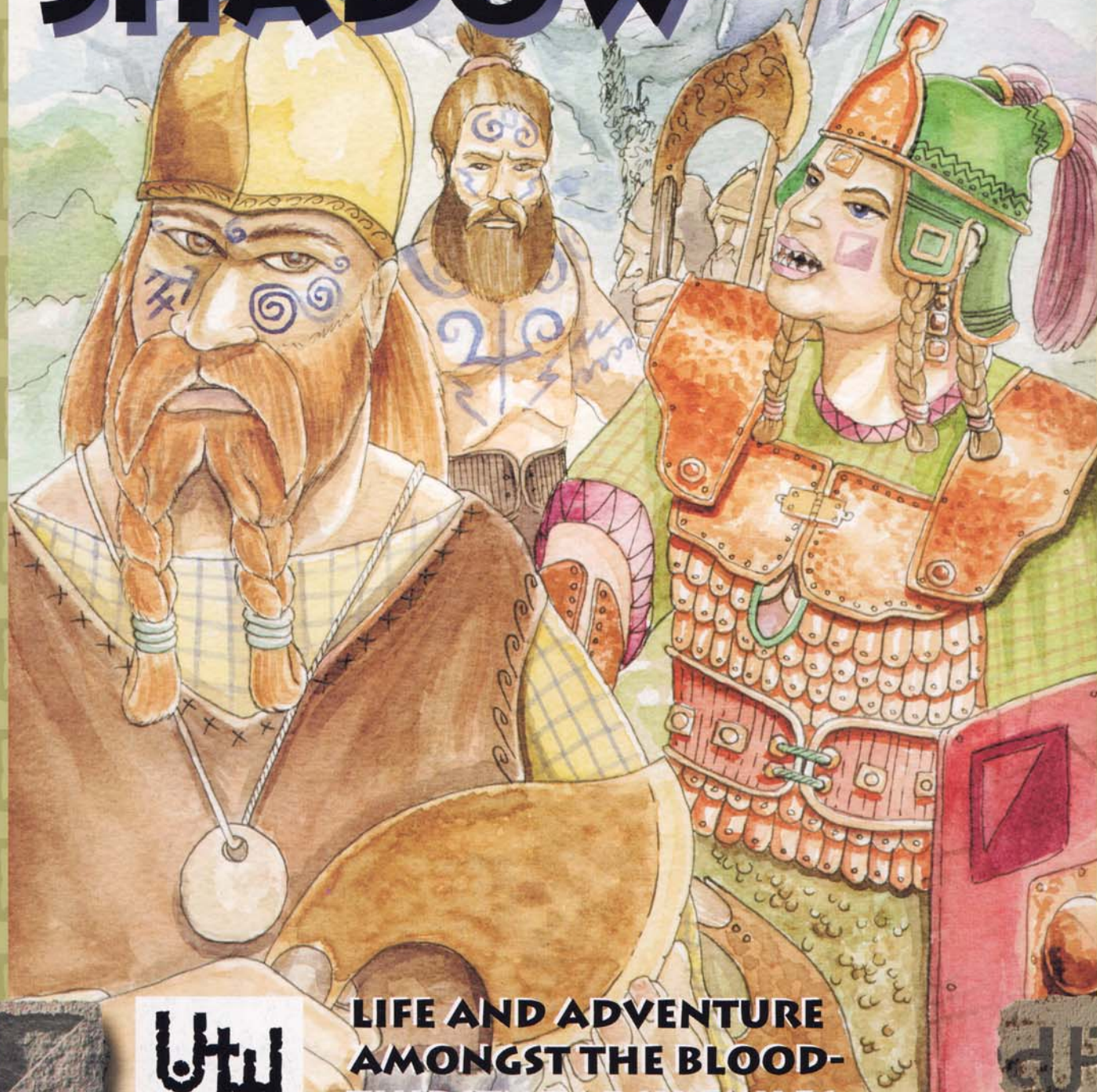


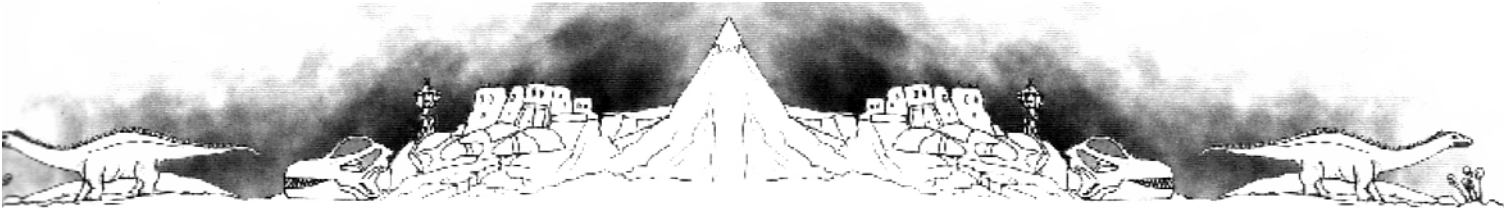
For Hero Wars and HeroQuest

IN WINTERTOP'S SHADOW



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THE UNSPOKEN WORD

**LIFE AND ADVENTURE
AMONGST THE BLOOD-
THIRSTY TARSH EXILES**



UNSPOKEN WORD 3



IN WINTERTOP'S SHADOW

LIFE AND ADVENTURE AMONG
THE TARSH EXILES

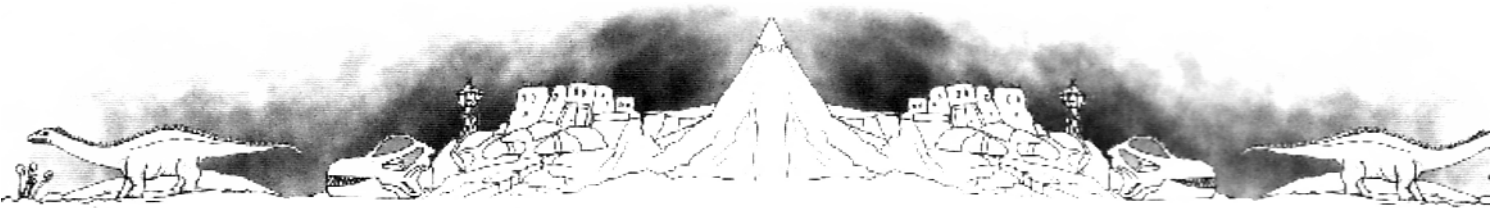
IAN COOPER



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A Product for the Hero Wars[™] and
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IN WINTERTOP'S SHADOW



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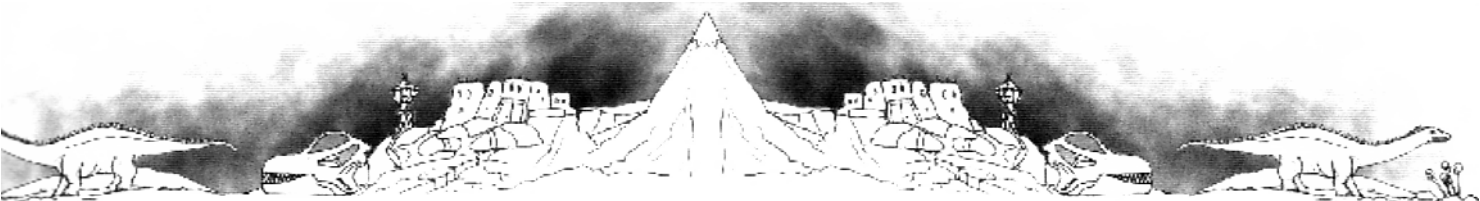
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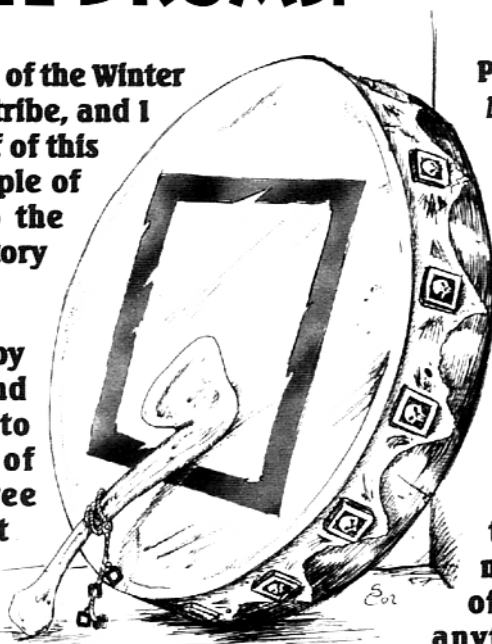


LISTEN TO THE DRUMS!

"I am Illaro Tastínimsson, thane of the Winter Shadow clan of the Míthchuinn tribe, and I am a poet and man of the chief of this camp. We are the last free people of Tarsh, the Kerofiní. Listen to the drums as they beat out the story of Exile.

"Tarsh is the nation founded by Yarandros from the tribes and clans that followed Arim into Dragon Pass. The kingdom of Tarsh has endured for three hundred years. It is as resonant with history and loyalty to us as clan or tribe. Yarandros forged a united kingdom, but now Tarsh is a nation divided. Old Tarsh and Lunar Tarsh have fought a civil war for control of the kingdom that has so far lasted for five generations.

"Your ancestors cannot rest until you right the wrongs that have been done to us. Lunar kings have reigned in Tarsh for over a century. For a brief while, Palashee Longaxe restored Old Tarsh, but the children of the Whore seized back the throne. For a hundred years, the Kerofiní, from Arim's Secret Valley and Wintertop Vale, led those faithful to Old Tarsh. Forty years ago, at the battle of Grizzly



Peak the Lunar king, Moirades, crushed us. Many lost kin in that battle – my own grandfather died with a scimitar between his ribs but a curse on his lips. Bagnot, the Kerofiní capital, fell to Lunar Tarsh. The Kerofiní retreated to their ancestral lands, around the Kero Fin and the Shaker Temple, to make a final stand. Those of us who would hazard anything to remain free flocked to their stronghold.

"The Lunars call us "Exiles and Outlaws" but we are the last free people of Tarsh. The Aldachuri and Quivini tribes have fallen to the Empire or its allies.

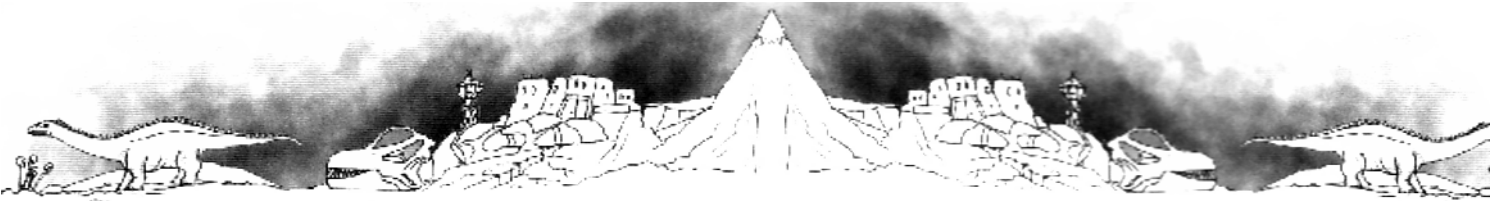
"We remain steadfast, whatever the price. Arim and Yarandros's dream of Tarsh must not perish. Míthchuinn's sons shall have their payment in blood. The earth speaks new prophecies that tell us a liberator will come and lead a new rising to unite Tarsh, within our generation."



The Tarsh Exiles who live, love, hunt and fight in Wintertop's shadow are a hard, harsh people. They have had to be, to survive a hard, harsh fate, betrayed by their kinfolk, abandoned by their rulers, harried from the broad valleys and rich farmland of Tarsh to the rocky hills of their new home. All this they have endured, because the alternative was to sell their breaths, souls and wyrd to the Evil Moon Empire of the north, the Whore of Kings, dread Shepelkirt. Instead of relying on Ernalda's gentle bounty, they must also rely on the grudging and unpredictable whims of Maran, the Dark Earth. Hunger and despair are as dangerous to them as the honeyed voices

of the missionaries and the scimitars and spears of Shepelkirt's soldiers. But the Hero Wars are upon them, and change is in the Wind...

In Wintertop's Shadow is a comprehensive guide for playing Tarsh Exile heroes or running games set in their dangerous land. They are an Orlanthi people, and a narrator would be well advised to have access to *Thunder Rebels* and ideally also *Storm Tribe* and *Barbarian Adventures* (Issaries, Inc.) to use the book to the best advantage. *Tarsh in Flames* (The Unspoken Word) provides further details on lowland and Exile Tarsh.



1 IN EXILE

THE DRUM HISTORY

From exile village to village the drums, stationed in high watchtowers, carry news and messages. All Kerofini knows the language of the drums. The drums, the godar tell, are Maran's breathing, which rumbles and shakes the ground. "Listen to the drums," our elders say, "for they tell our story."

1120 The Dragonkill War. After the fall of the EWF, the Invincible Golden Horde, a human army hundreds of thousands strong, invades Dragon Pass intent on sacking the Dragon's Eye. The dragons return to defend their ancestral home and slaughter the invaders. Less than one in twenty survive. The dragonewts close Dragon Pass to human occupation from the Deathline, in the North, to the Crossline, in the south. Beastmen, Dragonewts, and Trolls control the Pass.

1220 Birth of the Red Goddess.

1247 The Red Moon ascends into the Middle Air.

1271 Jannisor, a hero from Imther, aids the Dara Happan tripolis against the rising Empire, winning battles at Einar's Farm (1271) and Vashpolis (1272) and maiming the Red Emperor (1273) before the Sable Riders betray him while assaulting Glamour (1275).

1285 The city of Alkoth surrenders to the Lunar Empire.

1289 The Lunars kill the Butterfly Princess. Refugees begin flocking south to the DaraNi confederation. Years of war between the Empire and DaraNi begin.

1309 Hwarin Dalthippa the Conquering Daughter marries Ingkot Axe-and-a-Half, ruler of the Sylilan Orlanthi tribes. The surrounded DaraNi raise the river spirits in a last attempt at resistance but the Lunars defeat their expeditionary forces.

1316 DaraNi confederation surrenders to the Empire.

1317 Blue Deer Princes of Vanch invade Sylila and burn Jillaro.

1326 Sylila becomes a sultanate of the Empire. The Kynneling Alliance, centred on Mirin's Cross, leads barbarian resistance to the Empire.

1330 Arim the Pauper leaves Saird and enters Dragon Pass as conflict between the expanding Lunar Empire and the Kynneling Alliance grows. He crosses the Death Line, despite opposition from his ancestors, and settles in Arim's Secret Valley at the foot of Kero Fin.

1333 Ingkot and his son, Phirmax, are killed in battle with the Kynneling Alliance.

1347 Hwarin Dalthippa sets out on the first Daughter's Road campaign from Jillaro. She defeats the Kynneling Alliance in a four-day battle at Mirin's Cross, and goes on to take the surrender of the tribes of Holay at Filichet.

1348 Hwarin Dalthippa sets out on the second Daughter's Road campaign, from Cfol into Vanch, which surrenders, and then into Imther. A tattered warband led by Mitchuinn Moonhater crosses the Deathline and enters Tarsh. The Breagalos try to extort tribute from them. The Mitchuinn kill their chief, Breagal the Greedy, and absorb the clan, placing them under tribute.

1348 Arim completes the wooing of Ernalda and marries the incarnation of Sorana Tor, becoming King of Dragon Pass. She bears him the Twins of Tarsh - Varstapoor and his sister Vestenbora. Swelling with refugees from the fighting in Holay and Vanch, Arim's secret kingdom begins to evolve from a sacred community to a tribal organisation. Early rivals of Arim's kingdom include the Uitaros, Danbaling, and Karvening tribes.

1350 Dragonewts approach the Twins of Tarsh, and offer an alliance between the tribes of Tarsh and the dragonewts. They aid Tarsh until the end of the Twins dynasty in 1448.

1357 Taros Ridgeleaper leads the Far Walkers across Dwarf Run to resettle the ruins of Aldachur and begin the resettlement of the Far Place.

1360 The Mitchuinn launch a raid down the Daughters Road into Holay.

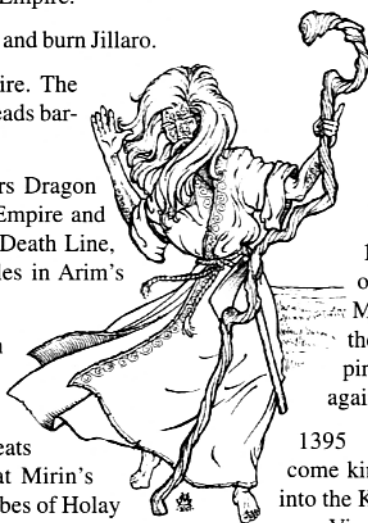
1362 The Battle of Falling Hills. Reacting to Tarshite raids, the Lunar Provinces, led by Holay, muster to invade Tarsh and 'bring them the Moon'. The tribes of Tarsh elect Arim their reluctant warleader. He marches into Holay to confront the Lunar forces, accompanied by Balazaring and Aldryami allies. The Twins of Tarsh raise a range of hills and drop it, like a wave, upon the enemy, destroying them.

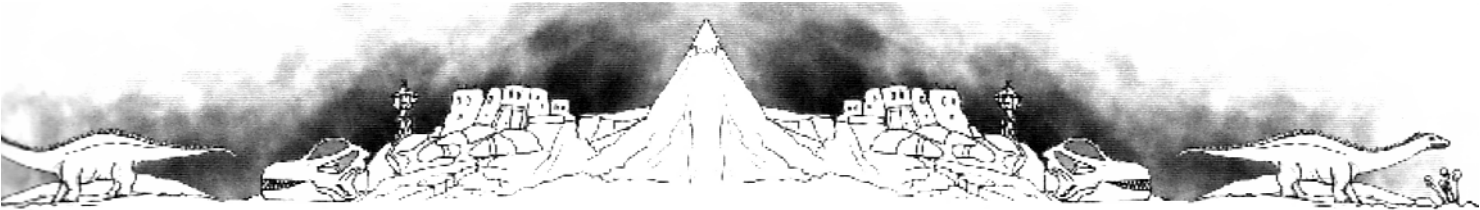
1368 Arim dies. Varstapoor becomes King of the Tarsh Tribes. His sister Vestenbora dedicates the temple to Maran Gor, Maranaba, at Wintertop's foot.

1374 The Opili, a savage horse nomad nation, invades the Empire. They retreat after the slaughter of the Battle of Quintus Vale. The Twins use their earth shaking magic to aid the Empire against the nomads in this battle.

1375 Varstapoor is sacrificed after seven years of rule, and becomes a guardian spirit for Maranaba. Ovarien Twinson becomes King of the Tarsh Tribes. Horse nomads invade the Empire in force; effectively ending Lunar advances against Orlanthi barbarians to the south.

1395 Yarandros deposes his own father to become king of the Tarsh Tribes. Yarandros forges them into the Kingdom of Tarsh. He founds a dynasty, calling upon Vinkot's example for justification of hereditary rule. With the Empire distracted, he is able to expand at the expense of his neighbours. By the end of his reign, the Kingdom of Tarsh has conquered the Aldachuri, parts of Holay, the Quivini, and Grazers. Yarandros's stated objective is to conquer the lands of the former kingdom of Saird.





1415 Vantar Sun-Vision elected first Prince of the Aldachuri, swearing allegiance to king of Tarsh.

1440 The Quivini tribes, in alliance with the Praxians, raid Tarsh. Bagnot falls, the raiders steal the Ivory Throne, and Yarandros dies. Orios becomes King of Tarsh.

1442 Tarsh raids the Lunar Empire, which is weakened by war with the horse nomad leader Sheng Seleris. Sylila suffers heavily; raiders penetrate as far as Darjiin and Kostaddi.

1448 While raiding the Empire, Orios crosses the border of Tork, releasing the Mad Sultanate. The released madmen massacre Orios and his army; the dynasty of the Tarsh Twins ends.

1448 The Tarsh Civil War begins: with no clear successor, different factions compete for the throne. The Shaker's Temple, with the support of the Kerofini tribe, puts forward an incarnation of Erantha Gor, insisting on a queen and a matriarchal inheritance overseen by the priestesses. Tarkalor the Huge, a Princeros tribesman and Prince of the Aldachuri, claims the throne, but Jorkalor of Talfort defeats his army with aid from Sylila.

1450 Formal secession of the Quivini tribes from the Kingdom of Tarsh

1455 Blond Arim, leader of the lowlanders, defeats Erantha Gor and the Kerofini. Aided by Sylila, he forces the Shaker Temple to negotiate peace. The Temple begins the ritual to incarnate Sorana Tor. The ritual is completed and the temple expels the Lunars. Illaro Blacktooth, of the Hendarli clan of the Kerofini, marries Sorana Tor and becomes King of Dragon Pass.

1458 An army from Sylila plunders Talfort and Holay. Jorkalor is seized and sent to the Empire in chains. Blond Arim is slain by treachery. Tovtarsar Gaptooth, a Tovtaros tribesman and the Prince of the Aldachuri, tries to seize the throne but suffers heavy losses. Illaro conquers the lowland tribes and kills or drives out the Lunar supporters. He renounces his position among the Kerofini, and is crowned King of Tarsh. Filichet declares itself a dependent of the Lunar Empire. Illaro forms an alliance with the Aldachuri, and together they raid the Quivini. Illaro and the Shaker's Temple defeat the Grazers with an earthquake. Illaro never re-conquers all of the old kingdom, including the lands of Holay, the Balazarings, and the Quivini.

1460 The Lunar Empire defeats Sheng Seleris and the nomads and begins reconstruction.

1464 The Seven Mothers cult is dispatched to bring the Provinces (Vanch, Imther, Holay, Saird) back into the fold. Missionaries re-enter Tarsh, returning some lowlanders to the Lunar Way.

1470 Illaro Blacktooth dies during a religious ceremony, Tastinim becomes King of Tarsh.

1477 Telmori kill Tastinim. Halifitoor becomes King of Tarsh

1481 Marofdul assassinates Halifitoor and becomes King. He receives a member of the Lunar court as a treaty wife, refuses to have anything to do with her, and locks her in a brass cabinet in the Hydra Hills.

1488 Marofdul abdicates. Pyjeemsab becomes King.

1490 HonEel proves that Ernalda is She-Who-Waits, one of the Seven Mothers, by performing the Whole Dance of Spring at

the Ernalda temple on Kordros Island, incorporating Earth within the Moon pantheon. She marries Pyjeemsab and sacrifices him on their honeymoon. Pregnant, she declares herself regent for her unborn son. Goldedge resists the Lunar takeover, but falls. The Kerofini, Aldachuri, and Grazers rebel, massacring Lunar supporters. At the Battle of Dancing Sisters, the Lunars defeat the Old Tarsh loyalists. Bagnot holds out but the Lunars sack Dunstop and Slavewall. HonEel's son Phoronestes is born and named heir to the kingdom. His Lunar viceroy decrees that those who do not accept his rule are 'outlaws and exiles.' Many tribes, tired of war, surrender. However, the tribes of the southeast, behind the line of forts stretching from Dunstop to Goldedge to Slavewall, refuse to submit.

1492 Furthest is declared the new capital, razed, and rebuilt along Sylilan lines. The Kingdom of Sartar is founded among the Quivini.

1496 Temple of the Reaching Moon dedicated in Tarsh. The non-Lunar tribes, called the Tarsh Exiles, decline as the Illaro dynasty grows with Lunar support.

1510 Phoronestes inaugurated as King.

1535 Phoronestes dies. Philigos becomes King.

1538 Palashee Longaxe leads the Tarsh Exiles to drive out Philigos, who flees to Sylila. The Earthshakers destroy the Temple of the Reaching Moon. Palashee Longaxe becomes King of Tarsh.

1545 Lunar Provincial Government formed. Philigos's brother, Prince Phargentes (left), becomes the Provincial Governor and leads armies to take Tarsh back from the rebels.

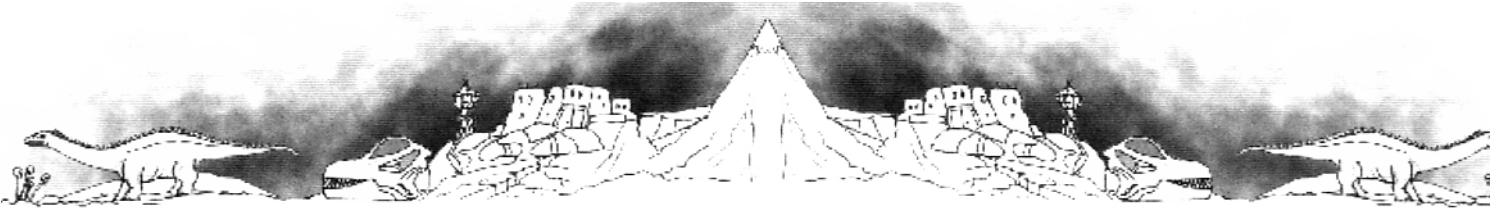
1555 Palashee defeats Philigos at the Battle of Karge Farm. General Phargentes ambushes and kills Palashee, becoming King of Lunar Tarsh, ensuring the dynastic succession.



REGARDING HISTORY

The Exiles have an oral and not a written culture. History is passed orally in stories or through the drums that accompany the events of life in the mountain fastnesses. Of course, such tales tell the Kerofini perspective and distort the truth, remembering events as the Kerofini now see them, not as they were.

Some of the best historical sources of Tarshite history are tapestries, which hang in the halls of tribal kings or wealthy clan chiefs. The Korlokstead tapestry, which hangs in the seat of the Mitchuinn tribal king, tells the story of Mitchuinn Moonhater and his struggle against the Empire and eventual death following the Northfaring heroquest. The Hendarstead tapestry tells the story of the fall of Tarsh to the Empire. Beginning with Marofdul's abdication and Pyjeemsab's coronation it shows HonEel's entry into the whole rites of spring on Kordros Island, her marriage to the king, and through the revelation of the Kev priestess Ukeena Black the discovery of his murder, and subsequent events leading to the defeat at the Battle of Dancing Sisters. The Loom House tapestry in Wintertop begins at a similar point but concentrates instead on the rise of Palashee Longaxe to lead the Exiles to victory of the Lunar usurpers, and his tragic assassination by Prince Phargentes.



1565 Phargentes kills Hendrakos, Palashee's heir, and pretender to the throne.

1579 Phargentes dies. Moirades succeeds him as King of Tarsh.

1582 The army of Lunar Tarsh confronts the Exiles and their Sartari and other allies at the Battle of Grizzly Peak. The Exiles are defeated and Bagnot falls. The Lunar victory confines the Exiles to a small region about Kerofin Mountain and the Shaker temple. The Aldachuri join the kingdom of Sartar.

1583 Ineldus Ludsson, King of the Mitchuinn dies in battle with the Breagalos.

1585 Moirades razes the Bush Range. The army drives a number of clans into the Wintertop foothills and

then burns the forest. The Aldryami warleader, Strongbark, a rootless elf once from the Stinking Forest, declares that he is to undertake the Pine Cone Path to avenge the burning and obtain revenge on Moirades and his descendants. No humans know what this is, but rootless elves begin appearing in the Bush Range seven years later.

1586 Varstapoor BrightAxe of the Hendarli clan performs the Making of the Storm Tribe heroquest, and then negotiates with the clans settling around Wintertop Vale to form a new tribe, also called the Hendarli. With the Hendarli controlling Wintertop Vale and its food stores, many clans join the new tribe.

1587 Chief Stoner of the Marantaros clan forms a triatry from the fanatical clans around the Shaker Temple. Sedjena becomes high priestess of the temple.

1590 Tarsh, outside the Wintertop region is pacified. Lunar culture is now dominant in Furthest and spreads along the river valleys.

1591 The Lunar Empire launches an abortive invasion of Sartar. The Bush Children fight alongside the Sartari.

1602 The Kingdom of Sartar is conquered.

1603 Tarkil, the chief of Irist Hold performs the Making of The Storm Tribe and calls the clans of the area together to form the Iristaros. Many clans who wish to remain independent of the Hendarli and Mitchuinn join.

1604 A new disease kills many of the Exile's sheep and cattle. The clans turn to Maran's Earthblood ritual to survive the coming winter, raiding the lowlands for captives to sacrifice. Many Firstblood and

Pomini clans are badly hit by the raids from the desperate hillmen. The latter tribe includes former Kerofini clans, whom some might consider kin to the raiders. Even so, many Exiles starve during that winter, which becomes known as 'the Dearth and Dark.'

1607 Dragonewts travel from their city south of the hills to Maranaba. They ride around the temple seven times counter-clockwise on demi-bird back and then depart on the magic road. Over the year, small groups of dragonewts make this journey, in both directions. The magic road to the Dragon's Eye hums. Any human interference is rebuffed, but provided they are left alone, the dragonewts hurt no one.

1608 Independent clans, outlaws, the brave and the foolish begin return to the Bush Range. They find many non-humans and bandits settled amid the ruins.

1610 Feuding breaks out between neighbouring Mitchuinn and Iristaros clans over hunting and grazing rights.

1612 Lunar settlers begin arriving in the Bush Range. The independent clans and non-humans resist them, but the feud between the Mitchuinn and Iristaros hampers concerted resistance.

1613 The Lunars crush Starbrow's rebellion in Sartar. Harvar Ironfist, Prince of the Aldachuri, promises to swear fealty to Tarsh.

1614 Orios Sternhearted, King of the Hendarli, makes peace between the Mitchuinn and Iristaros. The Mitchuinn agree to pay tribute to the Iristaros for three years in compensation.

1615 Tovtarim Flamehaired becomes King of the Mitchuinn.

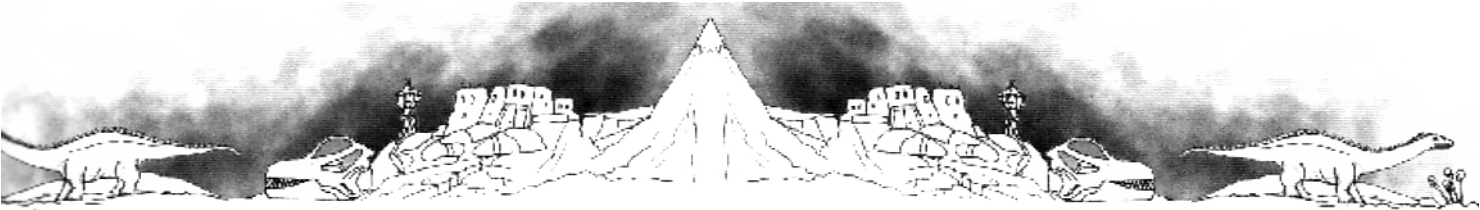
1616 Orios Sternhearted of the Hendarli declares himself heir to the throne of Tarsh and convenes the King's Ring in Wintertop. The other tribes refuse to support his claim, although henceforth he calls himself the High King. The Marantaros say they will only support a King who marries Sorana Tor. The Shaker Temple priestesses fail to reach agreement on beginning the prayer to Sorana Tor to incarnate the goddess.

1617 Orios Sternhearted sends shrieves to the tribal councils of the Exiles. They refuse to accept the king's lawspeakers' authority, though all show hospitality. Iristaros clans come into conflict with Bush Range clans over attempts to expand their grazing into the Bush Range.

1618 A year of woe for the Exiles. Disease breaks out among the Iristaros herds. Many cattle and sheep are slaughtered. Many of the clans go hungry. When asked for help, the Mitchuinn and Marantaros turn their backs on the Iristaros. Orios offers Hendarli help in return for support in his claim to the throne. The Iristaros refuse. Many Exile mercenaries die when the Solanthi warlord Greymane raids Esrolia in force. With the approach of winter and little food, Chief Tarkil nne for Tarshite corn forces him to allow Lunar missionaries to preach in Irist Hold. Some starving families embrace the Lunar Way in return for food; many others die during the winter.

**Hearts are weakened, cattle die;
Backs are turned and guestcups dry.
Harlots beckon when mothers cry.**

A prophesy of 1619



LIFE BY THE AXE

The highlands around Wintertop are rugged hill country with poor soils, ill suited to the plough. Combined with the religious prohibitions of the Maran cult, forbidding worshippers from ploughing or herding, this makes farming less important than hunting, fishing, and trapping. Most clans own herds of hardy hill-sheep. Nevertheless, the mores of cattle-ownership persist. For many, the shaggy-coated, long-horned highland cattle remain the marker of wealth.

Outside the fertile lager of Wintertop Vale, farming is slash-and-burn. Farmers clear the land, work it until the poor soil becomes exhausted and allow it to return to wilderness. Woodland can take many years to recover leaving impenetrable undergrowth and bushes. Transhumance, the movement between seasonal hunting lands or pasturage, is the norm, taking families away from the stead in summer to the hunting lodges and shielings (shepherding huts). For trade with the outside, the highland clans cut lumber, for which a ready market exists in Tarsh, particularly around Arim's valley, and mine amber and bronze for export throughout the Pass.

The population of the Wintertop region has swelled since Grizzly Peak. Too many compete now for its sparse resources. Providing becomes harder every year. Many clans face famine without earnings from raiding, tribute, and war.

Some highland clans thrive on raiding the caravans crossing the five passes though the Dragonspine Mountains. The merchants who pass through the hills call these bandits Bushwhackers (*The Thieves' Arm*, pp8-9). Joining a Bushwhacker band is a rite of passage for a young Exile warrior. A typical Bushwhacker warband has some a dozen warriors. By custom, they demand 'Finovan's portion' from a caravan, a seventh of its goods. The Bushwhackers show little mercy to those caravans that refuse. Most merchants comply factoring this 'tax' into the cost of crossing the passes. Other clans who live away from the passes raid the Grazelands or Tarsh.

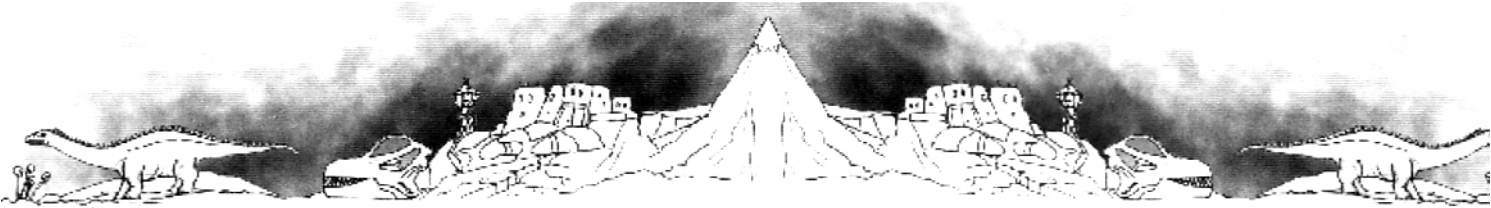
Besides plunder, taking thralls is a major objective in these raids. The Exiles justify their ownership of thralls by saying that the breath of those taken as captives is weak, and those whose breath is weak are not fit to be free men and worship Orlanth. Only the strong are free. Sons born to Maran worshippers are considered thralls too, though they belong to the local shrine or temple rather than the mother's clan. For many Heortling newcomers to the Wintertop region, with their ancestral connection to Hendreik and Larnste this is the hardest practice of their new neighbours to accept. The Exiles use some thralls for domestic labour, but sell more in the markets of AldaChur, Pimper's Block, Slavewall, and Wilmskirk. Between them the Exiles, Mellmuri (in Tarsh), and Sambari (in Sartar) control much of the thrall trade in the Pass. The Lunar Provinces with their need for slaves and surplus of agricultural produce are the Exiles major market, but they operate throughout the Pass. Before the Empire the trade in thralls was less significant, but the Empire's insatiable appetite for fresh slaves has created a thriving market. On the slopes of Kero Fin the price of freedom is paid in the slave markets of the Empire the highlanders so despise.



The clans feed off each other. The strongest clans take tribute from their smaller neighbours. Most small clans are used to the emissaries who arrive each summer to demand a share of their herds, furs, lumber, or ore. Sometimes an heroic chief or warleader encourages their clan to refuse tribute, but failure to pay risks losing far more in the subsequent raid.

The Exiles' neighbours and caravans often hire one warband as mercenaries to protect them from the others. This just formalizes the paying of tribute, but those doing the hiring retain their pride, and the mercenaries are honour bound to protect them against other dangers too. The many conflicts in Dragon Pass have created a wider market for these mercenaries. Warband leaders recruit young men for service with a warband in Sea Season and dismiss them to travel home for the winter. These associations are usually temporary, the men swearing loyalty to each other for the duration of their employment. Each man who wishes to join must bring his own fighting gear – axe, spear, shield, and helmet. If there are too many warriors then applicants may have to compete for places in the band. Some permanent Free Companies do exist such as the Company of the Bow, which recruits archers at fairs throughout the region and follows the hero Jorganos the Archer, the Horse Kings who ride horses stolen from the Grazers and are popular with Elmali warriors, and the Bush Children who have served foreign rulers since Grizzly Peak. Free companies ask their members to serve for terms of at least five years. Ditali, Solanthi, and Wolf Pirate raids draw many Exile mercenaries south, as Esrolia has weak armies of its own, and must buy protection. Many Exile villages lost young men in the Lion King's Feast (1616) and Greymane's Great Raid (1618) and whisper the name of Harrek the Berserk, leader of the Wolf Pirates, in fire-side winter tales. Exile mercenaries have found profitable employment in the struggles in Heortland too.

Wintertop Fort and Irist Hold are the only towns; most of the population lives in large steads or villages, sheltering from raiders and other dangers behind a stout palisade wall. This is hard country where travel is difficult and roads are non-existent. Instead, the villages communicate with drums, with wilderness drum towers forwarding messages over long distances.

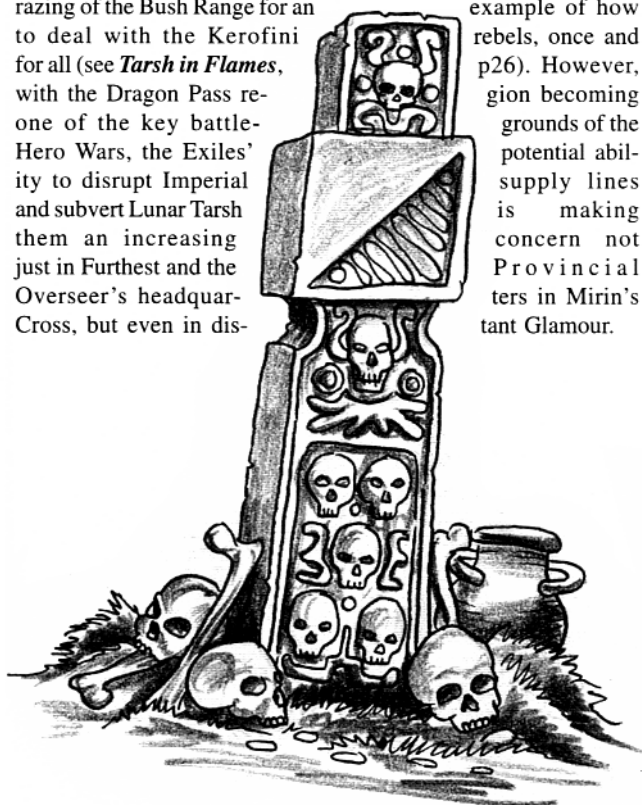


How do the Exiles survive, surrounded on all sides by enemies? In a state of siege, holed up in their mountain fastness. The Kero Fin region is difficult country for lowlanders, especially ones inexperienced in hill fighting, where the enemy strikes from ambush and then retreats into the hills and caves, or makes a stand in narrow passes wide enough for only one man to stand abreast. The presence of the holiest sites of the Orlanthi religion is still intimidating to many Provincial soldiers who after only two or three generations of conversion remain wary of the old stories, perturbed by strange dreams or hearthside tales.

The commanders of the Provincial Army vowed to never forget the massacre of the Battle of Falling Hills and are wary of the power of the Shaker Temple. The slaughter of the Quintus Valemén in 1598 was enough to convince many a commander that winking the Exiles out of their hilltop fastnesses and caves was too expensive. A raid in force by the Valemén was ambushed entering Wintertop Vale: the Earthshakers started a mudslide that split the regiment, killing half. A united Hendarli and Marantaros warband then fell on the survivors and there was slaughter. Many Barastaros and Uitaros hearths had no menfolk that winter.

So the Provincial Army seems content to place the area under siege, convinced that the highlanders cannot support their population and must either surrender, or turn on each other. The recent trials of the Iristaros have reinforced this view.

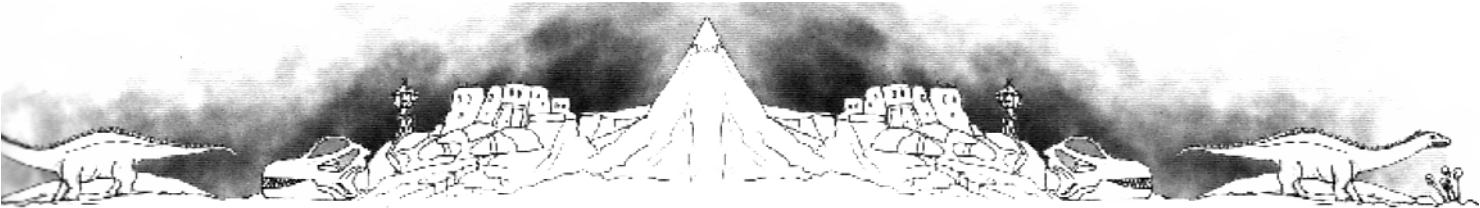
The Provincial Government sees (or chooses to see) the rebels in the hills around Wintertop as a local, Tarshite matter. The Exiles are just the Kerofini, a tribe of Tarshite bandits living in the hills. They are not officially perceived as a threat, for they too, must eventually surrender to the embrace of the goddess, like the rest of their countrymen. Within Tarsh the Fazzurites look to the Seven Mothers missionary activities and subterfuge to bring the Exiles back into the kingdom of Tarsh seeing the civil war as over and winning the hearts and minds of the conquered as a better strategy. The Phargentites are more warlike and look to Moirades razing of the Bush Range for an example of how rebels, once and p26). However, gion becoming grounds of the potential abilisupply lines is making concern not Provincial ters in Mirin's tant Glamour.



"What does it take for a people to realise they are beaten? Will they never give up? How long can they sit on that cold mountain. Their kings are descended from the Third Inspiration of Moonson, and so from the goddess herself. Don't they say 'Obey chosen leaders?' Then they should obey the King in Furthest. They are everything the priestesses say about them: murderers, thieves and rebels. They are a grim people who commit terrible atrocities. In the worst one I heard yet a band of them fell on a village in Geroini lands. The Geroini are good people who have embraced the worship of the Maize mother. We found the bodies of the priestesses and acolytes in a grove outside the village. They hung them up naked, mutilated their bodies and then they impaled them on sharp stakes. It is no wonder the Emperor is so keen on putting an end to the worship of the bandit god Orlanth.

"While their countrymen prosper under the goddess; they starve on that holy hillside of theirs. In Dark Season a famine claimed the lives of many of the Iristaros, and there must be some hope that they will surrender soon. In the meantime we wait, laying siege to them, sealing them into their mountain fastness. I am thankful we do not have to go up there and drive them out though. Brulgard the commander of the Quintus Valemén took part in an expedition over twenty years ago, when he was just a young soldier. Fewer than one in five returned. We call the Valemén the 'Tough Bastards' and they are expert mountain fighters, but the rebels brought a hill down on them. I am not sure how the rest of us would fare in that sort of fight. They are outside the Glowline too, and I see the looks on my men and women's faces when they think of passing beyond the influence of the Reaching Moon. Eventually they are going to have to come down from that mountain, or we will go up to take down their emaciated bodies. Either way, we can wait."

Letter home from Brygesus the Firm, officer in the Doblian Dogeaters



2 WINTERTOP

**"Kero Fin, Dragonspine, Wintertop,
The Storm keeps on blowing, it never will stop."**

Part of an Exile children's rhyme

THE WINTERTOP REGION

It may be a barren and dangerous land of freezing winters and treacherous passes, but this is the raw and vital heart of Kerofinela, and has been throughout and before history.

This area was the centre for the Vingkotlings during the Storm Age. Orlanth slew the fearsome Ssharkazeel here and his body forms the Dragonspine Mountains; Stead of the Ram, Vingkot's hall, was at nearby Grizzly Peak in Tarsh; Elmal shone from atop Kero Fin throughout the darkness. In the Dawn Age it was home to the Stravuli, one of the Star Tribes, who later became the core

Life here is a constant battle with the damp that seeps through the thatch, soaks through clothing, and turns the ground to mud. Pilgrims make journeys to the mountain and the pious sometimes try to climb the mountain, trusting in Orlanth to catch them should they fall. The foothills around Kero Fin average 2,500' above sea level with many hills rising to 3,500'. The two highest peaks in the foothills about Kero Fin itself: Lion Mountain and Wintertop. Wintertop is the highest at 4,000' and has snow on its summit year-round.

