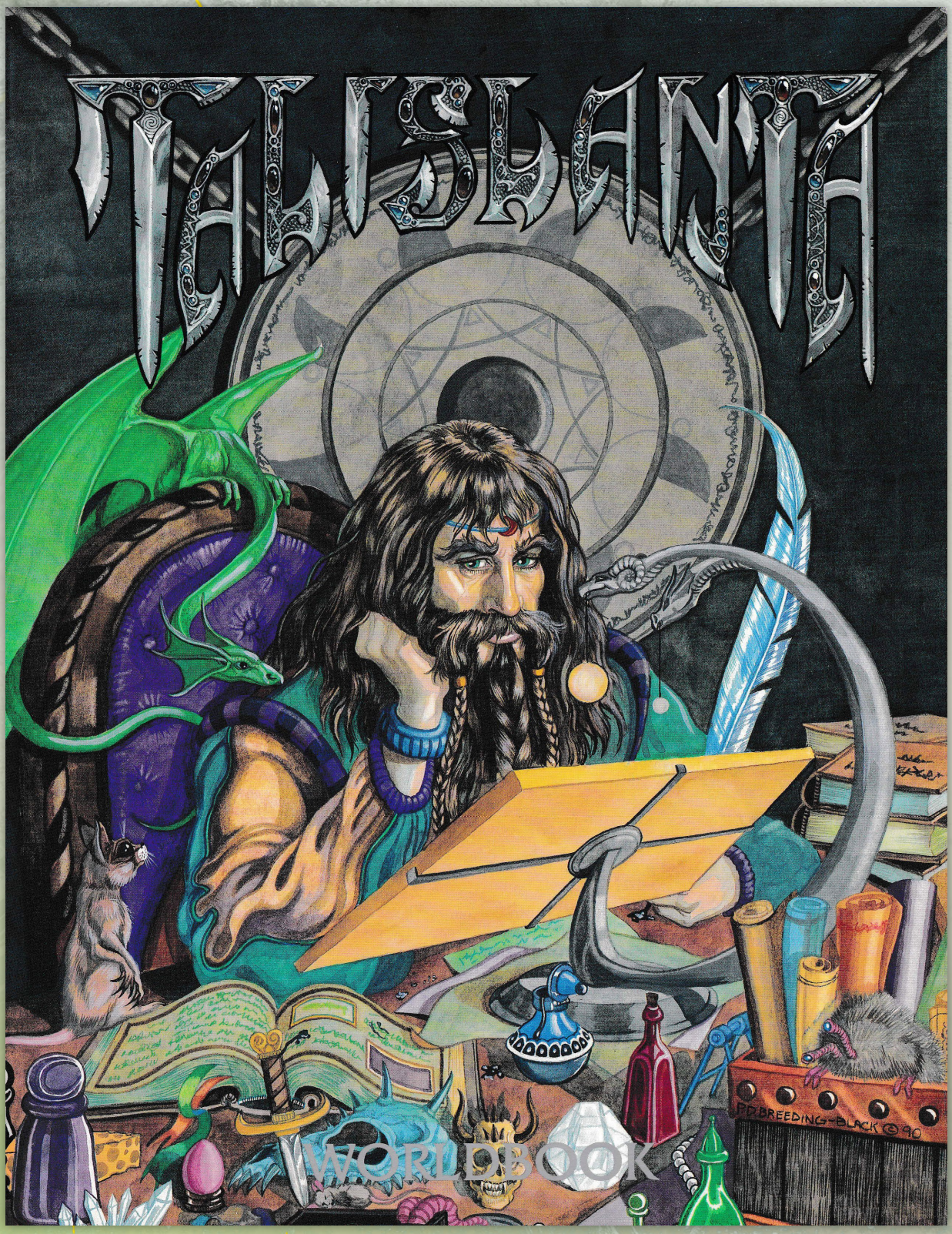

Talislanta
Atlas & GM's Guide
EVERYTHING
EPIC
The Epic Alien Fantasy Milieu
and Roleplaying Game by
Stephen Michael Sechi




This Epic Edition is lovingly dedicated to P.D. Breeding-Black, the pioneering spirit whose art first breathed life into the world of Talislanta. With gratitude and admiration, we honor the visionary who laid the foundation for the artwork for our journey into this fantastical realm.

# Credits

**Original Talislanta Creator:**
Stephen Michael Sechi

**Talislanta Epic Edition:**
Stephen Michael Sechi and Christopher Batarlis

**Game Designer & Writer:**
Stephan Michael Sechi

**Game Developers and Additional Writing:**
Tony Herring, Mark Williams

**Editors:**
Dayna Peavyhouse, Robert Peavyhouse,
Mark Williams, Christopher Batarlis

**Art Director:**
Stephen Michael Sechi

**Cover Art Atlas and GM's Guide:**
Jay Lee

**Landscape Artist:**
Jay Lee

**Map Illustrator:**
Ben Dennett

**Illustrations and Artwork:**
Jay Lee, Ben Dennett, Shane Braithwaite, Carlos Villas,
Alexander Nazolkin, Dusan Markovic, Benny Kusnoto, David Arenas,
Geun Cheol Jang, Ruben Hiraga, Christopher Batarlis, Mark Williams

**Graphic Design and Layouts:**
Mike Kay, Mark Williams, Joe Raiten, David Lanza, John Williams

**Proofers:**
Mark Williams, Alessandro Andreas Davour, Brandon Click,
Carsten Pleines, Clint Forney, Curtis Kilbourn, Gary Dowell,
Giles Bennett, Jack Hill, Jason Rhodes, Joe DelJanovan, Lauri Tuiskuharju,
Les Ratcliff, Mike Davis, Mike Taylor, Nickolas Hartunian, Paul Lipor,
Peter Lindstrom, Ralph Plowman, Roberto Maggi, Wayne S. Wallace, Esq.,
Aaron Spriggs, Kaya Kurdak, Eric Edwards, and Terry Mills

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The world of Talislanta was first glimpsed "through a veil of blue mist" by Tamerlin, a self-styled wizard, obscure author, and explorer who claimed to have "discovered" this "strange and exotic land" long ago.

The first accounts of this mysterious realm were published in Tamerlin's original Chronicles of Talislanta, along with a series of notes and monographs compiled by the wizard during the years following the publication of the Chronicles. It is likely that Tamerlin - being inclined towards romanticism - may have embellished somewhat on the details of his epic travels. Nevertheless, his works may still be of some interest to aspiring Talislantan travelers, if only for their value as curios of a bygone age.

## The World of Talislanta

Most scholars agree that Talislanta resides somewhere on the material plane, in close proximity to an inter-dimensional portal referred to by some as Nexus. Yet even today, little is known about the exact nature of the Talislantan world. Some say the world is flat, and warn that if one sails too far in any direction, they will fall off the edge of the world. Others say the world is round, and that Talislanta is just one of several continents, separated by vast oceans. Still others believe that the continent of Talislanta is but a fragment of a world once known as Archaeus, which was torn to pieces following a terrible cataclysm known in legend as The Great Disaster.

Such is the nature of Talislanta.

## The Peoples of Talislanta

The humanoid peoples of modern-day Talislanta are remarkably diverse in outward appearance, exhibiting an uncanny variety of skin colorations, facial features, and bodily forms. Yet despite their differences, the continent's humanoid inhabitants are all believed to be descended from one of six root sources:

### 1. The Forest Folk

Also known as the Elder Folk, the Forest Folk are believed to have been the first humanoid peoples to inhabit Talislanta. Along with their modern-day descendants, they have dwelled in the deeper woods, forests, underground warrens, and jungles of Talislanta for many millennia. The Forest Folk include the Muses, Gnorls, Gnomekin, Sprites, and Darklings, as well as plant-like folks such as the Green Men, Arborin, and Verdir.

### 2. The Drakken

Often forgotten by Talislantan scholars, the massive reptilian humanoids known as the Drakken were the first truly "civilized" people known to have existed on the continent. Though they were warlike by nature, they built stone cities of immense sizes, and developed a culture rich in art, poetry, and scholarship. The Drakken ruled the continent for centuries, but were eventually driven to extinction by an alliance of the Wild Tribes and the magic-wielding Archaens. Their descendants include the Saurans, the Satada, and according to some scholars, the Kang.

### 3. The Wild Tribes

The Wild Tribes are among the oldest humanoid folk of Talislanta. They once dominated the central regions of the continent, but were eventually eclipsed by the magic-using Archaens. The descendants of these two peoples have fought ever since, resulting in centuries of intermittent warfare, and most recently, a bloody Uprising that stretched across much of the continent. An uneasy state of truce currently exists between the two age-old adversaries, which few believe will last for long. The descendants of the Wild Tribes include the Beastmen, Yrmanians, Drukh, Za, Chana, Harakin, the Ur, and a long-lost Tribe known as the Baratus. The Jaka disavow any relation to these tribes, instead claiming direct descent solely from the legendary Shaka, greatest of all the Wild Tribes.

### 4. The Archaens

The Archaens are acknowledged as the first humanoid peoples to have discovered the Lost Secrets of Magic. Following wars with the Drakken and later, the Wild Tribes, the Archaens attained supremacy over the entire continent, and perhaps beyond. They developed an advanced arcanology, constructed fabulous cloud cities, built fleets of windships, and created many other marvels. After dominating Talislanta for centuries, the Archaens declined into decadence. Following the Great Disaster, their empire fell into ruin, and much of their magical lore was either lost or forgotten. The modern-day descendants of the Archaens include the Cymrilians, Phantasians, Thaecians, Hadjin, Aamanians, Zandir, Quan, Sarista, and Mandalans.

Although the Archaens are descended from the Wild Races, scholars of the New Age claim that the two races diverged and became distinct after the Archaens discovered how to use magic to alter their appearance. This theory is supported by the Wild Races as well; such is the ages-old animosity between the two peoples that neither race will acknowledge being related to the other. This should tell you all you need to know about Talislantan race relations.

### 5. Magical Hybrids/Mutations

Many sorcerous lifeforms were created by the ancient Archaens, including hybrids such as Thralls, Bodor, Araq, Yassan, Xambrians, Monads, Rajans, and others. The category also includes magically mutated species such as the Ahazu, Moorg-Wan, and Raknids, and according to some, magically evolved or devolved species such as the Gryphs, Aeriad, and Stryx.

### 6. Extra-Dimensional Entities

Talislanta is inhabited or visited by a variety of entities and peoples from other worlds and dimensions. These include benign folk such as the Sindarans and Ariane, who have lived in Talislanta for centuries; but also Shaitan, Cthonian Demons, Ebonites, Tarterans, Brood, Thage and other entities from the Lower Planes of the Omniverse.

# A Brief History of Talislanta

*"Talislanta is a world older than reckoning, steeped in magic and littered with the ruins of a succession of past ages. Its history is as ancient as time, its origins, lost in antiquity."*

- Hotan's History of the World -

To acquire an understanding of the modern-day Talislantan world, one should first learn something of its ancient past — a tenuous undertaking, as much of the history of Talislanta is shrouded in mystery. The lack of reliable data concerning Talislanta's distant past can be directly attributed to the occurrence of an event known simply and accurately as The Great Disaster, a terrible cataclysm that laid waste to much of the Talislantan continent many centuries ago. What is currently known (or believed to be true) of this bygone epoch – gleaned from a smattering of ancient tomes, folk tales, and legends – may be summarized as follows:

## The Time Before Time

Little is known of this ancient epoch, which stretches back across countless millennia to the beginning of the world. The only evidence that civilized peoples were extant during this period can be found in the desolate land of Khazad. Here, rows of ancient grave markers bear mute testimony to the presence of the Thane, a race of seven-foot tall humanoids who once dwelled far to the north in the unknown land of Thanatus.

The Thane were cultists who possessed great interest in the lore of the lower planes. They plied the oceans in black-hulled vessels of mysterious aspect, though to what ends, scholars only speculate. The Thane are believed to have constructed a port city along the western coast of Khazad, from which they conveyed their dead for burial in the territories that lay to the south. Morbid and reclusive by nature, they avoided contact with any other peoples that might have existed in Talislanta at the time, and they continued this practice throughout the Forgotten Age.

## The Forgotten Age

The period predating the Great Disaster, appropriately referred to by scholars as the Forgotten Age, can be divided into two eras: the Drakken Era and the Archaen Age.

## The Drakken Era

The Drakken Era is so named for the reigning civilization at the time, the Drakken – a giant race of humanoid reptilians who dominated the central regions of Talislanta for centuries.

One day, a vessel of unknown origin fell from the sky and landed in the forests of western Talislanta, and was discovered by one of the wild tribes of that region. Inside the ship, they discovered an unusual artifact, a crystalline orb that contained the secrets of a mysterious alien lore: magic.



The tribesmen believed that this artifact originated from the heavens, and revered the makers of the orb as deities. They practiced primitive magical rituals and erected stone monuments (called witchgates by more recent civilizations) to these new deities, who are now remembered only as the Forgotten Gods.

After a time, the tribes traveled to what is now southwestern Aaman, settling along the banks of the Axis River. With their growing knowledge and understanding of magic, they erected a walled fortification to protect themselves from other tribes who might have wished to steal their sacred magical orb. In time, this place would come to be known as Arcanopolis – "the City of Secrets" – and its inhabitants would be known as the Archaens, "Keepers of the Secret Lore."

Over the next few centuries, the Archaens extended their influence throughout the surrounding territories, battling the other Wild Tribes that had previously occupied these regions, whom they now condescendingly referred to as "sub-men." By the end of the millennium, Archaens had ventured as far east as the Wilderlands, where they established a second settlement known as the walled city of Phandril. Here, the Archaens' plans for further expansion met their greatest obstacle: the Drakken, and they had to turn to their former foes, the Wild Tribes, for help.

Against the objections of some of the Shaka's leaders, the Wild Tribes joined forces with the Archaens and embarked upon a great war against the Drakken. When it was over, the Drakken had been driven from the continent, and the Archaens and their Wild Tribe allies took their place as rulers of Talislanta. So began the Archaen Age.

## The Archaen Age

At first, relations between the Archaens and their less advanced brethren were amicable. However, as the Archaens delved deeper into the arcane arts, they grew strange and aloof. Using magic, they altered their physical semblances and began to look less and less like their feral ancestors. They laid claim to the best hunting lands, cut down forests, and erected walled settlements for their people. Their settlements expanded, became cities, and then city-states.

It was not long before the Wild Tribes came to resent the Archaens, and to despise and fear their magics. Tensions between the two sides escalated, exacerbated by internecine struggles between rival Archaen city-states. Wars of conquest and expansion flared across the continent.

After much bloodshed, a group of seven Archaen magicians, known as the Archaen Cabal, arranged a truce. Under the terms of this agreement, the Archaens ceded all the lands of Talislanta to the Wild Tribes. They then left the world below and went to live among the clouds, where their magicians had created a fabulous floating city – the first of many.

A golden age of magical achievement and discovery followed, lasting for several centuries. Some of the greatest magicians ever known were extant during this time; names such as the estimable Koraq, the sorceress Sylan, the High Priest Solimorrion I, and the brilliant but reckless Arkon all made their place in history (see Lost Lore of Talislanta). More sky-cities were erected, and the Archaens enjoyed an unparalleled era of prosperity.

Unfortunately, the Archaens' industrious affluence eventually gave way to decadence and ennui, manifesting in an age of decline. Seeking new and ever more extravagant sensations, the Archaens dabbled in forbidden magics, and created new, hybrid lifeforms to serve their every need. They consorted with entities from other planes, and tampered with the laws of nature for their amusement. A few conscientious individuals tried to intervene, warning that the balance of elemental forces was being upset, and that grievous consequences would result unless the Archaens changed their ways. These warnings went unheeded until it was too late.

## The Great Disaster

To this day, the precise cause of the Great Disaster remains a source of speculation. Some blame the Archaens' excessive use of magic, which they claim damaged the dimensional fabric separating Talislanta from other realities. Others, citing ancient prophecies, attribute the Disaster to divine, diabolical, or demonic origins. More recently, scholars have theorized that the Disaster's root cause was the machinations of the Sepharans, a cult of symbolators whose primary goal has always been to find some way to raise the Six Arch-Demons of the Apocalypse – entities whom the Sepharans regard as deities – and thereby cause the destruction of Talislanta, and the entire omniverse with it. According to those who believe this theory, the Disaster occurred when five of the Arch-Demons awakened; only the failure of the sixth to rise prevented armageddon (see "Talislantan Conspiracy Theories").

Whatever its cause, the Disaster brought a swift end to the Archaen Age. In the ensuing cataclysm, the sky-cities fell from the clouds; some drifting slowly, others plunging like meteors. *The Archaen Codex*, the primary manuscript in which all of the Archaen's magical secrets were stored, was lost, and would not be found again for hundreds of years. Firestorms swept across the plains, and mountains

were ground into dust. Clouds of aberrant magical energy tore across the atmosphere, wreaking havoc with the environment and resulting in climate changes, wildlife mutations, and other anomalies.

The Archaen Age was over. And the Talislantan reality was altered forever.

## The Age Of Confusion

Following the Great Disaster was a fairly short period known as the Age of Confusion, during which the survivors of the Disaster scattered in all directions, abandoning the ruined cities and fleeing into the wilderness. With the collapse of the Archaen Empire, the accumulated magical lore of the previous four millennia was lost, and the peoples of Talislanta reverted to an era of ignorance and superstition. The result was a veritable "Dark Age'' of magic in Talislanta, marked by violence and utter chaos.

During this time, the Wild Tribes battled incessantly for control of the continent, waging war against each other and preying upon the many neomorphs and Archaens who had been displaced by the Disaster. After much bloodshed, the tribes united under a common ruler — the Tirshata, the leader of the Baratus tribe, who would become known as the greatest war-chief of the Wild Tribes. Under the Tirshata's command, the Wild Tribes drove the last descendants of the Archaens out of their ancestral lands, and into the dark forests of Werewood. For the first time since the Forgotten Age, the Wild Tribes once again reigned supreme over the continent of Talislanta.

The day of the Wild Tribes was destined to be short-lived, however. The Tirshata disappeared under mysterious circumstances, and the tribes again fell to infighting as they had in the past. Meanwhile, far to the west, a band of nomadic hunter-gatherers located an artifact within the wreckage of a downed windship — the Archaen Codex, missing since the time of the Great Disaster. With the lost secrets of magic once again in their possession, these descendants of the surviving Archaens began to organize and establish new settlements. Though their new nations were but pale shadows of the once-great civilizations that came before them, together they gave birth to a period that became known as the New Age.

## The New Age

The New Age began with the establishment of several new kingdoms, city-states, and confederations that rose from the ruins of the past: Carantheum, the Kang Empire, Faradun, the cohort of the Seven Kingdoms, and others. Some lost secrets of Archaen magic were rediscovered; windships again sailed the skies above Cymril and Phantas, and the Dracartans brought back the ancient arts of thaumaturgy in Carantheum.

For a time, these isolated pockets of civilization flourished, offering some hope that Talislanta might finally enter an age of peace and prosperity. But barely seven centuries into the New Age, the continent was once again engulfed in war.

## The Uprising

To the "civilized" peoples of Talislanta, this event was known as "the Sub-Men Uprising." To the Wild Tribes, who have long resented the slur, it is simply known as "the Uprising."

The Uprising began with a portentous event called the Awakening, which supposedly began when a giant three-eyed stone idol (one of many) in the land of Urag "came to life" and issued a prophecy to the Ur clans.

The prophecy stated that in the year 699 on the last day of the month of Zar, there would occur a full eclipse of the black moon that would blot out the twin suns, causing the world to fall into darkness for thirteen days. It also foretold that a legendary tribe of wild folk who were forced to flee Talislanta during the Forgotten Age would descend from the skies to lead the Wild Tribes to victory over their enemies. This tribe was the Baratus, and their leader would be called the Tirshata.

The eclipse was the signal for all the Wild Tribes of Talislanta to unite and "overthrow the oppressors" – the so-called civilized peoples of Talislanta, their allies, and the creations of the old Archaens, the Wild Tribes' enemies from ancient times. The Ur united amongst themselves and with most of the Wild Tribes, including the Za, the Drukh, the Yrmanians, the Beastmen, the Chana, the Saurans, the Mondre Khan, and the Harakin.

War broke out across the continent of Talislanta. Though there had been warnings beforehand, the Seven Kingdoms and the other nations of Talislanta were taken by surprise by the ferocity of the Uprising; in particular, the reappearance of the Baratus, and their fleet of windships, which brought the Seven Kingdoms to the brink of defeat.

The bloody conflict lasted for seven years. Though it ended in a stalemate and an uneasy truce, the war had a profound effect on Talislanta, and ushered in the current era of Talislantan history.

For more information on present-day Talislanta, see **Overview: Talislanta Then and Now**, in the *Players Guide*.


THE MIDNIGHT SEA
Necron
KHAZAD
the serpantine MNTS
NARANDU
Black pit of Naranbu
the crystal
YRMANIA
THE LOST SEA
Mordantes Deep
THE AZURE OCEAN
WEREWOOD
Mushroom Forest
Vodruk
Grod
DRAG
Krad
Maze of Ali
TAMA
The Watchstone
Dhar
Ruins of Osmar
PLAINS OF G
Phaedran tombs
SILVANDS
Akbar
ARIM
Zandre
DURNE
The Fangs of Golarin
Castabilon
ZAND
Zann
Valenis
JAKAR
Zanth
Aamahd
Nadir
Mangra
SINDAR
THE WILDLAND OF ZARAN
Zantigm
AAMAN
VARDUNE
KASMIR
Wilderness Wall
Korak's Mountain
Zir
Andurin
Vashay
CYMRIL
Kasmir
Cymril
Bandit Stronghold of Zaran
THE DESERTLANDS
Arat
TAZ
Aabaal
Tor
New Danuvia
ASTAR
Alm
NEW DANUVIA
JHANGARA
the CINNABAR MNTS
MOG
THE DARK COAST
THE LANDS OF THE GREEN MEN
AHAZU LANDS
Tabal
Mogrin
THE THAECIAN ISLES
Geo Din
Phantas
IMRIA
Kraga


THE SEA OF ICE
Rhin
Myr
The Mystic Mnts
THE SEA OF MADNESS
L'haan
Shadow Realm
The Iron Citadel
Xanadar
Harak
The Coral Mnts
The Sinking Land
Karang
Ispacia
Kharakhan Ruins
Kangru
The Omen
Ruins of Jalad
Kajar
THE KANG EMPIRE
The Volcanic Hills
The Oracle
Jacinth
D'jaffa
Sanctuary Mnts
Red Iron City
Al Ashad
Hadran
Carantheum
Ruined City of Hadji
Labrynth of Sharma
Crysalis
THE FAR SEAS
The Hand of Urmahan
Rajanistan
Irdan
THE SEA OF GLASS
Jade Mnts
Vulge
THE CRESENT ISLES
Ruins of Maledictus
Jungles of Chana
Faradun
Komal
Batre
Gated Sea City
Nefaratus



## The Nine Kingdoms

The federation of nations once known as the Seven Kingdoms was the primary target of the Uprising, a war that pitted the Wild Tribes against the descendants of their ancient enemies, the Archaens, and their allies. Though the war ended in a strained truce, the Seven Kingdoms federation was dissolved. It reformed as a new union known as the Nine Kingdoms.

The Nine Kingdoms represent a loosely organized confederation of nine separate city-states, each ruled by its king or queen. Established during the New Age by the descendants of various peoples displaced by the Great Disaster, and reorganized following the Uprising, the Nine Kingdoms share a common government known as the Council of Kings. The nine member-states of this unique confederation are Astar, Cymril, Durne, Kasmir, Sindar, Taz, Vardune, and the new kingdoms of Jakar and Danuvia. The capitals of each city-state are linked by the Nine Roads, a vital east-west link for the trade caravans of Talislanta.

The territories now designated as the Nine Kingdoms encompass a diverse range of terrain types, from arid desert and rocky canyons to deep forests, swamps, and jungle lands. The Axis River forms the western border, while the waterless Dead River canyon performs the same function in the east. To the north stand the mountains of southern Urag; to the south, the dense swamps and mountains of Mog and Jhangara.

## The Nine Roads

The Nine Roads system, consisting of one underground and eight overland roadways, connects each of the Nine Kingdoms to the capital of Cymril and intersects with such important systems as the Phaedran Causeway and the Wilderlands Road.

While the Nine Kingdoms are among the safest and most stable of Talislantan lands, travel along the Nine Roads can still present difficulties. The territories that lie beyond the city-states continue to serve as home to miscreant wizards, highwaymen, and predatory beasts. The civilized versions of these menaces – namely peddlers and charlatans – likewise pose a nuisance to travelers.

# The Wilderlands Wall

Following the Uprising, the Nine Kingdoms built a defensive wall that extends from the northern border of Sindar along the entire eastern border of Kasmir, and south as far as the border of Astar. Fifty feet in height and equipped with catapults, ballista emplacements, and heavy iron gates, the Wall provides some protection from land-based attacks by hostile Wild Tribes such as the Za and Beastmen. A fleet of windships, stationed in Cymril, provides aerial support and reconnaissance.

The Nine Kingdoms jointly maintain the Wall and the various outposts located along its length. These installations are manned by contingents of the Borderlands Legion, a military force comprised mainly of mercenaries, foreign refugees, and outcasts.

# The Kingdom of Cymril

The capital of the Nine Kingdoms is Cymril, a fabulous city of crystal towers, domes, and elevated causeways. Here, the Cymrilian magicians practice their arts, creating windships, potions, powders, and other wonders. Tall and slender in stature, Cymrilians have pale green skin and hair, usually with golden eyes and handsome features. All types of exotic apparel are in vogue, with magical enhancements used to alter appearance as desired.

# The Cymrilians

### *Ancestry and History*

The Cymrilians' earliest ancestors are the ancient Archaens, the first folk in Talislanta to discover the secrets of magic. Cymrilians are also direct descendants of the Phandre, who succeeded the Archaens after their empire was destroyed during the Great Disaster. Exiled from the old Phaedran Empire, the Phandre fled eastwards and settled in the woodlands there; in time they established an independent city-state, which came to be known as Cymril.

### *Culture*

Cymrilians are enamored of magic in all its myriad forms, many of which have become integral to the culture of these people. Almost every Cymrilian owns at least one magical adjunct, and often more. The majority of these items are typically of limited power and are either practical or frivolous. Young children favor magical toys, such as dolls that "speak" a few simple phrases, or miniature animal-constructs that move of their own volition. Among adolescents, enchanted boots or slippers that levitate the wearer a foot or two above the ground are very popular, as are magical enhancements used to alter the color of the skin or hair, enchanted garments that sparkle or glow in the dark, and so forth. Adult Cymrilians also use enhancements, though generally of a more elaborate and expensive sort; substances or items that enhance the user's intelligence, memory, resistance to disease, sexual performance, or desirability are most popular.

Many popular forms of entertainment are also influenced by the Cymrilian love of magic. Among those held in the highest esteem are exhibitions of enchanted art, such as animate sculpture, paintings done with magical pigments that change colors or move about the canvas, prismatic arrangements that emanate holographic images, whorls of color, and so on. Illusionist-artists are also held in high regard for the fantastic panoplies of color, sound, and imagery that they create.

Cymril is the continent's leading supplier of magical wares, and such commodities as amberglass and aquavit. Caravans from many lands come here to trade for Cymrilian products and goods from across the Nine Kingdoms.

The Lyceum Arcanum, Cymril's school of magic, produces the skilled enchanters, alchemists, and magicians that are such a vital part of the Cymrilian economy. Once each year, the city of Cymril hosts the Magical Fair, a colorful spectacle lasting two weeks and attended by folk from all across Talislanta.

### *Language*

Cymrilians converse in either High or Low Talislan, depending upon their profession, level of education, and purported degree of sophistication. Common names are derived from old Archaen nomenclature, as in Celene, Cirelle, Califax, Merdigan, and Pandaran.

### *Magic & Religion*

Cymrilians are not an especially devout people. Most are more interested in magic than religion, which is not surprising given the peculiarities of Cymrilian culture. In the year 603, the Wizard King ordered the magicians of the Lyceum Arcanum to open the institute's secret archives, which had been sealed for centuries. Inside were found numerous artifacts from the Forgotten Age, including the *Archaen Codex*, a repository of magical secrets that may predate the Forgotten Age. Cymrilian scholars estimate that it could take decades to decipher and analyze the complete contents of the archives.

## The Festival of the Bizarre

Excerpted from Tamerlin's Chronicles of Talislanta:

*"I have seen many strange sights in the course of my travels, but few to compare with the Festival of the Bizarre. To gain entrance, one must be attired in costume or make-up. Wearers of the most outlandish garb are awarded a silver goblet, entitling them to drink for free while at the Festival. Competition for this honor is understandably keen and produces some truly unbelievable results. While I was in attendance, a trio of Cymrilian contortionists won goblets for appearing in the guise of a tanglewood tree (I will refrain from citing particulars concerning how this feat was accomplished).*

*"Multicolored tents and pavilions litter the festival grounds, each housing some sort of attraction or entertainment: a duel between spellcasters for wagers, abominations from the Aberrant Forest, illusory panoramas, romances, sensations, improbabilities, and things defying description. The visitor is invited to observe, partake of, or otherwise experience as he or she desires. Rare delicacies from all over the known world are available, as well as more common fare, at nominal cost.*

*"The climax of the festival is the awards ceremony, where valuable prizes are given to those who have submitted an attraction or other entry. For the categories "Most Unique," "Most Provocative," and "Most Absurd," the prize is ten thousand gold lumens. The grand category, appropriately entitled "Most Bizarre," carries with it a prize of one hundred thousand gold lumens. A committee of twelve Thaecian enchanters and enchantresses serve as judges, registering varying degrees of approval or disapproval through magically exaggerated facial expressions and gestures."*

Cymrilians inter their dead in crystal sarcophagi, a practice that goes back hundreds of years to the founding of the nation-state. The color of the crystal used in the making of these funerary devices has varied from one age to the next, though until recent times variations of green and yellow were the most popular hues.

### *Government*

The ruler of Cymril is known as the Wizard King, or Wizard Queen if female. The King represents Cymril in the Council of Kings. He is assisted by the members of the Cymrilian Cabal, a pentad of five advisors chosen from the faculty of the Lyceum Arcanum, Cymril's institute of magic. The Council of Kings meets once a month at the royal palace in Cymril.

Though relations between the member nations are usually good, the Nine Kings have had disagreements about certain issues, such as the building of the Wilderlands Wall and relations with "problematic" nations such as Aaman, Faradun, and others. The most difficult issue by far has been how the Nine Kingdoms are going to deal with the Wild Tribes.

Cymrilians generally identify with one of three political factions, each of which had their origins among the ancient Phandre. The most numerous are the moderate Koresians, who are flexible in their views, and have no great attachment to the old ways of their ancestors. The conservative Tanasians make up less than two percent of the population and are known for their strict adherence to tradition and stern views regarding magical lore, which they believe should not be shared with other peoples. The third group, comprising only about three percent of the population, is the more radical Pharesians, who believe that there should be no restrictions on magic whatsoever.

### *Worldview*

Cymril plays an important role in the Nine Kingdoms, both as a supplier of magical wares and as an integral part of the confederation's defenses and diplomatic efforts. For many years, Cymril was protected by a powerful armada of windships and airborne troop carriers, which were commanded by skilled swordmages. Many of these ships were destroyed during a sneak attack by Baratus windship pirates, and the government is currently working to bring the armada back to full strength.

Cymrilian ambassadors represent the Nine Kingdoms' interests in many foreign countries, including Carantheum, the independent city-states, the Western Lands, and even the Kang Empire.

# Places of Note

## The City of Cymril

The Crystal City of Cymril is widely regarded as Talislanta's single most influential center for trade and cultural exchange. People from almost every part of the continent can be found here, from merchants to travelers, pilgrims, refugees or expatriates from foreign lands, and wayward adventurers. The city is also known for the Lyceum Arcanum, Talislanta's foremost institute of magic. Surrounding the city are many small farms, vineyards, and country estates.

The old city of Cymril sustained considerable damage during the Uprising, and many of its structures were rebuilt following the end of overt hostilities between the civilized nations of Talislanta and the Wild Tribes. The following is an overview of what Cymril looks like in the Nine Kingdoms era, after the Uprising.

### *1. City Outskirts*

The outskirts of the city form a wide ring of pastures, small but verdant farms, vineyards, and country estates. Most of these are owned by Green Aeriad who work the land with exceptional skill. The fruits of their labors are transported by wagon to Cymril, and a percentage of the crop is also sold at roadside stands. The hills here are low, covered in close-cropped grasses, and occasionally crowned with copses of hardwoods or fruit trees.

Well-maintained roadways between villages and manor houses crisscross the landscape, often lined with hedges or short walls of stone and wood. Thrall warriors mounted on mangonel lizards patrol the roads leading to Cymril. Pharesian peddlers, bandits, troupes of Bodor musicians, Djaffir merchant caravans, bands of Sarista, and the occasional itinerant wizard may also be encountered along these thoroughfares.

### *2. Sentinel Stations*

Each of these single-story structures houses a contingent of 20 mercenaries from the Nine Kingdoms Borderlands Legion, predominantly Thralls, Jaka, and Blue Aeriad. Mangonel lizards are stabled outside, a provision intended to discourage wandering bandits and predatory woodland beasts.

Patrols from the inner city check in at these stations regularly, keeping the sentinels appraised of security concerns. It is a grave mistake to underestimate the capabilities of these forces, as those stationed here are all experienced veterans of the Uprising.



### *3a. Cymril Park*

This attractive garden is landscaped with crystalline shrubs, trees, and flowers, all fashioned of colored glass. Paths paved with green-glass tiles lead to a central commons; there stands a crystal statue of Pharos, the first Wizard King of Cymril, whose extensive writings on magic are preserved at the Lyceum Arcanum.

### *3b. Durne Park*

Built to resemble an underground cavern, this enclosed area is complete with scenic grottos, as well as gardens where amber crystals are grown. An amber statue of Sabo Orablo, the Gnomeking who led his people to victory over the Darkling hordes of Urag, stands here. Phosphorescent fungi illuminate the cavern-park, lending a definite Durnean ambiance to the surroundings.

### *3c. Astar Park*

A sylvan preserve replete with fields of rainbow-hued wildflowers, copses of willowood, and a pond which is a scaled-down version of Lake Zephyr, Astar Park is one of the most peaceful sites in the city. In the middle of the lake is an island, upon which stands a statue fashioned of lavender-blue stone and hung with garlands of blossoms. The statue depicts a Muse; possibly Twysk, a renowned maker of gossamer harps in ancient times, though the Muses claim not to recall precisely.

### *3d. Kasmir Park*

Sweeping dunes of yellow-gold sand serve to represent the arid land of Kasmir. Within a windowless stone tower at the center of this area is a gold-plated statue of Abn Kadan, acknowledged as the wealthiest merchant in Kasmir history. At the peak of his power, Abn Kadan is said to have owned four-fifths of the gold in Kasmir. Regrettably, the tower is almost always kept under lock and key – a measure intended to keep thieves from stripping the statue of its gold plating.

### *3e. Sindar Park*

In this unusual setting, built to resemble the wind-worn mesas and rock spires of Sindar, stands a 14-foot basalt statue of Nadir Saluu. An esteemed collector from ancient times, Saluu is credited as the inventor of the complex game known as Trivarian, the favored pastime of the Sindarans. His fabulous collection of ancient artifacts is considered a national treasure of Sindar and is periodically on display at the nearby Museum of Antiquities.

### *3f. Taz Park*

Overgrown with tangled vines, fronds, and dendrons, this park is designed to resemble the wild jungle lands of Taz. The landscape is quite authentic, if perhaps a trifle overdone – the inclusion of poisonous serpents, man-eating plants, and other hazards indigenous to Taz is popular with visiting Thralls, but may give less adventurous tourists cause to avoid this particular attraction. Somewhere in the interior is a lacquered iron statue of Axos, a Thrall military hero credited with saving the City of Cymril from attack by the Wild Tribes after they overran the kingdom of Kasmir.

### *3g. Vardune Park*

These splendid terraced gardens, through which visitors pass on elevated walkways fashioned of woven vines, shelter myriad forms of plant life. In the central garden stands a towering statue made from a single, living Viridia plant, which has been tended constantly by Green Aeriad for several centuries. The statue depicts Viridian, the great magician who created the Viridia hybrid, which is the national plant of Vardune.

### *3h. Danuvia Park*

This new park is dedicated to the Danuvians, one of two new nations added to the Nine Kingdoms after the Uprising. It commemorates the thousands of Danuvian citizens who were put to the sword after the old city-state of Danuvia was taken by tribes of Za and Beastmen during the Uprising. Danuvian warriors sometimes come here to pay their respects to those who died defending their former homeland.

### *3i. Jakar Park*

This new park is dedicated to the Jaka, who fought alongside the members of the former Seven Kingdoms during the Uprising. When their homeland in the Brown Hills was razed by the Ur clans, the Jaka were allowed to resettle in the land of Durne. The landscape of the park resembles the Brown Hills region.

### *4. Consulate*

This large two-story structure has quarters and offices for ambassadors from each of the Nine Kingdoms. Separate facilities are also available for visiting dignitaries and their entourages. Sentinels patrol the grounds regularly. The current representatives of each of the Nine Kingdoms are:

- Moonseed (Astar, 5th Level Muse Telempath). She has served longer than any other Muse; no one knows why.
- Corolian (Cymril, 19th Level Wizard). He is a former instructor at the Lyceum Arcanum, and an expert in

arcana dating back to Archaen times.

- Ebo Aban (Durne, 22nd Level Crystalomancer). He is an expert on the Underground Highway and adjacent caverns, tunnels, and underground rivers.
- Hassan Il Dune (Kasmir, 17th level Trapmage). He is an aged counselor to the King of Kasmir.
- Naru Motas (Sindar, 20th Level). He is a famed alchemist, and a collector of ancient Neurian artifacts.
- Rann (Taz, 18th Level), a former general in the Tazian army; Rann's tattoos denote his many victories in battle.
- Ki-Kya (Vardune, 21st Level Green Aeriad Botanomancer). A senior member of the Great Council of Vardune, her chief concern is preserving the forests of her homeland.
- Danu (Danuvia, 24th Level Virago). She was a commander of the Danuvians during the Uprising; she resigned after the fall of the city-state of Danuvia, though it was not her fault.
- Tane (Jakar, 29th level Beastmaster). He is a renowned tracker who, in days gone by, traveled the continent with the wizard Tamerlin.

### *5. Hall of Records*

The offices of Cymril's tax collectors, assessors, and related functionaries are found here, as are all records pertaining to tariffs, trade duties, real estate holdings, licenses to practice magic, and the like.

**Profile:** Avira K'Ya
Green Aeriad, 24th Level
Head Archivist at the Hall of Records, Avira is very old - his bright green plumage has faded to yellow. He tries to accommodate every request for information, but is often swamped with work. Avira is hard of hearing, so it is advisable to speak loudly when addressing inquiries to him.

### *6. Court of the Nine Kingdoms*

Nine judges (one from each of the Nine Kingdoms) preside over this court, which handles disputes arising between the member nations. Criminal and civil cases of importance are referred here from one of the lower courts.

### *7. College of Law*

A university and guildhouse for arbitrators and legislators, legal representatives from across the Nine Kingdoms and beyond are available here for hire at costs of 100 gold lumens per day or more. Sindaran litigators, due to their unique mental faculties, usually command fees of up to twice the standard rate.

**Profile:** Uru Hadar
Sindarin, 16th Level
Renowned as the most skillful litigator in all of the Nine Kingdoms, Uru's fees are commensurate with his reputation – as high as 1,000 gold lumens per day. Some claim that his obsession with artifacts from Khazad is extreme, even for a Sindaran.

### *8. City Gaol*

One of the city's few stone structures, the gaol serves as a place of incarceration for felons, miscreants, and other undesirables. Heavily armed Thralls and Jaka are employed as guards, with Kasmir trapsmiths acting as gaolers.

All locks used here are of Kasmir make, each device having between two and eight separate locking mechanisms. Maximum security facilities are available to house spellcasters and members of those races requiring special attention. By Talislantan standards, these facilities are deemed quite tolerable. Still, conditions in the subterranean levels leave something to be desired.

**Profile:** Ibn Asheed
Kasmir Trapsmith, 17th Level
The head gaoler of the city gaol, Ibn Asheed, is said to be scrupulously honest and cannot be bribed. Attached to his belt by a chain is a great keyring that holds the keys to every cell in the City Gaol.

### *9. Citadel*

A fortified installation with facilities for over a thousand mercenaries (chiefly Thralls and Blue Aeriad) as well as a Cymrilian Warrior-Mage troop, the Citadel serves as the barracks, armory and training camp for Cymril's private Legion.

**Profile:** Varn
Thrall Warrior, 17th Level
As Commander of the Watch, Varn is in charge of coordinating security for the city-state. He is a veteran officer of the Borderlands Legion and is not one to be trifled with. Varn fought in the Uprising and is said to be an expert on the Wild Tribes.

### *10. Sentinel Stations*

Each of these two-story outposts is manned by a mixed contingent of heavy and light infantry, typically 20 in number, and a pair of Cymrilian warrior-mages. Platoons of five sentinels patrol their designated areas in four-hour shifts. If a platoon fails to report on time, alarm gongs sound, and additional units respond.

### *11. Council of Kings*

This is the great hall of the Nine Kings, who gather here once every month (seven weeks, in Talislantan chronology) to rule on issues of the Nine Kingdoms. Facilities for each of the kings and their entourages are contained in an adjoining structure.

### *12. Palace of the Wizard King*

This is the dwelling place of Rabian, the current Wizard King of Cymril, who lives here with his family and a retinue of advisors. He is guarded day and night by a personal guard of elite Thrall warriors and Cymrillan Warrior-Mages, all attired in ceremonial battle armor. The palace is splendid rather than ostentatious, featuring a large banquet hall, canopied terraces, scalloped balconies, a solarium, a library, and private chambers of varying size and utility.

**Profile:** Rabian, the Wizard King
Cymrilian Magician, 38th Level
Rabian is an aging Cymrilian with a long beard and emerald green skin and hair. He is a benevolent ruler, though perhaps a bit addle-brained as a result of excessive indulgence in Phantasian dream essence, a vice of his.

### *13. Cymril Bazaar*

This open-air market is where merchants from across the continent come to offer their wares. Numerous types of goods are available in the shops and stalls, including seeds, plants, and linen from Vardune; weapons and armor from Taz; intricate musical instruments and gossamer from Astar; crystals and precious stones from Durne; locks, fetters, and trap mechanisms from Kasmir; alchemicals and skoryx from Sindar; magical paraphernalia and aquavit from Cymril; and much more. Travelers are advised to keep an eye out for unscrupulous charlatans, who attempt at every given opportunity to foist inefficacious remedies and tonics upon gullible wayfarers. Djaffir merchants, selling beasts of various sorts, usually occupy the southern sector of the bazaar.

**Profile:** Darual the Morphosite
Cymrilian Magician, 11th Level
An odd and eccentric individual, Darual is known for his habit of magically altering his manner of dress, skin coloration, and gender, as the mood suits him (hence the name Morphosite). He is a seller of exotic potions and charms and operates from a small booth festooned with gaudily-colored silks and baubles. As strange as he may seem, Darual is friendly and even somewhat benevolent, and is a well-known figure both here and at the Magical Fair.

### *14. The Emerald Pentacle*

An unusual five-sided structure built of translucent green crystal and furnished with tables and chairs of polished lemon yellow glass, the Emerald Pentacle is an inn and tavern catering primarily to travelers and magicians. Curtained booths are available for those seeking privacy; a spacious common room and outdoor terrace suit the needs of individuals inclined to more sociable behavior. The accommodations are first-rate in all respects, and the prices are reasonable. House specialties include Zandir wine, steamed rock urchin in a sauce of leeks and truffles, and aquavit of the first order.

### *15. The Double-Edged Sword*

This inn and tavern caters to mercenaries and men-at-arms, especially Thralls. Hearty food and Tazian fire-ale served in red-iron mugs are the house specialties. Sparsely furnished rooms and ample stable facilities are available at standard rates. A Zandir swordsman named Lefanque tends the bar, and an immense Monad named Ord delivers food and



drink to the patrons. Tazian combat (with garde) and other contests of a martial nature are held here on a nightly basis. All weapons except garde must be checked at the door – a stipulation suggestive of the nature of the Double Edged Sword's typical clientele.

**Profile:** Cestus
Thrall Warrior, 17th Level (retired)
The Thrall Warrior Cestus is the owner of the Double--Edged Sword, though he is seldom on the premises; when the Uprising started, he reenlisted in the Borderlands Legion, and is currently serving as a sub-commander on the Wilderness Wall. Cestus is considered to be an expert on the Za tribes, against whom he has fought for over fifteen years.

### *16. The River Inn*

Catering exclusively to Blue and Green Aeriad, this inn is furnished with tables, lounges, hammocks, and elevated walkways fashioned of woven vines. The fare (seeds and pods, fermented vinesap, and giant waterbugs broiled in a savory swamp-sauce) and accommodations (tiered tree dwellings situated behind the tavern) are likely to hold little appeal to non-Aeriad. A stream flowing through the common room helps sustain the viridian-plant decor and adds a touch of authentic Vardune atmosphere. Prices are one-fourth higher than standard rates.

**Profile:** Cha-Chik
Green Aeriad Horticulturist, 9th Level
The proprietor of the River Inn grows hybrid plants as a hobby and has an extensive knowledge of Talislantan flora. She is aided by an enchanted and fully mobile Bombo Tree.

### *17. Astar Gardens*

This nympharium and pleasuredome was built to resemble the sylvan glades and scenic woodland vistas of Astar. An admittance fee of 100 gold lumens is charged at the entrance. Customers are allowed to partake of succulent fruits and vials of blossom nectar, engage in dalliances or romantic confluxes, and experience the myriad raptures of Muse culture, as they desire. Entertainment is provided by male and female Muses, who use their telempathic powers to project panoramas of color and sound for the benefit of their clientele (and according to their whims).

**Profile:** Amarylis
Muse Esthesian, 18th Level
This beautiful, nymph-like creature with lavender-blue skin and hair is both amorous and exotic, but like all Muses seems somewhat distant and aloof to outsiders. Amarylis speaks fluent Low Talislan and loves to mimic the voices and accents of others. She is watched over by her two small friends, Mig and Scag, a mated pair of Wood Whisps who constantly cause trouble in the market by stealing small fruits and sips of nectar.

### *18. Subterranean Market*

In this underground marketplace, run by the Kingdom of Durne, Gnomekin merchants sell mushrooms and fungi, fresh rock urchins, precious stones, low-grade magical crystals, and other commodities. Wagons head to and from the subterranean city of Durne through the Underground Highway, which has a surface entrance here. Gnomekin fare – roots, tubers, dried fish, and pungent mushroom ale – is available in the grotto tavern, though moss-lined nooks serve as the only available style of accommodation. Prices are below average in most cases.

**Profile:** Ibo Azo
Gnomekin Crystalomancer, 12th Level
As coordinator of the Subterranean Market, Ibo Azo is charged by the Gnomeking with setting fair prices for all Gnomekin exports. Ibo is also known for having spent over ten years traveling the Underground Highway beneath the Nine Kingdoms and beyond, mapping much of this complex subterranean system as he went.

### *19. Sindar Pavilion*

An inn and tavern catering mainly to Sindarans, though also frequented by scholars, antiquarians, and curio dealers, the decor here is in the Sindaran style: Open-walled, with diaphanous curtains dyed in oranges and deep browns, and furnishings of smoothly polished hardwood or stone. In the central common room Sindarans play Trivarian, a game incomprehensible to single-brained beings. Wagering is often brisk, the players being stimulated by rainbow-hued skoryx served in spheres of frosted crystal.

A collection of one sort or another is usually on display (one demented Sindarin, Sadaan, has a semi-permanent exhibit of skulls and necromantic regalia that always draws a sizable crowd). Aspiring thieves would do well to consider other prey – the Sindarans ward their money satchels with clever devices and are exceptionally vigilant concerning their treasured collections. A further concern is Sadaan himself, who is always in the market for skulls, bones, and other morbid collectibles. The inn's prices are average.

**Profile:** Kahutan
Sindaran Collector, 15th Level
The owner of the Sindaran Pavilion is known for his collection of antique jewelry, much of which dates back to the Forgotten Age. The Sindaran often appears in public ornamented with priceless rings and bracelets, seemingly

oblivious to his danger. Kahutan is also a Trivarian player of some note (he is a Nadir of the Fourteenth Degree). He considers himself a guardian of sorts for a Sindra named Sadaan, who collects necromantic adjuncts.

