

# Tradetalk

The Chaos Society Magazine

#5

RuneQuest  
Glorantha  
Chtulhu  
Elric!  
Pendragon  
Nephtilim  
Hawkmoon  
Elfsquest  
Mythos

## KETHAELA PART TWO

- *The Pharaoh*
- *Kingdom of Night*
- *People of note*
- *Caladraland*
- *Cult of Vinga*
- *Three Flowers*



# Tradetalk

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# EDITORIAL

Hi Fellows,

WITH THIS ISSUE you hold Tradetalk # 5, our second Kethaela issue, in your hands. All the articles we promised in Tradetalk # 4 unfortunately are not included, but some have been delayed for upcoming issues. In this issue we have two big background articles: the Cult of Vinga and Caldraland, and one adventure: Three Flowers. The other articles we promised will arrive soon in Tradetalk # 6. Tradetalk # 6 will include some more Kethaela material such as Heortland, the Aeolian Church, the original version of Lanbril (rewritten by Stephen Martin) and some catch up material about east Ralios which was left from Tradetalk # 3. The next issue, Tradetalk # 7, will be solely a Non-Human issue with a Dragonewt adventure and background material about Ducks, Telmori and the Wasp Riders. Handra will be published in a much later issue. We have so much material about this part of Glorantha that it may take a whole issue for Handra, but first we hope you will enjoy this one!

## Non-Official Material

In the near future we hope to publish a lot of official material about Glorantha from Issaries Inc. The material here is mostly non-official material, so it may be possible that there will be contradictions in the future with material we will be publishing. We try to hold to a nearly official line of background given by Greg Stafford, but some facts may vary with or contradict oncoming material published by Issaries Inc. We have had some discussion among the editorial team in the past about some articles and their more or less official character and we came to the conclusion that, from now on, we won't publish material which contradicts that published by Issaries Inc. On the other hand if there aren't official facts about a special region, we will publish the authors version and we will leave it to the GM whether to use it or not.

## Glorantha Publications

Since the last issue, some new material has hit the shelves:

**The Missing Lands** is one of the first publications from Issaries Inc. It is a work in progress publication about the Islands and the seas of Glorantha as well as more information about Pamtela.

**Convulsion - the next generation C4 Anthology** is the last Convulsion Con. Booklet with short stories from Sandy Petersen, Simon Bray and others. A working report from Robin Laws about his work on **Hero Wars** is also included.

**The Book of Drastic Resolutions - Volume Darkness** is an Issue dedicated to the Culture of Trolls and other darkness creatures. It contains a lot of things what you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask, plus a pamphlet describing the Cult of Kyger Litor from an Uz kind of view.

Furthermore the **Reaching Moon Megacorp** has published the **Rough guide to Glamour** for their Free Form Game **Life of the Moonson**, with a city description, short stories, lunar gods and goddesses and more.

In the near future some other material awaiting their publication are : **Tales of the reaching Moon # 18**, a Lismelder special; **Best of Tales 1 - 10**, and **MIG 2nd Edition**, an updated, illustrated Index of Glorantha publications.



## Issaries Inc.

The work on **Hero Wars** goes steady but slowly forwards. Greg Stafford has initiated some working groups to discuss all the different regions of Glorantha, for example there are working groups for Ralios, Fronela, Prax and Dragon Pass. As a result of these working groups new supplements should arise about these regions. The **Introduction into Glorantha** book, which was to be published around Christmas 1998 was pushed into the New Year. At the moment it seems that the RPG itself is further along in development than the Introduction. However the RPG **Hero Wars** should be published sometime in 1999.

In the same time the computer game **Opal** (for which the working title has changed to **King of Dragon Pass**) from David Dunham should be ready. For news about King of Dragon Pass take a look at: <http://a-sharp.com/opal>, you will love the illustrations on the "tour".

## Avalon Hill

The Avalon Hill game company was sold off to Hasbro. Therefore the publication of **RuneQuest: Slayers** is more or less uncertain at the moment. Hasbro wants to keep the trademark "Avalon Hill" to publish its wargames, and has recently announced that they see Avalon Hill's RPG line, especially RQ: Slayers, as part of the publishing line in the future. We shall see.

## Errata

There is no special errata to mention on the last issue, only that the front page got a bad print, which was my fault. Dario's original front cover was much better, as you can see on this issue. At least it seems that we aren't making quite so many mistakes as in previous issues.

Enjoy.

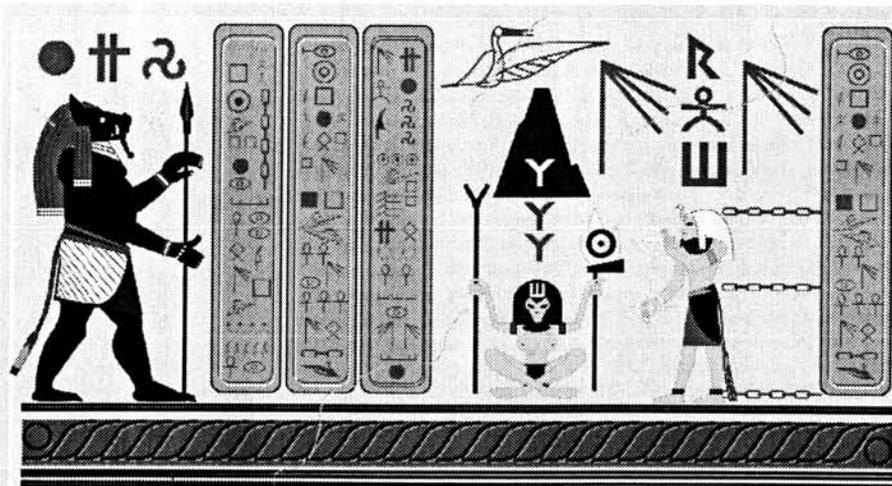
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# The Pharaoh

by Greg Stafford

• Glorantha is a place of mystery, and I am not yet ready to reveal some of those mysteries. The story of Belintar is one of them. Belintar is an extraordinary individual, more than most people quite imagine, and one whose origins have been kept secret even from his own people. Even events of his quest to become the Pharaoh are shrouded, with true fragments kept here and there, like the Esrola Temple's Secret (believed to have been Belintar's resurrection); and with some outstanding actions self evident, such as the Leaden Hills, which are the skeleton of the great darkness monster he slew. Everyone knows a few obvious facts, such as his shattering of the Obsidian Palace and summons of some Silver Age heroes.

But more than that? Well, realms of rumor, gossip, propaganda, and speculation fill the minds of every Kethaelan today; I hope you have your own pet theory. But in fact all we REALLY know is what he has written about himself in his own book, *Belintar's Book*, a document which has been handed around since he disappeared. Here is the text of that book which pertains directly to him. It is everything which is known at this time about Belintar, the Pharaoh of Kethaela.



**T**HE LORD OF THE WORLD, know that I am going to be taken away. I shall not return for the years of a generation, and to prepare for that return I have devised this document. Here is the critical material at the heart of this dear world.

I ask you, my household and soul mates, to copy and distribute this, to help it get into my hands upon my eventual return. The purpose of Life is to seek the Great Mystery.

signed,  
Belintar, 12 Storm, 1612 ST  
Son of the Apple 112,612 YS  
Lord of the Harshax

## Invitation

My foot, a mountain, is bound by ropes, and my hand by chains of sense. A staircase of both tears and prayers wraps about me like a shawl, much stained and storied.

The story of the world unfurls from the scroll of the sky, also much stained like the stairs, but also quite tattered by worm holes, claw marks, and fire. Tatters of history flap in the wind. A cloud, more solid than usual, is caught among them like a newtling drowning in a net. It struggles, weak now, nearly lost.

The wind (it is always the wind for me) makes the sound which begins my life once more. The tattered scrap of history which is my life snaps in the draft, the sound like a whip, which I hate.

Before me now, my opponent snorts a soft blast of hot air from his snout. I think he narrows his eyes, too, though it's hard to tell when he squints because his piggy eyes are so small to begin with. He, too, heard the whip.

"The master's whip" - he says. It is his answer, his reply to the question which I ex-

posed by baring that sound from my soul. He need say no more. Yet he does. "You know that lash" - He gloats. "You too have flogged."

But he is wrong, once again, and I know that the weave of my trap has grown stronger. He knows nothing, and I shall have his body.

I have showed him my power. I have exposed my soul to him. He can not see what is real. I hate the sound of the whip, and he believes it is because I loath my own lordship. He thinks I have lashed, and now feel ill from it. He still thinks that I'm too good. He is wrong, and I will be king of the world.

Off to the side, on my right and his left, sits Tessele the True. She is the instrument of this duel. Her power will decide and enforce its outcome.

She is a goddess, born when the world was made. She never converses, speaks only to recite her formulae and rituals. She is simple, intentioned with a single purpose. As a woman, she is not pretty, beautiful, or sexy. Here hair is bleached blond, her eyes washed out blue, her lips bloodless. She is very thin, not cadaverous, but perhaps starved. Her breasts are pips, her knees are gnarled knobs beneath her plain white gown. Her hands, spindly, enwrap her Y-shaped staff which she holds straight-armed before her. Her thin arms should not have that strength, but she does not waver. It is, after all, the one thing which she does.

Her function, from the dawn of creation, is to hold forth the truth for whomever would see it. If she were not here, I might not dare to sit in the presence of him who sits before me. But the truth is here, we are sworn to it, and I shall win.

# Kingdom of Night

## Part III: THE SECOND AGE

by Shannon Appel

During the First Age Kethaela suffered the ravages of the Broken Council and its traitorous allies, sun-lovers, tree-huggers, and dirt-diggers alike. But with the coming of Arkat that corrupt council was destroyed, and a new peace descended upon both Kethaela and the world. Unfortunately it was only the lull before the great feasting, for the Age of Empires was coming, and with it the depravations of the Jrusteli and the Empire Without Friends. Herein I shall chronicle the history of Kethaela during that time, lest the truth be lost in the lies of he who calls himself Pharaoh.

Throkblotten Leadhead  
Priest of Ezkankekko



### The Years of Unrest

IN 450 S.T., following the destruction of the corrupted council, Arkat retired to Ralios, where he lived out the last fifty years of his life. But, he had left his mark upon central Genertela, irrevocably changing that land. Two of Arkat's decisions would have great effects upon the future of Kethaela, both involving grants of land, first the Eastern Wastes to the Hendriki, and second Kerofinela to the Uz.

The Hendriki accepting the land thereafter known as Hendrikiland was of little consequence to Ezkankekko the Only Old One. Since the Darkness the Eastern Wastes had been a chaos-infested wasteland, and so the Only Old One was pleased to affirm Arkat's grant. The Hendriki, however, were greatly moved by the gift. They were a lost people, with little faith left in their gods or their leadership; like all humans they were deeply

moved by the small events without seeing the entire epic. They saw Arkat's grant as giving them new hope. In honor of it the Hendriki began to take up some of Arkat's strange western ways, planting bright seeds from which would spring the decadent Malkioni religion that these people would know in centuries to come.

The grant of Kerofinela to the Uz was an act which would have far greater repercussions for the Kingdom of Night, and this was primarily because the grant was not to the Only Old One alone. Rather Arkat jointly gifted the land to Ezkankekko of Kethaela, Ekzorgash of Dagori Inkarth, and Zokargzon Bonegnasher of the Elder Wilds. The Only Old One sought peace, as he always had, but this was not the way of his Uz brothers. Instead they ruled like the solar dictators of the north, oppressing the people with tyranny, and even collecting a tax (Arkat's Command) from the humans. For the first fifty years that the peo-

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ples of Kerofinela lived under this Uz rulership the Only Old One was able to maintain a stable peace. Then in 500 S.T. Arkat apotheosized, and the world subtly changed.

It was during this same period that the modern Kitori tribe began to form. A human who claimed descend from Varzor Kitor made alliance with an Uz queen, which they sealed with marriage. Their new tribe of humans and Uz settled in what is now known as the Uz Woods, the one part of Hendrikiland which the Hendriki wanted no part of. These new Kitori were not warriors but traders. The Only Old One was pleased, for it was what he had wished when he had first formed the Kitori centuries before. For the majority of the Second Age the Kitori would remain a small tribe.

The creation of the Kitori was but one patch of hope in a world filling with despair. In 512 S.T. the dwarf Isidilian refused to pay Arkat's Command, declaring that his infallible chronometer decreed that the tax collectors were twenty-four hours late, and so the taxes were no longer due. This was the act that started the elder race wars again in Kethaela and Kerofinela.

Ezkorgash of Dagori Inkarth and his Zorak Zoran warriors fell upon the dwarves of Kerofinela. The Only Old One had no desire to battle his old allies, but he was swept into the conflict when the dwarves of Gemborg and the elves of Arstola Forest rose up once more. We Uz ate very well of rock and wood delicacies in those years, but the continuous wars were disastrous to our people. We lost more good warriors than were born, and were forced to replace them with useless Eln. Gbaji be cursed; the best days of the Uz were clearly past.

At the same time great resentment was building among the humans of Kerofinela due to the leadheaded tactics of the tax collectors from Dagori Inkarth and the Wilds. By 550 S.T. there was an undercurrent of dissent among all the Heortling peoples. In 562 S.T.

a clan of Heortlings openly defied the Uz of the Elder Wilds by allowing a group of sun-worshippers into Hoday; as short sighted as ever they had forgotten the wars just a century past. Finally everything erupted in 578 S.T. when the Heortlings rose up into open revolt, slaying not only the oppressors from Dagori Inkarth and the Wilds, but also many honest Uz of the Kingdom of Night. This was The Great Tax Slaughter. But, The Great Tax Slaughter was not caused by the oppressive rule of the Uz alone, for practitioners of a new draconic magic were among its leaders, and they wanted change. Therein is the story of the foundation of two great empires.

## The Foundation of Empires

Here we must turn our attention on Esrolia. On the Southeast coast of that land lies the city of Nochet. It is a place with an long history. The ancient ruins of some ancestral Nochet lie scattered about the city. These cyclopean remnants are awe-inspiring, but spiteful spirits keep them free of visitors. They are older than our earliest Uz records. The modern city of Nochet was built among the remnants (carefully avoiding the haunted ruins) before the days of the Unity Council, but in that time it was of little consequence.

Nochet rose to prominence in the First Age. The waertagi set up a trading outpost within the city and Nochet immediately began to grow. On occasion the waertagi would bring some of their land-dwelling allies to Nochet. They all named themselves Seshnegi, but they were a varied people, of many different philosophies and beliefs. Most worshiped a foreign god named Malkion, hence they are often called the Malkioni. When these Seshnegi came to Nochet, they would always ask the Only Old One for permission to settle, which he granted. By the end of the First Age Nochet had a large population of Malkioni people, as did several other waertagi outposts in the area, Karse and Kasino among them.

In 507 S.T. the waertagi brought a new type of Seshnegi people to Nochet. They called themselves the Justeli, after the island they inhabited in the middle of the ocean. They asked for permission to settle in Nochet and the Only Old One was happy to grant it, for he knew these foreigners would bring commerce, knowledge, and food-stuffs from foreign lands.

When I speak of the Justeli many will think of the magical monsters that ruled the oceans during the ninth century after the Dawn, manipulating history and mythology in their pride and arrogance. Those Justeli, the God Learners, were still two hundred years in the future. The Justeli who came to dwell in Nochet named themselves the Industrious Scholars of the New World. They claimed they came to teach the great mysteries of the world, but in truth they were irreverent sneak-thieves, come to our Kingdom to steal our most sacred secrets.

Now we skip forward seventy years, through the years of increasing conflict in Kethaela, as I have already documented. In that time the Impious Scholars grew strong in Nochet, forming mighty colleges in which they taught their stolen knowledge. The number of Seshnegi in Nochet swelled, as people travelled far to learn the Justelians' secrets. The Westerners even had the arrogance to name the city of Nochet a Malkioni bishopric. Such was the situation in 573 S.T.

The Impious Scholars had spent over half-a-century pilfering the religious secrets of the Kingdom of Night, but in 573 S.T. they stole a secret so deadly that it almost destroyed them: the secret of the cult of Drolgard. We Uz were not surprised, for we had known it was only a matter of time before these blasphemous scholars stole something too great for them.

The cult of Drolgard was an Esrolian hero cult that had served the Only Old One well in the



past. It had been his voice to the dragonwets from the time of the Unity Council forward. By stealing the secrets of the cult of Drolgard the Impious Scholars learned the tongue of Auld Wyrnish and set great events into motion; as with most humans they were not far-sighted enough to see what they had released.

At once the Impious Scholars began to teach Auld Wyrnish in their colleges but as time dragged on their student realized something was very wrong. Somehow the magics of the dragons and the Impious Scholars were incompatible; it was slowly driving the teachers insane. Despite a particularly memorable incident early in 575 S.T., when one of the Impious instructors cut his own throat in front of a class of Wyrnish initiates and then laughed as his bright human blood bubbled forth, the first two-year Wyrnish course was completed. However, none of the Impious Scholars who knew the secrets of Auld Wyrnish survived the next year.

Though scores of Impious Scholars died trying to comprehend draconic magic they remained strong in Nochet and elsewhere in Kethaela. They stole many secrets from the natives of our land, and had an important foothold in Kethaela. Their strength continued to grow, and we will return to them in the future, but for the rest of the sixth century after the dawn it is the formation of the EWF which takes center stage.

Vistikos Left-eye was the greatest student of draconic knowledge. He was a Heortling, which was not unusual, for many Orlanthe had come seeking knowledge in the Justelan schools. In 575 S.T. he and many of his fellows were cast out of Nochet. The Impious Scholars had grown fearful of the draconic knowledge they possessed.

Vistikos and his followers travelled to Kerofinela and there talked with the dragonwets and learned many things. Vistikos found that his knowledge of Auld Wyrnish caused him to look at the world in a very different way. He taught this new perspective to many people. It was like a plague that infected everything it touched, but Vistikos and his followers were too stupid to realize what they unleashed.

By 576 S.T. Vistikos had established the first Waltzing and Hunting Band. This was a band of missionaries. It mocked the missionaries the Only Old One had sent out during the time of the World Council of Friends, for where we offered truth they offered deception. The Bands sang and danced, but in their mirth was hidden draconic secrets, and through this subtle path the draconic plague spread further and faster than ever. We may only thank Kygor Litor that we Uz were immune to the pull of this draconic knowledge, as were the other elder races. It was a uniquely human illness, built of human pride and short-lived short-sightedness. When elder races joined the draconic movement later it was out of fear or necessity, not out of understanding.

By 578 S.T. many of the Heortlings of Kerofinela had fallen under the sway of the draconic teaching. This was why their leaders were able to convince them to rise up against us Uz in the Great Tax Slaughter of 578 S.T. Having regained control of Kerofinela the humans wasted no

time. Within weeks they had formed the basis of a new entity, the EWF, born of madness and baptized in blood. The EWF was still a religious organization at this time, not a true empire, but its power would grow.

The original Heortling people were always the center of the EWF. The other Orlanthe of Kethaela, the Hendriki and the Esrolians, joined the EWF in great numbers too, but were ultimately distracted by other matters. The Hendriki grappled with their new Western ideas while the Esrolians gravitated toward the colleges of Nochet. The Pelaskites, particularly those of the left arm, gave their support to the EWF more wholeheartedly.

The twin blessing of Minarian Memory Removal and Janaxian Extermination of Ideas have destroyed much of what we know about the Second Age. We can not even say what "EWF" stood for with surety. Some call them the Empire Without Friends or the Entirely Witless Folks, but most name them the Empire of Wyrn's Friends.

In 507 S.T., by the minor act of allowing Justeli to settle in Nochet, the Only Old One put into motion the events that would eventually destroy his millennial old empire. He caused the foundation of the EWF and gave the people who would become the God Learners strength they would not otherwise have known. The tragedies that end the Second Age, and ultimately weaken the Kingdom of Night to the point of destruction, can be traced to that one decision.

### *The Formative Years*

**T**HE EWF WAS something entirely new in the world, being a unique symbiosis between dragons and humans. But, the Only Old One was not afraid of new things. Despite the fact that the Queens of Dagori Inkarth counseled war the Only Old One bravely put forth the hand of compromise, as he always had. He called upon the old pact of the Night Dragon Society, and through this means forged a promise of peace between Dagori Inkarth, Kethaela, and the newly-born EWF. Regrettably the Elder Wilds did not fully take part in this peace, either now or in the future. Still, dark dragons once more flew high, carrying messages across Kerofinela. The year was 578 S.T. Our Uz wars with the dwarves and elves became scattered skirmishes in this time. Some years we sent armies of Enlo while we true Uz feasted at home. We were tired and could only watch as the humans continued to change the world. For over two hundred years there was peace in northern Kethaela. The EWF consolidated its hold on Kerofinela; Draconic shrines were built in many cities, among them Banjarn, Hannand, Kordros, Olorost, Orin Jistil, Ostgelter, Salor, and VossVarainu, now all lost to the world. Great decrees came forth from the Dragon's Eye, and the religion of the EWF spread.

During this same time the power of the Justelans grew. The Impious Scholars continued to steal great secrets, and all over the world the Justelans inveigled a variety of cultures into trusting them wholeheartedly. In 675 S.T. the Justelans began a philosophical movement called the Return



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to Righteousness. In doing so they initiated a great crusade to first free Seshnela, then Ralios, from barbarian overlordship. This crusade would have great repercussions.

So the world was at the start of the eighth century, paused at a great turning point.

### *The Years of Growth*

**D**URING THE FIRST eighty years of the eighth century the enemies of the Kingdom of Night, the EWF and the Jrustelans, continued to grow in power, and also closed in on Ezkankeko's realm.

It was the Jrustelans who moved first. For two centuries that had depended upon the kindness of the waertagi, who then ruled the oceans, but the Return to Righteousness gave the Jrusteli a new, vernal spirit, and so they determined that they would become the masters of the own destiny. The Jrusteli quickly built great ships of war and in 718 S.T. they dared to challenge the waertagi, using huge fleets and wicked sorcery alike. Our old allies, the waertagi, were utterly destroyed. This was the First Great Act in the Fall of the Kingdom of Night, for with his old maritime trading allies gone the Only Old One found his powers of commerce weakened. The Only Old One built a great black fleet following the defeat of the waertagi, but it was never the equal of our old ally's ships, and it was frequently opposed by the Jrusteli.

After 718 S.T. the Jrusteli formed the Middle Sea Empire. They began to establish new colonies on all the coasts of Genertela. Many lands joined voluntarily, but the Middle Sea Empire was willing to use force when required. The Middle Sea Empire did not invade Kethaela yet, for they were wary of the Only Old One's power. They would, however, gain footholds in our land by other means.

Meanwhile the EWF's early expansions of the eighth century were northward, and so of little concern to Kethaela. However, in 720 S.T. there was an event in the north that offered ill omens for the times ahead. That was the year in which the Elder Wilds joined the EWF. Only the Votanki and the elves were willing to become part of the draconic union, and so the leaders of the EWF encouraged new race wars in the Wilds. Elves and humans slew Uz, and Uz slew dwarves. Our only consolation is that the Uz emerged victorious, eating many of their enemies. Still, this betrayal of Uz-dom was greatly disturbing.

But, the Only Old One had little chance to assess the effects of this betrayal, for within a year the new Middle Sea Empire had begun occupying the lands nearest the Kingdom of Night.

Slontos was the first target. It had long been a Seshnegi land. As early as 138 S.T. it had been influenced by Seshnegi ways. In 721 S.T. the Jrusteli simply declared Slontos a Dukedom of their Middle Sea Empire. By that means they were able to land fleets without battle, and so established their first stronghold near Kethaela. Many mighty Jrusteli cities were founded in Slontos.

After that the Jrusteli sailed into Kethaela

carrying passengers. These peoples were worshippers of the god Caladra, but they came not from our own Caladraland, but rather the far-off island of Jrustela. They were litter-mates, separated at birth, and our traitorous Caladralanders at once opened their arms to the brothers of their brothers, which is to say the Jrusteli. By 725 S.T. Caladraland had become another outpost of the Middle Sea Empire.

Then came the Jrusteli's greatest victory, far away from Kethaela. The Jrusteli had invaded Ralios as part of their Return to Righteousness.

In 740 S.T. they destroyed the last remnant of Arkat's Stygian Alliance. More importantly, they stole HeroQuesting secrets from the Cult of Arkat. By this act, and the magical knowledge that the Jrusteli gained, the Impious Scholars became God Learners.

It was at this same time that the Ingareens finally revealed themselves. They were a Malkioni people that had remained hidden on the islands of God Forgot since the Dawn. The God Learners contacted the Ingareens, welcomed them as brothers, and swore they could use their newly-won HeroQuesting secrets to remake the Ingareens' God who had died so long ago. The Ingareens agreed and they began to construct Locsil, the stinking Clanking City. This city had all manner of purposes, it was meant to strengthen the God Learners in a hundred ways, but its greatest purpose was to reform the Ingareen's lost God as a tool of the God Learners. He would be known as Zistor, the reborn one, and he was constructed a mechanical body in the Clanking City. The philosophy of Zistor spread quickly, first to Slontos, then to the rest of the Middle Sea Empire.

Just when the Jrusteli threat seemed the greatest there came a new betrayal from the EWF. Around 760 S.T. the EWF officially sent emissaries to the emperor of Dara Happa, who was among the oldest enemies of the Kingdom of Night. As the Only Old One watched humans and elves unite in the EWF, and then saw them extend the hand of friendship to Dara Happa, he was reminded too strongly of the High Council.

To further its hold on the Dara Happan mind, the EWF stole our secrets to form a Golden Dragon Society; it would grow very strong in Dara Happa in the years to come, but still the emperor never embraced the EWF openly, and for that reason the Only Old One kept his worries at bay.

In the twenty years that followed, despite their growing strength, neither the EWF nor the God learners directly threatened Kethaela. After 780 S.T. that would all change.

### *The Years of Conflict*

**S**OME MAY SAY the Only Old One was not vigilant enough in the first half of the Second Age, that he let two hundred years of peace with the EWF and the Jrusteli envelop him like a soothing darkness. This is entirely untrue. The fact that Kethaela knew two hundred years of peace was solely the result of the Only Old One's actions. For centuries he spoke kind words into the ears of the EWF, reminding them of the promises of the Night Dragon Society. Then, in the eighth

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century after the Dawn, when the power of the Justeli began to wax, he stood strong against them, daring them to face the power of his mighty union. We should not fault the Only Old One because war finally came to Kethaela. Rather we should laud him for holding out for so long, and for the fact that even after the wars began Kethaela still retained its independence.

Kethaela's long war with the two empires began in 780 S.T., though not with a true battle. That was the year that the God Learners led a revolt in Nochet (the first of many) trying to conquer the countryside that surrounded their colleges. Even with their power growing daily the Justelans feared to face us Uz in real combat.

The Justeli revolt were unsuccessful, but the event worried the religious leaders of the EWF, who suddenly saw the danger of a Justeli-controlled Kingdom of Night. In 782 S.T. the tribes of the EWF began an offensive of their own. By breeding anti-Uz sentiment they were able to launch simultaneous attacks on the Kingdom of Night and Dagoni Inkarth.

