



The Explorer's Haven

PLAYER MATERIAL FROM THE BOOK KARVOSTI – THE WITCH HAMMER

Symbaron

KARVOSTI

The Explorer's Haven

JÄRNRINGEN:

Martin Grip, Mattias Johnsson,
Mattias Lilja

WRITER:

Mattias Johnsson

TRANSLATION:

Niklas Lundmark

EDITOR:

Mattias Lilja

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Martin Grip

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Johan Nohr
Christian Granath

MAPS:

Tobias Tranell
Johan Nohr

PROOFREADING:

Brandon Bowling
John-Michael Warkentin

Symbaroum



JÄRNRINGEN

ISBN:

978-91-87915-38-3

COPYRIGHT:

Nya Järnringen AB 2017

Tharabban's Domain

FEW PARTS OF THE DAVOKAR REGION are the subject of as many rumors and legends as the cliff of Karvosti. Yes, songs are sung of Symbar, Saroklaw and the mythical Dakovak. Yet, unlike these fabled places and others like them, Karvosti is very much alive – and what is more, it is the home of many renowned individuals.

MANY PEOPLE, BARBARIANS and Ambrians alike, fantasize about what life is like up there amongst the wrathguards, sun priests and witches; how it would feel to stand on the plateau and behold the mighty forest below. Very few ever get the opportunity to actually set foot on the cliff. Usually, such a visit would require a difficult and perilous journey through monster-infested woods, and a lengthy absence from one's crops or whatever means of livelihood one might have. Hence, apart from its small number of permanent residents and members of the delegations sporadically sent by the clans, Karvosti is visited almost exclusively by people with nothing to lose or live for.

Sure, there are exceptions – meticulously organized expeditions made by explorers or fortune hunters who are using Karvosti as a base of

"Before the days of the High Chieftains, there lived a dragon on Karvosti, or... Well, some say it was a giant, others that it was a great bear, but I think it was a dragon ... Aravax, it was called. Unbelieevably powerful!"

operations, or have planned a brief stay on the cliff to rest and reprovision. These may be groups led by Ordo Magica, the Black Cloaks, or possibly some ambitious noble. Such visits tend to aggravate the already tense atmosphere on the cliff, for though the High Chieftain and the witches must accept the Ambrian presence, they do not look kindly on fortune hunters who violate the barbarians' well-founded taboos. All too often their fears are confirmed when the expeditions bring with them the darkness of the forest below – as a result of shameful intrusions into some abominable creature's territory, or the theft of its treasures.

This chapter is intended to reflect the first impressions of Karvosti, as experienced first-hand or recounted by Ambrian explorers. In other words, it is reasonable for players whose characters have





spent time on the cliff, or who have socialized with seasoned fortune hunters in Yndaros or Thistle Hold, to have access to the following information. All players should study the material before embarking on The Witch Hammer, as it will make it easier for them to understand what is going on and begin exploring. Any which way, they will face great challenges on Karvosti, the cliff of High Chieftain Tharaban!

First Impressions

THOSE WHO HAVE made their way up the cliff and reached the sturdy wall at the end of the slope are intercepted by a group of eleven wrathguards, who share little in common beyond the arms they carry and their red-tinted chainmail. Newcomers should

The gate to the witches' dwelling

The arched gateway leading to the witches' dwelling appears to be wide-open, but those who try to enter uninvited will most likely get themselves bruised. There are rumors suggesting that the gate is simply invisible, while others believe it to be guarded by powerful spirits stopping intruders in their tracks.

For whatever reason, it seems that neither people nor thrown objects may pass the witches' threshold without first having been welcomed by Gadramon, Eferneya, or the Huldra herself.

Endo Evelin sparring with Alonar, a Zarekian wrathguard, in the shade of the fault scarp.

"The wrathguards are ancient, honestly! The ones patrolling the area now did the same five hundred years ago; the witches keep them alive, with their potions and witchcraft."

not be surprised to be met by just a few guards, probably accompanied by Lumedo, the aged Ambrian who has been the wrathguards' interpreter these last four years. The remaining wrathguards are likely to throw them quick glances before redirecting their attention to the forest, looking for any movement that might signal an approaching threat.

After having answered questions about the nature of their visit, and having their packs searched, the travelers are given some time to let the impressions sink in – the High Chieftain's mighty fortress looming on the eastern edge of the plateau; the fault scarp, a couple of hundred meters further away, with its entrance to the witches' dwelling; the shiny copper dome of the sun temple perched on the upper ledge near the western precipice. Then there are the people. There seems to be only a few of them moving around, at the nearby marketplace and the pilgrim camp below the sun temple. More of them are posted along the edges of the plateau, on the walls and towers of the stronghold, and by the sun temple. They are all looking outwards, at the forest, that dark and waving sea of leaves. Or is it that they look for what is moving beneath the foliage? Karvosti may be an impressive cliff, but compared to Davokar it is both tiny and terribly exposed. It is imperative for people on the cliff – residents and visitors alike – to get along and assist one another.

Initially, this feeling of solidarity is the predominant one. On Karvosti, everyone stands united against the darkness of Davokar, despite various disagreements and historical animosity. This is taken for granted, more out of necessity than anything else, and all present on the plateau are expected to do whatever it takes to avoid open conflict. Of course, this is easier said than done – especially when situated on an isolated cliff deep within the forest, along with a colorful collection of rash and violent individuals with unwavering confidence in their convictions...

One soon realizes that just about everyone on Karvosti must constantly bite their tongue with regards to the many perceived injustices – some more serious than others. Suppressed, destructive feelings such as jealousy, suspicion, dislike, and pure hatred can be recognized on most faces – in the exchange of glares between wrathguards and sun knights; in the hand reaching for the hilt of a sword when a merchant refuses to haggle; in the whispers behind the backs of newly arrived members of a successful expedition; even in the growing silence as a loving couple sneak into their tent. An inquisitive person may be told plenty of grisly stories about times when such feelings could not be subdued – often ending with the aggressive party being imprisoned, waiting



Edrafin, unofficial leader of the pilgrim camp, is usually the first person newcomers encounter on the plateau.

to be judged by either the chieftain of his/her clan or the Queen's legate.

Other blemishes on the peaceful surface are the individuals suffering from physical and mental afflictions; something particularly apparent in the pilgrim camp. At night, the silence is often broken by anguished moans, hysterical screams, or mindless babble – like a ghastly chorale; the spiritually diseased sometimes incite each other and the physically afflicted cry out their suffering, thinking their wails to be drowned out by the screams, laughs and chants of the insane. The recently deceased Master of the Order, Eulia Vearra, described the phenomenon as "*the Karvosti Midnight Choir*," a phrase more or less deliberately misinterpreted in Yndaros and made synonymous with the wild feasts of the barbarian folk.

Finally, there are the disappearances. After having arrived at the cliff, it will probably not be long before someone asks whether the traveler has met a certain person or two on the journey through the forest. It is difficult to estimate how many have disappeared, but rumors around the pilgrim camp and marketplace suggest the number to be at least a handful every moon. No one really knows the cause. It appears that most of the lost ones were infected by some disease, and most likely threw themselves off the cliff, later to be dragged away by some hungry beast. There are also whispers claiming that the witches might have something to do with it, while others suspect that the ancient being Aloéna is responsible.

At any rate, one cannot fail to marvel at the fact that such a great number of people have managed to disappear without a trace from a place like Karvosti.

Memorable Events

IT IS SAID that people were living on Karvosti long before Davokar took root and eventually swallowed the cliff. There are only a few recorded accounts from its early history, and the paintings and mosaics one sometimes finds can all be interpreted in many different ways. People interested in history are therefore referred to the songs and tales kept alive by the clans or advised to limit themselves to the last five hundred years, when the High Chieftain's chroniclers have been more meticulous – if not systematic – in recording important people and happenings.

The events described below are tales which newcomers on Karvosti will soon come across; some are so widely spread that they are even told by bards and minstrels in the towns of Ambria. They all mention various dangers threatening the cliff, either from the depths of the forests or its own residents and visitors.

THE ELF PRINCE (ABOUT 400 YEARS AGO)

Elves are rarely seen on Karvosti. However, some years ago the aggressive autumn elf Terael-Kael convinced both himself and his minions that the Guard of the Slumbering Wrath was guilty of having mutilated a powerful spirit, Ranan the Bear Herder. A small force of elves ascended the cliff, sheltered by the nighttime darkness, without setting off the alarm. But as they reached the top, every last one of them was slaughtered by an assembly of wrathguards and templars, as well as Yeleta and her Keepers – none of whom would show the injudicious elves any mercy.

However, the infrequency of elven attacks on Karvosti is said not to be the product of fear or caution on their part, but of the legendary parley between High Chieftain Agadan, the Huldra Bovosin, and the elven prince Eneáno. According to myth, the prince arrived unaccompanied, dressed in simple wayfarer's attire, but glowing with an otherworldly light as he requested an audience with the High Chieftain and Huldra. Some stories claim that he stayed for an entire moon, others that it was just a few moments, and in the wildest of tales time itself was suspended during his visit – while everything proceeded as usual on the cliff, the outside world froze in the midst of an autumn storm, with lightning fixed in the sky and the clouds forming a dark and motionless ceiling.

Only those involved know what was said at the parley, but its consequences were obvious to all. The Huldra summoned the witches, and soon all taboos were revised and made even stricter. It is

said that peace can only be preserved on Karvosti for as long as the High Chieftain and the Huldra fight to enforce the taboos – leading many to wonder how the current duo's tolerance of the Ambrians will be perceived by Eneáno and other powerful elves.

