

Sun County



RuneQuest Adventures in the Land of the Sun

SUN COUNTY is a
supplement for the
RuneQuest roleplaying
game. This book is usable
with RQ Deluxe Edition.



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Game Company**
DIVISION OF MONARCH AVALON, INC.

Sun County is Avalon Hill's trademark for its fantasy
roleplaying game supplement to RuneQuest.

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SUN COUNTY AND ENVIRONS

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Sun County

RuneQuest Adventures in the Land of the Sun

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*This book is dedicated to Stephen Ross (who always said I would)
and Su, my wife (who always said I wouldn't).*

SUN COUNTY: RUNEQUEST ADVENTURES IN THE LANDS OF THE SUN
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SUN COUNTY is a supplement intended for use with the RUNEQUEST roleplaying
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Table of Contents



Page	Section	Page	Section
Inside Front		46	Militia Profile
Cover	Sun County Map	47	Games: Shield Push
1	Title and Credits	48	Sun County Encounters
2	Table of Contents	49	Encounter Descriptions
3	Introduction	52	Sun Dome Justice
3	Where in the World	53	Special Encounters
5	The Light List	56	Jaxarte Visits Harpoon
8	Solanthos Ironpike	57	Sun County Scenarios
9	Hazia	58	Creating Adventurers
10	Temperature and Precipitation	61	Rabbit Hat Briefing
11	Notable Personalities	62	8 Pre-Generated PCs
12	Invictus	66	Sun County: An Overview
13	Lady Vega	67	Garhound Contest
14	Lord Belvani	76	Melisande's Hand
15	The Gamon	88	Six Contestants
15	The Globe & Scepter	91	Rabbit Hat Farm
17	Jaxarte's Journal	108	Grant of Lordship
21	The Cult of Yelmlio	109	The Crown of Yamsur
27	Gifts and Geas	110	Sun County Ruins
28	Sun Dome Temple	112	The Old Sun Dome
30	Temple Map	115	The Vampire of the Crypt
33	Hector's Yellow Book	119-120	Bunan Flea
36	Sanctuary	123	Solinthor's Tower
37	Temple Defenses	123	Goldbreath Village
40	The River Ritual	124	Solinthor
42	Sun Dome Templars and Militia	126	The Lost Hymns
43	Sun Dome Active Militia Units	127	A Year in Sun County
43	2-H Spear with Shield Skill	127	Regional Activity Table
45	Templars Profile	Inside Back	
		Cover	Garhound Town Map

*This book is sacred to Yelm.
May the enduring light of the
Fiery Father sear the eyes of
the impure lest they profane this work.*

Sun County

An Introduction

This supplement is a RuneQuest Gloranthan sourcepack with adventures set in Sun County, a small, isolated province of light-worshipping farmer-soldiers, situated in the fertile River of Cradles valley of Eastern Prax, south of the City of Pavis, and surrounded on most sides by hostile nomads and arid upland wastes. Sun County was first described in the classic RuneQuest scenario packs *Pavis* and *Big Rubble*. These works were the inspiration for *Sun County*, and with the kind permission of the original authors, some material from those works has been adapted for this supplement. It is, however, not necessary to own *Pavis* or *Big Rubble* to enjoy *Sun County*.

This book follows the Avalon Hill Deluxe Edition of the *RuneQuest* rules, and many of the divine spells listed are taken from *Gods of Glorantha*. Standard Edition users must adapt or ignore unfamiliar spells.

Where in the World?

Sun County lies two days journey from Pavis, a good ten days ride west across the plains of Prax to the nearest large city (Aldachur in northern Sartar), and several weeks after that to the civilized lands of the Lunar Empire proper. For more details refer to the *Glorantha* RuneQuest supplement.

Prax

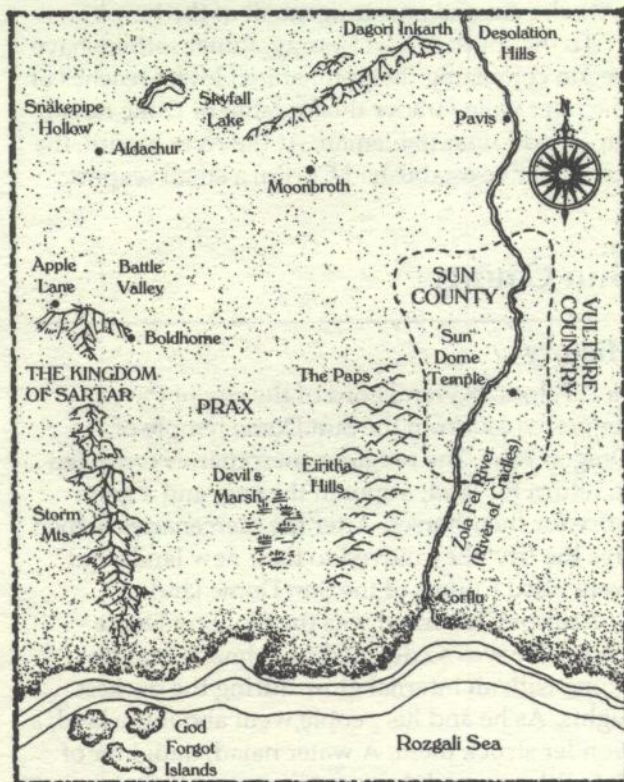
Prax is an uninviting expanse of barren plains, unbearably hot in the summer and unpleasantly cold in the winter, scourged with strong, capricious winds and parched by periodic drought. The climate of the arid high plateau of Vulture Country to the east is even worse, and only the hardiest nomads (driven there by the Lunar invaders) could hope to survive there.

The nomads of Prax belong to several distinct tribes, each of which rides and herds a unique species of beast. The great nations of Prax include the Bison, High Llama, Sable, Impala and the

Morokanth (the inhuman Morokanth herd a bestial variety of humans but do not ride them). The nomadic cultures of the beast herding tribes are well-suited for survival in the harsh wastes of Prax, and nomads share a lofty disdain for the soft, settled agricultural societies clustered along the banks of the River of Cradles. See *Glorantha, Player's Book*, pp. 10-13, for a detailed treatment of Praxian nomad culture.

The River of Cradles

The River of Cradles lies in a great fertile valley that runs from its source in the Desolation Hills south to the Rozgali Sea, dividing Western Prax from Vulture Country. The river got its name centuries ago from the epic journeys made by great cradles bearing the children of giants that



Sun County, the Prax Region, and Environs



floated to the sea from a mysterious source in the Desolation Hills. The nomads call the river Zola Fel after its resident deity.

Unlike the arid plains, the river valley is comparatively fertile, and its grazing lands are much sought after by the nomads. However, the valley is presently dominated by civilized farmers, and the nomads are no longer welcome in their ancient tribal grazing ranges.

Pavis

The northern end of the valley is controlled by the city of Pavis, a Sartarite colony founded near the ancient walls of Old Pavis (also known as the Big Rubble), now a ruin haunted by trolls. Pavis fell to the Lunars in 1610 S.T., about 10 years before this campaign setting. The Lunar governor, Sor-Eel the Short, rules over Pavis and Prax, and by terms of the Armistice is the nominal overlord of Solanthos Ironpike, ruler of Sun County. New Pavis is a small city of approximately 3,500 people, including a sizable Lunar garrison. The Suntown district of New Pavis is populated by Sun Dome cultists who enjoy considerable freedom from interference by the Lunar authorities.

The city of Pavis is the administrative center of Pavis County. Many of the 20,000 people of Pavis County are of Sartarite stock, but an increasing number are Lunar settlers, recently arrived here with the aid and encouragement of the Empire.

To the south of Sun County, Lunar settlers have begun colonizing the uninhabited lower reaches of the river valley under the lordship of Duke Raus, an exiled Lunar nobleman. At the river mouth, the Lunars have established Corflu, a small seaport.

Sun County

History

In 877, Joraz Kyrem, Lord of the city of Pavis, requested aid from the Sun Dome temple of Dragon Pass. The religious mercenaries complied in return for land, a spot in the sun, and a good price for their horses. After the mercenaries helped free the city, they moved to their new lands and were titled Counts of the Sun Dome lands.

Arinsor Clearmind was the first Sun Dome leader. He was so devoted to Yelm alio that he shone with an internal glow during the darkest nights. As he and his people went about the land, a wonder struck them. A water naiad, daughter of Zola Fel, engaged Arinsor in an ancient rite: they reenacted the story of Yelm and the Oslir river,

wherein the lord of light fell but was revived by the river, and so they made an alliance. The sun people were reconciled with the river, and there was irrigation upon the lands for the good of all.

In the early days, when the Arrowsmith dynasty ruled in Pavis, the population, fertility, and security of the land grew. Food was plenty, children common, and marriages pleasant.

After Pavis fell in 1200, Sun County was isolated from the peoples beyond the nomads. They call this era "Solitude of Testing." They feel they passed their tests and survived and are now receiving their blessings from their lord, Yelm alio.

This blessing began in 1575 when Dorasar arrived with presents, offers and an alliance to clear the valley of nomads.

The history of Sun County thus has three phases. First, 879-1200 S.T. (some 321 years) is called the Peaceful Era, the end of which was marked by terrible violence. Then came the Solitude of Testing from 1200-1575 (lasting 375 years). The time since then is called Recent History.

In 1610, the Lunar Empire defeated the nomads at the Battle of Moonbroth and occupied Pavis. Sun County has allied with the Lunars, who in return do not interfere in Sun Dome affairs.

The Count of the land is usually the ranking Light Son of the temple, with special privileges among his fellows. He deals with outsiders.

Sun County Settlements

The population of Sun Dome Temple and the town beside it totals about 1,000. The inhabitants are almost all humans, though a band of griffins stops by regularly. Most of the people are farmers, but a large percentage are religious personnel and craftspeople to maintain dignity proper to the temple. This is also a seat of civil government, and a significant portion of the temple and town's population is employed by the bureaucracy.

Crafts include ironsmithing. Like the smaller settlements, Sun Dome has a weekly market within its walls.

There are several other small towns scattered through the County with an overall population of about 2,500 people. A further 12,500 farmers live in small hamlets or farmsteads throughout the valley.



The Light List: The Honored Counts of Sun County

The Sun County Light List covers the whole of their occupation of the land since 877. The 42 entries give the names of the ruling counts, a title or ascription traditionally associated with their reign, and the historical term of the reign (noted in years S.T.). The title or ascription is often posthumously bestowed. All children raised in Sun County memorize this entire list.

Ariansor Clearmind, the first count, who came from Dragon Pass to conquer the giants (877-1004).

Kolyth the Horn, who ate wolves (1005-1093).

Zebroth the Bow, a dull competent (1093-1140).

Zolan the Cruel, a great leader (1140-1224).

Palishon the Clever, son of Zolan (1224-1273).

Zolan II, called Trader, and Wyrmslayer, and Manywife Sinner (1273-1301).

Zolan III, singer and son of Zolan II (1301-1324).

Zolan IV, who was infamously shot by an arrow (1324-1328).

Lorango, an Avenger of Brilliance, who could fly (1328-1343).

Golungan, an elected man, from the Sable Tribe (1343-1352).

Kokostang, peasant-born whose companions were never cold (1352-1358).

Belonni, who loved hawks and won battles (1359-1370).

Zeoluz, called Traitor, or Shadowlord, or Destroyer (1370-1375).

Salostong the Literate, who should have ruled longer (1375-1378).

Kollen, son of Kistang, who seized the title (1378).

Bitchelli the Head Bearer, who killed Kollen (1379).

Monallyn the Calm, who used iron darts and brought peace (1380-1383).

Cruk the Dissenter, an outlander (1384).

Blame and Shame, outlander twin brothers of great strength (1385).

Orogurri the Bison, who yelled a lot (1386).

Pistolli, who tried hard (1387-1388).

Kujubbi the Impala, Elasto the Worthy, and Daga the Cruel, who killed each other (1389).

Boburto the Pygmy, who began a new line of counts (1389-1401).

Balablor the Good, son of Boburto (1401-1412).

Melenst the Poem-Lover, the last of the pygmy counts (1412-1420).

Oloros the Blind, who imprisoned Malia during his reign (1420-1439).

Skindilli Longlaegs, who drove away Daga and made slaves of Storm Bull men (1439-1458).

Narokoris the Wise, who trained all his people once again to the drill of spear and shield, and made his land peaceful (1458-1498).

Kirstan the Good Killer, a many-virtued leader (1498-1509).

Tol the Peasant, who used his fingers to read (1509-1512).

Dadelin the Shaggy, a great sage (1512-1515).

Tol the Just, who angered many gold-wearers (1516-1519).

Banashi Gold, who had too many sons (1520-1525).

Tol the Generous, who was murdered by his rivals (1525-1532).

Kilossi Banashison, who was killed by his brother (1532-1534).

Banalli Banashison, who was called Kinslayer (1535-1536).

Korogi, Nashalta, and Fankarios, all of whom were Banashi's sons, and of whom ruled in turn after murdering predecessors (1537).

Poskuturri Criminal-Slayer, long-ruled, wise, and childless without sorrow (1537-1556).

Zentakos the Blind, who never fell down until he died (1556-1567).

Varthanis Brighthelm, who aided Dorasar and received the gift of our patience (1567-1593).

Varthanis II, who turned his Pavis palace over to the Lunar commander (1593-1612).

Solanthos Ironpike, who likes to kill Dara Happan Rune lords in duels (current Count).



The People

"I am a Sun Dome Templar.

Who are you to march through our lands?"

The people of Sun County look unlike their Pavic or Praxian counterparts, typically having blonde hair and brown eyes. They are distinguished further by their language, a dialect recognizably Sartarite, but heavily influenced by Old Pavic and Praxian. Despite these differences, they use the same farming tools and methods, live in similar structures, and raise the same foods as their neighbors and ancestors. Their religion of Yelmadio worship, their social customs (based on a patriarchal theocracy), and their history (of presence on the Plains) set them apart.

Sun County men favor beards. They are the providers and the protectors. They are expected to marry young (except those blessed with celibacy by Yelmadio) and sire many children. Children keep their father's name as their surname until they earn another, sire children of their own or, in the case of girls, marry.

Sun County women are considered socially inferior, but occupy a special place in Sun Dome society as caregivers and mothers. Women may take on a man's role in the Yelmadio cult, but this is unusual. They are expected to dress modestly, and veil their faces in mixed company. Following Dara Happan custom, women have property rights, the right of divorce, and half of all gifts received during marriage.

Sun County people have great reverence for the aged, and respect their wisdom and experience.

Religion

Sun Dome County is an attempt by a devout, cohesive theocratic Yelmalian culture to achieve some portion of the grace and glory of the exalted Mansions of Yelm and its Halls of Eternal Light in the mortal world. This experiment in seeking the divine on earth in the Zola Fel Valley has been a notable success for more than eight centuries.

The Yelmadio cult is the way of life for the people of Sun County, and provides them with answers to all their spiritual needs. Almost all Sun County males join the Yelmadio cult at maturity. A few Lunar expatriate families still revere Yelm the Fiery Father, and can claim certain prerogatives. Worship of other deities is uncommon, even of other gods in the Yelm pantheon.

Although the cult of Yelmadio is open to them, women typically worship Ernalda the Earth

Cult Membership in Sun County

	Males
01-93	Yelmadio
94-97	Yelm
98	Lokarnos
99-00	Other*
	Females
01-90	Ernalda
91-94	Dendara
95-96	Chalana Arroy
97	Uleria
98-00	Other**

*Includes Chalana Arroy, Dayzatar, Donandar, Flamal, Gorgorma, Lodril, Nysalor, and Pole Star.

**Includes Aldrya, Asrelia, Babeester Gor, Dendara, Gorgorma, Ourania, Ty Kora Tek, Voria, Yelmadio, and Yeloma.

Mother, wife of Yelmadio. A few eccentric souls choose to follow other deities and are usually considered "strange" by their peers.

Governance and Custom

The conservative government (modeled on the mythical government of heaven) provides Sun Domers the security of their farmlands in return for their loyalty and taxes.

The worship of Yelmadio and associated deities is the official state cult. The cult itself retains title over the lands according to the original grant by Joraz Kyrem. Sun County lords earn their tenure upon those lands, and cult initiates earn their right to dwelling, workshop, and farm plots through faithful service to the cult. No non-Yelmalian mayown land in Sun County, though the cult may grant permission to rent land to outlanders. In each farming community, farm plots are assigned by lot each year. Rights of personal property are recognized and protected, but all benefits from land and labor are acknowledged as deriving from the grace and generosity of Yelmadio.

Sun County citizens are proud and deserving of the reputation they have among foreigners as exceptionally moral. Cult lords and priests have power of judgement over lay and initiate cultists, and are encouraged to judge according to the spirit as well as the letter of the law. Important rulings (capital crimes, banishment, blinding, etc.) are confirmed by divination. A judgement divined to be unpleasing to Yelmadio is reconsidered until it is meet in his sight.



Sun County culture has also earned the reputation of being sexually repressive. A strict monogamy is enforced upon cult members, and sexual congress is permitted only within the bonds of cult-confirmed matrimony (though bachelor cultists may worship with Uleria priestesses who travel a regular circuit through the larger villages of the county). Yelmations are offended by and scornful of the sexual license tolerated by Lightbringer and Seven Mothers cults.

Sun County culture has been authoritarian, stable, and cohesive for eight centuries. In times of good leaders, this proves a benefit for all citizens; in times of poor leaders, all citizens suffer equally. Sun County currently thrives under the strong, competent leadership of Count Solanthos Ironpike. The previous count, Varthanis II, was also an effective administrator, though he is now remembered primarily for what is popularly regarded as a demeaning accommodation with the Lunars. Solanthos, slayer of two Lunar Rune Lords in duels in his youth, is popularly credited for preserving Sun County's honor and independence as an ally of the Lunar Empire, but in fact the Count prudently avoids unnecessary conflicts with Lunar authorities, and resentfully tolerant of the presence of acknowledged and secret Lunar agents in Sun County.

Solanthos is an ignorant, prudish dirt farmer ill-suited to rule peoples of the Sun. They say, however, he boasts of some skill with the spear.

— attributed to Eritus Armemnon
General, Lunar Army, 1582-1613 S.T.,
slain in a duel upon a point of honor

Military

The Yelmation cult has an ancient and honorable military tradition as independent farmer-warriors. Military service is an important element of social life and an integral part of cult worship. The poetry of the culture is filled with metaphors evoking imagery of hard labor, strength and hardiness, sowing and harvest, both in the fields of barley and on the field of war. Veterans of great battles are accorded a special honor and status; noncombatants are formally acknowledged as essential to cult and culture, but privately mocked



Count Solanthos Ironpike, Ruler of Sun County

and despised by battle veterans. Maneuver and stratagem are disdained by generals and troopers alike; the coming together of stout, courageous warriors in honorable, decisive battle, where strength, will, and mettle are tested, is the proper Yelmation mode of warfare. Though Sun Domers admire archery skill in hunting and heroic exploits, they disdain the use of massed archery in offensive warfare. However, they do use missile skirmishers on the battlefield, and excel in the defensive use of archery from fortifications — a potent weapon against lightly armored nomad raiders. Even the Sun County dancing tradition includes community shield-bashing in time to chanted musical accompaniment. Women perform a more stately version of this dance with sheaves of barley. Citizenship and initiate status is a function of military service; consequently, women are inevitably second-class citizens. Hints of the weakening of the social bond as a result of Lunar influence is most notable among Sun County women attracted by strong feminine roles available in Lunar cults and culture.

The Yelmation cult is famous for its mercenaries, the Sun Dome Templars. Such was their fame that Joraz Kyrem called for them back in 877. Although their original grant from Kyrem stipulated it, the Sun Domers of Sun County no longer revere nor raise horses. They have adapted to their fate afoot,



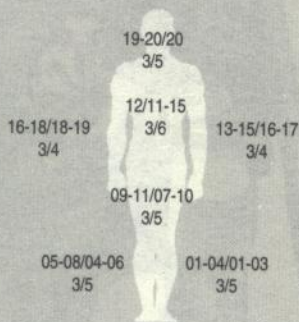
Count Solanthos Ironpike, Ruler of Sun County

Ranking Light Son of Yelmalo, human male, 43

The temporal head of Sun County, Solanthos Ironpike is also the ranking Light Son of the Sun Dome temple. Arbitrary, suspicious, and vain, he is nevertheless both loved and feared by his people. Unlike his predecessor, Solanthos keeps his association with the Lunars to a minimum, and this attitude has won him the respect of the populace. Once renown for his martial prowess, the count is now middle-aged, increasingly sedentary, and no longer a master duelist. He is unmarried.

STR 12
CON 13
SIZ 17
INT 17
POW 15
DEX 11
APP 16

Move: 3
Fatigue: 25
Hit points: 15
Magic points: 15
Dex SR: 3



Solanthos Ironpike

Formal Regalia: Total encumbrance = 9.5. Fatigue -15 (25 - 9.5). Gold leaf-covered cuirbouilli (AP 3/ENC 6). Pike damage listed includes permanent Truespear I. Shield, 1-H spear, bow and quiver of 20 arrows are carried by an orderly.

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Iron 2-H Pike	4	96/99	4d6+4+1d4	3.5/18
(Self Bow)	3	95	1d6+1	.5/5
1-H Spear	6	84/61	1d8+1	2/10
Hoplite Shield	7	41/92	1d6	7/18

Spirit Magic (88-ENC): The count does not deign to keep spirit magic in mind himself; however his allied spirit will and knows these spells: Heal 9, Lightwall (4), Mobility 2, Befuddle (2), Farsee 1.

Divine Magic: Understand Birds 1, Catseye 1.

Skills: Orate 86, Cult Lore 58, Civil Law 92, Dodge 76 (-ENC), Human Lore 85, World Lore 69, Hawking 95, Listen 95, Scan 90, Ceremony 94.

Languages: Local 96/88, Firespeech 88/59, Trade 33/00.

Armor: The count's splendid gold armor is really a thin tissue of gold over hard leather. It has negligible armor value.

Gifts & Geases: Divine spells (see above). The count seeks to emulate Yelmalo in all he does, but his only true geases are "all celibacy requirements" and "never let an elf suffer needlessly."

Allied Spirit: "Seneschal" Bound into Iron Pike, INT 18 POW 31 (this is a special cult spirit given to each successive count).

Special Items: Iron Pike has Truespear I permanently cast on it, a gift from his god. Solanthos can also draw upon up to 40 MP while within the borders of Sun County, another boon from Yelmalo. Bladesharp 10, Countermagic 8 and Glamor 3 matrixes are all carved onto the haft of his pike. A gold bracer is a Matrix for Sunspear I; this item may only be used with the permission of the High Priest. The count also has the right to certain ritual items as the Scepter of Order and the Globe of Authority, but they never leave the temple grounds.

Ransom: 1,500L.

and have been forced on occasion to rely on allied mounted nomad tribesmen of their religion for cavalry support. The Sun Domers once even used chariots in war, but only the Count now has such a vehicle for ceremonial purposes only.

The Sun Dome has formed an alliance of convenience with the Lunar forces in Prax, and joined them at the great battle of Moonbroth where the nomads were subjugated in 1610. As a condition of this alliance, the Lunars do not station their troops in the count's lands. This suits both the insular Sun Domers and the Lunar authorities, who lack the manpower to garrison and patrol such a large region and its borderlands. The arrangement will probably continue unchanged as long as the Sun Dome properly remits its taxes to the Lunar administration in Pavis.

In Sun County the peace is kept by small squads of Sun Dome Militia. These squads are made up of young farmers doing their annual cult service under the command of professional soldiers. A standing force of Templars exists to meet stronger threats, and to guard the Sun Dome officials. This regiment consists of approximately 800 men, superbly disciplined and well-equipped with pikes, hoplite shields, and heavy armor. In a time of crisis Sun County could call upon nearly 4,000 men, nearly the entire adult male population. Realistically, the count might be able to muster a force of up to 1,000 levies to support his Templars. For more details on Sun Dome Militia and Templars, see pp. 42-46.

The Land

Each Yelmalian initiate receives a plot of land to work for as long as they remain faithful to cult and count. Such plots are always as rectangular as possible, to imitate the Earth-rune, and vary in size depending on rank and status. The corners of farm plots are marked by special white stones inscribed with fertility-runes, which must stay in place for the annual Bless Crops rituals to be effective.

The land is plowed by teams of oxen and is reaped by hand with sickles. Clever irrigation channels ensure the crops are kept well watered, and the farmers spend a certain amount of their time each season keeping the watercourses in good repair. Barley is the main crop grown, and the cult takes a portion of it as tax. This is hoarded in the temple granaries, and distributed in times of shortage or famine. Other crops include vegetables and common plants like flax, tomatoes, and herbs. Hops are often grown to brew beer, and grapes, to produce wine and raisins.

Sheep were originally brought to the valley



with the first settlers, but most succumbed to hoof rot and wool canker. Pigs thrive, and domestic ducks and geese are common, as are dogs and cats. Popular also as pets or familiars are a local species of mongoose, kagas (a large, insectivorous gecko), and song birds of various species. Domesticated sables and impalas provide wool, meat, cheese, and other necessary products. The hardy, independent Sun Dome beastherder needs strength, courage, and wit to defend his wide-ranging flocks from nomad raiders, predators, and feral broos.

Trade

All trade and portage in Sun County is strictly controlled by the Sun Dome Temple through the Lokarnos wagon-cult. The temple enjoys many choice monopolies, including salt production, the harvesting of dates, and the smithing of gold. The count claims all sturgeon and pike caught between Helmbold and Harpoon as his own, a point hotly contested and routinely ignored by the River folk. Farmers are forbidden to deal with foreigners directly, and the wares of all passing traders are scrutinized carefully. Most of the trade passing through Sun County is by river. This is because the wheel ruts of Sun County are broader than elsewhere and bringing a wagon into the area requires a changing of axles. Traders are further discouraged by the Sun Dome cult's stubborn insistence of using the unwieldy gold Wheel coin as the unit of exchange.

Despite the prohibition against dealing directly with foreign traders, Sun County citizens are easily persuaded to exchange goods if a suitable pretext can be devised which avoids the appearance of trade. For example, the exchange of gifts is not prohibited, and barter with tribal nomads who

worship Yelmadio is specifically permitted. Within Sun County borders outsiders may purchase certain services from specially licensed foreign concessioners in some locations. For example, the only inn open to foreigners in Sun Dome Temple, the Light House Inn in the Yard district, is run by an Issaries cultist licensed by the temple.

River traffic passes through Sun County, and local authorities make occasional attempts to charge a toll or duty on trade goods, sometimes without the direct authority or knowledge of the cult. The Sun Domers ignore the newtling reed rafts which ply the river, partly out of racial distaste and partly because the newtlings always attempt to avoid them (newtling-tail is a great delicacy in Sun County). The Sun Domers also let official Lunar traffic pass unhindered, preferring to exact the toll from private craft and traders. Their ability to waylay passing boats is hindered by their own fear of water and lack of boating skills, and most experienced traders know not to pull in at any of the Sun County settlements if they want to escape without a fee.

Currency

"Wheels" are coins minted from gold by the Lokarnos cult. They are named after an ancient race called the Sun Wheel Dancers. The Yelmadio cult leaders have an obligation to use gold as much as possible. This sometimes gives them an image of ostentatious wealth, which is seldom the case. Silver money is typically pounded into lumps of metal before trading it for gold.

Silver pennies are known as "Lunars" because most of these coins in circulation in the Valley are minted by the Empire. People with an anti-Lunar bias usually call them "guilders," "pennies," "stars," or just plain "silvers".

Hazia: A Contraband Euphoric Herb

Hazia is a euphoric substance derived from the crushed stamens of a plant native to the Stinking Forest. It is highly addictive, producing in the mind of the taker an effect not unlike Discorporation. It is usually smoked or inhaled, but some species, particularly trolls, like to eat it.

Each pipeful of hazia has a POT of 1d10, which is matched against the smoker's CON. If more than one pipe is smoked per hour, the POT effect is cumulative. If the resistance roll is failed, the taker is addicted and wants more. This craving lasts for a number of days equal to the POT of the hazia he has taken. Each day he goes without a "hit", he must make a CON x 3 roll or lose a point of CON and DEX. Characteristic loss continues until another "hit" is made or the addict kicks the habit. The lost CON and DEX return gradually (a point per week) after the addiction is broken.

Hazia is cultivated illegally in plots deep in barley fields of Sun County, although the authorities officially deny it. Pavis serves as the distribution point for Prax, Sartar, and the Lunar Empire beyond. A pipeful of hazia comes wrapped in a small package of leaves from the hazia plant. Alternatively, the hazia may be rolled up and smoked. An addict might smoke up to 20 pipes per day, if he can afford it. Prices range from 1-10L a dose, depending on quality and availability. The slang word for hazia is "dummy."

While the punishment for growing hazia is an arbitrary fine of up to 500L and confiscation of the crop, traffickers are treated more severely. Penalties range from mere mutilation, to death by hanging (for outsiders) or fire (for Sun County indigents).

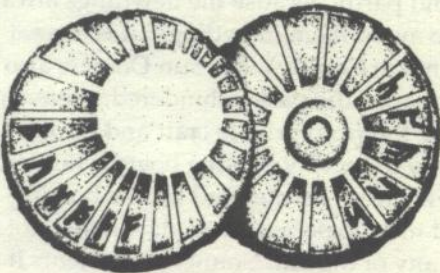


Relative Values of Currencies

- 1 Wheel = 20 pennies/Lunars/guilders/stars
- 1 penny/Lunar = 10 clacks
- 1 clack = 10 bolgs (for trollkind)

Copper coins of both Lunar and Sun Dome origin are commonly referred to as "coppers" or "clacks."

The trolls use a lead coin called the "bolg," but no self-respecting citizen in Sun County would accept the currency of Darkness creatures.



Timeline

Here is a list of dates for the most significant events in local history.

- 1598: The Opening. Ship begin docking at Corflu again.
- 1610: The Lunar Empire invades Prax, defeats a massed nomad army at Moonbroth, and occupies the city of Pavis.
- 1613: Count Solanthos Ironpike becomes ruler of Sun County.
- 1616: Rabbit Hat Farm sacked by nomads.
- 1621: The Cradle comes downriver.
- 1621: Garrath Swordsharp vanishes.
- 1621: Gim-Gim the Grim, head of Lunar Intelligence in Pavis, returns to the Lunar Empire. Replacement unknown.

Prax Temperature and Precipitation

Season	Normal Daily Temperature	Rainfall/Days of Rain	Prevailing Winds
Sea-Early	45/75	10"/21	Southwesterly
Sea-Late	50/85	4"/12	Southwesterly
Fire-Early	50/85	—	Southwesterly
Fire-Late	50/90	—	Southwesterly
Earth-Early	50/85	2"/2	Westerly
Earth-Late	45/75	3"/3	Westerly
Dark-Early	20/65	2"/4	Northwesterly
Dark-Late	15-45	4"/16	Northwesterly
Storm-Early	30/55	6"/28	Westerly
Storm-Late	30/65	10"/25	Westerly
Sacred Time	40/70	3"/9	Westerly

The early portion of a season is the first four weeks: Disorder, Harmony, Death, and Fertility. The late portion of a season is the last four weeks: Stasis, Movement, Illusion, and Truth.

Normal Daily Temperature (in Degrees Fahrenheit): Average nightly low / average daily high

Rainfall / Days of Rain: In a typical year, this amount of rain falls and this number of days are rainy. In the frequent drought years, the rainfall is much less, perhaps six inches per season or even drier.

Prevailing Winds: The normal winds come from the stated direction. Other winds blow intermittently. During drought years, a northeast wind frequently scours the plains.

Notable Personalities

In Sun County

Perimides the Chaste, High Priest of Yelmalo

The spiritual head of the Sun Dome community. Though extremely (some say unnaturally) old, Perimides stubbornly resists pressure from subordinates to retire to the Towers. Almost bedridden, he is cared for by a team of Ourania nuns and supported by a pair of acolytes during the ceremonies. The High Priest is rarely seen except on these occasions, and never deals with outsiders. He speaks only Firespeech.

Gaumata the Strange, Light Keeper

An outsider from Pavis who converted to the Yelmalo religion in early youth, Gaumata has worked hard to distinguish himself and now oversees the magical and religious duties of the cult. Elderly himself, Gaumata is next in line to be High Priest. Gaumata suspects a reluctance to promote an outsider to High Priest behind the delay of Perimides' retirement. Perhaps because of this, Gaumata follows cult strictures to a degree even his fellow priests consider excessive.

Laertes Coatilon, Light Guide

A man of subtlety and discretion, the Light Priest Laertes directs the internal affairs of Sun County. His shrewd and discrete agents keep him well-informed concerning local, Pavic, and Lunar affairs. His loyalty to the Sun Dome temple is unquestioned, but he persistently advocates closer ties with the Lunar authorities.

Hector the Wise, Temple Librarian

Though formally reporting to the Light Keeper, Hector treats the library as his exclusive domain. A true worshipper of Dayzatar, he is both learned and aloof. Even the count is said to be wary of his sharp wit and intolerance for the modestly educated. Hector is even older than Perimides, and is his only real friend.

Porthor, Temple Cellarer

Porthor works under the Light Guide, and supervises the collection, storage, and distribution of tithed and surplus produce in Sun County. Though a mere initiate, he is scrupulously fair and trusted by his superiors.

Invictus, Light Captain

Invictus is the Ranking Light Son in the county, Light Servant (acolyte), and commander of the Sun Dome Templars. (See p. 12.)

Lady Vega Goldbreath, Guardian of Sun County

Lady Vega is a Light Lady (the only female rune lord in Sun County) and commander of the Sun Dome Militia. (See p. 13.)

Belvani, Lieutenant of the Light Captain

Belvani, a Light Son, Light Servant, and second officer of the Sun Dome Templars, is accompanied by a crested dragonewt manservant. (See pp. 14-15.)

Jalmara Yelmsfoot, High Healer of Chalana Arroy

Jalmara is kind, gentle, loved by all, but rarely heeded. She capably manages the Hospital Block in the Sun Dome Temple complex.

Penta Goldbreath, High Priestess of Ernalda

Although Penta heads a religion that claims nearly 50% of the Sun County population, she exercises little influence outside of her cult. Penta is the identical twin-sister of Vega Goldbreath, although they are almost complete opposites in personality. Married to Invictus the Light Captain, Penta is the mother of three sets of twins, a great cause for celebration.

In Pavis County

Karial the Pure, High Priest of Yelmalo in Pavis

Though well respected by his flock, Karial chooses not to take an active role in Pavis city politics. He was pushed sideways into this position by Gaumata the Strange, who then took over his role as Light Keeper back at the Sun Dome.

Haloric Glowbrow, Light Captain of Yelmalo in Pavis

Haloric assumes the civic responsibilities Karial neglects, and maintains a high profile.

Thandren Clubfoot, Rune Priest of Lokarnos

Thandren is responsible for supplying the Yelmalo community in Pavis, and regularly travels to the Sun Dome. He is a close relative of Laertes Coatilon, and serves as the Light Guide's eyes and ears in the city.

Sor-Eel the Short, Lunar Count of Prax and Governor of Pavis

Stationed in Pavis city (incidentally, in the former palace of the leader of the Sun Dome community there), Sor-Eel's administrative responsibilities encompass Sun County, but he will rarely be encountered there. Though a respectful vassal, Count Solanthos shares a mutual dislike with Sor-Eel, although the only victims of this professional rivalry are the lesser functionaries who handle public and administrative affairs between them (see "Jaxarte's Journal," pp. 17-21). As long as the taxes are paid, Sol-Eel is content to leave Sun County alone. He does, however, plot to exert greater influence in the affairs of Sartarite farmers around Pavis.

Gimgim the Grim, the Masked One

Gimgim is the head of Lunar intelligence in Prax, including Sun County. Rumor reports him trying to establish an intelligence network in the Sun Dome lands. There are many whispers about this mysterious fellow — so many in fact, that some must be true.



Invictus, Light Captain of Sun County

Light Son and acolyte of Yelmalo, human male, 37.

Invictus is both a Light Son and Light Servant (acolyte). He is commander of the Templars, and formulates military policy. Invictus's passion is hawking, which he shares with the count. He leaves the day-to-day running of the militia to his subordinate (and former wife) Lady Vega Goldbreath. He is now married to her sister, the earth priestess Penta. As befits his status, Invictus is always accompanied by an honor guard of at least three Templars.

STR	16			
CON	17		19-20/20	
SIZ	15		18/6	
INT	14		12/11-15	
POW	18	16-18/18-19	18/8	13-15/16-17
DEX	12	18/5		18/5
APP	13		09-11/07-10	
			18/6	

Move: 3

Fatigue: 33

Hit points: 16

Magic points: 18

Dex SR: 3

05-08/04-06
0/6

Invictus

01-04/01-03
0/6

Arms and Armor Total encumbrance = 24. Fatigue -9 (33 -24).

Iron plate armor (AP 12/ENC 15). Iron 2-H Spear, Javelins, Comp. Bow, and Quiver of 20 arrows (ENC. 1) carried by orderly.

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Iron 1-H S. Spear	7	121/109	1d8+1+1d4	2/15
Hoplite Shield	8	71/105	1d6+1d4	7/18
(Iron 2-H Spear)	6	115/97	1d10+1+1d4	2/15
(Javelin x2)	3/9	94/28	1d6+1d2	3/8
(Comp. Bow)	3/9	110/28	1d8+1	5/7

Spirit Magic (103-ENC): Light, Detect Game, Farsee, Lantern 1, Lightwall, Repair, Disrupt, Bladesharp 4, (known by allied spirit) Heal 8, Mobility 5, Endurance 1, Farsee 1.

Divine Magic: Worship Yelmalo I, Catsee III, Heal Body I, Heal Wound II, Sunbright II, Soul Sight I, Extension III, Shield IV.

Skills: Ride 75, Dodge 68 (-ENC), Hawking 123, Orate 97, Scan 112, Search 99, Hide 85, Sneak 105.

Languages: Local 64/36, Firespeech 50/25.

Armor: Goldenhand's Armor (enchanted gilded iron plate, AP 18 in all locations; see description nearby.)

Gifts and Geases: Raised Spear Attack, Raised CON, "wear no armor on legs," "love only Earth cultists," "never eat any meat but bird," "never seek shelter from storm."

Allied Spirit: "Tercef" Bound into vrok hawk, INT 15 POW 18. Skill: Scan 169.

Special Items: Magic Spirit "Lady Gilt" bound into spear INT 15, POW 17 (usable only by Light Sons); knows Protection 6, Strength 4, Dispel Magic 5; linked to a 14-point POW spirit that only it can use. Also possesses 6 MP and 16 MP storing crystals set into a gold ring and a tiny wand which contains a POW 07 magic spirit that knows the divine spells Shield II and Fight Disease I. Hawking glove is a matrix for Command Hawk.

Ransom: 1,200L.



Invictus, Light Captain of Sun County

Lord Goldenhand's Armor Challenge: One of the first Light Sons of the current Sun Dome Temple, Lord Goldenhand helped establish the temple's armory. His own enchanted, gilded iron armor, passed down through the generations of Light Sons of the Sun Dome in Prax, is the center piece of that armory. Goldenhand's armor glows slightly in the dark and is warm to the touch. Light or Lantern spells cast on this armor have doubled effect. The cuirass also contains a binding enchantment holding a 16-point POW Spirit, usable by the rightful wearer. The armor is worth 1,500 Wheels to the temple. The armoring enchantments have a user restriction that they may only function for the rightful winner of Goldenhand's Challenge, as detailed below. If worn by someone else, the armor protects as a "normal" suit of enchanted iron plate. The armor provides protection (half damage) from fire.

Over the centuries, tradition demands that any Light Servant or Light Son born, initiated, or permanently resident in Sun County may challenge the current wearer to a duel over use of the armor. When a current wearer of the armor retires, such a challenge is a mere formality, and the duel is ritualized. Challenges must be issued on Yelmalo's High Holy Day, and fought on the last day of the Sacred Time. The current possessor of the armor gets to use it in the duel. Duels are fought until one or another challenger yields, and killing magic (like spell-traded Sever Spirit,) fire magic, and elementals are not allowed. Even though the duel is not to the death, challengers and defenders have died in these contests. Yelmalo has never yet answered a call for Divine Intervention within the bounds of the challenge. Invictus wears Goldenhand's armor. No one has dared challenge him for it, though some say Vega wants to.



Vega Goldbreath, Guardian of Sun County

Light Lady of Yelmalo, human female, 33

STR 12
CON 12
SIZ 12
INT 17
POW 18
DEX 09
APP 16

Move: 3

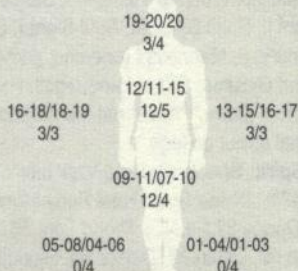
Fatigue: 24

Hit points: 12

Magic points: 18 +

21 ally = 39

Dex SR: 4



Lady Vega

Full Armor: Total ENC (w/iron 1-H spear & shield) = 18. Fatigue = 6 (24 - 18). Gilded armor (ENC 13). Javelins, bow and quiver of 20 arrows carried by orderly.

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Iron 1-H Spear	8	113/100	1d8+1	2/15
Hoplite Shield	9	56/100	1d6	7/27
Spear & Spells*	6	141/113	1d8+4+1d6	2/15
Shield & Spells*	7	69/113	1d6+1d6	7/27
Self Bow	4	110/23	1d6+1	.5/5
Javelins (2)	4	101/100	1d6+1	1.5/8

* Strength 3, Coordination 4, Bladesharp 3

Spirit Magic (104-ENC): Bladesharp 3, Countermagic 5, Heal 6, Demoralize (2), Light; (known by allied spirit) Farsee 1, Lantern 1, Speedart, Detect Gold, Extinguish 1, Mobility 3.

Divine Magic: Catseye I, Sunbright I (1-use), Heal Wound III (1-use).

Gifts and Geases: Mastery of 1-H Spear, Mastery of Javelin, Catseye spell, Recover magic points at double rate, "use only hoplite shield," "use only cult weapons," "never eat meat on Fireday or in Fire season," "never wear metal armor on arms," "never wear any armor on legs," "remain celibate every Truth week."

Allied Spirit: Formel, bound into Vrok hawk, INT 08 POW 21. Skill: Scan 150%.

Spirit: A gold wristband contains INT 08 POW 11 Magic Spirit; Spells: Detect Water, Repair 2, Spirit Screen 1, Strength 3 (raises STR to 19, damage modifier to +1d6, adds +05 to attack and parry, adds 9 to fatigue).

Skills: Dodge 58, Orate 47, Scan 99, Listen 94, Devise 44, Search 86, Hide 88, Sneak 87, Human Lore 46.

Languages: Pavic 67/35, Firespeech 45/37, New Pelorian 17/—.

Armor: Gilded iron plate armor on chest and abdomen, gilded cuirbouilli on arms and head.

Ransom: 1,000L.

Special Items: A leather braid is matrix for Coordination 4 (raises DEX to 17, lowers SR by 2; adds +08 to attack and parry). Vega took this from a captured nomad priestess and now wears it in her hair. It has the condition that only women may use it (Vega is unaware of this). Vega also possesses a tiny golden shield marked with curious runes and sigils. Once a day it can cast a single Protection 10 spell on the possessor, who must supply the magic points to power the spell. The object is an ancient Goldbreath family heirloom that only works for a chosen Goldbreath heir (Vega is the first female in the family to receive it). The heir must assume the Yelmalo geases "never flee or surrender to worshippers of Zorak Zoran," "never speak to or help trolls in any way," and "eat no bird meat."

The only woman rune lord in a man's cult, Vega Goldbreath has fought prejudice, derision, and chauvinism on her way to the top. In the process she earned a reputation as a capable duelist, finally gaining the eye of the Light Captain Invictus. They later married, but were compelled to divorce after he became an acolyte. Invictus later married Vega's twin sister, something she has never forgiven him for.

As a military commander, she struggles to exercise authority over men unaccustomed to receiving orders from a mere woman. As Guardian of Sun County and head of the Sun Dome militia, she has been charged with the responsibility of stamping out the Hazia trade once-and-for-all.

Vega is intelligent and quick-witted, but hardly orthodox Sun Dome in outlook. Her militia unit, The Victors, is the best in Sun County.

Lady Vega's Honor Guard: Vega is accompanied by an honor guard of three Templars. (A fourth member of her entourage, Vega's cousin Mara, is detached to serve as second-in-command of The Fishermen, another superior active militia file.)

• **Tarquin** (Standard Templar; 2-H spear attack 101%, never wear armor on legs): Proudly carries the Guardian's standard.

• **Alalia** (Quick Templar female; no combat related geas): Emulates Vega in everything she does.

• **Hiero** (Standard Templar; no combat related geas): Longs to command his own militia unit.

The Guardian's Standard: As Guardian of Sun County, Vega has the right to display the Guardian's Standard, which depicts a griffin rampant surmounted by a golden orb. Vega has appended a pennant to it showing the colors of a House Goldbreath. This ancient cult treasure features several special abilities:

• The standard is inscribed with matrixes for Glamor 3 and Seek Sun Dome. The Seek Sun Dome is special, in that when it is cast, the gleam of golden light is visible to everyone in the Guardian's party. Only the Guardian may use these spells.

• The standard is a Sanctified item, and worship activities can be carried out around it.

• When the standard is carried with the Guardian inside the borders of Sun County, all divine intervention rolls made by the Guardian are at half POW cost.

• The count always knows in what direction the standard is, if it is within the borders of Sun County.

• The Guardian's standard bearer gains the following special Yelmalo gift when carrying it aloft: No functional incapacitation. What this means is he is preserved from incapacitation, shock, unconsciousness, and exhaustion, as if he had Berserk cast on him (see *RQ Deluxe*, *Magic Book*, p. 31). He can only die from the loss of total hit points. In this way, Yelmalo ensures his standard will be held high until the last. The corresponding geas is "never flee or surrender to enemies of the Sun Dome."

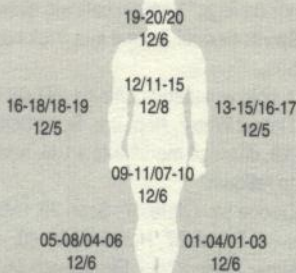


Belvani, Lieutenant of the Light Captain

Light Son and Light Servant (acolyte) of Yelmalio, Nysalor
Illuminate; human male, 39.

STR 13
CON 20
SIZ 12
INT 18
POW 18
DEX 16
APP 09

Move: 3
Fatigue: 33
Hit points: 16
Magic points: 18 +
16 ally +4 crystal
+ 13 crystal = 51
Dex SR: 2



Lord Belvani

Full Armor: Total ENC (w/ 2 iron gladii) = 27. Fatigue = 6 (33 -27). Gilded iron plate armor (ENC 25). Javelins, two crossbows and a quiver of 20 bolts, self bow and quiver of 16 arrows carried by The Gamon.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
RH Iron Gladius	6	109/92	1d6+1+1d4	1/15
LH Iron Gladius	9	99/107	1d6+1+1d4	1/15
Med. Crossbow	2	118/30-	2d4+2	4.8/8
2-H Spear	5	92/67	1d10+1	2/10
Self Bow	2/7	90/19	1d6+1	.5/5
Javelins (2)	2/17	97/95	1d6+1	1.5/8

Spirit Magic (108-ENC): Disruption (1), Demoralize (2), Protection 4, Bladesharp 5, Countermagic 3, Speedart (1), Multimissile 2, (known by ally) Heal 6, Farsee 1, Lightwall (4), Repair 1, Endurance 1, Detect Gold (1).

Divine Magic: Worship Yelmalio I, Sanctify I, Shield II, Divination II, Sunbright II, Spirit Block III, Soul Sight I, Extension II, Catseye I, Heal Wound II, Madness I (one-use, gained from spell trading).

Gifts and Geases: Gift of Languages, Raised CON, "never seek shelter from storm," "never eat the meat of horses," "never wear non-metal armor on legs."

Allied Spirit: Shu, bound into Vrok hawk, INT 14 POW 16. Skills: Scan 147%. Divine Spell: Heal Body I (one-use).

Skills: Dodge 37 (-ENC), World Lore 55, Human Lore 75, Orate 57, Scan 92, Listen 82, Devise 64, Search 103, Sneak 93, Sing 66, Climb 115, Hide 84.

Languages: Pavic 90/90, Firespeech 75/67, New Pelorian 57/33, Tarshite 35/25, Sartarite 13/—, Darktongue 08/—, Dara Happan 08/20.

Armor: Gilded iron plate armor on all locations.

Special Items: 1. A silver brooch is set with 6 stones: the first and fourth store 4 and 13 magic points respectively. The rest are worth 5d10L each. 2. A legendary Fire Crystal, which Belvani quested for at the Hill of Gold in Vanch. It boosts all offensive magic cast by Belvani by 3 MP, and is thus useful for penetrating defensive spells (for more information, refer to *Elder Secrets, Secrets Book*, p. 39). It also serves as an Ignite matrix, and can even be used in this way by Yelmalio cultists. Belvani must one day surrender the crystal to a high priest, in return for which his next divine intervention attempt costs him 4 POW less than the number rolled.

Ransom: 350L.

Often employed on missions for the count outside Sun Dome lands, Belvani has a somewhat more cosmopolitan and balanced view of the world outside the County than is typical for a Sun Dome Light Son. Belvani has some habits that are decidedly unusual for a Sun Domer. For example, he favors the shortsword and uses a crossbow to hunt. He is fluent in several languages, including New Pelorian, the language of the Lunar overlords. Often the opinions he espouses would be considered heretical if they came from someone with lower cult status. Yet he continues to enjoy both the count's and his god's favor. Nonetheless, the perception that Belvani is tainted with outlander ways limits his prospects for advancement in the cult.

Belvani is condescendingly friendly to foreigners, and always insists on the traditional friendly contest with Orlanthi associates. If the Orlanthi loses, Belvani graciously offers to return the gold which changes hands as a sign of his generosity to inferiors. Equivalent in rank to Lady Vega, Belvani regards her with amiable contempt.

Belvani views personal hand-to-hand combat with outlaws, brigands, or other riffraff as distasteful, preferring to send in his templar bodyguards, supported by his spells. Another preferred tactic against inferiors is to destroy foes at a distance with concentrated missile fire, behind the cover of a Lightwall spell. If circumstances compel him to dirty his own hands, he attacks ferociously as though personally insulted. Duels with equals or battlefield combat with worthy opponents is another matter; Belvani savors such opportunities with zest.

Belvani's Bodyguard: Belvani currently has a reduced bodyguard of two templars. His other follower was killed on the road some time back, and he is having trouble finding a suitable replacement.

• **Anio Goldspot** (Slow Templar; no combat related gift or geas): A native of Pavis, and worldly wise like his master.

• **Soracte** (Standard Templar; bow attack 101%; never wear head protection): One of the rare female templars; joined Belvani to escape barracks life.

The Gamon: Belvani also has a unique manservant, a crested dragonewt known only as The Gamon. Years ago, Belvani saved its life and soul. In return, it has sworn to serve him until it has died three times. The Gamon is then free to return to its home nest and continue its life cycle. Although it has served Belvani for over a decade, The Gamon has not yet died even once. Within Sun County, Belvani treats the dragonewt like a pet in public; as a consequence, his countrymen then regard it as an exotic curiosity, rather than a threat to public order or decency. In private, or beyond the Sun Dome borders, The Gamon once again carries its own sling, utuma, and samarin.

The Gamon obeys only its master and never speaks, not even to Belvani. Its usual duties are menial, including cooking (and hunting things for the pot, but never in Sun County), cleaning, and carrying Belvani's gear when on the road. Belvani never risks his exotic slave in combat. Instead, The Gamon winds and arms his crossbows for him. (For The Gamon's statistics and profile, see p. 15.)



The Globe of Authority and Scepter of Order

Though the true, original Globe was lost before the fall of the Old Sun Dome, the rulers of the County refuse to be without such important symbols of office. Only the inner circles of Light Servants, Light Guides, and Light Sons know that the current set is a weaker reconstruction. In fact, they are reconstructions of reconstructions, since the first set of replacement regalia disappeared at the time of the Old Sun Dome's destruction. (See the "Solinthor's Tower" scenario, p. 123.)

The count knows that the current set of ritual objects is much weaker than the previous sets. Generations of counts before Solanthos have sought to recover the originals and have concealed knowledge of the earlier, more powerful artifacts from the general populace. Each count has also striven to add new powers to the reconstructions, seeking to approximate the powers of the original. (In fact, the Sun Dome Temple has no definitive accounts of the powers of either the originals or the first reconstructions.)

The Current Globe of Authority
Tradition demands that the Globe never be removed from temple grounds, but there is no magical prescription against doing so.

The Globe is an heirloom-quality work of jewelry made of gold, crystal, sapphires, amber, and topaz. The spirit inhabiting it resides inside an internal crystal sphere and constantly gives off a light equivalent to a bright torch. Bands of jewel-encrusted gold crisscross the Globe, and a Gold



Globe of Authority

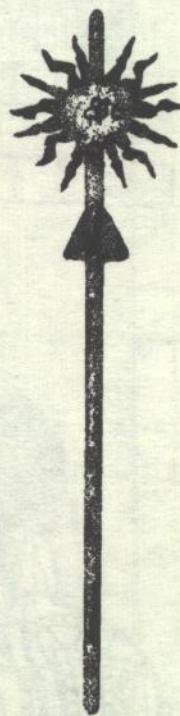
Truth rune projects from the top. Metal and jewelry value alone is 1,000W, though the Sun Dome would pay twice that if they somehow despaired of recovering the piece by force. Divination from Yelmadio always reveals the Globe's location, unless all enchantments are broken.

The Globe has 9 AP from Armoring Enchantments, and is usable only by the rightful ruler of Sun County or his freely appointed representative. The Globe contains a Yelmalion Magic Spirit INT 15 POW 20 with these spells: Glamour 7, Light (1), Lightwall (4), Extension I, Sunbright III, Mindlink IV, and Command Cult Spirit IV.

The Current Scepter of Order

The Scepter is a 15cm-diameter gold medallion with a sun-and-rays motif at the top of a two-meter gold shaft, with a bell-shaped handguard 20 cm beneath the medallion. The medallion itself bears the image of Yelmadio as a templar with pike and hoplite shield, flanked left and right by the Truth and Light runes.

The Globe has 12 AP from Armoring Enchantments, and is usable only by the rightful ruler of Sun County or his freely appointed representative. The Yelmalion cult spirit residing within the Scepter's binding enchantment knows the following spells: Dismiss Magic IV, Sunspire I, Spirit Block III, Shield IV, and Soul Sight I.



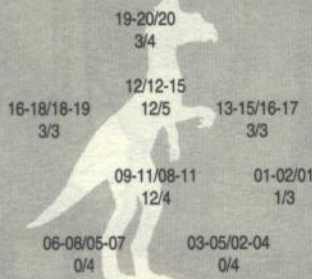
Scepter of Order

The Gamon

Crested Dragonewt

STR 06
CON 16
SIZ 04
INT 14
POW 12
DEX 16
APP 13

Move: 3
Fatigue: 22
Hit points: 10
Magic points: 12



The Gamon

On the Road: Total ENC = 20. Fatigue = 2 (22-20). Utuma, sling, and 10 stones (ENC 1), 10 samarin (ENC 1), javelins, two medium crossbows and quiver of 20 bolts (ENC 1), spear, self bow, and quiver of 16 arrows (ENC 0.8) which belong to Lord Belvani.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Utuma (S. Swd)	7	41/43	1d6+1-1d4	1/8
Sling	2/7	67/—	1d8	.1/—
Samarin* (10)	2/7	50/—	1d4+1	.1/—

* A samarin is like a shuriken. More than one can be thrown at a time for extra damage at a -10 penalty for each additional samarin thrown.

Sorcery: (Free INT 12; Intensity 47) Damage Boosting 43, Haste 39.
Skills: Dodge 87 (-ENC), Hide 76, Sneak 102, Conceal 66, Cooking 50%

Languages: Understand Spoken Pavic 28.

Armor: 1-point scaly skin.

Special Items: The Gamon has two spirit magic matrixes tattooed onto its hide, one for Protection 3, the other for Mindspeech 1. They could be used by anyone, even if The Gamon was skinned.

Ransom: (from Lord Belvani) 25L.



Commissioner Jaxarte Whyded Endures a Warm Reception from the Count

Jaxarte's Journal

A Young Lunar Official's Introduction to Sun Dome County

This account, taken from the shelves of the Pavis Temple of Knowledge, gives the reader an insight into contemporary Sun County life and politics, as seen through the eyes of Jaxarte Whyded, a young Lunar official who visited the region in 1617 S.T.

Jaxarte Whyded

To Sor Eel, governor of Prax, came in 1617 one Jaxarte Whyded to take up a vacant junior position on his general staff. Through careful use of patronage Jaxarte's impoverished but well-connected family had placed the young man in this bureaucratic position, which (on Jaxarte's own admission years later) was far beyond the ken of his experience or mettle. Apparently, Jaxarte had no liking for the work of an official; his consuming passion was architecture, particularly temple design. His later career attests that he was in fact an architect of some ability, but in Prax he had no chance to exercise such talents.*

Compelled to do something with his unambitious nephew, Sor-Eel appointed Jaxarte "Commissioner of the Imperial Census for Prax." The Imperial Census had actually been conducted several years before. All Jaxarte was required to do was revise the existing figures, which Sor-Eel considered unreliable. Although the census officially had nothing to do with taxation, many of Sor-Eel's vassals viewed the youth's appointment with alarm, thinking that somehow the governor proposed to revise the already high taxation levies. Jaxarte's job was made all the more difficult by such people, who wished to obfuscate and confound his researches.

Jaxarte was initially unhappy about being sent far from the comparative pleasures of Pavis but, as time progressed, he took to his task with gusto and compiled extremely detailed reports. Jaxarte did

not confine himself solely to the revision of the population figures; in a private journal he also wrote about his experiences and travels across Prax. Although some scholars consider most of his population estimates to be wildly inaccurate, his journal is still useful for its impressions of Prax under the Lunars.

The census occupied him for several years and, up until his removal from office (in the purge following Sor-Eel's disgrace after the Cradle Affair), Jaxarte entertained plans to publish his journal in a "Grand Gazetteer of Prax." Unfortunately, Jaxarte was forced to hurriedly return to the Heartlands (where he finally convinced his family to let him study architecture). Jaxarte Whyded's writings were subsequently archived with other personal papers in Pavis's Temple of Knowledge.

Floriat Fedora

Jaxarte's writings languished in the Lhankor Mhy library for some years until they were discovered and later translated by Floriat Fedora, a young but well-read junior sage. She edited and later (in extreme old age) published selections of Jaxarte's writings as part of a "World Chronicle of the Third Age" (a popular genre of the period). The excerpt given below is not from this pompous and derivative work, but rather from Floriat's original draft translation of Jaxarte's journal. The main text is unmistakably Jaxarte's; the occasional footnotes are Floriat's.

Sun County

This selection describes Jaxarte's impressions of Sun County, the Yelmic territory west of Pavis. Loath to venture out into the dangerous plains themselves, Jaxarte made Sun County one of the first places to begin his work. As will be seen, Jaxarte's naïveté and political inexperience, coupled with Count Solanthos's suspicions that Jaxarte was coming to reassess the taxes, gave the youth an unpleasant introduction to the world of diplomatic intrigue.

* The unconventional design of the Yana Aranis temple of Mirin's Cross, built by Jaxarte in his middle years, was said by critics to have "captured the raw essence of the power of the desert wind" with its broad sweeping lines and glaring bulk. Several years after its completion it was extensively remodeled back to a less original design by a more orthodox high priest.

*All Praise the Reaching Moon!**Winds-Disorder-Sea-7/46*

I, Jaxarte Whyded, Commissioner of the Imperial Census, recount a journey taken through Sun County, there to gain audience with Count Solanthos Ironpike.