Fortunately the Only Old One had lost none of his negotiating abilities. While Zorak Zoran and Argan Argar troops marched against draconic legions he spoke quickly and quietly through the Night Dragon Society. The Only Old One reached an agreement with Landaros Forktongue, then high priest of the EWF, and the troops withdrew. The old promises of peace became a true alliance, and the Only Old One spoke of this as the formation of a New Unity Council. The Uz began to quietly pay tribute to the EWF leaders and tensions quickly lessened. After an army of dragonwets passed through Kethaela to stage a surprise attack on Caladraland the God Learners were reluctant to attack the Kingdom of Night again. Another generation passed. Some say that as part of his compromise with the EWF priests the Only Old One offered up certain secrets of the God Project. Our records of the Second Age are too fragmented to say whether this is true. It is known that the EWF began preparations shortly after Ezkankeko's peace accord to mount an expedition to the wastelands of Dorastor. It was not until 824 S.T. that they finally reached the ruins of the City of Dead Dreams. They discovered great magics there, and brought them back, and in 826 S.T. the EWF remade itself, like the dragon shedding its skin. The high priests of the EWF took the places of their Orlanthe leaders, and so the EWF became a true political entity—a magical theocracy. Erolanzarrons Scaleface was their first king.

Some call the EWF the Third Council after this date, but in their own records only the obscure EWF figure continues to appear. It was also in this year that the Kingdom of Night officially became a protectorate of the EWF.

At that same time, when the EWF's attention was turned inward, the God Learners led yet another riot in Nochet. Again they were defeated.

But, they had not truly expected success. They were testing our strength, waiting.

In 842 S.T. the God Learners began their campaign against Kethaela in earnest, using Caladraland, Slontos, and God Forgot to launch their attack. Esrolia faced the brunt of the invasion. Zis-

tor itself appeared during these battles. It was still weak, not truly awake, but it was powered by the dreams of thousands.

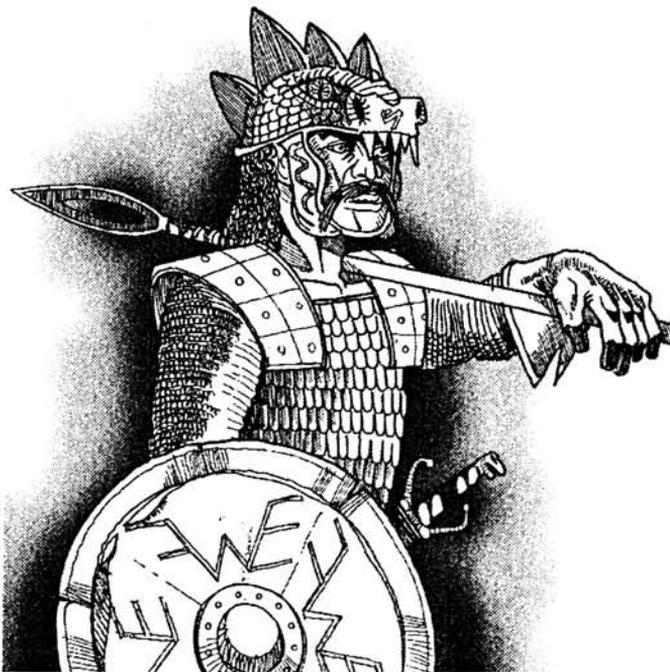
Things seemed very bad but the Kingdom of Night fought on. The Only Old One turned to the EWF for help. He was to be bitterly disappointed.

Just as the God Learners were launching their attack upon Kethaela the EWF was facing internal dissent of its own. Dara Happa had been a strong ally of the EWF ever since 760 S.T. Now, though, a cult named the Old Day Traditionalists was leading an uprising in Dara Happa. A great massacre of Kerofinelan missionaries followed—an ancient Dara Happan tradition. Just when the Only Old One needed aid most he found the EWF calling upon his promise of alliance, demanding he send armies north. The Only Old One was only able to meet his obligation by reminding the Uz of the Blue Moon Plateau of an ancient debt, and so convincing them to aid in the invasion of Dara Happa in Kethaela's place. With the old debt paid, the Blue Moon Uz were no longer our allies, and so they did not help us in the trials to come. In 850 S.T., with the aid of the Blue Moon Uz, the EWF started a new war in Dara Happa.

Meanwhile the battles in Esrolia dragged on for decades as one city fell after another. Our great black fleets of trade were turned to war, but we could not defeat the God Learners on land or on sea. Even after 878 S.T., when Dara Happa fell to the EWF, our false friends refused to help us. In 886 S.T. still another riot was led by the God Learners in Nochet. Unlike all the others it succeeded. By the end of the year all of Esrolia had fallen.

After that the war continued, but we had lost much. Everything west of the Shadow Plateau was controlled by the God Learners. We Uz had been forced to flee underground on the Shadow

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Plateau. Hendrikiland had retained its independence, as had the Pelaskites of the left arm, but they fought against the Ingareens in the South, while the insidious influence of the EWF continued to infiltrate the north. The once mighty Kingdom of Night had become a very small place. This year was 889 S.T.

### The Fall of the Great

**A**FTER THAT THE EWF and the God Learners should have been unstoppable, their only enemies each other. The Kingdom of Night, a fragile buffer between them, seemed doomed. But, the Only Old One had a plan that began with toppling the Empire of False Friends in Kerofinela. He knew that both the EWF and the God Learners had a great enemy they could not see, their own pride, and he had determined to use it to destroy them.

In 889 S.T. the Only Old One went in person to the Dragon's Eye to offer the leaders of the EWF a trade. In return merely for certain worthless shards of egg which the EWF had brought back from Dorastor the Only Old One offered the leaders of the EWF worship. The EWF leaders had never considered such a thing before, but they were quickly won over by the possibilities. That same year they declared themselves draconic gods. As promised the Only Old One was the first one to offer up power to them; soon they demanded the same from all of their followers.

The people of the EWF began to rebel at once, with the Votanki of the Elder Wilds leading the first military assault in 890 S.T. The Old Day Traditionalists led many provinces to rebel. So was the pressure on our northern border lessened.

In Akez Loradak Ezkanekko carefully stored away the shards of the Pseudocosmic Egg he had won from the EWF, pieces of the very egg from which Gbaji had sprung.

Though the fall of the EWF had begun, the God Learners were an ever growing threat. In 907 S.T. they cast a great spell on Kerofinela, graying the darkness, stopping the wind, freezing the water, breaking the earth, and dimming the light. There was no Summer that year. So the God Learners proved their control over the five elements and they demanded we make peace. The Only Old One smiled when the God Learners made this demand, and much to the surprise of everyone he bowed before them and asked for mercy. Six and a half decades of intermittent fighting ended.

Further, to show his good will, the Only Old One offered the leaders of the God Learners a trade. In return merely for a few baubles from the Clanking City the Only Old One offered the

God Learners the shards of the Pseudocosmic Egg. It was precisely what the God Learners needed to finally waken Zistor, and they accepted the Only Old One's offer, exactly as he had known they would.

This was the God Learner's great mistake of pride, for when Zistor was welcomed into the world the Cosmic Compromise was broken, and all the other gods came back. The Only Old One had been expecting this, and so he went to meet his father, Argan Argar, for the last time. He brought him back into the world and Argan Argar did what Ezkanekko could not: he reunited the people of Kethaela.

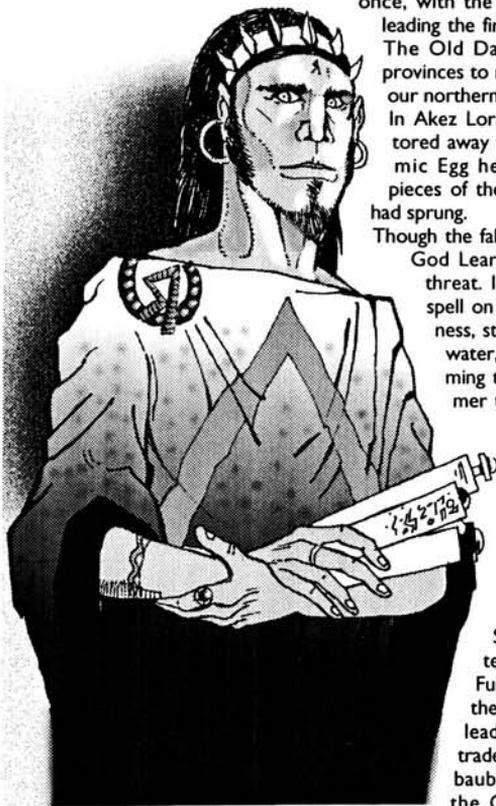
There was a great rejoicing in Kethaela when the land's first King returned. Dwarves, elves, Uz, Heortlings, Hendriki, Esrolians, Caladrians, and wind children put aside their differences to march against a common foe, the God Learners. Argan Argar's Army of New Unity traveled to God Forgot and razed every village it found. Finally it sieged the Clanking City, a siege which lasted for ten long years. The heroes of this war were many. There was Kuzen Kang of the Kitori, Vandana the Virgin of the Heortlings, Tarlentir Ironaxe of the Gemborgi, Moray and Telerio of the Caladrians, Nagurt the Giant of the Esrolians, Zekarkaken of the Argan Argar Spear Throwers, and many others. They worked together for a common good.

The Clanking City should have been impregnable. It would have been if the God Learners had not traded away certain baubles which allowed the Army of New Unity to understand the manner of its workings, and so defeat them. In 917 S.T. the foul, stinking Clanking City collapsed and Zistor was destroyed. After that Argan Argar was forced to leave as well. He bade his son a solemn goodbye, promising that he had prepared a fine place for him in his immortal palace, regretful that he could not tell his son of the doom to come. Then the victorious Army of New Unity moved through Esrolia, Caladraland, and Slontos, freeing all from the Justeli oppression.

During these same years Dara Happan forces were driving the EWF ever southward. Our solar enemies had freed their capital in 910 S.T. By 925 S.T. they had driven the EWF all the way back to Kerofinela.

In Kethaela, however, we were more concerned with God Learner vengeance. It never came. By their actions in the Clanking City and elsewhere the Justeli had angered the gods themselves, and so the whole world was now turned against them. In 917 S.T. Seshnela was ravaged by a great typhoon. Then in 920 S.T. a great magical force originated in the west, dooming the Middle Sea Empire by closing the oceans. In this same time our old allies the waertagi returned aboard rotting boats filled with armies of the dead. They were not the same people we had known, for now they were few and bent only on vengeance.

As the waertagi destroyed the God Learners, the oceans continued to close. In 930 S.T. the Closing swept across Slontos, sinking much of the unfortunate land. In 935 S.T. the Closing reached Kethaela. Thus do the last scattered remnants of the God Learners and their Middle Sea Empire leave our tale. In this time the waertagi disap-



peared once more too, back into the Underworld from which they had come.

However, this Closing was the Second Great Act in the Fall of the Kingdom of Night. With the destruction of the waertagi and the ascendancy of the Middle Sea Empire our sea trade had suffered greatly. Now it was gone entirely. Our black fleet was all either grounded or destroyed. The Kingdom of Night had always depending upon commerce, not tyranny. Now our avenues of trade were beginning to close.

After that the Only Old One watched the death throes of the EWF in pity. He did not aid them when they began to push back into Dara Happa: in 947 S.T., but conversely neither did he attack them in 976 S.T. when Dagori Inkarth went to war against them. For a century he simply offered refuge to those who fled the EWF, trying at the same time to rebuild the shattered economy of his Kingdom.

### The Last Generations

**I**N 1042 S.T. the Inhuman King of Kerofinela determined that draconic secrets were being misused, and so he decreed the destruction of the EWF. The Blue Moon Uz willingly aided the dragonewts, and with their aid the Inhuman King destroyed nearly all the leaders of the EWF in a single night.

We Uz thought to take advantage of this destruction. Our fellows in Dagori Inkarth, as well as many Zorak Zorani from the Kingdom of Night, rushed in to Kerofinela hoping to eat of the corpse of that Empire. One man denied us our feast. His name was Delecti and he was one of the few EWF leaders who had survived the purge. When we Uz rushed in, he created a great swamp, the Upland Marsh. Foolish Elno panicked, and as a result many of our finest fighters were dragged to their doom.

After 1042 S.T. Kerofinela was a very different place. Heortlings still dwelled in that land but their numbers had been reduced greatly. Many tribes were destroyed or scattered. A new people, the Beast Folk, were gaining prominence. These were creatures half-human and half-animal. Many, such as the pain centaurs, had been created by the blasphemous magics of the EWF. Others, such as the duruliz, were simply rising in power, taking the good lands that the humans had previously denied them. The Only Old One made his usual attempt to offer the hand of peace to these people, hoping to make new friendships and extend the good done by his father. Of course he was successful. Within a few years Uz were moving into Kerofinela, setting up new homes among our new allies.

As Uz immigrated into Kerofinela we learned that our old friends the Aramites had survived the EWF purge. But, they had fared very badly.

Perhaps by EWF experiment, perhaps by their own choice, they have become a race of half-Uz. They now worshiped their dark god fully and happily satiated his bloody lust. Still, these dark Aramites, who now called themselves Tusk Riders, offered no great argument to the new peace of the region, and so for nearly sixty years things were quiet.

As is so frequently the case new dissent came from the solar-loving human lands of the North. In 1100 S.T. the warlords of Dara Happa decided to avenge themselves upon the dragon people of Kerofinela. They began to assemble a huge army, named the True Golden Horde, planning to march it down toward Kerofinela. The True Golden Horde gathered troops from Dara Happa, Prax, and even from among traitorous Heortlings who should have fought on our side instead. The dragonewts was forced to send out a call for help through the Night Dragon Society. The Only Old One responded with a hundred thousand troops. In 1120 S.T. the True Golden Horde met an immense army of dragonewts, Uz, loyal humans, and true dragons. This was the Dragonkill War, named for what the dragons did, not because they died.

After that the Inhuman King decreed that Kerofinela was closed to humans. This was the Third Great Act in the Fall of the Kingdom of Night. While Uz were still welcome to live and travel through the lands of Kerofinela the closing of the land to humans strangled trade. With maritime trade already destroyed the Only Old One despaired. Though his enemies were gone, he was denied friends as well. The Only Old One knew that the loss of commerce would weaken his Kingdom and eventually destroy it.

Thus we leave our story of Kethaela at the end of the Second Age, a mere five hundred years ago. We find the land still inhabited by many people. For the moment their loyalty was strong, but it would waver as the Only Old One's strength waned. The people of Kethaela are: triolini, newtlings, and Pelaskites in and around the Mirrorsea Bay, a body of water protected from the Closing; dwarves and primitive humans in Caladralands; a society of humans in Esrolia that has become quite civilized through the actions of the God Learners; elves in the Arstola Forest; Uz both upon that plateau and in nearby Kerofinela; Hendriki in Hendrikiland; and wind children in the Stormwalk Mountains. The tiny tribe of the modern Kitori has grown strong following the Dragonkill War, for they have been flooded with refugees; they remain in the Uz Woods, and are one of the few peoples of the Kingdom of Night to truly benefit from the events of the Second Age.

The Ingareens of God Forgot, on the other hand, are no longer a coherent people; they have nearly been destroyed in the God Learner wars. The Heortling people of Kerofinela have fared little better. The shattered tribes who fled Kerofinela after 1120 have settled in northern Prax and Kethaela—it was because of the arrival of these people that Hendrikiland became known more popularly as Heortland in this period. Finally we must mention a few people in Kerofinela for their connection to Kethaela. They are the dragonewts, the beast people, and the corrupt Tusk Riders.

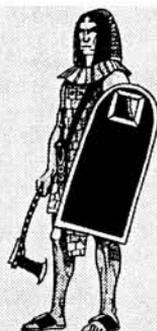
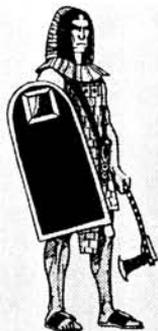
The Kingdom of Night rules over a land reunited by Argan Argar himself, but it will not last, for year-by-year the Only Old One's mercantile web is collapsing, and all of the power is being leached out of his crumbling kingdom.

• The people of Kethaela are: triolini, newtlings, and Pelaskites in and around the Mirrorsea Bay, a body of water protected from the Closing



# Holy Country: PEOPLE OF NOTE

by Jörg Baumgartner



## Brian of the Volsaxi



A powerful chieftain of the Volsaxi, an accomplished heroquester and priest of Orlanth. From 1611 to 1615 he led a band of Volsaxi mercenaries in the service of the King of Heortland, defending Knight Fort and the Praxian Marches from the Animal Nomads of Prax. In 1613 many exiles from the Starbrow rebellion, including the famous leader, Kallyr Starbrow herself, joined him at Knight Fort.

In 1615 Brian's term of service ended, and he returned to his native lands north of the kingdom, taking most of his followers with him. His warriors were foremost in the raids on Lunar Sartar in 1615 and 1616.

During the raids of 1616 the King of the Volsaxi Federation was slain. Brian gathered his supporters and was named King of the Volsaxi after Sacred Time.

1619: When the Lunar invasion forces assembled in Sartar, Brian sent out the Red Arrow and called the warriors of the Volsaxi to his standard. Rather than offer Fazzur an open battle (and repeating the disaster of 1605, when Fazzur's cavalry raid was stopped before Karse only by an order to re-

treath), he made his troops skirmish against the Lunars while preparing the fortress city of Whitewall for a siege. Fazzur left sufficient forces under Jorkandros Blinder to besiege Whitewall until the arrival of the Crimson Bat and pushed further south to take Karse in an assault. However, when the Bat arrived, Brian and his household of heroic companions slew the monster.

Fire Season 1621: After almost two years of a somewhat loose siege, Tatius the Bright has built up sufficient magical force to take the city by assault. Most of the empire's magicians and huge numbers of troops are brought against the stubbornly resisting Orlanthi holed up in the ancient hill-fort. Vast rituals forced a way into the citadel, killing many of the participants, only to find the city empty, except for a score of corpses. Brian's whereabouts are unknown. Yet Tatius reports this as a grand victory.

Sacred Season 1621: Brian and his followers reappear in the sacred rites of the Bullflood Orlanthi. He raises the country in rebellion.

## Fazzur Wideread Governor-General of the Lunar Provincial Army

This Tarshite nobleman has been in charge of the Lunar Provincial Army and occupied Sartar (and Prax) since 1613, when his (Dara Happan) predecessor fell prey to an intrigue. A career officer and scholar, Fazzur has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Barbarians he has been placed in charge of. His ambition to be-



come king of the most recent addition to the Empire, as well as over the neighbouring territories waiting to be conquered, is not widely known, but well supported by his brother-in-law, king Moirades of Tarsh.

1619: Reinforced with imperial Heartland troops, Fazzur invades the Marzeel Valley and conquers Volsaxiland, except for the citadel of Whitewall, which he leaves sieged, and for the Lunar College of Magic to take. He pushes through to the independent barony of Karse and takes it by assault after bribing off some of the defenders.

1620: Mustering at Smithstone, Fazzur leads his troops into Heortland, aka "the Kingdom of Malkonwal" ruled by Richard the Tigerhearted. Richard offers battle at Jansholm, but failure of some of his vassals to support him weakens his forces. The battle becomes a mere formality when his former lieutenant Mularik Ironeye, now Duke of Jansholm, takes him prisoner and sells him off to the Lunars. The Seshnegi chivalry forming the core of Richard's followers gives a good account of itself, but the Lunars take the field, and the Kingdom. Within days, Fazzur has taken all the cities south to Duchamp, where he encounters an invasion force

from God Forgot. Fazzur gives Mt. Passant away in a treaty, but ensures the open sea port of Refuge and the Praxian Marches for the Empire.

1621: Fazzur now turns his attention on Esrolia, in order to take over all of the leaderless Holy Country. He supports Queen Hendira of the Red Earth faction to build a temple of the Reaching Moon in Nochet. This temple would cover most of the Holy Country within the Glowline, and establish a secure Lunar hold over the land.

Sacred Season 1621: Fazzur receives his demotion from the post of Governor-General as a result of Dara Happan officers in the army conspiring against their "barbarian" commander. Tatius the Bright takes over command while Fazzur retreats to his duchy in Tarsh.

## Gagix Twobarb Scorpion Queen of Jab



This scorpion queen had overcome and eaten three other queens in the Footprint, and by 1616 formed a single tribe of proportions unseen until then. When the Heortland civil war of 1617 and the royal decrees afterwards weakened the chaos

defense of the local Orlanthi, her tribe grew undisturbed by the annual chaos hunts that had suppressed the scorpionpeople's population in earlier years. As a result, queen Gagix now rules over a vast horde ready to invade the human-settled lands as soon as opportunity offers itself. For the moment, she holds back her people while receiving Lunar bribes and support.

*Greymane  
Warlord of the Solanthi*



This Manirian warlord has been the nemesis of the Holy Country's armies since he first managed to unite the Solanthi tribesmen behind his banner.

While the Manirian Orlanthi are outwardly ruled by the Trader Princes who control the castles along the trade road to Ralios, many of the tribesmen (who kept their traditional religion regardless of their overlords) turn to their warlords for guidance.

When Lunar agents sifted into the lands west of the Holy Country after their failed attempt to invade the country in force, they found eager takers for their money in the tribal warlords. For a number of years, the Ditali barbarians and their western cousins kept making trouble, but it took the leadership of Greymane to unite the tribes into greater action.

1614 saw the first great raid of Ditali and Solanthi barbarians under Greymane's banner, erupting after four years of deceptive quiet after the Pharaoh's last punitive campaign. The raiders devastated Caladraland (and even some of the Islands), then withdrew before the Pharaonic armies could catch up with them.

In 1616, a retaliatory expedition of the Pharaonic army,

including the elite of many of its Sixth warriors, was ambushed in Ditaliland and almost completely wiped out by barbarians gathered by Greymane.

Finally, in 1618 Greymane led another great raid into Esrolia and Caladraland, causing much trouble in the western provinces.

*Gunda the Guilty*



This woman-warrior, a heroine in her own right, is best known as Harrek the Berserk's sidekick. She was the daughter of a Fronelan valkyrie conquered and raped by a "cruel philosopher", likely a Loskalmi Great Knight on a quest for power in the faerie realm. She grew up fleeing her father's minions, while learning the warfare of her mother. At age twelve she overcame the leader of a pack of wolf pirates who had taken the ship on which she fled from her pursuers. Her most famous exploit was to break the glamour of Zoria's infamous Queen of the Kiss which forced the victim to swear an eternal oath of fealty. Of all so afflicted, only Gunda found the power to break the enchantment, and the oath. This earned her the curse that she never would know love.

*Gwydion of Sklar  
Archbishop of the Aeolian  
Church of Heortland*

The head of the Aeolian Church comes from a poor fisherman community in northwestern Heortland. He rose through the hierarchy by wit and labour, becoming bishop of Backford by age 35. When the Archbishopric in Durengard became vacant, Gwydion demonstrated his political skill by gain-

ing that position too. He is one of the most trusted advisors of King Owain.

1617: The childless death of King Owain, following the deaths of his uncle and cousin, leaves Heortland without a clear heir. Gwydion is instrumental in keeping the capital neutral while several contenders decide the issue on the battlefield. However, his play for neutrality is thwarted when Richard the Tigerhearted, commander of the Seshnegi mercenaries protecting the capital, announces his own claim for the crown, and succeeds. Gwydion soon finds himself opposing the influence of the Rokari bishop of Nochet, Vancelain du Tumerine.

1618: After protesting against a royal decree "to remove all pagan ornaments from the churches to the Invisible God" Gwydion is declared outlaw, and forced to hide in the Storm Mountains. He gathers a following of other outlawed Aeolians and disgruntled Orlanthi who have been forced from their clan lands which were giv-



en to cronies of King Richard.

1619: In secret, Gwydion manages to convert Sir Gerard de Montanpein, former right-hand man of Richard the Tigerhearted, and duke of Mt. Passant, to the Aeolian faith. When Gerard's sympathies for the native church become apparent, he is effectively demoted, and his duchy led by a royal sheriff.

1620: As the Lunar invasion plans become obvious, Gwydion moves to ensure that King Richard will lack support from his subjects. Gwydion plans to play off the Seshnegi against the Lunars, and then to liberate the land with the support of the freedom-loving Orlanthi hillmen of the Storm

Mountains. He is surprised by the efficiency of Fazzur's invasion, and the God Forgot invasion in the south removes his most faithful followers from his forces.

1622: Gwydion supports Brian's rebellion against the Lunar occupation troops while Gerard de Montanpein retakes the city of Mt. Passant from the God Forgot invaders. Gwydion establishes his base there in order to reconstruct the kingdom of Heortland.

*Harrek the Berserk*



The berserk from Fronela joined forces with the Wolf Pirates in 1616 and incited the Great Raid on the Holy Country, which devastated much of the coastal regions of all Sixths. He remains a threat to the coasts until Sea Season 1621 when he leads a majority of the captains from Threestep Isles eastwards on an epic raid on all coasts of the Homeward Ocean.

Fire Season 1624: Harrek returns from his circumnavigation ending in the raid of Noloswal in the west, and joins the alliance of Lunar haters in Esrolia led by Brian of the Vol-saxi as a mercenary. After the battle of Pannel Ford he and his pirates settle down in Nochet for a season of drinking up their loot.



*High Admiral  
of the Boats*

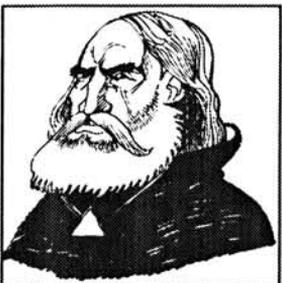
The human leader of the Rightarm Islands. During Harrek's leadership of the Wolf Pirates of the Three-Step Islands, this office swallowed several of its holders.

*Kallyr Starbrow*



Like many of the other leaders of the 1613 rebellion in Sartar, this heroquester and figurehead of the rebellion found acceptance as mercenaries with Brian of the Dunlaingi, in south-eastern Heortland. Kallyr becomes a trusted companion of Brian and supports him throughout the next years. Her reputation attracts many Sartarite exiles to his cause.

*Leonardo  
the Scientist*



This adept from God Forgot is known for his strange, one-of-a-kind inventions, some of which roam the Leftarm Islands. Sometimes he can be seen flying across the land in his pedalcopter.

*Sir Mularik Ironeye*



The bastard son of a Rindland knight and a Ralian noblewoman taken in a border war left his home country for the life of a mercenary in Ralios. By 1614 he led his own small band, but when he encountered Sir Richard the Tigerhearted and his band, he joined forces for a greater destiny. His move was rewarded when Richard made him first sherriff, then Duke of Jansholm. In this function, he was foremost in Vance-lain du Tumerine's effort to remove all Orlanth imagery from the Aeolian Malkioni temples in Heortland. Many of these made from precious substances, and disappearing into Mularik's private coffers. When the Lunar Empire invaded Richard's Kingdom of Malkonwal, Mularik bought his personal freedom and that of his band by handing over his king to the invaders. He then took his accumulated wealth and set sail from Karse to the Threestep Isles, where he joined the Wolf Pirates. He accompanied Harrek on his circumnavigation.

*Owain  
King of Heortland*



King Owain is the young king of Heortland. In his mid-

twenties, he is still unmarried, having preferred a more heroic style of reign.

1617: When the Pharaoh disappears after the Year King rites in Esrolia and fails to procure his next body in a Tournament of the Masters of Luck and Death, Owain uses the annual royal Sacred Time Light-bringers Quest to return the ruler and unity of the Holy Country. His efforts deep under the Shadow Plateau leave him fatally poisoned after an unexpected twist of events. A powerful magical healing restores him shortly, but already on the first festival of 1617 the extent of the poisoning becomes apparent when he impregnates several virgins of noble houses in a frenzy. Kept from death only by most potent magic, his subjects start a frantic questing to find a cure, but by early Fire Season the king has faded away. The pregnant girls are watched closely, since they might bear the heir apparent of the kingdom. But one after another suffers miscarriages, mercifully so since the aborts bear little resemblance to human beings. As the last hope of a legitimate heir has dissipated, a civil war breaks out for the succession.

