater version of this spell, Summon the Eternal Dragon's Fire, is known to exist (Magnitude 10), which inflicts damage as an inferno (3D6 damage).

Summon Flame

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

As seekers of the draconic ideal, the element of fire is beloved by the dragonspeakers. This spell is one of the first that most mystics of the imperial cults ever learn. Summon Fire channels the universe's energies to generate flame near the caster, setting fire to anything flammable within range. The fire called into being is considered to be a large flame (1D4 damage). Skin or flesh cannot be the source of the summoned flame and if the target is attached to a living being (such as hair, fur or clothes) then the spell gains the Resist (Resilience) trait. This is the weakest of the fire magic practiced by the mystics of the EWF and is accordingly limited. Greater versions of this spell, Summon Lesser Fire (which creates a small fire, 1D6 damage, Magnitude 3), Summon Greater Fire (which creates a large fire, 2D6 damage, Magnitude 5) and Summon Inferno (which creates an inferno, 3D6 damage, Magnitude 7), are all known and commonly used within the Empire.

Summon Wraithfire

Casting Time 10, Duration 20, Magnitude 3, Trigger

While this spell is active, any Dragon Magic spell the wyrmfriend casts that implements heat or fire is transmuted. The flames created are ghostly, translucent and almost invisible to mortal eyes. The fire deals damage to spirits, ghosts and any other incorporeal beings that would otherwise be immune to fire attacks – including salamanders.

True Dragon Scale

Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 9, Trigger

The ultimate form of dragonspeaker armoured metamorphosis, this spell alters the character's skin, mimicking the feel and toughness of real dragon skin. This halves the damage received from all non-magical sources, after AP has been deducted. The caster also gains complete immunity to magical and non-magical fire and heat for the duration of the spell. Lastly, the character's natural attacks gain the Formidable Natural Weapons trait and any natural attacks receive a +2 bonus to damage. This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Scaled Skin.

Universal Negation

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Trigger

This spell negates a combined Magnitude of spells on a target. The spell affects up to 1 point of Magnitude for every 10% of the mystic's Draconic Illumination skill. It works by dismissing the most powerful spell it can act on, reducing its *own* effect by the magnitude of the eliminated spell, then continues to dismiss the next most powerful spell it can still affect. A spell cannot be partially eliminated, so only 'complete' spells are negated.

Unseen Presence

Casting Time 5, Duration 5, Magnitude 5, Trigger

This spell renders the mystic virtually invisible and silent in any shadow or darkness. This spell grants a +50% bonus to the dragonspeaker's Stealth tests, while imposing a -50% penalty on any Perception tests made to attempt to locate the dragonspeaker. Even if spotted, the character gains the benefit of being partially obscured (-20% to most attempts to target or strike the character). Should the character leave the shadows, the spell immediately expires.

Draconic Evolution

Draconic Mysticism offers much to those who would master its secrets. Spells can be cast even as the magician moves and attacks his enemies; there is no need to locate and integrate runes; no need to emulate any god in order to summon divine power, yet it is not a path that comes without a price to pay. The level of discipline and study required to achieve any more than the most basic spells is intensive to say the least. Outsiders have no chance of learning the secrets of the Dragonlords unless they adapt their lifestyles and become true citizens of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Lastly and most importantly, the risks to the magician's soul are very real. These risks are played out through the concepts of Backlash (when a draconic mystic's powers go wrong) and Draconic Evolution (when a draconic mystic's powers alter his body and mind over time). Backlash has already been described; Draconic Evolution is discussed here.

As a dragonspeaker gathers more knowledge and power regarding the draconic ideal, his demeanour and physical appearance undergo changes that make him ever more beautiful and compelling to his fellow believers. Curiously, the acquisition of Draconic Illumination has the opposite effect when the dragonspeaker interacts with outsiders, who find the cultist increasingly eerie, cold and ever more inhuman as his powers increase. This effect is known to the cults as Evolution. It is considered a natural part of the process towards the Great Dragon To Come.