Garhound

The Sun Folk's strong-lands begin across the ford at Garhound. To my shock, the commander of my escort suddenly announced that he had orders not to proceed further. Evidently, a detachment of Yelmic hoplites was to greet me on the opposite bank of the river. Sun Dome templars, not Lunar legionnaires, were to convey me to my audience with Count Solanthos Ironpike, ruler of Sun County. Although technically Lunar allies, the people of Sun County have always exhibited a staunch independence, and Uncle (1) did not want to antagonize them by marching occupation troops through their land. I concurred, and allowed my escort to return to the city.

Garhound is a squalid town of 866 souls, evidently typical of those along the river valley. Its only building of note (the home of the Garhound family) is of unspectacular design. Despite my credentials, these country hicks refused to receive me, claiming they had not been informed of my arrival by his excellency the governor. I was therefore compelled to quarter in the verminous stockade with common soldiers (2). In the meantime, my driver set about changing the axles of my gig so that they would fit the wheel ruts of Sun County, a tedious but necessary task (3). Several days later, my Yelmic escort appeared on the opposite side of the river.

Having heard much of the discipline, precision, and punctuality of the Sun Dome hoplites, I was shocked to see the dirty, uncouth squad of louts sent to fetch me (4). Their leader, a pimply lad scarcely older than his followers, explained that they were not templars, but "Sun Dome Militia" — farmers' sons for the most part — doing their annual cult service. The militia leader had the audacity to demand a gold wheel "entry impost," which I flatly refused to pay. He continued to press for payment, until I threatened to expose this graft to his commander.

Sun County

Sun County is flat and monotonous. The farmers are obliged to sow four-fifths of their holdings with barley. The temple takes one-third of the barley harvest as tax. The other one-fifth of their plots the farmers may use as they please: crops include hops, grapes, rye, and wheat. Reportedly some farmers illicitly grow the banned narcotic Hazia, though I saw no sign (5).

Illegal stills too are said to be hidden among the villages, for the Yelmalio cult controls all brewing in the County. Date palms line the sides of the road, but the cult also enjoys a strict monopoly on their produce. The land is skillfully irrigated, and all farmers are expected to give a portion of their time to maintain the channels.

Division of the land into farming plots is very rigid, and such plots are usually rectangular. The annual fertility spell of Sun Dome Temple affects the crops of these temple lands. Farmers inherit special white stones marked with fertility runes to signify that their plot is part of the temple lands (6). The Yelmalion fertility ritual calls for the stones to remain in place all year, or the spell will be

Floriat's Notes

1. Sor-Eel. Jaxarte was the third son of Sor-Eel's elder half-sister Euridice.
2. One wonders why Jaxarte did not stay at the local inn, which could have hardly been more verminous than the Lunar fort.
3. What could be a better illustration of the insular and aloof nature of

Sun Dome society than their roads!

4. Obviously a calculated insult on the part of the count. (Then again, perhaps Sor-Eel's sending of the 17-year-old Jaxarte as a Lunar emissary was also a calculated insult?)
5. Hazia is illegal, but greatly sought after in the Lunar Heartlands.
6. Thus, a farm purchase is often colloquially called "Getting a rock."

broken for that particular farm.

Lately a rumor about a great treasure under one of these rocks has been spread across the county. The farmers take a grim view of treasure-seekers disturbing their stones, though they themselves often give in to temptation and peek underneath. This has brought about an agricultural disaster. Severe punishments have been decreed for those caught overturning the stones, but still food production remains severely affected. (7).

The people of Sun County themselves are plain by Pelorian standards, with blonde hair and dark eyes. Men typically go about with full beards, but women are expected to cover their faces modestly when in the presence of strangers. (8) Sun Domers speak an unusual dialect, a mixture of several tongues, but refrain from discourse with outsiders.

Although their leaders deign not to trade in the silver coin of the Empire (preferring gold), the common folk willingly enough accept the silver Imperial. The Lokarnos wagon-cult controls all trade and portage in the county, save that which goes by river.

The Sun Dome Temple

In an otherwise uninteresting region, the Sun Dome Temple itself comes as a pleasant surprise. The temple complex is an imposing series of buildings, executed in the severe, formal style of Dara Happa (9) yet happy found here, deep in the desert wilderness! From some distance one can see the great Sun

Dome of the temple, a gilded half-sphere that almost blinds the viewer with its reflected radiance. Beside the temple proper is small town, usually referred to as "The Yard." To my disappointment I found The Yard to be scarcely different from any other town in the valley, though I admit the streets were wider and cleaner. Approximately 1,000 souls live here, many of whom work directly for the Sun Dome Temple.

Count Solanthos Ironpike

After a night's rest in one of the temple guest houses, I was roused from my bed at dawn and instructed to dress for my audience with the count. As I prepared to enter the temple complex one of the splendidly attired guards suddenly ripped my crimson cloak off my back and threw it to the ground! I went to retrieve it, but despite my protests was hustled on. (10)

Unlike its outward magnificence, the interior of the Sun Dome Temple is a confusing array of cloisters and corridors. I finally found myself in the temple's council chamber, a majestic gilded room, lined with scrolls dating to antiquity. There, before me on a simple yet commanding throne sat Count Solanthos Ironpike, ruler of Sun County.

Once a duelist of some distinction, yet now in middle age tending to corpulence, Count Solanthos wears a thick black beard, although his receding hair is quite blonde. (11) When I arrived the count was apparently conducting

7. Count Solanthos arrived at a novel solution to this problem: he issued a decree that the "great treasure" had been found, and displayed a fine golden cup at the markets of the county for the next season. He also publicly whipped several "rumor mongers".

8. The mere sight of a woman's elbow or thigh is considered a scandalous outrage by the pious, a significant erotic event by the irreverent.

9. Here, Jaxarte's incomplete knowledge of architecture is obvious. The "Dara Happa" style which he enthuses about is admittedly "formal and severe," yet places a much greater emphasis on symmetry than is evident at Sun County.

10. Jaxarte had the lack of political tact to attempt entering a Yelmalian temple wearing red, the color of Fire, the lost power.

11. Count Solanthos does in fact have naturally black hair, unlike most of his subjects who tend to be blonde. A man of tremendous

vanity, the count obtained permission from the priests to dye his hair the lighter shade. He was forbidden to do the same to his beard on the grounds that this would constitute "disguising himself as a woman," something a good Yelmalian male must never do. (Curiously, it is all right for a Yelmalian woman to disguise herself as a man!)

12. Court transcripts record that the man and woman had in fact been married, but, following cult dictates, were forced to divorce each other five years after the man became a priest. Unable to curb his passions for her, the man had taken to visiting his former wife and was eventually informed upon by a neighbor. It is unusual that the count chose the early morning to judge a capital crime. Such offenses are usually heard at noon, "full under the impartial and just light of Yelm." Jaxarte's presence at the trial was most probably intentional, as another form of intimidation.

a trial: the two defendants before him had been arrested some hours earlier on the charge of "fornication." (12) Despite their impassioned pleas for mercy, the count curtly cut the pair short, stating he had fulfilled his legal obligations to them and was now ready to pass sentence. The man he ordered to be blinded and imprisoned in a retirement tower for life; the woman was to be taken out immediately and strangled. (13) All this for mere "fornication"! (14) The malefactors dispensed with, Count Solanthos was ready for me. I presented him with my credentials and began a skillfully composed panegyric lauding the close links the Empire enjoyed with Sun County. Unimpressed with my oratory, the count peremptorily silenced me and bade me come to the point. Taken aback, I requested from him the necessary data I required to update the census. The count gruffly replied that such information could easily have been

sent by routine courier, and why had Sor-Eel sent a spy!!! I began to protest my innocence of such a charge, but the count dismissed me imperiously. Instead, he gestured to a liveried attendant who handed me a gilded scroll. "This should satisfy your master, boy!", the count sneered. What could I do but thank him and withdraw gracefully? Taking his hint, I made immediate plans to return to Pavis.

Uncle burst into peals of laughter when I showed him these documents, remarking that the count had a fine gift for fiction. He casually tossed the scroll into a wastepaper basket, and told me that I could gain a truthful account of Sun County's population figures in last year's Lunar tax records. (15) As I left the governors' office, my head fogged with the intricacies of high politics, I wondered if my apparently futile trip to Sun County had some deep political purpose I was not as yet privy to? (16)

13. It has been said of the count that he loved the correct forms of legality almost as much as he despised the concept of justice.

14. The count's severity toward sexual and moral offenses may be a symptom of the restrictive geas Yelmalo compels him to follow.

15. The count obviously thought Jaxarte had been sent to investigate the revenue potential of the county, which had not been reassessed since the conquest. Count Solanthos therefore furnished him with bogus figures, which deliberately underestimated the county's population (and thus tax liability). To Jaxarte's credit, his thorough examination of the previous year's tax records enabled him to come to a fairly accurate population figure for his census. I quote from his report:

"Urban Sun County: 1058 souls; includes temple staff, garrison and craftsmen. Extensive ironsmithing/goldworking shop.

"Eiskolli: 414 souls. Population swells to over 700 in late dark season, when the local tannery reaches maximum output.

"Helmibold: 556 souls; excluding river-folk. Major source of flax in Sun County. Has resident ironsmith.

"Harpoon: 234 souls. This village is remarkable only for the large machine housed there, used to kill sea monsters.

"Rory's Well: 399 souls. Located on the edge of the Long Dry, an important caravan watering place.

"Chomoro: 619 souls. At the far southern end of the Sun Dome lands.

"Morning, Cornspot, Arrowsands, Dawn, Shallow Corner, Flatvale, Yellow, Queenscliff and Daybreak are all small settlements with populations between 68 and 209 souls.

"The village of Sandy Lot has been renamed "Repentance" for a year-and-a-day by order of the count, as punishment for failing to pay its annual cult remittances.

"Since the last census, the village of Goldwater has been decimated by swamp fever and most of the populace have moved to other parts of the county.

"Rabbit Hat village was sacked and burned by unknown nomads late last year and its inhabitants were carried off.

"Rural farmers: 12,193 souls.

"TOTAL POPULATION OF SUN COUNTY, IMPERIAL PROVINCE OF PRAX: 17,338 souls."

16. I have already proposed that Sor-Eel's motive for sending the inexperienced junior bureaucrat as his emissary was to subtly insult the count and his haughty pretensions. Then again, perhaps Sor-Eel was simply being ingenuous, though this is certainly not one of the governor's apparent traits.

The Cult of Yelmalio

Myth, History, Blessings, and Obligations For Worshippers of the Son of the Sun

I. Mythos and History

Yelmalio is the son of Yelm, the Sun. During early wars in which mortals supported their gods, he led his people from the warm lowlands, carrying high the magic and power of his father.

Yelmalio was a commander and leader. He met and fought many beings for the cause of his father in the Gods War. But at the Hill of Gold he was disarmed by Orlanth, and then ambushed by Zorak Zoran, who stole his fire powers. The Son of the Sun fell and bled out his life-giving heat.

During the Darkness, Yelmalio's wounds did not deter his struggle. He joined with the Lord Elf and others to fight against the relentless approach of chaos, and thus became the Last Light, the strongest god of light to live in the Darkness. He survived, and greeted the rise of his father, the Sun, at the start of time.

Since that time Yelmalio has lived in the mountains and hills, and even the staunchest Orlanthi admits the presence of the Sun.

I gift and grant thee and thy children a rocky waste.
And from that rocky wastes shalt thou bring forth a Garden,
by labor of Man, blessing of Earth, and bounty of Sun.
But no gift is free, and no joy is without struggle.
Drought, Beast, Man, and Monster shalt ever covet thy Garden.
I command thee!
Guard thy Garden fiercely, in purity of thought,
keenness of weapon, and brightness of worship,
lest thy gift and grant be scattered like dust in a windy land.
— from The Seven-Hundred Blessings of God

The cult of Yelmalio is also called the Sun Dome Temple because it popularly includes worship of both Sun and sky (the "dome") in one. It is, in fact, the sun as worshiped by mountain people where the fiery orb is praised more for light than warmth. At the Dawning, the cult mainly survived in elven strongholds. A minor cult even then, it did not have a representative on the First Council, which

guided the descent from the mountains to civilize Peloria. The cult came to the fore in fighting the horse barbarians of the lowlands, and the cult of the Son of the Sun became popular in the lands bordering Dara Happa during the Dawn Ages.

In the Second Age, the cult fought dwarves everywhere and spearheaded armies invading the mountains (reliving the enmity between Yelm and Orlanth). At the end of the Second Age, when all the lowlands united against the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends, Yelmalio again led the fight. Many Sun Dome Templars were slain by dragons in the Dragonkill War of 1100.

The cult survives amongst the Orlanthi, and everywhere it exists it helps to restore some of the cosmic balance and to stabilize the country for the ruling house. It has proved to be a minor cult, though it is always well supported by its worshippers. The worshippers of Yelmalio anticipate descent to the mansions of Yelm after death, where the Sun God stayed in Hell after his murder at the hands of Orlanth. There, in the halls of eternal Light, they find their final contentment.

The dead are burned at dusk with smokeless fires. Services begin with great mourning and the burning, then wine or beer follow, as do victory paens and the call for the soul to join with the Sun. At dawn the sunrise is read for omens, and the ceremony concludes.

The cult is connected with the Runes of Light and Truth (the torch of light and knowledge).

II. Cult Ecology

Yelmalio is the god of the Sun Dome — the shining light of the sky when both the sun and night are absent. He is the only solar god worshiped amid the hostile storm cultists of western Genertela. This cult also survives by the training and hiring of pike-armed soldiers as mercenaries — the famous Sun Dome Templars.



The cult is hostile towards trolls, especially the cult of Zorak Zoran, who destroyed Yelmadio's powers of heat. All trolls are hated for the long fight they put up against the forces of Light before the coming of chaos.

The cult's rivalry with the Humakt cult is avid but amiable. There is no rancor in the relation, and individual Humakti sometimes can be found commanding a mass of Sun Dome spearmen. Humakt builds warriors — the Sun Dome trains soldiers. The cult is popular among elves because of aid given and received in the Great Darkness. At times, entire Sun Dome temples have been staffed exclusively by elves.

The cult celebrates holy days on the Fireday of each Truth week. The high holy day falls on the holy day of Fire-season.

III. The Cult in the World

This cult wields little influence except upon its own members. Cult members are often accused of treachery by their Orlanth-worshipping neighbors. Members of the cult return the world's distrust, and tend to regard outsiders as unclean. But if



Yelmadio: Out of the Greater Darkness, a Champion of Light

someone joins their mercenary bands and serves well, their comrades remember them kindly, even if they left the cult when they left the mercenaries. The rest of the world thinks the cult unnecessarily aloof, but they still hire the Sun Dome Templars to hunt foes rather than risk their own citizens.

The cult of Yelmadio is only found among the Orlanthi of Genertela. Some entire tribes are Yelmadio cultists, simply replacing Orlanth with Yelmadio in their social system. In other places, such as the famous Sun Dome temples, the cult consists of a self-sufficient community centered around the temple itself.

The temples offer sanctuary to any who seek it within their main temple buildings, and each temple is noted for its magical powers in protecting the refugee. The temples are resented for this policy, even though an outlaw never may leave the temple if he wishes to maintain his protection.

Most tribes of Yelmadio worshippers support a minor or major temple. The famous Sun Dome temples are all great temples. Cateseye is taught at all cult shrines.

Each temple is headed by a single High Priest. He has three administrative assistants who report to him, each of whom is titled a Chief Priest. One is called the Light Captain, and he commands the mercenaries and military policy. The second is the Light Guide, and he is in charge of internal affairs and leading the people. The third is the Light Keeper, who is in charge of the magical and religious duties of the cult.

IV. Initiate Membership

People born into residence in the temple area can automatically join at adulthood by sacrificing a point of POW. Outsiders can join by serving with the temple mercenaries, or simply taking on jobs for the tribe or temple. After serving for at least two years, the candidate must choose either to leave or to be initiated automatically by sacrificing a point of POW. Only humans and elves are accepted into this cult.

Initiates must spend two weeks per season working for the cult. The work period cannot be spent in training. Initiates may not befriend trolls or dwarves, must always support the Truth in all they do, and suffer expulsion if they are found to be Lying to the detriment of the cult. Simple Lying to outsiders is frowned upon, but has no set punishment. An initiate may be neither shaman nor sorcerer.



Initiates may farm, hunt, or live on lands owned by the cult or the tribe. All buildings and livestock are also owned by the cult, though ownership of personal private property is respected. Initiates may accept a gift and its geas. Only one gift and a concomitant number of geases are given at the initiate level. Priests explain that these gifts and geases help the recipient to become a better Yelmalion. This is not required — failure to take a gift from Yelmalion is not frowned upon, but acceptance of a gift is considered to show true devotion. If an initiate does not take a gift upon himself when he first joins the cult, he does not get another chance to take a gift until he reaches the level of Light Son, Light Servant, or Light Priest.

Initiates of Yelmalion are forbidden to learn the spirit spells of Bludgeon, Darkwall, Fireblade, Firearrow, or Ignite.

Initiates receive plots of land to work as long as they remain in the tribe, and are taught the cult language of Firespeech up to 25% for free. Those that serve in the mercenaries are given a scale hauberk, cuirbouilli limb armor, an open (4-point) helm, two spears, a hoplite shield, and a self bow. Replacements for these are paid for by the initiate.

Spirit Magic: Coordination, Detect Gold, Farsee, Light, Lightwall, Repair.

V. Light Son Membership

Light Sons are fighting warriors. They specialize in weapons use and lead the temple soldiery.

A candidate for this office must have 90% in Bow or Javelin Attack, Scan, and any Spear Attack, plus 90% in two of the following skills: Listen, Search, Shield Parry, or Sneak. He must know the spell of Farsee. He must have been an initiate in good standing for at least four years. As with the Light Priests, there are no examinations to pass. A worthy candidate is accepted if an opening exists.

A Light Son never may ride any animal except a horse, nor marry anyone from another cult except a priestess of an earth cult (symbolically reuniting the Sun with his mate, the Earth).

Every Light Son must own a gold spear worth at least 1000 pennies for ceremonial purposes, and is urged to own properly gilded spurs, helmet, and cuirass. On all Firedays, Light Sons may speak only in the cult tongue of Firespeech.

Male Light Sons never may disguise themselves as women, but the converse is not true. Light Sons

may never eat fish, potatoes, or raw eggs in any form. They must always allow Light Priests to be seated before themselves, at table, on the ground, atop a horse, or anyplace else. No Light Son ever may sleep under a red blanket or ride upon a horse with a red saddle blanket, because red is the color of Fire, the lost power. Light Sons may not show mercy to trolls, but lose all status if they ever torture any human-type being (including trolls).

Light Sons also have some unusual benefits. They are given the first portion of any meal they eat with fellows of their cult. They receive a mount and gear when they become a Light Son, though they must pay for replacements. They may pick any three initiates of the cult as their personal guards when they attain their status, and these three attend the Light Son at all times and pay loyalty to him before all else, even before the High Priest of their cult. This loyalty breaks only at death, or when the initiate becomes a Light Son in his own right. If the initiate becomes a Light Servant or Light Priest, this bond of loyalty is not broken.

A Light Son gives up 90% of his time and income to his cult and people.

A Light Son must take another gift and its concurrent geases upon achieving his status. He may take more gifts later in his life, but may not take more than one gift per year.

When rolling for Divine Intervention, a Light Son rolls 1d10 rather than 1d100. The cult prefers that the Light Captain be a Light Son as well, and prefers that Light Sons deal with all outsiders.

VI. Light Servant (Acolyte Membership)

Light Servants are special servants of the priests and Light Sons at Sun Dome temples. They go on special missions too unimportant to risk Light Sons on, and serve as liaisons with the outside world for the priests.

Light Servants are acolytes, and their status is identical to normal acolyte status. They need not take a gift and its geases upon becoming an acolyte, but they may do so if they see fit. They cannot take any more gifts until they achieve the status of Light Priest or Light Son.

Each Light Servant is assigned to a particular priest, and works with that priest when on duty.



VII. Light Priests

The Light Priests of this cult are often very aloof, even from their own people, but their word and wish are followed implicitly by their congregation. The High Priest and Light Keeper never deal with non-Light Priests in any fashion.

A candidate for Light Priest must have been an initiate with an unblemished record for at least five years. He must know Farsee (unless he has it as a permanent gift from Yelmadio) and Lightwall, be able to read his native tongue at 80%, know Ceremony at 50%, and know 10 points of divine magic. There is no test to pass since the temple should already know the candidate well enough by this time, and can reject or approve at need.

He must take another Yelmadio gift and its concurrent number of geases at this time. He may take more Yelmadio gifts later, but no more than one gift per year.

Light Priests are not allowed to marry after they become priests, but those previously married may remain married as priests with one exception. If their spouse is an initiate of any earth cult, they must divorce them exactly five years after taking their priestly vows. This symbolizes the sundering of Sky and Earth when Air tore them apart.

Priests of this cult must fulfill all other normal priestly responsibilities and have all normal priestly duties.

Common Divine Magic: all.

Special Divine Magic: Catseye, Sunbright, Shield.

VIII. Yelmadio Special Rune Magic

Catseye **1 point**
touch, duration 12 hours, nonstackable, reusable

For 12 hours this spell affects the target's eyes so he can see by any amount of available light. If there is a complete absence of light, he cannot see; if light from a dim spark exists, he sees normally. Eyes under this spell reflect light as do a cat's.

Sunbright **2 points**
ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

This spell puts a 50-meter-radius circle of Light around the recipient of the spell. If the recipient is unwilling, the caster must overcome his magic points with his own. This light gives the effect of

full daylight, and so affects creatures such as cave trolls. It Demoralizes vampires, ghouls, and other intelligent undead as per the spirit magic spell. It also gives the recipient the equivalent effect of a Shimmer 2 spell.

Each round a shade remains within the effect of a Sunbright spell, it takes 1d3 points of damage. If a Sunbright spell is successfully cast directly upon a shade, the shade dissolves.

IX. Subcults

Spirit of Reprisal: Monrogh

This is the cult of the Founder of the Cult, the mortal son of Yelmadio. Monrogh is also the cult's spirit of retribution. He punishes any Yelmadio who breaks cult vows or a geas, or murders a fellow or associated cult member. Monrogh has a POW of 60 and engages the culprit in spirit combat. However, Monrogh steals his victim's POW rather than magic points. He continues until his victim has lost as many points of POW as he has Rune spells and geases combined.

Monrogh then offers to return the characteristic POW if the offender gives up all Rune spells and special cult gifts. If the offender does not agree, he loses the POW, but keeps the Rune spells on a one-use basis, and keeps the special cult gifts. If he again breaks a geas, Monrogh appears again, and keeps appearing again each time a geas or a cult vow is broken, or a murder is committed.

Otherwise, Monrogh returns his POW, but takes away the culprit's spells and gifts. If the offender wishes, he can also lose all geases acquired through the cult. He may make this choice only once, and if he surrenders the geases, he never may rejoin this or any other Light cult. If he keeps the geases, he may try to rejoin, following the normal procedures from the beginning.

Monrogh has a shrine at every major and great temple to Yelmadio. He invented the special cult spell of Lantern. Those who know this spell may wear a brass arm ring with the Fire rune inlaid in gold to mark that they know the spell.

Lantern (spirit magic) **variable**
ranged, duration 15 minutes per point, passive

This spell must be placed upon a flat surface (such as the ceiling or the front of a shield). It illuminates a 10-meter radius for 180° in front of the surface, giving off a glow like a torch.



Kuschile

This is an ancient subcult marking the hero who knew Riding and established the special cult skill of Kuschile Horse Archery. Archers adept in this skill may carry yellow-fletched arrows.

Kuschile Horse Archery (Manipulation skill 00%): this skill can only be learned by initiates of Yelmlio. Learners of this skill must accept one random geas in exchange for a 25% skill plus any skill category modifier. The skill can be trained or researched, once it has been obtained through the geas. Successful use of this skill allows the user his normal archery chance from horseback, regardless of his riding ability. The skill can be attempted once per arrow fired.

Togtuvei

Togtuvei was an ancient hero who taught the skills of map use and geography. Those who know his special spell wear a yellow feather in their helmet.

Seek Sun Dome Temple (spirit magic) 3 points
self only, instant, passive

This spell causes a gleam of golden light to flash on the horizon in the exact direction of the nearest Sun Dome Temple. The gleam is visible only to the spell's user.

X. Associated Cults

Aldrya

Aldrya's spell of Heal Body is available to the Light Guide and those priests who form his retinue.

Ernalda

Ernalda gives acolytes and priests of her Husband-Protector's cult the spell Bless Crops.

Vrimak

Vrimak is the Father of Birds. In the Godtime, his child Hawk Mother was friendly to Yelmlio. He gives Yelmlio his spell Speak with Birds.

Yelm

Yelmlio's father still blesses his son. The Light Captain, the High Priest, and the Light Keeper may all learn the spell of Sunsear.

Yelorna

The ruling priests of a Sun Dome temple traditionally hold primacy over Yelorna High Priestesses and Star Maidens. Yelorna cultists are forbidden ever to attack a temple of Yelmlio.

XI. Miscellaneous Notes

The Temples

Throughout the entire region of southern Peloria in the Third Age, there are only 15 operative Sun Dome temples. These temples are uniformly shaped, though they vary somewhat in size. They are always square-based with slightly tapering walls, and with a single huge staircase rising from the western side and going to the roof. Atop the roof is an immense dome sheathed with gold. Worshippers inside the temple can see through the gold and look upon Yelm during worship.

The congregational priest leads the inside services, but the majority of the priesthood assembles atop the temple around the dome. Non-worshippers inside the temple or anyone who climbed the staircase to the top of the temple with unholy intent are blinded for life, if not killed.

Retirement Towers

Aging Light Priests may voluntarily elect to withdraw from the world into retirement towers. Freed from all practical concerns and human communication, these retired priests pass their remaining days studying the Light and Truth of Yelmlio through divination and meditation in isolated sacred hermitage.

A retirement tower is a simple cylinder of stone or brick 10 meters high, roofless, and open to the sky. The diameter of the cylinder at the bottom is five meters; the top tapers slightly. There are no windows or openings except a single door at ground level and the open tower top. Inside there is no shelter or firepit; by the grace of Yelmlio, during the day, regardless of the time of day or cloud cover, the tower is filled with warm sunlight as if at noontime, and at night, even in the coldest weather, the tower stays comfortably warm. The retired priest spends most of his waking hours seated on the bare stone floor, his face upturned to the solace of the ever-bountiful sunlight.

Retirement towers are scattered at various sites throughout Sun County. Three sites are of particular interest. The three towers at the Sun



Dome Temple are almost always occupied by retirees. The three towers at the old Sun Dome are abandoned and derelict. Nine individual towers are scattered nearby the remote village of Goldbreath. These towers are rarely used. Only one is occupied at present; the other eight are sealed until needed. In fact, unknown to all but the current High Priest of the Sun Dome, one of the sealed eight towers here is inhabited by the ancient undying priest Solinthor. (See the scenario, "Solinthor's Tower," pp. 123-126.)

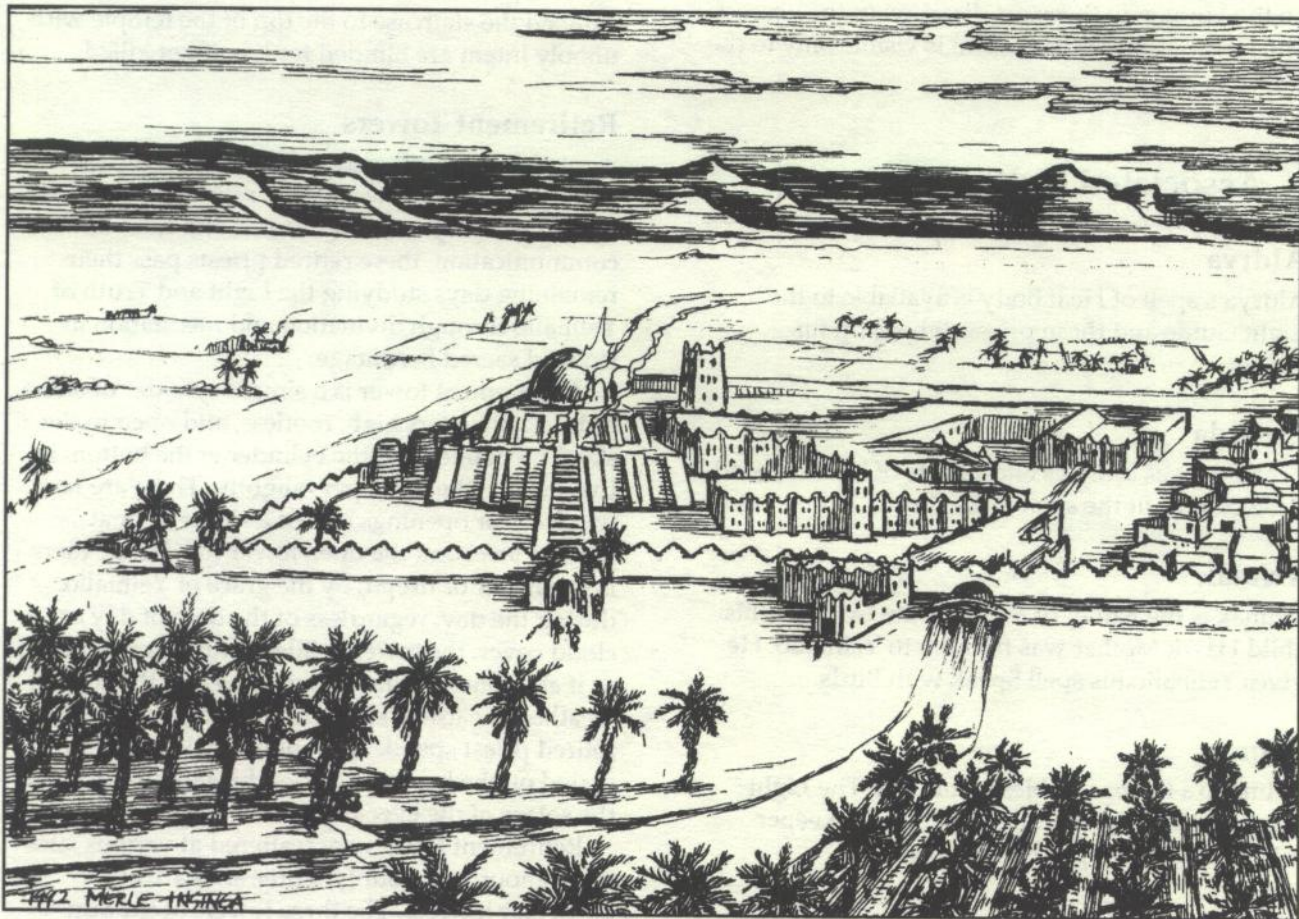
Monetary Policies

The cult has a peculiar and troublesome habit of measuring all costs in gold Wheels, an oddly fractional system for a world that runs on silver guilders or Lunars, but the cult is adamant on this point. It certainly — perhaps intentionally — contributes to their general isolation.

The priests and lords of the cult have an obligation to use the cult metal (gold) as much as possible. This gives them the image of being ostentatiously rich, which is not always the case. They despise silver, and pound silver coins into lumps of metal before trading them for gold, even though it decreases the trade value for local moneychangers and workers in precious metals.

Racial Types and Special Customs

For generations most Yelmalion cultists have been blond and brown-eyed. Many devout initiates practice the harsher restrictions placed upon Light Sons and Light Priests (excepting the marriage restrictions). Yelmalion women are usually chastely clothed in lose-fitting, draped garments that conceal limbs and neck, and cultists are scandalized by naked legs and arms. Men of the cult favor beards.



A Sun Dome panorama



Gifts and Geases

Gifts are made randomly, never chosen by the recipient. The Yelmalio's Gifts Table lists the most common gifts (roll 1d20), though others have been given in living memory. After each gift listed on the table is an indication of the required number of random geases which the recipient must assume. These geases are found on the Yelmalio's Geas Table.

Yelmalio's Gifts Table

1d20	Gift and Required Number of Geases
1	+10% in any skill, chosen by initiate; accept 1 geas
2	permanent ability of Farsee (as per the spirit magic spell); accept 2 geases
3	immediate raising of Bow Attack to 90% (including skill modifiers)*; accept 3 geases
4	immediate raising of One-Handed Spear Attack and Parry to 90% (including skill modifiers)*; accept 3 geases
5	immediate raising of Two-Handed Spear Attack and Parry to 90% (including skill modifiers)*; accept 3 geases
6	immediate raising of Javelin Attack to 90% (including skill modifiers) *; accept 3 geases
7	gain Catseye as a reusable spell; accept 2 geases
8	Communication (automatic Mindspeech) with all horses; accept 2 geases
9	Gift of Languages (training or research takes half normal time); accept 1 geas
10	+1 to STR, no limits; accept 1 geas **
11	+1 to CON, no limits; accept 1 geas **
12	+1 to POW, no limits; accept 1 geas **
13	+1 to DEX, no limits; accept 1 geas **
14	+1 to APP, no limits; accept 1 geas **
15	+1 to INT, no limits; accept 2 geases **
16	+1 or -1 to SIZ (at option of initiate), no limits; accept 2 geases **
17	gain Speak with Birds as a reusable spell; accept 1 geas
18	protection (take only 1/2 damage) from all forms of fire; accept 1 geas
19	recover magic points at twice normal rate ***; accept 2 geases
20	recover fatigue points at twice normal rate ***; accept 2 geases

* If recipient already at or above 90% in the skill, gain Gift 1 instead.

** Increase limited to species maximum or 1.5 x original rolled score of the characteristic.

*** If rolled again, increase recovery rate to triple normal, then quadruple, and so forth.

Note: Yelmalio cult weapons are defined as all spears, all bows except crossbows, and all javelins and darts.

Yelmalio's Geases Table: Roll once on this table for every Geas required from Yelmalio's Gifts Table.

1 d100	Geas Received
01	avored by Yelmalio; no geas
02-05	never eat meat on Fireday
06-09	never eat meat in Fire-season
10-12	never eat the meat of birds *
13-15	never eat any meat but bird *
16	never eat any meat
17-20	remain celibate every Fireday
21-24	remain celibate every Truth week
25-28	remain celibate every Fire-season
29-30	all celibacy requirements above
31	total celibacy
32-33	speak only truth to everyone
34-36	never seek shelter from storm
37-40	never let a horse suffer needlessly
41	never wear non-metal armor on legs
42	never wear non-metal armor on torso
43	never wear non-metal armor on arms
44	never wear metal armor on legs
45	never wear metal armor on torso
46	never wear metal armor on arms
47	never wear any armor on legs
48	never wear any armor on torso
49	never wear any armor on arms
50-52	never wear any head protection
53-54	never use any shield but hoplite shield
57	never use any axe
58	never use a flail or whip of any kind
58-60	never use a sword of any kind
61-64	never use a mace or maul of any kind
65-67	never use any but cult weapons
68-70	never flee or surrender to worshippers of Zorak Zoran
71-72	never flee or surrender to any Darkness creatures
73-77	never speak to or help trolls in any way
78-79	never speak to or help dwarfs in any way
80-81	never speak to or help non-Light worshippers in any way
82-84	never speak to or help Orlanth worshippers in any way
85-86	never permit an elf to suffer needlessly
87-88	never eat the meat of horses
89-97	never love any but Earth cult worshippers
93-95	never bathe
96-97	roll twice more
98	roll thrice more
99-00	gamemaster's choice or roll again

If one roll results in a minor prohibition and another in a major prohibition, count each as a roll, but simply follow the major prohibition. There is no need to roll again for the lesser prohibition. Thus, if both "never wear any metal armor on legs" and "never wear any armor on legs" came up, it would count as two separate geases.

* If both come up on rolls, then eat no meat at all

Sun Dome Temple

The Seat of Religion and Government in Sun County

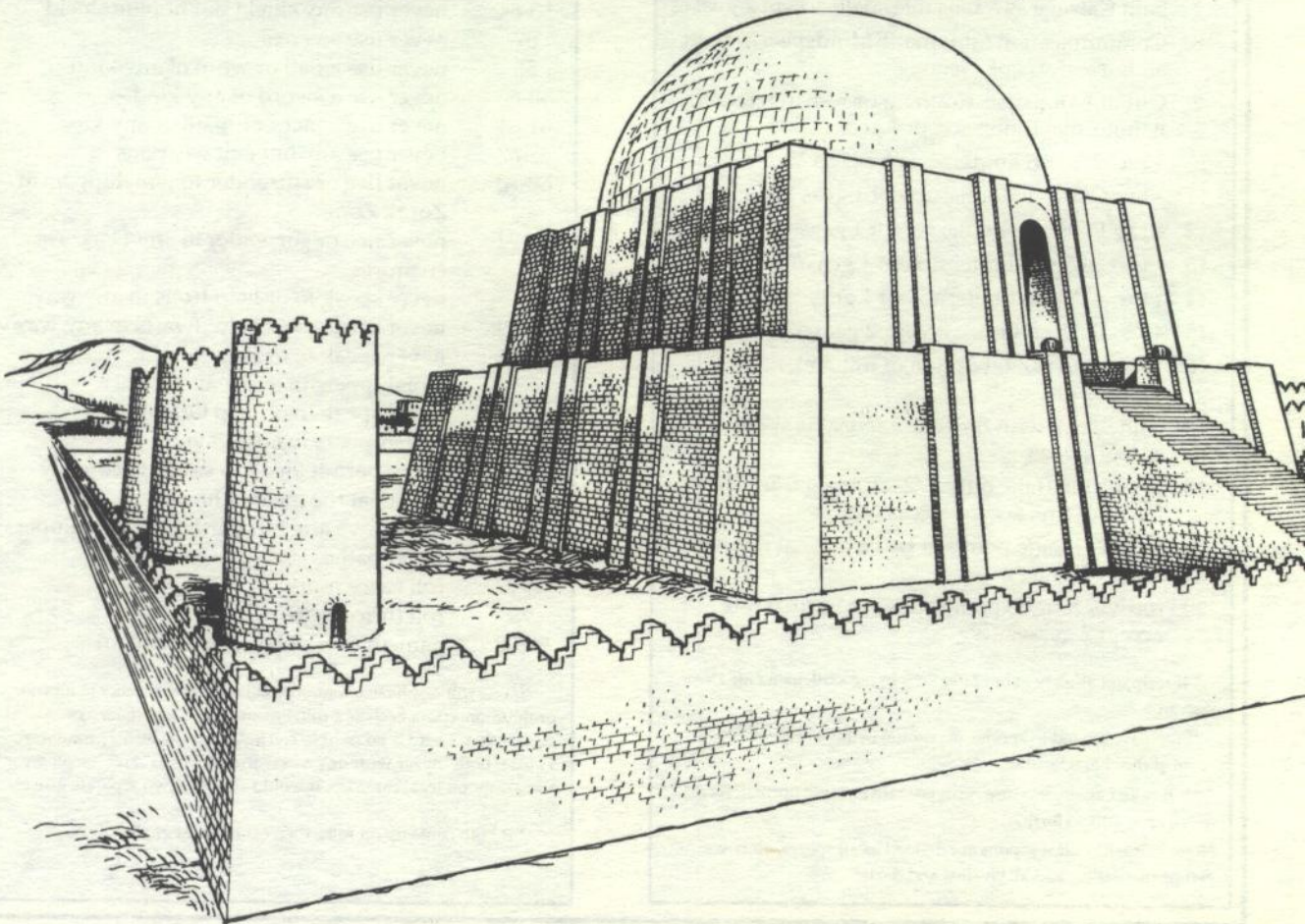
This description and map of the Sun Dome Temple provides a model for other Yelmadio temples in the land, and is useful for campaign play. This map also serves to represent the abandoned Old Sun Dome Temple; see the "Old Sun Dome" scenario on p. 112 for another separate descriptive key.

1. The Gathering Place

This wide grassy area slopes down from the west side of the temple. On the mead, the local population can be assembled for mustering or celebration. Near its center (not shown), within a bend of the Ouel stream, stands a conical hill, for centuries called the Summons Hill. From its top cult leaders direct the activities of their followers.

2. Guest Houses

These two-story buildings and their domestic attachments, lying at the edge of the Gathering Place, are part of a series of buildings along the Ouel stream reserved for visiting non-cultists. They are outside the boundary wall of the temple, for few guests are permitted into the holy area. This particular complex is reserved for the most important visitors. It contains a courtyard (a), places for servants and mounts, separate halls, private quarters, and indoor privies. Behind this complex the Ouel stream is spanned by the three arches of this only stone bridge (b). The other visitors' buildings are less luxurious, and are further downstream, off the map.





3. Gatehouse

The temple compound is surrounded by a 10-foot-high stone wall. There are a number of small gates in the wall, but the gatehouse (on the Northwest side) is the official entrance. The vaulted passage is defended at the west end by a heavy bronze-bound double door; the inner archway is open. The floor is paved with flagstones; a stone bridge runs along the north side. In the north wall a low door leads into the porter's lodge, which is warmed by a small fireplace; a small slit (not shown) allows him to scrutinize anyone waiting outside the closed gate. The room on the south side houses the duty guard; it has a fireplace, a pair of arrow slits, weapon racks, and other equipment. When the doors are opened, a pair or more of large-shielded, spear-wielding guardsmen stand by them.

4. The Temple

The great western stairs rise up over the massive inward sloping walls of the base to the roof of the upper temple; two smaller stairs lead from it to the walkway atop the foundation. In the crypt (a), huge cylinder piers on square bases with semi-circular buttresses support the thick walls and

upper building; speculation surrounds a supposed lost secret door to the crypt and what treasure the founders stored there. In the jeweled, gold-furnished upper temple (b) are shrines to: the heart of the local cult, Yelmadio; Yelm, the fiery father; Yelorna, the star goddess; Pole Star; and other spirits of Light. Cult trophies decorate the walls. The thin gold dome topping the temple is marked on the map by a dashed line. The corners and edge of the roof are exclusively reserved for use by the priesthood during services. At the foot of the western stairs is an obelisk surmounted by gilded ball (c) which is illuminated during services.

5. Lawn

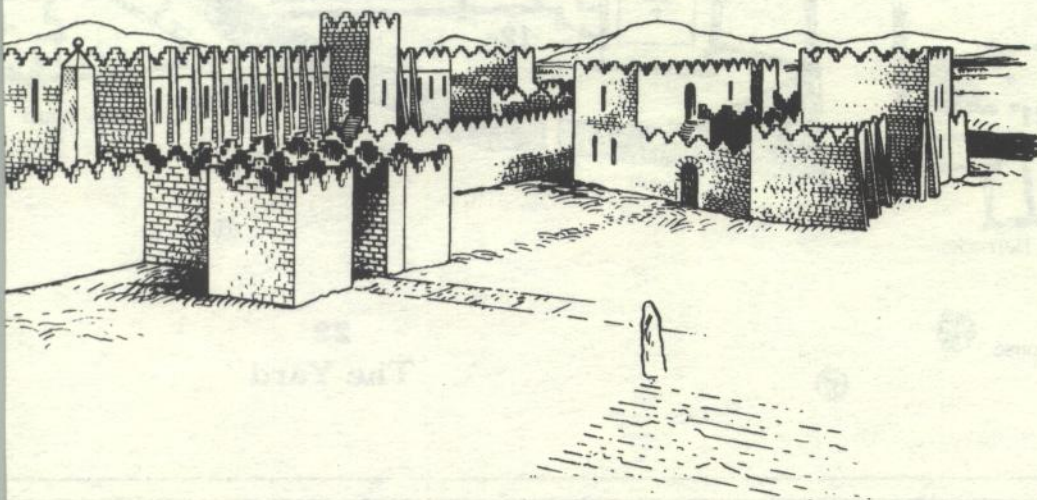
This grassy area is used primarily for outdoor training exercises of all kinds. Due north of the temple are the three roofless circular retirement towers (a) used by some priests; they are of different periods, styles, and heights. In the southeast is a rear gate (b) with a guard room and a small boat landing.

6. Garth

A sheltered enclosure that catches the sun, with a roofed walkway and open arcading along its four

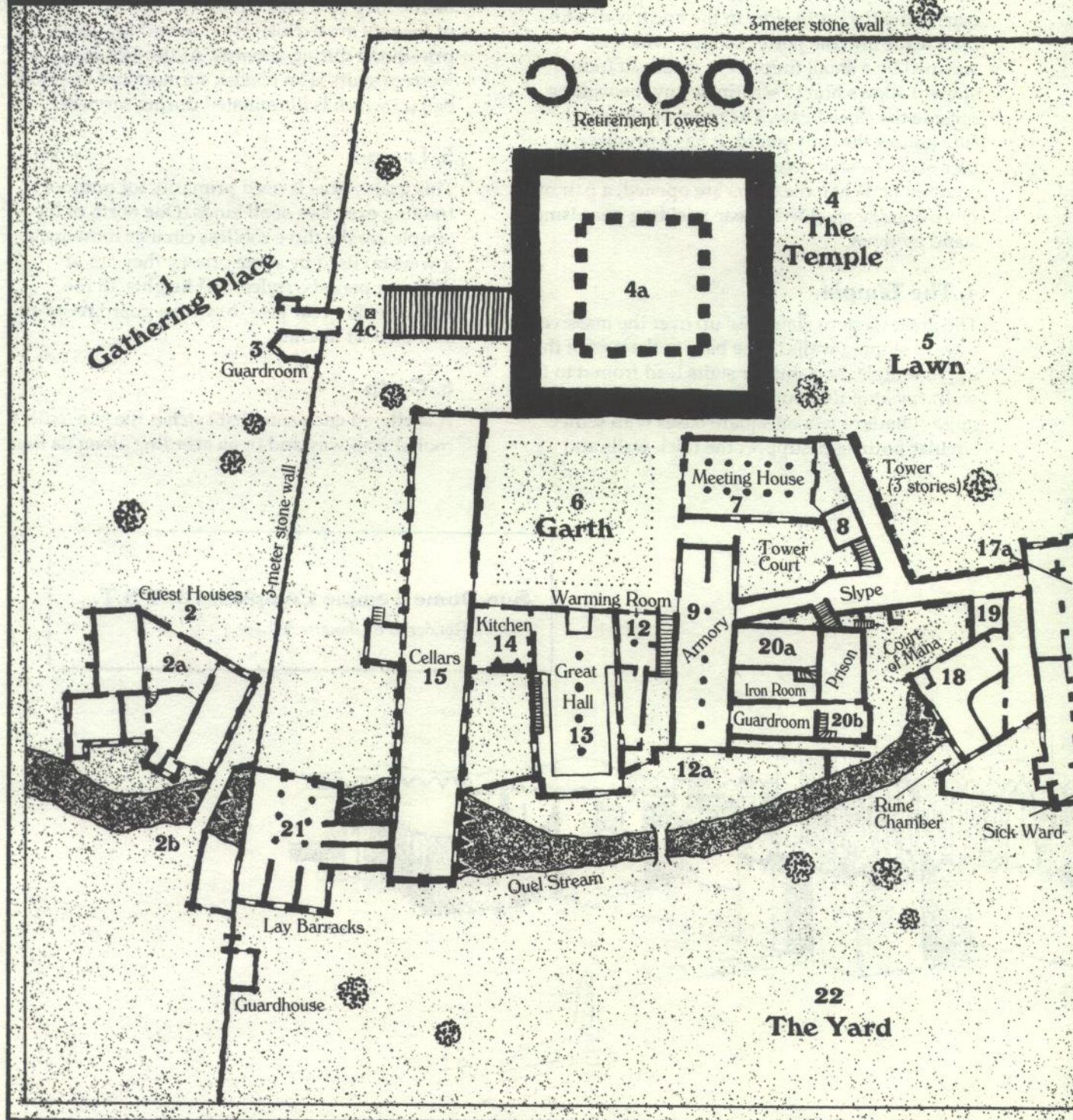
Sun Dome Temple Complex, 1617 S.T.

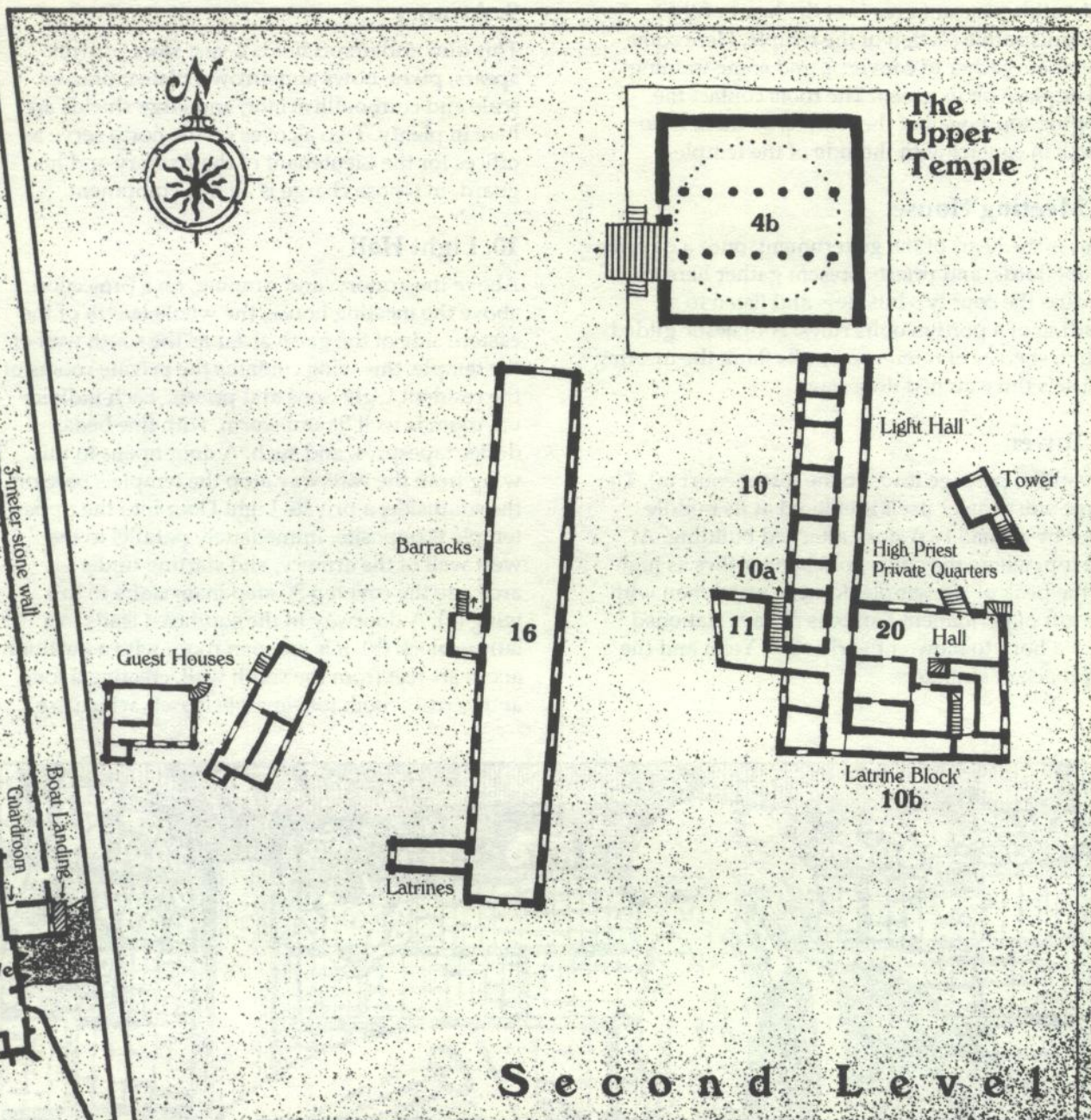
Sketch Rendered by Jaxarte Whyded



Sun County Temple

Ground Level

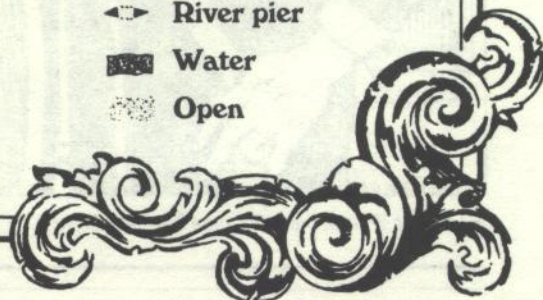
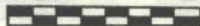




Legend

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| — Wall | • Pillar |
| — Window | ▨ Outside platform |
| — Door or gate | ⊗ Obelisk |
| ▨ Stairs
(direction always down) | ◁ River pier |
| ▨ Roofed, but not enclosed | ▨ Water |
| | ◻ Open |

2.5 m scale 28 m





sides, this pleasant area is at the heart of the administrative section of the temple. Here some members gather to converse, and some training takes place on its green. The roofs contact the sloping south wall of the temple, so there is no break in contact with the side of the temple.

7. Meeting House

This is the heart of the government; once a day, the count, lords, and priests present gather here to discuss the county's business and listen to a reading of a portion of its rules. A majestic gilded room, shelves of reference scrolls flank the meeting house's three arched doorways.

8. Tower

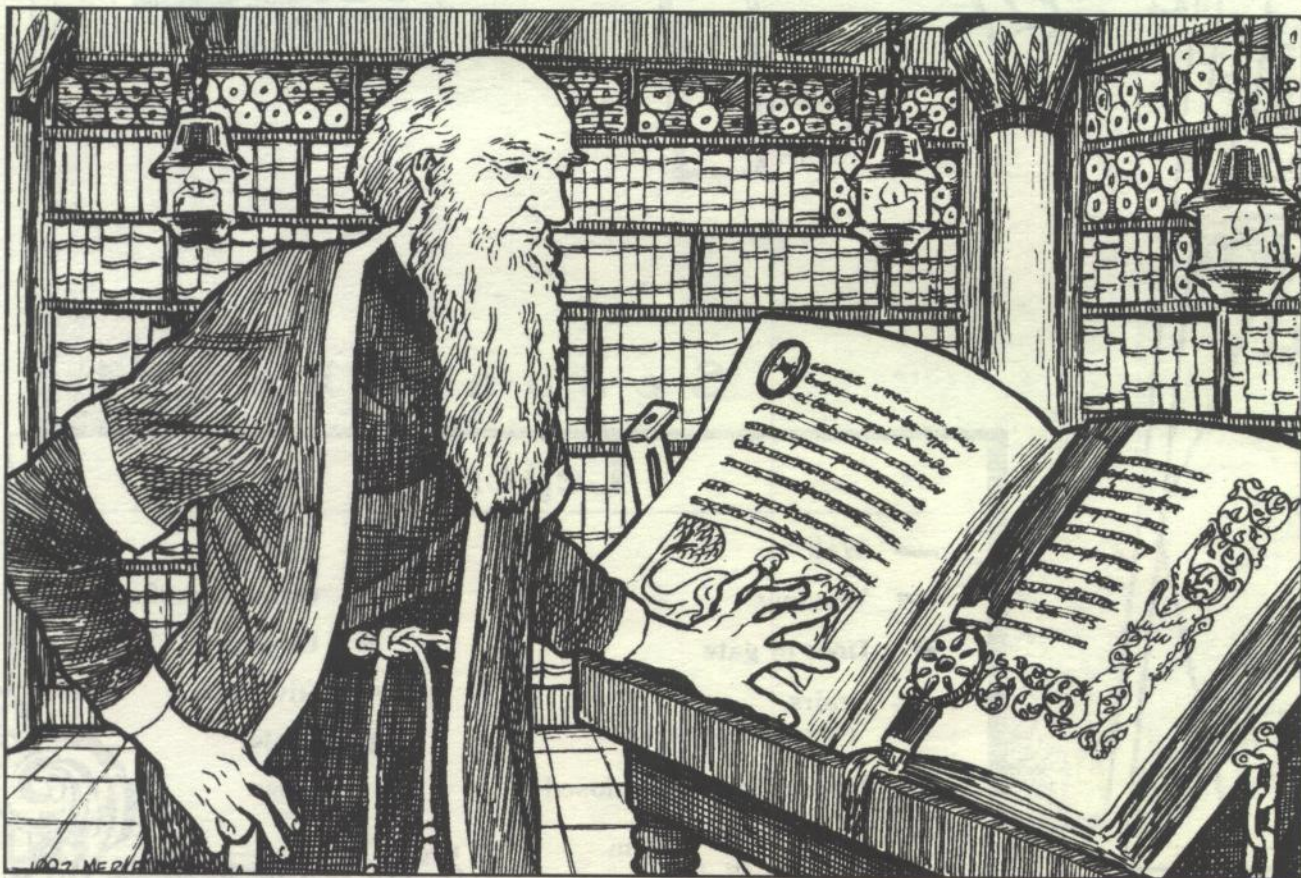
A vaulted passage leads to the tower court (a). The three-story tower itself is entered at its middle floor by a small two-story attached building. At the top, where the cult's gold banner flies as high as the peak of the temple dome, a watchman with the gift of permanent Farsee is always stationed with a horn to blow at the rising of Yelm and the approach of strangers.

9. Armory

This dim undercroft holds a vast store of arms: spears, pikes, bows and arrows, plate cuirasses, scale and cuirbouilli armor, and large shields are here in plenty. Two alcoves on the north serve as offices for the Lieutenant of the Armory and his guard, in whose charge is all this equipment.

10. Light Hall

Above the armory, and running, on a projection above the meeting house, the whole length of the eastern side of the garth as far as the south wall of the temple, this wing contains the private rooms of the resident Light Sons and priests. Each individual room is well lit and warm, with fine beds, desks, tapestries, and such. A door opens to this wing from the walkway atop the temple's base on the southside; a private Light Door into the upper temple is opposite. Immediately parallel to the west wall of the armory, and starting under an arch, are the covered 30-step main stairs to this wing (a). A doorway in the southeast leads to a latrine block (b): it is an open room with a partition about six feet from the south wall, creating a long and narrow room for separate closets which are



Hector the Wise in the Sun Dome Temple Library



provided with clean straw each day. The closets empty into a similarly narrow channel on the level below; the drain is fed with pumped-in water.

11. Library

Off the top of the main stairs of Light Hall to the right is the temple library. Here are kept the cult archives and some of the precious possessions in frequent use; it is also used as a secure deposit for valuables by some of the leaders. The windows have heavy bronze bars and the bronze-bound door is defended by two more doors in front of it. The library is protected by a one-point Warding spell from the temple defenses.

12. Warming House

Next to the main stairs, going westward, is the temple's warming house. Here two fires are lit on the first day of Dark season every year and kept going until the end of Sacred Time. Cultists working in unheated areas come into this vaulted chamber to get warm. The east wall is filled with two immense fireplaces with pointed arches and wide lintels. Directly underneath the library, the heat helps keep the valuable deposits warm and

dry. On the west wall are two openings into the next room, the Great Hall, which let in some of the heat. South of the warming house is a yard in which timber and peat for the fires is stored under a lean-to (a). The fuel is brought across the small wooden bridge (b) over the stream from the yard.

13. Great Hall

The high-roofed great hall is an impressive room split into two aisles by an arcade of five columns. The entrance alcove has wash basins on either side provided with warm towels from the warming house. In the western wall stairs give access to a raised gallery running around most of the room, used by lecturers, entertainers, and spectators. A high table is at the south end, on a dais, and additional and larger windows are designed to throw more light on the table and to add to the dignity and importance of those privileged to sit there. Between the dais and the arcade is a hearth, the smoke from which escapes through flues in the heads of the tall windows on each side. Behind the high table is a huge green tapestry woven with griffins and cult symbols in gold thread. Table linens and gold saucers, goblets, dishes, bowls, ewers, and salt-cellars are in frequent use here.