Geographically the Wintertop Region can be divided into the Dragonspine Mountains, the Bush Range, the Broken Neck Hills, Tamlane Hills, Birch Ridges and Wintertop Vale.

The Dragonspine Mountains are the backbones of the dragon Ssharkazeel, the first Dragon killed by Orlanth, covered in earth and vegetation. They average 3,000' with many rising over 4,000' and the highest peaks 6-7,000' high. They rise abruptly from the surrounding foothills and are sharp, almost triangular. The series of peaks and valleys clearly mark the spine bones of the dragon. They are too steep for horses, mules, or other pack animals. Local clans sometimes know secret trails over the ridges, but these are usually narrow mountain sheep tracks, impossible to find without a guide and difficult to cross, impassable in winter.

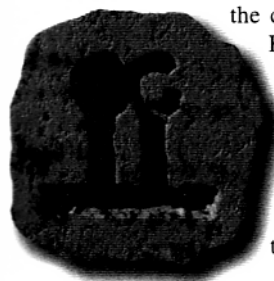
Five passes allow the range to be crossed relatively easily including Dragon Pass, Dendrogi Pass, and Harda Pass. The warmest locations in the foothills have year-round temperatures of 10 °C with the highest parts of the range only averaging -2 °C. The lower areas only have snow for Dark and Early Storm Season, but in the higher reaches the snow lasts all year, and in the coldest nights of Dark Season, the snow at the bottom of gullies can even be compacted down to form vicious magical ice snakes. Much depends on how early in the year the Ohorlanth storm comes from the northwest to bring the spring thaw. The snow is rarely more than 3' deep in the foothills but may be up 6-9 feet deep in the mountains.

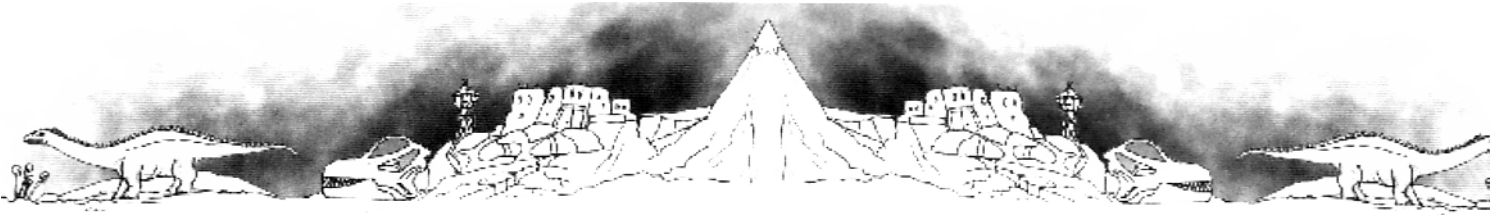
The foothills are mostly mixed deciduous, dominated by oak with silver and dwarf birch. The montane zone, above 1,800' and below 3,000' is dominated by beech mixed with silver fir and spruce. The sub-alpine zone above 3,000' and below about 3,500' is mainly spruce forest with some rowan. Above the timberline at about 3,500' are alpine meadows, which give way to sparse alpine vegetation.



of the Heortling people and whose founder blessed Arim the Founder. The four main trails that lead from Dendrogi Pass to the River are still called the Stravuli trails.

Kero Fin dominates everything here. The sacred mountain, the mother or Orlanth, is eight miles high and rises into the clouds and toward the Sky Dome. It is to Kero Fin that the Orlanthi of the Pass all fly on One Day. It was on Kero Fin that Elmal remained steadfast in the Darkness. Its base is 18 miles across, so Kero Fin looks like a needle thrusting up into the sky. Clouds swirl around Kero Fin, especially when Orlanth comes to visit, bringing high rainfall to the surrounding area.





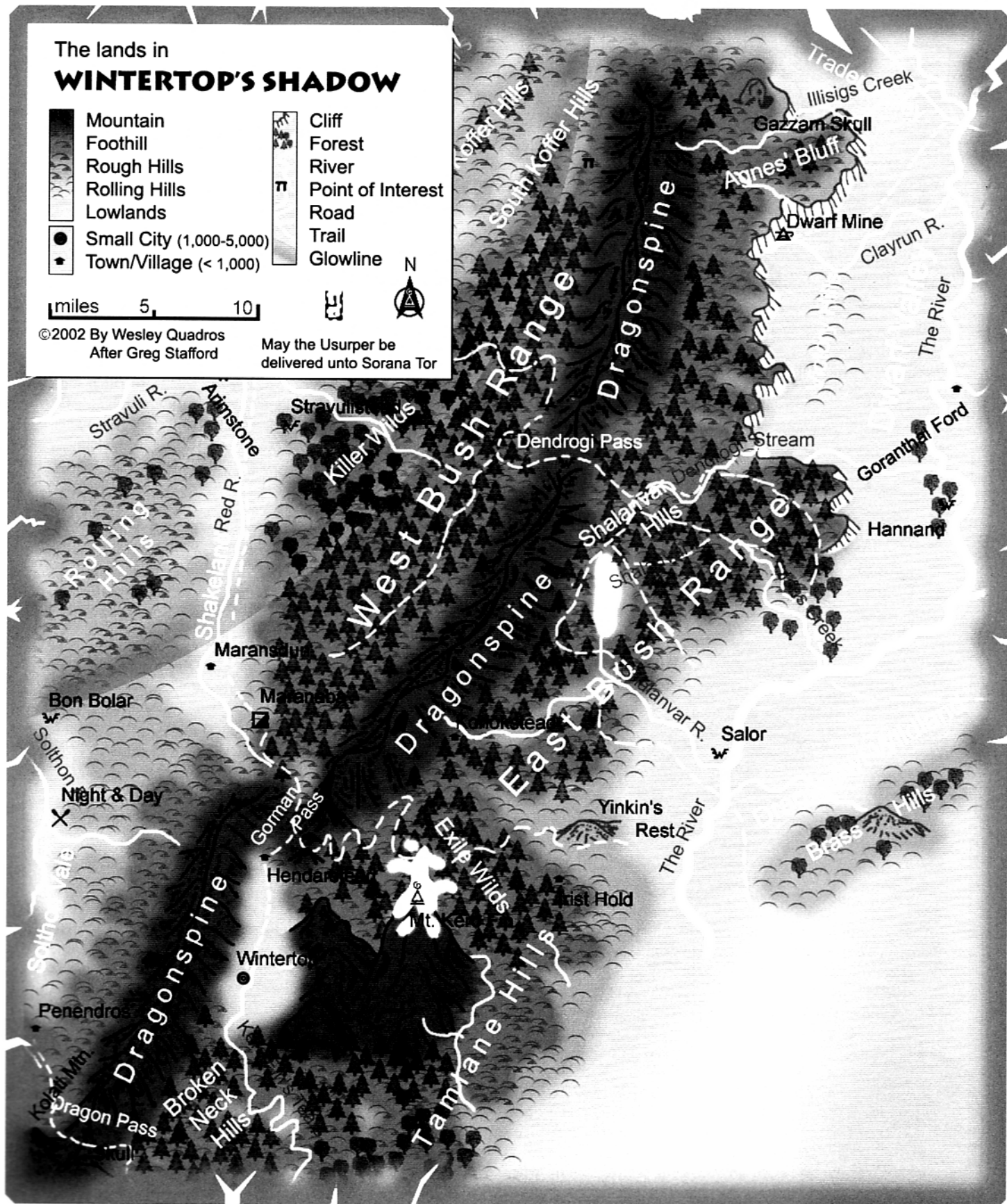
The lands in WINTERTOP'S SHADOW

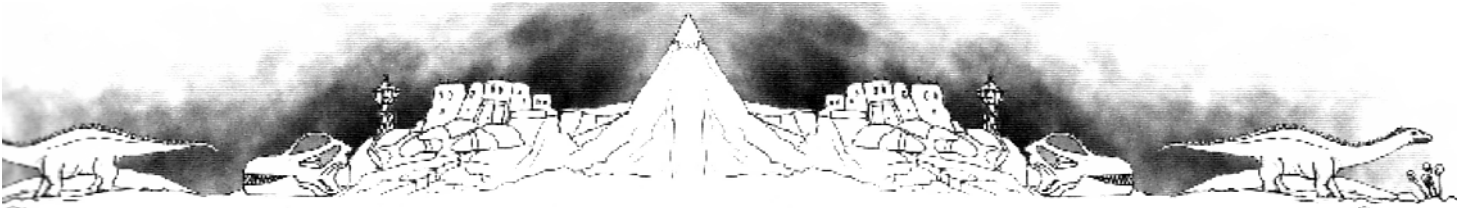
| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|-------------------|
| | Mountain | | Cliff |
| | Foothill | | Forest |
| | Rough Hills | | River |
| | Rolling Hills | | Point of Interest |
| | Lowlands | | Road |
| | Small City (1,000-5,000) | | Trail |
| | Town/Village (< 1,000) | | Glowline |

miles 5 10

©2002 By Wesley Quadros
After Greg Stafford

May the Usurper be
delivered unto Sorana Tor





GAZETTEER

Bush Range: Running from the Harda Pass north to Dendrogi Pass, and split into East and West by the Dragonspine Mountains the Bush Range is rugged hill country. The hills are irregular and steep; the valleys run north south and are overgrown. Some valleys are occupied home to bandits, Bush Ranger clans, or Lunar settlers, but most are empty and sometimes haunted. A former refuge of the Southern Tarshites who resisted Lunar rule, the Empire razed the Bush Range after Grizzly Peak as a warning to the Orlanthi of Pass of the price of resistance. The forest was burnt and even where the woodland is beginning to return the valleys are choked with masses of thick entangling thorny bushes that spread quickly and resist clearance.

Birch Ridges: The pale trees of these woods are sacred to Voria, flower goddess of the spring and are said to represent her innocence. Foresters here remember to say prayers of apology to Ernalda for the harm they will do before violating the spring maiden.

Broken Neck Hills: The foothills around Wintertop spiral towards the Mother of Mountains rising as the spiral tightens. The spiral begins here in the Broken Neck Hills at the end of Wintertop Vale and rises up through the Tamlane Hills, Lion Mountain, and Wintertop to reach Kero Fin.

Dendrogi Pass: Named after the Vingkotling hero Dendrog, who slew the dragon Shalanvar to avenge his son's death and thereby widened an old sheep trail to a sizeable pass. The pass remains dangerous to cross because of the siren-lure of the Falling Ruins nearby.

Dragon Pass: A broad pass marks the cut where Orlanth cleaved Ssharkazeel. Later a giant dragon's skull, several thousand yards wide was placed across the southern end of the Pass, and now all traffic must pass through the dragon's gaping maw.

Falling Ruins: Also called Intan, this ruin was first settled by the Stravuli in the Dawn Age. During the EWF Dinkat raised his

ladder here to climb to the Sky World, but when he stared Dayzatar in the eye Dinkat stumbled and fell taking his ladder with him and crashing into the city below. Parts of Dinkat and his ladder still tumble from the sky onto the city from time to time. Elemenoria, the Great Temptress lives here now, able to grant any wish – for a price.

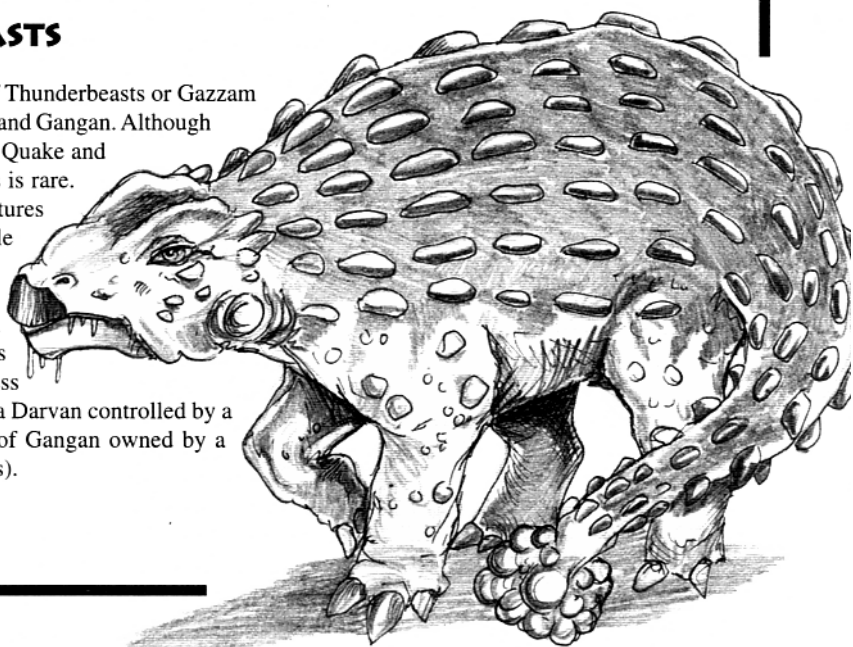
Harda Pass: In the first age the hero Harda stood off the armies of Gbaji here during the battle of Night and Day, first by outfoxing the enemy scouts, then razing the Bush Range, then by throwing rocks at the enemy as they tried to cross. He was defeated, but bought valuable time for others to escape. The pass is also called the **Gornan Pass** because it is home to many of these earth and rock spirits. It is a series of switchbacks, and while the distance as the crow flies is 5 miles it takes travellers a whole day to traverse. Crossing the pass without first appeasing Maran at either Maranaba or Delvalan Hill risks rocks and boulders tumbling down upon you. Crossing the Pass without paying tribute to the Chief of Irist Hold risks confrontation with his patrols.

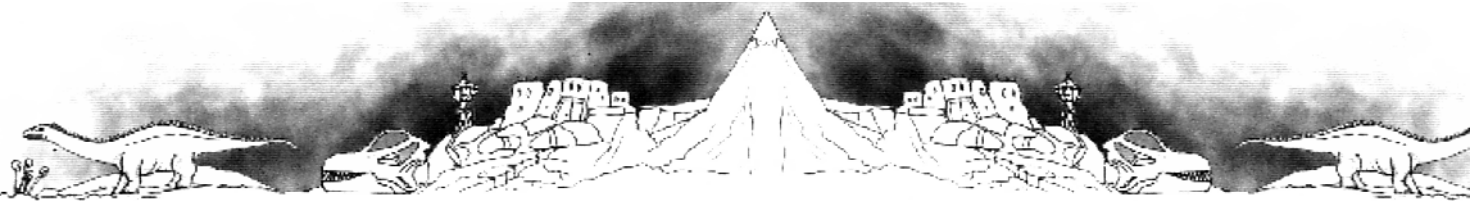
Hendarstead: Hendar founded the Hendarli clan and is still revered by the tribe that bears his name. Finding all the best land in Arim's Secret Kingdom had already been taken Hendar gathered to him the bravest of the latecomers and led them across the Dragonspine to the southland. Bargaining for passage across the Gornan Pass at Maranaba he led his people to the foothills of the Mother of Mountains. There at the ruins of the village of Tolstead, where Tol used to rest, he cut a stead tree. His descendants have lived in the fertile Wintertop Vale ever since.

Irist Hold: A former Vingkotling hill fort, Irist Hold controls the Harda Pass and the Gornan trail that leads across it. It is a small fort built to the south of Delvalan Hill, which is sacred to the Earth Shaker. Travellers appease Maran there with a sacrifice before crossing the dangerous Gornan Pass. The Delvalan clan controls Irist Hold, and are fated to do so while they continue to inaugurate their chiefs on the Delvalan Stone.

THE EXILES AND QUAKEBEASTS

The area around Wintertop is home to a number of Thunderbeasts or Gazzam (*Anaxial's Roster* p145) such as Brotards, Darvan and Gangan. Although Gatara Tor's magic allows the Exiles control over Quake and Thunder beasts the domestication of such animals is rare. Among clans with a Gatara Tor shrine, such creatures may serve the cult as beasts of burden or temple guardians, but more often these beasts are used in war as befits the destructive and warlike nature of Maran. Try to make the Exile clans' usage of such creatures individual, interesting, and not caricatures or light relief. Examples might include a priestess with a Brotard pack beast, or a clan warband with a Darvan controlled by a Gatara Tor mahout and carrying archers, a herd of Gangan owned by a renowned warrior (instead of the more usual cows).





Kero Fin: Orlanth's mother rises over eight-miles high but is only some 18 miles across and so looks like a giant needle thrust up into the sky.

Covered in snow and often misnamed for the smaller peak

Wintertop on its lower slopes she is the tallest mountain in the world, visible from afar. Kero Fin was the daughter of Earth and Mountain, one of the Three Dragon Mountains

that rose to mark the place where Drag-

ons ruled. She resisted Larnste's planting of the Rockwoods keeping Dragon Pass clear, and when Umath thrust himself into the world she rose higher to meet him. The child of that union was Orlanth. Yinkin is another child. Once more widely worshipped, she is still an important goddess to the Exile women who live upon her slopes. Kero Fin is one of the goddesses who hold the secret of sovereignty to the Pass, along with Sorana Tor and the Feathered Horse Queen. Those who seek to rule the Pass must gain the support of her or her followers. Great men have competed to win Kero Fin's amber necklace among them Aram, leader of the First Council.

Korlokstead: The tribal seat of the Mitchuinn. A fine mead hall and temple to Orlanth, with inlaid silver storm runes, dominate the stead. The hall, decorated with the plunder of the Empire is a beacon to those who would not suffer Shepelkirt to exist.

Maranaba: Located where Havan Vor's blood was spilt, Maranaba, once called De Gavarum, is sacred to Ana Gor and to Maran Gor the chthonic earth goddess. Located in a series of caverns deep beneath the earth and surrounded by a chaotic wall made from a jumble of megalithic rocks, few visit here voluntarily who are not initiated into the cult. King Varstapoor's shade guards the temple and Palashee Longaxe is entombed within its rock. See *Tarsh in Flames*, pp67-68.

Maransdun: A former Vingkotling fort in Shakeland, built on a low rise but surrounded by a dry-stone wall made from boulders far too heavy for any but giants to lift. This is the seat of the Marantaros Queen and is sacred to Erantha Gor as it guards the approach to Maranaba. The Queen's mead hall is buttressed with Brotard ribs and her throne is made from the ivory of Quakebeasts.

Spinosaurus Flats: This strip of moorland is home to herds of Quakebeasts from many varied species all covered with crests, horns, spikes, and spines. Most terrible of the spiny beasts is the Spiny Lizard a two-legged meat eating Quakebeast, forty to fifty feet long weighing over 4 tons, with 6-foot spines emerging from its backbone in a frill and long crocodile-like jaws.

Tamlane Hills: Climbing from the Broken Neck Hills the Tamlane Hills are rugged and bleak, unsuited to plough or cattle and marginal even for sheep.

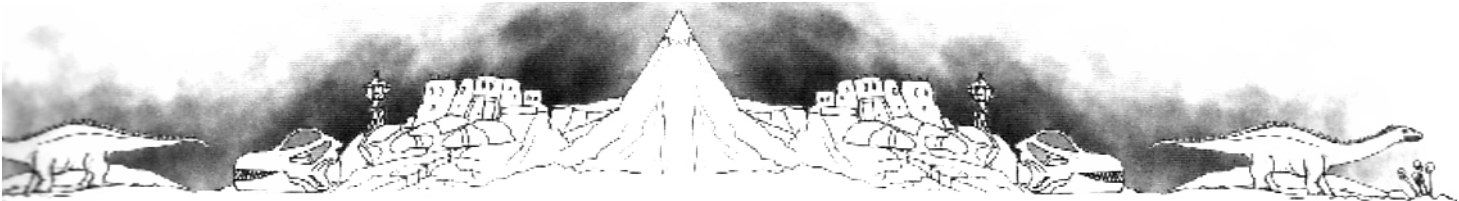
Wintertop Fort: The main stop for pilgrims heading up the winding hills from Wintertop Vale to Kero Fin. Travellers stop here to hire local guides to take them higher into the mountain or buy coloured ribbons and kites to fly from shrines on its slopes. Wintertop town is located on a steep-sided hill. Cyclopean stone-walls defend the approaches from Wintertop Vale, up steep slopes that are easily defended, and a high mountain tarn lies to the town's back. Wintertop is the only permanent market in the area, supplied by the wealth of the valley below and catering to the demand of travellers and the other tribes. A thousand souls call Wintertop home. For the local hill folk it seems crowded and metropolitan, though urbanites see it as little more than the cita-

del of a barbarian king. A stone keep here is the residence of Orios Stonehearted, pretender to the Tarshite throne and the meeting place for the King's Ring. Wintertop most truly comes alive at the Earth Season market when clan folk travel for miles to trade sheep, cattle, craftwork and thralls that are surplus to the needs of winter survival.

Wintertop Vale: Stretching from Wintertop fort to Hendarstead, Wintertop Vale is a fertile strip of arable land in the harsh hill country. Esrola's sweet influence overcomes her sister Maran here making the valley fertile and the earth peaceful. Surrounded on all sides by forbidding terrain the valley it is the breadbasket for the rebel tribes, providing their main source of locally produced wheat, oats and rye. Without this valley, Wintertop fort could not be supported. The valley is home to the Hendarli, the former tribe of Illaro Blacktooth, the founder of the current Tarshite dynasty. The Hendarli are noted for their beer brewed from winter grown hops. Hendarllager is cold, refreshing, and armies have had their morale restored on a long march by drinking it. Hendarllager has also given the valley the name Lager Vale, denoting its role in food supply to the Exiles. Wintertop Valley is cold in Dark and Storm Season, colder even than the surrounding uplands, as winter slides downhill into the valley from the mountains and often does not stir until Thunder Day in Seas Season. During this period the valley is an icy pocket covered in a carpet of snow.

HENDARLLAGER

Beer is important source of carbohydrates for the Orlanthi. Daily intake is about 2-4 pints, however ale is weak especially from later washings of the mash (ale of the first water is the strongest, small beer is the weakest). Fermentation makes beer nutritionally more valuable than bread! Most Heortling beer is ale brewed from barley malt, but also from wheat, oats, and rye. The Orlanthi flavour ale with a mixture of herbs called grout including bog myrtle, rosemary, yarrow, and alecost. Mostly the Orlanthi brew without hops, so the beer spoils quickly, lasting only a week before it turns green, when stead holders fill the pig trough with it. Serving it to a guest would be a deliberate insult. Ale making is a weekly hearth activity. Beer brewed with hops, or lager, lasts longer preserving carbohydrates for consumption throughout the year and more beer can be made from the same amount of malt. The Hendarli grow winter hops. This is a unique variety harvested in late Storm Season instead of in Earth Season, and produces a lager that is cold and refreshing.



THE EXILES

The Kerofini and the Mitchuinn trace their origin back to the tribes that founded the Kingdom of Tarsh. There are many independent clans around Wintertop and in the Bush Range; some are refugees from the Empire, many are bandit gangs, and all struggle to maintain their independence.

THE KEROFINI

The Kerofini are a tribe of kings and heroes. Illaro Blacktooth, who saved Tarsh from the first civil war, was born among the Kerofini, as was Palashee Longaxe, who liberated Tarsh from the Lunar dynasty, if only too briefly. The tribe lives in sacred lands around the Shaker Temple and Kero Fin Orlanth's mother. Traditional hunters and religious conservatives the Kerofini fragmented after the Battle of Grizzly Peak from the pressures of the influx of refugees to the Wintertop region. The ambitious Hendarli clan, invoked the name of their ancestor Illaro Blacktooth to draw the dispossessed to their banner, and grew into a new tribe. The Marantaros clan withdrew to their sacred lands around Maranaba, a beacon for zealots and traditionalists, rejecting new ways. Around Irist Hold, the clans formed a new tribal affiliation, the Iristaros, hoping to remain independent of Hendarli ambition.

HENDARLI

The Hendarli are the tribe of Illaro the Blacktooth who renounced his leadership when he became King of Tarsh. The Hendarli tribe lives around Wintertop valley, which stretches from Wintertop fort to Gornan Pass and in the Broken Neck Hills down toward Dragon Pass. They are famous for making cold beer from winter-grown hops. Most of those who live in Wintertop fort are Hendarli. Orios is their king, and claims the High Kingship of Tarsh from the blood of Illaro that runs in his veins. The Horse Kings, a mercenary cavalry unit draw many of their recruits from the Hendarli and winter Wintertop Fort and the surrounding valley. Elmal is honoured among the Hendarli, and the clans say his horses once grazed in Wintertop Vale.

IRISTAROS

Once known as the fat tribe, because their women grow prosperous on the trade of the Harda Pass through Irist Hold, the Iristaros clans formed as a counterweight to the Hendarli. In recent years a sickness that swept through their herds has brought famine to their lands. Alienated former allies refused to help and Chief Tarkil of Irist Hold turned to the Empire for support allowing missionaries into Irist Hold from where they preached to the tribe in return for food. This led to a number of conversions, particularly to the Lunar Earth. Fear of kinstrife protects the converts but

their presence and their bellies well fed on lowland corn, are a continued source of tension. The Iristaros live in the Tamlane Hills and the fringes of the Bush Range around Irist Hold, which controls the Harda Pass, one of the strategically important passes through the Dragonspine mountains. The strongest clans had been pushing into the East Bush Range at the expense of the clans there, an expansion that was halted by the famine of recent years. The Mitchuinn clans use Tarkil's tolerance of Lunar missionaries into Irist Hold as an excuse to raid the Iristaros.

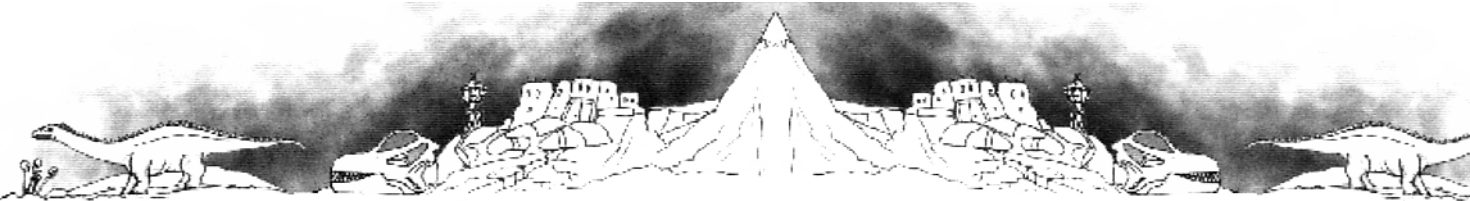
MARANTAROS

The Marantaros live in the lands around the Shaker temple. To call them a tribe glorifies their small size. The Marantaros is one clan that split into three when it absorbed refugees who came to live in the lands near the goddess's temple. The three clans form a triaty and are matriarchal. This means that the three clans take husbands only from one other clan. This creates unusually strong bonds of kinship within the tribe. "The old ways," they say, "are proved to be the best." Maran Gor is strong with the women of the triaty. Alchfled, a priestess of Erantha Gor leads the triaty. The women of the tribe are fierce warriors who take their enemies' scalps in battle. Philigos's scalp still hangs in the Queens Hall at Maransdun.

THE MITCHUINN

Mitchuinn Moonhater was an Orlanthi chieftain from Dara-Ni who fled the Empire to Tarsh. He swore to bring Shepelkirt down, and made his followers swear the same oath, founding the tribe that bears his name. Enemies of the Empire flock to the Mitchuinn. Tovtarim, their redheaded king, leads the Moonhaters on raids against the Empire in Tarsh and Sartar.

The Breagalos tribe of Tarsh was once part of the Mitchuinn. They joined, in tribute, when the Mitchuinn slew their king, Breagal the Greedy. The Breagalos rose against the Mitchuinn in the second civil war, throwing their support behind the Lunar dynasty in return for liberation from Mitchuinn rule. The Mitchuinn lost clans in the struggle: the Culthos, Drayvan, Igarni, and Prand. The Breagalos forced the Mitchuinn from their lands, driving them from many important sacred sites. With faith in their heroic ancestor, the Mitchuinn weathered the collapse of Old Tarsh and maintained their identity but had to absorb many refugees and migrate to the Wintertop region. The Mitchuinn harbour a desire for revenge on the Breagalos tribes, and their leaders call for them to pay tribute to the Mitchuinn.



THE INDEPENDENT CLANS

Many clans remain stubbornly independent of the tribes. A few remain loyal to the Old Kerofini overtribe, but not to any of the newer tribes, others are refugees from their former tribes in Tarsh who dream of ousting the Lunar sympathisers and reclaiming their ancestral lands. One subgroup is important enough to have established its own identity, the clans of the Bush Range.

The Exiles divide themselves into four groups: The Old Timers whose ancestral lands have always been in the Wintertop region, the Grizzlers who arrived after the Battle of Grizzly Peak, the Newcomers - Quivini refugees from the fall of the kingdom of Sartar, and the Lost and Found - Aldachuri refugees from Harvar Ironfist. The newcomers figure for the Independent clans includes Lunar settlers and non-humans among the Bush Rangers.

THE BUSH RANGERS

The desperate, ambitious, or unlucky make their homes in the no-man's land that is the Bush Range. Some of these Bush Ranger clans have eked a miserable existence from these lands, un-governed by Tarsh since the first civil war. Others are new, collections of malcontents, outlaws, and brave homesteaders from the Provinces and Far Point. Some are non-human: troll clans hiding in dark caves, nomadic tusk rider warbands with their herds of giant battle pigs, and rootless Aldryami renegades. Most are small, numbering from anywhere from 50 -100 adults and bandit gangs in all but name. A few grow larger, most by taking tribute from others under the leadership of a strong warleader, others held together by the convictions that forced them into exile. All are distinguished by owing fealty to neither the tribes of Tarsh nor the Exiles.

| <i>Tribe</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Old Timers</i> | <i>Grizzlers</i> | <i>Newcomers</i> | <i>Lost And Found</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Marantaros | 3,000 | 2,300 | 500 | | 200 |
| Iristaros | 6,500 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 200 | 300 |
| Hendarli | 5,000 | 2,500 | 2,000 | 200 | 300 |
| Mitchuinn | 3,500 | | 2,300 | 800 | 400 |
| Independent Clans | 16,000 | 3,100 | 4,000 | 6,600 | 2,300 |
| The Exiles | 34,000 | 9,900 | 15,800 | 3,800 | 3,500 |

MERCENARY WARBANDS OF THE EXILES

Many Exiles serve as mercenaries, either in Dragon Pass or Maniria, especially in Esrolia (where the strength of Earth cults often provides links for recruitment). In part, this reflects their reputation for implacable savagery, in part the poverty of their tribal lands. It is, after all, quite common in lean years for a younger son or even daughter to be presented with the green-and red-ribboned ceremonial 'walking axe' on their initiation, in effect inviting them to spend the next three years away fighting to earn money for themselves and their families. Of course, given the confused nature of loyalties and feuds among the Exiles, clan and tribal warbands are also often found fighting in unusual circumstances. Exiles themselves can only rarely afford to hire mercenaries, although the promise of sanctuary means that their warbands often contain fugitives from either Tarshite or Sartari justice, and even a smattering of escapee Grazer vendref, Black Horse County peasants and Aldachuri refugees fleeing Harvar Ironfist's purges.

The Bush Children

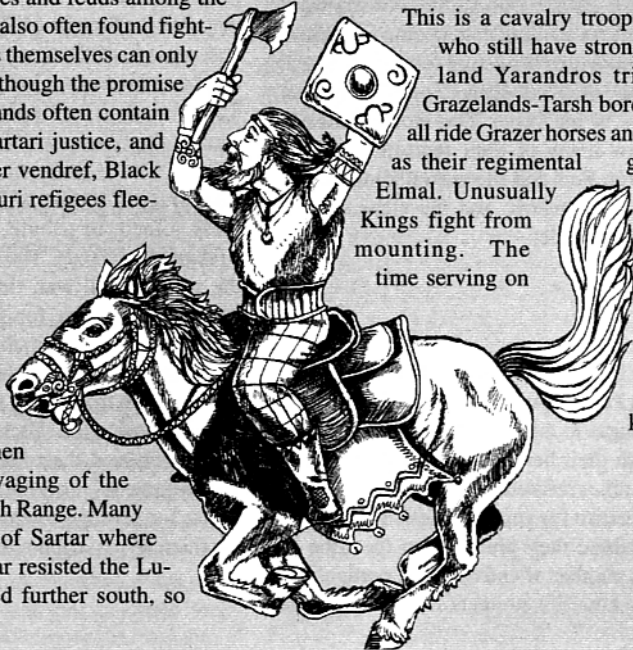
One of the most famous Exile mercenary bands, the Bush Children trace their origin to the dark days after the battle of Grizzly Peak, when many Tarshites fled the Lunar ravaging of the clans hiding amid the hills of the Bush Range. Many sought sanctuary in the Kingdom of Sartar where they served as mercenaries as Sartar resisted the Lunar advance. As the Empire pushed further south, so

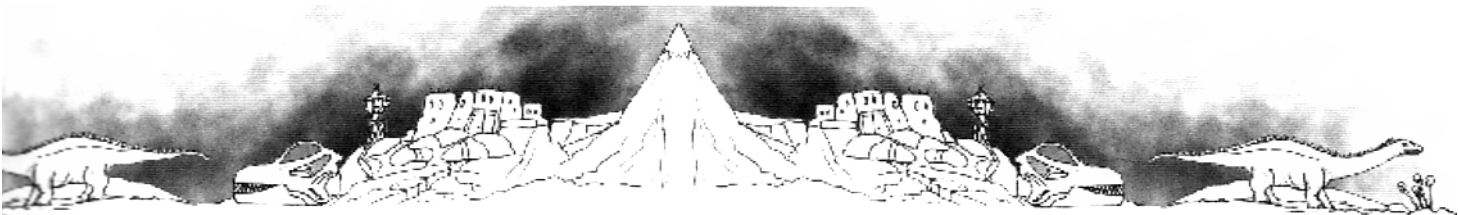
the Bush Children retreated from its advancing front, first finding service with the king of Hendreikiland and later among the defenders of Whitewall. To replace their heavy losses fighting against the Empire the Bush Children still recruit from among the dispossessed of the independent clans of the Bush Range.

The Horse Kings

This is a cavalry troop based in Wintertop Vale who still have strong connections to the low-land Yarandros tribe who live along the Grazelands-Tarsh border. Members of the troop all ride Grazer horses and many worship Yarandros as their regimental god, with others following Elmal. Unusually Kings fight from mounting. The time serving on

for Orlanthi, the Horse horseback instead of dis-unit spends much of its the Solanthi border in Esrolia for it is very unsuited to life in the hills, where the lack of grazing makes it expensive to keep horses.





3 WE ARE THE EXILES

"On three things can we rely: the axe's edge, the mountain's pride and Maran's rage."



The Exiles are an Orlanthi people like those outlined in *Thunder Rebels*, but they are Alakoring, not Heortling, with differences of attitude and culture. The Alakorings originate from Ralios and southern Peloria. During the Imperial Age, all the barbarian peoples around the Rockwood Mountains called themselves Heortlings. Then Alakoring Dragonbreaker liberated Ralios and Saird from the EWF. To prevent the mistakes of the EWF being repeated, he instituted the cult of Orlanth Rex and changed the size of the ruling tribal and clan rings to thirteen to keep the balance between chiefs, priests, and carls. Those he liberated identified themselves as Alakorings afterwards. In addition, the strength of the Maran in Exile worship has given women a stronger role in society.

After Yarandros, the importance of the clan declined in Tarsh, and the importance of the kingdom and family grew. The tribe became more central to the individual's life. The tribal ruler appoints a shrieve – a lawspeaker responsible for the tribe's interest to the clan. Among the lowlanders, the Lunar dynasty has accelerated the changes. The king appoints tribal rulers and the clan chief is weaker than the shrieve. However, because of their dislocation from their ancestral tribes and lands, the clan remains the defining social unit among the Exiles and the tribes still have elected kings. Among the Mitchuinn and Hendarli, a shrieve represents the tribal king in each clan, but is weaker than the chief. The Marantaros reject shrieves as part of the new thinking that

led to the downfall of Tarsh, and their loyalty is to Maranaba not the kingdom. The clans of the Iristaros see their tribe as a counterweight to the others. Their kingship is weak, and has never been able to appoint shrieves; many clans pay only lip service to their tribal obligations. Thus, the Exiles have three tiers of government: the Thunder Brothers' council which guides a village, the clan ring (usually an Alakoring Ring, see p31, but sometimes a hill ring – *Barbarian Adventures* p15 – but with a Gor position instead of one for the crafters) and an Alakoring Tribe ring of thirteen for the tribe.

HOMELAND KEYWORDS

Exile Man

Abilities: Alakoring Custom, Alakoring Myths, Close Combat ([Weapon] & Shield Fighting), Dragon Pass Geography, Drumspeech, *Fyrd* Combat, Know Local Area, Ranged Combat ([Ranged Weapon]) Track, Running

Personality: Fierce

Relationship: To Village; To Tribe; Worship Storm Pantheon.

Magic: All men initiate or devote themselves to a specific god. See *Thunder Rebels* p155.

Exile Woman

Abilities: Alakoring Custom, Alakoring Myths, Close Combat ([Weapon] & Shield Fighting), Dragon Pass Geography, Drumspeech, Housework, Know Local Area, Spinning, Weaving.

Personality: Cruel

Relationship: To Village; To Tribe; Worship Storm Pantheon.

Magic: All women initiate or devote themselves to a specific god. See *Thunder Rebels* p155 and *Tarsh in Flames* pp61-66 or *Storm Tribe* pp220-21 for Maran.

Notes

Alakoring Customs and Myths can be used as Heortling Custom or Myths with a -3 penalty.

Drumspeech: Understanding or communicating by drums should generally not require a roll on the part of an Exile hero.

[Weapon] is one of axe, seax, spear, or mace.

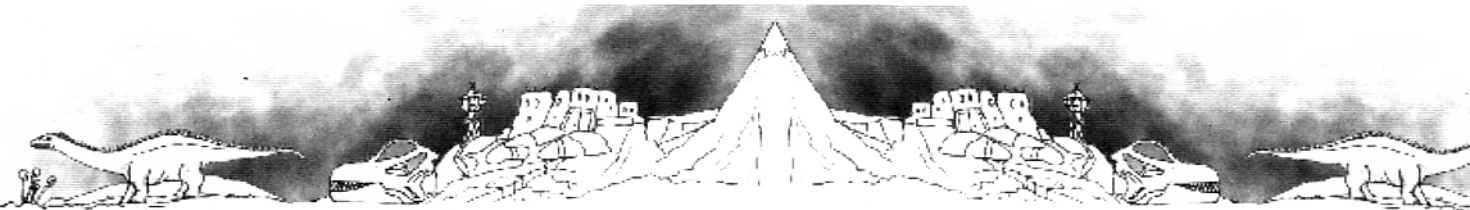
[Ranged weapon] is throwing axe or bow.

Names

Thunder Rebels lists names, which Exile characters may use. In addition, we provide a number of popular Tarshite names.

Men's names: Angwil, Annstad, Arim, Delvalan, Dendrog, Derik, Doekas, Engarnos, Fazzur, Freidar, Gusan, Halifitoor, Harda, Hassidor, Hedgar, Hendarl, Hendrakos, Hyrovan, Illaro, Irist, Jornkalar, Kocho, Kornos, Marofdul, Mitchuinn, Moirades, Onjur, Orlev, Orios, Overtien, Palashee, Pharandos, Phargentes, Philigos, Phoronestes, Potov, Rul, Tarkalar, Tastinim, Tovtarsar, Varstapoor, Vladik, Yarandros

Women's names: Alakora, Alakfled, Berendwydd, Desi, Eadora, Eraneti, Eranina, Ersenvoora, Fazytha, Frigifa, Halufa, Halwitha, Illara, Ingarde, Iristhild, Kynnwyna, Maraneti, Maranta, Marusa, Marwyna, Onwyna, Oreti, Palora, Pharwyna, Pharzeela, Philleti, Phora, Salevra, Sedjena, Sorana, Tarleti, Traytha, Verenmara, Vesthild, Vestenbora, Yaranhild.



OCCUPATIONAL KEYWORDS

The keywords from *Thunder Rebels* are appropriate for the Exiles. Relationships to family will generally instead be to the village. As in Tarsh, the Exiles call weaponthanes huscarls when in the retinue of a nobleman.

Cultural Weapons

The cultural weapon of the Exile warrior is the axe, the Earth's weapon. Warriors use a one handed axe with a 3 1/2' haft and a single edged blade for close combat and a shorter axe with a curved blade for throwing. Maran's warrior women use the club, or mace, as well as the axe. In addition, there is a two-handed long axe, favoured by huscarls, and the seax, a single-edged knife or short sword. Hunters and Elmali, use the Tarshite longbow, a 5-6' yew or elm bow.

Basic Occupations

The Exiles have subsistence agriculture, supplemented by hunting, fishing, and raiding. Farmers are rare in the hills around Wintertop, and thralls perform much of the agricultural labour. Gender does not restrict the warrior keyword among the exiles,



though warrior women must worship an appropriate goddess, usually Maran. Hunter and Forester occupations are open to women as well through the Maran cult, though it is more usual for women to take the Steadwife occupation than take these roles directly.

Forester

Lumber is one of the few resources of the hills around Wintertop, though the population pressure after Grizzly Peak has created an unsustainable demand for timber, both as a local resource

and for export. Feuding between clans over lumber rights to woods, the so-called Wood Wars, has increased dramatically in recent years. Foresters' steadwives usually worship Overdruva the Forest Friend, but the woodcutters themselves never do.

Abilities: Close Combat (Two-handed Axe), Forestry, Know Local Woods, Know Weather, Make Simple Repairs, Manage Stead, Ranged Combat (Throwing Axe), Tree Cutting

Relationships: none additional.

Personality: Independent, Taciturn.

Magic: Orlanth Allfather (Durev or Orstan)

Unusual Magic: Erantha Gor, Orlanth Adventurous (Tatouth,

Varanorlanth)

Wergild: Half-Carl

Living Standard: Common

Equipment: Leather helmet, two-handed axe, throwing axe and dagger; farmstead, odal rights to woodland, half ox-team and cart or earth sled (or full-team for a carl).

Miner

The Kerospine mountain range and surrounding hills have rich mineral resources. In many places, earth movements have brought them close to the surface. The richest veins are near Dwarf Mine, jealously guarded by the Mostali. Around Wintertop the veins of bronze ore are less rich, but still workable. Mining is a dirty, strenuous, and dangerous profession. Usually thralls, not free men, dig the seams. This profession represents a free man of the clan who is part prospector for new seams, part mining engineer overseeing the digs, and part overseer to the thralls. Miners' wives worship Asella and are the crafters of jewellery. Mining clans propitiate but do not worship Maran. Cave-ins and collapsing shafts are a constant threat, as Maran's servants seek to prevent Asella and Torkal robbing the earth of Asrelia's treasures.

Abilities: Assess Earth's Wealth, Dig, Ignore Dark, Find Earth's Wealth, Know Land, Make Simple Repairs, Manage Stead, Smelt Ore, Strong, Tough, Tunnelling, Underground Survival.

Relationships: none additional.

Personality: Hard Working.

Magic: Asella, Torkal

Unusual Magic: Argan Argar, Gustbran

Wergild: Carl

Living Standard: Common

Equipment: Leather helmet, spear, shield and dagger; farmstead, odal rights to mine, ox-team and cart (or half-team for half carl).

Thrall

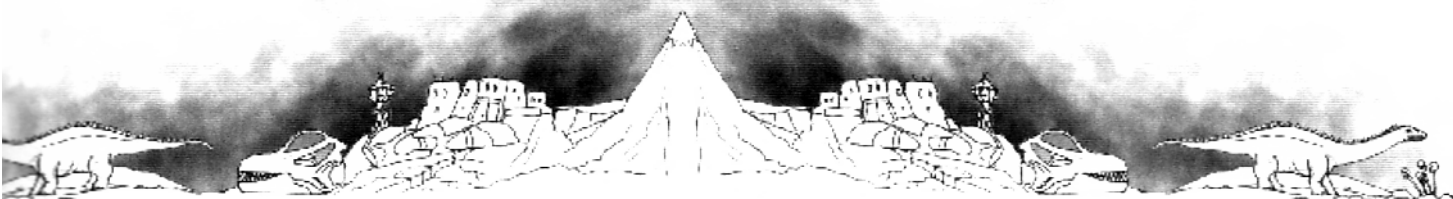
Thralls are often lowlanders, captured in raids, or debt slaves. Male thralls provide unskilled labour around the village: building dry-stone walls, charcoal burning, peat digging, laying log paths, ploughing, pig herding and stick picking. Female thralls perform the physically hard domestic chores, grinding with a hand quern, milking, churning, and laundry. Sometimes female thralls act as handmaidens or wet nurses to important women of the clan. Favoured thralls may become overseers responsible for the work of others.