The positive effects of Draconic Evolution are already handled in the dragonspeaker rank descriptions earlier in the chapter. Each rank gains increasing respect and admiration for their prowess and their increasing appeal to believers (represented by a weighty Influence bonus). However, the negative aspects of Draconic Evolution also apply. For every Dragon Magic spell that a dragonspeaker mystic learns, he suffers a cumulative -1% penalty on Influence tests dealing with Gloranthan

residents that are not of Wyrms' Face Believer rank or above. This penalty applies to humans and all other races, as the unnatural magic at work crosses racial divides and raises the hackles of any mortal being. The penalty is minor at first but will soon begin to affect the dragonspeaker's day-to-day life if he deals with people outside the Empire. It is yet another sacrifice the wyrmsfriends must make for their grand design: one they make willingly and with few regrets.

For Example: Edric reaches the rank of Initiate in his cult and knows seven Dragon Magic spells. As such he suffers a -7% penalty when making Influence tests with non-wyrmsfriends.

The effects of Draconic Evolution are subtle at lower levels but still noticeable under many circumstances. The dragonspeaker has moments of cold-hearted and ruthless behaviour, eerie distraction and might slowly begin to care less and less about the feelings and plights of others not bound into the wyrmsfriend cults. At the earliest stages these moments are flashes of what will come in the future, enough to make outsiders uncomfortable. Then the physical effects begin to manifest as the dragonspeaker acquires more draconic power. As they first begin to take their toll, the mystic energies might alter a dragonspeaker priestess's skin so that under the moonlight she appears to have lightly scaled hands and fingertips, or pupils

that thin to slits when she is in the sunlight. Likewise, a male cultist might find his knuckles becoming slightly lumpier as the bones harden and swell or the 'S' sounds in his speech becoming more sibilant and pronounced. To anyone of Wyrms' Face Believer rank or higher, these changes are captivating and beautiful, making the dragonspeaker seem serene, enlightened and touched by destiny. To those outside the cult system of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, these alterations can seem threatening and unnerving.

As the cultist gains significant power with Draconic Mysticism, the changes become increasingly noticeable. The mystic's eyes might have one or both irises change colour to orange, yellow or red, with a slitted black pupil. Teeth can become slightly jagged (sometimes also uneven in the gums) and sharp to the point of drawing tiny quantities of blood from the dragonspeaker's lips on 'F' and 'V' sounds and his tongue on 'L' sounds. Scales may begin to coat the parts of the body where bone is close to the surface of the skin, such as the forehead, cheekbones, chin, collarbones, elbows and knees. These areas are also prone to slight bone protuberances, either as the bony ridges grow in mimicry of a reptilian skeletal structure or as small spines pushing up through the skin such as on some dinosaurs' backs.

The personality continues to change as well. To outsiders, dragonspeakers at this degree of Draconic Evolution border are frequently cold, dispassionate and distant – 'cold-blooded' is how companions are described by their fellows when the wyrmfriend reaches this level of alteration. To the believers, the cultist is clearly enlightened and dedicated to the grand design and his words and gestures are accordingly charming and admired.

The physical changes can only go so far, however. Despite the initial similarities, Draconic Evolution does not transform humans into dragonewts. The most powerful dragonspeakers display incredible draconic features, such as scaled, bony crests grown in eerie resemblance of crowns from their scalps and foreheads, as well as black nailed claws and even scales of various colours marking their entire bodies. Yet for all intents and purposes, the dragonspeaker is still human.

Since Draconic Evolution occurs at varying rates for different mystics, no rigid system would represent the changes very well. The emotional and social distance from non-believers is covered by the Influence penalties as the mystic acquires more and more Dragon Magic but the physical alterations are another matter entirely. As a rule of thumb, Games Masters might want to consider selecting a single reptilian feature to manifest on a character for every five Dragon Magic spells the mystic learns.

These features should be subtle at first, gradually increasing in severity but never making the mystic appear completely inhuman. Games Masters should also think very carefully before allowing any of the features to offer bonuses or improvements to any tests. This is a strange and not-entirely-natural transformation resulting from wielding inhuman magic, not a reliable way of crossing the racial divide between human and dragonewt. For obvious reasons, the effects of Draconic Evolution do not apply to dragonewts that practice Dragon Magic.