KARLABAN'S RETURN (ABOUT 200 YEARS AGO)

Karvosti is under constant threat from attacks by woodland creatures, as it has been since the first High Chieftain claimed the area as his domain. Nowadays, common predators have learned to avoid the cliff, although exceptionally harsh winters may compel desperate jakaars, mare cats and fey beasts to make the attempt. While the attacks are less frequent, they are far more dangerous than they used to be – carried out by packs of blight-born monsters or even primal blight beasts, with no regard for anything but their own hunger and lust for destruction. Should such a foe get past the alarm system and reach the plateau, it could cause great devastation before being neutralized.

The incident that made High Chieftain Dormegor construct the alarm system of thin wires attached

"You know Aniabar, that bald man always sneaking around the plateau? He is a staff mage! He could wipe out anyone ... anyone at all... with just a gaze."

The Law of Karvosti

The last stretch of the steep slope leading to the plateau passes between a mountain wall on its west side and a precipice on the east. The former is about the height of five men, while the path itself is blocked by a stone wall, ten paces thick, with a pair of double gates of iron-fitted oak. The gates are usually open, with three wrathguards posted in the gateway. Another eight sentries are located either along the edges of the ravine or on the crenellated top of the wall, cast in shadow by the statues of two wild boars towering over them.

The wrathguards on the ground proclaim, sometimes through an interpreter, that Karvosti is neutral ground. No creature is denied entrance, except those who are blight-marked or carry objects deemed dangerous to the other residents. Should there be any confusion on these issues, the witches are notified and one of them (usually the male witch Gadramon) comes down to inspect the person or object in question.

Those who pass this inspection are granted free movement on the plateau. Neither Tharaban nor the wrathguards are authorized to pass judgement on visitors who cause trouble or commit crimes – they are all to be judged by the laws of their respective ruler. However, the wrathguards may use force to maintain peace on the plateau and have the right to detain suspects until they can be extradited to (if not judged on site by) the appropriate authority. Allegedly, they are happy to exercise these rights whenever possible, and the vast prisons below the High Chieftain's stronghold are sometimes bursting with inmates.

List of High Chieftains and Huldras

Since the exact dates are uncertain, the High Chieftains and Huldras are simply listed chronologically, grouped by the century in which they reigned. Furthermore, these lists are not guaranteed to be exhaustive, as some individuals might have been forgotten.

Chieftain | Huldra

–500

Serembar	Obala
Agadan	Ebrana
Odorog	Bovosin
	Ianbel

–400

Avedon	Aroaleta
Maiesticar	Ygba
Ragradeon	Kthelba
Vogmar	
Boherg	

–300

Kvahar	Odrel
Saaroan	Mareb
Gothomer	Yavoba
Kaar	Yagbal
	Soalem

–200

Karlaban	Fulba
Dormergor	Maragba
Roel	Bagdal
Banthar	Areol
Darg	Unna
Ygval	

–100

Omorman	Helabag
Saarathar	Boelba
Sotorek	Eaba
Faodan	Moal
Ergmer	Bahakal
Tharaban	Oryela
	Yeleta



There are many varied descriptions of the High Chieftain, but one particular trait is always mentioned: solemnity.

to eight bells is often referred to as Karlaban's Revenge. Dormegor's predecessor, High Chieftain Karlaban, was – for reasons unknown – corrupted by darkness, and fled to the woods as wrathguards and the Huldra Fulba came to arrest him. Two years later, the former high chieftain returned with a horde of predatory blight-born beasts. The abominations swarmed up the edges of the cliff, and with them an impossibly strong and seemingly invulnerable Karlaban, come to reclaim his throne.

It is not entirely clear what eventually saved Dormegor and his people. According to some legends, the Huldra used a mighty artifact called the Hammer of Fulba, the Iron Flame, or the Witch Hammer; other tales state that the witches unleashed a creature previously held captive, or possibly living, in their caves – a creature of purest light that drove the abominations off and who sank its jaws into their leader. Whichever version one chooses to believe, the artifact or creature is said to remain somewhere deep below the surface of the plateau.

ALOÉNA'S CLAWS (ABOUT 90 YEARS AGO)

The uncrowned queen of the southern edge – the towering, horned she-giant called Aloéna – is rarely seen by anyone. But every two or three years she wanders the plateau, and everything stops. For many moons, people talk of nothing but her – what she looked like, in what direction she was headed, whether she was carrying anything, and to whom (if anyone at all) she paid attention. The latter is a particularly hot topic, as it is said that a look from Aloéna will cause a person to either suffer the worst misfortune imaginable or be blessed with extraordinary luck.

On one of Aloéna's strolls across the plateau, something happened that will not soon be forgotten. A crowd of speechless and paralyzed spectators watched her stop next to three people and pierce their throats with her long, sharp claws. These people – a young Karitian woman and two men of clans Zarek and Baiaga – died instantly. There was nothing to suggest a connection between the victims or that they had even met each other before their executions.

The witches have affirmed that they know nothing about Aloéna's motives, and since the executioner has not spoken of it, the mysterious incident is as incomprehensible as it is terrifying. For without knowing why this happened, it is of course impossible to predict if, or when, Aloéna will choose her next target.

THARABAN'S CORONATION (YEAR 5)

Due to the nature of the position, the election of a high chieftain is usually quite an orderly affair. Certainly, there are often two or more candidates nominated by different clans, and disagreements between clan chieftains will occasionally put the pretenders to the test with a varying degree of violence. But with few exceptions, the elections rarely threaten the peace between the clans.

A particularly notorious exception was when Gorema, the vain and hot-blooded daughter of clan Yedesa's chieftain, lost the election in favor of Oroman. In an outburst of violent rage, Gorema slew her father and gathered her newly acquired warriors for an attack against their southern neighbors, the Baiaga (Oroman's clan), before her own witch killed her with a spear-thrust in the back.

Tharaban's election also caused great commotion. The northern clans favored another candidate, the Saar Iaholas, and when the new high chieftain was nearly assassinated not long after his coronation, many blamed the northerners. As the chieftains Razameaman, Rabaíamon, and Karona denied any involvement whatsoever, and since there was no proof as to who had fired the poisoned arrow, the situation eventually calmed down. There are still suspicions floating around, but perhaps it is true as many people say – that the attack was entirely Iaholas's doing.

THE KEEPER'S DEMISE (YEAR 9)

Thirteen years ago, four years after Tharaban's coronation, the current Huldra, Yeleta, arrived on Karvosti under turbulent circumstances.

It is widely known that Yeleta came to see Oryela, the Huldra at the time, and brought with her an artifact that had been found somewhere in Zarekian

territory. People could hear screams and turmoil from the witches' dwelling; a fight that ended with the death of Deadorna – one of Oryela's Keepers and a very promising young witch. According to the shocked and wounded Huldra, Deadorna had turned into an abomination and been killed by Yeleta in self-defense.

It was widely speculated that Yeleta, who was immediately chosen to succeed the popular keeper, had in fact planned it all as a way of getting close to the Huldra. These speculations gained further credence a few moons later when Oryela too was killed, battling a vile pack of spiders that had managed to enter Karvosti through the Underworld.

Whatever the truth may be, the witches themselves pay these rumors little notice, as was made perfectly clear when they almost unanimously appointed Yeleta as the new Huldra. To be sure, Yeleta has done her part in silencing the skeptics; both the High Chieftain and most of his subjects consider her to be one of the most prominent Huldras in history.

THE AMBRIANS' ARRIVAL (YEAR 14)

In year 14 the first Ambrian explorers arrived on Karvosti. Back then, the Ambrians had not had much contact with the barbarian folk, apart from their conquest of Kadizar and obliteration of clan Jezora. They received a bloody welcome – all members of the ten expeditions that arrived between year 14 and 16 were either executed or enslaved. Rumors of the stronghold on the cliff began to spread among the Ambrians and were finally confirmed when the Queen's people formed an alliance with the Odavs.

The first Ambrian to ascend the cliff and return with her life was an anonymous explorer calling herself Sunflower – most likely a descendent of one of the noble families that were disgraced during the war. With the assistance of a docile Odav named Morak, she smuggled herself onto Karvosti and examined the High Chieftain's stronghold, the entrance to the witches' dwelling, and especially the temple ruin. It was Sunflower who informed the Church of Prios of the sun symbols carved into the ruin, which sparked both the Queen's and the First Father's interest in the deeper parts of the forest.

The missionaries who arrived in the early winter of year 16 were spared. The reason for this is unknown – perhaps their wish to visit and pray at the ruin was considered harmless by the two leaders of Karvosti; perhaps said leaders were afraid to anger the god of the newcomers. Either way, as soon as the snow began to thaw, the Curia



Sometimes even barbarians refer to Yeleta as the true ruler of Davokar.

proclaimed that Karvosti was to be incorporated into the Lawbringer's realm.

THE BATTLE OF KARVOSTI (YEAR 16)

The spring rain fell serenely over the trees and evaporated into a damp morning fog as Commander Iakobo Vearra gave the order to attack. There had been no attempt at diplomacy, no request for the High Chieftain to surrender. No, the champions of the sun thought themselves superior in both arms and righteousness – the barbarians had defiled the cliff for long enough, and Prios demanded satisfaction!

Just as the morning sun burned through the somber clouds, engulfing the eastern slope in light, a hundred templars marched on Karvosti. Witnesses describe it as a massacre; the Curia prefers to emphasize the cowardice of the defenders and their alliances with dark forces. In any case, the sun knights were clearly both arrogant and misinformed – they died like flies as the Guard of the Slumbering Wrath launched its counterattack, firing projectiles from above and charging the aggressors on their way up the cliff.