The sign of the thrall is the leather slave-collar around the neck, combined with short-cropped hair. Clothing is usually a simple flax or hemp tunic. The clan that owns the mother raises the children of thralls as free. Thralls also have skills from their former occupation.

Abilities: [Male] Carry Heavy Burden, Domestic Animal Care, Endure Bad Weather, Farming, Make Simple Repairs, [Female], Butchering, First Aid, Make Cheese, Preserve Food, [Both] Dodge Blame, Endure Beating, Go without Food, Know Local Area, Any one other skill from former life.

Relationships: To Master or Mistress

Personality: Rebellious or Resigned



Magic: Any but thralls only have the time to becommunal worshippers and may not bear weapons or ride.

Wergild: None, though anyone who kills or injures a thrall must compensate the owner. A female slave is worth 3 cows, a male slave 2-4.

Living Standard: Minimal, a slave owns little if any personal property, though slaves of wealthier masters often live in better condition.

Equipment: A simple, grey, flaxen or hemp tunic and hoarded possessions of sentimental value.

ADVANCED OCCUPATIONS

Village Council Member

The 13-strong Thunder Brothers' council guides the villages. Councilmen are not thanes, apart from the village headman and woman, but they form the upper social layer in the village, and it is from among them that the thanes are drawn. The villagers elect these posts. Anyone elected to the post gains a one-time +5 increase to wealth, not the +10 that Heortling thanes gain.

Entry Requirements: Be a solid citizen of the village (a useful ability at 5 \mathbb{W} or more) and be elected by others (relationship to village at 1 \mathbb{W} or more).

Abilities: Manage Resources, Speak With Authority, Talk for Hours.

Relationships: to Village, to Clan, to Tribe.

Personality: Ambitious

Magic: Any.

Wergild: Councilman 40 cows, Headsman as Thane.

Living Standard: Common

Equipment: Longhouse in the village with thralls to help run it; fine clothes, village regalia.



Shrieve

The shrieve is the tribal king's representative to the clan. The shrieve is always a stranger from another clan, ensuring his loyalty to the king and promoting understanding between the clans. A good shrieve does not interfere in clan affairs, but is responsible for collecting the king's taxes, and administering the king's justice. In times of trouble, he may petition the king on the clan's behalf, or ask the clan to aid others. The shrieve never sits on the ring but the ring listens to his voice in council.

Among the lowlanders of Tarsh, the king appoints tribal rulers and the shrieves have become more important than the chief has. Among the Exiles, the clan chiefs still elect the tribal kings and jealously guard their traditional rights. There is always a tension here: a shrieve who seeks to assert too much authority may find favour with his king, but risks being branded 'New Tarsh', a seriously insulting epithet.

Entry Requirements: The recognition of the king (relationship to king at 5 \mathbb{W} or more) and be able to administer the king's justice and collect taxes (have a useful ability 5 \mathbb{W} 2 or more).

Abilities: Gauge Value, Know Alakoring Laws,

Look Imposing, Memorise, Speak With Authority.

Relationships: to Tribe, to Clan.

Personality: Impartial

Magic: Any, but Orlanth Allfather (Harst or Jarani) is the most appropriate.

Wergild: Noble.

Living Standard: Prosperous

Benefits: The shrieve has the ear of the king and can expect material and spiritual support from him when carrying out his duties. The shrieve has influence on clan and tribal affairs.

Equipment: A hearth with thralls to help run it; fine clothes; four warriors as followers; three cottar servants.

ORIOS STERNHEARTED

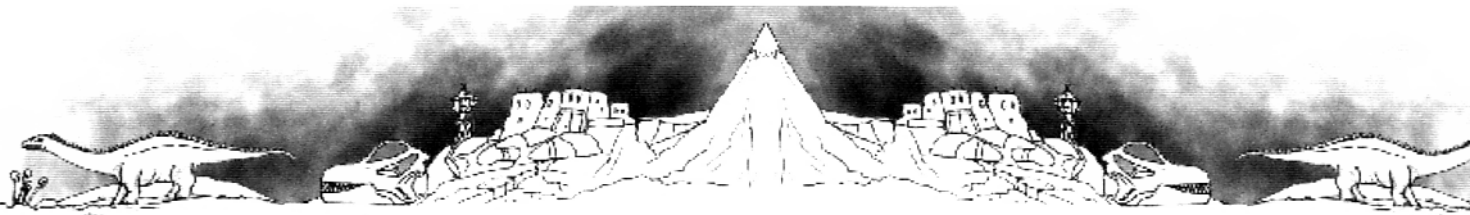
King 1 \mathbb{W} 2, Devotee of Dar Allfather 20 \mathbb{W} , Devotee of Orlanth Rex 20, Brooding 1 \mathbb{W} 2

The Kerofini tribe is the bond that unites all the Exiles. Once, all but the Mitchuinn were clans of the Kerofini. Illaro's blood runs in the Hendarli tribe of Kerofini, and Palashee's among the Marantaros, and kings of Tarsh are always of the blood. Orios Sternhearted of the Hendarli claims to be the High King and heir to the throne of Tarsh – but his rule from Wintertop is an empty one. The King's Ring meet, but the Marshal has no armies to command, and the treasury is all but empty. Three summers ago, Orios sent shrieves to the clans to oversee 'royal interests'; they were guested but politely ignored. The tribes reject Orios's attempts to raise taxes or dispense the High King's justice. The tribal kings speak with the loudest voice now, though there are supporters of the Orios who meet in secret everywhere, plotting his return.

THE SHAKER PRIESTESS.

High Priestess of Maran 20 \mathbb{W} 3, Huge 10 \mathbb{W} , Ugly 10 \mathbb{W}

The Twins of Old Tarsh divided rule of Tarsh between the temporal powers of the brother/king and the spiritual and religious powers of the sister/queen. Through the incarnation of Sorana Tor the cult held the rites that granted sovereignty over the Pass, which gave them significant influence. Illaro rebuilt the kingdom through the authority conveyed on him with such rites. The emergence of the Feathered Horse Queen and the rites of marriage that also granted sovereignty over Dragon Pass weakened the influence of the Shaker Temple in Dragon Pass politics. Many in the Temple claim that by failing to honour the rites of Sorana Tor, Tarsh doomed itself. They campaign for a return to Old Tarsh – the rule of a brother/king and sister/queen. Of course the sister/queen is always the High Priestess of the Shaking Earth. The current incarnation is so ponderous that she travels in an oak cart pulled by six blind cave oxen accompanied by her acolytes, the Earthshakers, 47male and female cannibal devotees of the chthonic goddess.



HUNTING AND FISHING

With farming and animal husbandry relatively much less productive than in the lowlands of Tarsh or even the lands of the Sartari, hunting acquires a particular importance among the Exiles. Not only is it a vital source of food and materials, it teaches the youngsters the skills and attitudes they will need as bushwhacker raiders or stalking Imperial soldiers. Odaylan hunters are also important contacts with kin still in Lunar Tarsh, as it is generally accepted that they roam far and wide. This is as important simply for maintaining contact with kin as it is a means of gathering intelligence and smuggling goods and messages.

The Hunt

The bow is the weapon of the hunter in the hills around Kero Fin. Despite the effectiveness of the Tarshite long-bow, the stalk is still needed to get within effective range of his quarry. Once on the trail a hunter does not follow his quarry all the way to its lair. Instead, relying on a knowledge of animal behaviour and local terrain, he moves ahead to locations it is likely to pass, picks up the trail and moves off again. This allows the hunter to catch or ambush the animal.

Kills are rarely instant, so tracking is required to find the quarry even after it has been struck. Great attention is paid to the wind. Because warm air rises, hunters move down from higher elevations into the valleys in the mornings and back up into the hills in the cooler evening. Hunters may also ambush deer, lying in wait in a blind along known trails such as those near to watering holes.

Odaylans, who more often work alone, may dress in a tanned deer hide cape with antlers, their chest painted white. Walking crouched over, with their bow and arrows hanging down in imitation of the deer's forelimbs, the hunter approaches a grazing deer from its side. The bow and arrow are rubbed together to simulate the sounds of bucks intermeshing their antlers. Feathers are often 'silenced' with tufts of downy owl feathers as deer, especially white-tipped are so quick that they can 'jump the string' or dodge the arrow. The owl, a silent hunter of the night, is thought to have great powers for the stealthy kill.

Hunters co-operate frequently. When chasing a deer to exhaustion, hunters and alynxes are stationed in a relay along the likely escape routes of the quarry. Taking over the chase with fresh wind, they are more able to run the quarry down. Deer drives push the quarry into advantageous terrain for the hunter, such as promontory of land, or cliffs. Fires, human scent, and alynxes drive the deer forward.

Small Game

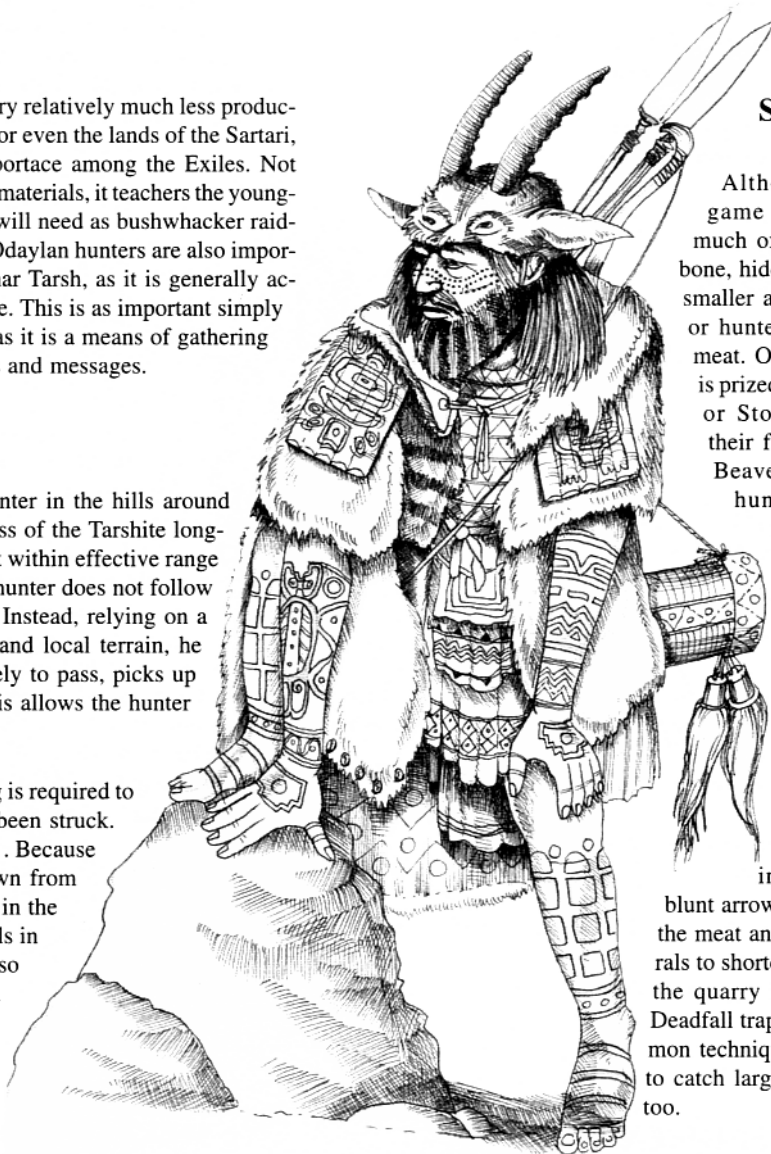
Although the larger game animals provide much of a clan's need for bone, hide, meat, and sinew, smaller animals are trapped or hunted for the pelts or meat. Otter and beaver fur is prized especially in Dark or Storm Season when their fur is at its richest.

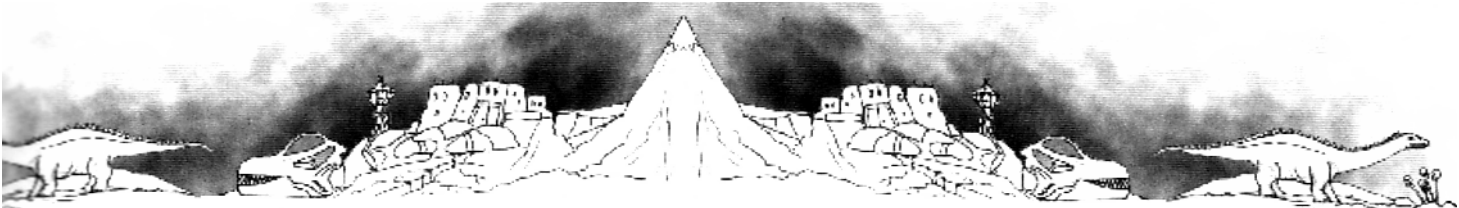
Beaver trappers station hunters at the exits from the lodge and then break in. As the beavers flee they are caught by hunters at the exits, tossed onto the ice and clubbed to death. Other small game such as squirrels are hunted by stalking, and shot with

blunt arrows to avoid spoiling the meat and the fletching spirals to shorten the range so that the quarry is not carried off. Deadfall traps are another common technique sometimes used to catch larger game like bears too.

Fishing

The streams around Kero Fin provide an important food source. Fishermen use nets, spears, and basket traps in the water, though a skilled hunter can 'tickle' fish out of the water.





GODS AND HEROES OF THE EXILES

"Between Maran's Earth and Kero Fin's Snows"

— Exile saying to suggest anywhere in their world.

While most of the Exiles follow the ways of Orlanth and Ernalda, their traditions and their experiences mean that other deities receive greater or less attention than might otherwise be the case in Sartar. Maran, the scarred and grudging goddess of the Dark Earth, is obviously especially important to the Exiles, as is Kero Fin, whose physical body towers above them. Peaceable and specialised gods such as Issaries and Lhankor Mhy have less relevance to their daily lives eking out a meagre living in the hills and fighting off the intrusions of Shepelkirt.

THE CULT OF MARAN GOR AT THE SHAKER TEMPLE

The Maran cult in *Storm Tribe* represents the cult as worshipped among the Heortlings. At the Shaker Temple, her cult has a richer selection of subcults (see *Tarsh in Flames*, pp61-66 for more details).

Initiate

A candidate must pass a series of tests by the local Ernalda priestess to prove herself. She is then sent alone to the Shaker's Temple, perhaps never to return. Those who return rejoin their society and family and attend all the usual worship. On cult holy days, they go alone or to join with other cultists in the wilds since no actual priestess is usually present. On the cult High Holy Day, they are the centre of the whole community's attention and lead public rites. Initiates have all normal requirements and restrictions, and receive all the usual benefits. They must swear to obey their temple's High Priestess unto death. They may not directly till the soil or herd beasts for their livelihood, and must eat raw meat, fish, or fowl as their breakfast daily. Initiates of all subcults may not enter into any form of marriage except the "eighth form," which is no marriage at all, having no legal status. This is sometimes called the "Harmast form" or "Niskis form" implying carnal pleasure without legal or even personal entanglements.

Magic Keyword

Abilities: Close Combat (Axe or Mace Fighting), Endurance, Mythology of Maran

Virtues: Active, Relentless

Affinities

☐ Earth Making

☒ Quakebeast

How many women worship Maran?

The Exiles are an Orlanthi people and practice the religion of Orlanth and Ernalda. Most women follow the aspects of Ernalda as they move through their life. Those that do not are the customary one in seven. While the

Heortlings fear Maran and have no or few worshippers in the clan, among the exiles Maran is an accepted and in many clans valued alternative. Worship of the dark goddess has always been strongest among the Marantaros, where even men sometimes initiate. Maran's active nature means the cult's influence can exceed its numbers.

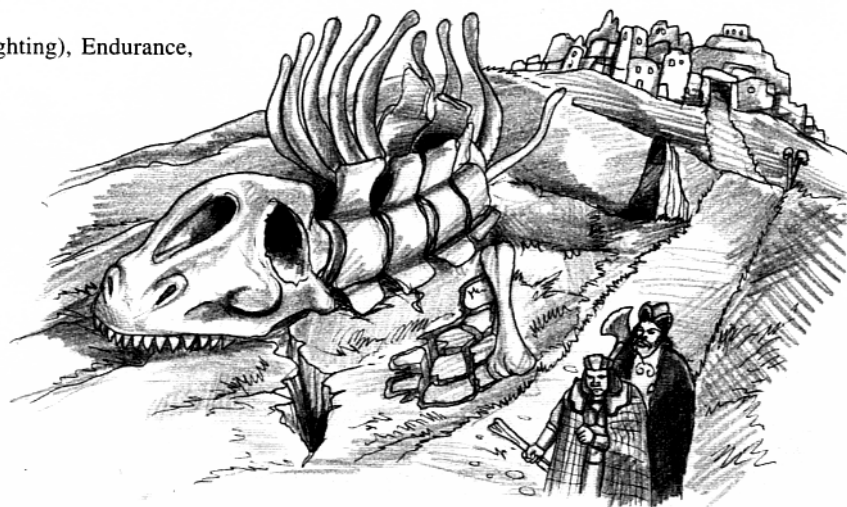
Devotee

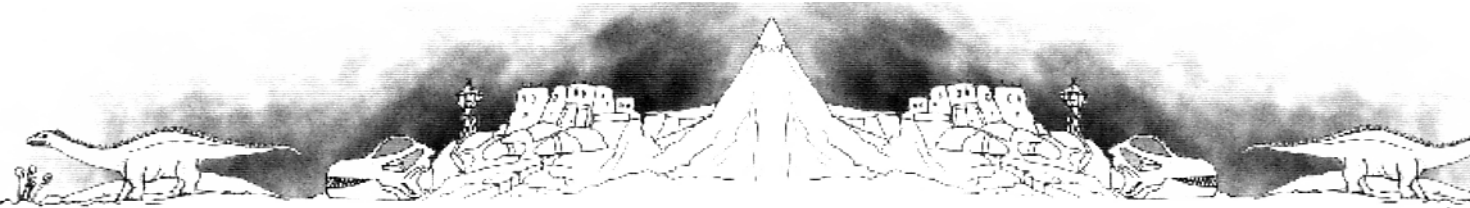
Devotees must fulfil all the standard requirements. Female devotees need not be celibate, but they may not marry and must divorce any current husband when they take their vows. Any sons born to a devotee become thralls belonging to the temple, but retain the right to become initiates of Maran when they reach adulthood.

Affinities and Feats

☐ **Earth Making** (Divert Stream, Move Rocks, Open Trench, Raise Earth, Solidify Dust)

☒ **Quakebeast** (Control [Quakebeast], Great Strength, Ponderous Step, Rockskin)





Priestess

Candidates must be women who have proved themselves as devotees. They must fulfil normal priestly functions and have normal priestly benefits. They must remain celibate, trading the joys of love for the service of the goddess. A priestess rules each temple of Maran, but most do not have more than one. A chief priestess of each subcult, who often has one or more priestesses to serve her, serves the high priestess at the Shaker Temple.

DARGETH KOR, THE BLOODY EARTH



Dargeth Kor is the Bloody Fertile Earth. When Ernalda had gone to sleep and the Goose Dance had failed, the Storm Tribe's fields lay barren. Hunger stalked the Tribe once more. When the Vingkotlings returned from the Northfaring without food, the women went to Maran for help. She refused.

When the starving Fire Tribe pursued the Northfaring home, the battle was terrible and the blood of warriors soaked the fields. From the blood arose a part of Maran, Dargeth Kor. She smiled, tasting the rich sacrifice and blessed the fields. The sterile earth brought forth food for the hungry.

Dargeth's worshippers are a last ditch effort to stave off Hunger. Her feats are bloody and she is only worshipped in those places where there is no other way to bring forth crops. Blood is always required to perform her magic, and the slaughter of battle is required for the crops to prosper. Only the most warlike clans or the truly desperate seek her help since her blessing of Earth Blood requires the assistance of Ana Gor and a human sacrifice. Only in the most extreme times will a clan tolerate such rituals unless they worship Maran as a primary deity.

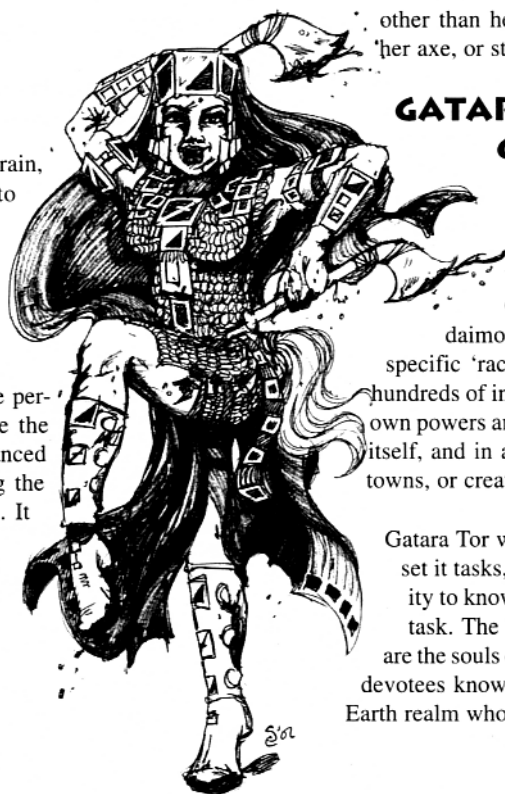
Abilities: Prepare Sacrifice.

Virtues: Cold, Practical.

Affinity:

- **Bloody Earth rituals** (Blood Feeds Grain, Strengthen Crops, Transfer Wound to Victim, Wash Earth Clean)

Secret: **Earth Blood ritual** (If the devotee is victorious, this ritual increases the fertility of a field. For every death that occurs on this ground until the next harvest, the field will yield at least enough food additional food to feed one more person for a year per acre blessed. [Use the Magic Distance chart from the Advanced Magic chapter of *Hero Wars*, reading the number as acres rather than distance]. It will also counteract any Blasted Earth curses laid upon that land. The deaths must be of sentient life through battle or sacrifice, the blood of mere animals does not suffice.)



THE THREE WARRIORS

Sometimes small images of the three warrior goddesses are found together. The simplest of these is a rock or stick painted with red on one third of its circumference, black for one third and blue for the last. At other times, three sticks or stones (or other simple images) are set up, identical except for their colours. When identifiable images are used outsiders can more easily recognise the goddesses as Erantha Gor (red), Babeester Gor (black), Maran Devor (blue)

ERANTHA GOR, THE AXE



Erantha Gor is the form that Maran took the second time she went to war. She washed herself in the blood of her foes, she drank the magic ale and took to hand an axe. This is the fiercer of the two war aspects. Erantha Gor's followers guard the temples of the Earth, and in times of need may form entire warbands. They must never marry after becoming initiates; men cannot worship this subcult even as initiates. Followers of Erantha Gor must do duty with the fyrd.

Abilities: Close Combat (Axe & Shield, Two-Handed Axe), Ranged Combat (Thrown Axe)

Virtues: Brave

Affinities:

- † **Axe Combat** (Axe Trance Berserk, Kill Man, Slash Foe, Terrifying Appearance, Unbreakable Shield)

- **Earth Making Feats:** Break Ice, Cut Stone.

Secret: **Axe Dance** (As she dances the devotee, becomes one with her axe. She adds the rating of the secret to her Close Combat ability and to any ability that she uses to resist magic.

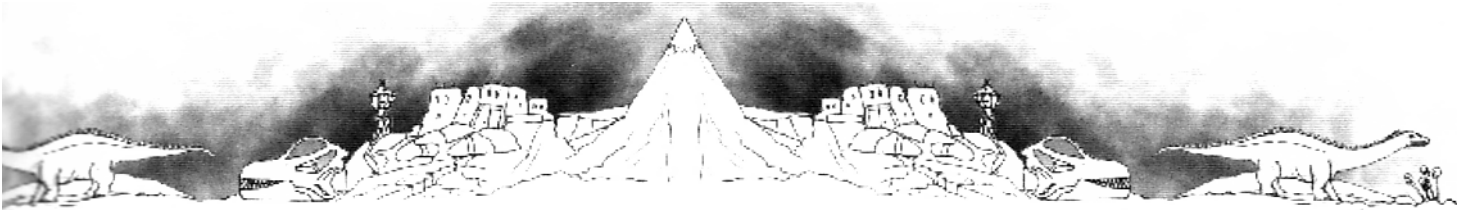
While in the dance she is berserk and cannot use magic other than her Axe Combat affinity. Should she lose her axe, or stop moving, the dance ends immediately.

GATARA TOR, MOTHER OF GATINGS



Gatara Tor is the mother of the earth daimones known as Gatings. Gatings are not a specific 'race' of daimones, but a class that contains hundreds of individually named entities, each with their own powers and personality. Each can perform a task by itself, and in a group, they can raise hills, shake down towns, or create vast chasms.

Gatara Tor worshippers can command any gating and set it tasks, but they must use their Gating Lore ability to know which gating to summon for a particular task. The few initiates of this cult know that these are the souls of Maran's Five Ancient Quakebeasts. The devotees know many unique entities, lesser gods of the Earth realm who were saved by Maran.



MARANINGS AND OTHER QUAKEBEASTS

Maran's Five Shaker beasts were her beloved children: the Dordarings, Serevings, Aladarings, Voraladarings, Gatorgarings. All are now extinct though they can be encountered in the Green Age, Stagnant Age, Umath's Age, Storm Tribe Age, and Vingkotling Age. They are called Quakebeasts is a 'category' of animals recorded in the stories of the Earth Family. The term is more specific than the Dara Happan gazzam (*Anaxial's Roster* p145): creatures that did not shake the ground when they walk are not Quakebeasts. In Orlanthi stories, these creatures are often called Thunderbeasts, because they make sounds like thunder. Quakebeasts share the characteristics of being huge and making big noises. Some are vegetarians, others are carnivorous, and one is actually aerophagic (air-eating). Some have scales, some have fur, and a few have skin like rocks or other minerals. A very few are intelligent. Many come from the God World, but some come from the Spirit World or Dragon World, some were created in the Inner World, and one type comes from the Sorcery World.

Maran's **Control [Quakebeast]** feat works without penalty on creatures that she made. It works on other Quakebeasts with a penalty -5 for those created in the Inner World, -10 for those from the God World but not of Maran, and a -20 penalty for those that come from the Spirit, the Sorcery World, or the dragons.

Ability: Gating Lore

Affinities:

☑ **Mother of Gatings** (Command Gating, Dismiss Gating, Summon Gating ritual)

☑ **Quakebeast Feats:** Call Quakebeast

Secret: **Become Gating ritual** (The devotee may transfigure her physical body, reshaping it into the form taken by her soul. No worshipper knows the form she will take until she performs the ritual the first time. This form may be any of any type of Quakebeast, although those not from the God World are rare. Blessed worshippers discover that their soul is that of one of the five ancient Quakebeasts, and only the greatest of heroes are born with a unique Gating soul.)

MARAN DEVOR, THE MACE



Maran Devor is the Mace Goddess. The first time that Maran took up weapons she put on this face, and in her battles destroyed forests, slew great beasts, and smashed giants.

Maran Devor has the fewest requirements of any subcult of Maran. Initiates are treated as normal members of society, with no cult restrictions against marriage or sex. It is also the only subcult that allows men to become devotees.

Abilities: Close Combat (Mace & Shield, Two-Handed Mace), Ranged Combat (Thrown Mace).

Virtues: Brave, Hate Aldryami.

Affinities:

† **Mace Combat** (Crush Foe, Kill Aldryami, Mace Trance Berserk, Terrifying Appearance, Unbreakable Shield)

☐ **Earth Making Feats:** Augment Stone Weapon, Shatter Tree.

Secret: **Mace Dance** (As she dances, the devotee becomes one with her mace. She adds the rating of the secret to her Close Combat ability and also to any ability that she uses to resist magic. While in the dance, she cannot use any magic other than her Mace Combat affinity. Should she lose contact with the earth, lose her mace, or stop moving, the dance ends immediately.)

MARAN GOR, THE EARTHSHAKER



Maran Gor is the One Who Makes the Earthquakes. The subcult is unique in that magicians must work together to create their greatest effects, for otherwise their quakes are weak and localised. The cult does not often use its great power because it takes times gather enough devotees and accumulate sufficient magical force to empower their rituals. However, when it does concentrate its forces, the cult can have a devastating effect.

Affinities:

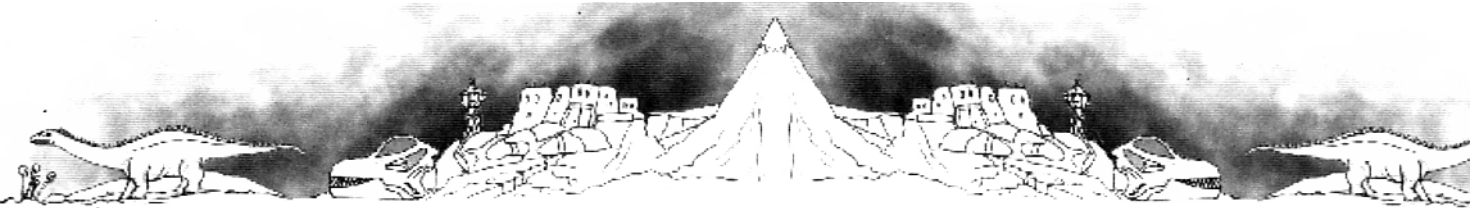
☑ **Earth Shaker** (Collapse Building, Create Fissure, Earth Tremor, Knock Over Building, Shake Down Chaos)

☐ **Earth Making Feats:** Cause Landslide, Stop Eruption

Secret: **Shake Earth Ritual** (This ritual allows two or more devotees to combine their Earth Shaker feats to create a greater effect. Initiates may not support the ritual. The devotees add their secret's ability ratings together to determine the area in acres that is affected by the ritual without increased resistance. All devotees must use the same feat.)



Jimmy-01



SORGOTH KOR, THE BARREN EARTH



Sorgoth Kor is the Taker of Earth Gift. When the Fire tribe came to seize the bounty of the fields, they abused the women and tore down the temples. When the blood of the women flowed on the earth, Maran raised herself up from her broken altar. She named herself Sorgoth Kor as she raised her fist and each man she struck was cursed with impotence. She then struck down the Fire Horse, and with its blood laid waste to the fields so that they became as infertile as the men.

Sorgoth's worshippers remove the blessings of the Earth from those who threaten the Earth tribe. Her feats are curses, and her worshippers gather to bestow them on those they hate. Blood is always required to perform her magic but she does not care whether it is the blood of a worshipper, the victim, or an innocent bystander, and so most Heortlings fear and despise her even more than they do her other subcults. Her greatest curse is the Blast earth ritual, which requires the summoning of Ana Gor to perform a human sacrifice. Few clans will support a devotee who performs this ritual unless the clan worships Maran as a primary deity.

Abilities: Close Combat (Fists), Prepare Sacrifice.

Virtues: Hate [Enemy], Vengeful

Affinities:

☒ **Earth Curse rituals** (Cause Disease, Kill Animal, Make Man Impotent, Return Curse to Sender, Thwart Healing, Wither Plant)

Secret: **Blast Earth ritual** (if the devotee is successful this ritual destroys the plant-bearing capacity of a specific area of earth [use the Distance chart from the Advanced Magic chapter of Hero Wars, reading the number as acres rather than distance.] Any attempt to bless the ground or restore its fertility must overcome the target number of the curse.)

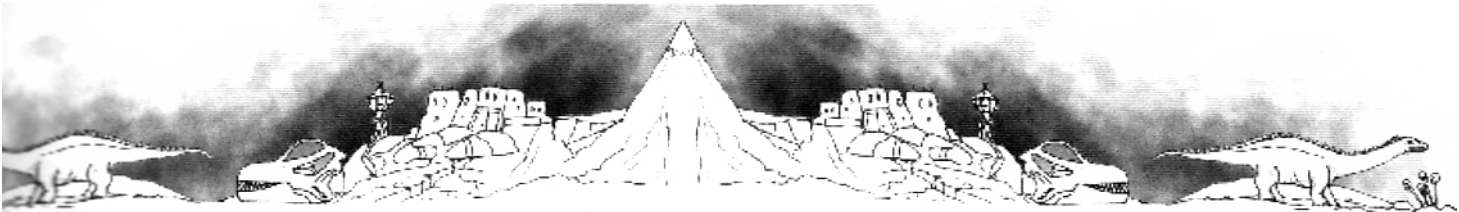


SERDRODOSA IN WINTERTOP

The Wintertop region is rich in spirits, even though the Exiles primarily follow theist practices. Kero Fin draws many spirits of the wind, cloud and storm, and kolating shamans in their wake, but the strength of the Earth powers here means that Serdrodosa the Earth Witch is strong.

Powerful shamans amongst the Exiles include Chara Maransdattir, mistress of the Rumblestone Urges, and Five-Sticks Erevora, a midwife who is said to be able to bring stillborn babies back to life by burying them in the earth. The Stone Hag of Maransdum, probably the most famous of her kind for a century, has not been seen for three years now. Some claim she is dead, others that she is engaged on some epic spirit quest to gather mighty allies to restore the glories of Old Tarsh.

There are also many, generally small local spirit traditions, many of which need to be appeased with libations of blood and alcohol. Two of the most widely-known are the Thirty-Nine Bloodstones of the Shalanvar Hills and the Silver Pike of Kero Fin's Tears. However, the Serdrodosa rites also allow access to a wide range of Enemy Practices suitable for averting or fighting many Exile enemies, not least the increasingly popular Shepelkirt Scorns, which uses obscene chants and gestures to weaken or dispel Lunar spirits. The strength of Odaylans amongst the Exiles and also their use of the Mirog Gor rites to bind the breaths of their foes mean that the Exiles are less suspicious of spirit magics than either other Tarshites or Sartari, and any animist who has mastered these ways is welcome in warbands looking to raid Lunar Tarsh.



ASELLA AND TORKAL

The importance of mining to the Exiles has meant that they have had to develop a particular relationship with Asella and Torkal. Asella is the granddaughter of Asrelia, who fell in love with Gustbran and defied her grandmother by showing Gustbran how to find the treasures of the earth. With this knowledge and Asella's protection, Gustbran forged the three gifts and completed the Earth Queen's tasks. He wedded Asella and they had a son Torkal. When the darkness came, Gustbran and Asella taught their secrets to Torkal. Asella showed Torkal how to open the earth and not harm it; he then dug deep into Asrelia's hall to bring back hope. On his journey, Maran Gor and her destructive servants harried him. Asella guarded the entrance to the tunnel, even when Gustbran was called away to make weapons. At the Dawn, Torkal returned to the surface world, bringing with him treasures to make the world prosperous and beautiful once again.

TORKAL

Worshippers: Miners worship Torkal

Abilities: Mythology of Asella and Torkal, Tireless

Virtues: Stoic

Affinities:

☞ **Take Earth's Wealth** (Evade Earth Daimone, Find [Metal], Find [Mineral], Find Right Path, Propitiate Earth, Smelt Ore)

☑ **Tunnelling** (Break through Rock, Go Without Air, See In Darkness, Shore Up Tunnel, Unblock Way)

Secret: **Asella's Protection** (The miner gains Asella's **Protection** affinity)

ASELLA

Worshippers: Miners' wives and crafters of jewellery worship Asella

Abilities: Mythology of Asella and Torkal

Virtues: Fatalistic

Affinities:

▲ **Jewellery** (Bless Mould, Diamond Sharp, Enchant Jewellery ritual, Etch Pattern, Ignite Fire, Melt Metal)

☑ **Protection** (Bless Mine ritual, Bless Miner ritual, Go Without Sleep, Heal Injury, Watch for Danger)

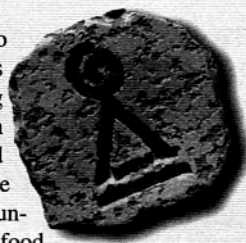
Secret: **Mother's Love** (The Asellan gains access to Torkal's **Take Earth's Wealth** affinity)

AMBER

The Exiles say that the amber found in the hills is the blood of Elmal shed when he defended Kero Fin in the Chaos Age. That there is so much amber is a testament to how much blood Elmal shed in the defence of his people. Amber has magical properties. Most amber promotes healing, and is set by clan folk in rings and necklaces as a charm against illness or injury. Some drops of amber still resonate with Elmal's life force and have much more powerful magical properties. Such drops can aid magicians with light magics, or powers of defending against darkness.

Kero Fin Ice

Ice taken by climbers who ascend to the higher cliffs of Kero Fin has magical properties from being formed so close to the Storm Realm itself. Transparent, emanating cold and burningly frigid to the touch the ice does not melt if kept from direct sunlight. The hill folk use the ice to keep food cold throughout the year in larders or storage pits and prevent spoilage. Many Exile clans have such an ice pit, where they preserve meat in the cold of Kero Fin ice.



Kero Fin Kite

The Exiles fly kites and streamers above their tulas. The many wind spirits that howl around the Mother of Storm love to dance and play amongst them and their presence brings luck and good fortune to the clan.

Manifestations: Asella and Torkal are present in every mine, in the pick and shovel and in the treasures of the earth.

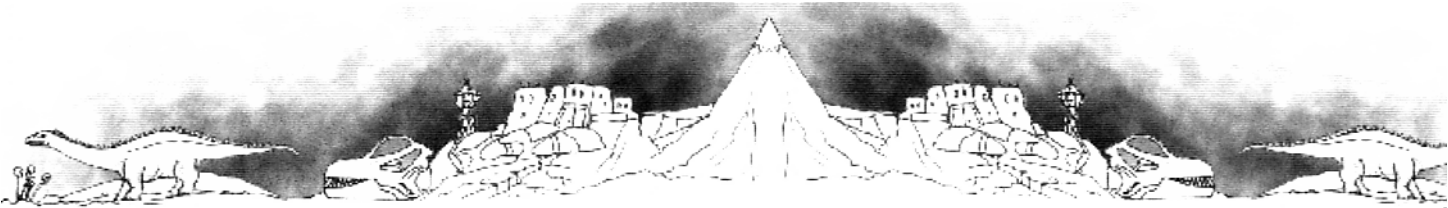
Holy Days: Worshippers celebrate the High Holy Day celebrating Torkal's Return from the underworld with Hope on Clay Day of Fate Week in the Sacred Time. Worshippers celebrate Asella and Gustbran's Marriage on Clay Day of Fertility Week of Fire Season.

Sacrifices: Worshippers sacrifice the hidden wealth of the earth, especially fashioned into jewels to Asella and Torkal. The worshippers throw the sacrifices into deep shafts into the Earth.

Other Side: Asella's workshop is next to her husband Gustbran's smithy in Storm Village. From there, worshippers can travel to the Storm Age or Vingkotling Age. From Gustbran's forge, deep within the earth, worshippers can enter Torkal's tunnels that lead through the earth to Asrelia's Treasure Cavern. Other tunnels lead to the Chaos Age, Vingkotling Age, and the Underworld.

Other Connections: Asella's husband is Gustbran, the Bonesmith. Some clans maintain that Gustbran's wife is Arnna, one of the household goddesses (see **Storm Tribe** p217) and that Asella's husband was not Gustbran. Both are correct.

Disadvantages: Asella and Torkal raid the earth to steal its treasures. To their mind, this is no worse than harvesting Esrola's bounty, provided they ask for forgiveness for Asrelia and cite their need. Maran and Babeester, the Earth's warrioresses, guard these treasures and try to prevent Torkal from taking them. These different agendas of the cults frequently bring them into conflict, particularly when Maran's tremors collapse a mine.



HERO AND ANCESTOR CULTS

The worship of heroes and ancestors is important to Tarshites (*Tarsh in Flames* p20). Local heroes, especially former kings, are popular as is Alakoring Dragonbreaker (*Storm Tribe* p237), who is a primary cultural hero. Below are other hero cults popular with the Exiles. Narrators and players are encouraged to create heroes for clans, villages, or tribes. For heroes that Exile characters may incarnate, players may create a 25-word description (*Narrator's Book* p51) or up to three affinities (although one or two are more usual). Most members of these cults include their worship within the worship of the Storm tribe (10% of the worshipper's time - *Storm Tribe* p17), and may learn the affinity or a single feat from the affinity. Clans and shrines usually know only a particular feat. For some of these cults, devotees or initiates who commit the usual time requirements can worship them as an aspect of the deity giving access to the affinity for initiates or feats for devotees. Usually such worship requires membership of a hero band or community centred on worship of the hero. Initiation or devotion to Yarandros the Charger King, for example is possible for people who join the Horse Kings mercenary war band.

ARIM THE PAUPER

All Tarshites honour Arim the founder on the annual feast day of First Step (Windsday/Death week/Fire Season), which celebrates the day that Arim led his people over the Deathline. Initiation into Arim's cult is hard, for followers must put the good of others before themselves.

Only chieftains, kings, or other leaders worship Arim as a subcult of Orlanth Allfather. It is also sometimes used in place of the Orlanth Rex subcult.

Hero:

Lead Folk Feat: Take the Burden

Orlanth Allfather Aspect:

Virtues: Confident, Selfless

Abilities: Leadership, Negotiate, Control Mob

Lead Folk (Find Sanctuary, Inspire Loyalty, Know Right Path, Lead By Example, Restore Morale, Take the Burden)

Secret: Self Sacrifice (Allows the user to sacrifice some or all of an ability to increase any other ability being used in the course of leading any member of the community. The user permanently loses the sacrificed points from that ability and the other ability gains the sacrificed amount plus the devotee's ability number in this Secret, only for the contest)

DENDROG

A hero of the Vingkotling Age associated with the pass that now bears his name. Dendrog was a famous dragonslayer who killed slew Shalanvar the Lord Ice Dragon. A narrow pass went past Shalanvar Peak, where the dragon lived. The Vingkotlings drove their herds from Northland to Southland across this pass. When Shalanvar ambushed and devoured Harmenval, his son, Dendrog shattered the dragon and widened the mountain. Since then people call the opening Dendrogi Pass.

Combat Feat: Shattering Blow



EARTH TWINS

Varstapoor and his sister Vestenbora were the children of Arim by an incarnation of Sorana Tor. Varstapoor was a frail and pretty man and his sister big and forward. Sometimes they were mistaken for each other when they were together. Together the twins could raise great earthquakes that brought everyone to their knees for miles around. Varstapoor was the sacrificial king and Tarshites worship him as the sacred guardian of Maranaba. Maran's power filled Vestenbora and she destroyed an army at the battle of Falling Hills. The Earthshaker's cult reveres her for restoring worship of Maran at the Shaker Temple.

Membership Requirements: Any member of an Earth cult may worship the twins as a hero. Only twins, a sister and brother, may follow them as an aspect of Maran. The twins may combine their ability ratings when touching.

Hero:

Earth Shaker Feat: Defend Earth

Maran Aspect:

Virtues: [Men] Selfless [Women] Ruthless

Affinity:

Twins (Defend Earth, Earthquake, Earth Feeling, Earth Tsunami, Falling Hill, Overawe, Strength of Rock, Voice of Authority)

Secret: Heroform Twins (Incarnation Ability)

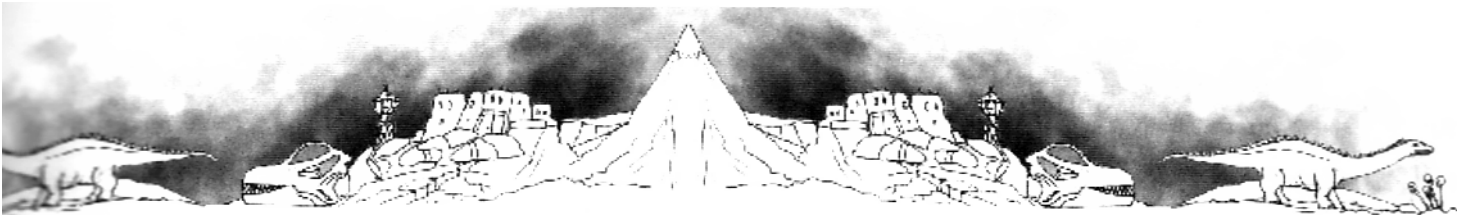
Earth Twins Heroform

Varstapoor Earth Shaker 10W3, Frail 5W, Pretty 19, Leadership 8W2, Twins 9W2

Vestenbora Close Combat 10W2, Twins 10W4, Endurance 10W, Ruthless 18

HARDA

After the Orlanthi defeat at the Battle of Night and Day, Harda and his wounded companions delayed Gbaji's huge army for days, holding them off at the pass of the Dragonspine Mountains that now bears his name. The defenders ambushed the approaching



army's scouts, burnt the forests and dropped rocks on the lead forces. Harda and his companions died defending the pass, but they still give magic useful to Orlanthi raiders who defend this precipitous pass and trail. There is even a clan of his descendants in the Bush Range, who know magic allowing them to throw huge boulders from Kero Fin at enemies in the Pass.