### *20. The Caravansary*

A sprawling tent-complex serving as an inn and tavern, the Caravansary caters to travelers from the desert kingdoms of Djaffa, Carantheum and Kasmir. The atmosphere is casual - customers recline on silken cushions and are attended to by veiled serving girls bearing trays of honeyed dates, skewers of roasted meat, and palm wine. Silver cucurbits of steaming-hot mochan, a dark and stimulating beverage popular throughout the Desert Kingdoms, are imported directly from Djaffa after each year's harvest.

The tents contain three large common rooms, numerous small suites, and a half dozen baths. Outside are extensive facilities for the stabling of beasts, with additional areas for wagons and drays. Farad merchants enter the Caravansary at their own risk. Prices are slightly above average.

**Profile:** Nabu Al Abss
Dracartan Navigator, 26th Level (retired)
This retired land-barge captain now acts as proprietor of the Caravansary. In his day, he sailed the desert sands of Djaffa and Carantheum, and even Faradun. In the course of his career he had numerous run-ins with the Rajans, whom he despises. After a few drinks Nabu can become talkative, which is unusual for a Dracartan; on a good night he may regale a listener with stories of the buried treasure he claims to have found in the ruins of the Four Nations.

### *21. Museum of Antiquities*

A monolithic structure over four centuries old, the Museum of Antiquities contains rare artifacts, many of which date back to the Forgotten Age. Included are exhibits on the ancient civilizations of Elande, Pompados, Sharna, Phandril, Xambria, as well as others. There are rumors that a collection of Torquaran artifacts is kept behind formidable magical wards and locks. Of special interest to scholars and antiquarians is an exhibit featuring uncategorized relics, whose origins and historical usage have yet to be determined.

**Profile:** Modan
Sindaran Collector, 27th Level
Modan serves as Curator of the Museum of Antiquities. He is sometimes available to appraise newly unearthed artifacts and has been known to finance archaeological expeditions to ancient sites, such as the Labyrinths of Sharna, to acquire artifacts for the Museum.

### *22. Site of the Magical Fair*

Situated directly above the Subterranean Market, this area serves as a public park during all but two weeks out of the year, when Cymril's famous Magical Fair is held here (see "Talislantan Chronology"). The Fair offers an incredible variety of attractions: Pageants; exhibitions of magical virtuosity; windship races; and many other challenges, oddities, and amusements. Especially popular are the numerous small booths and stalls, which offer for sale all manner of magical and alchemical appurtenances – potions, powders, phylacteries, philters, medicines, tonics, dusts, and exotic fragrances. Small magical boats sail in the moat which surrounds the grounds, and the waters are stocked with colorful fish and mollusks. The Fair is attended by folk from all across the continent and is an event of paramount importance to the merchants of Cymril.

**Profile:** Celene
Cymrilian Enchantress, 12th Level
Known for her skillful illusions, subtle charms, and placid demeanor, the Enchantress Celene serves as the Director of the Magical Fair, responsible for the coordination of all events and attractions. Permits for booths may be obtained from her clerks at a cost of 100 gold lumens per day, subject to Celene's final approval. Rumors hint at a romantic liaison between the Enchantress and the Wizard King.

### *23. The Library at Cymril*

This venerable institution is an adjunct of the Lyceum Arcanum. The library contains over 20,000 tablets, scrolls, and volumes, many quite rare or even unique. The sections on magic, alchemy, ancient history, geography, and languages are especially well-regarded. It is not permissible to borrow research materials from the library except by special arrangement with the Lyceum Arcanum.

**Profile:** Sophistes
Callidian Cryptomancer, 24th Level
The Head Archivist at the Library at Cymril is not particularly sociable, but he is efficient and highly competent. Sophistes keeps a keen eye on all who enter the Library and is especially alert for thieves and vandals – it is said that he keeps a captive Shaitan in a brass bottle hidden beneath the folds of his cloak.

### *24. The Arcanum Society*

This is a private club open only to members of the Arcanum Society, which includes many of the instructors at the Lyceum Arcanum as well as other scholars of the arcane arts, and several prominent wizards and archimages of various races and nationalities. Admission to the Society (as a member or guest) is by invitation only. The club is said to

maintain an excellent library of magical and alchemical writings, plus a collection of rare and potent magical artifacts. The structure is warded against thieves and intruders to such an extent that mere proximity to the building can be dangerous. The Society also sponsors an annual awards ceremony that is the talk of the Seven Kingdoms.

**Profile:** Azradamus
Cymrilian Archimage, 37th Level
Azradamus, the Chief Administrator of the Lyceum Arcanum, also serves as head of the Arcanum Society. Though he is over 200 years old, he remains a magician of great personal force. Azradamus interviews all prospective members, and testily insists that only Phaedran (the dead language of a fallen empire) should be spoken within the Society's halls.

### *25. The Alchemist's Wares*

This small establishment offers powders, potions, and mixtures of various sorts at close to average rates. The proprietors purchase raw materials from independent sellers, provided the quality of such wares is up to their standards. Unknown mixtures are analyzed at a cost of ten gold lumens. This is a very reputable establishment, known for fair prices, honest dealing, and quality merchandise. It is also an informal gathering place for the Sindaran alchemists who dwell in Cymril.

**Profile:** Zured
Sindaran Alchemist, 25th Level
Zured is the primary supplier of alchemical wares to the magical and alchemical communities of Cymril and Sindar. He has dealings with merchants and independent sellers from many lands, and is always interested in purchasing rare plants, crystals, and other ingredients; he pays a fair price.

### *26. The Lyceum Arcanum*

This labyrinthine structure houses what is perhaps Talislanta's foremost institute for the study of magic and alchemy (the Academy of Thaumaturgy in Carantheum is also highly rated, but its curriculum is less varied). Courses are available at Apprentice, Initiate, Adept, and Master levels, with classes offered in such esoteric fields as magical scripts, alchemical procedures (basic and advanced), rituals of summoning, metaphysical doctrines, the concoction of magical mixtures, interdimensional travel, the creation of homunculi, and many more.

Tuition at the Arcanum is 1,000 gold lumens per septemester (seven weeks), or 100 gold lumens for Cymrilian citizens. Application and placement exams are required before acceptance.

The Lyceum faculty presently consists of the following individuals:

- Azradamus (Cymrilian Archimage, 37th Level) – Chief Administrator, head of the Board of Directors, Professor Emeritus of Arcane Lore and Metaphysical Doctrines
- Talmaj the Green (Cymrilian Magician, 30th Level) – Assistant Director, Lyceum Treasurer, member of the Board of Directors, Professor of Occult Sciences and Extradimensional Studies
- Nymandre (Cymrilian Wizard, 35th Level) – Dean of Adepts, member of the Board of Directors, Professor of Extra-Dimensional Studies
- Ebonarde (Cymrilian Wizard, 33rd Level) – Dean of Initiates, member of the Board of Directors, Professor of Metaphysics
- Pandaran (Cymrilian Magician, 32nd Level) – Dean of Apprentices, member of the Board of Directors, head of the Alchemy Department, Professor of Alchemy and Mysticism
- Abascar (Dracartan Thaumaturge, 36th Level) – Head of the Thaumaturgy Department
- Alb of Elwan (Aamanian Archimage [expatriate], 34th Level) – Associate Professor of Theosophy and Ethics
- Califax (Cymrilian Cryptomancer, 18th Level) – Associate Professor of Cryptomancy and Linguistics
- Cirelle (Thaecian Enchantress, 30th Level) – Associate Professor of Enchantment
- Merdigan the Miraculous (Zandir Wizard, 15th Level) – Associate Professor of Illusions and Conjuration
- Naryx of the Gloved Hand (Tanasian Necromancer, 23rd Level) – Associate Professor of Primitive Magic and Necromantic Studies
- Nostros (Pharesian Sage, 32nd Level) – Professor of Arcane Lore and Talislantan Culture
- Omlr of Kasir (Kasmir Trapmage, 25th Level) – Associate Professor of Constructs, Security Advisor to the Lyceum
- Pharlan (Cymrilian Magician, 21st Level) – Director of the Apprentice and Initiate Undergraduate Programs, Professor of Magical Academe
- Qual the Phantasian (Phantasian Astromancer, 21st Level) – Associate Professor of Astromancy
- Skree Cha K'Ya (Green Aeriad Botanomancer, 24th Level) – Associate Professor of Botanomancy
- Torann (Sindaran Alchemist, 26th Level) – Archivist Emeritus, Associate Professor of Alchemy and Antiquarian Lore
- Zarista (Dhuna Warlock, 17th Level) – Associate Professor of Magic and Witchcraft

### *27. Cymril Magical Supply*

Like the library, this establishment is an adjunct of the Lyceum Arcanum. All sorts of magical and alchemical

supplies and paraphernalia are available here, including alchemical apparati, powdered plants and animals, crushed minerals, crystal containers of various shapes and sizes, magical inks and pigments, several varieties of parchment, and a host of related materials. The more common types of magical and alchemical mixtures, many concocted by students at the Lyceum, can also be obtained here. This shop buys raw ingredients and magical apparati only from licensed dealers, ever since the scandal concerning tainted Euphorica (a mood enhancer and intoxicant) and the plague of inebriated Harbinger Imps two years ago. Prices for goods tend to be rather high due to the large local demand.

**Profile:** Dabn Nada
Kasmir Merchant, 15th Level
Dabn Nada runs this establishment for the Lyceum. She receives a small percentage on everything that is sold here, and has no patience for haggling, since it cuts into her commissions. Dabn is often the target of pranks and mischief from the Lyceum's apprentices, and her tolerance is growing thin.

### *28. The Sanctum*

Ostensibly a shop dealing in rare books and magical writings, the Sanctum bears a shadowy reputation as an establishment owned, operated, and frequented by black magicians. It is widely believed that contraband substances and stolen goods are bought and sold here.

**Profile:** Nocturnus
Farad Necromancer, 17th Level
An individual of dark and saturnine moods and not prone to idle chatter, Nocturnus is the topic of much speculation among his fellow shopkeepers. Some claim that he is a dealer in the narcotic herb K'tallah, and possibly an agent of the Rajans; others claim that he has connections with the Witchmen of Chana. Nocturnus has been accused several times of selling contraband but has never been convicted; evidence and witnesses seem to mysteriously disappear whenever anyone attempts to make a case against him. Some believe that Nocturnus is served and advised by an ancient Sardonicus named Quaz, whom Nocturnus reportedly keeps in a sealed vault. Others whisper that it is Nocturnus who serves the bottle imp, not the other way around.

### *29. The Magic Sigil*

One of the most colorful shops in the city, the Magic Sigil is owned by a Rahastran wizard named Merdan. The shelves lining the walls of this shop are laden with all manner of strange objects: Books, phials, curios, scrolls, statuaries, sarcophagi, urns, old clothing, jars filled with various anatomical parts preserved in amber-colored fluids, crystals, maps, chests, and a thousand other oddities. Merdan makes no effort to catalog his wares, nor does he care to spend much time bargaining with customers. Pay the asking price, and the object is yours; no guarantees or refunds. Merdan is equally renowned as a buyer – no questions asked, take his offer or leave it.

**Profile:** Merdan
Rahastran Wizard, 27th Level
Known for his stories, some of which verge upon the fantastic, Merdan claims to be no less than 411 years old, and the seventh son of the seventh son of the mad wizard Rodinn. His cadaverous appearance and archaic style of dress would seem to lend credence to the first claim. He owns a Zodar deck but refuses to use it, claiming that the cards have turned on him. His magical interests now focus primarily on his collection of rare spells and artifacts from the Archaen Age, which is said to be unsurpassed on the continent.

### *30. Artisans' District*

Here are found numerous small shops, featuring jewelers, ambersmiths, metalsmiths, weaponers, tanners, glassblowers, makers of green dyes, jewelers, furniture builders, potters, weavers, and so forth. The wares are reasonably priced, and the merchandise is of good quality.

**Profile:** Melianthe
Sawila Artificer, 16th Level
Just one of the many artists who work in this part of the city, Melianthe is a weaver of gossamer tapestries – delicate creations that often sell for over 1,000 gold lumens apiece. Her works are said to have an unusual charm, and children are especially enraptured by the scenes she weaves. Young and attractive, she has many suitors, including the Zandir painter Rochalle, the Cymrilian sculptor Quast, and Kadath the Tanasian (who constantly sends Bodor Musicians to serenade her).

### *31. The Four Winds Travel & Supply Co.*

This run-down complex of buildings is owned by two partners, a Cymrilian magician and a Phantasian dream merchant. One structure houses facilities for the construction and maintenance of windships; another is a warehouse for the storage of various ship's components. There are several docks, including one reserved for windships coming in from the mines on the Sea of Glass. An old watchtower, dating back to the time of the Beast Wars, houses a small, dingy office.

Ships depart monthly, though schedules tend to be erratic. Accommodations vary in quality; when available,

first-class fares are generally double the standard rate. Passage to other locales must be arranged privately – the standard rate is 10 gold lumens per mile, plus a departure fee and retainer of at least 500 gold lumens.

**Profile:** Radan
Cymrilian Magician, 15th Level (retired)
During the Uprising, Radan made a fortune supplying the Nine Kingdoms military with equipment, rations, steeds, and weapons. He has many connections in places high and low, including the rulers of the Nine Kingdoms, the commanders of the Borderlands Legion, the Dracartan Desert Scouts of Carantheum, and more.

### *32. Cymril Glass Co.*

Situated adjacent to the Four Winds Travel and Supply Company, this facility stores, cuts, polishes, and ships green crystal mined and imported from the Sea of Glass. The Glass Workers' guildhall is located on the premises, and includes an interesting exhibit of items found entombed within cut blocks of glass – presumably trapped since the formation of the Sea of Glass. Mining ships arrive and depart monthly, off-loading and taking on cargo at the Four Winds' docks. The owners are reluctant to hire mercenaries to protect their ships, saying that they'd rather lose a cargo than be bled white by over-priced warriors.

**Profile:** Malnar
Cymrilian Artisan, 14th Level
The owner of the Cymril Glass Company, which he inherited from his father, Malnar is in his forties, heavy-set, and has a gruff temperament. He employs a workforce of forty Cymrilian glassworkers, ten Monad servitors, and two dozen experienced Cymrilian windship crewmen. He has four large windships capable of carrying heavy loads at his disposal.

### *33. The Four Winds Tavern*

This tavern and inn caters primarily to Cymrilian windpilots and airmen, though shipcrafters and glassworkers sometimes come here as well. Not surprisingly, their talk is largely of windships, atmospheric conditions, and goings-on in foreign lands. The establishment offers good food and drink at nominal prices, overnight accommodations of adequate quality, and private lounges where individuals with a surfeit of wealth can enjoy a phial of Phantasian dream essence in repose. It is sometimes possible to obtain the services of a qualified windpilot or levitational engineer by inquiring on the premises.

**Profile:** Arcturian
Phantasian Astromancer, 12th Level

The proprietor of the Four Winds Tavern is a former Dream Merchant of adventurous nature who acquired the tavern after winning a windship race against a Cymrilian magician named Moraldo. Though Arcturian won the race, and the wagers that came with it, fair and square, Moraldo now regards Arcturian as a hated rival. Arcturian has traveled across the length and breadth of the continent, and loves to regale customers with tales of his travels, such as the time he smuggled a chest of gold out of the Khadun's Tower in Rajanistan, or the night he spent with an alluring Dhuna witchwoman as a covert witness to the Rites of Zar.

### *34. Seraglio's*

Seraglio's, owned by a Zandir clothier of the same name, is an establishment dealing in exotic costumes of all types and origins. Elaborate and fanciful outfits are for sale or rental hare, and custom-made apparel is available by arrangement. Prices are high, but the quality of Seraglio's work is unmatched in the Nine Kingdoms.

**Profile:** Seraglio
Zandir Artificer (clothier), 18th Level
A foppish Zandir, Seraglio is about 40 years old and a bit out of shape. He dresses in the most extravagant costumes and affects a somewhat snobbish attitude. Seraglio is always in step with the latest fashions, no matter how outrageous. During the Second Cult War, he helped hide a Dhuna witch from Aamanian Witchhunters; Seraglio believes that since then, he has been spied upon by Aamanian Inquisitors, who he fears are after him.

### *35. The Key and Lock*

This establishment specializes in the design, repair, installation, removal, and maintenance of intricate trap mechanisms. Also available are keys made to order (10 gold lumens), custom locks (20 gold lumens and up), a lock opening service (25 gold lumens on-site, 100+ if travel is required), plus such unusual items as shackles and cages. Prices are exorbitant, even for goods of such high quality.

**Profile:** Azin al Din
Kasmir Wizard, 22nd Level
The accomplished wizard and trapsmith Azin al Din is much in demand among the wealthier magicians of Cymril, for whom he provides security measures to safeguard their homes and possessions. Azin al Din is said to hoard a veritable fortune in gold and gemstones, supposedly in a vault hidden in the basement of his tower-shop. Despite the dangers posed by Za and Beastmen tribes, he hopes someday to launch an expedition to the Hadjin Tombs, to further increase his fortune.

### *36. The Wilderlands Outfitter*

This immense warehouse and stable complex offers almost anything which an aspiring traveler or caravan-master could desire – trained beasts of many types, wagons, drays, rope, tents, weaponry, armor, clothing, and even the occasional used windskiff. Prices are within reason; quality is good.

**Profile:** Muharabi
Djaffir Merchant, 16th Level
Muharabi abandoned the nomadic lifestyle of his people and settled in Cymril some years ago. He is regarded as a crafty businessman, fair but firm in all his dealings. Muharabi continues to be on good terms with his tribesmen, who supply him with the finest quality of merchandise. He is said to keep a harem of no less than eleven wives, all of different nations and exotic customs.

### *37. Tazian Tattoos*

The most intricate and colorful tattoos may be obtained here at a cost of approximately 5 gold lumens per square inch. Only Thralls are allowed to be inked with Tazian tattoos, and all battle-tattoos require confirmation from at least two eyewitnesses.



**Profile:** Maul
Thrall Warrior, 26th Level
This scarred, one-eyed Thrall is an expert in the art and iconography of Tazian tattoos from across the ages. At a glance Maul can decipher the meaning and import of any Thrall tattoo. Though lacking one eye, Maul is still a skilled warrior. He helped defend Cymril during the Uprising.

### *38. Talislantan Imports*

This subsidiary of the Wilderlands Outfitter deals in a wide variety of goods imported from across the continent. Many types of commodities may be available at any given time, depending upon supply and demand, and might include furnishings, fabrics, exotic hardwoods, spices, scintilla, amber, gourmet delicacies, liquors, and curios of various sorts. Yitek nomads come here to sell items unearthed from the numerous ruins which litter the Wilderlands of Zaran. Prices are high (at least double standard rates), and quality varies considerably.

**Profile:** Wanibi
Yitek Tomb Robber 11th Level
The chief wife of Muharabi, who owns the Wilderlands Outfitter, Wanibi serves as both the head of his household and the mistress of his harem, as well as the proprietress of Talislantan Imports. The other wives are said to fear her.

### *39. Kasmir Money-Lender*

A windowless stone structure resembling the typical fortified Kasmiran home serves as the office of the Kasmir moneylender Abn Qua. Here one can exchange foreign currencies (for a 10% surcharge), deposit money or valuables for safekeeping (5% fee per month), or apply for a loan (30% minimum interest).

**Profile:** Abn Qua
Kasmir Auditor, 10th Level
Abn Qua is fair in his dealings, but he has little patience for those who do not make good on their loans. He is suspected of having hired the services of Arimite Revenants and Jaka Manhunters to persuade recalcitrant debtors to pay up promptly and in full.

### *40. The Technomancer*

This stall is run by a family of Technomancers which designs, repairs, and maintains all sorts of mechanisms, devices, and conveyances. The quality of workmanship is superior; fees begin at 10 gold lumens per hour, plus materials.

**Profile:** Kwadinn
Yassan Technomancer, 15th Level

Kwadinn is renowned as the architect of the Wilderlands Wall. He knows every inch of the structure by heart, including – some say – the location of several secret passageways and trap doors that were built into and below the Wall. All ten of Kwadinn's children work for him and bear his name.

### *41. Temple of the Ten Thousand*

Located opposite the Temple of Aa, this is not actually a temple, but a lively tavern and brothel frequented by traveling Paradoxists from Zandu. Wine and spicy Zandir dishes are available at fair prices. Entertainment is provided by Bodor musicians, Thiasian dancers, and Zandir charlatans.

**Profile:** Xanique
Zandir Courtesan, 11th Level
An aging courtesan manages the colorful "Temple" of the Ten Thousand. Once lovely beyond compare, Xanique's fading beauty is now necessarily enhanced by the use of magic. She believes in living for the here and now and is a great favorite of the many folk who patronize her establishment. Few are aware she was once the pampered companion of a now-deceased Exarch of Arim, nor that she knows secrets of the hidden passages of the palace in Ahrazahd.

### *42. Temple of Aa*

This bland, white-washed edifice is dedicated to Aa the Omniscient, the cold patron deity of Aaman. The temple is frequented mainly by members of the Orthodoxist cult on pilgrimages to the East; Aa has few followers in the Nine Kingdoms. The temple also attracts Aamanian witch hunters, who are not particularly welcome in the Nine Kingdoms.

**Profile:** Aalm
Aamanian Archimage, 18th Level
A stern-faced Aamanian of middle years, Aalm's assignment to Cymril brings him no joy – he believes that he is surrounded by infidels, and that Cymril is a city of sin. Still, he obeys the dictates of the Hierophant unfailingly and without question. Aalm is served by an Aamanian Witch Hunter named Aaslan (13th Level), who bears a shadowy reputation amongst the local citizenry. Of even greater concern, it is said that Aalm has been known to associate with Aabassian Heretics – the black-armored and much-feared agents of the Hierophant of Aaman.

### *43. Temple of the Creator*

The beneficent deity known as the Creator has a wide and varied following, including many Cymrilians, Aeriad, and Sindarans. Services are held in this temple only twice per year, on special holy days.

**Profile:** Bahal
Cymrillan Priest, 12th Level
Tall, reserved, and introspective, aside from his priestly duties Bahal is also an avid scholar of metaphysics. He owns a considerable collection of manuscripts on the subject.

### *44. Temple of Terra*

This underground temple is dedicated to the Gnomekin's patron deity, Terra the Earth Mother.

**Profile:** Abo Surabla
Gnomekin Priestess, 19th Level
The High Priestess of the Temple of Terra is compassionate to the needs of all beings, and never turns away a person in need, regardless of the individual's religious beliefs.

### *45. Cymril Mausoleum*

A gigantic edifice of dark green crystal, the mausoleum is the final resting place of many Cymrilians. As was the fashion among their Phandre ancestors, the Cymrilians inter their dead in glass. Green crystal is the least expensive and most popular material (2,000 gold lumens per sarcophagus, the lighter and more translucent shades costing quite a bit more), while amberglass is favored only by the very wealthy (20,000 gold lumens). Encased in solid crystal, the departed are perfectly preserved, and may be viewed by untold future generations of admirers and descendants.

**Profile:** Dismar
Cymrilian Mortician, 13th Level
A gaunt man with pale green skin and ice-cold hands, Dismar serves as the mausoleum's chief mortician. When extending his sympathies to the bereaved, he wears a mournful expression and attires himself in somber black garments. When not on duty, Dismar can be found at the Temple of the Ten Thousand, pouring back glasses of green wine.

### *46. Mercenaries Exchange*

The owners of this establishment act as agents for mercenaries and others for hire, arranging to lease them to interested parties temporarily. Available in their current portfolio are:

- Kasmiran trap-mages (200 gold lumens per day plus expenses)
- Yassan technomancers (10 gold lumens per level, per day)
- Jaka Scouts (200+ gold lumens per month)
- Arimite knife-fighters (100 gold lumens per week)
- Za mercenaries (75 per week)
- Jhangaran scouts (50 per week)
- Sauran bodyguards (1,000 per month; six-month minimum)
- Vajra engineers (300 per week)
- Sunra mariners (200 per week)
- Green Men symbiotes (250 per month)
- Mandalan savants (500 per month)
- Nagra spirit-trackers (100 per day)
- Mercenaries and tradesmen of all sorts visit here regularly, looking for work. However, no slaves are ever sold here.

**Profile:** Matheus
Farad Procurer, 11th Level

This tall and imposing figure serves as the chief administrator of the Mercenaries Exchange. Matheus is impatient and demanding – individuals who fail to meet his expectations are summarily dismissed. He is neither well-liked nor greatly trusted by those in his employ. Some say that the establishment is owned in part by Mendar, the Monopolist of Sard Island and one of the wealthiest of all the Farad.

## The Cymrilian Woods

From the outskirts, the hills form a gentle wave of green grasses and rise into the Cymrilian Woods, a less populated and more wild region. Here, the hills bear trees and undergrowth and become steeper in some places, creating ravines and bare cliff faces toward the southeast and the Jaspar Mountains. Cart paths connect hamlets and timber mills in the woodlands to the main roadways of the city. Otherwise, footpaths and game trails are utilized by most residents here. On clear days and moonlit nights, windships may be seen flying above the trees toward landing platforms atop tower keeps.

While the Sentinels have increased their presence in the woodlands, it can still be a dangerous region. Bandits who prowl the city streets and roadways at night lay low here, and magicians come from the city under cover of night to practice dark or experimental magic here. Beasts such as exomorphs have been seen in the forests. The common folk tend toward suspicion first and do not give their trust easily to strangers.

## The Jaspar Mountains

Though they form borders with Kasmir and Astar, the Jaspar Mountains are within the domain of Cymril. Rugged cart paths lead from mines and meander through the Cymrilian Woods until reaching main roads into the city proper. The mines once produced black iron, copper, silver, and tin, but were largely abandoned years ago. Due to the Uprising, interest in the mines has risen, both to find new veins of ore and to block them from being entrances into Cymril from the Underground Highway.

The mountains are the most lawless region of Cymril. Malathropes and exomorphs prowl the surface while Satada and Subterranoids are known to lurk within mines and caverns.


CITY OF
CYMRIL

## Encounters in the Countryside

Throughout their history in the region, the people of Cymril have focused themselves on building, maintaining, and protecting the glittering city, leaving the surrounding countryside in the hands of its residents. As a result of the events of the Uprising, the Cymrilian government has begun a more aggressive regime in patrolling the countryside. Some living in the hamlets and villages beyond the city outskirts welcome the protection of the Sentinels, but many who choose the hilly grasslands and woodlands do so to avoid the influence of the city and find any change to be a threat to their way of life.

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The aftermath of the Uprising is evident across much of Cymril. The typical sign might be: (1) a burned Sentinel station being rebuilt (see encounter #2); (2) a makeshift cluster of tents among the remains of a razed hamlet; (3) a stone bridge under construction with traffic cautiously crossing a rickety wooden affair; (4) a ruined war machine moved off the road and abandoned; (5) mourners at a mass grave; (6) displaced folk traveling to or from the city. |
| 3 | **Sentinel Station:** In response to the Uprising, more Sentinel stations are planted in the Cymrilian countryside, particularly along the roadways. The typical station houses a small group of mercenaries of mixed cultures: Cymrilian, Thrall, Jaka, Danuvian, and Blue Aeriad. A nearby stable and corral holds their mangonel lizards and greymanes. A quartermaster oversees a small group of youngsters, who serve as cooks, stable hands, and scouts-in-training. |
| 4-5 | **Patrol:** Mounted on mangonel lizards and greymanes, a typical patrol consists of a handful of Sentinels from the nearest station (see encounter #2). Among their duties are to provide aid and protection to travelers and to be wary of bandits and signs of incursion from the Wild Tribes. |
| 6-8 | **Hamlet:** A cluster of Cymrilian cottages built along or near the main roadway. The inhabits likely share the same customs and beliefs amongst themselves, possibly quite different from Cymrilians living in the city. A traveler is as likely to encounter a welcoming smile as a door slammed in the face. |
| 10 | **Village:** Straddling the main roadway with tributaries of smaller roads, alleys, and paths, the typical Cymrilian village sprouts buildings of various sorts, from cottages of wood and stone to unique manor homes constructed in elaborate designs with the aid of magic. A village will have a Sentinel station (see encounter #2), a lively farmers' market, a common ground for travelers to camp, and a variety of businesses such as inns, taverns, gaming halls, and assorted workshops. |

## Along the Roadways of Cymril

The City of Cymril is the shining emerald of trade and civilization at the heart of the Nine Kingdoms, due largely to its roadways. Teams of laborers and engineers maintain them and mounted squads of Sentinels patrol them. Even so, the amount of wealth in goods and coin flowing to and from the city makes for scoundrels of all stripes.

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 11-13 | **Farm:** Along the roadways in the countryside, one is more likely to find farmlands worked by Cymrilian families, as opposed to the farms and vineyards tended by Green Aeriad surrounding the city. Like the Cymrilians living in cottages and hamlets of the wilder areas of the region, farm families here tend toward self-reliance and have become much less trusting of strangers since the Uprising. |
| 14 | **Pharesian Peddlers:** Most Cymrilians of Pharesian lineage believe their society should place no restrictions on the use of magic and magical paraphernalia. Some go so far as to live as traveling merchants who seek new magical lore from distant lands. Those encountered on the Cymrilian roadways may be returning from such places with a keen interest in peddling their potentially illicit wares, or they may be heading toward some far-off place in search of new wonders. |
| 15 | **Troupe of Bodor Musicians:** Several troupes of Bodor Musicians led by maestros of notoriety in Cymril travel the Nine Kingdoms roads in regular circuits, stopping at hamlets and villages along the way. These musicians are welcomed by all, from the most common cottages to the dwellings of the elite; Bodorians know much of the comings and goings in the Nine Kingdoms and beyond. |
| 16 | **Djaffir Merchant Caravan:** Djaffir merchants typically come to Cymril to sell mundane wares such as spices, rugs, silkcloth, mochan, wine, and domesticated beasts. They often return to their homeland with Cymrilian magical wares. Their caravans are the largest on the road and well-protected by mounted warriors astride desert aht-ra. |
| 17 | **Road Laborers:** Long stretches of the roadways were damaged during the Uprising. Laborers living in makeshift work camps move from place to place to repair the road surface, bridges, and Sentinel stations. These may include skilled Yassan engineers from the Desert Kingdoms, or hirelings from almost any other part of the continent. |
| 18 | **Sarista Gypsies:** The brightly painted wagons of Sarista families travel the roads of Cymril, often stopping to set up shop in the common grounds of villages or wherever other folk gather. Though they profess their skills as healers, soothsayers, and entertainers, many would say they are more aptly named as cheats, scoundrels, and tricksters. |
| 19 | **Itinerant Cymrilian Magician:** Typically encountered alone, Cymrilian magicians of dubious rank and ability travel the roadways. Most seek to replenish lost funds or reputation by offering their services to any with coin to pay; some are even so desperate as to consider criminal endeavors. Others may be of a more honorable nature and pursue errands of their own making, or those of a mentor or patron. |
| 20 | **Bandits:** Thieves along the byways may strike crudely as robber gangs mounted on swift beasts or more subtly as rogues seeking to gain the confidence of travelers before making their real intentions known along a secluded stretch. These unsavory types could be from any culture welcomed to travel the Nine Kingdoms, and in some cases, even include those from the Wild Tribes or other remnants of the Uprising. |

## In the Cymrilian Woods

Traveling within the woodlands is generally safe due to the plentiful game trails and well-maintained cart paths between hamlets. Even so, the Cymrilian Woods is not without its dangers and curiosities.

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | **Scars of the Uprising:** The aftermath of the Uprising is evident across much of Cymril. This scar might be: (1) a burned cottage; (2) a razed and abandoned hamlet; (3) a swath of devastated forest; (4) a ruined war machine; (5) evidence of a mass grave; (6) a fouled pond or stream. |
| 3 | **Ancient Ruins:** Structures from forgotten eras rest beneath the ground. Some become revealed through natural events like floods and earthquakes, others through more arcane means, such as alignments of the moons and suns, or when an adventurous sort uncovers a forgotten tome of lore or spell of revealment. An ancient ruin could be: (1) a buried statue as tall as the tallest tree, with only part of a hand and fingers above ground as if reaching toward the sky; at night mumblings may be heard coming from the depths; (2) a column of blue stone engraved with runes only visible under the light of one of the seven moons, rumored to reveal forgotten spells to those able to decipher them; (3) slate slabs protruding from a hillside which are part of the roof of a temple or dwelling; (4) a three-sided, roofed dolmen covered in flowering vines which smell horrid, but a pleasant golden light fills the space within; (5) a pale green mist hissing from fissures in the soil in an area a few strides across; any seeds planted here at suns-rise will mature, bear fruit, and wither away by sunset; (6) a carved stone disk several feet across and mostly covered by plants and dirt; if uncovered it reveals a cobble-stoned shaft leading to a forgotten tomb. |
| 4-6 | **Cottage:** Cymrilians may choose to forego the city for comfortable stone and wood cottages, either on a permanent basis, seasonally, or simply when the whim strikes. Most are good-hearted and welcoming of civilized travelers; some may be more of the angry hermit sort by nature, or just suspicious of strangers due to the Uprising. The typical cottage might be: (1) a burned-out ruin; (2) wholesome but seems abandoned; (3) lived-in but currently vacant; (4) the home of a loner; (5) a family dwelling. |
| 7-9 | **Hamlet:** A cluster of cottages (see encounter #3) built around something of interest. The inhabits likely share the same customs and beliefs among themselves, possibly quite different from Cymrilians living in the city. A hamlet could be built near: (1) a scenic view at a crossroads; (2) a grove of gall oak (see encounter #13); (3) a timber mill (see encounter #12); (4) a source of purportedly healing or otherwise magical water (ancient well or fountain); (5) an ancient ruin of arcane or religious importance (see encounter #2); (6) a tower keep (see encounter #5). |
| 10 | **Tower:** Rising above the rolling hills and trees, tower keeps are typically constructed of stone blocks and heavy timbers, and, rarely, of colored glass like those of the city proper. They may also be lacquered in vibrant colors, patterns, and runes. Some may be quite ancient and conceal forgotten mysteries within chambers or tunnels below. The tops of most towers bear a wooden dock for windships. A tower might be discovered as: (1) a burned-out ruin; (2) abandoned due to magical mishap; (3) a bandit hideout (see encounter #14); (4) the private laboratory of a light-hearted mage; (5) the private laboratory of a dark-hearted mage; (6) a Sentinel station of scouts with a small windship and pilot (see encounter #11). |

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 11 | **Exomorph:** These ferocious predators prowl the woodlands and target people as readily as animals. The PCs may: (1) discover evidence of the beast (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) be hunted by an exomorph and feel as if they are being watched; (3) spot the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) find a hamlet (see encounter #4) whose inhabitants have been preyed upon by the beast and have posted a reward for its slaughter; (5) stumbled upon the creature's lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 12 | **Equs:** Silvermanes wander the woodlands in small herds. They pride themselves as guardians of the forest and keenly observe what transpires there. Though able to speak Low Talislan, silvermanes very rarely speak with outsiders. It is illegal to hunt equs of any kind in Cymril. This herd could be: (1) seemingly intent on grazing but actually eavesdropping to decide if the PCs are a friend or foe of the forest; (2) trotting through the trees in a weaving formation as some form of dance or play; (3) fleeing from hunters (see encounter #10); (4) chasing an exomorph (see encounter #6), intent on killing the beast; (5) surrounding the abomination's soul (see encounter #8), but afraid to let it touch them; (6) trying to extricate one of their own kind or another creature from a Tanglewood's grasp (see encounter #9). |
| 13 | **The Abomination:** Called simply "the abomination" by residents of the woodlands, this creature is the result of a magical mishap which has separated its soul from its body. The soul takes the form of a floating sphere of gelatinous material with long, sinewy tentacles; if it entangles someone in its tentacles it can communicate with them telepathically; it wants to find its body. The body is a huge, thrashing monstrosity of rippling muscles and flashing claws, ambulatory on its own; it knows only fear, anger, and frustration. If the two can be brought together, the spell will be broken and its true form will be revealed – that of the Cymrilian Enchantress, Lystasia. The PCs might have: (1) found signs of the body (a path of knocked-over trees, giant footprints, its enraged and mournful cries); (2) found signs of the soul (globs of slime hanging from trees, a cold spot in the air); (3) spotted the body in the distance; (4) been spotted by the soul. |
| 14 | **Tanglewood Tree:** These malignant, devious trees may stand up to 50 feet tall and sprout long, vine-like limbs capable of entangling and lifting large creatures into the air. Perhaps this Tanglewood tree: (1) is being pruned by woodcutters (see encounter #12); (2) has held a captive high in its branches for several days; (3) wears the bones and belongings of past victims like trophies; (4) has become the pet project of a Green Aeriad, who seeks to communicate with the tree; (5) tries to trick the PCs into coming within range of its grasp. |
| 15 | **Hunters:** Some residents of the area hunt, fish, and gather plants to feed their families. Others come for profit. Some possible hunters are: (1) a small group of Jaka who have come to hunt an exomorph (see encounter #6) for the challenge and the bounty; (2) a small group of Arimites who have come to capture silvermanes (see encounter #7), which is illegal in Cymril; (3) a Cymrilian magician's apprentice sent to find a rare magical ingredient; (4) a group of Cymrilian children who have lost their way; (5) a Jaka leading Cymrilians in search of lost children; (6) a Cymrilian warrior-mage following the trail of the abomination's soul (see encounter #8). |

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 16-17 | **Sentinels:** Cymril has increased patrols in the countryside following the Uprising. Those encountered in the woodlands are lightly armored scouts and likely on foot, but some could be mounted on greymanes. A typical patrol consists of a small group of Sentinels of mixed cultures: Cymrilian, Thrall, Jaka, Danuvian, and Blue Aeriad. Perhaps this patrol: (1) is preparing a meal at a temporary camp; (2) is hot on the trail of Arimite poachers (see encounter #10); (3) is cautiously following a trail of uprooted trees and giant, clawed footprints (see encounter #8); (4) is guarding a crew of engineers and builders as they construct a new tower keep (see encounter #5); (5) is searching for a missing enchantress named Lystasia and offering a reward for her discovery (see encounter #8); (6) is hidden and hoping to ambush an exomorph (see encounter #6). |
| 18 | **Woodcutters:** Several lumber camps and timber mills employ woodcutters, laborers, and artisans. Most are Cymrilian, but Thralls, Danuvians, and Green Aeriad may be found among them. The camps and mills have wide, rough roads leading to them. These wood cutters might be: (1) chopping and sawing trees which seem to have been pushed over (see encounter #8); (2) arguing with a Green Aeriad who protests their intent to prune a thrashing Tanglewood tree (see encounter #9); (3) dancing merrily about a bonfire and apparently quite intoxicated; (4) guiding a land lizard dragging logs; (5) fleeing in terror after an attack by an exomorph (see encounter #6); (6) talking excitedly as they have just uncovered something strange among the roots of a massive tree (see encounter #2). |
| 19 | **Gall Oak:** Named for the tumor-like growths in their bark called galls, these trees secrete a blue-black syrup from them. This substance is used in the making of inks and dyes. The PCs may have come upon a gall oak that: (1) is being harvested for its syrup by Cymrilians who live nearby; (2) is being pruned by a Cymrilian artisan who prizes its deep, richly grained wood; (3) is being experimented upon by a Green Aeriad who, using concoctions and incantations aligned with the phases of the seven moons, is attempting to get the tree to produce differently colored syrups; (4) stands alone in a quiet glade, weeping black tears. |
| 20 | **Bandits:** Scoundrels encountered in the woodlands are usually traveling to or from their hideouts, which will be in hidden caves or forgotten towers. A bandit gang might include members from virtually any culture welcomed into the City of Cymril, and rarely include those from the Wild Tribes or other remnants of the Uprising. These bandits are quite possibly: (1) escorting a kidnapped victim whom they hope to ransom; (2) riding greymanes on their way to rob travelers on the nearest major road; (3) escorting a land lizard pulling a wagon full of stolen goods; (4) crudely disguised as Sentinels; (5) ensnared by a Tanglewood tree (see encounter #9); (6) looking for a new hideout after having been driven out of the old one by the abomination (see encounter #8) |



## Among the Jaspar Mountains

During the Uprising, civilized folk were driven out of the mountains by the Wild Tribes on the surface, and Satada raiders from below ground. Mines and mining camps remain abandoned or have become the last holdouts of dangerous creatures.

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | **Evidence of the Uprising:** The aftermath of the Uprising is evident across much of Cymril, and may include: (1) a burned and razed mining camp (see encounter #11); (2) a wrecked war machine; (3) a toppled stone tower; (4) evidence of a battlefield (shallow graves, rotting or rusting equipment, skeletons of beasts or humanoids exposed by rain and wind); (5) the remains of a crashed windship, the contents of which may or may not have already been pillaged; (6) a fouled stream or pool bubbling from below ground. |
| 3 | **Sentinel Station:** During the Uprising, mines were used as entrances into Cyrmil by the forces of the Wild Tribes. In response, Sentinel stations are being constructed here to protect crews working to clear the mines and to secure the region. The typical station houses mercenaries of mixed cultures: Cymrilian, Thrall, Jaka, Danuvian, and Blue Aeriad. A nearby stable and corral holds their mangonel lizards and greymanes. A quartermaster oversees a small group of youngsters, who serve as cooks, stable hands, and scouts-in-training. |
| 4-5 | **Sentinel Patrol:** Mounted on mangonel lizards and greymanes, a typical patrol consists of a few Sentinels from the nearest station (see encounter #2). Among their duties are to provide aid and protection to miners, general laborers, and travelers |
| 6 | **Chasm Viper:** These serpents hunt small animals and insects, but will strike at larger creatures who stumble upon them. Because they lair in hillsides or even rock walls, chasm vipers are particularly dangerous to climbers startled by their presence. Cymrilian alchemists and Sindarin collectors may be encountered hunting these serpents in this region. |
| 7 | **Crystal Moths:** The Jaspar Mountains are the migratory breeding ground of a species of crystal moth with wings of a predominately emerald green. The brilliantly colored insects vary in size with wingspans from a few inches to two feet. They gather in great numbers among groves of withergall (see encounter #8) where they mate and feed upon the inky secretions of the gnarled trees. Collectors and artisans pay handsomely for their delicate and beautiful wings. |
| 8 | **Malathrope:** While quite intelligent, these beasts are also, unfortunately, quite insane; they seem possessed with a desire to stalk, torment, terrify, and eventually devour other intelligent beings. Signs of a malathrope include partially-eaten victims whose faces are frozen in fear, four-clawed tracks, unintelligible runes clawed into tree trunks or even stone, and echoes of hideous, mocking laughter. |
| 9-10 | **Andrak:** These humanoid-arachnids lair among the cliffs, caves, and mines of the region. They are quite intelligent and are believed to ally with Satada (see encounter #10). In exchange for victims, they guard entrances to the underground or spy upon surface-dwellers. |
| 11-13 | **Copse of Withergall:** Gnarled withergall trees grow in clusters among the rocky hills and valleys and up the slopes of the mountains. The inky secretions from the galls of the species found in this area are typically of a green-black color with a sweet taste and musky odor. Crystal moths (see encounter #5) migrate to these trees during certain seasons. Morde (see encounter #9) prefer to nest within their branches. |

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 14 | **Morde:** Flocks of these cowardly scavengers nest among the withergall groves (see encounter #8) in the region. Many believe the ugly avians carry disease and are an omen of impending pestilence or some other doom. |
| 15 | **Satada:** During the Uprising, Satada from the underground raided the surface via mines, tunnels, and caves in this region. As the Uprising collapsed, the Satada retreated but were never truly defeated, and they still raid the surface in small numbers. It is believed they dwell in subterranean settlements below the realm of Sindar and the Jaspar Mountains. |
| 16 | **Mining Camp:** Most camps in this area were abandoned or destroyed during the Uprising. However, several are being rebuilt by Cymrilians employing mercenaries, laborers, and artisans. Ultimately, the government of Cymril hopes to bring the miners back and reopen the mines. |
| 17 | **Miners:** Miners may be encountered traveling to a mine with the hopes of clearing it and bringing it back into production. Some may have already done so and are actively working to mine ore. In any case, the region is largely untamed and quite dangerous. Miners who are not part of a larger camp will be eager to hire protection if they have not already done so. |
| 18-19 | **Mine:** The entrances to most mines are quite obvious, though some have been long forgotten or hidden. The majority are silver mines, with black iron, copper, and tin being less common. Since the Uprising, very few mines are actively being mined. It is very likely that any mine will be occupied by dangerous creatures such as chasm vipers, crag spiders, and malathropes. Satada favor mines and caverns connecting to the Underground Highway. |
| 20 | **Bandits:** Considering the inherent dangers and remoteness of the Jaspar Mountains, gangs of thieves find the region a suitable place for hidden camps. They might be encountered traveling to or from such places, which are usually in a hidden mine, a forgotten tower, an abandoned mining camp, or dwellings in a secluded canyon or valley. |



## Encounters In and Near the City

As the literal hub of the Nine Kingdoms and the center of commerce and learning in Talislanta, the city attracts visitors and migrants from the farthest reaches of the continent.

## In the Outskirts of Cymril

Low grassy hills and fields ring the city. Since the Uprising, the finely-manicured vineyards, farms, manors, and villages have become somewhat rough around the edges due to the ravages of war and the makeshift camps of refugees.

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 1-3 | **Scars of the Uprising:** The aftermath of the Uprising is evident across much of Cymril. The typical scar might be: (1) laborers repairing a roadway, bridge, or building; (2) wildlife growing among the ruins of a toppled war machine or tower; (3) newly erected monuments upon a pockmarked battlefield; (4) refugees seeking work or aid (see encounter #5); (5) a burned and withered vineyard (see encounter #8); (6) a once fabulous manse, now blasted to rubble (see encounter #7). |
| 4 | **Sentinel Station:** The typical station in the city outskirts will be found atop a hill within sight of the city walls or among the other buildings of a village (see encounter #10). A station houses mercenaries of mixed cultures: Cymrilian, Thrall, Jaka, Danuvian, and Blue Aeriad. A nearby stable and corral holds their mangonel lizards and greymanes. A quartermaster oversees a small group of youngsters, who serve as cooks, stable hands, and scouts-in-training. A station might be equipped with a landing platform with a small windship and pilot. |
| 5-6 | **Sentinel Patrol:** Mounted on mangonel lizards and greymanes, a typical patrol consists of a few Sentinels from the nearest station (see encounter #2). Among their duties are to provide aid and protection to residents and travelers. They have the authority to inspect cargo for illicit goods and to deny unsavory sorts entrance to the city. |
| 7 | **Roadside Market:** Between villages (see encounter #10), it is common for small markets to pop up. These may exist as semi-permanent stalls, or appear one night and vanish by suns-rise. It is at these places where one may find wares considered illegal within the city walls. |
| 8-9 | **Makeshift Camp:** Refugees from the Uprising came to Cymril for protection and built ramshackle camps outside the city walls. Many of these folk have no homes to which they can return. Debate rages within the city as to how best to aid them. |
| 10 | **Paddock:** Enterprising farmers and estate-owners provide walled pasture for the beasts of travelers and caravans at a daily rate. Such creatures are not allowed on the city streets without a prohibitively-priced license. A small crew of animal handlers, who are most commonly Jaka or Danuvians, tends the beasts, mends the walls and fences, and collects fees. |
| 11-12 | **Estate:** The wealthiest families and organizations of the city may own fanciful estates in the countryside. Such a house may be a sprawling mansion of crystal towers and domes, much like the finer buildings of the city proper, or a more rustic getaway constructed of colorful stone and timber. The grounds may be rolling gardens meant only to please the eye, or vineyards and fields intended to turn a profit. |

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 13-15 | **Vineyard:** The vineyards around the Crystal City produce the finest wines in all of Talislanta. The combination of the land, the botanical skills of the Green Aeriad, and the magic of the Cymrilians surely has much to do with this, but the specifics are well-kept secrets. The typical vineyard grows upon the terraced slopes of a hill and is tended by a crew of Green Aeriad. |
| 16-18 | **Farm:** Within the outskirts of the city, one is most likely to find farmlands worked by families of Green Aeriad, as opposed to the farms tended by Cymrilians in the wilder regions of the more distant countryside. Utilizing their talents in Botanomancy, the Green Aeriad have increased the size and yields of their crops. They also are known for creating completely new hybrids of fruits and vegetables. |
| 19-20 | **Village:** Straddling a main roadway with tributaries of smaller roads, alleys, and paths, the typical Cymrilian village comprises buildings of various sorts, from cottages of wood and stone to unique manor homes constructed in elaborate designs with the aid of magic. A village will have a Sentinel station (see encounter #2), a lively farmers' market, and a variety of businesses, such as inns, taverns, gaming halls, and assorted workshops. |

## On the Streets of Cymril

The City of Cymril is a fabulous place of art, architecture, and magic. It is a city built of paved streets and alleys. Domes, spires, and towers of many sizes, connected at varying heights by graceful arches covered in vegetation or artwork, make for a unique skyline. The encounters below are meant to give your players a sense of the style and feel of the place, and to give you ideas for more in-depth encounters of your design.