Following are a selection of entries from the *Yellow Book*, a fantastic collection of assorted information, gathered and listed without order, meaning, or editorial labor by Hector the Wise, librarian of the Sun Dome Temple. The *Yellow Book* is modeled upon the similar compendiums held in the Lhankor Mhy temples at Jonstown and Nochet, the only difference being the *Yellow Book's* emphasis on topics significant to Sun County and the surrounding region.

The *Yellow Book* is written in Firespeech, in special purple ink. It has pride-of-place in Hector the Wise's library, and is chained to a special stand. All cultists of good standing may inspect the book and suggest new entries. Only Hector himself is permitted to write in new entries, which he does in a firm hand that belies his great age.

Every two years, a junior initiate from the Lhankor Mhy Temple at Pavis is selected to journey down to the Sun Dome Temple to copy the newest entries from the *Yellow Book*. In return, he brings texts that might be of interest to Hector the Wise. Thus, all but the latest entries in the *Yellow Book* may be examined in the reserve collection of the Pavis Lhankor Mhy library, and many Lhankor Mhy texts are available at the Sun Dome. Since the Lunar occupation, this sage from Pavis has always been an Irippi Ontor cultist.

Excerpts from Hector's Yellow Book

(1621 Solara Tempora XXVI-26) Twice the size of my purebreds they were, and the riders louse-ridden savages whose bows felled poor Edruf at crossbow range. I only survived their tortures with the Son's blessing, minus these two fingers of course. Tortred Silktongue, a Lokamos merchant of the Sun Dome, describing a trading expedition to the Plains of Prax.

(1621 S. T. XXVI-28) Quoted by a follower of Tomas the Seer, sometimes known as Rhymer, 1609. "Thufir Twosword, though that be not your name/ You shall be known by it all the same; / And on whatever journeys you do fare/ Your fate shall be linked to a shaggy mare!"

(1621 S. T. XXVI-65) Even once one gets used to sucking water into the lungs, the sensations caused by the Breathe Water spell are most unpleasant. Even worse is at the end of its duration, when you must expel the water still in you. Purge it from your lungs

quickly or you may drown, even if on land. Rudent Ingilli, Priest of Zola Fel, Prax.

(1621 S. T. XXVI-66) Notes about the Agimori, as dictated to me by Khost, most famous among the Desert Trackers. The Agimori of Prax, due to the harshness of their environment, must live in harmony with the land. If they did not they would perish through starvation, as they would take more from the land than they would give back. Their philosophy is thus simple: nothing is wasted; water is precious; those who cannot provide a valuable service to the tribe in exchange for their food must die. My duties took me to Prax, five years before the Building Wall War (1600 S.T.). There I witnessed the death of an old Agimor who, lamed by age, could no longer run in the hunt and disdained (nor had the teeth) to do women's work. When his family moved on, he simply sat down in the midst of a dry wadi and waited. It took him 11 days to die! Appended here by Wrontos the Pursuivant. →



14. Kitchen

Next to the great hall is the kitchen, to which there is access via a service hatch for servants. Two large fireplaces stand back-to-back and a well is in the southeast wall. There is little storage, since most items come from the cellars next door. The kitchen is off limits to all except the cook, his apprentices, and the high priest's own cook.

15. Cellars

At the southwest corner of the garth is the doorway into the cellarer's range. The cellarer is an official, usually a priest or senior initiate under the Light Guide, who manages the food for the entire Sun Dome settlement. Vaulted in 22 double bays from a central row of 19 columns from which the ribs spring, the range is carried across the stream over four vaulted tunnels. Here is brought the produce of the valley, from grain and impala hides, to cider and spirits. Some food-processing equipment, such as the large stone cider press, is used here instead of across the stream in the yard. The cellarer has his own office (a) from which he oversees the collecting, storage, and distribution for the settlement.

16. Barracks

Above the cellars are the barracks which accommodate some initiates from the work force, the temple garrison, and those granted sanctuary within the temple. They sleep on cots in rows along the west and east walls, in an open plan. The barracks are reached by stairs outside the west wall over the cellarer's office and through an entrance alcove. At the south end of the range is their half of the latrine block, built over the river.

17. Hospital Block

A covered passage, called a slype, runs from the east side of the armory to the hospital block and branches off, about halfway along, to the lawn. The course of the Ouel was changed so that it now runs under the block in four channels through vaulted tunnels which emerge on the western side of the Rune chamber. The sick ward (a) is large, heated by six fireplaces, and is screened off by cloth hangings into cubicles when necessary; a private room is attached as well. The hospital is where the wounded are healed, the diseased cared for, and where cultists who have grown too old to cope with the daily routine live out their days. The hospital has its own kitchen (b) with a pair of fireplaces, to cook food for the sick. A pit with grills in the kitchen floor permits rubbish to be thrown into the swirling waters below. Also in the block are chambers for the nurses and healers (c), a chapel to Chalana Arroy and other healing goddesses (d), and a latrine with shafts that discharge into the stream (e).

18. Rune Chamber

This curiously shaped room, just outside the sick ward and straddling the river, with its partitions and arched arcades, is where the cult magics and rituals are taught. The chamber is entered from the slype directly through a door, or through a guarded arch into the open courtyard of Mana (a) where outdoors rituals are taught.

This room is not given any special protection by the temple defenses, but is the focus for other-world cult spirits who will attack the unprotected.

(1621 S.T. XXVI-81) "The usurper Kollen, Kistang's son, was of course succeeded by Bitchelli the Head Bearer, who ruled, as it were, through his nostrils and generative organ."

(1621 S. T. XXVI-82) What kills a walktapus is the publicity it gives itself.

(1621 S. T. XXVI-99) . . . and he, foul Osboropo, tool of Wakboth, was driven back into the Vulture's Country whence he came, seated backwards on an ass, his severed hands tied round his neck and his privy member in his mouth.

(1621 S. T. XXVII-29) Shall my beard grow to my navel while I ponder this question?: What does it mean when a man, unearthing an ancient urn, buries his drinking flask?

(1621 S. T. XXVII-42) Who was Gallegos? He was the Sun hero who was granted immortality and omnipotence so long as he did nothing. Such is the reason that the declination of his star seen since his apotheosis in the western heavens remains fixed, and neither twinkles

nor fades, not even in the full light of day. Might it ever change? Only Gallegos could tell us, and he cannot answer.

(1621 S. T. XXVII-53) Avoid gold and silver Pavic coinage minted anytime after Sea Season last year: Quinscion the Patient (General of Procurement and Disbursement) has sent his trusted agent Sikundar "the Scissors" to oversee the Royal Mint there. Sikundar, it is said, can clip the equivalent of five coins from every 50 issued.

(1621 S. T. XXVII-58) The most common form of clothing among ducks of the River of Cradles is greaves, usually made of leather or cloth, wrapped around the shins and tied with thongs.

(1621 S. T. XXVII-59) The Universal Splendor and Power of Yelm: A Hymn by Solinhor (592 S.T.). "Thou dawnest beautifully in the horizon of the sky/ O Living Yelm, who wast the beginning of life !/ When thou didst rise in the eastern horizon/ Thou didst fill every land with thy beauty/ Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high over every land/ Thy rays are upon the earth/ Though thou art in the faces of men/ Thy footsteps are unseen." →



19. Conduit House

This building is sandwiched between the south wall of the slype and the Rune chamber. Here, water is piped in from a spring and stored in a bronze cistern from which it is manually pumped to other parts of the temple.

20. High Priest's House

In the right angle of Light Hall and its latrine block, joining the south wall of the slype with a staircase, is the high priest's house of two stories. The upper story contains his private quarters and can be reached via the stairway leading from the slype or via another stairway from the courtyard of Mana. The stairs and a private door to Light Hall open onto the high priest's hall, where he entertains private guests. There is also a large antechamber that serves as a visitor's waiting room, a council room, and a presence chamber. This last room is for the high priest to receive formal requests and the like. Another private, covered door gives access to his sleeping quarters, his own section of the latrine, and two stairs to the lower section. One staircase leads to an isolated section (a), which serves as a private temple treasure room administered by the high priest and his immediate servants. The other staircase opens into a small guardroom with a fireplace (b). This guardroom is always occupied. The section north of the guardroom contains three prison cells for high-ranking criminals, whether cult members or outsiders. Bronze rings are stapled into the floor of the cells for attachment of inmate's shackles. Of the two rooms below, the southern serves as a general purpose room for the guards stationed here and in the armory during their relief; the northern room, protected by a heavy bronze door, contains iron and gold armor and equipment held by the cult.

The private treasure room gains a one-point Warding spell from the temple defenses, as does the High Priest's presence chamber. The ever-burning fire in the fireplace of his personal quarters is actually a salamander, under his personal control.

21. Lay Member's Barracks

This simple pillared hall over the river is entered by a large arched covered doorway. Lay members working or staying at the temple can sleep here, as well as some of the initiated. There are a few cots, but most sleep on straw or rolled up in blankets.

22. The Yard

The temple walls south of the Ouel stream enclose an area more than twice that of the north. The area enclosed is called the yard, and is a small town, with about 1,000 residents. Armorers, bronze-smiths, and goldsmiths all work here. The settlement also features a horse mill, malthouse, and bakehouse, along with a tannery and carpenters' and wheelwright's shops.

Near the temple is a large mews for hawks and falcons of the cult leaders, stables, and, further off, a small kennel.

To the south, where the yard ends in the rising hills and a well-managed barley field, are a pair of small prisons to hold captives and outlaws. The count's palace (actually a small, secure villa) occupies the southeast corner. This residence is rarely used for official purposes.

Near the west gate, south of the guardhouse, lies the Light House Inn, a hostelry run exclusively for outlander clientele by an Issaries initiate under license from the temple. By tradition, the concession is granted to respectable foreigners of Orlanthi heritage. With the waxing influence of Lunar culture in the Valley, temple officials are

(1621 S. T. XXVII-60) It is told by the fishermen of the River of Cradles that when the World Spike exploded and left a gaping hole at the center of the world, all the seas and rivers changed their courses to fill this void. This is why rivers flow towards the sea. But nobody told Sir Salmon, and this is why, to this day, salmon still travel upriver to spawn. *So much for the wisdom of the salmon. Pug the Perspicacious.*

(1621 S. T. XXVII-91) Loess is the fine yellowish brown soil of Vultures Country, the wastelands to the west of Sun County. Loess is blown by the winds of the Genert desert and deposited in layers often tens or hundreds of feet deep on top of the original terrain. It is exceptionally fine and easily eroded by wind and water, leaving the vertical earth cliffs and precipitous ravines and gullies so typical of the region's landscape.

(1621 S. T. XXVIII-01) It's been lonely in the saddle since the horse died.

(1621 S. T. XXVIII-09) I have always seen, in Prax and such nasty places, that a lioness, finding a herd of game, stares at a particular animal she has selected to devour. The rest, quite understanding, isolate the unfortunate and go on grazing unperturbed.

(1621 S. T. XXIX-36) *As related to Khost by N'qoboka, Fire-Priest of the M'dlaka impi to me, Gaumata the Strange, Light Priest of the Sun Dome:* "This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatsoever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life: Man is merely a strand of it. Whatsoever Man does to the web, Man does to himself."→



under increasing pressure to grant the concession to a Lunar Etyries cultist.

None of the buildings in the Yard are shown except the guardhouse at the western end with its corral outside the walls (a).

Sun Dome Temple Sanctuary

The Sun Dome Temple is a safe haven for all those who seek it. This is a well-known fact, even to people outside Sun County society. The custom is firmly entrenched in cult lore, and is much despised by such outside authorities as the Lunar government. Nevertheless, once inside the temple walls, the refugee is protected until he chooses to leave. The difficulty lies in getting inside the temple walls.

In an apparent attempt to appease the Lunar authorities, Count Solanthos now enforces an aggressively literal interpretation of the right to refuge. Although he is obligated to protect those inside, the count can exercise his right to refuse entry to any refugee that he deems inexpedient to harbor. Such undesirables include escapees from Lunar justice, perpetrators of monstrous crimes (such as rape or blasphemy), and obvious chaotics. Of course, if an outlaw gains entry to the temple grounds first, then announces he is seeking sanctuary, the count's hands are tied.

Care and supervision of the refugees is supervised by a junior Light Servant under the Light Guide. The quality of their lodgings and fare depends greatly on the opinion the Sun Domers have of them. Refugees may receive guests at the count's discretion, and are free to leave at will. In fact, some are actively encouraged to leave, though never physically.

Refugees Within Sun Dome Temple

Some of the outlaws currently domiciled at the temple include:

Coriander is a disgraced Lunar official who tricked his way into the temple compound by flying in on a sylph. Count Solanthos grudgingly permitted him to stay, but had him blinded in one eye for the impertinence. Governor Sor-Eel has recently sent a deputation to sue for Coriander's extradition, but the Count had no choice but to refuse. Coriander is old, fat, stupid, but cunning.

GM Note: Coriander is a former priest of the Crimson Bat, who narrowly avoided becoming Bat Food during a recent cult dispute. Both Sor-Eel and Solanthos are unaware of his true identity, but the governor is getting pressure from above for his return. The bat-cult want him back! It is very dangerous to hold Coriander, to say the least.

Scenario Hook: Should Sor-Eel learn of Coriander's past, he will want him out of Prax, fast! The governor is not interested in having the Crimson Bat and its minions tearing his dominions apart looking for a runaway. Sor-Eel may arrange for a covert party to enter the Sun Dome compound and kidnap Coriander. He will want to distance himself as far as he can from these raiders, who may even be Sartar patriots, duped into serving the empire.

The Third Man is only known by this name. He arrived at the Sun Dome gates over 30 years ago from parts unknown. He stills wears the faded and tattered finery he appeared in, although he permits the nuns to wash and repair them occasionally. The Third Man's past is a mystery, for he has only spoken two words since his arrival. That was years ago, and only the High Priest now remembers what he said. The Third Man is treated

(1621 S.T. XXIX-80) "There are many types of fox, all of which are descended from the Silver Fox. One of the rarest of these is the Yellow Fox, often known as the Desert Fox. The indigents of Sun County have their own name, they call him Lemmor which means winer (sic) - due to the high pitched screams the fox makes during the cold desert nights." Y. Y. B

(1621 S.T. XXX-1) *A Note by Hector the Wise. This is a tale from the west, translated by me from a Lunar copy of Easmuir Delelac's "Mythic Eschatology," a Safelsteran work published last century. In the Golden Age Yelm's favorite bird was Vulture. Vulture was the most beautiful of all birds, his plumage was pure gold, his crest filled with long and slender feathers which were all the colors of the rainbow. Yelm gifted his favorite with the choicest portions of any food available; he allowed Vulture above all birds to soar closest to his own divine countenance. When Yelm was slain by Orlanth and forced into*

the underworld, he asked his beloved Vulture to follow him, but Vulture refused, saying that the underworld did not befit such a noble and beautiful creature as himself. This displeased Yelm, and at the beginning of time when the Lightbringers returned him to the sky so he could follow his daily path across the firmament, Yelm took vengeance on his faithless servant. Yelm plucked the crest of many colors from Vulture's head. He withdrew the golden hue from Vulture's feather. Yelm ordered that "never again shall such a bird so vain be allowed to eat the first meat: instead, you must wait in hunger for the last pickings. You may fly high in the sky, but must ever hang your head in shame beneath the glory of my radiance." This Delelac claims to be a sage and scolyte of Yelmlio, yet is a willing, even enthusiastic participant in the erroneous Stygian Heresy (a diabolical mixture of Western atheism and true veneration). This, and the fact that our own mythology of course identifies Vrimak as Yelm's favored bird, enables me to dismiss this tale as fanciful Western rubbish. Hector.



deferentially by the Sun Domers, if only because every year a courier delivers a letter of credit for the sum of one kilogram of raw gold.

GM Note: The Sun Dome Temple is uninterested in the Third Man's past, and remains so until the money stops coming. He has never had a visitor, and has never expressed any desire to leave. As a token of respect, Chalana Arroy has granted him permission to reside with nurses and healers in the hospital block, where he patiently and humbly tends to the sick and aged.

Scenario Hook: The count's interest in his guest will be piqued if the gold payment ever ceases. If it fails to arrive one year, he may dispatch a party to investigate. The drafts originate from an address in Lunar Tarsh, a firm of actuaries who will be unwilling to divulge the name of their client. Who is the Third Man?

Kegan Stormson is a Sartar emigre, who fled to Prax after the failure of Starbrow's Rebellion in 1615. With the Lunars hot on his trail, he had no choice but to seek sanctuary in the Sun Dome, and has been here ever since. The political furor that followed resulted in the count adopting his literal stance over the acceptance of refugees.

GM Notes: Kegan is yesterday's hero, now all but forgotten by the Lunars (although warrants and charges against him still apply). During his incarceration he has become a devout Yelmalion, and his passion for rebellion has cooled.

Scenario Hook: Whilst some may be interested in recovering Stormson for the bounty still offered (~500L.), those fighting for freedom may want to liberate him to lead the good fight again.

Velota is an elven Wood Lady, a native of the Pavis Garden. She fled to the Sun Dome after leading an elven war-band into a troll ambush. To her undying shame, Velota fled the scene, leaving her friends to die at the hands of the blood-crazed Zorak Zorani. She has not had the courage to return to her people, let alone to venture out of the Sun Dome. Scornful Sun Domers familiar with her story have nicknamed her "Lilyback."

GM Note: While deplorable, Velota's actions were not sufficient grounds for excommunication, and she remains an active Aldryan.

Scenario Hook: When Velota's self-esteem finally reaches rock-bottom, her resolve will harden and she will undertake to venture out against the trolls again. Because she knows no elf would join her, she will attempt to recruit troll-hating humans for the strike. Once again, at a critical moment, she will panic and flee.

Defenses of the Sun Dome Temple

There are 5,000 initiates of the Great Sun Dome from all over Sun County. Other initiates worship at town shrines, but all who are capable of it make the pilgrimage to the Great Temple for Holy Days. These 5,000 initiates provide the temple with 50 points of defensive Rune Magic.

In the 471 years since the founding of the current Sun Dome, priests and other faithful have often shown their devotion by enchanting things to help or protect the temple. Even with occasional theft, breakage and pillage, an impressive variety of enchantments remain active as part of the Sun Dome Temple. An unspecified number of these "donated" points have been left unassigned for individual referees to devise enchantments they need, where they need them. With few exceptions, these enchantments should be designed into large, hard-to-steal features of the temple. A paving stone works just fine as a POW spirit binding, provides the watchman with the MP he needs, and has the added benefit of being almost impossible to steal, without needing a user restriction.

Gatehouse and the Outer Wall

Four Intellect Spirits are bound into a large bronze-bound stone in the floor of the gatehouse, near the door. These spirits allow any initiate of a light cultist to cast their spells. In total, they know Protection 6, Repair 4, Detect Enemy, Lightwall, and Glue 6. All these spells are useful for defending the gate, and are here to be cast as appropriate on unknown visitors, or the front gate if it is damaged. The stones cost their makers 9 POW each to create.

The captain of the watch for each gatehouse has a special wand as his symbol of authority. It contains two Intellect spirits, and gives the watch commander use of Farsee, Detect Magic, Mindspeech 5, Second Sight, Light, Lantern, and Dispel Magic 3. The wands also contain a 16-point POW spirit. There are two of these wands, one for each gatehouse. These wands cost their makers 8 POW each to enchant.

These wands and floorstones are part of the donated defenses, totalling 34 points of POW.

The stone wall surrounding the temple compound is magically protected by Warding 4. These matrix-based spells protect the walls from base to top all along their outside face. Any enemy of the Sun Dome touching the wall is hit by the Warding. The spells do not protect the entire area of the compound, only the wall. This is because the



wards are set only a few centimeters apart, in order to keep the total warded area as long and narrow as possible. The Warding would not activate if someone crossed the wall without touching it, but someone breaking through the wall would be hit by two ward lines — one entering and the other leaving its zone.

The Warding rods for each zone are set into the foundations of the compound wall. Those that protect the face of the wall are set slightly forward of the wall line in heavy masonry outcroppings.

The Warding spells protect people on the parapet from spells cast into the compound from below or even with the parapet. The Warding does not protect against spells cast from above or inside the compound.

The matrices for these Warding spells are all kept in the temple, though they may be moved at the discretion of the Light Captain, Invictus.

Permanent Warding zones extend only from the two guardhouses north and up across the northern wall. Warding rods are placed for the rest of the wall around the Yard, but must be cast by priests. Other rods are also in place to run a Warding across the yard from the guardhouse by the Lay Barracks to the wall south of the Hospital Block.

All the Wardings that protect the outer wall are from Warding matrices donated to the temple over the year. Their maintenance and renewal are the responsibility of the Light Captain and his staff. In total, these Wardings account for 16 points of the temple's donated magical defenses.

The Temple

Donated enchantments (117 points-worth) go to provide a Warding 3 zone around the entire upper level of the temple, starting at the top of the stair. Anyone triggering the Warding is immediately confronted by the next layer of defenses, the Guardians of the Four Directions (see p. 39).

The Sanctum and High Altar of Yelmali

The High Altar is the central point of magical defense for the entire temple complex. If the Altar is defiled or broken, all 50 points of initiate-based temple defenses end. Individual, priest-enchanted defenses continue to work, unless they are also part of the High Altar.

Temple Defenses in the High Altar: Fifteen points of the sanctum's defenses center on the High Altar, the heart of the Sun Dome. Twelve points of the Sanctum's defenses go toward four uses of Sunspear. These activate one at a time if anyone not an initiate of Yelmali touches the altar

without the express permission of the Light Guide. One point goes to a Warding cast around the High Altar, more as a warning to accidental trespassers than as a real defense against enemies of the cult. The most important defense of the Sanctum is the Binding Enchantment holding the spirit of the High Altar, Feshoaa, "Soul of Light" (see p. 39).

Added Enchantments of the High Altar:

Donated and inherited enchantments protect the Sanctum. Forty points created the Link condition enchantments that give the Altar its magic point storage capabilities, including several independent magical items linked to the High Altar, and detailed below.

A. Truestones: The Sun Dome owns two Truestones. Others have passed through its hands over the centuries, but only these are blessed with the holy spells of the Light Pantheon. The priests consider them sacred.

The Great Stone: The larger stone came to the cult blank, thanks to a Light Son who knew no Rune Magic. As a result, this stone is "set" to hold Rune Magic equivalent to the massed magic of the entire Sun Dome Priesthood at the time the stone was delivered to the temple. The spells stored here include: Armoring Enchantment x 3, Binding Enchantment x 4, Catseye x 16, Dismiss Magic 25, Divination 18, Excommunication x 4, Extension 28, Find Enemy x 8, Heal Body x 7, Heal Wound x 15, Magic Point Matrix Enchantment x 4, Mindlink 22, Sanctify 20, Shield 40, Soul Sight 24, Speak with Birds x 11, Spell Matrix Enchantment x 4, Spellteaching x 12, Spirit Block 18, Strengthening Enchantment x 3, Summon Cult Spirit x 14, Sunbright x 18, Sunspear x 5, Warding 20, and Worship Yelmali x 16.

The First Stone: This Truestone has been the property of the temple since its founding, hence its name. It was found by a Light Son who was also an acolyte, and he could not resist the compulsion to fill it. It is set for the following spells: Shield 4, Catseye, Warding 2, Heal Body, and Spirit Block 2.

B. Unpowered Magic Crystals and POW Spirits: War booty, gifts to the temple, and inheritances from cultists have provided the cult with many magical gifts over the centuries. Most of these are unpowered magical crystals and POW spirit binding enchantments. Once a decade, the priests of the temple enchant newly gained objects into the altar in one great spell of Linking. Currently, the High Altar has 780 points of total POW spirits, in 63 POW spirits. These spirits are linked to the magic point storage capability provided by MP matrices and unpowered crystals, filling a reservoir with 854 MP capacity.



Guardians of the Four Directions

These spirits are the primary defenses of the temple, bound to the walkways surrounding the actual dome of the temple. They may be ordered out of their enchantments for aggressive defense by any of the priests, the spirit of the High Altar, or the Light Captain.

These huge spirits scare away the sendings of shamans and other disincorporate entities. Most non-cult spirits flatly refuse to come near such a great temple, and are easily destroyed or enslaved if they are ordered to do so. The Guardian of the North was instrumental in the defeat of the Founder of the Bison Nation during the Solitude of Testing, and most nomad shamans know this.

When the Sun Dome is attacked, the Four Guardians usually cast an Extended Mindlink on one of the other Guardians and a designated watch priest or acolyte, to coordinate their defense. The watch priest always has access to the magical resources of the High Altar, and the Four Guardians have access to these through the Mindlink. This allows them to use any of the spell matrices in the High Altar, but they cannot use the magic point stored there. While engaged in Spirit Combat, Mindlinks are temporarily broken.

Normal tactics for all the Guardians are to use Second Sight and Soul Sight to find an appropriate victim, cast a large enough Dismiss Magic to blow down any spirit defenses the target has, and then engage in spirit combat or spell casting. When possible, they sometimes engage in spirit combat with enemies involved in melee, so the victim must decide to fight the spirit and risk physical injury, or to fight the melee and risk possession. All the Guardians have Second Sight as a natural ability and have the following spells in common: Visibility, Spirit Block 4, Control Magic Spirit, Extension 4, Mindlink 2, and Dismiss Magic 6.

The Guardian of the East (INT 18 POW 36)

This spirit is a manifestation of joyful rebirth and vigor, the "Light of Dawn." It is the recognized leader of the Guardians. It prefers to attack as a disembodied spirit. It knows the following spells in addition to the above: Sunbright x4, Light, Lantern, Lightwall, Heal Body, Control Salamander x3, Sanctify 4, and Extension 6 (total of 10 points).

The Guardian of the West (INT 14 POW 31)

This spirit is a manifestation of war, vengeance and death, the "Light of Sunset." Like the Guardian of the East, it prefers to cast Visibility and attack in disembodied form. By expending MP, this spirit may, while Visible, cast an area effect Demoralize spell equal in attacking strength and meters radius to the MP it spends. It knows the following spells in addition to the above: Demoralize, Disruption, Control Magic Spirit x 6, Catseye, Dismiss Magic 4 (total 10), Spirit Block 3 (total 7).

The Guardian of the North (INT 15 POW 44)

This Guardian prefers to attack by using its Second Sight ability and Soul Sight spell to find the most powerful enemy it can defeat. Then it possesses the character in spirit combat and wreaks confusion and destruction among the other transgressors, once it has possessed a victim. The Guardian of the North has the natural ability to attack as if under the effects of the Berserk spell. This is a result of its disregard for the body it possesses, and is not actually a magical spell. It can turn this ability on and off at will from melee round to melee round. In addition to the standard spells known by all four Guardians, this spirit knows the following spells: Bladesharp 10, Mobility 5, Heal, Body, and Shield 8.

While embodied, the Guardian of the North has the following base skill chances. Any bonuses for physical statistics derive from the possessed victim: Any spear attack 90%, any spear parry 90%,

Hoplite shield parry 90%, other shield parry 50%, other edged weapon attack 65%, Scan 120%, Dodge 90%, Speak Firespeech 55%, and Stab Self in Head 120%.

The Guardian of the South INT 16 POW 34

This Guardian acts similarly to the Guardian of the North, though it prefers to capitalize on the confusion of battle to disorganize the enemy with less direct attacks. When it finishes possessing an enemy, it claims (in its victim's voice) to have driven off the spirit. Then it attempts to approach an enemy commander for combat, give bad orders, or otherwise upset the enemy's organization. The Guardian of the South usually avoids attacking characters who have allied spirits. In addition to the standard spells known by all four Guardians, this spirit knows the following spells: Silence 4, Coordination 4, Glamour 4, Multimissile 4, Heal Body, and Shield 4.

While embodied the Guardian of the South knows the following skills. Any bonuses for physical statistics derive from the possessed victim: Sneak 85%, Scan 140%, Hide 87%, Fast Talk 75%, Dagger Attack 90%, any Spear attack 90%, Speak Praxian 32%, Speak Firespeech 87%, Speak Pavic 23%, Fist Attack 77%, Dodge 78%, and Ride 32%.

Feshoaa, "Soul of Light" Magic Spirit of the High Altar (INT 20, POW 55)

Feshoaa is the spirit of the temple. While nominally under the command of the High Priest, Feshoaa is first and foremost a servant of Yelmalo. As such, it may act independently of the will of the High Priest, though it generally remains aloof from mortal affairs. It has full access to all the enchantments of the High Altar, including the Truestone. Feshoaa also rules the Guardians of the Four Directions. It was Feshoaa, using spells in the altar, who cast the Command spells necessary to bind the Guardians in the first place.

Feshoaa knows 20 points of Repair, making it difficult to destroy the High Altar (or any other sacred thing in the temple) without first defeating the Spirit of the Temple. Feshoaa also knows the following divine spells, in addition to the spells he has access to in the Altar: Shield 6 (always cast with Extension on the High Altar), Heal Body x 4 (used to keep defenders alive), Dismiss Magic 8, Sunbright x 3, and Extension 5.

The Goldenblood Light

This most sacred of relics is the heart of the High Altar. Only the High Initiates of the cult (those above Acolyte status) are certain of its existence, though rumors abound of the "Holy of Holies." The Goldenblood Light is the solidified blood of Yelmalo, spilled during one of his many battles. Any initiate of a Light cult can sense its holy nature, and members of Yelmalo often enter an ecstatic state when viewing this marvel.

The Goldenblood Light is perfectly round, and glows as brightly as a star. At close distance, it is too bright to look at directly. Its light is bright enough to demoralize creatures who cannot stand full daylight, like trollkin or cave trolls. Vampires lose any supernatural abilities while in this light.

This relic also has the ability to affect any Yelmalo rune magic cast from the High Altar. When cast by the Light Guide, any cult rune magic gains the benefit of two points of Extension. This power does not function on Darkday.

The Goldenblood Light is an Heirloom of immense value. Under no circumstances would cult officials allow it to leave the sanctum, much less the temple. The Sun Dome would expend every resource it owns to retrieve it.



The River Ritual of the Sun People

Introduction

Arinsor Clearmind, the first count, ensured his people's survival by forging an alliance with a daughter of Zola Fel, god of the River of Cradles. Since then, the river has watered the lands of the Sun Dome, providing the Sun people with plenty. In return, the temple provides grain to the river folk, who have no knowledge of farming. Thus, despite the mutual distrust of river and sky, the agreement allows the people of the river and the Sun Dome to co-exist and share in the bounty of the river valley.

The River Ritual takes place in the early part of Sea Season, corresponding with the rising of the river. The exact day to commence is determined by special Divinations made during the Sacred Time. The quester starts at the top of Summons Hill at dawn, and travels along the Ouel stream toward the river.

In the first year of a new count's reign, he personally renews the alliance with Zola Fel's daughter by enacting the quest. In other years, a favored initiate is chosen by the count to act as his representative. In the official Sun Dome ritual the candidate enacts the quest alone, though he is supported by a bevy of priests and cultists who fervently pray for his success. The farmers and their families spend the entire day in prayer and fertility rituals to aid the quester and prepare the land for the life-giving touch of the river.

The ritual has also been enacted by individuals in need of assistance from the river. The chance of success depends more on the expected benefit from the quest for the cult community's and the willingness of the river to render the quester aid than on the skills of the quester. However, failure of private quests affects only the quester, not the people and land of Sun County.

There are five stages to the River Ritual, each corresponding to both the five aspects of Yelm the Sun God, and to five ages of myth and history.

I. Yelm the Youth (Golden Age)

Myth: In the Godswar, Yelm fell to the blows of his enemies, but was revived by the great river spirit which flows through the Pelorian basin. The heat of his fall scorched the earth, but Oslir washed it with her waters and restored the land to life.

Yelm established his kingdom in the now-fertile valley and gave his protection to Oslir. His

people were reconciled with the native river dwellers, and they existed in peace and plenty for uncounted ages.

History (877-1200): Arinsor Clearmind was granted the lands of Sun County by the kings of Pavis. He entered into an alliance and ritual marriage with a daughter of Zola Fel, who irrigated the land for the good of all.

Arinsor established the Sun Dome Temple, and the river worshippers and people of the county lived in peace, sharing in the bounty of the river valley. This age is called the Peaceful Era by the Sun Dome people.

Action: The Quest begins at noon, when Yelm is highest in the sky. As the quester walks toward the river, he is assailed by dozens of farmers, naked but for loincloths and coated with ash. Making fearful, wailing noises with dry throats, they depict the drought and famine which only the river can prevent. The quester is then driven into the river where he is met by the daughter of Zola Fel. (In an independent quest, the quester, confronted by heat, dust, and pursuing enemies, seeks sanctuary with the river.)

II. Yelm the Warrior (Storm Age)

Myth: Yelm was eventually slain by evil gods, who then fought amongst themselves and destroyed the world. Yelm's children left Heaven to preserve the remaining light in the universe.

History (1200-1383): The city of Pavis fell to nomad and troll attacks, and Sun County was isolated, though the inhabitants maintained their rituals and their friendship with the river. This period is called the Solitude of Testing, and lasted until 1575.

Action: In order to gain the blessing of the naiad, the quester must prove himself as her protector. She directs the quester against whatever force has been harming or polluting the river. These foes may be, for example, mundane enemies or rivals of the river cult, or chaotic forces despoiling the fertile waters. The river's foes may be found within a few hundred meters of ritual site, or may be a hundred kilometers or more up or down-river. The nymph magically transports the quester to the correct location, arriving at dusk. The magical journey may appear as a gradual transition of time and place spent in pleasant discourse with the nymph, or as a nightmare journey through dark, freezing waters taking many hours.



III. Yelm the Leader (Greater Darkness)

Myth: Chaos entered the world through the cracks opened by Yelm's murderers. Yelm's children defeated their foes, but in the process were wounded or slain; light leaked from the world.

History (1384-1439): The years of drought. Count Cruk (known as "the Dissenter") refused to perform the River Ritual in 1384; in 1385, co-rulers Blame and Shame fought over who would marry the nymph and slew each other in the process. The counts for the next 57 years did not bother with the ritual (except for Pistolli, who tried in 1387 and failed), and so the land suffered. By the year 1439, Daga, God of Drought, reigned in the river valley.

Action: The quester must fight and defeat the designated foe of the River. If the official candidate falls, the nymph supports and heals him. Independent questers do not receive aid from the nymph; if they perish, so be it. The nymph does not actively fight.

IV. Yelm Imperator (Grey Age)

Myth: Yelm ruled the Land of the Dead. By his purity and power, he summoned the forces of evil to him, and slew Chaos. He then prepared for the renewal of the world, marshalling his powers and sending the Star Captains to protect the scattered remnants until his return.

History (1440-1575): Skindilli Longlegs became count and performed the River Ritual for the first time in over half a century. He gifted the nymph with his Lantern spell in repayment for the failures of his predecessors; she accepted, and sent the life-giving waters of the river to renew the land. Daga was banished from the valley, and Yelmario reigned supreme once again.

Action: If the foe was not defeated, the quest has failed. The nymph will rescue a solar quester from death if she can, taking him to the opposite bank from the foe. She may also decide to rescue a non fire-sky cultist, depending on their worthiness. Regardless of cult affiliations, a failed quester receives a geas; he must not cross the waters of the Zola Fel or any of its tributaries for one year. Should a geased individual attempt to do so, he is assailed by continuous Drown spells, swamped by undines, etc., until he turns back or perishes.

A successful quester strengthens the ties of the river with the land and so aids the fertility of the valley; other benefits vary. The count performs the quest as a duty, and so gains no personal benefit.

The count's designated initiate performs the quest as an honor and gains no personal benefit either. However, he is usually favored by the river during the course of the following year; he might find travel across the river easy, his crops might grow especially well, or he may even be gifted with a River Eye ability.

The gift given to an independent quester will vary according to the nature of his request. If he sought the river's aid against drought, he might be gifted with some modest magical power — for example, several uses of the Control Flood spell. If he sought the river's aid against foes of the river, he may gain allies from the river cult, or receive a special tool or spell to aid or shield him. If he simply sought alliance with the river, he may gain similar benefits to those of a designated initiate (as described above).

V. Yelm the Elder (History)

Myth: Yelm conquered Death and returned to his place in the sky. With the Dawn came the return of Light and Law to the world.

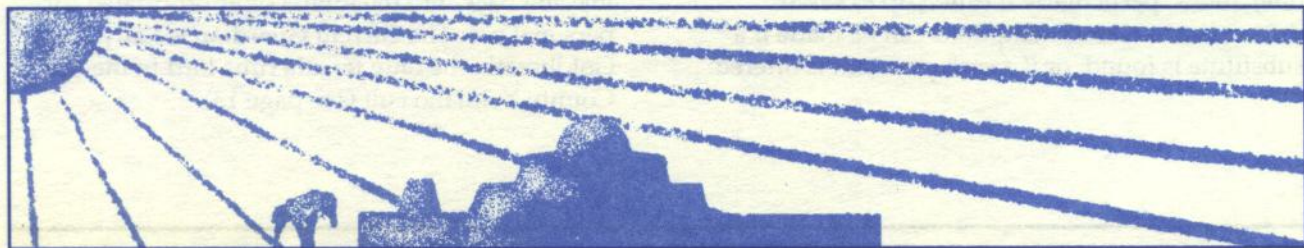
History (1575-present): Dorasar came to Prax and founded New Pavis. He arrived with presents and offerings of a new alliance to clear the valley of nomads, and so ended the Solitude of Testing.

Action: The quester and the naiad consummate their union, symbolizing the alliance of river and sun, and the fertility that this brings to the world. The quester must then return with the river's gift.

The count or his designated initiate is transported back to the Summons Hill, arriving with the dawn. As Yelm rises over the land, the waters of the river rise and fill the irrigation channels of Sun County.

The naiad takes a successful independent quester as close to his goal as she can along the river. Regardless of the time or distance he always returns at dawn.

A failed quester must travel back under his own power, without the river's protection. Any foes from the first stage are encountered again, in addition to other dangers.



Sun Dome Templars and Militia

Elite Soldiery and Citizen Levy of Sun County

Yelmalio is a militaristic cult, and Sun County is a militaristic culture. If the Sun Dome Templars could be said to be the land's standing army, the Sun Dome Militia is the police force.

The Sun Dome Militia

Local Militia

Every village and hamlet has its own local militia force, whose efficiency and effectiveness depends on the personality of the person who leads it and the commitment of those in it. (The village of Greenbrass militia, *RQ Deluxe, Gamemaster Book*, pp. 40-41, is an example of a local militia.)

Sun Dome Militia

Taking precedence over the local militia units are the Sun Dome Militia squads, which are organized centrally. Upon initiation at age 16, every Sun Dome male is registered at the Sun Dome, and his name is placed into a pool consisting of all adult males, 16-49 years old, in good health. Exemptions are available for certain occupations (i.e., priest, acolyte, healer, tax official). From this pool are formed 120 16-man militia squads called "files." Each season 12 of these files are on active duty in 12 districts of Sun County. Each on-duty file is commanded by a professional soldier (a Sun Dome Templar, junior acolyte, or rune lord) with the assistance of an experienced veteran as second-in-command. These two professional soldiers (called "file leader" and "half-file leader") provide continuity as new files are rotated through the district every season.

Thus, in theory, every eligible Sun County male serves in the Sun Dome Militia for one season (eight weeks) every two years. Despite the heavy penalties, some farmfolk attempt to shirk their obligations, particularly if called up to serve during the harvest. Exemptions can be made if a substitute is found, or if a cash payment is offered.

Active Militia Files

In addition to providing a superior citizen levy in times of war, the Sun Dome Militia serve as a combination regional police force and border patrol. An active militia file's routine mixes standard military training and drill with regular patrols through their districts, especially along the frontier borderlands.

Militia Duties: The unit file leaders are responsible for keeping the borders secure and keeping tabs on foreign traders, adventurers, travelers, and other riffraff. In this capacity they maintain regular communications with the Sun Dome through the local temples and priesthood. Of particular current concern is the Hazia trade, which has grown alarmingly to satisfy expanding markets in the Lunar Empire. The Sun Dome grants the file leaders authority to execute summary judgements for minor infringements of Sun County law (usually punishable by fines, confiscation, or temple penances or proscriptions, occasionally accompanied by a righteous, admonitory beating), but those detained for major crimes are usually delivered for justice to the count at the Sun Dome. Should a situation get out of hand, the Sun Dome Templars are called up and brought to bear. The Sun Dome Militia file leaders have been cautioned not to unnecessarily antagonize official Lunar parties, but outlanders in general can otherwise expect harrassment or rough treatment from militia patrols.

The Sun Dome Militia is commanded by the Guardian of Sun County, a subordinate to the Sun Dome Light Captain. The office of Guardian is a position of great responsibility and little obvious reward. There is no official salary, but all money taken in fines, ransoms, even bribes can either be injected back into the militia or appropriated for personal use. The current Guardian is Lady Vega Goldbreath, the only female rune lord in the Sun County Yelmalio cult (see page 13).



Militia File Bases

Each of the active militia units is based at a barracks near the temple in the largest Sun County communities, and is responsible for patrolling the district around it. It is the policy of the count that militia squads are stationed away from their home districts, to keep them both honest and impartial. Militiamen often patrol in half-files, with one half-file on patrol commanded by the file leader, the other half-file remaining at base under a second-in-command called a half-file leader, but for frontier or dangerous patrols, the squad marches at full strength.

The "Sun Dome Active Militia Units, Bases, and Leaders" table tells where in Sun County each file is based and gives a brief description of the file's leader. Because the file leader may often be absent

on patrol with a half-file, (or in pursuit of other duties, or in simple neglect of duties), the second-in command is often in charge of routine duties.

The Two-Handed-Spear-with-Shield Skill

While the Lunar Empire is founded on the fighting skill of its hoplites armed with the two-handed spear and hoplite shield, the Sun Dome Temple originated the tactic, and they remain the experts in its use, being especially proficient with the extra-long (3.5 meters or more) pike, or sarissa.

The temple teaches the skill to any initiate. The training costs is the same as that for regular two-handed spear training, but the tactic has definite disadvantages as well as advantages.

Sun Dome Active Militia Units, Bases, and Leaders

No.	Nickname	Location	File Leader	Notes
I	"The Victors"	Sun Dome	Vega Goldbreath (RL) See p. 13.	The premier militia squad; many templars are recruited from here.
II	"The Glory Boys"	Helmbold	Sonny Brightness (I) Indifferent, never on patrol.	Very lax and poorly lead.
III	"The Fishermen"	Queenscliff	Haloric Longfarm (I) Brave and loyal.	Perhaps the most effective unit after Vega's. Second-in-command is Mara Goldbreath, her protégé.
IV	"Jovian's Men"	Harpoon	Jovian Goldbreath (I) Vega's useless older brother.	Jovian uses the unit to enrich himself through corruption.
V	"The Targeteers"	Arrowsands	Magnus Pike (A) Ex-priest; hale for his age.	Excellent archers through the efforts of their leader.
VI	"The Dust Eaters"	Goldbreath	Dorian Lightbody (I) Uses his initiative; fair.	A capable group (see also the "Solinthor's Tower" scenario).
VII	"Men of Gold"	Rory's Well	Jaspar Yello (I) A punitive assignment.	Persistent troublemakers are often posted to this unit.
VIII	"The Boatmen"	Chomoro	Coriander (I) Scrupulously honest.	Spend much of their time regulating the river traffic. Perhaps the best boatmen in Sun County.
IX	"The Bird Men"	Eiskolli	Coriander (A) A nobody.	A very religious bunch.
X	"The Old Guard"	Old Sun Dome	Vaaron Archibald (A) See p.113.	They fear the ruins are haunted.
XI	"The Crow Eaters"	Morning	Dawn Eagle-Eye (I)	Control the local Hazia industry. Corruption alleged, but unproven. Possible ties with Krarsht.
XII	"Rogar's Riders"	Unassigned	Rogar (RL, A) Operates largely on his own. initiative (often more so than is to Vega's liking).	More Rogar's personal following than a militia squad, they have recently taken to riding on horse back.

RL = Rune Lord A = Initiate I = Initiate



In this combat style, the shield is fastened to the left arm of the spear user and hung from his shoulder. The supporting strap, and having to hold the spear with both hands, restrains the spearman so that he cannot maneuver the shield. It sits in one place, and can only be moved with the movement of the whole body.

To any one opponent facing the user (or more if they must approach through a narrow opening), the large shield blocks all blows striking the left arm (16-18), the chest (12), and the abdomen (9-11). It cannot be used to block blows to any other locations. Any blow striking the left arm, chest, or abdomen must penetrate nine points of hoplite shield before transmitting damage to the armor and body underneath. (Note: A slung shield covering a location adds half its armor points to the armor points of the location struck.)

Unfortunately, not only can the character not use the shield for parrying, but the spear is too constrained by the shield hanging on the maneuvering arm to be used for parries either. Thus, the character must rely on his Dodge and his armor, and hope that the incoming blows land on the left arm, chest, or abdomen.

Both viking round and kite shields are adaptable to this tactic, although the Sun Domers do not employ these styles of shield. Other types of shield are not suited to this technique since they do not cover enough area to be effective.

Those trained in the standard form of two-handed spear can use this form untrained at half their normal ability up to 60%, then with a subtraction of 30% as they improve in the basic form. Thus a character with 60% in the standard two-handed-spear style are at 30% skill with the two-handed-spear-with-shield style, while a character with 75% skill in the standard two-handed spear are at 45% with this form.

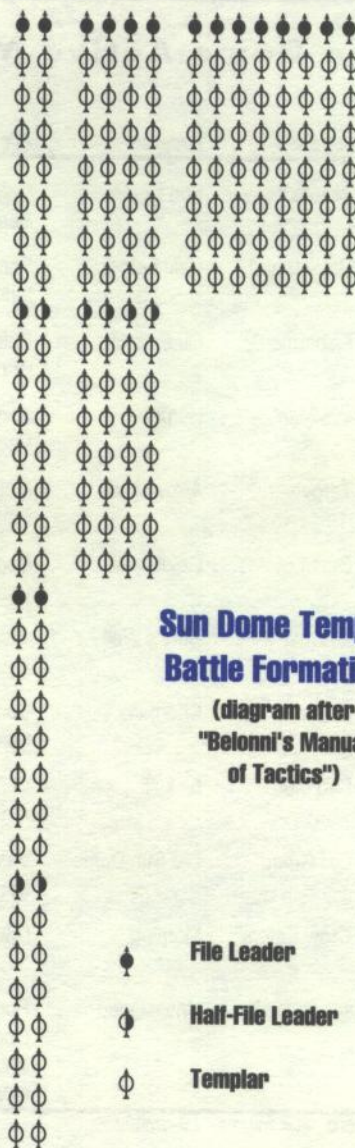
Hit Locations for Two-Handed-Spear-with-Shield

<i>Melee</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Missile</i>	<i>AP</i>
01-04	R. Leg	01-03	—
05-08	L. Leg	04-06	—
09-11	Abdomen	07-10	9
12	Chest	11-15	9
13-15	R. Arm	16-17	—
16-18	L. Arm	18-19	9
19-20	Head	20	—

Sun Dome Templar Battle Formations

In column for road or frontier travel, units travel in two-abreast double-file formation. For battlefield march or maneuver they move in open formation, four lines 16 men deep, with wide spacing between lines to permit skirmishers and missile troops to penetrate. In combat they shift to battle file, or close formation, eight half-files, eight men deep, a tight square of 64 men with locked hoplite shields. The militia also uses these formations when operating as battle units, but more typically are arrayed in line two ranks deep for missile fire or skirmishing.

Double File Open Formation Close Formation



Sun Dome Templar Battle Formations

(diagram after
"Belonni's Manual
of Tactics")

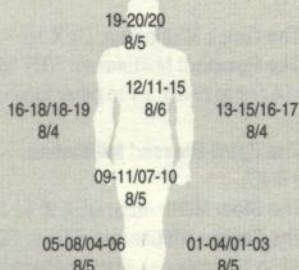
Sun Dome Templars: Initiates of Yelmalio

Sun Dome Templars are the military elite of Sun County, and serve as the standing army. They are commanded by the Light Captains of the Yelmalio cult. Templars are entitled to bear arms at all times, and are accorded great respect by the populace. Given below are game statistics for a typical templar squad.

Templars are encountered in full plate (as represented on the diagram) only on guard duty or local defense. Campaign gear is standard kit for local police actions and remote campaigning. Mercenary units typically feature pike-and-shield tactics.

STR 14
CON 14
SIZ 15
INT 15
POW 14
DEX 14
APP 14

Move: 3
Fatigue: 28
Hit points: 15
Magic points: 14
Dex SR: 3



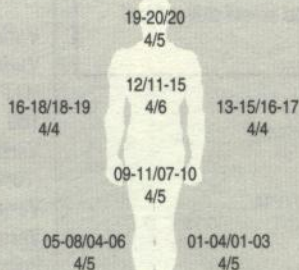
Standard Templar: Full Plate

Full Plate: Total encumbrance = 34. Fatigue -6 (28-34). Full Plate (AP*/ENC 25).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H S. Spear	7	70/40	1d8+1+1d4	2/10
Hoplite Shield	8	22/70	1d6+1d4	7/18

Campaign Gear: Total encumbrance = 24.5. Fatigue 3 (28-24.5). Cuirbouilli & Soft Leather limbs and helm (AP 4/Enc. 6.0), Scale Hauberk (AP 6/Enc 6.0). Quiver of 20 arrows (Enc. 1)

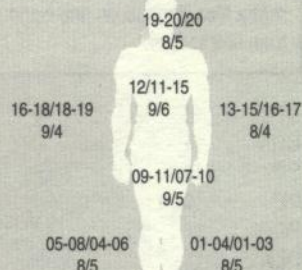
Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H S. Spear	7	70/40	1d8+1+1d4	2/10
Hoplite Shield	8	22/70	1d6+1d4	7/18
Javelin (2)	3/9	70/--	1d6+1d2	3/8
Self Bow	3/9	60/--	1d6+1	.5/5



**Standard Templar:
Campaign Gear**

Pike & Shield: Total encumbrance = 28.5. Fatigue -1 (28-28.5). Shield covers chest, abdomen & left arm AP 9/Enc. 3). Plate armor elsewhere (AP 8/Enc. 15). No parries with shield or pike.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
2-H Pike & Shield	5	70/--	2d6+2+1d4	10.5/12+18



**Standard Templar:
Pike & Shield**

Spirit Magic (81%-ENC): Speedart (1), Multimissile 2, Bladessharp 2, Mobility 1, Farsee 1, Befuddle (2), Light (or Lantern 1), Heal 2 (Half-file leader — Heal 5).

Divine Magic (all one-use): Heal Wound I, Catseye I.

Skills: Scan 75, Listen 75, Search 65, Sneak 60 (-Enc.), Dodge 50 (-Enc.), Human Lore 39.

Languages: Local 37/13, Firespeech 25/--, Trade 20/--.

Ransom: 1d20 Wheels, 1d100 gold pennies on their person; cult ransom = 500L.

Templar Variants: The standard templar is a superior fighting man, as might be expected in an elite corps. Within a templar unit, some individuals are superior or inferior to the standard. The following variants suggest modifications to make to the standard templar to represent these variations in individual quality.

A strong templar 16-man file has two each of Variants A, B, and C in addition to 10 standard templars. A weak file has two each of Variants D, E, and F in addition to 10 standard templars.

Variant A: The Quick Templar: DEX 16: -1 to weapon & spell SR.

Variant B: The Powerful Templar: STR 16, CON 17: Fatigue = 33. Hit Points = 16 (+2 to chest, +1 to other locations). Damage Modifier = 1d6, not 1d4.

Variant C: The Spirit-Blessed Templar: POW 18: Spirit Magic (90% -Total ENC).

Variant D: The Slow Templar: DEX 9: +1 to weapon and spell SR.

Variant E: The Feeble Templar: STR 12, CON 12: Fatigue = 24. Hit Points = 12 (-1 to all locations). Damage Modifier = None, not 1d4.

Variant F: The Spirit-Cursed Templar: POW 12: Spirit Magic (60% -Total ENC).

Unit Leaders: Templar units are organized into 64-man units called "squares" or "sixty-fours" like the Lunar armies. The captains, file leaders, and half-file leaders usually have one or more of the features of Variants A, B, and C, and have received Mastery of a cult weapon as a gift of Yelmalio.

Yelmalio Gifts and Geases: For roleplaying encounters, determine gifts and geases from cult charts. For melee encounters, use the following quick tables:

1d100	Gift and Geases
01-05	Bow Attack 101; "wear no head protection."
06-10	Javelin Attack 101; "wear no metal armor on torso."
11-15	1-H Spear Attack & Parry 101; "never flee or surrender to Darkness creatures."
16-20	2-H Spear Attack & Parry 101; "wear no armor on legs."
21-25	+10 to favored Attack skill; "wear no armor on arms."
26-00	No combat-related gift or geas.

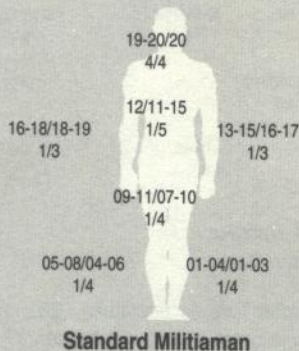


Sun Dome Militia Initiates of Yelmalo

Twelve active 16-man militia files provide guard, garrison, patrol, and police functions in Sun County. Full mobilization provides over 1,000 militiamen. In battle these units usually provide missile fire and protect the flanks of regular Templar units; militia files are also drilled in pike-and-shield unit tactics. On patrol, militia files depend on one-hand spear and shield skill rather than unit tactics.

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

Move: 3
Fatigue: 22
Hit points: 11
Magic points: 11
DEX SR: 3



Patrol Gear: Total encumbrance =13. Fatigue -9 (22-13). Cuirbouilli helm (AP 3/ENC .5). Linen armor on all locations (AP 1/ENC 3.5).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H S. Spear	7	40/35	1d8+1	2/10
Hoplite Shield	8	19/40	1d6	7/18

Battle Gear: Total encumbrance = 15. Fatigue 7 (22-15). Cuirbouilli helm (AP 3/ENC .5), Linen armor on all locations (AP 1/ENC 3.5), Quiver of 20 arrows (Enc. 1).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
2-H Pike & Shield	5	35/--	2d6+2	10.5/12+18
Self Bow	3/9	35/--	1d6+1	.5/5

Spirit Magic: (60-ENC): Bladesharp 1, Heal 1.

Skills: Scan 35, Listen 35, Search 33, Sneak 30 (-ENC.), Dodge 30 (-ENC), Farming 45, Human Lore 15.

Languages: Local 32/--, Firespeech 07/--.

Ransom: 1d10L. Each militiaman has a 100L ransom from the Yelmalo cult.

Yelmalo Gifts and Geases: For roleplaying encounters, determine gifts and geases from cult charts. For melee encounters, the following quick tables :

1d100	Gift and Geases
01-05	Bow Attack 90; "never wear head protection."
06-10	+10 to favored Attack skill; "wear no metal armor on torso."
11-15	1-H Spear Attack/Parry 90; "never flee or surrender to Darkness creatures."
16-20	2-H Spear Attack/Parry 90; "wear no armor on legs."
21-00	No combat-related gift or geas.

Militiaman Variants: The standard militiaman is an adequate part-time soldier. Within a militia unit, some individuals are superior or inferior to the standard. The following variants suggest modifications to make to the standard militiaman to represent these variations in individual quality.

A strong 16-man militia file has one each of Variants A, B, and C in addition to 10 standard militiamen. A weak militia unit has two each of Variants D, E, and F in addition to 10 standard militiamen.

Variant A: The Quick Militiaman: DEX 16: -1 to weapon & spell SR.

Variant B: The Powerful Militiaman: STR 16, CON 17: Fatigue = 33. Hit Points = 16 (+2 to chest, +1 to other locations). Damage Modifier = 1d6.

Variant C: The Spirit-Blessed Militiaman: POW 14: Spirit Magic (70% -Total ENC).

Variant D: The Slow Militiaman: DEX 9: +1 to weapon and spell SR.

Variant E: The Feeble Militiaman: STR 9, CON 9: Fatigue = 18. Hit Points = 9 (-1 to all locations). Damage Modifier = None.

Variant F: The Spirit-Cursed Militiaman: POW 9: Spirit Magic (45% -Total ENC).

Unit Leaders: Militiamen are organized into 16-man units. The militia file leader has the characteristics, abilities, and skills of a Standard Templar. The half-file leader is the second in command, and usually has one or more of the virtues of a Militiaman Variant A, B, or C.



Sun Dome Templar outfitted with two-handed-spear-and-shield



Shield Push Star Striker Farrar Drushkenee of the Sun Dome Eagles forces the wedge in the Red Demon's line

Games Sun Domers Play: Shield Push

Long ago, the Sun Domers raised horses and entertained themselves with such games as polo or racing. Today, the people of Sun County no longer ride, and their passion is now a sophisticated martial game called Shield Push.

Shield Push involves two sides. The standard Yelmalian rules state that each side may have up to 14 players; however, any number over four is playable. The players are all regular soldiers wearing armor and carrying only shields (blockers with two shields are permissible). The two sides line up with shields and push: five meters behind each side is a spear stuck in the earth with a helmet on top. The first to push through and grab a helmet wins, or in longer matches scores a point.

In a shield push STR vs. STR, Dodge, Jump, Grapple, and Shield Parry skills are all used, and to grab the helmet a DEX x 2 roll must be made. Deliberate violence is illegal; the game is rough enough with shield attacks and kicking. Magic is also forbidden, so Shield Push coaches often strive to recruit players with advantageous Yelmalian gifts (such as raised STR or increased Fatigue). From one to three neutral marshals serve as referees. Breaking the rules causes a halt to play (a small gong is rung), and the offending player is sent off the field for a predetermined period.

The game is not as simple as it first appears, for subtle tactics are often used. A simple trick is for the middle to give way while the wings make a dash for the helmet. "Waltzing" involves moving the other team across the field to gain a better angle on the helmet. Some teams even have a very small player who climbs over the top of the struggling mass.

Shield Push has also caught on in the Lunar army with the following adaptation. The helmet is 10 meters back and there is a scoring line a further 20 meters back from that. This allows the team whose helmet is taken to save the situation by either taking the other team's helmet and scoring first or by blocking the person with the helmet from crossing the line. To score, the helmet must be in a player's grasp as it crosses the line.

Despite these variations the Lunar and Yelmalian teams often compete. The top teams of the various military units play regularly in a field outside the main gate. The top Lunar team is the Cohort IX Red Demons, who are known for their strength and speed. The top Yelmalian team in Sun County are the Eagles who combine incredible agility with highly imaginative strategies. A recent challenge by the Zorak Zorani Thurkan Thumper to field a troll team against the Sun Domers has yet to be answered.

Sun County Encounters

Scenes and Events to Intrigue the Inquisitive Traveler

Sun County is settled, ordered and civilized. Its inhabitants are proud of their independence, and suspicious of foreigners and barbarians. The militia attempts to keep such undesirable elements out, or at least under control. Despite their efforts, a traveler abroad in Sun County might encounter a wide variety of persons and creatures.

The following chart provides suggestions for possible encounters in four distinctive types of Sun county settings.

Rural: The rural areas of Sun County consist of broad grain fields, interspersed with small villages and farmsteads. There is a 25% chance of a significant encounter every six hours (day or night).

Town: Sun County has several large towns spread through it, which serve as regular marketplaces and are often the headquarters of a local lord and his family. There is a 50% chance of a significant encounter every six hours.

Sun Dome: The Sun Dome Temple and its adjoining town is the religious and political capital of Sun County, and boasts a high proportion of religious functionaries and bureaucrats. There is a 75% chance of a significant encounter every six hours.

River: The River of Cradles wends its way through Sun County. Many beings make their living on the river, and many animals thrive on the rich vegetation along its banks. There is a 35% chance of a significant encounter on and around the river every six hours.