Harda Feat: Hurl Boulder.

ILLARO BLACKTOOTH

Illaro Blacktooth is the founder of the ruling dynasty and the hero who saved Tarsh from its first civil war. Tarshites honour Illaro on the annual feast of Restoration (Clayday/Death week/Storm Season). The Kerofini still honour Illaro as an ancestor, despite his renunciation of his position among them when he became king.

Authority Feats: Strength in Unity

KERUDDWEN BIGGEST DRUM

Keruddwen of the Marantaros was the greatest of the temple dancers, pounding out the sacred steps with her feet. She could hear Maran talking in the sounds of the rumbling earth and the falling rocks and she could reply with the pounding rhythm of her dance. But her feet were not loud enough for others to hear so she fashioned the Biggest Drum, stretching out a Brotard's hide for its skin and using its thigh bones for drumsticks. She furiously beat the Bloodbeer Rag in times of victory, the Tars Gor in war and the Grinding Lullaby to calm the guardian nakasas of the temple. She taught the Drumspeech rhythm to the Kerofini clans so that they could signal and warn. She is now worshipped as a herocult of Maran.

Abilities: Drum Loudly, Endure Noise, Make Sacred Drum
Biggest Drum Feats: Drum Fear, Drum Rage

MITCHUINN MOONHATER

The Empire killed Mitchuinn's father, Korlok, and wiped out his clan, the Vervoni. Mitchuinn fought against the Empire as part of the Kynneling Alliance with Gwythar Longwise. He was present at the death of Ingkot and Phirmax and fought a rearguard action when Mirin's Cross fell to the Conquering Daughter.

Leaving Holay behind, he led the survivors across the Deathline and into Dragon Pass, following the rumours of Arim's Secret Kingdom. Mitchuinn died from a wound that would not heal, taken while on the Northfaring heroquest against the Empire. His companions cremated and buried him at Mitchuinn's Rise, now in Breagalos lands in Tarsh.

Worshippers must swear Mitchuinn's oath of vengeance (see Hero Bands). Mitchuinn performed many Vingkot heroquests and among the Mitchuinn his cult is worshipped not as an aspect, but

as a subcult of Orlanth Thunderous that includes Vingkot Victorious within it. His cult teaches the secret of heroquesting on the Lunar Heroplane.

Hero:

Fight Moon Feat: Hate Moon

Orlanth Thunderous subcult:

Virtues: Vengeful, Hate Lunars

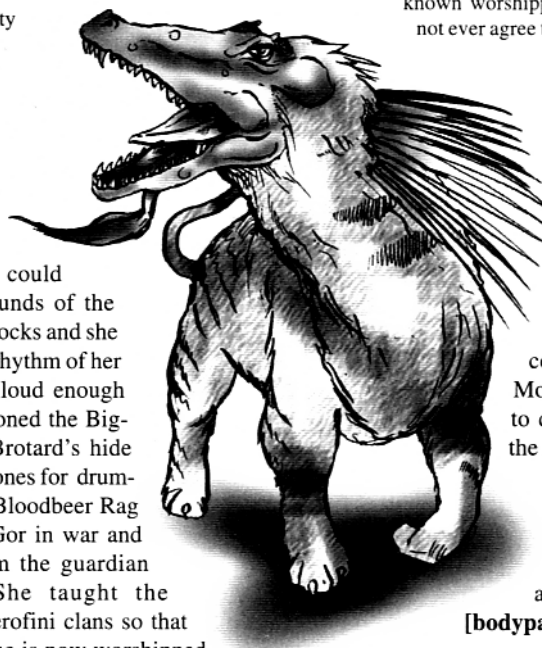
Abilities: Ambush, Know Lunars, Move Silently.

Fight Moon (Avenging Blow, Blunt Scimitar, Break Lunar Line, Hate Moon, Iron Will, Resist Lunar Magic, Shout of Hatred)

Storm Feats: Block Moon with Clouds, Reaching Storm

Secret: **Walk Lunar Heroplane** (character suffers no penalties from being in a foreign place in the Lunar Other Side. This skill can augment attempts to enter Lunar Myth).

Disadvantages: The Empire has outlawed the cult and will harry any known worshippers to the death. The cult's vow means they may not ever agree to cooperate with Lunars - no matter what the reason.



MORIG GOR

Maran Gor took the name of Morig when she defeated Ana Gor and took Death from her. When Vadrus killed Barntar and he did not return and the people starved Ernalda sought him in the depths of the earth. Morig had taken him as a thrall and used his great strength to break up the earth into clumps she could hurl at her enemies. Ernalda persuaded Morig to let Barntar go but Morig still knows how to capture the breath of the dying so that, when the need is great, and enemies beset the clan, their breath can aid the living. This is a herocult of Maran and Ana Gor.

Sacrifice Human ritual: the cult provides access purely to one ritual - **Bind Breath in [bodypart]**

PALASHEE LONGAXE

Palashee led the Old Tarsh loyalists to victory over the Lunar dynasty. He ruled for 17 years until his death at the hand of Phargentes. The Exiles entombed his body at the Shaker Temple. The Kerofini still revere him as an ancestor, and his heirs live in the lands around Wintertop. He is remembered for being wise and strong and is revered for his fairness and ability to quaff mead.

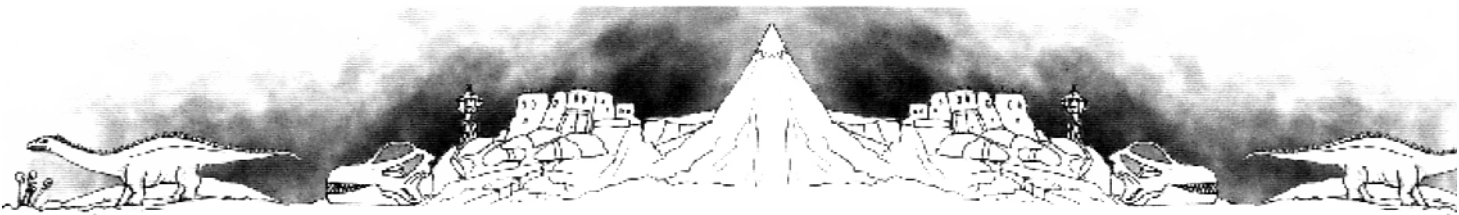
Virtues: Fair

Flaws: Gluttonous

Rule Kingdom Feats: Old Tarsh Loyalty

RASTALULF

Rastalulf Vanak Spear of the Berenethelli summoned the Great Storm before he was a man to prove his worth to jealous priests. After his initiation he summoned a wind to carry him and his companions to Empty Mountain and confronted dread Alaramsor, guardian of Asrelia's rich treasure trove. He spurned King Harandangian's service for the honour and the chieftaincy of his



TROPHY TAKING

Both men and women warriors may take trophies, in the form of parts of a defeated enemy's body, after a battle. Only noted foes and great struggles are honoured in this fashion, the trophy marks the encounter and the warrior's triumph. The powers of Morig Gor also allow some of their enemy's breath to be trapped in the part of the body taken. Individual Kerofini clans usually know rites for different body parts, to entrap different breaths. The Marantaros, for example bind their enemies breath into scalps. These practices are ancient but outsiders find them shocking, associating them with the headhunting rituals of the chaotic Than cult. The Exiles understand it to be Maran's right to enthrall others to aid her war, as she once enthralled Barntar.



Ghosts may haunt Orlanthi, whose kin have been captured in this way, for they are unable to complete their journey to Ty Kora Tek's Cavern of Silence whilst in this state. Heroic Orlanthi may seek to release their ancestor by destroying the trophy and performing an Ernaldan ritual to liberate the breath, appeasing Maran with a sprinkling of their own blood.

The Bind Breath ritual allows a character to entrap one of his enemy's breaths in a fetish formed from part of his body. It may be carried out by whoever personally killed the foe and took the trophy, who need not be a worshipper of Morig Gor, but carries out the ritual under the supervision of the Morig Gori (who will generally extract some price). In this case, the ability number is the lower of the Morig Gori's Bind Breath feat and the trophy-taker's Worship Earth deity or relationship to an Exile clan.

This is treated in every way as a shamanic fetish. Determine the number of uses from the success of the ritual. The trapped breath may be treated as either a passion or skill spirit depending on the ability stolen, with a might equal to half the victim's highest ability rating. The hero must spend a hero point to cement this acquisition and the narrator should bear in mind that the character has now probably become the enemy of the victim's kin, who want to free his complete soul. Even though this rite is treated as animism in rules terms, it is still theistic.

own people. Gathering his companions around him Rastalulf entered Hell and overcame Alaramsor to win the Vanak Spear. He supported his kinsmen against Harandangian and Lokamayadon and demanded the return of Hindala's dowry. Finally, Tuluki the burner burnt down Yinkstead with Rastalulf's inside; Rastalulf's son Brolarulf Great Leap sang the Immolation Song as they died. Rastalulf is still worshipped by Orlanthi who struggle against unjust rule.

Honour Feats: Disobey Un-elected Leaders

VERENEMARS

Verenemars ruled Saird during the Imperial Age. He was a son of Sarenesh, and around 986 ST received Saird as his share of the inheritance. Verenemars, despite his brothers' attempts, founded a long-lived dynasty and kingdom, which led resistance against the EWF. Verenemars still receives worship as a dragon-fighter and leader throughout Saird. Shrines to Verenemars teach one of the following feats.

Virtue: Tolerate Dogs.

Fight Dragons Feats: Crush Dragon

Rule Kingdom Feats: Justice of the Heart

YARANDROS THE CHARGER KING

Yarandros is the founder of the nation and, in the way of Vingkot, of the first Tarshite dynasty. Yarandros stormed the walls of Kafol and later stole the magical horse, Glad Leaper. Glad Leaper could vault rivers, use magic, and overcome instinct. Yarandros household rode Goldeneye horses, and he used his cavalry to exploit his enemies' weaknesses, earning him the name "Charge-crazy." His household numbered heroes, Jaldon and Derik among them. The skalds recite hundreds of songs of his deeds.

The Exiles still revere Yarandros as a warlord and conqueror, in the lowlands his cult is worshipped only as a stunted god of cavalry. Warriors sacrifice to him before raids, particularly against the Pony Breeders. The Yarandros cult teaches warriors to fight from horseback, as cavalry, instead of dismounting before battle. Followers raid the Grazers to steal Goldeneye horses. The cult also knows the **Horse Path** heroquest, a version of the Grazer's Goldeneye heroquest that allows them to bond with their mounts.

Hero Cult:

Virtues: Bold

Abilities: Mounted Combat, Riding.

Charger King Feats: Thunderous Charge

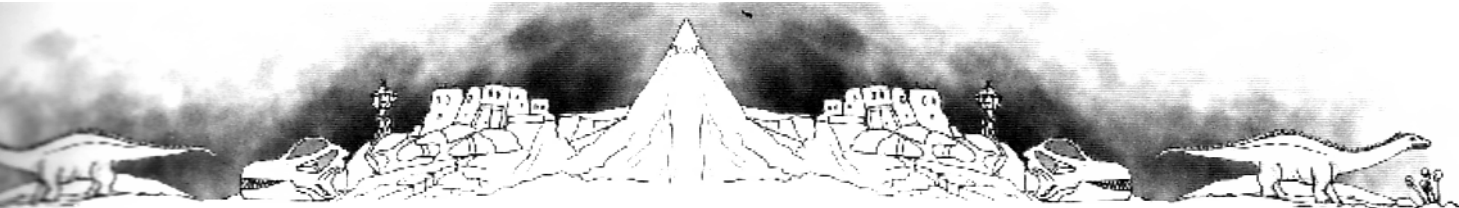
Subcult of Orlanth Adventurous

Virtues: Bold, Reckless

Abilities: Know Horses, Mounted Combat, Riding.

Charger King (Exploit Enemy's Weakness, Force a Way, Lead from the Front, See Through Enemy's Ruses, Thunderous Charge)

Secret: **Stallion King** (Yarandros stole secrets from Tarsh's former allies the Grazers, condemning his nation to enmity with the Horse Spawn, but gaining unique magics. Yarandros's followers can gain the Stallion King affinity from misapplied worship of the Grazer's Yulkargzant Tradition. Stallion King gives the feats of Endurance, Leap, Speed, Strength, Virility).



WORDS FROM EXILE

"Father, Mother, Brother, Sister: Head, Heart, Breath, Blood."

WHAT MY FATHER TOLD ME



Who are you?

I am Illaro Tastinimsson, thane of the Winter Shadow clan of the Mitchuinn tribe, and I am a man of the chief of this camp.

Who are we?

We are the Mitchuinn. Three hundred years ago, Mitchuinn Korloksson led the survivors from the Kynnelfing Alliance south to Tarsh following their defeat by the Conquering Daughter. We entered exile around Kero Fin

when the Red Moon seduced the lowlanders. The Breagalos tribe, who once paid us tribute, now occupies our ancestral lands around Mitchuinn's Rise on the Black Eel River.

Are we a great people?

We are steadfast. Others have fallen to the Empire but we have always remained loyal to Orlanth, here at the foot of his mother, Kero Fin. Elmal's light shone from Kero Fin during the Great Darkness giving hope to the people of the world and our freedom gives hope to the oppressed people of the Pass. We live in a holy place. Kero Fin is Orlanth's mother and the source of the life and sovereignty of the Pass. At her root is the Shaker Temple where Arim met Sorana Tor. Maran, goddess of the trembling earth, lives there. At the summit is a temple to the Mother of the Storm. We entombed Palashee, our greatest hero at Maranaba, along with the Sacrificial Kings.

Tarsh was a great nation. Many of our kings were Kings of Dragon Pass, and we have ruled Holay, Balazar, and the Quivini. Tarsh will be great again. The soldiers of the Moon killed your grandfather, Olav, at Grizzly Peak and I swore Mitchuinn's oath of vengeance against the Empire. I have killed two-dozen

men, but I cannot rest until we drive the Empire out.

What are the social classes?

Thralls are the lowest. Their breath is weak. Some we capture in raids, others are unable to support themselves and live on free men's generosity. In the darkness, the Forosto Jann refugees came to our clan seeking shelter. Our ancestors saw that their breath was weak and took them in bondage. Now, the Empire's conquests bring new refuges to us - the Newcomers from the Quivini Mountains and the Lost and Found from among the Aldachuri. Your kin argued that the refugees' breath was weak, that they were thralls. Our chief argued that we needed free men since our defeat at Grizzly Peak. He allowed them to form a new bloodline. Kalf also gave them hunting and grazing rights, some of which once belonged to us. Since then, there has always been tension between the refugees and us. Know that a thrall may not bear arms. If you give a thrall a weapon, you free him. If he is not yours, you must compensate the free man who owns him.

Cottars are next. They do not own a village, or have rights to pastures, so they must labour on a free man's land. Some are craftsmen or merchants. Your cousins Drenyen and Jenesta live and work in our village with their widowed mother. They are poor, but respect them, for they are still kin.

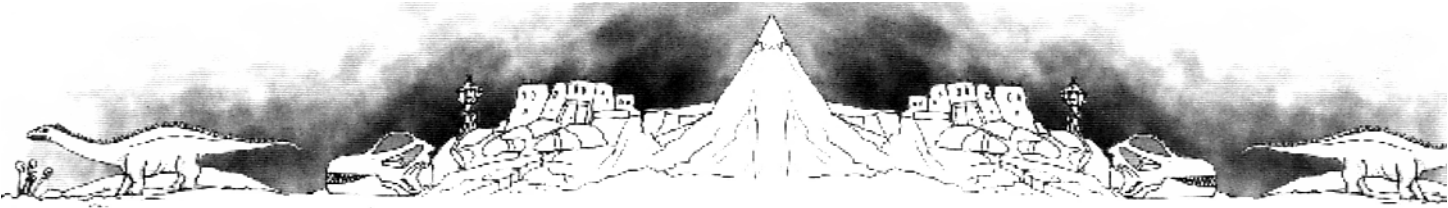
Carls are men of property. Your elder brother, Korlmar, is a carl already, and owns pasture rights and a fine herd of cattle. You may be one too one day, if you prove yourself a great warrior. In a village, the free men and women elect the most respected carls to the village council.

Thanes, like me are the leaders of the clan. I earned my place as a warrior in King Tovtarim's household, a huscarl. Now I am the spokeman to the clan ring for our bloodline, the Askinings. Nobles are the next highest rank. They include not only the clan chief and the chief priest and priestesses, but also the king of the tribe.

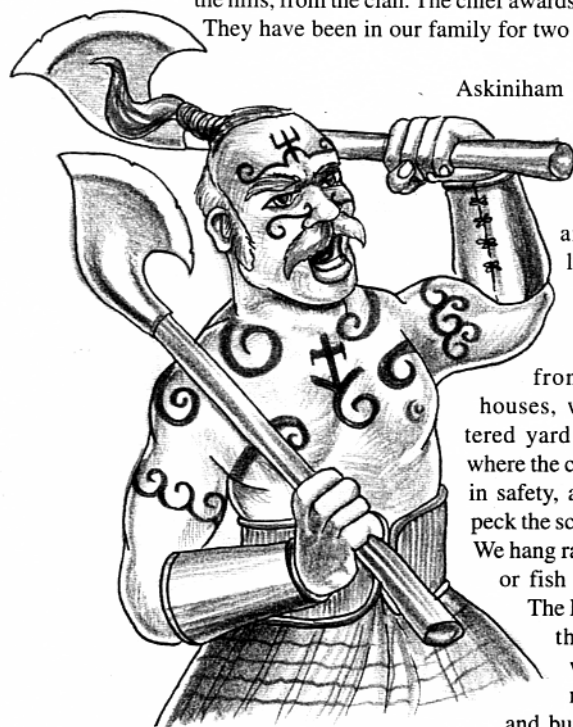
Where do we live?

We live in this village, Askiniham, under the shadow of the drum tower. The clan owns the village and all of the lands of our tula, but we hold rights to live in this hearth, graze our cattle on the pastures and hilltop summer meadows, and hunt in





the hills, from the clan. The chief awards those rights. They have been in our family for two generations.



Askiniham surmounts a rise, which gives us a clear view of the lands around. We live in longhouses. We form an Earth rune from four houses, with a sheltered yard in between where the children play, in safety, and the hens peck the scattered seed. We hang racks of game or fish in the yard. The light is better there for the women to make cheese and butter or grind

flour, or weave. Paths of split logs keep everyone's feet dry, just. At the centre of the village, you will find the chief's hall, just like in Storm Village. Seventy feet long, and thirty feet wide with a shingle roof, the mead hall is the finest hearth in our village. Because the chief's hall is here, you will see thanes and even strangers visiting our village. Askiniham is important and it has over two-dozen buildings. About three hundred people live here.

Each village has a drum tower. Young men or women keep watch at all times. One is on the drum; one on lookout. Listening to the drums, you will hear news of births, marriages, deaths, strangers, war, victory, and defeat. In some places, the villages are far apart or the huscarls want to watch for raiders, so there are drum towers outside the village too. When you do your service with the fyrd, you may stand guard in such a tower. Be vigilant.

A palisade and ditch surrounds Askiniham and keeps our enemies out. Not all villages have such good defences, but, those which do not, suffer from the raids of their enemies.

The hills do not take well to the plough like your grandfather and great-grandfather's tula, and we live mainly by herding, hunting, and tribute. Great men do not sweat for what we can purchase with blood. In the hills around Askiniham, we hunt red deer and boar with alynxes, set trap lines, and fish fresh perch, pike, roach, bream, and trout in the mountain streams. Great hunters may have cloaks of wolf or bear to keep them warm in the cold winters. We keep sheep in the hills, and pigs live on mast in the forest. We have some cattle too, for I am a thane of the clan.

We raid the Pony Breeders, looting their thrall villages and stealing their horses. We take tribute from all caravans that would cross the passes under the shadow of Kero Fin. We plunder the lowlands, where Arim's people have grown soft in worship of the Red Moon. We take tribute from the Bush Ranger clans. We raid the Quivini, for their king is impotent. Our warbands earn thralls and marks of silver by selling their swords from the

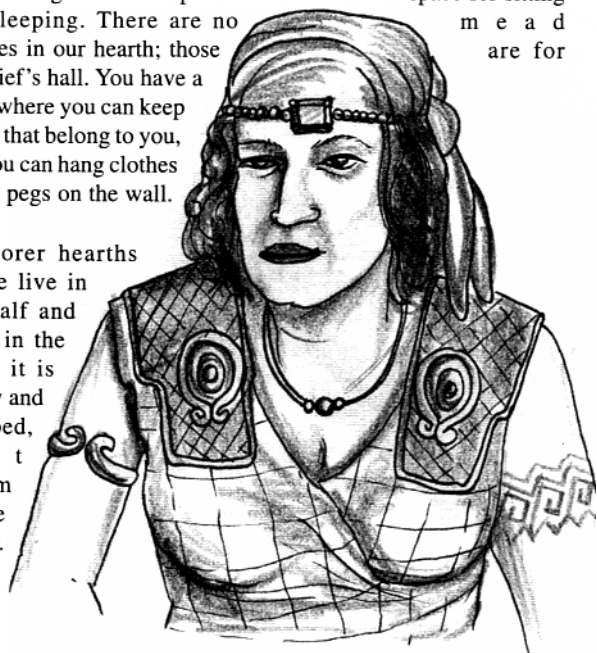
Heortland to Esrolia, where people's breath is also weak. Some of the thralls we put to work here in Askiniham, but others we sell. At Wintertop Fort, there is a slave and cattle market in Earth Season. If the Thunder Brother's council agrees, you may be lucky enough to go there.

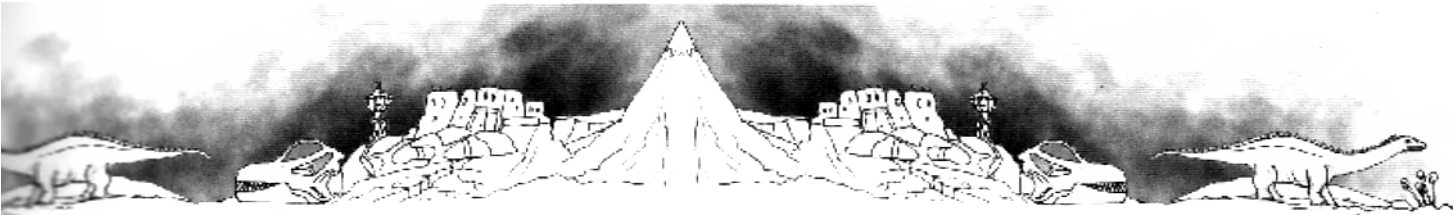
What are our homes like?

We live in longhouses like this one. Most hearths are the size of ours, about twenty by sixty feet, and hold a family. Thirty people live in our hearth. The chief's mead hall, the council hall, and other great buildings are larger. To build a longhouse we start with four corner posts of strong wood and brace them with strong cross posts. Jarnandar the Carpenter made these stout posts for your grandfather and blessed them with Orstan's magic to keep our hearth strong against the wind and weight of Dark Season snow. Lighter timber is used for the roof ridge and beams and the wall posts. We like to have high roof spaces, sometimes the Quivini newcomers call our hearths 'tallhouses' because of them, but they are useful for storage, and the alynxes have plenty of space to sleep amidst the rafters. The doorposts are rune carved. Your great-uncle Govoran earned those as a gift from the chief long ago, even before Grizzly Peak. When we go raiding, we can get help from our ancestors by sacrificing a cow and placing its head on a ledge over that rune-carved lintel. See that head up there on the lintel, coated in lime. That belonged to Markalor Halfhand of the Drayvan clan of Breagalos. Your grandfather, Olav, took it when we were feuding with them and it wards enemies from our hearth. For walls, we nail wooden planks between the poles. The timber comes from woods held by the Askinings. We thatch our roof in reed, that is the best, but some people must use straw or heather. Only fools build their houses in stone. The earth trembles as Maran breathes in and out so buildings collapse all the time. Stand in the door arch or under near one of the cross-posts when you feel the ground tremble. We buttress important buildings, like the Loom House or Chief's hall with additional timbers to help withstand the continual tremors.

At home, we gather around the hearth, a stone-lined fire. Mahome's kin keep us warm, give us light to see by in the evening when we recite poetry and drink beer, and heat to cook by. Platforms along each wall provide space for sitting and sleeping. There are no benches in our hearth; those are for the chief's hall. You have a trunk where you can keep things that belong to you, and you can hang clothes on the pegs on the wall.

In poorer hearths people live in one half and cattle in the other, it is smelly and cramped, but warm in the winter.





We have a separate byre where our cattle live. We are a civilised people and there is a thunderbox in the yard where we can relieve ourselves. The thralls take the nightsoil to spread on our vegetable plot.

What do we eat?

Your mother and sisters prepare two meals a day. We have breakfast a couple of hours after we rise at dawn and supper at the end of the day shortly after sunset. We do not eat barley porridge, which is for the lowlanders, but stews of meat, fish, cheese, and poultry. Your mother uses what barley we grow, trade for, or plunder to make beer and flatbread. You use the bread as a trencher. Always make sure you drink beer or buttermilk, not the water, which might make you sick. Mutton or beef are the common meats, taken from our herds, but we also eat fresh perch, pike, roach, bream, and trout fished from nearby streams. We smoke the meat or fish in the rafters, dry it on racks, or pickle it in whey to help preserve it. We eat unsmoked meat at the Earth Season slaughter, or when we hunt red deer or rabbit, in the hills around the village. Salt is rare and expensive, but preserves food the best. Angora and cousin Jenesta follow Maran and eat raw meat for breakfast. I prefer mine cooked, in a pot of stew or, if I have made your mother especially happy, glazed in honey. Sometimes I like cheese as a change, especially when it is fresh, wet, and lumpy. Unless we are feasting, breakfast is the main meal so eat your fill then. I have never really been fond of the carrots or turnips that your mother adds into the stew, but if you have a sweet tooth then you can have bilberries, blackberries, plums, or wild apples at breakfast. If the chief's feasts you in his hall, you might eat boar and drink mead made from honey.

What do we wear?

Men, and Maran women like Angora and Jenesta, wear a simple tunic long trousers and a cloak. The tunic should reach to your knees, and can have long or short sleeves. When it is cold, you can wear several tunics at once, or even wear a tunic made of fur for extra warmth. We are a colourful people and our best tunics have horizontal stripes of yellow, blue, green, or black. Your mother makes trousers from wool, sometimes from fur or hide for warmth. You hold them up with a rawhide thong. Some women favour a string skirt instead of trousers. I wear my trousers cross-thonged to the knees, to keep them from getting too muddy. In hot weather, many of the young bucks like to walk around bare-chested showing off their tattoos. I have heard that some of the Iristaros wear white linen shirts. Its just another sign that the fat tribe are weakening and may soon fall to the Red Moon. Some people wear hats, especially in the cold of winter, usually of fur. I prefer to go bareheaded.

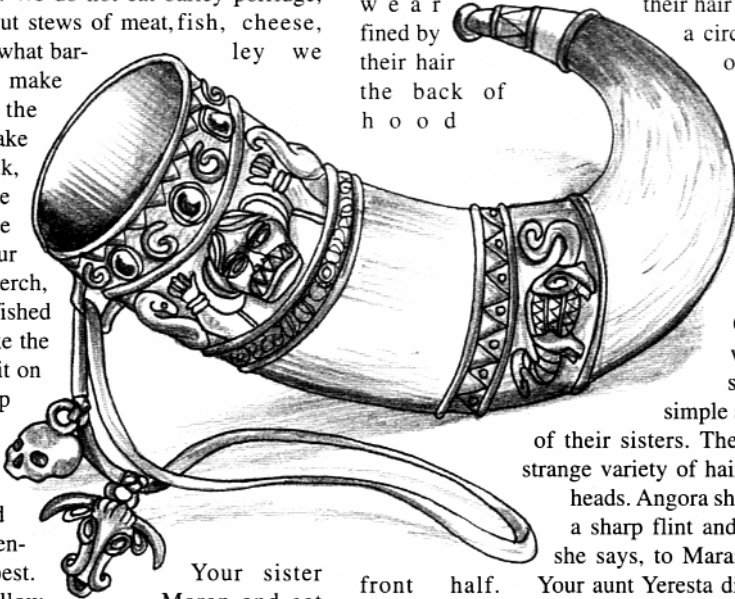
Grooming is important to us and we wash every week and comb our hair, whether we need to or not. We also wash our clothes in cow's urine to keep them fresh. I hope that you will be able to

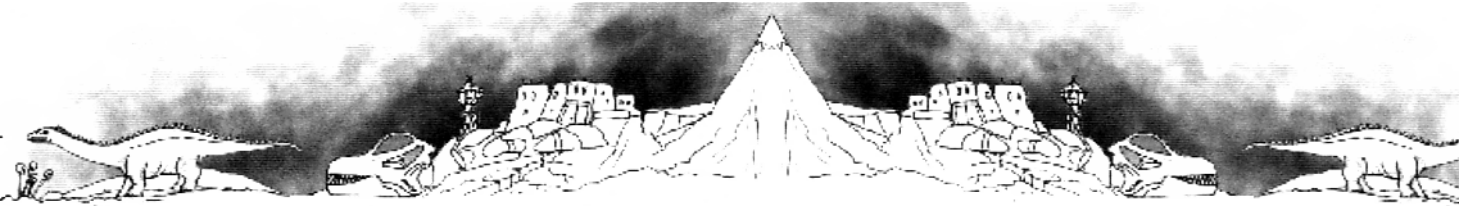
grow a fine moustache like mine, which is over a hands span in length now:most men wear beards in the Quivini manner, but I think the mustache is the true style of Old Tarsh. Many young warriors comb their hair into a topknot, too; I am too old for that sort of vanity now.

Women wear a coloured woollen petticoat with wide sleeves that reaches to their knees. Over this, they wear an overdress fastened at each shoulder with a large oval broach. In winter, women wear knee-length leggings for extra warmth. Unmarried women wear their hair uncovered, loose, or confined by a circlet. Married women coil their hair on top of their head, or at their neck, and wear a hood over their hair. Many of the married Quivini women do not cover their hair, which shocks the more conservative Ernaldans of our clan.

Of course the Maran women could never be shocked by something so simple and laugh at the bickering of their sisters. The Maran warriors wear a strange variety of hairstyles. Many shave their heads. Angora shaves hers completely with a sharp flint and a bowl, giving her hair, she says, to Maran. Others shave only the front half. Your aunt Yeresta dies her hair indigo. Many Devor women die their hair blue, Erantha red. Jenesta binds her hair and wears a copper headdress, which your aunt Illiga gave her as a gift. Those Maran women, who return alive from their initiation, have their teeth filed to points. The better, Jenesta says, to tear flesh. Sometimes that girl makes me shudder. Despite dancing and war, Maran women grow curvaceous. Yeresta did not weigh much more than you did when she was your age, but now she carries twice mine. Her whole body seems to shake when she walks or dances. "Just like the mother," she says. Maran's priestesses wear ankle length dresses, dyed darkest indigo or black, with a white trim or border marked with runes. They wear a white headband and long black veil that reaches to their waist. They only wear copper jewellery. The women of our tribe love amber. The Amber Necklace in our tribe makes the finest pieces, which are highly prized. Women prize copper, the metal of the Earth. Men love silver and tin the metals of the air.

Thralls of both sexes wear rough hemp or flax tunics. We mark them with a leather collar around their neck. They usually wear their hair close cropped to their head, except for the work-thralls up in the cold hills..





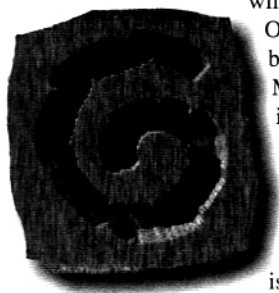
Your cloak should be about five foot square and made of wool. If you do well you may be able to trim your cloak with fur, or even own a fur cloak to keep you warm in the snows of winter. You will need a fine broach to hold your cloak at your throat. Men will mark your wealth from the quality of work on your cloak-pin. Your cloak has broad stripes and fine checks, these are the clan tartan, or storm plaid, and show your kinship to strangers. Be proud in your storm plaid; never shame us when you wear it.

Arm rings, finger-rings, and torcs will all show your wealth, skill as a raider, and connections with great men too. The cobbler cuts shoes from a single piece of leather sown together on the top of your foot and held tight at your ankle with rawhide.

What is important in my life?

You are a member of the Mitchuinn and soon you will become a man. You may hunt to live, but learn the axe and seax, for it is plunder and tribute that will increase your wealth and enable you to own thralls and land from the clan. You may want to vow vengeance against the Empire and join the King's warband when we raid Lunar Tarsh or the Grazelands. This oath is hard, but you will make me proud. Always live up to the boasts that you make in the mead hall when the chief gives out rings. Do not disgrace us by betraying them. If the king calls for a raid, or for warriors to serve as mercenaries, then we compete for the honour of joining the band at Neela's Pool. I look forward to the day you earn your place among the king's men.

When you die, you will lie out so that the living may visit you to pay their respects. Then we will burn your body and the priest will summon the wind to send your soul to Orlanth. If you were a woman, we would bury your ashes in an urn field, or, for Marani, place your body whole in an urn into the earth.



What makes us great?

Behaving like Orlanth and Ernalda. That is the first rule. Men and women become great by following the gods' example. Orlanth called on us to fight for freedom but also taught us to exercise responsibility. He taught us freedom when he killed the Emperor, who stifled the world. He taught us responsibility when he travelled to the underworld to bring the Emperor back. Ernalda taught us find the other way, to look for alternatives, to think before we act. Maran teaches us that to create, you must first destroy. From death comes life.

Heort gave us six virtues to follow. To be great do not bring shame on us by acting without honour. Aid in the feeding and defence of our community. Obey chosen leaders, like Kalf the chief, and support justice. You should know the Greeting and honour the laws of hospitality when we have guests at the village. Heort also taught us the secret of I Fought We Won, which shows everyone who had to reach inside himself to face evil. You will learn that secret at your initiation.

In exile, we remember the example of Elmal, who was steadfast when Orlanth was in the underworld. Do not weaken in your resolve, or give in to the siren song of the Empire, the Teller of Lies. You should be vigilant. The seven dangers are never far

away: strangers, foreigners, enemies, hostile gods and spirits, disease, hunger, chaos. A wise man does not part with his weapons. Our life is harsh. We are highlanders, not soft Moon worshipping lowlanders. We must be ruthless. Be unmerciful to enemies, for if you let them live, they will only return to destroy you.

There are four stages to life. You are a child, you have freedom, but you have not learned responsibility. Soon you will undergo your initiation. Then you will be responsible for your actions and be an adult. As a man, you should strive to win a place on a raiding band. In battle, match your bravery to the chief. The chief fights for victory, you fight for the chief. Defend and protect him. Make your battle-boasts reflect his glory, not your own. Do not bring shame upon our family by returning from the field of battle when your chief does not. Your kin would shun you for that failure, and I would ask you to follow Humakt, now that you were dead to us.

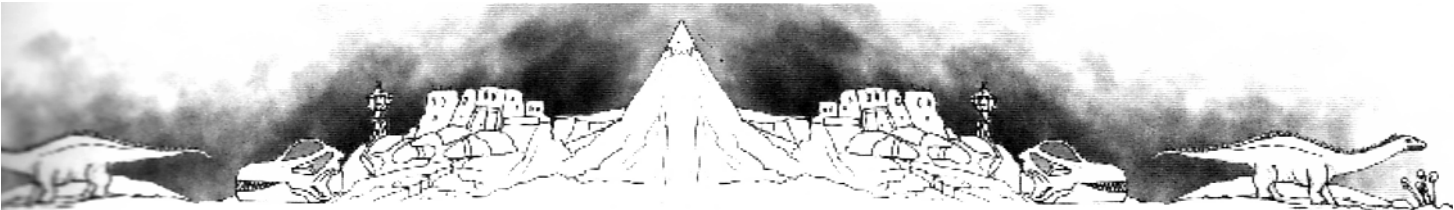
Remember, the wyrd of a brave man is greater than a coward. Plunder is the way to greatness. Always be generous with your treasure, be known as a ring-giver and men will follow you. Once you are an adult, you should think about marriage. Choose a wide-hipped woman with a large dowry, not one of those skinny girls the Quivini favour.

Be careful. Maran women take pleasure in sex, but act without responsibility. While you smile at that now, it is raising fine children that will make you great man. Children continue the tribe. They care for you in your old age, as you will me. They will sing songs of your deeds and shout your name when you die. If your sister Angora has children, they will be born out of passion and belong to her temple. Our family has no future there.

Once you are a parent, your perspective on life will change, as Orlanth's did when Barntar was born. You will think of the future and of others. Some people never become parents, for religious reasons or, because no one wants them. They may take the Wanderlore rites when the elders feel they have shown the same understanding. We call them parents after.

If you are successful then the clan may make you a thane like me. Then you will sit upon the ring and advise the chief. Perhaps Ernalda has woven the cloth of your life so that you will become chief of the clan. You will never be king, for Mitchuinn's blood does not flow in your veins. However, if you are fortunate, you may live long enough to grow white-haired and toothless. Then the clan will declare you an elder. You will have earned a warm place by any hearth and the respect of the clan for your wisdom.





What else is there to do around here?

Kalf Garstalsson is a fine player of Swords and Shields, and his love for the game has made it popular throughout the clan. I have a fine set that I carved from soapstone that I can teach you to play with. The men love to wrestle, and we play kick-the-ball against the other villages. There are horse and kuk fights every year. In late Sea Season there is the cheese rolling. We roll a large round cheese down Breakneck Hill and those who are not parents or elders chase it.

Maran's warrior women love to dance. The dancers wear tiny bells, the best dancers from copper. The main accompaniment is the drum. Made from carved and hollowed out wood the drum is as big as a man, some as large as a troll. The women stretch skins over one end or both. Usually they use sheep, bullock, or doe-skin. The holiest drums have the skins of defeated enemies or Earthshakers. They adorn them with the skulls of their enemies. Jenesta says that she has seen one at the temple adorned with twelve heads. The dances involve jumps, claps, and shouts. The dancers carry weapons and they strike mock blows, often miming the decapitation of their enemies. As they dance, they chant.

Who rules us?

The Thunder Brothers' council guides the village, chosen from the leading families. They are thirteen in number: and they decide how we will use the village land, how will manage the herds and what repairs must be made or new defences built. The council settles disputes between families, organises the fyrd, and collects the taxes that support the clan.

The councils of the clan's villages meet at the moot, just outside Askiniham, to elect the clan chief. The chief leads our warband in raids, is the first to speak to outsiders, and carries our voice to the tribe. Huscarls, or weaponthanes, stand at the chief's side: the finest warriors drawn by the plunder and gifts the chief gives them, his sword, spear and shield in life, avengers after his death.

Kalf Garstalsson is our chief, a veteran of many raids, who fought at Grizzly Peak when he was just a boy. Grey streaks his beard, but though he is no longer the warrior he was in his youth, age has brought Kalf great wisdom. Sitting by his hearth fire, he has bested everyone at Sword and Shields.

Kev has blessed and cursed the old crone Morganeth. Her eyes are milky white with cataracts, but she has visions of the pattern woven on the loom of life. Her visions have often warned us of the cost of our actions and the clan ring rarely ignores her advice. Seek her out if you would understand the pattern woven for you.

As Alakoring showed us, our clans belong to a tribe. Tovtarim Flamehaired is the king of the Mitchuinn, appointed by the chiefs, in Vinkot's way, from among those amongst whom the blood of Mitchuinn runs. A council of 13 guides him. By custom and tradition, the Winter Shadow always has at least three seats on the ring, one of which is the tribal tradethane. The Winter Shadow has the right of First Trade with caravans from Irist Hold.

Korlokstead, the royal village, lies on the Winter Shadow tula and we maintain it as part of our tribute to the tribe. Only terrible changes like a king refusing to swear Mitchuinn's vow against

the Empire could break us from that duty. Erryn Longsnanks is the king's shrieve, and carries his authority in our clan. Erryn is not from our clan, but from the Amber Necklace. Because Erryn comes from a different clan, he reminds us that we are more than just a clan - we are a tribe. We support Erryn with the 'day-feed', the hospitality owed to the king. He collects the king's taxes, keeps the king's peace with the aid of his hearth companions, and administers the king's justice. In the mother country, under the Red Moon, the power of the shrieve eclipses that of the chief. We have never fallen into this error. Remember 'no one can make you do anything'.

Our Holy Queen, sacred priestess of Maran inspires us. She is a holy figure, whose devotion is such that she moves her plentiful body only with the greatest effort: an oak cart drawn by six oxen carries her. But Alakoring showed us the error of letting priests rule. We will never let that happen again. Now our ring has thirteen members so that men rule, as Orlanth intended.

THE ALAKORING RING

This form of tribal ring (see *Thunder Rebels*, p25 and *Barbarian Adventures* pp14-15) is common throughout Lunar and Exile Tarsh, and further north, wherever Alakoringite traditions are strong. In a bid to reduce the power of the priests and also create rings large and inclusive enough to hold sizeable tribes together without undermining royal power, this 13-strong ring relies often in twinning roles. Thus, the two members responsible for the same area can assist and support each other - but the king (and queen) can also play them off against the other.

Dar: the King.

Orendana: his Queen. This is usually the queen of the tribe or clan, but in some cases may be another powerful woman. Clans which become heavily dependent upon the Earthblood ritual face strong pressure to appoint a Maran priestess to this powerful position.

Harst: who distributes the wealth. Responsible for trade and the detail of negotiation.

Kev: who understands the cost. The Kev role is essentially to introduce caution into the ring and set the broad terms of the dealings which the Harst member will undertake.

Voriof: who guards the herds. Often this is actually euphemistic, and the role is filled instead with a Finovani or other raider, who 'guards the herds'; by expanding them at neighbours' expense.

Uralda: who blesses them.

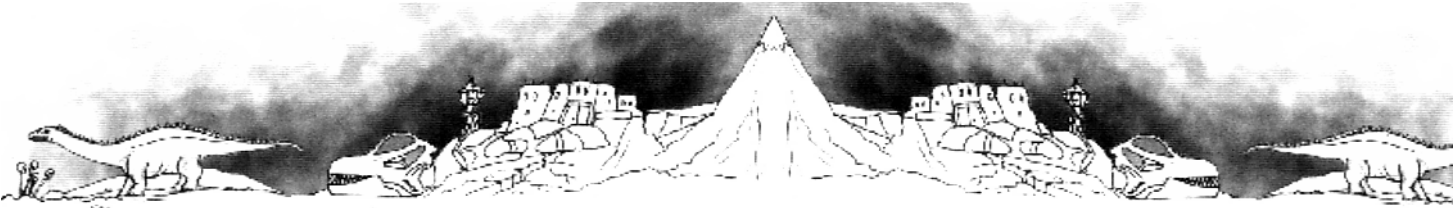
Orstan and Pela: who make. These are roles held by craftspeople and, by extension, reflect the community's main source of wealth. In clans especially dependant on mining, for example, these roles may be held by followers of Asella and Torkal.

Durev and Orane: who speak for the families. They speak generally for the men and women, respectively. The Orane role is often held by a worshipper of Kero Fin, while the Durev position may go to a follower of the tribal or clan ancestor.

Starkval and Maran Devor: who defend. Broadly speaking, these are the male and female warriors, although where no other Maran cultist has managed to assume another role, it is not unusual for the Devor post to be held by a follower of a less directly combative subcult, such as Gatara Tor.

Ormalaya: who hunts. The role of Ormalaya is much more variable than this implies. As a hunter, who often works outside the community, this post is also sometimes passed to an outsider, whether a Trickster or an unusual cult such as Heler or Yinkin.

Outer Ring: Addressed as Cloudbreakers.



Who are our enemies?

Our enemy is the Lunar Empire. Mitchuinn swore an oath to show the Empire no respite and we have kept that vow. We have fought for three hundred years. The Conquering Daughter drove us from our homes in Saird. HonEel drove us from our homes in Tarsh. The Empire has murdered our kin, and sacrificed them to their maize goddess. They have grown fat by plundering our ancestors. While there is breath in our bodies, we will not surrender.

Lunar Tarsh, our former land, is our greatest foe. HonEel the whore seduced King Pyjeemsab and delivered the foolish lowland dirt eaters to the evil empire. Her vile dynasty, descended from the whore, rules the nation. The Empire denies the worship of Orlanth, crucifying the faithful, befouls Ernalda's most sacred rites with the Lunar Earth, and corrupts Maran's rites of blood to grow maize. The once proud nation of Yarandros has fallen to the whispers of the Teller of Lies. Only we keep the dream alive. The Breagalos tribe lives in our former lands in Tarsh, around Mitchuinn's rise. We conquered the Breagalos when we first arrived in Tarsh. Their king, Breagal the Greedy, tried to force a toll upon us, but Bork slew him and we forced tribute upon them. The Breagalos clans hid their hatred for us in their hearts and joined the Empire to drive us from their lands. When we return

from Exile we will line our lintel posts with the heads of the oath-breaking Breagalos chiefs, and decorate our halls with their treasures.