After a swift retreat, the Ambrians made a second attempt, this time with a strategy better adjusted to the actual opposition. Priests and templars prayed for Prios's protection, but could never summon the strength to reach all the way to the plateau, perhaps because so many of them had already fallen in the first attack. There are indications that not a single wrathguard was slain, and while this information can hardly be accurate, there is no doubt whose gods were greater that day.

The alarm system of bells along the rim

Designed by High Chieftain Dormegor's master builder, the alarm system has proven effective to this day. Almost the entire cliff is encircled by a three meter wide cluster of extremely thin wires, about thirty meters from the top, all attached to one of the eight bell towers positioned along the edge of Karvosti. It would take a lot for someone to climb all the way up without releasing the weights which make the bell towers signal their arrival – especially for packs of beasts or large abominations.

The areas near the wall and below the grove of Aloéna by the southern tip are the only ones free from wires. The witches have made it clear that Aloéna will not have any bells or wires near her domain; something the High Chieftains have approved, believing the ancient creature to be perfectly capable of dealing with intruders herself, should they try to sneak into her grove.

People & Locations

KARVOSTI IS NOT a particularly large settlement, about nine hundred paces between its northern tip and the fault scarp, and only five hundred paces across. Nor is it heavily populated – taking into account the more permanent guests of the pilgrim camp, there are only a few hundred people living on the cliff. But despite its limitations, there is little Karvosti does not offer, especially if one includes the surrounding camps and outposts.

Accommodation

FEW PEOPLE WOULD ever consider sleeping under the trees of Davokar if they had any other choice. The few worthwhile alternatives found on and around Karvosti are very expensive, and none can match the straw mattresses of inns such as The Ruin or The Seamstress' Rest. On the other hand, it usually does not take much to satisfy those who have spent some nights on the hard roots and rocks of the woodlands.

In addition to the pilgrim camp and the places mentioned below, there is a tent camp directly below the northern tip. There, all who are denied entry onto Karvosti are welcome; one could call it

a miniature Blackmoor – but with a larger number of corrupted people and objects. Smaller predators such as mare cats and jakaars will usually leave the camp alone, making it relatively safe from outside threats. However, depending on who occupies the tents, it may well be as Iasogoi Brigo once wrote: “Safer to sleep in a bog alone, than sojourn with a villainous wretch.”

THE STRONGHOLD

The mighty stronghold of the High Chieftain is not only home to Tharaban and his family, but also to the Queen's legate and the entire Guard of the

“The girl who died last week, that newcomer from the north...”

They say she was jabbering something about the Emperors of Symbaroum having returned, that they had sworn to destroy the world. Creepy.”





The Tent Camp Massacre

Whether one spends the night on the cliff or by its foot, it will probably not be long before one hears the gruesome story recounting the night when the entire camp below the northern tip of Karvosti was wiped out. There is dispute as to who exactly orchestrated the bloodbath – many blame vengeful, man-eating elves; others assert it was raging abominations or some undead lord looking for objects stolen from his crypt.

Regardless, there were plenty of witnesses able to describe what the butcher left behind: fifty torn bodies, shredded canvas and gear, and a ground literally soaked in blood.

Slumbering Wrath – yet there is still plenty of room for guests, both invited and paying ones. But the beds and cuisine are not available to just anyone. You must either be of noble birth, be well-connected among the Ambrian elite (Contacts: Nobles or equivalent), or be able to spend a small fortune to enjoy such comforts.

Those who manage to procure a bed in the stronghold are lodged in a sparsely furnished chamber situated in one of the outer wings, where three meals a day are also served. A staff of four Odavs, supervised by the stern Mistress Brana, act as servants and guards, ordered to prevent the guests from entering other parts of

Table 1: Price of accommodation on and near Karvosti

NAME	DESCRIPTION	1 NIGHT	1 WEEK	1 MONTH	OWNERSHIP
Pilgrim camp	Spot on campground	3 ortegs	1 shilling	4 shillings	—
Marketplace	Spot for tent/caravan	5 ortegs	2 shillings	8 shillings	—
The Victorious Hawk	Dormitory or room for two	1 thaler	5 thaler	15 thaler	—
The stronghold	Room for two or four	2-9 shillings	1-6 thaler	4-15 thaler	—
The Cave	Pelt on the ground	1 shilling	—	—	—
Braddokkugru	Place in hut	2-5 ortegs	—	—	—

Rules: Peep Through the Curtain

All participants blurb (i.e. simultaneously cover their eyes and ears). The chieftain (or equivalent) taps the shoulder of someone who must then rise and slip behind the curtain. The blurping stops. The participants must now try to guess who is missing. This is done by hurling blunt objects at the curtain, hoping to identify the person behind it by the groans he or she makes. The more guesses (hits) the hidden one endures, the more praise he/she will receive. The current record is 411, but as Ruut sadly died just after having revealed herself she never got to enjoy her great accomplishment.

the stronghold. It is said that the master thief Doriano Dresel ended his days in Brana's grip, after she caught him trying to use the guest room as a base for his planned break-in into the High Chieftain's cellar vault.

THE VICTORIOUS HAWK

The only proper inn in the region can be found behind the palisade surrounding House Vearra's trading post, about an hour's walk east of Karvosti. Named after the Vearra sigil, the diving hawk, the inn is mainly intended for Ambrian merchants wishing to trade with the clans. Staying at the Victorious Hawk is certainly not cheap, but you do get what you pay for – it is a new and lavish establishment, and cook Erella was taught by the great Elindra Aroma herself.

The outpost and the ten buildings within its palisade were raised only a year ago, with the permission of Chieftain Embersind of Clan Odaiova. Several prominent family members – including Count Demetro and his niece Lesena – have contributed finances towards the enterprise, hoping that it will give House Vearra an advantage on the battlefields of both trade and exploration.

The question is, for how long will the palisade and the outpost's bailiff, young Lenela Vearra, be able to stand their ground when beasts, elves, rage trolls, or some rival House decide to undo all they have achieved?

THE CAVE

Those who are not able or willing to enter the plateau, and would pay to avoid the tent camp by the northern tip, can head for the west side of Karvosti. About fifty feet up the slope are some caves of varying sizes and comfort (though the word "comfort"

may be misplaced in this context). They have long been utilized by travelers in the area, but four years ago, the aged – or at least ragged – ogre trio Gruff, Lugger and Swinga decided to occupy them.

For a fee, the seasoned warriors will provide a place to sleep and keep watch in the night, so their guests may rest safely. They also offer two bowls of porridge a day – the evening meal often accompanied by Swinga's lengthy accounts of their many adventures in Davokar (for example how they supposedly joined Gorakai the Younger on his trip to the Clearwell ruins). The only reason not to guest at The Cave would be the rumors stating that many fortune hunters have been found robbed and killed shortly after their stay. Of course, it might be nothing more than a malicious rumor or a series of unfortunate coincidences.

BRADDOKKUGRU

Another alternative for those who do not mind paying for a bit of extra security is the goblin tribe Braddokkugru. The settlement lies just west of Karvosti, and is happy to welcome smaller groups to stay. In exchange for some food, a weapon, or an alluringly shiny object, you may sleep in one of their huts and share both morning and evening meals with the chattering bunch.

However, some may be deterred by the fact that guests are expected to participate in the tribe's games before bedtime. The Braddokks have an affinity for traditional pastimes such as Hide the Cow and Crack and Crush, but have also invented a game of their own: Peep Through the Curtain. This has been the end of many expeditions, as important members ended up behind the curtain and the goblins found it more amusing to be wrong than right.

Food & Drink

FOR PEOPLE SEEKING culinary experiences, Karvosti is most definitely a poor choice of

destination. In the forest of Davokar, one eats and drinks to survive – not to tickle taste buds or

cultivate palettes! Of course, exceptions are made during certain holidays and festivals. And there are certainly some people who by sheer accident just happen to cook good, or at least interesting, food without even trying.

As to beverages, the most common ones are the deliciously fresh forest water and the nourishing Vesa (a mix of cow's milk and goat whey). Though popular among Ambrians, Blackbrew is only consumed on special occasions, and excessive drinking is generally frowned upon. Exempted from this moral rule are the elderly and those who have suffered spiritual or physical trauma, to whom intoxication provides some much-needed relief. The rest stay sober, ready to fight the next pack of beasts or rage trolls attacking the settlement.

IARLO'S CAULDRON

Of the two people selling food and drink at the pilgrim camp, Iarlo is both the cheapest and most pleasant. Outside his modest tent, from early morning to late at night, he keeps a sooty iron cauldron suspended over a burning fire. He claims to have lived among the northern clan Enoai for over a decade, where he learned the basics of their barbarian cuisine. Whether or not this is true, there is no denying the amazing smell and exquisite flavor of his root vegetable stews.

They say that there have been two attempts on old Iarlo's life during his four years on Karvosti. On both occasions he managed to defeat the assailants and throw their bodies over the edge of the cliff before anyone had time to give them a closer look. Thus, who has it in for him remains a mystery; one that Iarlo himself will not discuss. However, he does enjoy telling other stories while serving additional portions and pouring some more brew into the cups of his delighted customers.

Today's stew	3 ortegs
Spring water	free
Cup of Brutebrew	2 ortegs
Cup of Blackbrew	5 ortegs

SALVIA'S KEBROGS

The fortune hunter Salvia is one of those who have retreated up Karvosti and never again dared return to the deep woods. She arrived about a year ago, clawed to bits and thoroughly exhausted, without hope or courage, crying over her fallen friends. Yet, within the span of a moon she had pulled herself together and started selling herbal kebrogs – a dish from eastern Alberetor, consisting of pastries filled with meat and vegetables.