Response Table: Depending on the player character cults, nationalities, personalities, etc., determine whether the group encountered is basically hostile, neutral, or friendly to the adventurer party and roll on this table:

Response Table

Hostile	Neutral	Friendly	Response
01-05	01-10	01-15	Extremely friendly and cooperative.
06-15	11-30	16-75	Friendly; talk and trade possible.
16-25	31-70	76-85	Neutral; will wait for telling actions.
26-85	71-90	86-95	Active dislike.
86-00	91-00	96-00	Extremely hostile; combat likely.

Sun Dome Encounter Table

Encounter	Rural	Town	Sun Dome	River
Baboons	01-05	—	—	—
Bandits	06-07	01	—	01
Beggar	08	02-06	01-05	—
Broos Raiders	09-10	—	—	02
Children	11-15	07-13	06-10	03-04
Cliff Toads	16	—	—	05-08
Dinosaurs	17	—	—	09-11
Dragon	18-19	—	11	13-14
Elves	20-22	14	12-15	—
Farmers	23-47	15-28	16-22	15-19
Farmwomen	48-59	29-40	23-27	20-24
Griffins	60-61	—	28	—
Hawks	62-63	—	29-31	25-26
Hazia Runners	64	41	—	27-30
Herd Beasts	65-67	—	—	31-36
Local Toughs	68	42-45	32-33	—
Lunar Soldiers	69	46	—	37-38
Merchant	70-71	47-50	34-41	39-45
Newtlings	—	—	—	46-50
Nomad Party	72-73	51	—	51
Nomad Raiders	74	52	—	52
Priest	75	53-58	42-51	—
Riverfolk	—	—	—	53-79
Rune Lord	76	59	52-57	—
Small Game	77-78	—	—	80-81
Succubus	79	60	58	—
Sun County Official	80	61-67	59-68	82
Sun Dome Templars	81	68-73	69-74	83
Thief	—	74-75	75	—
Townsfolk	82	76-90	76-95	84
Trachodon	83	—	—	85-88
Traveler	84-86	91	96-97	89-95
Troll Raiders	87	—	—	96
Tusk Riders	88	—	—	97
Sun Dome Militia	89-99	92-99	98-99	98-99
Special	00	00	00	00



Encounter Descriptions

Baboons: Baboons, as migratory hunter-gatherers, must go wherever they can find food. Drought or famine sometimes drives them into settled lands, where they steal the rich pickings of the farmers until driven out. They are often blamed for stealing chickens and livestock, and a hungry baboon troop can raze a field of grain in hours. Considered vermin by the Sun Domers, and without legal rights, baboon can be hunted with impunity within the county.

Baboons usually travel in small family groups of no more than 15-20 individuals. For creature stats and further information, see *Gloranthan Bestiary*, p. 13, and *Elder Secrets*, *Elder Races Book*, pp. 77-78.

Bandits: This adventuring party seeks loot by infamous means. They may attempt to waylay rivals, or even propose to join forces.

Use "Adventurer Party" in *Monster Coliseum*, *Monster Book*, pp. 33-34, or "Party of Humans" in the *Snakepipe Hollow Digest*.

Beggar: This is perhaps an unfortunate driven to beggary by illness or injury, or a charlatan, faking misfortune to make an easy living. Beggars in Sun County are strictly controlled by beadles (Yelmalion cult officials) who reserve the lucrative spots for regulars and claim a percentage of their take. Registered beggars are not harrassed unless they block the streets or hinder commerce.

Broos Raiders: These may either be feral broos, wandering from the wastes to wreak havoc in settled lands, or wild broos, just as vile, whose acts may be orchestrated by a disease master or powerful shaman.

Information about broos is given in *RQ Deluxe*, *Creatures Book*, pp. 10-11, and *Elder Secrets*, *Elder Races Book*, pp. 78-80. A broos gang is described on pp. 37-38 of *Monster Coliseum*, *Monster Book*.

Children: Unlike their elders, Sun County children may find strangers extremely interesting, and will follow them around, acting cute, asking all sorts of difficult questions, and generally making adorable nuisances of themselves.

Cliff Toads: Cliff Toads are fairly uncommon, as they are hunted relentlessly by the nomads. Those remaining haunt the cliffs along the River of Cradles and if hungry will attack anything up to half their own size.

About 5% of cliff toads are actually Traskars, intelligent familiars of the newtlings, who worship a water spirit called Frog Woman. Traskars are generally encountered in the water, where they spy for their masters.

For cliff toads, see *RQ Deluxe*, *Creatures Book*, pp. 37-38. Traskars are identical, except they have an INT of 3d6.

Dinosaurs: Several herds of dinosaur (ankylosaurs, hadrosaurs, brontosaurus, etc.) live along the River of Cradles, usually far downriver from Sun County. On occasion, a herd may wander into cultivated territory, doing great damage. Nomads love to hunt the beasts, and may be in pursuit (15% likely). Several carnivorous species of dinosaur exist in the River of Cradles, but none have been seen in Sun County in recent memory.

For further information about the various dinosaur types see *Elder Secrets*, *Secrets Book*, p. 18.

Dragon: Two "dragons" live in the river valley. One, Krang, is a small dream-dragon who lives far downriver. The other, Windwhistler, is actually a wyrm and priest of the Sun Dragon cult. He lives in the Pavis Rubble, but on occasions is known to visit the Sun Dome Temple. Krang will be out looking for food or loot, Windwhistler on his way to or from the Sun Dome.

For dream dragons see pp. 16-17 of *Elder Secrets*, *Secrets Book*. Dragon and Wyrms statistics are found on p. 14 and 42 of *RQ Deluxe*, *Creatures Book*.

Elves: The elves have a small number of Yelmalion worshippers among their numbers. These Yelmalion elves occasionally visit the Sun Dome Temple for their devotions, and an elf party encountered will probably include a priest.

Elves are detailed fully in *Elder Secrets*, *Elder Races Book*, (pp. 26-52) and stats of various elf types are listed on pp. 17-18 of the *Gloranthan Bestiary*.

Farmers: Sun Dome farmers are generally suspicious of strangers. They report persistent questioners to their local headman or priest. They do not appreciate trespassers, and sternly warn them back onto the road. Once their trust has been earned, though, the farmers of Sun County are guarded but hospitable.

Use the Sun Dome Militia statistics on p. 20, except the farmers are unarmored and are carrying their farm tools instead of spears.



Farmwomen: Yelmalion women do not mix with strangers, especially strange men. They cover their faces, and withdraw to husbands and families.

Griffins: A small pride of intelligent griffins periodically come in from the wastes for devotions at the Sun Dome. They occasionally make off with the odd farm animal, but the farmers hold the beasts in religious awe. The griffins may also prey upon outsiders, knowing full-well their status puts them above the law.

Griffin statistics may be found in the *RQ Deluxe, Creatures Book*, p. 23. A full pride of griffins is given on pp. 37-38 of *Griffin Island, Scenarios Book*.

Hawks: Hawks are sacred to the Yelmalion cult and it is an extremely serious offense to harm one. It is possible that the hawk encountered is actually a priest's familiar, sent to spy.

Hawk statistics on p. 24 of the *RQ Deluxe, Creatures Book*.

Hazia Runners: These could be farmers out to make some money on the side, or real professionals, even Krashit cultists. They almost certainly will not appreciate interference with their nefarious activities.

Herd Beasts: This could range from a single individual to a herd of 30 or more beasts. The beasts might be any of the various herd animals common to the plains, and may be followed closely by their nomad protectors.

Herd animal statistics are found variously in the *Gloranthan Bestiary* and *RQ Deluxe, Creatures Book*.

Local Toughs: This local gang of rowdy farm boys is out to prove themselves and to have some fun at the expense of innocent wayfarers.

Adapt the militia statistics on p.46.

Lunar Soldiers: Lunar soldiers are not stationed in Sun County, but frequently pass through. They can order civilians to carry their packs for them, for distances up to seven miles.

Use the "Common Soldier" statistics on pp. 7-8 of *Monster Coliseum, Monster Book*.

Merchant: This could be a Lokarnos merchant doing the rounds of the villages, or a foreign trader passing through.

Adapt Honest John's caravan from *Monster Coliseum, Monster Book*, pp. 27-29, except note that Sun County inhabitants never learn sorcery.

Newtlings: Newtlings live along the river, and travel its length on the reed rafts. They avoid the Sun Domers, who enjoy eating their tails.

Newtlings are described in *Elder Secrets, Elder Races Book*, p. 89 and their statistics in *Gloranthan Bestiary*, p. 32. A complete newtling tribe is given in *Apple Lane*.

Nomad Party: These riders are in Sun County with peaceful intent, perhaps to trade, perhaps in search of strayed herd animals. Age-old resentments between Sun Dome farmers and nomads are always close to the surface, and require only a little friction to burst into open conflict.

Adapt the "Nomad Raiders" in the *Monster Coliseum, Monster Book*, p. 35, giving each the appropriate riding beast.

Nomad Raiders: These nomads are in Sun County to steal and pillage. Depending on whether they are coming or going, they could be laden with loot (foodstuffs, metal goods, captives).

Use the Nomad Raiders in *Monster Coliseum, Monster Book*, p. 35.

Priest: This encounter could range from a single junior Light Servant, riding the circuit between villages performing services, weddings, funerals, etc., to a full priest travelling in state. Even the most junior acolyte is accorded exalted status by the lower orders, who are brought up to obey the word and will of their priests.

A Light Servant is similar to a Sun Dome Militia leader, except he will have several points of divine magic (one of which must be Worship Yelmalion).

The Light Priests rarely leave the Sun Dome Temple, and when they do, travel in a style commensurate to their rank. When one of the Chief Priests need to travel, he normally does so in the company of a Light Son or two, and a crack squad of templars.

The priest encountered need not be a Yelmalion; the "Earth Goddess" section in *Monster Coliseum, Monster Book*, pp. 30-31, gives details of a Earth priestess and her followers.

Riverfolk: The riverfolk worship Zola Fel, the local river-cult. Relations with the Sun Domers are troubled, in spite of ancient pacts. Some riverfolk are simple fishers; others run flat-bottomed rafts up and down the river. The few that live along the river in Sun County take to their boats when the Sun Dome tax collector arrives.

Use the Sun Dome Militia statistics (p. 46), but add Boating skills.



Rune Lord: Perhaps on official business, or maybe hunting or visiting one of his farming districts. Light Sons are usually accompanied by several personal bodyguards, each a superior soldier and fiercely loyal to his master.

Adapt the "Local Noble Entourage" entry in *Monster Coliseum*, *Monster Book*, pp. 32-33, noting that Sun Domers disdain the use of sorcerous magic.

Small Game: This includes rabbits, rodents, small deer, lizards, and birds. Outlanders may not be aware that certain game animals (particularly game birds) are the prerogative of the count and his nobles, and may find themselves in serious trouble for poaching.

Succubus: Succubi are demons that can assume male or female form, depending on their choice of victim. The sexually inhibited and repressed Sun Domers are easy prey for these fiends.

The *Gloranthan Bestiary* describes the powers of the succubus fully (pp. 39-40)

Sun County Official: Depending on his status, this official (typically a tax collector, or minor religious functionary) may be accompanied by militia or templar guards. Officials demand the deference their status affords them; in the rigidly stratified Sun County culture they usually get it.

Sun Dome Templars: The templars are the elite of the Sun County military and the most-favored sons of the Yelmadio religion. On duty they are well disciplined and enforce cult prejudices strictly. Off duty, they are overbearing and arrogant, and if anything, exhibit their cult's dislike of foreigners even more aggressively.

For Sun Dome Templars statistics, see pp. 45.

Thief: In town, a pickpocket or cutpurse, intent on losing himself in the crowd before his victim notices. In the countryside, a rascal who filches the packs of sleeping or distracted travelers.

Townsfolk: These are people going about their daily business, including loafing at their front door, selling produce, or praying at the local shrine. The townsfolk have more to do with outsiders than their country cousins, and tend to be less reserved with strangers.

Adapt the Militia statistics on pp. 46.

Trachodon: Trachodons are large, solitary magisaurs that live along the river valley. Trachodons resemble duck-billed dinosaurs and are often confused with them. They are actually an intelligent species of dragonkind and are allied to the newtlings. Trachodons usually ignore anything not an obvious threat.

Magisaurs are discussed in the *Elder Secrets*, *Secrets Book*, p. 18 and their statistics are provided on pp. 28-29 of the *Gloranthan Bestiary*.

Traveler: This encounter could be a harmless journeyman or wandering vagrant, or an outlaw fleeing justice. He may seek to join the party if they are going his way, for safety in numbers.

Select a suitable character from the *Monster Coliseum*, *Monster Book*, "On the Road" section.

Troll Raiders: These trolls are here to cause harm and strike terror in the hearts of the Sun People, their ancient foes. Most likely to be Zorak Zorani berserks, they care little for their personal safety and seek only to cause maximum harm.

Use the "Dark Troll War Band" on pp. 36-37 of *Monster Coliseum*, *Monster Book*, the "Trolls" in the *Snakepipe Hollow Digest*, or suitable statistics from *Into the Troll Realms* or *The Haunted Ruins*.

Tusk Riders: The Lunars brought out Tusk Riders to help them conquer Prax, and some remain to this day, to everyone's regret. Tusk Riders crave nothing more than blood and plunder, and may attack any likely prey. A favorite tactic is to give a peace greeting, draw close, and then ready their magic whilst pretending to control their pigs.

Tusk Rider statistics and description are in given in *RQ Deluxe*, *Creatures Book*, (pp. 43-44) and *Elder Secrets*, *Elder Races Book*, pp. 92-94). A ready-to-use Tusk Rider gang may be found in the *Snakepipe Hollow Digest*.

Sun Dome Militia: This squad is sure to aggressively interrogate and search outlanders, regardless of their apparent capacity for doing harm. For more information about the militia, see "Sun Dome Militia," pp. 42-46.

Special: The gamemaster indulges his improvisational muse. Perhaps the adventurers encounter the sly vampire from the Old Sun Dome, an exotic chaos monster, or even Count Solanthos himself, doing the grand tour.



Sun Dome Justice



To an outsider, Sun Dome justice may seem severe, even arbitrary, but the Sun Domers themselves know the laws of the cult have enabled them to survive for centuries, through trial and testing, tribulation and famine, solitude and occupation. It is the Sun Dome way, and it has served them well.

The people of Sun County are brought up to obey implicitly the word and wish of their leaders, who have received the mandate to rule from Yelm himself. With no distinctions made between civic and religious crime, outlanders often find themselves facing what seem to be capricious or perverse charges.

Whereas the priests hear and judge the crimes of their people, it is Count Solanthos's prerogative to deal with outsiders as he sees fit. Unless the count's curiosity is piqued, trials are often short and incomprehensible (unless the accused understands Firespeech!)

Part of the count's enthusiasm to convict outlanders stems from the cult's need of foreigners to play the part of antagonists in their rituals. If the need is pressing enough, outsiders will be rounded up on the slightest of pretexts. One such hapless foreigner was the Issaries trader, Biturian Varosh. His account (excerpted here from the great *Jonstown Compendium*) is given below.

Extract from "The Jonstown Compendium"
#453, 607

5/8/IV/1614

Though I approached the community as a peaceful trader without hostile intent, they chose instead to abuse my offers. I found myself in an embarrassing position because I was the only Lightbringer nearby, and was needed as such to fill the antagonist position in one of their rituals.

I protested mightily, but my best orations did not daunt their leader, a Rune Lord named Ruric. He pointed to Norayeep's slave bracelets and collar and asked, "Are you not the Keeper of the Earth?" and "Are you not the friend and guardian of Orlanth, our foe?"

I was placed in a cage with the others being held for the ritual, who seemed even less fit than I to fulfill the role of Orlanth for these sun worshippers. I knew not even what rites the temple planned, and so could not prepare myself properly. As the Yelmalios prepared their circle, one of my fellows, a High Llama warrior named Goral, spoke to me, explaining that the five men and women in the circle were husbands and wives, ordained five years before, and now their religion demanded that they give up their marriages for the priesthood.

Goral said that one priest, angry about having to give up his wife, demanded to enact on us the 'three blows of anger' of their god. (Yelmalio had killed three enemies when his wife was stolen by the air gods, and the priest hoped to repeat the act.)

Could I attack him? Could I fight back? I was totally unfamiliar with the rites. "If you distract him," said Goral, "I will go behind him and kill him." I hastily agreed as they herded us out for battle. At least they let us arm for it.

Never underestimate the skills of this cult. They fought well, though one hung back after performing his minimal ritual obligations. But my foe killed one man with his spear, which broke, cast a salamander at me, hacked another to death with his sword, then turned back to engage me.

In the fight I used up most of my own magic and my spirit's magic. A great deal was expended for healing. I also invoked Dismiss Magic, Shield, Extension, and my bronze helmet (worth 650 Lunars) was cut in half. In the end it was only my allied spirit's sacrifice and intervention which saved me, thanks be to Issaries.

Goral killed our foe from behind as he promised, and received not a scratch. The priest did not return to this plane. Goral received the priest's weapons and armor, as well as the woman as a prize, and that worthy gave me the armor, returned the weapons to the temple, and then mounted his steed and disappeared towards the Vulture Lands with the best of his winnings.

A most unfair fight. Most grievous was the Power lost by Eye-whisper, my ally, who traded it to restore my life. I did not think the florid, golden-decorated armor an even exchange at all. In total, a vile day which did not endear this cult to me.

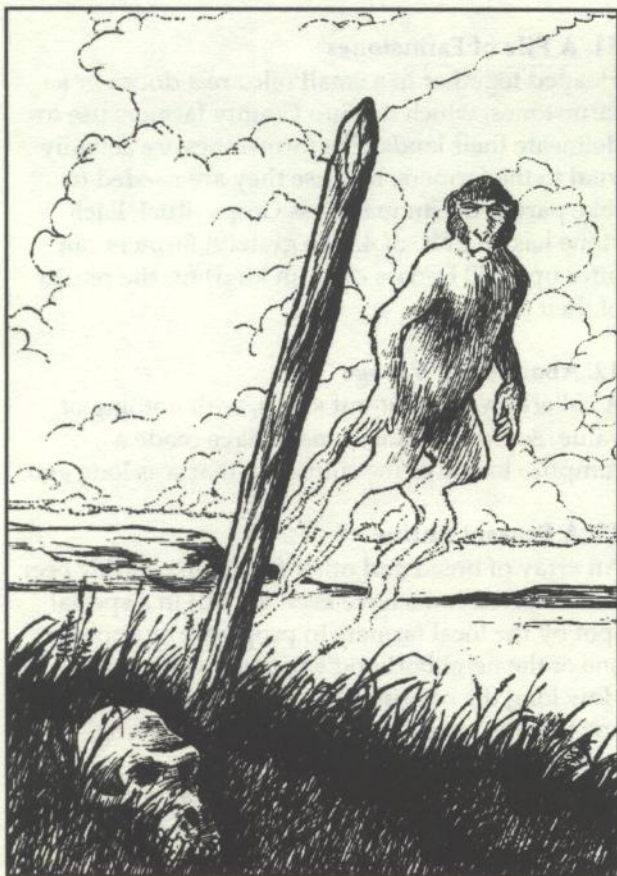


Special Encounters

The following special persons, creatures, and settings may be introduced to a scenario at the GM's discretion. They are ideal as brief distractions or pacing devices. Interrupting the flow of a developing conflict or plot line with such a diversion lets the players relax for a while. After the encounter the GM can once again build the tension of the central actions gradually. Such open-ended mysteries and dramatic situations serve as improvisational hooks for spirited GMs and players, and usually are simply experienced, then abandoned. Occasionally may spontaneously and unpredictably develop into more significant adventure elements.

1. An Execution Block

Hidden deep in fields is a large granite block, five meters on each side but buried to half its height. It is an execution block once used by the Storm Bull nomads, and is avoided as a place of ill-omen by the farmers. A Detect Magic spell reveals that the block is magical: it is actually a huge Glue 6 matrix. Cut into the block are the runes of the Storm Bull cult: Beast, Storm, and Death.



Daka Fal Totem

The block is all but forgotten by the Storm Bull cult and unknown to the Sun County authorities. Chaos-hating adventurers may inform the Storm Bulls of the site, or even reactivate it. Such actions might not be understood or appreciated by the locals or the Sun Dome Temple.

2. A Message

A flint dagger pins a piece of tattered parchment to a tree. The writing is now illegible, but buried near the foot of the tree is 20 man-days of hardtack rations with the Lunar seal.

3. A Huge Pile of Steaming Dung

A large steaming pile of animal dung lies close to the trail. Analysis reveals it to be Tusker dung, indicating Tusk Riders may be about.

4. Daka Fal Totem

Though it looks like just a sharp stick thrust into the ground, it is actually a Daka Fal totem, set there by itinerant baboons. A baboon skull lies in the grass beside it.

The spirit of the dead baboon is bound into the skull and haunts the area. The spirit waits for someone to place its skull back onto the stick. The baboon spirit will manifest itself before whoever does this kindly deed and will teach them one use of the Daka Fal (Ancestor Worship) spell "Summon Ancestor," provided they immediately expend one point of POW to Daka Fal. (The ancestor summoned is determined by the GM.)

Anyone foolish enough to remove the stake or damage the skull is immediately set upon by the furious Beezark in spirit combat. If the ghost manages to possess his victim, he uses the captive body to restore the skull before killing it and returning to the Halls of the Dead.

Beezark, Baboon Ghost.

INT 14 POW 19

Spirit Magic (108): Spirit Screen 6, Heal 4, Slow 3, Furstiff (Protection) 1, Visibility.

Divine Magic (100): Summon Ancestor, Free Ghost, Incarnate Ancestor, Spirit Block I, Spirit Melding I.

Languages: Baboon 34/—, Tradetalk 24/—, Pavic 14/—.

5. A Bronze Anchor

Half-buried in the earth is a large bronze anchor. It has an encumbrance of about 45 and could be worth up to 315L as scrap.



6. A Gift from the Sky

An olive branch falls into the lap of a random adventurer. Scanning upwards, a hawk or falcon is seen, winging towards the sun. What does this mean? Is the adventurer favored by the Sun? Is it an omen of good things to come? If he is a Sky cultist and makes his boon known, his chances of promotion in the cult are raised by 5%. However, if he belongs to a cult that is antagonistic towards the Sky, his chances of progression in his cult are reduced by 5%.

7. Melo Yelo

'Melo Yelo' is a very unusual baboon. His real baboon name is Gorzeek; he has assumed the nickname Melo Yelo. He has attempted to join the Yelmadio religion for several years now, only to be rejected every time. Convinced it is his calling, he hangs around Sun County, hoping the priests will take pity on him. As a symbol of his earnestness, he has had himself completely shaven and his skin dyed bright yellow.

He is always on the lookout for sun-worshipper types, hoping to get noticed by them. He follows adventurer parties around, checking them out. He attempts to join such parties unless they act "suspiciously." He reports any suspicious acts to the local militia. The militia usually mocks and ignores him unless he succeeds in his Fast Talk.

Other than his abnormal hue and unusual religious motivations, Melo Yelo is an average baboon, as described in the *Gloranthan Bestiary*, p. 13 and *Elder Secrets, Elder Races Book*, p. 77. He knows a few stock phrases of Firespeech, like "Shine, Son-Worshipper," "Dome Above!" and "Make me light, Brother."

8. A Glint in the Grass

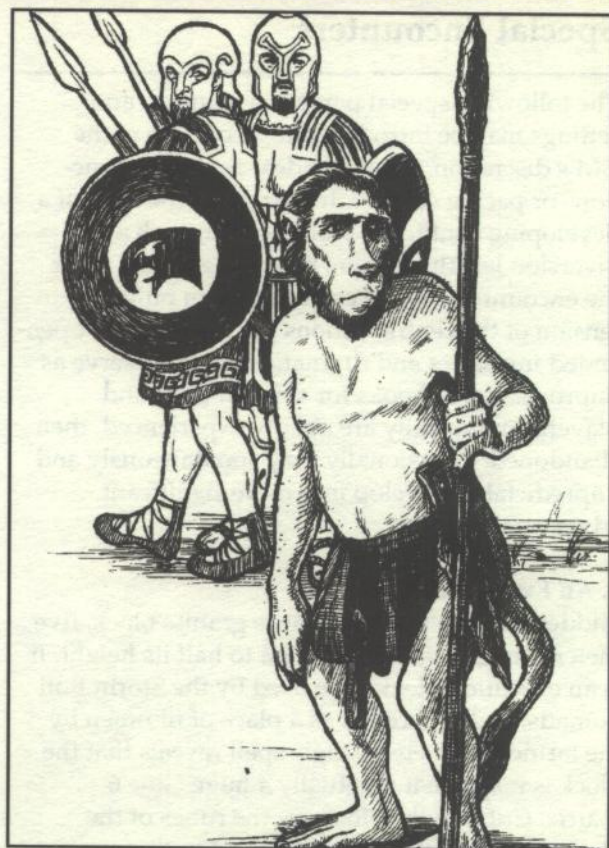
Lying in grass on its side is a silver bugle, embossed with Lunar runes. It belongs to the Cohort IX "Red Demons", who recently passed through Sun County on the way to Corflu. They could pay a reward of 50 Lunars for its return.

9. Wilted Elf Bow

The twisted, blackened remains of an elf bow lies discarded on the ground. It is now useless to anyone. Several yellow-fletched arrows lie nearby.

10. An Arrow with a Message

An arrow is found impaled in the ground. Fletched with distinctive yellow feathers, the arrow has a small scrap of parchment wrapped around the shaft. On it is a Firespeech message, "All Quiet."



Melo Yelo the Baboon: a Yelmadio Aspirant

11. A Pile of Farmstones

Heaped together in a small pile are a dozen or so farmstones, which the Sun County farmers use to delineate their lands. The farmstones are actually vital to the farmers, because they are needed to take part in the annual Bless Crops ritual. Each stone has an ENC of 4. The grateful farmers can offer up to 50 Lunars each (in kind) for the return of their stones.

12. Abandoned Village

A collection of burnt-out shells, with nothing of value. Some itinerant nomads have made a campfire in one of the ruins, but that was long ago.

13. A Peasant Shrine

An array of bread and other foodstuffs, barley beer and assorted coins have been left out in a special spot by the local farmers to propitiate or appease one of the neighborhood's nature/water spirits. How long the offerings have been exposed (from one to nine days) is evident from weathering, spoilage, or decay.

The peasants don't take kindly to anyone disturbing their offering, and neither would the spirit they are attempting to please.



14. Another Glint in the Grass

Lying in the grass is a single gold Wheel, minted some time late last century. The coin belongs to Thandren Clubfoot, a Lokarnos priest from Pavis, and it houses his allied spirit. The coin was snatched by a nomad during a recent border fracas with beast-riding raiders. The nomad later discarded the coin here after being persuaded by his shaman that the coin was 'cursed.' Thandren has been frantically searching for the coin for weeks, and is currently in Sun Dome seeking the aid of priests in divining its whereabouts.

If touched, the coin mentally communicates its plight and desire to be reunited with its master, who, the spirit asserts confidently, is probably worried sick, and who will certainly offer a fine reward for its return. In fact, Thandren Clubfoot will offer a generous reward of 50 Wheels for his special coin's return. The challenge for the adventurers is locating Thandren.

Allied Spirit "Lucre"

INT 17 POW 18

Spirit Magic (90%): Detect Gold (1), Detect Silver (1), Farsee 1, Glamour 3, Glue 5, Light (1), Mobility 3, Repair 2.

Divine Magic (100%): Extension I, Coin Wheel I, Hie Wagon I.

Languages: Tradetalk 85/—.

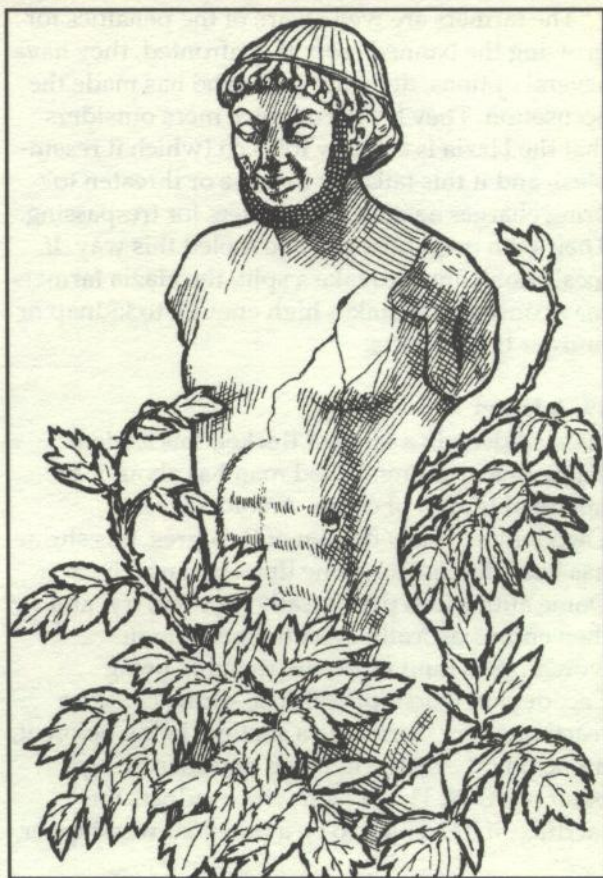
15. A Trip Wire

A cord trip-wire has been set across the path, devised to snap if a small amount of force is applied against it. In breaking, the cord allows a stone to fall and strike a suspended gold plate. However, there is nobody about to hear.

The plate was filched from an old retirement tower and has a raw ENC value of 93L. It would be worth perhaps three times that to a collector.

16. A Discarded Satchel

A rock bearing a harmony rune marks the spot where a small satchel is buried. The satchel is plain, but contains the white sash of a Healer. Wrapped in the sash are a few dried healing herbs and a small ceramic jar, sealed with wax. The jar contains a magical Heal salve. Rubbing the whole contents of the jar onto a wound heals 14 points of damage. Smaller amounts can also be taken from the jar, but it should be resealed in between uses.



A Herm

17. A Skull and a Scrollcase

A human skull lies in a shallow puddle of muddy water. A leather scroll-case protrudes from one of the eye sockets. Disturbing the skull initiates spirit combat with a disease spirit which haunts the area. The scroll case contains a map of the local area, marking in crude Trade Talk the locations of several well-hidden sources of infection.

Disease Spirit

POW 16

Disease: Carries the Wasting Disease.

18. Hazia Crop

Hidden amongst the barley stalks, a group of sly farmers have planted the illegal narcotic Hazia. A Scan or Search roll reveals the hidden plants, and a Plant Lore roll identifies them as Hazia.

Depending on the time of year, the Hazia plants may range from tiny shoots (early sea season) to mature plants (mid-earth season). It is unlikely the plantation is guarded, though a conspirator may be on watch nearby.



The farmers are well aware of the penalties for growing the banned crop. If confronted, they have several options, depending on who has made the accusation. They try to convince mere outsiders that the Hazia is actually tobacco (which it resembles), and if this fails, try to bribe or threaten to bring charges against the accusers for trespassing. Their own neighbors can't be fooled this way. If locals don't agree to take a split, the Hazia farmers may consider the stakes high enough to kidnap or murder the accusers.

19. A Herm

Located deep in a tangled thicket, this ancient statue of a grinning, naked man has about it the impalpable aura of chaos. An old altar to Cacodemon, chaos-demon of the ogres, this shrine has been derelict for some time, because the Sun Dome authorities periodically root out, try, and then enthusiastically execute Cacodemon worshippers (and those suspected of being Cacodemon worshippers). The shrine could be reactivated by sacrificing a sentient being before it, drenching the statue in blood and sacrificing 1 point of POW. The person who conducts the sacrifice, if perceived to be a potential worshipper,

immediately receives one random chaotic feature. A subsequent sacrifice is perceived as a petition for admittance into the Cacodemon cult as an initiate; see *Elder Secrets*, *Elder Races Book*, pp. 103-104, for details.

20. A Set of Dentures

These false teeth, made of two gold plates fastened together with copper springs and set with realistic teeth carved from ivory, are fantastically exotic and tremendously expensive. However, only the most civilized of adventurers would have any idea what they are, although a successful Human Lore roll gives some clue to their function. To everyone else, they appear to be an arcane, perhaps sinister, artifact.

The identity of false teeth's owner is at the referee's discretion. The count (who already affects a dyed beard and is extremely sensitive about his appearance) is a good candidate. Regardless of to whom they belong, the teeth are expertly crafted to fit the owner's gums, and are less successful in the mouths of others, especially if they still have their own teeth. The dentures are worth 1,000 Lunars or more to their owner.

Jaxarte Visits Harpoon

In his capacity as Commissioner of the Imperial Census, young Jaxarte Whyded visited the Sun County town of Harpoon sometime after his journey to the Sun Dome. His recollections are quoted here (with the notes of his

"Harpoon is an utterly charmless settlement, remarkable only for the great spear-throwing machine the Sun Domers placed here on the cliffs overlooking the river. This amazing machine (said to be wrought by dwarves) was apparently constructed to prevent sea beasts or pirates travelling further upriver, but as the Yelmites view this device as some sort of 'secret weapon,' I was not permitted to view it closely. The seasonal target practice was taking place as we marched in, though, and I was fortunate enough to witness the great machine in action. (*The Harpooners invariably held target practice when a Lunar detachment was in town, presumably to show off Sun Dome military 'prowess'.*)

"Several large kegs had been lashed together in the water, and the gunners made a great show of lining up the target in their sights. A carnival crowd had gathered to watch the spectacle, and all commented favorably about the skill of their lads on the cliff. I overheard one of our archers whisper to a fellow soldier that he doubted they would hit the water let alone the barrels, so I wagered Sir Geo (*Jaxarte's travel companion on this journey*) a gold wheel they'd miss their target.

"The crowd gasped as the great cord was slowly wound back and the first missile (fully 12 yards long!) was lowered into the breach. (*The three great spears launched against the Giant's Cradle in 1621 were said to be twice this length and tipped with obsidian points.*) Then, just as the bolt was to let fly, the horns of the watchtower on the bluff blasted a warning: a sea monster had been sighted, making its way upriver! The crew of the spear-thrower answered their call, and the crowd cheered. I thanked the goddess for my good fortune.

"The excited spectators craned their necks to see a large gray-green beast coming round the bend, splashing and spraying through the water. The leviathan had a great fluted horn protruding from its nose, something like a unicorn. A couple of Yelorman warrior-women tried fruitlessly to convince the crowd of this fact, but few people took notice, being too busy buying castings of the Farsee spell from a pair of canny vendors (who turned a tidy profit before the monster drew close). Finally the beast came into range of the machine and the crowd gave the gunners an encouraging cheer. There was a tremendous TWANG! and the great arrow lurched out from the machine, flew through the air in a graceful arc... and firmly embedded itself in the target barrels. In their excitement the machine crew had forgotten to realign their sights. Sir Geo won his gold piece after all." (*Consulting Baythir Teen's Menagerie of the Outer Deep, I conclude the creature Jaxarte describes was a Narwhal, a whale-like beast rarely found in temperate waters. After the encounter at Harpoon it continued its way upriver for some miles until it foundered in the shallows. A passing band of Impala riders slew it with darts, but sold the horn to the Yelormans, who had been following it eagerly.*)

Sun County Scenarios

Resources for a Sun County Campaign

The balance of this supplement presents a group of scenarios and additional scenario ideas for GMs developing *RuneQuest* Gloranthan campaigns in the Sun County setting.

The Garhound Contest and Melisande's Hand

Melisande's Hand is set in the market town of Garhound. Garhound lies just across the border from Sun County, in Pavis County. Though in appearance Garhound resembles other market towns in Sun County, and though its inhabitants live much the same as their Sun Dome neighbors, the Garhounds are of Sartarite stock, and worship the deities of the Orlanth pantheon.

Unlike dour, wary Sun Domers, Sartarite farmers are open and hospitable to most strangers, particularly those who claim kinship (however distant it might be). Garhounds even get on well enough with Sun Domers, if only because both groups keep to their own sides of the river that divides the two counties. The Lunars and their allies, on the other hand, though publicly treated with respect and civility, are privately regarded with distrust and hostility.

Garhound can serve as a useful base for adventurer parties, particularly groups with Orlanthi ties who may find their presence in Sun County unwelcome over any length of time. If they fall foul of Count Solanthos, they may wish to hide out in Garhound until the heat is off.

Part of the annual Harvest Festival, **The Garhound Contest** is a competition of various events used to select a husband for the Harvest Queen. **Melisande's Hand** describes in detail a particular year's contest, made notable because Lunar Governor Sor-Eel himself turned up to watch the proceedings. A Sun Domer contingent travels to Garhound to compete every year; therefore, the contest is an ideal setting for introducing player-adventurers to the major themes and personalities of neighboring Sun County.

Rabbit Hat Farm

In **Rabbit Hat Farm** the player-adventurers are solicited (or coerced) into investigating a deserted hamlet on the fringes of Sun County. If they are bold and steadfast (and fortunate), they may find themselves landowners in Sun County, and well on the way to becoming respectable citizens (and taxpayers) of the Sun Dome lands. **Note:** This scenario is recommended for new or inexperienced *RuneQuest* GMs and players.

The Old Sun Dome Temple and Solinthor's Tower

Entry into these two adventure settings is provided through a common group of scenario hooks. Individuals with various ethical perspectives may hire the player adventurers to seek items thought to be hidden in two ancient abandoned ruins sacred to the Yelmlio cult. In both cases, the ruins contain mysteries and dangers far exceeding those they are led to expect. In both cases, the player-adventurers risk being involved in illegal and possibly sacrilegious acts. If apprehended, they may savor the unrelenting severity of Sun Dome justice.

Note that the Ancient Vampire of **The Old Sun Dome** and the lich Solinthor in **Solinthor's Tower** are a deadly threat even to Rune-level characters. For less-powerful PCs, provide broad avenues for retreat or carefully stage confrontations to avoid wholesale slaughter. Alternatively, heroic NPC companions and powerful magical resources can bolster a weak party's survival prospects; for example, a Sunbright spell could cover a hasty retreat from the Ancient Vampire.

A Year in Sun County

Finally, **A Year in Sun County** offers a selection of scenario ideas for GMs developing a campaign in the Sun County setting.



Sun County Adventurers

New PCs for Sun County Campaigns

Here are three schemes for introducing new characters to the Sun Dome campaign setting:

1. Create a party of 17-to-21-year-old Yelmalo initiates as a half-file of Sun Dome militia. These characters are suitable for the "Garhound Contest" and the "Rabbit Hat Farm" scenarios. Use pregenerated character Haloric Longfarm as an NPC militia leader at your discretion.

2. Create a party of characters of 17-to-21-year-old Lightbringer or associated cult initiates traveling south from Pavis through Sun County. These characters are suitable for the Garhound Contest and the Rabbit Hat Farm scenarios. Use pregenerated character Skeelios Hemper as an NPC employer or sponsor at your discretion. With extensive previous experience, such characters could also be used for "The Old Sun Dome" and "Solinthor's Tower" scenarios if you temper the deadly force of their primary antagonists, the vampire, and Solinthor's lich.

3. Use the pregenerated characters on pp. 62-65. These characters are suitable for the "Melisande's Hand" and the "Rabbit Hat Farm" scenarios, and specific group and individual rationales for their participation are provided.

Introducing Existing PCs to Sun County

Three scenarios ("Rabbit Hat Farm," "Old Sun Dome," and "Solinthor's Tower") may be presented as simple treasure hunts. The easiest of these scenarios — "Rabbit Hat Farm" — includes a Lankhor Mhy document which may serve as the initial inspiration for Sun County adventuring. Later, their success in obtaining the Crown of Yamsur may earn the PCs a reputation as capable Sun County treasure hunters.

Involving existing PCs in "Melisande's Hand" is a more complex matter. In addition to the obvious inducement to unmarried male initiates of Orlanth, Yelmalo, Storm Bull, and Argan Argar cultists who wish to compete in the contests, study the scenario hooks offered in the scenario, and improvise any additional hooks to suit the peculiar details of the existing party's composition.

Alternatively, a PC party on other business in the Valley of Cradles may just happen through Garhound during the festival. The PCs may then

Creating Sun County Adventurers

Use the "Civilized Culture Occupation" tables in *RuneQuest Deluxe*, *Player Book*. The people of Sun County never use sorcery, so substitute "Farmer" for "Adept Sorcerer".

Native Sun County adventurers may automatically join the Yelmalo or Ernaldal cults at age 15. Children whose parental occupation is "Merchant" may automatically join Lokarnos. In recent years a small minority of exiled Pelorians worshipping Yelm have been granted right to settle in Sun County; those whose parental occupation is "Noble" may optionally choose to join the Yelm cult rather than the Yelmalo cult.

Cultural Weapons:

Attack and parry —

1-H or 2 -H Spear (25)

Sickle or Scythe or Military Flail (20)

Attack only —

Javelin or Pilum 20, Self Bow 20

Parry only —

Hoplite Shield 20

Equipment:

As per occupation. In addition, initiates of Yelmalo are granted rights to cultivate a plot of temple land for the duration of their service, and up to 100L ransom money if ever required.

treat Garhound as little more than a brief encounter, or, if the setting intrigues them, they may choose to involve themselves in the main plot (the contests) and the various subplots (the murdered women, Lady Jezra's seductions, Sor-Eel's schemes to tamper with the games, etc.) without conspicuous contrivance on your part.

The Pregenerated PCs

See the pregenerated characters on pp. 62-65. Duplicate these pages, cut them up, and distribute them to your players. If desired, the stats may then be transferred to standard RQ character sheets.

At your discretion, permit each player to increase any three skills of his character's skills: one by +30, one by +20, and one by +10. You may limit their choices to noncombat skills, if you like.

Turri and Koris are deliberately designed as weak, inexperienced characters. If you prefer, you or your players may beef up their skills and spell selections to produce a more powerful character.

Sun County: An Overview

See page 66. This one-page summary of Sun County history and culture may be duplicated and distributed to your players.



Scenario Hooks and GM Notes

On the following pages, study the “GM Notes” and rationales provided for introducing the pre-generated characters (see pp. 62-65) to the “Rabbit Hat Farm” and “Melisande’s Hand” scenarios. “Sun County: An Overview” (p. 66), “The Rabbit Hat Farm Briefing” (p. 61), “Refugee’s Map” (p. 95), and “An Inquiry into Lost Treasures” (p. 109) should be duplicated for distribution to players for the “Rabbit Hat Farm” scenario.”

Rabbit Hat Farm: GM Notes

To present the “Rabbit Hat Farm” scenario using the pregenerated PCs, distribute copies of the characters sheets and copies of the “Rabbit Hat Farm Player Briefing” to your players. Let them read through these documents and study them, then ask your players to choose their characters. After they’ve chosen their characters, take the players of the following characters aside and read them the private briefings given below. Where two names are listed together, deliver the briefing to both players at the same time.

If necessary, Delenda and Harada may be adapted as male characters. If, on the other hand, a third or fourth female player character is required, we recommend creating a native Sun Dome Chalana Arroy healer or adapting Zozka Allyn as a coarse, eccentric frontierswoman.

Rabbit Hat Farm Private Briefings

Haloric: Rabbit Hat Farm’s location is ideal for hazia runners or smugglers. The coincidence of Bison Rider raiders burning the village followed a few days later by Broos raiders suggests a link between Bison Riders and broos — a peculiar and suspicious coincidence. Though the Bison Riders and broos are a serious enough threat, you feel certain that someone or something is behind the events at Rabbit Hat; you also feel that something is likely to be more dangerous than Bison Riders or Broos themselves. About the outlanders: the Humakti are reputed to be as forthright and honorable as Sun Domers, but you doubt the Gray Sage’s sincerity when he claims to be a fanatic foe of Chaos. Your instincts tell you he can be trusted, particularly when in the company of his Humakti companion, but you wish you knew why he was willing to volunteer for this mission. And keep an eye of Koris and Turri — you don’t want to get the kids killed.

Lynnell & Delishi: Three of the missing militiamen — Derew Milleh, Androda Federa, and Mikos Fallan — are old Shield Push mates and

drinking buddies. You can’t imagine their not getting a message back to Chomoro if they were still alive; you hope against hope to rescue them, but, if they are beyond rescue, you swear to avenge their deaths. And, by the way, your characters are not powerful or durable heroes. Be careful, and enjoy your opportunities to roleplay headstrong youths guarded by veterans.

Zozka: You pose as a scout and trader with the frontier nomads. In secret you serve as an agent for Laertes Coatillon, Sun County’s Light Guide. You keep him informed on affairs on the borderlands, especially in matters concerning the illicit hazia trade and smuggling. You cultivate a reputation of being somewhat shady in your dealings to facilitate your undercover work; only Haloric, Turtle, and Del know your secret, having worked with you on a few hazia busts. You are the only one who has been to Rabbit Hat Farm before. (Give the player a copy of the “Refugee’s Map,” page 95.)

Gherazn Rhenar, a Sun Dome tax official and casual acquaintance, is overdue for arrival in Chomoro, and may be involved somehow in the Rabbit Hat mess. You have long suspected Rhenar of cooking his tax books; he may even be involved with the hazia trade. If Rhenar is captured or dead, you’d like to get your hands on his tax books; they may provide incriminating evidence of complicity in tax fraud or worse at higher levels. If possible, you don’t want anyone who reads Sartarite or Pavic to look at the books. You’d like to keep any irregularities secret so you can decide how and when to use the information. For Yelm’s sake, don’t let Haloric know if the books are crooked; he’d broadcast it all over the county.

Joshfar and Delenda: As a Storm Bull initiate, Joshfar doesn’t feel he can deny a request to hunt Chaos, and wherever Joshfar goes, Delenda goes. But Joshfar has no intention of wading into a hopeless confrontation against overwhelming odds, particularly if it means risking Delenda’s life. If the opposition looks too dangerous, he has no qualms about withdrawing and recruiting a proper full-scale Storm Bull party to return at a later date. He keeps this resolve to himself, however, to avoid appearing faint-hearted before outsiders (and Delenda).

Harada and Skeelios: When the Chomoro temple official came looking for volunteers, talking about “shattered farm stones profaned with broos filth,” Skeelios recalled the document he bought from Treasure Trove Hurbi in Pavis entitled “An Inquiry into Lost Treasures.” (Give the player a copy of this document found on page 109.) Before Harada could politely decline the invitation,



Rabbit Hat Farm: Player Briefing:

Eleven days ago a messenger from Wyoh village came to Chomoro Sun Dome officials and reported a Bison Rider attack on the neighboring village of Rabbit Hat Farm. The local active militia unit was out on frontier patrol. The officials relayed the report upriver to Sun Dome Temple and waited for the militia's return.

The militia unit returned seven days ago. Arriving in Chomoro that same day was a second messenger from Wyoh, reporting that Rabbit Hat Farm was deserted and destroyed, and broods were observed squatting in the ruins. The militia immediately set out for Rabbit Hat Farm. No word has been heard from Rabbit Hat, Wyoh, or the militia since.

The Chomoro temple officials have asked **Haloric Longfarm**, a veteran templar with a homestead in the Chomoro area, to scout Rabbit Hat and search for the missing militia squad. Haloric has chosen two reliable Chomoro militiamen volunteers, **Lynnell Turri** and **Delishi Koris**, and **Zozka Allyn**, a well-traveled frontiersman and trader, to accompany him. All four know each other well from previous militia service. Several years ago, Turri, Koris, and Allyn were posted to an active militia file led by Haloric; since then the four have shared a number of adventures in the badlands of Sun County.

Seeking additional hands with frontier experience, Haloric asked the temple officials to muster more volunteers. Of the numerous persons answering the temple summons, Haloric chose the four most promising: two Sable Rider couriers (**Joshfar Wildbow** and **Delenda Axesister**) and two outlander veteran mercenaries (**Harada Finehair** and **Skeelios Hemper**), each being tough, savvy, and eager to fight Chaos. Joshfar and Delenda are freelance couriers who deliver parcels and messages throughout the Valley for Lunars, Sun Domers, and other parties. The temple officials know them well and vouch for their reliability. Moreover, Joshfar is a Storm Bull cultist, and where Chaos is concerned, Storm Bulls are regarded with respect. Finehair and Hemper are outlanders, but since they are known to have traveled back and forth through Sun County for several years, and no ill reputation has attached to them, Haloric is glad to have Finehair's sword and Hemper's languages, spells, and quick wit on this dangerous mission.

Capsule Character Descriptions

Haloric (ambitious, arrogant, unconventional) is well known in Chomoro and the Valley for his courage and his self-assurance. His family boasts six generations of Lights Sons, and Haloric intends to make the seventh generation the best known of all. A geas prevents wearing armor on his torso.

Lynnell Turri, nicknamed "Turtle" (cautious, friendly, stubborn) is a slow-moving, easy-going, friendly fellow, but he is known locally as a strong athlete and first-rate Shield Push player. **Delishi Koris**, or "Del" (impulsive, sardonic, defensive), is the opposite of Turtle — quick, sharp-tempered, and sour-spirited — but he and Koris have been close friends since childhood, and when playing Shield Push or fighting in militia drill together, they are excellent as a team. (**Special Rule:** If fighting with shield and spear or sword, and standing side to side or back to back, +20 to attack and parry for both Lynnell and Turri.)

Zozka Allyn, or "Zoey," (garrulous, complaining, pessimistic) is a colorful, middle-aged desert scout and trader. He's been everywhere and done everything, if you believe his endless chatter and tall tales, but he's good company, if you can ignore his grouching, and he knows the borderlands, their peoples and ways.

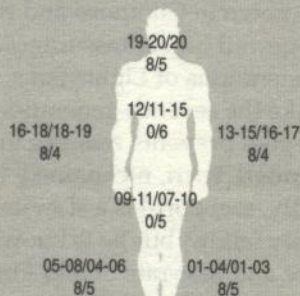
Joshfar Wildbow (proud, generous, curious) always always honors his word, friendships, debts, and hospitality, and expects others to do the same. He doesn't fit the stereotype of the wild, uncouth savage often associated with Storm Bull. In fact, he is curious, thoughtful and deliberate, and practical, even cautious, by Storm Bull standards. **Delenda Axesister** (proud, headstrong, practical joker), a daughter of a nomad chief, chose a self-imposed exile from her tribe rather than marry at her father's demand. She's apparently accustomed to being treated with respect and deference, and she expects to get her own way. Joshfar joined her in her exile, and they have been constant companions for years.

Harada Finehair (aggressive, hyperactive, daring) and **Skeelios Hemper** (show-off, scheming, patronizing) are Sartar exiles who've worked as mercenary guides and guards in the Valley of Cradles for years. They've no reputations as trouble makers, and are accepted by Sun Domers as decent outlanders. Harada is a bundle of energy, and is known as a fine swordswoman and fearsome fighter. Skeelios is intelligent, well bred, well educated, well spoken, clever, creative, and a passable singer and double harp player — and he never lets anyone forget it.

**Haloric Longfarm**

Sun Dome Templar and Yelmalo Initiate, male, 23

STR 09
CON 11
SIZ 17
INT 13
POW 16
DEX 11
APP 08

**Haloric Longfarm**

Move: 3
Fatigue: 20
Hit points: 14
Magic points: 16
DEX SR: 3

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 2-H spear and shield) = 30. Fatigue -10 (20-30). Plate except on torso (AP 8/Enc 21).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
2-H Spear	5	96/45	1d10+1+1d4	2/10
Hoplite Shield	7	15/35	1d6+1d4	7/18
Gladius	6	52/38	1d6+1+1d4	1/10

Spirit Magic (90-ENC): Bladessharp 3, Detect Gold, Heal 3, Lantern 1, Seek Sun Dome Temple (3), Mobility 1, Farsee 1.

Divine Magic: Heal Wound II.

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +5: Speak Pavic 39, Speak Firespeech 25, Speak Tradetalk 13, Speak New Pelorian 13, Intimidate 68, Orate 26.

Agility -7: Dodge 71, Throw 29.

Manipulation +4:

Knowledge +3: Evaluate 33, Human Lore 44, Write Pavic 21.

Perception +7: Listen 77, Scan 63, Search 61.

Stealth -12: Hide -2, Sneak -2.

Magic +10: Ceremony 21.

Armor: Plate all locations except chest and abdomen.

Gifts and Geases: Mastery of 2-H Spear, "never wear armor on torso," "never eat meat of birds," "only speak truth to everyone."

Special Item: Haloric wears a brass torc containing a Lightwall matrix, a family heirloom. Unlike normal Lightwall spells, the Lightwall created by the matrix lasts for as many minutes as magic points powering the spell.

Distinctive Traits: *Ambitious:* From a family boasting six generations of Light Sons, Haloric is determined to advance to Rune level. His arrogance and unconventional views have earned the dislike and distrust of his superiors. *Arrogant:* Haloric has a high opinion of himself, and a low opinion of most others. He interprets his geas to always speak truth to everyone as license to speak without shame of his own virtues and others' faults.

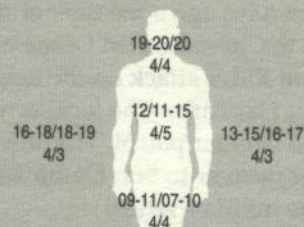
Unconventional: Though a devout Yelmalo cultist, neither tradition nor dogma prevents him from employing unconventional means to achieve important ends.

Personal Connections: Turri and Koris are young and foolish, but good spirits; you'd risk your life for them. Everyone says Zoey is a sneaky weasel; you respect his judgement from long experience. Joshfar and Delenda are nomads, barely civilized, but you admire their skills, pride, and independence. Finehair and Hemper are outlanders, and probably impious, treacherous deceivers, but their talents are valuable if they prove trustworthy.

Lynnell Turri ("Turtle")

Sun Dome Militiaman and Yelmalo Initiate, male, 17

STR 17
CON 09
SIZ 14
INT 13
POW 10
DEX 11
APP 09

**Lynnell Turri**

Move: 3
Fatigue: 26
Hit points: 12
Magic points: 10
DEX SR: 3

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 1-H Spear and shield) = 17.5. Fatigue 8 (26-17.5). Cuirbouilli armor over linen padding on all locations (AP 4/ENC 8.5). Quiver of 20 arrows (Enc. 1).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H S. Spear	7	40/35	1d8+1+1d4	2/10
Hoplite Shield	8	19/40	1d6+1d4	7/18
2-H Pike & Shield	5	35/--	2d6+2+1d4	10.5/12+18
Self Bow	3/9	99/--	1d6+1	.5/5

Spirit Magic (54-ENC): Bladessharp 1, Heal 2, Lantern 1.

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +3: Speak Pavic 32, Speak Firespeech 07.

Agility -1: Climb 42, Dodge 30, Throw 35.

Manipulation +8:

Knowledge +3: First Aid 18, Farming 23, Craft Wood 14,

Animal Lore 11, Human Lore 17, Mineral Lore 10, Plant

Lore 12, World Lore 11, Write Pavic 28.

Perception +3: Listen 28, Scan 29, Search 28.

Stealth -3: Hide 7, Sneak 7.

Magic +4: Ceremony 9.

Armor: Cuirbouilli and linen padding all locations.

Gifts and Geases: Bow attack raised to 90, "never use any shield but hoplite shield," "speak only truth," "never seek shelter from storm."

Distinctive Traits: *Cautious:* Turtle always pauses to give his thoughts and instincts time to size up a situation — no matter how pressing the emergency. *Friendly:* Turtle makes a point of being friendly to everyone, no matter how rude or outlandish they behave. He genuinely likes most folk, and for the rest, he believes Dad's proverb, "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." *Stubborn:* Once he's made up his mind, not even the gods can change it.

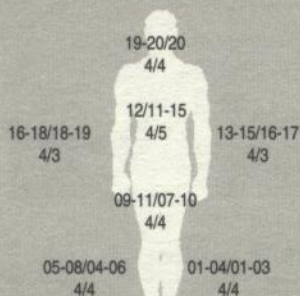
Personal Connections: Haloric is a pain in the fundament sometimes, but he knows his stuff, and he's usually right. Del gets on other people's nerves, but you know him well; you understand his difficult temperament, and love him like a brother. Zoey is pretty spry for an old guy, and he's got some great stories to tell about the badlands. Joshfar and Delenda are typical nomads, stiff-necked and obsessed with their sabres, but Dad says nomads make great scouts. Finehair and Hemper have been all over Sartar and Prax, and they sure look like the Real Thing. Finehair doesn't talk much, but Hemper'll chatter like a brushcrow about any and everything.

**Delishi Koris ("Del")**

Sun Dome Militiaman and Yelmalo Initiate, male, 17

STR 10
CON 09
SIZ 13
INT 17
POW 13
DEX 15
APP 08

Move: 3
Fatigue: 19
Hit points: 11
Magic points: 13
DEX SR: 3

**Delishi Koris**

Patrol Gear: Total encumbrance (w/ 1-H Spear and shield) = 17.5. Fatigue 1 (19–17.5). Cuirbouilli armor over linen padding on all locations (AP 4/ENC 8.5). Quiver of 20 arrows (Enc. 1).

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H S. Spear	6	55/48	1d8+1	2/10
Hoplite Shield	7	19/62	1d6	7/18
2-H Pike & Shield	5	35/--	2d6+2	10.5/12+18
Self Bow	3/9	35/--	1d6+1	.5/5

Spirit Magic (78–ENC): Bladesharp 3, Mobility 3.

Divine Magic: Sunbright II.

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +8: Speak Pavic 39, Speak Firespeech 11, Orate 23, Insult 36.

Agility +3: Climb 37, Dodge 42, Jump 45, Throw 51.

Manipulation +13:

Knowledge +7: Write Pavic 22, First Aid 41, Farming 19, Craft Wood 14, Animal Lore 13, Human Lore 21, Mineral Lore 13, Plant Lore 14, World Lore 14.

Perception +8: Listen 45, Scan 43, Search 39.

Stealth +0: Hide 14, Sneak 11.

Magic +13: Ceremony 18.

Armor: Cuirbouilli and linen padding all locations.

Gifts and Geases: "Gain Catseye," "never use a sword," "remain celibate every Truth week."

Distinctive Traits: *Impulsive:* Del has a habit of saying the first thing that comes to mind, and doing the first thing that occurs to him. It makes him quick-tongued and quick-moving, but his judgement is not always the best. *Sardonic:* Del is also quick-witted and sarcastic. Often his smart-aleck remarks are genuinely clever; but sometimes they are just nasty or mean-spirited.

Defensive: Del finds it very hard to admit he has made a mistake; he is quick with excuses and to blame others.

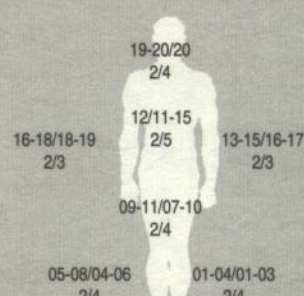
Personal Connections: Haloric has no sense of humor, and he always rides me hard; I try hard to please him, but he's always criticizing me. Turtle's my best friend. I'm hard to take sometimes, but he's always there, always looking out for me and trying to be cherry. Sometimes I envy him his sunny disposition. Zoey's an old fart full of phony stories, but when it comes to knowing Sun County, he's pretty sharp. Joshfar's got a nasty temper, and I think I get on his nerves. Delenda's quiet, but seems like an okay person. Finehair is a tough customer, and knows what a blade's for. I like Hemper. Nobody pushes him around; he's cocky and self-sure, and he seems to know a little about everything.

Zozka Allyn

Scout, Trader, and Lokarnos Initiate, male, 43

STR 10
CON 11
SIZ 08
INT 17
POW 10
DEX 13
APP 14

Move: 3
Fatigue: 21
Hit points: 10
Magic points: 10
DEX SR: 3

**Zozka Allyn**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ broadsword, bow, and quiver) = 7. Fatigue 14 (21–7). Stiff Leather armor on all locations (AP 2/Enc 4). Quiver of 20 arrows (Enc. 1).