The Tusk Riders, the boar-riding half-trolls of the Stinking Forest, are an old enemy of Tarsh. Nomadic bands of Tuskers raid the east of Tarsh and the Bush Range. They worship a cruel god who delights in pain and bloody sacrifice. When you were small, I took part in the Boar Hunt. In vengeance, warbands from the tribes of the Pass raided in the Stinking Forest in force. I proved my mead-hall boasts that day, when I held the line, my spear in hand, against the fearful Tusker charge. That was where I earned this scar, my leg ripped open by a tusk.

The Pony Breeders have been an enemy of since Yarandros made us a nation. They raid the soft lowland farmers of Lunar Tarsh now and it is rare to see their war parties in these hills.

We have never liked the Iristaros tribe who grow fat exacting taxes on the trade of the Harda pass. We are still hostile to the Delvalan clan of Irist Hold and never forgave Tarkil for allowing Lunar missionaries into the fort. Better that his people starve than live as slaves of the Moon.

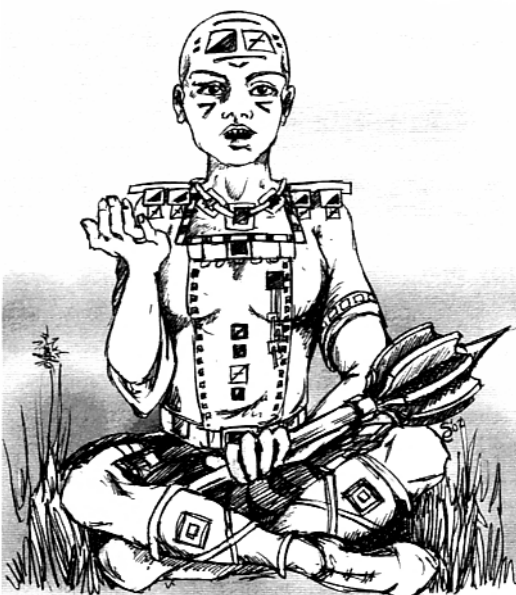
WHAT MY SISTER WHISPERS

Who are you?

I am Angora Illarosdottir, warrior of the Winter Shadow clan of the Mitchuinn tribe, and I am a woman of the chief of this camp. After my second year as a new adult, I passed Ernalda's tests and left home for the Shaker temple, alone. There I learned the secrets of Maran Devor, which you may not know. I survived. I shaved off my hair, offering it to Maran, and filed my teeth to points. These sacrifices marked my adulthood and rebirth from death.

Is Maran cruel?

The Ernaldans know much of the Earth's bounty, but they shy from the truth of its cost. To give, the land must also take. I shall tell you things that are rarely heard outside the women's places. Women are intimately connected with the cycle of nature. That cycle is both life and death. Every month we bleed. That blood is the price of fertility. Every month we feel pain, rage, and sadness. For part of the month any woman is fertile, for part barren. When we menstruate, we experience all that is Maran. To deny this side of ourselves is to deny who we are. So Maran is a part of every woman. Ernaldans often hide from this side are less whole for it. We do not hide from the wholeness of our sex.

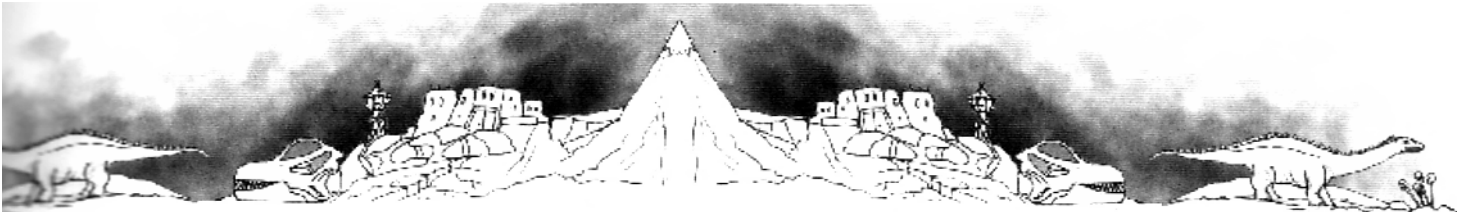


Any mother understands that birth is pain. All creation is an act of destruction. Did you know that Maran helped make the world in the Green Age? What outsiders see as acts of destruction, we know is an act of making. Did you know that Maran is a mother? The Quakebeasts are her children.

But I have heard stories of human sacrifice and cannibalism

People sacrifice to Maran in thanks for what she gave them. When Vadrus committed Kinstrife by killing Barntar, Ernalda searched for him in the Earth. She found Maran

had taken him as her thrall where he broke rocks for her, so that she might hurl them at her enemies. Maran let Barntar return with her sister that time, even though she knew that the Unholy Trio would soon bring the Devil into the world. A gift demands a gift, and to this day people sacrifice to Maran so that she will return Barntar to them. In times of hunger, when Maran keeps Barntar in the tunnels beneath the earth, the people sacrifice the blood of the living so that their life might be exchanged for Barntar's and do Maran's work in his place.



MARAN'S RITES

There are many aspects to the Earth tribe that are forgotten or fragmentary since their association with the Storm Tribe. Many Earth gods and goddesses have fragments of their older roles, hidden within their myths, or only known in the sacred tales told to initiates. Maran's worship has declined since the Dawn and much of the knowledge, secrets, and mythology of the cult has been lost over the intervening years.

Maran is the War goddess of the Earth tribe; she holds the Death Rune, which is the club or axe and not Humakt's sword. As Maran Devor she is the club, as Erantha Gor she is the axe. Maran is a cruel god of war. She is war for rage, revenge, and hatred. She is the blood drinker, the terror of battle. She is war for survival, not for power. She is war for the sheer joy of destruction. She is the embodiment of that side of woman that is unmerciful to her enemies.

But fragments of stories still told in Maranaba hint of a deeper mythology. They whisper that Maran is the guide to Ty Kora Tek's Cavern of Silence, the psychopomp for the Earth tribe, the chooser of the slain. In the inner rituals at Maranaba, Maran is sometimes called De Gavara, the Hooded Crow or Raven. In this form she haunts the battlefield, and takes thralls to help break the earth so that she can hurl it at her enemies.

Within the Storm Tribe, Issaries is the guide for the dead, but her initiates know that role belonged to Maran. The journey through the fissures and cracks of the earth to Ty Kora Tek's Cavern of Silence is where many of those who fail their initiation are lost. Most of these passages were closed in the Great Darkness, but the cult still buries there dead in such fissures so Maran can guide them to the other side. Maran's funeral rites, placed whole in the urn in a fissure in the earth, differ from customary practice reflecting these myths. It is this role that is at the core of many of her most feared powers and rites, such as those of Morig Gor (p26). When the Orlanthi sacrifice blood to her they give of their life that she might free Barntar. When the Orlanthi take heads, called Maran's acorns or Maran's mast, cut scalps from their victims or take other body parts in trophy to steal an enemy's breath, they call on Maran's ability to enslave the dead, as she enslaved Barntar. They also understand that such acts may only be committed when faced with great evil, as Maran was. Ana Gor is worshipped in the Shaker temple too for it was here the Havan Vor's blood first spilled. Sorana Tor, an incarnation of Ana Gor can be called here through the Prayer to Sorana Tor, which allows one of her priestesses to incarnate the goddess to bear the sacrificial king, who rules for up to seven years after his coronation and is then sacrificed to the Earth, that the land might be renewed. Heortlings say that Maran and Esrola and Ty Kora Tek conquered and cast out Ana Gor, but many Exiles say that there is one goddess with three forms: Ana the power, Maran the mother, and Sorana the goddess made flesh.

The Earthblood ritual

The Earthblood ritual is used only in the most desperate times, to restore fertility to the land with the sacrifice of human blood.

It does not matter whose blood it is, kin who give their lives so that others might live, prisoners, thralls, or those slain in battle; Maran accepts any blood that falls on the fields. 'The land must take, for the land to give' the priestesses say. The priestesses say that the sacrifices of blood appease Maran, releasing the power of Orlanth and Ernalda's son Barntar to help in harvesting the fields. A gift demands a gift - the Earth is no different. Ana Gor is always present in these rites, for she is part of such sacrifice, and her presence at the Shaker Temple ensures the persistence of these rites. Outsiders revile such practices, and may accuse its practitioners of being krjalki or ogres. The form of the corn rites introduced by HonEel to Tarsh borrowed elements of the native rituals.

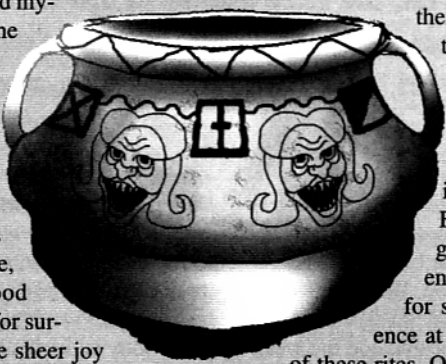
Cannibalism

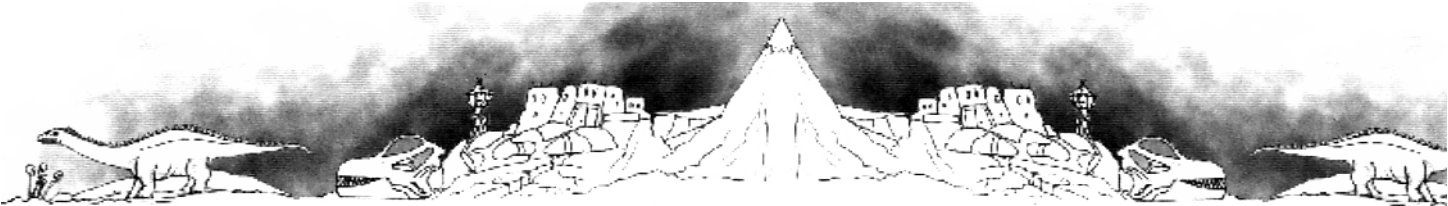
Even in hungry years, cannibalism is not about food but about the ritual consumption of enemies to gain part of their power. Despite tales of the priestesses of the Shaker Temple living off human flesh it is only used in sacred rites. Similar to trophy taking this practice traps a part of the victim's breath for use by the cannibal. But in this case the celebrant integrates the trapped breath. Often there is a physical manifestation of this theft. Only the death of the celebrant releases the stolen breath so this rite is dangerous because it makes the celebrant the mortal enemy of the victim's kin. The might is equal to the ability stolen.

Other Gods, Other Rites

Maran is not the only god or goddess to who human sacrifice is made. Others took, stole or learnt Ana Gor's secret in the Darkness (*Storm Tribe* p193): Babeester Gor, Esrola, Humakt, and Ty Kora Tek. Among the Exiles many of these gods are worshipped with the sacrifice of sentient beings too. This disturbs or repels outsiders who commonly think such activity is for demons and chaos.

The Ana Gor rites protect the worshipper, but only if performed out of great need. The clan uses the Earthblood ritual when it risks starvation, sacrifices to Humakt when fighting for survival, takes its enemies' heads after the most intense struggles. The regularity of such rites among the Exiles is a reflection of the desperation of the siege they are under on the slopes of Kero Fin. Performing these rites outside such strained circumstances risks the practitioners' souls. They may sprout chaotic features, marking them out for all to see, or fall into the worship of chaotic gods such as Thed the god of hunters, Urain the black cloud of madness and violence, or Krjalk the god of monsters.





4 ADVENTURES IN EXILE

There are Four Corners to the land of Exile:

Hope is to the north and west, that Old Tarsh will rise again.

Dark is to the north and east, Klnstrffe, Nightmen and Grunting Woods.

The Earth is to the south and west, the Rock and Peak upon which we Live.

The Wind is to the south and east, the Purging Storm that's Coming.

And in that Square is left our Wyrd, our Breath, our Dreams, our Destiny.



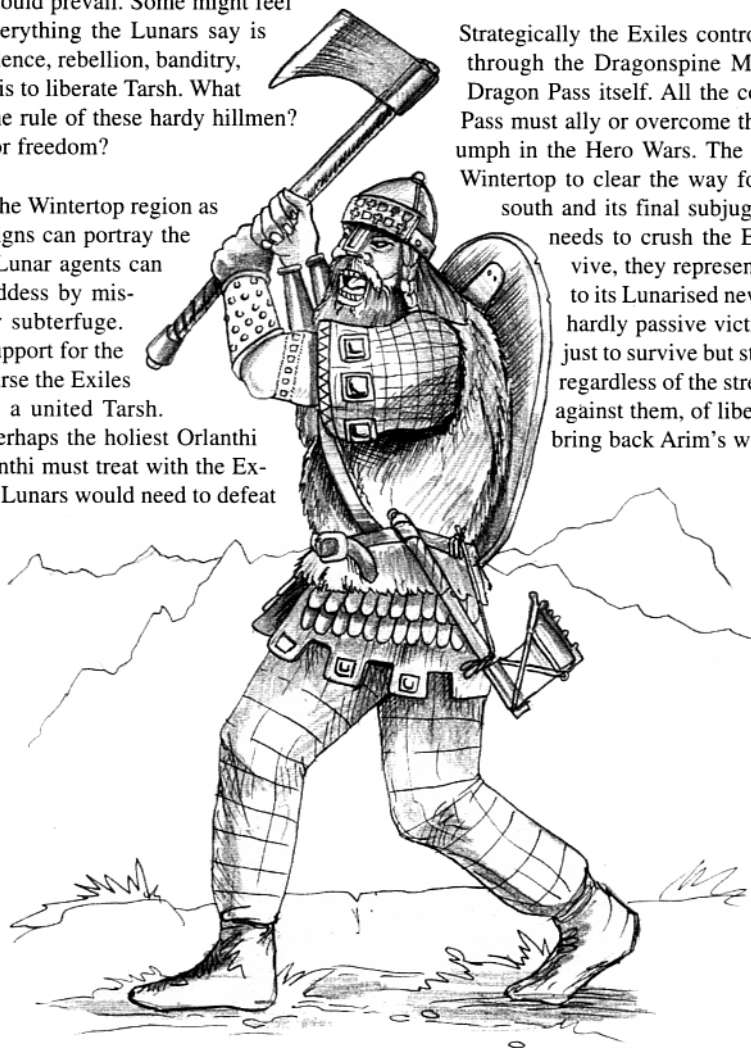
The Exiles remain free, but that freedom has a price. Up on the slopes of Kero Fin, isolated and dependant on the Maranaba temple for protection, the Exiles have become barbaric and savage. Might is right, blood pays for life, and the weak are enthralled by the strong. Orlanth is the rebel, the thief, the raider, and the murderer, not the farmer. Maran is the thirst for revenge. The Old World is ending, and only the strong will survive. The player heroes might question whether these are the attitudes that should prevail. Some might feel that the Exiles personify everything the Lunars say is wrong with the Orlanthi: violence, rebellion, banditry, and theft. The Exiles' dream is to liberate Tarsh. What would Tarsh be like under the rule of these hardy hillmen? What price should be paid for freedom?

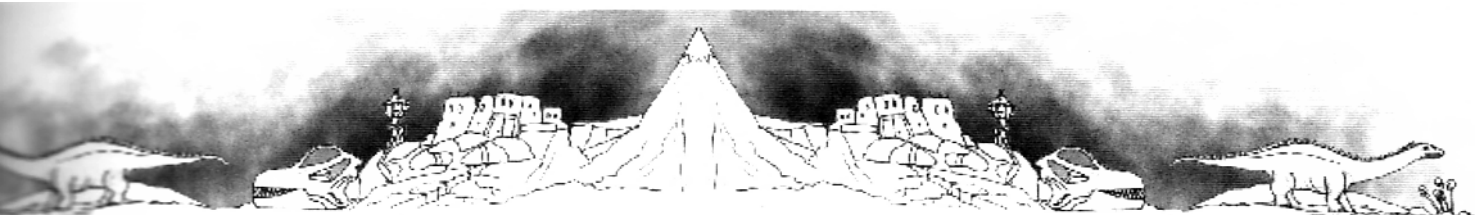
Existing campaigns can use the Wintertop region as a place to visit. Such campaigns can portray the Exiles as enemies or allies. Lunar agents can try to bring them to the Goddess by missionary work, seduction, or subterfuge. Rebels can try to win their support for the upcoming Hero Wars. Of course the Exiles have their own agenda too, a united Tarsh. Camped around Kero Fin, perhaps the holiest Orlanthi place in the Pass, many Orlanthi must treat with the Exiles if on pilgrimage, and the Lunars would need to defeat them to gain control of the Mother of Mountains.

New campaigns might start in the Wintertop region. The absence of an occupying Lunar army changes the feel of clan life here, though these people's lives are a constant struggle against the realities of over-population and starvation. Exile-based games give opportunities for play outside Wintertop too, perhaps as mercenaries serving abroad or as traders selling thralls in foreign markets.

Either way, demonstrate the differences to Heortling culture: the emphasis on hunting and war over farming and herding; the strength of the Maran cult and the different position of women; the thralls who perform the hard and menial tasks; the importance of blood and might; the loyalty to Old Tarsh and its liberation. Both scenarios presented here can be played with either Exile or outsider heroes - indeed, the first, **The Tars Gor**, can be used as a way of allowing Sartari heroes to develop a relationship with the Exile Mitchuinn through fighting a common Lunar foe, perhaps as a basis for further adventures in the Wintertop region.

Strategically the Exiles control three of the five passes through the Dragonspine Mountains and thus across Dragon Pass itself. All the conquering warlords of the Pass must ally or overcome the Exiles if they are to triumph in the Hero Wars. The Empire must thus subdue Wintertop to clear the way for its further conquests to south and its final subjugation of Orlanth. Furthest needs to crush the Exiles, for while they survive, they represent an ideological challenge to its Lunarised new order. And the Exiles are hardly passive victims - they are seeking not just to survive but still nurture serious dreams, regardless of the strength of the forces arrayed against them, of liberating the old country and bring back Arim's ways.





THE YEARLY CYCLE



SEA SEASON

The weather warms and the last snows of Dark and Storm Season fade to the spring thaw. During this season guesting and feasting largely ends as the winter stores have run too low and the providing cycle restarts. The first lambs are born in the clan's flocks and many human babies are born to the first-time mothers of the clan. Flower Day marks the return of ewe's milk, rich in fats, to the highlanders' diet. The rituals of this season are of motherhood both human and animal. It is also the raiding season after the end of the guesting season and before the hard work of summer. Later in the season, the steadfolk drive the cattle from the fields to begin ploughing and from the meadows to make way for the new hay crop. Timber cutting begins in the hills. Hunters fish or gather eggs from birds' nests. Women begin dairy work as the cows have now calved. On and after Sword Day, warbands begin recruiting for mercenary service in foreign lands.

■ ■ Gatara Day

Earthmaker Day: Clay Day, Disorder Week. On Earthmaker Day, beer and blood are offered in the memory of Maran's Quakebeasts and her long lost 'big lover,' whose face is remembered but whose name is lost in a drunken haze. Stories of the Green Age revive memories that contrast with the vengeance demanded the rest of the year. Clans or temples that have been lucky enough to capture a Quakebeast may sacrifice it to Maran and earn great favour with her in the forthcoming year. On such occasions, her joyful laughter can be heard through the earth for miles around.



FIRE SEASON

Families are split as the animals and their new-born young are moved to the shielings after Fire Day. Ernaldan women and children travel with the animals while the men remain at the stead to prepare for war or travel to the summer hunting lodges. The deer and boar hunting seasons begin. Young hunters are expected to kill a boar as a rite of passage. Year-marriages end at this time as the couples are separated by competing demands.

The roads improve enough for travel and stronger clans send war parties to demand tribute from weaker neighbours. Raiders begin to strike further into the lowlands and Grazer villages. Sell-axes ply their trade in Esrolia or Heortland. In the shielings, the animals yield milk, used to make butter and curd cheeses. The clans send the surplus by mule to Tarsh to trade for food and luxuries. Sheep milking ends at the close of Fire Season. Tribal activity centres on the moot at the end of the season when disputes between clans are settled and kings elected.

Everyday Activities

The raiding season begins. Frequently starting with sheep raids between neighbouring clans these raids develop into gathering of bands for raiding the lowlands.

The clan's best hunters try to capture a Quakebeast to sacrifice to Maran on Gatara Day.

A predator is killing the clan's sheep. It may be a bear or alynx or something more exotic like Telmori or a Quakebeast.

Wealth Failure

Winter persists too long into Sea Season and many of the clan's lambs are born in the snow. The clan risks starvation if the lambs die and their mother's milk dries up.

Raiders carry off a large number of newborn lambs and their mothers. The winter stores were too quickly exhausted and everyone feels the Hungry Gap. Stalking and killing a Brotard could mean the difference between starvation and salvation.

There are too few fish in the river to feed the tribe.

Morale Crisis

Disputes arise over a lack of generosity during the guesting and feasting season.

Troublemakers stir up conflict with a neighbouring clan.

The tribal shrieve criticises the clan for failing to support the tribe.

Threats

Neighbouring clan, Monsters (Dragonewts, Undead)

■ ■ Sorgoth Day

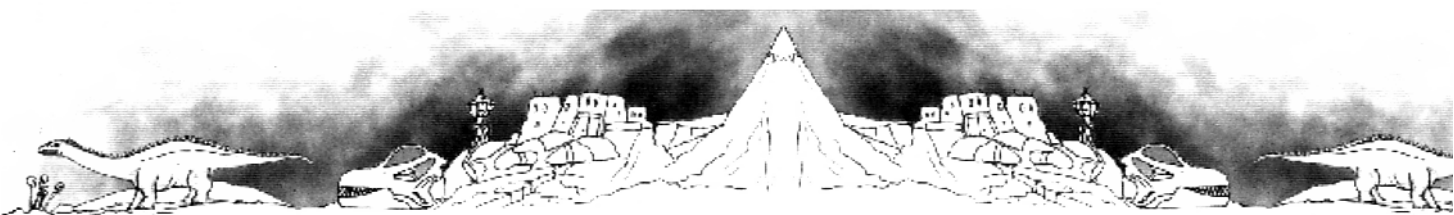
Blasted Earth Day: Clayday, Disorder Week. Fire Season is the time of War and raiding. The wrongs that ended the Green Age are remembered such as the Emperor's fiery destruction of the Dordarings. Sorgoth Kor raises herself once again from the broken altar, and the cult uses her blessings against those who have wronged them in the past year. The human sacrifices required by her most powerful curse keep most far from her ceremonies.

Everyday Activities

Bushwhacker bands raid caravans, vendref, lowland villages, and each other.

A boar or deer hunt. The chieftain offers a prize for the finest kill.

Neighbouring clans compete for use of traditional hunting lands or woodland.



EARTH SEASON

The shepherds take newly weaned lambs from their mothers, and shear the adult sheep of their fleece before allowing the flock to run with the rams. The young men travel up to the shielings to help with the shearing. Children are weaned from breast-milk to gruel. Families return from the mountain shielings to the steads. Earth Season is for hay making, not just from hay meadows but all patches of long grass. The more grass a village cuts the more animals it can feed through the winter. Shepherds round up herds in preparation for winter. Warbands disperse and the men return to help with the most demanding period of the stead's agricultural calendar. The clans cut winter fuel from timber and peat. Those animals that cannot be kept alive are butchered and preserved by smoking, wind drying, or where available salt. The abundance of meat from the slaughter means this is the time for feasts and weddings. Year-marriages begin. Political manoeuvrings increases in the run-up to the clan moot. It is also the worst season for disease. Late Earth Season and early Dark Season is the period for gathering fruit and pressing cider.

☑☑ Devor Day

Death Mace Day: Clayday, Disorder Week. Earth Season begins the time of sorrow for the Goddess and all of the Earth. Worshipers of Maran Devor gather, and many challenge male warriors to ritual combat, the results of which often are used as divination. Erantha Gor's, followers lay down their axes and take up maces, becoming initiates and devotees of Maran Devor for the day. True to the 'First vengeance of Maran', worshippers often raid Hsunchen and Aldryami foes.

☑☒ Shutting the Door Day

Wildday, Fertility Week. Maran shares this holy day with Ernalda, so all Orlanthi worship her at this time. Unless a clan has active

Wealth Failure

A stronger neighbouring clan demands more wealth than you can afford. Many of the clan's young men are killed fighting as mercenaries. Another clan brings yours to the tribal moot demanding compensation.

Morale Crisis

The thralls grow restless with their workloads.

The women are angry with the men over the division of responsibilities within the clan.

The Bush Children are recruiting; the clan risks losing many of its warriors who are dissatisfied with the gifts of the chief.

Threats

Neighbouring clan, Raiders (Black Horse Troop, Grazers, Lowlanders), Lunars, Monsters (Dragonewts, Undead)

worshippers, however the sacrifices are primarily propitiatory in nature. For all Orlanthi, however, the day ends with a low rumble felt by everyone as the gateway closes behind the living for the rest of the year. Maran's rites on this day show contempt for Ernalda's husbands, for her death shows that they have failed to protect her. On this day, Maran's worshippers are the centre of the whole community's attention, and one of them will lead the public rites, even if she is only an initiate.

Everyday Activities

Providing activities dominate as the clan prepares for winter – butchering, logging, hunting, gathering, and shearing.

Ritual raiding by Maran's warriors.

Wealth Failure

Disease afflicts the clan's herds or local wildlife

Disease affects the clan folk. Some argue for the need to worship Maran, others call upon Ernalda. Rumours of wandering Chalana Arroy healers nearby are followed up.

An important member of the clan dies: how does this affect the balance of power in the ring?

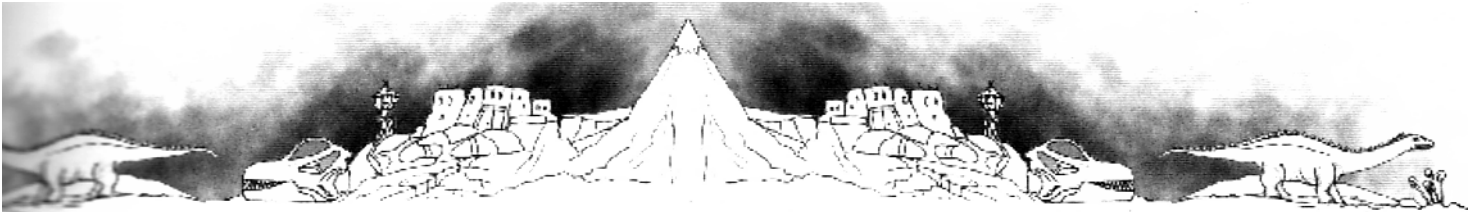
Morale Crisis

Members of the clan question the commitment to remaining in the hills and contemplate returning to the lowland to adopt the Lunar Way. Traditionalists complain that the clan is not doing enough to ensure the liberation of Tarsh.

The clan folk demand the election of a new leader, citing continuous years of hunger, raids by enemies, and weak leadership.

Threats

Neighbouring clan, Raiders (Black Horse Troop, Grazers, Lowlanders), Monsters (Dragonewts, Undead)



DARK SEASON

Snow falls and the temperature drops so that animals cannot survive outside at night. Sheep can nibble on shoots of grass poking through the snow throughout the winter, but cattle are kept in byres or in the hearth both day and night and fed on hay. Around the hearth, work is indoor tasks like making or mending tools. The women use animal skins from the slaughter for clothing, shoes, and bed-covers. In winter, travel is by snowshoe, ski, or skates. The Earth sleeps and is barren, and the clan must survive on stored and preserved foods. Unpreserved fruits and berries are considered rotten and taboo foods. It is also a closed season for hunting deer or boar. This is the time for the strengthening of kinship relationships round the hearth fire reciting the sacred stories and myths.



Erantha Day

Bloody Axe Day: Clayday, Disorder week. Darkness Season sees the death of the last of Maran's children. Worshippers of Erantha Gor gather and wash themselves in the black blood of revenge. Erantha's followers are often joined by Maran Devor's, who lay down their maces and take up axes, becoming initiates and devotees of Erantha Gor for the day.

Uz taken in raids during the previous weeks are challenged to ritual combat. As long as the Uz surrenders and agrees to serve as a slave to Maran, it is spared. This rare submission of Darkness to the Earth is celebrated with sacrifices of dogs. If no Uz are taken, men sometimes play the parts of Erantha's enemies, and their blood is a sweet beer for the victors.



STORM SEASON

Repair work begins around the stead fixing the damage of winter frosts and snow to buildings, hedges and ditches and the stead's pulisade wall. Cattle are allowed off the byres into meadows and fields. Men look forward to religious celebrations of this season with Orlanth's High Holy Day. Travel becomes easier and as a result guesting and feasting increases. The hunters trap animals for their fur – particularly otter and beaver, but also the brave wolf and bear. It is the season for the forging of alliances and the making of plots.



Earthshaker Rising Day

Clayday of Disorder Week. During Storm Season, the Earth sleeps. Even Maran is quiescent, but her power can still be called up when needed to defend the earth. Her powers over the Shaking Earth are cherished, and during the bloodstained rites she receives blood sacrifices from everyone, even the temple thralls. The Shaker Temple is thronged with initiates, devotees, and priestesses from across Dragon Pass and beyond. At the height of the ceremony, everyone within thirty miles can feel the impact of Maran's fist as steads tremble and pottery shatters.



Gor Day

Clayday, Death week. Maran's high holy day commemorates the taking of the name Gor. None save her worshippers approach the Shaker Temple lest they find themselves participating in her ceremonies as victims or enemies. Drums and bloodletting accompany several days of ritual that leads up to the final transformation of the goddess. Aldryami and other enemies are ceremonially slaughtered and consumed. At the culmination of the rites the Shaker slays her enemies and her worshippers wallow in blood.

Everyday Activities

Raiding trolls for captives for the upcoming ceremonies
Story-telling

Wealth Failure

The clan does not have enough food stores to see it through the winter to spring.
Heavy snowfalls damage the stead buildings, which can no longer provide effective shelter from the cold.

Morale Crisis

Squabbling among the kinfolk who go 'nuts' in close confines living on preserved food.

Threats

Chaos, Monsters (Dragonewts, Undead, Uz)

Everyday Activities

Stead repairs
Early raiding

Wealth Failure

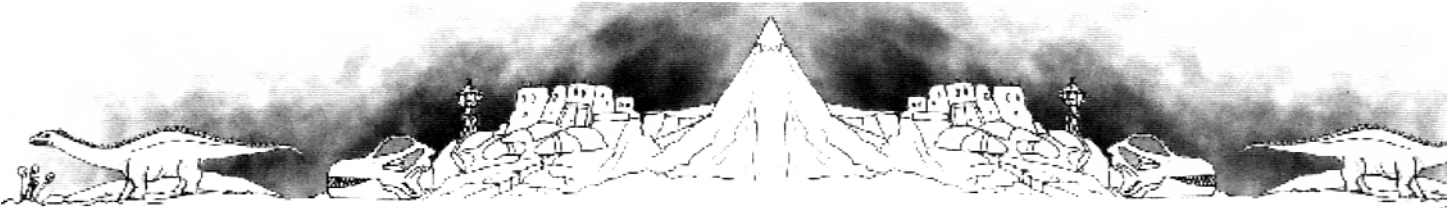
Hunger strikes the clan when the winter stores run low
Food theft.
Buildings badly damaged by an Umbroli wind.

Morale Crisis

Hospitality is broken while guesting emissaries from another clan. The incident threatens to turn into a feud.

Threats

Neighbouring clan, Chaos, Monsters (Dragonewts, Undead, Uz)



THE TARS GOR

Raiding the Bush Range

In Fire season, with the crops in the ground and the herds in the summer pastures an Orlanthi's thoughts turn to raiding. With Sword Day behind and Blasted Earth Day approaching, the Mitchuinn tribe plan to raid. Their target is the Lunar settlers of the Bush Range. This can be run for Exile characters (ideally with or seeking some relationship to the Mitchuinn) or even for non-Exile Sartari, who wish to help the Exiles fight for their freedom. Cattle Raiding and Blood Feud from *Barbarian Adventures* (pp40-43, 51-56) provide an overview of raiding and are useful additions to this material.

SCENE 1: THE CALL TO WAR

Korlokstead is the seat of the Mitchuinn tribal king. A high drum tower rises above the palisade walls, from where guards keep watch. The sails of a windmill, sacred to Orlanth Thunderous, turn in the wind. Outside the walls, a small square house forms a shrine to Heler. A fine mead hall and temple to Orlanth, with inlaid silver storm runes, dominate the stead. Two hundred people live in the stead about 120 men and women and 80 children. As the king's seat, many of those here are thanes, huscarls, priests, and craftsmen instead of cattlemen. A blacksmith's forge and brewery show the king's wealth. Korlokstead is rich, decorated in tribute and plunder.

The Tars Gor

From the watchtower the drums beats out the Tars Gor, the call to war. Answering drums carry the message out from clan to clan across Mitchuinn lands. Messages beat back and forth all day. Soon it becomes clear: Tovtarim Flamehair, son of the sons of Korlok, king of the Mitchuinn, calls for a raid. His own son, Hiord Pigsticker, will lead the raid. Warriors who wish to win the right to join the raid should present themselves in two days time, at Neela's Pool for the choosing of the spears. Neela's Pool is the location of the law rock, where the tribe holds moot. There, those who want to join the raid must boast of their skills and prowess to Hiord. If they have skills that he thinks are useful he may ask them to prove them. Jarolor the Fair, warband leader of the Mitchuinn, will not be taking part in the raid. Instead, this is seen

as a chance for the younger warriors to prove themselves and Hiord will appoint his own lieutenants from amongst his hearth companions.

If the heroes canvas for opinions of Hiord, the first reaction is "He's a brave warrior, who has headed successful raids against the Tusk Riders." An ability test with Relationship to Warband, Fast Talk (-2), Wealth (-3) learns that "He's a bit of a hothead, takes a lot of risks; if he hopes to succeed his father to the kingship he'll have to learn a little more caution."

SCENE 2: THE CHOOSING OF THE SPEARS

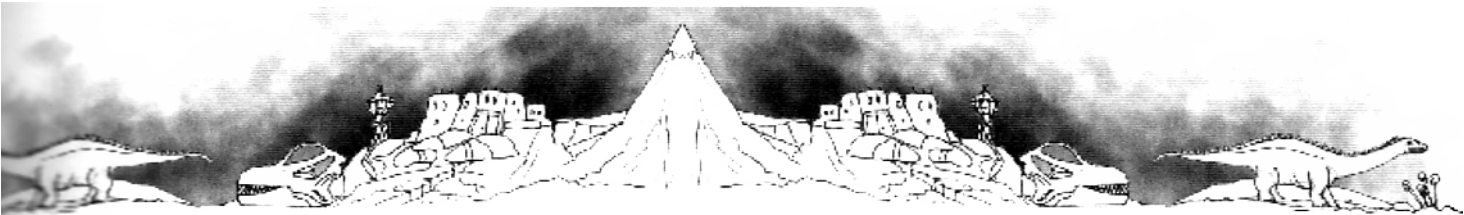
At Neela's Pool, a natural causeway, made of a checkerboard of granite plinths from 1-20' in diameter, diverts the course of the Lion River. The river winds around the causeway, and amid the plinths. A wooden bridge crosses from the causeway to the far shore. On the downstream side of the rock is a lager pool, inhabited by the nymph Neela. A cool mist hovers over the pool, even on a warm summer's day, and at night will 'o' the wisps dance and play throughout the area. The rocks are easily visible to anyone standing on the near banks, and the Mitchuinn use them as the law rock during tribal gatherings. In the meadows above the banks are dry stone walled booths, covered with awnings for use as shelter during the gathering. The clans have traditional booths that they use year after year. The tribal dishthane allocates other booths on a first come, first served basis.

NEELA

Neela lets the Mitchuinn use the area around her pool for their tribal gatherings, in return, each year a male Mitchuinn warrior serves as 'guardian of the pool' and remains the year with Neela entertaining the nymph and protecting the waters. Every Sea season Mitchuinn warriors compete in contests of athletic, martial, and musical prowess to win the honor of 'guardian of the pool' for the coming year. All champions of the Mitchuinn tribe have been a 'guardian of the pool' at some point, and the guardian does not physically age during the year. Neela has had a number of children by guardians of the pool, who the king fosters on clans of the tribe, though, by custom, he does not tell the clan of the children's origin. Neela allows the Mitchuinn to swim in her pool, enjoying the laughing children, whose voices she often mimics, but none may perform their ablutions there.

Might 5W2, Local River Knowledge 8W2, Magically Alluring 8W, Sense Other's Wyrd 6W2.

Her current 'guardian' is Hargran Swiftaxe. A warrior of Winter Shadow clan, he is tall, dark, handsome, and left a trail of broken hearts across the clans when he became the guardian. Some claim he was chosen by Neela for his looks, not his martial prowess, and talk of the king fostering children again this year. Others say Arachne Solara weaves great wyrd for Hargran, and this is but the first step.



Around a hundred warriors have arrived from the clans to compete for the chance to join the raid, along with spectators here to see the spectacle. Any gathering draws traders, and even at short notice, a number of vendors are here with their carts hawking their wares. Hiord stands upon the law rock, and addresses the crowd.

Those who have no claim there continue to make their home in the Bush Range. They grow corn there with the rites of HonEel the whore, and do not worship Orlanth. They do not pay us tribute. We asked them for tribute two years ago. Most of us remember how the Shakers brought down one wall of their stockade and we stormed their village. Many of you suffered wounds that day when we forced back. Some of you lost kinsman, like Ketil Longstrider and Orlgard Gralarson. They have yet to pay us compensation for those losses. It is time we took payment with sword and spear. I am looking for about fifty warriors and healers too. I am also looking for people who can entertain, for a special task.

A cheer goes up from the assembled warriors. One by one, warriors stride down the bank to stand before Hiord, boast of their deeds, and, if necessary, prove them.

Natural Selection

Entertainers need not convince Hiord of their place, he simply directs them to entertain the gathered. Otherwise, heroes need to convince Hiord to take them on the raid. Some need to prove their words.

Contest: Win a Place on the Raiding Party

Appropriate Abilities: Boast, Orate (-2), Fast Talk (-3)

Typical Modifiers: Relationship to Hiord or Mitchuinn (-3).

Resistance: 17.

Complete Victory: Everyone has heard of your deeds, Hiord welcomes you on the raid.

Major Victory: You are convincing, Hiord asks you to win your place against a couple of youngsters - best/second-best skill at -8/-12 minimum of 17/15.

Minor Victory: You have promise. Win your place against an average member of the Warband - best/second-best skill at -4/-6 minimum of 14/19.

Marginal Victory: You might be good enough. As above, but experienced, -2/-4, 34/14 minimum.

Marginal Defeat: You fail to shine. You face veteran: 0/-2, 54/34 minimum.

Minor Defeat: You are a good opponent for someone more experienced to show his skills. As above, but +2/0, 74/54 minimum.

Major Defeat: Joining the raid is honor. One of Hiord's household decides to show you the standard. As above, but +4/+2, 94/74.

Complete Defeat: Hiord tells you to try again in another year.

The Holmgang

Warriors must prove their skills in a Holmgang, or duel. The duel, takes place on one of the granite plinths of the causeway. It is the only place in the assembly area not subject to Ernalda's peace. The rock is twelve feet across, and a judge spreads a white bulls' hide cloak, 9' in diameter, upon the island, calling upon Orlanth to witness

the duel. Like a Humakti duel, the duelists fight either until to first blood, or until one places both their feet over the edge of the cloak. Shedding blood (a *Marginal* or *Minor Defeat*) is more honourable than being forced from the cloak (a *Major* or *Complete Defeat*). Each combatant takes it in turn to strike, the challenger first. The judges do not allow ranged attacks and a duellist may not wear armor, but may use magic. The duelists pay no compensation for wounds inflicted in the duel. Instead the loser surrenders something of value to the winner, agreed beforehand (the agreement here is a place on the raid).

The Healer's Test

Healers compete on the rock too but their competition is in recognising healing plants, and challenging each other to recite the correct techniques for first aid, treating illnesses, and make medicines. A senior healer, Ernadela Proudfoot oversees the contests and judges the winners.

The Entertainer's Test

No one agrees as to why Hiord wants entertainers, and few came to compete for the honour of joining the raid. Perhaps he wants skalds to sing of the battle, or bagpipers to inspire the warriors. He seems willing to try everyone from puppeteers through jugglers to harpers. As long as the entertainer manages to amuse the crowd (test vs. resistance 17), Hiord is willing to have them.

The Woman who Washes by the Pool

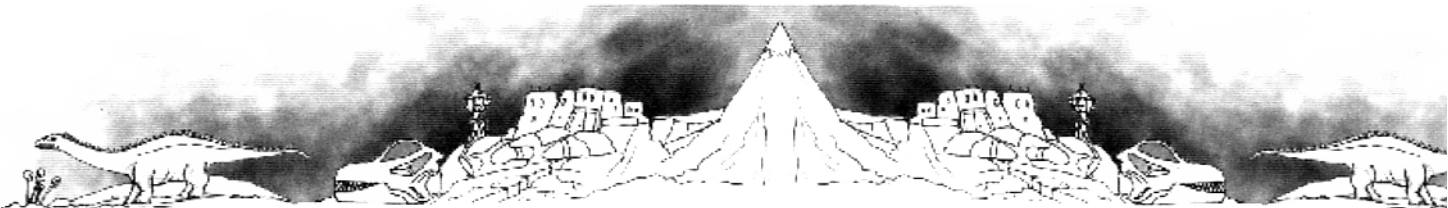
An opportunity, provided by Neela, remains to allow heroes who do not succeed in joining the Warband to go on the raid. All those heroes experience the following event. All experience the same thing, but individually. Heroes are aware that the boundaries between the other side (in this case the spirit world) and the mundane plane are thin. The heroes are walking down by the pool when suddenly they find themselves surrounded by the mist of the lake, unable to see more than a few feet ahead. Through the



HIORD PIGSTICKER

Warrior 154, Mastakos Devotee 104,
Eager 54

Hiord is a huscarl and the eldest son of Tovtarim. A Mastakos devotee, the tribesfolk worry Hiord has too much wanderlust to bear the burdens of office. His carousing with Erryn Cleverkennings adds to the tribe's disapproval. Anxious to prove his worth, Hiord takes great risks, but this has not endeared him to the warband. Hiord is generous, and just and earned the name Pigsticker for his raids against the Aramites, bravely standing against Tusker charges with the barbed iron spear Gutter, his uncle's legacy. Two door thanes, Harvald and Ovtol are always at his side.



comes the sound of a woman crying. Heroes who head in the direction of the crying come across a beautiful young woman washing clothes by the poolside. Other heroes wander lost in the mist. She sobs as she works. Her eyes are overlarge and blood-shot from crying, her face sallow with sunken cheeks, her hair is unkempt. The hero notices that the woman is washing red, blood-stained cloaks. Blood washes into the water, but the woman never seems to be able to get the cloaks clean.

Heroes may try to comfort the crying woman. Let all the heroes who want to try, try at once, pitting an appropriate skill or magic against a resistance of 14. If a hero succeeds in offering comfort, the sobbing woman looks up at him and says, "If only you had gone, I wouldn't have all these cloaks to wash." She does not speak to heroes who fail, instead they hear the terrible howl of a mourning widow, a howl that fills them with the fear of death (they may acquire the Flaw Morbid 12).

The mist parts and the heroes find themselves standing at the poolside, back in the mundane world. Hargran Swiftaxe appears. "What did you see?" If the hero tells Hargran, he takes them to Hiord. Unsure what this means, Hiord summons Vargast, godi of the warband. Vargast explains that Neela has appeared as the 'woman who washed by the pool' before. She is always an omen of death. If she does not speak to the viewer or the viewer wanders aimlessly in the mist, it is an omen of the his death. When she speaks, it is an omen of deaths within the tribe. Her warnings always bear fruit, though some have escaped their *wyrd* by virtue of the warning. Vargast and Hiord quickly agree - heroes to whom Neela spoke must accompany the raid. To others they offer a choice "We cannot know whether you can avoid your *wyrd* by going with the warband, or staying here. We offer you the choice." Heroes who choose to remain at home are effectively out of the episode. It is up to the narrator to decide if they must confront their *wyrd*, if they remain at home.