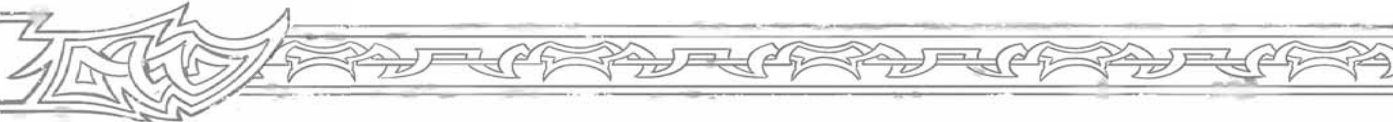
Enlightenment and Transcendence

Draconic Mysticism should not be confused with enlightenment. Humans may work draconic magic very successfully without ever becoming truly enlightened. Enlightenment comes with understanding and insight.

Measuring Enlightenment in *RuneQuest* is simply a matter of adding together the Insight and Draconic Illumination skills. When the two total 400 or more, Enlightenment is attained and the character can attempt to transcend. Transcendence can only be attempted once; if the attempt fails then the character is forever trapped in the physical – although his body and mind will still undergo profound change resulting in incredible power. Of those who have attempted transcendence only Obduran has succeeded. His disciples, the members of the Eternal Dragon Ring, have made the attempt and failed – although none of them know that they cannot remake the attempt.

Transcendence uses the following process.

- X Insight and Draconic Illumination must total 400% or more.
- X 1D100 is rolled against this value.
- X If the result is one hundredth or less than the Insight and Draconic Illumination total, the character transcends the material world, attaining full draconic enlightenment. To all intents and purposes he has left the mortal world and joined the Cosmic Dragon. He takes no further role as a player character although can be comforted by the fact that he has achieved absolute draconic perfection – the ultimate goal of all draconic mystics.
- X If the 1D100 result is between 96 and 00, then the character suffers madness. His mind is incapable of dealing with the profound understanding of the cosmos and breaks irrevocably. The character may remain in play, but his madness is such that he is likely to be shunned by the EWF and he must live the rest of his days as a renegade – one who almost achieved perfection but was ultimately lacking.
- X Any other result of the 1D100 roll means that the character has failed transcendence but has undergone profound physical and psychic change. He is permitted to roll 1D3 and take this number of rolls on the Draconic Manifestation table, applying the results immediately. This is the state of being attained by the members of the Eternal Dragon Ring, and, even though they have failed complete transcendence, they have attained levels of knowledge and power that place them in command of the EWF's agenda in Glorantha. Characters in a similar position effectively become members of the Eternal Dragon Ring.



Draconic Manifestation Table

1D100

Manifestation Traits

01–25

Extended Life Span. The character effectively becomes immortal, ceasing to age from the point of his Transcendence attempt.

26–35

Reborn as a dragonewt. Roll 1D4 for the stage:

1. Crested 2. Beaked
3. Tailed Priest 4. Full Priest

36–40

See the Dragonewt statistics in *Races of Glorantha* for the new statistics for the reborn character. Mastery: character develops mastery and command over a random element. Roll 1D6:

1. Air 2. Earth
3. Fire 4. Water
5. Darkness 6. Light

As a Master of an Element, the mystic is able to command (but not summon) any creature tied to that elemental rune and it will obey only unless it can succeed in a critically successful Persistence roll. The mystic cannot create the element he maintains mastery over, but neither can be hurt by it. Burying a transcendent mystic with Mastery of Earth under a ton or so of dirt or rock will not injure him – although it will take him time to escape its clutches.

41–50

Invulnerability. Character becomes completely invulnerable to a random form of damage:

1. Blades 2. Blunt weapons
3. Arrows 4. Fire

51–60

Fly. The character can fly with the aid of semi-corporeal wings that unfold from his back. He can fly at 20 metres per Combat Round and the ability costs no Magic Points to invoke.

61–70

Regeneration. The character regenerates damage from physical attacks as per his Natural Healing rate (see *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 60) but measured in Combat Rounds rather than in hours. Thus, a transcendent wyrmfriend with Resilience 65% would regenerate 1 HP every 24 Combat Rounds – roughly 1 HP every two minutes.