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Broadsword	8	61/78	1d8+1	1.5/10
Comp. Bow	3/9	67/--	1d8+1	.5/7

Spirit Magic (59–ENC): Mobility 2, Shimmer 2, Glamour 2, Disruption (1), Detect Gold (1), Glue 2, Repair 2, Befuddle (2), Heal 3.

Divine Magic: Spirit Block 1, Find Enemy 1.

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +9: Bargain 67, Speak Pavic 70, Speak Firespeech 34, Speak Tradetalk 45, Speak New Pelorian 21, Speak Sartarite 41, Speak Praxian 35, Orate 37, Fast Talk 75.

Agility +5: Dodge 55, Throw 29.

Manipulation +10: Conceal 75.

Knowledge +7: Write Pavic 35, Write Tradetalk 29, Evaluate 63, Animal Lore 51, Plant Lore 48, Human Lore 67, Frontier Lore 71.

Perception +8: Listen 47, Scan 81, Search 83, Track 59.

Stealth +5: Hide 70, Sneak 57.

Magic +9: Ceremony 25.

Armor: Stiff leather on all locations.

Distinctive Traits: *Garrulous:* Zozka cultivates the impression that he is an old fool by chattering idly, blandly presenting implausible frontier tales as authentic fact and giving wildly exaggerated accounts of his own adventures. *Complaining:* Zozka is always grouching about bad luck, bad weather, and bad planning. He has no idea how annoying his constant litany of complaints is to others. *Pessimistic:* Zozka always expects the worst — and is seldom disappointed. He loves reminding others how everything has gone wrong, just as he predicted it would.

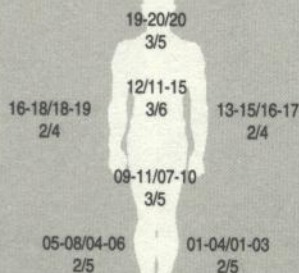
Personal Connections: Haloric is an old hand, knows his way around, and has a good instinct for ferreting out the mysteries of the criminal mind. The two kids are cute, but they're as frisky as puppies and as likely to get into mischief. Turtle is a charmer, but Del gets on your nerves after a while. Joshfar and Delenda know what they're about — don't worry about them. It's lucky that Finehair is along in case there's any trouble; she's a demon with the broadsword. Hemper was probably born sneaky. He's the type that always has to think he's got something going on. He's probably okay — no Humakti would keep company with him otherwise — but it'll pay to keep an eye on him.

**Joshfar Wildbow**

Sable Rider Nomad and Storm Bull Initiate, male, 24

STR 12
CON 14
SIZ 11
INT 13
POW 16
DEX 14
APP 15

Move: 3
Fatigue: 26
Hit points: 13
Magic points: 16
DEX SR: 3

**Joshfar Wildbow**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 1-H spear and shield) = 10. Fatigue 16 (26-10). Cuirbouilli helm and torso (AP 3/Enc 2), stiff leather arms and legs (AP 2/Enc 3).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Dagger	8	45/40	1d4+2	.5/6
Mtd. Lance	0	55/—	1d10+mount	3.5/10
1H Short Spear	7	68/25	1d8+1	2/10
Self Bow	3/9	35/—	1d6+1	.5/5
Target Shield	8	10/55	1d6	3/12

Spirit Magic (91-ENC): Bladesharp 2, Disruption (1), Mobility 2, Protection 1, Fanaticism (1).

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +9: Speak Praxian 37, Speak Pavic 24, Speak Tradetalk 11, Speak New Pelorian 11.

Agility +4: Dodge 49, Jump 38, Ride Sable 70, Throw 61.

Manipulation +8:

Knowledge +3: Animal Lore 31, Human Lore 31.

Perception +8: Listen 41, Scan 60, Search 39, Sense

Chaos 37, Track 79.

Stealth -3: Hide 71, Sneak 62.

Magic +11: Ceremony 27.

Armor: Cuirbouilli on head and torso; stiff leather on limbs.

Special Item: Countermagic 4 spell matrix in dagger.

Distinctive Traits: *Proud:* Joshfar is easily stung by slights or insults. Civilized life has taught him to control his temper, but he bears silent but obvious grudges. *Generous:* Accounts hospitality and generosity as highest civilized virtues. Takes gifting very seriously, and enjoys the pleasure and status he gains by distributing gifts to friend and foe alike. *Curious:* Endlessly fascinated by the peculiar customs of house-bound folk. Politely struggles to remain quiet, but obviously interested in the cult observances, rituals, and habits of other party members.

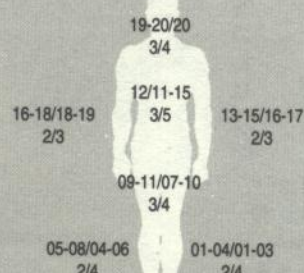
Personal Connections: Haloric is far too impressed with himself, rude, and careless of the feelings of others. He is a strong leader, though, and deserves respect. Turri and Koris are young as house-bound folk raise their young. Turri is great-hearted and steady, like the desert tortoise. Koris is troubled and unsure of himself; he must master his weak spirit, or he will earn enemies to no good purpose. Zozka talks like an old mad woman, but his eye is sharp, and he heeds the speech of the desert. Delenda is my boon companion and life-friend; I hold her life dearer than my own. Finehair and Hemper are outlanders, mad with curious ways. Finehair is a true warrior. Hemper's speech is like the shaman or elder, but he knows only the things in his head.

Delenda Axesister

Sable Rider Nomad and Eiritha Initiate, female, 23

STR 13
CON 11
SIZ 10
INT 15
POW 13
DEX 11
APP 13

Move: 3
Fatigue: 24
Hit points: 11
Magic points: 13
DEX SR: 3

**Delenda Axesister**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 1-H spear and shield) = 10. Fatigue 14 (24-10). Cuirbouilli helm and torso (AP 3/Enc 2), stiff leather arms and legs (AP 2/Enc 3).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
BattleAxe	7	55/30	1d8+2	1/8
Thrown Axe	3 (9)	50/—	1d6	.5/6
Mtd. Lance	0	45/—	1d10+mount	3.5/10
1H Short Spear	7	40/40	1d8+1	2/10
Self Bow	3/9	55/—	1d6+1	.5/5
Target Shield	8	10/45	1d6	3/12

Spirit Magic (74-ENC): Shimmer 3, Detect Enemies (1), Slow 3.

Divine Magic: Great Parry 1.

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +8: Speak Praxian 45, Speak Pavic 20, Speak Tradetalk 11, Speak New Pelorian 11, Understand Herd Beast 49.

Agility +3: Dodge 40, Jump 30, Ride Sable 70, Throw 81

Manipulation +8:

Knowledge +5: Animal Lore 51, Human Lore 41, World

Lore 45.

Perception +7: Listen 41, Scan 60, Search 45, Track 60

Stealth -2: Hide 33, Sneak 41

Magic +9: Ceremony 31

Armor: Cuirbouilli on head and torso; stiff leather on limbs.

Special Item: Heal 4 matrix in amulet.

Distinctive Traits: *Proud:* As a chieftain's daughter, Delenda was always accustomed to deference, and spoiled rotten by her father. Joshfar still treats her like a princess, and Delenda expects it from everyone. *Headstrong:* When she wants to do something, she doesn't ask permission, or give notice — she acts. Afterwards she can't understand why people are angry with her. *Practical Joker:* She delights in playing childish pranks, especially on Joshfar. Joshfar is used to it, but outsiders may find it hard to believe that stone-faced Delenda is such an imp.

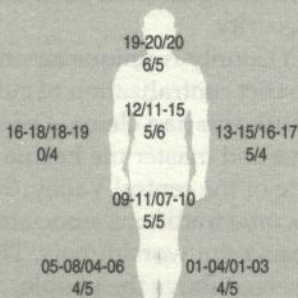
Personal Connections: Haloric loves to give orders. Delenda loves to try his patience by asking for endless clarifications, or by subtly twisting the orders to suit her. You like Zozka; he has a respect for the land and for nomads uncommon among Sun Domers. Joshfar is a good man and a fine friend; you can't imagine life without him. Finehair is a balanced, deadly warrior; she wears a mask over her feelings, and must have once been greatly hurt.. Skeelios thinks he's clever, and you sense a devious mind. If Finehair, a Humakt, trusts him, that speaks well enough, but you'll keep an eye on him.

**Harada Finehair**

Mercenary, Sartar Exile, and Humakt Initiate, female, 28

STR 14
CON 13
SIZ 15
INT 15
POW 18
DEX 11
APP 15

Move: 3
Fatigue: 27
Hit points: 14
Magic points: 18
DEX SR: 3

**Harada Finehair**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ broadsword and shield) = 13.3. Fatigue 14 (27-13.3). Bezainted legs (AP 4/Enc 3), ringmail torso & arm (AP 5/Enc 4), llamelar helm (AP 6/Enc 1.8).

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Broadsword	7	85/81	1d8+1+1d4	1.5/10
Heater Shield	8	27/72	1d6+1d4	3/12
Great Axe	6	58/45	2d6+2+1d4	2/10
Javelin	3 (9)	78/—	1d8+1d2	1.5/8

Spirit Magic (104-ENC): Bladesharp 6, Befuddle (2), Coordination 2, Mindspeech 1, Protection 4.

Divine Magic: Divination 2, Shield 2, Truesword 2.

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +12: Speak Sartarite 61, Speak Pavic 39, Speak Tradetalk 33, Speak New Pelorian 25, Intimidate 44.
Agility -2: Dodge 61, Ride Horse 37, Throw 60.
Manipulation +8: Devise 29.
Knowledge +5: Write Sartarite 41, Write Tradetalk 27, Write New Pelorian 15, Write Pavic 21, Human Lore 54, World Lore 37.
Perception +11: Listen 61, Scan 75, Search 59.
Stealth -12: Hide 21, Sneak 15.
Magic +14: Ceremony 38.

Armor: Llamelar helm, chain arm and torso, bezainted legs.

Gifts and Geases: Broadsword doubles damage penetrating any armor on abdomen. "No armor on left arm."

Special Item: Heal 5 and Light 1 matrix in sword pommel.

Distinctive Traits: *Aggressive:* Harada has strong opinions and strong impulses, and follows them instinctively. She has a very hard time taking orders or tolerating opinions she thinks are stupid. *Hyperactive:* Harada can't be still for a moment; she is always pacing, fussing, or fidgeting, often giving the impression that she is ignoring what others are saying to her. *Daring:* Her fear of being thought a coward impels her to leap into dangerous situations before her fear can freeze her.

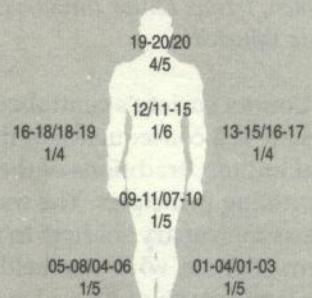
Personal Connections: Haloric is arrogant and pushy; it'll be tough keeping your temper and following his orders. Turri and Koris are cute kids; don't let them drag themselves — and you — into trouble. Zozka's an odd bird, but sharp, and worth listening to. The nomads look trustworthy, and can take care of themselves. Hemper's a manipulator, and too clever for his own good, but you love him like a brother, for his humor, intelligence, songs and stories, and bright spirit.

Skeelios Hemper

Explorer, Sartar Exile and Lhankor Mhy Initiate, male, 27

STR 09
CON 12
SIZ 13
INT 18
POW 15
DEX 10
APP 11

Move: 3
Fatigue: 21
Hit points: 13
Magic points: 15
DEX SR: 3

**Skeelios Hemper**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ broadsword and shield) = 13.3. Fatigue 14 (27-13.3). Leather armor on all locations (AP 1/Enc 3.5). Cuirbouilli helm (AP 3/Enc .5).

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Broadsword	7	55/68	1d8+1	1.5/10
Heater Shield	8	21/83	1d6	3/12

Spirit Magic (88-ENC): Countermagic 4, Demoralize (2), Detect Gold (1), Dispel Magic 2, Disruption (1), Mindspeech 1, Second Sight (3), Shimmer 1, Mobility 3.

Divine Magic: Analyze Magic (1), Knowledge (2; x2), Translate (1; x2), Truespeak (2).

Bonuses and Skills:

Communication +11: Speak Sartarite 85, Speak Pavic 61, Speak Tradetalk 75, Speak New Pelorian 69, Insult 65, Orate 81, Sing 78.
Agility -4: Dodge 51, Throw 25.
Manipulation +8: Devise 65, Play Double Harp 35.
Knowledge +8: Write Sartarite 81, Write Tradetalk 67, Write Pavic 51, Write New Pelorian 55, Evaluate 50, First Aid 75, Animal Lore 29, Human Lore 58, Mineral Lore 39, Plant Lore 32, World Lore 63.
Perception +12: Listen 35, Scan 34, Search 61.
Stealth -8: Hide 11, Sneak 15.
Magic +13: Ceremony 56.

Armor: Cuirbouilli helm; leather on all locations.

Special Items: 5-point magic point matrix crystal concealed in leather Lhankor Mhy amulet.

Distinctive Traits: *Show-off:* Skeelios takes every opportunity to display his superior education and intelligence. *Scheming:* Skeelios is always looking for a new angle. In one sense, this is his creative genius. In another sense, it is an expression of his compulsive desire to get ahead of everyone else in the world. *Patronizing:* Skeelios constantly expresses sympathy for less-intelligent and less-well educated peasants.

Personal Connections: Haloric can run things all right if he's properly advised and steered. Turri and Koris are impressionable farmboys, although that Koris has a chip on his shoulder about something. Zozka's smarter than he lets on; keep an eye on him to know what's really happening. Joshfar and Delenda are certainly better than your average nomad savages. Joshfar has a keen wit and curiosity; you'd be glad to teach him a thing or two. Finehair... well, she's just wonderful. She's like a song singing the best spirit of Sartar. Someday, when we've driven the Pelorians from our land, we could go back there and settle down.



Sun County: An Overview

Excerpted from the briefings prepared by Hosghe Layemen, Irrippi Ontor Initiate, for Commissioner Jaxarte Whyded

Sun County society's centralized authority of cult and state is a consequence of the strong professional military traditions of the men who framed its founding principles. The settlers of the county came as mercenary soldiers to fight at the behest of Kyrem of Pavis, who then held titular sway over those lands south of Pavis. Unable to pay in coin, Kyrem paid with land.

Though the foundation of the colony's ultimate success was its efficient irrigation system, they would never have survived in the valley without their military traditions and skills. Settlements were well sited with respect to secure communications and defensible fortifications. The land was cultivated with a hoe in one hand and a spear in the other. In the early years, Sun Domers relied on templar and citizen phalanxes, but also maintained excellent light cavalry — one source of the great enmity the beast nomads bore for the Sun Dome Settlers, and a key element in their ability to survive nomad raids. Disciplined cavalry neutralized the nomads' great advantage of mobility.

In the Solitude of Testing Era, the Sun Domers abandoned attempts to maintain horses, and never adapted to beast riding. As a consequence, without cavalry, they frequently fell prey to nomad raids. At the same time, the decline of Pavis deprived Sun County of an ally against the nomads. During this period Sun County learned to defend the walls of its settlements and to accept the inevitable predation by nomad raids. Several times the Sun Dome fell to nomad raiders, but reverence for Yelmlio prevented the raiders from destroying the cult hierarchy, the foundation of Sun County's strength and continuity. Each time the culture survived its nomad usurpers, in the process assimilating various elements of nomad society and lore into Sun County traditions.

Recent history is marked by two major developments: the foundation and flourishing of New Pavis under Dorasar, and the advent of Lunar civilization in the Zola Fel valley. Under the guidance of three exceptional counts — Varanthis Brighthelm, Varanthis II, and Solanthos Ironpike, the current count — Sun County has entered a new era of peace and prosperity. Varanthis II, in particular, though unjustly vilified by his own people for his accommodations with the Lunar Commission of the Armistice, is responsible for

engineering the powerful military and social alliances between Sun County and the Lunar Empire that guarantee each other's sovereignty and security.

Sun County is unique among Orlanthi cultures in its strict centralization of cult and governance. This authoritarian element enabled the colony to survive and master the hostile nomads and harsh climate of the central Valley. Sun Domers scorn the aristocratic traditions associated with Dara Happan Yelm worshippers. The leaders do not set themselves above the people, as exemplified in their ancient tradition of the count guiding the oxen and plow in spring planting season.

Sun County is notably egalitarian (though women are traditionally limited to a subordinate and nurturing role). No citizen is held above other citizens by reason of birth or wealth. Except for modest personal properties, all wealth and land is owned by the cult and distributed by the cult for its initiates' use according to their worthiness and service to the cult and county. All authority and responsibility derives from the cult and its institutions. Light Lords are noble not by birth, but by achievement. Though such achievements often run in the family, a son of a farmer may hope to rise to be High Priest, Light Keeper, or Light Guide.

Outlanders are treated with disdain and contempt by the cult's nobility (Light Sons, Light Guides, and Light Priests) and warrior class (templars). The Sun Dome crafter, trader, or citizen farmer regards outlanders with a sullen distrust or active hostility. Foreigners must expect harrassment from the minor officials and militia units that act as the county's police force. Despite our cordial political and military relations with Sun Dome, even Lunars citizens can expect little warmth or hospitality from these people.

The interlocking strictures of cult and state are bewildering and, to civilized observers, harsh and barbaric. Enforcement of these strictures by militiamen, local officials, and cult lords is often arbitrary and capricious. Any outlander inclined to stand on pride and dignity in an exchange with Sun Dome authorities must realize that he is placing his very life and freedom at stake. The best way to handle trouble is to avoid it. Once in trouble, adopt an apologetic, deferential posture, or, all else failing, place yourself at the mercy of Yelmlio. Attempts to conjure with the power and influence of the Lunar Empire are more likely to inflame than daunt Sun Domers.

The Garhound Contest

Seven Feats for the Suitors of the Harvest Bride

Garhound and the Harvest Festival

The market town of Garhound in Pavis County hosts a unique event taking place there in the week before the district's annual Harvest Festival (Godday/Truth Week/Earth Season). The farmers in this district are descendants of the followers of Sir Declan Garhound, a kinsman of Duke Dorasor, and they still honor the Sartarite customs of their homeland. Tradition decrees that each year a Harvest Queen is selected from among the local maidens, and a contest is held to select a male warrior who plays the part of her Husband-Protector in the forthcoming rituals.

While a citysider might dismiss as bucolic superstition the suggestion that the worthier the warrior, the greater Ernalda's bounty in the coming year, the garrulous law-speaker of the town can take the skeptic's arm and recount to him such proof as the marvellous harvest of 1604, when young Garreth Sharpsword won the crown, or (in a low whisper) the terrible blight of '99, when it was found that the winner, Squatbrow Broo-bane (a horseman of the Pol Joni), had already taken three wives.

The Suitor's Challenge

What began as a simple peasant affair where sons of the local farmers strove amongst themselves for the fair prize, has evolved into a sophisticated tournament attracting experienced warriors from throughout Prax. Local lads still compete, but are rarely a match for the battle-hardened veterans who ride in from Sun County, Pavis, and beyond to contend as suitors for the Harvest Bride.

The contest consists of seven events, each held on the successive days before the Harvest Festival. The town is thronged with farmfolk from across Pavis County, and many spectators even come down from Pavis. Rumor has it even Sor-Eel himself will be attending this year (see "Melisande's Hand," pp. 76-90).

Eligibility: The contest is open to all unmarried male initiates of the gods Ernalda recognizes as her

"Husband-Protectors." Most competitors are Orlanthi of course, but the priestesses must accept initiates of Yelmadio, Storm Bull, and Argan Argar as well, for these deities also married the Earth Goddess in mythology. (Flamal, Magasta, and Pamalt were also husbands of Ernalda and, presumably, their initiates too are eligible to compete.)

Members of the Garhound clan may take part in the contest for free. Even so, before the event the local lads fight it out amongst themselves to see who will take part, and usually only one comes forward on the day. Foreign Orlanthi will offer the priestesses a gift of at least 100L value; others must pay a gift worth 500L. It is permissible to enter the contest any number of years, but a contestant may only win it once.

The Favored Suitor: When all the competitors are assembled, the maiden chosen to play Ernalda may select one of them to be her "favorite." The Voria priestess then uses her Flowers spell to crown his hair with a beautiful spray of bloom, as a mark of favor. If the favorite wins the contest, this is taken to mean that the coming year will be especially bountiful. The favorite selected is almost invariably an Orlanthi, though not always a local. If the favorite is a foreigner, Sir Davis Garhound (great-grandson of Sir Declan and chief landholder of the district) will refund the value of the foreign favorite's entrance gift to the priestesses.

Events and Scoring: There are seven events in the Suitor's Challenge. Each event is scored differently, but generally first place receives 3 points; second place earns 2 points; third place, 1 point. In cases of ties, event judges may award places by special judgements, or may devise a playoff to resolve the tie.

The contestant with the highest point tally at the end of the seven events is the winner of the Suitor's Challenge. If in the end two contestants have the same number of points, a duel to first blood is fought to determine the overall winner. This duel must be fought with swords, the Air's chosen weapon.



The seven events are listed below, along with typical comments the locals might share with a curious and impressionable outsider asking questions about the contest events.

"You won't be needing that saddle son!"

"A 'match roster?' What's that?" (Chuckles.) "Oh, wait until you're all out there on the field, lad, and I'm sure someone'll give you a good look at his 'match roster'."
(Pats the sword sheath at his side.)

"Don't worry about all that poncy, classical stuff: just bowl your opponent over and get him out of the ring!"

"How good are you at lifting pots?"

"Wall of Death? Why, that's it over there!" (Points to an apparently innocuous section of city wall.).

"Lifting a pot of another sort!"

"That's when the ladies find out if there's anything of substance inside that codpiece you're wearing!"

The challengers compete to win the hand of the Harvest Queen. The Victorious Suitor is married to the Harvest Queen during the culmination of the Harvest Festival, and their union is consummated amidst great celebration.

The Husband also takes his wife's dowry (1,000L in coin and 1,000L-worth in land or stock). The Husband may leave his wife directly after the festival without impropriety (none of Ernalda's husbands were especially faithful), but he is then expected to return the dowry and leave Garhound never to return. (He may, however, keep all prizes won in individual events.)

Though the winner may be well satisfied with the fairest of his prizes, the Husband also receives the following additional bounties:

- The right to call himself "Champion of Garhound."
- A voice on the town council for the year.
- A small but comfortable house in the town and its attendant plot of land for the year.
- The services of an elderly housekeeper and her retainer husband for the year.
- Command of the Garhound Militia for the entire year.
- An especially fine broadsword to keep (11 AP, 1d8+2 damage). The Lightbringer temple provides, free of charge, the enchantment for one one-point spell matrix of his choice.
- +25% to his chance to gain Rune Lord status in his cult, and to gain an allied spirit if he does.
- Honor and recognition throughout Pavis and Sun Counties for the rest of his days.
- The blessings of the priestesses, which take the form of the gifts of one divine magic spell from each of the priestesses who blessed the contest. The champion can choose which of the spells he will accept, but he must make the POW sacrifice himself. Each spell is strictly limited to one use. The priestesses and their available spells include:

Ernalda: Restore Health (STR) or (CON).

Humakt: Truesword.

Chalana Arroy: Cure Chaos Wound

Issaries: Lock.

Lhankor Mhy: Analyze Magic.

Eurmal: Charisma.

**Uleria: Erotocomatose Lucidity,
Community, or Reproduce.**

Voria: Invigorate.

Babeester Gor: Great Parry.

Asrelia: Hide Wealth.

Esrola: Bless Crops.

Odayla the Hunter: Sureshot.

When the year of marriage is passed, the retiring champion is encouraged to stay in Garhound with his wife and child. (Note that unions consummated on the high holy day of the festival always produce offspring, and often twins; such children are blessed by Ernalda.) The retiring champion and his wife must vacate the champion's house, but the town council assures the retiring couple and their family of a felicitous resettlement.



Godday/Illusion Week/Earth Season The Harvest Festival

On the morning of the first day of the contest, the competitors present themselves at the Lightbringer Temple before the cult priestesses to identify themselves, establish their eligibility, and tender their entrance offerings. A large crowd gathers to size up the contestants and speculate on the most likely winner.

At this time the priestesses ask which events each competitor will participate in. Each competitor may take part in as many or as few of the seven events as he wishes. However, making a sporting effort in all seven events shows the proper spirit and respect for the contest's sacred origins. Slackers earn the disapproval of the crowd, and the special enmity of public-spirited Garhounds.

The Horse Race (Godday)



Although the Orlanthi barbarians here sensibly adopted the saddle of their Solar foes, this event is undertaken bareback in deference to ancient Orlanthi custom. Thus, if a rider fails his Ride roll, he falls off. (See *RQ Deluxe, Players Book*, p. 72; however, note below special rules limiting damage taken in such a fall.)

A respectable performance in the Horse Race brings a contestant from start to finish in approximately nine turns, or 90 strike ranks (hereafter abbreviated "SR"). The Horse Race event is divided into 10 segments. In each of the 10 segments, competing PCs and NPCs test various skills and abilities as they attempt to decrease their total strike rank count below the typical 90 SR score. Failing skill and ability tests can cause the contestant to increase his strike rank score. The winner of the contest is the character with the lowest strike rank score at the end of the race. See the "Garhound Diagram" and "Horse Race Summary Worksheet," p. 70, which aids in organizing and tracking the progress of the race.

Restrictions: Only leather armor may be worn in this event. The use of all spirit, divine, and sorcery spells and magic effects is prohibited. If a priest, priestess, or other judge suspects the use of magic, or if a contestant lodges a protest, all

contestants are required to swear before a Humakt Detect Truth spell after the finish of the race.

Horse Race Segment 1 The Dash

Contestants begin on foot at Point A on the Garhound Diagram (p. 70). At the start they then must sprint to the waiting horses at Point B.

An average speed for this segment is 20 SR. At his option, a character may choose to test Run skill (or one-half Dodge skill) once to improve this performance. (In the absence of a Run skill, Dodge is taken to indicate swiftness afoot.) Roll dice, consult the following "Dash Table," and add or subtract from the 20 SR score for this segment:

Dash Table

Fumble:	add+2 SR
Fail:	add +1 SR
Success:	-1 SR
Special Success:	-2 SR
Critical Success:	-3 SR

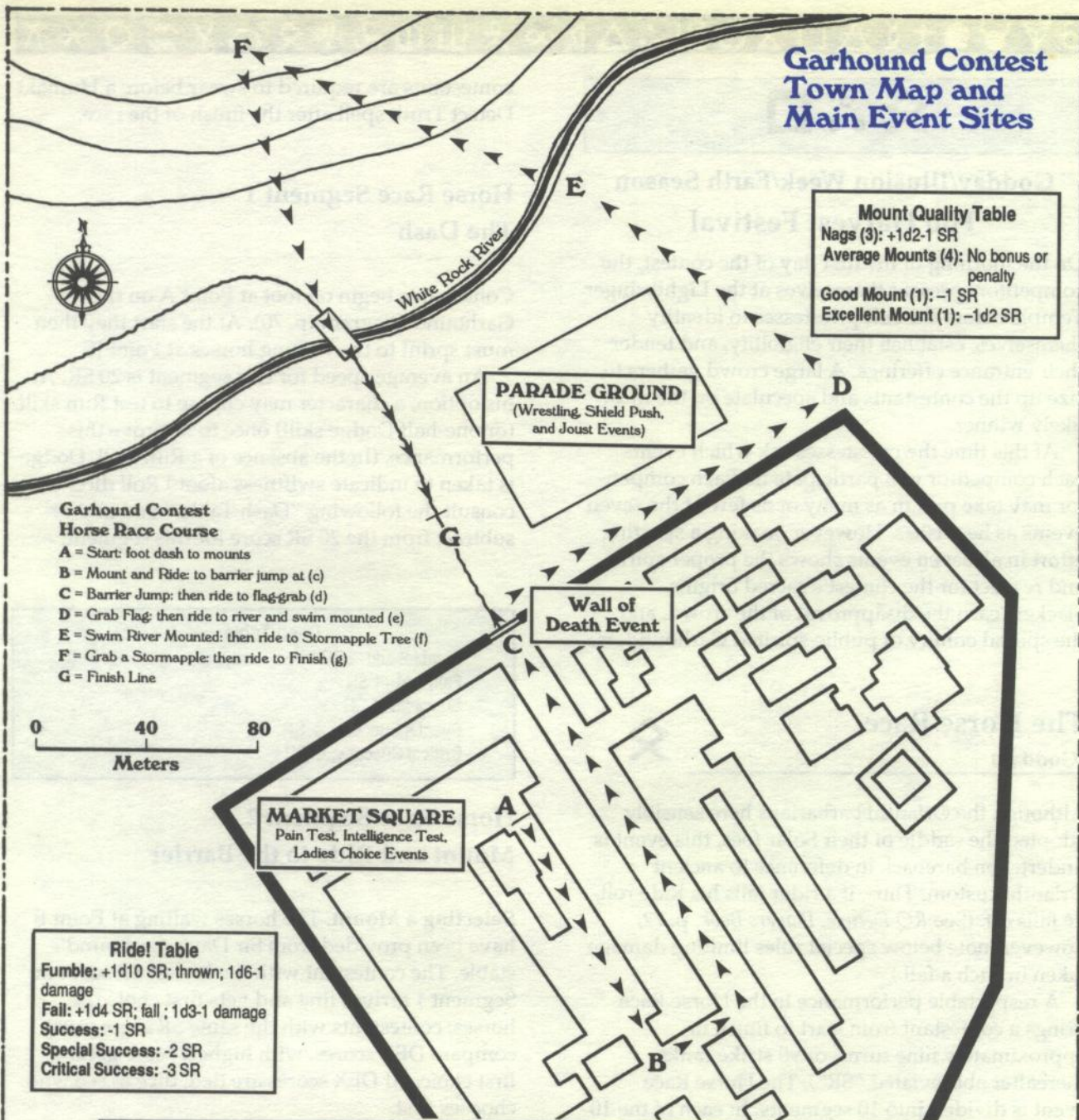
Horse Race Segment 2 Mount and Ride to the Barrier

Selecting a Mount: The horses waiting at Point B have been provided from Sir Davis Garhound's stable. The contestant with the lowest SR score in Segment 1 arrives first and gets first choice of horses; contestants with the same SR score must compare DEX scores, with highest score getting first choice. If DEX scores are tied, dice to see who chooses first.

To select a mount, each contestant must test vs. Animal Lore or Ride (player choice). A success permits the contestant to choose the best horse still available. A failure means the contestant receives a horse chosen randomly from the remaining pool of horses by the GM.

If there are 10 or fewer contestants, ten horses are provided from which to choose. (If there are more than 10 contestants, add an additional average mount for each additional rider.) The quality of the 10 horses is listed below in the "Mount Quality Table," along with the SR bonus or penalty to be assessed during each Ride! segment of the Horse Race:

Garhound Contest Town Map and Main Event Sites



1. The Dash

2. Mount & Ride to the Barrier

3. Jumping the Barrier

4. Ride to the Flag

5. Grab the Flag

6. Ride to the River

7. The Swim

8. Ride to the Stormapple Tree

9. Grab a Stormapple

10. Ride to the Finish

Select Mount

Mounting

Ride! Table

Ride! Table

Dismount for Flag OR

Grab Flag

Ride! Table

Enter Water

Swim on Mount

Plant Flag

Ride! Table

Dismount for rotten apple

Mounted for unripe apple

Climb for ripe apple

Ride! Table (x 2)

Total

20 SR +

0 SR

0 SR +

10 SR +

0 SR +

10 SR +

0 SR +

0 SR +

10 SR +

0 SR

10 SR +

0 SR +

10 SR +

0 SR +

0 SR +

0 SR +

20 SR +

90 SR +

Running bonuses or penalties

Check Mount Quality Table

Optional Heroic Leap (-1 SR or +1d4 SR)

Ride! test and mount bonuses and penalties

Barrier Jump Table bonuses or penalties

Ride! test and mount bonuses and penalties

Dismount (1d4+1 SR)

Test Ride & DEX 2; SR bonuses or penalties

Ride! test and mount bonuses and penalties

Successful Ride test

SR penalties for Swim and remount

Dart/Throw or Dismount; SR bonus or penalty

Ride! test and mount bonuses and penalties

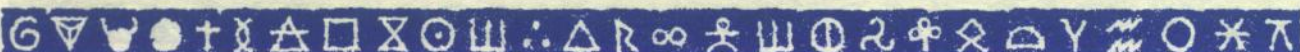
3 SR

SR penalties for Scan, DEX x 5, & Ride

SR penalties for Dismount, Climb, & SIZ SR

Ride! test and mount bonuses and penalties

Total bonuses and penalties = Race Score



Mount Quality Table

Nags (3): +1d2-1 SR

Average Mounts (4): No bonus or penalty

Good Mount (1): -1 SR

Excellent Mount (1): -1d2 SR

Mounting: A gallant character may optionally attempt a heroic leap upon his mount. Test vs. Jump (or one-half Ride). If successful in the heroic leap, subtract 1 SR from the total score for this segment. If failed, add 1 SR to total SR score for this segment. If fumbled, add 1d4 SR. Otherwise, the contestant is assumed to make a safe mount with no bonus or penalty.

Ride!: Each 100 meter riding segment of the race takes an average of 10 SR to complete. In each Ride! segment each contestant is required to test Ride at least once for each 100-meter segment.

Each time a contestant tests Ride skill during a Ride! segment, consult the following Ride! Table for SR bonuses and penalties. Remember also to assess bonus or penalty SR according to mount quality (see Mount Quality Table above).

Ride! Table

Fumble: +1d10 SR; thrown; 1d6-1 damage

Fail: +1d4 SR; fall; 1d3-1 damage

Success: -1 SR

Special Success: -2 SR

Critical Success: -3 SR

Note: After a fumble or failure on the Ride! Table, the rider remounts and continues without further tests or SR penalties (unless incapacitated by injury).

Horse Race Segment 3

Jumping the Barrier

At the town gate (Point C) the riders must jump a barrier. This segment normally costs 0 SR. Test Ride skill and consult the following table:

Barrier Jump Table

Fumble: Mount refuses the jump and rider is thrown: 2d4-1 damage, +5 SR, and rider must attempt the jump again.

Fail: Mount jumps, but rider falls: 1d6-1 damage, +1d4 SR, but need not repeat jump.

Success: Mount and rider clear barrier: no bonus or penalty.

Special Success: Fine jump: -1 SR

Critical Success: Spectacular leap — Crowd Goes Wild!: -2 SR

Horse Race Segment 4

Ride to the Flag

This 100-meter riding segment of the race from Point C to Point D takes an average of 10 SR to complete. Test Ride and consult the Ride! Table (see above) for SR bonuses and penalties. Assess bonus or penalty SR according to mount quality (see Mount Quality Table above).

Horse Race Segment 5

Grab the Flag

At Point D the rider must grab a small flag planted in the ground. This is an extremely difficult maneuver to do while riding bareback, and the rider must succeed in both a Ride roll and a DEX x 2 roll to grab the flag and subtract 1d3 SR from his current SR score. If he fails either or both rolls, he falls, taking 1d3-1 damage and receiving an additional 1d4+1 SR penalty.

An easier way to grab the flag is to dismount and pick it up at the cost of 1d4 SR. This draws hoots of derision from the crowd, but is certainly the safest method.

Horse Race Segment 6

Ride to the River

This 100-meter riding segment of the race from Point D to Point E takes an average of 10 SR to complete. Test Ride and consult the Ride! Table (see above) for SR bonuses and penalties. Assess bonus or penalty SR according to mount quality (see Mount Quality Table above).

Horse Race Segment 7

The Swim

Swimming the River: At Point E the rider must swim his horse across White Rock River and plant the flag on the opposite bank. A successful Ride roll coaxes the mount into the water; if failed, the rider must make further Ride tests at a cost of 1 SR per test until he is successful. (Poor riders may be here a long time.)

Once in the river, all the rider has to do is hang on until his mount gets to the other side. Test Ride skill for each rider. A success means the horse and rider swim the river in 10 SR. A failure means the rider slips off his mount and must make an immediate Swim test. Thereafter the contestant



must make first a successful Swim test, then a successful Ride test, to regain his mount. Failure of each Swim test means the rider receives 1d3–1 points of drowning damage to the chest, and each Swim and Ride test costs an additional 1 SR. Then the cost for swimming the river is 10 SR plus all additional SR penalties while trying to swim and remount.

A competitor who is obviously drowning is rescued from the river by the spectators, but is then disqualified from the horse race.

Planting the Flag: The rider may dismount and plant the flag on the opposite shore at a cost of his DEX strike rank modifier in SR. Alternatively, he may attempt to plant the flag without dismounting. He may test Dart or Throw (player choice); if the test is successful, the flag is planted with no penalty in SR. If he fails, he immediately adds 1 SR to his SR score, and must dismount and plant the flag at an SR penalty equal to his DEX SR modifier.

Horse Race Segment 8

Ride to the Stormapple Tree

This 100-meter riding segment of the race to Point F takes an average of 10 SR to complete. Test Ride and consult the Ride! Table (see p. 71) for SR bonuses and penalties. Assess bonus or penalty SR according to mount quality (see Mount Quality Table, p. 71).

Horse Race Segment 9

Grab a Stormapple

Once across the river, the course runs up the hill to the old stormapple tree. Stormapple trees bear fruit sacred to wind worshippers. Such fruit are normally not available to the likes of the competitors. The priests allow them to pick one fruit each in this event. Each competitor has the following choices:

- **Pick a rotten fruit from the ground:**

Dismount at a cost of 1 SR, retrieve a rotten fruit from the ground in 1 SR, then remount at a cost of 1 SR. Rotten stormapples taste awful, but if the eater can stomach its POT 5, his tolerance to alcohol is raised as if he had an extra 1d3 hit points. Increased tolerance lasts for an hour. If additional unripe fruit are eaten, the POT effect is cumulative.

- **Remain mounted and pick an unripe fruit:**

Test Scan until successful, then test DEX x 5 or Ride (player choice) to pick an unripe fruit from the lower branches. Each Scan, DEX x 5, and Ride test costs an additional 1 SR. Unripe stormapples are hard and chewy, and have no special qualities

- **Climb the tree and pick a ripe stormapple:**

Dismount at a cost of 1 SR, then test Climb until successful. Each Climb test costs an additional 1 SR. Climbing to the upper branches costs the character's SIZ strike rank modifier in SR. Pluck a ripe fruit from the upper branches at no SR cost. Now test Climb to descend safely at a cost of 1 SR. Failure means a fall, causing 1d6 damage to the contestant, at a cost of 1 SR.

Ripe stormapples are highly magical fruits that heighten the eater's awareness and perceptive powers for several hours. Raise all POW-based skills by 5% per apple eaten. Unfortunately, once picked stormapples only stay fresh for about a week. The brewing of the potent Stormapple Wine is an Orlanth cult secret.

Horse Race Segment 10

Ride to the Finish

This final 200-meter riding segment of the race to the finish line at Point G takes an average of 20 SR to complete. Test Ride **twice** and each time consult the Ride! Table (p. 71). Assess bonus or penalty SR **twice** according to mount quality (see Mount Quality Table, p. 71).

The Harvest Queen, priestesses, and crowd wait expectantly at the finish line. A gallant contestant might present his stormapple to the Harvest Queen, or to one of the priestesses. The gift of the winner's stormapple is a gracious favor. The presentation of a loser's rotten or unripe stormapple might, on the other hand, be viewed with less enthusiasm — particularly if such fruit were offered to Sor-Eel or another Lunar by a bitter or witty Lightbringer contestant.

The Horse Race Prize: The winner of this event is awarded 3 points, with 2 points going to second place and 1 point to third place. The winner can also take as prize any one of Sir Davis's horses used in the race. If he succeeds in an Animal Lore or Ride test, he picks the best horse (Move 12); if he fails, he picks a normal horse.



The Joust

(Freezeday)

This is another mounted event. Each contestant is provided with an average horse (*RQ Deluxe, Creatures*, p. 26, CON 11, POW = 11), saddle, and tack from Sir Davis's stables. Contestants may use their own armor, shield, and one personal melee weapon of their choice; special non-impaling jousting lances are provided.

The joust here is a somewhat more informal affair than in the West. The jousting field is a rectangular area 60 meters by 10 meters, marked with tall pennant-marked poles at each of the four corners. The two contestants begin at opposite ends of the long dimensions of the rectangle. At the signal, each contestant may seek his opponent in the jousting field. No spells or magic of any kind may be cast until the signal. Thereafter, any spell or magic is permitted except the spirit magic spell Glue. Any contestant who leaves the marked jousting area is immediately disqualified.

Special jousting lances are used which break rather than impale their victims. A successful impaling attack does only normal damage to the victim; however, the victim suffers a knockback as if he had received full impale damage. The lance is thus broken, and a new lance must be obtained from racks standing at the four poles marking the corners of the jousting area. A critical success attack with one of these lances does not break the lance, and does damage as usual.

If both or either rider is unhorsed, he may not remount. He may leave the field, acknowledging defeat, or he may remain on the field and continue to challenge his opponent. Each joust continues until one opponent leaves the field, yields, or is incapacitated. If one opponent is unhorsed and he remains on the field, his opponent is under no compulsion, legal, moral, or chivalric, to dismount to face his opponent. It is only common sense to exploit the advantage of horse and lance against an unhorsed opponent (unless, of course, the rider has more to fear from falling off his horse than from the attacks of his opponent on foot).

In each round opponents for each joust are decided by drawing numbered chits from a helmet. Chit 1 wrestles Chit 2, Chit 3 wrestles Chit 4, and so forth. If there is an odd number of contestants, the odd man receives a bye (i.e., does not joust) for that round, and automatically passes to the next round.

It is forbidden to attack mounts. If a horse is killed, the slayer is disqualified and must offer recompense to Sir Davis for its loss.

The joust is a bloody, dangerous event, but healers hastened with Mobility spells are stationed at each of the corner poles. An incapacitated competitor (i.e., one who does not move for a whole melee round) immediately receives healing attention. A competitor who receives such healing is eliminated. Interference with healers is a serious offense, and is cause for immediate expulsion from the games. There is no charge for healing.

Three points are given to the winner of the joust, and two points to his defeated opponent. Ties for third place are decided by a joust; the third place winner receives one point.

The Joust Prize: The prize for this event is a lance so well made and balanced that it weighs only 3 ENC. The lance bears a spell matrix enchantment for a Vigor 1 spirit magic spell.

The Wrestling

(Waterday)



The wrestling contest takes place in a five-meter-by-five-meter square sandpit, and the competitors are unarmed. Loincloths must be worn by all competitors; the Orlanthi have not adopted the Pelorian classical style of naked wrestling.

The two contestants begin at opposite corners of the sandpit. At the signal the contest begins. Although called a "wrestling" contest, characters may use any natural weapons skill, including martial arts. No magic is permitted.

Use the Grapple rules in the *RQ Deluxe Players Book.*, p. 60. To win, a wrestler must either incapacitate his opponent, throw him out of the sandpit, or pin him for three consecutive rounds. A single loss eliminates a contestant.

In each round opponents for each match are decided by drawing numbered chits from a helmet. Chit 1 wrestles Chit 2, Chit 3 wrestles Chit 4, and so forth. If there is an odd number of contestants, the odd man receives a bye (ie, does not wrestle) for that round, and automatically passes to the next round. Healing is provided for free after each bout, and contestants are given a chance to catch their breath (restore their Fatigue Points) between matches.

If the atmosphere of the joust represents a rugged, hostile, no-holds-barred battle between warrior suitors, the wrestling contest represents a friendly match of strength and skill among trusting, sporting companions. There are no specific rules that discourage loutish behavior, but uncouth wrestlers may win bouts, yet lose the favor of the crowd. For example, a Storm Buller who casts Fanaticism upon himself may, in his



frenzy, continue to pummel an opponent after he is incapacitated or forced from the sandpit. Such behavior may win bouts, but the crowd boos, hisses, and spits, while other contestants make a special effort to punish the miscreant. The offender is also unlikely to win points in the Ladies' Choice.

If many PCs and NPCs participate, the following formula can be used to determine the overall winners of this event if you don't want to fight out or fudge the results of all matches:

STR + CON + SIZ + DEX + (best unarmed Attack skill score divided by 5) + (best unarmed Parry or Dodge skill score divided by 5) + (Martial Arts skill score divided by 2.5) + 1d20.

The Wrestling Prize: Three points are given to the winner of the wrestling match, and two points to his defeated opponent. A tie for third place is decided by a further wrestling match; third place receives one point. The overall winner receives an ornate bronze girdle, set with semi-precious stones (worth 500L).

The Intelligence Test

(Clayday)



It is said that this event was once a riddling contest, similar to those played when Wind Lords meet Yelmalio cultists. Whatever it might have been, it is now a drinking contest and one of the most popular events.

The rules are simple. The competitors sit at a long table and drink successive rounds of beer until they pass out. The last person conscious wins, and receives three points. The second-last person to slip under the table earns two points; the third-last earns one point. While vomiting earns the vociferous derision of the spectators, it does not disqualify that character.

The beer consumed in this contest is barley beer, brewed locally. It has been deliberately watered down to an Alcohol Potency Point Value of 2 per pint (half-liter), to make the contest last longer. Potency Points accumulate in the drinker's system as long as the drinker continues to drink. Each accumulated Alcohol Potency Point reduces all percentile chances for tests made by the drinker by one percentile point (including skill, magic, INT, and CON tests, but excluding Luck tests).

Each time the cumulative Alcohol Potency Points exceed a multiple of the drinker's current

hit points, the drinker's player must pass a (CON x 5 – accumulated Alcohol Potency) test.

The first time that this roll is failed, the competitor feels a wave of nausea pass through his body. He feels a bit dizzy, but there is no other effect. If he fumbles, he passes out immediately.

The second time the roll is failed, the competitor gets sick. If the failed percentile result is greater than twice the reduced CON x 05 roll, the drinker passes out instead of getting sick. If the roll is fumbled, the drinker gets sick — then passes out.

When the percentile reductions from accumulated Alcohol Potency Points cause the contestant's CON x 05 chance to fall to zero or less, the contestant passes out.

The Intelligence Test Prize: It chagrins the Lhankor Mhy sages who sponsor this event to think that their Intelligence Test has degenerated into a drunken revel. Nevertheless, they still offer 500L worth of training at the Pavis Lhankor Mhy Temple to the winner. Perhaps more widely appreciated is the keg of barley beer the local brewers throw in. The thirsty crowd expects this keg to be untapped that night while the winner toasts his victory.

The Wall of Death

(Windsday)



In this event each contestant must pass along a section of the town wall, unarmored and weaponless. No spells or magic effects may be used in this event. As the competitor moves, a 95%-skilled archer fires 15 arrows at him. These special "slow arrows" can be Dodged or Arm Parried. A character's arm is considered to have 3 armor points. The arrows do 1d6 damage if they hit, but cannot impale. Once the competitor is incapacitated he is disqualified. A competitor may also withdraw from the event at any time.

Contestants may attempt to catch these slow arrows. For each arrow that is caught, the total number of arrows to be shot is reduced by one. To catch an arrow, the player must first declare that he is attempting to catch an arrow. He then must make a successful Dodge roll. If he succeeds, he must attempt a catch. If he fails, he is hit normally. To attempt a catch, he must make a successful Sleight test. If makes the roll, he catches the arrow. If he fails the test, he is hit normally.

Any contestant who is still standing on the wall after all arrows have been fired at him is a winner, and he receives three points. (Thus, there may be



The Ladies Choice Prize: The winner of "Ladies' Choice" receives a magical arrow that unfailingly hits its next target (as per Sureshot spell) and a shadow cat, the gift of Zelezza Blackpaw, the region's Yinkin priestess. However, knowing spectators (and approving glances from the judges) hint that there are far greater satisfactions awaiting the man who wins the ladies' hearts.



Melisande's Hand

A Garhound Harvest Festival Contest Scenario Setting

Scenario Setting

The Lunar occupation of Pavis was an uncertain time for the Pavis County landholders with Sartarite sympathies. With the responsibility of accommodating thousands of new settlers and hundreds of retired soldiers, governor Sor-Eel looked with predatory interest upon the estates of the landed families and schemed of ways to take control of them. One such landholder was Sir Davis Garhound, whose ancestors came out with Duke Dorasor. Upon receiving reports that the Lunar governor and a large entourage planned to attend the annual Garhound Harvest Festival and the Suitor's Challenge, Sir Davis immediately suspected that Sor-Eel had conceived some subtle plan to twist the traditional festival games to his own purposes.

Scenario Hooks

The Contests as Primary Scenario

Ideally, most or all of the PC party might be able to compete in the Suitor's Challenge. Schemes to encourage this for campaign play include:

- A wealthy Sun County lord offers to pay the entrance fees for a favored unit of patriotic Yelmalian militiamen or templars. (The player characters are newly created Sun County adventurers, or veteran PCs of earlier Sun County adventures.)
- Krogar Wolfhelm, habitué of Gimpy's tavern in Pavis, swordmaster, Orlanth Adventurous cultist, and suspected Sartar sympathizer, privately contacts certain PCs and offers to pay their entrance fees if they will swear to defend the honor of the Orlanth cult against Lunar-sympathizing challengers. He will be looking to recruit suitable challengers right up to the start of the competitions. (The PCs are newly created Orlanth cultists recently emigrated from Lunar-

occupied Sartar, or veteran Orlanth, Storm Bull, or Yelmalian cultists with anti-Lunar sympathies.)

- Duke Raus generously offers to pay the entrance fees of any of his mercenaries who wish to travel with him to Garhound and enter the Suitor's Challenge. Such mercenaries would not be able to accept the title of "Champion of Garhound," for their duty to Duke Raus precludes a year's stay in Garhound, but they may keep any prizes they win. (The PCs are veteran mercenaries in Raus's service, or are offered the entrance fees as a recruitment bonus, contingent upon contracting to Duke Raus's service.)

The Contests as Scenario Background

An alternative approach is to use the Garhound Contest as a background to another GM-devised plot. PCs might then choose to participate in the contest events as secondary activities while pursuing other objectives. A player whose character does NOT participate in a given event can easily be persuaded to play one of the NPC contestants; such diversions may even prove to be the highlight of an evening. Examples of plots using this approach include:

- Sir Davis Garhound learns of a plot to assassinate Sor-Eel. This assassination could invite terrible reprisals from the Lunar administration in Pavis. Sir Davis hires the veteran adventurers to search out the plotters and to protect Sor-Eel without drawing attention to themselves or to the threat they are hired to eliminate.
- His suspicions aroused by the smugly confident character of the large Lunar contingent, Sir Davis suspects that Sor-Eel is backing one of the contestants, and that he has somehow devised a scheme to twist the odds in his agent's favor. The PCs are hired to learn which contestant Sor-Eel is backing, to discover how Sor-Eel plans to cheat, and to foil Sor-Eel's schemes by fair means or foul.

Notables Present in Garhound for the Festival

Lunars

Sor-Eel the Short, Count of Prax and Governor of Pavis. *Rumor:* That doxy on his arm is none other than Griselda!

Bor-Eel. Sor-Eel's loyal half-brother.

Agrestis. Sor-Eel's jester.

Pharnastes Rugbagian, Deputy Priest of the Pavis Market. *Rumor:* Between them, Sor-Eel and Rugbagian plan to line their pockets with the cut they take on all bets made.

Radak, the Iron Centurion. Commanding a half-century of the count's bodyguard.

Raus, Duke of Rone, Lord of the Weis Domain. *Rumor:* Raus (an exiled Lunar noblemen with a holding south of Sun County) is looking for free swords to bolster his mercenary force – and a husband for his high-spirited daughter. He's also here to curry favor with Sor-Eel.

The Lady Jezra, Raus's daughter. *Rumor:* Jezra is a real hell-raiser who's not going to stand for an arranged wedding with anyone!

Garhounders

Sir Davis Garhound, Contest sponsor and local landholder. *Rumor:* Sir Davis is concerned about the large Lunar presence at the festival this year. What is Sor-Eel up to?

Sir Davis's household.

Numerous Honorable and Naive Peasant Freeman Farmers and Farmwives.

Contest Priestesses

Melisande Winnow, the Harvest Queen. *Rumor:* Garhounder Melisande has her heart set on winning the hand of a foreigner who will take her away to the faraway places she has only dreamed about.

Carra Goodhearth, Garhound Ernalda Priestess. *Rumor:* The Earth-Mothers desperately need a worthy champion because a drought has been predicted in the coming year.

Rebene Valhan, Garhound Ernalda Acolyte.

Bian Azar, Garhound Chalana Arroy Priestess.

Apa Puellen, Garhound Uleria Acolyte.

Meyerla Greenslough, Garhound Voria Acolyte.

Sun Domers

Solanthos Ironpike, Count of the Sun Dome. *Rumor:* The old goat has come to watch his latest "pet" compete.

Invictus, the Light Captain. Solanthos's right-hand man and commander of the Templars.

Penta Goldbreath, High Priestess of Ernalda in Sun County and Guest of Honor. Twin sister of Vega and wife of Invictus.

Lord Belvani, Invictus's lieutenant. With his crested dragonewt manservant.

Vega Goldbreath, the Guardian. Light Lady and commander of Sun Dome militia.

Assorted Gilded Lords, Veiled Ladies, Honest Farmers, and Modest Farmwives.

Others

Fleeter Nemm, Daughter of Pavis. *Rumor:* Fleeter is concerned about Lunar motives and has come to watch Sor-Eel.

Krogar Wolfhelm, Wind Lord. *Rumor:* Krogar suspects that Calmstorm is a Lunar tool, and is looking for another Orlanthi warrior to uphold cult honor.

Willem Noralar, Sword of Humakt. Willem is Humakt's representative here, and provides Detect Truth spells to confirm contestant oaths of honor.

Neela Siff, Grey Sage. Lhankor Mhy representative and noted storyteller.

Laughing Loolie, Itinerant Eurmial Priestess. The Trickster's irrepressible representative, and a hefty 125 kilos of chucklebait and cheap gags, Loolie draws a crowd wherever she goes. She is especially tough on the dour Sun Domers.

Okalla Wayblue, Babeester Gor Acolyte. As her cult's representative, this Bison Rider is often uncomfortable with the romantic feminine roles assumed by many other contest priestesses.

Assorted Shysters, Shills, Mountebanks, Frauds, and Charlatans. Such colorful riffraff are always attracted to such events.



The Barbarian, the Beauty, and the Beast

Sticklebrixx, Pol Joni Brave and Storm Bull Cultist

Jarst Daro, Mysterious Stranger and Argan Argan Cultist

Mellissande, Harvest Queen and Ernalda Cultist



• The PCs encounter a contestant or notable figure (Sticklebrixx the Storm Bull cultist, for example) in another scenario and perform a service for him (e.g., keep a merchant from robbing Sticklebrixx blind or a tavern mob from killing him after a particularly flamboyant exercise of his dipsomaniacal muse). In return for the favor, the contestant or notable invites the PCs to accompany him to the Garhound contests as his guests.

The Contest as Isolated Scenario

The scenario may also be presented as a solitary, tournament-style game with the players taking the roles of the six primary competitors (Carylon Squally, Promidius, Vathmar Allweather, Myrrhyn Calmstorm, Sticklebrixx, and Jarst Daro; see pp. 88-90 for their character sheets). If more than six characters are desired, or if the GM prefers to keep one or more of these characters as an NPC, he must design other alternate PCs for his players to choose from.

Around Town in Garhound

(For a map of Garhound, see inside back cover.)

Accommodations: Most travelers of modest means take advantage of the Lightbringer-sponsored campground north of the Parade Ground along the White Rock River. Good food is available for a modest temple donation from outdoor kitchens there.

Lodgings: Prosperous travelers prefer lodgings at Geo's Garhound Inn or the Bartered Beast.

★★ **Geo's Garhound Inn:** Its tavern hosts a local clientele primarily composed of long-time Garhound residents of Sartarite extraction.

★★ **The Bartered Beast:** A new establishment run by a retired Lunar trooper, Panos. Panos caters to the more-recently arrived Lunar settlers. Loyal Sartarite-descent locals continue to patronize Geo's Inn, but freely admit that Panos is a fine and honorable fellow serving excellent food and beer.

Taverns: The following serve food and drink, but lodgings are not available.

★★ **The Silent Partner:** Features good food at reasonable prices, and is a favored watering hole for travelers.

★ **Will's:** Food, drink, service, and fellowship are of indifferent quality, but the prices are low.

★ **The High Tail:** A popular low-life hangout; the food is poor, but the beer is cheap.

Temples: Garhound has three minor temples and one site precinct.

The **Lightbringer Temple** has major shrines to Ernalda and Chalana Arroy, and lesser shrines to Asrelia, Orlanth, Humakt, Issaries, Lhankor Mhy, Uleria, and Voria. The majority of the Garhound region's folk worship the Lightbringer's Pantheon. The Lightbringers are also the sponsors of the Suitor's Challenge.

The **Solar Temple** has major shrines to Yelmadio and Eiritha, and lesser shrines to Yelm, Lokarnos, and Zola Fel. Worshippers of the Yelm pantheon are a sizable minority in the Garhound area.

The **Seven Mother's Temple** is a recent addition to the Garhound religious community. Settlers of Lunar background worship at the Yanafal Tarnils, Yara Aranis, Irripi Ontor, and Etyries lesser shrines here, while the cults of Deezola and Teelo Norri minister to the needs of the poor.

The **Prax Cult Sites** honoring Eiritha, Storm Bull, Waha, Odayla the Hunter, and the Ancestors are maintained by the Garhound clan and the town fathers, originally as a token of respect for visiting nomads, and currently as a worship site for the Lunar-allied Sable Rider unit stationed here.

Other Important Places:

Commission of the Armistice: Offices for the Lunar Commissioner Caius Cyna, and his staff, and for the captain and officers of the Sable Rider Auxiliary unit stationed in Garhound.

Sables Barracks: A troop of 100 Sable Riders is maintained as a border garrison to discourage nomad raiders and to present a show of Lunar military authority.

Garhound Militia Armory and Constabulary: Garhound maintains a freeman militia comprised of two 16-man shield-and-spear files. Two more similar units of spearmen from the region can be assembled with two hours notice. These four units, with the 40-odd noble cavalymen of the Garhound clan, were the total military force in the region until the coming of the Sable Rider troop.

Constable Leach, a local boy and former leader of the local militia, serves in what is only a recently-established official position in Garhound. Before the Lunar occupation the Garhound clan lord and his retainers handled all local law enforcement and justice. With the advent of the numerous Lunar settlers and the Sable Rider garrison after the



Armistice, Garhound has been forced to hire a constable to handle law enforcement. In theory, the constable can call upon the militia or the Commission of the Armistice for manpower. However, in practice the constable still relies on Sir Davis and the clan when strong arms are needed to keep the peace and protect property.

Council Office: The Town Fathers, appointed by the Garhound lord, is comprised of the Ernalda priestess, the Yelmadio priest, the Teelo Nori priestess, and four prominent Garhound citizens. This body's duty is to counsel and advise Sir Davis on civic matters.

Garhound Manor: This is the residence of Sir Davis Garhound, head of the Garhound clan. Lands originally received by the Garhound clan from Dorasor included a region bounded on the east by the Zola Fel, the south by the White Rock, the north by the Scritha, and the east by the escarpment of Vulture County. Territories currently held by Garhound and his dependents include the best bottom lands along the White Rock. The Lunars assumed title of all Garhound lands not currently settled or cultivated in the region as a consequence of the 1610 Armistice with the victorious Lunar administration. As a result of the conditions of the Armistice, Sir Davis and his clan retain a noble lord's authority in the region, with the advice and counsel of the Commission of the Armistice.

Player Character Activities

It is expected that one or more of the PCs may wish to compete in the contest. Any number of

contestants are permitted, as long as the candidates are eligible. The other PCs may enter into the carnival atmosphere of the contest, cheer their friends as they compete in each of the events, lay bets, lose some time (and possibly their shirts) at one of the numerous sideshows, listen to the rumor and speculation, and so on.