Neela has seen one possible path, but the strands of Arachne Solara's web offer many. The omen lasts for at least this scenario, whenever the hero faces physical risk. If Neela predicted his death, he may not spend any hero points to bump rolls in that contest, and he experiences flashbacks of Neela crying by the pool. If Neela predicted the hero to be a saviour, the hero may spend hero points to bump up other participant's rolls, as well as his own, during the contest, and he flashbacks of Neela washing the clothes, saying, "If only you were there." Heroes discover this effect after the first contest with physical risk begins.

SCENE 3: TO THE BUSH RANGE

The Warband travels to the Bush Range. Hiord tells everyone to set out on foot, because horses will not be able to take the route he proposes. It takes the warband through Mitchuinn lands around the south of Kero Fin, north of Wintertop and onto the Bagnot road. Hiord wants to avoid both Wintertop and Iristaros lands: Lunar spies are rife there. The Warband follows the Bagnot road to the Shaker temple, where they join the Blasted Earth Day services.

On the Road

The Warband travels quickly through tribal lands south of Kero Fin climbing higher into the Kerospine Mountains. The route leads the up the course of the Lion River towards Lion Moun-

tain. Progress soon becomes slow as the path winds around the spurs of the valley. The river turns to whitewater and the path alongside narrow to single file, the rock slick, and wet, passing through gorges and waterfalls. At these heights, it quickly becomes cold.

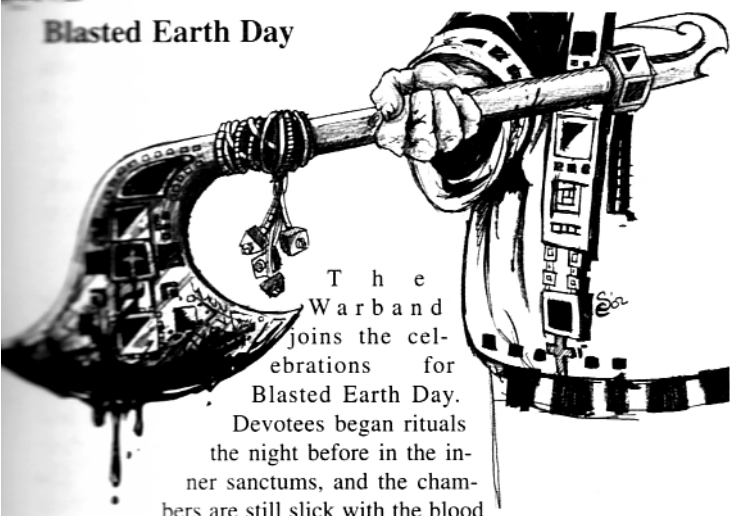
The Narrator can just skip over the journey, or play out several vignettes. A broken trail where the path has fallen away in a landslide over a river may require a risky climb or jump to cross. Standing watch on a cold mountain night carries the risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Then, Hiord chooses to cross between Kero Fin and Lion Mountain through Dangmar's Pass to reach De Garavum in time for Blasted Earth Day, even though Dangmar's Pass is also known as Dangmar's Giant Pass, because Mountain Giants live there. Only the desperate, or heroes, go that way. Dangmar was just the first of many to die trying. The heroes might be scouts or on watch when mountain giants try to attack the warband, their vigilance as important as their combat skills. Fortunately, Mountain Giants, known as Hecalonti, are no longer as powerful as their ancient kin, although they are still impressively large, averaging 20' in height. Up to two-dozen giants ambush the Warband (Close Combat 15W, Ranged Combat 3W, Large 18W-5W2, Strong 18W-5W2, Dodge Attack 17), lead by Hagrid Mansnapper. The giants capture defeated heroes and supporting characters and take them to their camp, destined for the cooking pot. The Narrator should adjudicate heroes' attempts to escape, or arrange a rescue. Play the giants as a more primitive pastiche of Heortling culture. Their 'stead' is a set of caves high in the mountains surrounded by sheep pens.

Eventually, though, the warband descends from Dangmar's Pass onto the Wintertop-Bagnot road north of Wintertop. Despite being Hendarli country, the road is open to all Kerofini and busy with pilgrims journeying north to De Garavum for Blasted Earth Day. Soon a small caravan surrounds the Warband, as travellers seek safety from bandits. At some point, there will be an earthquake. Animals begin whining or looking nervous about an hour before this occurs. Maran devotees sense the impending tremor too, feeling agitated and irritable beforehand. When the quake comes, it throws everyone to the ground who fails a Strong ability test. A mule starts and charges off carrying a merchant's wares. After calming the animals people laugh in relief, and say, "Maran breathes."

The Shaker Temple

The temple sits on the Kerospine edge of the great natural basin called the Shakelands. The temple becomes visible from the road as it descends into the basin down Breakleg ridge. Here, everyone feels a vibration from the ground at all times coming up through the soles of their feet and resonating in the hollows of their body. Cyclopean walls surround the temple, which is set back against the great cliffs, forming a series of tiers. The blocks of the walls are huge, pierced by great arches and gates, sized for giants not for puny men. Women warriors with axes, some copper, guard the gates (see *Tarsh in Flames*, pp67-68). Initiates and supplicants gather in the courtyard in front of the temple gates. Fissures split the ground here. Sulphurous gases belch forth from the cracks in the earth. Faithful pilgrims breathe deeply of the gases, inhaling the goddess's breath, collapse, and thrash ecstatically on the ground.

Blasted Earth Day



The Warband joins the celebrations for Blasted Earth Day. Devotees began rituals the night before in the inner sanctums, and the chambers are still slick with the blood

of the Temple's enemies, Dara Happan prisoners, sacrificed to Sörgoth Kor to appease the goddess for the destruction of the Dordarings. The warband's Maran worshippers enter the temple to join in the ceremony and travel to the Other Side to join with their goddess. The communal worshippers wait in the courtyard, praying that gifts and sacrifices of thralls appease the hungry goddess for another year and the initiates do not seize them as sacrifices in her rites. The earth twists and turns, at times seeming to flow like liquid, the very cliff face and floor rippling throwing the pilgrims to their knees. The pilgrims cry out "She is here, she is here" as the goddess shows her vengeful power. The Blasted Earth Day rites are truly terrifying for those who are not Maran initiates. Communal worshippers should test their bravery (Resistance 5W) if they do not wish to spend most of the ceremony cowering in fear.

SCENE 4: THE TOMB OF THE LONG AXE

Next day, Hiord assembles the warband in the courtyard of the Shaker Temple.

We've come here to seek Palashee's blessing for our raid. Many of you wondered why I brought entertainers on this expedition. I plan to send warriors into the stead disguised as entertainers, amidst the skalds and puppeteers. With Orlanth's blessing, they will capture the gates at dawn, open them, and hold them while we charge in. We will fight like Alusar, with stealth and cunning.

Hiord asks the heroes to join the disguised group sneaking into the stead. He wants to keep the numbers small, so Hiord's hearth companions dissuade heroes from taking the followers, saying, "They'll be chances for them to gain glory another time, this is your chance to shine." The only exception are entertainers, the muse needs them. In case the hero band has few or no entertainers, they will be accompanied by others Hiord has recruited, such as Gringle Andersson's leads a troupe of Skovari & Skovara puppeteers, famous for their Thunder Brother's Tommin' Tales, comic retellings of some of the Thunder Brothers' more ribald exploits or even his friend Erryn Cleverkennings, the bagpiping Mitchuinn tribal skald, a veteran of many battles now chafing under the infirmity of his limbs..

The hearth companions take the troupe to one side. Ovtol, one of Hiord's huscarls briefs them.

"You will need Yinkin's cunning to pull this off. Even though they don't worship Orlanth, they still honor Alakoring, and he backs the Greeting for them. We honor Alakoring and we don't disregard the rules of hospitality. If you do break the rules of hospitality, Alakoring will curse you all. But, they don't follow Orlanth so you should be able trick them into breaking hospitality. That will bring the curse down on them and you can act without fear of angering the gods. That is the point to storm the gates and throw them open. Call lightning, make a fire or a noise, do something to signal to us. When you signal we'll come. You only have to hold the gate that long."

Some heroes may feel that Hiord's plan is dishonourable and not the way a good Orlanthi warrior should fight his enemies. Humakti with *geas* never to take part in an ambush may find the plan particularly difficult. Ovtol reminds them that their enemies do not worship Orlanth, and such tactics are fair against them. Alusar and Desemborth are members of the Storm Tribe. If they still object, Hiord excuses them from joining the band sneaking into the stead. Such heroes do not take part in scene 5 but instead rejoin the story in scene 6.

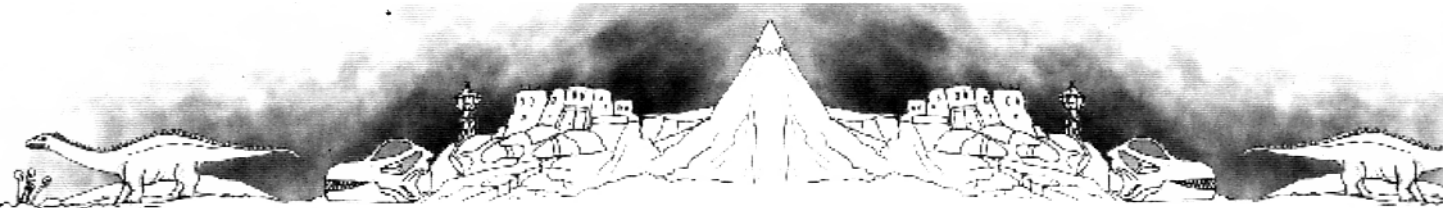
Preparations

The Shaker temple holds the tombs of the ancient kings of Tarsh, their bodies placed whole into funeral urns and then lowered into the gratefully receiving earth. In a stone sarcophagus lies Palashee LongAxe. Though he was never a sacrificial king, the temple raised him and he restored the glory of Old Tarsh. Most of the tombs have small shrines associated with them accessed by passages leading from the courtyard into the rock of the temple. Hiord gathers the warband to prepare for their raid.

Hiord has decided to ask for Palashee's blessing. The **Palashee Harries Philigos** ritual invokes Palashee's pursuit of the evil King Philigos all the way to Furthest. Palashee exhorts his warband to greater efforts in their pursuit calling for them not to "sleep nor tire from battle or pursuit until the field is ours". If successful, the warband gain a +5 bonus to any Movement or Endurance ability and can provide extraordinary support to a chosen hero. The ritual also gives a -10 penalty to contests against the enemy leader, for Palashee failed to catch Philigos. When the warriors return home, they sleep heavily for two days, while they 'catch up'. Palashee's war magic would give away the infiltrators, so Hiord chooses to perform a Yinkini rite to aid them: **Alusar Sleeps by the Enemy's Fire**. Alusar spent many a night enjoying the hospitality of Orlanth's enemies (if you are going to live off somebody else's hard work, why not pick somebody you do not like?), keeping his ears and eyes open, for he knew how to make himself look presentable and hunt for a gift that he could add to the evening's meal. If the celebrant succeeds the participants gain a +4 bonus to any Carousing, Entertaining or Spying ability.

SCENE 5: AN ENEMY'S HOSPITALITY

As the heroes enter the Dirani *tula*, mounted warriors ride out to meet them. The patrol is lead by Monrogh Illarason (Warrior 3W2, Yelmali Initiate 15W). Two mounted Templars accompany Monrogh (Warrior 15W, Yelmali Initiate 13W) along with 8 fyrdsmen (Warrior 17, Doburdun Initiate 15). Monrogh performs the Greeting (*Thunder Rebels* p34). The heroes' leader needs to deceive the Greeting ritual's truth magic (resistance 1W2). Allow other heroes with suitable skills to augment the leader and



embellish his account. On a *Minor* or *Complete Defeat*, Monrogh realises they are disguised enemies and attacks. On a *Major Defeat*, he understands that they are concealing information. As they are entertainers, he decides to take them to see the shrieve, not just kill them. The resulting suspicion puts the Dirani on guard and gives a 50% penalty to all abilities used to deceive the Dirani. A *Marginal* result means Monrogh is suspicious, while on a *Minor Victory*, he believes them. On a *Complete* or *Major Victory*, the Dirani suffer a -10 penalty when resisting the heroes' deceptions.

If Monrogh runs the heroes off the tula, Hiord attacks without the benefit of infiltrators, go to Scene 6. Otherwise, Monrogh offers the heroes water and takes them to see the shrieve at Farstead. Presuming the heroes claim to be entertainers, Justin asks for a demonstration of their skills. This is a group simple contest of the heroes' entertainment skills against a resistance of 14 + group size.

On a defeat, the heroes fail to convince the shrieve, Justin offers only water, and not a place to sleep in the hall. The clan gives them shelter in an outbuilding only. The lack of contact makes it almost impossible for them to trick their hosts. On a success, Justin offers them a blanket, inviting them into the hall. Judge the size of the feast Justin orders by the level of their success. The heroes may take their ease until the evening. Then, if they gained more than water, their hosts arrange a feast in the mead hall. The feast is mutton stew, served on rye bread, with cheese and ale for all. Guests near the high seat eat roast pig and drink mead. The Sun Dancers seem less keen on drinking to excess than others. After the feast, the shrieve calls for entertainment.

Breaking Hospitality

Hospitality is a gift and like all gifts should be repaid, even if it is only a song, tale or news from afar. Those who fail to return the gift of hospitality acquire a reputation as a scrounger and are no longer welcomed. More to the point, hospitality does not just exist so that men may find shelter for the night while travelling; it exists so that men might meet in peace, without fear of vio-

lence. Any breach of that rule brings divine wrath, whether physical attack or crime. Breaking hospitality afflicts the losers with Divine Wrath (*Thunder Rebels* p78). In this case, the curse is not Orlanth's but Alakoring's. It saps courage. The cursed suffer a -5 penalty to all actions that involve some sort of risk. Atoning requires winning a lawsuit to prove there was no breach, or payment of the fine of ten cows. Thus, the heroes must try to trick or provoke the Dirani into the first breach.

This can be resolved as a simple test of Boast, Wit, Irritate or the like against a combined resistance of 14W2. Alternatively, it could be handled as an extended contest. Their hosts' bids represent their attempts to retain their cool despite the provocation or even trying to push the heroes into breaking hospitality first with their own boasts and insults. Heroes may challenge their hosts to contests such as wrestling, drinking, football, or other skills that may lead to violent outbursts from the losers. Add enough Dirani at the evening's feast to give them a similar AP total to the heroes. The Yelmalian are proud and less liberal than other Orlanthi, and their prejudices, taboos and geases might give the heroes a major edge if exploited, although it would take an Alakoring Customs (Heortling Customs -3) test to be aware of them.

Broken Hospitality

Determine what happens from the contest results:

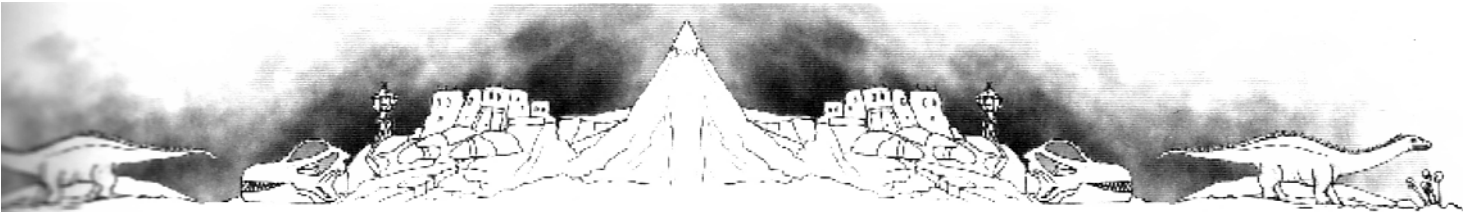
- Any Victory:* The Dirani break hospitality with the heroes. Alakoring curses them, and the Dirani, their fortitude and courage ebbing from them, turn pale. The shrieve flees the hall, accompanied by his huscarls. Rapidly the other thanes desert the hall, and the heroes until only a few remain. In any contest, the cursed Dirani are at -5.
- Marginal or Minor Defeat:* The heroes fail to provoke the Dirani.
- Major or Complete Defeat:* The heroes have broken hospitality. They feel afraid and are unable to decide what to do next. Fleeing seems the best option! Cursed, the heroes' actions are at -5.

The Narrator may want to adjudicate any other penalties from the manner in which hospitality was broken. For example, if violence breaks hospitality then run the resulting fight as a simple contest. Successful heroes can go to scene 6.

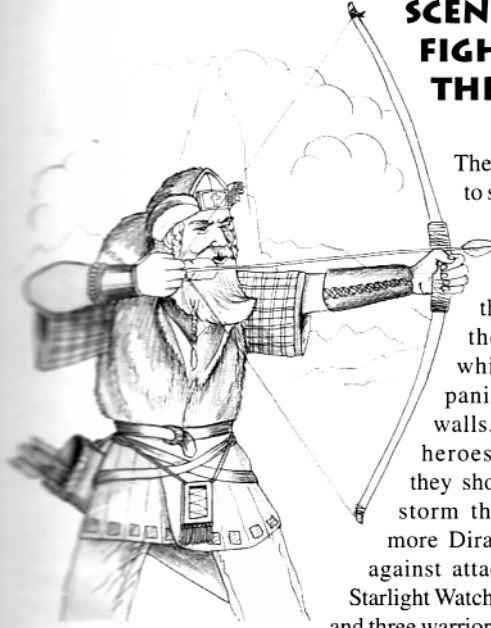
THE DIRANI CLAN

With 300 men and woman and only half as many children, the Dirani are a new clan of settlers from Tarsh, Holay, and Vanch. Some were outlaws, others foolish romantics, still more religious zealots, all were undesirables. The Dirani are part of Arim's Firstblood tribe, which claims the lands of the Bush Range, a claim the Exiles dispute. **Justin Stoneburner** is the clan shrieve, voice of the Firstblood tribe (Chief 18W, Doburdun Initiate 13W, Spear & Shield 2W2, Assess Problem 3W, Bully Clan 4W2). He rules the clan with an iron grip, for fear that the assorted bandits, thieves, and malcontents will seek power on their own. His right hand man, **Illig Avarensen** commands the warband (Warband Leader 4W2, Yelmalian Devotee 14W, Perceptive 4W). The most powerful priest is **Haliftoor Garnensson** (Yelmalian Priest 15W, Warrior 1W, Tight-Lipped 17). Clan chief **Elgan Orlgardsson** has a position that is little more than ceremonial, however he is a devotee of Barntar and has earned respect for his ability to make the Bush Range yield food. The Dirani live much as Orlanthi do, herding sheep and cattle, growing crops (maize not rye), and weaving. While not warlike, constant skirmishes with Exile raiders have resulted in a well-trained fyrd and increased the popularity of Yelmalian. The women worship Ernalda, many through HonEel. Maran is not welcome here. The Seven Mothers are popular, particularly Deezola, Danfive, and Yanafal.

The Dirani live in two villages: **Farstead**, home to the shrieve, and **Elgansfarm**, home to the clan chief. Farstead is by far the bigger, home to 200 adults, living in 12 hearths formed into squares of four, and ten cottages. The largest hearth of all is the shrieve's mead hall, 100' long, with a high pointed roof lined with tiles, decorated with a painted golden sun and golden nails outline the pattern of a sun hawk. The Dirani wyter is still only part-formed, reflecting the mixed nature of the community, but is housed within a golden shield mounted in the mead hall, granting the powers of Protect Maize 20, Blow Away Wind 18 and Predict Earthquake 17.



SCENE 6: THE FIGHT AT THE GATE



The warriors need to storm the stockade gates, overcome the warriors there, and hold the gates open while their companions storm the walls. Provided the heroes act quickly, they should be able to storm the gate before more Dirani reinforce it against attack. At night a Starlight Watch of one Templar and three warriors (Warrior 10W,

Yelmatio Initiate 7W) provide the gate guard, using Yelmalian magic to see and fight in the dark. With the gate captured, the heroes must signal to Hiord's waiting forces nearby and hold it long enough for Hiord's forces to reach them. A handful of huscarls attack the heroes at the gate (Warrior 10W, Doburdun Initiate 7W), supported by ten fyrd (Archer 17).

Hiord's Assault

Hiord's forces camp in the wilderness on the edge of the *tula* to avoid detection. Hiord asks for warriors with "good movement magic" to come forward. He leads this band on a charge across the *tula* on the signal, relying on magic supplemented by the ritual performed at Palashee's tomb. They help hold the gate. Besides any player-heroes, Hiord leads a force of eight warriors. Keeping up with Hiord is a simple contest of Movement magic or Run (-10) against a resistance of 2W.

Arrange his arrival at the gate and the numbers that arrive to be dramatic. Allow the heroes the chance to make a heroic stand, or a heroic rescue. If the heroes are having too easy a time of it, the defenders can regroup, or a relief force of templars, huscarls and fyrd may arrive from Elgansfarm. Conversely, if they look about to be overwhelmed, then allow Hiord to make his appearance unexpectedly early.

When the gate falls to Hiord, the Dirani form a cordon of warriors and try to evacuate women and children over the palisade walls. It is slow work. The panic caused by the curse creates confusion and means no one tries to counter-attack the forces now holding the gate as the rest of the warband arrives. Run the final fight at the stead as a group simple contest for all involved, the level of victory or defeat represents the damage the heroes are able to inflict and the plunder they are able to capture. Hiord's forces gain a comparable level of success. To Heortlings, the Ealies seem ruthless, giving far less quarter and taking thralls not prisoners.

Contest: Plunder Farstead

Appropriate Abilities: Close Combat, Ranged Combat
Resistance: 8W

Complete Victory: The warband loots and burns Farstead, carrying off 40 cows, 10 horses, a further 80 cows worth of goods and 20 thralls.

Major Victory: It carries off 30 cows, 5 horses, 60 cows worth of goods and 10 thralls. It desecrates the temples to Yelmatio and HonEel.

Minor Victory: It takes 20 cows, a horse, 40 cows worth of goods and 5 thralls, burning the mead hall.

Marginal Victory: 15 cows, 20 cows worth of goods and 1 thrall.

Marginal Defeat: The steadfolk manage to escape with some of their wealth and animals freed from the pens and barns quickly escape. The warband carries off 10 cows and 15 cows worth of goods.

Minor Defeat: The defenders put up a fight. The warband carries off 10 cows, and 15 cows worth of goods.

Major Defeat: The defenders retain control of most of the stead. The warband carries off only 5 cows and 10 cows worth of goods.

Complete Defeat: The defenders force the warband to retreat with nothing but their lives.

Failure, Flight, or Capture

Failure: If the heroes fail to outwit their hosts, but do not break hospitality, they can either storm the gates or play out their cover as entertainers and leave the next morning. If the heroes storm the gates, the initial opposition is as described. The heroes break hospitality by attacking their hosts, and Alakoring curses them. If the heroes capture the gates, Brave (-5) ability tests are needed to stand and hold them, heroes who fail flee. Stoneburner is soon on the scene with 4 huscarls, followed by Monrogh, 2 more huscarls, 6 warriors and 10 fyrd.

Flight: It is some moments before the Dirani realise what has happened. Pursuit follows rapidly, heroes with movement magics may be able to escape over the palisade walls, others may have to try to storm the gate or trick their way past.

Captured: If the Dirani capture the heroes not all is lost. Hiord negotiates for their release, but with the infiltration of the stead, the compensation demanded is high. Hiord must leave hostages to ensure future good conduct (cruel narrators may select some of the heroes' followers), and arrange the payment of future tribute. The debacle seems to doom his chances of succeeding to the kingship, unless he can orchestrate a reversal.

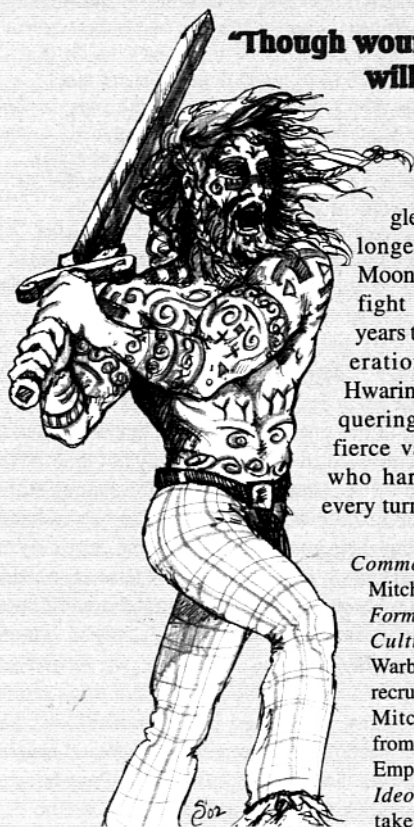
SCENE 7: HERO'S REWARD

Hiord leads the Warband home via the Shaker Temple and Wintertop. At the Shaker temple, a successful raiding party sacrifices thralls or cows to Maran in gratitude. At Wintertop, victors trade excess cattle and thralls for hacks of silver (silver armbands from which traders literally hack off required amounts). Back at Korlokstead, victors enjoy a victory feast with songs recounting their deeds in the mead hall, while losers slink home to their hearths in shame to mutter to each other of what ifs.

Success: Hiord gifts his warriors with hacks of silver and looted treasures. Heroes who performed well can cement a point of wealth; he gifts heroes who performed outstandingly with a specific item of excellent quality, such as a suit of mail or gold-tipped Yelmalian spear. Award each hero with 3 points of wealth, 5 if singled out. Heroes who are not from the Mitchuinn acquire a Relationship with the tribe.

Failure: Heroes who failed at Farstead may end up breaking hospitality. This leaves them with a reputation that affects offers of hospitality in southern Tarsh and the Bush Range in future.

THE MOONHATERS



"Though wounds lay me low, magics smite me down, or death claims me, I will lead my kin to war and plunder. As long as a Mitchuinn lives, the Empire will know no respite!"

Some have struggled against the Empire longer than others. The Moonhaters can trace their fight back three hundred years to the DaraNi confederation's resistance to Hwarin Dalthippa, the Conquering Daughter and the fierce valour of Mitchuinn, who harried the Lunars at every turn..

Common Names: The Mitchuinn Warband.

Form: Warband.

Cultural Context: The Warband of the Mitchuinn; recruits come not only from Mitchuinn clans but also from all those who hate the Empire.

Ideology: All Moonhaters take Mitchuinn's original vow of vengeance against

the Empire. They may never treat with or aid the Empire in any way.

Look and Feel: A famous warband, raiders of the Empire. The Moonhaters were among the first rebel Orlanthi bands fighting the Empire and are an icon to others. Many members are individually renowned.

Headquarters: Korlokstead, the seat of the Mitchuinn king, lies south of Wintertop. In the mead hall, the Moonhaters feast amidst the past plunder of an Empire and boast of their deeds.

Reactions: Most Orlanthi fighting against the Empire, revere the Moonhaters as an example, The Empire regards them as mortal enemies.

Resources

Leader: Jarolor the Fair

Renowned Members: Tovtarim Flamehair, King of the Mitchuinn, a battle-hardened bull of man, now past his prime; Hiord Pigsticker, Tovtarim's son and foe of the Tusk Riders; Erryn Cleverkennings, aged skald and Hiord's ale-companion; Aski Monrosson, Mitchuinn Champion, Hiord's foster-brother and master of many battle feats including the Spearjump Strike and Thunder Roar.

Membership: Jarolor can call upon a hundred warriors who are hearth companions of the band's leaders and rebels guesting with Tovtarim. This forms the cadre of the band. When Jarolor calls for action, many more flock to the band from the thanes and carls of the Mitchuinn clans seeking glory, rebels seeking to strike a blow against the Empire and adventurers seeking plunder. The band may reach two hundred warriors and magicians at such times.

Other Contacts: The Moonhaters have the support of the Mitchuinn tribe who gladly provide aid and comfort. United in their hatred of the Empire, the Old School and the Mitchuinn often work together.

Organisation

Jarolor the Fair leads the band; Hiord and Aski are his seconds. Jarolor is a cunning strategist and popular leader, Hiord is reckless, over-anxious to prove himself and less popular. When Jarolor raises the Tars Gor, warriors come from across Mitchuinn lands to earn their place. By tradition, the host gathers at Neela's Pool. Those who would join the fight must win a place either by boast or deed. Competition is intense, for there is the promise of plunder and glory. Duels, fought only to first blood or submission, frequently sort those who go from those who do not.

Guardian Being: Nine-Blows

Mitchuinn's sword acts as the guardian being for the Moonhaters. It is an emanation holding Jarolor Nine-Blows a Vingkotling warrior who fought the Dara Happans with his heart and his hands at the cost of his left eye and love. He died on Vingkot's Northfaring but Orlanth returned his soul to fight on. Provided the band keep Mitchuinn's sword safe, they can use the magic provided by Jarolor, and understand the hidden message in the north-blowing winds when he wishes to send them warnings or encouragement.

Method: *Imminent* (provides spell-like magic that any member can use).

Membership Requirements: Hate Lunars

Awareness Function: Sense Dara Happans 1W

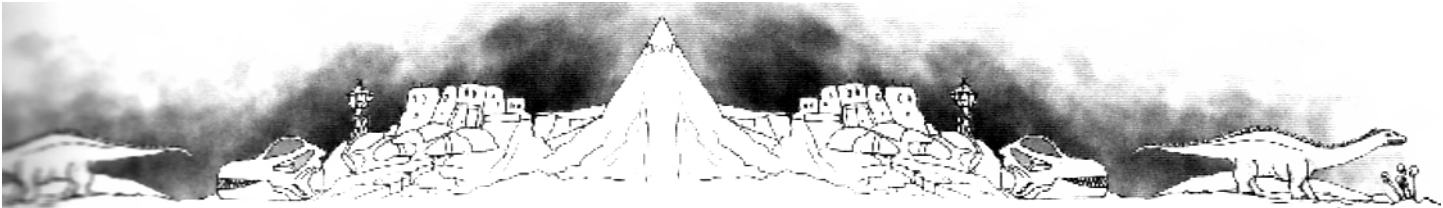
Blessing Function: Shatter Solar Spear 2W

Defence Function: Resist Solar Magic 3W

JAROLOR THE FAIR

Warrior 15W2, Devotee of Yavor 20W, Initiate of Mitchuinn 15W, Hunter 1W2, Wise 20W, Hate Lunars 1W2

Jarolor the Fair is the Mitchuinn Warband Leader and a devotee of Yavor Lightning, as well as an initiate of Mitchuinn. Orphaned as a child, he was raised by Far Walkers of the Far Place, although the blood of the Igarni chiefs runs in Jarolor's veins, even if the old bloodline is otherwise dead and the clan now part of the Breagalos and lost to the Lunar Way. A cunning strategist and veteran of many campaigns, in his youth, Jarolor accidentally consumed the magic of the Salmon of Wisdom while guarding a Lhankoring expedition to Skyfall Lake. Jarolor bears the iron sword *Mooncutter*, forged from a fallen star, and when not warring enjoys hunting with his alynx pack.



KING FOR A DAY

Providing for the community is an essential duty of the chief. But what is an acceptable price to pay to feed the clan folk?

NARRATOR'S INFORMATION

In an emulation of HonEel's conversion of Tarsh, Salevra the Alluring, Principal Dancer of the Corn Bringers, has seduced Chief Tarkil of the Irist Hold and become his mistress. Janerra, Tarkil's wife, has returned to her clan claiming the king has committed adultery. Many elders of the Delvalan are dismayed, but the Moon draws many, after the years of famine tired of watching more kinfolk die in the winter. Salevra convinces Tarkil to begin cultivating maize.

The corn rites require blood sacrifice, and men loyal to Tarkil seek victims. Tarkil is unaware that Salevra intends that he will lead those sacrifices in spilling his blood upon the fields. She plans the corn rites for Wild day, of Fertility week of Sea Season - the day of the Full Moon.

Involving the heroes

This episode is written with the assumption that the heroes will actively oppose the corn rites, or their part in them. Other decisions are possible, but require more work from the narrator. Outsiders often pass through Irist Hold. The heroes might join a caravan passing through Irist Hold on its way between Sartar and Tarsh. The approach of Fish Day, Thunder Day and Honouring Day draw many clan folk from the Tamlane Hills to Irist Hold to participate in the rites and the attendant festival and fair. Rebels may have heard rumours that the Irist Holders are turning to the Red Earth and seek to oppose it - such heroes may already have contacts with the Old School.

Another option, especially useful if you want to shorten the scenario, would be to have the heroes captured by Bushwhackers, Exile raiders (see *The Thieves' Arm*, pp8-9), and simply sold to Salevra for use in the rites.

THE CORN RITES

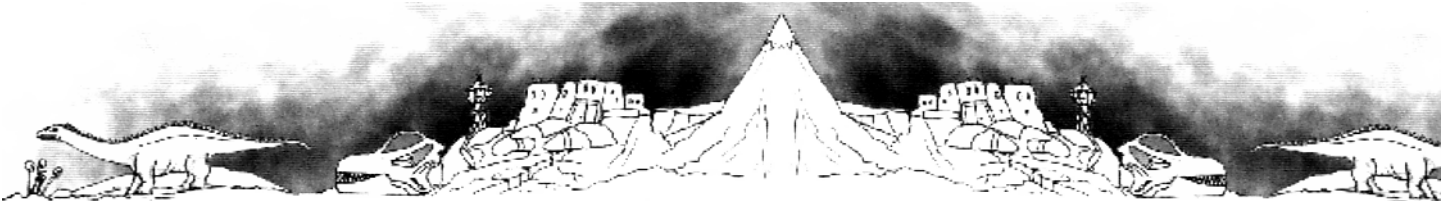
Corn does not grow well without blood sacrifice. HonEel's Corn Rites re-enact both the impregnation of HonEel by Sinoda the elf god and his murder by Alanthore. In Tarsh, they are 'sacrificial kingship' rites drawing from the rites of Sorana Tor and Maran Gor. First, a sacrificial victim playing Sinoda, who is usually an enemy or victim forced into the part, enjoys a feast fit for a king and an amorous seduction by a celebrant playing HonEel. The victim must willingly consummate the relationship with the celebrant, as Sinoda did with HonEel. The victim always successfully impregnates the child of the die a tragic death young. The union is fated to while still



The next day the victim to ploughed fields. In victim faces a champion playing Alanthore in single combat. Alanthore must kill the sacrificial victim and spill his blood on the earth, fertilizing the soil, for the rite to be successful. After the blood has spilled, the priestesses sow corn.

Multiple celebrants are possible - the rites of consummation between Sinoda and HonEel become an orgy and the single combat the next day a gladiatorial game in a blood soaked arena of the fields. The corn rites may be performed as an execution not a ritual a combat. These rites are weaker, but acceptable when maize has grown in the fields in previous years. The victims are frequently criminals, enemies-of-the-state, the infirm, or insane (see *Tarsh in Flames*, pp38-40).

Emperor Venerabilis banned the human sacrifice element of the ritual and the HonEel cult replaced human sacrifice with corn dolls, outside Oria. The harvests were less bounteous and the priestesses have slowly whittled away the prohibition and where they are strong, such as in Tarsh, the sacrificial rites remain in force.



SCENE 1: THE TAMLANE HILLS



Key points: Bushwhackers ambush the heroes on their way to the Thunder Day celebrations in Irist Hold

Setting: The heroes are travelling through the Tamlane Hills outside Irist Hold. A Hedkorph storm pelts them with hail.

Hedkorph Storm

Deafening thunder, driving wind, dark Ram Clouds, illumination from flashes of lightning, driving hail and slippery mud make everything the heroes try to do more difficult. Apply a -5 penalty to all perception or stamina-based abilities. Characters may use Endure Weather, Tough or similar abilities as an augment to negate this penalty. Heroes who worship the Storm should rejoice in their god's power. Increase Storm affinities by 1/2. Indeed, worshippers of Hedkorph, while still suffering the same penalties, will feel euphoric to be in the presence of their turbulent god.

Fighting in the Mud is at a -5 penalty representing the slippery and boggy ground and applies to all combatants. Combatants who have feats such as Run across Mud can negate this penalty, those with movement affinities augment against it. These penalties and benefits apply equally to narrator characters.

Ambush

The Corn Bringers need more victims for their forthcoming sacrificial rites. No one will miss a few travellers on the road to Irist Hold (indeed, if the heroes have come to the notice of Salevra or the Lunar religious authorities as trouble-makers or rebel-sympathisers, they may even be specifically targeted). Morofdul the Cunning leads a band of Tarshite mercenaries in an ambush attempt. He uses his Warband Tactics 7W when setting the Ambush.

Contest: Stage an Ambush

Appropriate Abilities: Ambush, Stealth abilities (-3), appropriate Tactics Abilities (-5), Know [Enemy] -10, Hunting (-10).

Typical Modifiers: Greatly superior numbers +5; greatly inferior numbers -5; late getting into position -10.

Resistance: Opponent's best Sense Ambush, Scouting, Good Hearing (-5), Keen Vision (-5), Know Local Area (-5), or appropriate Tactics ability (-10).

Complete Victory: As major victory for three rounds

Major Victory: As minor victory, plus losers must spend the first round withdrawing or in shock (which takes an unrelated action).

Minor Victory: Winners attack losers at close range, allowing no ranged attacks. Winners may augment their melee ability with Ambush.

Marginal Victory: Winners surprise the losers, allowing the losers only one round of ranged attacks or magic before close combat.

Tie: Ambush is unsuccessful, with no side having an advantage.

In the gully, the ground has turned to thick mud with a boggy stream running through it. This makes fighting difficult and combatants are in constant danger of slipping and sliding. As well as Morofdul, there is one bushwhacker for each hero and follower. Do not forget multiple attacker penalties (*Hero Wars* p140)

Morofdul the Cunning

A Yanafal Vorderos worshipper from the Gardint, and an infatuated lover of Salevra, he leads a band of warriors who act as bodyguards to the Arteses. As worshipper of a bodyguard god, Morofdul is the 'enforcer' for the Whole Spring Dancers.

Keywords: Tarshite Warrior 5W2, Vorderos Initiate 4W2 (Combat, Vorderos, Warlord)

Significant Abilities: Brave 4W, Close Combat 5W2, Dodge Attack 12W, Ranged Combat 6W2, Scan Terrain 6W, Warband Tactics 7W.

Equipment: Chain armour and shield ^5, Scimitar ^3, Axe ^3, Throwing axe ^3, knife ^1

Personal Augments:

Brave (+2 to Close Combat)

Combat Affinity (+4 to Close Combat)

Vorderos Affinity (+4 to Scan Terrain)

Warlord Affinity (+4 to Warband Tactics)

Fighting in Mud (-5 to Close Combat, Scan Terrain and Warband Tactics)

Tarshite mercenary

The ambushers want to capture the heroes alive, and use non-lethal combat (*Hero Wars* p148), battering them with their Addi. If a hero is defeated then the ambusher will use Bind Captive as a parting shot (*Hero Wars* p141). An ambusher captures any hero reduced to dying or any defeated hero's follower. Their next action is to withdraw from combat (*Hero Wars* p138). See *Barbarian Adventures* (p23) for Doburdun.

Keywords: Initiate of Doburdun 8W (Storm, Thunder Addi), Tarshite Warrior 1W.

Significant Abilities: Bind Captive 5W, Brave 3W, Close Combat 3W, Ranged Combat 5W, Running 3W.

Equipment: Leather and bronze armour and shield ^3, spear ^3, Addi ^3, throwing axe ^3, knife ^1

Personal Augments:

Brave (+2 to Close Combat)

Hedkorph Storm (+12 to Storm Affinity)

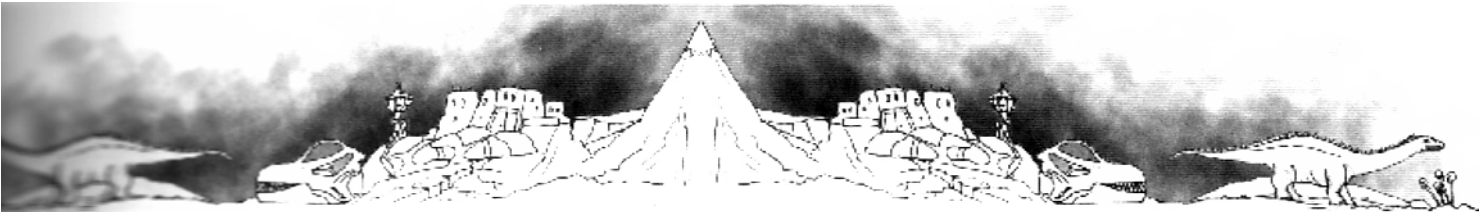
Storm Affinity (+4 to Close Combat)

Thunder Addi (+2 to Close Combat)

Fighting in Mud (-5 to Close Combat)

Tracking the ambushers is impossible in the rain, the storm washes the tracks away too quickly, and the visibility is too poor. Magic senses could perhaps work, but the natural resistance will be augmented both by the effects of the storm and also the cunning ploys Morofdul knows, for an extra difficulty of +20.

Free heroes continue to Irist Hold. The ambushers take any captured heroes are Tarkilstead. Deal with any captured heroes, or attempts to free them in **Captured**.



SCENE 2: THUNDER DAY

Key Points: (Waterday, Fertility week, Sea Season) The heroes attend the Thunder Day celebrations, and learn that something is rotten in Irist Hold.

Irist Hold

Over a half-mile in diameter and enclosed in a 15' high earthen dyke, Irist Hold is a reminder that the Vingkotlings, who built it, were greater than their descendants in both stature and achievement. The fort has gone by many names. The Vingkotlings called it Berhof. Arim's people called it Harda Fort for the pass it controlled. Some mistakenly call it Delvalan fort for the nearby hill and occupying clan, but most call it Irist Hold for the tribe which gathers in the hills around, for whom it is a refuge and tribal center.

Population: As of 1620 the population is around 950 adults. Most of the herders, huntsmen, craftsmen, and warriors who call Irist Hold home are from the Delvalan clan. Thaners, traders, and supplicants from other clans visit Irist Hold swelling the overall numbers, as do travellers and caravans crossing the Harda Pass. A fifth of the population of the town is thralls. Male thralls work as unskilled labourers or herders (pigs and sheep); female thralls are domestic servants or concubines.

The Hill Fort: South of Delvalan hill a defensive dyke and palisade wall encloses the upper third of the hill. Drum towers are spaced along the wall, providing both a lookout post and communications. The drums are a constant accompaniment to life here, a background conversation. Storm Village provides the basic pattern for the settlement though Earth traditions are strong here too.

Town houses: Single storied longhouses, about 12-20' wide and 30-50' with wattle and daub walls and thatched roofs. No one builds in stone, because the regular earthquakes mean buildings

collapse with alarming regularity. The locals avoid cellars for the same reason. The gaudily decorated buildings reflect a love of colours and patterns. In good weather, craftsmen set up stalls outside the house, where the light is better and there is less chance of the roof falling in, crowding the narrow streets of the fort. Most houses are split between living quarters for people and a byre for the cattle, though richer hearths have separate cattle byres.

The Chief's Hall: The hall is 130' long and 40' wide with a brightly coloured tile roof, heavily buttressed to provide additional support against the shaking earth. The timbers of the hall still creak unnervingly every time the earth trembles, and a few tiles always slide from the roof.

Lightning Flint Hill: The highest point in the fort. Six menhirs of flint forming a Storm Rune attract lightning during storms, and give this Orlanth temple its name. On Holy Days, they glow blue and lightning arcs between them and the clouds.

The Delvalan Stone: Said to be the stone on which Delvalan the Founder sat when he formed the clan, generations of chiefs have sat on this stone plinth and worn it smooth whilst presiding over the moot. The Delvalan cannot inaugurate their chiefs without it. Prophecy tells that a thief will come to take the stone and the clan will fall, so the chief's weaponthanes keep watch on the stone night and day. From this duty, they gain their name - the Stoneguard.

Streets: The streets are of wattle fencing laid on the ground, which help to keep feet out of the mud. Along them are the homes, workshops and stalls of coopers, redsmiths, tanners, turners, potters, brewers, leather workers, antler and soapstone carvers.

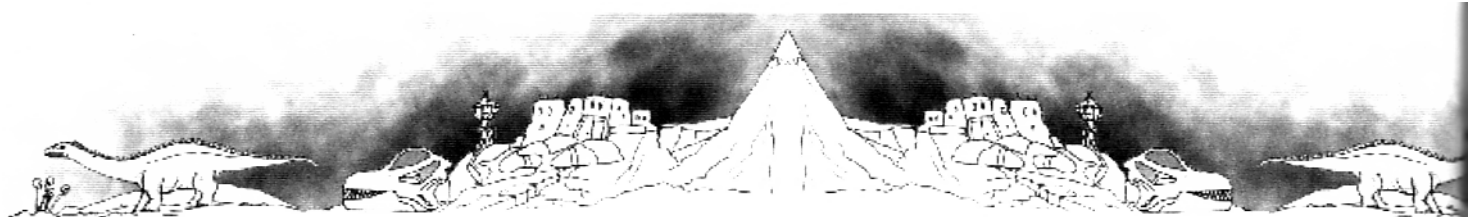
Delvalan Hill: A temple to Maran the Earthshaker is located on Delvalan Hill to the north of the fort. The priestesses throw sacrifices into a crevasse on the hilltop. A temple to Ernalda, Maran's gentle sister, lies at the heart of the fort.