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 1-4 | **Scars of the Uprising:** The aftermath of the Uprising is still evident within the city. The typical scar might be: (1) glass-workers and laborers repairing a street, archway, or building; (2) Burden Beasts hauling loads of glass and crystalline rubble out of the city (see encounter #7); (3) a ceremony at a newly-erected monument to a fallen hero in one of the city's parks (see encounter #4); (4) refugees seeking work or aid; (5) refugees being forcibly removed from a city park by Sentinels and Sindarin investigators (see encounter #9); (6) a heated debate between pedestrians about how to aid the surplus of refugees (see encounter #8). |
| 5-7 | **Sentinel Patrol:** Sentinels on the city streets walk in small numbers with the primary duty of keeping the peace. Since the Uprising, they have been given even more leeway when enforcing the city's many laws and will likely question those from lands outside the Nine Kingdoms as to their business. They might have a Sindarin investigator with them and be actively gathering information regarding a real crime, or are acting as the Wizard King's secret police (see encounter #9). |
| 8-9 | **Magical Wonder:** Magic is part of daily life in Cymril, and wonders of various types may be spotted almost anywhere in the city. Individuals sporting multi-colored skin, hair and clothes abound. Illusionists are common here, and some merchants employ them to conjure oddities such as illusory creatures or faces, floating about and declaring the day's special offers in the hope of attracting customers. The artwork adorning the walls of some domes and walkways is alive with motion, and often even scents and sounds. |

| d20 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 10-12 | **Festival:** A social event is happening on the street. It could be the celebration of a celestial event, the birth of a child to an important family, a parade, a holy day or ceremony of a religious or prestigious organization, or perhaps a masquerade, for example. Cymrilians need little reason to hold elaborate galas sometimes lasting for days and typically including fanciful fireworks enhanced with magic, ethereal music, and delightful cuisine. During one street's festival, other neighborhoods may be preparing for their own, while the rest of the city is going about its regular business. The many parks are also used for special events. |
| 13-14 | **Street Performers:** A troupe of performers has attracted a small crowd. They might be dancers, musicians, jugglers, tumblers, magicians, or conjurers. Most sell tokens to performances at venues around the city. Some dancers and tumblers may employ levitationals – twisting upward gracefully and recovering from dramatic falls at the last moment. |
| 15-16 | **Street Racers:** Not yet outlawed, but highly frowned upon by many, it has become a fad of young Cymrilians to race small windskiffs called wind-sleds. These single-person conveyances consist of a levitational mounted upon a wooden or bone frame with one mast and sail. Riding the strong currents between the taller buildings of the city, the daring pilots zip above the heads of pedestrians. The currents are unpredictable, as are the young racers, and accidents are common. |
| 17 | **Rampage:** A creature has gone berserk. This could be a beast of burden, such as a land lizard, mangonel lizard, or ogriphant, which has broken its fetters and is charging down the street. Alternatively, it could be a foul creature summoned by an unscrupulous conjurer who has lost control of it; in such a case, the rampaging creature might be an earth demon, bat manta, or fantasm (also known as a pseudo-demon). Such summonings are illegal in Cymril. |
| 18-19 | **Public Decree:** Someone is making a proclamation. They might be standing at a podium in a public meeting place in one of the city's parks, or simply floating above the crowd on a busy street. City officials typically make their announcements from the steps of the Council of Kings with great fanfare, their voices amplified with magic. Topics range widely – artists wanting to share their latest works of poetry or song; politics (with aiding refugees, taxes, reconstruction, and preventing another Uprising being relevant today); or legal rulings regarding who has been convicted of what crime, including bounties issued for criminals who have fled the Council's justice. |
| 20 | **Military Display:** While Cymril has always been known as a land of magicians and merchants, since the Uprising the focus of Wizard King Rabian has been reconstruction, refortification, and rearmament to restore courage in Cymril's populace and induce fear in its enemies. Not all members of the Cymrilian Cabal nor the Council of Kings agree. Rumors spread that the Wizard King's sudden change toward a militaristic view is due to an unseen influence. This is most evident to the populace when the Wizard King declares that a parade through the city and past the palace steps is in order; such displays typically coincide with the completion of a new windship or other machine of war. Rumors also abound about the Wizard King's paranoia, and that he has ordered Sentinels and Sindarin investigators to secretly harass refugees suspected as spies. |

# The Kingdom of Astar

Astar is a land of sylvan glades, lakes, and streams. Idyllic forests drape the land, opening into clear fields and meadows of wildflowers in all the colors of the rainbow. Here in this ethereal setting dwell the last of an ancient and enchanting race of beings, known as the Muses.

## The Muses

Muses are among the most graceful and beautiful of the humanoid races. Their bodies are slender and lithe, their features delicate and exquisitely fashioned. They dress in translucent robes shaded in hues complementing the colors of their skin and hair, as well as their butterfly wings – pastel blue, aquamarine, turquoise, violet, and rose, to name just a few.

### Telempathic Defense

*Because the Muses of Astar are delicate and sensitive creatures, they are regarded by many other Talislantan races as weak and defenseless. Nothing could be further from the truth, as anyone who has ever made the mistake of threatening or angering a Muse can attest. While Muses stringently avoid the use of weapons or physical violence, the ability to project mental images via telempathy can be a powerful, and even deadly, weapon.*

*At the first sign of danger, Muses will often project a form of imagery intended to warn or frighten potential aggressors; usually, at less than full strength, as Muses are averse to causing pain if it can be avoided. The effects of this type of telempathic projection may be instantaneous, like a sudden premonition of doom, or may escalate for several moments. Warning imagery can cause the subject to experience feelings ranging from a disturbing sense of insecurity or inadequacy to a nameless, deep-rooted dread. If the intended target has a great deal of willpower, these feelings can be overcome or ignored. Should this occur the Muse may project the warning again and again, each time increasing the amount of mental power used.*

*Should repeated warning imagery fail to achieve the desired result, the Muse may have no choice but to use the most dangerous form of projection: telempathic hallucination, a concerted assault upon that part of the attacker's brain that controls the senses. Using telempathy, the Muse can alter the subject's perception of reality in any way desired, creating terrifying illusions, crippling phobias, or impairing one or more of the subject's senses. A sustained attack of this nature can render the subject utterly insane, bereft of his or her senses, or trapped in a hallucinatory reality from which there is no escape.*

### *Language*

Muses are generally fluent in High Talislan and Sylvan, regarding common speech as coarse and unaesthetic. They much prefer to communicate telempathically and will often use diminutive forest sprites, known as whisps, as "translators" to put their thoughts into words. Muse names are based on the names of flowers, such as Lilyandre and Aramantus.

### *Government*

The Muses have no full-time King or Queen. Instead, they draw straws once each month to determine who is to represent their people at the Council of Kings in Cymril. The holder of the short straw is then temporarily crowned King or Queen.

Muses observe no formal laws or customs, and generally do as they please. Petty jealousies are not unknown and may result in squabbles. Most are handled by those involved, occasionally through intercession by whisps.

Muses have no weapons or armies, and are averse to physical violence. However, they are by no means defenseless, as many intruders into Astar have discovered, to their regret.

### *Ancestry and History*

Muses are descended from an archaic race of forest nymphs, possibly of magical origin; the ancient Archaens often summoned such creatures for their pleasure, and their couplings occasionally yielded unexpected results – the Muses, perhaps, being one of them.

Muses possess a natural talent for all artistic pursuits. They create enchanting musical instruments, tapestries of colored gossamer, and other fine goods, but only when struck by inspiration. The making of telempathic "paintings" and vistas, among the most ephemeral of arts, is also a specialty of these people.

The Muses have no actual settlements, but tend to congregate in groups of varying size and composition; individuals come and go as they please. Muses are promiscuous and may take numerous sexual partners – including non-Muses, though such unions rarely bear offspring. These trysts may be of long or short duration but are always intensely passionate (at least from the Muse's point of view).

Muses care nothing for riches, though they are attracted to things of beauty, music, and sweets. Such things as they require are readily available from the surrounding environs – pollen, blossom nectar, and honey for food; gossamer for clothes; rare woods for musical instruments. The gossamer tapestries and other artistic wares that they sometimes create are treasured throughout the Nine Kingdoms and beyond.

### *Magic & Religion*

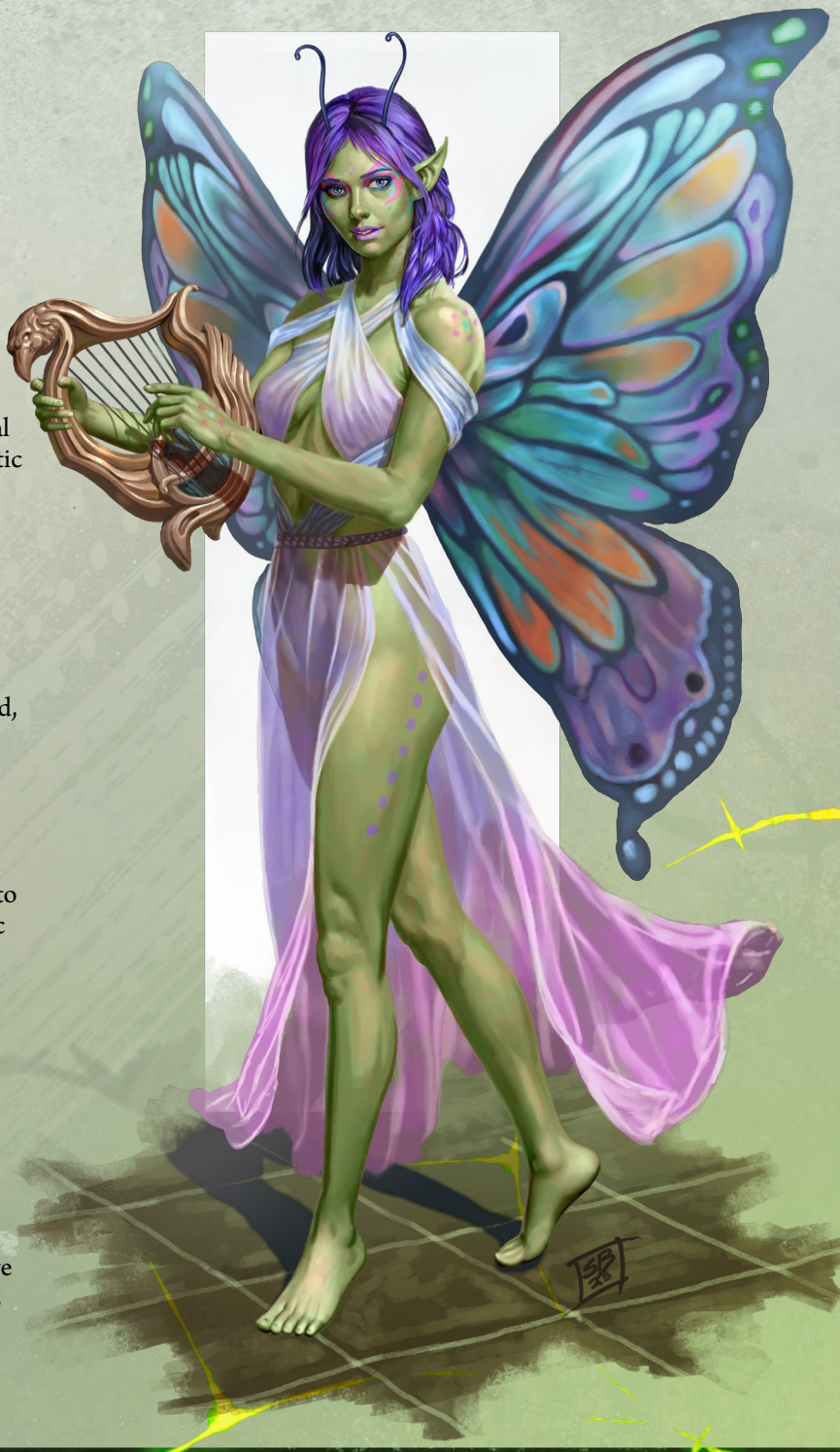
Muses have no formal religion, but revere nature spirits of all sorts and have a great love of life. They are natural telempaths, able to communicate through thoughts and images. Muses can sense the strong emotions of others, broadcast and receive thoughts, project mental images, sense the presence of living beings, and even influence the emotions of others.

Muses erect no permanent dwellings, shunning physical labor as tedious and uninspiring. They have a near-symbiotic relationship with the species known as wood whisps, who aid them in gathering food and erecting impromptu tent-pavilions of gossamer and flowering vines, which in Muse society pass for domiciles.

### *Worldview*

To other Talislantans, Muses have always seemed distracted, disinterested, and aloof. They are contemplative by nature, and are highly perceptive as regards their surroundings.

Astar was largely unaffected by the Uprising, and many believe that the reason for this was the Muses' telempathic defenses. Since then, attitudes towards Muses have begun to change, as the full extent of their extraordinary telempathic powers begins to be understood by the other members of the Nine Kingdoms.



## Places of Note

### Lake Zephyr

This scenic body of water is a favorite trysting place of the Muses. Diaphanous-winged crystal moths, waterwhisps, and many colorful species of avian and aquatic creatures are common to the region, as are less benign creatures, such as skalanx.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The only victims of the Uprising in Astar were the hapless attackers who made the mistake of coming here expecting to find helpless prey. The Wild Tribes and their war machines were turned away in droves by the telempathic projections of the Muses. Those who crossed into Astar eventually died of starvation, trapped in a hallucinatory reality of darkness and fear, or became mind-numbed pets of Muses.<br>**Signs that might be encountered include:** (1) one or more abandoned and decayed war machines now overgrown with flowering vines; (2) discarded weapons, armor, or other gear laying in the undergrowth; (3) one or more Beastman or Za adorned in gossamer clothing and living the hallucination that he is a gardener, wood whisp, etc. |
| 2 | 2 | **Sylvan Glade:** These special places of hidden beauty lie in the depths of the forests of Astar. It is common for a single Muse seeking solitude to set up a pavilion in such a place for a time (with the help of his or her whisp companions and followers, of course). The Muse may be extremely happy to see visitors, or he or she may be quite angry (see encounter #5). |
| 3 | 3 | **Lake or Stream:** Many small lakes, ponds, and streams of clear water can be found throughout the forests of Astar. In addition to the various colorful species of land, air, and aquatic creatures around these bodies of water, one might find: (1) one or more Muses, bathing in or gazing at the water; (2) a small or large group of tiny water whisps, either asleep, swimming about, or looking for some sort of mischief to get into; (4) one or more waterborne predators such as lurkers and skalanx, rare in Astar but occasionally found in deeper water. |
| 4 | 4 | **Field or Meadow:** The forested hills open onto a sunny field or meadow. Along with abundant wildflowers and fruiting trees or berry bushes, one might find: (1) Muses either at coterie or trysting (see encounter #5); (2) wood whisps at work or play for their Muse benefactors (see encounter #7); (3) travelers from other parts of the Nine Kingdoms, possibly lost, or perhaps here in search of rare herbs or plants; (5) a dryad bush (plant in daytime and dryad at night; see encounter #13). |
| 5-6 | 5 | **Muses:** A group of Muses. They might be found in a temporary community of tent pavilions of gossamer and flowering vines, or they could be wandering the countryside on what they call a trysting, which is a time for forging a new relationship. No matter where they are, song, dance, romance – and possibly telempathic hallucination – are certain to follow. |
| 7 | 6 | **Crystal Moth(s):** These brilliantly colored insects vary in size with wingspans from a few inches to two feet. They thrive on nectar from the abundant flowers of the many fields, meadows, and glades here. Muses treat them like pets and messengers or even living adornments to be worn in their hair or clothing. |
| 8-9 | 7 | **Wood Whisp:** Wood whisps may be encountered in small numbers in all areas of Astar, and in larger numbers in their own communities, which they typically construct in the boughs of trees and bushes. Wood whisps can be quite curious of outsiders and will happily gossip regarding the goings-on of their Muse benefactors in exchange for sweets. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | 8 | **Water Whisp:** Most shy among the whisps, the individuals who live in the lakes, ponds, and streams of Astar generally avoid contact with strangers (no Muse is a stranger to them). Even so, sometimes they may be coaxed forth with music or treats. They know much of the sunken secrets of the waterways and will come to the aid of good-hearted people in need. |
| 11-12 | 9 | **Night Whisp:** With skin like smoke and eyes of night, these little sprites move about only after the twin suns have set. Preferring pranks and jests over gossip and treats like other whisps, night whisps can be unpredictable at best and even dangerous at their worst. Muses find them endearing for this, though wood whisps and water whisps avoid them, for night whisps are particularly cruel to other whisps. Their tricks are merciless when it comes to strangers in Astar unless such travelers have come under the protection of a Muse. |
| 13 | 10 | **Skalanx:** These solitary horrors lurk in the deeper lakes and streams. They prefer prey beneath the surface, but will strike at tempting targets along the banks of waterways. |
| 14 | 11 | **Giant Water-Bug:** Giant Water-Bugs in Astar are usually harmless. They may be a few inches to several feet in length or diameter, depending upon composition, and all exhibit bright colors. Some are considered a delicacy by various Talislantan cultures, though caution is advised as some are deadly poison when consumed. Water whisps ride certain varieties as aquatic mounts. |
| 15 | 12 | **Iron Butterfly:** With a wingspan of up to eight feet, iron butterflies are perhaps the largest insects in Astar. Their iridescent wings appear made of something like blue iron due to their metallic color and lustrous sheen. Wood whisps lure them with jars of nectar, then wrangle them and ride them as airborne mounts. |
| 16 | 13 | **Dryad Bush:** During the night hours, these bushes transform into forest nymphs, reverting to plant-form when the suns rise. They are said to be quite beautiful and mysterious creatures who seek romance in the moonlight. |
| 17 | 14 | **Cymrilians:** A group of wealthy Cymrilians of varying ages and professions, who may have traveled to Astar for pleasure or diplomatic reasons, or to trade magical wares for musical instruments and gossamer clothing. They travel by windship. |
| 18 | 15 | **Sindarans:** One or more Sindarans, who may have traveled to Astar looking to purchase or trade for rare herbs and plants for their alchemical operations, conduct general research on the Muses (who are baffling to most Sindarans), or, perhaps, in the hopes of finding some rare or unusual artifact for their collections. |
| 19 | 16 | **Aeriad:** A group of Green or Blue Aeriad traversing the forests. If Green Aeriad, they may have been sent to Astar by their ruling Council to acquire or study new species of plants for botanical experimentation of some sort. Blue Aeriad are typically scouts or rangers who may be tracking a dangerous creature, providing security for some Green Aeriad, or performing some other sort of mission for their Council. |
| 20 | 17 | **Zandir:** Several Zandir swordsmen and swordswomen. This group has taken it upon themselves to gift their Sultan with a Muse consort, believing such a gift will cause the Sultan to overlook their recent crimes. A large portion of the money from this crime they have brought along. They believe it will be a simple matter of exchanging money for Muse. Perhaps they will sober in time to realize their mistakes. |

# The Kingdom of Durne (Jakar)

The Kingdom that folk once knew as Durne is a land of grassy knolls, gently rising hills, and sparse woodlands. This wooded region is no longer called Durne, but is now known as the Kingdom of Jakar (see page 58), for the people of Durne do not live above ground, but instead dwell far beneath the surface, in an underground kingdom rich in natural resources, crystals, root-crops, and clear underground lakes. Here, in the subterranean city of Durne, live the true citizens of this kingdom, the Gnomekin.

## The Gnomekin

The Gnomekin are a diminutive folk who average just over three feet in height. They have nut-brown complexions, muscular bodies, and wide-eyed, almost childlike features. Both the males and females have a crest of soft, black fur running from the center of the forehead to the small of the back.

### *Ancestry and History*

Gnomekin claim to be descended from an ancient subterranean race related to the Gnorls of Werewood. The Gnorls do not dispute this theory, and so it seems to now be accepted as fact.

### All In The Family

*The Gnomekin are well known for their devotion to family and love of children. In combination, these two qualities result in family groups of incredibly large size. It is not uncommon for a Gnomekin child to have as many as two dozen siblings, forty aunts and uncles (their parents' siblings), and over five hundred first cousins (their parents' siblings' children). Throw in grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, and a veritable army of second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh cousins, and a Gnomekin's extended family may easily number into the thousands.*

*Marriage is yet another aspect of Gnomekin culture that contributes to the growth of the family. For when Gnomekin of different families marry, each of the groups adopts the entire other clan as part of its own. It is said that a Gnomekin who chances to meet another of his or her people anywhere in Talislanta can usually be assured the two of them are related in one manner or another, whether through blood ties or marriage. So, it is not necessarily an exaggeration when Gnomekin say that they are all part of one big family*

### *Language*

Gnomekin are so modest and unassuming by nature that they seldom refer to themselves in conversation. For example, among these folk, "Am pleased to see you" means "I am pleased to see you." Gnomekin speech sounds much like purring. Common names have a lilting sound, such as Abo Ebo, Eno Erobia, Aba Edaba, and Obo Orabio.

### *Government*

Durne is ruled by a pair of hereditary monarchs known simply as the King and Queen of Durne. The Gnomequeen is the matriarch of all Gnomekin families. She is responsible for determining fair prices for the goods produced in Durne's subterranean gardens, which are delivered to Cymril via the Underground Highway. The Gnomeking serves as commander-in-chief of the country's small but fierce army.

The Gnomekin Army is a small but highly competent force of light infantry. They excel at all aspects of subterranean combat, and move swiftly and silently underground.

### *Magic & Religion*

Gnomekin have a deep reverence for the earth and for their earth goddess, Terra, who is revered as their people's benefactor. They are not much for dogma or formal ceremonies, preferring simple prayer services conducted in sacred caverns by the female priestesses of the Great Mother. Gnomekin inter their dead deep in the earth, or, as they say, "close to the Goddess."

Crystalomancy is a field of magic practiced extensively by the Gnomekin. They consider crystals to be a gift from Terra.

### *Culture*

Gnomekin live in underground colonies, each comprised of several single-family dwellings known as nooks. Gnomekin nooks are like small caves, lined with carpets of soft and sweet-smelling moss; furnishings are spare and made from polished stone covered with moss for comfort. Underground streams and brooks provide fresh water. Phosphorescent fungi provide a faint illumination — more than enough for a Gnomekin to see clearly, though outsiders sometimes have a hard time getting acclimated to the gloom.

Gnomekin are a warm and friendly folk, possessed of an almost childlike innocence. Their families are close-knit, and often quite large. It is not uncommon for a Gnomekin couple to have a dozen or more offspring (see sidebar). Gnomekin subsist on mushrooms, tubers, roots, and lichen; many tasty dishes are made from these simple ingredients.

Of all the Talislantan races, none know more about the Underground Highway than the Gnomekin. They have charted most of the tunnels that extend beneath the Nine Kingdoms, and have surveyed parts of the system extending as far east as the Volcanic Hills, as far north as the borders of Narandu, and as far south as the borders of the Dark Coast. Maps and geomantic studies of the Underground Highway may be purchased in the city of Durne. However, the most detailed maps are considered state secrets, and are heavily guarded due to their considerable strategic value.

Durne's primary export and source of income is crystals of many sorts. Gnomekin are experts at growing, polishing, cutting, and appraising all types of gemstones. Shipments of these goods are conveyed by durge-drawn wagons along the Underground Highway to Cymril, and from there to the rest of the Nine Kingdoms and beyond. Other exports include gems, minerals, mushrooms, fungi, edible roots and tubers, root syrup, and mushroom ale.

### *Worldview*

During the Uprising, the Gnomekin army fought bravely against a combined force of Darklings and Satada. They suffered many casualties, but successfully prevented any invaders from gaining access to the other Kingdoms' territories via the Underground Highway. After the Uprising, the Gnomekin generously granted the rights to the above-ground territories of Durne to the Jaka, who fought with their allies during the war. The two peoples are now close friends and allies. Gnomekin enjoy excellent relations with the other member states of the Nine Kingdoms, but otherwise Durne has few contacts with other countries.



## Encounters Underground

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** During the Uprising, the Gnomekin fought to protect their city and to defend the main tunnels of the Underground Highway from invading hordes of Darklings and Satada. Using their wits and familiar terrain, the Gnomekin were victorious. The typical sign could be: (1) a monument to the fallen crafted from living rock and adorned with glowing fungi shaped into runes or portraits; (2) Gnomekin bearing horrible scars from battle; (3) Gnomekin working to repair damaged tunnels, bridges, and homes; (4) Gnomekin soldiers guarding major strategic points, such as tunnel intersections and water sources; (5) a blasted cavern with its roof partially collapsed, exposing the surface far above; (6) tunnels intentionally collapsed or flooded by Gnomekin artificers. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Gnomekin nooks may be found throughout the city and even further away in isolated sections of tunnels. Some may be solitary, housing a single family in a small cave or grotto. Others may form a colony of nooks in larger caverns. |
| 5 | 3 | **Garden:** Gnomekin farmers typically live in a nook or colony near their garden. Such places range in size, from very little caves to enormous caverns. They are used for the growing of tubers and other root-crops, various crystals, and mushrooms and other fungi. |
| 6-7 | 4 | **Water:** Managing water sources underground is vitally important, both for consumption and to prevent flooding, a hazard all Gnomekin fear. Water may come from the surface above or from the depths of the earth. It may be found in the form of lakes, rivers, streams, brooks, or pools. Some serve as hatcheries for fish and mollusks. |
| 8 | 5 | **Sacred Cavern:** Gnomekin priestesses of the Great Mother hold ceremonies within caves and grottoes sacred to their people. Most are adorned with crystals grown and shaped into forms ordained by the priestesses. A sacred cavern may be obvious and openly welcoming, or it may be a hidden place where the uninvited are unwelcome. In some, tunnels lead down to deeper burial chambers and in others passages wind upward to birthing chambers. |
| 9 | 6 | **Outpost:** The Gnomekin military constructed new outposts in caverns and tunnel walls throughout Durne, and at strategic points along the Underground Highway, particularly beneath the other realms of the Nine Kingdoms. Within Durne's borders the typical outpost houses mostly Gnomekin, but may also include Jaka. Commonly in remote areas, a gate or portcullis blocks passage and is guarded by soldiers |
| 10-11 | 7 | **Patrol:** Soldiers and mercenaries stationed at outposts regularly patrol the subterranean byways in small groups. They always include Gnomekin and might also have Jaka among them. |
| 12 | 8 | **Oddity:** The caves, tunnels, grottoes, and galleries of the underground hold many strange and fascinating sights. These might be works of art made recently or long ago, such as cave drawings or statues and sculptures fashioned of clay, stone, or crystal. In some places fountains or wells provide access to fresh water or even unusual substances like oil, nectar, or resins. Such places may have been forgotten or concealed. Perhaps the PCs have stumbled upon a hidden entrance. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 13-14 | 9 | **Travelers:** Those making their way through the twists and turns of the Underground Highway and the regions around the City of Durne typically do so in groups. The PCs might encounter Gnomekin merchants on durge-drawn wagons. They may be carting crystals, gems, minerals, various types of fungi, tubers, root syrup, or mushroom ale. Most likely, merchants are heading to or from Cymril, but could also be dealing with Vardune, Taz, Sindar, Kasmir, or Astar. Though less likely, they could also encounter Gnomekin mourners and priestesses transporting bodies to sacred caverns for burial. They could also come upon travelers from any of the other kingdoms, who will likely have a Gnomekin escort or guide. |
| 15-16 | 10 | **Rock Urchin:** These prickly creatures may be found alone or in groups. They roam the floors, walls, and ceilings of the underground, feeding upon lichen, moss, and other vegetation. Gnomekin use them to clear caves of unwanted or decaying growth in order to farm new harvests. Some magicians and scribes seek out their spines for making quills. |
| 17 | 11 | **Darkling:** These foul creatures despise Gnomekin and sometimes attempt to sneak into Durne to spy, cause trouble, or to steal anything from food to valuable crystals, or even Gnomekin children. |
| 18 | 12 | **Satada:** Having suffered great losses against the Gnomekin, Satada brood for vengeance and seek to reestablish their dominion over various parts of the underground. They may be encountered in small or large groups and will be intent on taking slaves or killing anyone they meet. |
| 19 | 13 | **Kra**: These immense burrowers find prey through vibration and may lie dormant until the hapless victim approaches. Other times the kra itself causes tremors as it tunnels through the ground. Gnomekin soldiers use drums to lead kra away from populated areas. |
| 20 | 14 | **Subterranoid**: These omnivorous and near-mindless predators dwell deep below the ground, further than even the Gnomekin travel, and typically attack from surprise, bursting forth upon the unwary. |

# Gnomekin Settlements

## Subterranean City of Durne

The Gnomekin have but a single settlement, the subterranean city of Durne. Constructed several hundred feet below ground, the settlement consists of numerous moss-lined cave dwellings, pools, and grottoes, connected by a complex maze of tunnels. Large caverns are used for the growing of mushrooms and tubers, underground lakes serving as hatcheries for several species of subterranean fish and mollusks. The Gnomekin also grow amber crystals, a raw material useful in the making of magical orbs and scrying devices.

# Places of Note

## The Underground Highway

The Underground Highway is a vast network of tunnels, subterranean rivers, and passageways that extends throughout the continent of Talislanta. The section connecting the city of Durne to Cymril is suitable for use by wagons and mounts and has been used as a major trade route for over two hundred years. This passage intersects with two other serviceable roadways, one leading to Vardune and Taz, and the other to Sindar, Kasmir, and Astar.

The Highway is by no means uniform in construction or design. Some of the tunnels are barely five feet in diameter; others are wide enough to allow passage of a land-ark. Some run at a consistent depth for miles on end, while others run uphill and down, winding like serpents through the subterranean depths.

# The Kingdom of Kasmir

Kasmir is an arid region bordered to the south by the Jaspar Mountains and to the east by the Wilderlands of Zaran. A barren land swept by sandstorms throughout much of the year, Kasmir presents a terrain of ever-shifting proportions, its dunes swelling or receding according to the prevailing winds. By day the twin suns beat down upon the desert sands without surcease; by night, the temperature drops, and an icy chill descends across the desert. The harsh environment is home to a desert people known as the Kasmirans.

## The Kasmirans

The Kasmirans are short and lean with odd-looking, shriveled features. They dress in hooded cloaks, loose robes, and curl-toed boots or slippers, apparel well-suited to the extremes of their environment.

### *Ancestry and History*

Originally a nomadic folk displaced by The Great Disaster, the Kasmirans are a wealthy people, though how they acquired their fortune is unknown; some say they were once tomb-robbers, or partners of the Djaffir bandit tribes. Whatever the truth may be, these folk established settlements in the Kasmir desert around the beginning of the second century, at which point they became known as the Kasmirans

During the Uprising, Kasmir was overrun by hordes of Za raiders and Beastmen. Many died in the assault before the invaders were eventually defeated by a combined force of Danuvian mercenaries, Jaka, and Thralls. Vowing never again to allow their land to be invaded by the folk they derogatively refer to as "Sub-Men," the Kasmirans were integral in the financing, planning, and construction of the massive Wilderlands Wall that now separates the eastern borders of the Nine Kingdoms from the Wilderlands of Zaran.

### *Culture*

Even before the Uprising, it was a well-known fact that Kasmirans are insular by nature and suspicious of outsiders. Only members of the same family and ancestral clan are truly trusted; a Kasmiran's lineage is evident in his or her name, which among Kasmirans serves as an individual's references (see Language, below).

Kasmirans live in windowless stone towers, their doors barred and locked to protect against thieves. Spy-tubes are used to scan the surroundings before allowing any visitor to enter. Kasmirans subsist on a simple diet of coarse black bread, desert palm fruit, a type of hard erd's cheese called kasmara, and cups of steaming-hot mochan.

The Kasmirans are renowned throughout the continent as crafty negotiators. The Djaffir merchant tribes, who still do business with the Kasmirans from time to time, commonly refer to them as tu-beshal, which means "blood-suckers," though the term carries certain lewd connotations as well.



In truth, the Kasmirans are not cheap or stingy; they are just extremely frugal (see sidebar). This is an old habit acquired from the days when the ancestors of the Kasmirans were poor desert nomads, homeless and destitute. To ensure that such circumstances could never happen again, Kasmirans make it a practice to save and safeguard their money, which they keep in personal vaults warded with multiple locks and trap-mechanisms.

### *Language*

Kasmirans are fluent in Low Talislan and the old Nomad tongue. Kasmiran names are a combination of personal first name, family name, and ancestral clan name. For example, Azi al Din means "Azi of the al family, of the Din tribe." Other common names include Abn na Fal, Abas el Adin, Kafa da Nir, and the like.

### *Government*

The ruler of the Kasmiran people, known simply as the King or Queen of Kasmir, is elected by a form of popular vote. However, only the heads of the one hundred most influential families are allowed to cast ballots. In Kasmir, individuals accused of a criminal act have the right to obtain legal counsel, at their expense. Reneging on a contract is a very serious offense, punishable by fines, reparations, and/or imprisonment. Kasmirans employ mercenaries to collect on bad debts, and in extreme cases, may even hire Arimite Revenants to find those who flee to escape their responsibilities.

Kasmir has no army of its own, but is protected by a mercenary force stationed in fortified barracks located close to the Wilderlands Wall. Though the country as a whole has no organized system of fortifications, even the lowliest Kasmiran tower-dwelling is like a fortress, capable of withstanding a small siege force for several days. These tower-dwellings are the only thing that saved the Kasmiran population from being completely decimated during the Uprising.

### *Magic & Religion*

A small percentage of the Kasmiran population practices magic, mainly for its financial benefits. Kasmirans are atheists; they have no religion and revere no deities. Kasmirans bury the dead along with a portion of their wealth in locked stone vaults warded with traps of many sorts. The buried wealth is considered an investment for later generations to unearth, and a hedge against inflation or other financial calamities. The traps are a necessary safeguard against tomb-robbers.

## Kasmiran Etiquette

*The Kasmirans observe a great number of ancient traditions, some of which may seem bizarre to foreigners. When in the company of these folk, outsiders would do well to familiarize themselves with certain important rules of etiquette, which may be expressed as follows:*

*If you are invited into a Kasmiran's home, knock once on the door and wait patiently for a response. This may take several minutes, as it is likely that your host will first scrutinize you thoroughly through a combination of peepholes and spy-tubes. Do not take offense; this is the custom among all Kasmirans. When all locks have been undone, you may enter your host's home. Again, be patient, as this may take a few moments.*

*Visitors to a Kasmiran abode are expected to sit on the floor, as the Kasmir do themselves. A rug or mat will always be provided for this purpose; take care not to wipe your feet on it when you enter, as this is regarded as a great insult. Your host will offer one or more cushions for you to lean upon. Take it with thanks; such perquisites come free of charge. If a Kasmiran host offers you more than one cushion it is a sign that he or she regards you as a "valued customer" – in Kasmiran terms, one with whom the host hopes to do business.*

*While visiting with your host, never request food or drink unless it is offered to you. To make such a request is considered poor manners; what if the Kasmiran has only enough food and drink for himself? Should refreshments be offered, the polite response is to offer monetary compensation to your host. The host should take only enough to pay the cost of purchasing, transporting, storing, cooking, and serving the food; any more than this would be impolite.*

*Do not complain about the lack of light inside a Kasmiran abode. For economic reasons, Kasmirans rarely use more than a single candle or small lantern to illuminate a room. This may do little to dispel the gloom, for the typical Kasmiran abode has no windows. However, keep in mind that the lack of windows is due to the Kasmiran fear of thieves, and complaints associated with this subject may reflect poorly upon your intentions.*

### *Worldview*

Following the Uprising, Kasmir convinced the other members of the Nine Kingdoms to begin construction of the Wilderlands Wall, to prevent further attacks from the Wild Tribes. Hatred of the Wild Tribes runs deep in Kasmir, who continue to be alert for signs of future hostilities.

Kasmir remains a key center of trade, and its merchants can be found throughout the Nine Kingdoms and beyond. Kasmiran merchants finance caravans, buy and sell quantities of trade goods, and lend money to fund small- to medium-sized ventures of many different sorts. Moneychangers are available in any Kasmiran settlement and will gladly convert foreign currencies at current rates of exchange in return for a fee of just one percent.



## Kasmiran Settlements

### The City of Kasmir

The walled city of Kasmir serves as the country's capital, and as an important center for commercial and financial ventures of all sorts. Built on the ruins of a forgotten city-state, the city is a collection of windowless stone towers arranged haphazardly, their doors barred and locked against thieves. The narrow streets are little more than alleys, running in every direction at odd angles. Mercenary Thralls patrol the city and guard the main gates.

### Kasir

West of the capital lies the wealthy Kasmiran settlement of Kasir, notable for its artificers and locksmiths, who are considered unsurpassed in skill. Kasir is also a regular stopping point for caravans traveling the Nine Roads. The settlement resembles a smaller version of the capital.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** During the time of the Uprising, armies of Za raiders and Beastmen swarmed the deserts of Kasmir, but were ultimately defeated by the combined forces of Thralls, Jaka, and Danuvians. Signs of these attacks and battles include equipment and skeletal remains half-buried in the sand, the tattered remnants of abandoned camps, and the fact that many Kasmiran towers were damaged but not overcome. |
| 4-5 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The twin suns blister the deserts of Kasmir to the point that, on the hottest days, travel becomes dangerous for the unprepared. Some nights can also be dangerous, or at the least uncomfortable, due to rapid drops in temperature. The most feared type of extreme weather is sandstorms, which can occur suddenly and wreak havoc, but also, thankfully, tend to pass quickly. |
| 6-8 | 3 | **Tower:** Kasmiran tower-dwellings are fortresses of stone. Typically, they have no windows and one obvious, imposing door. On the walls of most towers, bas-relief visages of family members or fanciful creatures provide more than decoration – they conceal spy-tubes and peep holes. Towers might be encountered singly, in small clusters, or enough to form a town. |
| 9-10 | 4 | **Barracks:** Most barracks have been constructed near the Wilderlands Wall, but Kasmirans are having more built near their towns as well. Each barracks structure houses mercenaries employed by Kasmirans. The structures are well-fortified, though plain, even less decorated than Kasmiran tower-dwellings. |
| 11 | 5 | **Tomb:** Stone vaults may be found throughout the desert, visible or sometimes buried under the sand. In some cases, they may be from an ancient time and culture, but most are Kasmiran tombs and will be guarded by a multitude of complex traps. Some are in the process of being built or expanded to hold newly-deceased family members. |
| 12-13 | 6 | **Traveler:** Most folk who travel to Kasmir do so in small to large caravans. One might encounter Kasmiran merchants and their hired mercenaries or merchant caravans from other lands, such as Djaffa or Carantheum. Thrall and Danuvian mercenary units also travel the desert, moving between settlements or to the Wilderlands Wall. |
| 14-15 | 7 | **Oasis:** Groves of desert palms mark places where one might find fresh water from a spring or well. The larger oases will usually have travelers (see encounter #6) camped among the palms and sponge bristle. Some may also have Kasmiran towers nearby (see encounter #3). |
| 16 | 8 | **Land Kra:** These giant burrowing predators prefer the deep sand regions of Kasmir. Attracted to vibration, they are a particularly dangerous threat to caravans. |
| 17 | 9 | **Chasm Viper:** These serpents hunt small animals and insects but will strike at larger creatures who stumble upon them. Because their prey is often found at oases, one may encounter these vipers there also. Cymrilian alchemists and Sindarin collectors may be encountered hunting the snakes in this region. |
| 18-19 | 10 | **Satada:** These malevolent beings travel beneath the desert in the tunnels of the Underground Highway. They guard hidden entrances to the surface from which they come forth to raid and kidnap anyone unfortunate enough to encounter them. |
| 20 | 11 | **Behemoth:** Though rare in Kasmir, small herds of behemoths and their young wander here. Travelers typically try to avoid the creatures at all costs as they are unpredictable and incredibly dangerous if enraged. |

# The Kingdom of Sindar

Sindar is a land of towering mesas, arches, and strange configurations of time-worn stone. Underground springs and geysers are the only sources of water in this region, which is bordered to the east by the barren canyons of the Dead River. A branch of the Nine Roads follows a winding route through deep ravines and outcroppings of weathered stone to the settlement of Nankar, where there is a bridge that provides access to the Wilderlands of Zaran. Here live a curious, dual-brained people known as the Sindarans.

## The Sindarans

Sindarans bear little resemblance to any other humanoid species native to the continent. They stand over seven feet in height, and are emaciated in build, with wrinkled, sandy-colored skin. All Sindarans have a row of horn-like nodules running from the crown of the head to the back of the neck, and a curved spur of cartilage protruding from beneath the chin. They dress in cloaks, loincloths, and sandals, decorating themselves with simple jewelry, bangles, and bracers on their wrists and ankles.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Sindarans are said to be descended from the Neurians, a race that is alien to Talislanta and originated from another dimension. Long ago, a Neurian vessel arrived apparently by accident, possibly through a gate or rift created by the sorcerers of ancient Archaeus. Stranded in a strange world, the vessel's inhabitants settled on a distant continent, where they lived until the coming of the Great Disaster. In an ill-fated attempt to escape the destruction of their adopted homeland in a great sky-spanning ark, they crash-landed on the continent of Talislanta. After a period of wandering, the survivors settled in their current home, where they became known as the Sindarans.

### *Culture*

Sindarans are dual-encephalons; they have two brains, each capable of independent function. The ability of Sindarans to follow two lines of thought simultaneously is both alien and somewhat disconcerting to most Talislantans. Further complicating matters is the propensity of Sindarans to argue both points of any issue before arriving at a single decision.



Sindarans may lose their dual-encephalic abilities through accident, injury, or attempting to practice magic. Individuals who have suffered such a fate often become irrational and unpredictable, and are called "Sindra," a term meaning "one who is cut apart." The word itself is not disrespectful, but it is often used condescendingly.

Sindarans live in mesa-top communes composed of elegant, tiered buildings, each built around a structure of carved stone blocks and hardwoods imported from Vardune and Taz. Gossamer curtains dyed various shades of orange and burnt umber serve as the walls of the Sindarans' pavilions, and provide a measure of privacy while retaining a feeling of wide-open spaces. Communication between Sindaran communes is made possible utilizing large reflective crystals, which are mounted on tripods and used to flash coded messages from one outpost to the next.

Sindarans have two passions: collecting, and an activity called trivarian. Trivarian is a test of skill, often referred to as a game by other peoples (though Sindarins consider such a term to be inaccurate) that requires an exceptional degree of intellect and abstract reasoning, and is virtually impossible for anyone but dual-encephalons to comprehend. Trivarian tournaments are held throughout Sindar and are considered events of great importance, as winners become candidates for leadership in governmental positions (see Government). Second in importance only to trivarian is the activity of collecting (see sidebar), be it artifacts, books, or baubles. Sindaran collectors are completists who find it difficult to resist indulging in their obsession.

Sindarans subsist on a diet of vegetables and tubers, supplemented by certain powdered minerals and crystals. These substances are required to meet Sindaran nutritional needs, which are different from those of native Talislantans. Skoryx, a potent liquor of rare qualities and multiple taste sensations, is a favorite drink.

Sindarans export silver, which is mined by well-paid mercenary laborers from Arim and other lands, and either sold in ten-pound ingots or worked into various decorative and useful goods. These folk also concoct and sell many different types of alchemical mixtures, medicines, and remedies. Most Sindaran wares are shipped to Cymril for sale throughout the Nine Kingdoms and elsewhere, though considerable savings can be had by purchasing directly from the Sindarans themselves.

## The Collectors

*Of great importance to every Sindaran is his or her collection. Indeed, to the Sindarans collecting is not simply a hobby, or even an obsession. It is a means of personal expression, and of developing those virtues held in the highest regard by the Sindaran people: pandidactism, persistence, and patience.*

*Before obtaining a single collectible, the neophyte collector may spend months or even years researching numerous fields of study, ranging from naturalism to numismatics, cosmology, metaphysics, linguistics, antiquities, and so forth. After much study, the aspiring collector will eventually settle upon a single field of study and choose a specialty within his or her chosen field; once the specialty has been chosen, the collector will begin a second period of research, intended to uncover all available information on the subject. During this phase a Sindaran will spend countless hours scouring libraries and archives throughout Sindar, sometimes even traveling to foreign lands.*

*Once a collection is begun, the collector will never be completely satisfied until it is complete in every detail. This does not mean that a collector must personally acquire every single object or artifact that falls within his or her specialty. Rather, completion can be achieved as long as the collector has located and at least studied every item relevant to his or her collection. To Sindarans, material acquisition is not as important as intellectual acquisition. Completing a collection is a rare thing indeed. Many collections are works in progress, handed down from one generation to another. Happy is the day when a Sindaran completes such a collection, fulfilling his or her personal goals and the aspirations of his or her ancestors as well.*

*Another rationale for the Sindarans' interest in collecting may also exist – a well-known naturalist known as Thystram speculated that the Sindarans collect things because they are searching for fragments, traces, or clues to the location of the Neurian ark that crashed somewhere in Talislanta during the Great Disaster. Thystram believed that this ship may well contain lost secrets that would allow the Sindarans to return to their ancestors' homeworld.*

### *Language*

Sindarans are fluent in both High and Low Talislan, and frequently combine elements of both dialects to express contrasting concepts. They tend to be verbose and are partial to the use of multisyllabic words. If given the opportunity, a Sindaran can go on for hours about almost any subject.

Sindaran nomenclature is based on gender, "personal" name, and family name. Common personal names for males include Taj, Nas, Dar, Naj; female personal names are similar, but end in an I, as in Taji, Nasi, Dari, and Neji. Family names do not differentiate between sexes. The most common include Modan, Nadar, Motas, Najar, and Narune.

### *Government*

Every third year, a five-day trivarian tournament is held to determine the best player in the land. The victor assumes the rulership of the kingdom, and the title of Nadir Absolute. Sindarans of successively lower trivarian rank serve as governors of the settlements, advisors, or magistrates. Sindaran litigators are among the most skilled in Talislanta. Trials are presided over by a pair of Sindaran magistrates, and are exceedingly long affairs – the opposing counsels are likely to present the "pros" and "cons" not only of their side, but also of the opposing one.



A folk enamored of subtlety and intrigue, Sindarans prefer to disguise the defensive capabilities of their mesa-top settlements. Popular tactics and devices include concealed weapons that can be employed against airborne attacks, as well as the use of secret tunnels through which Sindaran defenders can launch surprise counterattacks upon would-be invaders. Sindaran militias patrol the territories around their settlements on foot and in light windskiffs, which they obtain from Cymril.

### *Magic & Religion*

Sindarans revere a deity similar in some respects to the Talislantan Creator, but known to Sindarans as the "Duality," signifying the joining of mind and spirit. Sindarans relate the "heavens" to the stars, where they believe their lost homeworld can be found. Sindarans do not bury their dead. Instead, following a short ceremony the body of the deceased is disposed of by dissolution in alchahest, leaving not so much as a trace.

### *Worldview*

During the Uprising, Sindar's mesa-top colonies were attacked from the air by winged Stryx from Urag. The Sindarans suffered heavy casualties before they were finally able to repel the invaders, with the assistance of a contingent of Blue Aeriad from Vardune. Since the truce, Sindar has been among the only members of the Nine Kingdoms that has called for better relations with the Wild Tribes. As always, the dual-encephalons see both sides of the issue between the Wild Tribes and the so-called civilized nations.

The Sindarans continue to play an important role in formulating policy for the Nine Kingdoms, but prefer to keep a low profile when it comes to relations with foreign lands. Sindarans have interests apart from those of the confederation, but in diplomatic matters they generally abide by the decisions of the Council of Kings — after first presenting their views in detail, of course.

# Sindaran Settlements

## Nankar

The largest Sindaran settlement, Nankar is the capital of Sindar. Several Sindaran institutes of learning are located here, attracting scholars with an interest in alchemy and metaphysics. The settlement is accessible via winch-platform from the southwest, and from the northeast via the Bridge at Nankar, which spans the Dead River chasm and leads to a branch of the old Wilderlands Road.