Salvia is not rude, but avoids eye contact and rarely makes conversations with her customers. This shyness, combined with the mystery of her last trip into Davokar, has brought her many admirers – men wishing to protect her from the dangers of the world and especially from other admirers. Sometimes brawls break out between guests on the plateau, as they accused each other of having bothered or intimidated Salvia, but the situation is usually settled by other visitors or the wrathguards.

Herbal kebrog	1 shilling
Lamb kebrog	2 shillings
Fortune hunter's kebrog*	1 thaler
Cup of Blackbrew	1 shilling
Mug of wine	5 shillings

* Extra-large kebrog for the extra hungry, filled with meat, onions, and roka berries

THE LONGHOUSE

In one of the few permanent buildings at the marketplace, spouses Ov and Teresma serve simple dishes and cold beverages. Barbarians may have their meals for free, courtesy of the High Chieftain, while other visitors must pay a small sum to partake in what is offered. The water is free for all customers, but even barbarians must pay to have something stronger – and there are always several barrels of fine Zarekian Blackbrew stored in the cellar.

One of the regulars at the longhouse is an ogre called Crueljaw, who about six months ago set up a permanent monster-hunter's shop at the marketplace. The burly merchant generates a large part of the establishment's revenue, but has an unfortunate tendency to bother other guests. Not that he is a troublemaker! Quite the opposite. No matter how much Blackbrew is poured down the ogre's gob, he only grows more sentimental, more cuddlesome, and more eager to tell someone his life's story – preferably one-on-one, eyeball to eyeball, so the listener is sure to fully understand the immense sadness of his tragic fate.

Soup with bark bread	2 shillings
Grilled meat with turnip mash	4 shillings
Jug of Brutebrew	5 ortegs
Jug of Zarekian Blackbrew	5 shillings
Pint of the Duke's Relief	3 shillings
Bottle of Vearra's red	5 thaler

LAKE GREAT WATER

Not far from Karvosti are a handful of different settlements – two barbarian camps, the goblin tribe Braddokkugru, and the free settlement of Jakaar.

"That hammer the witches keep hidden somewhere, imagine if you had it – you could squash every abomination in Davokar. Why Queen Korinthia has not demanded that they hand it over is beyond me."

"Salvia is actually married, to an elven prince! But he mistreated her, so she had to leave, even though she loved him. Tragic, so very tragic..."

Every one of them has their own traditional cuisine, and people with culinary interests would surely enjoy visiting them all – the shell-cooked turtle in Jakaar and the Bradokk's elver-stuffed long-eel are not just exotic, they may even be perceived as tasty. But the thing one should make sure not to miss is visiting the Baiaga settlement by Lake Great Water.

All present clan members join each other for the evening meal, which is roasted over an open fire

down by the lake. Huberol, the exceptionally skilled master of the grill, keeps whatever the hunters have caught in a chilly root cellar, where the meat hangs for a couple of days before it is seasoned, coated with oil, and roasted over the fire.

For 3 shillings (in coin or objects/services of equal value), guests are welcome to join the feast and may of course also help themselves to the barrels of Softbrew.

Entertainment

NO ONE COMES to Karvosti to be entertained. That being said, it is not uncommon for people to remain there for long periods of time, perhaps waiting for a companion's wounds to heal. And sooner or

later, anyone will tire of just sitting around and sharpening swords.

Many stories are told around the pilgrim camp and marketplace – everyone has at least one spine-tingling



tale from their travels in Davokar, and visiting barbarians will happily tell you about the plains and woods of their faraway land. Another popular pastime is watching the wrathguards and templars hone their fighting skills, especially when they agree to face each other in bloodless, but definitely violent, combat. Guests may also participate in these exercises, provided that they have something to offer in the form of weapons technique or tactical maneuvers.

GAMES AT THE PILGRIM CAMP

On Karvosti, the average guest spends his or her waking hours eating, telling stories and playing games – often all three at once. People play cards, dice, and board games; compete in arm wrestling contests and duel each other to the first drop of

Barbarians and southerners alike may take pleasure in watching justice be served on the notorious Pole.



blood or bruise. However, one must be careful not to end up like fortune hunters Levana and Leda. While Leda was recovering from a bad case of swamp fever, her sister Levana squandered all their hard-earned riches on dice. Although blood may be thicker than water, it makes little difference when it flows on the ground – a lesson Levana did not live to appreciate.

As its bored visitors have a reputation for being easy targets, the cliff sometimes attracts professional gamblers. These masters never stay for long, but often leave with a small fortune in their packs. They say that Mogio Garakel, the unscrupulous card-jakaar, could live like an emperor in Yndaros for years after having ruined Levana and two other fortune hunters during his two days on Karvosti.

STORY NIGHT

From time to time, the High Chieftain arranges a story night at the Marketplace, often as a way of calming residents and guests after some upsetting incident. Karvosti's chroniclers have always been spectacularly talented storytellers, but the current one, Monagona, is truly extraordinary. When she walks up to the podium and begins to weave her magical tales to the tunes of strings and flutes, it is as if time suddenly stops and nature itself settles down, not to spoil the moment.

The audience is always large and diverse; sometimes even sun priests and off-duty templars allow themselves to be spellbound by Monagona's stories. All is quiet and peaceful during the performance, but later at night, when the listeners gather in the Longhouse to discuss the details of what they just heard, things tend to get rough – visiting barbarians or Ambrians resent their particular people having been portrayed as villains; someone else finds it perfectly appropriate, and soon a brawl has broken out. Nevertheless, Tharaban must be pleased – at least people are focusing on something other than the incident from which he wanted to distract them.

MASS AT THE SUN TEMPLE

Many Ambrians on Karvosti spend a lot of time in or around the sun temple, seeking solace and tranquility. The temple's Light Yard has only enough room for about twenty people, but the theurg Piromei, the liturg Aranitra, and their three initiates make time for those gathered outside as well.

Every evening at sundown, people attend mass at the sun temple. It is usually Aranitra who delivers the sermon, preaching harshly about Man's duty to the Church's dying god. Sometimes, Piromei will take the podium. To the anguish of wrathguards and visiting barbarians, he raises



0 10 M



VEARRA'S OUTPOST

1. The Victorious Hawk
2. Stables
3. Orola's warehouse
4. Storage
5. Lenela's house
6. Guard's barracks

his high-pitched voice and lets his hateful rhetoric echo over the plateau, reaching its crescendo as the sun sets on the horizon. His closing remark is always the same:

"Grant us strength, O Prios, Father of our Laws; cleanse us so that we may reflect your light in all its glory; flog the soot off our souls, carve the rot from our skins; for our torment is just and can never be too great, if only it may save the One!"

THE MIGHT FIGHT

At every full and new moon, there is an athletic tournament taking place at clan Odaiova's settlement by the Arch Bridge. The tournament has a long history and is meant to test the contestants' abilities in various ways. It is a highly prestigious competition and has always attracted challengers from Gaoia in the north to Karohar in the south, and nowadays even from Ambria. Soldiers and

gladiators would love to add such a great victory to their list of accomplishments:

The tournament is comprised of five events:

- **Precision:** Five javelins are thrown at a target with colored scoring rings.
- **Strength:** A large and heavy rock is lifted from the ground as many times as possible, with back and legs kept straight.
- **Stamina:** Contestants must swim as far as they can against the strong currents of the Malgomor.
- **Perception:** Contestants compete to locate the highest number of twenty three objects hidden in varied parts of the forest.
- **Speed:** The six most successful challengers so far must repeatedly run the same, short distance; the last to finish each race is eliminated, until only the victor remains.

The barbarian clans

For a listing of the barbarian clans currently living in the Davokar region, see the header **Factions** in the **Symbaroum Core Rulebook**.

Trade

SHOPS AND STORES like the ones found in Ambria do not exist on the High Chieftain's cliff. Still, those in need of various items, gear, and supplies are not likely to be disappointed. There are always a handful of wagons parked around the marketplace,

most of them owned by traders from clan Odaiova, or even the southern plains, who have come to peddle their goods.

Bartering is a common practice on Karvosti. Fortune hunters may well use their finds as

currency when trading with merchants or each other; in fact, many Ambrian merchants go there explicitly to trade cheaply acquired necessities for exotic crafts and curiosities. Needless to say, this has a way of aggravating their customers, and said merchants do well to keep bodyguards nearby – at least if they have the nerve to demand exquisite antiques in exchange for a single (though much-desired) bottle of Ambrian stout.

THE FORGE

In the west wing of the stronghold, where the Guard of the Slumbering Wrath has its quarters, the barbarian blacksmith Jorlamar and his aides are hard at work. In addition to forging and repairing the wrathguards' battle gear, Jorlamar offers similar services to paying customers, with the High Chieftain's blessing. Due to the lack of competition and, in equal measure, his tremendous sense of self-worth, the blacksmith's wares are 20% more expensive than normal.

Many stories are told about old Jorlamar. Everyone agrees that his weapons and armor are of the highest quality, but as to where he first learned his craft, and what influenced the rough, yet beautiful patterns he engraves into his masterful work, there is little consensus. Jorlamar himself will not comment on the rumors of him having been taught by elves, trolls, or even the frost ghouls of the Ravens.

EFERNEYA

The Keeper Eferneya and her apprentice, Sefa, are both proficient drug makers, equal even to the master alchemists of Ordo Magica. Those in need of healing drugs, waybread and such are more than welcome to visit the witches' dwelling and seek an audience with one of them. But one should think twice before doing so...