The Death House: Outside the walls is the Iristaros tribal temple to Humakt, the death house. There are numerous Humakti among the Iristaros for the tribal lands are close to the Upland Marsh and many clan warriors live by selling their swords. The temple maintains a Humakti battalion led by Derek the Gravelvoiced. A 15' high stone wall encircles the temple.

The Elmal Temple: Also located outside the walls is the tribal temple to Elmal. Elmal is important among the Kerofini, both because his steadfastness is seen as an inspiration in troubled times, and because Kero Fin is where Elmal shone from in the Darkness. Kirnan Yellowstripe is the chief priest of the tribe.

The Heler Temple: The tribe maintains only a shrine to Heler. Camille Twoscars, a devotee of Uroth the Ram, is the godi of the temple. Supported by a stipend from the tribal king, she ministers to the needs of the faithful.





The Ormalaya Temple: Farming is not as important as hunting to the Iristaros. Hunting trophies including the bones of Thunderbeasts stalked by to great hunters adorn the temple to Ormalaya. Hastur Sureshot is the chief priest and oversees the temple, hunting contests, and rituals.

How can I pay? The locals barter, but merchants accept silver or gold. Old Tarsh coins are accepted and trusted, as are some of the new coins minted by the King's Ring in Wintertop. Local merchants spit on the new Tarshite coins, stamped with a usurper's head, but value the coins at weight. The Chief of Irist Hold levies a tax of one part in seven on all transactions made by outsiders. The female thrall, worth three cows, is the basic unit for measuring exchange among the Exiles.

Where can I stay? Irist Hold controls the southern end of the Harda Pass and caravans passing through the Dragonspine frequently rest here. Caravan guards and porters usually stay in Tenttown, a shanty town of canvas and mud, which nonetheless is regarded as a little more secure and prestigious than Outside-the-Walls, where transients and the dispossessed shelter in a collection of hovels, from where there is plenty of opportunity for begging if little protection.

Entering Irist Hold

Joram Sharpword, a weaponthane, and his four storms are on guard at the gate (use the Patrol Leader from *Barbarian Adventures* p22). Run through the greeting with heroes when they arrive (*Thunder Rebels* p34, *Barbarian Adventures* p10). Joram's *Sceptical* ability is 1W. If the heroes lie, then the ritual allows Joram to augment his scepticism with the clan wyter's awareness (+5). On a victory, Joram assigns his backboy to lead them to the chief's hall. With the up and coming holy day drawing in all sorts, Joram will not run the heroes off on a defeat; instead he tells them that they must remain outside the fort between dusk and dawn. He points them in the direction of the hovels of Irist Hold Outside-the-Walls. Tarkil greets visitors perfunctorily offering them only water and asking caravan masters for passage across the pass: one ewe or two wethers (castrated rams) for each person with his entourage. He prefers silver. The heroes also note Salevra, the beautiful woman who is always at his side.

The heroes arrive on Fish Day, an Odaylan festival (*Storm Tribe* p144). Some of the clan hunters meet in sacred bear caves nearby to worship. Most of the Delvalan hunters mark this festival as it denotes the height of the fishing season that brings much of the clan's spring food. Heroes who are devotees or initiates of Odayla should attend the ceremony. Use the **Thunder Day** notes below for inspiration, if you want to detail the ceremony.

Divine Wrath

First Lunar missionaries and now the Corn Bringers have seduced the leaders of the community, and many of its members, to worship the Lunar Earth. Now the community is experiencing Divine Wrath (*Thunder Rebels* p78). The community leaders hide their actions from their gods. The men's breath is weak, they wheeze like asthmatics. The women are snappy, and argumentative. Worst of all, the air is weak in Irist Hold and the Delvalan tula. Heroes will notice that they seem to be more short of breath than usual, that foul smells linger, that Irist Hold smells rotten, that smoke seems to hover, failing to rise and must be wafted

away. Some clan's folk go about with cloth tied over their nose and mouth. Something is obviously wrong in Irist Hold.

Thunder Day

As dusk, and with it Thunder Day, approaches the wind begins to pick up, brightly coloured windsocks fly from the drum tower masts, and Orlanthi with abilities like *Sense Change in the Weather* are able to feel the approaching Ohorlanth storm. There is a palpable sense of relief as the smells and smoke in Irist Hold begins to clear, and the tightness around the chest recedes (it will begin to return again once Thunder Day has passed).

Thunder Day celebrates the coming of the Ohorlanth storm; the warm fertile rains of spring instead of the cold winds of Dark and Storm Season (see *Thunder Rebels* p112). Review the material on Orlanthi ceremonies as described in *Thunder Rebels* (pp61-62, 118-120). Orlanth devotees should attend the full ceremony, whereas initiates attend only from dawn. Initiates or worshippers of other gods need not attend.

The opening ceremony: The Storm Voices bless the six stones atop Lightning Flint Hill, and stands at the centre, finishing the pattern of the storm rune. As each devotee enters the sacred space enclosed by the spiral, he names himself. Chief Tarkil is not among those present, nor are many of the ring. Emphasise to the heroes that this is a shock to the Delvalan. Yarandros, the chief priest, decides to press ahead with the ceremony:

We call upon Hant, Heort, and Hara; and all the good gods and goddesses.

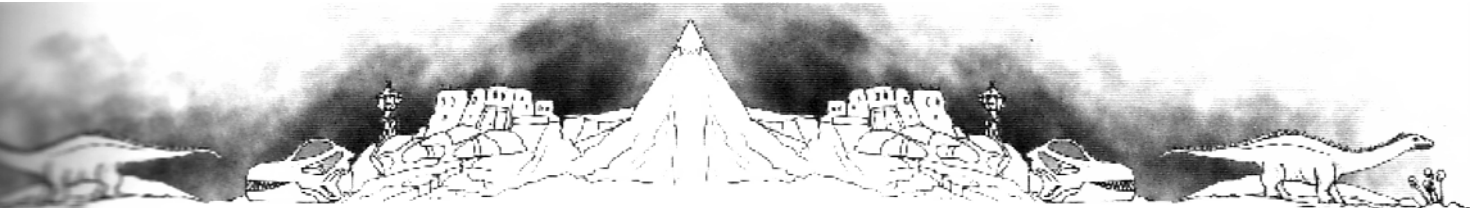
Three devotees step forward wearing masks: Hantrafal, the first Godi, the first to worship Orlanth and work magic; Heort who taught survival in the Darkness; and Hara, the beloved, and an initiate of Ernalda. Called into the temple, the three form a circle around Yarandros.

When the sun dawned fresh and new, and all life breathed again in wonder and joy, the great god Orlanth, slayer of giants, walked the earth to find a new home. He found it near to his mother's house, where the Six Winds meet.

Yarandros then opens the door between this world and the other side. As Yarandros calls each direction, a devotee representing the guardian comes forward, wearing a mask.

I call upon the guardians of the six directions. I call upon the North Wind. I call upon the East Wind. I call upon the South Wind. I call upon the West Wind. I call upon the Wind of Above. I call upon the Wind of Below. I call upon the guardians to stand with us now. I call upon the guardians to watch us.

The worshippers let go of their masks. They do not fall. Instead the masks hang in the air, still facing their directions. The masks speak, one after the other. The North mask calls out "*The servants of the whore gather in fields that will soon be washed in blood.*" Each other mask calls out "*All clear.*" Later the leaders confer about this omen. Allow the heroes to make *Alakoring Myth* ability tests to determine that the whore is probably HonEel and that the warning is that HonEel's servants gather to the north.



I am Yarandros, son of Illaro, of the Delvalan clan and the Iristaros tribe. I am a priest, and I am a man of the chief of this camp. I am Yarandros and I make this prayer to you, Issaries, as you told me to do. And I call on you, god, who keeps me talking true, to speak through me. I call upon the Six Guardians to wake and to fill me with the tale. I call upon the Lady of Inspiration to sit within me and tell this story of how the world was made.

The Climax

The climax occurs the following midday. By this point, the initiates and communal worshippers have gathered at Lightning Flint Hill. The Ohorlanth storm has already broken bringing warm refreshing rains. As befits the god of Thunder and fertile rains, many participants are skyclad, wearing only woad. The worshippers dance in spirals in the rain, chanting. The enforcers appear (*Thunder Rebels* pp81-85). Some of the townsfolk yelp as Bolters arc from metal to flesh, punishing initiates for minor infractions. Clouds of impests fill the air with their ringing. Flint slingers leap overhead. Wind Fists swoop amidst the crowd, turning aside at the last moment.

Still Chief Tarkil does not attend, nor members of the Ring. The townsfolk whisper that the Lunar courtesan Salevra has enthralled Tarkil.

Playful Umbroli begin to dance and play amidst the worshippers and the windsocks and kites around the fort. As the men dance, they begin to rise into the air, spiralling around the hilltop. Communal worshippers see them spiralling there, but the initiates begin flying towards Kero Fin. From Kero Fin the initiates enter the Storm Realm and Orlanth's Hall (*Thunder Rebels* pp131-140). In the Storm Realm, initiates and devotees witness Ohorlanth's birth. He grows out of his cradle in a minute, the longhouse in an hour, the village in a day, and turns himself into an insubstantial wind so he does not harm his kin.

The initiates return from the Storm realm singing songs of Ohorlanth and his storm. The Umbroli and enforcers withdraw. Yarandros closes the circle:

I, Yarandros, thank Hant, Heort, and Hara, the good gods and goddesses, and the guardians of the Six Directions for watching over Thunder Day. We are grateful for the fertile blessing of rain you have given us this day.

This normally concludes the ceremonies so most people are surprised when an alynx scampers up to the inner circle of stones, leaps atop one, and speaks clearly:

A land that takes before it gives and a harvest from a rain of blood. A breath held, and a weakened wind. Who will be king, when the wind stops?

The cat leaps to the ground and slinks off

Afterwards there is a feast. The mood is muted; everyone is discussing the message of the alynx and Chief Tarkil's absence.



A devotee leads a black calf into the centre of the circle. Yarandros produces a flint knife and a clay bowl. The calf skitters nervously as Yarandros reaches under its throat with the knife.

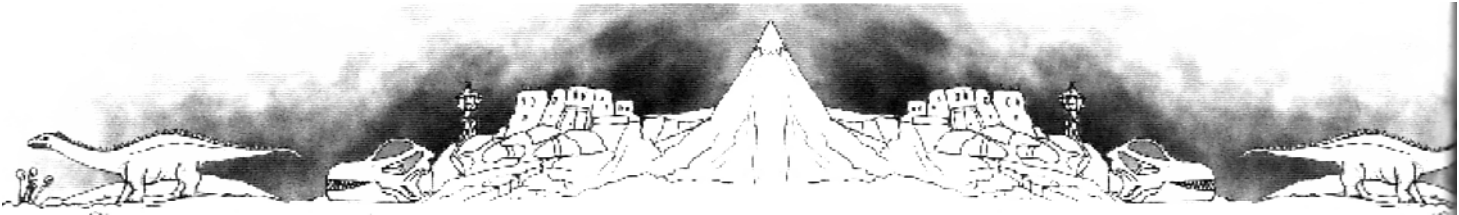
On the eve of Thunder Day, we come to honour Ohorlanth, the spring rain, and share in his fertility that sends the rebirth of the land. We offer this calf as our thanks for all Ohorlanth has given, and all Ohorlanth is about to provide.

Bright blood steams from the calf's neck. Yarandros catches the blood in the bowl and pours a libation from it onto the ground by each of the masks. A worshipper sounds a horn seven times, as two of the devotees drag the body away, leaving a spiralling trail of blood on the ground. Participants feel their senses are sharper, colours brighter, here within the sacred space.

We ask the Ohorlanth to accept this calf as our offering of honour and thanksgiving on this the festival of Thunder Day.

The Tales

During the ceremony the priests tell myths of Orlanth. The narrator may wish to recount myths that might be important in later episodes, especially for heroquests, or provide more hints of a gathering evil. Yarandros tells the myths in the sacred way accompanied by the beat of a drum. In sacred telling listeners may hear portions of well-known myths differently, replacing a name or event with something locally significant. These differences portend events to come, or give insights on problems, and the narrator should feel free to insert hints for each player of coming events.



SCENE 3: HONOURING DAY

Key Points: (Clayday, Fertility Week, Sea Season) The heroes attend the Honouring Day celebrations.



The Opening Ceremony

The festival continues with Honouring Day, *hunder Rebels* (p183). The ceremony takes place at the Loom House at the centre of the fort. The temple is a square longhouse with stone doorposts and a statue to an aspect of Ernalda at each corner. A sacred loom dominates the hall. While the women gather or prepare for the ceremony, their men perform the household chores and run the stead.

Much merriment accompanies this role reversal with stead wives complementing their husbands on how pretty they look or how fine the meal is. Devotees gather in the temple, which the women have filled with fresh cut spring flowers. Vestenbora Illarisdottir, the chief priestess welcomes each woman and then opens the doorway to the other side. This time however, members of the ring are present. There are women among the gathering who are worshippers of Ernalda HonEel, converted after the recent famine, but they follow the goddess so Vestenbora makes them welcome.

We call upon Hant, Heort, and Hara; and all the good gods and goddesses.

Tarkil takes the role of Hara, the beloved. As Vestenbora calls forth each of the directions, she pours a libation of beer to that direction.

We call upon Ernalda the healer, the guardians of the North and the element of Earth. We call upon their wisdom, and ask for their support. Witness this celebration of the household and family that you support. We call upon Voria the Spring Maiden, the guardians of the East, and the element of Air. We call upon their wisdom, and their powers of renewal. Witness this celebration of the future life you hold. We call upon Mahome, the Hearth, the guardians of the South, and the element of Fire. We call upon their wisdom, and their powers of warmth. Witness this celebration of the home that you heat. We call upon Esrola the Earth Mother, the guardians of the West and the element of Water. We call upon their wisdom, and your powers of life. Witness this celebration of the mother and wife. We call upon Maran, the guardians of Below, and the element of Darkness. We call upon your wisdom, and ask for your protection. Witness this celebration of the life that you protect. We call upon Ernalda the Queen, and the guardians of Above. We call upon their wisdom, and ask for their leadership. Witness this celebration of the family that you guide.

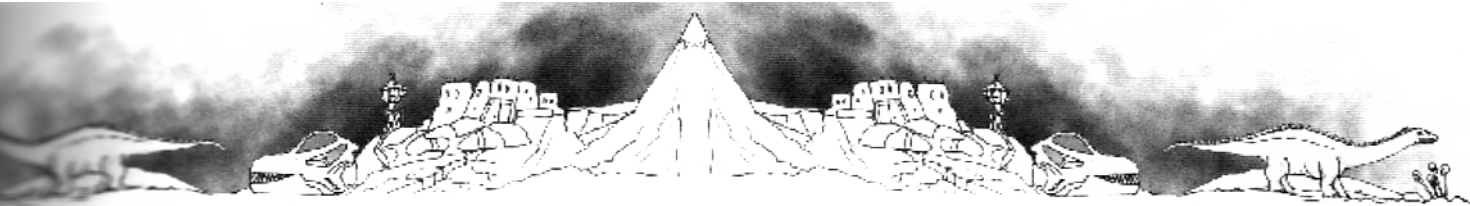
When the masks hang in the air, the north mask warns.

"There is discord among the hearths."

The narrator should decide on the sacred tales that the priestess has chosen for the occasion. There are many dances during the ceremony led by the worshippers of Roitina. The strangers are good dancers and seem to take special pleasure in the dances. Once or twice, the strangers lead the women in new dances. Some women are pleased to learn new dances and speak of the fertility they hope it will bring, but others refuse to participate. The elder frowns at the disharmony during a ceremony to honour the family and refer darkly to the guardian of the North's warning.

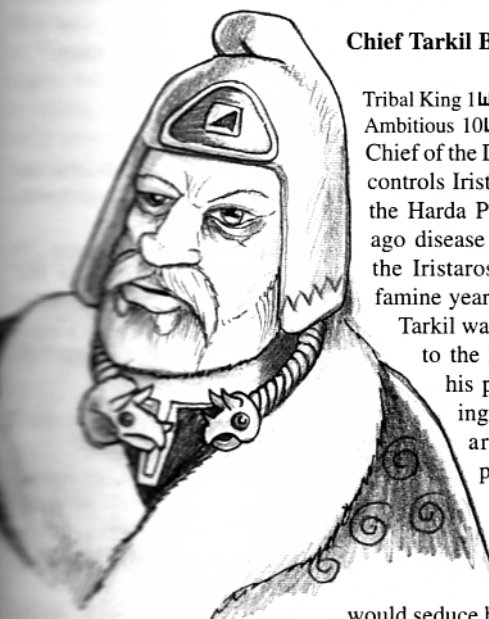
If the heroes ask who the women are then they are told that some hearths converted to the worship of the Lunar Earth following the recent famine. Players who make appropriate rolls can quickly determine that there is much resentment towards them.





SCENE 4: IN IRIST HOLD

Key Point: We present a list of the important people that the heroes might encounter in Irist Hold. The Corn Bringers' plans for the cultivation of maize, and conversion of the Delvalan are close to fruition. The heroes' arrival threatens that plan so the Corn Bringers try to kidnap heroes who seem to present a danger to that plan.



Chief Tarkil Bloodybreaks

Tribal King 1W2, Ruthless 10W, Ambitious 10W.

Chief of the Delvalan, Tarkil controls Irist Hold and thus the Harda Pass. Two years ago disease killed most of the Iristaros herds. In the famine years that followed Tarkil was forced to turn to the Lunars to feed his people, promising their missionaries rights to preach in Irist Hold in return.

Tarkil never guessed that the Moon would seduce him, but he was

switched by Salevra and agreed to begin the cultivation of corn and support the worship of HonEel within the Ernalda cult. The chief receives petitioners in the mead hall. Salevra the Alluring is always behind and to one side, in sexually provocative clothing and fine gold and silver jewels. She whispers in Tarkil's ear after each question. As he speaks, Tarkil looks to her for reassurance, receiving a nod of encouragement.

Salevra the Alluring, Artess

Leader of the Corn Bringers, Salevra dances the same steps her goddess used to enthrall Pyjeemsab to win the Iristaros by temptation and sacrifice. She cares little for the fate of the unwashed barbarian masses themselves: everything she does is for the pleasure of the tangled web of the dance.

Yarandros Vastinson, Priest of Orlanth

Priest of Orlanth (Jarani) 5W2, Depressed 3W, Zealous 1W

Yarandros despairs at the hold Salevra has over Tarkil. The famine years were hard, the conversions to the Moon a betrayal of his kin who died at Grizzly Peak. Better to starve on the holy mountain that live as a slave of Shepelkirt. Yarandros remains hopeful that he will win Tarkil back from Salevra, but does not know how to convince him of her duplicity. He feels that his position as Hantrafal on the ring should give him a greater voice, yet every attempt to speak to his chief seems to push him further away and now his counsel is unwanted and unheeded.

Vestenbora, Priestess of Ernalda

Priestess of Ernalda (Votenevra) 10W2, Depressed 5W, Selfless 5W.

Vestenbora feels she has failed her people. Time and again the

Earth forsook them and she could not right the situation. Now many women have turned to the worship of the maize mother and a harlot has seduced the chief. Vestenbora is convinced that she should stand down in favour of someone who might be able to halt the steady conversion of her people.

Iristha, Priestess of Maran

Priestess of Maran (Gatara Tor) 1W2, Angry 5W, Vengeful 20.

Iristha is the priestess of the Maran temple on Delvalan Hill. She is aware that Tarkil is straying from his duty as protector of the earth, but unsurprised – all Ernalda's husbands ultimately failed her too. Iristha plots to replace Salevra, but still plans to carry out the sacrifices at Tarkilstead, but this time to ask for Maran's Earthblood blessing.

Jornkalar Iceheart, Stoneguard Leader

Huscarl 15W2, Stony 5W, Resolute 10W, Devotee of Starkval 15W, Loyal to Tarkil 1W, Old Tarsh Loyalty 20.

Jornkalar leads the Stoneguard, huscarls of the chief, and guardians of the Delvalan Stone that holds sovereignty of the clan. Loyalty to the chief is the traditional virtue of the huscarls, to and even beyond death, but that loyalty is tested as Tarkil turns to the Moon. Jornkalar is divided between his personal fealty to Tarkil and his commitment to the dream of Old Tarsh. He could be turned against his chief.

Illig Lightfoot, Odalyan Master Hunter

Master Hunter 1W3, Heroquester 20W, Taciturn 20, Ursine 5W.

Illig is the greatest hunter of the clan, and knows the ways of the forest better than any. A heroquester, he seeks to become more the bear in every thought and deed. This has led him further and further away from the stead and into the woods. Clan politics trouble him little now; all he requires is support for his heroquests. In Irist Hold for Fish Day, he might be swayed to involve himself in the events, but only for the promise of greater Odalyan mythic insights.

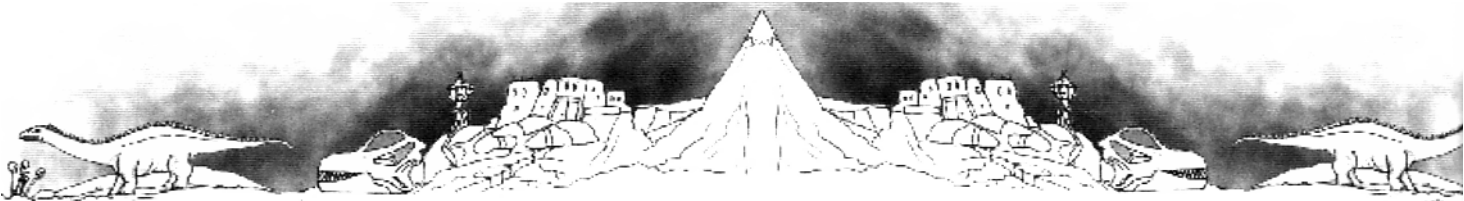
Marusa Bloodaxe, Erantha Gor Champion

Axewoman 20W2, Devotee of Erantha Gor 20W, Aggressive 10W, Relationship to Salevra 5W.

The deadliest warrior of the clan, notable not just for her skill but the rage with which she fights. Scalps adorn her axe, marking the greatest champions she has defeated in single combat. Since the conversion of many clan women to the Red Earth she has fought with male Mitchuinn warriors. Marusa has fallen under Salevra's spell, Salevra speaks to her of as yet hidden secrets that reveal the connections between the bloody corn rites and Maran's own. She has given her loyalty to the Red Earth.

Gathering Information

The narrator needs to adjudicate the heroes' attempts to gather information on what is happening in Irist Hold and where any captured comrades have been taken. Time is a factor, as are the attempts of the Lunars to kidnap the heroes for sacrifice in the coming rites. The principle characters seek to draw the heroes into their web. The corn faction perceives them as dupes and sacrifices the traditionalists as agents of change.



Drawn out investigations are often dull. Instead create scenes that focus on the moment that characters learn information from the locals or the principles, framing that scene with a summary of the player's hard graft to reach that point. Focus on revelation rather than investigation, but draw the heroes into events by relating the revelation to the goals and desires for their characters and an understanding of the motivations of the principles: food at the price of change or starvation with honour.

Events

The following events help provide drama drive to the heroes' investigations in Irist Hold

Kidnap

This event can occur a number of times. Be sure to present it differently on each occasion. Tough heroes will not be captured by this approach, instead try seduction instead.

Ambushers

The ambushers strike from the cover of a longhouse, a rooftop, or a side street. The streets of Irist Hold are narrow, crowded by longhouses and wattle fences. Use the Tarshites from **scene one**. Morofdul leads them if he survived; otherwise use the Tarshite Weaponthane from *Barbarian Adventures* (p23). Allow Morofdul to augment the attackers with Set Ambush or Warband Tactics and the heroes to augment themselves with Spot Ambush.

SALEVRA THE ALLURING

The Principal Dancer of the Whole Spring Dancers of Kordros Island, Salevra is a stunningly attractive woman. Devoted to the Lunar Earth Salevra has found inspiration in the deeds of her goddess and seeks to subvert the Exiles and bring them into the light of the Moon. Salevra has two infatuated bodyguards with her (Warrior 19W, Vorderos Bodyguard Initiate 15W; + 78 AP in combat)

Keywords: Artess 16W, HonEel the Dancer Devotee 4W2 (Red Earth, Seduction 7W2, Spirit Dance)

Significant Abilities Arts of Love 18W, Close Combat (Knife) 10W, Dodge Attack 3W, Entertaining Conversation 6W, Lead Ceremony 3W, Lie 5W, Seduce 16W, Seven Dances of Seduction 4W

Equipment Silk garments, Knife ^1

Personal Augments:

Arts of Love (+3 to Seduce)

Lead Ceremony (+2 to Bless Crop ritual)

Defensive Dance feat (+4 to Dodge Attack)

Dance of Allure feat (+4 to Seduce)

Seduce Noble feat (+4 to Seduce)

Mask of Desire (+4 to Seduce)

Make Love Potion (+4 to Seduce)

Divine Seduction secret (+4 to attempts to Seduce)

Seduction

To capture tough male heroes the Corn Bringers may attempt a second strategy - seduction. They will only keep trying this technique until it fails. A provocatively-dressed artess approaches a male member of the band on his own and tries to seduce him. As the evening winds on, she will attempt to drug him into sleep.

Sedjena the Artess

Keywords: Artess 10W, HonEel the Dancer Initiate 5W (Red Earth, Seduction 10W, Spirit Dance)

Significant Abilities: Attractive 20, Close Combat (Knife) 1W, Lie 3W, Seduce 5W, Seven Dances of Seduction 2W, Tireless 17

Equipment: knife ^1, Sleeping Draughts 20

Personal Augments:

Attractive (+2 to Seduce)

Seduction (+3 to Seduce)

Seven Dances of Seduction (+2 to Seduce)

Contest: Resist Seduction

Appropriate Abilities: Chaste, Devotee of [God] (-10), Relationship to clan (-10), Relationship to Wife/Lover

Typical Modifiers: Drinking alcohol (-10). The narrator and player should decide how easy the hero is to seduce, based on character conception and previous experience and award up to +/- 20. A player can use the ability to resist poisons or Stay Awake as an automatic augment, helping the character resist the Arteses drugged potion.

Resistance: Arteses's Seduce, or similar, ability.

Complete or Major Victory: The hero resists the attempt at seduction.

Complete or Major Defeat: The hero is seduced, drugged, and captured.

Other: The artess does not seduce the hero, this time, but may try again on subsequent days. Modifiers to resisting future seduction attempts are: Minor Defeat (-10), Marginal Defeat (-5), Marginal Victory (+5), Minor Victory (+10)

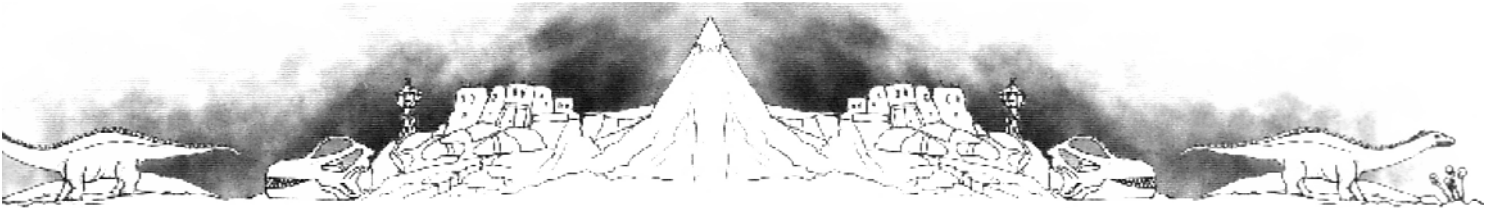
Captured heroes go to **Captured**.

The Vengeful Earth

Three women approach the heroes. They all wear white dresses and green cloaks. Two wear hoods, but the third wears her hair into elaborate buns on the side of her head, bound with copper wire. It is this woman, Sister Estava of the Old School accompanied by her two novices, who addresses the players:

We need each other's help. We are the defenders of Ernalda, the scourge of the six-toes, whom some call the Old School. Our enemy is the HonEel, goddess of the Lunar Earth, who entered the Whole Dance of Spring and wove the dance of lies that seduced Tarsh to the Moon. Do you fight the Moon?

If the heroes can convince the Old School to join with them (Resistance 3W) then they gain the aid of the vengeful earth in **The Sacrificial King**.



SCENE 5: CAPTURED

Key Points: Captured heroes attempt to escape. Their companions stage a rescue attempt.

Action: Upon arrival at Tarkil's village, the captors lock the heroes in cages with other prisoners. They remain bound. Their captors feed them water and cornmeal. Heroes notice another 1-10 female captives (Steadwife 1W) and 1-20 male captives (Hunter or Warrior 1W). For simplicity, imprison the heroes together in cages, with any followers in a separate cage. Strip the heroes of weapons, armour, and equipment. Heroes who appear too magically powerful or else prone to use such abilities may even be bound or gagged. The wyter of the village also places n extra +10 resistance on attempts to use magic to flee or resist.

Escape?

Once a day, heroes can attempt to escape their bonds. Heroes who break their bonds must then escape the cage.

Contest: Escape Bonds

Appropriate Abilities: Foil Restraints, Sleight of Hand (-3), Strong (-5)
Typical Modifiers: Flexing muscles when bound +1; Guards tighten bonds after previous attempts -2
Resistance: 19

Heroes who escape their bonds can try to escape. Two guards watch each captive. In the event of an escape, all but two pursue any escaping hero

Contest: Escape Cage

Appropriate Abilities: Pick Locks, Strong (-10)
Typical Modifiers: Flexing muscles when bound +1; Guards tighten bonds after previous attempts -2
Resistance: 1W

The guards discover and rebind a hero who frees his bonds, but has not escaped yet, at the evening meal. If a prisoner escapes, then breaking open a cage to free other prisoners is a repeat of the above task.

Contest: Lead Prison Break

Appropriate Abilities: Boast (-5), Fast Talk (-10), Leadership, Speak with Authority (-3)
Resistance: 3W
Defeat: The hero's breakout attempt alerts the guards.
Marginal or Minor Success: A quarter of the prisoners join you
Major or Complete Success: Half the prisoners join you.

The guards quickly spot any breakout and pursue. Escaping heroes who want to retrieve named items of equipment should be able to find the wagon containing them as they escape, but may have more trouble with generic arms and armour.

Contest: Find Equipment

Appropriate Abilities: Search, Observant (-3), Smart (-3)
Resistance: 17
Defeat: The hero's breakout attempt alerts the guards.

Put To Work

Female thralls carry wood and water for the chain gangs, but male prisoners are put to work constructing a wooden arena. They build a low wooden wall, with gates at one end, and three tiers of bleachers around that. A framework of wooden poles goes above the bleachers, covered with tarpaulins to keep the worst of the elements off spectators. The guards chain the prisoners in gangs of seven, with three guards per chain. Overseers with whips drive them. Heroes who resist working or cause problems are whipped.

Contest: Endure Beating

Appropriate Abilities: Endure Beating, Ignore Pain (-3), Tough (-5); (physical risk).
Resistance: 17
This is a physical risk as on a failure the hero is injured.

On the night of Empty Half Moon (Fireday), of Fertility week of Sea Season the guards lead remaining prisoners from their cages into the mead hall. Run **King For a Day**.

Fellow Prisoners

We provide some capsule descriptions of fellow captives for the narrator to draw on.

Hrutt the Strong (Strong 5W, Slow-witted 17). A bear of a man, Hrutt is simple, quick to anger, but loyal to those who have won his trust. He dislikes 'clever' people.

Palashee Oakenshield (Close Combat 4W, Finovan Initiate 19). A Mitchuinn raider, his constant attempts to escape, sabotage, and defy his captors earn him regular beatings. He may die before he reaches the arena.

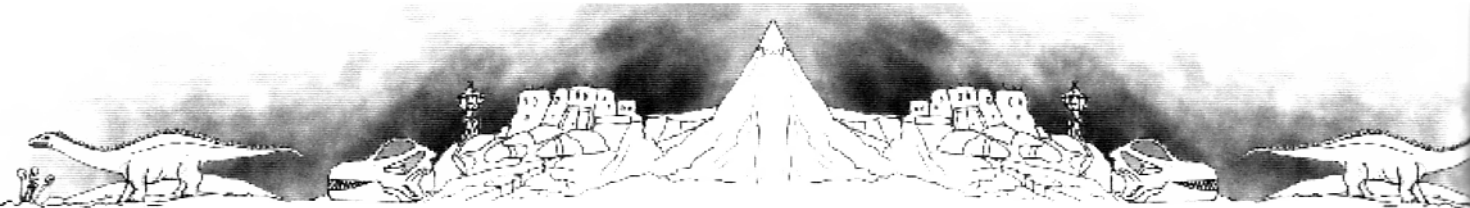
Jarena Marnasdaughter (Merchant 10W, Issaries Initiate 19). A wealthy merchant from the Hendarli, she assumes that anything can be negotiated, including her freedom. Her attempts to bargain with the guards earned her an audience with Salevra, who rejected her offers out of hand. Jarena has slid into depression.

Kagrados Fedarkisson (Warrior 8W, Destor Devotee 2W, Warband Tactics 18). The leader of Jarena's caravan guards, his surviving men trust him completely.

Branduan Jonatansson (Warrior 17, Starkval Initiate 17, Nervous 2W). One of Jarena's caravan guards. Branduan is 17, scared, uncommunicative and relies heavily on Kagrados. Kagrados promised to look after him; if separated from Kagrados, Branduan panics.

Jarstana Sunwillow (Warrior 2W, Humakt Initiate 18). Jarstana has the relief sickness (*Storm Tribe* p43). She longs for the peace of the afterlife and is dead-to-the-world.

Erken of Oldenstead (Warrior 17, Orstan Initiate 17, Cunning 20). Erken is an opportunist, a thief and a renegade. He claims to have been waylaid while making his way to Irist Hold to sell some carvings, but he actually fled his village in disgrace. He will do whatever seems best for him, perhaps warning the Exiles of an imminent escape if he thinks this will buy him his freedom, or else going along with it and selling the heroes out later down the line.



SCENE 6: KING FOR A DAY



Key Points: The Corn Bringers treat the heroes as kings: they wine, dine, and seduce them.

Setting – The Mead Hall (Empty Half Moon, of Fertility week of Sea Season). Built to entertain and accommodate guests as well as flaunt his wealth and power, Tarkil's mead hall is 80' long. Two-thirds of the building is the mead hall proper. The other third of the building is the kitchen where the feasts are prepared.

Action: The guards take female captives out of their cages and escort them to the kitchens. Two guards (Warrior 1W) watch each captive. There, the guards remove their blindfolds and gags. Alakora the Enchantress addresses them:

Thralls! You are here to serve as cooks and serving girls for tonight's feast. Chief Tarkil may keep those of you who do well here on afterwards. Those who do badly will join their ancestors. You will address all male thralls at tonight's feat as 'Sinoda'. Do you understand?

Alakora motions to the guards to beat anyone who answers anything other than 'Yes', or remains silent. Use **Endure Beating** from **scene 5**. The guards then put captive female heroes to work in the kitchen, preparing the meal.

An hour later, the guards escort male captives, bound, into the hall. They unbind them and seat them on the benches. The guards station themselves around the walls, two guards per captive. Use the Tarshite warriors from **scene 1**. Alakora addresses the captives:

Welcome to our house, Sinoda. We do not have much to offer, but what we do we give to you with pleasure and love.

Alakora claps her hands and the guards motion for the female thralls to serve wine and food. Skalds enter the hall and begin to play. Alakora orders the women to place garlands around the captives' necks and wreaths of roses around their heads. The feast continues for hours.



Salevra and the other Whole Spring Dancers of Kordros Island enter the hall. Tarkil accompanies Salevra and seats himself at the high seat. The music changes and the Corn Bringers begin dancing. The women dance the Seven Dances of Seduction. When the dancing finishes, Salevra approaches Tarkil and other Corn Bringers approach male heroes. Settling alongside the hero, they gaze into his eyes, caress him and whisper erotic promises. See **scene 3: Kidnappers** for the **Resist Seduction** contest. If a hero fails to resist the dancer leads him from the hall to the freshly ploughed fields outside. There, in the darkness, they consummate their relationship. Those guards beat and mock those who resist - see **Endure Beating**.

The action continues the next morning with **The Sacrificial King**

ALAKORA THE ENCHANTRESS

Alakora is Salevra's understudy as Principal Dancer. While all the Corn Bringers work to further the Red Earth, Alakora might put her own ambition above loyalty to Salevra.

Keywords: Artess 16W, Roitina Devotee 3W2 (Earth Queen, Find Another Way, Earth Rituals 5W2)

Significant Abilities: Arts of Love 11W, Close Combat 15 (Knife), Dance 10W, Dodge Attack 19, Entertaining Conversation 3W, Know Red

Earth Rituals 12W, Lie 8W, Seduce 11W, Restart Ceremony secret 17, Seven Dances of Seduction 2W, Twelve Dances of Abandon 1W

Equipment: Silk garments, Knife ^1

Personal Augments:

Arts of Love (+3 to Seduce)

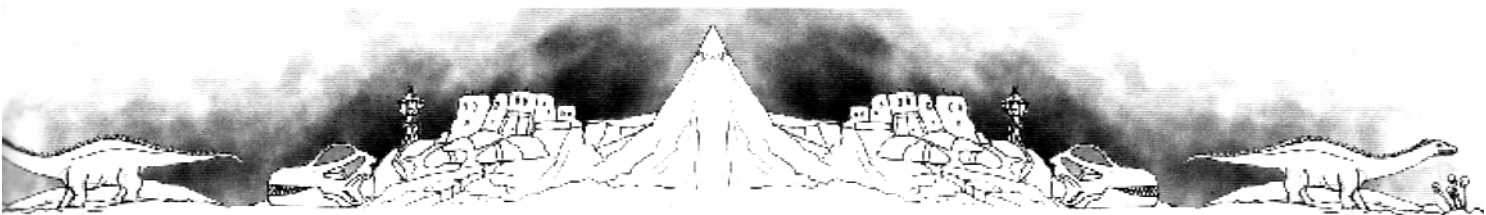
Augment Sacrifice Dance feat (+4 to Know Earth rituals)

Dance (+3 to Know Earth Rituals)

Seven Dances of Seduction (+2 to Seduce)

Followers:

Slither (Talos) Swallow Victim 10W4, Large 12W, Strong 8W



THE WHOLE SPRING DANCERS OF KORDROS ISLAND

"The Old World is over, join us in the dance that forms the new"

HonEel was a priestess of the earth cult at age 12, went to the Moon at 19 and at 24, engaged an elf-god lover, who left her with a golden-haired son and a bagful of special seed. The son died a tragic, young death, but the seed was maize. HonEel was intent upon manifesting herself as an incarnation of the earth-goddess. She was successful, and is worshiped today as the Lunar Earth and Mother of Corn.

HonEel sought to convert Tarsh to the Lunar Earth. At Kordros Island, she performed the Whole Dance of Spring during the most secret of the earth rituals, and showed that Ernalda was the Mother called 'She Who Waits'. HonEel then seduced the King, sacrificed him, and bore an heir to the throne. Tarsh was plunged into Civil War. In the years since, the Lunar Earth has pushed the traditionalists, calling themselves the Exiles, further and further back. Now only their fastness around Kero Fin, the Shaker Temple, and Arim's Secret Valley remain. It is time to for the Exiles to be converted, for now is the time of the Hero Wars.

Common Names: The Corn Bringers

Form: Sacred dancers.

Cultural Context: Bringers of lunar fertility and mistresses to leaders of the Provinces and surrounding lands.

Ideology: The Whole Spring Dancers follow HonEel's example and capture kingdoms by winning the hearts of those within to the Red Earth.

"Such are the ways the goddess moves to embrace the peoples of the world, not only like Hwarin Dalthippa, by conquest, but also like HonEel, by art."

"The Red Moon proved her right to a place in the Middle Air, so shall HonEel prove her right to a place in the Earth."

Look and Feel: Machiavellian schemers who seek to overthrow the Exiles and the Shaker Temple by subversion instead of force of arms. Beautiful priestesses gifted in the arts of seduction and intrigue; infatuated warriors, spies, thieves, and even kings who serve them.

Purpose: Spread the Lunar Earth religion, and unite Tarsh.

Reactions (of outsiders): Traditionalist Earth cultists such as the Old Earth School are enemies. The Exiles are hostile because they blame HonEel - 'the whore' - for the Civil War. Moirades and the Fazzurites support the Machiavellian strategy employed by this group, but as a result, the band has lost favour with Tatius the Bright. While the band considers their actions to be in the path of their goddess, many others perceive them as sacred whores.

Resources

Leader: Salevra the Alluring, stunningly attractive she follows her goddess in seducing foreign nobles to the Lunar way (see p52)

Renowned Members: Morofdul the Cunning, a Vorderos worshipper from the Gardint and infatuated lover of Salevra. Alakora the Enchantress, Salevra's understudy as Principal Dancer and Roitina priestess.

Membership: The Whole Spring Dancers of Kordros Island are a sacred dance group of two-dozen priestesses and initiates

Headquarters: HeruvErnalda temple, Kordros Island

Other Contacts: The Artesses of the Corn Bringers have seduced many who now do their bidding.

Organisation

Any woman who is a member of the HonEel cult may join, whether she worships the goddess on her own or as an aspect of Ernalda. Other women who accept the revelation of HonEel as 'She Who Waits' may join to help further the band's goals. Men may join the band as community members, helping with either manual tasks or defence. Morofdul the Cunning leads a band of love-struck warriors, who act as bodyguards to the Artesses.

The Artesses train in the arts of seduction and the dance. The band teaches new women how to use these arts to further the spread of the goddess's word and in particular the crop maize. The Principal Dancer leads the Whole Spring Dancers.

Membership Keyword: Artess

Abilities: Arts of Love, Choreograph, Dance, Dodge Attack, Entertaining Company, Five Dances of Escape, Lie, Seduce, Seven Dances of Seduction, Three Dances of Reconstruction, Tireless, Twelve Dances of Fertility.

Personality: Machiavellian

Relationships: To Whole Spring Dancers

Magic: HonEel, Roitina the Ceremonialist.

Living Standard: Rich

Disadvantages: No personal time, publicly perceived as a mistress or whore.

Equipment: Ritual regalia, seductive clothing, villa and cornfields, stables and servants. Usually an Artess has one or more followers who are infatuated with her to provide protection, labour etc.

Guardian Being

VinvalNoy was HonEel's choreographer for the sacred dances. She envisioned the Dance of Three Reconstructions, which restored the Empire after Sheng's reign of terror and devised the steps of the Whole Rights of Spring, which allowed HonEel entry into the sacred rituals of the Earth Tribe. She died alongside her mistress at the Nights of Horror. She emphasises the use of art or skill to overcome the maize mother's enemies and aids in the unity and choreography of the dance.

Method: Emanation.

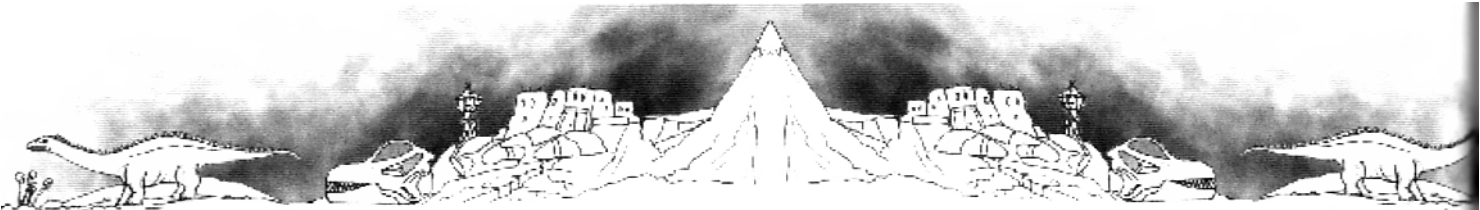
Form: VinvalNoy is present in the act of dance; it summons her, and makes her abilities available to members; she communicates to members through subtle changes in the rhythm and pattern of the dance.

Membership Requirements: members must engage in an hour's practice of dance each day.

Awareness Function: Aesthetic Appreciation 17.

Blessing Function: Move in Harmony 19.

Defence Function: Safety Dance 18.



SCENE 7: RESCUE



Key Points: The heroes try to free captured companions.

Scouting

The heroes need to evaluate the situation by scouting Tarkilstead, ideally without being seen.