## Nadir

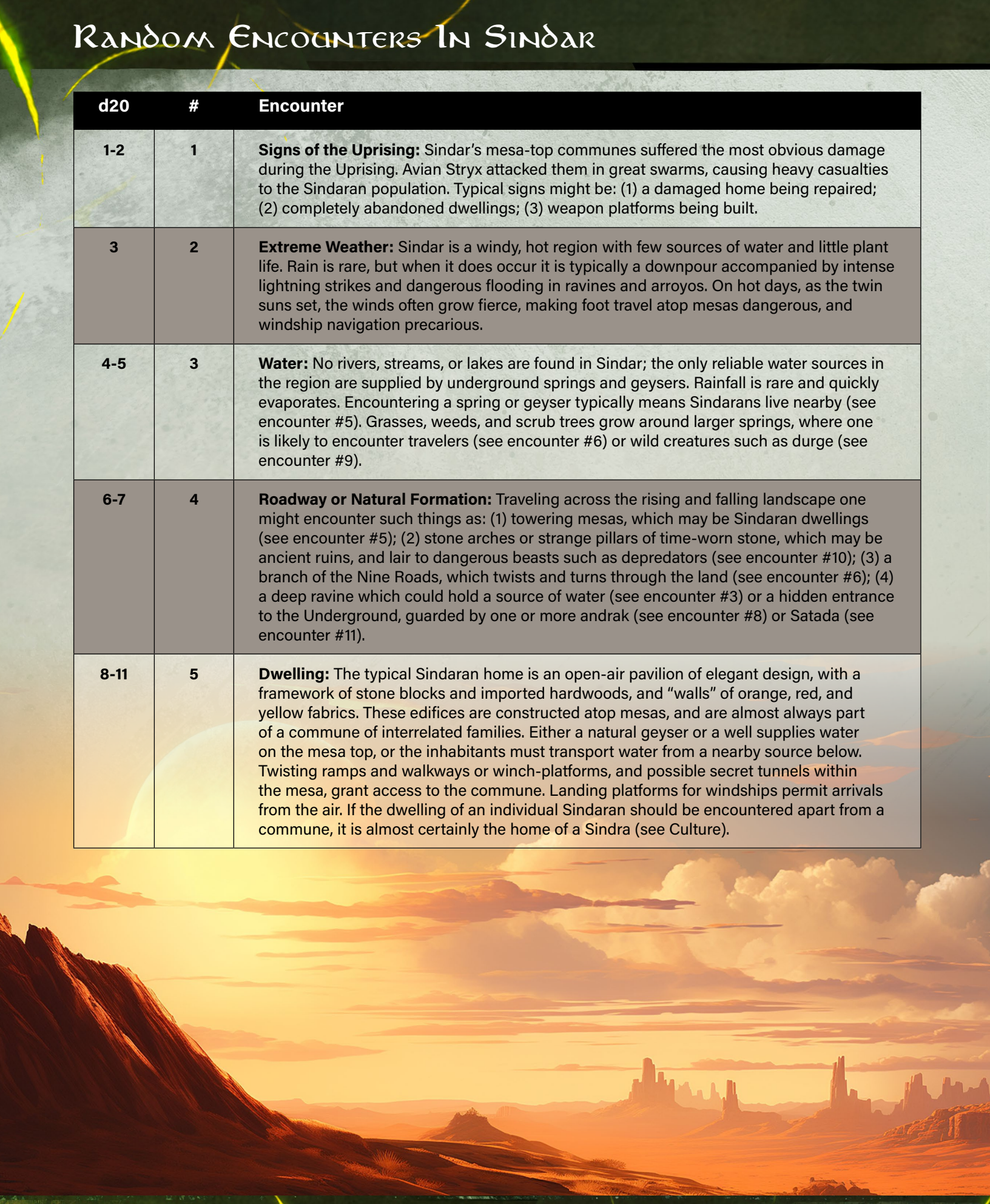
Nadir is home to many of the Sindar's foremost trivarian players, who are also known as "nadirs" – the term refers to the base of the pyramid-shaped "board" on which trivarian is played, a position over which only the most skillful players can attain mastery. Built atop a mound of stone two hundred feet in height, the settlement is favored for its cool breezes and splendid view. A natural geyser provides abundant water for the inhabitants.

## Sahar

Sahar is little more than an outpost, famed only for the moonstones found in the canyons nearby. Unfortunately, chasm vipers, Satada, and fearsome depredators also dwell among the ravines.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** Sindar's mesa-top communes suffered the most obvious damage during the Uprising. Avian Stryx attacked them in great swarms, causing heavy casualties to the Sindaran population. Typical signs might be: (1) a damaged home being repaired; (2) completely abandoned dwellings; (3) weapon platforms being built. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** Sindar is a windy, hot region with few sources of water and little plant life. Rain is rare, but when it does occur it is typically a downpour accompanied by intense lightning strikes and dangerous flooding in ravines and arroyos. On hot days, as the twin suns set, the winds often grow fierce, making foot travel atop mesas dangerous, and windship navigation precarious. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Water:** No rivers, streams, or lakes are found in Sindar; the only reliable water sources in the region are supplied by underground springs and geysers. Rainfall is rare and quickly evaporates. Encountering a spring or geyser typically means Sindarans live nearby (see encounter #5). Grasses, weeds, and scrub trees grow around larger springs, where one is likely to encounter travelers (see encounter #6) or wild creatures such as durge (see encounter #9). |
| 6-7 | 4 | **Roadway or Natural Formation:** Traveling across the rising and falling landscape one might encounter such things as: (1) towering mesas, which may be Sindaran dwellings (see encounter #5); (2) stone arches or strange pillars of time-worn stone, which may be ancient ruins, and lair to dangerous beasts such as depredators (see encounter #10); (3) a branch of the Nine Roads, which twists and turns through the land (see encounter #6); (4) a deep ravine which could hold a source of water (see encounter #3) or a hidden entrance to the Underground, guarded by one or more andrak (see encounter #8) or Satada (see encounter #11). |
| 8-11 | 5 | **Dwelling:** The typical Sindaran home is an open-air pavilion of elegant design, with a framework of stone blocks and imported hardwoods, and "walls" of orange, red, and yellow fabrics. These edifices are constructed atop mesas, and are almost always part of a commune of interrelated families. Either a natural geyser or a well supplies water on the mesa top, or the inhabitants must transport water from a nearby source below. Twisting ramps and walkways or winch-platforms, and possible secret tunnels within the mesa, grant access to the commune. Landing platforms for windships permit arrivals from the air. If the dwelling of an individual Sindaran should be encountered apart from a commune, it is almost certainly the home of a Sindra (see Culture). |



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 12-13 | 6 | **Traveler:** If encountered on the road, travelers will likely be part of a small or large caravan heading to or from Cymril to a Sindaran settlement. Sindarans export silver ingots and goods, a multitude of alchemical mixtures and remedies, and a strong liquor called skoryx. They import vegetables, minerals, crystals, and building and crafting supplies. One might also encounter a patrol of Sindaran militia, either on foot or in small windships. |
| 14 | 7 | **Chasm Viper:** These serpents hunt small animals and insects but will strike at larger creatures who stumble upon them. They lair in the cracks and crevices of mesas and stone formations. Cymrilian alchemists and Sindarin collectors may be encountered hunting the snakes in this region. |
| 15 | 8 | **Andrak:** These giant arachnids (also known as Crag Spiders) lair among the cliffs and ravines of the region. Some are quite intelligent and are believed to ally with Satada (see encounter #11). In exchange for victims, they guard entrances to the Underground or spy upon surface dwellers. |
| 16-17 | 9 | **Beast:** Small herds of these large and slow-moving herbivores wander the area. Sindarans typically ignore them, but employ them as beasts of burden in some communes. Durge sometimes fall prey to andrak, depredators, and vasps. |
| 18 | 10 | **Depredator:** These horrific fliers usually prefer easy prey such as durge, but will attack travelers, and sometimes even Sindaran mesa communities. |
| 19 | 11 | **Satada:** These malevolent reptilians travel the tunnels of the Underground Highway. They guard hidden entrances to the surface from which they come forth to raid and kidnap anyone unfortunate enough to encounter them. It is believed that an extremely large colony of Satada lies somewhere far beneath Sindar. |
| 20 | 12 | **Vasp:** Though still rare in Sindar, the numbers of these large, predatory insects have increased since the Uprising. Vasps lurk in the clefts of mesas, cliffs, and ravines. |



# The Kingdom of Taz

Taz is a land of heavy jungles to the north and low-lying swamps to the south. It is bordered to the west by the Axis River, and the east by the forests of Danuvia. A branch of the Nine Roads winds its way through the jungle, connecting the capital of Tor to the city of Cymril. Virulent species of plants and animals — such as mantrap, alatus, and lurkers — haunt this region, which is home to a warrior-race known as the Thralls.

## The Thralls

Thralls are uniformly tall and heavily muscled. Hairless and devoid of pigmentation, they are distinguishable only by sex; otherwise, all Thralls look exactly alike. In defiance of this inbred genetic trait, Thralls decorate their bodies from head to toe with elaborate tattoos, thereby attaining some degree of individuality. Males dress in sandals and loincloths; females add a vest to the sparse ensemble.

### *Ancestry and History*

A hybrid race created long ago by the sorcerers of some ancient and forgotten kingdom, Thralls were bred to serve as an army of slave warriors. After the Great Disaster, they were freed from servitude, and spent many years wandering in the Wilderlands of Zaran. They eventually settled in the jungles of Taz, and later joined the Nine Kingdoms confederation.

During the Uprising, Thrall armies played a key role in the defense of the Kingdoms. They fought in Kasmir, Cymril, and along the eastern border of the region as a whole. Along with the Danuvians, their forces were integral in driving the Wild Tribes out of the Kingdom's territories. Following the truce, the Thralls voluntarily ceded the eastern sector of Taz to their allies, the Danuvians, who lost their own home during the war.



### *Culture*

The Thralls of Taz live in settlements ringed by high palisade walls constructed of cut stone blocks. Each village is a fortified camp, with sheds for supplies and provisions, stables for mangonel lizard mounts, a foundry for making weapons and armor, and communal barracks. Thrall society is based upon the military chain of command. The family is like a platoon; a settlement comprised of many families operates like a division; the race of Thralls functions like an army. Males and females form "alliances" rather than marrying, remaining steadfastly loyal to each other until death. Their young are raised in separate training facilities and learn to fend for themselves quickly (Thralls are fully grown by eight years of age).

Bred for combat, Thralls know no other way of life. The highly specialized nature of Thralls has led some folk to assume that they are dull-witted or ignorant, but it is a grave mistake to underestimate a Thrall; while their talents are limited to martial abilities, they are renowned as skilled tacticians who possess an instinctive ability to grasp and execute even the most complex military strategies. Conversely, Thralls have little interest in other skills and professions, which they generally do not comprehend.

Thralls practice no arts or crafts that are not related to the military, though long ago they adopted the practice of decorating their bodies with tattoos. These markings represent the individual's place of birth, clan affiliation, rank, and achievements, and constitute a great source of pride. Thralls can "read" the tattoos of others of their race, and by doing so, learn much about them without the need for verbal communication (see sidebar). When off duty, Thralls enjoy physical sports such as wrestling.

Taz is mainly self-sufficient, producing most of the equipment and provisions necessary to maintain its populace. When there is a surplus of goods available, Thrall supply units export these wares to Cymril for sale or trade. When provisions run short, they import materials from outside sources. Several of the Nine Kingdom countries hire Thrall units as mercenary defenders, providing an additional source of revenue.

### *Language*

All Thralls converse in Low Talislan. Despite the stereotype, Thralls do not speak poorly; rather, they speak simply, and often movingly. Common names tend to have a militaristic slant, such as Ramm, Axa, Axus, Striker, Barax, Kadre, Fortus, Blade, and Cestus.

### *Government*

The Thralls are ruled by an individual known as the Warrior King or Warrior Queen of Taz – essentially, Commander in Chief of the Thralls. Thralls respect the chain of command, and among these folk, rank is always earned – promotions are never awarded for purely ceremonial reasons or as political stunts. So it follows that the title of Warrior King or Queen is also a merit-based position, with individuals usually remaining in power until they are killed in battle, retire due to age, or sustain crippling injuries as a result of combat. Occasionally, high-ranking contenders for the throne arise, and the resulting duels are surprisingly complex, with the challengers competing in multiple contests of tactical skill and leadership ability. These usually take the form of strategic wargames and large-scale mock battles between the two contestants and the people who choose to follow them. Such "battles" for the throne can take many days or even weeks to reach their conclusion.

Unsurprisingly, the rest of Thrall government is also organized like a military chain of command, with commanders, sub-commanders, platoon leaders, and soldiers. Military tribunals handle all legal matters, which are adjudged in the manner of a military court-martial. Due to the Thralls' innate devotion to duty and respect for rank, serious offenses are extremely rare.

The Thralls maintain one of the best-trained and most efficient military forces in Talislanta. In essence, the entire adult Thrall population is part of the military. Each unit has its logistical operations and responsibilities: supply, recon, artillery, the construction and maintenance of fortifications, heavy cavalry, infantry, and so forth. Thrall forces play an integral role in the defense of the Nine Kingdoms, particularly in the Borderlands Legion, which guards the Wilderlands Wall that extends along the eastern borders of the Wilderlands of Zaran.

### *Magic & Religion*

Thralls possess no talent whatsoever for magic. They revere the warrior-spirits of their early ancestors, whose names live on in tales passed from one generation to the next. Thralls have no illusions as to their origins. They know that their race was created by sorcery, rather than some deific being. Thralls cremate their dead in a simple but moving ceremony. To die in battle, defending one's beliefs, is considered the highest honor.

## Thrall Tattoo Symbology

*Thrall tattoos, while colorful in appearance, are not just a form of decoration, nor are the designs simply a means of instilling a sense of individuality into a race whose members otherwise look exactly alike (though they do also serve that purpose). Instead, the intricate symbology utilized in Thrall tattoos provides a virtual record of the wearer's life and history. To obtain some idea of how to read Thrall tattoos, one must understand the importance of the tattoo's location, color, and symbolism.*

*The location of a tattoo determines the general type of information it conveys. For example, the tattoos on a Thrall's head depict an individual's name, rank, and personal embellishments as he or she prefers. Name and rank are indited on the forehead, for easy recognition. Promotions and commendations appear along the sides and back of the head. Personal embellishments are primarily decorative, and are located in the areas around the eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, ears, and neck. Place of birth and clan alliance are recorded on the shoulders. The torso is used to delineate the wearer's lineage: his or her ancestors, their place of origin, and their accomplishments. The individual's achievements and skills are inscribed upon the arms, legs, hands, and feet.*

*Colors are used to indicate clan alliance, and to provide more specific information about the wearer. Each clan uses its color combination, which is incorporated into the traditional shoulder designs. The use of bright colors makes such designations easier to read at a distance. The vertical forehead designs used to show rank are also based on color; gold is the highest rank, followed by green, violet, blue, orange-red, and white. Color is also used to indicate specific types of battle commendations – green for valorous conduct, blue for tactical expertise, gold for command excellence, etc. More specific information is contained within the actual symbols used in each tattoo, each of which is an ideogram expressing a word, phrase, or concept. Arranged in a variety of different combinations, the lines, patterns, and geometric shapes used in Thrall symbology convey the entire story of a Thrall's life.*

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The Uprising did not come to the Kingdom of Taz. Instead, the Thralls and their military might went to meet the Uprising head-on. Even so, the Uprising has affected Thrall life within their kingdom. Typical signs might be: (1) ongoing work on roadways meant to allow Thrall war machines and troops to better mobilize; (2) frequent Thrall battalions moving on the roads, either to reinforce garrisons in other lands or to export wares for trade; (3) construction of war machines, fortifications, and training facilities (even more so than usual, that is). |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** Taz is a land of rain forests, jungles, and swamps. The most common type of extreme weather that occurs here is monsoon-like storms that bring drenching rains. These are often brief, but severe, and cause flash floods in the jungles and rising water in the swamps. Roadways can become impassable in such times. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Water:** Groundwater is everywhere in Taz. However, much of it is unsafe to drink. Thralls use rain-catchers to funnel rainwater into containers of all sizes, from personal canteens to underground cisterns or elevated tanks at permanent settlements. A random encounter with water might mean: (1) being in the path of a coming flood (see encounter #2); (2) coming upon a flooded region; (3) finding a source of safe drinking water, perhaps a Thrall rain-catcher or natural spring. |
| 6-7 | 4 | **Roadway:** Roads in Taz vary from single-file footpaths to proper byways atop embankments wide enough for war machines to travel. An encounter with a roadway might involve: (1) coming upon travelers (see encounter #6); (2) spotting a hidden trail leading somewhere interesting (see encounter #5 or #9); (3) finding laborers working to repair or expand a road; (4) coming upon a small to large force of Thrall soldiers (see encounter #1). |
| 8-11 | 5 | **Dwelling:** Thralls do not live individually, but together in communal barracks within fortified settlements. Even so, it is possible to encounter unusual dwellings in Taz, such as: (1) a new Thrall settlement under construction; (2) Thrall soldiers at a temporary camp as part of a training exercise; (3) a nest of alatus (see encounter #7); (4) the lair of a lurker (see encounter #8); (5) the lair of a skalanx (see encounter #9); (6) the camp of travelers from another land (see encounter #6). |
| 12-13 | 6 | **Traveler:** Examples of people coming to Taz might be: (1) Cymrilian merchants traveling by windship; (2) Sindaran collectors searching the jungles and swamps for specific flora and fauna; (3) Danuvians on their way to or from the city of New Danuvia; (4) Kasmiran merchant caravans bringing wares to sell or hoping to contract Thrall mercenaries. |
| 14 | 7 | **Alatus:** These flying leeches, measuring up to six feet in length when fully grown, are particularly bothersome to travelers without proper shelter for the night. Alatus are known to carry and transmit a disease called blood fever. |
| 15 | 8 | **Lurker:** Wading in even ankle-deep water can bring one within the deadly grasp of a lurker – a lumpy, mud-burrowing, carnivorous invertebrate that can easily be mistaken for a submerged rock. |
| 16 | 9 | **Skalanx:** Though rare, these hideous aquatic predators lair within the deeper waters of the swamps of Taz, and will readily attack anything that moves. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | 10 | **Marsh Strider:** Known for their irritable nature, the bipedal creatures known as marsh striders might be encountered as hatchlings about a foot tall, or adults standing over seven feet tall. It is a badge of honor for Thrall youth to track, capture, and train a marsh strider as a mount. |
| 18 | 11 | **Mangonel Lizard:** These large herbivores roam the jungles in small to large herds. They are the preferred mounts of Thrall soldiers |
| 19 | 12 | **Stranglevine:** Thralls eliminate the murderous stranglevine wherever they find it, but the invasive plant can be difficult to spot. |
| 20 | 13 | **Tazian Fly:** A swarming horde of thousands of bright red Tazian flies is a frightful sight to behold. Seeking shelter is strongly advised, as they are believed to carry terrible diseases, and deliver them in methods equally terrible to experience. Oddly, Thralls are rarely preyed upon by Tazian flies – perhaps the insects dislike the taste. |

### *Worldview*

Taz is an active and integral part of the Nine Kingdoms confederation, planning strategies for the defense of the federation, guarding the borders, and helping keep the Nine Roads safe for merchants and travelers. Thralls rarely get involved with foreign relations or diplomatic matters, preferring to leave such concerns to the Sindarans, Cymrilians, or other members of the confederation. Taz believes that future conflict with the Wild Tribes is inevitable, and has warned the other Kingdoms to make preparations for another war.



# Thrall Settlements

## The Fortress of Tor

A fortified communal complex, Tor serves as the capital of Taz. Situated in the jungle, the city consists of several squat, rectangular structures built of stone blocks, surrounded by double walls and a defensive network of interconnected towers. Mangonel lizards, greymanes, and marsh striders are maintained in stables for military use.

## Targ

The Thrall community of Targ lies on the western fringes of the swamp. Like most Tazian settlements, the city comprises several simple stone dwellings set within a walled enclosure.

# The Kingdom of Vardune

Vardune is a densely forested region bordered to the west by the Axis River, a wide but shallow waterway that can be safely navigated only by flat-bottomed skiffs, barges, and small watercraft. Vardune is divided into two great woodlands: Northwood and Southwood. Both regions are covered in verdant foliage, with old-growth forest predominating in the north, and cultivated crops and orchards most common in the south. Populated by great flocks of avir, exotic plant species, and wild beasts, the land of Vardune is also home to a semi-avian people known as the Aeriad.

## The Aeriad

There are two subspecies of Aeriad: Green Aeriad, who seldom exceed five feet in height, and the taller and somewhat more aggressive Blue Aeriad. Both species are slender and frail in stature, their bodies covered in a coat of feathers that glisten with a metallic sheen. A rigid coxcomb of plumes adds to the distinctive appearance of these folk. By contrast, their manner of dress is simple and austere, typically featuring a short tunic, loincloth, and a cape of plain viridian linen.



### *Ancestry and History*

The Aeriad claim descent from a race of avians who fled from a far-distant land following the Great Disaster, eventually landing in Talislanta. Formerly a race of sky-roving hunters and gatherers, the Aeriad were forced to abandon their traditional way of life when their ancestral homeland was annexed by the forces of the old Phaedran regime. They settled in the forests of Vardune and built several small settlements along the eastern banks of the Axis River. The Green Aeriad became horticulturists and botanomancers, and through the disuse of their wings eventually lost the ability to fly. The Blue Aeriad remained closer to the ways of their raptor-ancestors who, while not powerful fliers, were adept at hovering and gliding on the winds for great distances.

During the Uprising, the Blues came to the aid of Sindar, which was under attack by avian Stryx from Urag. They also fought for Cymril against the Baratus windship pirates. In gratitude, Cymril's alchemists concocted an elixir that helped to restore the Blues' diminishing powers of flight.

### *Culture*

Aeriad society is divided along color lines. Green Aeriad live in Southwood, and Blues live in Northwood. There does not seem to be any prejudice or animosity between the two peoples; that is just the way Aeriad society functions. Green Aeriad tend to be agriculturalists, botanomancers, scribes, historians, or scholars. Blues tend to be hunters, gatherers, scouts, and rangers.

Aeriad live in tree-dwellings of elaborately woven vines and branches, and they subsist on a diet of seeds and vinesap. Extended families of several generations often live together in the same tree-dwelling, called a "family tree." Bridges of woven vines connect different tree-dwellings, forming small settlements.

Green Aeriad produce most of Vardune's marketable wares, including its most important crop, the massive viridia plant. Its vines are woven into rope; its ten-foot-long pods are filled with a fibrous down which can be spun into a fine cloth called viridian linen. The empty pods are cured, cut, lacquered, and used as building and roofing materials. The Aeriad trade with the other members of the Nine Kingdoms, Mog, and to a lesser extent, Arim.

### *Language*

All Aeriad are bilingual, fluent in Low Talislan and also the avian tongue used by the Gryphs. Avian is favored by the Blue Aeriad, while the Green Aeriad prefer Low Talislan.

This may be described as a point of contention between the two Aeriad peoples, which at times has become heated; while the two ethnicities are not rivals, they do have differing points of view, with Blues favoring their "wilder" avian heritage and Greens being more interested in the type of "civilized" or scholarly practices of magic-using folk like the Cymrilians.

Aeriad speech in Low Talislan is characterized by a slight stutter, evident only with words that begin with a hard C or K sound. This occurs because the Aeriad's vestigial beak has not yet evolved (or devolved) sufficiently to allow for all nuances of the Talislan tongue. Common names tend to sound like birdcalls, as in Kree-Kya, Cha-Chik, Kee-Ree, etc.

### *Government*

Green and Blue Aeriad are each governed by their Councils, both of which are comprised of a group of nine elders, called Ministers. The Green Council governs Southwood, and the Blue Council governs Northwood. Each Minister is responsible for a specific aspect of Aeriad society, such as Defense, Trade, Wildlife, Agriculture, and so forth. The Green and Blue Councils meet together once each month to discuss matters about the country as a whole. The Chief Ministers of their respective Councils take turns representing Vardune in the Council of Seven Kings.

Blue Aeriad scouts and rangers are protectors of the forests of Vardune and its borders. A fleet of heavily armed barge-forts, manned primarily by Blues, guards the Axis River along the western border of Vardune.

### *Magic & Religion*

Blue and Green Aeriad revere the deity called the Creator, whom they depict as a great winged humanoid with rainbow plumage. Blues and Greens gather together to roost in the branches of great span-oak "temples" and raise their voices in the ancient songs of their ancestors. Many of these songs are about the "Tree of Life," which Aeriad believe is the ancestral home of the first avian race, from whom the Aeriad and Gryphs are descended. When an Aeriad dies, the body is covered with a shroud of woven vines and laid to rest amidst the uppermost branches of a great viridia tree; a ritual signifying the Aeriad's connection to the Tree of Life.

Green Aeriad botanomancers are members of a respected fraternity that takes as its inspiration a fabled sorcerer of ancient times named Viridian, who is credited with the creation of the viridia plant and many other useful hybrids. The Green Aeriads' efforts to replant forest lands and create new and useful plant species reflect the environmental policies espoused by their idol.

### *Worldview*

Located far to the west, Vardune has historically felt less threatened by the presence of the Za and other Wild Tribes tribes than most of the other states in the confederation of the Nine Kingdoms. Since the Uprising, a sizable contingent of Blue Aeriad has been stationed at the Wilderlands Wall, serving as aerial reconnaissance in the Borderlands Legion. Another smaller contingent is stationed in Sindar, helping the Sindarans keep watch for future incursions from Urag.

## Aeriad Settlements

### The River City of Vashay

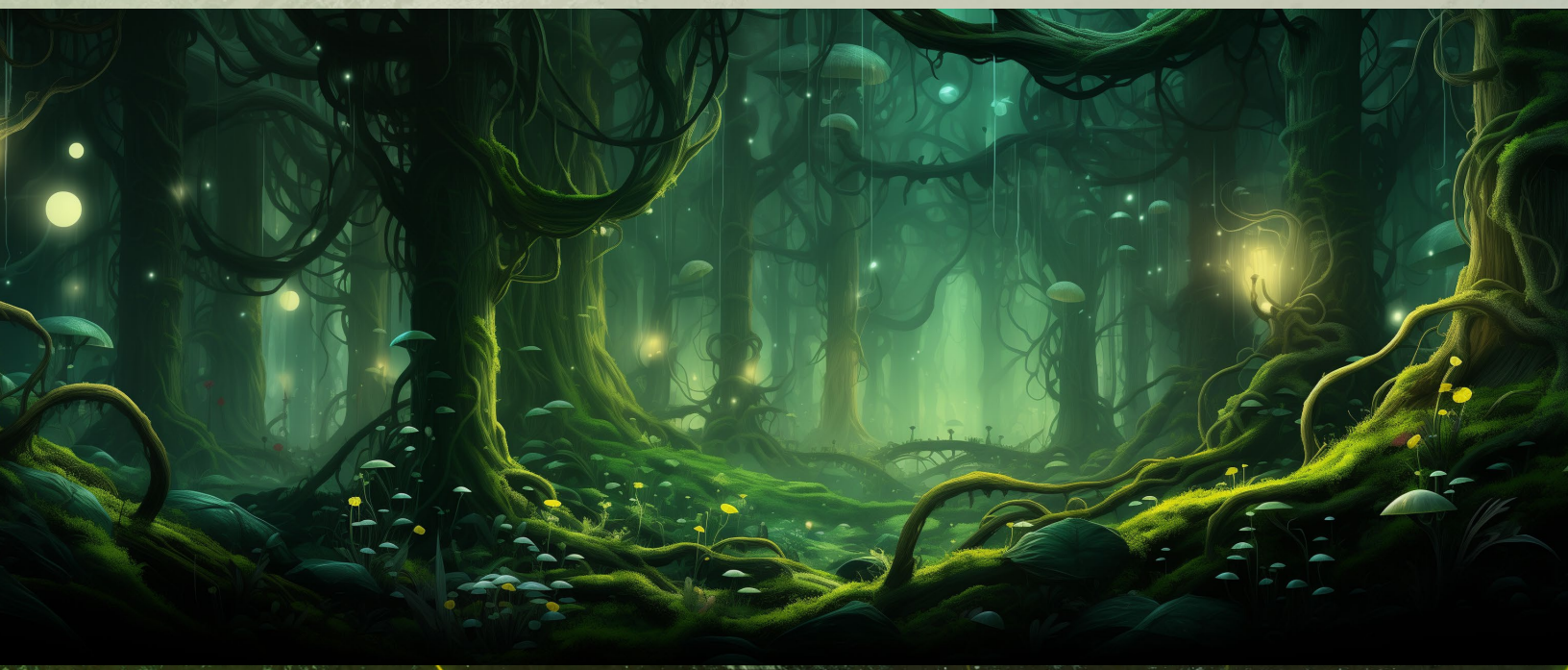
Vashay is renowned as a producer of useful herbs and plants, which the Aeriad export to the other members of the Nine Kingdoms confederation and elsewhere. Boats made of dried Viridia pods ply the river alongside the larger barge-forts of the Blue Aeriad. The nearby Bridge of Vashay spans the Axis River and leads to the Western Lands.

### Valanis

A fortified river port situated in Northwood, Valanis is the largest Blue Aeriad settlement. There are docking facilities here for Aeriad barge-forts, which are used to patrol the Axis River, and for merchant ships and barges.

# Random Encounters in Vardune

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** Warfare during the Uprising did not reach the forests of Vardune directly, though both Green and Blue Aeriad played important roles in the defeat of the Wild Tribes. Typical signs might be: (1) Blue Aeriad warriors performing aerial maneuvers as training prior to departing for stations along the Wilderlands Wall or in Sindar; (2) Blue and Green Aeriad being welcomed home from deployment in other lands; (3) Blue Aeriad preparing caravans of supplies for transport to the Wilderlands Wall; (4) Blue and Green Aeriad constructing reconnaissance platforms of living vines and branches in the tops of trees along the borders of Vardune. |
| 2 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The most common form of severe weather in Vardune is intense thunderstorms. The canopy of old forest sways and swells like ocean waves during a storm. The greatest dangers are lightning strikes, forest fires, and falling objects like trees, branches, and even Aeriad dwellings breaking loose and plunging to the ground. |
| 3-4 | 3 | **Water:** Water is abundant in Vardune and of great importance to the Aeriad. Their forests contain many natural pools serving as communal baths and sources of fresh, clean water. They go to great effort to transport water in containers made from the pods, vines, and fibers of the viridia plant. These may be as small as personal canteens up to casks as large as ten feet long and half as much around. Creeks and streams may also be found twisting through the forests, ultimately emptying into the Axis River. |
| 5-7 | 4 | **Roadways:** One of the Nine Roads passes through Vardune and connects the City of Cymril with the Aeriad settlement of Vashay at the Axis River. Tributaries of this road may be encountered in the north and south of Vardune. Some may be well-maintained and safe for conveyances, while others are little more than game trails. See encounter #6 for ideas of who might be using these roads and pathways. |
| 8-10 | 5 | **Dwelling:** The most commonly encountered dwelling is that of an Aeriad family, who live in the trees in homes fashioned from woven vines, living branches, and viridia pods. Elevated walkways connect family dwellings into communal settlements. One might also encounter Blue Aeriad warriors garrisoned in a tree dwelling that serves as a lookout station. To a lesser degree, one may encounter travelers camped in the forests (see encounter #6). |



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | 6 | **Traveler:** Those using the walkways and waterways of Vardune might be: (1) Green Aeriad merchants transporting wares, such as herbs, plants, seeds, honey, and items made from viridia plant like rope, viridian linen, containers, and building materials; (2) Blue Aeriad warriors heading east to deploy at the Wilderlands Wall or Sindar; (3) Arimite merchants bringing goods made of black iron to trade for Aeriad wares; (4) Cymrilian peddlers bearing elixirs and magical implements for trade; (5) Aamanian pilgrims heading east toward various holy places; (6) Mogroth traders bringing ancient coins or amber to trade for liquor or succulent plants. |
| 13-14 | 7 | **Avir:** Vardune's forests are home to a tremendous variety of bright, colorful birds known as avir, which may be found in large flocks. Aeriad train the avians to hunt root grubs (see encounter #11) and as lookouts. |
| 15 | 8 | **Exotic Plant:** Aeriad horticulturists and botanomancers grow common plants in abundance, but they also use their skills to experiment and create entirely new species. An encounter with an exotic plant could mean spotting a new species that stands out from the usual forest plant life; it might be unusual in size, color, fragrance, or even intelligence. Some may be harmless, even helpful; others could be quite dangerous. |
| 16 | 9 | **Grue:** These malevolent creatures spawn in woodland regions that have been damaged in some way, perhaps by magic, warfare, deforestation, etc. Though rare in Vardune, they may be encountered in areas that were damaged during the Uprising. Voracious and violent, grues feed upon plant life of all sorts as well as plant-folk like green men and Verdir; though they start small, if allowed to grow to full size (50 feet or more), grues can become extremely dangerous. |
| 17 | 10 | **Oryx:** these aggressive winged hunter primarily prey on insects and small animals, but may also go after larger prey. When food is scarce, flocks of oryx have even been known to attack humanoids. In such instances, these graceful looking creatures can become extremely dangerous. |
| 18 | 11 | **Green Aeriad Gardeners:** Aeriad gardeners may be found throughout Vardune, tending the many forms of plantlife that grow here. They are always on the alert for dangerous plant-entities such as Arborin or Grues, and will sometimes hire mercenary adventurers to help them drive off or eradicate such creatures. |
| 19 | 12 | **Spice Tree:** Created by Green Aeriad botanomancers, this hybrid tree has become quite valuable in both Vardune and Zandu. It produces roots, bark, flowers, and leaves which are all marketable as cooking ingredients and fragrances. Encountering a spice tree could mean an encounter with the Aeriad who tends it, or even a traveling merchant offering or seeking spice tree products. Root grubs also seem attracted to these rare trees (see encounter #11). |
| 20 | 13 | **Exomorph:** Though rare, these stealthy predators prowl the forests and fields of Vardune in small numbers. An encounter with an exomorph could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |

# The Kingdom of Jakar

Jakar is one of two new free states established in the confederation that was once known as the Seven Kingdoms, now become Nine. The wooded hills and glens comprising the new kingdom of Jakar were once part of the primarily subterranean Kingdom of Durne, but were gifted to the Jaka people after they joined forces with the Seven Kingdoms during the Wild Tribes Uprising, and their former homeland in the Brown Hills was ravaged by the Ur clans during the Sub-Men Uprising.

The new Kingdom of Jakar is a land of grassy knolls, gently rising hills, and sparse woodlands. Herds of wild greymanes, durge, and megalodonts forage along the slopes, which after many years are once again blanketed in rich copses of trees and various forms of plantlife. This is the new home of the folk known as the Jaka.



## The Jaka

The Jaka are a striking people, with sleek black fur, silvery-gray manes, and blazing green eyes. Most stand about six feet in height, a certain lithe muscularity being a common trait of all members of this race. Jaka dress in loincloths, with vests of toughened and boiled leather for protection. Most favor leg and arm bracers as decoration and additional armor. All wear pendants that the Jaka believe protect them from the "evil eye" (see sidebar).

### *Ancestry and History*

The Jaka are descended from a noble race of intelligent beast-folk who once roamed the forests of northern Talislanta and the plains of the central regions before the coming of the Archaens. They do not identify with most of the other Wild Tribes and consider themselves superior to such races as the Beastmen and Mondre Khan.

### *Culture*

Jaka are a fiercely independent folk who value freedom above all things. Some prefer to live alone, or in mated pairs. Others hunt or trade in small bands of up to a dozen or so individuals. They make no permanent dwellings, though a group of Jaka may mark an expanse of woods or hills as their territory and settle in the region for a time. Most prefer to live in the wild, though some readily associate with "civilized" peoples.

Though considered barbaric by most Talislantans, the Jaka are held in high regard by the folk of the Nine Kingdoms, who admire the courage and tenacity that they displayed during the wars with the Wild Tribes. Jaka are much in demand as mercenary scouts, hunters, and guides. Some also possess the ability to tame and even befriend wild animals, a talent which in ancient times led to the ancestors of the Jaka to be known as the beastmasters of the Northern Woods.

Jaka tend to be suspicious by nature, a trait that is perhaps attributable to their uncannily acute senses. The Jaka's sixth sense, which alerts them to the presence of danger, is so acute that the creatures occasionally evince behavior that verges on paranoia. While the Jaka are loners at heart, they are known to make steadfast, if not particularly sociable, companions. They are equally famous for turning on those who seek to cross them and are quite capable of cold-blooded murder if the situation warrants. Despite a dread of magic, Jaka are fearless in battle.

Jaka fashion superior horn bows and articles of bone, hide, and furs, decorating their wares with elaborate designs. They sometimes transport hides, horn, and wild beasts from Jakar for trade in Arim and Zandu. Jaka who live in or travel through civilized regions use coin; all others use barter.

### *Language*

Jaka converse in Sign and a dialect of Low Talislan. Their speech is punctuated by growls and snarls, which are used for emphasis. Common names include Tane, Jarak, Tala, Jata, Taka, Jabas, and Tavas.

### *Magic & Religion*

Jaka have no formal religion, though they claim reverence for a manifestation of one of the Forgotten Gods, known in legend as the Beast-God. The Jaka call their deity Jakar, meaning Lord of the Beasts. According to legend, Jakar was the scion and companion of the Creator, who made him the first beast to walk on two legs, and crowned him the master of all other animals in the forest. It was Jakar and his mate, Jalar, who gave birth to the race of Jaka, they say, and who taught the first Jaka the secret lore of the Beastmasters. Following the Great Disaster, the Jaka lost many of the secrets of their ancestors, and ever since, Jaka have had a superstitious fear of magic.

## Superstition or Intuition

*Among many Talislantans, it is considered an established fact that the Jaka exhibit a deep-rooted aversion for magic, a trait that many believe is based upon ignorance and superstition. What is not generally known is that the Jaka do not fear magic so much as they distrust it.*

*This attitude can be traced to two sources: First, the Jaka have seen the effects that the Great Disaster had on the continent of Talislanta and are well aware of the destructive and unpredictable forces that can be unleashed by arcane malpractice. Second, and perhaps more importantly, close proximity to powerful magical energies can activate the Jaka's uncanny "sixth sense," which warns them when they are in the presence of danger; a not altogether inappropriate response, given the potential for mishaps and side effects associated with the use of magic.*

*While the talismans that Jaka wear to ward against "the evil eye" confer a degree of protection from certain types of black magic, these devices are not worn strictly for superstitious reasons. Instead, some believe that the talismans may also serve to lessen the Jaka's subconscious "danger response," enabling them to evaluate conditions on a more rational basis when in the presence of magic. If true, then the Jaka's aversion to magic would seem to be based more on intuition than mere superstition.*



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** Ur tribes and their war machines rolled across the land of Jakar during the Uprising and into Cymril, leaving a trail of destruction. Typical signs of the Uprising might be: (1) evidence of a battlefield (rotting equipment, the skeletons of beasts); (2) an abandoned camp with collapsed fortifications; (3) a swath of devastated grassland; (4) a ruined, rusting war machine; (5) evidence of a mass grave; (6) a fouled pond or stream. |
| 4 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** For the most part, the weather in Jakar is relatively calm. However, certain forms of extreme weather can occur sometimes, including: (1) rains of strangely-colored hail, possibly caused by magical "residue" from the nearby city-state of Cymril; (2) thick and nearly impenetrable layers of fog rolling down from the northwestern mountains; (3) foul or even toxic clouds blowing in from Urag to the northeast. |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Water:** In western Jakar, water is plentiful, becoming less so as one travels to the east and into Sindar. An encounter with water might mean finding a watering hole in the grasslands where herds (and predators) gather; coming upon a stream, small river, pond, or small lake; or discovering a source of tainted water (see encounter #1). |
| 7 | 4 | **Roadway:** A branch of the Nine Roads, called simply the Road to Jakar, starts in the central hills of Jakar and ends at the gates of the city of Cymril to the south. Other roads of various sizes and quality, from game trails to rutted cart paths, branch off the Road to Jakar. Rolling this encounter could mean coming upon a fork or intersection on the current road, discovering a roadway if traveling overland, or finding travelers (see encounter #6). |
| 8 | 5 | **Dwelling:** There are very few permanent dwellings of civilized folk in Jakar. An encounter of this sort will generally mean finding: (1) a Jaka campsite; (2) an abandoned Ur fortification (see encounter #1); (3) a traveler's campsite (see encounter #6); (4) a cave which may be a beast's lair (see encounters #11 and #12), a commonly used campsite, or even an entrance to deeper caverns and the Underground Highway. |
| 9-10 | 6 | **Traveler:** The most common travelers in this region are Jaka, who migrate across their lands as individuals, as mated pairs, or in temporary hunting parties. One might also encounter Blue Aeriad warriors heading to garrison at Sindar or the Wilderlands Wall. Arimite merchants also travel across Jakar when heading to any of the Nine Kingdoms to sell their black iron wares. |
| 10-12 | 7 | **Greymane:** Large herds of these equs thrive among the rolling, grassy hills of Jakar. They have a mutually beneficial relationship with the Jaka, who protect the greymanes from predators and hunters in exchange for information about the region and use as mounts when needed. The greymanes of Jakar have even been known to come to the aid of good-hearted travelers. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 13-15 | 8 | **Armodont:** These large herbivores shamble across the grasslands of Jakar in huge, slow-moving herds. Jaka sometimes hunt Armodonts for meat, hides, bones, and tusks. Exomorphs and omnivrax are known to prey on old or wounded Armodonts, but will not attack a herd. |
| 16-17 | 9 | **Megalodont:** Herds of these giant beasts sometimes roam the hills and prairies of Jakar. The Jaka prize their horns for crafting bows of superior quality. |
| 18 | 10 | **Nighthawk:** When the Jaka migrated from their traditional hunting grounds in the Brown Lands, they brought their tamed nighthawks with them. Now, these nocturnal raptors are thriving in the forests of Jakar. |
| 19 | 11 | **Exomorph:** These stealthy predators find ample prey by following the herds of greymanes, durge, and megalodonts roaming the region. An encounter with an exomorph could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 20 | 12 | **Omnivrax:** Though the Jaka have largely eradicated these terrible creatures, some omnivrax still hunt the forests of Jakar. They tend to remain dormant during the day and emerge from their lairs at night to stalk anything or anyone they come upon. |

### *Government*

Jaka have no formal government, and exist in small family units at most, but since joining the Nine Kingdoms, they agreed to send a representative to the Council of Kings whenever they meet. As the Jaka representative is typically a volunteer who has no actual authority over his or her people, the position is ceremonial at best.

When traveling in hunting or trading bands, Jaka will often be led by the most experienced member of the group. Otherwise, they share responsibilities and decision-making, though even this is too much structure for some Jaka.

### *Worldview*

Though the Jaka are now a part of the Nine Kingdoms, they remain a free and fiercely independent people. They are loyal allies, though, and once their word is given, it is never broken. Talislantans who are ignorant of their ways sometimes confuse Jaka with Beastmen or other Wild races; to a Jaka, this is a grave insult.



# The Kingdom of Danuvia

Danuvia is one of two new states to be granted entry into the confederation now known as the Nine Kingdoms. Formerly an independent city-state, Danuvia was overrun by hordes of Za and Beastmen during the Uprising, while most of the city's female warriors were off helping defend the (then) Seven Kingdoms. The entire male population, and all those too young to fight, were put to the sword, an atrocity that the surviving Danuvians have sworn never to forgive or forget.

Following the Uprising, the Danuvian warriors who survived the war were taken in by the Thralls of Taz. The territory of Eastern Taz was made the new Danuvia, and a sizable area was cleared for the building of a walled fortress. This is now the home of the Danuvians, who are full-fledged members of the Nine Kingdoms.

## The Danuvians

In the post-Uprising era, the only remaining Danuvians in Talislanta are females; no Danuvian males survived the fall of their city-state. All were cruelly slain by the Za, who bragged that they wiped out the "breeding stock" of the Danuvian people.

Danuvian women are tall and bronze-skinned, with strong features. They decorate their faces with bold pigments, dress in martial attire replete with iron torc and corselet, and wear their hair in a stiffly lacquered crest.

### *Ancestry and History*

Like the Thralls, Danuvians were originally a hybrid race created long ago by the Archaens. They survived the Great Disaster, and sometime later intermarried with and became allies of the ancient Phaedrans. The Danuvians were exiled from the Western Lands during the latter part of the Cult Wars, and they settled in the eastern Wilderlands and established the independent city-state of Danuvia in the year 480.

After the Uprising, the Danuvians became members of the Nine Kingdoms. The new Kingdom of Danuvia was established in what was formerly eastern Taz.

### *Culture*

The Danuvians live in a fortified citadel built for them by the other members of the Nine Kingdoms in appreciation of their selfless actions during the Uprising. The population of the citadel is a mix of Danuvians, Thralls, Kasmiran merchants, and various folk displaced during the Uprising. Danuvians hold all positions of authority, and primarily serve in the military and government; the remainder of the population provides all other important services, such as those related to trade, commerce, agriculture, and so forth.

Danuvia's most saleable commodity remains its mercenary army, considered among the most skilled fighting forces on the continent. Since the massacre of the male Danuvians during the Uprising, female Danuvians only choose male warriors from other cultures as mates – typically, Thralls, with whom they have much in common.

### *Language*

Danuvians converse primarily in Low Talislan. Common names begin with the prefix Da-, as in Daria, Danu, Dala, Damia, etc.

### *Government*

Danuvia is ruled by a military gynecocracy, at the head of which is the Queen. Her Highness is served by the Danuvian Council, a group of twelve female advisors, or Ministers. Each is a general in the Danuvian military with her own area of expertise, such as Defense, Requisitions, Engineering, and so on. The Minister of Justice sits at the right hand of the Queen and adjudicates all disputes.

Danuvia maintains a sizable army of archers, lancers, and swordswomen. Their troops decorate their faces with colored pigments, and ride greymanes into battle. The new citadel is well-fortified against attack and has sufficient supplies of food and water to resist a determined force of invaders or a long siege.



## The Oath

*Following the fall of their home city-state and the massacre of the Danuvian males, the female Danuvians who survived the Uprising swore a sacred and solemn oath: to avenge the loss of their loved ones, and wreak a bloody retribution on those responsible for this act of wanton brutality. To this end, when given the opportunity, a Danuvian will attack Za wherever they find them. In such cases, a Danuvian has neither mercy nor quarter to spare, as the Za gave none to their loved ones.*

*Since the Uprising, it has become the custom of Danuvians to cut off the scalp-locks of Za that they have defeated and slain in battle, and to wear these tokens on their mounts. The number of such "battle trophies" is regarded as a measure of the Danuvian's prowess, as well as her dedication to fulfilling her sacred oath.*

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The devastation dealt by the Uprising to the former city-state of Danuvia was tragic, and left long-stretching shadows across the new Kingdom of Danuvia and its inhabitants. The remaining Danuvians have vowed to never again allow such horrors to befall their people, and signs of this oath are clear in the Kingdom, including: (1) work on roadways to allow Danuvian cavalry and foot soldiers to better mobilize; (2) Danuvian mercenaries moving on the roads, either to reinforce garrisons in other lands or to export wares for trade; (3) construction of fortifications and training facilities. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The region around New Danuvia is a land of rainforests, jungles, and swamps. As in nearby Taz, the most common extreme weather that occurs here is monsoon-like storms that can bring drenching rain, flash floods, and rising water in the swamps. In such weather, roadways can become impassable for hours or even days at a time. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Water:** Groundwater is everywhere in the region. However, most of it is unsafe to drink. Danuvians have adopted the Thralls' use of rain-catchers to funnel rainwater into containers of all sizes, from personal canteens to underground cisterns or elevated tanks at permanent settlements. A random encounter with water might mean: (1) being in the path of a coming flood (see encounter #2); (2) coming upon a flooded region; (3) finding a source of safe drinking water, whether a rain-catcher or natural spring. |
| 6-7 | 4 | **Roadway:** Roads around New Danuvia vary from single-file footpaths to proper byways atop embankments wide enough for war machines to travel. Encountering a roadway might include: (1) coming upon travelers (see encounter #6); (2) spotting a hidden trail leading somewhere interesting (see encounter #5 or #9); (3) coming upon laborers working to repair or expand the road; (4) crossing paths with a small to large force of Danuvian troops (see encounter #1) |
| 8-11 | 5 | **Dwelling:** Danuvians in the area live within the city walls of New Danuvia. Even so, it is possible to encounter unusual dwellings in the region, such as: (1) a new Thrall settlement under construction; (2) Thrall or Danuvian soldiers at a temporary camp as part of a training exercise; (3) a nest of alatus (see encounter #7); (4) the lair of a lurker (see encounter #8); (5) the lair of a bog devil (see encounter #9); (6) the camp of travelers from another land (see encounter #6). |
| 12-13 | 6 | **Traveler:** Examples of people coming to New Danuvia might be: (1) Cymrilian merchants traveling by windship; (2) Sindaran collectors searching the jungles and swamps for specific flora and fauna; (3) Thralls on their way to or from the city of New Danuvia; (4) Kasmiran merchant caravans bringing wares to sell or hoping to acquire contracts for Danuvian mercenaries or visiting other Kasmirans living in the city; (5) Dracartan merchant caravans bringing red iron wares for trade. |
| 14 | 7 | **Alatus:** These flying leeches, measuring up to six feet in length when fully grown, are particularly bothersome to travelers without proper shelter for the night. Alatus are known to carry and transmit a disease called blood fever. |
| 15 | 8 | **Lurker:** Wading in even ankle-deep water can bring one within the deadly grasp of a lurker – a lumpy, mud-burrowing, carnivorous invertebrate that can easily be mistaken for a submerged rock. |
| 16 | 9 | **Skalanx:** these frightening creatures typically make their lairs in underwater caves and grottos, but may also be found in lakes and rivers. They normally prey on other aquatic creatures, such as nar-eels, but have been known to attack anything that enters their domains. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | 10 | **Marsh Strider:** Known for their irritable nature, the bipedal creatures known as marsh striders might be encountered as hatchlings about a foot tall, or adults standing over seven feet tall. |
| 18 | 11 | **Mangonel Lizard:** These large herbivores roam the jungles in small to large herds. |
| 19 | 12 | **Stranglevine:** This murderous, invasive plant can be difficult to spot until it is too late. |
| 20 | 13 | **Tazian Fly:** A swarming horde of thousands of bright red Tazian flies is a frightful sight to behold. Seeking shelter is strongly advised, as they are believed to carry terrible diseases, and deliver them in methods equally terrible to experience. |

### *Magic & Religion*

The Danuvians have no formal religion, though they express reverence for a war god similar in some ways to Zoriah, the Kang's god of war. However, in the Danuvian interpretation, the god is called Danu, and is female. Danuvian females are given a warrior's funeral and buried with honor, along with their best weapons and ceremonial armor.