*Pharaoh*



The magical ruler of the Holy Country has ruled Kethaela since his victory over the Only Old One in 1318. Whenever he has used up an old body, a Tournament of the Masters of Luck and Death is held, and the victor gives his body to the Pharaoh in exchange for an angelic existance on the Gods Plane.

1616: Undergoing the annual sacrifice of himself in the Esrolian Year King rites, the Pharaoh disappears. The ensu-

ing Tournament of the Masters of Luck and Death fails to provide a successor.

What nobody in the Holy Country knows: He is tricked by Jar-eel, the great Lunar heroine who entered the ritual as the bride and made sure the sacrifice sent him do a different Hell than the usual realm of Ty Kora Tek. Trapped in the ritual, the Pharaoh can neither resurrect his own body nor enter a new one provided by a Tournament of the Masters of Luck and Death.

*President  
of Caladraland*



The mundane ruler of Caladraland is little more than a glorified clan chieftain chosen by his peers. His actual influence on the inhabitants is small outside of his own clan. Quite often this post is occupied by a compromise candidate from a small clan to keep the major clans in check.

*Queen Hendira*



Leader of the Red Earth faction in Esrolia, and after 1620 the most influential Esrolian queen in Nochet. The Red Earth faction started out as a small number of dissatisfied priestesses of the Old Earth faction in Esrolia who disagreed

with the course the sacrificial kingship had taken. After the Building Wall Battle, Lunar agents and money supported these zealots until they got hold of some of the larger Esrolian houses.

Queen Hendira inherited a difficult position after the great raids of the wolf pirates in 1616 and the Ditali and Solanthi in 1618. Educated by Red Earth priestesses, she turned to the nearest representatives of the Lunar Empire for assistance, Fazzur Wideread, Provincial Governor. Fazzur was only too happy to comply as soon as he had conquered the Heortland plateau. He brought Tarshite magicians and specialists to support her position in Nochet, the greatest city in this part of the world. Fazzur's engineers and magicians started to build a full Lunar temple right within Nochet, from where an expanded Glowline would have covered all of the Holy Country. However, in Sacred Season of 1621 General Fazzur was relieved from his office, and his magicians and engineers were ordered to abandon the almost finished project for another project by Fazzur's successor, Tatus the Bright. Tatus planned to cover all of the former lands of the Rebellus Terminus with the Glowline, and had chosen a site in eastern Sartar.

*Sir Richard the Tigerhearted*



This Seshnegi mercenary captain is the younger son of the count of Estarenic. He left his home country for a career of soldiering when his older brother inherited the title and holdings. With his childhood companion, Sir Gerard de Montanpein, he assembled a mercenary company of renowned Se-

shnegi knights currently not vasaled to anyone and entered Ralios and its petty wars. There his company is joined by that of Sir Mularik Ironeye, a Rindland knight of great capacities. After a politically difficult intrigue in the Ralian state of Tiskos Richard decided to put as much distance between himself and his home country. He followed the Trader Prince road into the Holy Country. Upon arrival in Nochet, Richard entered a dalliance with Elena Rosa, the newly-wed young wife of old Don Capratis, leader of the Nochet Seshnegi. The jealous Don arranged his quick departure on the first contract offered (defense of the Praxian Marches of Heortland, the post previously held by Brian of the Volsaxi). Richard and his (by now quite large) company entered Prax in Earth season 1615.

After proving the worth of the heavy chivalry in devastating a head-to-head charge against a raiding bison clan the Seshnegi knights get invited to a tournament in Durengard, the capital of Heortland. Richard and his knights excelled over the rustic Heortland chivalry, and early in 1616 they were ordered to the court as the king's personal bodyguard. Other Seshnegi mercenaries of less renown who had followed Richard's tracks replaced his force in Knight Fort.

1617: When the king died after a (in Richard's eyes pointless, pagan) quest, he and his knights support the royal counselors in Durengard while several claimants fight out their right for the crown of Heortland. Due to an imagined slight inflated beyond reason by newly arrived barbarian followers, a powerful claimant from northern Heortland moved against the Seshnegi knights. He was denied entry into central Heortland in a hard battle on a Syphon crossing against Mularik's company, decided only when relief from Durengard arrived after a forced march. With only two serious claimants left after this battle, Richard (with overt support from the bishop of Nochet (decided to state his own claim. The remaining claimants allied against the foreigners, but in a

decisive battle the rival claimant was slain and his ally driven into hiding in the mountains, and Richard could ascend the empty throne of Heortland.

1618: Listening to the advice of the bishop of Nochet, Richard decrees most of the Orlanthi pagans of Heortland as serfs (thereby forbidding them to carry swords), and also supports a conversion of the Aeolian temples into purified Malkioni churches. This gains him the enmity of large parts of the populace, which he ignores the same way he would have ignored grumbling peasants in Seshnela.

1620: Richard prepares to throw back the Lunar invasion. However, his most trusted lieutenants turn on him, and few of the populace are ready to fight for the Rokari oppressors. He gets separated from his own troops on the battlefield, and is given over to General Fazzur by the men of one of his Lieutenants, Sir Mularik Ironeye, then Duke of Jansholm.

*Vancelain  
du Tumerine  
Rokari Bishop of Nochet*



This member of the great Nolosite trader dynasty was invested due to generous financial support of the Ecclesiarch's private conflict with the king of Seshnela. Vancelain is an ambitious man, and when Richard the Tigerhearted established a strong Rokari presence in the leaderless Heortland, Vancelain was quick to propose a holy kingdom to the mercenary captain. He masterminded much of Richard's approach to the crown, and as a reward he could expand his see of Nochet into all of Heortland, including the well-off Aeolian heresy.

• **Jörg Baumgartner** roleplayer for 12 years, into RQ for 8 years, into Glorantha for 6 years, but deeply. One-time editor of German zine **Free INT**, co-editor of **Tradetalk**, and holder of the yellow flag on the digest for excessive verbosity.

<http://www.toppoint.de/~joel/omegl.html>

# CALADRALAND

by Vesa Lehtinen

*"I am (name) of (clan) of (tribe), follower of The Volcano Twins. What brings you here?"*



The Caladra & Aurelion  
writeup originally used is  
the one published in  
TOTRM #7



Additional ideas given by  
comments of Simon Bray  
& Jörg Baumgartner



## Legendry

**W**HEN FATHER FIERY looked down he saw something quite wonderful. Then Mother Stable looked up, she saw something fierce and powerful. And the Father hurled into ground and brought gifts to her and joined her people. And he took the name of Caladril, expanded their lands and built a great palace for his household.

Long was the courtship and its fruits were many. The glutton Howler, the Hothead, Pelushi the Stubborn. But dearest to their mother were the Silent Twins who slept and grew in dreams. But Caladril grew jealous of them and wanted to use their embers again. He even claimed that they were not his. So their mother hid the daughter with the aid of Moastal and sent the son away.

Caladril made amends and left to search for his children and he left his son to take care of the land. In the south he raised black warriors. In the north he topped an Empire. But when he came back, his family had been slaughtered by the Storm Beast from the East. It had killed his wife and one of his favorite sons, murdered the Sun and killed the light. And when Caladril tried to avenge them, he was wounded himself.

And the dead of Light brought Darkness with it and weakened Caladril was chained and enslaved by Arragar, the youngest of the darkness gods. And he forced Caladril to rebuild the palace for him and made it his own home.

But the calamity followed another when the Raging Sea erupted over the Caladril's old lands. When the waters of Ocean poured over Earth, trying to quench life, Caladra stirred for the first time; Vails of the people of Earth above her reached her sleeping ears and she trembled on her molten bed.

Fire under the earth burst forth and the land rose. Bright siblings of Caladra leapt to defend her and the people above her resting place. Land rose to high cliffs and Ocean had to withdraw. Some spirits of water were captured by the Caladra's kin and taken as hostages. Some of them pledged allegiance to Caladra or married the fiery defenders and became her servants and they and their descendants are the spirits of hot springs and leaping waters in our land today.

The grateful people praised her and tended her kin. But when one of the chiefs, named Tordak, offered himself in Holy Marriage, Caladra still wasn't all awake and still was missing her brother and did not answer. Angered, Tordak turned to Storm and ransacked the land.

Then came Wakboth who destroyed the World Mountain. Far away woke up Aulerio and Caladra sensed his rage and raised her head. The true daughter of the land arose and she burst up in the pillar of Earth and Fire and now in the place where she raised her head and came to her people's aid, is Caladra's Vent.

Her fiery touch poured over the horde of Chaos, purifying them and turning them into a fertile earth. She scorched the Storm, boiled the Sea and brought the fire against the Darkness. And she raised the land above the Sea and accepted its people. And with the secrets she had learned in her dreams she built the World Mountain of her own.

Tordak was afraid and called his master for aid. Storm Chief came and witnessed Caladra's fire.

«I Am The Storm Chief, the King of Air».

«I Am Caladra, Fire Under Earth»

«Then you are kin, for you are sister to my wife».

«Then leave my people in peace or I'll defend them till the last ember».

And Storm Chief saw he could not win for he did not want to turn the Earth against him. So he called for Goldentongue, a new but an old ally, to help him. And the God of Speech proposed a trade.

«Let it be thus» - said the Storm King. - «Give me a secret of a safe fire and I'll never rule on your lands».

«Let it be thus» - said the Daughter of Fire and Earth - «Give us rain for our lands and my people and I'll leave your lands in peace».

«So be it» - said the Goldentongue. And it has been so since

And one of the sons of the Storm Chief came to them as a sign of peace and his name was Orllam Rain-bringer. Later his brothers have broken their father's promise and attacked us but he still brings rain from the sea.

But after him sneaked in his twin Ormmal and tried to force his affections on Caladra. First she tried to reason with this unbathed lout but Ormmal could not understand, changing his shape to divert her. When pursued, he jumped into the cauldron of Bluesmoke but would not die. And now he is here like his brother...

Tordak fled west and turned to Wendel. There he raised a family of raiders.

But there was a feast of rejoicing and sisters met for the first time. And from the Mother Earth Caladra heard about what had happened in the mortal world. Together they weeped for the demise of the King of Seed.

But Caladra sensed there was another of her blood in this world and departed for West to look for him...

## History

**A**T DAWN, CALADRALAND ended up being one of the members the First Council under the tutelage of the Only Old One. Uprisings against the Troll Emperor were rare and ineffective because he had Caladril in chains. For the first century, Caladralanders acted content, but secretly joined forces with Gemborgian dwarves.

The first actual war was 123 ST., when Martaler of the Blazing Forge attacked the Only Old One, gaining many followers amongst Caladralanders. Thought Martaler's campaign was ultimately a failure, the war broke the back of the Uz power in Caladraland; trolls have never been able to regain their position since.

Enmity between Mostali and Uz went on. 365, when the Only Old One left the World Council like the majority of other troll leaders, Martaler launched another attack, yet again getting Caladrian support. The result was another failure and enmity of Esrolians when Caladrian spearmen marched through their fields. They had to wait more than twenty years for another chance.

When the army of the Nysalor's Bright Empire, lead by a Dara Happan general Palangio the Vrok, arrived 380, he became a powerful ally. Palangio demanded Twins' cooperation due to their ancestry and barged in to "pacify" the land. Many did welcome him but many coastal tribes remained sceptical, resisting the very idea of being invaded. Even the spirits of Hot Point and some others retaliated by burying the temples of the priests who supported the general.

The result was a brief but decisive civil war and a load of refugees leaving for the seas. Although it has been claimed that these were the ancestors of the people of Breakwater in Jrustela, they themselves deny it.

## Piece of the secret history

The pair of Jrustelian twins from Breakwater that came to Caladraland during the latter part of the Second Age were looking for their own place in the world.

Strengthened with Jrustelian secrets and RuneQuest Sight, they were determined to create one. And only in Caladraland they could find resources (and an otherwise neglected area) to do so.

Their projects had been seen strange and without economical benefits. They did not do pure research and lost social support. They did not acquire new divine resources to fatten someone's treasury, and lost financial backing. But they thought that in this land they could begin anew.

They studied the land and even the fragments of its dead gods. And in the plateau of one of them they found pieces of the ancient land from the time of the Caladril.

What they found was a way to create a some semblance of unity. And their wish, instead of analysis and plunder, was to build and create. At first they gained support of the neighboring tribe and proceeded to pull together two somewhat similar gods, recasting them into their own image.

They returned to Jrustela to bind another part of the cult and talked about their success. Suddenly their scheme had become interesting and many of those who had laughed at them congratulated them and wanted to join them. Jrusteli geomancers saw very many interesting applications to mass-production of diamonds and a chance to get their

hands into the wealth only mostali would have dreamed of. Soon their project was flooded with volunteers and they became a pawns in their own design. But during the following years they noticed something else; the destruction and damage to the structure of legends. They did not ignore the warnings of Valastos of Seven Pens, they knew the gaps in their own knowledge. And like any builder, they did not want to see their creation destroyed for greed, vanity and criminal indifference. They knew the secrets now and knew their peoples even better. They had literally bound their creation with the substance of their sibling bond and like every God Learner who had studied the scriptures plundered from Arkati, knew the Cut of Severance. And they knew the way. Placing themselves into the Flow of Eponyme, the path of cultural heroes, they begun the combined quest of Severing and Binding to ensure the survival of their lands, spirits and people. What their followers in the later centuries would call a reforming movement, was in fact their struggle to regain their own creation. When they returned to Caladraland, they saw the land being drained by Zistorite machinery, enthusiastically supported by the first generation of true Twin Priests, who were nothing more than a puppet regime. But they knew the way. They joined forces with Martaler and Only Old One. They brought back Tessele the True once more. They wiped away the still fledgling priestly dynasty with the help of those tribes who had been

Palangio's grip was tight and he gained more support by promising to free Caladril from the captivity. Whole tribes joined his army which had already laid siege to a Castle of Black Glass. But despite of his schemes, he never managed to conquer to place.

Over the years he become more and more indifferent. He did support Caladril attacks on Shadow Plateau but survivors came back to tell how they were treated more as expendable rabble than true allies. Eventually they lost fate on him. And when they heard that Tessele the True had come back to the lands of living and joined Arkat, they were already ready to abandon the insolent Yelmite.

Caladralanders flatly refused to help Palangio any more and many of his emissaries were slain. Palangio cursed them but he was soon fighting a desperate battle against Arkat's army. Maybe three hands of Caladralanders joined Tessele but the rest decided to stay out of this fight. Eventually Martaler abandoned Palangio as well - some Howler shamans later took credit for persuading him - which lead to a serious setback near the Maldros river, where Palangio's forces were routed for the first time ever. General had met his match and retreated to Dragon Pass where he was later slain.

Arkat let Caladraland in peace but he did reinstate the rule of the Only Old One. Caladrilans still refused to allow any trolls clans to settle in. However, many human Arkati moved to the village of Jador which was built on the place of power. They expanded it, making it a city with temples to gods of darkness and knowledge. They also managed to ease the relations between trolls and Caladralanders by the Song of Treaty.

For the next hundred years the situation was relatively peaceful (aside from the usual squabbles). However, at 656 when certain Esrolian matriarchs had embraced the gods of darkness, they decided to help the trolls to regain their long-lost foothold in Caladraland. Surprise attack was successful in two fronts. Near the border of Esrolia, it almost destroyed many of the Caladralander border tribes. Survivors fled to the Solung Plateau, formed an alliance called Solungian Confederation and launched a successful counterattack. The end of the war left them holding whole Porthomeca and two Esrolian border cities. After a whole dark season full of combat - Caladrilans melting the snow under the troll's feet all the time - Only Old One eventually decided to abandon the attempt in return of the continued cooperation.

Caladril priesthood, which had suffered only a couple of deflected attacks in their own front from the Bay, exploited the situation by accusing Arkati of Jador for treachery because they, supposedly the allies of the Troll Emperor, had not warned of the threat. In addition, the priesthood was supported by the newly-arrived Jrusteli spies who eventually helped them to depose Arkati altogether. So Caladraland took its first steps as an ally of God Learners.

Trade and information exchange prospered but in time, the amount of transgressions, taboo violations and exploitation increased. Despite of all this, the priesthood and powerful chiefs let everything happen and even enthusiastically joined the Zistor experiment by giving sacred earthblood and firebone to fuel Zistorite machinery. And Jad-

nor became the Zistorite stronghold in Caladraland; They found use of the underground heat and begun to drain the land's vitality.

But to their surprise, Martaler did not approve of the Machine God. Suddenly Pelushian rebels gained a very powerful ally. Suddenly the Mostali creatures and Caladril warriors and fiery spirits collapsed towers, raided laboratories and incinerated traveling nobility. Soon many previously obedient volcanoes refused to hear the priesthood's wishes. Spirits of lava arose to melt the Zistorite legs.

Amid this confusion, Moray and Telerio, the latest heroes of the land, emerged wielding magic that, finally, could be used against the God Learners. Emulating the Volcano Twins themselves, they stroke against Jador. Founders of the Caladraland to come, afterwards known as The Three Tribes, defeated and killed the priesthood reputedly with their bare hands. Afterwards they erected the High Temple of the Caladra's Vent.

Then Moray and Telerio slipped into the Castle of Black Glass to make another pact. And for the first time, Caladrilans were allied with trolls, for the Only Old One sent his own forces against Jador. He released part of the Lodril's power to reduce the rotten place to the wet rubble of Vapor Pits it is now.

But the collapse of the Jrusteli Empire brought its own cataclysms. Zistorites had already drained the land so much that there was a threat of famine. Hurriedly Moray and Telerio established new, more powerful rites and left to ask for the help of gods and heal the wounds of the land. They returned only once more to establish a new priesthood, form old ties with the rulers and then left for the realm of the gods...

Closing of the seas brought another conflict in the form of increasing Pelaskan raids which became a full-fledged war. People of Right Arm islands had been isolated from the sea, their main source of food and became desperate. The Three Tribes of Vent joined forces with other neighboring tribes to drive them away. Newly shipwrecked Ajasi joined the war, too, first under the tutelage of the neighboring tribe of Rolimim though their part was far from important.

Pelaskans averted the conquest of their islands only with Mermen help. At 936 priests from Vent and Seapolis met to make peace. As a sign, two shrines were erected near the very Eastern tip of Caladraland. Over the centuries, a settlement called Halftown arose around them.

Next four centuries went in with relatively minor disturbances, among them the silence of the spirit of Lighthouse. Twin Priesthood kept good relations with Only Old One, thought they became increasingly formal during his last century.

Then came the stranger from the demon haunted seas. Publicly he challenged the goddess of the land, proclaiming himself being better than anyone else and being able to challenge the Only Old One. Priesthood swiftly had him thrown to Vent's cauldron. And to everyone's surprise he emerged unscathed and Caladra had accepted him as her husband. And he summoned Tessele the True to his side.

Eagerly people supported his cause and spirits the land joined forces with him. Group of companions of Tessele escorted him to his feats in Esrolia, Heortland, the Islands and God Forgot. Even into the Arstola forest where Pharaoh came

to enlist their aid. And eventually an army of Caladrians accompanied him, and others, to the Shadow Plateau where they had a pleasure of plundering the Castle of Black Glass before it was smashed into a glittering dust.

Although Pharaoh later allied himself with the other lands, Caladrians found it easier to accept him. As far as the priests of the Twin are concerned, Pharaoh's rule was the best possible. Alongside his came better trading opportunities and the leaders did find use of the Yelmalian he installed near the temple.

Pharaoh tried to maintain peace in the Holy Country during his reign. He was not totally successful. In fact, one of his mistakes was to let the elven group Enekael (later called Manhater) to move near Howler volcano. Aldryami took less than a year to begin a guerilla war against the nearest human beings, wiping out one clan before Caladrians even noticed. Pharaoh did remove his protection from them but it took two years for Caladrians and Western Allies to drive them to near Maldros river near the Solanthi lands, where they remain to this day, bane to most humans passing by.

Since the disappearance of the pharaoh, relations between Caladraland and other lands have been weakening. Wenelians have become more daring in their raids. Right Arm Islands accepted the god of Moonlovers and then allied with them. Esrolia has remained in friendly terms but meetings have become strained and formal.

Some claim that Pharaoh will come back although others predict doom or return of the Troll Emperor. Some people are praying that Moray and Telerio would come back to guide them.

### Main Factions

**CALADRIAN TRIBES** do not have one, unified vision of the future. More militant members of the priesthood of High Temple advocate counterattack through the Right Arm Islands. In the Low Temple, people talk about allying with northerners, trying to drive Moon-lovers away. Aside from these groups, not to mention indifferent people, main factions are the following:

**Dark Doom** - A bunch of visionaries most common in western coastal area who predict the return of the Troll Emperor and a subsequent era of troll domination. They want to organize an massive attack to Shadow Plateau now when they are still weak.

**Brothers of Restoration** - They want to organize a campaign to find Pharaoh or at least a replacement to him. They have gathered magic resources for a journeys to the otherworld. Most numerous in Vinavale.

**Prayers for Twins** - Group of Low Temple priests who who spend most of their time praying that Moray and Telerio would come back to give advice and help them. There are one or two adherents in every temple.

**Rule of Hot Spear** - They advocate a military campaign to bring all Holy Country under the Caladrian rule. They are small in numbers as of yet and their ranks are mixed with those of

Brothers of Restoration.

**Spear and Plow** - Grassroots movement especially popular west of Ashmount, which supports an idea of Caladrian self-rule. Now when the last overlord is gone, they say, Calarians can rule their own lives for the first time since Dawn. Why become again a part of some dubious empire? Why be like Pelaskans who are already puppets of Mermen and now accepted Red Goddess to pull their strings?

**Warm Earth Alliance** - This is a primarily a reformation of an ancient tribal confederation of Solungians and therefore centered in Vinavale. It has many Esrolian supporters in the border cities. It is especially anti-Lunar and therefore regards both the Red Moon Empire and the Esrolian Red Earth Alliance as its main opponents.

### Relations

**RELATIONS TO ESROLIA** have been peaceful mainly because of the Esrolia's own attempts of diplomacy and Solungian clans on the both sides of the valley border.

Contacts with the Shadow Plateau still remain relatively sporadic and a trade with it is usually made through Esrolian middlewomen. Trolls still wants obsidian for their own purposes and the cult of Argan Argar still hordes volcanic glass for their eye-protectors.

Heartlanders do not have much they want from Caladraland and most of the trade was made through the Porthomecan port of Storos. However, ever since the war against Lunars erupted, there have been in occasional ship full of refugees fleeing the confrontation. Locals have no much respect for them.

Due to ancient hatred, people of Caladra has never been in peaceful terms with Ludoch and their Merchiefs. In occasion there have been widespread bloodshed including giant grab assaults and lava salamander attacks. Pelaskan alliance with the mermen of the Right Arm Islands - and the subsequent stalemate in the war - did brough peace but it is not friendship of any kind. Certain Caladrians see Pelaskans only as dupes or minions of mermen. Pelaskans apparent friendship with Lunars has given even more reason for the mutual dislike.

After the Opening of the Seas, Twin Priesthood sponsored two expeditions to re-establish contact with Breakwater and Meetinghall. Later couple of hundred people moved to Meetinghall to supplement its small and heavily inbred population. Still many Caladralander regard the place a "retirement home for lazy runelords" because locally blessed Companions of Tessele cannot sail away afterwards.

Caladraland has also increased its trade with Breakwater, one of the rare human-held areas of Jrusteli Isles.

### Description

**CALADRALAND** is the actively volcanic region in the southwestern corner of the Holy Country. It extends from Mirrorsea Bay westward almost 200 km and 160 km from shore to inland. Its highest peak, Vent, towers

harmd the most. And they released the Caladril from the chains to turns Jadnor into a hot marsh. But the experiments of Zistorites had left the land weak; when the God Learner Empire finally collapsed, the land and cult of the wins almost plunged into nothingness with it. Moray and Telerio had barely time to teach the rites of the the twins, blessing the Earth with Fire, before Caladrians would starve or sink. They were in their way to Jrustela to do the same when they were surprised by the Closing at sea and plunged into the Magasta's pool. In the underworld they were separated and most of their companions disappeared. Eventually they managed to return to the surface world, spread their creed and met in the site of their first rituals, the Meetinghall Mountain. They taught the rare survivors on the art of building new land for themselves and eventually departed for the lands of the heroes.



• **Vesa "Aku" Lehtinen**  
Big, bald, bearded and lives in Tampere, Finland. Been roleplaying since 1985, running RQ sporadically since 1988, the current RQ campaign(s) begun 1992. All the RQ-related stuff has been published in the Finnish RPG magazine called **Magus**; this includes a 5-part short story series and a bunch of scenarios. Member of **Finnish Science Fiction Writer's Association**. Homepage not interesting at the moment.

2100 m high, its plume of smoke visible from hundreds of kilometers away at sea.

Coast cliffs on the Poison Shore are over 30 meters high from the ocean surface. Half-active lava pools spot the ground.

Rain has washed away some of the pre-Time volcanic cones and left a couple of spectacular plateaus. The ground still keeps shaking and changing, slowly. There are ruins of both pre- and post-Dawn villages buried under volcanic ash and a smoke of new island emerging is sometimes seen on the coast. In Wenelia, it has been said that Caladra would try to replace Slontos which disappeared below the waves.

Alike most of Maniria, climate is temperate. Flora is mostly light jungle. Common larger animals include Genertelan sabretooth, wild shadowcat, black bear, boar and deer. Gargoyles and skybulls are occasionally encountered.

Thought there is rain, storms very rarely penetrate the Caladraland proper. Warm rains are common during Storm and Sea Season and happen infrequently during other seasons until the Dark Season when they stop altogether. Temperature ranges from 30-32 of centigrade (85-90 Fahrenheit) during Fire Season to -2-7OC (35-45 F) at Dark Season. Most often temperature range is about 15-18OC (60-65 F)

Only road worth mention is between the Esrolian border and Low Temple; there is even some inns in the villages in it. Elsewhere there is a multitude of established paths all around, but they are useful only for walkers and horsemen. Only the wider path between Low Temple road and Ashmount is usable for wagons. Travellers in these area are sometimes plagued by sabretooth tigers and small, persistent packs of rubble runners apparently appearing out of nowhere.

**Inhabitants** - Majority of Caladralanders are humans of Wareran racial stock. Brown and dark hair and brown or green eyes are dominant features, though there are redheads in Vinavale. The only exception is the tribe of Ajasi, descended from refugees.

Gemborg is a major dwarf city. Mermen are distrusted and most ducks do not stay because of their allegiance to air gods. Elves, if met, are often hostile.

**Population** - 450.000. In comparison to lowlands of Esrolia, Caladrians are thinly spread. Some population centers have formed in Vinavale.

**Language** - Caladran. There is a written form but most of the people do not need the skill. People like Innkeepers of Esrolian-Low Temple road and traders have some understanding of numbers and are able to carve their own names. Scribes from Low Temple fulfill the other needs.

Quills and papyrus are used only for temporary stuff. Sacred writings or records are carved into a thin copper plates and bound together as a "books". Literate commoners use pieces of bark on which they draw letters with a piece of coal or carve them with their knives.

The other significant language, which is actually sung, not spoken, is the cult language of the Twins, Diamonspeech. It is usually reserved for rituals or some more secret communications.

**Gods** - Caladra, the goddess of the land, and her brother Aurelion are the most respected gods of the region. Their father Caladril is acknowledged thought only couple of tribes worship him exclusively. Villagers revere many local spirits connected to geysirs and hot pools. Many tribes also revere spirits of their founders and heroes, like Beriamn of Hrennani tribe. Annual and sometimes seasonal human and animal sacrifices are done in the regionally dominating temples.