If Eferneya suspects her buyer of planning to violate the barbarians' taboos (or that person is foolish enough to admit to such intentions), he or she will, at best, not be allowed to buy anything – or at worst, suffer Eferneya's wrath. On several occasions, fortune hunters have contracted a terrible flu just before (or after) leaving Karvosti, and in a suspiciously large number of these cases, the afflicted had previously been in contact with the witches' drug makers.

CRUELJAW'S TRAPS

When Crueljaw, the aged ogre, finally had to retire because of his bad knees, he chose to settle down on Karvosti. It would surely have been impossible for him to stay there, had the former monster



Whether he is bellowing or blubbering, Crueljaw's name is certainly justified.

hunter not – on at least two famous occasions – helped the barbarian High Chieftain hunt down and destroy some particularly dangerous beasts, one of which was the blight-marked aboar who attacked Tharaban's eldest son, causing him permanent injury.

Crueljaw has established a shop at the marketplace, where he sells various tools and weapons related to monster hunting. The big-jawed, one-eyed ogre is always cheerful, and can spend hours listening to his customers' grandstanding stories, until he has a bit of Blackbrew or Ambrian stout. Then he is the one doing the talking. And often also the weeping.

VEARRA'S OUTPOST

By setting up an outpost near Karvosti, the House of Vearra hopes to entice Ambrian explorers and fortune hunters to spend thaler and treasures at their establishment, rather than on the High Chieftain's cliff. The former innkeeper Orola manages the stock and is also in charge of sales, along with Madar, an Adept of the Order who is tasked with assessing the value of items and artifacts offered in trade.

One can purchase both gear and provisions at the outpost, albeit at a higher price than normal (+50%). As for the value of the items one wishes to trade, it depends completely on Madar's assessments, which are likely to be on the low side. These circumstances are the reason why many people are reluctant to do business with Orola and her adept. Nevertheless, there is a rumor that tempts customers to accept these prices – a rumor of the duo paying good money for corrupted objects.

"Oh, the witches this and the witches that! The real treasures and secrets are kept below the stronghold. The High Chieftain has more gold than troll-mother Vouax; that I can promise you!"

"That goblin tribe out west, Brado... Baradou... Br... Oh, you know, the goblins! Anyhow, they are cannibals. Well, not cannibals – man-eaters!"

Knowledge & Information

ONE OF THE staples of both the explorer's and treasure hunter's professions is doing research and gathering information. However, in Davokar one soon learns that all information is subject to interpretation – something easily forgotten in Ambria, where authorities such as Ordo Magica and the Sun Church often present their particular interpretations and conclusions as "truth" or "facts."

In the deep woods, one almost inevitably ends up seeking information in many different places, adding all the pieces together and drawing one's own conclusions. The available knowledge seldom appears in the form of writing, but rather as stories and images – sources that mean very little until one knows who made them and something about the circumstances leading up to their creation.

THE CHRONICLER'S ARCHIVES

For an outsider to be allowed to enter the archives in the stronghold, the circumstances must be very special indeed. Besides, if one is to believe the few people who claim to have actually seen them, the term "archives" is somewhat misleading. Rather, they are a series of underground vaults, full of stone tablets, embroidered textiles, parchment scrolls, and various objects deemed to hold historical significance.

The rumors of what exactly is down there are many, most of them absolutely hair-raising. They speak of the Symbarian Emperor Merébaron's statute book, written on (and bound in) the skin of human offenders; troll-mother Vouax's legendary, doom-brewing cauldron; ancient mechanisms salvaged from the stone ships resting on the shores of the Eastern Sea; and things even more fantastic. Whether or not these rumors are true, there is no

doubt that whoever is granted unrestricted access to the vaults will make some astounding discoveries...

OLD MARGANDA

The pilgrim camp is still home to Marganda – one of the first three missionaries to pray by the temple ruin on Karvosti. She was already old back then, and time has not been kind to her hearing, eyesight, teeth or mind. But if you have questions regarding the Sun Temple, the Ambrians' time on Karvosti, or events which have transpired on the cliff since her arrival, it will only take a hot meal for her to start talking.

According to Marganda, she has remained on Karvosti due to a combination of laziness and age-related frailty, but the content of her absent-minded ramblings has led many to suspect that she may in fact have ulterior motives for staying on the cliff. Some say she found something in the ruin, something that scared her, but which was glossed over (or at any rate ignored) by the Sun Church; others claim that she, for reasons unknown, has developed a profound hatred for Prios and his representatives. When asked about it, Marganda simply snorts in response.

LERULG THE SHAMAN

Lerulg, the shaman of the Braddokkugru tribe, is not versed in either the Ambrian or barbarian tongues, but she is said to possess great wisdom and deep knowledge about the region surrounding Karvosti. In order to gain an audience with her, one must either have noble intentions (that is, aim to do something beneficial for the tribe or Davokar) or manage to catch a specimen of the mudskipping Bottom Eel – a type of oily fish that lurks on the murky bottom of Lake Volgoma and happens to be Lerulg's favorite food.

There are also many stories about fortune hunters who, in exchange for information, agreed to perform certain tasks on the goblins tribe's behalf – such as hunting down some monster with an appetite for goblin flesh, or carrying out attacks against their arch enemies, the clan Odaiova or the Gurrmmurrg tribe. It may sound extreme, but in Davokar fortune hunters often have no choice but to do whatever is required in order to obtain the information they so desperately desire.

THE WHISPERER IN THE WATER

About halfway between Karvosti and the Earth Towers of Black Leech Rift, one finds The Whisperer's Rapids – a three hundred pace long

Lumedo the Interpreter

Cranky old Lumedo who for the last four years has served as the wrathguards' interpreter, is something of an enigma. Every morning he saunters down to the wall, and then returns to his stronghold chambers by sundown, ready to work nights as well if his services are needed. No one knows who he is or why he resides on Karvosti, as he keeps his mouth shut whenever he is not working. There is no doubt that Lumedo knows a tremendous amount about everyone who visits or has previously visited the cliff – but since his peevishness is only matched by his pride, extracting this information from him is virtually impossible. On the other hand, should it be necessary, there are of course both mystical rituals and methods of violence that just might loosen his tongue ...

stretch of river where the Malgomor surges and splashes and froths. According to the barbarians, the rapids are in fact a living entity called The Whisperer. After much research, the scholars of Ordo Magica have concluded that there is some truth to this, but reject all ideas of the river itself being animate. Instead they have declared it haunted, and recommend that all sensible Ambrians stay clear of it no matter what.

Authorities

IT IS PERFECTLY obvious to everyone that Karvosti is the High Chieftain's cliff, and that the Huldra also has legitimate reasons to call it hers. Although neither of them have, nor want, the lawful right to pass judgement on barbarian or Ambrian offenders – it is the extended arm of said leaders, the wrathguards, who uphold law and order – they are completely authorized to remove visitors from the plateau and detain whoever disturbs the peace in any way. Apparently, the High Chieftain may also banish people from Karvosti, although he only exerts this right in exceptional cases, like when a clan chieftain fails to punish someone who is clearly guilty of a serious offense.

However, Tharaban and Yeleta are not the only powerful figures on Karvosti. Even if they cannot act independently of the formal authorities, there are others who hold a great deal of influence on what does, and does not, happen on the plateau. These people can probably put some pressure on the High Chieftain, as he is required to maintain good relations with the factions they represent. To be sure, there are political tensions on Karvosti; it is always best to treat people with a soft hand, though sometimes combined with a pair of shiny brass knuckles ...

LOTHAR GRENDEL

Forty-year-old Lothar Grendel is rarely seen without a frown on his face, and in an ill-tempered pout to boot. It is said that he commanded the defense of Kadizar when Korinthia's troops arrived at the village, and was determined to fight the invaders to the last drop of blood. But while his older sister chose exile – a rebel's life in the Titans – Lothar surrendered, along with his father Manvar, ceding their land to the kingdom of Ambria.

The Queen's Legation on Karvosti is reluctantly, but so far commendably, run by Lothar. He is assisted by three colleagues: his barbarian aide Undi, Notary Karlas, and Emon Garlaka – a retired military strategist who lost his left eye in a battle against the Dark Lords.

Whomever one chooses to believe, it is more or less recognized that those who enter the Whisperer's Rapids, cut open their palms and let their blood mix with its water, will soon hear a hissing voice rise from the waves. People claiming to have heard the Whisperer are rarely willing to share his words, but most describe him as an oracle – one they say has the power to foresee the bleeder's death.



Lothar does not look much like the noble he is, so-mething many attribute to him being a bachelor.

Their primary responsibility is representing the Queen and speaking on her behalf, but also to deal with Ambrians who find themselves in trouble on the cliff, for example by offering food to people heading back to Thistle Hold. Furthermore, the legate decides the fate of those who end up in the stronghold dungeons – as long as they have only committed a minor offense, such as theft or assault. More serious offenders are taken to the Thistle Hold penitentiary to undergo investigation and await final judgement.

FIRST GUARD FARVAN

The current leader of the Wrathguard is a Karit named Farvan. He is a seasoned warrior, whose grit has been tested during both Ambrian invasions and internal conflicts within his own clan. In his eight years on Karvosti, he has proven his mastery of both spear sling and battle claw on numerous occasions. And though he is a head shorter than many of his subordinates, and keeps his head and cheeks unusually clean-shaven, the

"Did you hear about Father Piomei, the head of the temple? Apparently he has bastards in every barbarian settlement. From his days as a missionary, I mean."