### *Worldview*

Danuvia is now a member of the Nine Kingdoms and is perhaps the strongest advocate of further military action against the Wild Tribes, who they view as hated enemies and a continued threat. Danuvians in particular bear great enmity for the Za, who they have sworn to gain vengeance upon for what they did to the inhabitants of their former home city-state (see sidebar).

The Danuvians have retained close ties to Carantheum of the Desert Kingdoms, an important trading partner. Danuvia is considered vital to the defense of the Nine Kingdoms, and a strong contingent of Danuvians serves in the Borderlands Legion, guarding the Wilderlands Wall.

## Danuvian Settlements

### New Danuvia

Located in the jungles on the eastern border, the fortress city of New Danuvia is built on a hilltop overlooking Astar, to the east. It is accessible via a branch of the Nine Roads and the Underground Highway. Replacing the old Thrall fortress of Trang, New Danuvia has been expanded – very little of old Trang remains except for the old streets and a portion of its original wall.





## Aaman

Aaman is a land of low hills and wooded glens, bordered to the east by the Axis River and to the west by the Sea of Sorrow. Its southern lands are demarcated by Phandril Forest, the last of woodland in Aaman that has not been cleared for fuel, timber, or farmland. To the north, separated by a towering structure called the Great Barrier Wall, is Zandu, hated rival of Aaman, and enemy of the religious people known as the Aamanians.

## The Aamanians

Stern of bearing, Aamanians have copper-colored skin, sculpted features, and deep green eyes. To promote the orthodox ideal of "oneness in body and spirit," Aamanians use an extract of the bald nettle plant to remove all facial and body hair, thus achieving a sameness of appearance. Astringents and powders that whiten the skin are also used by many, as an expression of "purity." Only the most modest attire is permissible in Aaman – colorless smocks, robes designed to conceal the figure, and caps of starched linen.

### *Language*

Aamanians speak a simplified version of High Talislan. Stripped of the flowery turns of phrase and flourishes that are a part of High Talislan, the language sounds rigid, overly formal, and restrained. Aamanians converse mainly in clichéd cult dogma and quotations from Orthodoxist scripture. Gesticulation is practically unknown; Aamanians are taught to speak with the hands clasped together in the traditional gesture of piety. Male and female cult members always have the Aa- prefix affixed to their names, as in Aamar, Aabas, Aalm, or Aama. Converts to the faith are given an Aamanian name to distinguish them from "infidels."

### *Ancestry and History*

The Aamanians are descended from the ancient Phaedrans, rulers of an empire that once encompassed the greater part of the Western Lands. Aaman became an independent nation following the long and bloody Cult Wars, which pitted the Orthodoxists against the Paradoxists of neighboring Zandu.

Before the Uprising, the longstanding animosity between these two opposed states erupted again, resulting in the Second Cult War. The conflict began when Aaman offered witch-hunters a bounty of 100 gold lumens for every Dhuna witch or warlock taken dead or alive. Hundreds of Aamanian witch-hunters and bounty-hunters from other lands flooded into Werewood to kill or capture Dhuna; when their victims began to include Sarista gypsies, Zandu struck back by offering a similar bounty on Aamanian witch-hunters.

The Second Cult War was suspended at the start of the Uprising, as both countries withdrew to protect their interests. Aaman and Zandu remain enemies to the present day, a somewhat shaky truce so far preventing the outbreak of yet another war.

### *Culture*

Aamanian society is rigidly structured and is based on a religious caste system. Higher caste Aamanians work in mercantile guilds, elite ranks of the military, or the clergy and its various branches. The lower classes work as farmers, laborers, vendors, or as conscripts in the infantry. Slaves are used for the most odious types of manual labor. They have no rights and are regarded as property, to be bought and sold as desired by their Aamanian masters.

Aamanians live in drab, whitewashed brick dwellings. Every Aamanian home has a small shrine with an All-Seeing Eye at its center. These icons can be found throughout Aaman, in the cities, villages, along roadways, and so forth. The symbols serve as a constant reminder that the Monitors, mortal representatives of Aa the All-Seeing, are always watching.

Devout fundamentalists, Aamanians shun any form of merry-making or improper behavior and are taught never to question the dictates of their superiors. Disagreement with Orthodoxist doctrine is considered tantamount to heresy and may result in unpleasant consequences; a trip to the House of Penance is the usual remedy. Visitors from other lands are required to show respect for the local customs (see sidebar). Outsiders are constantly watched by Monitors in the service of the Knights of the All-Seeing Eye, from the moment they enter Aaman to the moment they leave. In this regard they are treated no differently from any other citizen of Aaman.

### *Government*

Aaman is a church-state governed by a theocracy, at the head of which is the Hierophant, ruler and high priest of the Orthodoxist Cult. The Hierophant wields supreme power in Aaman, for he is entrusted with sole curatorship of the Omnival – the Orthodoxist Cult's book of the law. Serving the Hierophant are his representatives, called the Monitors. Each holds the position of ruling prelate in his assigned district and is responsible for awarding aalms (for definition see Magic & Religion paragraph pg 72) to those worthy of advancement in status, or deducting mana from individuals whom they deem unworthy (see Magic & Religion below). Next in line come the Aspirants, members of Aaman's Monastic Orders, which include such factions as archimages, warrior-priests, inquisitors, and witch hunters.

In Aaman, religion and law are the same. Thus, the only "correct" view on any issue is that which is put forth by the Orthodoxist Cult. The doctrines of Orthodoxy center around the Aamanians' patron deity, Aa (also known as "Aa the Omnipotent," "Aa the Omnificent," and so on). The tenets of the cult are recorded in a series of iron-bound volumes known cumulatively as "The Omnival," which purports to reveal the answers to all questions and mysteries. It is said in Aaman that "what the Omnival does not teach, the true Orthodoxist need not know." Those who fail to heed Cult doctrines are taken to the Halls of Penance, where the inquisitors subject offenders to "ritual cleansing" – an Orthodoxist euphemism for the forcible conversion of infidels to the cult's doctrines by interrogation, torture, and coercion.

The Aamanian military is another branch of the church-state and is under the direct control of the Hierophant. The military arm of the Cult is divided into several Monastic Orders, each operating out of its fortified monastery. The most powerful and influential of these is the Order of the Knights of the All-Seeing Eye, who serve as the Hierophant's bodyguards and wield considerable influence in the Cult. The Order of the Defenders of the Faith is comprised of warrior-priests, the Knights of the Hooded Veil, and inquisitors. The Knights of Retribution serve as witch hunters, who roam the Western Lands and beyond, hunting down enemies of the church-state – witches, warlocks, and all others who oppose the Hierophant's dictates.

## Advice For Travelers

*Travel to Aaman, with its strict religious laws and prohibitions, is by no means a simple undertaking. Foreigners who plan to visit or pass through the region would do well to keep in mind the following recommendations:*

*1. As a general rule, avoid any and all actions which, by their nature, might attract undue attention to yourself or your companions. Adhere to the local laws and customs at all times; deviation from the norm is not permitted.*

*2. Before entering Aaman, remove or conceal all non-Orthodoxist religious or magical paraphernalia that you may carry upon your person. In Aaman, the wearing of such articles is considered tantamount to heresy and may lead to serious consequences (see #7).*

*3. In a land where every citizen wears white, it is safe to say that travelers who dress in colorful apparel will stand out from the crowd. The best way to avoid scrutiny is to cover one's usual costume with a plain white cassock and hooded cloak. Garments of this sort can be obtained for a few copper pieces throughout the country.*

*4. If you have long hair and/or a beard, wear a hood or veil. While it is not necessary to undergo complete facial and bodily depilation as the Aamanians do, one should bear in mind that all forms of bodily adornment are considered provocative in Aaman.*

*5. Avoid speaking loudly, using vulgar or "colorful" language, or engaging in theological or metaphysical debate in the presence of Aamanians. Ask no unnecessary questions about Orthodoxy, the god Aa, or Aamanian culture in general. Should these subjects come up in the course of conversation, offer no opinion of your own. Instead, bow your head, raise your hands with palms extended to the sky, and say, "Aa is Omniscient" – a traditional response indicating deference to the all-knowing Aa, and humble admission of your ignorance and unworthiness. Repeat as needed.*

*6. The alert traveler will notice the presence of "All-Seeing Eye" icons, which can be found almost everywhere in Aaman. Rest assured that these icons are not for decorative purposes, nor are they only religious. Perhaps as many as one in ten icons are either enchanted scrying orbs, peepholes, or the apertures of spy-tubes. These devices are indeed "All-Seeing Eyes" that are employed by the Monitors to keep watch on the citizenry – and especially, on foreigners and infidels.*

*7. If, despite all precautions, you or your companions become the subject of scrutiny by a Monitor or other Aamanian official, do not panic. Remain calm, speak softly and without emotion, and answer all questions posed to you with extreme deference. Failure to do so may lead to serious consequences: in Aamanian terms, this means that you will be arrested, stripped of your possessions, and hauled away to the nearest House of Penance, where you will be subjected to the unpleasant attentions of the inquisitors. Forcible conversion to Orthodoxy usually follows.*

*In summation, follow these simple rules and you should be able to avoid difficulties. Enjoy your stay in Aaman.*

### *Magic & Religion*

High Orthodoxy is the official state religion; all other beliefs are regarded as heresy. Aaman's religious caste system is based on the acquisition and accumulation of mana, or "spiritual purity," which is measured in units known as aalms. One can attain aalms by entering the priesthood or a Monastic Order, making donations to a temple, or by undertaking a pilgrimage to one of the cult's officially sanctioned holy places. Such holy places include the Well of Saints, by far the most esteemed, which lies beyond the Volcanic Hills; the Watchstone, situated amidst the Plains of Golarin; and the Red Desert in Carantheum. There are several other places of lesser significance.

It is the custom of Aamanians to bury their dead in plain iron coffins painted white and stamped with the All-Seeing Eye icon; even in death, the faithful cannot escape the all-knowing gaze of Aa.

### *Worldview*

The traditional enemy of Aaman remains the nation of Zandu; their enmity dates back over five hundred years. The Great Barrier Wall, built after the Cult Wars of the early New Age, is all that separates the two rival states. Aaman continues to pursue a policy of persecution against all practitioners of witchcraft and pagan cults, particularly the Dhuna of neighboring Werewood. Arim is officially neutral as regards Aaman and Zandu; so are the Djaffir and Farad, whose interests in Aaman are strictly mercantile. The Nine Kingdoms has censured Aaman as a slave state, and diplomatic relations and communications between the two nation-states are infrequent at best.

# Aamanian Settlements

## Aabaal

A settlement located in the forested highlands of western Aaman, Aabaal is renowned primarily for its ironworks. Here Orthodoxist cult relics are made, fashioned from black iron by a cloistered order of artisan-priests.

## Aabass

Aabass is a secret penal colony hidden somewhere along the southern coast of Aaman. Heavily fortified and guarded by a contingent of Aamanian warrior-priests, this place is reserved for the most irredeemable criminals and heretics – individuals who have resisted even the harshest forms of penance. A sect of Aamanian inquisitors hand-picked by the Hierophant is in charge of "reeducating" those who are imprisoned here, most of whom will never again see the light of day. The exception is the rare few who are chosen by the Hierophant to serve as Aabassians – dark agents of the Orthodoxist Cult.

## Aamahd

Aamahd is the capital of Aaman, and the center of all trade, commerce, and culture. Its architecture consists of a bland compilation of squares and grid patterns, reflecting the unimaginative nature of its Aamanian builders. The Hierophant lives here in a mighty tower of ivory-colored stone, attended by his most trusted advisors. Far below, thousands of low-ranking Aspirants and infidels toil, loading wagons and canal-barges with shipments of ore and precious stones from Arim.

## Alm

Alm is a small village situated in the forested highlands along the southwestern coast of Aaman. An especially fanatical order of Orthodoxists, known as the Flagellants, founded this settlement. They can sometimes be seen wandering the roads of Aaman, beating themselves with ritual flails and chanting Orthodoxist slogans.

## Andurin

Andurin is the site of Aaman's largest military installation. It is also an important staging area for trade with the lands that lay east of the Axis River. Orthodoxist pilgrims often stop here to visit the Abbey of Andurin, where holy relics are bought and sold by monks of the Order of Reliquaries.

## Arat

Arat is a port city that once served as a naval installation during the Cult Wars with neighboring Zandu. Aamanian warships are still stationed here, though the facility is now used primarily by merchant vessels. These ships travel from Aamahd to Alm and as far south as Jhangara, hugging the coastline all the way; like most Talislantans, Aamanians fear to sail the open sea.

## The Great Barrier Wall

Stretching the entire length of the border with Zandu, the Great Barrier Wall is an immense stone structure, sixty feet in height and half as wide at its base. A toll of one gold lumen per person is charged at each of the Wall's gates. Proprietorship of the Wall and its toll facilities is determined by an annual event known as the Clash of Champions. The Aamanians and Zandir expend a considerable amount of effort searching for a suitable champion for the year's match, the outcome of which is worth a small fortune in toll revenues. Spectators from many lands come here to partake in the spectacle, bringing a substantial amount of business to local innkeepers, shop owners, and vendors. Betting is always brisk, and pickpockets from neighboring regions consider the event to be something on the order of a religious festival.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** As a consequence of the Uprising, Aaman's war with Zandu was effectively suspended. Aamanians abroad returned to their homeland. Now, Aaman continues to build its defenses and is once again sending knights and pilgrims to foreign lands to spread the purity of Aa. Typical signs might be: (1) construction of new watchtowers along Aaman's borders; (2) more scrutiny of foreigners entering the region; (3) a general feeling of anxiety among the populace. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** Aaman is blessed with generally moderate and pleasant weather. However, intense storms may blow in from the Sea of Sorrow or the Azure Ocean. Considering the large-scale deforestation of the land, Aaman is also prone to flash flooding and mudslides in the hills after such storms. |
| 4-6 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The majority of Aamanians reside in settlements, towns, and cities. All construction is whitewashed and drab. Those encountered in the wilderness areas of Aaman are likely farmers or herders, who are often viewed with suspicion due to their solitude. One might also come upon labor camps of woodsmen, stonecutters, or miners. |
| 7-9 | 4 | **Traveler:** Aamanian roads are well-maintained and wide enough for large dray beasts and wagons. One might encounter: (1) Aamanian farmers, laborers, or merchants moving their wares; (2) Arimite, Djaffir, or Farad merchants with permission to trade in the region; (3) pilgrims visiting roadside shrines; (4) members of the Order of Flagellants who plod along the roadways beating themselves in deference to Aa the Omnificent; (5) members of other Monastic Orders traveling to or from their monasteries for various reasons; (6) a foreigner who has been forcibly converted to Orthodoxy and seeks help in escaping the region. |
| 10-12 | 5 | **Monitor:** Foreign visitors to Aaman will soon get the unnerving feeling they are being watched. All-Seeing Eye icons are everywhere, and some of them are enchanted scrying devices, elaborate spy-tubes, or simply peepholes in walls, ceilings, or floors. Peering from these are the Monitors, who watch foreigners and their own citizenry for signs of impurity or outright heresy. |
| 13 | 6 | **White Avir:** Across Talislanta these birds display a variety of colors, but in Aaman, only Avir of white plumage are allowed to survive – others are killed on sight. |
| 14 | 7 | **Drac:** These small, wingless dragons thrive in the Monastic Hills and wilderness areas of Aaman. Some monastic orders train them as guardian beasts. |
| 15 | 8 | **Grazer:** Aamanian herders raise these beasts for meat to sell to monasteries and in the markets of villages and towns. Though some are truly wild, most are encountered with a watchful herder nearby. |
| 16 | 9 | **Erd:** Aamanian farmers and herders raise erd for their shag, which is made into blankets and rugs, and for their milk, which is made into a white cheese. An erd encountered in the wild means it has most likely wandered away and a farmer or herder is actively seeking it. |
| 17 | 10 | **Exomorph:** These stealthy beasts find ample prey among the domesticated herds of durge, erd, and ogriphant in the region. An encounter with an exomorph could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 18 | 11 | **Ogriphant:** Herders raise these ponderous beasts for sale to laborers who use them as beasts of burden. Their ivory tusks are also favored by Aamanian artisans. It is not uncommon for ogriphants to break free of their pens or wander from their herders during the mating season. |
| 19 | 12 | **Ravenger:** These creatures, remarkably both amphibious and winged, survive in considerable numbers along the rugged coastlines of Aaman. They are less common inland, where the Aamanian military is more apt to hunt them down as a threat to the populace. |
| 20 | 13 | **Urthrax:** These vermin thrive in the cesspools and waste waters of the sewers beneath the cities and large towns of Aaman. While Aamanians are fastidious about the cleanliness of their dwellings and settlements on the surface, they are less concerned about the unseen underground. |



Arim is a land of rough and irregular hills, interspersed with grassy steppes and thickets of stunted oak and briar. To the north lie the dark peaks of the Onyx Mountains; to the northwest is Lake Venda, source of the great Axis River, fed by countless mountain streams and brooks. West lies Werewood; east, the towering Cliffs of Bahahd fall away into the Darklands of Urag.

Arim is mainly wild country, with a single city and a few small settlements. Aside from the old Phaedran Causeway, the few roads that run through this land are more like woodland trails – unpaved, and difficult to traverse in bad weather. The wooded hills of Arim are rich in game, but also rife with predators such as exomorphs, omnivrax, and depredators.

Travelers who elect to pass through this region are advised to take shelter at night in the various inns that serve wayfarers, hunters, Aamanian pilgrims, peddlers, and the like. Most of these places may be optimistically described as "rustic," little more than crudely made hovels of stone, earth, and rough-cut logs. Needless to say, these places also attract bandits, cut-throats, thieves, and other unsavory sorts.

The inhabitants of this gray and windy realm are known as the Arimites.



# The Arimites

A dour and moody lot, the Arimites are swarthy of complexion, with long black hair and dark, deep-set eyes. The customary mode of dress in this region consists of sackcloth garments, animal-hide boots, and bulky fur vests, accented with wristbands, earrings, and knives made of black iron.

## *Ancestry and History*

The origin of the Arimites is uncertain; some say they are descended from Farad traders, who sometimes sail to Arim via the Axis River, and the wild tribes known as the Drukhs. The Arimites hotly deny such claims, and state that they are a distinct and unique ethnic group whose ancestors have occupied the hills of Arim since the Time Before Time.

During the Uprising, the Arimites were attacked by the Drukh, indigenous tribes that dwell in the wooded hills of northern Arim. Though much blood was shed, the Drukh tribes lacked organization, and after several battles ended in a draw, they retreated to their territories in the north.

## *Culture*

The population of Arim is divided between the country's rural and urban areas. Rural Arimites dwell in stone huts with thatched roofs and dirt floors. They live under a feudal-type system, with wealthy landowners providing arable land and protection to families in return for half of what they grow or raise. Their urban counterparts dwell in houses made of stone with black iron sheeted or plated roofs, typically streaked red with rust. All Arimite dwellings are made of heavy wood, their doors and shutters reinforced with iron and always locked to keep out assassins and thieves.

The Arimites are a humorless people, most of whom live hard lives as miners of the country's considerable mineral wealth. They favor chakos, a fiery liquor brewed in black-iron kegs. Abuse of this potent intoxicant is widespread in Arim, especially among the overworked miners, who seek escape from the tedium of their existence.

Arimites excel at knife-throwing, which serves both as a sport and as a form of self-defense. Most carry a throwing knife or two with them at all times, thereby helping promote the generally unsavory image that these folk bear among other Talislantans. Accordingly, the Arimites bear a reputation in other lands as cutthroats, an assessment which experts say is not without merit.

The theme of revenge runs through Arimite culture. Arimites have long memories, and never forget an affront or insult. This is most evident in the history of the Revenant Cult, a secret society that specializes in revenge-for-hire. Anyone who can afford their fees — which range from as little as ten silver pieces to over 100,000 gold lumens — can obtain the services of the cult. This is done by the simple method of posting a notice in some public place. The prevalence of the cult is such that a Revenant, attired in customary night-gray cloak and veil, will perform the desired service by the following day. Government officials, common laborers, merchants, and even jealous lovers and irate housewives have all been known to employ the services of the Revenants to settle disputes or avenge affronts. The popularity of this impersonal means of seeking redress is such that, in most parts of Arim, the mere shaking or brandishing of a change purse is considered suggestive of a threat to hire the Revenants. The only way for an intended victim to cancel a Revenant contract is to buy it back – at twice the original price (see sidebar).

### *Language*

Arimites speak a version of Low Talislan, liberally flavored with an impressive variety of curse words and epithets. Their dialect is considered crude and uncouth, even by others who speak Low Talislan. Common names for males typically consist of two syllables, such as Hakmir, Yaku, and Abdul. Female names usually have three syllables, like Hakmira, Yakuo, and Abduli.

### *Government*

The clan is the foremost unit of Arimite society, a holdover from tribal days. Blood ties are strong, and often take precedence over local law.

Arim is ostensibly ruled by a hereditary monarch known as the Exarch, a recluse who dwells in the Forbidden City of Ahrazahd, surrounded by a retinue of bodyguards, concubines, and royal wizards. The Exarch governs through subordinates in Shattra and Akbar, who bear the title of Chief Subaltern, Second Subaltern, and so forth. In reality, the true power in Arim lies in the hands of the Revenant Cult, whose influence is everywhere in Arim, and may even extend across the continent. Such is the extent of their power that the Exarch does not dare to set foot outside of Ahrazahd for fear of being assassinated.

Under Arimite law, individuals accused of criminal acts have the right to tell their side of the case before being judged, though vigilantism sometimes renders such legalisms a moot point. Thievery is punishable by a period of incarceration in a public place; the thief is usually chained to a post, so that he or she may be flogged by the person who was robbed. "Unjustified murder," rape, and similarly violent crimes are punishable by drowning – the criminal being chained, weighted, and dropped into a deep well or lake.

Arim has a small but highly-regarded army; Arimite knife-fighters bear an especially grim reputation and are

## The Hillman & The Chakos Merchant

*The custom of hiring Revenants to resolve disputes is exemplified in the story of the hillman and the chakos merchant, a popular Arimite folk tale. As the story goes, the hillman returned from hunting to find that his wife, in his absence, had come into possession of a full cask of chakos. Having left his mate with funds insufficient to purchase such a quantity of liquor, the hillman became suspicious of the local chakos merchant, whom he believed might be seeking to gain the affections of his wife by plying her with valuable gifts. Accordingly, the hillman paid the Revenants ten silver pieces to perform a mischief upon the merchant.*

*The merchant awoke on the following day to find his wagon bereft of its wheels, with a note from the hillman warning against further indiscretions. Outraged, the merchant paid the Revenants twenty silver pieces to poison the hillman's favorite steed. This so upset the hillman that he at once gave over fifty gold lumens to the Revenants with instructions to have the merchant thrashed. On the next day, the chakos merchant made similar arrangements for the benefit of his hated rival.*

*This was the final straw for the hillman, who decided that only the death of his enemy would now suffice to settle their score. While in town posting a notice for the Revenants, the hillman chanced to meet the merchant, who was there for the same purpose. The two antagonists, too bruised and weary to fight and nearly bankrupt of funds, decided to strike a compromise: each contributed half the fee necessary to have the hillman's wife assassinated, thus removing the source of their differences. Relieved to have put an end to their feud, the two men parted as friends.*

*Unfortunately, neither ever saw the other alive again. Unbeknownst to either man, the hillman's wife was a member of the Revenant Cult, whose followers are strictly forbidden to harm one of their kind.*

valued as mercenaries. As Commander-in-Chief, the Exarch controls the military; however, while the army is loyal to the Exarch, it will not act against the Revenants. The largest military contingent can be found at the citadel of Akbar, which prevents the Ur clans from passing through the Gorge at Akbar into Arim.

Though the gold lumen is the standard, Arim also mints its silver lumens, which are in wide use among the populace. These coins are called exarchs, a term in which Arimites have always found a grim humor, regarding both the currency and monarch as being "second in influence to gold."

### *Magic & Religion*

Arimites are agnostics who place little faith in a supreme being. They rarely practice magic, which most regard as a pastime that only the wealthy or highborn can afford. Still, some dabble in the arcane arts or practice witchcraft, and a few Arimites become accomplished wizards. Arimites bury their dead without ceremony.

### *Worldview*

Arim is officially neutral as it pertains to Aaman and Zandu, and has trade relations with both countries, as well as the Nine Kingdoms, Faradun, and the Djaffir. Overland trade follows the old Phaedran Causeway; waterborne trade passes through Shattra down the Axis River. Arimite merchant ships and barges never travel from sight of land.

The Ur clans of neighboring Urag and their allies pose a constant threat to the Arimites and are greatly despised. The Darklings of Urag are regarded as thieves, baby-stealers, and bogeymen, and are usually killed on sight. Even before the Uprising, the Arimites waged war against the Drukh tribes for over a thousand years, and there remains much bad blood between the two.

## Arimite Settlements

### The Forbidden City of Ahrazahd

Ahrazahd is home to the ruler of Arim, a recluse known as the Exarch. Here in this lofty mountain retreat, the Arimite lord lives in seclusion, shielded and attended to by bodyguards, concubines, and royal wizards. Shipments of gold, gemstones, and provisions are brought here by caravan once each month. Aside from this, the city is closed to outsiders.

### The Citadel of Akbar

Standing at the mouth of a deep gorge, Akbar bars incursions by the clans of Urag into the land of Arim. The fortress also serves as a center for trade, and is occasionally visited by Jaka hunters, Djaffir merchants, and the occasional Farad slave-monger.

### The Town of Shattra

Located on the banks of the Axis River, the mining town of Shattra is a filthy place, crowded with ramshackle wooden tenements and covered in a perpetual haze of smoke and soot. Raw black-iron ore is brought here to be smelted down into ingots and shipped by barge or caravan to Aaman, Zandu, the Nine Kingdoms, and beyond. The secretive Revenant Cult is believed to have its base of operations here.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** While Arimite forces focused their efforts defending against the clans of Urag, Drukh shamans saw the opportunity to strike at their hated rivals. Drukh tribes formed large raiding parties and attacked Arimite settlements throughout the region. The Drukhs were driven back, but not after considerable devastation. Typical signs of this recent history might be: (1) a ghost town of destroyed stone huts; (2) an Arimite family working to rebuild their home; (3) an Arimite graveyard with many new gravesites; (4) a battlefield littered with the skeletal remains of Drukh raiders and their greymane mounts. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The typical weather in Arim is cold and wet. However, unusual weather does occur, and can include strange fog and mists from Werewood to the west, and toxic rain from Urag to the east. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 4-7 | 3 | **Dwelling:** Whether built in the wilderness or a settlement, all Arimite homes are made with defense in mind and constructed of stone. Those in towns will have black iron roofs, doors, and shutters, while those in the wilds will have thatched roofs and heavy wooden doors and shutters. Some may have wooden shelters, pens, or corrals for livestock, which are typically a few muskronts or greymanes. Arimites are notoriously suspicious of strangers. |
| 8-10 | 4 | **Roadway:** Branches of the ancient Phaedran Causeway twist through Arim, joining the major settlements of Shattra, Akhar, and the Forbidden City of Ahrazahd. These are the best-maintained and most heavily used roads in Arim. Many other roads and footpaths connect smaller settlements and homesteads. Finding a roadway may involve: (1) coming upon travelers (see encounter #5); (2) coming to an intersection; (3) spotting a hidden trail; (4) being blocked by an obstacle (fallen tree, washout, herd of beasts, etc.). |
| 11-14 | 5 | **Traveler:** Most travel in Arim is by foot, greymane, or wagon (see encounter #4). Ships and barges can be found plying the slow-moving waters of the Axis River. The most common travelers to Arim are: (1) merchants from Aaman, Djaffir, Faradun, the Nine Kingdoms, or Zandu; (2) an Arimite shipment of treasures and provisions headed to the Forbidden City; (3) Arimite merchants traveling to or from a major city; (4) an Arimite hunting party looking for game or Drukh raiders; (5) an Arimite wizard searching for a rare plant or animal; (6) Drukh raiders looking for trouble (see encounter #6). |
| 15 | 6 | **Drukh Raiders:** Small to large groups of male and female Drukh raiders venture from their lands to steal from Arimite settlements. With vengeance in their hearts, they are seldom to be reasoned with. Often the piercing music of their bone flutes may be heard in time to avoid them and their wrath. |
| 16 | 7 | **Exomorph:** Preferring the herds of muskront, ogriphant, and greymanes near Arimite settlements, these dangerous beasts become prey themselves by Arimite hunters who will go to great lengths to track and kill them. An exomorph encounter could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 17 | 8 | **Morde:** Flocks of these cowardly scavengers nest among groves of stunted oaks. Arimites avoid them or kill them from a distance, believing the ugly avians carry disease and serve as spies for Drukh shamans. |
| 18 | 9 | **Nightstalker:** these nightmarish entities sometimes wander from the Astral Plane into the material world, where they can pose a great threat to humanoid folk of all sorts. They possess the ability to invade the dreams of other sentient beings, whom they seek to slay by "devouring" their victims' astral bodies while they sleep. |
| 19 | 10 | **Drac:** Favored as pets in some places, the most common variety of these wingless dragons in Arim have black scales with reddish highlights. They lair in the rugged hills and crevices of the region. Full-grown dracs can measure up to eight feet long. |
| 20 | 11 | **Tundra Beast:** Though less common in the lowlands, these large, sometimes two-headed carnivores lair in the hills and hunt near Arimite settlements upon occasion. A pack of tundra beasts is fearsome to behold; Jaka and Arimites hunt them for their hides and fangs, and wear them as badges of their hunting prowess. |

# Drukh Lands

The rugged hills of central Arim are home to many species of wild animals, including herds of muskront, ogriphant, and the swift creatures known as graymanes. As predatory exomorphs and yaksha also dwell here, the novice hunter is perhaps best advised to avoid vacationing in this region — particularly as it is home to the wild folk known as the Drukhs.



## The Drukhs

Drukhs are a rugged people who dye their long hair, beards and skin with the juice of the purple barb-berry. They have dark eyes and sharp features, and dress in hides, furs, and necklaces made from the fangs and claws of wild beasts.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Drukhs are primitive tribesmen believed to be descended from the Wild Folk of ancient Talislanta. As they are similar in stature to the Arimites, some scholars have suggested that the Drukh tribes may also be related to these people. This theory has not been well received by either the Arimites or the Drukhs, who despise each other. During the Uprising, the two rivals fought to a bloody stalemate before the Drukh again withdrew into the hills.

### *Culture*

Nomadic hunter-gatherers who build no permanent dwellings of any kind, Drukhs range throughout the northern hills and mountains of Arim in loose-knit bands numbering from a few dozen individuals to several hundred. Their warriors ride wild graymanes dyed purple with berry juice — a most unusual sight. Drukhs subsist on roots, tubers, and wild game; they also prey on Arimite livestock as the opportunity warrants. They are known to rob caravans along those parts of the Phaedran Causeway that lay adjacent to their territories, and to launch raids against small villages and outposts.

Drukhs are taught never to show fear or pain, which they regard as signs of weakness. To show their ability to resist pain various forms of ritual scarring and bodily mutilation are common practices; scars earned in battle are considered signs of courage and are greatly admired. To test the strength and worthiness of their enemies, Drukhs often subject captured opponents to slow and excruciating forms of torture – invariably resulting in death, though in rare cases individuals who exhibit uncommon courage and ability to withstand pain are allowed to live.

As far as crafting, Drukhs are limited to weapons and tools, the curing of hides, and a style of scrimshaw involving the carving of intricate patterns on humanoid leg bones and skulls.

### *Language*

Drukhs converse in an unusual combination of sign, and Low Talislan punctuated by expressive hand gestures. While they do not employ a written language, tribes separated by distance communicate by means of smoke signals, using various types of herbs and plants to create as many as seven different colors of smoke. This system is more complex than it appears, and is unique to these people.

Drukh names consist of both somatic and verbal components; one must know both to accurately state the name of an individual Drukh. To omit the hand sign is considered a mark of ignorance at best, and at worst, an insult that may require the offended Drukh to seek redress. Examples of full Drukh names include Bone-Flute Brother (thumb and first two fingers of the right hand moving back and forth over left wrist), and Howling Mother (right index finger pointing into the palm of left hand).

### *Government*

Drukh tribes are led by shamanic war-chieftains, who are typically the most accomplished warriors of their respective tribes. The position is open to challenge once each year, from sun-up to sundown, on the day after the Ghost Moon (see Talislantan Chronology, page 301). During this time fierce duels to the death for dominance can occur at any time.

Drukhs accused of offenses are bound with leather thongs and brought before the tribe's shamans. The shamans act as judge and jury; individuals found guilty of weakness or disobedience are executed using ritual torture, a slow and horrible process. If they die a "good death" and do not cry out in pain, it is believed that their crimes will be forgiven by the ancestors, and they will enjoy a place of honor in the afterlife. Drukhs apply their laws and customs to outsiders as well. In this way they regard themselves as honorable and fair.

Both males and females serve as warriors and hunters. In battle, a select few Drukh warriors use enchanted flutes and drums to urge their comrades into a type of trance-state; Drukhs who have been so affected will continue to attack even if badly afflicted with normally incapacitating wounds; a bizarre and frightening sight to behold. It is known for Drukh musicians to also employ a "Song of Madness," which is intended to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies.

### *Magic & Religion*

Drukhs are extremely superstitious, believing in the power of spirits, curses, and black magic. They believe that the spirits of their ancestors watch them at all times, and will cause them misfortune if they act in a cowardly fashion. Any occurrence that can be construed as out of the ordinary may be regarded as an omen, either favorable or unfavorable. Drukhs rely upon their shamans to read these omens and explain the portents to the tribe. Their readings can impel a tribe to attack, to avoid an area or person designated as "cursed," or to postpone their plans until the appearance of more favorable omens. In addition to ancestral worship, the Drukhs also revere Noman, dark ruler of the Nightmare Dimension.

Drukhs observe no burial rituals. The dead are left to be eaten by animals while the rest of the tribe moves on.

### *Worldview*

Drukhs are decidedly unfriendly toward outsiders, finding great enjoyment in skinning alive individuals who trespass into their lands. The Drukh tribes particularly despise the Arimites, their ancestral enemies. Many tribes are still fighting to gain back territories lost to the Arimites hundreds of years ago. There is also much infighting among the Drukh tribes themselves.

When not at war with each other, the various tribes sometimes barter with each other for hides, horn, and iron weapons. Most Drukhs know nothing about currency and trade gold, silver, and copper coins primarily as baubles, or as raw materials that can be melted down and used to make more useful items.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** During the Uprising, Drukh shamans led their tribes in raids against Arimite settlements and initially inflicted considerable damage. When the Arimites responded in force, the Drukhs were driven back into the central hills. The Arimites have neither forgiven nor forgotten, and continue to send their own raiding parties into Drukh lands. Typical signs might be: (1) a decimated Drukh or Arimite camp; (2) Drukh smoke signals (see encounter #6); (3) a blasted and burned hillside or cave entrance, possibly the work of an Arimite wizard; (4) a battlefield littered with the skeletal remains of Drukh raiders and their greymane mounts. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The typical weather in Arim is cool and cloudy. However, unusual weather does occur, such as fierce winds and flashing lightning storms from the Onyx Mountains to the north, strange fog from Werewood to the west, and toxic rain from Urag to the east. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Dwelling:** Drukhs make no permanent homes, but move with the wild herds (see encounter #12) and where the portents lead them as determined by their shamans. They do, however, make camp and build simple shelters of hides strung between trees or boulders. In some cases, they may camp within caves in the hills. |
| 6-8 | 4 | **Trails:** There are no roads in the Drukh lands, only unpaved trails. Most are very narrow and difficult to traverse on rocky hillsides, while others are made from the passage of herds of large beasts and make for easy traveling. While on a road in Drukh lands, one might encounter: (1) coming upon travelers (see encounter #5); (2) coming to an intersection; (3) spotting a hidden trail; (4) being blocked by an obstacle (fallen tree, washout, herd of beasts, etc.). |
| 9-11 | 5 | **Traveler:** Most travel in the Drukh lands is by foot or greymane. Here, one may encounter: (1) a small to large tribe of Drukhs who will likely be riding greymanes (see encounter #6); (2) an Arimite raiding party who are as likely to be on foot as mounted on greymanes; (3) a small group of Aamanian pilgrims who have become lost; (4) a solo or pair of Jaka hunters seeking tundra beasts (see encounter #11). |
| 12-13 | 6 | **Drukh:** Individual hunters and gatherers, as well as entire tribes, roam the hilly landscape here. One might encounter: (1) Drukh smoke signals, which can be multi-colored and quite complex; (2) the disturbing music of bone flutes echoing through the cliffs and valleys; (3) Arimite raiders attacking a Drukh camp, or vice versa; (4) Drukhs on greymanes pursuing a wild herd (see encounter #12). |
| 14 | 7 | **Exomorph:** These stealthy killers thrive in the rugged landscape, preying upon the wild herds, Drukh folk, or anyone unlucky enough to become their intended victims. An exomorph encounter could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 15 | 8 | **Morde:** Flocks of these cowardly scavengers nest among groves of stunted oaks. While most consider them vile, Drukhs revere them as messengers of Noman, the lord of the Nightmare Dimension. Some believe Drukh shamans communicate with the loathsome birds. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | 9 | **Werebeast:** Caves in the tallest and steepest crags are the favored lairs of these fierce creatures. Drukhs admire their fearless nature, and will occasionally bring them offerings of captives, or newborn ogriphants and greymanes. |
| 17 | 10 | **Drac:** Favored as pets in some places, the most common variety of these wingless dragons in this region have black scales with reddish highlights. They lair in rugged hills and crevices. Full-grown dracs can measure up to eight feet long. |
| 18 | 11 | **Tundra Beast:** These large and vicious carnivores lair in the hills and hunt the same herds as the Drukhs. Jaka and Arimites hunt them for their hides and fangs, and wear them as badges of their hunting prowess. |
| 19-20 | 12 | **Wild Herd:** Small to large herds of muskront, ogriphant, and greymanes roam the hillsides of the Drukh lands as well as other regions of Arim. Drukhs ride greymanes to drive the herds into dead-end valleys or over ravines. |



# Castabulan

A rocky isle located off the western coast of Silvanus, Castabulan is fringed with copses of tanglewood and stunted gall oak. Uninhabited for centuries save for wild beasts and flocks of winged avir, the island is now populated by a refugee people who call themselves the Castabulanese.

## The Castabulanese

The Castabulanese are tall, slender of build, with skin a deep brown. They dress in loose-fitting robes and sandals. The women braid their hair in a variety of intricate styles, and wear necklaces of sea stones worn smooth by the tides.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Castabulanese claim to be the descendants of a group of Phantasians whose windship crash-landed on the isle in the year 447. Originally two dozen in number, the survivors have applied themselves vigorously to the act of procreation, so that nearly four hundred men, women, and children now populate the isle.

### *Culture*

The Castabulanese reside in an eccentric "observatory" constructed of rough-hewn timbers and stone. Originally built to house two dozen, the structure has since undergone many major expansions and additions. The lower floors serve as living chambers and storage. The top two floors house observation lenses, sky charts, and an alchemical laboratory. Here the Castabulanese monitor changes in the weather, compiling data that they use to predict storms, droughts, and other meteorological phenomena.

The population functions as a commune, with all members sharing equally in the work of growing food (tubers, grains, and fruits), hunting for shellfish, tending the commune's erd population, maintaining the observatory, and monitoring research and experiments in progress. The Castabulanese have no strict rules regarding marriage; relationships of all kinds are tolerated, with children being raised by the entire group while adult individuals take turns with other responsibilities.

The folk of Castabulan produce no marketable wares per se, but trade information about tides, weather, and wind currents to sea captains, scholars, institutions, and other interested parties. In return they receive alchemical supplies, gifts of food or wine, and occasionally a few gold lumens. These the Castabulanese use to purchase astrological apparati, tools, and other implements from the Nine Kingdoms and elsewhere.

### *Language*

The Castabulanese speak a jarringly casual form of High Talislan, reflecting the somewhat low regard that these people have for classical Phantasian culture. Castabulanese names have an easy, lilting sound, as in Saleas, Millias, Rastabulos, and Celesian.

### *Government*

The folk of Castabulan abide by a Communal Pact, which states that all must share equally in responsibilities. Aside from this, they enjoy a unique form of self-rule that empowers individuals to make important life decisions for themselves. A group of three elders, elected by popular vote, are called upon to make any decisions that affect the majority of the population, as needed. Any who break the Communal Pact or perform acts of thievery or aggression are banished from the island, never to return.

The Castabulanese have no army, weapons, or fortifications. They are believed to possess magical capabilities adequate to defend themselves from any small- to medium-sized force of invaders.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Castabulanese have no single religion, but worship or not as they choose. Nature deities are currently popular with some, as are traditional Talislantan holidays and festivals centered around nature or fertility themes, such as the Harvest of the Silver Moon and the Conjunction of the Twin Suns. The Castabulanese study numerous fields of magic, but are especially adept in astromancy and aeromancy. Castabulanese place their dead along with their personal effects in wooden coffins and cast them adrift, to be carried away on the tides.