Unscrupulous adventurers might wish to improve a favorite's chances by interfering with another contestant. Plausible ploys include: tricking vain Vathmar Allweather into breaking one of his geases; getting the thirsty Sticklebrixx drunk before an event; telling an inebriated Sticklebrixx that Myrrhyn Calmstorm is a Lunar-lover; stealing some of the magical stormapples. There are many possibilities for mischief by inspired PCs. Of course, interested NPCs might practice similar dishonorable tricks upon the PCs on behalf of their own favorites.

During the actual events themselves, GMs should dragoon gamers into playing the parts of the six NPC competitors. These NPC roles also permit you to invite gamers to sit in with your regular group and play short-term character roles.

Gambling

Wagers may be laid on single events or on the contest as a whole. The Lunars strictly control betting at the contest and take a 7% cut on all winnings. This is automatically deducted by the bookmaker before the payout (if any) is made. In return for this impost, punters who feel they have been cheated can take their complaint to the authorities. Legal bets can be made at the Etyries stand in the market, and Rugbagian has several

Place Your Bets!

Entrant	Horse	Joust	Wrestle	INT	Wall	Pain	Ladies'	Contest
Cary	6-1	13-2	9-1	30-1	4-1	10-3	3-1	15-1
Prometheus	25-1	36-1*	23-1	85-1	3-1	—	55-1	200-1
Vathmar	8-1	12-1	15-1	4-1	13-1**	2-1	60-1	80-1
Myrrhyn	9-1	4-1	11-1	12-1	7-1	7-2	7-1***	4-1
Sticklebrixx	7-3	3-1	6-1	3-2	13-1	3-1	99-1	6-1
Jarst Daro	30-1****	18-1	3-1	9-1	10-1	6-1	7-3	12-1
PC Contestant	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

* Whether he wins or not, after everyone sees Promidius's brilliant eye for horse-flesh when choosing his mount for the race, they reappraise his chances in the joust.

** When Vathmar starts mouthing off about how he's going to try catching arrows, his odds rocket past 100-1.

*** These odds shorten to 5-4 as the rumor gets around that he's a "sure bet". Eventually, you won't be able to put your money on Myrrhyn at the legal stands.

**** As an unknown quantity, the bookies only offer long odds for the first event.



assistants who do the rounds of the taverns.

Players with an anti-Lunar bias will probably go to one of the two Issaries bookies down from Pavis, but might be disappointed to learn that they too will prudently abide by the gambling laws.

Numerous illegal bookies also operate in the town, particularly in the wineshops, taverns and carnivals. They melt into the crowd at the sight of Lunar authorities. Although they cannot cover large sums like the legal bookmakers, they sometimes offer better odds. Several are con men who won't be found after the contest or who refuse to honor bets. Players must take their chances when making a bet with an unlicensed bookmaker.

Odds for the various competitors begin at the odds shown in "Place Your Bets," p. 80, but may change as the contest progresses or the gamemaster dictates. However, an honest bookmaker will pay you the odds you made the bet at. It may not be possible to bet on the overall winner once the first event is concluded.

Scenario Events

The seven days of the contest are described briefly here, along with GM notes about the NPC contestants. It is quite possible that the actions PCs will change the sequence of events (for example, they may expose the ogre earlier), in which case the GM must react and improvise.

The priestesses and acolytes representing their cults serve as judges and referees during the events. Some use their Detect spells occasionally to watch for contestants breaking prohibitions against magic, but typically all rely on the Humakt Detect Truth spell. If any contestant or judge protests or claims to have witnessed any irregularities, the Humakt representative casts a Detect Truth spell upon all contestants as they swear that they have upheld all rules of the contest. If necessary, the priestesses prompt contestants with specific questions if the priestesses feel the truth is being evaded by sophistry.

The priestesses and acolytes speak briefly before each event, explaining the event's ritual significance to contestants and spectators. (See "What the Priestesses Say" at the beginning of each day's events.) They also collectively perform various rituals before and after each event to dedicate the contest to Ernalda and her suitors. The contestants are expected to join in these brief services, each demonstrating his piety and virtue by consecrating his performance to Ernalda and his patron deity, and petitioning the deities for signs of their favor.

Staging Hints

Roleplaying the Rituals: Describe the NPCs' demeanors during the ritual services before and after each contest. Make NPC Oratory or other skill tests, if you like, or roleplay their actions. Then encourage the players to roleplay their own behaviors. Hint broadly that appeals that meet the approval of the gods may influence a character's fortunes of the field. And, if you like, make it so.

Make Cary your model of an earnest hometown boy with pure motives and a bright spirit, and make sure he gets lots of breaks when the going is tough. For example, when you've decided that Orlanth wishes to show his favor, roll 2d10 for a critical percentile roll, and ostentatiously announce that, for divine reasons, for this roll only, the lowest die score is to be read as the tens place. Or roll a six-sided die to indicate the tens place.

Make Daro the opposite model of a character who does not gain favor in the eyes of the gods – Ernalda in particular. Perhaps at a critical moment he rolls 1d12 for his tens place, or finds that the Earth itself is his enemy (test DEX x 5 or stumble over a rock), or that the Wind is against him (a breeze blows a stormapple out of his reach).

The Daro Homicide Subplot: With detective work, Divination and Reconstruction, the priestesses, acolytes, and Garhound authorities have a 40% chance after the first murder, 60% chance after the second, and 80% to 95% after the third (if it occurs, depending on PC actions) to realize that Daro is responsible for the crimes. However, even if Daro's crimes are revealed, they will not take action against him until after the contest, keeping a close eye on him in the meantime. Pulling one of the contestants out of the contest is thought to augur dreadful consequences for the contest ritual. If it looks like Daro is a sure winner, some may argue for immediate action, since the ritual would end in disaster in any case. If aware of his actions and hopeful that he will not win the contest, a majority of the authorities propose to wait until after the Ladies' Choice event is finished and the overall winner announced. Then Daro would be detained and confined with as little fanfare as possible, and held until after the harvest festival for Sir Garhound's justice.

The cult of Babeester Gor is well-known for punishing (castrating and/or killing) males that kill or rape helpless women. Okalla Wayblue, the Babeester Gor priestess, relentlessly hunts the murderer after the first killing. Ironically, the Lightbringer priestesses may ask the PCs to keep Daro alive and Okalla away from him until the



Rumor assumes the girl was the victim of a drunken assault — a rare scandal in Garhound, but popularly and unjustly associated with the occasionally unruly Sable Rider troopers. (The culprit is Jarst Daro, whose hunger got the better of him.)

- Lady Jezra, the daughter of Duke Raus, takes a fancy to one of the non-competing PCs. She sends a lady-in-waiting with an invitation to join her in her father's box to "explain the finer points of the joust." A hostile Duke Raus regards the PC as an unwelcome guest while his daughter teases and flirts with her beau all afternoon. She invites him back tomorrow, but implies that she loves gifts — "amusing trinkets" as she calls them. Jezra's idea of a "trinket" includes anything rare, expensive, and stylish. Such items are obviously difficult to come by in a hick town like Garhound, unless the purchaser is willing to spend an exorbitant sum or try his hand at theft.

- Thanks to the magic torc, Promidius's horse fights for him in the joust, much to everyone's surprise, since none of the horses are supposed to be war-trained.

- Sticklebrixx competes without a saddle just to demonstrate the inherent superiority of nomad riding technique.

- If Vathmar is unseated, he immediately sprints to safety out of bounds.

- That night, a brawl at The High Tail between off-duty Lunar soldiers from Sor-Eel's bodyguard and the local lads is quelled when the constable and five burly militiamen arrive and begin to crack heads. The local lads started the fracas, but Sor-Eel and the Lunar Commissioner prevail upon Radak and the Lunar guardsmen not to press charges in the interests of community good will.

- As the brawl spills out into the neighboring streets, Vathmar is seen rushing to the aid of a Lunar guardsman's horse, which is being hamstrung by a pair of drunken nomads.



Waterday: The Wrestling

What the Priestesses Say: Though Ernalda's suitors each fiercely contested with one another to win her favor, they also were vigorous, spirited

young men who enjoyed one another's fellowship, and they sought as much to impress each other as they did to win Ernalda's charms. This is a friendly contest, and a chance to exercise the gifts gods have granted to strong, healthy young men.

- Depending on the dainty item the PC has found for Jezra, she may or may not invite him to join her today. Whatever the case, one of Raus's men approaches him later and suggests he leave her alone. The threat if he doesn't is left unspoken.

- Jarst Daro appears in classical stance for wrestling (naked) and only covers himself when the judges insist. Many ladies loudly profess shock and indignation, but he wins many admirers.

- Sticklebrixx takes part in this event thoroughly greased with slippery Rhino Fat. This makes him particularly difficult to hold. Reduce all attacks and resistance rolls against him by 20%.

- Cathilion, a young Sun Dome official, discretely approaches a PC spectator, asking if he would lay a bet for him. (While Sun Domers are technically only prohibited from gambling within the borders of Sun County, Count Solanthos fiercely disapproves of Sun Dome officials gambling in public.)

- A local lass (obviously miffed because she wasn't selected to be Harvest Queen) snidely remarks to a PC that "perhaps Melisande shouldn't be in that white dress — after all, the maiden selected is meant to be, as they say, a maiden." Meggie Fipple's accusations are groundless, but an out-of-towner bandying such hearsay about might find himself confronted by young Melisande's burly older brothers Mort, Mack, Mick, and Mart.

- The PCs learn where the kegs for tomorrow's drinking competition are stored. If they investigate, they encounter a pair of Lunar Spoken Word agents spiking the barrels. In the ensuing melee, do the spiked barrels get hopelessly mixed up?

- Another brawl erupts between Lunar soldiers and the locals, and Sir Davis Garhound himself appears with Constable Leach to restore order. After the fray dies down, the word goes round that Sor-Eel has threatened to leave an extra contingent of troops in town after the contest to keep order if this sort of thing happens again.





Clayday: The Intelligence Test

What the Priestesses Say: Ernalda's suitors sought to impress each other with their intellects, and would often hold great riddling contests. As the suitors drank and feasted, each tried to outdo his companions in posing the cleverest riddle or the most pleasing toast. You too have a chance to demonstrate the quality of your wit in the Intelligence Test.

(Consistent losers in cerebral tussles, shrewd Storm Bull cultists began bringing more and more alcohol to the Garhound riddling contests. Good-natured Lhankor Mhy cultists acknowledge that, though the modern Intelligence Test is a travesty of the original form of the contest, the current version is greatly preferred by the public.)

- Another body is discovered in the countryside, again brutally mutilated. The Chalana Arroy priestess examines the body, pronounces the attack similar to the earlier killing. If a PC suggests an ogre attack, the Chalana Arroy thoughtfully confirms this as a plausible supposition. The townsfolk are really incensed now, because the victim was a local woman, not an itinerant showgirl. Rumor, however, continues to suspect Lunar troopers or guards. (Once he has tasted blood, Jarst's hunger becomes insatiable.)

- Vathmar gets a room at the Bartered Beast.

- If the Cathilion was satisfied with the PC's performance yesterday, he approaches him again. The official would like him to act as his "runner" for the rest of the tournament, and will give him a small purse containing five Wheels for the favor.

- In his enthusiasm, Sticklebrixx turns up to the event already well-lubricated – but he is still well-fortified, having eaten his unripe stormapple.

- During the revel, Vathmar boasts that he's sorry there ain't any trolls around, "cos I just love killing those Zoorak Zoorani trolls, hic!"

- Tiring of her present beau, Lady Jezra invites another PC to be her escort at a Lunar-sponsored feast tonight at the Bartered Beast. If the PC accepts, a furious Duke Raus privately offers him 150 Wheels to leave town tonight. The spurned PC, subtly misled by an Evil GM into thinking that Raus has forbidden Jezra from seeing him, may courageously confront Raus and cause a scene.

- If Jezra's new paramour ignores her father's threat and attends the feast, Jezra does her energetic best to ensure that they are caught *in flagrante delicto* sometime during the evening, hopefully by both the Duke and the spurned PC.



Windsday: The Wall of Death

What the Priestesses Say: In the Greater Darkness, when chaos swept the world, Ernalda's husbands had to fight their way through biting chaos and screaming winds to reach her side and defend her. You must endure a stinging hail and bitter blows to win through to the Harvest Queen who waits beyond the Wall of Death.

- Sticklebrix shows up smeared with Rhino Fat again, but the judges tell him to wash it off before he can compete.

- Vathmar attempts to earn extra kudos by catching the arrows fired at him. He stops once he catches three arrows or is hit once while trying to catch an arrow.

- The Sun Dome Eagles play the Lunar Cohort IX Red Demons in a furious Shield Push grudge match on the Parade Grounds before a large and partisan crowd. The match results in a slim victory for the Lunars.

- The victorious Red Demons then challenge all comers. The Orlanthi Krogar Wolfhelm rushes around town, seeking to put up a team that can beat the Lunars at their own game. Suitable PC adventurers are approached, particularly if they have no love for the Empire.

The Shield Push game can be played out by the GM and the players. The Lunars are all hardened veterans in the 50-75% range, and wear 8-point armor in all locations. More than just a match, the game takes on political significance and offers the downtrodden Sartarites a chance to embarrass their oppressors without fear of reprisal.

If the Lunars win, they and their followers loudly proclaim their victory in all-night celebrations. Their taunts may goad bitter losers into fights. If the local team wins, the already boisterous crowd goes wild!

- During the drunken celebrations that night, a PC notices Jarst slipping away with a young woman. Both appear to be very drunk (she is; he is only mildly so – just enough to risk another feed). On a



night like this, such a scene is not uncommon, but the couple are seen going into fields. If the PCs follow, Jarst abandons the girl and slips away but appears for the next day's event. If the PCs do not, another mangled corpse – one that the PCs can identify as the woman who accompanied Jarst – is discovered in the morning.

- If the PCs go to the constable or Lightbringer priests and priestesses with their suspicions about Jarst Daro, the Lightbringers reluctantly insist that Daro be allowed to finish the contest. Removing him now could compromise the ritual. However, if he won, the downcast priestesses admit, the consequences for Garhound would be monstrous.

Fireday: The Pain Test

What the Priestesses Say: The trials of the Greater Darkness were horrible. Only those with the greatest strength and endurance could have survived to protect Ernalda. You now have a chance to test your strength and endurance to the utmost in the Pain Test.

- Promidius, doubting his chances to win and unwilling to endure pain without a good reason, accidentally on purpose fumbles his hot pot and drops it early in the contest.
- One of the PCs overhears an off-duty Lunar soldier say to his companion that "our man has the ladies event all sewn up."
- Vandross, another official from Solanthos's party, approaches the PC who has been acting as the runner, asking about Cathilion's gambling. If the player admits he has been acting for Cathilion, this official asks if the PC would place a bet for him too. If the player denies his actions, the disgruntled official goes to Count Solanthos. Later that night, Vandross publically declares the PCs to be a dishonorable liar, and challenges the PC to a duel to prove his accusations upon the PC's body.
- Sor-Eel announces a grand party upon the Seven Mother's Temple grounds. Normally, only Seven Mother's cultists would be invited; however, avowed Lunar friends are graciously granted entry, and the governor wins many admirers with his generosity. The governor also extends an invitation to all competitors in the contest, and may be observed carousing at the party with Myrrhyn Calmstorm. Curiously, Duke Raus

excuses himself from the Bacchanalia early, and his daughter is nowhere to be seen. (The duke has already packed her off back home downriver, lest she cause him further embarrassment.)

Wildday: Ladies Choice

What the Priestesses Say: Ernalda's many suitors sought to win her hand in many ways. She accepted only those won her admiration. You too now have a chance to prove to the Harvest Queen that you are the most charming suitor.

- One of the agents the PCs caught spiking the beer barrels may be spotted just as he is placing a huge bet on Myrrhyn Calmstorm to win this event. The agent then returns to the governor's pavilion and hands Sor-Eel the ticket.
- Carylton Squally sings the banned ballad "Cold Wind over Sartar," which infuriates the Lunars but impresses the ladies. The whole crowd joins in the last stanza, and Krogar Wolfhelm visibly weeps. Sor-Eel fumes.

*What good is our youth when it's aging?
What joy is an eye that can't see?
When there's cool wind and laughter and flowers
But only our rivers run free.*

- Promidius does a graceful dance, though too "Yelmic" for the ladies' liking.
- Vathmar expansively catalogues his "amazing" exploits, beginning each statement "Now, I'm not one to boast, but...." Melisande and her companions sigh wearily and yawn.
- Jarst Daro tells a witty tale about an unusual audience he had with the famous Demivierge of Rhigos. The ladies love it, but the Sun Domers blush visibly and murmur their disapproval.
- Sticklebrixx tells the one about the Issaries merchant and the farmer's daughter. It was a big hit around nomad campfires, but its lack of subtlety is not appreciated here.
- Just as Myrrhyn Calmstorm walks out to begin, an ugly woman rushes out, kisses Myrrhyn, and in a shrill falsetto, shrieks of undying love. It is actually Agrestis, Sor-Eel's jester, done up in drag. The crowd laughs as Agrestis is dragged back to the stalls.



During this little exhibition, the sly Agrestis has actually cast his Lie spell on Myrrhyn. Using Lie, the tale Myrrhyn tells to the ladies is irresistible! (Myrrhyn's Lie spell gives him an automatic perfect 80 score for roleplaying if the judging formula is used, which all but assures him of a first-place win.)

What tale does Myrrhyn tell? For sophisticated medieval smut, you can't beat Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (make sure you get hold of a modern, unexpurgated translation, such as the Penguin Classics version). The GM is sure to find a witty tale among the hundred presented that tickles his fancy and that could be summarized at this juncture. For example, casting Myrrhyn as the protagonist, try "Third Day; First Story." Herein Masetto of Lamporecchio pretends to be dumb and becomes a gardener at a convent where all the nuns vie with one another to take him off to bed with them.

If the suggested formula is used to score the event, the NPC roleplaying scores are as follows: Cary 70, Promidius 28, Vathmar 20, Jarst 52, Sticklebrixx 8, Myrrhyn 80 (with Lie spell; otherwise, only 40).



Wildday / Truth Week / Earth Season Festival Wrapup

What the Priestesses Say: The closing ceremonies of the festival honor the winning suitor and his bride, and remind the spectators of their religious duties throughout the year. Afterwards an outdoor feast is sponsored by the Lightbringer temple. Many spectators choose to celebrate privately in the taverns and inns of Garhound, or with friends and relatives residing in town.

By sundown, the festival fever has run its course, and the streets of Garhound are almost back to normal. Travelers from more distant locations like New Pavis and Sun Dome may spend the night in town and start out for home in

the morning, but, with the exception of friends and companions of the contest winner, the eating and drinking is generally subdued.

- Unless their man wins, Sor-Eel and his party depart with abrupt dispatch. Myrrhyn Calmstorm accompanies the Lunar contingent as they return to Pavis. Sor-Eel must devise other strategies to weaken the influence of the Garhound clan.

- The winner marries Melisande, the Harvest Queen, and their union is consummated at the apex of the Harvest Festival amidst great rejoicing.

1. If the new Champion of Garhound is Carylton, there will be an unrestrained, joyful celebration.

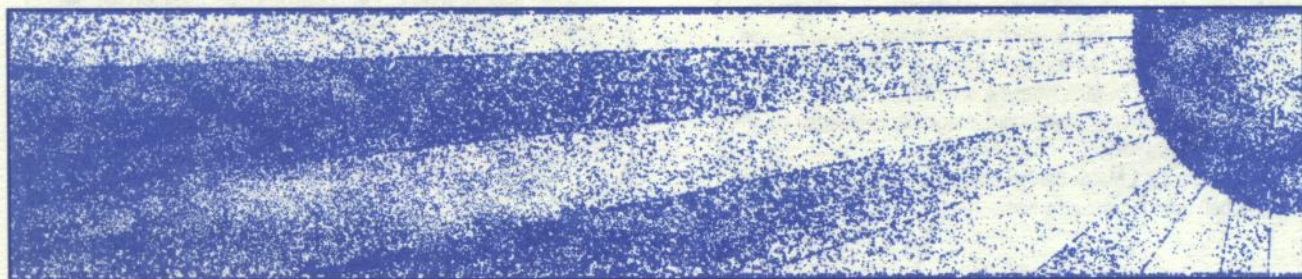
2. If Sticklebrixx becomes the Champion, the town will be drunk dry in a matter of days.

3. If either of the Sun Domers win, the celebrations continue, but with a more formal, reserved air.

4. If the new Champion is Myrrhyn Calmstorm, Sor-Eel and his contingent stay on to celebrate and swiftly outstay their welcome. Sor-Eel's man Myrrhyn becomes a continual irritation to Sir Davis and the Garhound family during his term as Champion, and the governor exploits this friction to his advantage.

5. If the ogre Jarst wins Melisande's hand, the crowd adopts an attitude of mourning. The prospects for Garhound are bleak: the town and surrounding district suffers greatly in a terrible drought in the coming year, the crops are blighted, and the livestock are barren.

- If a PC is the victor, the public response depends on their impression of his character and virtues as evidenced in his actions during the contest. If he played honorably and respected the rituals and mythic traditions underlying the festival, they take to him as a kinsman and countryman. If he won by crooked or uncouth means, and if he mocked the ritual underpinnings of the contests by treating them with disrespect or indifference, they treat him with the same guarded courtesy and veiled hostility that they show Lunar occupation forces.



Carylon Squally, the Local Lad

Orlanth Initiate; Human male, 17.

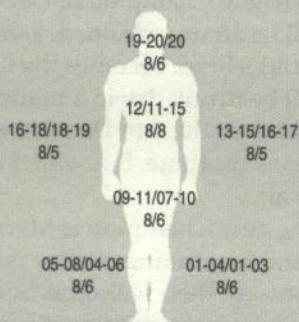
Cary won the right to take part in contest from among his peers in the unofficial tourney the young bucks of Garhound hold before the Contest. Although in awe of the more experienced competitors, Cary is young and cocky, and has the support of the crowd.

Rumors

- Cary and Melisande are sweethearts, and the priestesses really hope he'll win. If he does, we're bound to have a bumper harvest next year. (True.)
- It's almost certain Melisande will pick Cary as her favorite. If this happens, her father will be furious. The Winnows and the Squallys have been feuding for years. (True.)

STR 15
CON 16
SIZ 15
INT 13
POW 18
DEX 16
APP 12

Move: 3
Fatigue: 31
Hit points: 16
Magic points: 18
DEX SR: 2

**Carylon Squally**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ sword and shield) = 29.5. Fatigue 1 (31-29.5). Plate Armor (AP 8/ENC 25).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Broadsword	6	41/37	1d8+1+1d4	1.5/15
Heater Shield	7	27/40	1d6+1d4	3/12
Mtd. Lance	0	40/—	1d10+1+ mount	3.5/10
Kick	8	43/37	1d6+1d4	0/8
Fist	7	43/41	1d3+1d4	0/8 (3)
Grapple	7/4	37/41	1d6+1d4	—

Spirit Magic (114-ENC): Farsee 1, Bladeshard 1, Heal 2, Protection 1, Disrupt (1).

Skills: Run 65, Jump 54, Ride 56, Animal Lore 08, Dodge 26, Sing 32, Swim 37, Martial Arts 04, Climb 66, Search 61, Throw 42.

Languages: Pavic 33/00, Stormspeech 03/00.

Armor: Borrowed and refitted plate loaned by the Garhound clan. If Cary competes well, Sir Davis says he can keep it.

Special Items: As the local Champ, Cary has been gifted with several items for the duration of the contest by well-wishers:

- A cat's paw lucky charm, which halves the chance to Fumble.
- A full run-down on the horses in Sir Davis's stable (increase his Animal Lore by 50% when he selects his mount).
- His brother Horton's broadsword, magically enchanted by Humakt (extra AP).
- An Endurance 1 Matrix carved onto a tin armband.
- A ribbon from Melisande's hair.

Promidius the Sun Domer

Yelmatio Initiate; Human male, 17.

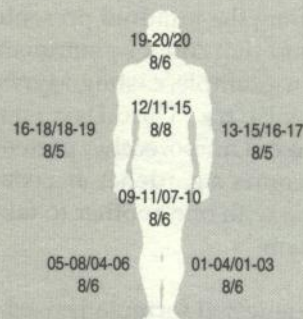
Young Promidius is the official Yelmatio contestant selected from Sun County's intake of new initiates for this year. He affects the haughty arrogance of a Sun Lord, but lacks the skills. He is carefully sequestered with the Sun Dome contingent during his stay.

Rumors

- If Promidius weren't Count Solanthos's nephew, he'd never been picked for the contest. (False.)
- That dirty little pillow-biter was only chosen because he's the Count's new joy-boy. (False.)

STR 09
CON 17
SIZ 15
INT 12
POW 18
DEX 15
APP 18

Move: 3
Fatigue: 27
Hit points: 16
Magic points: 18
DEX SR: 3

**Promidius the Sun Domer**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 1-H spear and shield) = 34. Fatigue -7 (27-34). Plate Armor (AP 8/ENC 25).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H Spear	7	32/29	1d8+1	2/10
Hoplite Shield	8	30/69	1d6	7/18
Mtd. Lance	0	28/—	1d10+1+ mount	3.5/10
Shortsword	7	30/30	1d6+1	1/10
Fist	8	32/28	1d3	0/8 (3)
Grapple	8/5	37/41	1d6	—

Spirit Magic (113-ENC): Light, Detect Gold, Farsee, Lantern 1, Coordination 1 (reduces SR by 1), Repair, Disrupt.

Skills: Run 29, Jump 31, Ride 35, Animal Lore 07, Dance 59, Dodge 28, Swim 15, Scan 40, Throw 35.

Languages: Pavic 32/16, Firespeech 02/00.

Armor: Gilded plate (on loan).

Gifts and Geases: Raised Dance, "speak only truth."

Special Items: Promidius has on loan from his temple the following item:

- A golden torc which confers upon the wearer the ability to talk to horses as per Mindspeech. However, while wearing it, the user must not wear any armor on his legs. Ergo, Promidius will only use the torc in the first two events.

Vathmar Allweather the Affronted Sun Domer

Yemalio Initiate; Human male, 20.

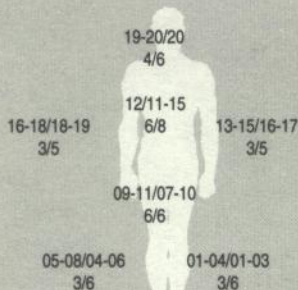
Vathmar's overbearing vanity is founded in the exceptional hardness (CON) which he recently earned as a gift from Yemalio. He is not part of the official Sun Dome party and is resentful towards them because he wasn't selected to be their candidate. He has spent his cult ransom money to take part in the contest and has staked the rest of his fortune on himself winning the Pain Test. Vathmar will sleep in the fields during the contest, ostensibly to show off his mettle, but really because he's broke.

Rumors

- Vathmar was a nobody before Yemalio gifted him, and will be a nobody again once he breaks his geases. (So general a statement as to be meaningless.)
- "Never seek shelter from storm" – that's the real reason why that conceited Yemalio has to sleep outside! (False.)
- If Vathmar's got such stamina, why is it he keeps away from all the girls?

STR 15
CON 21
SIZ 10
INT 13
POW 08
DEX 12
APP 09

Move: 3
Fatigue: 28
Hit points: 16
Magic points: 08
DEX SR: 3

**Vathmar Allweather**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 1-H spear and shield) = 16. Fatigue 12 (28–16). Scale hauberk (AP 6/ENC 4.8), cuirbouilli limbs & helm (AP 3/ENC 2.8), soft leather helm& padding (AP 1/ENC .3).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
1-H Spear	7	59/33	1d8+1+1d4	2/10
Hoplite Shield	8	30/69	1d6+1d4	7/18
Mtd. Lance	0	39/—	1d10+1+ mount	3.5/10
Kick	8	50/37	1d6+1d4	leg
Fist	8	32/28	1d3	0/3 (3)
Grapple	8/5	37/41	1d6	—

Spirit Magic (42–ENC): Bladesharp 2, Detect Gold 1, Heal 1, Disrupt (1), Vigor 1 (raises total HP to 17).

Skills: Run 32, Jump 41, Ride 72, Animal Lore 14, Dodge 40, Orate 23, Swim 25, Scan 66, Sleight 38, Throw 52.

Languages: Pavic 30/00, Firespeech 07/00.

Armor: Scale hauberk, cuirbouilli limbs, padded cuirbouilli helmet.

Gifts and Geases: Raised CON (8 points); "remain celibate in Truth week," "never eat the meat of birds," "never let a horse suffer needlessly," "never speak to or help trolls in any way," "never use any axe," "never wear non-metal armour on torso," "never use any shield but hoplite shield," "never flee or surrender to worshippers of Zorak Zoran." Vathmar always avoids trolls.

Myrrhyn Calmstorm the Lunar Collaborator

Orlanth Initiate; Human male, 32.

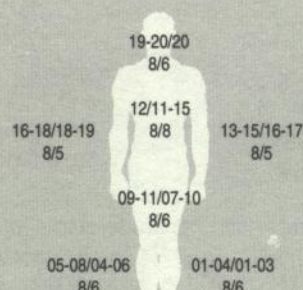
Myrrhyn is an Orlanthi turncoat who serves the Lunars. He worships at the Pavis air temple where Faltikus the Good, a Lunar sympathizer, presides over a shrinking congregation. Myrrhyn has entered at the behest of governor Sor-Eel, who has promised great wealth if he succeeds. With his agent as Constable of Garhound, Sor-Eel hopes to weaken the political hold Sir Davis has over the area. Myrrhyn is handsome, but for a pock-marked face. He has been visited by impests, and it is likely he will leave the cult one day. His gear is devoid of runes or other markings.

Rumors

- He paid to enter with freshly minted silver Imperials. (True.)
- Myrrhyn Calmstorm is one of "Faltikus's men." (More or less true. If anyone's, Myrrhyn would be Sor-Eel's man.)
- I saw him drinking with a pair of Lunars from the local garrison last night. (True. They were actually Spoken Word agents giving him final instructions.)

STR 10
CON 18
SIZ 15
INT 16
POW 13
DEX 11
APP 16

Move: 3
Fatigue: 28
Hit points: 17
Magic points: 13
DEX SR: 3

**Myrrhyn Calmstorm**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ broadsword and shield) = 29.5. Fatigue 2 (28–29.5). Plate armor (AP 8/ENC 25).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Broadsword	7	72/49	1d8+1+1d4	1.5/10
Target Shield	8	30/69	1d6+1d4	3/12
Mtd. Lance	0	66/—	1d10+1+ mount	3.5/10
Sickle	8	25/19	1d6+1d4	0.5/6
Fist	8	43/41	1d3+1d4	0/8 (3)
Grapple	8/5	37/41	1d6+1d4	—

Spirit Magic (75–ENC): Farssee 1, Endurance 3, Befuddle (2), Heal 2, Mobility 3, Bladesharp 3, Countermagic 2.

Skills: Run 39, Jump 29, Ride 66, Animal Lore 24, Dodge 33, Orate 32, Swim 08, Climb 76, Scan 68, Search 58, Throw 39.

Languages: Pavic 52/16, Stormspeech 16/00, New Pelorian 36/08.

Armor: Plate.

Special Items: To ensure his man will win, Sor-Eel has loaned Myrrhyn the following items:

- Myrrhyn's armor.
- A Heal 6 tablet hidden in the pommel of his sword.
- A chunk of moonrock, which yields 8 MP (16 on Full Moon).
- A good story to tell the ladies (see Agrestis's trick in the "Ladies Choice" event).

Stikklebrixx the Storm Buller

Storm Bull Initiate; Human male, 30.

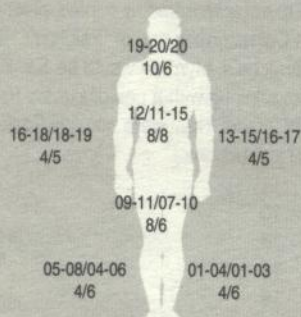
A brave of the Pol-Joni, this is Stikklebrixx's first time in civilization, and boy! does he love it (especially the beer they make round here). Ignorant outsiders can't believe he is odds-on favorite for the Intelligence Test.

Rumors

- No one has told the Bull-man you can't hit horses in the joust. (False. Stikklebrixx knows: he just doesn't care)
- To Stikklebrixx, small chaos is all chaos. This includes Lunar-lovers like Faltikus. Nevertheless, he'll drink all night with anyone who has a deep pocket. (True)

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

Move: 3
Fatigue: 33
Hit points: 16
Magic points: 16
DEX SR: 2

**Stikklebrixx**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ sword and shield) = 29.5. Fatigue 3 (33-29.5). Chain hauberk (AP 6/Enc. 7.2) and padding (AP 1/ENC 1.2), cuirbouilli limbs and helm (AP 3/ENC 4.2) & padding (AP 1/ENC 2.8).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Bastard Sword	5	66/37	1d10+1+1d6	2/12
Kite Shield	6	30/69	1d6+1d6	5/16
Mtd. Lance	0	81/—	1d10+1+ mount	3.5/10
Head Butt	6	32/—	1d3+1d6	—
Fist	6	63/40	1d3+1d6	0/4 (3)
Grapple	6/3	37/40	1d6+1d6	—

Spirit Magic (90-ENC): Fanaticism 1, Mobility 3, Slow 2, Heal 1, Bladesharp 2, Protection 2.

Skills: Run 74, Jump 48, Ride 91, Animal Lore 54, Dodge 26, Orate 52, Swim 21, Search 55, Scan 51, Throw 29.

Languages: Praxian 31/00, Pavic 16/00.

Armor: Padded chain hauberk, padded cuirbouilli limbs, padded horned cuirbouilli helmet.

Special Items:

- Stikklebrixx's horned helmet has been enchanted with 6 additional AP.
- A vat of Rhino Fat (adds 1 AP to hit locations smeared with it, not figured into stats above).

Jarst Daro the Mysterious Stranger

Argan Argar Initiate; Ogre male, 29.

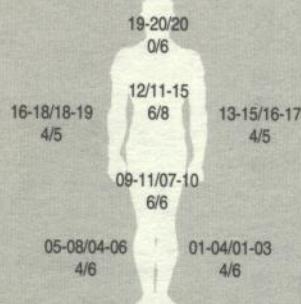
Garbed in black, Jarst Daro appears before the priestesses just before the first event is about to get under way, pays his fee, and demands to take part. To the scandal of the crowd, he announces he is Argan Argar cultist! Nevertheless, that dark god is counted in mythology as one the Husband-Protectors and the Ernalda priestesses have no choice but to acquiesce. Jarst Daro is actually an ogre who hopes with his presence to pervert and pollute the harvest festival. If he wins the contest and weds the Queen, it will bode ill for Garhound in the coming year.

Rumors

- He just walked in from the Wastes! (True.)
- This Jarst Daro is obviously a Lunar agitator sent to cause trouble in Garhound. (False. Jarst is acting on his own twisted initiative.)
- Even the Lunar agents in town are scratching their heads over this guy! (True.)

STR 23
CON 17
SIZ 16
INT 12
POW 15
DEX 10
APP 17

Move: 3
Fatigue: 40
Hit points: 17
Magic points: 15
DEX SR: 3

**Jarst Daro**

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/ 2-H Spear) = 15.2. Fatigue 25 (40-15.2). Lead hauberk (AP 6/ENC 7.2); padded cuirbouilli limbs (AP 4/ENC 6).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
2-H Spear	5	53/35	1d10+1+1d6	2/10
Buckler	7	30/46	1d6+1d6	1/8
Mtd. Lance	0	35/—	1d10+1+ mount	3.5/10
Quarterstaff	5	86/78	1d8+1d6	1.5/8
Fist	7	56/45	1d3+1d6	0/4 (3)
Grapple	7/4	37/41	1d6+1d6	—

Spirit Magic (82-ENC): Disruption (1), Fireblade (4), Counter-magic 1, Dispel Magic 2, Shimmer 3, Heal 1.

Skills: Run 55, Jump 41, Ride 40, Animal Lore 08, Dodge 54, Orate 32, Seduce (Courtesan) 32, Martial Arts 12, Climb 45, Scan 50, Search 50, Swim 31, Throw 29.

Languages: Esrolian 82/50, Pavic 32/00, New Pelorian 24/00, Tradetalk 22/00, Darktongue 22/00.

Armor: Lead scale hauberk, padded cuirbouilli limbs, no helmet.

Special Items: Jarst Daro owns a Ball of Tails which, if discovered, would earn him the instant enmity of all nomads. This Ball of Tails was created by a shaman associated with the Cacodemon cult. Made of four tails, one each from a bison, impala, sable, and high llama, this enchanted item contains 4 power spirits (POW 12, POW 11, POW 07, POW 03) that Daro uses to power his spells.

Chaotic Features: None.

Rabbit Hat Farm

Corruption Beneath the Surface of Sun County

Introduction

Several years ago, the Krarsht cult sought a base of operations in Sun County. Through a shrine there, they planned to expand their profitable cultivation and collection of hazia, the banned narcotic which was finding an ever-expanding market among the decadent libertines of the Lunar Heartlands.

The site selected for the temple lay beneath the small hamlet of Rabbit Hat Farm, a modest village on the southeastern edge of the county. Located far from Sun Dome Temple, it was an ideal base for the clandestine activities of the Waiting Mouth.

The krarshtkids were sent to excavate the site, and soon afterwards the Lip Polybius was dispatched to establish the temple. Reclusive, paranoid and suspicious, Polybius decided his shrine would be far more secure without the prying eyes of the locals about, so he devised a cunning plot to drive them away.

Not wanting to draw attention to himself or his cult's presence, he hired a band of renegade Bison Riders to raid and sack the village. The healthiest survivors were carried off to be sold as slaves; the old and sick were allowed to flee with their tales of murderous nomads. To ensure that no one would return, Polybius then invited a band of broos to squat in the village for a couple of days. The inquisitive were frightened away by the Malia tokens the broos left crudely displayed around the site and by the unspeakable things they did to the surviving livestock. Finally, Polybius engaged a jack-o-bear to guard the entrance to the tunnels. The pious Lip descended back into the subterranean depths, dispassionately pleased with the fruits of his labors.

Not long after, the Krarshti was shocked out of his complacency by a secret message received from his superior in Pavis, a high-ranking Lunar official. Polybius was ordered to close down his shrine and to inform the Tongues (priests) of the cult of the closure. The reason for the closure was never revealed to Polybius, and may be as obscure

or mundane as the Referee pleases, but the devout Polybius unquestioningly acknowledged the demands of the Devouring Mother.

The Krarsht cult has a grotesque but effective means of disseminating important information among their far-flung temples. A victim is ritually informed of the message to be sent. Then the victim is sacrificed, and the message appears in a vision to all priests of the cult. In times of need, or when no captive is handy, an unfortunate cult member is given the message and sacrificed.

Having driven the natives away, Polybius found himself without a suitable victim for sacrifice. Through meditation and prayer, Polybius sought guidance from the Waiting Mouth, which has graciously granted him one attempt to obtain a captive to sacrifice. If he fails, he is resigned to sacrificing himself to send the message. Polybius now sits brooding in his cold stone halls, waiting for a victim to present himself. As a Krarshti, he is infinitely patient: he knows that Fate and the Will of Krarsht will eventually deliver a victim into his tunnels. He also knows that if he blows his one chance, he has but one final service to perform for the Hungry One.

The Refugees' Tale

When refugees from Rabbit Hat stumbled into the neighboring hamlet of Wyoh, a messenger was sent immediately to the militia unit at Chomoro, and two Wyoh men returned to scout Rabbit Hat to see whether it might be safe to return. When these scouts discovered a band of broos at the site, they swiftly returned home, strongly advising against the return of refugees and forwarding their report to Chomoro.

At Chomoro, the first messenger arrived to learn the Boatmen were out on patrol. The messenger's report was left in the hands of Chomoro's temple officials. In turn, the temple officials sent a routine report upriver to Sun Dome, and waited for the return of the militia unit on patrol. The second messenger's account of broo raiders in Rabbit Hat reached Chomoro



before the militia had returned from patrol. Alarmed, the Chomoro officials sent an urgent courier to Sun Dome requesting assistance. No sooner had this courier been dispatched than the militia unit returned to Chomoro (five days after the first report reached Chomoro and eight days after the Bison Riders attacked Rabbit Hat) and immediately marched off for Rabbit Hat. Stopping on the way in Wyoh to collect the tales of the refugees, and to obtain the use of two local men as scouts, the militia headed for Rabbit Hat. Neither the militiamen nor the two Wyoh scouts have been heard of since, and the locals are too afraid to send anyone else to observe Rabbit Hat.

The amount of time elapsed since the militia disappeared depends on the scenario hook used. If the PCs must be assembled and dispatched from Helmbold or Sun Dome Temple, they may arrive in Rabbit Hat within the second week after the Bison Rider attack. If the PCs are outlander treasure hunters looking for the Crown of Yamsur, four to eight weeks has passed since the first attack, and no Sun Dome Templars or militia have been dispatched as yet, since divination clearly indicates that none of the missing militiamen or their scouts have survived. Also, the danger of disease from broo-defiled sites outweighs any advantages of a swift response.

Scenario Hooks For Sun County PCs

- A young, ambitious templar, following in the footsteps of his father, a famous Light Son of former years, has long petitioned the count for an opportunity to advance to acolyte status. Solanthos summons this templar to an audience in the Sun Dome Temple Meeting Hall, describes the situation at Rabbit Hat, and tells him:

"Safeguard this settlement and protect it from nomads and Chaos filth. Upon notice from you that the town is secured, I shall send forth to you men to work Rabbit Hat's lands, and you may thereafter consider yourself its lord. I shall also immediately deliver to the temple a favorable recommendation upon your application for acolyte status.

"You may select any of the active militia half-files as your command, or, if you choose, you may hand-pick your own half-file from among active and inactive men. If you are successful, I further promise that each man in your command shall receive a plot of land in Rabbit Hat Farm to work as his own. You shall be the judge of which plot and how large a plot each man receives."

The templar may be a PC, or, more likely, the templar may be an NPC, and the PCs are either an eight-man militia half-file or a collection of various PC militiamen chosen for their special skills. If the templar is a PC, see the grant of lordship document on page 108.

- A half-file of PC militiamen is assigned to The Glory Boys, Sonny Brightness's unit, in Helmbold. News comes to Helmbold that the militia unit stationed in Chomoro is overdue on a mission and feared lost. The unit was dispatched to investigate fugitive survivors' accounts of Bison Rider and broo raids on the Rabbit Hat Farm settlement. An indifferent Sonny complacently proposes forwarding a report to Sun Dome and waiting for orders. However, the PCs have several friends in the missing militia unit. Sonny reluctantly agrees to permit the PCs to set out alone for Rabbit Hat Farm while he waits for orders and reinforcements from upriver.

A variant of this hook introduces the PC militiamen as a unit arriving in Chomoro to assume its rotation from the active militia there. When the PCs arrive, they discover the Chomoro boys are out on a scouting patrol to the Rabbit Hat area and are long overdue.

- Upon receiving a report that the Chomoro militia unit is long overdue, Light Captain Invictus consults the temple diviners, then hastily assembles a special group of templars, militiamen, and other specialists best suited to the peculiar circumstances indicated. Considering the reports of Bison Rider raiders, he chooses people experienced in dealings with nomads, and well versed in their languages and customs. A Chalana Arroy healer is best suited to deal with sources of broo-borne disease. One divination response, "The Mouth Waits Within the Stone," may be interpreted as suggesting a link with the Krarsht cult, so friendly nomad Storm Bull cultists may also be sought for their expertise and zeal in fighting Chaos.

- On his regular journey to Sun Dome to copy the latest entries in Hector's *Yellow Book*, the Irrippi Ontor cultist graciously presents Hector with a copy of the document of Lucien the Diviner treating the Crown of Yamsur. (See "An Inquiry Upon Lost Treasures," p. 109.)

Hector reports the contents of this document to Solanthos, who directs the temple to provide further divinations on the subject. In response to the query, "Where is the Crown of Yamsur?" the reply, "In darkness beneath the festering earth," is



significantly noted to be identical to the response to another query recently asked, "Where is the greatest threat to the security of Rabbit Hat Farm?"

Inferring some links between the troubles reported from Rabbit Hat Farm and the affair of the Crown of Yamsur, the Count directs the Light Guide, Laertes Coatillon, to form a discreet and multi-talented expedition party to delve into the mystery of the Crown of Yamsur and the curse of Rabbit Hat Farm.

The party may be composed exclusively of PCs, or may be saddled with obnoxious and well-connected NPC scholars and holy men who blithely and imprudently order PCs to accompany them into long, dark, sticky tunnels. Thereupon these NPCs are instantly transformed into whining, precious, and vulnerable charges who must be protected from danger at all costs.

- In response to divinations concerning the fate of the templar commanding the missing militia unit sent to Rabbit Hat Farm, the temple receives the following reply: *"Perished... avenged... mastery within the waiting mouth."* Correctly interpreting "waiting mouth" as referring to Krarsht and "mastery" as signifying the missing templar (whose Gift was mastery of the Spear), the count summons a powerful group of local heroes to the temple Meeting Hall. The templar's widow and children look on as the count charges the PCs to recover the dead hero's body so he might be cremated with full honors. Of course, any evidence of the works of Krarsht at Rabbit Hat Farm must also be destroyed utterly.

Scenario Hooks For Outlander PCs

- In response to a divination asking Yelmadio "Which of thy servants should lead the mission to Rabbit Hat Farm?" the temple priests have received the following enigmatic response – *"From darkness the Lightbringers bear the crown."* The puzzled diviners ponder this message, reluctantly concluding that Yelmadio judges Lightbringers to be best-suited or most-favored for such a task. The count thereupon has all the Lightbringer cultists in the county rounded up and summarily dispatched to Rabbit Hat Farm.

Version A: Earlier in the campaign the GM has found a pretext to press the "Inquiry Upon Lost Treasures" document (see p. 109) upon a Lightbringer PC. This PC is hustled before the count, who reveals the exact words of the divination that has prompted him to summon Lightbringers to "volunteer" their services to the

Sun Dome. The count and the temple staff have no clue to the significance of the "crown" reference in their divination, and the PC is free to inform them or not at his discretion.

Version B: This is the same as Version A, but the count knows of the "Inquiry" document and understands the significance of the crown reference, though he does not reveal this information to the PCs. In this case the count will certainly send loyal Sun Dome NPCs along with the PCs to ensure that any priceless cult treasure recovered does not become outlander plunder.

Version C: This is the same as Version A, but neither the PCs nor the Sun Domers are aware of the "Inquiry" document, and they are all perplexed by the "crown" reference. Nonetheless, the divination is clear; the PC Lightbringers are ordained to resolve the troubles at Rabbit Hat Farm as a service to the Sun Dome Temple.

PC Motivation: The GM should fashion the threats and/or rewards to suit the psychology of his players and player characters. Some players find financial inducements or other benefits (enchanted items, free training or spell teaching, access to special cult magics) inducement enough. Other players may appreciate the dramatic touch of being dragooned into the service of Sun Dome against their will. Such PCs may require an NPC escort to keep them honest, or may be required to swear fearsome oaths.

In any case, the GM has the luxury of confining the PCs to Sun Dome Temple hospitality until he strikes upon suitably persuasive arguments. (For an example of comparable Sun Dome hospitality, see the experiences of Bituran Varosh in "Sun Dome Justice," page 52.)

The count may also offer to grant lordship over Rabbit Hat Farm, guarantee a plot of land for each PC, and provide settlers to work the land, *if* the PCs can clear it of any Chaos taint, *if* they can secure it from further attacks, *if* any PC is an initiate of Yelmadio or is willing to join the cult and become an initiate, *if* that PCs is willing to swear his loyalty to Sun County and its count, and *if* he is willing to take up residence in Rabbit Hat. See the grant of lordship on page 108.

- An agent acting on behalf of an anonymous third party seeks an experienced group of adventurers with skill and discretion to locate and retrieve a treasure in Sun County without attracting the attention of local officials.

Version A: The Lankhor Mhy Temple in Pavis has linked the "Inquiry" document with rumors from Sun County about a settlement where the



Yelmalian fertility stones have been defiled by Broos raiders. The PCs are told they are looking for a crown that may have been buried beneath a fertility stone, but they are not told of the legend associated with the crown or its possible significance to Yelmalian cultists. The PCs must devise their own cover story to account for entering Sun County. If the crown is discovered, they are warned that Sun County officials are likely to confiscate any treasures they discover in the possession of an outlander.

Version B: Irrippi Ontor has linked the "Inquiry" document and rumors from Rabbit Hat, and sponsors the expedition to seek the crown. Gimgim the Grim, head of Lunar intelligence in Pavis, discovers too late that Irrippi Ontor has set the mission in motion. In order to prevent adventurers from stumbling across evidence linking Gimgim and the Lunars with the Krarshti temple, Gimgim leaks a rumor to Laertes Coatillon's intelligence network that a group of outlanders plan a treasure hunting expedition in Rabbit Hat. Thus, the PCs have not only the jack-o-bear and Krarshti to contend with; they must also evade or defeat any militia or templars sent to Rabbit Hat Farm to protect native treasures from outland robbers and adventurers.

Version C: The secretive patron linking the "Inquiry" document and the Rabbit Hat rumors may be, at the GM's discretion, either Lhankor Mhy, Irrippi Ontor, or any independent or government-backed foreign treasure-hunters. A group of nomad tribesmen is hired to seek the crown in Rabbit Hat, with the reasoning that beast-riding nomads traveling through Vulture Country are best able to enter and leave Sun County without interference from local citizens or authorities.

GM Notes

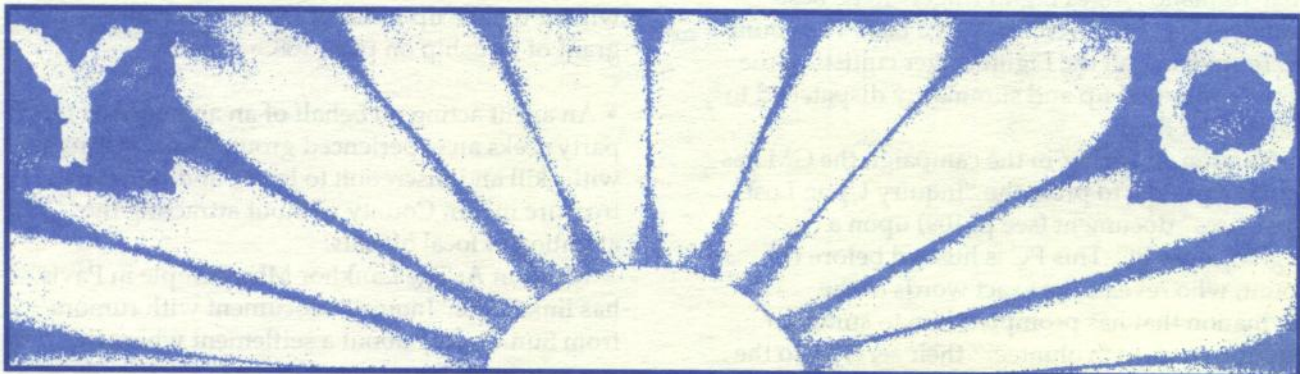
Balancing Scenario Challenges: Initiate-level PCs with modest skills and equipment can handle the jack-o-bear and may attempt to explore the Krarshti tunnels, though they would be wise to

leave and seek reinforcements when they learn the scale of the opposition. A weaker party may anticipate fatalities in a final confrontation with Polybius and his creatures.

Cleansing Rabbit Hat Farm of its Chaos corruption requires more skilled and durable characters. Gaining the support of one or two characters of acolyte or rune-level status is a wise precaution.

The Crown of Yamsur: Some GMs may feel that the Crown of Yamsur is too precious to be found so easily, buried as it is beneath the chaos altar in the headman's hut (see "Pumpkinhead the Jack-o-Bear," p. 98, and "The Crown of Yamsur," p. 110). Alternatively, Pumpkinhead may have moved his chaos altar and treasure trove underground in anticipation of assuming occupancy of the soon-to-be-abandoned Krarshti complex. A logical new site for his Primal Chaos shrine would be one of the dead-end tunnels leading from the Great Hall.

New Runequest Players: Beginning *RuneQuest* gamers may not appreciate the stark horror most Gloranthans experience when facing creatures of Chaos, and may not realize how bizarre and deadly a monster with chaotic features can be. Attaching an experienced NPC to a PC party of beginning *RuneQuest* players gives you a mouthpiece through which to voice the appropriate expressions of dread and terror when dragonsnails, Thanatari ghost heads, and krarshtkids are first encountered. Similarly, such an NPC can offer useful tips to doomed PCs, like "Run!" when attacked by a ghost in spirit combat, or "M-m-m-maybe it's just a chaos feature that m-m-m-makes it seems invulnerable!" Such an NPC informant might be a competent initiate like Haloric Longfarm (see pp. 62), who might be able to save the party from disaster, or a feeble Innocent Bystander whose role is to whine about never seeing his wife and children again, shriek with terror when chaos is encountered, then panic and flee if the PCs seem to be naively optimistic about their chances of survival.



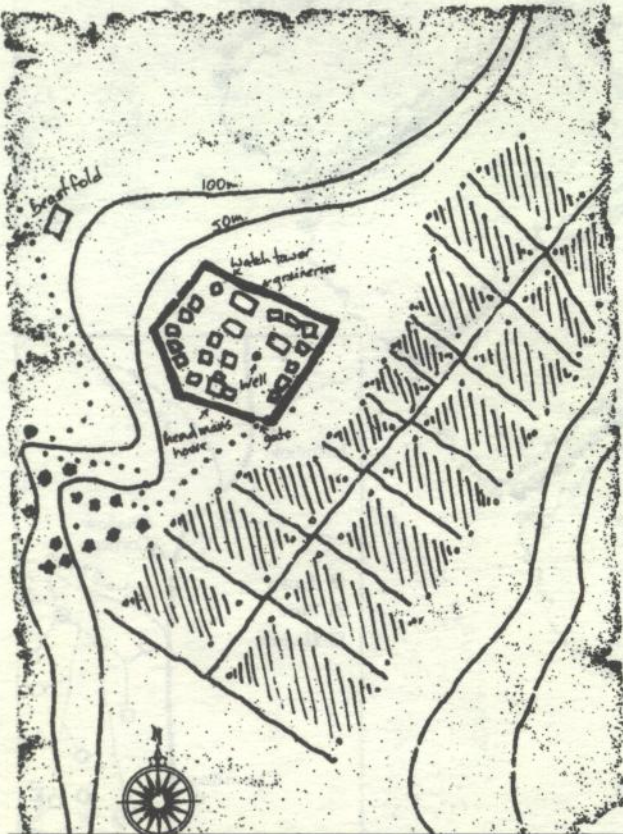


Approaching Rabbit Hat Farm

See the map of Rabbit Hat Farm nearby. Review "Diseases," *RQ Deluxe, Player's Book*, pp. 81-82.

From Chomoro, the Zola Fel is easily forded, except at flood, when local fishermen might be induced to lend a hand with their boats. It is 10 kilometers by road and trail from Chomoro east to Rabbit Hat. The route passes through the hamlets of Sellerscroft and Wyoh. If the PCs stop in Wyoh to interview the refugees of Rabbit Hat, they get a map indicating the important features of the town and its surroundings. Otherwise, their first indication of the lay of the land is gained from the high ground overlooking the town and fields of Rabbit Hat Farm. Trace or duplicate "Refugee's Map of Rabbit Hat" (see below) and give it to the players.

From the bluffs the town and fields below appear deserted. Only the headman's house has an intact roof; all other buildings have been gutted by fire. The main irrigation canal is littered with sand and debris. Side canals serving the fields are clogged with silt, forcing the water flow into murky pools. On close inspection the barley grains rot in their stalks, and seem to suffer a variety of blights and infestations. (A Sun Domer farmer or a successful Plant Lore test confirms this).



Refugee's Map of Rabbit Hat

A thorough search of the area reveals the following details:

A. Tracks: It is some time since the renegade nomads raided the village and the broos encamped there, but abundant bison and broo tracks are scattered throughout the fields and along the bluffs overlooking town. A wide-ranging search indicates that the Bison Riders approached from the northeast and apparently returned the same way, evidently accompanied by men on foot (the captive villagers to be sold as slaves). The Bison Riders' track is skillfully obscured on rocky ground a kilometer to the north. Pursuit of the Bison Riders and their captives is plainly a dubious and futile task. The broo raiders, on the other hand, approached and departed from the south. Their trail can be easily marked from their campsite. Pursuit and extermination of these broo raiders is a more plausible adventure. It is not, however, part of this scenario, and details must be improvised by the GM.

B. Defiled Fertility Stones: To be included in the cult fertility spells, Sun County farmers receive special white stones from their priests to mark their plots. If a stone is disturbed, the spell for its area is broken. The fertility stones of the plots around Rabbit Hat Farm have all been upended, shattered, removed, or defiled. The jack-o-bear Pumpkinhead has moved one of these stones to the Headman's House and built his chaos altar upon it.

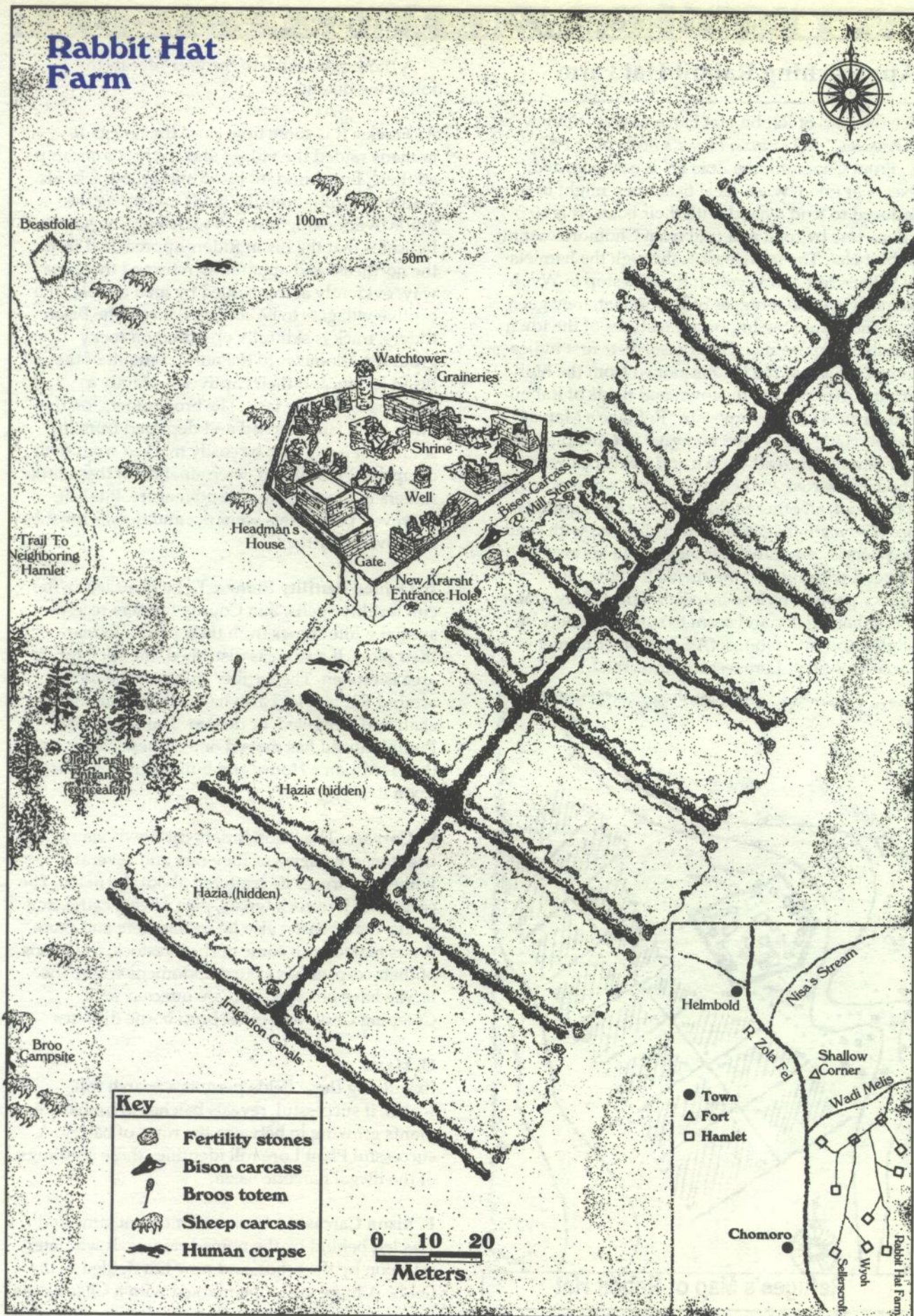
C. Corpses: The Bison Riders cut down many frightened villagers as they ran, and several withered corpses lie scattered about the fields. The corpses of livestock (goats, pigs, sheep, cattle, and native herd beasts) also lie rotting here and there. Broos mated with some of the livestock; the torsos of their corpses have burst abdomens where the larvae have emerged and are infected with Creeping Chills and other broo-borne diseases.