"There are lots of elves on Karvosti, probably nine, ten, maybe more. But they are all disguised with elven magic. And not only are they spying on people; they are murdering them too, in their sleep!"

wrathguards' respect for their taciturn leader is undeniable.

The stories of Farvan's exploits are many, most of them emphasizing the courage, skill, and unforgiving disposition of the First Guard. But there are other, less flattering tales suggesting feelings of resentment between Farvan and Tharaban, and others even questioning his loyalty to Karvosti. Clan Karohar has suffered badly by the Ambrian's arrival in the region, so perhaps it is quite understandable if the First Guard harbors a deep hatred for the Queen's people and reproaches the High Chieftain for having done so little to support the Karits in their struggle.

FATHER PIROMEI

It could be argued that Father Piromei Lethona, theurg and inquisitor, is unfit to be head of Karvosti's sun temple. His fanaticism and immense love for Prios is certainly an asset in many respects, but the very same traits often have a way of exacerbating tensions between the church and other authorities on Karvosti. Moreover, his unpleasant appearance is repellant enough to make both Ambrians and barbarians recoil whenever he comes near – he is tall as an ogre, with the jaw



Many describe Alisabeta as the sun knights' most zealous warrior, when she is so inclined...

of a troll, hair as white and wild as his beard, and small, deep-set, pitch-black eyes.

Generally speaking, radical tendencies have a way of mellowing with time, but if it is true what they say about Father Piromei, this does not apply to him. His views have only grown more extreme, and he does not refrain from weaving provocative insinuations into his fiery sermons – insinuations about the witches being in league with the evils of Davokar and the barbarians carrying a latent darkness inside; one that will surely bloom if not properly subdued by whip and cane.

ALISABETA OF HOUSE VEARRA

The sun knights on Karvosti are commanded by Alisabeta Vearra, daughter of Knight Commander Iakobo. Although she was too young to serve in The Great War, she has proven her quality many times over in the Queen's new homeland. She certainly did during the purge of the sun temple to the east of Karvosti, which is now being restored, when she slew the Blight Beast guarding the famous prophecy of Sarkomal.

Alisabeta has a reputation for being nothing but kind to loyal followers of Prios, but ruthless when fighting the hordes of darkness. On Karvosti, she is often seen wandering the plateau, stopping to chat with anyone who dares to approach her. She sometimes spends entire evenings and nights at the pilgrim camp, sitting by some guest's camp fire – simply to enjoy the company and have a good laugh, she says. Others claim that she only does it in order to learn as much as possible about the forests of Davokar and the darkness spreading through them.

Alisabeta's Exploits

Among the Ambrian people, The Knights of the Dying Sun are probably the warriors most associated with the triumph over darkness. A striking number of paintings in the Legacy Gallery portray templars battling the advancing hordes of the Dark Lords; when children play war games it is sun knights who eventually come to save the day; and there are hundreds of ballads and sonnets about lone templars fighting against overwhelming resistance. But there are also more recent tales describing the knights' heroic feats, and many of them feature Alisabeta Vearra.

One song, composed by the acclaimed sun bard Danio, has become particularly popular among the Queen's people: the Ballad of the Sun Princess and the Blood Dancer. The story is about Alisabeta's hunt for an abomination that had long terrorized the countryside south of Mergile. She found the beast – a great ram with curved horns which (according to the bards) had been reshaped into meter-long, tusks sharper than swords – in a valley, where they fought for eight days and seven nights, before the "Sun Princess" finally struck a killing blow.

One does not hear quite as much about the many brutal attacks launched by Alisabeta and her brother against free settlements throughout the border regions of Ambria. However, within the Church she is just as famous for punishing human heretics as she is for her relentless fight against the forces of darkness, and many assume that she will one day put an end to Father Sarvola and his followers.

Clan Lands

PEOPLE TRAVELLING BETWEEN Thistle Hold and Karvosti are, sooner or later, bound to come across members of clan Odaiova. Having done so, one is sure to hear stories about clan Baiaga and their settlement near Lake Great Water. These are two very different barbarian cultures, and together they (supposedly) present a good example of how the woodland folk live and operate.

Odaiova

CLAN ODAIOVA CLAIMS to be the largest clan in Davokar in terms of population, which would also be in accordance with Ordo Magica's estimates. The more than fifty thousand Odavs have always valued spirituality and culture as highly as the art of war, which is why they throughout history have often subjugated themselves to clans with a greater capacity for violence. Chieftain Haloban was the most recent warlord to protect and exploit Odaiova's lands and people, until Queen Korinthia's troops obliterated both his fortress and clan. Ever since, Odaiova has slowly come to accept and conform to the Ambrian presence – a change that would not have been possible without the diplomatic brilliance of Chieftain Embersind, but which also has caused serious divisions among his subjects.

HISTORY

Like all barbarians, the Odavs are a proud people, but they have always seen greater honor in cleverness and cunning than in brute force. According to legend, the Odavs come from a region that was relatively autonomous from the emperors of Symbaroum; a status they maintained through diplomacy and political scheming, rather than by

resorting to violence. The clan's original ancestor, Odamagála, was allegedly both physically and spiritually enormous – an ideal for all Odavs to this day, regardless of gender and social standing.

After Haloban's defeat there were many rumors, from within and without the clan, saying that the Odavs helped coordinate Queen Korinthia's attack on the Jezite stronghold. However, such speculations are refuted by the fact that Odaiova and Ambrian explorers and colonists waged total war on each other until year 14, when Lasifor Nightpitch and the witch Eferneya came up with a plan which made both sides lay down their arms. A great deal has changed since that day – much too quickly, and in the wrong way, according to some of Embersind's subjects.

The first step to ensure lasting peace was the establishment of trade relations – Ambrian knowledge, technology, everyday objects, and silver thalers poured into Davokar, and from the woods came timber, pelts, herbs and handicrafts. Further progress was made after the Battle of Karvosti in year 16, when the Queen and the Chieftain of Odaiova signed a treaty granting Ambrians safe conduct on the route between Thistle Hold and the cliff. A year later the treaty was expanded, allowing



The Odav's ancestor, Odamagála, is often depicted as a luscious woman.

Ambrian soldiers to patrol the route, in exchange for their assistance in fighting any rebellious tendencies within the clan, thereby reducing the risk of full-scale civil war.

A final major development was Chieftain Embersind's decision to move the clan's main settlement from the shores of River Eanor to their new home by the Arch Bridge. The official story was that Embersind returned his people to the place where Odamagála once founded the clan, but the actual reasons for doing so were probably to get closer to Karvosti and position the settlement on the road between the cliff and Thistle Hold.

SETTLEMENTS

Clan Odaiova currently has two major settlements and another ten or so small villages. They are all predominantly comprised of longhouses, with mortared stone walls and wooden joists and roofs; the latter often sealed and covered with moss. Most of these houses are built in two sections – one for the residents and the other for pets and livestock (domesticated hogs, goats, and sometimes workhorses).

The clan's oldest settlement is found on the northern shore of the River Eanor, about a day's march east of the road between Thistle Hold and Karvosti. It is completely dominated by the three-hundred-and-fifty-year-old Odama Citadel – a five-story fortress, surrounded by a wall of birch stakes erected on a massive rock base. There is a lower wall encircling the settlement, and though it is not high enough to hold back all woodland monstrosities it does give the defenders a much-needed advantage. All trees outside the wall, as well as south of the river, have been cut down to make place for crops – mostly turnips and root vegetables, but also a variety of utility plants and herbs. The jewel of the region is the so called All-Tree growing in the settlement's center. The berry bush was supposedly planted on top of Odamagála's tomb many centuries ago, and according to legend, its dark yellow fruit brims with her ancestral power.

Chieftain Embersind's new stronghold is located on the Malgomor's southern shore, built around the ancient Arch Bridge which, in Symbarian times, stretched across the river. Since then, the riverbed has moved a few hundred meters to the north, but the bridge itself remains where it has always been. It is almost two hundred paces long, supported by massive stone pedestals sunk deep into rocks and dirt. The houses near the bridge, and the marketplace located beneath it, were built in the traditional stone and wood fashion, with one notable exception: the Chieftain's stronghold. The all but completed structure was designed and built





Market day beneath the Arch Bridge; an event which nowadays attracts an equal number of Ambrian and barbarian merchants.

"Do you know why the Ambrians have not conquered Karvosti yet? No? Well, I do: the High Chieftain has been replaced by one of the Queen's cousins. Honestly! It is the only reasonable explanation, right!?"

by Master Aspelo, the Royal Architect of Ambria, who borrowed techniques and styles from the great palaces of his homeland and embellished his creation with details from both barbarian and Symbarian architecture. When finished, the fortress is supposed to be impossible to penetrate without razing the wall or breaking through the gates, as demanded by the ever more paranoid and incredibly wealthy chieftain.

KNOWN CONFLICTS

The Odavs should be grateful for everything their current chieftain has accomplished; it is an irrefutable fact that the alliance with Ambria has significantly improved the lives of most clan members, even if no one has benefited more from it than Embersind himself. And indeed, a majority of Odavs have come to accept, or even embrace, this new era. But there are some who have not...

There are at least two rebel factions operating in Odaiova. They are seen as bandits and rogues by both Ambrians and other Odavs, and very little is known about their numbers, how coordinated they are, and what they actually wish to achieve. One of those notorious groups is led by the witch Serbaga, also known as the Robber Crone, and the other by Embramer – Embersind's own nephew. These raiders move around the vast area called Odovakar, attacking Ambrian caravans and settlements along the borders of the forest. Though the Chieftain denies it, most people are convinced that either Serbaga or Embramer was behind last year's two attempts to assassinate Embersind in his stronghold on the shore of River Eanor.