### *Worldview*

Castabulan is neutral as regards all other nations; any visitors who come in peace are welcome. The Castabulanese enjoy good relations with many Zandir sea traders, who often visit Castabulan to obtain advice on prevailing winds, tides, and so on. Relations with Phantas remain one of Castabulan's few sources of dismay; the Castabulanese have attempted for decades to convince the Phantasians to restrict their thaumaturgical experimentation, which the Castabulanese claim is deleterious to the surrounding environment. The Phantasians disagree; some have gone so far as to recommend that the Castabulan facility be dismantled, and the descendants of the former castaways forcibly returned to Phantas.



| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 01-10 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The weather in this region can change quickly; the worst cases may include sudden squalls, strong winds causing rough seas, or even a dangerous maelstrom (see encounter #19). |
| 11-25 | 2 | **Ship:** An encounter at sea might mean spotting another ship or being spotted, finding a shipwreck or abandoned vessel, or observing a ship being attacked or pursued. The vessels involved could be of mixed types: fishing boat, merchant ship, pirate ship, warship, or windship. |
| 26-28 | 3 | **Land:** An encounter of land could mean spotting a partially submerged reef, hitting a submerged reef, finding an uncharted island, coming upon a coral settlement of the Sun-Ra-San (see encounter #27), or spying the Floating City of Oceanus (see encounter #11). |
| 29-30 | 4 | **Mishap:** Something is wrong with the ship or its crew. This could be a leak, talk of mutiny, spoiled or infested food, man overboard, disease, entangled in seaweed, stowaway, torn sail, fire, or a magical mishap. |
| 31-32 | 5 | **Alatus:** these horrid winged leeches are typically found in swamps and lagoons. But because they are capable of flight, they may attack individual or creatures on board ships, occasionally in numbers. Some believe that Alatus may be attracted to the light emanated by a ship's lanterns; others say they are attracted by scent or sound. |
| 33 | 6 | **Cthonian Sea Demon:** Nearly invisible in water, these demons originate from the lower planes, but occasionally find their way into the Talislantan reality via portals or rifts in the dimensional fabric. Entryways of this sort are typically located far below the surface; some may date back to the Forgotten Age, while others may have been created by Hydrans or others who delve in the occult. Cthonian sea demons are vicious and destructive, and will blindly attack anything that moves in the water. Encounters range in type from a "school" of small sea demons to a single sea demon of almost any size – including on the scale of a gigantic leviathan, capable of swallowing a ship. The smaller individuals take great pleasure in harassing passing vessels by forming strong currents or even whirlpools. |
| 34 | 7 | **Black Savants:** These strange folk sail the seas in iron-hulled vessels that are also believed to be capable of flight, like windships. They are mute, conversing only in sign, and are secretive by nature, generally keeping to themselves. It is considered unwise to attempt to consort with these folks, whose ships are said to travel to the far lands of Khazad and beyond, even to other planes of existence. |
| 35 | 8 | **Water Kra:** These giant, sightless eels hunt prey by sound and vibration. When aroused, they may slither aboard ships to grasp whatever they find in their massive jaws and plunge into the water to return to their undersea caves and grottoes. |
| 36-45 | 9 | **Sea Rogues of Gao-Din:** The flamboyant pirates of Gao-Din seek profit and plunder above all else. However, unlike the Mangar and Baratus, the Sea Rogues almost never seek to kill or even harm their intended victims. Their only interest is to rob them of their valuables, generally in as polite a manner as possible, and then allow their victims to sail away. Their ships may carry plunder from any region along the southern and western coasts, and may be unmarked or flying the flag of some other nation, such as Zandu or Faradun – a ruse to lure potential targets nearer. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 46-50 | 10 | **Baratus Pirates:** Sightings of Baratus are rare, but not unknown. One of the Lost Wild Tribes of Talislanta, these folk reappeared during the Uprising, but returned to their hidden haunts when a truce was called by the two opposing sides. Baratus fly windships equipped with ballistae, grappling hooks, and sometimes even fire-throwers. They are attracted to easy or unwary prey, and have been known to rob waterborne or airborne ships that they believe may contain valuable treasures such as ancient Archaen books, scrolls, or enchanted artifacts. |
| 51-55 | 11 | **Oceanian Sea Nomads:** Sea nomads live upon the Floating City of Oceanus. They patrol the seas upon domesticated zaratan mounts with the primary intent of protecting their city from predators and pirates. They typically avoid outsiders, but are known to seek trade with the Sea Rogues of Gao-Din, Zandir merchant ships, and Phantasian windships. They are generally not aggressive, and if threatened they will usually flee by diving far below the surface (zaratan have both lungs and gills, and Oceanians use simple breathing apparatuses made from the inflated stomach-sacs of nar-eels). They may be hunting a dangerous predator (such as a skalanx or water kra) or protecting the Floating City of Oceanus, which will be somewhere nearby. In this case, Oceanian sea nomads will warn interlopers to leave the area, and may attack any who choose to ignore their warnings. |
| 56 | 12 | **Skalanx:** These giant insectoids prefer to hunt other large aquatic creatures, including sea dragons and water kra, but may also attack ships with their massive pincers. |
| 57 | 13 | **Zaratan:** Typically benign unless provoked, a passing pod of zaratan fears no other creatures of the ocean and can simply dive deep if threatened. The only exceptions are if the pod is threatened, or if a number of newborn zaratan are in the group. In such cases, the adult zaratan will attack, seeking to ram and sink vessels that they perceive as a threat. Water kra, sea dragons, and sea scorpions avoid them. The sea nomads have domesticated zaratan and ride them as living guardians of the Floating City. |
| 58 | 14 | **Parthenians:** These bronze-skinned automatons travel the seas upon triremes fashioned with metal-plated hulls and equipped with fire-throwers. While not hostile unless provoked, Parthenians only seem interested in trading for workers to perform mysterious, and often dangerous, salvage expeditions beneath the waves |
| 59 | 15 | **Phantasians:** Phantasian merchants aboard their windships may be eager to trade dream essence and other mixtures. They greatly fear the swift windships of Baratus pirates. |
| 60-65 | 16 | **Zandir Trade Ship:** Typically encountered hugging the coastline, these colorfully-sailed ships carry finely crafted blades and utensils, fragrances, herbs, spices, silks, excellent wines, and opals. They seek metals, precious stones, magical artifacts, and information regarding dangers ahead or safe routes. Though they despise their age-old enemies, the Aamanians, Zandir are usually open minded with regards to other peoples. They seem to be especially friendly with the Gao, who some say have a “special relationship” with the sultan of Zandu. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 66-70 | 17 | **Imrian Coracle:** Imrians may be encountered aboard two types of vessels; they travel in huge barge-like coracles made of sea dragon remains and drawn by trained water kra, which transport smaller boats of woven reeds, used for raids and landing ashore. Either type may hold captives from the Crescent Isles, the Dark Coast, or lands beyond. Imrians may wish to trade herbs, strange beasts, brass rings (their currency), and captives in exchange for intoxicants or other captives. However, they are just as likely to attack a lesser force and attempt to capture as many victims as possible. |
| 71 | 18 | **Black Savant Iron Galleon:** These black-hulled ships are rumored to sail where others fear to go, including the Midnight Sea and even the Aethereal Seas between dimensions. They are most often encountered traveling between their island home of Nefaratus and Khazad. Black Savants pursue mysterious errands and have little need of outsiders. Most sailors regard it as bad luck to cross the wake of a Black Savant vessel. |
| 72 | 19 | **Maelstrom:** These dangerous whirlpools may be found in almost any sea or ocean. They can appear suddenly, created either by natural forces or other means, including aberrant weather conditions, undersea interdimensional rifts, sea demons, or malevolent peoples such as Hydrans. A maelstrom can pose a hazard to ships of all sizes, pulling them off course or potentially dragging them downwards to a watery doom. |
| 73 | 20 | **Hydrans:** These sinister and highly intelligent cephaloids are said to dwell in eerie-looking coral "castles" located in the deepest ocean depths. They are rarely seen outside of such places, but are attracted to powerful enchanted items and artifacts, which they covet above all things. Hydrans have been known to sink ships that carry potent enchanted items or artifacts, either by creating maelstroms or interdimensional portals, or using their innate psionic-like abilities to compel pilots to crash their ships into rocks or sail directly into such hazardous conditions. |
| 74-80 | 21 | **Batrachians:** These water-breathing humanoids traverse the seas and oceans of Talislanta, harvesting sea plants of various types and scavenging sunken ruins for valuables, which they trade to the Oceanians, the Gao, and others. They typically travel in small groups, though tribes of up to a hundred or more sometimes travel together in search of food or shelter. Batrachians are aware of goings-on in the seas and oceans of Talislanta, and the shores of distant lands. Unless threatened, they are generally peaceful, and may be a valuable source of information. |
| 81 | 22 | **Quaga:** These giant mollusks can be found in lakes, rivers, and oceans, and are known to attach themselves to the bottom of slow-moving or stationary vessels. The largest of these creatures can grow to ten feet in length and weigh over 500 lbs – large enough to damage or crush smaller vessels, and impede larger ships. Quaga are carnivorous, and are known to eat almost anything they can catch, including humanoids. The violet pearls found in the shells of these creatures are rare and extremely valuable. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 82-89 | 23 | **Farad Slave Ship:** These dark-hulled vessels ply the waters off the southern and western coasts of Talislanta. Those headed from the port city of Tarun are typically manned by a dozen or more slave-takers, and will usually be on their way to raid coastal villages. Those headed to Tarun will typically be laden with cargoes of slaves that were recently taken on such raids or bought from other peoples such as the Aamanians, Rajans, Jhangarans, or Mangar. Despised by all decent folk, Farad slave ships are heavily armed and always on the alert for attack. Their enemies include the Gao, Ahazu, Sunra, and even the peaceful Batrachians. |
| 90-91 | 24 | **Aamanian Pilgrim-Ship:** One or more white-lacquered, white-sailed vessels with the symbol of the Orthodoxist Cult's "All-Seeing-Eye" visible on the sail convey Aamanians on a pilgrimage to one of the cult's officially sanctioned holy places, such as the Well of Saints, which lies beyond the Volcanic Hills; the Watchstone, situated amidst the Plains of Golarin; or the Red Desert in Carantheum. |
| 92-97 | 25 | **Aeriad Barge-Fort:** These wide-hulled ships are made of intricately-woven reeds with a great tree serving as the ship's central mast. Crewed by semi-avian Blue Aeriad from Vardune of the Nine Kingdoms, barge-forts are typically only encountered close to the shore, and almost never in open waters. They generally carry agricultural products such as fruits, grains, and vegetables; however, if more heavily-armed, an Aeriad barge fort may be carrying items of far greater value, such as Green Aeriad botanomantic wares, rare plants and herbs, or important dignitaries from Vardune. The Blue Aeriad who pilot and guard such vessels are known to be somewhat high-strung and prone to aggressive behavior toward any ships they find suspicious. |
| 98 | 26 | **Ghost Ship:** An abandoned vessel, typically with its sails in tatters, drifting slowly with the currents, or strangely unmoving, regardless of wind or tides. Most Talislantan sailors hold such ships in superstitious dread, believing them to be haunted or cursed. Others steer clear of them because they may be plague ships, carrying disease, pestilence, or undead entities such as shadowights or necrophages. |
| 99-00 | 27 | **Sun-Ra-San Sea Dragon Hunters:** These semi-aquatic folk live in settlements carved from mounds of coral. They sail the seas in dragon barques from which they hunt and harpoon aquatic predators, particularly sea dragons. Sun-Ra-San ships are said to be carved from the bones of ancient sea monsters, themselves resembling stylized "sea dragons" from ancient times. The sails look like dragon wings, and the vessels ride low in the water, as the lower decks are flooded for the comfort of these amphibious folk. The Sun-Ra-San are deadly enemies of the Kang, and some of their clans are sympathetic to the cause of the Wild Tribes. Sun-Ra-San also despise the Mangar, whose ships they will attack on sight, as well as any ship that they deem as a threat. |

# Khazad

Khazad is a strange and largely unknown realm located at the furthest northwestern reaches of Talislanta. Inaccessible to all but the most determined travelers, its terrain is most forbidding. A line of precipitous cliffs runs the length of its western coast, and a ridge of mountains extends along its eastern borders. To the north lay fields of ice and snow; beyond this is the Midnight Sea, where sailors fear to go. The waters of the Gulf of Silvanus, rock-strewn and perilous, deny easy access from the southeast.



As a result of these impediments to travel, much of what is known of Khazad is based upon the accounts of the wandering Sarista tribes and the few hardy adventurers who have risked journeying to this isolated area. According to their accounts, the interior of Khazad is less than inviting. Patches of bleached and barren gall oak and deadwood stand like skeletons, silhouetted against a dreary purple and gray sky. Broken and irregular lines of hills dot the landscape, interspersed with moors, quagmires, and stagnant ponds. The air is heavy with the smell of moldering vegetation, and exudes an unsettling, ancient quality.

Scattered throughout the country are ruins, evidently of some long-forgotten civilization. Though a few of the ruins have been plundered of their hidden secrets, many remain largely unexplored. Far to the north are vast burial grounds, denoted by row upon row of age-worn stone markers, or cenotaphs. Less frequently encountered are mausoleums of pitted stone, engraved with arcane symbols of obscure origin. Humanoid remains, entombed in massive sarcophagi of strange design, have been found in some of these crypts. Scholars of the New Age believe that these are the final resting places of the Thane, ancient ancestors of the Black Savants of Nefaratus.

The Thane of Khazad were buried wearing funerary masks of frightening aspect, fashioned of gold, silver, copper, tin, and lead. Scholars believe the masks were intended to ward demons or evil spirits from the souls of the deceased. Brass urns sealed with paraffin, used to imprison bottle imps or safekeep the corpse-dust of departed wizards, are also found in the Thane tombs. Prized by curio collectors and necromancers alike, these relics bring high prices in some places.

However, the risks entailed in the acquisition of such items are not inconsiderable. Necrophages haunt the region, craving fresh corpses in preference to the dry bones of the Khazad dead. Lurkers prowl the moors, as do packs of werebeasts from the Serpentine Mountains. And, likely, the Black Savants themselves do not appreciate having the tombs of their ancestors defiled.

There is a legend to the effect that a vast complex of ruins lies far to the north. Referred to as Necron on many ancient maps, the Sarista call it the "City of the Dead." Here, it is believed, are buried the mummified remains of an entire city's population. The Sarista claim that the city is cursed and that it is death to enter it; others believe that the Sarista tell such tales to frighten away would-be grave robbers from their own private plundering grounds.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | 1 | **Ruins:** The remains of an ancient civilization protrude from the landscape as one journeys deeper into Khazad. A ruins encounter could be: (1) finding the carved stone marker of a forgotten grave; (2) spotting a towering pillar engraved with strange glyphs (some believe these point the way to Necron); (3) the partial walls of a collapsed and buried building; (4) seeing the smoke of a traveler's campfire coming from a ruin (see encounter #6); (5) finding a ruin being used as a creature's lair (see encounters #7 and #8); (6) the rare find of a sealed Thane mausoleum, etched with arcane runes. |
| 4-5 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The typical weather in Khazad is cold, overcast and damp. Extreme or aberrant weather can occur with some frequency, including fierce storms of black lightning from the Midnight Sea, ghost winds from the Spectral Isles, and a strange type of spiked hail made of black ice. |
| 6 | 3 | **Dwelling:** No civilized folk make permanent homes in Khazad. An encounter of this sort might mean finding the camp of travelers (see encounter #6) or the lair of horrid creatures (see encounters below). On occasion, a shadowizard (see encounter #11) takes residence in a ruined tower while it pursues whatever quest it has been charged with by its Underworld masters. |
| 7-9 | 4 | **Water:** Water is plentiful in Khazad, but finding drinkable water is a challenge. An encounter of water might mean: (1) coming upon a soggy moor, quagmire, or stagnant pond; (2) finding ancient, engraved stones around a basin of still, reflective water, which Sarista believe are viewports into the Underworld; (3) finding a trickling stream of snowmelt from the mountains; (4) a brief, cleansing rain blowing in from the Gulf of Silvanus. |
| 10-11 | 5 | **Ancient Roadway:** In eras past, the roads of Khazad were wide, paved, and well-maintained. Today, only short remnants of those ancient roadways remain above ground, while the remainder lie beneath the hills, moors, and bogs of the region. An encounter of this sort could mean finding a stretch of raised, dry road. It could also mean discovering the trail of recent travelers (see encounter #6). |
| 13-14 | 6 | **Traveler:** Only the brave, reckless, or foolhardy ever dare to venture into Khazad. Such people include: (1) Sarista treasure seekers who know the places to avoid and where to find safe water; (2) Black Savants having come for their own mysterious reasons and who will react with hostility to any trespassers deemed to be grave robbers; (3) Sindaran collectors with a need to find specific relics or remains; (4) Rajan necromancers seeking ancient magical artifacts for their dark rituals. |
| 15 | 7 | **Ghast:** Quite intelligent, though murderously insane, ghasts are solitary creatures who lair in crypts, ruins, and underground burrows. They delight in stalking and capturing travelers, who they bring back to their lairs to torture and/or provide other forms of grisly "entertainment." |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | 8 | **Necrophage:** Drawn by the scent of death and corruption, these horrid creatures lair among the graveyards and ruins of Khazad. Though sometimes encountered wandering across the broken landscape by night, they are more commonly discovered underground, feeding on the moldering remains of ancient corpses. |
| 17 | 9 | **Malathrope:** When the twin suns set, these insane predators come forth to hunt for unwary victims. Swift and unpredictable, they may be found almost anywhere in Khazad or the surrounding regions, in crypts, tunnels, in the mountains, staring down from high cliffs, etc. |
| 18 | 10 | **Depredator:** During the night, these airborne predators nest in their mountain aeries. When the suns rise, they take flight across the landscape of Khazad and may travel great distances in search of prey. |
| 19 | 11 | **Shadowizard:** The damned spirits of dead magicians, shadowizards come to Khazad on errands for their Underworld masters, or for their own mysterious purposes. They are not above using travelers as pawns to gain what they seek. |
| 20 | 12 | **Shadowight:** These insubstantial entities mourn for their lost corporeality, seeking to steal some semblance of what they've lost by draining the substance of living beings. Travelers who have come to Khazad and met an untimely fate at the hands of these undead stalkers may themselves become wights, and forever haunt the place of their death. |

# Places of Note

## The Cliffs of Khazad

Sheer cliffs two hundred feet in height ring the coastline of Khazad, making passage into the interior a daunting, if not impossible, prospect. Of interest to occult scholars are the giant diabolical visages carved into the cliffs along portions of the coast.

## Isle of Lost Souls

Legends say that this place is inhabited by a night demon with a penchant for collecting souls, which his assistants gather by night and bring back to his island lair. The "lost souls" are said to be stored in enchanted amberglass vials, which the demon keeps for his amusement. At the very least, it makes for a colorful tale.

# Silvanus

Silvanus is a hilly woodland region located to the west of the Necros River and the Forests of Werewood. Unlike the dreary and fell territories of its eastern neighbor Khazad, the wooded glens of Silvanus are scenic and relatively tranquil. Here, fields of meadow grass offer respite from the forest, and cool streams converge amidst thickets of silver beech, carpets of moss, and quiet ponds. Roots and herbs, many having magical or healing properties, are common throughout much of the region.



The woods of Silvanus are home to wood whisps, muskront, and other creatures, most of the benign sort. Beware of exomorphs and banes from nearby Werewood, however, as these sinister creatures sometimes infiltrate Silvanus by night. More commonly found in this region are the tribes of a wayfaring folk known as the Sarista.

## The Sarista

The Sarista are built along slender proportions, and have skin the color of blue topaz, dark eyes, and jet-black hair. They are partial to such forms of ornamentation as ear bangles, facial tattooing, and all types of gaudy raiment. The men sport colorful capes, berets, tight-fitting hose, sashes, and high boots; the women, all manner of sultry and provocative attire, also of a colorful nature.

### *Ancestry and History*

The history of the Sarista consists of a baffling collection of anecdotes, fables, and bawdy ballads. From these, scholars have theorized that the Sarista are descended from the Phaedrans and related to the Aamanians and Zandir. Others believe they are kin to the Dhuna witch-covens of Werewood.

### *Culture*

The Sarista are a people of diverse qualities. Some are loners who make their living as peddlers, mercenaries, or vagabonds. Others, notable for their skill at witchcraft, live in secluded wilderness regions. The majority of these folk are more gregarious, preferring to travel in loose-knit tribal groups, carrying all that they own in brightly painted wagons.

Sarista families are close-knit – "as thick as thieves," according to some Talislantans – and often quite large. Young males attract wives by acts of courage and daring; an offering of gold coins to the wife's parents seals the deal. Their children are raised liberally, and travel with the tribe.

Sarista caravans roam the Western Lands from Silvanus to the Nine Kingdoms, stopping in cities and villages along the way. In such places, the Sarista are renowned for their talents as folk healers, fortune tellers, and performers – or as mountebanks, charlatans, and tricksters, depending on one's point of view.

The discrepancy of opinion regarding the Sarista may be attributed to their mysterious customs and traditions. The tribes do not keep written records of any sort but rely upon their elders to teach their offspring the secret lore of their people. These studies consist primarily of minor magics, herb lore, local geography, and "Sarista culture," a euphemism held to be roughly equivalent to the less flattering term, "thievery." By age seven, a Sarista child will know every woodland trail in Silvanus by heart and will have an alarmingly comprehensive understanding of Sarista skills and talents.

### *Language*

The Sarista have their own language, a version of the common Low Talislan tongue which allows the speaker to convey hidden meanings by the use of subtle gestures and inflections. Sarista names are colorful and varied, such as Romaro, Salvagio, Garinda, Eviaro (men), and Romi, Esmeralle, Havia, and Kataea (women).

### *Government*

The Sarista have no central government. Each family is a separate entity unto itself, led in most cases by the eldest male or female member. A tribe made up of several families will usually be governed by an informal group made up of the elder members of each family. Among the Sarista, it is considered a grievous crime to steal from a member of one's own family or tribe. Offenses of this sort result in expulsion from the group, sometimes permanently. Tribes sometimes band together for protection, but the usual response to potential hostilities is to simply flee. Sarista are not cowards, but they believe it is better to live to fight another day than to die stupidly.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Sarista religion revolves around two obscure demigods: Fortuna, lovely but fickle goddess of luck, and the grim entity known as Death. The Sarista revere Fortuna, but mock Death, whom they strive to cheat at every opportunity. Many Sarista dabble in magic, and some become quite accomplished in the arcane arts. The womenfolk tend to be adept at making folk remedies, potions, and minor magic charms, and at telling fortunes.

### *Worldview*

The Sarista are an insular folk who generally have little interest in the affairs of other people. They remain apart from other cultures by choice, following the same traditions as their ancestors.

## Sarista Culture

Excerpted from the Chronicles of Talislanta, by the wizard Tamerlin:

*The rogue magician Crystabal and I once spent an evening with a Sarista band, who entertained us with their traditional songs and dances. The local cuisine, served with generous flagons of herb-spiced wine, was most excellent. Afterward, playful Sarista children gathered around, sitting on my lap and giving me gifts of little bouquets of meadow flowers. At last it came time to put the little ones to bed, though none would go without first giving "old Uncle Tamerlin" (as they insisted upon calling me) a hug. With wide grins, the elder Sarista then brought forth more wine. I listened to a few tall tales told around the campfire before myself retiring. Crystabal, flirting with a charming Sarista girl, attempted to arrange a romantic interlude.*

*I awoke at daybreak feeling refreshed and well-rested. A slightly bleary-eyed Crystabal joined me after a time, and the two of us saddled up our graymanes and bid farewell to the Sarista. Not five miles down the road I discovered, much to my chagrin, that the contents of my pockets had been picked clean. Muttering under my breath, I cursed the little urchins who had sat upon my lap and showered me with hugs and kisses. Crystabal laughed long and loudly, until he discovered that his purse of gold coins was also missing, among other items. With an ill-concealed grin, I consoled him, and we continued on our way; poorer in the monetary sense, but far richer in our knowledge of "Sarista Culture."*

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** Though the Uprising had little effect on the region of Silvanus directly, it certainly affected tribes of Sarista traveling and living in other lands. Typical signs might be: (1) more Sarista than usual living within Silvanus instead of traveling abroad; (2) folk still wearing mourning garb for those known to have perished; (3) Sarista interested in news from distant lands, hoping to learn the fate of those still missing. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** While the weather in Silvanus is typically calm and pleasant, foul weather sometimes occurs in the form of gales from the Azure ocean, freak snow storms from the northern mountains, or eerie and dense fog from the Necros River and Werewood. |
| 4-6 | 3 | **Dwelling:** Sarista are the most common inhabitants of Silvanus. They prefer living in their elaborate and colorful wagons and move about the region as signs, portents, and their elders dictate. Some, who no longer live among their families or for their own reasons, reside in secluded cottages or caves. |
| 7-9 | 4 | **Roadway:** Game trails and footpaths crisscross much of the area. Sarista also maintain roads for their wagons, though these are often rough and difficult to travel in places. On a roadway, one might encounter: (1) travelers (see encounter #5); (2) an intersection; (3) a hidden trail; (4) the way blocked by an obstacle (fallen tree, washout, herd of beasts, etc.). |
| 10-12 | 5 | **Traveler:** The most common travelers in Silvanus are Sarista, who may be alone or with members of their tribe. They will be found walking or riding greymanes, or riding their wagons pulled by greymanes, durge, or muskronts. One might also encounter adventurers from any of the Nine Kingdoms, Aaman, or Zandu. |
| 13 | 6 | **Alatus:** Wading in even ankle-deep water of the Necros River can bring one within the painful grasp of an Alatus, and potentially a case of blood fever. Sarista healers know a remedy for the disease. |
| 14 | 7 | **Bane:** These cunning killers lair in secret caves and hidden ruins along the banks of the Necros River and venture into Silvanus at night to hunt. Sarista fear them greatly and with good reason, as they can mimic the voices of other beings and often do so to cause fear and confusion among their intended victims. |
| 15 | 8 | **Erd:** Sarista keep these six-legged mammals for their fur, which they shear and fashion into blankets, rugs, and clothing. Erd are also favored for their milk, which contributes to numerous flavors of cheese. They also use erd to pull their colorful wagons. Most Sarista treat their erd with affection and respect. |
| 16 | 9 | **Exomorph:** These predators sometimes lair in the darker places of Silvanus. An Exomorph encounter could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the Exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 17 | 10 | **Werebeast:** These cruel carnivores cross into Silvanus at night in small to medium sized packs to run under the light of the moons and hunt all manner of creatures or folk. Their lustful howls may be heard for miles. |



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 18-19 | 11 | **Wild Herd:** Small to large herds of beast, muskronts, and occasionally even ogriphants roam the meadows and woodlands of Silvanus. Sarista sometimes maintain small herds used for food, but prefer Erd (see encounter #8) to pull their wagons. |
| 20 | 12 | **Wood Whisp:** These small sprites may be encountered in small to large communities living in the trees of the forests. Wood whisps can be quite curious of outsiders and will happily gossip regarding the goings-on of the region in exchange for sweets. |



# Werewood

Werewood is a dark, tangled forest region situated to the north of Zandu. By day, it is an eerie place; tendrils of grey moss hang from its gnarled and misshapen trees, looming above thick swarths of bracken, toadstools, and molds. Ravir, perched on the limbs of rotting spider-oak trees, assail travelers with pointed remarks and morbid prophecies. Strange shadow-forms prowl the undergrowth, their presence felt more than seen. Other creatures, less withdrawn, wait only for victims to approach within reach of talon, claw, or fang.

It is in the evening hours, however, that the true nature of Werewood is fully revealed. Clouds of mist rise, cold and dank, from the forest floor. From the darkening woods, mournful howls issue forth: the baleful cries of werebeasts on the hunt. Normally nocturnal creatures, werebeasts seldom venture from their caves during the daylight hours. By night, they can no longer control their hunger and must feed.

Werewood is divided into several distinct territories: The Dread Forest, Gnorlwood, and Witchwood.

# The Dread Forest

This dense and tangled region lies adjacent to the Necros River. It is a favorite haunt of ghasts, necrophages, and the like, and so is generally avoided by most sensible people. This would seem to exclude weirdlings, or, as they are sometimes known, wish-gnomes, who make their home in this strange locale, and are said to hoard great fortunes in their underground burrows. According to legend, if a weirdling is caught, it must give over its treasure or grant its captor a wish (hence the name, wish-gnome).

## The Phaedran Tombs

At one time, it was the fashion among the wizards of ancient Phaedra to be buried along the banks of the Sascasm. According to the style of the day, the magicians made arrangements to be interred in odd mausoleum-like structures. The interior decor of these edifices was often made to resemble an elaborate sitting room, dining hall, or bedroom, according to the wizard's preference in leisure-time activities. The mummified body of the late wizard, dressed in lavish garb and propped-up in some appropriate pose, added the finishing touch to the burial chamber. Though grave robbers have stripped many of these tombs of their wares, a number of these crypts remain undiscovered, overgrown with weeds, vines and mosses.

# Gnorlwood

The forest of Gnorlwood is located in the south-central region of Werewood, adjacent to the Zandir border. It is one of the oldest woodlands in Talislanta, its once-tall trees now stooped and withered with age. Hidden beneath the sloping hillocks and warrens of this region live a mysterious and magical folk known as the Gnorls.

## The Gnorls

Gnorls are short and squat, with wrinkled skin and deep-set, glowing eyes. They dress in voluminous robes and veiled headdresses, which serve to conceal most of their features. Rings, bracelets, and necklaces are also favored apparel among these odd folk.

### *Ancestry and History*

Gnorls are secretive creatures about whom very little is known. Some believe them to be related to the Gnomekin of Durne, but they are more likely kin to the weirdlings of the Dread Forest.

### *Culture*

There are no known Gnorl settlements, nor has there ever been any reported sighting of a Gnorl family or couple. The noted naturalist, Thystram, believed that this was because there is no race of Gnorls, as such; rather, Gnorls and weirdlings together constitute a single ancient race, the name of which has either been forgotten, or is a great secret among them. By Thrystram's logic, Gnorls are the females of this species, weirdlings the males. Thystram believed that members of the two sexes meet once every fifty years or so to propagate the species. It is not known how or by whom Gnorl offspring are raised.

Reclusive by nature, Gnorls live alone in well-hidden dwellings located in hidden underground nooks, the boles of massive span-oaks, abandoned barrows, or burrows of elaborate and mysterious design. Thystram described one such place as "decorated with rustic furnishings of appropriately small stature, with carpets of many hues covering the dirt floors and long roots dangling from the ceilings. From a main living area, tunnels led this way and that, upstairs and down, to root cellars, secret passageways, hidey-holes, a well, and places too eerie to warrant exploration. Illumination was provided by dozens and dozens of candles, set into alcoves dug into the earthen walls."

### Secrets For Sale

Excerpted from the Chronicles of Talislanta, by the wizard Tamerlin:

*"While traveling through the region of Werewood known as Gnorlwood, I chanced to stumble upon the home of a Gnorl — literally so, for I accidentally stepped into a hidden trap-hole, rolled headlong down a winding tunnel, and ended up in the underground nook of a Gnorl. After an awkward introduction (not surprising considering the circumstances), I was able to assure her that I meant no harm and had not come to rob her. At this point she called off her pet drac (a most ill-mannered creature) and the animate root-things that had confined me to the wall. Once freed I was invited to join her in a cup of tang-ting tea.*

*"We chatted for a time, and I learned that like many Gnorls, she was both an herbalist and a secret-seller. I was familiar with the former occupation, being something of an amateur apothecary myself, but not the latter. I asked her to explain, to which she complied. Gnorls value secrets above all else. This, so said my host, is because of the rarity of secrets in general, and useful secrets in particular. Gnorls collect secrets of all sorts, which they divide into categories. These include, but are by no means limited to: rumors, innuendo, gossip, myths, legends, secret recipes, dark secrets, deep secrets, lost secrets, forgotten secrets, riddles, mysteries, conundrums, and enigmas.*

*A Gnorl will sell a secret for gold, for something she needs (such as a rare herb or ingredient), or for another secret that she determines to be of equal or greater value. If my hostess's talents are indicative of all her kind, Gnorls are shrewd negotiators. For example, it cost me a juicy bit of gossip (regarding the forty-third wife of the Sultan of Zandir and a certain itinerant wizard), three rumors, and a ribald limerick just to find out if Gnorls, like weirdlings, also have the power to grant wishes (if you want to know the answer yourself, go ask a Gnorl)."*

It is the eccentric habit of Gnorls to decorate their nooks with all sorts of trinkets and geegaws, from witch-balls of colored crystal to richly patterned carpets, curious wall hangings, odd sculptures, and so forth. In this way they seem to be like weirdlings, though Gnorl nooks are said to be much tidier and are never cluttered with piles of junk.

Gnorls value secrets, which they employ as a form of currency (see sidebar). Otherwise, they are largely self-sufficient. Certain Sarista gypsies claim to have traded with Gnorls, though the veracity of their claims remains unproven.

### *Language*

When dealing with outsiders, Gnorls converse in a heavily accented dialect of Low Talislan. Gnorls are also believed to possess their own secret language, which they reserve for communicating among others of their kind. Gnorls prefer to keep their names secret; the Gnorl known to Thystram allowed him to refer to her as Shibaal, though this may or may not have been her actual name.

### *Government*

Gnorls appear to have no leaders or authority figures. Such concepts as "government" and "laws" offer nothing of interest to these folk. Gnorls rely upon secrecy for their protection. Their homes are well-hidden, and by their nature quite inaccessible to most other races. Traps and magical wards may be used to augment their security.

### *Magic & Religion*

Gnorls are known to be practitioners of witchcraft and wizardry, and are said to covet rare magical tomes, particularly those that describe secret rituals or long-lost arcana. Their religious beliefs, if any, are unknown.

### *Worldview*

As a people, Gnorls have no relations with other races or nations. It is said that they regard Gnomekin with tolerance, and perhaps Dhuna as well. On the whole, Gnorls seem content to continue living as they always have, in isolation.

Gnorls shun contact with the outside world, and with outsiders in general. They are suspicious of strangers and go to great pains to conceal their homes and activities from other peoples. Thystram believed that the creatures keep a watchful eye upon the surrounding environs at all times, possibly through the use of scrying devices or spy-tubes. No individual is ever allowed into their burrows unless a Gnorl determines beforehand that the person is trustworthy. Just as important, the person must have something the Gnorl wishes to have, such as an important secret, a rare book, or other esoterica. Gnorls sometimes leave their homes in search of rare herbs and other materials, or to trade secrets with trusted confidantes.

# Witchwood

Located in the eastern part of Werewood, Witchwood is an isolated land of ancient forests, hidden glades, strangely meandering trails, marshes, and rambling streams. In many places the trees form a great canopy that entirely blocks out the suns, so that the forest floor is covered with a blanket of thick loam, ferns, and mosses. Here, far from the teeming settlements of civilized Talislantans, is the home of the Dhuna.

## The Dhuna

The olive-skinned Dhuna have jet-black hair and expressive features. The women dress in linen robes, cloaks, and tunics, with sandals or boots, while male Dhuna wear shirts, breeches, and cloaks, with knee-high boots of soft leather.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Dhuna are an ancient people whose origins may date back to the Time Before Time. Persecuted for practicing witchcraft, their ancestors were forced to seek refuge in the forests of Werewood following the Phaedran Cult Wars. Hidden deep in these woods, the Dhuna discovered many sacred groves, each demarcated by a circular ring of tall runestones. Here they settled and remain to the present day.

The Dhuna were later attacked and persecuted again by Aaman, which regards the Dhuna as heretics and diabolists, and sent hundreds of witch hunters and mercenary bounty hunters into their territories to capture them. The Zandir came to their rescue, resulting in a second Cult War between the rival nations of Aaman and Zandu. The war came to an abrupt, necessary end at the onset of the Uprising, but Aaman has never disavowed what its people refer to as a "religious crusade" to rid Talislanta of all Dhuna, no matter the cost.

### *Language*

Though some Dhuna speak Low Talislan, the language most used by these people is the arcane Elder Tongue. Dhuna names are said to date back to the Forgotten Age, and indeed have a somewhat archaic sound, as in Alasta, Abramelus, Perdurabo, Nagenna, and Mecasto.

### *Culture*

The Dhuna live in communal groups, called covens, ranging in size from small family groups of less than a dozen, to large fraternal orders that may number into the hundreds. Each

coven has its settlement, typically consisting of a handful of simple huts made of stone and earth and roofed with woven thatch. The huts are well-hidden by the surrounding woods, and occasionally by certain spells and charms, as well.

The Dhuna are practitioners of witchcraft, and are thought to have strange powers, such as the ability to cast curses using "the evil eye." The womenfolk are said to possess extraordinary talents, not the least of which is the reputed ability of Dhuna witchwomen to capture a man's heart with but a single kiss.

Dhuna are skilled herbalists and healers. Plants used in the making of their remedies, such as prophet tree, shrinking violet, tantalus, contrary vine, and cleric's cowl, are highly valued by these folk. However, the Dhuna generally trade only among covens of the same magical order and with a few trusted outsiders, such as Gnorls, Sarista gypsies, and Jaka hunters.

### *Government*

Dhuna have no formal government or laws. On the contrary, Dhuna believe that all people should be allowed to do as they will. The most influential member of any coven is its high priest or priestess, who leads the rest of the group in ritual observances and may serve as the coven's advisor. Even so, he or she may have no power to command the others. When important decisions need to be made, coven members generally do so by popular vote.

The covens have no armies or militias, but are well-hidden from possible attacks. The stone circles and witchgates are thought to be protected by potent wards and symbols (see sidebar).

### *Magic & Religion*

All Dhuna covens claim alliance to one of three general orders: white, black, or grey. Covens of the White Order focus on the creative and fertile aspects of nature, and are opposed to the Black covens, who employ the destructive forces of nature. Grey covens seek a balance between the two, favoring neither.

The covens gather together during certain cycles of the suns and moons, meeting in secret among the ancient runestones. Here the Dhuna hold their rituals, certain of which may date back to the Age of Mystery. Witchgates play an important role in certain of these rituals and may be used to summon entities from other planes of existence.

### *Worldview*

Long persecuted for their pagan beliefs, the Dhuna are highly suspicious of outsiders. Such suspicions are warranted, as the covens are still persecuted by Aamanian witch-hunters to the present day. Aside from their trade contacts, the Dhuna have no formal relations with other countries or peoples. No other folk are allowed to pass through Dhuna territory without their permission.

## Circles of Stone

Excerpted from the Chronicles of Talislanta, by the wizard Tamerlin:

*"While traveling through Witchwood with the Jaka hunter, Tane, I chanced to come upon a circle of seven stone dolmens, each over twenty feet in height. The obelisk-like structures appeared to be of ancient origin, the strange symbols and glyphs carved into their faces long since worn by wind, rain, and the passage of time. I dismounted my equs, intending to examine the stones at a closer distance. I was immediately restrained by my Jaka companion, who explained in no uncertain terms that such an act could bring about dire consequences for us both.*

*Regarding myself as an enlightened seeker of truth, I was inclined to dismiss Tane's concern as the product of a superstitious upbringing. The Jaka, on the other hand, considered me to be both ignorant and misguided, and let me know that should I proceed in the direction of the dolmens he would have no choice but to bring about the immediate cessation of our relationship, and perhaps my life as well. I found his argument compelling, so much so that I moved away from the dolmens without delay.*

*Reassured by my retreat, Tane explained the reason for his concern. According to the Jaka, the runestones found in this region were erected thousands of years ago by a people who once revered the ancient deities now known only as the Forgotten Gods. Tane said that the Dhuna tribes still gathered at these sites to observe the ancient rituals, sacrifices, and holy days. He added that many of the stone circles were witchgates – openings to other dimensions, through which the Dhuna summoned entities of terrifying aspect. As some of the witchgates were protected by potent curses, Tane said that we should leave them alone and depart the area at once. By this time, I had already remounted and was headed back to Zandu."*

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 01-05 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** Werewood was left largely to itself during the Uprising. Aamanian witch hunters retreated to their homeland, bringing some relief to the Dhuna whom they sought to persecute as heretics. The Dhuna along with the Gnorls and Weirdlings all grew more secretive and distrusting of others, while the more primitive denizens of Werewood, such as Banes and Werebeasts, became even more aggressive.<br><br>**Typical signs might be:** 1 Aamanian witch hunters returning to Werewood; 2 Sarista coming here to reestablish trade with the Dhuna; 3 Dhuna, Gnorls, and Weirdlings acting especially suspicious of travelers. |
| 06-10 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The weather in Werewood varies somewhat between the regions comprising the Dread Forest, Gnorlwood, and Witchwood, but is generally dank and dreary. Extreme or aberrant weather can occur in any of thse regions, and may include such anomalies as strangely colored clouds of dense fog that seem to roll in from the Necros River, and Black Lightning from the Midnight Sea. |
| 11-20 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The Dhuna live in thatch-roofed huts forming settlements they call covens. Their huts are often concealed, either by camouflage or magic. Gnorls and Weirdlings form no settlements and choose to live alone in underground burrows of twisting tunnels and nooks. They also make efforts to keep their homes hidden. |
| 21-30 | 4 | **Ghaun:** these strange humanoids are essentially a vampiric plant-life. They feed on plants, animals, and humanoids, gaining sustenance by drinking the blood or sap of their victims. |
| 31-40 | 5 | **Traveler:** During the day, assume travelers are moving about. At night, they will usually be found only in a camp or shelter (see Encounter #3).<br><br>**Example travelers include:** 1 Sarista or Dhuna seeking plants for medicine or other concoctions; 2 a Gnorl or Weirdling skulking about and likely spying upon other travelers in the hope of learning secrets; 3 Jaka hunters tracking a dangerous beast; 4 Aamanians trying to locate a hidden coven of Dhuna; 5 Zandir seeking to protect the Dhuna from Aamanians. |
| 41-50 | 6 | **Stone Circle:** In numerous places about Werewood, ancient obelisks rise from the ground like stony fingers and form rings the Dhuna call Stone Circles or Witchgates. These strange dolmens stand over twenty feet high and are engraved with odd symbols and glyphs. The groves in which these runestones stand are sacred places to the Dhuna, who often live in hidden covens nearby. |
| 51-52 | 7 | **Bane:** These cunning killers lair in secret caves throughout Werewood and may be found among hidden ruins along the banks of the Necros River. At night they come forth to hunt, sometimes traveling in mated pairs - the most dangerous type of encounter with Banes. |
| 53-55 | 8 | **Endomorph:** Whether day or night, these shy creatures will be found within or very close to their communal shell. In exchange for food, drink, or a tall tale, they may take kindly to travelers and offer information in return. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 56-60 | 9 | **Exomorph:** These predators may lair in all regions of Werewood. They are more likely to hunt during the day.<br><br>**An Exomorph encounter could mean: 1** finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); **2** being hunted by the Exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; **3** spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; **4** coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 61-65 | 10 | **Malathrope:** These terrifying and insane predators are all too common in some parts of Werewood, and they may travel considerable distances in order to stalk, torment, terrify, and eventually devour other intelligent beings. They prefer the night but if hungry enough, will hunt during the day as well. Signs of a malathrope include partially eaten victims whose faces are frozen in fear, four-clawed tracks, unintelligible runes clawed into tree trunks or even stone, and echoes of hideous, mocking laughter. |
| 66-70 | 11 | **Mandragore:** During the day, these small, sentient plants root themselves to the ground becoming dormant. At night, they gather in groups to hunt and snare victims using nets of vines. They bury their catch, and with the dawn, they root themselves upon the grave to feast. |
| 71-75 | 12 | **Ravir:** These nocturnal avir seek carrion during the night and nest during the day. They speak Talislan and often become curious of travelers, whom they may follow and warn of dark portents and prophecies until the suns rise. |
| 76-80 | 13 | **Ravenger:** These adaptable creatures may be encountered in the trees, on the ground, and in the waters of Werewood. They are also known to follow larger beasts or travelers in hopes of scavenging scraps of food or refuse. |
| 81-85 | 14 | **Fetch:** these tiny imp-like creatures are found in swamps and forests, usually in the hollows of rotten trees. They are expert sneak-thieves, attracted to both the shiny objects of all sorts and anything that radiates an aura of magic. Fetches have a mercenary streak, and will sometimes work as thieves-for-hire. |
| 86-95 | 15 | **Werebeast:** During the day, a Werebeast pack will usually slumber in caves and barrows. An encounter at this time may mean that the PCs have stumbled upon their lair, with possibly tragic results. At night, Werebeast packs comes forth to run under the light of the moons and hunt all manner of creatures or folk. Their lustful howls may be heard for miles. |
| 96-00 | 16 | **Wild Herd:** Small to large herds of durge, muskronts, and ogriphants roam the forests and marshes of Werewood. They are not herded or domesticated by the folk of Werewood, but they are preyed upon as sources of meat, hide, and bone. |

# Yrmania

Yrmania is an untamed wilderness that lies to the west of the barren ice fields of Narandu. Hemmed in by mountains along its southern borders, Yrmania features a mixture of terrain types: stretches of coniferous forest, rocky hills, solitary peaks, tundra, withering cliffs, ravines, and hidden sinkholes. To the east, the flat expanses of the Lost Sea stretch for miles on end, and the Brown Hills, once home to Jaka people, lie adjacent, though they were overrun by the Ur and seized for their natural bounty and resources. One area within Yrmania, the Badlands, is known to be inhabited by humanoid peoples.



# The Badlands

The rugged hills, ravines, and tanglewood groves of this wilderness region are inhabited by such creatures as yaksha, tundra beast, and muskront. The sparsely wooded steppes of the Badlands are also home to a primitive folk known as the Yrmanians, or Wildmen, whose loose-knit tribes can be found wandering throughout the area.

# The Wildmen of Yrmania

Bestial in appearance, the Wildmen and Wildwomen of Yrmania have sharp fangs and dark, deep-set eyes. They wear their shaggy hair in braids and pleats, daubed with colored pigments. For clothes, the Wildmen employ crude loincloths, with arm and leg wrappings made from strips of hide.

## *Ancestry and History*

Talislantan scholars believe that the Yrmanians are direct descendants of the first Wild Tribes that once roamed Talislanta. Some claim that these folk still appear just as their ancient ancestors did ages ago.

During the Uprising, it was reported that several tribes of Yrmanians went on the warpath and followed an ancient mountain trail into Durne. Here they proceeded to attack trees and rocks, apparently at random, before returning to their home territories.

## *Culture*

The Yrmanians are hunter-gatherers who subsist on a diet of wild mountain berries, fresh game, leafy plants, and just about anything else that could be construed as edible. As far as anyone knows, the Wildmen have no settlements, but simply travel about from place to place, stopping temporarily when they become tired or bored. Their tribes range in size from small groups of four to six individuals to large clans numbering several hundred.

As travelers into their territories have found, the Wildmen and Wildwomen of Yrmania are aptly named. They are prone to fits of seemingly mindless behavior — in the heat of battle, Wildmen have been known to leap off cliffs or rock ledges, turn upon each other, or simply attack anything in their path, including trees, bushes, and inanimate objects.

## The Wildmen: A Field Study

*"After two unsuccessful attempts to study a tribe of Wildmen at close range, one of which almost resulted in my demise at the hands of a pack of Wildwomen in heat, I hit upon a more fruitful strategy. Rather than attempting to watch the tribe from hiding or approach them in an open and friendly fashion (the latter method being the one that nearly proved fatal), I scoured the surrounding woods until I had gathered a considerable quantity of skullcap. Then, carrying the mushrooms with me in a basket I sat on a rock in plain view of the tribe and waited.*

*"Several moments passed before any of the tribe noticed my presence. Then a small group of Wildmen approached, their expressions registering a combination of curiosity and puzzlement. One touched me on the shoulder, then jumped back as if shocked to discover that I was there and not some sort of hallucination. Another came close, looked into the basket, and exhibited a great, yellow-fanged grin. The creature pointed to its mouth; I nodded and gave him a mushroom. He swallowed it whole, shook his mane of matted locks wildly, and yelped in apparent glee.*

*"Soon the others were crowding around me in a most friendly fashion. I handed out mushrooms by the dozen, until there was only one left in the basket. This last mushroom none of the Wildmen would accept. Instead, by the use of certain signs and grunting noises, they indicated that this mushroom was for me. At first, I hesitated, uncertain whether ingesting a poisonous mushroom or possibly inciting a band of irate Wildmen would be more deleterious to my health. Since the mushroom was rather small and the Wildmen quite large, I decided on the former course of action.*

*"As soon as I ate the skullcap the attitude of the Wildmen underwent a marked change. Clapping me on the back and hooting loudly, they motioned for me to join them. Together we set off into the woods at a loping gait, the Wildmen swinging their r'ruhs above their heads and howling like tundra beasts. Fantastic images of prismatic-colored topography swirled before my eyes, and I was swept away by feelings of wild euphoria. This was no doubt due to the effects of the skullcap, as I realize now, though at the time I was convinced that these were visions of some great truth that had eluded me since childhood. I remember little else about the experience save for the fact that I awoke sometime later, suspended from the uppermost branches of a spyder-oak, with a headache that lasted the better part of three days."*

This sort of erratic behavior is attributed to the Wildmen's use of skullcap, a bone-white variety of parasitic mushroom. A lethal toxin when ingested by most Talislantans, the mushroom does not seem to harm the Wildmen, who have developed an immunity to the substance's deadly effects. Under the influence of this drug, Wildmen are totally without fear, and seem to be immune to pain; if threatened, they may continue to attack with savage bloodlust even if riddled with scores of wounds.

Yrmanians make their own implements and weapons, the majority of which are exceedingly crude and sometimes only marginally functional. The tribes occasionally engage in such activities as howling at the moons, beating hollow logs, and striking sticks and stones together; the correlation to actual music is uncertain, but seems likely. Some Yrmanians appear to have an instinctive talent for abstract art, as evidenced by cave paintings, impromptu drawings in the soil, and carvings on trees.

### *Language*

Yrmanians communicate via a curious mixture of grunts, snorts, and a simple version of common sign. Common names are monosyllabic and tend to end in G. For example: Og, Zug, Yag, Nug, Mug, etc. Addled by ritual drug-use, Yrmanians sometimes forget their names and the names of their tribesmen.

### *Government*

Yrmanians seem to move and act at random, following the lead of whoever seems to be doing something interesting at that moment. Except for toolmaking, most Wildmen behavior seems instinctive rather than learned or planned. If faced with a potential threat, the tribe will take up arms and attack — or not, if no one has noticed the threat. When set on battle they are dangerous opponents, bereft of fear and unaffected by exhaustion or, evidently, logic. In combat, the Wildmen wield the r'ruh, a sharpened stone blade affixed to a long leather thong. Swung over the head at great speed, r'ruh emit a distinctive "singing" sound that foes often find quite unsettling. Rival clans sometimes fight each other, a situation that has proved useful in keeping the otherwise prolific Wildmen population within reasonable limits.

### *Magic & Religion*

According to the Jaka, the Wildmen of Yrmania revere Manik, a mysterious entity referred to in certain scholarly texts as "the Mad God." Little is known of their religion other than fanciful speculation, such as reports that Wildmen shamans couple with the hideous creatures known as yaksha. While most scholars regard this claim as the height of absurdity, some have suggested that the Mondre Khan and Beastmen races may well have originated from such strange pairings. Wildmen shamans are said to be even more unstable than their tribesmen and may or may not possess any actual magical abilities.

### *Worldview*

The Wildmen tribes generally keep to themselves, though the Ur clans are said to have made attempts to forge alliances with some of their tribes. According to some, the race of Wildmen is believed to be declining in number, due as much to the gradual depredations of invading ice giants as to the Wildmen's propensity for drug use and infighting.

None of the Wildmen tribes will enter the Sardonyx Mountains. They believe that the jagged peaks are the teeth of a gigantic earth-monster, which the Wildmen call Yrman.

## The Lost Sea

Along the eastern borders of Yrmania lies the flat wasteland region known as the Lost Sea. By all accounts this area does indeed appear to be a dried-up seabed, littered with the ancient skeletons of giant sea dragons and other aquatic monsters. Some claim that half-buried sea vessels of unknown origin can be found in isolated parts of this region, many containing fabulous artifacts and treasures from a lost age (see sidebar). As bands of Wildmen, Darkling hordes, and Ur clan war parties sometimes traverse the Lost Sea, adventurers should exercise caution, if not outright discretion, when traveling in these parts.