D. Hazia

Examining these fields permits a Search roll, which, if successful, reveals batches of immature plants growing in between the rows of barley. A successful Plant Lore roll identifies these seedlings of the illegal narcotic hazia.

E. Bison Carcass: A bison mount went lame and was left behind by the nomad raiders. It was later set upon by the broos, and now lies defiled in the fields. A huge millstone marked with a Chaos-rune

Rabbit Hat Farm





has been tied to its neck, and a message has been carved into its hide in crude Tradetalk: "Pray Malia Or Blood Die Small Cut." The bison carcass is infected with the Bleeding Disease, and anyone close enough to read the message has been exposed to it. Bleeding Disease has one degree of severity; afflicted individuals require twice as many Healing points as do unafflicted individuals. A character with Bleeding Disease must use Healing 4 to stop bleeding. Only Cure Disease, spirit of Healing, Divine Intervention, or Malia Initiation can halt these effects.

Pumpkinhead the Jack-O-Bear: A scarecrow may stand nearby with birds clustering around it cheerfully perching on its outstretched arms. This scarecrow is actually Pumpkinhead the jack-o-bear (see pp. 98) masquerading as a scarecrow, hoping to surprise curious folk who come to examine the millstone and the bison carcass. If you decide to have Pumpkinhead encountered here, casually indicate the presence of the nearby scarecrow as though the bison had possibly been placed near this harmless landmark for some obscure reason. Avoid calling too much attention to the scarecrow in your description, but cautious, observant characters may deserve a Scan roll to see through Pumpkinhead's imposture.

F. Broo Totem: A human head, its mouth set in a silent shriek, teeters on a spear haft thrust deeply into the ground. All the vegetation around it has sickened and died. This is a broo totem, and bound into the head is a wraith (attacks its victim's STR; see *RQ Deluxe, Creatures Book*, p. 42). If the totem is in any way disturbed, the wraith attacks.

Broo Totem Wraith

CON 26 INT 11

Move: Equal to Magic Points.

Hit Points: 26

Magic Points: 15.

Special Attack: Affects INT; see *Deluxe RQ, Creatures Book*, p. 43.

Armor: None, but may only be struck by magic.

G. Broo Campsite

The broo band bivouacked here before approaching the village. Set up over a long-cold hearth is a spit made of an old spear. The spear has cleanly penetrated a bronze helmet, which has been inverted to serve as a crude cooking pot. The

helm's eye holes have been blocked with clay, and it contains the remains of a foul meal. Anyone foolish enough to touch the helmet (which, by the runes, probably belonged to a perished Sun Dome militiaman) is exposed to the Shakes.

H. The Old Entrance: In a ragged stand of stunted skullbushes in wasteland about 60 meters west of the village gate is the original entrance to the Krarshti tunnels beneath Rabbit Hat. While the village was still inhabited, Polybius emerged only at night, and took great care to camouflage the entrance. Recently, however, Pumpkinhead has been somewhat more careless in entering the hole, and the skullbushes no longer conceal the entrance from observant eyes. A special success Scanning from the trail leading down the bluff toward the town discovers this entrance. And once Pumpkinhead has been identified, successful tracking may trace his path here.

When the bushes are pushed aside, a funnel-shaped depression drops down five meters to a tubular passage leading southeast. It is difficult to swing down and jump into the passage because the hole is without a sharp lip. Those who do try must make a successful Jump roll to avoid injury (1d6 damage to two hit locations, regardless of armor). It would be safer to climb down with a rope. The rope can be made fast to a skullbush or belayed by another character.

The tunnel slopes down into darkness. The walls are notably smooth and regular, and the air is heavy and stale. A successful Listen discloses the distant sound of trickling water.

I. The New Krarsht Entrance Hole: The village wall has partially collapsed at this point into a dark hole. The opening is partly blocked by debris, but a smooth, well-like shaft is visible within. A cool draft rises, and a successful Listen notes the distant sound of trickling water.

When Polybius discovered he needed to capture a sacrificial victim, he directed a krarshtkid to drive an obvious tunnel to the surface. This feature is guaranteed to attract the attention of any visitors. To further encourage the curious, he bade the krarshtkid to carve deep gouges in an alternating pattern into the sides of the shaft. The one-meter diameter shaft may thus be descended by a cautious person pressing on the walls and stepping left and right as though descending an odd ladder. A descent without rope is possible but fatiguing. The shaft is 25 meters deep. A character



can descend one meter each melee round without risk. However, one fatigue point is lost each round. A swifter descent at a rate of two meters per round is no more fatiguing, but risks a fall (test Climb to avoid a fall).

The Village of Rabbit Hat Farm

Located on marginal farmland that gradually blends into the desert, the walled hamlet of Rabbit Hat Farm is now silent and derelict. The farmers there had always fought a grim battle against drought and sand. The recent nomad raid, which saw their crops trampled, their homes burned, their livestock hamstrung, and their young carried off, came as a final blow from which they could not recover. Those few that survived simply packed their belongings and left.

A two-meter-high stone wall encloses the village. The gate at the south hangs open. The packed-clay roofs of the lesser adobe-brick huts have collapsed, their supporting wooden

frameworks destroyed by fire. The Headman's House alone retains its roof. All have had their hearths broken, and are defiled by brood dung.

The watchtower is a tapered stone cylinder with steps running around it to a timber platform on top, sheltered by a simple canopy. The granaries are two deep, stone-lined pits covered with heavy stone seals. These have been overlooked by the Bison Riders and broods, and contain valuable grain and root vegetables. The granaries might also provide secure overnight shelter for PCs concerned about marauding nomads or broods.

Pumpkinhead the Jack-o-Bear

Devotee of Primal Chaos and Initiate of Malia.

STR	19			
CON	14		19-20/20	
SIZ	14		3/5	
INT	07			12/11-15
POW	18	16-18/18-19	3/6	13-15/16-17
DEX	16	3/4		3/4
APP	13			
Move:	4		09-11/07-10	
Fatigue:	33		3/5	
Hit points:	14	05-08/04-06	3/5	01-04/01-03
Magic points:	18			3/5
DEX SR:	2			

Pumpkinhead

Attacks:

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Harmonize	1	automatic	(special*)	—
RH Claw	7	43/—	1d6+1d6	—
LH Claw	10	49/—	1d6+1d6	—

Divine Magic (100%): Worship Primal Chaos I.

Skills: Hide 66; Sneak 78.

Languages: Understand Spoken Tradetalk 38.

Chaotic Features: *Harmonize one opponent per round at no cost (up to nine victims at once). Appears Harmless (see *RQ Deluxe*, *Glorantha Book*, p. 30, Chaotic Feature 95; hence the friendly birdies). Granted immunity from Creeping Chills by Malia.

Treasure: Buried directly beneath the fertility-stone chaos altar in the headman's hut is a dirty skin with the jack-o-bear's loot in it. The skin may be recognized as that of another jack-o-bear. The treasure is all contaminated with Creeping Chills. **34 C, 258 L** (88 tainted), **4 W**; and **three gemstones** each worth 1d100 L. A **magic brass whistle** that attracts herd-beasts within hearing, if their MP are overcome by the user. It costs 1 MP and 1 FP each melee round to blow the whistle. (Pumpkinhead got it from a Lunar officer he killed and ate in the Pavis Rubble. The officer looted it from a Bison Khan at Moonbroth. The jack-o-bear is incapable of blowing the whistle.) A **large bronze key** (which belongs to the Krarshti who lives beneath Rabbit Hat). A **bees-wax candle** moulded into the shape of a toad worth 6L. Finally, a **small, ornate gold fillet** which is virtually priceless. This heirloom is the **Crown of Yamsur**, which was lost at the Battle of Moonbroth (see "The Crown of Yamsur" on p.109).



Pumpkinhead the Jack-o-Bear



The well in the center of the village has been poisoned by the corpses thrown into it, and anyone drinking its water is exposed to Creeping Chills. The few wretched date palms that grew by the well and gave the villagers much-wanted shade have all been wantonly cut down and their stumps blackened.

Anything of value in Rabbit Hat Farm was stolen by the nomads, taken away by the surviving villagers, or spitefully spoiled by the broos.

The Headman's House and Pumpkinhead

This structure was once the home of the village headman. This derelict ruin is now the lair and larder of Pumpkinhead, the jack-o-bear.

Pumpkinhead was originally recruited by the Krarshti to guard access to their underground chambers. Polybius is apprehensive about dismissing him now that the shrine is closed. Pumpkinhead has been recently feeding on the remains of the Chomoro militia unit dispatched to investigate the area.

Pumpkinhead, an outcast from the Big Rubble, had wandered the Cradles Valley for months before being recruited by Polybius. He appears to be a normal scarecrow, with his straw hat, pumpkin head, and old clothes. Until one gets close, the only indication Pumpkinhead is not what he seems is the large number of birds flying around and perched on him. This unfortunate detail is a direct result of his rather unusual chaotic feature. When no other victims present themselves, these birds serve as his food supply. Upon close inspection, the jack-o-bear's leering mouth can be seen to be smeared with bloody feathers.

The stick frame which Pumpkinhead stretches his arms out on and leans against is not actually stuck into the ground. This makes it easy to sneak up on his victims and get close enough to Harmonize them.

At your discretion, Pumpkinhead is initially encountered in one of the following locations:

- Near the bison corpse (see above) masquerading as a scarecrow;
- Standing still in the field near the old entrance to the tunnels;
- Lurking within the Headman's House;
- Or stalking the adventurers as they search the village area.

If encountered in the open, even weak, incautious beginning characters have a good

chance to survive the encounter. Inside the confined area of the Headman's House, Pumpkinhead can limit the number of PCs who can attack, missile, or spell him, thus making him a more perilous opponent. If Pumpkinhead carefully stalks the PCs, picking off individuals as the opportunities arise, he is most deadly indeed.

The jack-o-bear shelters in the two-room Headman's House. The first room, his lair, is filthy with offal and excrement. Stuffed into the fireplace are the rank corpses of five militiamen, which Pumpkinhead is consuming at his leisure. A native Sun Domer may recognize and identify one or more of the bodies. Their gear is strewn about the room. In a corner of this room is a fertility stone carried from the nearby fields and dedicated as an altar to Primal Chaos. The jack-o-bear's treasure is buried 20 centimeters beneath this stone.

The second room, which Pumpkinhead avoids, contains the rotting remains of the village headman Manro, his young daughter Lillan, and a visiting temple official, Gherazn Rhenar, the local tax collector, slain in the nomad raid. Polybius arranged a friendly broo shaman to bind the spirits of these victims into the room. These spirits attack anyone who fails to give the current Thed password. Neither Pumpkinhead nor Polybius know the password. The broo shaman has sanctified this room, turning it into a Thed shrine. The focus of worship is a pair of severed hands

The Ghosts

Ghost One: INT 11 POW 13 (Headman Manro).

Ghost Two: INT 14 POW 12 (Tax Collector Gherazn Rhenar).

Ghost Three: INT 09 POW 09 (Headman's Daughter Lillan).

Combat Notes: These spirits take one round to manifest as ghosts before they attack. Select victims by random roll. They will not follow a victim beyond the boundaries of the house. Ghosts may be freed with a Free Ghost or a Sever Spirit spell.

nailed above the cracked hearth.

Still clasped tightly to the late Rhenar's chest is the tax collector's ledger, which contains records and receipts of assessments, written in vernacular firespeech by the unfortunate official. An unscrupulous PC might find some use for this book. However, it may become the subject of periodic divinations, and woe to the adventurer found in possession of this book by Sun Dome officials.



Below Ground

See the map “Beneath Rabbit Hat” on page 101. Except where noted, the tunnels are two meters in diameter, circular in cross-section, and remarkably smooth, having been munched out of the rock by krarshtkids.

A. The Old Entrance: This gently sloping corridor leads 120 meters down from the surface to the natural cavern (Location C).

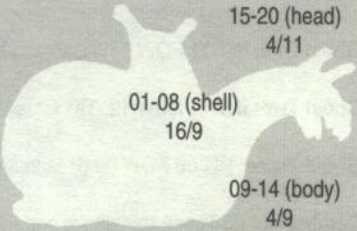
B. The New Entrance: From the foot of the shaft to the surface a lateral two-meter-diameter passage leads to the natural cavern (Location C).

C. Natural Cavern: The krarshtkid tunnels connect with this long natural subterranean chamber in the limestone bedrock. A small stream enters through an extremely tight squeeze to the northeast (Size 2 or smaller), flows though a pool, and is diverted into krarshtkid tunnels at point D. Below the diversion are a series of empty pools and a tight squeeze at the southwest end of the chamber where the stream originally exited.

Dragonsnail (See *RQ Deluxe*, *Glorantha Book*, p. 28.)
A Chaos Creature , Controlled by Polybius

STR	27
CON	18
SIZ	22
INT	02
POW	10
DEX	07

Move: 1
Fatigue: 45
Hit points: 20
Magic points: 10
DEX SR: 3



15-20 (head)
4/11

01-08 (shell)
16/9

09-14 (body)
4/9

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Bite	7	56/—	1d6+2d6	—

Chaotic Features: Appears invulnerable until killed; 16 point shell; regenerates 1d2 HP per melee round in all locations.

Appearance: The head and body is like that of giant squid, with huge saucerlike eyes and sharp beak. Tiny sinister-looking tentacles thrash about madly as it lunges to bite, but the adventurers won't know they are relatively harmless. Let them decide to parry or dodge the tentacles anyway. If hard-pressed or attacked from afar by arrows, the creature squirts out its ink (five meter spray) and sinks to safety below the surface. The ink has no immediate effects, but inexplicably makes anyone so painted irresistibly delicious to krarshtkids.

The pool is turbid and opaque with fine clay silt in suspension. A dragonsnail (see description) lurks submerged beneath the pool's surface. The floor of the pool is a two-foot-deep layer of soft, tenacious clay.

Tracking reveals numerous passages of a bare-footed human (Polybius), occasional marks of bearlike feet (Pumpkinhead), irregular paths of small, sharp, closely spaced marks (krarshtkid tracks), several traces of sandaled feet (a Thanatar cultist and the Sun County militia captain), and peculiar, wide, slime-traced marks of a heavy body that slides along the damp, silt-covered floor of the cavern (the dragonsnail).

The edges of the pool are slippery and treacherous, and those approaching the pool must make a DEX x 3 roll. A failed roll means the character slips and falls at the edge of the pool, disturbing the water and attracting the dragonsnail. A fumble tumbles the character prone into the pool, stuck in the meter-deep clay bottom and struggling to keep his head above the half-meter of water in the pool.

Any disturbance on the surface of the water attracts the dragonsnail concealed in the pool's murky depths. To engage in melee with the snail, a character must stand on the muddy bank, risking a fall. The dragonsnail doesn't leave the pool until attacked. Once attacked, it pursues anything it can sense by sound or movement. The dragonsnail is magically controlled by Polybius, who considers it his pet.

D. Mad Head Ghost

The underground stream which once carved out the natural cavern (Location C) has been diverted by a dam of stone into the krarshtkid tunnel to the southeast. After flowing down a shallow rut in the floor of the tunnel to Location E, it tumbles noisily into the krarshtkid feeding chamber below.

Heaped at Location D on the dry surface of a former pool bed is a mound of several hundred pieces of tarnished silver coinage gleaming dully in lamplight. Buried in a shallow pit beneath the coins is a severed head with a Mad Head Ghost bound into it. When the coins are disturbed, the corpse-gray leathery face leers up through the pile of coins. The ghost takes one round to assume bodily form, then it attacks. This head was left here by a visiting Thanatari emissary, who was negotiating with the Krarshti to supply his cult with sacrificial victims. When they failed to come to an agreement, Polybius fed his guest to his pet dragonsnail.

The Mad Head Ghost attacks anyone (even Polybius) who disturbs the coins, but is unable to



pursue a victim beyond 10 meters from the severed head.

The Mad Head Ghost

INT 0 POW 10
Hit Points: 5

The "Free Ghost" spell (see *Gods of Glorantha*, p. 26) frees a mad head ghost. The Lhankor Mhy head-smashing ritual may also be used. The head must be smashed (reduced to 0 HP) as the following chant is recited:

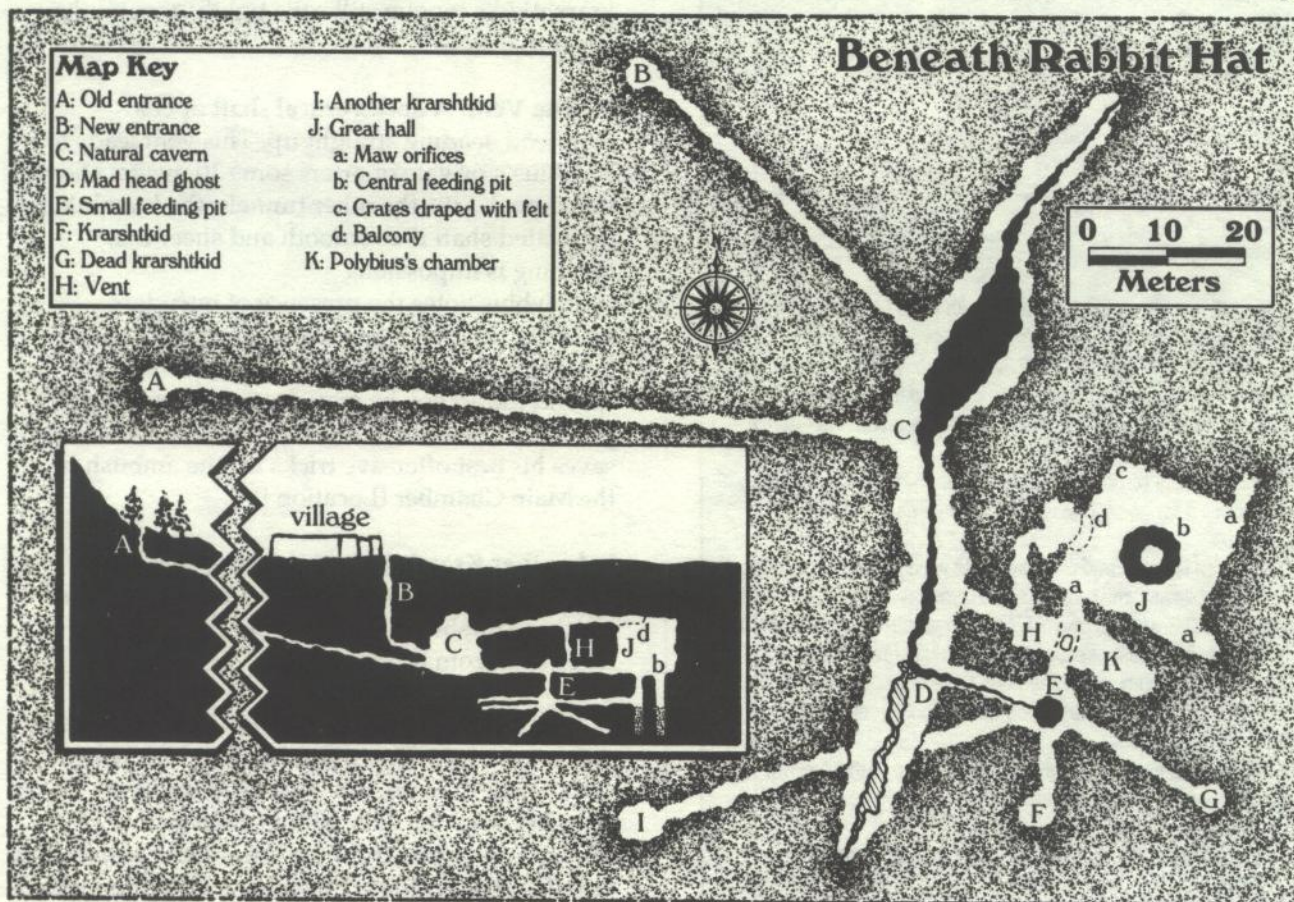
*In the name of Full Knowledge,
I rip this tool from Thanatar,
To confound his presence
In the scheme of being
And hasten the end of chaos.
Go, spirit, to the fate of your will!*

If the chanter is successful in a Resistance Table roll comparing the chanter's POW versus the ghost's POW, the ghost is free to return to the

Underworld. If the chanter fails to overcome the ghost's MP, he may try again next round. Meanwhile, the ghost continues its spirit combat attacks.

E. The Small Feeding Pit: The water diverted from the underground stream drops with an audible splattering into the hole at Location E. Polybius rerouted the stream to flow into the central feeding pit in the Great Hall. Although the tunnel widens slightly here, the opening in the floor here is difficult to see. Characters moving without a light source may stumble into the hole in the darkness, but adventurers Scanning the floor with a light source should notice it. The shaft drops straight down for nine meters into a five-meter-diameter spherical cavern, its rock surfaces slathered with stale pratzim. Anyone unlucky enough to fall into this hole becomes utterly entangled in the muck and strangles to death in their CON +10 rounds unless rescued. This pit was once used to feed the juvenile krarshtkids, but has not been used since the shrine was abandoned.

A score of smaller one-meter-diameter tubes lead from the spherical chamber to krarshtkid hives. One of these tubes leads to the main feeding





pit in the Great Hall (Location J); the diverted underground stream flows along this tube. The other tubes fork three times, then end in spherical chambers featuring numerous empty krarshtkid larval cysts.

F. A Krarshtkid: (See the description below.)

Quietly waiting in this passage is a krarshtkid. If finished, the tunnel would eventually link up with another Krarshti tunnel elsewhere in Sun County.

Krarshtkid

Bestial Chaos Servitor of the Krarsht Cult

Krarshtkids are eyeless, asymmetrical subterranean burrowing creatures with a Hunger sense that directs them to prey. They do not communicate in any obvious manner, though they cooperate with one another and with high-ranking worshippers of the Krarsht cult.

STR 14

CON 16

SIZ 10

INT 14

POW 23

DEX 17

Move: 1

Fatigue: 30

Hit points: 13

Magic points: 23

DEX SR: 2



Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Bite	7	67/—	2d6*	—
Tongue	2	94/—	4d3**	—
Spit Pratzim	2	90/—	Entangle***	—
Claws (1-3)	7	42/—	1d8†	—

* The bite injects a paralytic poison with a POT equal to the krarshtkid's CON. If the victim's CON is overcome, he is paralysed for the poison's POT in days. If the victim resists the poison the only effect is that 5% is added to the chances of success for all future krarshtkid bites for the rest of the victim's life.

** Destroys and dissolves armour first, then hit points. The tongue attack has a range of 5 meters and counts as a weapon.

*** Pratzim is a gummy, web-like mess which goes up the target and immobilizes him. A victim of pratzim may try to overcome the pratzim's STR with his own STR each melee round to escape. He may not fight or cast offensive spells until he breaks free. If a victim is gummed by more than one dose of pratzim, he must escape from each separately, but he still only gets one STR vs. STR roll per round.

† Attacks with its digging claws, it may use up to three claws simultaneously. No more than two may be used against a single target.

Combat Notes: A krarshtkid can only use one attack form each melee round.

Skills: Sense Life 90%.

Note: One of the krarshtkids serves as Polybius's familiar.

The krarshtkid is surprised from behind if approached silently. Making any noise alerts the creature to turn and attack.

The krarshtkid fights until slain or until the adventurers retreat down the tunnel past Location E. It cheerfully exchanges gobs of pratzim against long-range missile weapons and spells.

G. Dead Krarshtkid: The remains of a krarshtkid and his human foe lie here, locked in a final mortal embrace. The Sun County militia had discovered the Old Entrance (Location A) to the Krarshti underground, and had just descended to explore when Pumpkinhead ambushed them. All but the captain were Harmonized. The captain withdrew down the shaft when he realized that his command was doomed. He wandered the tunnels until he encountered the krarshtkid. Yelmario had given him mastery of the spear as his gift, and he used it to slay the Chaos-horror. His trusty spear has impaled the beast's torso. Unfortunately, the captain was so thoroughly gummed with pratzim he suffocated to death soon after the fight. The krarshtkid, the captain, and his gear are bound together with gooey strands of pratzim, and the krarshtkid's tongue still coils tightly around the spear that slew it.

H. The Vent: A dark vertical shaft opens overhead, leading straight up. This vent leads to Polybius's private quarters some 10 meters above this tunnel. Like the other tunnels, the krarshtkid-excavated shaft is so smooth and sheer that climbing is impossible.

Polybius notes the presence of intruders reaching this point, but takes no action against them unless they attempt to scale the vent. To defend the access, he may drop a net or fire poisoned crossbow bolts. If possible, however, he saves his best offensive tricks for the ambush in the Main Chamber (Location J).

I. Another Krarshtkid: (See description.) This corridor continues for 90 meters until it reaches another krarshtkid, which patiently awaits directions from its master.

J. The Great Hall: The Great Hall, intended to be the center of worship in this temple, was never completed. Even so, the huge underground chamber, an open cube 24 meters in each dimension, carved from the limestone bedrock, is a grand and daunting achievement. Polybius guided his krarshtkids in excavating the area by digging straight tunnels in grids along the three dimen-



sions. The rough walls still show evidences of the original tunneling, though the floor and the lower reaches of the walls are polished smooth by the krarshtkids at Polybius's direction.

The entrances are small orifices shaped in the likeness of a gaping maw. Each is at the end of a short corridor which, unlike the krarshtkid-made tunnels, show signs of human workmanship. These mouth-openings are about one meter in diameter and surrounded by stone teeth carved from the bedrock. Negotiating this entryway is tricky when encumbered. Creatures larger than SIZ 15 must remove all armor to squeeze through. Creatures larger than SIZ 18 cannot pass through at all without enlarging the entrance. The teeth can be smashed off at the expense of making a racket; each has 3 armor points and snaps off after absorbing 2 points of damage.

The entryways on the north and east walls lead to short, dead-end corridors. Further excavations here were interrupted with the order to abandon the shrine.

The focal point of the Great Hall is the central feeding pit, a yawning hole that drops into blackness. This was once the main feeding pit for the krarshtkids. Thrusting up from the darkness in the center of the hole is a huge stone pillar. The top of the pillar is flush with the level with the floor, with a three-meter gap between the top of the pillar and the chamber floor. While the pillar is smooth and polished, the altar atop the pillar is encrusted with evidence of centuries of sacrifices. Shaped like a huge, toothed mouth, the altar was imported in sections from another Krarshti den in Tarsh. The altar has not yet been used here, but if a non-Krarshti touches and thus profanes it, they must resist a POW 18 attack or lose a point of POW permanently. The edge of the pit is protected by a Warding 1 spell, the wards being jammed in recesses about a meter or so down.

Stretching across the three-meter gap from the floor to the altar is a large net delicately woven from human hair. The net is by design fragile and precarious; thus are worshippers approaching her altar made mindful of Krarsht's fragile and precarious tolerance for the attentions of her followers. A completely unencumbered character of SIZ 10 or less may carefully cross this net without risk. For each point of SIZ greater than 10, and for each six points of encumbrance carried, there is an additional 5% chance that the net will part and drop the character into the pit below. For example, a character of SIZ 15 bearing 6 points of encumbrance has a 30% chance to break through the net.

The Gorp (See *RQ Deluxe*, *Glorantha Book*, p. 28.)

STR	0	Move:	1
CON	15	Fatigue:	n/a
SIZ	17	Hit points:	16
INT	01	Magic points:	07
POW	07		
DEX	0		

Location	melee	missile	points
Body	01-20	01-20	0/16

Weapon	SR	Att/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Envelope	1	100/—	8 points acid	—

Chaotic Feature: Undetectable by magic.

The pit is 12 meters deep. The walls are smooth, but covered with stale pratzim goo. The diverted underground stream flows the krarshtkid hives beneath the Small Feeding Pit (Location E), and has filled the bottom of the pit with three meters of water which conceals a gorp.

In the southwest corner of the chamber, partially draped beneath a large piece of black felt, lie three large wooden crates, a block-and-tackle, and an extinguished torch. Although the crates are empty, they each have stenciled on their sides a Moon rune and "Office of Commissary and Despatch, Furthest." Paper seals, broken when the crates were open, read "Duty Paid." The Krarshti altar was transported in these boxes. The writing on them hints at corruption at a high level.

Half-hidden in the gloom 12 meters up the western wall of the chamber leans a hideous mouth-shaped balcony. A short passage behind it leads back to Polybius's personal quarters (Location K). A rope ladder is stowed in the balcony, and is anchored to one of the teeth.

Even with a strong light source, the ceiling and upper reaches of the hall are hidden in the darkness, and it is here that Polybius's krarshtkid familiar lurks. Unless noticed, the monster awaits his master's instructions before attacking. Use the krarshtkid statistics given nearby, but note that Polybius can draw upon the magic points of his familiar, see through its senses, and so forth. (See the Create Familiar sorcery spell in *Deluxe Runequest*, *Magic Book*, for a familiar's abilities.)

K. Polybius's Chamber: This small room is Polybius's personal quarters. In the center of the room is the vent leading down (Location H). Next to it, firmly anchored, is a 20-meter-long rope ladder. The other entryway to this chamber is via a sturdy oak door in the west wall. Although it has a complicated locking mechanism, Polybius has lost the key (see Pumpkinhead's treasure). If carefully



removed, the lock is worth 110L (double this if the key is included.)

The floor is covered in pratzim muck. In one corner is a straw sleeping mat and a filthy scrap of blanket. In another corner is a large open barrel full of marvelously foul-smelling water. Around the large barrel are seven large crates, each embossed with Lunar trade runes. The crates contain an unusual assortment of items:

Crate 1: Contains several month's supply of hard-tack biscuits, which Polybius is living on at present. They are of Pharoanic navy origin.

Crate 2: Empty.

Crate 3: Contains 102 small packages of dried hazia leaves, each worth up to 20L on the black market.

Crate 4: is a box filled with 200 assorted nails and bolts (ENC 10; 50L). Most are bronze, but a thorough Search (special success) reveals several pieces of runic metals (ENC .2; 200L).

Crate 5: A complete set of the famous *Books of Elephantis*, a comprehensive, annotated, ten-volume anthology of pornographic New Pelorian literature (value 2,000L). Marking a particularly carefully studied passage in Volume XI is a scrap of parchment inscribed with a cipher of Lunar origin. Decoded (Critical Success in Read/Write New Pelorian) it would read, "Deactivate shrine. Tell all Tongues. GG." Well-informed characters might connect these initials with a Gimjim the Grim, a shadowy Lunar official in Pavis.

Crate 6: Contains several combat nets of various sizes, cleverly coiled up.

Crate 7: Draped under a clean, black felt cover is a small, portable shrine to Krarsht (ENC 10), upon which Polybius hopes to sacrifice his victim. Made of porcelain, it has six legs and a central mouth. In the blood-caked orifice is a decayed part of Polybius's anatomy, barely recognizable.

Polybius's Story

Polybius's life is a testament to the profound satisfactions to be found in the solitary worship and contemplation of the devout hermit. As proof of his dedication to Krarsht he has castrated himself and vowed only to mate with broos. In appreciation of his devout behavior, Krarsht has sent him one of her krarshtkids as a familiar. His devotion to the Mother Maw is total and absolute, and he takes his present mission – to sacrifice a being to Krarsht to let all Krarshti know that the shrine is closing down – very seriously. Polybius will do everything in his power to accomplish this, even including sacrificing himself.

Polybius is known among fellow Krarshti as "the Decadent" because of the deterioration of his physical features. He suffers from severe, disfiguring acne; his hair is oily, and unkempt, and thickly matted with foul gooey substances. Polybius's teeth are rotten with decay, and his lips are split and cracked, oozing blood and spittle around the edges. He is clean shaven, but his raw skin is covered by numerous tiny nicks and cuts. He wears only the lightest armor under a ragged sackcloth habit and goes barefoot in the cold stone halls.

Polybius's Tactics

Polybius meditates in his chamber until he senses intruders. He can detect intruders in several ways. If they encounter the dragonsnail or the krarshtkids, the resulting disturbance echoes through the tunnels. When the adventurers pass beneath the Vent (Location H), he notes the sounds of their passage. Polybius also has access to the eyes and ears of his krarshtkid familiar in the Great Hall.

Upon detecting intruders, the Krarshti takes up his portable shrine and carries it to the balcony in the Great Hall. He hides himself there and awaits his foes, taking time to coat his weapons with blade venom, to wind his crossbows, to slather his



Polybius the Decadent



net with pratzim, and to prepare his globs of pratzim missiles. He also calls his dragonsnail. Upon receiving its magical summons, the monster oozes sluggishly out of its pool and makes its way to the Great Hall. It takes the monster 8 +1d4 rounds to slither to the aid of its master, and it leaves an obvious trail of putrid slime behind it. Make sure to keep track of where the adventurers are in relation to the dragonsnail: it attacks anything it meets on its journey.

As the adventurers enter the hall, Polybius uses his krarshtkid's magic points to cast the following spells: Countermagic 7 and Silence 5 on himself; Countermagic 4 on his krarshtkid; True Net 3 on his combat net; and Speedart on three of his crossbow bolts. This lowers the krarshtkid's MPs to 1. Because of the crucial nature of his mission, Polybius also expends his one-use divine spell Conceal, along with Extension I. Thus, for 30 minutes, the wily Krarshti is effectively invisible (except during melee rounds he acts offensively; see *Gods of Glorantha*, p. 71).

Because he needs to take a victim alive, Polybius allows the adventurers to enter the Great Hall and explore for a while, until they are distracted by the crates or the altar. This also gives his dragonsnail time to approach the Great Hall.

When he launches his assault, Polybius hurls his sticky net at a likely victim, while his krarshtkid familiar drops down from the ceiling upon the most heavily armored opponent, its uncoiled tongue flicking acid. Shortly thereafter the dragonsnail sticks its ugly head through the southwestern entrance, blocking this exit and snapping at anyone who comes near. It is too large to get through the openings. Note: The dragonsnail may be down 1d3 MP after slithering past the Mad Head Ghost (Location D).

If the krarshtkid succeeds in its Sense Life skill (90%), it has its DEX x 5 to land squarely on target. If the Sense Life roll fails, its chance is halved. The krarshtkid spits pratzim once, then uses its acidic tongue to peel away armor and flesh.

Polybius's net is so thoroughly gummed with pratzim that the unfortunate victim must disentangle himself from the gummy strands (resist the pratzim's STR of 15) before he can try to free himself from the net. If the victim looks like he is succeeding, Polybius continues to hurl fresh globs of pratzim on this most crucial target.

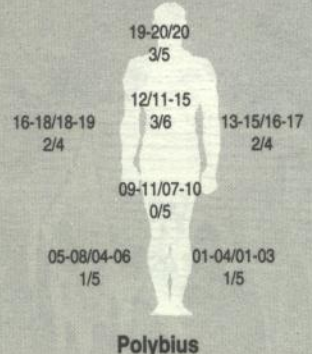
Once he has immobilized his victim, Polybius does all he can to kill or drive away the others using his creatures and his poisoned crossbow bolts. The first three bolts (two from heavy crossbows, the last from his light crossbow) have

Polybius the Decadent

Pious Lip of Krarsht, Devotee of Primal Chaos, Human male, 54

STR 13
CON 15
SIZ 10
INT 16
POW 18
DEX 14
APP 02

Move: 3
Fatigue: 28
Hit points: 13
Magic points: 18
DEX SR: 3



Polybius

Arms and Armor: Total encumbrance (w/shortsword and net) = 7.2. Fatigue 21 (28-7.2). Cuirbouilli cuirass and helm (AP 3/ENC 1.2), stiff leather vambraces (AP 2/ENC .8), and soft leather greaves (AP 1/ENC 1.2).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Shortsword	7	61/42	1d8+1*	1/10
Hvy Crossbow†	3	81/—	2d6+2*	8/10
Pratzim	3	55/—	Entangle**	—
Net	3	60/72	Entangle#	3/6
Thrown Dagger	3	99/—	1d4*	.2/4
Grapple	8	37/45	1d6	—

†Polybius has two heavy crossbows and a light crossbow.

*These weapons are dipped with Blade Venom POT 11. Targets taking damage from poisoned weapons suffer an attack from a poison of POT 11 in (CON) SR, as per *RQ Deluxe, Player Book*, p. 81.

**Pratzim STR 15. See the krarshtkid description, p. 102, for effects of pratzim.

The net is goosed with pratzim STR 15. See *Monster Coliseum, Coliseum Book*, pp. 16-17, for combat net use.

Spirit Magic (116-ENC): True Net 4, Detect Enemy (1), Heal 8, Befuddle (2). *Known by familiar:* Countermagic 7, Speedart 1, Silence 5.

Divine Magic: Worship Krarsht I, Sweat Acid I, Extension I, Sanctify I, Conceal I (one-use).

Skills: Sense Order 55 (a chaotic version of the Storm Bull skill Sense Chaos), Climb 78, Dodge 88, Hide 82, Sneak 87, Jump 66, Devise 81, Brew Blade Venom POT 11, Brew Pratzim.

Languages: Pavic 85/35, Tradetalk 25/08, New Pelorian 36/36.

Allied Spirit Familiar: Krarshtkid in the Great Hall (Location J).

See the Create Familiar sorcery spell in *Runequest Deluxe, Magic Book*, for a familiar's abilities. See p. 102 for krarshtkid description.

Special Items: A. Blade Venom (1d6 additional doses) in a large smoked glass beaker. B. Pratzim (1d10+10 handfuls) in a special belt pouch. C. A sharp tin razor, hanging on a cord around his neck. D. A Chaos-rune amulet that enables the wearer to control the unintelligent things which crawl from the Chaos ooze or gorp. The wearer must gift the creature with one point of POW for each 10 points the creature has. Polybius currently controls the dragonsnail in the natural cavern (Location C).



Ambush in the Great Hall of the Krarshti Shrine



Speedart cast on them, as well as the blade venom. Because he already has them cocked, the Krarshti can fire his crossbows in quick succession. Once all have been discharged, he throws both his envenomed daggers before furiously cranking and shooting again with the light crossbow.

If the adventurers have a light source, a successful Scan may reveal the mysterious marksman in the balcony. Polybius is only visible in melee rounds he shoots, and then only his head and arms can be seen. He ducks out of sight directly after shooting. Shots scored against him below his head and arms simply bounce off the jagged teeth of the balcony. Detect Enemies must penetrate Countermagic 7 to locate Polybius.

If the rest of the party flees, Polybius sends his krarshtkid familiar and the dragonsnail in pursuit. He uses whatever of his personal MP are required to ensure the krarshtkid stays mobile, but doesn't waste healing spells on the snail.

Meanwhile, Polybius tosses the rope ladder down to the floor and scrambles down. If the party left any incapacitated members behind apart from his intended victim, Polybius quickly gooes them up with pratzim. If he has time later, he returns and slits their throats. A far more disgusting fate awaits his chosen captive. The entangled adventurer is tied to the rope ladder and winched up to the balcony. If he struggles, he gets a gob of pratzim in his face. In the balcony Polybius ritually informs the adventurer of the message he wishes to broadcast. He then sacrifices his victim on the portable altar by strangulation.

If this ploy goes awry, Polybius returns to his room with the portable shrine and clambers down the vent with the rope. Hiding at one of the intersections, he waits for the party to pass and sneaks up on the last adventurer. Clapping a wad of pratzim over his victim's mouth, Polybius wraps him up in one of his sticky nets and returns to his chamber for the sacrifice. If the path back to his room is blocked he hides with his captive in the tunnels until an opportunity arises.

If all goes amiss, Polybius has no recourse but to sacrifice himself. He prefers to do this on the altar in the Great Hall, or his portable shrine. It is not really necessary for him to perform this act on an altar, but as his final cult service, he would like to go out in style. Naturally, he would rather sacrifice someone else if at all possible.

Resolving the Scenario

Ironically, the Krarsht temple is already doomed. Once Polybius has sent his farewell message,

either through a victim sacrifice or through his own self-sacrifice, the Rabbit Hat Krarsht menace ceases to exist.

Sun Domers have no way to know this, however, so Sun County PCs should not be satisfied until the tunnels have been explored, and the Krarshti creatures and priest are discovered and eliminated. A weak or timid party may justly decline to explore the full extent of the Krarsht tunnels. At the GM's discretion, a party that returns a report of the Krarsht infestation to Sun Dome officials without dealing with Polybius may either be relieved of further responsibilities in the matter (while a squad of templars supported by acolytes takes over), or they may be chided gently, provided with a few useful magical artifacts, then sent back to finish the job.

Outlander PCs drafted into service against their will should have more complex motivations. On one hand, they may consider any escape from the coercion or oaths binding them to this mission a successful resolution of this adventure. If, for example, such outlander PCs were to find the Crown of Yamsur, they may understandably ignore the plight of Rabbit Hat and try to smuggle the crown out of Sun County. On the other hand, if outlander PCs wish to maintain good relations with Sun Domers, or hope to gain some favor from them, they may be just as eager to cleanse Rabbit Hat of Krarsht pollution as a native Sun Domer.

Treasure-hunting outlander PCs who find the crown must then devise a method of smuggling the crown out of the country (unless they choose to present it to the Sun Dome upon the expectation of gratitude and generous gifts). This resolution may be an opportunity for wilderness adventure as improvised by the GM, using the Sun County Encounters, or, if the PCs are sensibly prepared for the return journey (well stocked with water and provisions) and if they travel through the sparsely-populated Vulture Country, they may face only chance encounters with nomads or broos.

If the PCs have been offered a grant of lordship for Rabbit Hat Farm, that lordship is granted only after Sun Dome officials are satisfied that the farm is secure. Count Solanthos appoints a deputation to visit Rabbit Hat Farm to inspect their handiwork. If the village is secure, after a lengthy bureaucratic delay Solanthos presents the grant of lordship to the most suitable character (i.e., the Yelmlio initiate most likely to serve Sun Dome's interests faithfully) in a modest ceremony. If there is more than one suitable candidate, the issue may be submitted to Yelmlio by divination or by ritual trial by combat.



It is up to the new lord of Rabbit Hat Farm to make good the count's promise of farm plots for all members of the party, and the new lord is free to allocate them as he wishes. The count fulfills his promise to find settlers to work the farmlands by emptying his debtors' prison of assorted riffraff, petty criminals, and defaulters.

Although Rabbit Hat Farm is the name of the village, the land grant is legally part of the fief of "Golden Ears." The cult fief of Golden Ears is fairly large by Sun Dome standards — over 55 squares. Note: Sun Dome land is typically divided into shapes as close to the Earth rune as is practical, and a "square" is equivalent to one hectare. Much of that land, however, is waste and badlands of insignificant agricultural value. Nonetheless, the discovery of the underground stream in the caverns may usher in a new era of prosperity for Rabbit Hat Farm. With prosperity comes taxes. Tax collectors appear to demand both this and the previous years' taxes when the adventurers are comfortably settled in.

The grant of lordship to Golden Ears is given below. The document is written on fine calfskin

vellum in gold ink reserved for the count's personal use. One copy is given to the adventurers, another kept by the count. The deed is written in formal Firespeech, and a request for a translation would be considered grossly impertinent.

The adventurers cannot sell or otherwise dispose of their land, since all land is held by the Yelmlio cult through the count. Unless the adventurers forfeit their claim (by failing to maintain residency, or by leaving the Yelmlio cult, for example), the count will honor the terms of the grant. Although wills are not legally recognized in Sun County, the conservative Sun Domers hold to the old proverb "thrice taken proves the custom." If the cult fief of Golden Ears meets its necessary taxation levies for three consecutive years, it is for all intents and purposes the adventurers' own land, and may be passed on to their heirs without impediment. Meeting one's taxation obligations three years running is perhaps not as easy as it sounds, given the rapacity of the Sun Dome tax collectors, the vagaries of the elements, and the hostility of the nomads.

The Grant of Lordship to Rabbit Hat Farm

In the name of Y'ELM the Emperor of the Cosmos, son of Aether, Harbinger and Provider;

In the name of Y'ELM the Warrior, Master of the Bow and Spear;

In the name of Y'ELM the Teacher, Musician, Hawkmaster, Fertility Bringer, and Rider (who gave the Horse as a gift of the Sun);

In the name of Y'ELM Imperator, Emperor of the Universe, Guardian of the Mantle of Leadership, The Crown of Heaven, The Scepter of Order, The Girdle of Command, and the Globe of Authority;

In the name of Y'ELM the Sage, Keeper of the Divine Order, Gracious Father and Mighty Lord,

PRAISE Y'ELM!

In the name of Y'ELM and Y'ELMALIO (Son of the Sun) we, Solanthos Ironpike, Light Son, XLIIInd Count and Ruler of the Sun Dome lands of Prax, being the Ward of the CULT FIEF of GOLDEN EARS, in consideration of services rendered to us and our subjects by (name of the party leader), do hereby grant lordship and domain in ALL THAT piece of land known as the CULT FIEF of GOLDEN EARS to the said (name again), subject to the encumbrances notified hereunder.

Dated this Fireday of Harmony Week of — Season 16 — Solara Tempora.

Signed here, in the Meeting Chamber of the Sun Dome by the said

(signed, Solanthos Ironpike, in the Presence of Y'ELM and his Ministers.)

ENCUMBRANCES REFERRED TO:

(i) Fealty must be given to the Count of Sun County.

(ii) The squire must take up membership in a cult acceptable to the said Count.

(iii) All outstanding taxes, duties, and debts must be discharged.

(iv) There must be an incumbent Count.

*(v) The squire is free to disburse portions of farmland to his household and followers, using the "Yelm Method." **

* The Yelm Method is the customary means used for division of property or goods in Sun County (and other places of Solar Culture). The leader keeps the whole amount here, although popular favor traditionally comes to generous leaders. Any division, though, is strictly voluntary on the part of the leader. Peoples who adopt this method do not think it unfair.



The Crown of Yamsur

This ancient treasure was worn by Arintheus the Splendid, who fought and died at Moonbroth in the Lunar lines. When the Sun Lord fell, the crown was lost in the confusion. One of the broos who later stripped the corpses found the item, but it passed through several hands before ending up in Pumpkinhead's possession. This small, ornate gold fillet of no inherent magical qualities is priceless because of its antiquity. Tradition has it the crown was first worn by Yamsur the Splendid, the Sun County hero who led his charioteers to fiery death in the Dragonkill War of 1100 ST.

Various groups are interested in retrieving the crown, and have posted large rewards: the Lunar authorities (5,000L), Arintheus's family (500W, but you would have to take the crown all the way back to Yuthuppa to claim the reward), and the local Sun Dome Temple (100W).

Another personage interested in this item is Lucien the Diviner, of the Pavis Lhankor Mhy Temple. A valuable clue to the crown's whereabouts may be picked up in a document he penned several seasons ago. After a recent factional dispute, Lucien left the Pavis Lhankor Mhy Temple and is currently Chief Diviner in the besieged Heortland town of Whitewall.

An Inquiry Upon Lost Treasures

This is a document of Lhankor Mhy, Lord of the Light of Inspiration and Quester for Knowledge. Brain Flayers protect this document, scourging all who would profane it or steal from it without honest recompense.

For Sale: 13 Wheels, pure gold.

Noted herein are the results of divinations I recently cast to determine where the greatest single treasure of the recent war lies abandoned, discarded, or lost.

For six nights I meditated upon the questions that I was to ask, and upon the answers I might receive, and how I may validate the answer and justify my questings before my peers, and whether my actions would be adjudged impious. To these questions I had no answer but for the first, for I am still a mortal man and not a hero. Therefore on the seventh day of my fast I resolved to cast the incantation, trusting to the wisdom of my god, Lhankor Mhy, Lord of the Light of Inspiration. Here follows a record of what I saw, and what I asked, and how I, Lucien the Diviner, Full Priest of the Grey Lords of Knowledge, read the signs:

My first question was: "Where lies lost or abandoned the greatest treasure that is booty from the war of conquest that just past wracked this land?"

To which Lhankor Mhy, Lord of Full Knowledge, replied: "Beneath the defiled stone that bears the plant."

My second question followed hard on the first: "What stone permits the growth of a plant?"

To which Lhankor Mhy, Hail his Perspicacity, answered: "The rock that marks the Sun's lands."

Seeing my error, I delved further, asking: "What is the treasure?"

To which Lhankor Mhy, Seeker of Knowledge from beyond the ken of the gods, replied: "It is the Crown of Yamsur."

Now recalling mention of "Yamsur" in the Library, I thereupon commenced a detailed search of the shelves, but failed to locate any reference to "Yamsur" (or his crown). Doubtless the reference is obscured by Lhankor Mhy's will in rebuke for my avarice and impertinence in asking these questions. Chastened and shamed, I abandoned my investigations. I further take unto myself a vow never to seek personal profit from this information vouchsafed to me by my Lord, and indeed I offer a reward of 525 silvers in cult training (or a gratis divination) to any person who finds the treasure without previous knowledge of this document. By this act I propose to atone to the Generous, All-Knowing Lord for my selfish actions.

(Signed) Lucien the Diviner, Full Sage.

(Original document translated from the Esrolian)

Sun County Ruins

Scenario Hooks for The Old Sun Dome & Solinthor's Tower

The Scholar

Galana Harrapa is a young Lhankor Mhy initiate and a student of Solinthor's works. She dreams of gaining for Solinthor the exalted status she believes he deserves, not to mention the kudos she would gain herself in literary circles. As part of her priesthood thesis, she is assembling the definitive collection of Solinthor's hymns and poems. She knows that Solinthor wrote exactly 500 hymns, and has collected all but seven.

Galana craves these last seven works, but is almost at her wit's end trying to find them. Being an outsider, she has found the Sun Dome Temple extremely uncooperative, and although they let her gain access to their library, she only found tantalizing clues to the lost works. The librarian hinted that there may well be further information in the Old Sun Dome library, but her request to visit the Old Sun Dome was peremptorily refused.

Galana knows Solinthor was banished to a retirement tower when Salostrong the Literate became count, and that he took his great codex with him. But which retirement tower? There are reportedly dozens of ruined towers scattered throughout Sun County, some inhabited, some deserted, some in ruins. Which one was Solinthor immured in? Her only clues are that the tower chosen was built during the reign of Arinsor (the first count), and that Solinthor was actually bricked into it and left to starve. She knows it has not been used since.

Galana Harrapa would like to hire a group of "researchers" to assist her to find Solinthor's tower. She would like a fellow scholar to lead the group, and can pay the group up to 10L per day. She is unable to leave her studies at the Sun Dome library at present, but will provide the party with a map of likely sites. This will lead the party to sites all over Sun County. Galana will warn the group to stay shy of the authorities, because the Sun Domers dislike foreigners approaching their retire-

ment towers and she won't pay their fines. If they can positively identify the tower as Solinthor's own, they are to return to the Sun Dome and bring her to it.

Galana suggests that another way to locate the tower would be to check temple records hidden in the Old Sun Dome library. One of the group must be an accomplished reader of Firespeech.

Galana is independently wealthy, and if her researchers find the right tower, she will pay them 500L cash and 500L cult credit. Furthermore, she promises that if her thesis is accepted and she gains the priesthood, she will give them her favor. If she's really impressed with their performance, they may eve

The Thief

Ulwin Lorimer is a goldsmith operating out of Garhound. He has recently supplemented his living by looting deserted and ruined retirement towers. While many towers are empty, others often contain gold ceremonial items which can be easily smelted and refashioned. His last gang was recently captured, tried, and executed (in ritual combat) after mistakenly raiding an inhabited tower. Ulwin was lucky to escape without exposure, and will be more careful this time. He will recruit his new gang without identifying himself, and set up a drop just across the Garhound ford. The gang must include a skilled climber. He will pay them one-half the raw ENC value of any gold items they recover, but he is not interested in non-gold items. Ulwin will warn them that attempting to sell the Yelmalion gold-work anywhere in Prax would result in their immediate arrest.

Ulwin dreams of his gang having a crack at the Old Sun Dome. Who knows what loot would be stashed in there?



The Merchant

Flesso Senshell is an Etyries merchant who plies the River of Cradles. Like Ulwin Lorimer, he too is interested in religious items, which he exports to collectors in the Holy Country. He will buy such items from enterprising subcontractors and smuggle them downriver to the seaport at Corflu. Flesso is not just after goldwork looted from Yelmalion towers: he'll take Praxian items, too, and stuff out of the Pavis Rubble. He is also on the lookout for a likely band to clean out the Old Sun Dome for him, which he imagines to be a vast repository of treasure.

Flesso is a master bargainer, and will always try to get his stock for the lowest possible price.

The Count

Count Solanthos Ironpike holds, when he sits in state, the Globe of Authority in one hand and the Scepter of Order in the other. Unfortunately, it is a well-known but unmentioned fact that the current items are replicas. The original items which the first count, Arinsor Clearmind, brought with him from Dragon Pass were lost sometime during the turmoil of the Solitude of Testing (1200-1575). Solanthos dearly wants these objects back, and would pay handsomely for them. Sadly, no trace of either remains and even divinations have proved inconclusive. The Old Sun Dome and the older of the retirement towers are likely places to start looking, but these are sacred sites which cannot be profaned by mere treasure-seeking. Or at least, that's the official attitude. Unofficially, the count would dearly love to send a party out to look for these items, though it would have to be without official Sun Dome sanction.

Solanthos's deputy, the Light Captain Invictus, wishes to form a covert band of outsiders to explore the Old Sun Dome Temple and likely towers. Invictus will probably go to the Sun County jail to recruit the band, offering suitable candidates this mission instead of ritual combat. In return for their cooperation, the party will then be freed. Of course, the militia cannot be notified of the Sun Dome's official complicity in this expedition, and if the group is arrested, Invictus stoutly denies all knowledge of the scheme. The hapless adventurers then find themselves back in prison facing the prospect of execution by ritual combat.

The Architect

Jaxarte Whyded is a young Lunar officer stationed at Pavis who has a passion for architecture and a particular interest in structures built in the Dara Happan style. Jaxarte Whyded recently visited the Sun Dome Temple, and despite the rude treatment he received, was very impressed with buildings he saw (see "Jaxarte's Journal," pp. 17-20). Jaxarte has heard about the Old Sun Dome, but has been refused entry to it by the count. His youthful enthusiasm is undaunted by this setback, and he wishes to hire an adventurer party with mapping skills to survey the complex and make plans of it for him.

Jaxarte cannot offer much in the way of money, but does promise his favor. A nephew of the Lunar governor and a member of a well-connected Lunar family, Jaxarte claims to have access to the ears of the high and the mighty.

The Outcast

Karin Kareetha is a Bison woman currently expelled from her tribe. Karin killed a skullbat during sea season, breaking one of her clan's strongest taboos. It is immaterial to her chieftain that it was an accident: atonement must be made. Karin has been ordered to deliver a bat-totem to the sanctuary where skullbats seek refuge from the sun. She then must prostrate herself before these skullbats, begging for forgiveness.

Karin has followed the bats to the ruins deep in Sun County, but is afraid to enter them without comrades. A stranger to civilization, she is looking for Bison friends to help her on her quest.

The Locals

The locals shun both the Old Sun Dome and Solinthor's Tower, considering them to be haunted. Recent calamities, such as stock losses, a disappearance, or disease, may be associated with these haunted sites. The village headmen may find, after their local militia superstitiously refuse to investigate, that outsiders are the only people brave enough to find out what is going on. In return, they offer gifts of produce or hospitality (or perhaps even hazia).

Local pundits sagely observe that the recent calamities have nothing to do with the haunted ruins, instead being caused by a predator, a band of broos or trollkin in the area, or something equally mundane. And maybe they are even right.

The Old Sun Dome

Echoes, Dust, and Spirits of Sun County's Past

The Old Sun Dome lies deep within farmland several hour's walk east of the modern temple. For many years the present site was known as "The New Temple," but over the centuries the deserted Sun Dome has been all but forgotten, and outsiders are actively discouraged from going there.

Nowadays, the new temple is simply referred to as "The Temple."

GM Background

The Official History

This account is known to all initiates of the local Sun Dome cult, and may be gleaned from the cult archives or from Lhankor Mhy sources. The locals regard the site with superstitious awe and avoid it.

The old temple was abandoned by the Sun Dome cult shortly after 1100 S.T., after their famed chariot regiment, The Golden Axles, joined the Invincible Golden Horde to plunder Dragon Pass. None survived the slaughter of the Dragonkill War, not even their heroic leader, Yamsur the Splendid (first son of the contemporary count, Zebroth the Bow). On the demise of this great Heroquester, the temple was rocked by an earthquake, and the floor was rent by a great crack that ran the length of the sanctuary. The temple was promptly abandoned after the unfavorable omen. It was not possible to induct new priests or hold important rites until a new temple had been established nearby, some six years later.

The Secret History

Only certain of the priests know the true story, and even they don't know the whole truth.

The fissure in the temple was not caused by earthquake. Far away in Dragon Pass, Yamsur the Splendid lay by his scorched chariot, charred from dragon breath and dying. About him lay the smoking remnants of his once proud regiment, seared away to nothing by the power of dragon magic. Yamsur was barely conscious, yet he flailed

his arms about, searching for his trusty spear. Above him loomed a dragon, alerted by his movement. Just as it breathed, Yamsur appealed to his god, Yelmadio, to grant that his body might rest in the lands of the sun. Yelmadio had been shamed by the defeat of his haughty templars, and so had chosen not to answer their pleas for salvation all day. His heart was turned by Yamsur's request, for the Light Son asked not for his life, but only to have his ashes safely interred. Yelmadio relented, but to hide his shame, he transported the remains back to the sunless vault of the Sun Dome Temple, so that Yelm, his father, might never know of this disgrace.

In the instant Yelmadio worked his wonders, the dragon unleashed its fiery breath against the prone form of Yamsur, killing him instantly and searing his corpse white-hot. When this bubbling froth of flame appeared in the vault of the temple, the air expanded with the heat, and the vapors, surrounded on every side by stone, blasted through the roof of the vault into the temple. The torrent of sulphurous gases overwhelmed the priests officiating in the ceremonies, killing them instantly. Shocked and leaderless, the Sun Domers fled the temple grounds in panic.

It was several months before a few brave souls returned and learned the truth. By then, the fear of the place was so great among the populace that none would return. Neither were they encouraged to, for Zebroth's second son Zolan used the opportunity to create a new Sun Dome Temple on his own lands, some distance away. The old Sun Dome Temple was ritually purified by fire, bricked-up, and shunned by all.

The Secret of the Vault

A hundred years later, a vampire moved into the deserted temple with his small following. Some time later, in a fit of paranoia, the vampire destroyed his congregation. He now feels secure in the sunless vault, which only he can enter in his gaseous form.