Two minor Air gods are known; Orrlam Rainbringer who brings the rains from the sea and his twin Orrmal the Prankster, the local incarnation of trickster. Orrlam has shrines near High Temple and the coast. Orrmal has nothing anywhere but his followers keep surfacing from time to time...

Existence of Lightbringers is acknowledged as well, thought people trying to get support for Lhankor Mhy have always come to grief. Sarries the Traveller and Chalana of Healing are the most respected.

Relim is the bright spirit of the sun Lightbringers brought back. The only shrine for him is the one Marrgon tribe built on the top of Light-house for its magical light.

In Vinavale, there are many who worship martial gods like Hurmak the Sword or Barbeester Gor. Axesworn of Barbeester Gor guard the Earth temples there. A group of spearmen following the minor god Yulmal, the son of Relim, originally brought in by Pharaoh, live in their shrine-barracks beside the High Temple.

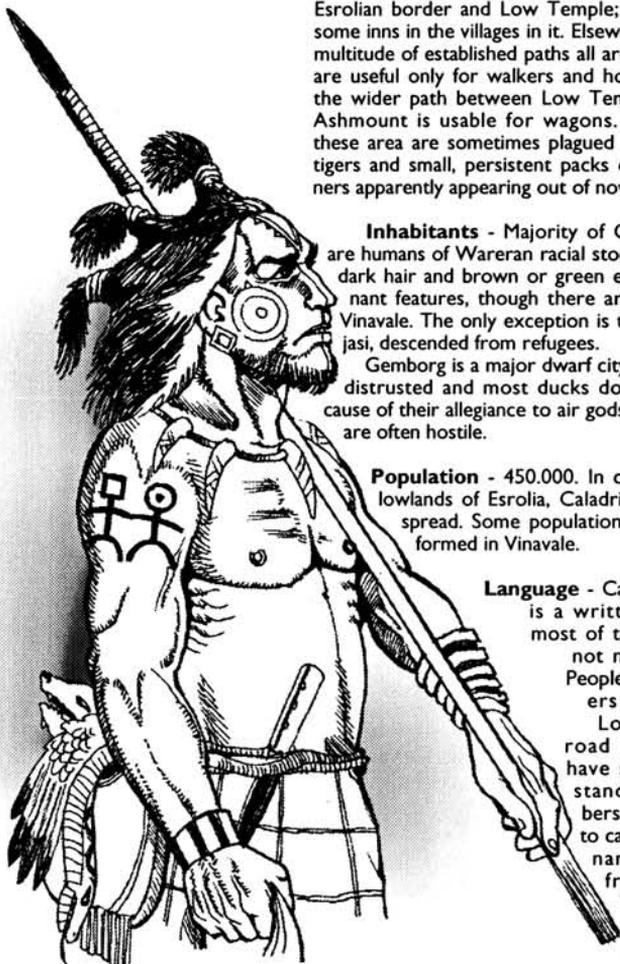
### Caladrian Life

**C**ALADRIAN CHILD is born into an extended family where he gets support from his or her siblings, his or her parents and their siblings. At first he is in the protection of the Morome, the spirit of fireplace, Caladra's sister, which guards his soul against the cold. Child is named after the first season and weaned four seasons later. She sleeps besides her parents until the age of 12, when she begins the first preparations for the adult life.

Amount of twins born to Caladralanders is only slightly higher than elsewhere but the celebrations can take a whole week. Also, Caladralanders see twins as a good omen, unlike very many other cultures of Glorantha. However, same-sex twins are rare. Among the Solungian tribes, they are called by the similar names and are given similar tasks in life.

Descend is counted both matrilineally and patrilineally though boys are usually treated as sons of their father and girls daughters of their mother.

It is up to the parents (or foster parents) to decide whether the child is ready for majority. Usually around the age of 16, he completes either



the Caladra's Ascent or Aurelion's Hunt and reaches the adulthood.

Child is usually expected to follow the footsteps of the parent of the same sex. However, sometimes there is no elder son or daughter suitable for the task. The first recourse is a younger sibling of the same sex, but if this is not possible, a daughter may follow her father's craftsmanship, for example. Only if there is no suitable relatives available, the family may decide to "adopt" an orphan or even a younger child of another family as an apprentice.

Only adults can join the clan council, marry or hold right to personal fields, also, in practice, non-mainstream cults like Hurmak or Chalana and especially tribal hero cults accept only adults.

All marriages begin in the heat of passion between a boy and a girl, usually before the both have passed their tests of adulthood. Sexual congress before marriage is expected. Actual marriage is decided both by the individuals concerned and their families. Especially the latter party tries to influence the decision if the potential spouse is a newcomer or considered too wild or "unattached".

Marriage has relatively minor significance - it is not thought to be a permanent state; it cannot outlast the sibling bond. There is no particular shame in divorce and the second marriage is usually the one that lasts longer.

Those that live longer than 40 summers are given the honor of Elderhood. In the temples, they eventually step down and became Advisors. Elder chieftains retain their status until death but they usually also gather other elders around them as advisors.

Upon the death, the body is cremated. If possible, they are lowered or thrown into the volcano or lava pool, accompanied with the Song of Passing. Tribes near the Western allies cremate the bodies alongside the tribal field, if the time is right.

**Rulership** - Caladran social system recognize people in the following order of respect:

#### **Priesthood**

*(Twin Priests or Acolytes of the Twins, in that order)*

#### **Clan/Tribal Nobility**

*(Chieftains and their families)*

#### **Advisors**

*(lawspeakers and, in Vinavale, certain scribes)*

#### **Common People**

*(Farmers, crafters, warriors)*

#### **Slaves**

*(Ashdiggers, water carriers)*

Clan chieftain has a final say in most simple matters but a more complex problems require a council. Among the majority of the tribes there is a clan circle lead by a local Twin Priests or acolytes. The leading priest pair of High Temple - usually natural twins - is elected by the clan leaders and priests. One of them usually concentrates on mundane matters when another one takes care of the spiritual ones.

Social mobility is uncommon but possible, thought many younger sons of chieftains regularly fail in their attempts to become priests or even acolytes.

One of the Lightbringers is often represented if there seems to be a need (Sarries for trade

relations, for example) but usually it is Chalana. Shrinetender for Orrlam is blamed if there is a drought. However, local chieftain always outranks everybody else but the Twin priest.

Clans and tribal confederations try keep their internal problems to themselves; in the local council every member can express his or her view. But in case of intertribal problems, only priests and chieftains has a say in the matter. Only people with significant status, reputation or deeds (like champions of the Ashmount Games or Companions of Tessele) can address the council in this case.

In effect, Vent's Holy Town could be considered a sort of a capital because of its central significance.

**Warfare** - Most adult men are armed and ready to defend their own territory in the case of raid. There are small groups of female warriors who call themselves Spear Maidens; usually they claim allegiance to Tessele.

Spear is the most traditional weapon and only slightly outranked by an axe (though if the warrior is proficient with other weapons, all the better). Spears with obsidian points are well-regarded. Among those tribes that worship only Caladril, there are many warriors who improve their throwing range by using spear-throwers (Atlatl in RQ terms). Armor, if any, is usually made of leather.

Caladrian spearmen were the first to join the Pharaoh's battle against the Only Old One and he tried to make them even stronger force. So, when he found a group of Yulmal (Yelmalian) mercenaries with no place to go so he sent them to Caladraland. Current generation has fought valiantly against Solanthi and Lunar troops. When Pharaoh disappeared, they placed themselves under the command of the Twin priesthood of the High Temple.

Otherwise the local equivalent of the army is composed of tribesmen with their own weapons. Usually priests teach them magic of lava spears (Fireblade in RQ terms) both as a reward and a reinforcement.

In the time of the greatest peril, local priests launch the fury of the local volcano against the overwhelming enemy. This tactics has proved surprisingly effective and forces any invading troops to use large amount of countering magic to try to prevent any eruption.

Caladraland has no cavalry as such; horse is a hard to purchase, even more expensive to support and usable mainly as a form of transportation.

**Customs** - Caladra & Aurelion emphasizes kinship, even between rival families. Twin Priest blessing between two members of different tribes is considered a stronger bond than any kind of political marriage. Specific ordained Priest pairs are regarded as siblings, including for incest taboos.

Local duel ordeal, holmgang, is fought with bare hands, following the custom originating from Caladril. Only protective magic is allowed.

Horses are usually kept by nobles, warriors and a rich folk. Very often they are of Caladralander breed of Ash Horse, grey horses with occasional red spots. Main center for horse breeding and trading is Ashmount.



#### **COMMON EVENTS**

- Raiders (Pelaskan, Solanthi, Ludoch, Wenelians, Wolf Pirates) approach - warriors are needed, local temple pays with magic
- Local spirits emerge to reveal a place for a good harvest - celebration and territorial disputes
- Large pack of sabertooth sighted - hunters depart to handle the threat
- Rumors about the return of Moray and Telerio

#### **RARE EVENTS**

- Local volcano spirit announces its displeasure - sacrifices sought. Foreign transgressions implicated and insults remembered
- Cloud of invisible death seeps to the surface - people and animals found dead with no wound in sight
- Cheerful, sentient lava creature emerges and toddles around clumsily, accidentally destroying houses and uprooting and burning fields.
- Rumors about an army of outlaws gathering in Petrified Sea.

*Tales of the Howler Volcano*  
**HOWLER'S GRIEF**  
 As told by Frodi with Six Fingers Left at 1345

"There resides the spirit of Howler, the ancient spirit of earthfire, once worshiped by many. The Mover that does not Move. His is the power of fiery spirit, the fire of wisdom from below. But he veils because he was spurned. Spurned by the Lady of the land, the one hair of fire and eyes of fiery embers. She came from east and captured his heart but did not stay because of his brother. And howler withdrew from the world though he can do not. For he still carries a flame for her. Many spirits, both those of dead and those who have never lived, know him and live in the recessed of his body. Some even can be visible to others in his presence. And thought he does not receive any priests of those who spurned him, he sometimes give aid to those who seek the wisdom of spirits. But beware; he is a moody one and those who live there must be wise beyond my years to befriend him. Since he knows the spirit world and the world of Power but he does not know much about the life of mortals".

Hot water is in abundance in the country's hot springs; They are widely used for baths and washing water; Some slaves do nothing more than carry hot water from the springs to the house. Springs which are near villages are often crowded with people, washing, bathing and socializing. Some women give birth sitting in warm ponds and dead are often buried into the nearest holy lava pool, if any. Even local bitters and ales are made into volcanic water and served warm.

The most prominent artform of Caladraland is music in its two forms. Just about everyone can sing, a feature influenced by the compulsory recitation of legendry during the rites, done by the sacred language, Diamonspeech. In festivities, singers are accompanied by drums and flutes.

Caladrians usually eat with their fingers or with sticks holding hot food. Only some tribes of Vinavale and near Hot Point have adopted food knives.

**Fashions** - Common colors of Caladralander costumes are grey, red and black. Otherwise the clothing varies from tribe to tribe.

Common clothing includes variations of a leather vest and leggings. However, if a farmer goes to take care of his burning field, he waresly wears anything else but a loincloth - if even that.

Men wear their hair at the shoulder length at most. Women wear longer hair but usually tie it back to their heads so it would not disturb their work.

In certain formal, religious occasions or during great festivities, noblemen darken their face with volcanic ash to resemble Aurelion - resembling, coincidentally or not, an average farmer after a day of tending an ashen field. Likewise, women may dye their hair reddish to emulate Caladra with a long, flowing hair.

Jewellery is usually worn only in festivities, excluding those of priests who are often diamonds inlaid in gold or silver. Obsidian jewelry is used by the common folk.

At wartime, warriors display their cult symbols by painting them on their faces by a paint made of volcanic ash.

**Settlements** - Caladralanders dislike walled cities and, to an outsiders, their villages may be a bewildering bunch of houses and huts, some of them in the forest farther from the others.

Most houses are built mostly on polished or unpolished stones with wooden (or, very rarely, stone pillar) supports. This makes the structures a bit less stable (masonry services purchased from dwarves are expensive and often reserved for important buildings) but less prone to catch fire. The top of pillars and supports are usually decorted with the carving of the Twins or local fiery spirits. The fireplace is usually in the middle of the house.

**Farming** - Slash & burn agriculture is the most widely used style to grow food - cattle is kept mostly for their meat and for beasts of burden. Caladralanders grow both vegetables, fruits and grain. This includes apricots, onions, in the

vinavale, even some grapes.

Type of the field depends on the tribal tradition and applicable resources. There are three main types of fields:

**Household Field** (1): Field belonging to the individual house or family. Sometimes wood is brought from elsewhere. House field is burned on the same year during the Sea Season. The amount of household fields increases near the western border of Caladraland.

(1) This is based of historical Finnish slash-and-burn style, called "kaski"-agriculture. Oats has been very unsuitable for this type of farming.

**Clan Field**: Larger field usually cleared into a nearby forest area, slashing trees into stumps before burning. Usually burned on Fire Season of the next year. Very common in Vinavale.

**Tribal Field**: The produce of the field will be used by the tribe as a whole; this may mean more than one village. These fields are usually cleared away from the more densely inhabited area, slashed up to two years beforehand by members of all clans of the tribe and left to dry until burning during Earth Season. Outsiders often think the area full of dying trees has been caused by raiding or forest fire.

The area of the burned field is usually measured as "axes". This does not refer to the tools used but to the amount of people used to clear the area and help during the burning. The actual tool used for moving burning wood is a heathook, tool resembling a spear with a curved metal tip. The blaze is usually kept in check with counterfires and, sometimes, by magic. Afterwards they can just mix the ashes with the ground layer underneath, without heavy plowing.

If the field has been continually barren for many years, an animal or human sacrifice is burned with it. Some volunteer to be cremated in the field after their death.

Rivalry of suitable areas and right to use a certain fields is a very common reason for an intertribal conflict. Thought High Temple priesthood holds that these should be handled in peaceful manner, wars are still fought over these things. Sometimes the one who has "violated" the area belonging to other clan can solve this problem by agreeing to give some kind of compensation. Holmgang is still more common.

After the wars of the Second Age, twin priest Gnaddir Finehair degreed that nobody could claim a larger area than which he can walk around in a single day. Most fields are smaller.

**Merchandize** - Caladraland is known mainly by its obsidian and volcanic glass. Common items include palm-sized, polished obsidian mirrors and small statues. Small volcanic glass plates have been exported as far as Pavis and probably to Red Moon Empire nowadays.

Common merchandize include salt. Some coastal tribes living near the Poison Shore gather it from the cracks of the coastal cliffs. Other tribes south of Bluesmoke Volcano It the seawater flow onto the hot spots on the ground where the water evaporates, leaving only the salt. The other one is lye made of wood ash and its derivatives, like soap.

In the ancient times, Zistorites demanded earthblood and firebone. In these days, those are traded mostly with Gemborgians, accompanied by

Name	Damage	STR/DEX	ENC	B%	AP	SR
Heathook	1d8	7/11	2.0	05	7	1

an appropriate rituals. In exchange humans usually receive gems and Companions of Tessele are instructed in the finesse of purchasing iron from them.

Most common Porthomecan merchandize (coffee, cigars and extra-strong vine rope) are also widely distributed in Caladraland.

Since the fire magic is so common, not to mention many other sources of fire, flint and steel and other items of firemaking are practically for-eign trinkets.

### People of Note

**Bertar of Tight Lips**, Twin Priest, Brother half of the ruling Priest Pair living in the Holy Town. He is a quiet half, too, and his subordinates and initiates do listen when he speaks because it is mainly for great praise or grave condemnation. Usually he lets Shorna speak and either smiles, scratches his short beard or grins beside her. They are natural twins.

**Dorradarr the Swimmer** - This quiet leader of a contingent of spearmen warriors, claims no alliance to either one of the temples. Solungian by birth, he spent most of his time defending coastal villages in Eastern Caladraland against Ludoch and Pelaskan raids. After that he fought a guerilla war against the invading Red Moon Empire. Now he has returned to his people and become one of the most prominent warleaders of the Warm Earth Alliance.

**Rollaug Lefthanded** - One-handed Ormialist who "sells" invisible body parts who sometimes became true ones. He claims that he lost the soul of his right hand in the heropath. Is particularly wary of any shamans he may encounter. Often seen in Ashmount.

**Shorna Goldeneye**, Twin Priest - Usually Shorna speaks for both herself and his brother. She is also more efficient in finding a practical solutions to a common problems, being concentrated on the mundane matters.

**The Wyrn** - This dragonkind visits the Vent Volcano at least annually and swallows hot magma. It claims that it knew Moray, hundreds of years ago, and gained the right to do so by helping them against the Wyrms Friends. Priesthood has not been quite convinced of this but since the wyrn had not caused any large-scale destruction (thought not been in any help, either) they have let it be.

### Places of Interest

**Ashmount** - Ashmount begun as a small trading place supported by the people of shrine of the Hoofed One, an alleged ancestor of all Ash Horses. Over the decades it has become an annual horse market and shrine begun to make a living as the Bath of Pool.

During the last two centuries, Ashmount had become a small village. Majority of a clan Thargil moved near the spring escaping invisible death. Their chief ensured the well-being and goodwill of the Hoofed One by entering into a ritual marriage; couple of years later he also married a priestess of the spring.

Eight years later, two of the remaining clans also relocated to Ashmount. Initially Thargil helped their kin, even selling them a breeding stock, but soon a rivalry begun between the clans. Because of this, and the fact that now there's many residents of Ashmount who do not belong to any of the clans, there have been a couple of annual brawls.

The town has become a main horse trading center in Caladraland. On the outskirts of the village is the Ash Pit where the Son of the Horse Goddess had been trapped when Caladra saved him. Grateful demigod pledged his descendants into her service as long as they are treated well.

Ashmount is not a quiet place even during a normal days but every Wildday of Movement week they keep their major horse market. During the Earth Season there is Ashmount games, a major competition of horsemanship between the representatives of three major breeders and, usually, many hopeful outsiders. Unofficial betting abound.

The most prominent guesthouse in town is the Grazing Mount.

**Blumen** - Small community of apostate Mostali from a day's travel from Holy Town alongside the Vent volcano. They are still unsure of their place in the surface world. They have traded with locals mainly for protection (occasionally with alchemical concoctions) but they have barely learned to smile and speak the local language. There is only one warrior among them.

**Caladra's Steps** - Straight-line series of small, volcanic islands in the Mournsea, said to be placed where Caladra stepped on while running to meet her brother, towards Meetinghall. Most of them are too small to inhabit.

**Gemborg** - A sizable population of dwarfs inhabit the depths of the Bluesmoke volcano. Their city, whose surface portions can be found on the south face of the volcano, is named after the gems the city specializes in. Humans are intrigued about frequent bursts of steam from the depths of their tunnels.

Reception in the Trading Chamber is cold but polite and efficient. In recent years, dwarves have been particularly interested purchasing tin.

**Firepit of Beriamn** - Relatively small volcano around which live the tribe of Hrennan. Beriamn was a second age tribal hero who saved his people from an elf attack by eruption in which he was also consumed.

**Half Town** - A settlement in the eastern-most tip of Caladraland. During the truce between Caladraland and Pelaskans, two shrines of Caladra and Pelaskos were built; the first on the ground, the latter on sturdy stilt house on the water. Over the centuries, people from both sides begin to settle around both and eventually formed what is not called Halftown; half of both sides. To this day, the "borderline" between the two parts of the town is called the Truce Line

Recently HalfTown was taken over by Lunars; it was badly damaged during the fighting.

**High Temple** - The main temple of Caladra and Aurelion in Caladraland and probably the

**SHAMANISTIC ASPECTS:**  
*Spirits Callers of Caladraland*

**Social Requirements**  
*Usually black sheeps of the family, orphans or otherwise socially infirm.*

**Social Status**  
*No religious authority; what influence the shaman may have he has to acquire himself among the people.*

**Call of Spirits**  
*Shamans are selected from the populace at large by their prospective mentors. Rebirth: Shaman is stabbed with a very physical spear; he is killed and must return to life.*

**Relationship to Fetch**  
*Fetch is a formed from the blood the shaman bleeds during the rebirth situation; it is an embryonic "spirit child" which will take its eventual form (usually that of an animal) later.*

**Second Sigh**  
*Perception Visual, overlapping the "mundane" world*

**Methods of Trance**  
*Shamans dance and sing themselves to exhaustion and collapse. Herb use is rare since many plant spirits are hostile to Caladrians.*

**Costumes and Props**  
*Wanderers wear necklaces or belts made of animals parts like pelts or skulls. Among the community of Howler, the most respected ones wear coal neclaces and paint their faces red.*

one with the greatest amount of supporters in Glorantha. It is located near the top of the Vent and reputedly has tunnels which lead downward to the inner temple of Caladril, and perhaps beyond into other realms.

**Holy Town** (Small City) - Area of habitation centered around the High Temple of Caladra & Aurelion on Vent. Outsiders often just call it Vent, like the volcano.

The Holy Town is not a city in the usual sense of the word nor it has any surrounding walls. It consists of temple area below the High Temple, which includes some shrines to other deities, couple of markets and closely built houses of The Three Tribes. Temples maintain most services; Yelmalian barracks takes care of defense though it also hires out warriors to other tribes. Temple employs crafters like smiths and stonemasons and maintains hot baths. The food comes from the fields of the neighboring tribes.

There is three main inns in the Holy Town. The largest of them is actually the Weather Shrine of Orrlam which is and frequented used by visitors from neighbouring lands.

Second largest, Care of Earth, is built on a hot spring and offers hot baths with reasonable prices, usually for outlanders (locals go to the temple). For lowlives, there's the Pierced Boar.

**Hot Point** - Inert volcano. Hothead, the spirit of the mountain was the another one to erupt against the Sea and protect its people and was almost snuffed out. Weakened, it was a easy prey for Zistories centuries later and has been silent for most of the time afterwards.

Local tribe still gives the spirit a bride every thirty years, after the divination has ensured that the previous one is dead. Hothead accepts no beauties, only homely looking women. Bride walks into the mountain and disappears inside.

Gerrer, the local tribe, is almost as flegmatic as the spirit of the mountain. It has taken part in the Caladraland history only by sacrificing Palangio's emissaries and joining the Solungians against the Dark Esrolia. Otherwise they stay in their own lands aside from occasional pilgrimages to High Temple.

Even the discovery that there is a pre-Dawn ruin under the volcano has not made them any more active. They are not overtly concerned and prefer to celebrate a couple of war heroes they have.

**Howler Volcano** - The spirit of this volcano, usually known only as The Howler, has been feared for a time immemorial. Legends say that the spirit was spurned by Caladra and erupted over its people. Rarely anyone ventures there any more and those who do, tell stories of ashen statues and ghosts of fleeing, burning people. Some shamans worshipping the spirit of the mountain have been observed there.

**Low Temple** - Site of the temple of lesser prestige and elevation but a larger land area in its territory. The trading route from Esrolia passes nearby.

Temple itself was built on the beach of a small lake which gets its water from the underground springs. Like most of the Caladralander settlements, most of the buildings surrounding the temple and lake are under the forest canopy.

The political schism between one-tribe Low Temple and High Temple has went on since the Second Age. To outsiders - not to mention many local tribes - the main difference between temples of two sects is a matter of architecture; Low Temple Faction builds its temples in low places when High Temple faction prefers high places, usually near the tops of volcanoes. The main supporters, however, claim that that is not the point but usually refuse to explain further and when they do, others rarely understand.

Many Caladralanders do not support either side and more wordly people treat the schism as ridiculous. Companions of Tessele, however, have to take their sides.



## Some Tribes of Caladraland

### AJASI

When the ship where Raj Ajasi of Teshnos was traveling with his family and retinue was surprised by the Closing, he called Somash for help but he did not answer. He noticed that they were hurled towards an unknown shore and they were likely to drown, all of them. So he raised his voice and pledged all his descendants and servants to the service of the god of this land if he would help them. And before his eyes, a steam cloud surrounded the ship, directing it safely towards the rocky shore they eventually landed on.

Following their leader and his oath, Ajasi hired themselves to fight the apparently invading Pelaskans and lost some of their best. At first they were under the protection of the local tribe until they were given the most desolate part of the landscape. To everybody's surprise, they have managed to turn it to use. Their most common export is salt.

Ajasi tribe, as it is now called, has mixed with the locals, but they still have their own distinguishing appearance and traditions. They have adopted most of the local customs but still maintain many of their

own; this includes the manner in which all the decisions of the chief are announced exactly at noon. They still revere Somash, which Caladralanders recognize as Relim and carry their ancestral swords. They live in the shore south-east of Vent.

Ajasi men cover their hair in daylight and their women keeps theirs short. Their warriors are obligated to greet the hot springs and jumping waters in their travels in order to respect the oath of their founder. Current chief of the tribe is Gulan the Willful.

**Lighthouse** - Otherwise dead volcano used by sailors, before and after the Closing, as a major landmark, secondary only to Vent itself. Before the Closing, when it was an active volcano and sailors used its glow to navigate, there was a port town on its base. Afterwards the Marrgon tribe had to abandon it. Since the opening of the seas, they opened it again. They resorted to the shrine of Relim to restore the light on the top of the mountain.

The heat of the mountain decreased considerably during the Closing. About a century later, there was formed a small area of interconnected caverns where the locals built first a shrine, and then a temple for the local spirit.

**Margar Fort** - Originally a Brusteli-built tower, Solungians took it over in the beginning of the Zistorite war and gradually turned it from a laboratory tower into a small-scale fortress. It was abandoned afterwards but now the meetings of the fast-forming Warm Earth Alliance are held there regularly.

**Petrified Sea** - Field of barren rock, resembling a raging, stormy sea, frozen and cast on stone. Locals tell that Caladra transformed a group of powerful sea spirits sent by Ocean into a earth and then forced them to petrify themselves.

Many outlaws live here. There are also rumors of ogres and a creature of one mind and many bodies called Nagurra, who destroys the unwary.

**Porthomeca** - This place of unique culture has been under Caladraland's influence ever since it was taken over by a Solungian clan centuries ago but still it has retained its most unique aspects. It is the main source for exotic luxury items like cigars and coffee. Locals are noted mainly for their ritualistic relations to local fauna and curious customs like mixing powdered birch bark to their black beverage.

**Poison Shore** - Most of the sea here has been poisoned by volcanic ash and hot eruptions for centuries. The rumbling can still be heard from underwater. Only the Murthyami kelp forests can survive here. Twin priests claim that Caladra is reclaiming a new land from beneath the sea and that a new fertile land will appear beside the cliffs, though how soon, none of them can honestly say.

## HRENNAN

Tribe living around the Firepit of Beriamn. Beriamn was a Second Age tribal hero who, when local aldryami threatened to exterminate the tribe, sacrificed himself by summoning a major eruption which consumed him and most of the enemy. A decade later he appeared to teach his magic to direct lava flow to his people.

The Firepit is surrounded by three lava flow canals, one of which leads directly to the sea. Hrennani have built six small villages around it. Local priests use earth spirits to shape the canals when needed. More ash and lava spirits reside in the walls of the local temple.

**Red River** - Red, molten lava flowing on the bottom of a deep crevasse, near coast, into the ocean. For the local Arbern tribe, the ritual by which a slave can regain his or her freedom includes climbing down to collect a small statuette of Caladra. Not many try and many of those who try, die.

**Solung Plateau** - Remains of a volcano which exploded before the time immemorial. Twins priests claim that it was the site of a son of Caladra who destroyed himself in purpose and took thousands of chaos fiends with him. Esrolians claim that the spirit of the mountain flexed its fires before the goddesses of the land unless he blew his top off.