### Exploring The Lost Sea

Excerpted from the Chronicles of Talislanta, by the wizard Tamerlin:

*"I once spent some little time exploring the outer reaches of the Lost Sea. The Jaka hunter Tane accompanied me as a guide, his initial reluctance to visit the area being offset by a mercenary fondness for gold. Narrow escapes from crazed parties of Wildmen, hunger-maddened tundra beasts, and a pair of stryx (who hovered above us for miles, hoping in vain for some fatal accident to befall our small party) marred the greater part of our journey. Then we came upon the remains of an ancient wooden vessel of immense proportions, its hull and part of the prow submersed in rock-hard sediment.*

*"Wielding axes, Tane and I cut away a tangle of petrified coral and barnacles, allowing us access to the ship's cabin. Within we found sea charts and logbooks so old that they crumbled at the slightest touch. On the floor of the cabin was a skeleton of vaguely humanoid proportions. The tattered and rotting remnants of some sort of elaborate uniform hung loosely on its lifeless frame, a half-corroded blade of odd design still clutched in its bony hand. An attempted mutiny? A clarion call to arms? Or perhaps, a final act of swashbuckling defiance in the face of Death itself? I paused in contemplation of the fate of this archaic sea captain, whose skeletal corpse now conjured forth visions of a long-vanished past.*

*"The Jaka, who was less inclined towards romanticism, had meanwhile hacked his way into the ship's hold. He returned wearing the bestial snarl that passed for a grin among his people. In his hands was a rusted iron chest filled with coins, all encrusted with green and black oxides. Leading me below deck the Jaka eagerly showed me nine more chests of similar size and countless, worm-eaten wooden crates. Tane then took his axe and hacked off the top of one of the crates, revealing a dozen dust and mud-spattered flasks of aquamarine glass. That evening we sat on the deck, counting stacks of gold and silver coins, and drinking wine of exceedingly rare vintage. Never before or since have I so thoroughly enjoyed a stay onboard a sea vessel.*

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** During the Uprising, large Ur war parties and their war machines rolled across Yrmania, eventually driving the Jaka from their homeland in the Brown Hills region. The lust for war exhibited by the Ur encouraged the Yrmanians to form their own war parties, and some made it as far as Durne before losing interest and wandering back home. Typical signs of this conflict might be: (1) coming upon unusually wide and rough roadways created recently by the passage of Ur war machines (see encounter #4); (2) encountering Ur scouting parties or raiders (see encounter #5); (3) finding active or abandoned Ur war camps (see encounter #3). |
| 2 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** Extreme weather is not uncommon in Yrmania, and may take the form of freezing windstorms and icicle rain from Narandu, acid rain from nearby Urag, and black lightning from the Midnight Sea to the west. |
| 3-4 | 3 | **Dwelling:** Yrmanians build no permanent dwellings but prefer to wander. Some tribes may take shelter in cliffside caves or caverns beneath sinkholes. Other dwellings in the area might be temporary camps made by Ur scouts or Jaka hunters. Some believe the Ur have fortified a large war camp in the Brown Hills. |
| 5-6 | 4 | **Roadway:** The only true roadways that might be suitable for wagons or large beasts are those created by the Ur, who devastated large swaths of woodland in order to make way for their lumbering war machines. These are risky to travel due to the continuing movements of Ur war parties. One might also encounter game trails and footpaths made by Yrmanians wandering to favored spots for food, shelter, or skullcap (see encounter #13). |
| 7-9 | 5 | **Traveler:** The most common travelers here are those of ill intent (see encounters #6, #7, and #8). A more fortunate encounter may occur if one meets Jaka hunters, who may be seeking nighthawks to train (see encounter #12), or revenge upon the Ur. Rarely, Sarista or Dhuna may travel the Brown Hills and Yram's Woods regions of Yrmania in search of rare plants or animals for medicines or magical concoctions (see encounter #13). |
| 10-12 | 6 | **Yrmanians:** An encounter with Yrmanians usually means seeing them before they see you, as they are often engaged in some seemingly bizarre behavior. They may be acting out violently against one another, things around them, or even themselves. They are as likely to be pursuing something harmless as well, such as grooming one another or making strange works of art, whether cave paintings or sculptures of stone, wood, and mud. |
| 14 | 7 | **Darklings:** Most Darklings in Yrmania are the servants of the Ur and will be found with Ur scouts when traveling or working in Ur war camps. Some have escaped their overlords and have taken shelter in the wilds of the region. They may spy upon travelers and attempt to steal food or valuables. |
| 15-16 | 8 | **Ur:** An encounter with the warlike Ur may range from meeting an individual scout to a large war band. The Ur might be: (1) hunting and gathering food; (2) hauling lumber and stone as building materials for their "castle" in the Brown Hills; (3) searching for escaped Darklings or prisoners; (4) imbibing in skullcap and acting strangely or becoming ill; (5) escorting captives toward a camp or settlement; (6) forcing Yrmanians to fight one another as a cruel form of sport. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | 9 | **Yaksha:** Caves in the tallest and most steep crags are the favored lairs of these fierce creatures, but they may also be found dwelling and hunting in all regions of Yrmania. Ur seem to have an innate dread of them. Jaka legends tell of Yrmanians, particularly their shamans, revering yaksha as embodiments of Manik, the Mad God. |
| 17 | 10 | **Tundra Beast:** Packs of these fierce carnivores lair in caves and sinkholes across the region, coming forth to hunt in both day and night. They prefer to prey upon the wild herds of the area, but will attack humanoid creatures as well. Ur have shown some skill in raising young tundra beasts, training them as trackers and guards. |
| 18 | 11 | **Wild Herds:** Small to large herds of muskronts and darkmanes roam the forests and hills of Yrmania. Though rare, small herds of tundra lopers and snowmanes wander the more frigid tundra and mountainous regions. |
| 19 | 12 | **Nighthawk:** These raptors prefer to hunt under the light of the moons, but may be encountered in daylight as well. They nest among the tall conifers and crags of Yrmania. Jaka prize them as trained hunting birds. |
| 20 | 13 | **Skullcap:** These mushrooms have a black stem and bone-white cap. Yrmanians crave them and seem impervious to the fatal effects of skullcap, but are quite susceptible to their hallucinogenic properties (see encounter #6). Sarista and Dhuna sometimes risk a journey into Yrmania in search of skullcap and other exotic plants (see encounter #5). |

## Romantic Love

*The Zandir have a passion for romance, which they refer to as "the spice of life." Young lovers flit about from partner to partner like butterflies to sweet blossoms; a taste or two, and then they take wing again, to alight elsewhere. Even couples who have been happily married for many years continue to engage in clandestine affairs, flirtations, and amours. Such practices are in no way restricted by age, sex, or social status, but are pursued in equal measure by young and old, male and female, noble and commoner.*

*The concept of romantic love fascinates the Zandir people and has influenced many aspects of their culture. Zandir painting and sculpture is dominated by depictions of lovers wooing, courting, embracing, and consummating. Zandir poetry is obsessed with forbidden love, unrequited love, first love, lost love. The most popular plays and panoramas are those that portray affairs of the heart, rather than comedies, tragedies, or epic sagas.*

*Though the proliferation of amorous activity would seem to suggest that the Zandir are slaves to their wild and unbridled passions, this is not entirely true; there exists among these people a social contract that is not readily apparent to outsiders, but which nonetheless serves to prevent their society from disintegrating into complete and utter chaos. In essence, while Zandir have almost unlimited freedom to act out their romantic fantasies, they can do so only because such activities are considered secondary to the unity of the family. Though each partner may have numerous affairs throughout his or her life, the marriage pact is rarely threatened. Extramarital activities tend to be brief, impetuous, and transient; marriage and the family are permanent. While romantic love may be regarded as the spice of life, it is seldom mistaken for the main course.*

# Zandu

Zandu is a land of gentle hills and sparse woodlands, shifting to deep forests along its northern borders. To the east lay the Onyx Mountains of Arim; to the south, the sandy shores of the Sea of Sorrow. In the interior region, groves of orange, quince, and blue pomegranate flourish, fed by numerous small tributaries of the Sascasm River.

The undeveloped northern and coastal areas are dotted with ancient stonework towers of varying design, built before the fall of the ancient empire of Phaedra. These fortresses once served as wilderness outposts or sanctuaries for traveling merchants. Most are now in ruin, though some are known to be occupied by solitary spellcasters, who find isolation suitable to their needs.

One particularly notable example of sorcerous hermitry is Koraq's mountain – in ancient times, the great sorcerer Koraq had constructed on this mount a fabulous manse of eleven amberglass towers, in which he kept his collection of wonders, curiosities, and amazements. Harassed by throngs of curious sightseers, the sorcerer finally retired to another dimension, taking with him all he owned. A quirk of fate caused his manse to become trapped in a temporal rift, with the result that Koraq's abode occasionally reappears for several hours at a time atop the mountain which now bears the sorcerer's name.

Roadways are generally well-maintained throughout the land of Zandu, and are traveled by folk from across much of the continent – the exception being Aamanians, being long-time enemies of the land's inhabitants, and who are forbidden to travel to Zandu (and in any case, they are not welcome). Colorful processions of merchants and charlatans, bands of Sarista, troops of Zandir swordsmen and swordswomen, and visitors from the Nine Kingdoms may all be encountered in this land, which is generally far more open and welcoming than other countries in Talislanta.

In the current age, the majority of Zandu's population has settled in the southern part of the country. Here live the colorful folk known as the Zandir.

## The Zandir

The Zandir are a handsome folk with copper-colored skin, dark hair, and dark eyes. They enhance their features with vividly colored dyes, adorn their hair with silver bands, and dress in flamboyant apparel — velvet blouses and trousers, capes of silken brocade, curl-toed boots or slippers, and so forth.

### *Ancestry and History*

Like the Aamanians, the Zandir are descended from the Phaedrans, a people who ruled the Western Lands during the early part of the New Age. A dispute over religious views caused the Phaedrans to split into opposing factions, who proceeded to wage war on each other for nearly four hundred years. One of the factions that participated in these Cult Wars became known as the Aamanians; the other became known as the Zandir.

The rivalry had cooled for a time, but just before the Uprising, the longstanding animosity between these two opposed states erupted into the Second Cult War. This conflict was suspended at the start of the Uprising, as both countries withdrew in the interest of defending against the larger threat. However, Aaman and Zandu remain enemies to the present day, a somewhat shaky truce so far preventing the outbreak of yet another war.

### *Culture*

The Zandir's culture is in every way opposed to the folk of neighboring Aaman. Where the Aamanians are conservative, Zandir are liberal, or even radical, in their views. Aamanians dress in colorless smocks; Zandir favor the most colorful attire. Aamanians believe in one god, while the Zandir believe in numerous luminaries, pagan gods, woodland spirits, and saints. It is little wonder then that the two are enemies, for they can agree on almost nothing.

The population of Zandu is made up of numerous minority groups and factions. The Causidians serve as legal advisors, diplomats, and scribes. The Certaments are a class of professional duelists, many of whom are skilled both in magic and swordplay. The Serparians are professional beggars who wander the streets in rags, asking for alms. The Zann are fishermen who bear a wide reputation as the most steadfastly contrary folk in all of Talislanta. They rarely agree with other peoples and are extremely opinionated.

Zandir are amorous and hot-blooded, and find it difficult to control their passions (see sidebar). They marry young, and often foolishly; both males and females have numerous



affairs and trysts and are quite flirtatious. Zandir are polygamous; men may have as many wives, and women as many husbands, as they can afford.

### *Language*

Zandir speak High or Low Talislan, depending upon their level of education and chosen occupation. Zandir names tend to be colorful, as were those of the Phaedrans. For example: Palitane, Celestea, Crystabal, Balalamos, and Schezalle. The only exception is the Zann minority, who go for short, blunt-sounding names, such as Neb, Sej, Menk, and Zaj.

### *Government*

Zandu is ruled by a Sultan, who wields absolute and unquestioned power over all his subjects. All citizens are theoretically equal, and therefore equally subject to the whims and moods of the Sultan of Zandu, which sometimes run to the extreme. Unlike the Hierophant of Aaman, the Sultan is far from celibate. Zandir custom allows men to take as many wives as they can afford, and the ruler of Zandu is a very wealthy man.

Zandir laws are generally lax. A popular local saying notes that "what no one sees, no one knows." So long as thieves exercise a certain amount of discretion, the authorities usually look the other way. Accordingly, petty theft is rampant, particularly in the larger cities, such as the capital of Zanth. Criminals who make the mistake of attracting too much attention can expect to be dealt with severely – convicted thieves may be tortured or chained to a pillory and placed on public display. Public executions are also popular, as the executioners of Zandu are widely renowned for their creative and melodramatic talents.

Zandu keeps a sizable army of well-trained swordsmen and swordswomen, archers, cavalry, and artillerists. Zandu's navy is well-regarded, though like most Talislantans the Zandir fear to sail the open sea and navigate primarily by

hugging the coastline. Zandir traders visit the island of Castabulan several times a year to obtain advice on weather patterns and currents, which they consider essential to a safe voyage. Most of Zandu's land forces are strategically deployed along the Great Barrier Wall, prepared to attack Aaman at a moment's notice.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Zandir are Paradoxists who profess to be mystified by the nature of their existence. The tenets of the Zandir "religion" are perhaps best explained in the Paradoxist text, the Book of Mysteries, a lengthy tome filled with over 100,000 questions with no answers. Paradoxist seers, widely regarded as charlatans by other folk, are well-liked in Zandu. Some possess actual magical abilities.

### *Worldview*

For many centuries Zandu and Aaman have been deadly rivals. The building of the Great Barrier Wall led to a period of peace, but since the Second Cult War, modern relations between the former antagonists are far from cordial. The differences between their cultures remain extreme, and there is no love lost between the two peoples.

Zandu has good relations with the Nine Kingdoms, and has strong trade ties with Arim, a major supplier of black iron, copper, and precious stones. Exports include utensils of copper and brass, exotic fragrances, spices, narcotic herbs, fine wines, and opals. Blades made by Zandir craftsmen are held in high regard throughout the continent and are also popular trade items.

## Zandir Settlements

### The Capital City of Zanth

From the shining palaces and minarets of the central sector, to the slums of the beggars' district and the Sarista ghetto, Zanth is a study in contrasts. The crowded streets and marketplaces teem with a conglomeration of races and professions: Paradoxist seers dressed in brightly-colored cassocks, bands of street urchins, Zandir swordsmages in chain mail and flowing cloaks, Jaka manhunters, Jhangaran mercenaries, blue-robed Causidians and many others.

### Zadian

Zadian is a fortified citadel situated along the central coastal regions of Zandu. A sizable contingent of Zandir troops is stationed here, including units of mounted archers, swordsmen and swordswomen, and border scouts. The citadel stands atop a hill overlooking the rich estates, vineyards, and groves of Zadian's wealthy aristocracy.

### Zantil

A small Zandir coastal settlement, Zantil is built on a peninsula jutting into the Sea of Sorrow. There is a lighthouse and watchtower here which serves as an aid to ships navigating the dangerous waters of the aptly-named Sea of Sorrow, and as an early warning system intended to alert vessels of the presence of giant sea scorpions, which occasionally enter the area via the Phaedran Straits.

### Zantium

Westernmost of Zandu's seaports, Zantium is a walled settlement constructed at the terminus of the Sascasm River, near Zantium Bay. Its exports include timber, costly perfumes, and exotic plants and wild beasts from the Zandir Moors. Jaka and Zandir trackers come here to sell hides, captured animals, and other goods.

### Zir

The port city of Zir is Zandu's largest shipbuilding facility. Here, ships headed to and from such exotic locales as Thaecia, Batre, and Faradun can be found, taking on passengers and supplies, loading and unloading cargo, or awaiting repair.

### Zandre

Located to the south of Werewood, Zandre is a fortified border outpost housing a contingent of Zandir scouts. The outpost stands adjacent to an old stone bridge that spans the Sascasm River. Zandre is frequented by hunters, trackers, and traders from the surrounding areas. Zann boatmen sail their small skiffs upriver to sell their wares here, and for ten gold lumens a day will convey small parties by boat to almost any destination desired, including Werewood.

### Zann

Zann is a seaport located on the western coasts of Zandu, notable primarily for its contrarian inhabitants, the Zann. The people of Zann drink from streams thought to be tainted by waters from the Necros River, which may go far to explain the curious behavior of these folk.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** Zandu acknowledged a reluctant truce with Aaman during the Uprising. Both nations have taken a more defensive posture and each keeps a wary eye on the other, expecting a declaration of war at any time. Typical signs of this tension might be: (1) construction of new watchtowers and citadels along Zandu's borders; (2) more scrutiny of foreigners entering the region; (3) an even more frenzied indulgence in the pleasures of life among the populace as they seek to relieve their anxiety. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** Though normally temperate and mild, Zandu is subject to certain forms of aberrant weather, which may include hurricane-force storms from the Azure Ocean, ghost winds from the Sea of Sorrow, and eerie fogs or mists from Werewood. |
| 4-7 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The majority of Zandir reside in settlements, citadels, and cities. In less developed areas, folk may take residence in homes constructed around or as part of ancient Phaedran ruins. Such places are also favored by thieves who have pressed their luck too far and become hunted criminals. |
| 8-11 | 4 | **Traveler:** The roadways are well-maintained in Zandu. On these paths, one might encounter: (1) Zandir farmers, laborers, or merchants moving their wares; (2) merchants from Arim or any of the Nine Kingdoms; (3) Zandir soldiers patrolling the road or moving men and equipment to a border citadel; (4) Zandir legal advisors, diplomats, or scribes on errands to do the Sultan's bidding; (5) a Zandir duelist in need of a patron; (6) rogues, ruffians, or cheats looking for an easy mark. |
| 12-13 | 5 | **Avir:** Zandir favor these beautifully colored birds as living art, and display them in fancifully designed cages. While most Avir are of a single color, the very rare multicolored individuals are the most prized. |
| 14 | 6 | **Chig:** These leaping and biting insects are particularly virulent in the rural regions of Zandu, but are also known to swarm into populated areas as well. |
| 15 | 7 | **Beasts:** Zandir herders raise these creatures mainly for use as beasts of burden. Exomorphs and malathropes sometimes prey on older and weaker members of the herd, and herders sometimes need help to drive off or kill these dangerous predators. |
| 16 | 8 | **Drac:** These small, wingless dragons may be encountered in all areas of Zandu, but seem to thrive in large numbers near Koraq's Mountain. |
| 17 | 9 | **Erd:** Zandir herders keep these six-legged mammals for their shed fur, which is fashioned into blankets, rugs, and clothing, and for their milk, which contributes to numerous flavors of cheese. Though rare, some erd still roam freely in northern Zandu. |
| 18 | 10 | **Exomorph:** These predators sometimes lair along the border with Werewood and may prowl deeper into Zandu. An Exomorph encounter could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the Exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 19 | 11 | **Sniper-Bug:** These insects are capable of wielding tiny weapons and prey upon small creatures throughout Zandu. If encountered in large numbers, they are known to attack anyone they believe to be in their territory. |
| 20 | 12 | **Urthrax:** These vermin thrive in the cesspools and waste waters of the sewers beneath the cities and large citadels of Zandu. They may also be encountered in refuse piles and bogs along roadways or outside settlements of all sizes. |





# Harak

Harak is a bleak and desolate land, hemmed in on all sides by mountains and swept by frigid winds from the north. The landscape of Harak is nightmarish: jagged spires of rock jut upwards from the cracked and barren earth, and scattered shards of black iron litter the ground. Here, in this most inhospitable of regions, dwell the fierce warrior clans known as the Harakin.

## The Harakin

The Harakin are a gray-skinned race, lean and rugged of build and averaging over six feet in height. They dress in loincloths, cowls, high boots, and heavy gloves, usually made of reptile hide. Both the males and females paint the areas around their eyes with black pigments, giving them a fearsome aspect.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Harakin are believed to be descended from one of the original Sub-Men tribes that fled the central regions of Talislanta following the Great Disaster. The Harakin themselves have no interest in the past; only the present matters to them.

During the Uprising, the Harakin joined forces with the Mondre Khan to invade the northern regions of the Kang Empire. The Kang repulsed their forces, but some Harakin and Mondre Khan infiltrated into the hills and mountains of that region, from which they still launch attacks against the Kang.

### *Culture*

To the Harakin, life is a constant struggle to survive in a harsh and unforgiving land. Harakin clans are nomadic, traveling from place to place in search of food and water, both precious commodities in this region. Their preferred food is wild muskront or tundra beast, from which they also obtain hides, bone, and horn. If game cannot be found, they may raid other clans to steal their food; when even raids have proved fruitless, Harakin subsist on scorpions, serpents, spiders, and bits of lichen and mosses. A simple

form of barter is sometimes used between members of the same clan or band; otherwise, Harakin simply take what they want.

Raised in the hostile environment of Harak, these folk can endure great hardships. Both the males and females are warriors, and out of necessity, survivalists. Mating is viewed as an act required to propagate the species, and also as one of the few sources of pleasure available. Couples may or may not remain together, depending on the availability of food and the outcome of battles with various clans; the life expectancy of the average Harakin is not great.

Some Harakin clans have domesticated the dractyl, a species of winged reptile native to the sheer cliffs of Harak's coastal regions. The Harakin use these creatures for transport and in battle. Though ugly, mean, and ungainly, dractyl require little food and are themselves somewhat edible, factors which hold a certain appeal for their masters.

The Harakin, skills and crafts not related to warfare or survival are regarded as useless. Each clan member learns to make his or her own weapons, which are hammered and honed from the numerous fragments of black iron found almost everywhere throughout the region. All other skills needed to survive — such as hunting, dressing game, and finding water — are considered warriors' skills. In the Harakin language, the words "survival" and "fight" translate the same.



## Sociology of the Harakin

*An unusual tale regarding the Harakin is told in the Kang Empire. There, it is said, a group of Mandalan scholars once ventured forth on a mission to Harak. By theorizing, they had deduced that the Harakin were not evil beings but were simply products of the harsh and cruel environment of their homeland. They intended to convince a few of the Harakin to accompany them on the return trip to Quan, where their scholarly theories might be put to the test.*

*Upon sighting a small band of the nomads, the wise men threw up their hands and raised their voices in greeting. When the Harakin approached, the scholars gave them gifts of gold, fragrant oils, and precious stones. These the Harakin examined, and then discarded. Without apparent enmity they slew the scholars, divested them of their fur cloaks and boots, cut their mounts into sections, loaded everything on their dractyls, and continued on their way.*

# Random Encounters in Harak

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** During the Uprising, a number of the Harakin tribes attacked the Kang Empire south of the Opal Mountains. Some of these tribes still maintain a foothold in those mountains. To the Harakin, life is a perpetual state of Uprising; the war was nothing usual to them. Typical signs might be: (1) Harakin tribes coming together to form a new war party; (2) Mondre Khan within the borders of Harak seeking new allegiances with the Harakin; (3) Kang war parties seeking vengeance on the Harakin tribes. |
| 2-3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** Typically, the weather in Harak is cold, dry, and windy. The frigid north winds may bring little-to-heavy snow and ice. Rockslides and even avalanches are a danger among the mountain peaks surrounding Harak, and tremors and earthquakes may alter the jagged landscape. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The Harakin make no permanent dwellings, but do camp during their travels and especially when following migrating wild herds (see encounter #13). Some tribes move between favored camping spots, which may be among sheltering rock spires, cliffside caves, or crevices and caverns in the flatlands of Harak. |
| 6 | 4 | **Water:** Other than the snow of mountain peaks, sources of water are hard to find in Harak. The tribes know where to find water and often come to blows among themselves at these places. |
| 7-8 | 5 | **Roadway:** There are no established roads in Harak. One may instead find the meandering trails created by wild herds, which make for somewhat easier travel. Coming upon a recent campsite may indicate a Harakin tribe or, very rarely, other travelers nearby. |
| 9-10 | 6 | **Traveler:** Those most often encountered in Harak will be Harakin – individuals, small hunting bands, or entire tribes. Very rarely, Kang war parties venture into Harak in pursuit of Harakin raiders. |
| 11-12 | 7 | **Harakin:** An encounter with Harakin typically results in violence. Harakin may barter among themselves, but with regard to outsiders, they take what they desire. Avoiding them is the safest route. |
| 13-14 | 8 | **Dractyl:** These winged reptiles lair among the cliffs along Harak's coasts, where Harakin hunt and capture them. The Harakin ride dracytl on the ground and in the air, though at low altitudes. An encounter with dractyl could mean finding wild one, or spotting a cliffside nest. Though generally of an unpleasant temperament, dractyl are capable of limited speech and may communicate with travelers. |
| 15 | 9 | **Frostwere:** Though preferring snow, frostweres may venture down the mountains surrounding Harak and hunt among the lowlands, particularly during snowstorms. |
| 16 | 10 | **Ice Giant:** Towering creatures of animated ice, ice giants sometimes wander into Harak, crossing the vast and nearly impenetrable mountain ranges of Narandu. Encountered alone or in small numbers, they are simply lost, and likely searching for living creatures to eat. If encountered in numbers, they may be following the commands of their demonic ruler, the Ice King; in such cases, they may be seeking to invade and occupy other territories in Harak or beyond. |
| 17 | 11 | **Ravenger:** These adaptable creatures may be encountered in all areas of Harak. They are known to follow larger beasts or travelers in hopes of scavenging scraps of food or refuse. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18 | 12 | **Tundra Beast:** Packs of these fierce predators hunt throughout Harak, and are in turn hunted by the Harakin. Tundra beasts prefer the wild herds, but will attack travelers if they're hungry enough. |
| 19-20 | 13 | **Wild Herds:** Small to large herds of muskronts roam all areas of Harak, while tundra lopers range the mountain slopes and most frigid regions. Harakin tribes often migrate with the beasts and have been known to quickly decimate small herds. |



### *Language*

Harakin converse in both Sign and an ancient dialect of Low Talislan. Harakin names are usually comprised of three syllables, with the accent over the third syllable. For example, Katadao, Hakatao, and Arakao.

### *Magic & Religion*

Forced by the circumstances of their existence to endure great hardships, the folk of Harak have no concept of morality or religion and are by nature fatalistic and grim. They know nothing of magic except that it can be used to harm them. In a fight, Harakin will always attack spellcasters first.

### *Government*

Harakin clans are led by a single chieftain, who may be either male or female. Clans may sometimes form larger tribal units, though this is rare due to the scarcity of food. The law of survival is the only real law in Harak. The Harakin have no armies, fortifications, or defenses. All members of the clan are expected to fight whenever the need arises.

### *Worldview*

Harakin care nothing for the ways of civilized people, whom they consider useless (see sidebar). Ultimate survivalists, they view all other living creatures as prey. The warrior clans of Harak are known to range as far as the Kang Empire and the Volcanic Hills in their depredations. They attack nearby L'Haan with lesser frequency, generally considering passage through the towering peaks of Xanadas to be a profitless endeavor. Able to survive the rigors of their land, the Harakin have little difficulty tolerating the climates and terrains of other regions, most of which seem pleasant by comparison.

# The Jungles of Chana

The jungles of Chana occupy a portion of the southeastern coast of Talislanta, from Faradun to the borders of the Kang Empire. To the west, the jungles melt into rain forest, rising upwards into the Jade Mountains. The climate in this region is hot, wet, and unbearably humid; ideal conditions for Chana's many varieties of tropical plants and trees, which can spring up overnight after a drenching rain. Virulent species of animals and insects likewise find the jungles to their liking, making travel in this region a dismal proposition.

The low-lying jungles and tropical forests of this region are home to several hostile tribes of humanoids, known collectively as the Chana Witchmen.

## The Chana Witchmen

The Chana are tall and cadaverous in stature, with bilious green skin. They do their utmost to appear fearsome, filing their teeth to sharpened points, decorating their visages with occult symbols, and carrying the shrunken heads of their adversaries on cords slung about the neck. It is customary for members of the Witch-tribes to wear their hair in a single topknot, lacquered and braided with leather thongs or sinew. Ritual scarring is also practiced by these people, whose reliance upon the narcotic, kesh, contributes heavily to their unhealthy appearance.

### Headhunting

*Among the many strange rituals and customs observed by the Witch-tribes, perhaps none is regarded with such loathing as the Chana practice of taking the heads of their enemies and turning them into necromantic fetishes. The procedure is quite grisly and is not recommended for the faint of heart. Braver souls may read on.*

*The first step in the creation of a shrunken head fetish is, quite naturally, to obtain a head. For such purposes only a head removed from a living victim will suffice. Before decapitation the victim, bound hand and foot, is fed a mixture of kesh, black lotus, and other magical herbs; in combination, the drugs render the victim insensible to pain, and — according to the Chana — prevent the soul from fleeing the body upon death. A ceremonial axe inscribed with occult runes is used to sever the head, after which the skull is removed, and the eyes and lips sealed to keep the soul imprisoned within. Finally, the head is filled with hot sand and buried in the ground.*

*After nine days have passed, the witchdoctor returns to the place where the head was buried, and listens to the ground. If the witchdoctor hears the voice of the victim crying out to be released, then the operation has been successful. The head, now "cured" and shrunk to less than a third of its original size, is unearthed and is ready for use as a focus in necromantic practices.*

### *Ancestry and History*

The Witch-tribes are descended from wild tribes of ancient times, who are said to have been conquered by the Mazdaks. Driven from their lands, they fled south and settled in the Jungles of Chana, after which the tribes became known as the Witchmen, or Chana.

During the Uprising, the Chana tribes invaded the southern territories of the Kang Empire. They burned several Kang outposts to the ground before the Kang responded in force and drove them back into the jungles. Even so, Witchmen continue to harass the Kang at every opportunity.

### *Culture*

The Chana are a people ruled by superstition. Most Witchmen and Witchwomen are users of the drug kesh, which enables them to commune with spiritforms, and they have a rampant fear of water, which they believe is the domain of hostile elemental spirits. It is common for these folk to cook and eat enemies who have been captured in battle; the Chana believe that by doing so, they acquire their enemies' strength and powers.

The Witch-tribes live in villages of thatched huts, which may be found scattered throughout the jungles of their homeland. Cannibalism is practiced by all the Chana tribes, though this is done more for ritual purposes than as a means of obtaining sustenance.

Chana have no currency, and so barter for all goods. Trade between rival tribes is rare, but sometimes occurs during intervals when a truce or treaty is in effect. Chana's jungles are known to harbor an abundance of riches, including costly herbs, precious stones, and exotic animals. The narcotic known as kesh is sometimes traded to unscrupulous merchants such as the Farad.

### *Language*

The Witch-tribes converse in Chanan, an ancient tongue that linguists believe dates back to the time before the Great Disaster. The Chanan tongue has no known written equivalent, though the strange symbols that the Witch-tribes inscribe upon their faces may be relics of a dead script. The tribes also communicate by signal drums — wooden instruments covered with the flayed skins of their enemies. Common Chanan names include Cha-Kyo, Cho-Nyan, Che-Kya, and Chu-Kyan.

### *Government*

Chana shamans, called witchdoctors, are the unquestioned rulers of their tribes. The most powerful is referred to as the chief witchdoctor; the position is earned by defeating the reigning chief in spirit combat. The rest of the tribe's shamans are free to attempt to usurp the chief witchdoctor's authority by magic, but are well aware of the risks: the loser of such a challenge knows that his head will end up as a grisly trophy of the victor (see sidebar). Individuals accused of breaking tribal taboos are brought to the tribe's chief witchdoctor for judgment, which is usually swift and merciless. Punishment, on the other hand, is slow and excruciating, and may result in the offender being boiled alive or staked over a mound of furious biting insects.

The Witch-tribes are warlike in the extreme. They fight among each other constantly, each vying for control of the other's territories. Truces and treaties are sometimes arranged between tribes, but rarely last for long. Their warriors employ throwing sticks, blowguns, and spears in battle, but generally disdain frontal assaults in favor of ambushes and sneak attacks. Most Chana villages are surrounded by rings of sharpened, poisoned wooden stakes.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Witch-tribes are practitioners of a primitive, ancient form of dark magic. They revere the forces of darkness and despise those who worship other gods. Chana witchdoctors are skilled in the concocting of certain dangerous substances, such as devilroot and kesh. The former is an herbal poison that can be prepared in powdered or resinous form; kesh is a pungent liquid derived from the root of the jabutu, a plant found only in the Jade Mountains, notable for its profound narcotic and magical properties.

Chana witchdoctors have also learned how to charm the poisonous serpents known as death's-head vipers. The natives call these foot-long snakes "wrist vipers" and wear them like deadly, living bracelets. The serpents are trained to attack on command.

### *Worldview*

The Witchmen bear a long-standing hatred of the Manra tribes, whose lands they covet, and the Nagra, whom they fear. In addition to their usual depredations, bands of Witchmen occasionally cross the border into the Kang Empire, wreaking havoc on the plantations there. Kang troops from the nearby outpost of Vishana periodically launch raids into the jungles in retaliation for these assaults. Imrians sometimes raid the coasts of Chana hoping to take Chana witchdoctors, who bring a high price in Faradun, where they are employed in the narcotics trade. Not surprisingly, more than a few Witchmen bear the shrunken and scaly-skinned heads of such souvenir hunters on their belts.



# The Jade Mountains

Ranging across the northern borders of Chana, the Jade Mountains are rich in natural resources, such as black diamonds, moonstones, k'tallah, lotus, devilroot, and a tropical variety of the healing herb called cleric's cowl. In addition to shathane and exomorphs, the deep forests of this region are home to one of the most unusual humanoid tribes on the continent, known as the Manra.

## The Manra

Manra resemble the Witchmen in physical stature, but exhibit none of the frightful or unhealthy characteristics associated with those hostile people. They wear necklaces of dried flowers, woven vines, beads, and feathers; also abbreviated garments of woven plant fibers and three-stranded whipsash — a type of light bolas worn around the waist.

### The Metamorphosis

*"I write these notes in a state of exhaustion tempered by considerable excitement, for last night I was allowed to witness a traditional shape-changing ritual called the Metamorphosis.*

*"The ritual began at dusk; a group of seven Manra elders sat in a circle, while the rest of the tribe arranged themselves on a nearby hillside and watched. For what seemed like a long time the elders sat motionless, as if deep in thought or meditation. Then, so slowly as to almost escape my notice at first, the entire group began to undergo a strange transformation: dwindling in size, they seemed to melt, until nothing remained of the elders but seven pools of shimmering liquid. From the center of each pool emerged a creature of webbed fins and fan-shaped gills, its sleek form covered in silvery scales. Now the aquatic forms raised themselves on their fins; their gills dwindled, the fins became clawed appendages, the fine scales grew tougher, thicker.*

*"The seven reptilian quadrupeds walked around the circle, then raised on two legs. They grew in size, acquired sail-like head-crests. Then another transformation: the scaled hide turned into a coat of sleek black fur as the creatures diminished in size, took another turn around the circle. The coat of fur gradually grew more sparse, the creatures became more humanoid in semblance. Once again, they were Manra elders.*

*As if awakening from a trance I realized that the ritual was over. It was dawn; we had been there all night, though it had seemed that the whole procedure had lasted no longer than an hour or two. Only now do I realize how tired I am, and so I shall put aside my notebook to sleep, and to ponder the symbology of the Metamorphosis."*

### *Ancestry and History*

The Manra are believed to share a common ancestry and history with the Chana, both of whom are thought to be descended from the ancient Mazdaks. Both tribes employ the jabutu plant in their magical rituals, though the Manra do not employ jabutu in headhunting, but shape-changing.

### *Language*

Manra converse in a derivation of the language spoken by the Chana. As they gain experience as shape-changers, Manra also learn the languages of plants and animals, so that they can communicate with such life forms when in altered form. Manra are named after a favored animal- or plant-form – for example, Avir, Shathane, Drac, Willowood, Sunblossom, and Tantalus.

### *Culture*

The Manra tribes live in small communal settlements and tend to keep to themselves. Manra villages are collectives, where all pitch in to help share the work of gathering fruits and berries, making huts of living vines, and keeping a watchful eye out for predatory beasts and Chana war parties.

Manra possess the unique ability to assume the forms of other living things, such as wild beasts and even plants. Their shape-changing talents are made possible through ritual ingestion of a derivative of the jabutu plant, the making of which is a tribal secret. This talent is vital to the existence of the Manra, as it enables them to adapt quickly to the hostile environment of their homeland. Conversely, the Manra's short lifespan is believed to be directly attributable to the physical stress inherent in the practice of shape-changing. When in humanoid form they are vegetarians, eating only fruits, nuts, and berries. In animal form they feed as the form of choice normally does.

Manra have little interest in material possessions, and practice only such crafts as are essential to their existence. They value the natural world above all things. The various Manra clans sometimes get together to trade news, or to share rituals, but the exchange of material goods is a practice almost unknown to these people.

### *Government*

Manra tribes are led by their shamans, who are respected for their wisdom and are consulted on all matters of importance to the group. Manra observe the laws of nature, and do not steal from or fight with each other. As such, tribal judges are deemed unnecessary.

If threatened, Manra usually attempt to avoid violent confrontations by adopting forms that allow them to blend into the environs or escape harm. If faced with no other recourse, Manra will take on forms that enable them to aggressively defend their territories.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Manra are nature worshipers, whose primary concern is the protection of the mountain rainforests that they call home. It is the shamans who initiate the other members of the tribe in the secrets of shape-changing. To the Manra, shape-changing is a means of attaining a deeper understanding of the natural world. Each bodily form is said to represent a different symbolic attribute – avir-form symbolizes freedom, flight from responsibility and care; tree-form represents tranquility, patience, strength, stability; shathane-form represents power, fury, aggression under provocation; and so on. In adopting the outer appearance of an animal or plant, the Manra believe that they also adopt the inner, or spiritual semblance. For this reason, no Manra would ever want to learn how to adopt the form of any creature that is "evil" or "false" in nature.

### *Worldview*

The Manra mark the Kang, and especially the Chana Witchmen, as enemies, and actively defend their lands against invasion by these warlike races. The shape-changers bear considerable resentment for the Witch-tribes, their rivals for the region's limited supply of the jabutu plant. They regard the Nagra tribes with considerably less ill will, primarily due to their mutual hatred of the Chana. Manra generally prefer to avoid civilized folk, whose ways they regard as destructive to the natural environment. Though they have no love for the ways of civilized folk, the Manra did not take part in the Wild Tribes Uprising.



# The Coastal Mountain Range

The mountains of the southern coast of Chana are among the most rugged and forbidding in the Eastern Lands. Passage through the region is perilous at best, and reliable trails are few, faint, and far between. The higher elevations are home to frostweres and other arctic predators; the lower altitudes are haunted by exomorphs, alatus, venomous serpents, and worse. This latter region is also home to a primitive people called the Nagra.

## The Nagra

Nagra have mottled grey-green skin, black fangs, peaked skulls, and their eyes are like tiny ebony specks. They dress in rude garments made from the furry hides of winged apes, ankle and wrist bands of woven fibers, and earrings made from the fangs of exomorphs or tarkus.

### Spirit Tracking

*Of all Talislantans, only the Nagra possess the uncanny ability known as spirit tracking. This talent allows the Nagra to track any creature by following the minute traces left by the passing of its spirit through the astral or material planes. The ability applies also to spiritforms of all types, but not demons, which have no souls.*

*To utilize this talent, the spirit tracker must first locate the trail of the intended subject and isolate it from the traces left by other entities. In desolate areas where few creatures are found, it may take no more than a few seconds to locate the desired trail. In populous regions such as large towns or cities, the process of locating and isolating a single trail among hundreds or even thousands of others may take anywhere from several minutes to several hours.*

*Once the trail has been found, the spirit tracker will be able to follow it anywhere: overland, across water, or through the air. From such evidence, a spirit tracker can determine the age of the tracks, the type of entity that made them, and whether or not the tracks belong to a specific individual; according to the Nagra, each entity's track is unique, and like no other.*

*Though spirit traces fade with time, under normal conditions they may remain visible for hundreds, or even thousands, of years. Certain forms of magic may be used to obliterate or conceal a spirit trail, either intentionally or by accident. However, there is no known way to alter or disguise the nature or appearance of spirit traces.*

### *Ancestry and History*

The Nagra are believed to be related to the Chana and Manra, though their appearance would seem to suggest that they also have some Za blood in their veins. The Nagra tribes once lived far to the Northeast but were driven into the southern jungle lands by the Kang, who hunted them like animals. Most of the survivors settled in the jungles of the Topaz Mountains, though a handful of others may have traveled to the Jade Mountains of Rajanistan.

Like the peaceful Manra tribes, the Nagra did not take part in the Uprising – not because they have an aversion to violence (they do not), but because they have no love for tribes such as the Chana and Jhanganans.

### *Language*

Nagra are bilingual, communicating both in a crude version of the Chanan tongue, and in sign. Female Nagra names begin with a vowel followed by an apostrophe and hard sound, as in A'Ko, O'Ta, U'Da, or E'Ko. Male names begin with a consonant followed by an apostrophe and hard sound, as in K'Ta, D'Ko, or N'Ka.

### *Government*

Nagra tribes are loose-knit bands whose makeup changes constantly as members come and go. Nagra shamans guide as needed; however, individuals who do not agree with the shamans are free to leave the band. Nagra have a flexible view of morality which recognizes that people will act as they will. In instances where one Nagra performs a transgression against another, the victimized party is entitled to seek recompense or revenge, as he or she sees fit. Other Nagra will seldom get involved in these altercations, which may take the form of arguments, challenges, or outright murder.

Nagra have no organized means of defense. Bands will fight together if attacked en masse and may act in concert to retaliate against enemies like the Chana. Otherwise, bands and individuals act according to their own best interests.

### *Culture*

The Nagra are semi-nomadic hunters whose movements mirror the migratory patterns of the wild beasts upon whom they subsist. When their prey has settled into a region for purposes of grazing or feeding, the Nagra erect temporary shelters of skins and wooden poles that serve as hunting camps. When the wild beasts move on, so do the Nagra.

Nagra bands tend to be comprised of several small families, and rarely total more than twenty in number.

The Nagra generally have a low regard for the ways of civilized peoples. They shun mounts and conveyances, and are tireless runners, able to cover distances of up to thirty miles a day with ease. Other people tend to find the Nagra somewhat strange, and even eerie. This is particularly true as regards the Nagra's taste for serpents, which they swallow whole, uncooked, and alive.

All Nagra wear stone spirit jars about their necks, to protect their souls from evil spiritforms. A Nagra who has lost his spirit jar would feel exposed, and completely defenseless. These folk are skilled at spirit tracking, an uncanny ability that enables them to follow any track or trail, regardless of its age or origin (see sidebar).

Nagra barter among themselves for hides, bone, rare herbs, and the marbled black and gray stone used to make soul jars. Those who live in the wild never use currency. Nagra sometimes travel great distances across the Wilderlands, and occasionally end up in places like Carantheum and the Nine Kingdoms. Though fierce and aggressive by nature, they are valued as scouts and guides, and will sometimes accept such work from foreigners.



### *Magic & Religion*

Nagra revere a vast and confusing pantheon of spirits. Their shamans act as intermediaries, employing their ancient magics to commune with spiritforms of various sorts, from whom they derive wisdom. From this information, Nagra shamans can predict the future and divine the secrets of past ages. They also craft the spirit jars that are worn by all Nagra.

### *Worldview*

The Nagra bear an undying hatred of the Kang, whose ancestors drove their people out of the Kang Empire long ago. They despise the Witch-tribes of Chana, whom they regard as despicable, and little better than animals. Otherwise, they have no formal relations with other Talislantan nations or peoples.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The Chana Witch-tribes overran and burned several Kang outposts along their border before being repelled. The Manra and Nagra took no active part in the Uprising, but there are still signs of conflict throughout the land, such as: (1) Kang troops raiding in the jungles of Chana; (2) Chana warriors preparing to raid the Kang Empire; (3) Kang rebuilding outposts along the border. |
| 2 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The low-lying jungle areas of Chana are extremely hot and humid, with temperatures being somewhat cooler in the mountains. Extreme or aberrant weather is not unknown in these parts, and may include strange clouds of black fog that roll down from the mountains, witch winds, and ghost winds. |
| 3-4 | 3 | **Dwelling:** In the jungle lowlands one will most likely find the thatched huts of the Chana Witch-tribes; their villages will be surrounded by sharpened and poisoned stakes. The Manra construct huts of living vines and make their villages near the Jade Mountains. Being a migratory culture, the Nagra make temporary hunting camps and shelter in simple structures of hide and wood, most likely found near the southern jungles and mountains. |
| 5 | 4 | **Rich Resources:** The jungles of Chana and its mountains hold several valuable resources: black diamonds, cleric's cowl, devilroot, jabutu, k'tallah, lotus, and moonstones. Any of these might be found naturally or in the possession of the Chana Witch-tribes, Manra, Nagra, or travelers (living or dead). |
| 6 | 5 | **Trail:** There are no roads in Chana, but one may find stretches of well-used footpaths and game trails. However, Chana Witchmen stalk these paths to ambush game, other tribes, and outsiders; whenever possible, one is advised to avoid the trails in Chana. |
| 7-8 | 6 | **Traveler:** One may encounter various folk in this region, including: (1) Chana Witchmen moving between villages to barter goods or on the hunt; (2) Manra shape-changers scouting for danger; (3) Nagra, tracking beasts or enemies; (4) Farad merchants seeking trade for kesh; (5) Kang troops on a raid; (6) Imrians seeking to capture a Chana witchdoctor. |
| 9-10 | 7 | **Chana:** An encounter with these people could mean hearing their signal drums, observing a cannibalistic ritual, finding a dwelling (see encounter #3), coming upon an offender who has been staked over an insect mound and left to die, or being ambushed by Chana headhunters. |
| 11 | 8 | **Death's-Head Viper:** The Chana capture and train these serpents to be worn as decorative "wrist vipers." An encounter could mean spotting a nest of the snakes, stumbling into a nest, or even spying Chana hunting for them. |
| 12 | 9 | **Exomorph:** These predators lair and hunt throughout the Jungles of Chana and the surrounding mountains. Encountering an exomorph could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 13 | 10 | **Manra:** An encounter with the Manra could mean observing a shape-shifting ritual, finding a dwelling (see encounter #3), or unknowingly being observed by them. If the Manra do not feel threatened, they may exchange news and, very rarely, material goods. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 14-15 | 11 | **Nagra:** An encounter with Nagra might mean spotting one or more of them as they hunt – their quarry might be a beast, an enemy Chana headhunter, or even a disembodied spirit, as Nagra spirit trackers are able to track even incorporeal entities. PCs may also spot a Nagra dwelling (see encounter #3), or might be confronted by angry Nagra if trespassing in their territories. Unless the PCs adopt a threatening or aggressive attitude, Nagra may be willing to barter with them, or even act as guides. |
| 16 | 12 | **Shathane:** A jungle-based relative of the northern werebeast, shathane are fearsome to behold, but typically not violent unless threatened. The Chana and Nagra actively hunt shathane for their thick hides, and to prove their skill as warriors. |
| 17 | 13 | **Alatus:** These flying leeches are particularly bothersome to travelers without proper shelter for the night. They may be found in or around most types of caves, pits, and tunnels; sleeping in the shadows by day, and flying forth to hunt by night. Alatus are known to carry and transmit a disease called blood fever. |
| 18 | 14 | **Tarkus:** Most common to the mountains of northern Chana, wild tarkus may also be encountered hunting in packs or mated pairs along the jungle's edge. They are among the most aggressive and dangerous predators in the region. |
| 19 | 15 | **Urthrax:** These foul-smelling vermin thrive in the bogs and dank waters of the jungle. They may also be encountered in refuse piles outside Chana villages. |
| 20 | 16 | **Lurker:** Wading in even ankle-deep water can bring one within the deadly grasp of a lurker – a lumpy, mud-burrowing, carnivorous invertebrate that can easily be mistaken for a submerged rock. These predators typically lair within the deeper waters of the jungles and along the coast, but they may also be encountered in shallow pools, waterfalls, and bogs. |



# The Kang Empire

Beyond the Volcanic Hills and the Jade Mountains lies the great Kang Empire. Its territories are vast, extending from the dense southern jungles bordering Chana to the wild northern forests of the Opal Mountains, and the faraway city of Ispasia.

To the west lay the fiery peaks and lava-rivers of the Volcanic Hills, home to the age-old enemies of the Kang known as the Saurans. To the east, the peaceful glades and woodlands of the Mandalan peoples extend towards the Inland Sea, and the Sunra city of Isalis.

Access to the Kang Empire is restricted, and no foreign visitors are allowed to enter without permission from the Kang. The most common points of access are the port of Ispasia, the Mandalan port city of Isalis, and the heavily guarded Bridge at Hadran, which stands at the edge of a pass that winds through the Jade Mountains.

Seven distinct races live within the confines of the Empire: the Kang, Quan, Ispasians, Mandalans, Sunra, Vajra, and the Mondre Khan.



## The Kang

Tall and fierce, Kang have quasi-reptilian features, fiery red skin, and white eyes with no visible pupils. Both the men and women wear their long black hair pulled straight back in a single tail or braid. Iron collars and armbands are the fashion among these folk, who customarily attire themselves in armor even when off duty. The Kang also decorate themselves with Kanjiko, a form of artistic scarring.

### *Ancestry and History*

The ancestors of the Kang were wild tribesmen of the steppes who reveled in battle, hunted wild tarkus for sport, and loved as fiercely as they fought. In the second century, the Kang tribes united and threatened to take over territories then known as the Quan Empire. They were bought off by the Quan, whom they served until the Silent Insurrection of the Year 611, when the Kang finally took over control of the Empire for themselves.

The Kang were under attack from three sides during the Uprising – by the Harakin and Mondre Khan to the north, the Chana to the south, and the Saurans to the west. The Saurans inflicted the most damage, destroying the fortified Kang outpost of Kang-Tu. Though the Kang managed to repel the other forces who attacked them, they suffered heavy losses, and some believe that the Kang's hold on the Empire may have been weakened.

### *Culture*

No longer the wild hillmen who once roamed the steppes and slept under the stars, the Kang now live in walled citadels and fortified outposts made of rough-hewn stone. As in the old days, the primary unit of Kang society remains the war clan, an extended family of male and female warriors, forged together in a blood alliance against all who oppose them. This, in essence, is the Kang philosophy. Kang normally mate for life, though their "marriages" are often tempestuous affairs marked by outbreaks of physical violence. They prize aggressiveness in their mates above all other considerations.