The Guards at Old Sun Dome

The "Old Guard", the Xth Yelmic active militia file, is permanently bivouacked in the guesthouse buildings of the Old Sun Dome. Their charge is to protect the temple from looters and intruders. The penalty for outsiders entering the Old Sun Dome is death, by order of the count. The usual method of execution, as the militia are happy to explain, is quartering. Policy is to transport apprehended trespassers to the new Sun Dome to receive the count's justice.

The sentries are not especially vigilant at their task, except on the rare occasions a superior inspects them. Posting to the Old Sun Dome is known to be soft duty, and like the farmers of the surrounding area, the militiamen and their leaders believe the ruins to be haunted. Although they might pursue looters over the walls, they only enter the temple site itself with extreme reluctance. They rarely perceive a good enough reason to leave their simple adobe barracks at night.

Each morning and afternoon, a squad of three militiamen circle the ruins, often walking along the top of the wall. One always carries a bugle to sound the alarm. It usually takes the party one or two hours to walk the circumference of the Old Sun Dome grounds.

Use a weak militia unit as described on page 46.

Vaaron Archibald, Old Guard Leader

Vaaron is a junior Light Servant (acolyte) who feels he is being punished with this assignment to command a squad of illiterate farmboys. As a consequence, he is rarely present, preferring to spend his time in more agreeable surroundings. There is only a 25% chance that Archibald is present in Old Sun Dome, except on Firedays when he is expected to ride a circuit of the local villages performing cult services.

Vaaron is a Spirit-Blessed Templar (p. 45) with standard templar skills and gear except that he wears a 7 AP gilded helmet and knows the following reusable divine magic spells: Worship Yelmlio I, Bless Crops II, Heal Wound I.

"Old Venables," Second-in-Command

With Vaaron away much of the time, the mantle of authority falls on "Old" Venables, a crusty old bugger and veteran of many battles. Sadly, Old Venables is close to senility and is easily hoodwinked by his younger men.

Old Venables is a Quick Templar (p. 45). He has gained several Yelmlio gifts during his long service, including mastery of 1-H Spear attack, raised DEX, and protection (half damage) from

fire. His geases are "never bathe," "never eat horse meat," "never eat meat in fire season," "never wear metal armor on legs," "remain celibate every Fire-season," and "never speak to or help Orlanth worshippers in any way."

The Old Sun Dome Temple

The floorplan of the Old Sun Dome Temple is almost identical to that of the modern temple, shown on pp. 30-31. Key numbers here refer to locations given on that map.

1. The Gathering Place

This wide grassy area slopes down from the west side of the temple. It is overgrown with weeds and littered with chunks of rubble. Near the center (not shown), within a bend of the stream, stands a conical hill. A 20-meter-high wooden tower has been constructed next to the barracks. From this vantage a member of the Old Guard militia unit watches all day using Scan and Farsee. However, on days that Vaaron Archibald is not present, there is a 20% chance each hour that the sentry is asleep. He waits with a bugle to sound the alarm, and on clear days he can use a heliograph to signal the guest house or to signal west to the new Sun Dome via relay stations.

2. Guest House

Once used to house important visitors, this two-story building is in excellent repair and is now used to accommodate the militia unit. The windows have been shuttered, with arrow slits for archers. The other guest houses (further downstream, off the map) are now little more than empty shells. Over the years local farmers have taken away and used parts of the masonry.

The stone bridge (Location 2b) is also in excellent repair, but is barricaded by rubble and broken masonry. A militiaman often stands sentry duty here (50% likelihood).

3. Gatehouse

The Old Sun Dome compound is surrounded by a three-meter-high stone wall. Huge messages have been painted along the walls warning trespassers to stay out under the pain of death. The militia squad are in the midst of repainting these messages, most of which have been blistered and faded by the elements. The wall is still quite solid, but a successful Climb roll will discover sections that are easier to get over (add +20% to Climb roll). To enter the ruins, the militia must scale the wall.



There were a number of small gates in the wall, but they have all been solidly bricked up. Now, the only entrance remaining is the Gatehouse. The huge bronze-bound double doors are securely locked, and the only key is in the possession of the High Priest back at the new Sun Dome. However, the lock mechanism is fairly large, even by Gloranthan standards, and is therefore quite easy to pick. Even if unlocked, the doors are still stuck fast by rubble and will only budge after considerable exertion (resistance equals STR 100). Every turn spent forcing the doors has a 25% chance of bringing fragments of the gatehouse's crumbling roof down on top of the workers. The falling masonry causes 3d6 damage to the general hit points of those under it, and only their lightest armor counts to protect them.

Whilst the guardroom on the south side is empty, the fireplace in the porter's lodge is often used by the militiamen as a latrine when on patrol. Unbeknownst to them, there is a one-meter-deep cavity hidden beneath the brickwork in the fireplace. It contains the old porter's secret hoard; he dared not take it with him. It requires a critical Scan, special Search, or normal Craft: Masonry skill success to spot the gaps in the mortar.

The porter's secret hoard consists of 13W and three small ceremonial items filched from the cult during his years of service. They are: a candlestick holder (ENC .25, 400L), a censer (ENC 1, 1,500L) and a small goblet (ENC .25, 400L) encrusted with 27 semiprecious stones (worth 1d10L each).

4. The Temple

The great sun dome conforms exactly to Yelmalian ideals and is still an impressive sight, despite the ravages of time and the fact that the gold sheeting that once covered the dome was removed when the temple was deconsecrated. There is a huge split at the top of the dome, large enough to admit characters of SIZ 09.

The entrances to the upper temple have been bricked up, and the only way to gain entry (apart from the hole in the roof) would require this new work to be demolished. Such a task would take three man-days with good masonry tools.

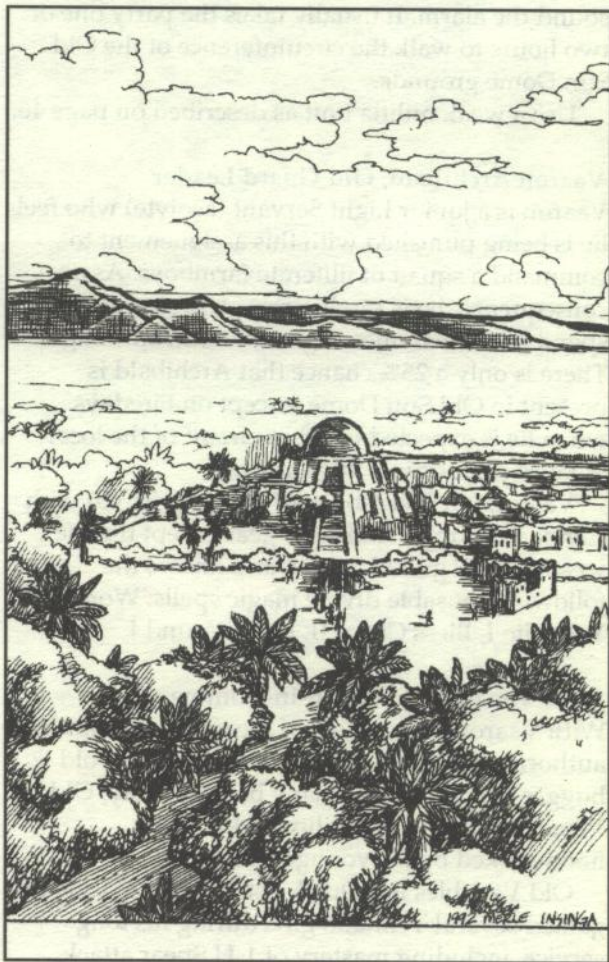
Even after an opening has been made, the interior is dark and musty. The walls are black with the soot of the cleansing fires. The floor is covered in a thick layer of dust, but an inch-wide crack is visible running from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. This crack leads down into the great vault below, the abode of the vampire. (See "The Vampire's Crypt," p. 115, for a description of the crypt and its vampire.)

The temple was stripped of everything of value when it was abandoned, and the statues that are left have all had the jewels and precious metals that covered them removed. There are statues of most of the Solar deities in a ring about the room, each covered with a cotton sheet. One lies on the floor by its pedestal; inspecting it reveals to any Light cultist that it is a statue of Nysalor. Putting this statue back on its stand reactivates the ancient Warding VI spell which the departing priests left to safeguard this area. The Nysalor statue forms one of the wards for the spell; it was knocked over by the vampire to break the spell centuries ago. The other wards stand in each corner of the room.

The vampire has hung his iron heater shield and iron scimitar upon one of the Solar statues. Concealed from view by the draped cotton sheet, these weapons are thus available to the vampire when he emerges from the crack in the floor while in mist form.

5. Lawn

This once grassy area was once used as a parade ground and training area. It is now overgrown into



The Old Sun Dome: A Haunted Ruin



The Vampire's Crypt

The crypt was closed off long before the temple was deserted, and the original entrance is blocked off by tons of earth and stone. Gaining entry to the vault would now entail a major demolition project. This is precisely how the vampire likes it. Only he can access the crypt by assuming gaseous form and seeping through the crack in the floor.

The vampire sleeps in a coffin fashioned from the charred remains of Yamsur's chariot, and has filled it with earth that he dropped through the fissure particle by particle. Any treasure the founders may have hidden here was destroyed when the chamber exploded 500 years ago.

The Vampire

The vampire no longer remembers its name: it is very, very old and was undead even when the Dragon Gold kings set off to plunder Dragon Pass. It cannot recall where it came from, or what deeds it did in mortal life. It has forgotten all tongues it once spoke except for Darktongue, the language of vampires. The vampire's one delight is its undead state. It revels in eternal life, mocking (though no longer fully understanding) the mortal races who are cursed by death. It spends years at a time down in its safe, silent, secret crypt, coming out only to feed. Whereas other Vivamorti have used the immortality to make themselves feared lords of power, the essentially selfish, introspective ego of this vampire has allowed it to remain content with just possessing what few others can have: an ageless, deathless existence.

The vampire emerges to attack anyone who breaches the upper temple area. It fights to kill, rather than feed. It hunts at night, often a long way from the ruins. It is canny enough to avoid preying on the militia, preferring to seek out lone travelers and the like. It almost certainly visits adventurer parties camped in the Old Sun Dome. If hard-pressed, the vampire assumes gaseous form and seeps down into the safety of its crypt.

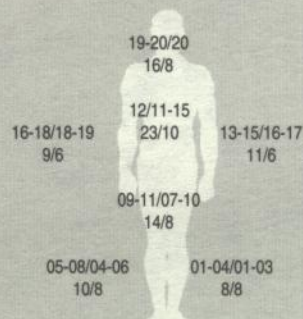
For details of the Vampire's special abilities, see *Deluxe RuneQuest, Creatures Book*, pp. 39-40. In particular, note its four forms and respective movement rates (standard body, 4m; mist, 5m; wolf, 7m; bat, 8m). Also, Gloranthan vampires are affected by the Death rune in the same way that vampires of other myths are affected by crosses.

GM Note: The ancient vampire's abilities are exceptionally complex and powerful, and ideally suited to giving Rune Lords a thorough thrashing. Against very powerful PCs, the vampire casts his plethora of Divine Spells impulsively and instinctively – occasionally whimsically. Consider the list of spells and how they may be employed before the session. For more modest PC opponents, however, this vampire hardly needs to resort to spells to earn their respect.

The Vampire of the Crypt, former male human, age – ancient.

STR 32
CON 30
SIZ 11
INT 12
POW —
DEX 11
APP 03

Move: 4/5/7/9
Fatigue: 62
Hit points: 21
Magic points: 17
DEX SR: 3



The Ancient Vampire

Attacks: Total encumbrance (w/ scimitar and shield) = 4.5.
Fatigue 57 (62–4.5).

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Iron Scimitar	7	199/138	1d6+2+2d6	1.5/15
Iron Heater	9	96/168	1d6+2d6	3/18
Bite	8	137/—	2d6+Fatigue drain	
Touch	8	160/—	1d4 +2d6+MP drain	
Enthrall	1	auto	Helpless for 1 full turn	

Skills: Hide 230, Dodge 103, Sneak 202, Jump 167, Climb 130, Scan 178, Listen 396.

Spirit Magic: Has forgotten any it once knew.

Vivamort Divine Magic: Ecstatic Communion (Worship Vivamort) XXVI, Divination V.

One-Use Divine Magic: (sucked from countless victims over the millennia) Accelerate Growth I, Analyse Magic I, Blinding I, Catseye I, Chaos Spawn I, Claws I, Cloud Call I, Coin Wheel I, Command Goat I, Comfort Song II, Couvade I, Crack II, Crush I, Detect Truth I, Draw Beast I, Drown I, Earthwarm I, Erotocomatose Lucidity III, Extension III, Hie Wagon I, Hide Wealth I, Lightning II, Lock II, Madness I, Mindlink II, Reflection I, Restore Health (STR) I, River Eyes I, Safe I, Seal Wound I, Second Mouth I, Shattering I, Shield V, Shield of Darkness I, Soul Sight I, Speak With Herd Beasts I, Sweat Acid I, Truesword III, Wind Words I, Wolf Hide I.

Languages: Darktongue 60/60 (has forgotten any others it once knew).

Spirits: The vampire spiritually annihilated his allied spirit, along with the rest of its followers, long ago.

Enchantments: The vampire is completely naked, but its body is completely covered in a fine filigree of armoring enchantment tattoos, forged with the POW of his followers in the days when he was active. It is extremely difficult (~25%) to Scan the tattoos under the centuries of grime that cakes the vampire's body.

Treasure: The charred remains of Yamsur's chariot, which the vampire uses as its coffin, would be considered an ancient treasure by the Yelmaliens. The rest of its valued items are hidden in the Armory (Location 9). Even the vampire has forgotten hiding them there.



The Ancient Vampire: So old it has forgotten its name — but not its craving to feed on the force of life.



a confusing thicket of weeds, bushes, and low trees forming a miniature forest inside the walls. Small rodents, rubble runners, and snakes are found here in profusion.

In the southeast corner of the lawn is a bricked-up gate and guardhouse. There is nothing here of note.

Due north of the temple are three roofless, circular retirement towers. The first is in ruins, having collapsed in a storm decades ago. The other two are in reasonably good condition. The middle tower is home to a large colony of skull bats who flutter about if disturbed by day, shrieking madly. Buried deep in the guano on the floor of the tower are the remains of an old priest who refused to leave when the temple was closed down. The skeleton has a gold torc around its neck (ENC 2, 3,000L) with a POW 3 spell-strengthening crystal mounted on it.

The third tower occasionally has a strange glow emanating from it. This effect often begins on a Fireday and lasts through to Godday. The militia-men are especially frightened of this tower because one brave fellow who went in to explore it several decades ago never returned. All the locals know this story and repeat it, with 30 years of lurid embellishments to anyone who expresses interest.

The glow actually comes from a magical gate suspended in midair five meters above the floor of the tower. It appears as a softly glowing portal of light, through which a staircase is barely visible. Gaining access to a glowing magical portal which is hanging fifteen meters in the air is difficult, not to mention of dubious wisdom. Nonetheless, expect characters to set about this task with a will.

At this point, invite all players to make Idea rolls for their characters. A successful test suggests to the character that stepping through a magical portal may not be a good idea. Having tendered this subtle hint to your players, you are thereby absolved of any further misery their characters suffer as a consequence of their actions.

Any character passing through the portal of light vanishes, along with the light and the portal. The character finds himself standing on a small landing of a towering, endless golden staircase that extends upward out of sight toward a gradually more radiant dome above and downward toward a vast well of blackness. All about and beneath him is a dark, empty void. Ask the player to make an Idea roll; a successful test discloses the disturbing fact that the character is not breathing.

The character is in fact standing on a staircase to Yelm's Heavenly Mansion. After a timeless

moment, during which the character may contemplate his surroundings, an unimaginably loud and distant voice whispers, "Welcome, Seeker. Dost thou desire to be Examined for translation into the Holy Realms of Light?"

If the answer is "Yes," the character is Examined. The Examination is inexpressibly painful. No hit points are lost, but the character loses the use of all five senses for 1d10 hours. The Examination, of course, reveals the character unfit to be translated as yet into the Holy Realms of Light, whereupon the character is spit back into the Mundane Plane. An observer in the tower sees the portal of light briefly reappear, then the character forcefully expelled from the portal, tumbling like a limp doll back to the floor of the tower, taking standard falling damage in the process. The portal of light then disappears again, and does not reappear until the next Fireday.

If the answer is "No," anything else, or no answer at all, the character is not Examined, but is immediately spit back into the Mundane Plane. The character arrives back in the tower exactly as described in the preceding paragraph, except that he retains access to his senses, and can therefore properly savor the terror and pain of plunging to the floor of the tower.

If a clever, inspired character does something Exceptional, reward him with a commensurately Exceptional Fate. For example, a character who jumps off the staircase falls back to Glorantha, landing in a random location somewhere on the face of the world. Of course, nobody could possibly survive such a drop without magical support (e.g., multiple Fly spells, a sylph, etc.).

Occasionally, at the whim of Yelm, a character entering this portal is not spit out. The reasons for such occasions are incomprehensible to mere mortals. One such occasion was the disappearance of the hapless militiaman; his fate is Unknown. Another occasion was the disappearance and subsequent reappearance of Bunan Flea (see p. 119). We cannot Presume to explain the reasons or mechanisms for this remarkable event.

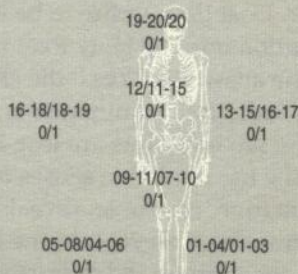
Warning and Disclaimer: This is *not* presented as a model for devising Heroquests. This is a Cheap, Imaginative Stage Effect designed to produce the impression of an otherworldly event without assuming the burden of rationalizing it. Anyone attempting to extrapolate Revealed Truths about Heroquesting from this Cheap Trick deserves the Divine Misery he brings upon himself.



Skeletons, Guardians of the Vampire's Treasure

STR 11
SIZ 13
DEX 11

Move: 3
Fatigue: NA
Hit points: NA
Magic points: 1
DEX SR: 3



Skeleton

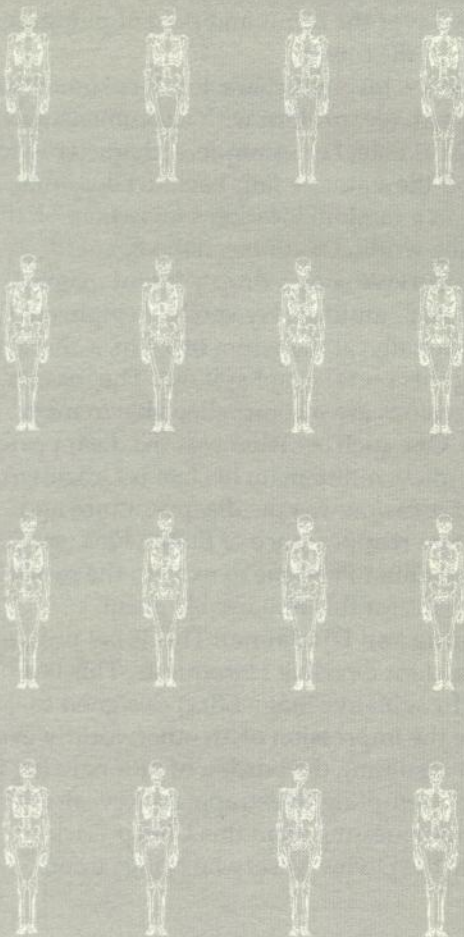
Attacks: Skeletons have no fatigue points, and never tire.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Gladius	7	55/55	1d6+1	1/10
Heater Shield	8	21/55	1d6	3/12

Skills: Dodge 55.

Armor: None.

Disease: The marrow of each skeleton's bones has long since decayed to powder, and if a hit location is destroyed, it crumbles into dust. Breathing in this dust exposes the victim to Joint Rot (test Con x 5; if failed, permanently add 1 to base strike rank).



Mark off each location as it is destroyed.

6. Garth

This sheltered area is now an impenetrable tangle of thorns and weeds.

7. Meeting House

This once majestic chamber is now empty and hollow. The walls ring back echoes into the dust-filled chamber, undisturbed for centuries.

8. Tower

Like the garth, tower court is choked with vegetation; only with great difficulty, noise, and fatigue would a path to the tower door be cleared. The tower itself is empty and in a fair state. A mated pair of vrok hawks roost in the roof.

9. Armory

This is where the vampire stowed the corpses after he destroyed his followers. The room is dim, dusty, and silent. The bones lie in a great charnel heap in the left alcove. If disturbed in any way, the skeletons begin to animate at a rate of 1d3 per melee round, until all are up and fighting. They have been instructed by the vampire to attack anyone in the room. If the intruders withdraw, the skeletons fall down where they stand.

The skeletons stand guard over the vampire's prized possessions which he has hidden here and forgotten. Under the charnel heap is a loose flagstone which can only be spotted with a critical Scan, special Search, or normal Craft: Masonry skill success, and only once the bones have been cleared away. The area also registers to a Storm Bull's Sense Chaos skill. Once the stone is removed, a large cavity is exposed.

Lying on top of the loot is a beautiful crimson gown which crumbles to dust if moved. It was the dress the vampire's lover wore the day he sucked her life away along with the rest of his followers. Underneath it is an oiled sack which contains the vampire's suit of armor. Fashioned from silver plate and tarnished to blackness, it is engraved with the gruesome and appalling imagery of the Vivamort cult. The suit was made for SIZ 11. It could not possibly be worn in decent company.

Crammed at the bottom of the hole is a small, lead-bound box. It has no lock. The box sets off alarms for Detect Chaos and responds to a Detect Magic spell. Inside is a small, dried-out corpse of a strange birdlike animal with two sets of sharp claws and scales – the remains of the vampire's basilisk. This curiosity could fetch as much as 1,000L at a Knowledge temple, and could be of interest to sorcerers, alchemists, or assassins.

There is also a small casket in the box, made of



heavily lacquered wood and brazenly marked with chaos, magic, and Death-runes. Inside is an oblong egg, yellow with age and resting on a bed of straw. This is the infamous cock's egg, from which a basilisk may be hatched. The egg is now of course rotten, and its shell is exceedingly brittle.

Touching the egg itself fractures it, unless a DEX x 1 roll is made. Picking up the box is almost as risky (DEX x 3), and carrying it about requires a Luck roll every turn to prevent the egg from breaking. Piercing the shell exposes its putrid contents to the air. If the cock's egg breaks when still inside the box, enough noxious vapor eventually escapes to make all those around it feel nauseated. If the egg is open to the air when it shatters, all those within three meters must make a CON roll against the vapor's POT 24. Anyone failing this roll loses 4d6 points of CON. Those who succeed in the roll lose 1d6-1 CON. In addition, everyone in range is also violently sick. Victims receiving adequate care regenerate 1d3-1 points of CON per week. Any CON not regained in a season is lost permanently. Anyone foolish or depraved enough to eat the egg becomes tainted by Chaos and gains 1d6 chaotic features.

10. Light Hall

The light hall is a series of rooms running off a long corridor above the armory and the meeting-house. The priests and lords of the temple once lived here. The rooms are all empty now, and have scorch marks on the walls and ceilings from the fires of purification. It was once possible to enter the upper temple from the light hall, but the doorway has been bricked up.

A door in the southeast leads to the latrine block, a long room that contains separate cubicles. Holes in the floor empty into a narrow channel which is dry now. One of the cubicles contains a tattered bedroll and some broken crockery. It is here that "Bunan Flea" pretends to sleep during the afternoon and early evening.

Bunan Flea

Bunan Flea was an escaped trollkin slave. He blundered into the Sun Dome lands and was chased by the Sun Dome militia. Bunan took refuge in the ruins and thought himself safe. One night the vampire stalked him, and in fright he ran into the third retirement tower. The magical portal was open, and after recovering from his fright with the vampire, Bunan scrambled up the walls of the tower and passed through the magic portal. This hapless trollkin then descended the staircase to the Realm of Darkness.



Bunan Flea: A Darkness Spirit Impersonates a Trollkin

Some time later a new Bunan Flea emerged from the old retirement tower. (See Bunan Flea's description on page 120.) The original trollkin had been defeated by a powerful darkness spirit on another plane. The darkness spirit has assumed Bunan Flea's form and has returned to the Mundane Plane to live exactly as the trollkin had lived. If the simulacrum ever sees itself in a mirror, the spirit of the original Bunan Flea is drawn here, where it gains a final attempt to win back his body through spirit combat.

The simulacrum of Bunan Flea is identical to the trollkin, save that it really has no idea who or where it is. It only speaks Darktongue and has no shadow. Unlike a normal trollkin, it is not demoralized by sunlight, but shuns it all the same. It is able to teleport between any two shadows once per round; this action costs 1 MP to perform. It may also instinctively teleport back to the Otherworld place from which it came, but if the spirit does so, it cannot return for 1d20 hours.

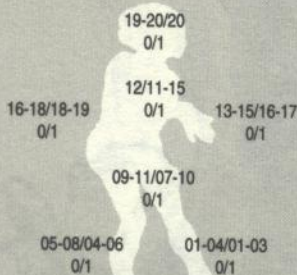
This entity skulks after intruders, seeking to learn who and what they are. It instinctively hates and fears light-worshippers and may seek to harm them. It fears other darkness creatures (such as trolls) unless it discovers they are weaker.



Bunan Flea, Darkness Spirit in the Form of a Trollkin
(See *Deluxe RQ, Creatures Book*, p. 18.)

STR 14
CON —
SIZ 11
INT 13
POW 28
DEX 17
APP 10

Move: 5
Fatigue: NA
Hit points: = POW
Magic points: 28
DEX SR: 2



Bunan Flea

Attacks: Darkness spirits have no fatigue points, and never tire.

Weapon	SR	Attk/Par%	Damage	ENC/AP
Quarterstaff	5	66/66	1d8+1d4	1.5/8
Med. Crossbow	2	66/—	2d4+2	
Touch	7	99/—	Fearshock (as per Shade)	

Skills: Dodge 87, Listen 66, Hide 66, Sneak 66, Darksense Scan 66, Darksense Search 66.

Languages: Darktongue 66/00.

Magic Items: A tin compass. This item would be worth up to 5,000L to the Grey Sages, as it has been out of this world and no longer points to Magasta's Pool.

Special Abilities: Able to teleport between shadows (see above). Any living creature whose skin comes in contact with Bunan Flea's must resist his Magic Points or suffer a Fearshock attack like that of a shade (see *RQ Deluxe, Creatures Book*, p. 118). Bunan Flea has no control over this power.

11. Library

One of the most secure rooms in the Old Sun Dome, the library's barred windows have been bricked up and its great bronze doors mortared shut. Smashing through to the bronze doors takes two man days of labor with the appropriate tools. The bronze doors themselves are extremely sturdy, taking 75 points of damage before giving way. The bronze reinforcement gives the doors the equivalent of 7 AP.

Inside, the library is as it was left, for it is one of the few areas in the temple that escaped the ritual fires of purification. The old librarian refused the priests entry, and was promptly bricked in and entombed. There are hundreds of scrolls and dozens of books lining the walls, most of them fatally ravaged by time. Many crumble to the touch. The few works worth salvaging are all written in the vernacular Firespeech of the period and would be of considerable value to the count or a Sage temple.

Notable among the tomes is a contemporary account of the life of Arinsor, the first count, written on plates of gold (ENC 4, 9,000L). Chained to a desk is a huge codex of the Sun Dome lands during the reign of Count Kolyth the Horn (1005 – 1093), which includes a list of all the retirement towers in Sun County at that time, including that in which the poet Solinthor was later imprisoned (see "Solinthor's Tower," p. 122-126). Sitting reverently on a pillow inside a nook is a beautiful vellum scroll, wrapped around magnificent solid gold ends (both ENC 1.4, 1,000L). It is part of a compendium of Yelmalion cult lore, and reading it increases the reader's Ceremony and Yelmalio Cult Lore skill by 1d4 x 5%, up to a maximum of 75%. It is of priceless heirloom value to the Yelmalio cult.

Other books of interest include a manual describing the training of a gryphon, an incomplete Firespeech dictionary, a treatise on Sun Dome battle tactics (which, though antiquated, would still be of considerable interest to the Lunar military), and the blueprints of the great spear-casting machine at Harpoon.

The library still has all its original fittings, including a large, gold-plated corona (chandelier). The ropes that suspended it from the ceiling have long since rotted, and it lies smashed on the floor. If recovered and repaired, this antique would fetch in excess of 1,000L. Other pieces of interest include finely crafted furniture (desks, chairs, etc.) and a solid gold lamp on the librarian's desk. This piece has a Magic Spirit (INT 02 POW 09) bound into it which knows the spirit magic spells Ignite 1 and Extinguish 1. When commanded in Firespeech to "light," it uses its Ignite spell to light the oil reservoir in the lamp. When commanded to "douse," it casts Extinguish and puts the lamp out. All that remains of the oil in the lamp is a crusty residue.

The library is haunted by the wraith of the librarian. In the sealed environment of the library, his body is remarkably intact. His mummy-like remains lie face-down at his desk, where he slowly died of thirst. His hands clutch the remnants of a journal, which is all but unreadable. It is the librarian's account of the closure of the temple, which he bitterly penned after being immured here. The librarian ascribed the closure of the temple to the arrogance of his High Priest, who he claims was plotting to depose the count and give the title to his own son. The day the coup was to take place the temple was rent by the great explosion and the High Priest, who survived the blast, attributed this calamity to Yelm's displea-



sure of his treason. On the day he announced that the temple had lost the god's grace and had to be abandoned, he also announced his retirement. Records at the modern Sun Dome confirm that the high priest then shut himself away in a retirement tower and died. It is also noted that his son was blinded and imprisoned.

The librarian's wraith is bound into his journal. It attacks anyone who takes the journal from the corpse's grasp; it can range within 20 meters of the journal itself. It can follow thieves out of the room, if they take the book with them. If the journal is destroyed, the wraith is freed.

The Wraith of the Old Librarian

INT 18 CON 45

Magic Points: 20

Move: = MP

Hit Points: 45

Special Attack: Affects INT.

Armor: None, but may be struck only by magic.

Divine Magic: Dismiss Magic I, Sunbright I.

Yelmallo Gift/Geas: "Protection (half damage) from all forms of fire," "speak only truth to everyone."

12-16. Warming Room, Great Hall, Kitchen, Cellars, and Barracks

This entire wing of the temple was inadvertently burned down during the hurried deconsecration ritual performed as the complex was evacuated. Only a blackened shell remains. A large number of snakes live in the jumbled wreckage.

17. Hospital

The hospital block has fared well over the centuries. Though skull-bats roost in the chimneys, the structure is still sound and clear of debris.

Growing on and around the door in the southwest corner is a profusion of molds and fungi that has spilled into the room from the herb garden outside. The herb garden has grown wild and is choked with weeds, but a successful Plant Lore roll indicates a wide array of healing herbs. Other plants of interest growing there include Spirit Moss (when eaten raw, it causes the eater to disincorporate; in extract form it is used in some Heroquest rituals); Eurmals crumbs (magic mushrooms that either poison the eater or give him Power); and a mutant tuber that, when mashed and smeared over a weapon, serves as a crude form of Blade Venom (1d4-1 POT). This plant as yet has no name, and would be of great interest to a Lhankor Mhy sage or an alchemist.

The chapel to Chalana Arroy (Location 17d) is surprisingly still active. A large, badly damaged

bas-relief of the Healing Goddess and her minions graces the walls, barely visible under the coating of soot. Anyone sincerely invoking the name of Chalana Arroy in here attracts a random Healing Spirit, if they succeed in a POW x 3 roll.

As a cruel irony, the latrine that once disgorged into the stream (Location 17e) is now blocked-up, and the murky water trapped in the bowl has become a haven for disease. Anyone who drinks or otherwise comes in contact with the infected water is exposed to both Creeping Chills and Wasting Disease. The cause of the blockage, a small leather satchel containing 19W that is lodged out of sight in the conduit leading to the stream, may register on a Detect Gold spell.

18. Rune Chamber

This room was fervently torched by the ritual fires because of the conspicuous role it played in cult functions. Only the keenest eye may discern the last faint images of the runes, once so prominently painted on the walls, ceiling, and floor.

19. Conduit House

The single door to this tiny cubicle was bricked-up during the evacuation. Inside, a Light Son had concealed some of his less-portable gear, planning to retrieve it after the panic had died down. Whatever became of him is not known, but his secret cache remains here to this day, missed by successive looters over the centuries.

The goods are simply stacked in one corner of the room. The dampness caused by the leaking cistern has caused some of the items to deteriorate badly. The most striking item is a large lump of crystal (ENC 5) which rests on top of a once-fancy saddle, ruined by the damp. Other than its large size, it is a normal unpowered crystal which stores up to 16 MP.

Resting against one wall is a set of chariot wheels, the spokes cunningly styled like mobility runes but rotten and useless. The axle (ENC 4) lies between the wheels on the floor. Unlike the wheels, it is in reasonable repair. Carved onto the shaft is a matrix for the Mobility 5 spell. The enchantments are incomplete; the services of a priest and the sacrifice of 5 POW are required to complete the enchantments.

Stacked together by the wheels are three small barrels covered in a large red saddle blanket. The first two barrels are empty; a reddish residue remains to identify the barrels as once having contained red wine. Investigators may deduce that old stains on the floor around it may have come from a slow leak. The third barrel is miraculously



still sealed and contains 15 liters of red wine. Full, the barrel has an ENC of 17. Its unintentionally extended cellaring has produced a most remarkable and ancient vinegar. Its taste is vile, but its novelty value to a jaded Lunar aristocrat would be approximately 50 times that of normal wine.

20. High Priest's House

These quarters were well scorched by the purifying fires of deconsecration, and are now empty. Long ago, someone camped here. Raking through the cold ashes reveals several small pendants made from human fingerbones and tarnished silver, fashioned to resemble horned skulls. A crude but elaborate decoration depicting a vast pyramid of skulls has been scrawled on the walls of the council chamber. Piled on the dais in the presence chamber are six skulls, Thanatar severed heads which have mad ghosts bound into them. The Mad Head Ghosts instinctively engage any being that enters the room in spirit combat unless the visitor carries one of the pendants.

A hidey-hole built into the back of the dais is revealed with a successful Search roll. The hole is now empty, save for a solitary tarnished silver piece of recent Pavic coinage.

A staircase leads down into an isolated section (Location 20a) which once served as a private temple treasure room. There are six ancient, headless corpses lying in here, the hapless victims of the Thanatari. Expert examination of the bodies reveals that each underwent hideous torture before being beheaded. In the unlikely event that a Lhankor Mhy Reconstruction spell is cast on the remains, the victims were actually Thanatari themselves, executed in a factional struggle.

Five of the bodies were stripped naked, and their effects were used as fuel for the fire. The last leather-armored body still has the horned skull pendant on it; wrapped around the wrist is a leather garrote.

The other staircase leads to the High Priest's private prison (Location 20b). Two of its three cells are empty and don't even have doors. The third is securely locked, and holds the remains of the High Priest's son, blinded and imprisoned here by Count Zebrokinth for treason. The door (treat as having 4 AP) absorbs 50 points of damage before giving way. Inside, the cramped cell is

sumptuously furnished, as befitted the status of the occupant. Among the moldering pillows and frayed draperies, the following items of value may be uncovered: an intricately carved wooden bedhead (ENC 10, 2,500L), a gold privy stand (ENC 2.5, 2,000L) and porcelain pot, a set of golden cutlery and crockery (total ENC 1.5, 2,500L), and a gold ink tray and stylus (total ENC .25, 500L). The body of the high priest's son lies on the bed, face down. A pair of gold earrings (50L each) and a small pendant set with a jasper cameo of his father (worth 347L) may be retrieved from the corpse.

The cell is haunted by the ghost of the high priest's son. He manifests as a handsome youth, his visage marred by gaping, bloodied, eyeless sockets. The ghost attempts to possess one of the weakest targets who enters the room. If successful, it uses the body to escape its prison. However, the ghost's blindness manifests itself on a psychological as well as physical level, and even if it manages to possess someone, it remains sightless.

The Mad Head Ghosts

Ghost One: INT 0 POW 07
 Ghost Two: INT 0 POW 09
 Ghost Three: INT 0 POW 12
 Ghost Four: INT 0 POW 12
 Ghost Five: INT 0 POW 13
 Ghost Six: INT 0 POW 17

Ghost of the High Priest's Son

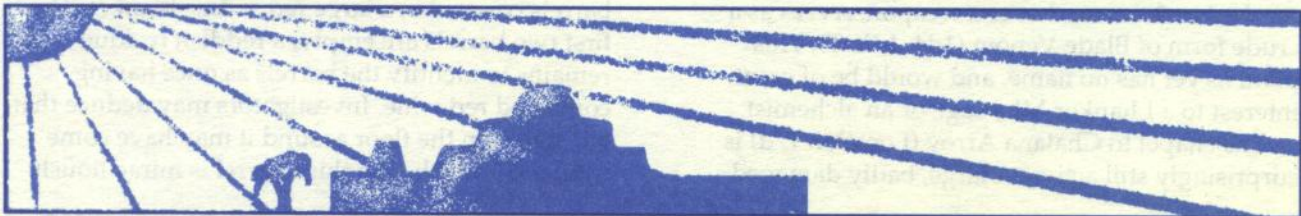
INT 12 POW 14
 Spirit Magic (70%): Befuddle (2).

21. Lay Member's Barracks

This building collapsed long ago and the rubble now forms an easy series of stepping stones across the stream.

22. The Yard

The less-durable adobe structures of the former companion settlement have virtually disappeared. Little remains but mounds of sandy debris and fragments of brick, and the whole area is overgrown and infested with rubble-runners, shadow cats, rock lizards, and snakes.



Solinthor's Tower

An Ancient Poet Seared Yet Unconsumed by Yelm's Wrath

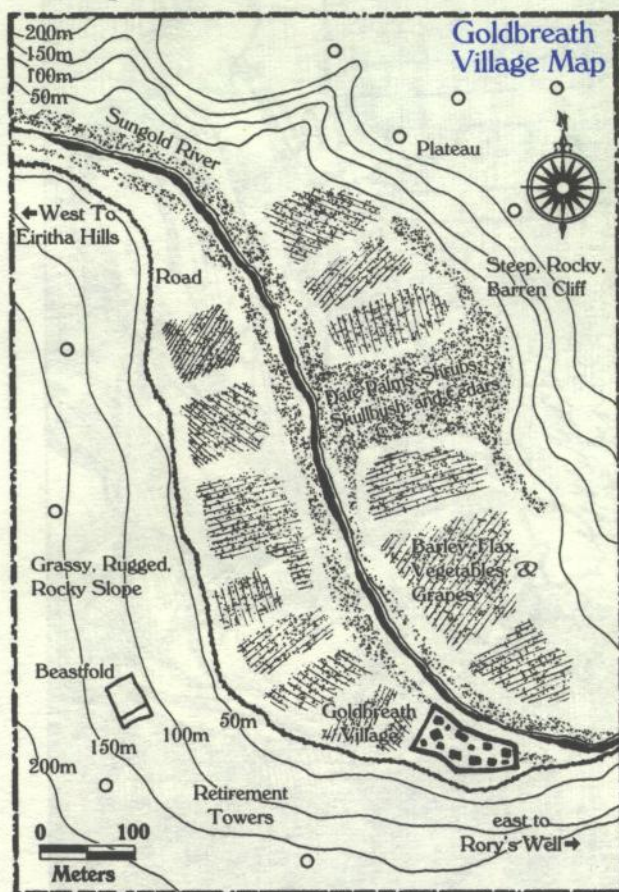
Solinthor is a great but forgotten poet. Had he been born somewhere along the banks of the Oslir, doubtless his name would be remembered and his works revered. But he was born in 1252 in far Sun County during the Solitude of Testing, and his work never received the wide exposure and acclaim it deserved. Solinthor's Tower is one of nine ancient towers in the vicinity of Goldbreath, one of the small farming communities of Sun County. Two of these towers are currently occupied, each inhabited by a priest, each blind of eye but blessed with insight from gazing each day upon the fiery face of their god, Yelm. The ancient Solinthor, his spirit imprisoned in a body that withers but does not die, sits in his tower, too, seeking atonement for his crimes. For several centuries now, he has awaited a sign from Yelm that he is forgiven.

In 1370, Zeoluz the Shadowlord usurped the title of count and put his successor, Belonni the Hawkmaster, to death. With this foul act, Zeoluz, who also became known as "The Traitor" and "The Destroyer," began a reign of terror that lasted five years. Solinthor was then the High Priest at the Sun Dome, and to his everlasting shame, throughout that time Solinthor did nothing to curb his count's excesses. Content in the isolated purity of the priesthood, he impassively received reports of the count's excesses and atrocities. In particular, he did nothing when Belonni's family were ritually strangled and burnt before the congregation, despite their pleas for clemency. Several years later Zeoluz was replaced by a kindlier count, and Solinthor found it politic to retire. He went into a retirement tower and waited to die... and is waiting still.

The souls of Belonni and his family, victims of Solinthor's complacency, sit at the feet of Yelm, imploring and beseeching him to bar Solinthor's entry to the Heavenly Mansion. Ever inscrutable, Yelm has judged that when Solinthor dies, his soul may be permitted to be reborn and may be given another chance to attain his final contentment in the spiritual cycle. But Yelm has sternly decreed

that Solinthor shall have all the time he needs to contemplate the special tragedy of his misdeeds. Thus Solinthor has remained on earth long past his appointed hour, and is tortured with the uncertainty and cruel justice of his fate.

Solinthor's Tower is ancient but still sound. He was bricked in when he retired there, and the doorway is still blackened with the purifying fires. Ancient armoring enchantments have been etched into the facia, but all have long since been eroded away to the point where, although they may still register on Detect Magic, they no longer have any AP value. The only access is through the opening at the top of the tower.





The Foresaken Sinner Prays for Death

Solinthor awaits within, seated in lotus position and staring balefully at the sun with long-dissipated, hollow eye sockets. Centuries of exposure to the winds and harsh sunlight have turned the body into a dried, withered husk. Only the head, pointed toward the sky, may now move. Like a sunflower, the parched skull follows Yelm's progression across the sky daily as Solinthor rasps through a dry throat jumbled prayers he no longer understands. Dressed in the tattered raiments of a Light Priest, the lich prays before a small flaming brazier blackened with centuries of use. The source of the brazier's eternal flames is Solinthor's salamanders, which he may summon at will.

The lich holds a replica of the Globe of Authority in one hand and of the Scepter of Order in the other. This is the first set of replacement

Solinthor, Lich and former Light Priest of the Sun Dome Temple and Priest of Yelm the Elder.

SIZ 06
INT 22 (insane)
POW 27

Move: 0

Fatigue: N/A

Hit points: Any damage to a location destroys it. To kill Solinthor, every location must be destroyed.

Magic Points: 21 + 90 MP reservoir stored on the spirit plane.

Divine Magic: (It takes the lich twice as long to regain his spells as normal.): Worship Yelm I, Divination X, Sunspear III, Summon Salamander I, Control Salamander I, Shield VIII, Sanctify I, Soul Sight V, Warding IV, Excommunication I, Dismiss Magic III, Extension II.

Skills: Mouth Yelmic Prayers 2500, Ceremony 1625, Summon 866.

Languages: Understand Firespeech 05%.

Solinthor's Huge Salamander

STR 31
SIZ 10 cubic meters
POW 41

Hit points: 56

Move: 3

Solinthor's Small Salamander

STR 07
SIZ 3 cubic meters
POW 15

Hit points: 29

Move: 3



regalia made by the Sun County Priests. These relics are usable only by the Anointed Count of Sun County, the Light Guide of Sun County, or their freely appointed representative. This user restriction is different than that for the set currently owned by the Sun Dome Temple (see p. 15). Solinthor no longer has access to the spells in either of these objects, but their ritual significance is undiminished.

The Globe's ritual significance grants the bearer a +10% to any Yelmation ritual skill. If used with the Scepter of Order, the total bonus is 25%. The Globe contains matrices for the following spells: Glamour 4, Command Cult Spirit I (x 4), Extension X, Mindlink X, and Sunbright I (x 6). The Scepter holds the following spells: Spirit Block IX, Shield VII, Sunspire I (x 2), Summon Cult Spirit I (x 2), Dismiss Magic VII.

These relics rightfully belong to the Count of Sun County. Unfortunately, neither item is the original that the count seeks, although they are older than those he currently possesses. (The fate of the original Globe of Authority and Scepter of Order is a Mystery.) The orb has an ENC of 2.75 and a raw value of 1,650L. The scepter has an ENC of 3.25 and is worth 1,950L for the metal alone. As artifacts, these relics are worth five times as much to a collector and worth the possessor's life if found in his possession by a Sun Dome official.

Lying to one side is a large leather satchel. Inside is a huge roll of vellum, actually fashioned from a giant snake skin some eight meters long. All of Solinthor's poems (including the lost seven Galana Harrapa is seeking) are written on the scroll in tiny idiosyncratic Firespeech script (see "Solinthor's Lost Hymns," p. 126.) This document weighs 7 ENC and is worth perhaps 2,000L to a Sage cult. A Sun Dome official would express a more-than-polite interest in this item – in particular, just how the possessor came to have it. The usual penalty for looting the towers is death.

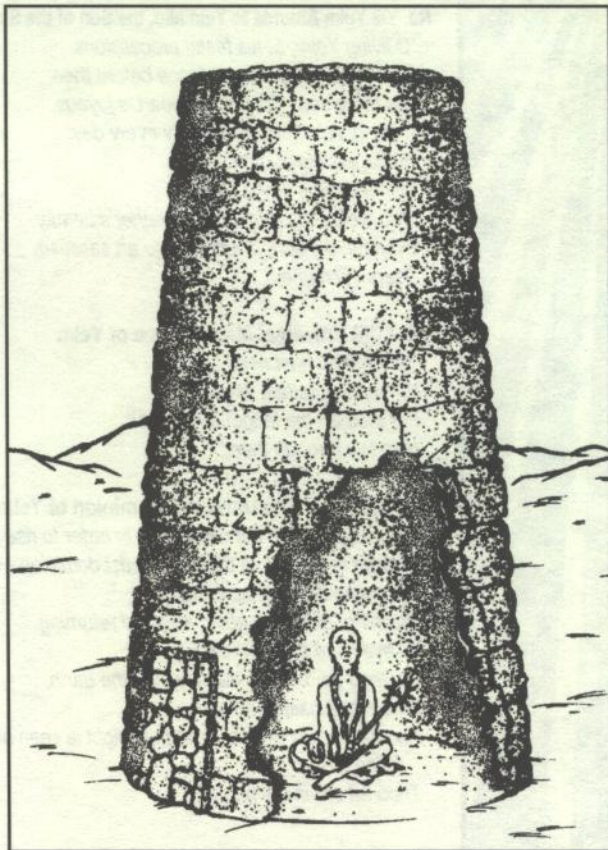
Once a week, the VIth Militia Squad (the Dust Eaters) patrol near the retirement towers in the vicinity of Goldbreath. They avoid Solinthor's Tower because they believe it to be empty and fear it to be haunted. Once every two weeks, always on a Windsday, a supply train visits the inhabited retirement towers to revictual the meditating priests within. The supply train usually consists of several loaded pack mules and a teamster, a junior Light Son or initiate, and a couple of militiamen. They also avoid Solinthor's Tower for much the same reason as the militia squad.

Solinthor's Welcome to Uninvited Guests

Solinthor's Sanctify spell blankets an area two meters all around the tower. The Sanctify is reasonably sophisticated, and ignores nonsentient creatures. If this boundary is crossed, the lich immediately casts his Soul Sight spell to examine the intruders should they come into view. If intruders do not withdraw from the range of his Sanctify within a few minutes, Solinthor attempts to drive them away. Solinthor wants only to be left alone to continue his petition to Yelm for forgiveness.

His defense begins with a casting of Cloud Clear above the tower, followed by summoning his smaller salamander. Solinthos protects this salamander with a Shield I spell. The salamander is instructed to drive away the intruders, especially any climbing the walls. If this salamander is defeated, Solinthor calls forth his huge salamander and protects it with a Shield II spell extended to double duration.

The interior of the tower is protected by a Warding IV spell. The wards actually form part of the masonry and are difficult to access or damage without an exceptionally clever plan. If this warding is crossed, the lich immediately casts his remaining Shield and Extension I on himself. This



Cutaway view of a retirement tower



is followed next round by a Sunspear spell, using ten or more MP to punch through any Countermagic defenses. Solinthor has two more uses of Sunspear to cast if the intruders are especially stubborn. Solinthor targets the most powerful opponent that he can sense with his Soul Sight. Remember: the lich is protected by 4 points of Countermagic from targets outside the Warding.

If Solinthor's body is destroyed, his spirit is freed. The next child born to a Sun County woman will grow up to be a great poet.

The slayer of Solinthor gains the special favor of Yelm. To his eyes only, a gateway appears before him with a stairway leading upwards toward the heavens and downwards to the underworld. If the slayer chooses to take this path, he may find himself Examined for fitness to venture into the Heroplane. (Since, at the time of publication, rules governing Heroquesting are not available, the favored character is found Wanting, but returned immediately to the Mundane Plane with little more than a remarkable story and a modest token

of Yelm's favor – a mark on the forehead in the form of a griffin, and one use of the Command Griffin divine spell.)

To everyone else present, the area is flooded with an incredibly intense light. The gate remains open for only 10 minutes. When it begins to fade, the clouds in the sky overhead begin to roil and scud, gradually peeling back to reveal ever-more brilliant manifestations of the awesome might of Yelm. If you like, ask for Idea rolls. Successful tests suggest that maybe this is not a good place to tarry if Yelm plans to display the awesome splendor of his countenance.

Six minutes after the gate has disappeared, a spectacular Sunspear strikes down from the heavens, utterly obliterating the top nine meters of tower. Anyone curious enough to remain as a spectator is gloriously vaporized.

If the adventurers kill Solinthor during the night, the heavenly display and destruction of the tower occurs at noon the following day.

Solinthor's Lost Hymns

No. VIII Yelm Attends to Yelmadio, the Son of the Sun

*"O living Yelm, at his festal processions,
All that thou hast made dance before thee,
Thy living son rejoices, his heart is joyous,
O living Yelm, born in the sky every day:
He begets his august son,
Yelmadio, Son of the Sun,
Who wears the mantle of his father's beauty.
Even he, thy son, in whom thou art satisfied,
Bears thy name."*

No. XCIII Universal Maintenance of Yelm

*"When thou hast risen thy live,
When thou settest they die;
For thou art the length of life itself,
Men live through thee."*

No. CCLXXXV The Universal Dominion of Yelm

*"Thou didst make the distant sky in order to rise therein,
In order to behold all that thou hadst dominion over.
Shining in thy form as living Yelm,
Dawning, glittering, going afar and returning.
All eyes see before them,
For thou art Yelm of the day over the earth,
When thou hast gone away,
And all men, in whose faces thine light is seen have
fallen asleep,
Thou art still in my heart."*

No. CCCXXIX Yelm and his Revelation to the Priests

*"There is no other that knoweth thee save thy Light
Priests.
Thou hast made them wise
In thy designs and in thy might."*

No. CDLXXI The Seasons of Yelm

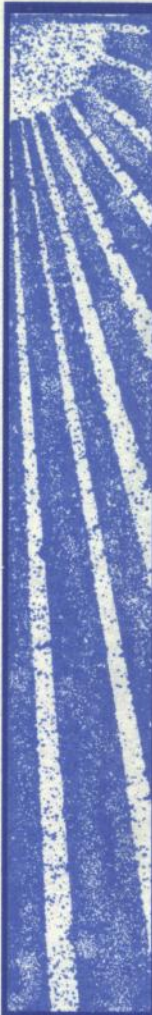
*"Thy rays nourish every garden;
When though risest they prosper – they grow by thee.
Thou makest the five seasons, in order to develop all that
thou hast made.
The winter months to bring them coolness,
And the Fire season that they may taste thee."*

No. CDXCIX Yelm by Night, and Man

*"When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,
The earth is in darkness like death.
Men, they sleep in their chambers:
their heads wrapped up,
their nostrils stopped.
Thou art gone, and it is darkness;
Wherein all the beasts creep forth."*

No. D (untitled)

*"Darkness broods,
The world is in silence,
Yelm, he that made man resteth, resteth in his horizon.
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek food from the gods."*



A Year in Sun County

Ideas and Themes for Sun County Campaigns



Sun County Regional Activity Table

Common Events

- A Lunar army unit marches through. Local lads may try to get together a Shield Push team for a challenge match.
- Foreigners pass through the area. Any suspicious behavior (i.e., anything the foreigners do) is reported to the authorities.
- Entertainers at the local market offer unusual – perhaps immoral – diversions.
- The local priest warns against “moral pollution.”
- Bickering with Sartarite farmers across the river erupts into open hostility.

Uncommon Events

- Elves pass through the County on their way to the Sun Dome.
- Griffins are seen in the sky. All are dazzled by their appearance, but farmers put their stock under cover nonetheless.
- A Sun County official is putting together a work gang to repair the irrigation channels or the roads. A sweep is made of the idle and the ignorant.
- A hungry band of baboons/trollkin/broos raze a large area of cropland. The local militia is summoned to drive away the menace.
- Lunar forces are rumored to be on their way to occupy the Sun Dome. Everyone is edgy and all foreigners are suspect.
- Hazia growers/traffickers are publically humiliated in the market square.

Rare Events

- A wyrm visits the Sun Dome Temple, and takes part in the ceremonies.
- A sea monster is reported swimming up the Zola Fel. The mighty weapon at Harpoon is activated to stop it.
- Troll raiders seen nearby.
- Unseasonal Storm Bull winds lash the river valley. Whirlwishes scour the land, seeking victims, and sky-bulls are reported in the air.
- Nomad raiders pillage an isolated village or farmstead. Sun Dome militia units are sent in pursuit.
- Uleria priestess is making a tour through the villages. Dozens of pious bachelor farmers gather to worship with her.

A Bad Year

Nomads

Lack of fodder on the plains forces the nomads to move closer to the river. Such close proximity to the farmers is sure to cause friction, as both sides compete for the fertile land. The adventurers could be nomads seeking feed for their hungry stock or farmers determined to keep the nomads off their ancestral croplands. The PCs may also be Sun Dome officials with an entourage sent to organize a council of farmers and nomads to negotiate a compromise that assures the farmers the security of their lands and affords the nomads an honorable way to pasture their herds.

Broo Hunt

Scarcity of food and water out on the plains also drives broos and other chaos creatures closer to the settled areas of the valley. To curb such a menace, the count offers a bounty for every broo head brought in. Similar bounties are later offered for ravenous bands of trollkin, baboons, newtlings, ducks, or other minor pests.

Plague!

An unexpected and virulent plague strikes the county. The adventurers may be dispatched as an escort for a Chalana Arroy Healer as she moves through the district tending the sick and convincing them to turn away from worship of Malia, or may be sent by the count to track down the source of the evil.

The Magnificent Seven

A remote village council decides to hire a band of mercenary-adventurers to protect them from the savage nomad raiders that appear each year to steal their crops, plunder their modest possessions, and assault their women. They can ill afford to hire expensive professionals, so they must seek among the disreputable, green, second-rate, mentally unstable, or nobly charitable freelance mercenaries in the valley.



A Good Year

Hazia Run

The adventurers find themselves mixed up in the illicit hazia trade, whether willingly or not. Perhaps they hire on as caravan guards, unaware that the real cargo is the banned narcotic. Then again, they may be fully aware of their crime, but driven to desperate means to raise a large sum of money. In any case, whether innocent or not, they risk a practical lesson in Sun Dome justice or in the even rougher justice of their underworld contacts.

Tax Farming

Sun Dome farmers remit their taxes in kind (barley), though certain duties must be paid in gold coin. Collection is farmed out to certain trusted individuals, who are entitled to extract an additional levy from all taxpayers. Adventurers are hired as guards to protect the tax wagon from disgruntled farmers, nomads, bandits, or thieves as it makes its way around the district. Alternatively, they may be the robbers themselves planning to waylay a tax wagon and its defenders.

Lassiter's Reef

Everyone in Sun County has heard of the fabled gold reef the desert tracker Lassiter is said to have discovered last century. One of the many maps purporting to lead to the mine, which lies deep in Vulture's Country, comes into the hands of Treasure Trove Hurbi of New Pavis, and thence into the hands of a PC scholar or treasure hunter.

Festival Time

Yelmalio Rituals

The adventurers find themselves imprisoned pending their "voluntary" participation in a forthcoming Yelmalio ritual (see "Sun Dome Justice," p. 52). The cult needs certain cultists (Orlanthi, other Lightbringer, Darkness, and chaos cultists) to satisfy the demands of the rituals, and if the Sun Dome officials can't supply genuine antagonists from county prisons, they may even resort to apprehending suitable outlanders on trumped-up charges.

Shield Push Challenge!

The people of Sun County are avid fans of the martial game Shield Push (see "Games Sun Domers Play: Shield Push," p.47). Adventurers may become involved in the game in various ways: as members of teams formed by local militia or templar units, or as spectators, gamblers, or promoters. They may perhaps even form their own team and challenge all comers!

A Journey into the Wastes

The wastes are shunned and feared by the settled Sun Domers, yet these regions hold secrets and objects sacred or dear to the cult. The adventurers are called upon to lead a cult leader out into the wastes, searching for a particular item or place. An extra element of difficulty is added if the priest they're escorting is blind! Possible items the Yelmalions are looking for include a griffin nest, the site of a Gods' War battle, a cult member kidnapped by nomads or broos, or a lost ceremonial item (e.g., the original Globe of Authority or Scepter of Order.)

TALES OF THE REACHING MOON

The RuneQuest™ Magazine

TALES OF THE REACHING MOON is an amateur magazine dedicated to the roleplaying game RuneQuest and the world of Glorantha.

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- Australia – Michael O'Brien, 2/33 Carween Ave. Mitcham 3132, Victoria.

The Town of Garhound



Places of Interest

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| A: Lightbringer Temple | H: Offices of the Commission for the Armistice |
| B: Sun Dome Temple | I: Council Offices and Constable |
| C: Seven Mother's Temple | J: Geo's Garhound Inn (inn: **) |
| D: Prax Cult Sites | K: The Bartered Beast (inn: **) |
| E: Parade Ground | L: The Silent Partner (tavern: **) |
| F: Garhound Manor | M: Will's (tavern: *) |
| (residence of Sir Davis Garhound) | N: The High Tail (tavern: *) |
| G: Sable Riders Stable and Barracks | O: Market Square |



Sun County



RuneQuest Adventures In the Lands of the Sun



Sun County - Prax

Sun County is a small enclave of staunchly independent farmers. Their stubborn ways have resisted nomads, famine and drought for centuries.

Strangers are not welcome in the Lands of the Sun, but many are drawn there by the promise of gold, fame, and adventure.

Do you dare enter the Sun Dome lands?

Sun County is a Gloranthan campaign supplement for the RuneQuest roleplaying game. *Sun County* contains:

- Four scenarios ready for play.
- Extensive historical notes on Sun County and its culture.
- Profiles of important persons and peoples of the region.
- New full description of Yelmaliu cult.
- Extensive detailed encounter tables.
- Personal notes and observations of Jaxarte Whyded, Commissioner of the Imperial Census, on his travels through the land.
- Sundry useful and ornamental details of interest to the Gloranthan scholar.

You must own RuneQuest
Deluxe Edition to play
Sun County.



"I am a Sun Dome Templar.
Who are you to walk
through our lands?"

What is RuneQuest?

In RuneQuest, players create adventurers who explore an ancient world, rich in magic. Everyone uses spells, and anyone can be a warrior, equipped with cold steel and stout armor. The gods provide fantastic powers to their mortal worshippers and can intercede on their behalf. Each RuneQuest adventurer is unique, belonging to a distinct culture and shaped by the crafts, trades, and skills of his parents.

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