The increased trade has also resulted in people losing some of their communal loyalty in favor of smaller, more immediate groups such as family, relatives, or colleagues. Everyone wants a share of the Ambrian wealth – hunters have, for example, started to compete with each other over who can offer the finest pelts at the lowest prices, which sometimes leads to quarrels or even violent clashes.

And lastly, one must mention the age-old conflict between the clan's principal lineages. To the Odavs, transcendental entities like Uron, Oroke and Eox are not Gods to worship, but spirits to learn from and communicate with. Instead, they revere their three original ancestors – nearly two thirds of the population adheres to Odamagála, while Yesalom and Embayal are embraced by a fifth each. Put simply, in order to clarify the nature of these conflicts, Odamagála is said to have been a peaceful and pragmatic woman, always striving for cultural and technological refinement, whereas Yesalom advocated a materially simple life devoted

to spiritual growth, and Embayal urged the Odavs to conquer the woods through military force and seek dominion over all of Davokar.

There is obviously much overlap between these conflicts – Serbaga claims to be a descendant of Yesalom, and many of the smaller groups fighting for the attention of Ambrian merchants are more or less linked to the aforementioned lineages. However, it appears that the Ambrian presence in the region has had a mitigating effect on the historical animosity within the clan. For example, some of Embayal's descendants make a good living by guarding storehouses and transports belonging to an Odamagálian family, and similar collaborations are becoming more and more common.

PROMINENT ODAVS

As in all barbarian clans, the Keeper of Odaiova is highly regarded and has considerable influence over the Chieftain's actions. Embersind's witch is called Lobaya, and is old enough to have kept her position under three Huldras, Yeleta included. She openly states that, had she only been younger and seen any hope for the future of the clan and humanity itself, she would object to much that has happened in the last decade. But, being neither young nor hopeful, she obliges her chieftain as best she can while grumbling about the good old days – sometimes adding comments like *"that Robber Crone woman sure has grit, and some wit to add..."*

The leader of the Chieftain's guard is a woman named Yoroun. Despite being descended from Embayal, she seems to be unswervingly loyal to Embersind and allegedly supported him against the much older and deeply critical Theodar (also of Embayal's line). The latter has never accepted his lineage's lower status; even back when the Odavs were vassals of Haloban he threatened to leave the clan, along with all his fellow Embayalans, if the Chieftain would not fight for an independent Odaiova. So far he has not followed through on his threats, but still, there is great dissent among Embayal's descendants about what their future should be.

When Serbaga's mother died, having eaten berries from a poisonous bush, the daughter replaced her as unofficial head of the Yesalom line – a position she would not occupy for long. After a grievous and public confrontation with the Chieftain regarding clan taboos, she was forced to flee the settlement. Most remaining Yesalomites now occupy two remote villages in the woods, where they keep to themselves. Their ill will towards Embersind grows ever stronger, not least because of Ambrian rangers appearing unannounced to search their homes for Serbaga. The village chieftain, Arnomer,

will apparently tolerate just about anything, though one can assume that he too has his limits.

Other well-known Odavs are Valagar, the highly successful jakaar breeder whose pups are sold to Ambrians as well as to other clans, and Golthor, a merchant who quickly realized the importance of learning the Ambrian language and establishing contacts in Thistle Hold. This made him an incredibly wealthy man, and some say he has paid to assume ownership of the Chieftain's citadel by the River Eanor when Embersind leaves. Other Odavs are bothered by his close relationship with Yoroun, a woman of his own lineage, despite Golthor's endless proclamations that this whole bloodline business is no longer relevant to the clan.

DARKNESS FALLS

Stories about the growing darkness of Davokar are told every day around woodland camp-fires and in taverns across Ambria. Odaiova is probably the clan who has suffered least from the forest's sinister powers – they live far to the south, where woods are sparse and deciduous, and it is said that Yesalom's descendants maintain strong relations between the clan and a handful of powerful forest creatures who have not yet succumbed to corruption. Still, they are not completely unaffected.

The smaller settlements north of the Malgomor have reported an increasingly large number of attacks by wild beasts, while southern villages and hunting parties have suffered brutal raids by the so called Beast Clan. Then there are two particularly unsettling stories describing something altogether different...

About fourteen moons ago, an entire village northeast of Karvosti was corrupted overnight. Two young siblings were the only ones to escape this gruesome transformation, and fled south to tell their story – how they awoke to horrifying screams, just before dawn, and soon witnessed their deformed parents ravage neighboring children with their sharp claws and bloodstained jakaar fangs. The wrathguards and witches who arrived a few days later found that at least half the village's population had been torn asunder, while the others simply disappeared. The abominations had also taken the village chieftain's treasured rune axe, Anthem – an artifact allegedly forged by trolls, and which is still missing.

The other story recounts a situation which would have ended just as badly, had it not been for the swift actions of an adolescent hunter. Young Oran sat perched on a rooftop, heartbroken, as his beloved had left him for another man. His quiet lamentations were interrupted by a disturbing noise – a rising, polyphonic hum. Realizing that it must have come from some unnatural creature, he put an arrow to his bow, and released it. The following morning Oran was found dead next to his victim: a grotesquely bloated woman, completely naked under a swarm of both crawling and flying insects.

Oran's father was brave enough to approach them, but came no closer than three steps from his son before falling to his knees, regurgitating repeatedly. The others soon threw jars of oil at the three bodies and used flame arrows to set them ablaze. To this day, no one has been able to identify the creature or determine its origins.

"Listen, I saw a sun knight and a priest fight. With their fists. Last week. They screamed at each other like mad, yelling "heretic" and "blasphemer" back and forth. It was over pretty quickly, though, when the knight landed a punch..."

Baiaga

THE BAIAGS ARE constantly moving around. The clan is thought to comprise about thirty to thirty-five thousand members; the exact number is difficult to determine due to the clan's scattered and nomadic nature. To the Baiags, home is where their families are. Often consisting of four generations, every family is led by its oldest member, who – through spiritual conversations with their god, Arex the Bloodwolf – decides where next to hunt, fish, gather berries and mushrooms, or just rest. However, it is not considered strange for some people to leave their families, even for long periods of time; sometimes Arex reveals trails that are meant to be followed by one person, and that person alone.

Arex is the reason why these nomadic families are referred to as a clan. They regard the Chieftain as chosen by the Bloodwolf, the clan witch as the voice of god, and their lands as Arex's domain.

All Baiags are obliged to defend their territory while awaiting Arex's return from his hunt in the Yonderworld. They have waited and fought for centuries, patiently, for the most part in harmony with each other. But the arrival of the Ambrians and the darkening of Davokar have put their solidarity to the test. This has become particularly evident since the death of Chieftain Hohax.

HISTORY

It is said that clan Baiaga's ancestor, Areman, was the son of Grabando and Gohalfu. Apart from being husband and wife, they were governor and general of the Khalasaar province during the final years of the Symbarian Empire. When Symbaroum began to fall apart and people's fear bordered on hysteria, the couple took drastic action to maintain order in their province – alleged instigators, deserters,



The Baiagan god, Arex the Bloodwolf, in one of his many forms.

and protesters were tortured or executed in the hundreds. According to legend, it was Areman who ended his parents' tyranny. He killed them in their sleep and led the people of Khalasaar to safer lands in the south, where they remained for over a hundred years before returning north.

Davokar has been the Baiags' home ever since. Before the threat from Angathal Taar, known as the Spider King, forced the clans to unite and agree to certain arrangements, the descendants of Areman were involved in many prolonged and brutal conflicts – with other clans, elves, beasts, and finally with the Spider King's ravaging hordes. The establishment of rough borders by no means put an end to these conflicts, but certainly made them less frequent, and thus easier to deal with.

Furthermore, the clan is haunted, if not cursed, by a lingering menace: the vindictive and extremely powerful Grabando who sporadically returns to life in spectral form. There are stories about a number of occasions when the undead horror left its crypt and proceeded to claim tens, if not hundreds of Baiag lives, before being driven back (or returning willingly) to its tomb. There have been attempts to identify some kind of pattern to the wraith's awakenings and, with great effort, seal his crypt by mystical means – all without any real success.

The clan's violent past is obviously vital to understanding their current situation and way of life, but so is the incident which befell the Baiags about six months ago – the murder of Chieftain Hohax at a clan meeting by Lake Great Water. It is still unclear who swung the axe at his neck, and as his potential successors in many cases had both motive and opportunity to do so, Arex has been without a human representative ever since. All Baiags would like to believe that the killer came from another source – from Ambria or some other clan – but considering the circumstances

it is difficult for them not to suspect each other. In fact, they would probably need the help of an outsider to clear things up once and for all, provided that the Baiags can bring themselves to trust someone who does not follow the trail of the Bloodwolf.

SETTLEMENTS

There are about a hundred campsites scattered around the Baiaga forests, most of them small with between one and five simple (but well made) log huts. Neither settlements nor individual buildings have permanent residents – apart from solitary elders who no longer have the energy to move around and thus have settled in their favorite spot. Instead, a vacant hut may be occupied by whoever is first to claim it. If a certain camp is too crowded to house every single visitor, the most recent arrivals must sleep in their own tents until some indoor space becomes available.

Two campsites are much larger than the others, as they have evolved into important meeting places for the people. The largest one is located near Lake Great Water, with a hundred log houses for lodging and many additional buildings well-equipped for various kinds of crafting – there is, among other things, a smithy and a water-powered mill which anyone is free to use. By the lake one also finds most of the clan's stationary members. To name a few, there is Altrod, the storyteller who lost his legs to a raging aboar, the butcher and grillmaster Hubero and his family, and Bera, the Elder chosen by her fellow clan members to represent them before Arex (that is, before the Clan Chieftain and Keeper) and who is bound to the artifact known as the Drum of Gohalfu.