Contest: Scout the Stead

Appropriate Abilities: Scouting, Tracking (-5), Woods Lore (-5)

Resistance: 17

Typical Modifiers: Splitting the party in the face of uncertain foes requires an Ability Test (personal Bravery, or a military skill like Scout or Skirmishing). Losers must remain with the majority of the group or suffer a -3 Handicap: Nervous. If the scout decides to 'get close' raise the resistance to 5W, but the scout can bump any success. Each additional member of the scouting party +1.

Special Modifier: Tarkilstead's wyter's awareness power is Sense Raiders. Technically, the scout is not a raider, but if he is a Finovani or similar, then the resistance increases by +10.

Any Victory: The scout sees all there is to see in "Tarkilstead," below.

Marginal Defeat: The scout learns nothing, and raises no alarms.

Minor Defeat: As above, and guards grow wary, gaining a +5 bonus to Perception.

Major Defeat: As above, plus the scout must defeat two guards in close combat before returning, use the Tarshites warriors from scene 1.

Complete Defeat: As above, but the scout must beat three guards.

Tarkilstead

Freshly ploughed fields surround the village, and a drum tower inside the palisade has a commanding view of the approach. A walkway allows defenders to look over the walls and gate. Within the village are three longhouses, a large mead hall, a redsmith's forge, storage sheds, and thralls quarters. Wooden cages contain the captives within the palisade. Guards patrol the palisade wall, gates, and prison camp. The drum tower has two guards at all times.

For a village in the Bush Range, it is well-built and prosperous. For those who know such things, many of the materials were imported from Tarsh or the Empire, such as the fine komotree timbers from Sikithi Vale or the Holayan dolmisk tapestries draping the door to the mead hall. Realising this requires a test of Recognise Value or Well-Travelled (-5) against a resistance of 20.

During the Corn Rites

On the Full Moon (Wild Day) a large crowd sits on the bleachers. Most appear Orlanthi, but some are from Lunar Tarsh or elsewhere in the Empire. The crowd chant, scream, ring little bells and holler. Cheered on by the crowd, men are fighting in the arena. When a gladiator falls, a priestess runs forward. She carries a rune carved pot. The priestess cries out:

The Land will take, for the Land to give. The Land will eat, for the land to feed.

She nods to the victor who, with one sweep of his axe, slices the

loser's head from his body. The priestess catches the blood that pumps from the loser's neck with the pot. The crowd cries out:

Give them to the Fields! Give them to the Fields.

The priestess carries the pot to one corner of the field and pours it into a wooden sangueduct that carries the blood to irrigate the field. The victor leaves, his axe held high in triumph. Teenage girls dressed in ochre robes run into the arena and drag the corpse over to the sangueduct. There they position the body so that its blood drains into the fields.

Heroes who know Tarsh or Lunar ways may recognise the corn rites: a simple test of Tarsh Geography or Know Lunar Ways (-5).

Unaided Rescue

The narrator must adjudicate the details of any attempt by the heroes to free captured heroes unaided, depending on the heroes' plan. The stead is swarming with mercenaries. Use the Tarshites warband from *Barbarian Adventures* (p23) or six weaponthanes equivalent to Morofdul and sixty warriors. The stead presents a real obstacle without help. Use the contests from **Captured** for freeing prisoners from cages.

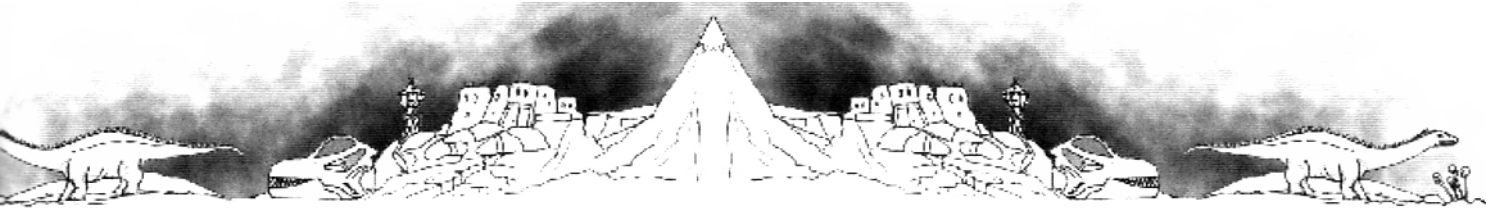
The Old School's Plan

If Old School accompanies the heroes or has otherwise agreed to help them, they use the scout's report to plan their attack. They have brought allies from the Earthshakers with them. Their plan is to flatten the arena and stead with an earthquake. There are four devotees of the Earthshaker with the Old Earth School group. However, the ceremony takes two hours, to complete. The priestesses begin dancing, their ponderous bodies shuddering as they move. As the ritual progresses, the ground trembles. At first, the effect is local to the ritual site but it slowly spreads toward the stead. At first, the gladiatorial games distract those watching the ceremony below. Nevertheless, as the ritual progresses Salevra notices the trembling and sends warriors to investigate.

The attack comes just as the Earthshaker ceremony is about to reach its conclusion. Two weaponthanes lead the patrol. Pair them off against the toughest player heroes. Their patrol has one warrior for every other player hero or follower. The strength of the attacking force can be increased or decreased to ensure an exciting but not impossible battle.

Divide the four Earthshaker magicians among the heroes. If and when a hero is defeated, the magician is unprotected and the bushwhackers cut her down as she performs the ritual (this takes an unrelated action). At least two must survive to the ritual's completion for the magic to be effective. If too many priestesses fall, the remainder call for retreat.

If the heroes defeat the patrol, then go to **Earthquake**.



THE OLD SCHOOL

"Restore Ernalda to the first pedestal, drive out the six-toed servants of the whore!"

In 1490, HonEel performed the dance of the Whole Dance of Spring at Kordros Island claiming that the goddess Ernalda was She Who Waits and one of the Seven Mothers. She married and sacrificed the Lunar King bearing his children, the first in a new Lunar dynasty. The traditionalists rejected the new ruler and HonEel's revelation. It is a trick they said, a misunderstanding of the mysteries and a lie. The cult and its new crop maize, spread quickly through Tarsh, many women began to worship Ernalda through HonEel's rites. Blood sacrifice fertilised the land to prepare it for the growth of maize. The traditionalists claimed this was a false perversion of the mysteries of Dargeth Kor. The Red Earth pushed them back, and after Grizzly Peak, they lost Bagnot and held only Wintertop. Confined to Maran's temple all seem lost. Then some began to tell the story of the foundation of the Illaro dynasty. They spoke of the Prayer to Sorana Tor, and a new king of Dragon Pass. They speak of the restoration of Ernalda's statue to the First Pedestal, when the sisters of Sorana Tor drove the six-toed troublemakers from the Temple. Now they say they it is once again time to drive out the six-toes from Tarsh.

Common Names: The Old Earth Sisterhood.

Form: Ernaldan religious sisterhood.

Cultural Context: Preservers of the old ways, rooting out HonEel's influence from among the Kerofini, urging the incarnation of Sorana Tor so that they might crown a new king of Dragon Pass.

Ideology: The old ways of the Earth have been abandoned – restore them.

Look and Feel: A religious sisterhood. The Sisters wear a white dress and green cloak. Novices wear a hood but Sisters have elaborate hairstyles and head-dress, the more elaborate the greater their rank.

Purpose: The Old School opposes the HonEel cult. They root out those tempted by the lies of the Red Earth, aid those in Arim's secret valley who resist the new ways, and fight a guerrilla war against HonEel the Maize Mother and the temple of Kordros Island. The Old School demands adherence to the Old Ways. The struggle is wherever the Red Earth is.

Headquarters: Maranaba, the Shaker Temple, is home to the sisterhood.

Reactions: The Empire considers them unrepentant heretics who refuse to embrace the truth of She Who Waits and say that the Red Earth will soon overcome them.

Resources

Leader: Mother Vinina Flaxenhaired, disciplined and firm Vinina allows no questioning of her decisions and finds much fault in others. Priestess of Roitina 20W2, Disciplined 15W, Critic 1W2, Traditionalist 20W

Renowned Members: Renatha Sharp-Tongued, a Kev priestess, who guides the band's future action. Saraska the Summoner, an Orendana priestess, and Aunt to the Novices.

Membership: The sisterhood comprises some 5 Elder Sisters who guide the band, fifty Sisters, and fifty Novices. A Novice is always paired with a Sister.

Other Contacts: Every Woman's Circle among the Kerofini knows the Old School.

Organisation

The Mother guides the Old School. All the sisters participate in selecting a new Mother at the Choosing and she may never step down voluntarily, but the Elder Sisters Circle who advise her can ask her to retire when her time is over. Once the Mother has spoken, everyone follows her pronouncement without question. One Elder Sister is the Aunt and in charge of all Novices. When a woman petitions to join the band, she becomes a Novice. The Novice's passage to Sister has no fixed schedule "Patience is a virtue" the Sisters tell new Novices.

Membership Keyword

Membership Requirements: Women join the band as Novices and progress. Men never join the band permanently, though some may join the band temporarily to aid in specific tasks.

Abilities: Mythology of the Earth Tribe.

Typical Personality Traits: Patient, Uncompromising.

Magic: The Old School accepts worshippers of the Earth Tribe.

Guardian Being

Lyzal was the keeper of the customary ways in the Loom House. She knew the way that things had been done before and reminded everyone of tradition when they gathered. Of course among the Storm Tribe there was always change but Lyzal tried to remember the things that were successful and worked well so that people would not be doomed to commit the same mistakes over and over again. She also reminded people that the old ways were simple and often best at a time when everyone was discovering new ways to do things. I am old school, she would say when asked about it.

Method: Manifestation.

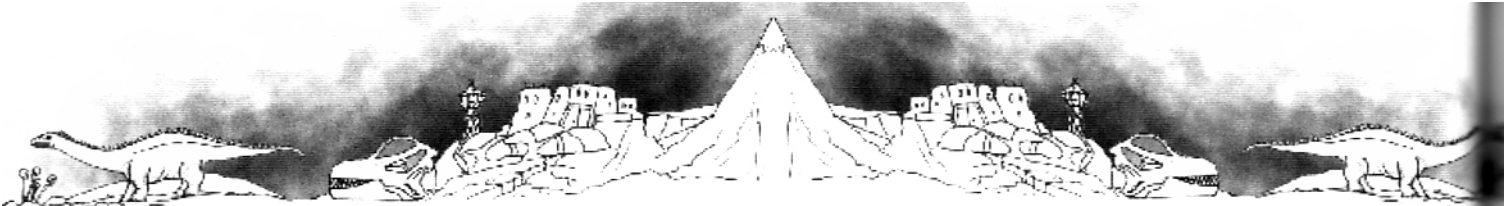
Form: Lyzal is a 12" high marble statue. The statue cannot leave its pedestal but is animated enough to speak and convey body language.

Membership Requirements: Keep Old Ways

Awareness Function: Know Old Way 3W.

Blessing Function: Maintain Faith 7W.

Defence Function: Drive Out of Community 5W.



SCENE 8: THE SACRIFICIAL KING



Key Points: On the newly ploughed fields, heroes must face Alanthore, in a fight to the death. If all the heroes are captive then you can stage the Old School rescue from **scene 7** attempt after the heroes have overcome their enemies in the arena or during the fight or else hit them with the earthquake from **scene 9** to give them a chance to escape in the confusion. If some or all of the heroes are free, you can run scene 7 for their rescue attempt or as an attack. When the Earthshakers begin their ritual, you can run **scene 9**.

The Morning After

Guards wake the thralls who were not seduced; the Whole spring Dancers wake those who were. At a gesture from Salevra, guards grab the seduced heroes and Tarkil by the wrists. They force their hands behind their back and tie them. Tarkil struggles, his face contorting in rage and confusion. He cries out

Salevra, tell your men to take their hands off me. What is the meaning of this? Have I not done everything you asked? You promised me maize to feed the Delvqlan. Were those promises lies?

Salevra nods to a guard he rams in spear-butt into Tarkil's side. Tarkil sinks to his knees, winded. Salevra addresses the assembled captives:

The Land will take, for the Land to give. The Land will eat, for the land to feed. For maize to grow there must be sacrifice. Sinoda was the first. HonEel loved him as the Dancers and I have loved each of you. He gave her a child, as we will give you children. Sinoda also gave HonEel a bag of seeds - corn. When Alanthore slew Sinoda, Sinoda's blood fell upon barren Earth. Where Sinoda's blood fell HonEel sowed corn. For the Land will take, for the Land to give. The Land will eat, for the land to feed. Without sacrifice, no corn will grow. Without blood, this barren land will never be fertile. In the fields, you will all face Alanthore. Rejoice for your blood will feed the land. Rejoice for the land will feed the hungry Iristaros. The people will always remember your sacrifice, especially yours Tarkil.

Tarkil sobs. The guards drag everyone out to the cages.

The Ceremony

The ceremony starts at dawn, but the arena does not start filing up with guests until about noon. At that point, the noise level increases, the sound of a mob waiting for entertainment: slow handclaps, cheers, and boos. Every so often the crowd chant:

Give them to the Fields! Give them to the fields

The crowd falls silent. Captives hear Salevra addressing the crowd. The guards fetch Tarkil and two others out of a cage. They dress

Tarkil in a tunic of vines and leaves, wrapping a wreath around his head. The guards frog march them to a gate into the arena. From inside the arena the crowd roars:

Give them to the Fields! Give them to the fields

The guards thrust axes and shields into the prisoners hands, open the gates, causing a might roar to be raised and prod them into the arena, closing the gates behind them with a thump.

From inside the arena come the sound of shouting and the ring of steel on steel. One, two, three mighty roars, and then the heroes hear Salevra calling out

The land must take, for the Land to give.

Nobody comes back out.

The guards move to another cage and begin the process again. They beat anyone who tries to escape. The land only accepts the sacrifice of men. However, if the Corn Bringers have not captured enough male prisoners, they dress female prisoners in male clothing and hang phalluses around their necks, and then send them into the arena. Separate heroes from the supporting characters when sending them into the arena. Send the heroes in one-by-one or in groups. The guards tell the heroes

Fight or we will execute a woman in your place. If you fight well then you could win your life, if you fight badly you will have given your life that others may live.

Into the Arena

When the heroes enter the arena, the roar of the crowd calling for blood fills their ears. The heroes face Tarshite gladiators representing Alanthore. There is one gladiator per hero.

Keywords: Gladiator 8^W, Grevlar the Unconquered Initiate 4^W (Challenge, Heroism)

Significant Abilities: Fierce 4^W, Close Combat 8^W, Dodge Attack 7^W, Keep On Fighting 6^W, Identify Foe's Weaknesses 11^W.

Equipment: Partial plate & shield ^ 4., Axe ^3

Personal Augments:

Challenge Affinity (+2 to Close Combat)

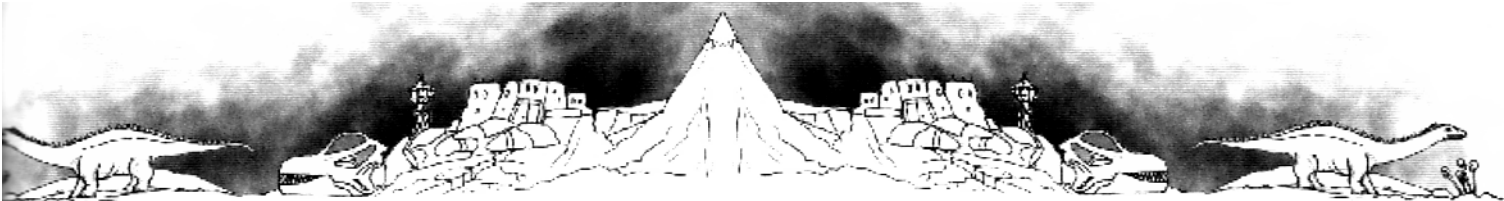
Heroism Affinity (+2 to Close Combat)

Identify Foe's Weaknesses (+3 to Close Combat)

One of the Corn Bringers is a priestess of Kadone the Lander, and she uses her **Force Flyer to Ground** and **Make Person Heavy** (15^W) on any hero trying to flee.

Guards lead heroes who survive their arena battle back to their cage. If you do not want to stage a rescue by the Old Earth School during the arena fight then the Corn Bringers intend to sell them into slavery. Locked inside their cages, heroes begin to notice the ground is trembling. Otherwise the earthquake should strike when the heroes are in the arena, perhaps just as they seemed doomed, or sure to triumph.

Tarkil is sent into the arena last, against a giant of a gladiator (as above, but +10 to all abilities, and Large 20^W), who kills him. However, if the earthquake strikes sooner, he will also be an active participant in what follows.



SCENE 9: EARTHQUAKE



Key Points: The Old Earth School strike their enemies

The earthquake is centred on the arena. Heroes accompanying the Old School feel the ground shake, but are far enough away that the resistance to remain standing never increases beyond its initial level, and can ignore

effects of gas and collapsing buildings.

Heroes in Tarkilstead hear a deep rumbling like the sound of distant thunder. The ground begins to move from side to side, slowly at first but getting quicker and quicker. As the ground shakes, people in the arena begin to scream. Anyone who is standing needs to try to keep his or her feet.

Contest: Remain Standing

Appropriate Abilities: Balance, Strong (-3)

Resistance: 14

Standing characters gain a +5 augment when attacking fallen characters.

Fallen characters can use an unrelated action to get up or attack with a -5 penalty.

The ground slides from side to side rapidly. There is a loud cracking sound and a spider web of fissures spread across the earth. Everywhere people are thrown to the floor, screams fill the air and the strong smell of sulphur as yellow a yellow mist gases forth from the cracks.

Remaining standing during this exchange is more difficult – the resistance is 14.

With a splintering of wood, and a cry, the bleachers around the arena collapse, dropping the spectators to the ground below. The awning and bleachers collapse in on them. A fissure runs straight up to the gates of the village and seems to burst them open. Sections of the wall collapse, and the roof of the mead hall collapses on those inside. A mist of foul-smelling sulphur swirls around everyone.

Standing is now at a resistance of 10. Anyone inside a structure (not those in the arena pit) is at risk from collapse.

Contest: Avoid Collapsing Structure

Appropriate Abilities: Quick, Dodge Attack (-2); (physical risk)

Resistance: 5

Panicked survivors begin to run, screaming. Salevra disappears under a section of the collapsing arena. Alakora may even be trampled as she tries to hold back the stampeding crowds.

What Happens Next?

To an extent, it is up to the heroes to determine their next moves. Do they simply seize the opportunity to flee? Will they want to take revenge on Tarkil, Salevra, Alakora and Morofdul? Will they lead others to safety or go and plunder the mead hall? Are the heroes the sort who require a major battle scene for closure? Here are some possible events and developments.

Kingslayer. If Tarkil is still alive, the heroes may choose to try to kill him, or else Morofdul may try to silence him. The heroes might either finish the job themselves or perhaps save him.

Bring Me the Head of Salevra the Artess. If he survives, Tarkil is likely to have a rather less positive attitude towards the Corn Bringers in general and Salevra in particular. This could have a major impact on the politics of the Exiles, but in the short term, his pride might be salved and his gratitude earned were Salevra's pretty head to be mounted on a spear...

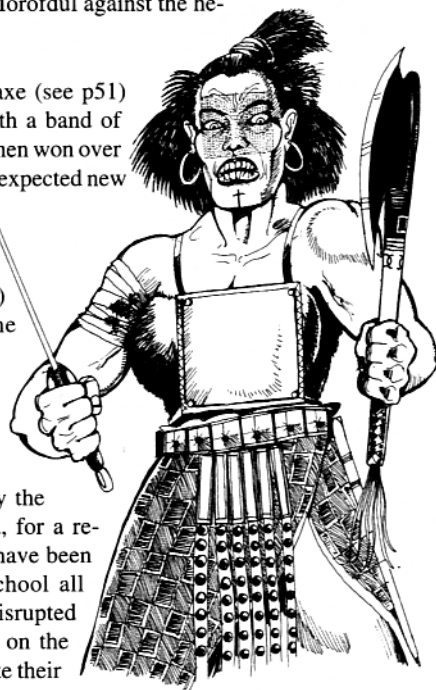
My Baby! There is always scope for heroics and difficult dilemmas amidst the chaos. On the one hand, Salevra is riding off, on the other a small child is about to be crushed by falling scaffolding. What does the hero do?

Who's Who? The rites might have attracted all kinds of interesting people. There may be Lunarised Tarshites good for a fat ransom, or perhaps powerful Lunar priests whose magic can suddenly pose an unexpected and unwelcome challenge to the heroes.

Rallying the Troops. There are still formidable forces in Tarkilstead - if Tarkil is dead, they may remain neutral or else be prepared to be rallied by Morofdul against the heroes.

Bloodaxe. Marusa Bloodaxe (see p51) could suddenly appear with a band of screaming Tarshite axewomen won over to Salevra's cause, as an unexpected new foe.

Double-Cross. Iristha the Maran priestess (see p51) has her own agenda. She may appear with her own bloody and brutal followers, intent on her own ritual killings, to take, use and redirect the magical charge already built up by the aborted corn rites. Indeed, for a really nasty twist, she may have been working with the Old School all along and they, having disrupted the Lunar rites, now turn on the heroes and plan to complete their sacrifice.



Be Seeing You. Salevra, Alakora or even Morofdul could become recurring villains, escaping to plague them again in the future. Even apparently buried under rubble, for example, Salevra could be brought secretly to safety by her talosi...



APPENDIX: EXILE CLAN GENERATION

The clan questionnaire presented in *Orlanth is Dead* is suitable for clans that entered the Quivini Mountains from Heortland. In this section we provide some alternative choices appropriate Exile clans who trace their origins through the Kingdom of Tarsh and its settlement. These choices mainly affect the events of historical memory. The major change to History is that these clans lived north of Dragon Pass during the Dragonkill, not in Heortland. You need to keep track of Wealth from the beginning. Instead of Lunar Friendship we measure Old Tarsh Loyalty, a measure of your clan's belief in the kingdom of Arim and Yarandros and your resistance to the new Lunar dynasty. This loyalty is formed in the crucible of the early days of contact with the Empire and settlement, but challenged by the civil wars.



SAIRD

After the Dragonkill your ancestors lived in Saird, a region covering that portion of the Oslir River that runs from the north of Tarsh to the Erinflath River.

21. Where in Saird did your clan live?

- The DaraNi Confederation.** You lived along the Erinflarth River valley and had many alliances with the river gods. The city state of Alkoth and its destructive god Shargash often subjugated your people. Modern Sylila includes your ancestral home.
- Aggar.** You lived around the drainage basin for the Forantin River. At the Dawn, two Heortling tribes, the Pennentelli and Vestantes, occupied this land. Arkat destroyed the Pennentelli and the Vestantes absorbed its surviving clans. The Vestantes rulers joined the EWF, and after their defeat by Alakoring, the survivors renamed the tribe Tarkarlings, though most call them the Kingdom of Aggar.
- The Saird Basin.** After the Dawn, the Berrenethings, largest of the early Heortling tribes, lived here. Palangio the Iron Vrok destroyed the Berrenethings during the conflict with Lokomayadon and Gbaji. After that, the region was called Saird. In the Imperial Age, it was conquered by the EWF. Alakoring and Verenemars freed your people from dragon rule and Saird led the war to destroy the dragons. Both the Kingdom of Vanch and the Queendom of Holay used to be part of the Kingdom of Saird, and this was used by Yarandros to justify his attempts at conquest. Saird fragmented after most of its men were slain in the Dragonkill War.
- Imther.** You lived among the Imther Mountains. Imther's native rulers have a personal, non-transferable trading relationship with the local Mostali. Its history is intertwined with Saird.
- Vanch.** You lived east of the Oslir and north of the Black Eel and Red Wyrn rivers. Your ancestors may once have been of the Jajalaring tribe, a dog-loving people, or the Nogtendos who rode in the Loon boat, or even the Tunoralings, worshippers of the racoon. However, expanding Heortling cultures largely absorbed your ancestors' culture into their own. These peoples retain enough identity to resurface as, for example, when Verenemars once again began sacrifice to Jajagappa.

Decide if your clan sacrifices to Jajagappa and keeps dogs instead of alynxes.

Results

- Attitudes:* Hate Dara Happans 17 *Wealth (initial value):* 10.
- Attitudes:* Hate Arkat +8 *Wealth (initial value):* 10
- Attitudes:* Fear Dragons +4, *Wealth (initial value):* 13.
- Attitudes:* Friendly to Mostali 17, *Wealth (initial value):* 17.
- Attitudes:* Thieving 13, *Wealth (initial value):* 8

ARIM THE FOUNDER, 1330

As the Conquering Daughter expanded the Empire's borders into the lands of the Orlanthe barbarians many fled its military and magical might to seek a new life in the haunted pass, unoccupied by humans since the Dragonkill. Arim the Pauper entered Tarsh at the head of a column of refugees from the Empire. Though many claim he was first, some others bravely entered before him. Arim was different in that he discovered the temple to Sorana Tor and became king of Dragon Pass. As the Empire's forces pushed south along the Daughter's Road, many others fled to join Arim in his Secret Kingdom.

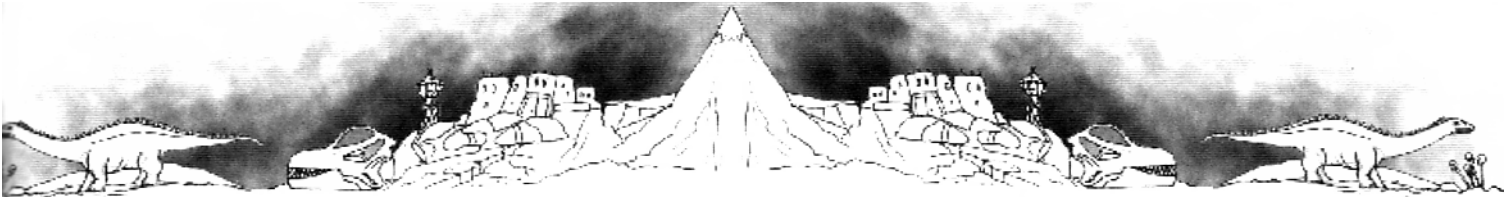


22. Why did you leave Saird?

- We feared the Conquering Daughter.
- Some of us hated the Empire, but others submitted to the Lunar way. The clan split to avoid Kinstrife.
- Glory and honour lay in carving the new land of Tarsh
- We had nothing, so we had nothing to lose.
- We wanted to explore the Haunted Lands of Dragon Pass.
- We had heard of Arim's vision of a secret kingdom, and wanted to join him.

Results

- Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +1
- Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +1
- Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +2
- Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty - 2
- Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -1
- Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +3



23. When did you leave Saird?

- a. We entered Dragon Pass before Arim did. Arim became famous later, but our ancestors were first.
- b. We left with Arim the Pauper, before the Daughter's Road campaign. We found good land in Arim's Secret Valley and settled.
- c. We were well prepared and took much of our wealth with us. The best lands in the Secret Valley were gone but we settled nearby.
- d. We fled when the Conquering Daughter entered our lands, leaving much of our wealth behind.
- e. We left after the Daughter's Road campaigns had conquered our homeland.

Results

- a) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -2, Wealth + 1
- b) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth + 2
- c) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +1, Wealth - 1
- d) *Attitudes:* Wealth - 2
- e) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth -5

ARIM THE PAUPER, 1340-1368



Arim's Secret Kingdom was at first something different from what had come before - a sacred community - but the other entrants to the pass clustered in formative tribal groupings. Most of these changed into more recognisable tribes over time.

24. Which group did you join?

- a. **Arim's Secret Kingdom.** You joined Arim's sacred community centred on the temple to Sorana Tor and the 'hidden valley' that stretched to what is now Bagnot. Arim who was the sacred king of the land led the community with his children, the Twins, to aid him.
- b. **The Uitaros**, who arrived in the Pass before Arim and lived in the lands around Quintus Vale. The Uitaros preserved their independence stubbornly.
- c. **The Danbalings**, who lived around Kordros Island. Danbal was an early rival of Arim's.
- d. **The Karvenings**, who were also a rival collective and an early grouping of clans who lived outside Arim's valley.
- e. **The Barteri**, who formed after the Battle of Falling Hills (see below) from clans on the border with Holay. They are at times part of the Kingdom of Holay, at times part of the Kingdom of Tarsh.
- f. **None of these**, we preserved our independence fiercely for many years.

Results

- a) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +3
- b) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -2
- c) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -2
- d) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -1

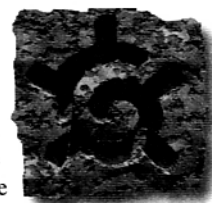
e) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -1

f) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty 0

The Battle of Falling Hills 1362

With a rallying cry of 'Bring them the Moon' Sylila and the provinces struck south at Tarsh, whose rebels were a constant thorn in the Empire's side. The tribes of Tarsh elected Arim their reluctant warleader and the twins showed their power at the Battle of the Falling Hills in Holay, bringing a range of hills down on the Provincial Army.

YARANDROS, THE CHARGER KING, 1395-1440



Yarandros was the unifier of the tribes and the founder of the nation. From this point on Tarsh becomes a kingdom. Yarandros expanded the rule of Old Tarsh to include the Aldachuri, the Quivini, the Grazers and much of Holay. He forged this great Orlanthi kingdom in the breathing space given by Sheng Seleris's conquest of the Empire. His descendants were to lose much of his gains in civil conflict, but the kingdom formed from the tribes of Tarsh remained until the Lunar dynasty. Yarandros claimed rulership not just by election, but also in Vingkot's way, through blood. Many clans resisted this, which seemed to contradict their law of "obey *chosen* leaders."

25. How did you react to Yarandros's claim of inheritance by blood?

- a. We accepted that it was how Vingkot had ruled in the Storm Age.
- b. We resisted and the Charger King conquered us.

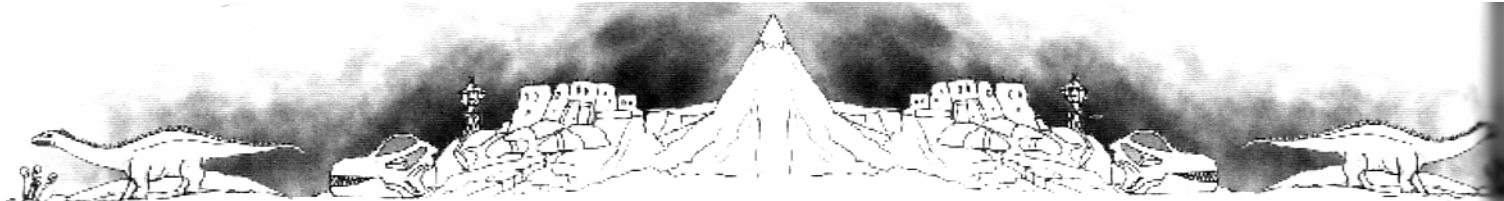
Results

- a) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth +1
- b) *Attitudes:* Old Tarsh Loyalty -2, Wealth - 2

26. Which Tribe did you join?

Your clan was a member of one of the twenty-one tribes of Tarsh. The choice is dependent on which group you joined on entering Tarsh. Some tribes here took clans from areas that cover several of the first groups, so some tribes are repeated. Those Exile clans who are not part of the Kerofini or Mitchuinn split from this tribe in the Second Civil War.

- a. **Arim's Secret Kingdom:** Firstbloods, Geroini, Kerofini.
- b. **The Uitaros:** Barastaros, Uitaros
- c. **The Danbalings:** Kordrosi, Geroini.
- d. **The Karvenings:** Norokoffi, Ossoforontosi, Pomini.
- e. **The Barteri:** Barastaros, Tremarki.
- f. **None of these:** Angardos, Blackwater, Carafandoli, Enkili, Hardhill, Hengkisi, Markstor, Mellmuri, Mitchuinn, Penthoi, Yarandrosi.



Results

As well as the results for the clan, the results show, in brackets, an additional ability or other modifier due to individuals of this descent. Where an ability is indicated, this is acquired at 12 – or, if the character already possesses it, a +1.)

- Angardos *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1, Wealth -1 (Sense Spirits)
- Barastaros *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -2, Wealth +1 (Mix with Strangers)
- Mitchuinn *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2 (Tough)
- Blackwater *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1 (Swim)
- Carafandoli *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1, Wealth +1 (Evaluate Slave)
- Enkili *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1, Wealth +1 (Dog Friendship)
- Firstbloods *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth +1 (+1 Wealth)
- Geroini *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2 (+1 to relationship with Orlanth or Maran)
- Hardhill *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1 (Stubborn)
- Hengkisi *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1 (Argue)
- Kerofini *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +3, Wealth -1 (Mythology of Kero Fin)
- Kordrosi *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -3, Wealth +2 (Legends of EWF)
- Markstor *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1 (Melancholy)
- Mellmuri *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -4, Wealth +2 (Unsentimental)
- Norokoffi *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1, Wealth +1 (Politics)
- Osoforontosi *Attitudes*: Wealth +2 (Respect Women)
- Penthoi *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -2 (Run)
- Pomini *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth +1 (Imaginative)
- Tremarki: *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -2 (Deliberate)
- Uitaros: *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -2, Wealth -2 (Cunning)
- Yarandrosi: *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1, Wealth +1 (Ride Horse)

THE FIRST CIVIL WAR, 1448-1455



Yarandros forged a nation but his sons lost it. While raiding the Empire, Orios crossed the borders of the Sultanate of Tork, releasing the madmen trapped within. The madmen slaughtered Orios and his army and the Twins' Dynasty ended, leaving no heir to the throne. A number of claimants vied for the throne; eventually Illaro

Blacktooth became King of Dragon Pass and reunited Tarsh. However the Aldachuri, Holay, Grazers and Quivini were never part of the Kingdom of Tarsh again.

27. Whom did you support in the civil war?

- Illaro Blacktooth
- Blond Arim
- Jornkalar of Talfort
- Torkalar the Huge

Results

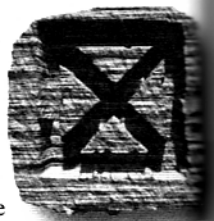
- Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2
- Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -2

c) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1

d) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1

THE WHOLE RITES OF SPRING, 1490

HonEel the Artess was the daughter of the Red Emperor and the Third Inspiration of Moonson. She was just one of a line of missionaries come to Tarsh, but the most powerful and already a hero throughout the Empire. At the Whole Rites of Spring at HeruvErnalda on Kordros Island HonEel heroquested to prove Ernalda's place within the Lunar pantheon, by revealing her to be the mysterious figure known as She Who Waits. Thus began the Tarshite worship of the Moon, through its association with Ernalda. Exile clans reject this association.



28. Did your clan accept that Ernalda was She Who Waits?

- No, HonEel's revelation was a trick; we do not accept her identification of Ernalda as one of the Seven Mothers and detest her corn rites.
- We accepted what we thought was the truth of HonEel's revelation. We now know that we are wrong.

Results

- Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth -1
- Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -2, Wealth +2

HonEel went on to marry King Pyjeemsab, conceive an heir to the Tarshite throne then sacrifice the old king. When her actions were revealed Tarsh divided between those supported the unborn Lunar king, and those who rejected HonEel and her child as a Kingslayer. All Exile clans rejected the Lunar regent, so no details are given for a clan supporting the Lunar dynasty.

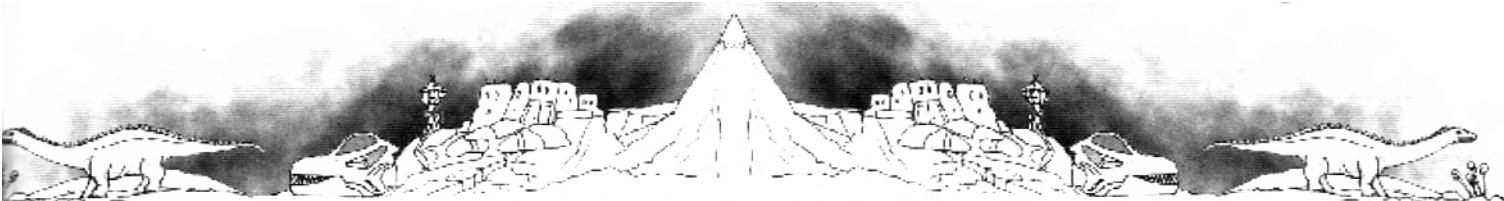
PALASHEE LONGAXE, 1538-1555

For a brief period of time Old Tarsh was restored when Palashee Longaxe seized the throne. He was the greatest warrior of his generation and rose to prominence as the warleader of the Kerofini tribe. Called the Liberator, he freed Tarsh from the rule of King Philigos and governed a free Tarsh for seventeen years. He was killed at Axefield by General Phargentes the Provincial Overseer and surviving heir to Philigos.



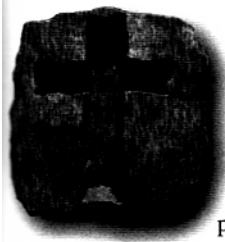
29. What was your clan's attitude to Palashee?

- He was the liberator who freed from us oppression.
- He was wise, strong, fair, and could quaff his mead.
- He was a strong king and brought us peace.
- He was a hero, but his fatal flaw was that he was a drunkard.



Results

- a) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +4
- b) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +3
- c) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2
- d) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1



THE BATTLE OF GRIZZLY PEAK, 1582

After years of civil war the Lunar dynasty under Moirades handed control of the army to the generals, the Phargentites while the King pursued the title of King of Dragon Pass. The Exiles met the army at the Battle of Grizzly Peak

and were crushed. The results were catastrophic. First Bagnot and then Arim's Secret Valley fell to the Phargentite generals.

25. How did you participate in this battle?

- a. We gave no quarter, and expected none.
- b. We fought honourably, but not insanelly.
- c. We sent as few warriors as we could.
- d. We argued for peace.

Results

- a) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +3, Wealth -2
- b) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +2, Wealth -1
- c) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty +1
- d) *Attitudes*: Old Tarsh Loyalty -1, Wealth +1

IN EXILE

With the loss of Bagnot and Arim's Secret Valley the Exiles were forced back to Wintertop. There, in the hills around Orlanth's mother, they vowed to make a last stand, whatever the cost of freedom. If the heroes did not choose the Kerofini as their tribe above, then their clan is sundered from their tribe by civil strife (this even applies to the Mitchuinn, who are usurped as leaders of their tribe by the Breagalos). If the players are not Kerofini they should choose a tribe to join: Hendarli, Iristaros, Marantaros, Mitchuinn.



26. Were you originally from the Kerofini?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Results

- a) Wealth - 5
- b) Wealth - 10

OLD TARSH LOYALTY















Exile clans may have an Old Tarsh Loyalty as an attitude. Add the clan's Old Tarsh Loyalty score to 6 (or subtract if negative). A clan with a rating of 6 or below no longer has Old Tarsh loyalty. If it is above 6 then record Old Tarsh Loyalty as one of the clan's attitudes. The players must decide whether or not to take the clan's Old Tarsh Loyalty attitude as an ability at anywhere up to the clan's value.

Bear in mind that if the individual's ability differs from the clan's then disputes may arise based on those values. Exile clans without Old Tarsh loyalty gain the attitude Independent at 17. Again a player may decide to take this attitude. Such a clan wants to remain independent of Tarsh, and no longer dreams of liberating the lowlands.

42.: 0 2 R 4 * 7 + 8 0 6 9 1 0 1 1 1 2 1 3 1 4 1 5 1 6 1 7 1 8 1 9 2 0 2 1 2 2 2 3 2 4 2 5 2 6 2 7 2 8 2 9 3 0 3 1 3 2 3 3 3 4 3 5 3 6 3 7 3 8 3 9 4 0 4 1 4 2 4 3 4 4 4 5 4 6 4 7 4 8 4 9 5 0 5 1 5 2 5 3 5 4 5 5 5 6 5 7 5 8 5 9 6 0 6 1 6 2 6 3 6 4 6 5 6 6 6 7 6 8 6 9 7 0 7 1 7 2 7 3 7 4 7 5 7 6 7 7 7 8 7 9 8 0 8 1 8 2 8 3 8 4 8 5 8 6 8 7 8 8 8 9 9 0 9 1 9 2 9 3 9 4 9 5 9 6 9 7 9 8 9 9

<http://www.celtic-webs.com/theunspokenword>

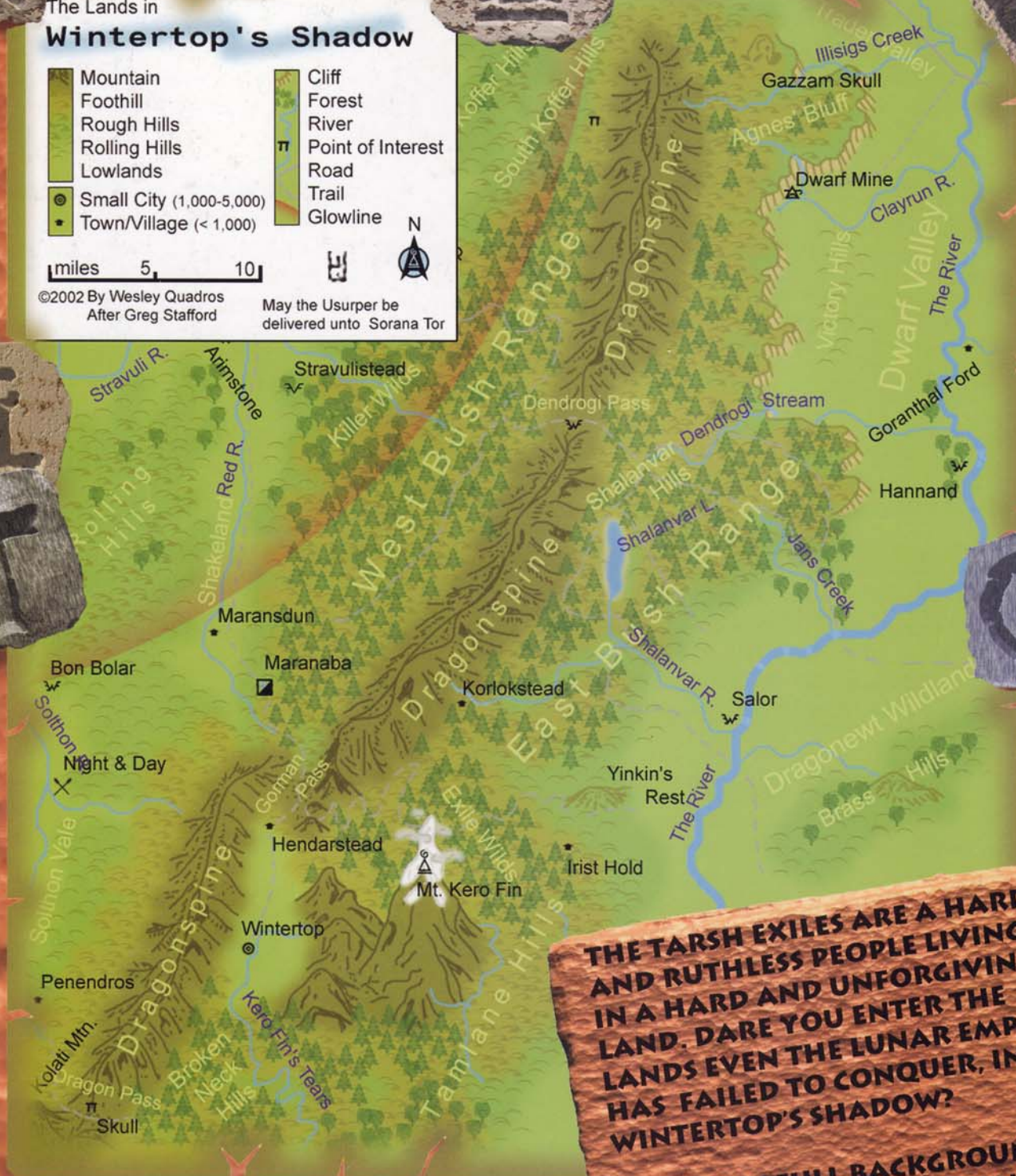
The Lands in Wintertop's Shadow

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Mountain |  Cliff |
|  Foothill |  Forest |
|  Rough Hills |  River |
|  Rolling Hills |  Point of Interest |
|  Lowlands |  Road |
|  Small City (1,000-5,000) |  Trail |
|  Town/Village (< 1,000) |  Glowline |

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 miles

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After Greg Stafford

May the Usurper be
delivered unto Sorana Tor



THE TARSH EXILES ARE A HARD
AND RUTHLESS PEOPLE LIVING
IN A HARD AND UNFORGIVING
LAND. DARE YOU ENTER THE
LANDS EVEN THE LUNAR EMPIRE
HAS FAILED TO CONQUER, IN
WINTERTOP'S SHADOW?

CONTAINS FULL BACKGROUND
FOR PLAY IN THE EXILE LANDS,
INCLUDING 2 SCENARIOS.

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