However, the name of Solung is the most prominent only in the name of an ancient tribal confederation of what is now Vinavale. (See below)

**Skull Field** - Field of smooth rock which have been cracked into smaller plates. It is a remnant of a chaos creature overcome by a Molten Swamp released by Caladra. The ground trembles occasionally and lava bursts from the outskirts of the area. In twilight, a dance of struggling, malign spirits can be seen over the center of the field.

**Thonble** - A region full of signs of an extended and protracted conflict between Caladralanders and Solanthi raiders. This region has been raided and taken back so often that the local spirits have been weakened over and over again. Land is almost unlivable and the last Solanthi warlord who took over the area has an almost dead land in his hands.

**Vent** - Is a huge, cratered volcano. It is more or less cone shaped and surrounded by other steep, but lesser volcanoes. Periodically it blows up its top but the damage it does is minimized thanks to the priests overseeing the events. On those occasions the pall of smoke can be seen from Teleos and Brustela and the burning mountain top is visible from hundreds of kilometers away at sea.

Major trade with Hrennan is with cork. Hrennan pay homage to Wood Mother annually when they collect cork. This includes Healing a tree if it bleeds sap and occasional propitiatory sacrifices. Some outsiders even claim that they have elf blood in their veins but Hrennani deny this.

Hrennani are suspicious of overt generosity and just may deliver the flaunting gift-giver to their ghods via the temple and the Firepit.

Hrennani commonly wear protective shoulder pads and sandals made of cork. Their chief is Karni With No Earlobes (cut off by aldryami)

Recently, an army of aldryami killed all the population of at least two villages and surrounded the volcano with weeds. Hero from the eastern Caladraland liberated the temple before the elves could desecrate it.

## RILLANI

This tribe lives in the lands south-east of Vent. Rillani are reputed to be fierce warriors - when in defense. They gained very little land in ancient wars when they were led by Tordak the Ravager. But most attackers, even darkness army of Orgor Treesplit, have been defeated or driven away.

In addition to Twins, they revere their an-

*Tales of the Howler Volcano*  
**THE SPIRIT OF HOWLER VOLCANO**  
By Ingval the Collector of Hrennani tribe 1616

*"And during the trip (to meet her brother) she came to the place we now call Howling Mountain who still was cold and unyielding. Though he was of quiet and reserved nature, he received her with courtesy and joy and summoned all his people to rejoice for her and entertain her and keep her company. And she enjoyed the revelry. But then the maid her elder sister (Ernalda) had borrowed her for the journey came to her and whispered that their host had a lusty eye on her and wished to keep her. And she looked at his unclean face, his strange costume of beastskin and his companions of unsavoury manner. And she slipped out quietly at night. But when her host noticed she was gone he cried for lust and agony and his molten tears burned the land around him and many of his people were killed or buried. And he tried to withdraw from the world but could not. And still, in occasion, he cries and bursts forth with tears of fire and earth."*

## Miscellaneous Notes

## OUTLAWS

Outlawry is a punishment for those whose crimes are regarded as heinous; kinslayers or those who follow the gods of chaos. Other crimes include rape and breaking of strong tribal taboos. There's only two other ways out of this: volunteering as a human sacrifice or becoming a slave. In a latter case the offender could, at least in theory, gain his freedom later. The eventual fate of the culprit is decided either by the chieftain or the council.

Outlaw cannot claim sanctuary and just about everyone can kill him (or her) without the fear of retribution. His kinsmen are given no right to avenge him. (Sometimes those kinsmen, especially among the most western tribes, ignore this but very often they have bowed to the popular pressure.)

Outlaws usually flee the country or escape to the Petrified Sea where there are many other fugitives and exiles.

Technically speaking, outlaws are condemned to be fugitives for a rest of their lives. In practice, however, they often leave Caladrland or, sometimes, are given sanctuary among more devoted kinsmen. If the outlaw returns after more than twenty years, the offense is usually forgotten (unless it has been particularly vile), especially if he is a generous one. In some cases, outlaw has been powerful enough that none has dared to try to kill him or whatever he has done has been considered justified by most people.

In Caladrlander folklore, outlaws can be both villains and romanticized heroes. More common figure is a berserk who is eventually slain by a local hero; sometimes they have even become broods or joined spurious cults. Some tales, however, tell about outlaws who struggle for years to survive in forbidding places or eventually redeem themselves with heroic deeds or self-sacrifice.

## PRESIDENT (2)

So-called president of Caladrland was a mere representative of the Caladrland clans in the City of Wonders and, occasionally, elsewhere. Since the temples could not agree upon a representative, a major chieftain decided to select one instead. President was usually selected among the tribes that had belonged to the Solungian Confederation. In addition to spending most of his time in the City of Wonders, his duties included taking part on Earth rituals in Low Temple.

After the pharaoh was gone, and City of Wonder became nearly inaccessible, the position of president lost all its significance. Low Temple did replace the vestments which disappeared with the last president, but the new candidate has not been forthcoming.

(2) I initially threw away the president because I did not fit into these schemes. This part is for those who want to use the position for something.

SPIRIT-CALLERS  
SHAMANS AND CALADRLAND

Shaman is a wounded healer. He has suffered a bleeding wound to his soul and has healed himself. And from the blood is born their spirit companion, the one that is part of them, brother in more than in flesh. (Frodi with Six Fingers Left, circa 1433)

In Caladrland, shamans are few and far between. They are not part of any religious authority. Priests frequently consider them below their dignity but have no socially based hatred toward them (unless personal). Some priests of Low Temple say that many potential tricksters, who would otherwise follow Ormmal, are guided into a "slightly more profitable path". Few priests even acknowledge the courage of a shaman who struggles against the powerful spirits of disease and demons who have possessed human victims.

Though essentially solitary, Spirit-Callers are a still a socially close-knit bunch. They are a miniscule sub-culture who are cooperating among a large, uncaring public. What influence they may have is based of their exploits, reputation and power.

Most "duties" of the local shamans are self-imposed. They are wandering exorcists, caretakers of obscure spirit places or simply seek to find themselves in insight. Among the Western Allies, some of them circle from village to village, helping people and trying to interpret dreams and, espe-



cestral founder, Jarn the Joiner, who unified the tribe. Most people never leave the lands of the tribe though all their priest pairs have studied under the priesthood of Vent before rejoining the tribe. (In RQ terms, Rillani have AP+3 when defending their lands against an assault)

## ROLIMIN

Rolimim are one of the Caladrland tribes who do acknowledge the Twins but instead choose to worship and follow their father Caladril.

Rolimim are relatively simple people who rarely raise their voices but when they do, it's hell to pay. It is claimed that when one

of them talks, you better listen, for he may not open his mouth again until the next year. They may boast about their exploits, but never about the material wealth they may have - and do not tolerate that from others, either. Their retaliation would be swift and lethal.

Among these people, Caladril is worshiped as an ancestor of the tribe and especially its chieftains. During the Sacred Time celebration, the youngest son of the chief is possessed by Caladril, which leads to orgiastic revelry with the enthusiastic women. In this kind of sex, conceiving a child is almost assured. Caladril also comes into one of his people in the times of need,

especially during the Zistorite wars. Rolimim seem to favor clothes with vertical stripes of alternating colors. Their chief is Hamlin Threespear.

## THE THREE TRIBES

People of tribes of Carrimin, Serronan and Kralin were the first to support the reforming efforts of Moray and Telerio. They fought and died in wars against Zistor and Pelaskan invaders and took a place of their own. They form the majority of the population in the Holy Town.

All tribespeople have adopted a shirt with the waistline embroidered with alternating figures of a man and a woman.

cially, control their own.

There are less than 30 shamans in Caladraland, probably less. About 1/3 of them are women.

### SOLUNGIANS

Solungian Confederation was originally found by the survivors of the first the first assault of the Only Old One and their allies from the Dark Esrolia. They gathered around the Solung Plateau, called for a dead god and suddenly otherwise indifferent or even hostile tribes united against the common enemy.

Counterattack they launched was devastating. Two border cities of Esrolia fell, Porthomecans - who had hoped to remain neutral - surrendered in two days. Goddess of the Shining River changed sides in less than a week.

The "border" between Esrolia and Caladraland shifted after by assaults, skirmishes, negotiations and even some political marriages. After 726, Solungians attained some kind of stability and warfare ceased although mutual dislike remained. Confederation became more a meeting body than a tool for warfare.

This situation persisted until the Twin priesthood reactivated the Confederation to help Zistorite Invasion of Esrolia. Solungian gathered their warriors together and crossed the border with the Zistorian Gadgester army.

They realized the truth almost too late; Tesele the True appeared just before the first combat between them and the army of Esrolia, now unenforced by the trolls. Solungians realized their mistake when they saw the shape of the Zistor himself looming over the Mirrorsea Bay.

Solungian commander made his decision; Caladrian spearmen turned and carved themselves into the flank of the previously allied Zistorite column; their gadgets were of no help against the lava-tipped spears. Together with the Axesworn of Esrolia, lead by Vandana the Virgin, they destroyed the whole regiment. Afterwards the spearmen left to join the attack towards the corrupted priesthood, plunder of Jadnor and destruction of Locsil, but the old enmity was forgotten.

After the war, Esrolians proposed a treaty. Gorping River became a part of Esrolia again but the city of Solung retained its Caladrian leaders. But when the threat of Esrolia was gone, Confederation fragmented and eventually became only a memory; Hot Pointers left, old allies begun to bicker again.

In a couple of generations, Solungian matriarch became the main controller of the timber trade between Esrolia and Caladraland. This trade was interrupted for a couple of years when the reigning matriarch was captured by Ditali during the great raid of 1618.

When the matriarch Jolona was restored 1620, she reformed the bonds between her kinsmen in the Caladraland proper. Deemed too weak to join the Old Earth alliance, she decided to try to reform the old Confederation in the form now friendly to Esrolia, the Warm Earth Alliance. Old Solungian alliances have been reformed and rituals of unity are performed again on the plateau. With the leadership of the Dorradrarr the Swimmer, a veteran in the wars with Lunars and Pelaskites, it strives to become a significant military power in the region.

### WESTERN ALLIES

Western Allies and especially the dominant power among them, a primitive tribe of Pelushians, appeared during the Imperial Age. They were already fighting a guerilla war against the Zistor-corrupted Caladrian priesthood when Moray and Telerio came to give them new magic and form an alliance with Gemborgians.

The tribes had not been part of the Kethaela at the first place and did not join the country after the new priesthood was established. They have not accepted neither Only Old One nor Prahaoch as their overlord, though have remained in friendly terms with the neighboring Caladralanders and even the Merchant Prince-city of Peelos. After the apparent death of the God-King, they have supported the idea that Caladrians would rule themselves instead of submitting to another ruler.

There is a small group among Pelushians who revere Black Brothers with Black Eyes, wear black coats and caps, sing and dance and apparently hate wagons and chariots; they like to drive them into

## Caladrians for Pendragon Pass

### Stat Modifiers

DEX+1, CON+1

### Traits

Energetic +2, Proud+1, Indulgent+1, Reckless+1

### Starting Skills

	M	F
Animal Lore	4	3
Awareness	6	6
Bargaining	0	1
Boating	2	2
Chirurgery	0	6
Compose	5	5
Courtesy	2	2
Custom (Caladran)	5	5
Dancing	2	2
Devise	2	2
First Aid	3	6
Flirting	3	3
Hunting	4	2
Industry	2	4
intrigue	2	2
Mathematics	0	0
Memorize	2	2
Mineral Lore	4	4
Orate	4	2
Plant Lore	3	5
Play <instrument>	2	3
Recognize	2	3
Religion (deity)	3	3
Singing	4	4
Sleight	DEX/6	DEX/6
Speak (Caladran)	10	10
Stealth	DEX/2	DEX/2
Stewardship	2	3
Swimming	2	2
World lore	2	3
Ritual	3	3
Diamondspeech	Special (see below)	
Battle	1	1
Riding	1	1
Axe	5	1
Bow	2	1
Dagger	3	3
Grapple	5	3
Javelin	4	1
Spear	5	1
Sword	1	1

Diamondspeech is a language of tunes, rhythms and vocal sounds usable only by initiated of the Volcano Twins. In effect, it is a ritual done as a song. The tones and rhythms of the sound are to the faithful as understandable as a spoken word to an outsiders. In Breakwater, the tunes are used for a long-range whistle communication, but Caladrians reserve it for rituals and the use of message harps.

Diamondspeech skill value is equal to either Singing or Ritual, whichever is higher.

destruction...

### YELMALIANS

1583 guardsmen of Karse saw a small group of unknown spearmen who emerged from the swamps south of Shadow Plateau, pursued by a large band of Zorak Zorani. The band fled towards the Karse city gates but was refused entry. The leader of the group resigned to his fate and ordered his eight survivors into a formation to meet the troll assault. In the last minute one of the guardsmen had a change of heart and opened one gate to let the men in. Spearmer proceeded to defend the city walls against the brief troll attack, rather successfully, and afterwards surrendered to the guards.

Pharaoh had many ears and one of them brought a message about this small band of apparently Sartarite spearmen. Caladrian spearmen had been very effective in his war against the Troll Emperor and Pharaoh had been looking for ways to make them even more powerful. So he summoned the leader of the spearmen to the City of Wonders.

There the warrior told his tale; he was Skaramin of Alone, a

Yelmalian Light Son who had fled with his men after the defeat and death of Tarkalor. Ashamed, they had not returned to the Sun Dome after the failure but had decided to quest against the Zorak Zorani to clear their name. Something had gone wrong, they had emerged inside the Shadow Plateau and only a handful of them had fled outside.

After questioning the man for three days, Pharaoh declared his judgement. In effect, they had attacked one of his subject peoples and should be punished. However, he was ready to be lenient under the circumstances - If Skaramin and his men would agree to serve him and train the contingent of Caladrians. Skaramin subjected to this and was shipped to High Temple with his men.

Yelmalians (or, like the locals call them, Yulmalians) attracted a small following and proved their usefulness in battle many times. Over the years the original eight men died and now all Yulmal spearmen are of Caladralander origin. When Pharaoh disappeared, they placed themselves under the command of the High Temple priesthood.

## SECRETS OF GEMBOURG MOSTALI

**D**WARVES OF GEMBOURG have had certain political influence in post-Dawn Caladraland. All the way from the Dawn Age, dwarves of Gemborg have been allied to some of the Caladrian tribes.

Gemborg is ruled by Martaler the Blazing Forge, a brass dwarf supporting limited Openhandism. Gemborg dwarves are not stupid enough to reveal all their secrets but there is an arranged place set up for trading purposes on the upper stories of the dwarf fortress-factory.

Supporters of other heresies, like Individualism, are not tolerated. What happened to them earlier is not revealed even to other dwarves but when Rurrif the Refugee founded Blumen 1586, it was accepted as a sort of a leper colony for heretical dwarves. Ruffir also bought the friendship of neighboring High Temple. He and his comrades still have problems living on the surface; Ruffir himself still uses a bronze mirror to check his smile when meeting surface-dwellers. They refuse to see Argan Argar traders.

Thought Mostali of Gemborg know how to produce black powder, they usually do not use it because of the underground heat and threat of explosion. However, heat and steam power are utilized in many ways. They can also direct burst of steam which are hot enough to burn enemies. Water of lower temperature is used for heating system and alchemical processes.

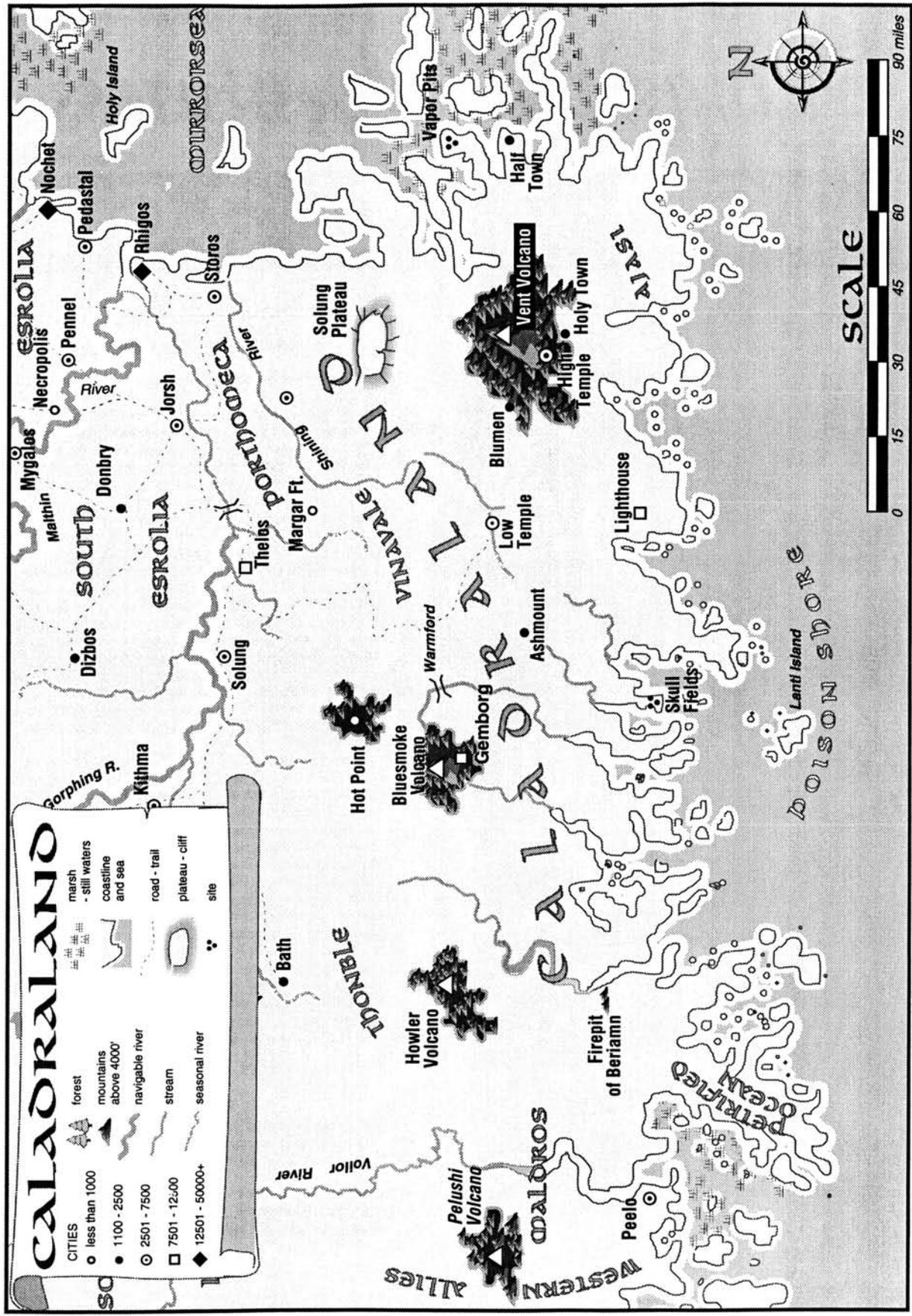
Gemborg is famous for its gems but only mostali know their origin; they are manufactured. In addition to using them in some rare optical instruments and cutting tools, they are used mainly for trade. Gemborg has a great amount of geothermal energy, but little of any other resources, aside from sulfur. Gems are next to worthless to them, but very valuable to neighboring humans who consider diamond sacred.

Gemborg also specializes in a specific model of Iron Dwarf. The first of his kind was Zambulli, sole Iron survivor of the unlucky war of 123, who replaced his severed hand with a axe blade. Afterwards all the Iron dwarves had been modeled after him. Now of Diamond status, Zambulli Axehand led a Gemborgian forces in the smashing of Jadnor and hunting down Zistorite sympathizers.

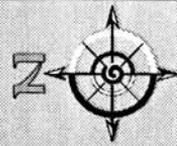


# CALAORALAND

- CITIES**
- less than 1000
  - 1100 - 2500
  - ⊙ 2501 - 7500
  - 7501 - 12,500
  - ◆ 12501 - 50000+
-  forest  
 mountains above 4000'  
 navigable river  
 stream  
 seasonal river  
 marsh  
 still waters  
 coastline and sea  
 road - trail  
 plateau - cliff  
 site



SCALE



# Vinga the Adventuress

by Jane Williams



## *The Cult in the Game*

### **A new cult in an old world**

**T**HE CULT OF VINGA was first introduced as "Orlanth Adventurous for women". The reasons given for needing such a cult vary: "because women can't join Orlanth" (sounds good, but how many existing campaigns could make that switch?): "to give women a role-model apart from the Babeester Gor fanatics" (if the cult of Orlanth is not gender-specific, do we need one?) and recently, because Vinga is mentioned in King of Sartar and hence needs a documented cult.

My own reason for writing this is a combination of the above, plus the need to give female adventurers a fairer chance in play. We start off with lower STR and SIZ, but get no bonuses for higher DEX, or anything else. Very few female PCs ever get a damage bonus, and not that many can run round in full plate without collapsing. Realistic, yes; fun, no.

This version of the cult is specifically designed to help overcome the weaknesses of female adventurers, and to capitalise on their strong points. It should give all the game-relevant bonuses of joining Orlanth Adventurous, plus just enough of an edge to make up for the lower stats. Once enough mythos and background has been added to explain all this, it's also a fun cult in its own right, game relevance aside.

The only way in which there is still a disadvantage is at Rune level: I couldn't think of a reason why Vinga should be a combined cult, so there is only one rune level rank. Ordinary Orlanthi can become Wind Lords without needing to qualify as a priest: Vingans need to do both. But then they get away without the poetry, so it balances out.

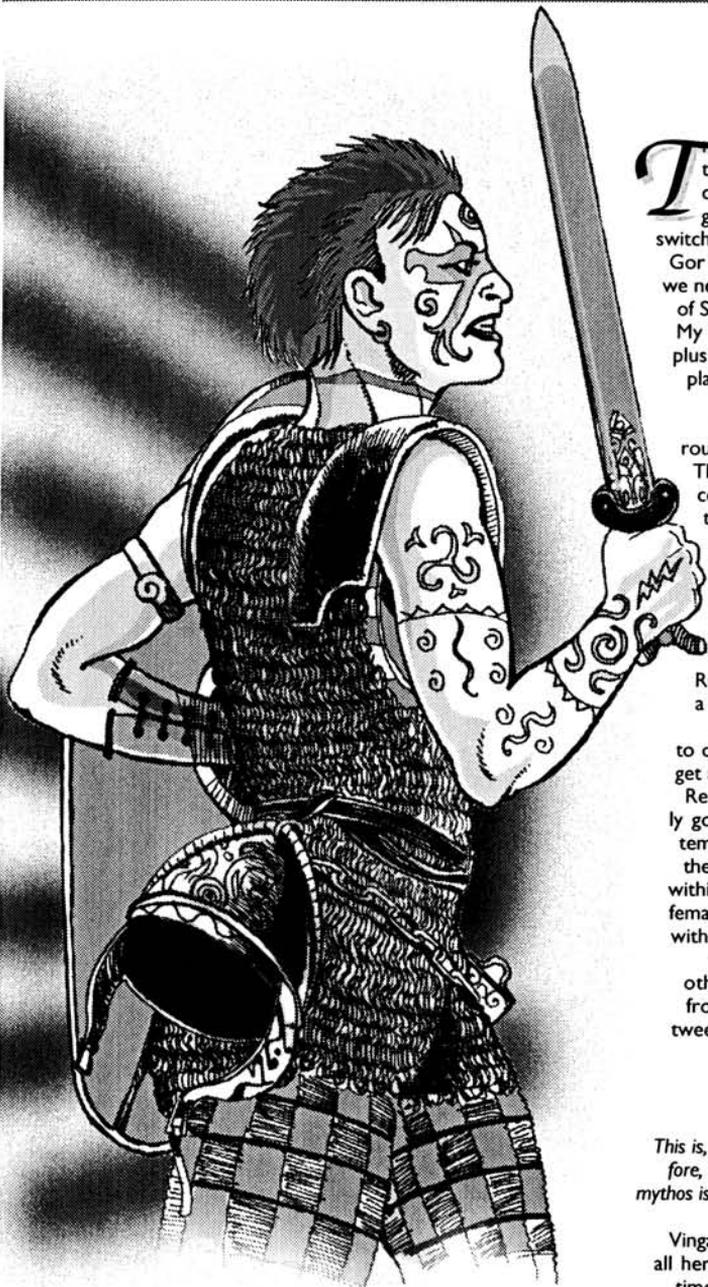
Retro-fitting a new cult into an existing campaign is obviously going to be difficult. Having Vingan shrines inside existing temples saves re-mapping cities, although personally I prefer them to have their own building (and no men are allowed within it: tricky if it's inside the Orlanth temple). Any existing female Wind Lords can be converted to Daughters of Vinga without too much trouble, just explain why their hair's the wrong colour. And remember that even compared to other Orlanthi cults, the cult of Vinga varies enormously from one place to another: you don't need consistency between temples, just make them fit the existing plot.

## *Mythos and History*

### **Mythos**

*This is, of course, the mythos as it is known in the 1600s: and, therefore, the mythos as it has always been, just as the present Yelmlio mythos is the same as it has always been.*

Vinga is the daughter of Orlanth and Ernalda, and is close to all her brothers and sisters. She grew up in the Gods War, a time of strife, and this shows in her nature: ever ready to



protect the weaker members of her family. Many of her battles are against chaos, protecting non-combatants, especially women. Her adventures generally show her using speed, courage and wits, rather than strength, and helping others to help themselves is a common theme.

Vinga's only notable action before the Darkness was to turn aside Ragnagar when he came to Orlanth's stead with his perverted lusts upon him. Far from fearing his mighty weapons, she laughed at him so hard that he slunk away, ashamed, and vented his frustrations upon Thed instead.

Yet when the Lightbringers had left, and the Eternal Ring was formed to guard Orlanth's stead, Vinga was not permitted to take her place with the male warriors.

"How can you fight alongside us?" - asked Elmal. "You cannot take your place in the shield-wall, for you do not have the strength to lift a shield!"

Vinga looked at the great shield, and knew that while she might be able to lift it, she could not wield it for long. "I do not need a shield" - she said. "They are fit only for those too clumsy to avoid a blow. There is always another way."

"Show us this other way, then" - said Elmal. He took down a practise spear and struck at Vinga, but she dodged to the right and avoided the blow. Elmal muttered under his breath and tried again, but Vinga dodged to the left, so she was on his vulnerable unshielded side. Once more Elmal tried to hit Vinga, and this time she dodged right past him and slapped him three times on the rear with the flat of her dagger. Trying to turn round and face her, Elmal tripped over the discarded shield and fell on his face.

"Now" - said Vinga - "why can I not be a warrior?"

Staunch Heler stepped forward, Heler who brings the rain that brings life. "Because you are a woman, Vinga, and are precious to us" - he said. "You can bear sons, who will grow up to be warriors. Better to have many more warriors in the future than one more now."

Vinga thought on this, for she wanted above all to help her clan. She thought of the children already in the stead, who cried with hunger because Chaos had taken the harvest. And she thought of her cousin, Babeester Gor, who had renounced her fertility forever to gain the power of Death.

"I will speak with my mother on this" - she said.

Vinga went to her mother Ernalda, who understood the ways of childbirth better than any other. "Mother" - she said - "I do not wish to bring children into the world while the darkness is still upon us. Is there a way?"

Ernalda considered her daughter, and considered what she might do if not given this secret. "There is always a way" - she said. And she showed Vinga the secrets of the camphire plant, which Uleria uses to dye the soles of her feet red, and which Ernalda uses to help nourish her children.