Strangers are welcome at the camp site, but are expected to offer goods and services in exchange for food, accommodation, access to the smithy, and so on. The Baiags are a curious and inquisitive people, and there are usually some with a good enough grasp of the Ambrian language to act as interpreters. They are also cautious and suspicious. Many outsiders are said to have died by Lake Great Water after having behaved in a threatening or worrying manner – from the Baiags' perspective, it is better to be safe (violent) than sorry (use words).

The second largest settlement is found along one of the forest's smaller rivers, known to the barbarians as Morankor, about a day's march north from the northern tip of Vologma. The Whitewater settlement is practically uninhabited for most of the year, but during the summer months, when trout are playing upstream, hundreds of Baiags

The Drum of Gohalfu

They say that Gohalfu, the warlord, had this mighty copper cauldron made so that she could issue orders to her subordinates from afar. The drumming on its lindworm skin is received and passed on by almost two hundred shell-shaped earrings which nowadays are worn by the heads of clan Baiaga's most important families. This way, Bera can reach more or less the entire clan with simple messages – convene council meetings, warn people of danger, or call for the children of Arex to defend his territory.

come to feast, socialize and gossip about what they have seen and heard while travelling the woods. Furthermore, the summer months are when the Whitewater Maid – an ancient being inhabiting the river, seemingly protecting it from all perceived threats – is at her most serene.

Legends describe the Whitewater Maid, sometimes called Daughter Manaud, as a female being the size of an arch troll, with toad-like features and milky white skin. She has not been seen for a long time, maybe because the Baiags have learned not to anger her. Her victims are always found in the woods near the river – tainted and blight-born creatures, sometimes even primal blight beasts, who have suffered the claws and acidic bite of the Whitewater Maid. Ordo Magica and the Sun Church call her an abomination, but the Baiags see her quite differently: as long as one does not mention her by her true name and has not been tainted by corruption, the Whitewater Maid is not a threat, but rather a guardian spirit.

KNOWN CONFLICTS

The Baiags have no concept of personal ownership. The land they roam belongs to Arex, and all who participate in defending it may share in its rewards. It is true that individual clan members are responsible for personal equipment, and families often have a selection of weapons, tools, and household objects at their disposal. But should any of their brothers and sisters be in greater need of them, it is not uncommon for people to give such items away. At any rate, Baiags simply do not fight over possessions and belongings – the very notion would seem absurd to them.

When they ever fight and argue amongst themselves, it is usually in regards to one of two matters: the enactment of new taboos (and the revision of old ones), or how the clan as a collective should deal with strangers. As for the former, many young Baiags – Keeper Makaba among them – believe that the darkening of Davokar calls for stricter enforcement of their taboos and the addition of some entirely new ones. Traditionally important regions are no longer safe; many border areas are being raided by dark creatures; strange and troublesome tracks have been spotted around certain ruins; more game and fish are being plagued by disease.

The older folk, however, will not be persuaded, and propose a different course of action. Bera the Elder maintains, and many agree with her, that clan Baiaga must fight the oncoming darkness, not retreat behind taboos. What would Arex say if he returned from his hunt to find his territory

diminished and riddled with corruption!? Both factions are slowly succumbing to impatience and desperation.

The question of how to treat strangers is rather more complex – or so it may appear when described to an outsider. The Baiags' sentiment towards the Ambrians ranges from hospitable amiability to distrust, loathing, and in some cases even murderous hatred. Their relations with foreign barbarians vary from family to family, depending largely on marriages and/or personal friendships between people of different clans. Hence, it is very difficult to predict how one will be received when meeting a group of Baiags. Outsiders approaching a clan settlement may well be welcomed with bowls of berry stew, or in other cases by axe wielding warriors ready to spill their blood.

Both of these conflicts become apparent as the clan prepares to elect a new chieftain, and though Baiags rarely fight among themselves, they are a people of strong convictions, ready to fight for what they believe is right. None of Hohax's three potential successors enjoy majority support, and many Baiags consider someone else (if not themselves) to be more worthy of the position. Sources on Kavosti, and in some of Thistle Hold's taverns, are confident that clan Baiaga is on the verge of civil war – all it would take is a catalyst to unleash the repressed anger and desperation in all its destructive glory.

PROMINENT BAIAGS

There is no greater honor for a Baiag than to valiantly defend Arex's territory. Their finest warriors, especially those who fight alongside the baiagorns, enjoy a high standing within the clan, and heroes like Ranokrag and Eradana can expect to be well taken care of wherever they go. But prowess with the axe is not the only skill lauded by the clan members; they are Arex's people, after all, and value proficient trackers and pathfinders just as highly.

As for individual Baiags, Makaba is probably one of the youngest Keepers in barbarian history. She came to power less than a year before Hohax's murder, no more than nineteen years old at the time. The Chieftain chose her over the older apprentice of the previous Keeper, and many Baiags would like to see this "mistake" rectified once a new Chieftain is elected. But Makaba is apparently unfazed by their threats – perhaps she would not mind being replaced; perhaps she deems herself more powerful than her challenger, Garagor, and is not afraid to prove it in a mystical duel, should it come to that.

"The last Baiag chieftain was murdered, you know that right? Well, now they know who did it: Tharama, the tracker, who many would like to be the new chieftain."

The Elder, Bera, has a reputation for being stubborn and harsh, and lacking capacity for tolerance or mercy. The previous chieftain despised her, and the common folk are losing faith in her as well, not least since the views she represents (*"defend Arex's territory at all cost!"*) are slowly losing ground. It would hardly come as a surprise to anyone if a future chieftain immediately called on his people to elect a new Elder to represent them, or if Bera was defeated in that election.

The three nominees most likely to succeed Hohax have little in common. The bear warrior Eradana demands that clan Baiaga adapt to the forest's altered conditions and form alliances with other clans, mainly Zarek and Godinja. Like Makaba, she wants to establish new taboos to stop people from visiting certain ruins and border regions, and prohibit the consumption of various plants and animals.

Her main opponent is Karloar, a former wrathguard and fanatic traditionalist who wants the clan to cut all ties with the outside world and drive the darkness from Arex's territory by any means necessary. But even though many clan members share his isolationist views, it might not be enough to win him the title of chieftain. Like many homecoming wrathguards, Karloar is forever scarred by his time on Karvosti – his trembling hands and voice, his violent mood swings and sometimes unquenchable thirst for drink cause some people to hesitate. His greatest chance of winning is said to lie in the third candidate's ability to sway large numbers of Eradana sympathizers. The tracker Tharama has a very similar vision for the clan, but has lived in Ambria for more than a decade and believes that the Baiaga should follow the Odav example and open their arms to their southern neighbor.

DARKNESS FALLS

In the east, the clan's territory borders to what the Ambrians call Wild Davokar, and is made even more vulnerable by the proximity to Karvosti. Many horrors – elves, abominations,

and tainted beasts – must cross Baiag lands on their way to the cliff. But there are three locations where the dark transformation is particularly evident and menacing.

On the outskirts of the territory lies Jerak's Sinkhole, which has always spawned all sorts of trouble – goblin tribes, predator packs, disease-spreading insects, and ravenous abominations. But the threats emerging from Jerak's deep are clearly increasing in numbers and severity. Some say that the part of the Underworld to which the sinkhole is linked has changed; that something has awakened down there, something that drives other Underworld creatures towards the surface. Whatever it is, the clan has agreed that five families with a minimum of two bear warriors each must be stationed in the settlement near Jerak at all times, to keep a close eye on the sinkhole, and avert or report all threats they encounter.

The vast ruins known to the Baiags as Rhan Mahaar are another cause for worry. Explorers who claim to have visited the ancient city sometimes describe it as a temple complex, sometimes as a graveyard of magnificent mausoleums. But they all mention how its wildlife is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Instead of withering from corruptive darkness, the ground seems to have sprung back to life: the thin, gray vines and hawthorns which long ago covered the ruins are growing rapidly once more, blooming in white and pink. Explorers also claim that all animals have fled Rhan Mahaar. Birds have abandoned their nests, voles no longer scour the ground for worms – even the insects have left the area, making the flourishing thorns all the more extraordinary.

Lastly, the Black Plague Termites must be mentioned. It has been five years since the first reports of these nasty pests reached Karvosti and, shortly thereafter, Thistle Hold. Back then there had only been a few incidents near clan Baiaga's eastern border, but now the plague has spread, even though every nest found is set aflame. The red and black, thumb-length insects attack both living and dead trees, and in addition to hollowing them out, they bring corruption to everything they touch – the trees they devour, the ground they walk on, and the earth in which they nest. For once, the barbarian witches and the scholars of Ordo Magica are in agreement: the well-coordinated termites possess some form of hive-mind intelligence, and are most likely controlled by at least one cunning Queen, hiding somewhere in the wilds. If she is not found, and the vermin continue to spread at the current rate, Arex's territory may be completely lost in just a few years...

Rumors

Many rumors can be found between the covers of this book. They reflect what can be heard in taverns and markets, often in a whispering tone. Half of them are, in all likelihood, completely made-up, and the other half are marked by misinterpretations and exaggerations. But who knows, perhaps there is a grain of truth in them as well...

Even though its surrounding vegetation has sprung to life, the cursed inhabitants of Rhan Mahaar still walk among the ruin's monuments and megaliths.