71–75

Absorb Magic. Every spell the character successfully resists using either Resilience or Persistence is absorbed into his body and can be regurgitated, usually through a vomiting action, and sent against either its caster or any other target the mystic desires. The spell retains all its effects, including Magnitude, as the original spell. The mystic does not need to make any roll for regurgitating the absorbed spell, and it costs no Magic Points to cast it, although the target must resist in the normal manner. The mystic can absorb a number of spells (note – spells, not Magnitude) equal to his POW.

76–82

Dream Avatar. The character can, whilst sleeping, create a Dream Avatar of himself. The Avatar has all the physical characteristics of the real mystic, the same skills and so forth, and can interact with the physical world in precisely the same way – but only whilst the mystic is sleeping, and the mystic can spend no more than eight hours sleeping before having to wake and remain awake for eight hours.

The mystic can generate one Dream Avatar for every seven full POW he possesses. Each Avatar may act independently or in concert. If an Avatar is killed – and they can be harmed in just the same way as the real mystic – then it dissipates and the mystic automatically wakes. He is unable to generate a new Avatar for 1D3 periods of sleep.

Dream Avatars always resemble the mystic who generated them but can have variations in appearance, even changing gender. However, physical characteristics, skills, magic and so on remain those of the sleeping mystic.

If the mystic is forced to wake, then any Avatars generated dissipate automatically. Upon waking the mystic is fully aware of what each Avatar he has created has done, immediately absorbing their experiences as though he, himself, had experienced it.



83–90	Commune. The mystic can commune with True Dragons and Inhuman Kings, adopting a trance-like state to do so. Whilst in this state he is treated as an equal and can share both wisdom and the abstract thought processes of true draconic kind, understanding and appreciating their motives and natures.
91–94	Draconic Magic Creation. The mystic can formulate his own draconic spells which may then be taught to others. Spells may be Progressive or Fixed in their Magnitude and if fixed have a maximum Magnitude equal to half the mystic's POW, rounded up. Spells have a maximum Duration of 10 and a casting time equal to 21 minus the mystic's INT. Spells can be Ranged or Touch and all have the Trigger capability. It takes a number of weeks equal to 21 minus the mystic's INT to formulate a spell, with a minimum of one week. Spells created in this way must always be prepared in consultation with the Games Master.
95–97	Create Cult. The mystic can form a draconic cult based around his teachings and transcendent philosophies. He is guaranteed a number of Followers equal to his CHA gathered from amongst the EWF faithful. Any spells the mystic knows or formulates, if he has the Draconic Magic Creation ability, can be taught to cult members as long as the limitations for draconic cults are followed. He may also take 1D3 deeds from his own life and formulate draconic myths. The first myth has a Mythic Resonance equal to his POW x5, the second equal to POW x3 and the third equal to POW x2. Behaviours can be associated with each myth accordingly. Members of the cult can, in turn, go forth to proselytize and draw more members into the cult. For every 100 members gathered, the mystic gains 1 POW, even if this exceeds his species maximum.
98–00	Draconic Form: the character can assume a draconic form at will. The dragon maintains the INT, POW and CHA of the mystic but all other characteristics are transformed as follows: STR – multiply by 7 CON – multiply by 3 SIZ – multiply by 7 DEX – multiply by 1.5, rounding up. The mystic gains the traits of Dark Sight, Formidable Natural Weapons and Night Sight. The following skills transform in the following ways: Athletics – multiply by 2 Influence – multiply by 2 Gain Track at Perception value. The dragon form can only breathe flame if the mystic has a Draconic Spell permitting it, and the spell works in the same way. The dragon can fly at 20m per round. All attributes are refigured for the draconic form. All Draconic Magic is cast as normal. Transformation takes 1D6 Combat Rounds to effect and the mystic can hold the form for a number of hours equal to his POW.

Mystics that attain draconic manifestation may accrue depths of power that make their continued presence as Adventurers unbalancing and should, depending on the circumstances and the level of the campaign, consider beginning a new Adventurer whilst their own becomes a hero and icon of the EWF.

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ISBN 978-1-907218-30-9



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