"Use this" - she said - "but on your head, not your feet. For a year it will protect you, and you will have no children."

Vinga thanked her mother, and used the camphire to dye her hair as red as the sunset. The

forces of Ragnagar saw the fire of her hair beyond the palisade and, knowing that they could not harm her, snarled in impotent fury.

"When there is peace" - said Vinga - "I will perhaps consider children. But not until then."

Her brother Barntar came to her then. "Truly, Vinga" - he said - "you are a good fighter, as good as any here. But the rest of our warriors are men. They have been taught from childhood to protect women, even at the risk of their own lives. If you fight alongside them, they will fear for you, and will fight less well in their efforts to protect you."

"And do they not fear for you also, brother?" - Vinga asked.

Barntar blushed and said nothing, for he knew that it was true.

Vinga looked out over the palisade at where the forces of Chaos were driving the men back towards the stead.

"Let us see if this is true", - she said. And she drew her sword and leapt down into the fight. "Follow me!" - she cried, and ran forwards into the enemy lines. And the men of Orlanth's stead took heart from her courage and followed her, and the creatures of Chaos fell back before them and fled.

"Now" - said Vinga - "why can I not be a warrior?"

Elmal tried to protest, but his voice was drowned in the noise of the warriors cheering Vinga. And from then on Vinga fought alongside the rest of the warriors, and taught the women of Orlanth's stead to fight, too, each in their own way.

As is told elsewhere, Vinga and Elmal became good friends later on. Vinga helped Elmal at the Hill of Gold, and after that, though he still feared for her safety, he did not try to prevent her from fighting Chaos. Indeed, when Vinga asked him for the use of the Horse that she might reach the enemy more quickly, he did not deny it to her. Some say that he hoped it would bear her from battle even more quickly than it took her to it, others say that he would not trust the care of his beautiful wife to any of the male warriors. Vinga does not comment on the matter.

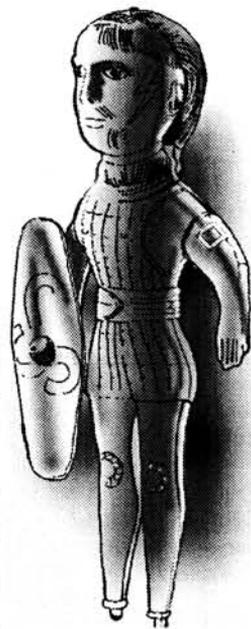
Most Orlanthi goddesses are non-violent in nature, and many of Vinga's stories are about how she encourages them to use their gifts to defend the group as a whole. (The same stories within those other cults may be rather different!)

Vinga fought Chaos throughout the Darkness, and was there at the Dawn to welcome her parents back to the world.

She is known to have fought at Castle Blue, at one point facing the Red Goddess alone and forcing her back for a time, though she was injured herself in doing so.

## History

The cult of Vinga has never been large, but becomes popular whenever Orlanthi women have to fight to defend themselves or their homes and families. Perhaps because this only happens in times of deep trouble, the cult is associated with last-ditch battles and pulling victory from the jaws



## • Scenario •

A Daughter of Vinga is hiring male Orlanthi for a troll-bashing expedition. She has the support of the local Orlanth temple, and volunteers are told that participation will count towards their cult duties. They are NOT told what to expect, but are picked for their hatred of trolls and general violence, so they should make the right response. They are told to take the Vingan's orders without question. In fact the whole thing has been pre-arranged with a local troll clan, in order to be sure of a safe birth for one of their women. The trolls will not fight as hard as might be expected, since the success of the plan depends on their losing. And some of them will probably remain to guard the female, just in case. When the puzzled adventurers get back to the temple, all will be explained, and they will be sworn to secrecy. Since they have been taking the part of Orlanth's own warband in a minor Heroquest, they may get some magical reward.

**GodLearner Quibbles**

The answer to any either/or question is "yes"

Various questions people have asked me, the answers to which require convoluted God-learner type reasoning that doesn't belong in the main write-up.

• IS SHE THE DAUGHTER OR THE SISTER OF ORLANTH?

I've always thought of Vinga as being the daughter of Orlanth, but other people have her as his elder sister. So here's a rationalisation.

Vinga is the daughter of Storm and Earth. Originally this meant being the daughter of Umath, owner of the Storm rune. When this passed to Orlanth Thunderous, the relationship transferred with it. So Vinga is the daughter of Orlanth Thunderous.

However, as a daughter of Umath, she is a sister of Orlanth. Orlanth is defined as being the youngest of Umath's sons, which gives a hint that he's the youngest child. So Vinga is the elder sister of Orlanth (Adventurous and Lightbringer).

Thus, both relationships are true. Most Orlanthi, being in a male-dominated society of which Orlanth is King, relegate her to the daughter position. Vinga has very little importance in non-Orlanthi society, so few places acknowledge her as his elder sister. (Esrolia might). As Orlanth's influence weakened under the Lunar occupation, the sister role might become stronger in Sartar. Maybe that's why Bryan's Vinga (in the same location as mine, but 20 years later) has her as the elder sister.

(Also, a quote in an old Digest that suggested the daughter role is Greg's view as well).

I suspect the "original" (Dawn Age) relationship was different again: but that's another story.

of defeat. It has a stronger following in Sartar and Heortland than in more scattered areas of the Barbarian Belt, and is particularly popular in Pavis. The cult history mirrors that of Orlanth, though on a smaller scale. Some scholars have suggested that the cult only came into being in the second Age, but since Heort himself was the son of a Vingan, this is clearly not the case. The cult history in the first and second ages is certainly confusing, made worse by references to some groups of warrior-women as Vingans when their use of star powers make it quite clear that they are in fact Yelornans (a totally different cult), despite their being part of an Orlanthi society. It seems likely that in fact the cult started in several places and merged at a later date: at one point it seems to have been a warrior school rather than a cult as such, and at least one of the heroines whose deeds were attributed to Vinga the goddess seems to have become a warrior to avenge her husband. Any Daughter of Vinga, if asked, will of course deny most of this.

### Cult membership

#### Lay membership

Any non-chaotic female may join the cult as a lay member. They are required only to attend Holy Day celebrations, and may learn the spell Droop. Most Orlanthi women in a moderately risky area (such as a city) will join on this basis.

#### Apprentice membership

Apprentices are lay members in training to become initiates. They must be adult, have no dependents, and pass a simple test to demonstrate their fitness to become a warrior. Under exceptional circumstances children will be accepted as apprentices, but they must have the permission of their parents. The exact nature of this test varies from one temple to another, but does not expect the apprentice to already have any combat skills, as it is accepted that many women will never have had the chance to learn. [If your campaign uses Traits, a Valour roll would simulate the test in most cases].

Once accepted, the apprentice gives 95% of their time to the cult, to be split between work and training as the priestess (or senior initiate) in charge of apprentices decides. Note that in some cases these may overlap: hard labour at temple tasks may act as training for STR and CON. Training will generally try to build on skills the apprentice already has, if any, and will choose combat methods to suit her abilities, within the limits of the teaching available.

The apprentice may leave at any time, but re-acceptance in this case is not automatic and will depend on the reasons for leaving.

#### Initiate membership

Ordinary initiates are the warriors of the cult. They gain the blessing of infertility from Vinga (and thus become semi-immune to that aspect of attack from Broo, as well as other inconveniences). Some initiates make the most of this

freedom, and gain many "friends" thereby, but note that joint membership of Vinga and Uleria is not an option!

Contrary to rumour, initiates may marry, but only where the form of marriage does not make them the subordinate partner. (See the forms of marriage in "King of Sartar" for more details on this).

Initiates are required to come to the aid of any woman who is being oppressed by a male. They are not required to seek vengeance after the fact, although they frequently do so. They are required to kill Broo whenever they find them, unless the odds are too great for this to be possible. In this case they are required to return as soon as possible with sufficient allies to do the job.

Vingan warriors dye their hair red (see myth) each High Holy Day (the dye will last the full year).

The test for initiation varies from one temple to another, but the four skills (plus Ceremony, or Religious Lore if you use it) will be chosen from:

• At least one Weapon Attack • A missile attack • Dodge • A Parry • First Aid • Sneak • Ride

Initiates must spend at least the standard time working for the cult, as well as attending the Holy Day celebrations and tithing as normal. Spending further time working for the cult is encouraged, and is the normal method of payment for spells and training. Tasks often include acting as guards for allied cults, such as Chalana Arroy. Vingans are often preferred as guards, as they generally know more healing skills than the average Orlanthi warrior, and tend to be rather less boisterous in carrying out their duties.

Initiates are taught any available combat skills, plus Dodge, Ride, Sneak and First Aid. They may also learn skills from allied cults.

#### "Retired" membership

It is accepted by Vingans that a warrior may not wish to stay a warrior for life. They may, after consultation with their priestess, retire from combat duty, losing the combat-related requirements as they do so. They may at this point regain their fertility if they so wish, though this will normally require a ceremony by an priestess of Ernalda. Some retire in order to marry and have children (though note the restrictions on marriage still apply!), some simply retire when they feel they are too old for active service. They retain many of the privileges of initiates, and may act as trainers for the temple. Some go on to other careers: Vingans turned Healers are not unknown. One duty they do retain is that they may be called back by the temple at any time to serve as full initiates in so far as it is within their ability to do so. Generally this would only be invoked in the case of an attack on the temple itself, or an invasion of the tribe or country in which that temple is based.

#### Daughter membership

(See reference to Natalina)

Daughters of Vinga are both Rune Ladies and Priestesses. They give up at least 90% of their

time and income to the cult (in practise, somewhat more than this). In return the cult supports them, pays their ransoms and provides them with cult spells. A candidate for Daughter must fulfil the standard requirements for priestess and also have 90% in a weapon attack, Dodge, and three of the following skills:

• *Any other Weapon Attack* • *Any Missile Attack* • *Any Parry* • *Ride* • *Sneak* • *First Aid* • *Scan* • *Search* • *Listen*

She must have been an initiate in good standing and known to the examiner(s) for at least a year. There must be a need for a new Daughter (there is always a need for a new Daughter!) She must be in the opinion of the examiners be dedicated to the ideals of the cult (note that membership of other combat cults normally indicates a lack of dedication to this one).

In theory a new Daughter of Vinga will receive an iron weapon to mark her status. In practise such a weapon may not always be available.

Daughters of Vinga roll for divine intervention on D10 rather than D100.

Leave of absence may be granted (provided there is someone to take over her temple duties) for quests that will bring fame to the cult and for defence of her own family, clan, tribe, etc. In either case most of the active initiates from her temple and clan will probably come and join in. It is often said that if you make an enemy of one Vingan, you make enemies of them all.

### Priestess membership

Priestesses of Vinga are Daughters who run their own temple or shrine. All Daughters qualify for this role, but most do not serve the cult primarily as priestesses immediately. The priestess of a temple has absolute authority over all other Vingans entering it, even if they are her senior under other circumstances.

### Red Women

Sometimes a Vingan's hair may turn permanently red at initiation, on becoming a Daughter of Vinga, or during a HeroQuest. This is a sign of exceptional piety and dedication to the cult. Such Vingans are known as "Red Women" (see reference to Heort). It is unusual for Red Women to retire, and even more unusual for them to regain their fertility. Any child of a Red Woman is clearly destined for greatness.

### Cult ecology

#### Relationships with other cults and races

**Lightbringers.** While Vinga was not of course a Lightbringer herself she is on friendly terms with all the Lightbringers through her father. In particular she is on good terms with Chalan Arroy, and Vingans are often preferred as bodyguards by healers.

**Solar.** The cult is mildly hostile towards most solar cults due to their treatment of women as second-class citizens. This feeling is, of course,

mutual. The main exception is the cult of Yelorna: while most Vingans find the Yelornans' insistence on chastity amusing rather than admirable the two cults often find themselves on the same side in arguments and will generally come to each others' defence if needed. Contact between them is slight, however, other than in the city of Pavis.

**Lunar.** Vingans dislike Lunars for much the same reasons as other Orlanthis. However, there are times when an individual Vingan's desire to protect women from men will override her desire to protect Orlanthis from Lunars. This is very much a question of individual attitude, but a group of Orlanthis men attacking a Lunar healer might well find themselves facing Vingan defenders. For the most part, though, Vingans are vigorously anti-Lunar. Kallyr is, as in most things, an extreme case.

**Trolls.** The cult attitude towards trolls varies widely from place to place. For various reasons, Vingans are more likely to be friendly to trolls than is the average Orlanthis, and it is rumoured that in Whitewall in particular the alliance between them is such that the Vingan shrine is protected by trollish magic. But the idea of a woman needing protection from attacks by men, and giving up her fertility to get it, is so alien to trollish culture that trolls generally shun Vingans. Female trollkin are of course another matter, and can in theory join the cult, though few do.

**Other Orlanthis warrior cults.** Joint membership of Vinga and another combat cult is common, though such initiates do not generally rise far within the cult. In particular Vingans also join Humakt, Babeester Gor, and Storm Bull. Usually these are the women who have been forced to leave their clan, or who are seeking vengeance.

There are important differences in attitude between the cults, though individual initiates may express them differently. Vingans fight, in general, to protect themselves and their clan. Babeester Gori are more interested in vengeance than survival (and are much more likely than Vingans to fly into berserk rages). Humakt have already accepted their own death, whereas Vingans are still tied to life. (And Humakti may regard some of Vinga's more cunning stratagems as dishonourable). Uroxi share Vinga's interest in fighting chaos, but fight it for its own sake, not necessarily out of a need to defend their people. And, again, they are much more likely to go for a straight attack than are Vingans.

The differences in attitude between Vingans and female warriors of other cults may be seen in how they would approach the following situation: an injured woman approaches the temple complaining that her husband has been beating her.

Babeester Gori would simply (or rather, messily) kill the husband. Humakti might kill the husband, or might decide it was nothing to do with them. Uroxi would not see the problem: you mean there are relationships without violence?

A Vingan temple would, first of all, give refuge and healing to the woman and any children, then possibly go and beat up the husband; but more likely, teach the woman to fight, then go a-

#### • IN THE MYTH, EVENTS ARE TAKING PLACE IN THE WRONG ORDER

For instance, Vinga remembers Babeester Gor renouncing fertility, and then goes to see Ernalda: but if Ernalda was still awake, Babeester Gor can't have been born yet! There's a wonderful reason (all right, a cop-out) for this sort of thing. All these events happened before the Dawn, and therefore before the invention of Time. So saying that something occurred "after" or "before" something else just doesn't make sense. This makes it very difficult for our poor time-dependant minds to follow, but it makes myths a lot easier to write.

#### • WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT CAMPHIRE?

As described in "Drastic Prax", though Steve carefully missed out the Vingan associations, and the fact that camphire is another name for henna. The official write-ups for the other cults (Eiritha, Ernalda, Uleria) don't actually mention camphire, but then the details of rites are rarely put into write-ups. I got most of it from descriptions of Sumerian religion, with a few hints from Jean M. Auel's "Clan of the Cave Bear" series. It makes sense to me that if a herb has a specific association in one cult, it would have similar associations in related cults. Incidentally, herb books tell me that henna also acts as an antiseptic, so all those red-haired Vingans have an advantage when it comes to First Aid.

#### • WHY SO MANY SPIRIT MAGIC SPELLS?

Two reasons here.

1) For game play, I like a PC cult to be useful to PCs. Most PCs are initiates, not Rune level, so for the cult magic to be any use to them, they need spirit magic, not divine magic. I think this is a needed change in quite a few other cults, too, otherwise

the unusual ones stay unusual, as there just isn't any game reason to join them.

2) Vingans started in many places, but always as a sub-cult of Orlanth. What do sub-cults have to distinguish them from the main cult? That's right, a special spirit magic spell. So when all the sub-cults merged into one full cult, all their spirit magic became available. Of course, not every spell will be available at every temple.

#### • THAT SPELL'S TOO POWERFUL!

This has been suggested about quite a few of my spells, and I still think it's untrue. As a general rule, look at how you might get the same effect with existing common spells. "Reflexes" is the obvious example: to drop your DEX SR by 1, you would normally cast a few points of Coordination. Two points, on average. And that would also affect skill modifiers and everything else. My spell doesn't have the extra effects, and is a bit cheaper: easier game-play and slightly better than the "common" spell.

#### • WHY'S SHE GOT GIFTS AND GEASES? ONLY TRUTH RUNE CULTS HAVE THEM!

Well, that's a matter of opinion. Of the official full write-ups, only Humakt and Yelmatio have geases as such. But Orlanthi have abilities and requirements, Chalana Arroy has cult vows, and unofficial write-ups all over the place have them. I suspect in fact all cults have their own set of gifts and geases, but most aren't relevant to the old monster-bashing style of adventuring, so never got written up. If you see Orlanthi as Celtic, as I do, have a look at the Red Branch sagas. Everyone's got geases, and most of them make far less sense than anything in Glorantha. But they add atmosphere and plot, and that's what we want, isn't it?

long and help.

### Holy days

The date of Vingans holy days depends on which of the various myths of Vingans' first battle the local priestess follows. Clay Day of Movement Week is common, with Storm Season being the High Holy Day.

### Burial

Burial rites are those of followers of either Orlanth or Ernald in that area, or possibly a mixture of both. Cultists expect to go to the Red Headed Lodge after death.

### Runes

Vingans have the runes of Movement, Air, and Earth. Movement is her main rune, and her worshippers' fighting style shows this clearly, with the emphasis on trying new things and on the use of Dodge rather than shields. Her connection to Air and Earth is through her parents, and while she does not have the same level of elemental powers as they do, use of small elementals is common. The cult is often compared to Orlanth Adventurous, and the Air links are obvious. The Earth links are perhaps not quite so clear. However it is worth remembering that in an Orlanthi area, where Vingans is strong, most women joining as warriors will already be Ernald initiates, simply as members of an Orlanthi clan. Joining Vingans does not, for them, increase their Earth rune connection.

### In Orlanthi society

The cult of Vingans has influence only within Orlanthi areas. Vingans initiates are accepted as warriors on an equal basis with the men. One (optional) place on the clan ring is held by a Vingans. (See description from "King of Sartar").

Orlanthi society is based around the clan, not around city temples, and therefore, so is the cult of Vingans. Most Vingans have become warriors primarily in order to defend their clan, and time spent in active defence counts as "cult duties". Of course, the average clan cannot support very many full-time warriors, and a Vingans at-home will, apart from fighting, spend much of her time in the normal work of any clan, just as a male warrior will spend more time farming than he does fighting. Vingans are often used as clan weapons instructors; as by necessity they rely more on technique than on brute strength. In some clans this extends to teaching the young men of the clan things besides fighting: as Vingans are usually unmarried and are protected against unwanted pregnancy, they can teach the youths how to relate to women without the disruption to clan life that another woman in the same role might cause.

Of course, Vingans often spend time away from home, travelling or working as mercenaries to improve their skills. A few are actually separated from their clans for one reason or another (revenge in which their clan does not wish to join is the most common), and tend to congregate at the temples as a result. While these are the women

most often seen by visitors to a Vingans temple, they are a minority within the cult as a whole.

### Temples

Most temples are minor, and are headed by a single priestess. Shrines may be attached to an Orlanth temple (if used primarily by warriors) or within an Ernald temple (if used primarily as a refuge). In either case, they will teach Droop.

All temples, even the smallest shrine, will offer refuge to any woman who asks it, including any children under the age of puberty. Such refugees are expected to work for the temple during their stay, and during troubled times some Vingans temples can come to be villages in their own right due to this influx.

The greatest Vingans temple is that of Tarthcaen, based around an ancient hillfort in the Quivin Hills, and reputedly dating back to before the Dawn. Certainly the mists placed around it by Huraya have been there at least that long. There is a small temple in Pavis, fitting in the gap between the Orlanth and Ernald temples and dependant on both of them for facilities. And there is a temple in Boldhome, on the edge of the West Pocket. Other temples and shrines are at the GM's discretion.

### Special magic

#### Spirit Magic

Bladesharp, Befuddle, Detect Enemies, Disruption, Mindspeech, Mobility plus specials below. Note that apart from Droop, no more than one of these "special" spells is likely to be available at any given temple.

(Incidentally, it may seem that there are some strange gaps in that list. Remember that most Vingans remain Ernald initiates, and can get spells from her).

#### Droop

1 point, ranged, duration 1 day.

If the caster overcomes the (male) victim's magic points then he becomes - well, unable to carry on with what he was about to do. And yes, it does work on Broo. Casting the spell is normally accompanied by pointing at the target and laughing, though this is not essential for the spell to work. Note that no actual damage is done other than to the target's ego, and no other abilities are affected.

#### Stability

variable, touch, temporal

Raises SIZ to half its current value again for purposes of knockback only. There is no effect on hit points or actual physical size, and normal species (not gender) maximums do apply. If you're already SIZ 20, don't bother with this spell.

#### Read Fate

Variable, touch, temporal

Allows the caster to predict an opponent's attack just before it is made, thus effectively raising her Dodge skill by 5% per point of spell.

#### Borrow harm

**I point, ranged, instant**

Cast on an attacker attempting a melee attack of any kind, but especially useful in unarmed combat. If the opponent's attack is successful, the damage bonus from it is transferred to any one successful attack the caster makes against them that turn. The opponent may appear to throw themselves onto the floor, or onto the Vingan's blade. Useful against larger and stronger opponents (like men!). Armour protects normally. This may appear to be a Bat-killer, but remember the target can resist the spell. It does work well against dinosaurs.

**Reflexes****I point, touch, temporal**

Reduces the target's DEX strike rank by 1. SR cannot go below 0.

**Divine Magic**

Common spells: Sanctify, Worship Vinga, Spell-teaching, Excommunicate, Soul Sight, Heal Wound. Vinga also has direct access to the divine magic specific to Orlanth Adventurous (with the exception of Bless Woad), but not that specific to Orlanth Thunderous or Rex. So Command Sylph, Flight, Shield and Wind Words are also Vingan spells, as is:

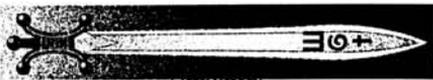
**Inspire****ranged, temporal, stackable**

Roughly similar to the Humakti spell of "Morale". Normally cast in battle, causes seven-times-seven of the caster's followers per point, plus the caster herself, to become Fanatical, as per the spirit magic spell. Extra points of the spell increase the numbers of followers affected, and also increase the range (multiply standard range by the number of points used). The followers need not be Vingans, and in fact are often male. They may try to resist the spell, though this is hardly normal behaviour. If they are already Fanatical then the spell has no effect.

Duration is as standard for divine magic. Unlike the more formal Humakti spell, there is no ceremony needed (shouting "follow me!" is normal, but not required) and no regimental standard. Instead, the caster's red hair acts as the standard: this is not a spell for those who like to lead from the back!

Inspire is compatible with most other spells, including Mindlink and Mindspeech. It is not compatible with Berserk, or with being affected by Demoralise: in both cases, the Inspire will be lost. It has been suggested that the effects if the caster is killed while the spell is "up" can be rather strange: rather than the spell simply being cancelled, the followers under its effect can go either Demoralised or Berserk. This has not often been tested in practise.

Notable battles when this spell has been used include Dangerford (1625) and Old Top (1626).

**Spirits of Reprisal**

Generally these appear as sylphs of varying sizes, though with unusual accuracy in their attacks. Minor infractions are often punished by the culprit's hair being pulled out by the wind. Note that the famous Vingan infertility goes with the hair (simply shaving it would not have this side-effect, of course). More serious crimes result in the culprit's weapon being blown out of their hand in the middle of combat. In extreme cases, they may find themselves unable ever to hold a weapon again until they atone.

**The Four Magic Weapons**

Vinga has access to these weapons, though not for the same reasons as for Wind Lords. For Vinga they are each tied to one specific location (though it is possible that other sites exist with different myths, as yet unknown). Unless specified, the spell provided is as described in the Orlanth write-up in River of Cradles.

**Scarf of Mist**

**Myth:** Vinga agreed to go out and fight a god who was threatening Huraya by blowing her mists away, if in return the nymph would defend those of Vinga's followers who remained behind. Huraya put a girdle of mist around Vinga's stead, and any man who entered it became lost and found himself outside again. That stead is now the temple of Tarthcaer, in the Quivin Hills, and it can be found by any woman who seeks Vinga's protection.

**Location:** Tarthcaer. Note that the defences are still in force!

**Lightning Spear**

**Myth:** When she heard that Elmal had gone to the Hill of Gold, Vinga followed him, hoping to help. She arrived to find him lying injured on the ground, while the first of his enemies stripped him of his armour. Enraged, she dashed in and picked up the spear which Elmal had dropped. The foe gave way before her attack, and she chased him down the hill. He flew away faster than she could follow, and she lost him. She returned to where she had left Elmal, but found that he had gone: home, she assumed, since he now had no armour and his favourite weapon was lost to him.

**Location:** Good question. The shrine that gave this spell was known to have been in Dragon Pass prior to the DragonKill War. It has not been rediscovered since the reoccupation of the Pass, though there are many Vingans who would like to do so. Possibly the various arguments about sun-worship have obscured its significance.

**Sandals of Darkness**

**Myth:** Once Vinga and other members of Orlanth's warband were in troll lands, raiding the trolls who had raided them. They came across a band of trolls who were defending a cave, and after a great fight, won through to see what it was that had been guarded so fiercely. Within, they found a female troll, about to give birth, and no treasure. The disappointed warriors would have

**• Source material •****Home of the Bold:**

"The Orlanthi pantheon offers many different role-models for men and women to follow which are not regarded as normal, but are regarded as acceptable. Vinga is an alternative role-model for women. Vinga is the daughter of Orlanth and Ernalda. She is the deity commonly called upon by all women when they are attacked by men. A specialised sub-cult of the deity is the warrior-woman caste, whose worshippers dye their hair red, and take Vinga as their role-model of the perfect warrior. In return Vinga provides powerful combat magics. Kallyr Starbrow is a worshipper of Vinga."

**King of Sartar p. 53:**

"Vinga: Goddess of women adventurers. Worshippers dye their hair red."

**King of Sartar p. 69:**

"what happens when you die...the soul departs...through one of the hundred doors at the rear of the Courts of Silence...the Red-Headed Lodge, when [sic] the Vingan Women go who have served their goddess properly"

**King of Sartar p. 90:**

"Heort... his mother was... a Vingan Woman and a Red Woman."

**King of Sartar p. 154:**

(at the start of Kallyr's reign) "Every childless widow among the Kheldon tribe dyed her hair red that winter."

**King of Sartar p.169:**

Argrath's Companions: "Fighting...Natalina, the Vingasdotter."

**King of Sartar p.212:**

Event of my life - Minaryth Blue "1614 - Inganna dyes her hair red and goes on Venderi adventure. I am jealous of her Vingan weapons."

**King of Sartar p.253:**

...councils, Lightbringer council. Seven places, of which 5 are predetermined: Orlanth, Issaries, Lhankor Mhy, Chalana Arroy, Eurmal. Extra two vary, but often clan ancestor and Vinga the Adventuress.

**Harmast Saga**

(unpublished):

"Stop this!" screeched a voice. It was so sharp it pierced Harmast's illness. The entire clearing froze from the command. One of the Vingan women was there, fiery eyed and snarling. Her javelin was poised, and at this range even Big Dick [a Storm Bull] could not dodge it. A crackling noise from it betrayed its magic. The huge man, still on his knees, froze."

**RuneQuest-Con Compendium**

"Vinga and the Cloak of Snakes" by Alison Place.

Of Vinga's acceptance as a warrior after rescuing her brother Barntar from Ragnaglar (by borrowing her mother Eralda's power over snakes).

**RQ Adventures #4**

A description of the Vingans in Whitewall during the siege. To precis, they regard themselves as a separate clan, and put to death any man who witnesses their rituals. Many are also followers of Babeester Gor.

**Dorastor**

Vinga place on the clan council of the Renekoti, in the Risklands, is taken by Berra Thengan: a male Wind Lord! Surely some mistake?

**The Book of Drastic Resolutions**

...an NPC, is forbidden by her father to join the Vingans, so runs off to join the Humakti.

**Greg at Convulsion '94 Lore Auction**

"What's the cult of Vinga,

killed the troll as she lay there, but Vinga stopped them. She had come to fight trolls, as had they, but she could not harm a woman, even of the Darkness tribe, at such a time. When they would have insisted on slaying their victim, saying that violence was always an option, she turned on the rest of them and chased them away. The troll, now safe, gave birth to a fine daughter and was very grateful to Vinga. But Vinga was now alone, without her companions, deep in enemy territory. The troll gave her the sandals that she had had from her own mother, so she could return safely to her own lands without being seen. Some say that the sandals were intended as a loan, and that Vinga neglected to return them, saying that promises only count when made to kin.

**Location:** Pick a troll area that looks like fun. (The Kitori area, perhaps?) The participating troll gets a healthy birth out of it, which gives them an incentive.

**Shield of Arran**

Vingans often use this spell to strengthen a shield which would otherwise be too light to be of use in melee: the light wicker shields more normally used on horseback to protect from arrows can be used in a shield-wall by using this spell. Since knockback affects the user normally, it does not enable the Vingan to resist unusually strong blows.

**Myth:** Arran is not a martial deity, and wielding his famous shield himself is not one of his skills. He has however been known to assist his sister, providing her with a magical clay that can be used to coat any shield, no matter how flimsy, making the surface as hard as iron.

**Location:** The Arran shrine at the Old Wind temple.

**Associated cults**

Note that not all these cults will be regarded as associated at all temples, and the spells supplied may vary.

**Universal associations**

**Orlanth Thunderous** giving Cloud Call.

(Also, it is just as easy to be both Daughter of Vinga and Storm Voice as it is to be both Wind Lord and Storm Voice. That is, not very, but possible. Confusingly, the joint title is often "Wind Lady").

**Eralda** giving Restore Health (STR)

(The same relationship does not hold here, since priestesses of Eralda must be mothers, and in many other ways the skills and attitudes required are too different).

**Chalana Arroy** giving Invigorate

In return, Vingans teach Healers how to Dodge as well as supplying spells as normal.

**Myth:** At the very beginning of the Darkness, Vinga came across Chalana Arroy, who wished to find the source of the Darkness and heal it, but was being prevented from leaving by Orlanth's warriors, who feared for her safety.

"She is weak" - said the warriors. "She will

not hurt even an enemy."

"That is not weakness" - said Vinga. "That is strength. Would you have the courage to do the same? Let us see how it may be used."

And she showed Chalana Arroy how to avoid injury in a fight by never being where the foe expected her, while never seeking to fight back or to cause injury herself. Chalana Arroy continued on her quest, and joined the Light-bringers, who were glad of her skills.

**Mastakos** giving Teleport reusably and Guided Teleport as one-use

**Myth:** Mastakos had gone with his master Orlanth to seek the Light. But they had been ambushed by the monster Jagrekriand, and Mastakos was too badly injured to continue. Pole Star, watching the quest from far above, saw this and told those who remained in Orlanth's stead of Mastakos' fate. Vinga went in search of Mastakos, rescued him from the monster's lair, and brought him home for healing. Mastakos was grateful to Vinga for this, and let her ride in his chariot once he had rebuilt it.

**Location-specific associations**

**Elmal** supplies the power to Speak to Horses, and will teach riding to Vingans. (This association is location-specific only because Elmal's worship varies. Where he is seen as Orlanth's loyal thane, he is associated with Vinga.)

**Pole Star** is such a minor cult in Orlanthi society that this association has very little significance, especially in that it is apparently only noted at Pavis, where there is no Pole Star representation at all.

**Heler** giving Command Undine: this is specific to the Black Eel River area.

**Storm Bull** giving Face Chaos: at Bullflood. She gives him Shield.

**Myth:** When Orlanth had bound the Bull with his lariat and left, taking his cat with him, Vinga came out from where she had been watching. (She had been hoping to find a way to beat the Bull in combat herself, but now knew that what Orlanth had done was beyond her strength. Still, there might be another way).

But Vinga was not the only one who had watched that fight. The Pre-Dark things that usually fled from the Bull had also been there, in hiding. Normally they would have been scared of the Bull's wrath, but now they had seen him bound they knew they were safe to attack.

Looking at the numbers of monsters approaching, Vinga hesitated, for she knew there were too many of them for her to fight alone, and the Bull was still bound. The Bull jeered at her, saying that she was a scared little girl who should run home to her mother, and Vinga made up her mind. She tossed her knife to the Bull. "Untie yourself, then" she said, and drew her sword. And she held off the monsters and their spells until the Bull was freed, and then they attacked together and drove them off.

**Humakt** supplies one of Vinga's gift/geas pairs: but, obviously, only where Vingans use gift/geases, and where a Humakt temple exists near a Vingan temple.

**Myth:** Once Humakt was attacked by an enemy whom he had sworn not to harm. He could not defend himself without breaking his word: but Vinga was not so restricted. She borrowed his great sword to defend them both, and he made it light enough in her hands that she could wield it.

**The four Weapon Cults** are each tied to a single location, also, as shown in the Sub-Cults section.

### Political alliances, with no association

In some cities (Pavis is the most famous), an alliance exists between the temples of Uleria and Vinga: the Ulerian initiates get protection from their "clients", and the Vingans get the occasional use of the Community spell on their training area.

In return Vinga will provide her special spells to female members only of the above cults, and combat training to all.

### Mothers and Daughters

Most Gloranthan cults have a preference for taking the children of existing initiates as members, rather than allowing complete strangers to join. Vinga is no exception: but since few Vingans have children, and those that do can produce sons as well as daughters, requiring all new Vingans to have a Vingan mother would result in the end of the cult, rather fast.

Except, of course, that they require exactly that. As part of the initiation of a Vingan warrior, she is presented with her first weapons by her mother, an existing Vingan initiate. Always. No exceptions.

Where possible, the "mother" is actually the candidate's blood mother. Far too often, this is not possible: the mother is not a warrior, cannot be present, is already dead: lots of reasons. In this case, the candidate is adopted by another Vingan, who then has the same responsibilities towards her "daughter" as a blood mother would have. The candidate's ties to her blood mother remain unchanged, but she now has another set as well: and possibly another clan of which she is a member. Of course, since she is already an adult, the responsibilities being taken on are not too onerous and the relationship is often more like sisters than mother and daughter.

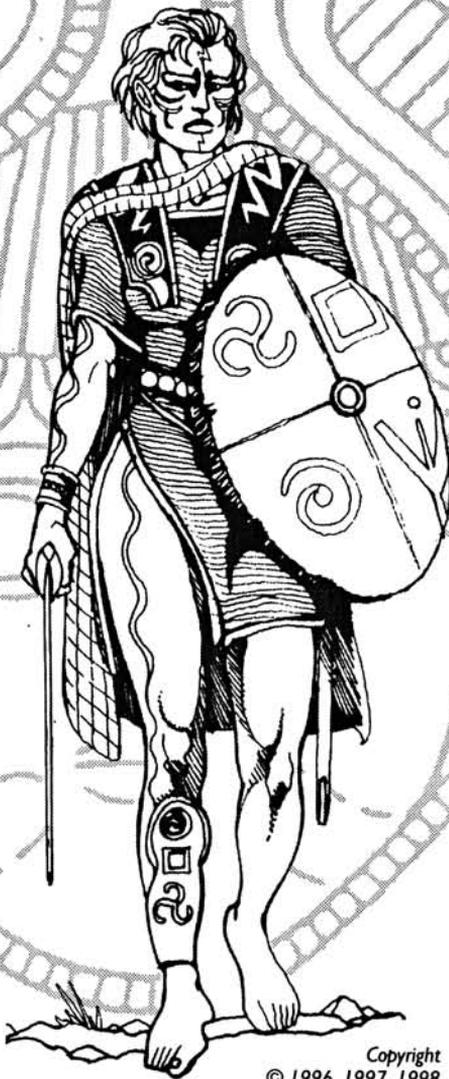
Normally the adopting "mother" will be the Vingan representative of the candidate's own clan. Failing that, a Vingan of another clan, but related to the candidate, would be the next best. If no links with her original clan can be maintained, the priestess presiding over the ceremony is usually the "mother": this is almost always what happens when a new Vingan has joined the cult to seek vengeance for her family that her clan or tribe will not provide.

Sometimes a new initiate may ask to be "adopted" by a Vingan she particularly wants to emulate, becoming part of a warband/family

group. The band of Vingans Kallyr formed at Whitewall is perhaps the most obvious example of this.

When a Vingan is ready for Rune Level, the "adoption" is carried out again: but this time, she becomes literally a Daughter of Vinga.

This system tends to make the cult unified: they are held together by family ties. It also tends to make it more aware of wider groupings than the clan, since many Vingans are members of more than one clan at once. The adopting "mother" may herself be a member of more than one clan as a result of her own adoption, and will pass on that membership to any "daughters" she adopts.



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Jane Williams  
Most recent revision  
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and more specifically, how does it differ from other Orlanthi warrior cults?"

"Not greatly. The cult of Orlanth Adventurers. The cult of Vinga is a woman's analogue of the Orlanthi Adventurous cult. With the Orlanthi, all men are warriors and all women are housekeepers. But all means 85%. So where does this other 15% get their support? Vinga is the woman's warrior cult. It's really like a subcult of Orlanth, or even of Orlanth Adventurous. They classically dye their hair red. That's because Vinga, who is not a goddess and really not the physical daughter of Orlanth (she was a Heortling hero who went off) she had red hair, so they all dye their hair red. In King of Sartar, it's mentioned somewhere that her children were murdered and she dyed her hair red. This is a code word. It means she gave up her life and became a warrior".

### Glorantha Digest v01n095

David Dunham: Vinga;  
Dara Happan fire

...the lore auction at RQ-Con 2, I asked Greg about Vinga. He said her parents are either Orlanth and Ernald, or some Heortling couple. She had no special role before becoming the goddess of adventure.

### Glorantha Digest v02n175

David Hall: Orlanth in Sartar

...main Orlanthi temple in Boldhome is on Thunderous Ridge above Sartar's Palace. There are a couple of buildings near the main worship site and two paths leading to it. Almost all Orlanthi holy sites are open to the wind.

...  
There's also a temple to Orlanth Adventurers at the edge of the West Pocket according to the old maps. This is the origin of the creation of Vinga by Greg.



## Gifts and Geases

Are not available at all temples, but are more likely to be found at those with a strong Humakti or Elmalli link. Gift/geas pairs are chosen, in consultation with the priestess, rather than being allocated by chance. High-level, dangerous geases will not be granted to inexperienced initiates for whom they would be suicidal. One gift and geas may be taken at initiation. Normally no more are granted until Daughter rank is reached, but exceptions can be made in cases of great service to the temple or cult.

Geas	Gift
Never use a shield.	Increase Dodge skill by 15%
Never allow any woman to suffer needlessly	Recover magic points at double normal rate
Never allow any child to suffer needlessly	Recover fatigue at double normal rate
Never allow any Healer to suffer needlessly	Resist disease as if CON was 3 points higher
Never allow any alynx to suffer needlessly	Increase Track skill by 15%
Never ask any man for protection.	Increase DEX by 1
Never allow any Humakti to suffer needlessly	Any one weapon enchanted as described below
Never flee or surrender to brood	DEX SR lowered by 1 (as in the Reflexes spell, but permanently) Cannot cause DEX SR to go below 0
Never refuse a challenge to a fair fight	Bonus of 15% to a chosen combat skill (e.g.: broadsword, self bow)
Never refuse any challenge	Bonus of 15% to a chosen group of combat skills (e.g.: all swords, all bows)
Challenge any male sun-worshipping Rune Lord you meet to a duel (need not be to the death) unless he will acknowledge you as the better fighter	Natural leader. One free use of the Inspire spell per week.
Never flee or surrender to chaos.	Chance of resisting fear-based spells doubles

- Some of the links between the geas and gift may not be entirely obvious. Vinga tends to act as a protector to other cults. Some of the geases are concerned with this protection (anything that says "never allow any \*\*\*\* to suffer needlessly"), and the corresponding gift reflects the speciality of that cult. So protecting women: Ernalda: cut-down version of Earthpower. Children: Voria: Vigour. And so on.

- Other gifts/geases will exist, but in creating more, remember that the "enchant weapon to...." types are the province of Humakt, not Vinga.

- Specialised weapons

(See reference to Inganna, and see myth related to Humakt.)

Temples to Vinga will supply specially enchanted weapons to initiates which differ from the norm only in that the minimum STR required for their use is lower than the standard weapon by up to three points. This enchantment works only for the owner of the weapon.

The enchantment is from a special gift/geas combination, as described above. Note that acting as a protector to Humakti in trouble is just as difficult and dangerous as one might suspect, and isn't very popular with the Humakti either, many of whom feel they should be able to defend themselves.

The enchantment can be passed to a different weapon (though of the same type). A secondary ceremony (no geas required), with the permission and participation of the original owner, will pass on ownership of the weapon.

Note that these weapons do not count as magical for the purposes of hitting creatures immune to non-magical weapons. They only detect as magical when the enchantment is actually in use, and then it is the hilt of the weapon that shows as magical, not the blade.

### • Jane Williams

started roleplaying at college. Met **Glorantha** very briefly and while very drunk, but it must have left an impression. About five years later joined a new roleplaying club and was introduced to **Glorantha** again. This time it stuck, possibly due to a really excellent GM. (Pete Brettell, take a bow). After a while, wanted more background info than the GM had provided, so bought **KoS**. Saw immediate parallels between this and the Arthurian history I'd been reading (**KoS** is much less ambiguous!) and started investigating further. In particular, became fascinated with **Kallyr** and **Vinga**.

# THREE FLOWERS



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by Peter Maranci  
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I SHOULD BEGIN BY BRIEFLY EXPLAINING my approach to scenario design: I set up situations. There are gamemasters who can devise wonderfully clever problems, puzzles for which the only proper answer becomes blindingly obvious just \*after\* it has been deduced. I respect the hell out of those rare GMs, but I'm not one of them. My strengths as a GM are probably my NPCs and my ability to work with a situation off-the-cuff. I design scenarios to play to those qualities.

When creating a scenario, therefore, I work up a situation that has certain tensions and plot flows built in. Various NPCs will likely be in conflict in some way, and the players will find themselves in the middle of it all. I plan exactly what the NPCs want, what they know about each other, and what misunderstandings they have. I also try to figure out at least a few ways that the situation might develop, and how the PCs will become involved.

Almost always the party finds a new angle of approach, and complications always develop that lead to situations that I haven't anticipated at all. In that sense, my design philosophy is an open-ended one, not necessarily suitable for everyone else. I'll include notes in italics to indicate how things went in actual play.

"Three Flowers" was designed for RuneQuest's Glorantha, but it should be possible to adapt it for other game systems. It took me about six three-hour sessions to finish, but your mileage may differ.

## Non-Player Characters

### • THE LUNAR AGENT

The agent possesses a daunting array of Hero abilities (for those not familiar with Glorantha, a capital-H Hero is a mortal who has attained virtually superhuman abilities). These include mastery of most types of weapons and superhuman strength, vitality, and dexterity. Most valuable in the agent's arsenal of abilities is a Heroic disguise ability. The agent is able to create disguises that are virtually impenetrable. Alteration in appearance, voice, gender, and class are ridiculously easy for the agent. Height may be increased or reduced by up to eight inches,

## The Setting

A GRAND FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS is held once every five years at a point several days travel from the home village. The festival lasts seven days, and serves a number of functions. It is an extremely large market. It gives people from distant villages a chance to meet and strengthen their cultural bonds. Most importantly, the Festival is a major religious ceremony for the cult of Voria and the Orlanthei pantheon in general. Other activities include plays, dances, and songs.

Technically the cult of Voria (Spring) is the host of the festival. However, as part of the ceremony the Vorian (mostly female children) remain hidden for much of the event. Priestesses and Initiates of the cult of Ernalda serve as

proxies for the Vorian maidens.

The Festival is held at a huge field near a major crossroad. Since most of the dwellings there are temporary, tents cover the field; however, there are a few permanent buildings. A sturdy wood and stone inn called the Broken Flagon is within the Festival area nearest to the crossroad. A wooden barn that is used by the inn serves as a Temple to Uleria (the Goddess of Love), and does a brisk business. A large stage is erected at the center of the festival. Several large barbecue pits are spaced through the area, and vendors everywhere hawk goods and food of all kinds. For the seven days of the Festival, the area is more like a city of tents than a field.

Groups tend to set up tents in distinct areas: the Orlanthei, Yelmalian, Ernalda, and

and weight by a comparable amount. The Agent also speaks an enormous number of languages, including Stormtongue, the Orlanthe holy speech. A vast repertoire of powerful spells may be assumed as well. The Agent has a small dagger of unusual shape; the metal is dark and of an unknown type. The handle is a sharp crescent moon, making it virtually impossible to wield in combat; it should be treated as a dagger with a -25% chance, doing 1-3 points of damage. However, the dagger acts as a slave collar when inserted in a victim, blocking their ability to cast spells or seek Divine Intervention. The dagger also causes a feeling of extreme pain and cold. In straight-on combat the Agent has an excellent chance (at least 50-50) of defeating the entire party. Fortunately, such combat is unlikely.

If the Agent has a weakness it is a touch of arrogance and over-confidence. The use of disguises is almost an addiction for the Agent. In fact, the Agent is two of the other NPCs on this list! If the Agent becomes aware that the party is somehow involved in this affair (which is likely) a plot to trick them is the first course of action. If the PCs happen to notice who is present and who isn't during various events they may start to draw connections and develop suspicions... [The identities of the Agent are listed at the end of this document.]

#### • AZETH STRONGARM

Orlanthe Initiate. Human male, 58 years old. A tough and grizzled old Orlanthe, he is a distant relative of one of the clan elders and is kindly inclined towards the characters. He spends most of his time running a large cooking pit, where he hears and recycles most of the gossip and rumor of the Festival. Bluff and boisterous, he knows almost everyone who is anyone at the Festival and is respected by all. He is not part of the Secret Wind, though he has heard of it. Physically, he is slightly taller than average but very stocky; his arms are extremely burly, his skin browned by long exposure to smoke and fire, and his beard singed in spots. When he is away from his fire it can be noticed that he smells strongly of cooked meat and smoke.

#### • TELO APPORAT

Seven Mothers Initiate. Lunar-constant Human male, 35 years old. A fundamentally decent man with

other groups all have their own districts. A delegation of Chalana Arroy healers set up a fair-sized clinic in a good location. A small delegation of Humakti are present, their campsite notable for several dueling and practice rings.

### The Ceremony

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE of the Festival is to insure the return of Spring. It is an ancient ceremony, a re-enactment of the loss of Spring in the earliest days of Time, when Winter reigned for three years. It was then that the people of the region gathered together to chose a Queen of Flowers, rediscover Spring, and drive out winter. Since that mythological event, every fifth winter has been unusually cold until the successful completion of the ceremony.

There are two main parts to the ceremony: the crowning of the Queen of Flowers and the Rediscovery of Spring.

Only the most beautiful women of the region may compete to win the crown. Since this is a religious event, entries are by cult; there is only one Orlanthe entrant, one Yelmalian entrant, etc. These are referred to as Flowers with a cult-appropriate prefix. The Orlanthe is known as the Windflower. The Yelmalian is the Sunflower. An Ulerian contestant would likely be called the Loveflower. If a worshiper of Malia were ever to compete (unlikely; although no cult is specifically barred from entering the contest except Valind, the people would destroy an openly chaotic delegation) she would no doubt be called the Sickflower.

*When I ran this scenario a couple of Irripi Ontor sages played an amusing little game of wits with a Lhankor Mhy PC by coming up with unusual cults and trying to create an appropriate prefix for each. Trickflower or possibly Squirtflower (for obscure reasons) for the Trickster; Healflower for a Chalana Arroy worshiper; perhaps Splitflower or Headflower for a Thanatari; etc.*

Thirty judges are selected by the Ernalda priestesses to select the Queen of Flowers. Most of the judges are highly placed or reputable men of good standing in their community. Women are traditionally excluded from judging the contest.

There are four main categories for the contest: Song, Dance, Oration, and Beauty.

The Queen of Flowers receives many gifts from visitors to the festival. Her cult and home village are especially blessed by Voria in the following year.

*When I ran "3 Flowers" I had only three serious competitors in the contest: the Windflower (a thinly-disguised Orlanthe entrant), the Sunflower (Yalmatio), and the Moonflower (Lunar). Other Flowers could easily be added, depending on the makeup of the party.*

The second part of the ceremony is the Rediscovery of Spring. Spring, in this case, is represented by a small ancient flower, carved with superlative skill from pure gold and studded with gems of all kinds; before the festival it is placed in a wooden case and hidden somewhere in the fairgrounds by the Ernalda priestesses. The only rule to its hiding is that it is not hidden within any private dwelling, nor in the sacred place of any temple.

All the men at the Festival are eligible to take part in the search. He who finds the Spring Flower is crowned the King of Flowers. He receives a portion of the gifts that are presented to the Queen of Flowers. His cult and home village are also especially blessed by Voria in the following year. The King of Flowers is usually considered lucky for the rest of his life, and is likely to receive several advantageous offers of marriage.

When the Spring Flower is found, the Voria Initiates (all young children) come out from hiding, all carrying flowers which they give to one and all. The air, formerly chill, begins to warm.

*This is a good example of a time when I wish that I could come up with a clever puzzle; were I better at that sort of thing, for example, a priestess might have recited an obscure poem that would reveal the hiding place when properly interpreted. Since I couldn't think of one, though, I simply went back to the original myth; since Winter reigned while Spring was lost, I decided that the boxed Spring Flower had been buried next to the spot where the Valindi (Ice) worshippers camped. Scott's character Roc followed that chain of logic (a path which Vuli started, but failed to pursue) and searching that area, he found the box. Roc made an odd King of Spring, but it seemed fair that he should have won that prize, particularly since he'd nobly wasted a one-use Divine Heal Wound spell at the start of the game.*

### Opening Moves

**I. Traveling Orders.** The village elders have delegated the PCs to represent the village at the Festival of Flowers. Their duties there will be light: to uphold clan honor, serve as judges of the contest if asked, and to present a gift to the Queen at the final ceremony; a beautifully crafted bronze rose, studded with semi-precious gems. They are given a large tent, (sufficient to house the entire party) to use at the Festival; although it is marked with wind runes it is not explicitly Orlanthe. The party is advised to look up Azeth Strongarm at the cooking pit, who will tell them where to pitch their tent.

**II. On The Way.** Travel encounters are traditional in RPG scenarios, of course. None of the encounters on the seven-day trip need be of great import, and as many or few may be used as you wish. Here are three possi-

ble encounters:

A) A white deer races through the party camp in the middle of the night. Following swiftly after it is an old Wild Hunter, a man who lives alone in the woods. He is friendly, and willing to talk for a short while, but must continue the hunt before long. I find it convenient to sometimes pattern NPC personalities on minor characters from film and TV; this makes it easy to give them a distinctive feel quickly, and players have never caught on. In this case I patterned the Hunter after Oliver Reed's portrayal of the god Vulcan in *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*.

B) As the party marches along, keen-eyed characters may spot something odd ahead: a large swath of brush on the side of the road is simply gone. As they get closer they may see an odd glimmering at one end of the bare area; it looks like a lump of water one meter across. Close observation will show that this is a gorp, an acidic and chaotic blob-like creature. It possesses two chaotic features: it looks like a blob of clean water, and it can leap up to eight meters once per day (yes, even though it has no legs. That's chaos for you!).

C) A fellow traveler hails the party, and asks if they are going to the Festival. He claims to be a storyteller. In fact he is an accomplished storyteller, but of the con-man variety; he is a rogue and ne'er-do-well. If he finds out about the gift for the Queen, he may try to steal it at night and sneak off -- but only if he's sure to get away with it. He's a cautious, charming fellow, and if the party is polite but wary they will find him a pleasant companion.

**III. Arrival.** The PCs may well feel overwhelmed when they finally reach the Festival; it's the largest gathering of people they've ever seen. Once they make contact with Azeth they are guided to a place to set up their tent. Their campground is in a comparatively quiet corner of the Festival.

**IV. In The Night.** Late that evening after the group has gone to sleep a figure staggers pell-mell into the party's tent. It is a man, apparently an Orlanthi but lacking any clan markings; he is bleeding copiously from numerous stab wounds in the back, and is obviously dying. He has no weapons, and a small object is clenched tightly in his right hand. Gaspingly he tells the PCs that he is one of the Secret Wind; a Lunar agent is after him. He has a message that must be given to the Wind Lord tomorrow at the Broken Flagon. He knows that he's dying, and insists that someone must go for him. The courier doesn't know what the Wind Lord looks like, but whoever goes should wear his green serpent broach (which the courier is presently wearing). The password is "the Bull's guts".

Just before he dies, he opens his hand and gives the contents to one of the PCs. It is the message: a common lunar (silver piece). The back is covered with fine scratches, which look

random to a casual glance but reveal an odd pattern on careful inspection. The pattern is not decipherable by any of the party, however.

If the party attempts to heal the courier, they find that most of his wounds do not respond to healing magic. Some sort of poison must be in the wounds, which are oddly small and deep. No matter what they try, the courier dies.

**V. Stuck!** The party is now in a real pickle. For one thing, they have an extremely inconvenient dead body on their hands. For another, they'll soon discover that Lunar patrols are on the hunt for a man with a green serpent broach, someone (the Lunar Agent in disguise) has tipped off the law that a criminal at the Festival is wearing it. Their religious affiliation demands that they try their best to deliver the message, nonetheless...

### The Festival Calendar

**Day 1. SELECTION.** The Flowers arrive, an opening ceremony re-enacts the loss of Spring, and people settle in. Judges are selected by the Ernalda priestesses.

**Day 2. THE CONTESTANTS ARE SHOWN TO THE PEOPLE ON THE GREAT STAGE.** This event is not judged; it is as much to give bookies a chance to set odds as anything else.

**Day 3. SONG.** The contestants take turns singing. They may also play musical instruments.

**Day 4. DANCE.**

**Day 5. ORATION.** A five or ten-minute oration is typical, on whatever subject each Flower chooses. Poetry is a popular choice.

**Day 6. BEAUTY.** The contestants show themselves in their most beautiful clothes, one at a time. At the conclusion of this event the votes for all four categories are totaled, and the winner is crowned the Queen of Flowers. As she stands on the stage with the King of Flowers warmth and the perfume of flowers spread through the air; Spring has finally come. The Queen spends the rest of the Festival parading around the ground with the King of Flowers (who spends that night with her as well, though she is not obligated to sleep with him).

**Day 7. CLOSING CEREMONY.**

### The Conflict

Two major conflicts obtain at the Festival; one is obvious, one secret.

**Conflict One: AN UNINVITED GUEST.**

Though they have never competed in the Festival before, there is a large contingent from the Lunar Empire (conquerors of this region) present at the Festival this year. Among them is

a strong conscience, which is why he is working as a Constable in the barbarian hinterlands. His responsibilities include Low and Middle justice at the Festival, as well as law enforcement and investigation. He has been assigned twelve regular troops to patrol the Festival. They patrol in groups of four. Telo is intelligent and scrupulously fair. He will investigate the murder of an Orlanthi as rigorously as that of a Lunar citizen -- that is, both to the best of his ability. If his investigations imperil the activities of the Lunar Agent, the Agent will contact his superiors and have him taken off the case.

In that case Apparat will suspect corruption is involved, and will attempt to secretly interrogate party members to discover what is going on. If he is informed by the Agent or a credible proxy that the entire matter is one of State security he will reluctantly drop the investigation.

• **NAMELESS LUNAR NOBLE**  
human male, 35, tall.  
He may be called in by the Lunar Agent to sit on Telo Apparat if necessary. This scary gentleman dresses in black (except for tiny red insignia), and silently exudes an aura of menace. He may bring up to 100 additional troops if these seem necessary, though that would be a highly inflammatory choice.

• **THE WINDFLOWER**  
Orlanthi, A human female, age 17.  
As is to be expected she is beautiful, talented, lighthearted and brave. Her hair is a pleasing shade of gray. Her instrument of choice is a small bagpipe. She is constantly surrounded by her kinsmen and female friends.

• **THE SUNFLOWER**  
Yelmalian, Human female, age 19  
Tall, beautiful, blonde, and patrician in bearing. She is somewhat distant and very proud of her education. A cold fish by Orlanthi standards. Her instrument of choice is the harp. While her talents are undeniably great, her approach is comparatively aloof, and her song and dance are obscure and emotionally cold; she is not a favorite with the audience.

• **THE MOONFLOWER**  
Red Goddess worshiper. Human female, age 26. Always heavily guarded, and heavily veiled except during the contest itself. Pale skin, long blood-red hair, very graceful. Knows a dance which

clouds men's minds (Heroic Dance skill). Her instrument of choice is her voice; if she wishes, her singing voice can sound like many birds singing at once (an eerie but beautiful effect). If caught in conversation she is polite, but careful; she is very aware that this territory is still not entirely pacified.

[In play I rolled a critical success for the Moonflower's dance. She had not intended to mesmerize the audience, but since I'd already determined that she had Heroic Dance skill, I decided that such knowledge can be a two-edged sword; she slipped into the dance without meaning to. The results were startling, as may be seen below]

• VIA BLADESONG

AKA "Deathflower"

Humakt Initiate. Human female, age 25. She is tall, has light brown hair, and is extremely skilled in the arts of war. That and her great beauty have led some to nickname her "Deathflower", a title that she does not find amusing. A child of privilege (both of her parents are Priests of Humakt) she is kind but somewhat distant to all but fellow Humakti.

• URIN THEGG, Trickster.

Human male, age 24. The party may not even meet this rascal, but will surely be impacted by his great trick at the Festival – as is everyone else attending. He is thin, dark, and accomplished at running away from angry mobs. He has a respectable selection of spirit and Divine magic, and is extremely clever. He is also rather ruthless, as can be seen in his treatment of the: • NAMELESS TROLLKIN AKA "Darkflower". Trollkin slave, age 10. The Darkflower is entered into the competition by his owner, Urin Thegg. He is kept hidden even more completely than the Moonflower until the contest begins. At that time he is wheeled onto the stage in a large covered wagon. When the cover is removed it may be seen that the trollkin is dressed in a red wig and gown that strongly resemble those of the Moonflower. The reaction of the crowd will likely give Thegg time to escape; the fate of the Darkflower is less certain.

[The Darkflower endured much abuse in play. When the Moonflower's Heroic dance began bewitching onlookers at the Dance Contest, a Eurmali used Divine Intervention to place the Darkflower directly above the Moonflower, t



the Moonflower, who will be competing to become the Queen of Flowers. The Lunars have roped off a large area for their use, and have erected large and elaborate tents; their campground is heavily guarded and patrolled by a force of forty troops.

The Moonflower is the subject of much gossip and speculation. She is almost never seen, and the few who glimpse her are unable to see her face beneath her heavy veil. Some say that she has danced before the Red Emperor himself, and is acquainted with dark and seductive mystic arts. No one in the Lunar contingent will discuss the Moonflower at all.

The Lunar presence makes life difficult for Orlanthi at the Festival; since worship of Orlanth is banned throughout the Empire, they must be careful not to reveal their religious affiliation. Beyond that, all good non-Lunars will be concerned that the Moonflower not be selected Queen of Flowers, since that would constitute a blessing on the Empire and give them a notable cultural foothold in the region. The obvious threat of the troops on hand and the power of the Lunar Empire which backs them makes direct action difficult and dangerous, however.

One or more of the PCs should be chosen as a judge of the contest, if possible; the politics of judging should lead to interesting conversations and debates. Throughout the festival the competition between the Flowers is a common subject of discussion, argument, and wagering.

Note that the Lunars do not wish to win the Festival. It would be difficult to do so in any case, since the majority of judges will necessarily be anti-Lunar. The Lunars have come to establish a greater presence in the local culture,

establishing a foothold in the regional consciousness. An outright win would antagonize many in the region.

**Conflict Two: A SECRET WAR.**

A continuing battle between the Lunar Empire and the underground Orlanthi resistance movement known as the Secret Wind has entered the Festival as well. Agents of the Secret Wind have amassed a large cache of magical weapons. Some are ancient artifacts discovered in ruins within the Empire. Others have been stolen from the Empire itself. The weapons have been buried in a hidden spot a few hours ride from the Festival, and a Secret Wind courier is at the Festival to hand over the consignment to a disguised Orlanthi Rune Lord for transport deeper into Orlanthi territory. Although the courier and the Rune Lord do not know one another by sight, a rendezvous has been planned to take place at The Broken Flagon.

Unfortunately an agent of Lunar Internal Security has been close on the trail of the weapons. The agent has captured and killed several Secret Wind agents within the Empire, and has pursued the courier to the Festival. The true battle at the Festival is thus between the Lunar agent and the Rune Lord of the Secret Wind. Both are anxious to keep the affair secret. The Rune Lord desires secrecy because it will be virtually impossible to smuggle the weapons quietly away if things get out of hand. The Lunar agent cannot afford a major diplomatic incident with the people of the region; if the Empire disrupts an ancient and important ceremony they will make many enemies at a time when their resources are stretched thin. Another problem is that the Lunar contingent at the Festival is unaware of the presence of the agent. Telo Apporat, the Lunar Constable at the Festival, is rigorously honest and fair even to barbarians. If he were to discover that the Lunar Agent had committed several murders in the area, he would probably cause trouble.

The agent is therefore reluctant to go public except as a last resort. Instead, the agent will use a hired gang of thugs to threaten the party and manipulate events.

*Wrap Up*

AS THE FESTIVAL draws to a close, the party is contacted by Thurin of the Secret Wind. Several people (including the courier) were supposed to help him retrieve the weapons after the Festival. As a number of them have been killed, however, he asks the PCs to help him. They are not obligated to do so; the task is dangerous. If they do accept, they will find themselves in a race to beat the Lunar Agent to the cache. How close the race is depends on how much information the Agent has gained during the Festival. A battle of titans is a strong possibility, in which Thurin and the Agent will attempt to destroy each other.

At this point the true identity of the A-



gent will become apparent. In all likelihood the Agent will be alone; this is not entirely hubris, however. The Agent has a notable advantage in ability and magic. However, if Thurin has reached the weapons first (as is likely) the balance will be even again. It remains for the players to make the difference in the combat. In any case, the Agent is unlikely to be killed; an escape via Divine Intervention is assured.

*In play the party chickened out, and declined Thurin's request for aid. They came up with a reasonable excuse, but there's no denying that the end of the scenario was a little anticlimactic as a result. Still, I can't fault them for taking the sensible course of action.*

### Magic Items from the cache

- **A shaman's belt of bindings.** That contains 100 spirits of various types. These include spell spirits, power spirits, and a great variety of others. Unfortunately many of the uses of the belt require a password, but there are certain features that will work for anyone: the belt will cast a spirit magic Heal 6 spell once per round on the wearer when they are injured, up to a total of 80 points of healing. A spirit in the belt will cast a Strength 4 spell on the wearer in combat, and another will cast Blade-sharp 6 at the same time (if a bladed weapon is in the wearer's hand).
- **A giant's ring of invulnerability.** This bronze ring is large enough to be loose around an armored man's waist. As long as it is around the wearer, they are protected with the equivalent of a divine magic Shield 10 spell (protecting from 20 points of damage and up to 20-point spells). Unfortunately the ring is enormously heavy (its weight is equal to a STR 30. Holding it up requires a STR

vs STR roll, with the wearer at half chance if only one hand is used. The ring could be tied on, but its excessive weight will make movement difficult. Others could stand behind the wearer and hold up the ring, but they would not be protected by it) and the situation would be very awkward in combat.

- **A scimitar of iron and Adamantium (!)**
- **A piece of Moon Rock in a lead box**
- **An ebony rod with a Mistress Race Troll hand on the end.** This rod allows the creation and manipulation of vast amounts of darkness. It may be used to command or destroy Shades.
- **The Wind Shield.** An ancient air spirit of great power is bound into this shield. At the user's command a driving wind bursts from the shield, blowing against anything before it. The wind has a STR of 25 that must be overcome to approach it, and attacks against the holder are at -50%. Missile weapons and arrows cannot strike the user. If the user falls or loses hold of the shield, the wind will continue to blow for one round — during which time chaos (small "c") is likely to ensue as the shield flies around at random. There are legends that the shield may be used to fly by directing its flow against the ground, but this would require superhuman dexterity and much painful practice.

All of these are major objects of power, of course, vitally necessary to the success of the Secret Wind. The PCs will not be allowed to keep them. Even if everyone else dies someone will soon come along to take these weapons away. However, if Thurin prevails and the weapons are recovered the Secret Wind will likely reward the characters at a later date. A reasonable (though not huge) amount of money is likely. The PCs may also be gifted with small serpent-shaped amulets of luck. These are very minor magic items: when the wearer must make a luck roll, they count their POWER as being one higher than it actually is.

The characters will have the gratitude of the Secret Wind, and their names will be remembered in the future should they be needed. On the other hand, the Lunar Agent may well remember them too, depending on what happened at the Festival...

THE CORNER  
PRETENDED TO BE DRUNK AND PASSED OUT IN  
OF THE PCs' PLANS AS THE UROXI WHILE SHE  
ACTUALLY ABLE TO OVERHEAR A GOOD PORTION  
ARE POSSIBLE, OF COURSE. [IN PLAY SHE WAS  
AS THE OLD UROXI. MANY OTHER DISGUISES  
CONTORED ONE, SHE ALSO DISGUISES HERSELF  
LIC APPEARANCES, THIS MAKES HER SCHEDULE A  
FLOWER, SINCE SHE HAS TO MAKE SEVERAL PUB-  
• THE LUNAR AGENT IS ACTUALLY THE MOON-

wenty feet in the air; the resulting impact broke the spell of the dance. It should be noted that DI does not normally allow such direct action against others, but the argument that Euralm does not always follow rules, along with the humor of the situation, persuaded me that an exception would make sense. Incidentally, the Moonflower tended the trollkin's wounds after the contest, and had it taken safely away from the festival.]

- **THURIN FARWALKER,** Issaries trader. Human male, 35. Actually a Wind Lord of Orlanth and a member of the Secret Wind, he is big, brave, handsome, and clever — a storybook hero. Depending on how the PCs dispose of the courier's body he may be aware that his contact is in jeopardy. Nevertheless he attempts to complete the rendezvous at The Broken Flagon. If no one present is wearing a green serpent brooch (which, given the number of Lunar patrolmen about, would be a dangerous thing to do), he will attempt to make contact by employing the services of:

- **GED SWEETVOICE,** Donandar Initiate. Human male, age 17. A scraggy punk, as minstrels go, and a very poor harper. Only charity has allowed him a place by the fire at The Broken Flagon. When the big Issaries trader makes a special request and offers silver, he's more surprised than anything else. Nonetheless Ged sings a song which includes a reference to a snake. Thurin's hope is that the party will make the connection, but the Lunars won't...

[In the actual run the players mistakenly thought that Ged was their Secret Wind contact, followed him outside after the performance and gave him the message coin (he assumed that it was a tip). This led to a situation I'd been hoping for: the coin was loose in the Festival, one among many thousands of others. By the time the party was contacted by the true Wind Lord, Ged had spent the coin. The party searched everywhere he'd been, and at long last found the coin and gave it to the proper recipient. But there was definitely a moment of panic].

- **OLD STORM BULL WORSHIPER.** Human male, age approximately 40 - 60. Is never seen sober enough to tell his name. Somewhat short and grizzled, he bears an axe that he uses

with incredible berserk skill, if roused. He's mostly interested in alcohol, however, and spends most of his time in a state of stupor. If the party will give him alcohol, he'll drink it and sleep it off on the floor of their tent.

• **GERTH AND GEDDY**, Issaries Initiates (traders). Human male, 29, and human female, 31. This married couple are typical innocent bystanders. As feelings run high among attendees (over the Flowers and any other issues that may have risen), Gerth finds himself caught up willy-nilly in a fight between two gangs of thugs near the PCs' tent. Geddy will plead with the characters to save her husband. If they do, the grateful couple will reward them as best they can, they aren't rich, but they do know some important Issaries people who have many connections. They could get the party a free consultation with a Lhankor Myh Sage, for example.

• **UNKEL FEG**, Black Fang Initiate. Ogre male age 26. This bulky and moderately handsome fellow has a gang of humans (as many as needed) who follow him slavishly. If the it seems necessary, the Lunar Agent will hire Feg and his gang to manipulate the group, by planting false evidence, say, or stealing their possessions. Feg has few scruples.

[In play, Feg and his gang were hired to make a midnight attack on the party. Their orders were to hurt them, but not to kill them. As it happened the old Storm Bull was in the tent at the time of the attack, however. Berserk, he killed all of the gang members with the help of the PCs, and ran off into the night. This led to a long session of questioning of the PCs in Telo Apporat's tent].



# The Pyramid of Set

## A Flashback Encounter for Nephilim



by Shannon Appel

**T**HE GAMEWORLD OF NEPHILIM is built on a long history. Player Nephilim may have incarnated two, three, four, or even a half-dozen times in the last several thousands years, providing them with a rich tapestry of past experience to call upon. In addition these past experiences could provide complex webs of old feuds and tasks left undone. This encounter tries to take advantage of Nephilim's history, by presenting a flashback set in ancient Egypt. This flashback is a fairly short encounter, and is intended mainly to present the idea of flashbacks in the Nephilim game.

### BACKGROUND

**I**n 1350BC Egypt was the center of a great spiritual revolution. Akhenaton wrote "The Book of the Dead", changed the role of the old Pharonic Priesthood, and formed the Arcana. But the revolution was eventually doomed to end in disaster.

After they incarnated in Egypt of 1350BC the player Nephilim became very involved in Akhenaton's revolution. They stayed loyal to him even when others betrayed him. Now, the Pha-

ronic Priesthood has begun to rise in revolt, and an extremist group has raised Orichalka against the Nephilim. They are the Sons of Set.

As this encounter opens a group of the Sons of Set have stolen from Akhenaton his greatest work, The Book of the Living. They fled into the desert, toward Giza, and thought they had left all pursuit behind. At the bequest of Tach-a-Ubir, Akhenaton's sage and advisor the player Nephilim have followed the Sons of Set across the desert. As the scene opens the players come upon a small oasis where two members of the Sons of Set appear to be resting.

### THE PYRAMID OF SET

#### The Oasis of Lost Souls

**T**HE OASIS is a point of color in the middle of the monotone desert. Scattered trees and scraggly grass surround a large natural pool which bubbles up from deep beneath the ground. Two figures can be seen, each idly lounging about the central pool. Between them a dark and smoky fire burns. The figures do not appear to see the Nephilim.

**TWO SONS OF SET**

Males, Apparent Age 25  
 Social Status: 5  
 Education: 12 (as members of the Pharonic Priesthood)  
 Life Experience: 43  
 Culture: 14th Century BC Egyptian, Priest-class  
 Profession: Warriors of Set  
 Family Relationship: 0, severed ties to family

STR 15	CON 15	INT 10
DEX 13	CHA 09	Solar-Ka 15
HP 15	Actions 3	DB +1D4

Skills: First Aid 50%, Hermetic Lore 10%, Hunt 75%, Melee (Bow) 60%, Melee (Spear) 75%, Natural Lore 50%, Religious Lore (Middle Kingdom Egyptian) 50%, Speak (Middle Kingdom Egyptian) 60%, Survival 50%

Weapons: Long Spear 75%, damage 1d10+1+db  
 Bow 60%, damage 1d6+1, medium range 20m

Magic: none

When the Nephilim are approximately 20m away the Sons of Set will spot them and open fire with their bows. If the Nephilim close their will pull out their spears and fight to the death. Following the battle, Nephilim poking through the fire will see the ashen remnants of papyrus. One piece is unburnt enough to show Akhenaton's distinctive writing. It seems that all is lost. However, the Nephilim making the best INT roll will recall that their contacts in Thebes stated that three humans had survived to carry "The Book of the Living" away? Where could the third have gone?

*INTO THE PYRAMID*

**I**N TRUTH the two Sons of Set left to guard the oasis were sacrifices. It was hoped that they would deter any Nephilim hunters. The fire was made with blank papyrus and a few expendable introductory pages from "The Book of the Living". The third Son of Set, a priest, escaped into the Oasis' pool.

The pool is unnaturally deep. Any Nephilim swimming down will have to return to the surface before reaching the bottom. As they swim down Nephilim should be called upon to make a series of CON rolls, beginning at CON x10. With each success the Nephilim swims 10m further down, and the breath in his lungs grow staler. If a Nephilim fails a CON roll he should expect to begin drowning. Many Nephilim will swim back to the surface before this occurs. In truth, the water is breathable. When a Nephilim begins to choke he takes a deep breath of the water, and learns he can breath. The bottom of the Oasis is 150m down. A Nephilim breathing the water can easily swim all the way down. The bottom of the Oasis opens on to a 3 meter square hole. Stonework outlines the hole; engraved on all four sides are the three hieroglyphs forming the word "Tuat", the realm of the Egyptian afterlife. There is air on

the other side of the hole. Despite there being no covering the water remarkably does not flow down into the space below. A Nephilim can easily swim through the large hole.

*THE ROOM OF JUDGMENT*

**R**EALITY IS TURNED upside-down as Nephilim swim through the hole. The hole opens on to the floor of an immense room, 30 meters on a side. The water-filled hole sits at the exact center. As a Nephilim climbs up into the room, shapes slowly shimmer in existence. The Sons of Set have done rituals to tie this room to the Subtle Planes--the magical realms of history and mythology. Now, in a very real way, the Nephilim have entered the Court of the Dead. Along the back wall are the judges of the dead: Heru-Khuti, Temu, Shu, Tefnut, Keb, Nut, Ast, Nebt-Het, Horus, Het-Hert, Hu, and Sa. Each holds a staff. Near the hole is a scale. A feather sits in one pan; the other is empty. A monstrous creature sits under the scale. It has the fore-part of a crocodile, the hind-quarters of a hippo, and the body of a lion; it is the eater of the dead which devours unworthy souls. Near the scale stands Anubis, and just behind him--holding reed pen and papyrus--is Thoth. When the first Nephilim climbs up into the room Anubis reaches forward and pulls the Nephilim's heart from his body. When he places it upon the other pan of the scale, they balance perfectly.

Anubis will then ask three questions: "Who are you?", "What do you want?", and "Why do you want this?" Each time the Nephilim is expected to respond.

If the Nephilim responds to all three questions truthfully the scale remains balanced. Anubis nods, and that Nephilim fades from the sight of the others. To the Nephilim everything else fades away, even the court. A long ramp appears along the back wall, leading further up into the pyramid. The hole leading back to the water is still visible as well.

If the Nephilim responds to any question untruthfully, or even seeks to hide the truth, then the scale tilts out of balance. The Eater of the Dead leaps upon the Nephilim, rips him apart, then devours him. The Nephilim wakes to find himself at the bottom of the oasis' pool. He can no longer see the hole leading to the pyramid and must struggle to the surface.

Each Nephilim will be tested in turn. If any Nephilim tries to obstruct the tests, the Eater of the Dead will devour him.

*THE ROOM OF TRANSITION*

**A**LL NEPHILIM WHO PASS the test will be reunited on the ramp. They will realize they have left the Subtle Planes behind. The ramp leads up (down?) to a second room, this one twenty meters on a side.

On one side of the wall is a large painting of Set. On the opposite wall is a large painting of Horus. Along the other two walls are writings concerning the ten gates the dead must pass through to see Osiris.

**HOW TO RUN A FLASHBACK**

Flashbacks are a great technique to use in Nephilim, but to be used most effectively they require planning. Ideally, when players are generating their Nephilim they should keep careful track of which skills get added during which historic eras. Then it should be very easy to peel back the years to give the Nephilim the appropriate skills. You'll need to generate simulacra for each of the Nephilim too, but that should be fairly simple, as you have the skill list from the past lives to use as a basis.

A slightly bigger problem is getting all of the players together in the same era. Again, you can resolve this problem during character generation by asking that all Nephilim maintain some past lives in common. However, this is not entirely necessary. A more elegant technique would be to generate a few NPCs for use in the past lives. These can be old fellows who happen to not be incarnated yet in the present. They can be played in past lives by players who don't have incarnate Nephilim. If new players join your gaming group, you can suggest they play these old fellows, finally incarnate in the 1990s. (A third option is to cheat, and say that all the Nephilim were incarnate in the particular past life you're playing in, but that some were alive for such a short time that they got no experience; killing them gloriously during the flashback can be a nice followup.)

Once you've done all of your preparation you should be able to drop a flashback straight into an adventure. At

*an appropriate time shift gears and hand out the past life simulacra. The flashback should then be played out in its entirety before reverting to the future. The flashback might be directly related to the adventure at hand, or it could be a standalone set-up for future adventures. Since Nephilim have long lives they've forgotten much of their past. Thus, flashbacks should often represent new, forgotten information to the Nephilim experiencing them. Any experience checks gained in the past should be carried over to the present, representing newly uncovered memories.*

## RUNNING HISTORICAL CAMPAIGNS

*Given the background of Nephilim it would be easy to run a historical campaign spanning the centuries. This encounter could be using as the beginning point of a long series of adventures. Though the Sons of Set may have been thwarted in ancient Egypt they will continue to be a threat through the eons, as they infiltrate the Orphic Mysteries, the Mithridites, and even the Templars. An epic campaign might not climax until 4000AD, when all living things on Earth are threatened by the impending collision of a second asteroid and the beginning of the Age of Dragons.*

To pass the room of transition a Nephilim must speak the names of the ten gatekeepers: Neri, Mes-Peh, Ertatsebanqa, Nekau, Hentirequ, Smamti, Akenti, Khutchetf, Tcheseff, and Sekhenur.

Each Nephilim should know this since they have all studied "The Book of the Dead". When a Nephilim has recited all ten names he will disappear. However, a Nephilim will only be welcomed onward if he stood directly beneath the painting of Set while speaking the names. In this case he will see a further ramp appear, leading upward. Otherwise the Nephilim appears back at the bottom of the oasis' water hole, the entrance now invisible and unpassable to him. (If the Nephilim spoke the words without considering where he stood, there is a 1 in 6 chance he was close enough to the painting.)

### THE ROOM OF REBIRTH

**A**GAIN THE NEPHILIM will be reunited on a ramp. It leads up to a final level, 10 meters on a side. By this time the Nephilim should realize they are in a pyramid, but a rather unnatural one. Most pyramids are filled with the stone necessary to support the structure, but this one is almost entirely composed of empty rooms; clearly the whole place is unnatural.

Hieroglyphs on the walls of this last room tell of the soul's rebirth in the physical world as a superior being. It is a heretical belief, not part of Egyptian mythology. Along the walls of the room are a dozen mummy case. These contain the mummified remains of Sons of Set that have died in the revolt. According to the writings they await rebirth on Earth.

Sitting across the room from the entrance is a frail looking old man, once a Pharonic Priest, now the leader of this sect of the Sons of Set. He clutches a sheaf of papyrus tightly to his chest.

Ami-Paa is tired and has seen too many

friends die to offer any further resistance. He tries to counter the Nephilim's desire for "The Book of the Living" with words.

Ami-Paa explains that he has only taken what humanity justly deserves, that when Akhenaton created the Arcanum he broke the Great Compromise. Now Ami-Paa wishes to give humanity the ability to raise themselves up to the level of the Nephilim, so they may interact as equals, and humanity may retake its birthright. He will not trust the Nephilim to take the scroll, even if they offer a later copy. He has already been betrayed once.

If the Nephilim do opt to take the scroll from Ami-Paa he can only threaten: "The Sons of Set will bite and snarl at your heels throughout the centuries, many-born ones".

Leaving the pyramid is simpler than entering it was. The ramps all lead downward, to the hole, and back to the oasis.

#### APPENDIX I: MODERN CORRESPONDENCES

*After playing this adventure it would be natural to generate modern adventures related to it. A number of questions will remain. What became of the Sons of Set? Do they continue to plot their revenge? What has become of "The Book of the Living"? Do new spiritual insights truly lie within it? What new powers have been gained by those who have studied it for centuries? Each question could form the basis of a modern adventure.*

#### APPENDIX II: GLORANTHAN CORRESPONDENCES

*Some work would need to be done to form this Nephilim flashback into a Gloranthan adventure, but it can be done. The Holy Country is definitely Egyptian in flavor and the Subtle Planes directly correspond to the Hero Plane of Glorantha, so conversion is possible.*

The following scenario is suggested: a secret sect of Belintar worshipers have made a daring raid on a Lunar-controlled Holy Country city. There they stole the only copy of a document named "The Book of the Living". The Lunars had given the book little consideration before, but now they hear rumors that it may hold the means to restore Belintar to life. At once they offer large rewards to anyone who captures the thieves and returns the book, without explaining the reason why.

The players, who are likely non-Lunar mercenaries, can not resist the rewards offered.

New stats will need to be generated for the Belintar worshipers at the oasis; they are common thugs. The gods and names of the pyramid represent the Pharaoh's own strange gods. Some manner of help will need to be offered so the players can pass The Room of Transition; perhaps the names of the gatekeepers are also written on the walls. The murals in that room actually depict Belintar and Ezkanekko, and the players must stand near Belintar in order to correctly ascend. At the end the last priest of Belintar will explain that restoring his lord is the only way the crimson tide might be checked. Are the players willing to possibly destroy that last chance?

#### AMI-PAA

Male, Apparent Age 70  
Social Status: 15  
Education: 18 (as member of the Pharonic Priesthood)  
Life Experience: 100  
Culture: 14th Century BC Egyptian, Priest-class  
Profession: Priest of Set  
Family Relationship: 0, severed ties to family

STR 08	CON 07	INT 18
DEX 10	CHA 08	Solar-Ka 25
HP 07	Actions 2	DB -1D4

Skills: First Aid 90%, Hermetic Lore 40%, Hunt 25%, Natural Lore 90%, Read/Write Hieroglyphs 75%, Religious Lore (Middle Kingdom Egyptian) 90%, Sorcery (Lower Magic) 50%, Speak (Middle Kingdom Egyptian) 90%, Survival 50%

Weapons: none

Magic: most lower magic spells, but he has no remaining means to cast them.



# Next issue!

A "catch up" with:

- *Aeolian Church* • *Heortland* • *Kingdom of Night* • *Lanbril* • *Osentalka Seventh Temple*
- *Goddess Grain* • *Istakax* • *Uron*
- *Etric! adventure*