Kang society is modeled after the military chain of command. Kang are subservient to all individuals of higher rank than themselves and tend to be verbally abusive and condescending when dealing with their lessers. Foreigners, having no rank per se, typically always fall into the category of "subordinate" unless they have earned khir – a term meaning "honor in battle" (see sidebar).

The length and adornment of a Kang's queue, or ponytail, is a mark of pride. For festive occasions, the queue may be bound with silver bands or jeweled rings. In battle, iron rings or leather thongs usually suffice. Kang never wear their hair down or unbound except to bathe. Losing one's queue in battle is considered a terrible disgrace; the victim will know no rest until he or she gains revenge for this evil act by killing the perpetrator and recovering the lost queue.

Such arts as the Kang practice all have their basis in warfare. This is evidenced by the art of kanjiko – an intricate form of ritual body scarring practiced by Kang warriors since the time of their early ancestors. Kanjiko are made by taking a knife and carving a design into the wearer's biceps, forehead, or shoulder, then rubbing a special black pigment into the wound. The procedure leaves a dark, raised scar, which the Kang consider a mark of distinction. A popular feature of all Kang feasts is the traditional sword dance, which may be performed by a group of as many as a hundred warriors at a time.

### *Government*

The Kang are governed by a military dictatorship, at the head of which is the Warlord – supreme commander of the Kang people, and ruler of the Kang Empire. He is served by the various clan leaders, who are called Dragonlords. The military controls all aspects of Kang life, even the temples of Zoriah. Disciplinary problems are handled by officers, or in more serious cases, military tribunals. Punishments range from demotion in rank and loss of khir to solitary confinement in a deep pit or hole. In severe cases offenders may be stripped of their queues before execution, bringing disgrace upon them and their clan.

The Kang maintain what many believe is the largest army in Talislanta. Known as the Crimson Horde, this force includes units of the heavy cavalry, heavy infantry, tarkus scout units, dragon elite, and heavily armored siege engines such as iron dragons and mobile catapults. Elements of the Crimson Horde are deployed in the west against the Saurans, to the south against the Chana, and to the north as protection against incursions by the Harakin.

### *Language*

Kang converse in a modified version of Quan, a language common to most of the indigenous peoples of this region. The Kang's dialect is heavy on action verbs and is harsh and unmusical to the ear. Common names all begin with K, as in Kuata, Kiyen, Kudan, Kran, Komo, etc.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Kang have no talent for magic, which they view with some disdain except as pertains to magical weapons and armor. All Kang revere Zoriah, the Red God of War, who is most often pictured as a giant male warrior attired in ceremonial battle armor, and an exceptionally long queue adorned with spiked silver rings. The worship of Zoriah entails few formal rituals; it is rare for Kang to visit the war god's temple except to have their newborn children subjected to the ritual "baptism by fire," and to attend funeral services for great war heroes.

### *Worldview*

Since the Silent Insurrection, the Kang have ruled what was originally the Quan Empire. The Kang Warlord now wields total control over the populace. Relations with the subject races range from peaceful coexistence to open warfare. The Quan have been reduced to the status of pariahs, shunned and despised by all. The Ispasians manage the Empire's trade and economic concerns with exceptional skill, but the Kang still do not trust them. The Sunra and Vajra serve as instructed, though not willingly. The Mandalans continue to exhibit an outwardly placid demeanor, while the Mondre Khan remain hostile and aggressive.

Once regarded as the most powerful army on the continent, the Kang military has been forced to rebuild following the heavy losses it took during the Uprising. Following the Sauran's destruction of Kang-Tu, the Kang were compelled to rebuild and strengthen all of their fortifications, adding more heavy catapults, strider-cavalry units, and tarkus-equipped trackers; the latter being used mainly to hunt Chana and Mondre Khan. Rather than wait to be attacked again, the Kang have also begun to launch preemptive strikes against their enemies to the north, south, and west.

A considerable amount of trade passes through the Kang settlements, heading to and from other parts of the Empire. Except as pertains to the requisitioning of military supplies, the Kang have little or nothing to do with such commercial activities, leaving these details to the Ispasians.

# Kang Settlements & Places of Note

## The Citadel of Hadran

The largest military installation in the Kang Empire, Hadran houses thousands of Kang troops and support personnel. The fortress is also the headquarters of the Warlord of the Kang. Built of marbled green-and-black stone from the Jade Mountains, Hadran overlooks a yawning chasm that runs for a hundred miles along the western frontier. A massive bridge allows access to the west, where a toll of ten gold lumens is charged to all visitors of foreign extraction.

## Vishana

Located in the hot and humid jungles of the far south, Vishana is a Kang military outpost situated on the River Shan. Soldiers from here are sent to patrol the Emperor's Road, though the task is made difficult by wild beasts and marauding Chana Witchmen. The Kang trackers and cavalry which patrol the Empire's southern borders have a particular loathing for duty here. To instill enthusiasm among the troops, the fort commanders offer a bounty of a hundred gold lumens for each Chana head taken on jungle patrols.

## The Fortress City of Shonan

An impregnable fortress that has withstood countless attacks by the Sauran tribes which dwell to the west, Shonan is built of dull grey stone from the Volcanic Hills. A large contingent of Kang is stationed here. Shonan also serves as a center of trade, due to its location at a nexus of the River Shan and the Emperor's Road. Goods of many sorts pass through here: precious metals, gemstones, and cerulean dye from Karang; foodstuffs transported upriver from Isalis; rare herbs and hardwoods from Vishana; and Mandalan silkcloth from Jacinth. A bridge spans the river, and a toll of five gold lumens is charged to all foreigners.

## Kangir

A fortified outpost at the edge of the Graylands, Kangir is a supply facility where siege engines are built, maintained, and refurbished by Vajra engineers. A large garrison of Kang strider cavalry is stationed here. Merchants and traders from across the Empire often stop in Kangir en route to or from Karang, Hadran, or Tian.

## Vulge

Set in the Jade Mountains, Vulge is manned by a contingent of Kang trackers and their beasts. This outpost is among the least favorite assignments for Kang troops, owing to its isolated location and the proximity of Nagra spirit-trackers, exomorphs, and winged vipers.

### A Matter of Honor

*Of great importance to all Kang is the concept of khir, or "honor in battle." Khir may be earned for any act of valor, from defeating an opponent in combat to exhibiting courage in the face of overwhelming odds. The Kang take great pride in such achievements, and deeds that earn khir are often cause for celebration among the honored participants and their admirers. These victory celebrations often go on well into the night, and are typically accompanied by much feasting, loud boasting, drinking, and revelry.*

*Khir entitles one to a degree of respect, though not necessarily obedience. A Kang who loses khir will be demoted in rank and must prove his or her courage to regain lost status. It is possible to earn khir in a losing cause, but only if the individual can retain his or her honor. Conversely, it is possible to lose khir in a winning cause if the opponent is so weak or craven that there is no glory to be won by their defeat.*

*The most notable example of the latter circumstance occurred when the Kang seized control of the Quan Empire in the year 611. The coup was so successful that it was accomplished in less than a day, the ruling class Quan failing to offer even token resistance. Though the Kang gained an empire in a single stroke, there was no khir to be earned for defeating such a weak and cowardly adversary, and no celebration of the victory afterward. So it was that the event became known in history as the Silent Insurrection – a victory without honor.*

*Conversely, the Kang regard the battles fought during the Uprising much differently. Though their forces suffered heavy losses, the Kang fought well and with honor, and much khir was earned by the victors.*

# The Quan

The central regions of the Kang Empire consist largely of grasslands that extend northwest to the Steppes of Kangir, south to the Quan Forest, and east to the Straits of Tian. The Emperor's Road winds through much of the region, connecting the fortified city of Hadran to Shonan, Tian, and beyond. The Road is regularly patrolled by Kang warriors, who keep a keen watch on the many traders and travelers who use this roadway, as well as the folks who live here: the former rulers of the Empire, the Quan.

The Quan are a sallow-skinned folk who, at the height of their reign, were known for their haughty demeanor and gluttonous appetites. They dressed in the richest apparel, adorned themselves with jewelry, and exhibited the lofty airs and delicate sensibilities normally associated with royalty. Now reduced to poverty, most of the surviving Quan now dress in tattered finery or makeshift garments.

## *Ancestry and History*

The Quan are the descendants of a barbaric people related to the ancient Mazdaks. Using military skill and guile they conquered an empire, but as time passed, they descended into complacency. Their reign ended in 611, when the Kang seized control of the Empire in a single day.

## *Culture*

After the Kang insurrection the Quan were removed from power and relegated to the lower rungs of society. Their riches were confiscated by the Kang, and their possessions sold at auction. Thousands of Quan were executed for "crimes against the Empire." Hundreds more chose to commit suicide, ordering their servants to kill them rather than face the wrath of the Kang. The remaining Quan are no longer allowed to own property or have servants, and are forbidden to live anywhere but the old capital of Tian.

Once marvelous beyond description, Tian has since fallen into a sad state of disrepair. The inhabitants live in squalor, struggling to grow or scavenge enough food to survive. Kang soldiers sometimes come to Tian to mock them, watching them as they would some endangered species that now exists only in a zoo.

## *Language*

The Quan speak both the Quan tongue and High Talislan, but prefer the latter, as it is more refined. Despite their fall from power, the Quan retain something of their former attitude of superiority. Most still use the elaborate titles that they bestowed upon themselves when they were rulers of the Empire. Thus, even the lowliest Quan are referred to by such flowery acronyms as "Splendid Jade Potentate," "Munificent Lotus Personage," and "Wondrous Sapphire Excellence."



### *Government*

Before the insurrection, Quan society was governed by a rigidly enforced caste system headed by the Emperor and his family, who were known as the Grand Elite. No longer do the Quan have an Emperor or ruling family. Instead, the Quan are now governed by a Council of Advisors, who help maintain order in the old city and serve as a makeshift judiciary. Their actual power and influence are limited, due primarily to a lack of resources and the severe restrictions placed upon them by the Kang.

By Kang decree, the Quan are prohibited from raising any kind of military force. A small volunteer militia exists to repulse wild animals that find their way into the city.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Quan were never religious, the concept of worship being without interest to a folk who once considered themselves akin to gods. More recently, some Quan have begun to turn to religion for comfort and guidance, and a cult based on ancestor worship is said to be slowly gaining adherents. Though the Quan once interred their dead in lavish tombs and mausoleums, the dead are now buried with little ceremony in unmarked graves.

### *Worldview*

Since their fall from power, the Quan have been cut off from the outside world. Never well-liked during the days of their rule, the Quan have received little in the way of sympathy from other nations, and nothing but scorn from their former subjects. They are a race of pariahs — isolated, powerless, and viewed as outcasts in their land.

In certain circles, it is rumored that a small number of Quan have begun to speak of mounting a rebellion against the Kang, who they regard as oppressors. These so-called Quan Rebels may or may not actually exist, and may or may not ever pose any sort of threat to the ruling Kang.

## Quan Settlements & Places of Note

### The Golden City of Tian

The former capital of the old Quan Empire, Tian is situated on an island within a man-made lake and is accessible only by boat or windship. The city was designed by Mandalan architects at the command of the Emperor of Quan, who demanded that the new capital surpass in beauty all of the cities of the Empire — even that of the Mandalan city of Jacinth. Once considered the most splendid city on the continent, Tian has now fallen into a pitiable state of disrepair.

### The Emperor's Road

The Emperor's Road spans the length and breadth of the Kang Empire, from Hadran to Ispasia, and from Karang to Vishana. It is the best-maintained roadway on the continent, showing signs of neglect only in the dangerous jungle regions of the south. Heavily-armed Kang sentinels patrol the Emperor's Road at regular intervals.

### The Imperial Canal

This man-made waterway links the River Shan to the Gulf of Tian and was built to allow access to the lake that surrounds Tian. A system of locks and channels, operated by a group of Vajra engineers, allows traffic on the canal to be strictly monitored.

### Tian Forest

The Forest of Tian is as odd a place as one may find in Talislanta. It is a man-made woodland, comprised of orderly groves of silver deodars and shade trees, once separated by neatly mowed grass trails and stocked with tamed animals of many sorts. The Quan aristocracy had this place "built" for the pleasure of the Emperor, who once came here to hunt "wild" game. Left untended since 613, the region has begun to revert to its natural state – the trails are overgrown, and the animals have gone feral.

# Ispasia

The far northeastern reaches of the Kang Empire are a mix of deep forests and rugged mountains, interspersed with grassy plains and farmlands. Though the well-paved roadways that pass through this region are heavily patrolled by Kang warriors, it is dangerous to venture into the surrounding forests, which are largely controlled by the Wild Tribes known as the Mondre Khan.

Tucked away in the far northern corner of the peninsula is the small city-state called Ispasia, known for its beautiful architecture and stately ambiance. The city was annexed by the Quan in the early days of the Empire, but allowed to retain its prosperous mercantile government and culture. The same conditions have remained in effect since the Kang came to power, for the Ispasians are integral to the prosperity of the Empire.

## An Ispasian Viewpoint

The Ispasian agent Ispal, speaking on his people's view of the Kang Empire:

*"The Empire is not a monolithic entity, as it may appear to those who look upon it from the outside. Rather, it is a mosaic of different cultures, each with its own beliefs and aspirations. The Mandalans are like the wind and rain, gradually wearing down the walls that imprison them, until the day those walls finally crumble. The Vajra are earth and stone; dark and deep, with memories as old as the world. They lurk below the surface until the time when they will erupt, like a sleeping volcano. The Sunra are like a river, whose many tributaries want nothing more than to run free to the sea. The Mondre Khan are the beast that sleeps by day and comes forth by night from the depths of the forest, to strike fear into the hearts of men. The Kang are fire; always burning, consuming all in their path. Like flame they must always feed, for if they cease to do so, they will die. The Quan were once like this, but now their fire is extinguished, and all that remains are a few wisps of smoke.*

*"My people are different from the others who dwell among us. The wind fills our sails, and the rain waters our fields; we use earth and stone to shelter us, and to build things of lasting beauty. We drink from the river and leave the beast to roam in the forest as it will. And we feed the fire, for it warms our hearths, and lights our way."*

# The Ispasians

The Ispasians are a folk of slender physique, lemon-yellow skin, and expressionless features. They dress in robes of fine silkcloth, upon which elaborate sigils represent their respective family crests.

### *Ancestry and History*

Some believe the Ispasians are descended from a race of neomorphs created by the ancient Archaens. The Ispasians themselves deny the validity of these theories, citing certain documents which they claim establish the separate and distinct ancestry of their people.

During the Uprising, among the first things the Kang did was to hastily send a contingent of elite troops to protect Ispasia, such is the importance of this small mercantile city-state.

### *Culture*

The Ispasians are a people who have prospered through their mastery of financial matters and transactions. They live in manor houses set within the walls of their well-manicured and tastefully-landscaped estates. The typical Ispasian manse has circular windows of rose-colored glass, a pagoda-style roof, slender white columns, and a flight of white stone stairs leading to the entranceway.

The Ispasians bear a reputation as cool, calculating businessmen. Unlike the Farad, they do not deal in contraband goods, or, generally, small quantities of goods of any type. Instead, Ispasians prefer to deal with large-scale investments and commodities. The Ispasians serve the Kang, helping them manage the Empire's finances; discretion is the watchword in all their transactions.

The Ispasians have an insular society. Cooperation is more important than individual achievement; the welfare and prosperity of the Ispasian people come first. Ispasians claim to have no personal feelings towards clients, and prefer to maintain a "cool" exterior, seldom showing outward emotion except when under great stress. It is the custom of these folk to regard all relationships as business transactions.

### *Language*

Ispasians are well-educated, and are fluent in both Quan and High Talislan, and often more languages. Common names start with the prefix Isp- (meaning, "respected one of Ispasian lineage"), as in Ispal, Ispmar, Ispan, Ispmir, etc.

### *Government*

Ispasia is ruled by a mercantile autocracy, at the head of which is a figure called the Imperator, who is served by a council of advisors. Together, they devise strategies for investment and acquisition that are faithfully followed by all Ispasians. The council of advisors also handles all matters of "violations of Ispasian ethics" (a term considered an oxymoron by some). Offenders may be punished by demotion in status or a simple fine.

The Imperator and his council play an important role in determining the value of currencies, commodities, and assets – by manipulating vast sums of money around, they can exert great control over the Empire's economy, and the economies of foreign nations as well

The Ispasians have no military of any sort. They rely on the Kang for their protection, assured that their value to the Empire is sufficient to guarantee their safety.

### *Magic & Religion*

Ispasians have little use for religion, and few of their people are known to practice magic. Instead, they prefer to hire magicians when in need of such services.

### *Worldview*

The Ispasians play a vitally important role in the Empire and are more influential than any of the other races ruled by the Kang. The Imperator's personal emissary sits at the left hand of the Kang Warlord, acting as his chief advisor on all issues related to trade, commerce, food distribution, the requisition of supplies to troops and fortifications, tariffs, tolls, and a hundred other non- military concerns. The Ispasians handle all of the Kang's financial concerns and do so in an efficient fashion.

Ispasian agents are known to travel across the extent of Talislanta and are believed to have clients in such far-distant lands as Faradun, Rajanistan, and Kasmir of the Nine Kingdoms, among others.

# Ispasian Settlements

## The City-State of Ispasia

Surrounded by walls of white jade, this wealthy city-state is the only Ispasian settlement in Talislanta. Its architecture is rich and impressive in scope, though not ostentatious; in this regard the city reflects the nature of its inhabitants. A large contingent of Kang guard the gates and are stationed in a nearby barracks facility tastefully concealed by shrubbery. At the center of the city are the lavish estates of the Ispasians and their families. Their Vajra and Mandalan servants live in a small district located outside the city proper.



# The Mandalans

The southeastern territories of the Kang Empire are characterized by well-tended groves of fruiting trees, terraced farmlands rich in the staples of life, and airy woodlands that abound with wild game and flocks of pastel-colored avir. The roads that follow the coastline and connect with the Ezst Shan River are well-maintained, and traversed mainly by merchants from other parts of the Empire and beyond. This region is only minimally patrolled by Kang, for the people who live here – known as the Mandalans – are pacifists, and as such are not considered a threat to the Empire.

A golden-skinned folk, the Mandalans are slender of build, with almond-shaped eyes and pleasant features. It is the custom of the men to shave their heads; while the women do mostly the same, they leave a topknot of long, black hair. Both sexes wear loose-fitting robes or pajama-style garments, typically of silkcloth, a material which is common in the regions in which the Mandalans live.

## *Ancestry and History*

The origins of the Mandalan race date back to the Forgotten Age, when their nomadic ancestors migrated from the Opal Mountains and established permanent communal settlements along the eastern coasts of what is now the Kang Empire. Here, the Mandalans established a peaceful society devoted to the cultivation of the mystic arts and sciences.

Soon afterward began the arrival of a succession of hostile nomads – the Zhan, then the Mazdaks, then the Quan, and lastly, the Kang. Each in turn subjugated the Mandalans, who offered no resistance. Each, in their turn, eventually grew complacent and were overthrown by other peoples. Only the peaceful Mandalans remain as they were before.

## *Culture*

The Mandalans have an advanced and enlightened culture centered amidst the pastel spires, arches, and promenades of the coastal city of Jacinth and outlying regions. Those who live in Jacinth serve as artisans, scholars, and historians. They dwell in simple but elegant dwellings made of parchment stretched over wood frames, with rock gardens, meditation areas, and shaded arbors adding a sense of serenity and beauty to their surroundings. The remainder of the population is scattered throughout the countryside, making their home in small villages. They live in rustic dwellings of artfully woven reeds and thatch, and work as farmers, herders, and weavers.

### The Legend of the Mystic Warrior

*In Mandalan lore, the Mystic Warrior is an ideal, symbolizing the indomitability of the spirit. It is the unshakable belief of the Mandalans that, though their people may be enslaved and oppressed, their hearts and minds shall always remain free. Thus, in the Mandalan perspective, no enemy can ever truly conquer their race.*

*For the vast majority of Mandalans, the practice of this philosophy is limited to various subtle forms of passive resistance. The Mandalans are most ingenious in this regard, and seem to possess a limitless ability to influence, misinform, and misdirect their oppressors without arousing suspicion in themselves.*

*In rare instances, a Mandalan may adopt the physical persona of the Mystic Warrior. Operating in total secrecy, these individuals often engage in more overt forms of resistance, including sabotage and other clandestine activities. According to legend, those who heed the call of the Mystic Warrior become like the wind – their presence felt, but never seen. Such is the aura of mystery that surrounds these individuals that the Mandalans do not even admit that they exist.*

To many Talislantans, the Mandalans appear weak and submissive, unwilling to offer even the slightest resistance to those who have invaded their lands in the past or the present. While there is evidence to support such a view, this perception of the Mandalans is in many ways inaccurate. Practitioners of an ancient mystical discipline, Mandalans abhor violence, considering militarism to be the domain of unsophisticated and primitive peoples.

Yet despite a great aversion to physical violence, the Mandalans are neither weak nor entirely submissive. It is no accident that they have survived centuries of oppression, or that their culture has endured long after the demise of the warlike races who have conquered their lands and subjugated their people. Rather, for many centuries, the Mandalans have developed a unique methodology for dealing with repressive regimes; a philosophy based upon the principles of passive resistance, and the concept of the Mystic Warrior (see sidebar).

### *Language*

The native tongue of the Mandalans is Quan, though many also speak either High or Low Talislan. Common Mandalan names are hyphenated, as in Shan-Yan, Xhan-Han, Zen-Shen, etc.

### *Government*

The Kang allow the Mandalans a degree of self-rule, mainly because they consider the Mandalans to be no threat to their interests. Jacinth is run by a democratic people's council composed of representatives from all walks of Mandalan life: artisans, musicians, artists, poets, and scribes. All matters are decided by popular vote. Rural villages are also governed according to the same principles, though on a smaller scale.



The Mandalans have never had an army, and have no interest in military matters.

### *Magic & Religion*

Mandalans worship the deity known as the Creator, but observe no formal rituals. Worship is centered around meditation and is considered a private matter between one's god and one's self.

### *Worldview*

Under the Kang, the Mandalans continue to be virtual slaves of the Empire. They obey the commands of their Kang masters without question, never showing signs of overt emotion. Yet in the countryside, events continue to transpire for which there is no explanation: a barge carrying a shipment of weapons sinks below the waters of the Shan river; a group of Kang trackers disappears without a trace; Kang troops are repeatedly inconvenienced by washed-out roads, collapsing bridges, and other logistical nightmares. Meanwhile, the barbaric Mondre Khan and Harakin clans continue to gather along the northern borders of Quan, waiting and watching, while the Mandalans remain passive and aloof.

## Mandalan Settlements

### The City of Jacinth

Once the center of Mandalan culture, the coastal city of Jacinth is now a resort area for Ispasians and visiting dignitaries. A large number of Mandalans still live here, serving as slaves of the Empire. In Jacinth are found ancient collections of scrolls and books, as well as gardens of crystal dendrons, mosses, and prismatic blossoms. Elite units of Kang guard the city from attack by land, and Sunra dragon barques patrol the harbor. The pleasure barges once owned by the Quan are now owned by Ispasians, who use them primarily for entertaining wealthy clients.

# The Sunra

Southwest of Jacinth is a beautiful and peaceful body of water known as the Inland Sea. This waterway is extensively used to transport raw materials and other resources to and from the Kang's jungle outpost of Vishana, and to convey goods of many sorts to and from the Coral City of Isalis. The shores surrounding the Inland Sea are blanketed in woodlands to the east and north, and jungle to the south and west. The only waterborne route to the Inland Sea is via the River Shan, to the south. But access to the river is barred by a massive chain that prevents the inhabitants of Isaslis from ever leaving the Kang Empire. These are the folk known as the Sunra.

The Sunra are a semi-aquatic race who are graceful in stature, with silver-scaled skin and deep blue eyes. The customary mode of dress for both males and females consists of a simple robe of Mandalan silkcloth, sandals, and a silk headband.

### *Ancestry and History*

The origins of the Sunra predate the Great Disaster. Their ancestors, the Sun-Ra-San, once ranged the Far Seas in glittering dragon barques, hunting ancient sea dragons and trading with distant lands. Now the majority of the Sunra population is housed in the Coral City of Isalis, as subjects of the Kang. Those few who are not a part of the Empire are referred to with the spelling Sun-Ra.

### *Culture*

The Sunra of Isalis live in graceful dwellings carved from great mounds of coral and decorated with shells. They subsist primarily on kelp and algae, which the Sunra serve in soups, broths, and stews – Sunra food is always high in liquid content and, by the standards of most other folk, very salty. The combination of fluids and salts enables Sunra to function out of water for extended periods without experiencing discomfort.

The Sunra have a great love of learning, as is evident in their interest in astromancy, ship-building, and sea-farming. Once a general education in these fields has been completed, Sunra people learn artistic skills using coral, shells, and other products of the sea.

Sunra sea farmers and fishermen supply much of the Empire's foodstuffs. Their mariners pilot the great barges that ply the River Shan from Tian to the Inland Sea, conveying shipments of goods across the Empire and beyond, to distant ports such as Tarun, in Faradun. However, no Sunra ship is ever allowed to sail beyond the Inland Sea unless escorted by a sizable contingent of Kang guards.

### *Language*

Though the Sunra have an ancestral tongue, Quan is the language most commonly spoken by those who live in the Kang Empire. Common names are hyphenated, beginning with Su- (males) or Sa- (females). Some examples are Sur-Rin, Sun-Ran, Sut-Ra (males); Sar-Rin, San-Ran, Sat-Ra (female).



### *Government*

The Kang have allowed the Sunra a semblance of self-rule, within certain limitations. Sunra are permitted to run their city as they choose, provided they remain in compliance with Kang law. The Sunra have an egalitarian democracy, a tradition that goes back to their ancient seafaring days. Their leaders are elected by popular vote. The individual designated as ruler is accorded the title of Eminence.

The Sunra are the finest sailors in the known world. They can read the currents and tides and use astrolabes to navigate according to the position of Talislanta's twin suns and seven moons. The Sunra maintain a large fleet of dragon barques, but are unallowed to sail such craft anywhere but the Inland Sea and the River Shan, except under the direct supervision of the Kang military.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Sunra worship an elemental ocean deity named Aqus. They have a great love of the sea and revere the moonfish as an avatar of their elemental deity. Sunra believe that the souls of their ancestors reside within moonfish, and so will never harm these creatures. They further believe that anyone who captures or kills a moonfish will suffer a terrible curse; in fact, the Sunra say that this is what happened to the Quan, who once kept moonfish as pets. While many scoff at these claims, it should be noted that, not long after the Silent Insurrection, the Kang forced the Quan to release all their moonfish into the River Shan, and thereafter made it illegal to own or eat moonfish.

### *Worldview*

The Sunra serve the Kang not out of loyalty, but because they fear that if they did not, their oppressors would dam the River Shan, causing the Inland Sea to go dry. It is no secret that the Sunra yearn to swim free, as they did in ancient times. Given the opportunity, some believe that the Sunra might rebel against the Kang. The Kang know this and have attempted to placate the Sunra to some extent by allowing them a greater degree of autonomy than they had under the Quan. So far, these measures have served to maintain order, but some wonder for how long it will last.

## Sunra Settlements & Places of Note

### The Coral City of Isalis

Besides being home to the Sunra, the Coral City of Isalis hosts the Empire's vast flotilla of dragon barques, merchant skiffs, and fishing boats. A reef serves as the foundation for the city, which is fashioned of pink, blue, red, and green varieties of coral. Its "streets" are narrow waterways which course among the elegant coral structures. Sunra sea-farmers ply the shallows around the city, harvesting kelp, algae, edible mollusks, and other aquatic foodstuffs.



# The Vajra

The northwestern reaches of the Kang Empire are clad in deep woodlands, from the scenic blue Cerulean Forest to the Vajran Hills, the latter of which rise slowly upwards to the Opal Mountains. The only city in this area is Karang, a fortified Kang citadel, which is connected to the southlands via the Emperor's Road. Aside from Kang, who can be found both occupying the citadel and patrolling the roads in this area, the primary inhabitants of this region are the Vajra.

The Vajra are short and squat, with barrel-like torsos and heavy limbs. Their bodies are covered with overlapping orange-brown plates, which form an effective natural armor. They dress in loincloths and wide belts, donning cloaks for ceremonial occasions. Their tough, scaled hide renders them impervious to cuts and abrasions, and serves as a natural form of armor.

### *Ancestry and History*

Vajra are believed to be descended from a neomorphic race known as the Yann, who were created by the ancient Archaens in the time before the Great Disaster. Their ancestors once dwelled beneath the Opal Mountains and Vajran Hills, in the northern part of what is now the Kang Empire. Vajra were originally subjugated by the Quan, who captured a large clutch of hibernating Vajra young and threatened to kill them unless the adults surrendered. Fearing that their species might be driven to extinction should such a catastrophe occur, the Vajra acceded to the Quan's demands. Following the Silent Insurrection of 611, the Vajra became subjects of the Kang.

### *Language*

The Vajra speak a dialect of the Quan tongue, and have deep, resonant voices. Common names usually have three syllables and begin with the prefix Vaj- (meaning "of the Vajra"). Examples include Vaj-Do-Rahn, Vaj-Nan-Sa, and Vaj-Kron-Do.

### *Magic & Religion*

Vajra revere the earth goddess Terra, whom they regard as the Great Elemental that dwells within the world of Archaeus. Vajra once would gather together in great numbers and offer prayers to their goddess. Now, such practices are forbidden by the Kang. Even so, Vajra priestesses are said to still hold services in secret underground shrines.

## The Dark Fire

*Vajra culture is rooted deep in the elemental earth of Talislanta. Like stone, a Vajra strives to be placid, enduring, strong, resolute. Like earth and soil, he strives to be fruitful and nurturing, providing a medium for growth and new life. But there is another side to the Vajra, about which little is known. For deep in the subterranean realms of their homeland, where the light of the twin suns never penetrates, is a place of perpetual night and burning, smoldering magma. This is the Dark Fire, a molten heart of darkness that exists not only at the center of the world, but also in the soul of every Vajra.*

*In Vajra culture, the Dark Fire is neither good nor evil. It simply exists, as do all things in nature. Vajra keep the Dark Fire deep within them; they say that it warms their hearts, illuminates their souls, and prevents them from losing their way in the darkness.*

*Under normal conditions, the Dark Fire is always hidden and kept under control. However, if subjected to prolonged periods of severe stress or torment, a Vajra may lose the ability to control what lies within. Like a volcano, he or she may erupt in a frightening display of violence and destructive force, clawing through stone, breaking free of the strongest restraints, exhibiting an almost elemental power. During such times, a Vajra may kill or destroy without remorse, perform feats of incredible strength, or suffer grievous wounds and injuries without apparent effect. The Dark Fire lasts but a few moments, and often less than this. Once the Fire goes out, the Vajra's energy is spent and he or she will lapse into unconsciousness. Death usually follows soon afterward, for once the Fire is extinguished, so too is the Vajra's life force.*

### *Government*

Before their subjugation, the Vajra were matriarchal, with each hive-settlement governed by a queen. The Quan outlawed the appointment of queens, a policy which the Kang continue to the present day. Even so, females continue to hold great influence among the Vajran people, and their advice is sought whenever important decisions must be made.

Vajra once built impressive underground fortifications that were manned by well-armed contingents of male soldiers. Such defenses are no longer permitted under Kang rule. Instead, Vajra camps are guarded by contingents of Kang.

### *Worldview*

The Vajra have no relations with other nations. They are on good terms with the Mandalans and Sunra, though formal relations with other subjects of the Empire are forbidden. Vajra still bear much resentment for the Quan, though they now regard their former masters with something approaching pity, in comparison to the Kang, whom they (unsurprisingly) hate.



# Vajra Settlements

## The Vajran Hills

The traditional territories of the Vajra, the Vajran Hills, are rich in minerals, timber, and other natural resources. After the Quan annexed this part of their Empire, the Vajra were deported from their subterranean homes and taken to slave camps near the Opal Mountains. Their underground settlements were sealed and have never been reopened. Many are believed to contain old Vajran treasures that were hidden from their enemies.

## The Citadel of Karang

Located to the north, Karang is a walled citadel built to safeguard against incursions of barbaric Harakin from beyond the Opal Mountains. Many Vajra miners live in the sub-levels of this ponderous structure, which is crisscrossed with catacombs and tunnels after the Vajran style. Precious stones and metals from the mines are stored here until they can be shipped by caravan to Shonan. Kang trackers patrol the outskirts with deadly hunting beasts called tarkus.

# The Mondre Khan

North of the Khan Mountains and south of the Ku-Chang Plateau is a densely forested and mountainous region that few denizens of the Kang Empire ever venture into. The section of the Emperor's Road that passes to the north of this region is considered dangerous, despite the fact that it is heavily patrolled by Kang warriors and trackers, for these are the territories of the Mondre Khan, the last of the Wild Tribes who once ranged far and wide across what is now known as the Kang Empire.

The Mondre Khan are a wild folk who claim the rugged hills and mountains of this region as their ancestral homeland. They are squat and powerfully built, with curved horns, leathery skin, a mane of coarse black hair, and a long fringe of fur running down the back of the legs and arms. They dress in hide loincloths and bits of leather, augmented with pieces of chain and plate armor stolen from the Kang.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Mondre Khan are believed to be related to the Beastmen of Golarin, or the now-extinct plains tribes known as the Shaka. The Mondre Khan scoff at such claims, and have their own theories on the subject of their ancestry; according to their legends, the Mondre Khan were the first of the Wild Tribes, and the discoverers of fire, which set them apart from the animals.

During the Uprising, the Mondre Khan launched a surprise attack against the nearby city of Ku-Chang, passing unseen through the mountains to the north of their territories. The assault was successful, and the Mondre Khan overran the city, plundering the Kang armories of iron weapons and armor. Though they were eventually repulsed, the Mondre Khan succeeded in extending their territories north into the mountains and parts of the Ku-Chang Plateau, where they continue to pose a threat to the Kang Empire.

### *Culture*

Nomadic hunter-gatherers, the Mondre Khan travel in tribes of up to forty individuals, subsisting on wild mountain berries and fresh game. They are hardy creatures who require little in the way of nourishment and can travel long distances on just a few scraps of food. Tribes camp in the mountains, finding shelter amongst copses of trees, in caves, or beneath rock overhangs. Their camps are always well concealed and are temporary at best; bands move on after a day or two to avoid being detected by the Kang.

Savage and feral by nature, Mondre Khan exhibit the ferocity and cunning of wild beasts when on the hunt or in battle. They find it difficult to repress their bestial sides and may react in the manner of wild animals when cornered or subjected to extreme stress. Conversely, Mondre Khan show great kindness and compassion for their young, and appear to harbor deep feelings for their mates and loved ones. This dichotomy seems to be ingrained in the Mondre Khan persona: on one side, the man-like creature striving to achieve a higher state of consciousness, and on the other, the wild animal driven by primal urges.

Mondre Khan clans occasionally barter with each other, trading provisions, tools, and weapons. Mondre Khan do not use coins, which to them have no value.



### *Language*

Mondre Khan communicate in a snarling version of the Chanan tongue, and in sign. Claw markings made on the trunks of trees may indicate the beginning of a written language; if true, this would be regarded by certain Talislantan scholars as an important development. Common names are comprised of two syllables and ending in -iz, as in Kaziz, Hakiz, Kadiz, Nagiz, or similar.

## Legend of the Forest King

*Among the Mondre Khan, there is a legend of such great antiquity that some say it is little more than a racial memory, borne in the blood of those whose ancestors survived the Great Disaster. According to some, this legend states that the first Mondre Khan – a creature called Khadiz – once lived far to the west, in a great forest that formerly covered much of the territories now known as the Western Lands. Known as the Forest King, Khadiz was the master of all other creatures, great and small.*

*One day, while Khadiz was out hunting in the forest, he was set upon by a group of hairless beasts. These creatures were not of the natural world; they had neither claw nor fang, but carried terrible weapons of cold iron and fire. With black magic they captured Khadiz and took him to a strange place, where he was forced to lay with one of the hairless beasts' females. The King of the Forest died soon afterward, his vital energies stolen and his spirit broken. But before he died Khadiz cursed the hairless ones, that the seeds they had sown would one day bring a bitter harvest. So it was that from this unnatural union the Mondre Khan were born into the world, to reap vengeance upon those who murdered their king.*

*Though most Talislantan scholars tend to dismiss the legend of the Forest King, some believe that, like most myths, the story has its basis in reality. If so, then the creature called Khadiz may well have been a Jaka, one of the Beastmasters of the Northern Forests, from whom the title "Forest King" could easily have been derived. This being the case, it would follow that the Mondre Khan were sorcerous hybrids created by the ancient Archaens – the "hairless beasts" mentioned in the legend. Said the noted naturalist Thystram, regarding the legend and its possible ramifications: "It is at least an intriguing theory."*

### *Government*

Each Mondre Khan clan has a single leader; typically, a strong male or female whom the others have come to trust and respect. The leader acts as a chieftain in war and resolves all disputes within the clan. Individuals guilty of an offense against another member of the tribe may be attacked by their peers and banished from the tribe.

### *Worldview*

The Mondre Khan are the avowed enemies of the Empire, whose forces the Mondre Khan have successfully resisted for centuries. The last indigenous people to avoid subjugation by the forces of the Empire, the Mondre Khan have proved to be a resourceful and dangerous enemy.

The Kang consider the Mondre Khan to be akin to wild beasts and hunt them down like animals. Holed up in their mountain retreats, the Mondre Khan have waged a successful campaign against numerically superior Kang forces for over four centuries, launching surprise attacks against merchant caravans, stealing military supply wagons, and repeatedly raiding the mining settlement of Ku-Chang. The Mondre Khan and Harakin clans hidden in the Opal Mountains are considered a grave threat that must be eradicated as soon as possible.

# Places of Note

## Ku-Chang

The outpost of Ku-Chang is a mining installation where crews of Vajra slave laborers exhume gold, silver, crystals, cinnabar, antimony, and a half-dozen varieties of precious stones. A garrison of Kang warriors and trackers keeps the Vajra in line and protects this vital installation from Mondre Khan raiding parties. Crag spiders, cave bats, and other dangerous creatures occupy the caves and gullies of the plateau. Kang patrols comb the heights by day, but do not dare to venture forth at night.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The Kang Empire was assaulted from three sides, taking heavy losses to their forces and extensive damage to their outposts before repelling the invaders. Typical signs of this onslaught might be: (1) work on damaged fortifications or construction of new outposts; (2) movements of Kang warriors and Vajra engineers heading to worksites; (3) Kang war parties heading to the Opal Mountains, the Volcanic Hills, or the Jungles of Chana. |
| 3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The Kang Empire can experience severe storms along its coastline, bringing hurricane-force winds and heavy rain. To the north, fierce blizzards and even aberrant weather such as icicle rain may blow down from the mountains. To the west, eruptions from the Volcanic Hills have been known to cloud the skies over the western regions of the Empire in darkness for days. |
| 4-6 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The Kang dwell in fortified locations varying in size from small outposts to large walled citadels located throughout the Empire. By law, the Quan may only reside in the old city of Tian. Ispasians live in manor houses within their city-state on the northern peninsula of the Empire. Mandalans reside in the coastal city of Jacinth and its surrounding environs, in homes skillfully and artfully built of parchment stretched over wooden frames or woven reeds and thatch. Most Sunra live in the Coral City of Isalis, their residences carved from coral and ornamented with shells, though some may be found along the nearby coastline of the Inland Sea. The Vajra are forced to build and reside in tunnels cut into mounds and hillocks throughout the Kang Empire. The Mondre Khan make temporary camps in the northern region of the Empire, particularly the Opal Mountains. |
| 7-9 | 4 | **Roadway:** The main roads of the Empire are well-maintained, patrolled, and heavily used. Many side roads, paths, and trails branch from the main roads. These may lead to isolated settlements or individual dwellings. Encounters on a roadway could include: (1) coming upon travelers (see encounter #5); (2) spotting a hidden trail leading somewhere interesting (see encounter #3 or #7); (3) coming upon laborers working to repair or expand the road; (4) coming upon a Kang patrol (see encounter #6). |
| 10-12 | 5 | **Traveler:** Kang, Ispasians, and Vajra may be encountered in all regions of the Empire, while Mandalans, Mondre Khan, Quan, and Sunra primarily stay within the regions in which they reside (see encounter #3). Merchants from Faradun, Rajanistan, and the Nine Kingdoms also travel within the Empire. |
| 13 | 6 | **Kang:** Due to their increased suspicions of foreign travelers, the Kang are likely to question outsiders as to their business in the Empire. In the best case, a "foreigners' tax" may be levied; in the worst, one may be forcibly escorted to the nearest citadel for interrogation. |
| 14 | 7 | **Mondre Khan:** As enemies of the Empire, the Mondre Khan keep their camps hidden and move in stealth. An encounter with them may mean stumbling upon one of their encampments, spotting signs of an imminent Mondre Khan raid, or being ambushed by them. |
| 15 | 8 | **Shrieker:** These large, predatory birds inhabit the forests of the Empire, especially the Cerulean Forest region. Their metallic feathers are highly prized, as they are used in the making of costly blue iron swords and chain mail. |
| 16 | 9 | **Satada:** These malevolent beings travel the tunnels of the Underground Highway. They guard hidden entrances to the surface from which they come forth to raid and kidnap anyone unfortunate enough to encounter them. Rumor spreads within the Empire that the Satada have established a base below the Vajran Hills. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | 10 | **Tarkus:** Packs of wild tarkus range the western regions of the Empire. The Kang hunt these beasts to capture and train them as tracking animals, but wild tarkus are extremely dangerous and aggressive. |
| 18 | 11 | **Dractyl:** These winged reptiles lair among the cliffs and mountains along the Empire's northern border and may fly over the lowlands to hunt. Though generally of an unpleasant nature, dractyl are capable of limited speech and may communicate with travelers. If hungry enough, they may choose to attack instead, seeking to carry off weak or wounded party members, or simply steal their food. |
| 19 | 12 | **Behemoth:** These massive beasts sometimes wander into the Empire from the west, often following wild herds of durge, lopers, or striders (see encounter #13). |
| 20 | 13 | **Wild Herd:** Grazers, lopers, and striders range across much of the western and central regions of the Empire. Kang warriors mounted upon striders take great pleasure in hunting these herds, but travelers should exercise caution; while durge are placid enough, lopers and striders are carnivores, and both are known to eat humanoids and various types of steeds. |



# The Volcanic Hills

The Volcanic Hills is one of the most desolate and forlorn sectors of Talislanta. Its terrain is tortuous, rising and falling in twisted mounds of pitted pumice-stone, angular peaks, and deep ravines. Clouds of smoke and ash, byproducts of the area's considerable volcanic activity, blot out the sun for miles around. Streams of molten lava pose hazards to all but the most adroit travelers, and the air reeks of sulfurous fumes.

Among the hazards that may be encountered in this region are the River of Fire, which flows northwards towards the Iron Mountains, terminating in spectacular fashion at the Firefalls. In the central regions lay the Fire Pits of Malnagar, where in ancient times the peaceful Xambrian people were exterminated in a mass sacrificial ritual by the necromancers of Torquaran (the site is now considered cursed, and is said to be haunted by countless spirits). North of here stands Dragonrock, the largest volcano in Talislanta, formerly home to the now-extinct race known as the Drakken.

Their only folk to currently inhabit this region are the Drakken's descendants, the reptilian humanoids known as the Saurans.

# The Saurans

Standing up to seven feet in height, Saurans have clawed hands and feet, scaly hide, and powerful jaws lined with rows of sharp teeth. They wear abbreviated garments of furs and hides, red iron bracers, and dragon iconography.

### *Language*

Saurans have their own language, which may have been derived from the ancient Drakken tongue. However, unlike the Drakken language, there is no written form of Sauran speech. Sauran speech is typified by a sibilant S, or hissing sound. Common names for females are mainly derivatives of the goddess Satha's name, such as Satta, Sathya, and Sathas. Male names never begin with Sa-, which is a female prefix. Instead, males have names such as Sosar, Sir, Sotha, Sethar, and Sirras.

### *Ancestry and History*

Saurans are believed to be descended from the Drakken, a race of giant reptilian-humanoids who ruled the continent long ago. Following the defeat of the Drakken by the early Archaens, many of the survivors fled Talislanta to some distant land far to the south, crossing over a landbridge that later collapsed during the Great Disaster. The few Drakken who remained in Talislanta eventually evolved into a smaller and more mobile species – the Saurans.

During the Uprising, the Saurans launched attacks from the Volcanic Hills into the western territories of the Kang Empire. With their armored land dragons, they destroyed the Kang outpost of Kang-Tu, and inflicted considerable damage on the Kang forces. Following their victory at Kang-Tu, the Saurans withdrew to their territories, seemingly content to have proven that they were a force to be reckoned with.

### *Culture*

The Sauran tribes live in walled stone enclosures scattered among the Volcanic Hills, where they subsist primarily on wild durge, land lizard, and megalodont. Saurans have a predominantly matriarchal society – Sauran women choose their partners based on strength, courage in battle, and intelligence; if desired, they may have more than one mate.

Though perceived by many other peoples as savages, the Saurans have adapted well to their surroundings. Utilizing volcanic mounds as natural forges, they make crude but effective armor and weapons of red iron. The clans have domesticated certain other reptilian species, such as land lizards and land dragons, which they use as steeds in war and for transport.

### *Magic & Religion*

Saurans revere Satha, the giant dragon-goddess whom her followers say is the mother of all reptilian species. The cult has numerous followers among the Saurans of the Volcanic Hills, but is practically unknown elsewhere. Priestesses of the Dragon Cult possess no magical abilities except concerning the fashioning of dragon icons, fetishes which confer strength to faithful followers of Satha.

### *Government*

The clan's dominant female serves as the clan's high priestess, and for all intents and purposes, its ruler. She is served by lesser priestesses and by a male battle chieftain, who commands the settlement's troops. The high priestess hears all complaints and rules on all disputes.

Sauran armies are slow-moving but heavily armed and even more heavily armored. Their forces often include land dragons, which Sauran warriors outfit with plates of hammered metal and ride into battle (see sidebar). Saurans employ these creatures as living siege engines, using them to batter down fortifications and to provide cover against opposing missile fire.

### *Worldview*

Saurans mark the Kang and Araq as their most hated foes. After many successful attacks against the Kang during the Uprising, some believe that the embolden Saurans may launch more attacks against the Kang Empire soon.

Though the people are noted for their aggressiveness, certain of the Sauran tribes are friendly toward other Talislantan peoples. Some have dealings with certain bands of Orgovian traders, bartering firegems in return for high-quality metal tools, fabrics, and other goods. On occasion, adventuresome Saurans have been known to leave their homeland to travel throughout Talislanta, offering their services as mercenaries.

## Sauran Settlements and Places of Note

### Sathra

Sathra is a sprawling fortress constructed of rough-hewn boulders, volcanic rock, and ancient blocks pillaged from Wilderlands ruins. Sathra has a large contingent of Sauran warriors and boasts at least four dozen land dragons, each equipped with an iron battle tower and stone-thrower. The Sathra clans have a good relationship with the Orgovians.

### The River of Fire

The River of Fire is an ever-flowing torrent of molten lava whose source is the giant volcano called Dragonrock. The river terminates far to the north in a most dramatic fashion, in an incredible deluge of flame known as the Firefalls – a spectacular sight when viewed at night. Sightseers should keep one eye peeled for pyro demons, who inhabit the more active volcanoes found in this area.

### The Valley of Mist

Not far from Dragonrock is the Valley of Mist, whose foggy atmosphere is derived from the Firefalls' proximity to the snows of nearby L'Haan. In this valley can be found the Well of Saints, the sparkling waters of which are reputed to possess miraculous healing properties. Those seeking a miracle should take pains to avoid vorls, insidious creatures of mist who offer a definite and final cure for all ills.

### Dragon's Grave

A dead volcano located somewhere in the heart of the Volcanic Hills, Dragon's Grave is a fabled resting place in many a Rajan and Dracartan folk tale. According to the lore of the desert folk, it is traditional for ancient land dragons to make the long voyage to this mountain when it is their time to die. The interior of the dead volcano is said to be littered with the remains of untold hundreds or thousands of these great monsters.

### The Dragons of War

*Since the time of the Great Disaster, the Sauran tribes have used land dragons in warfare. Hatched from eggs and raised from birth, these huge creatures are trained to obey commands in the Sauran tongue.*

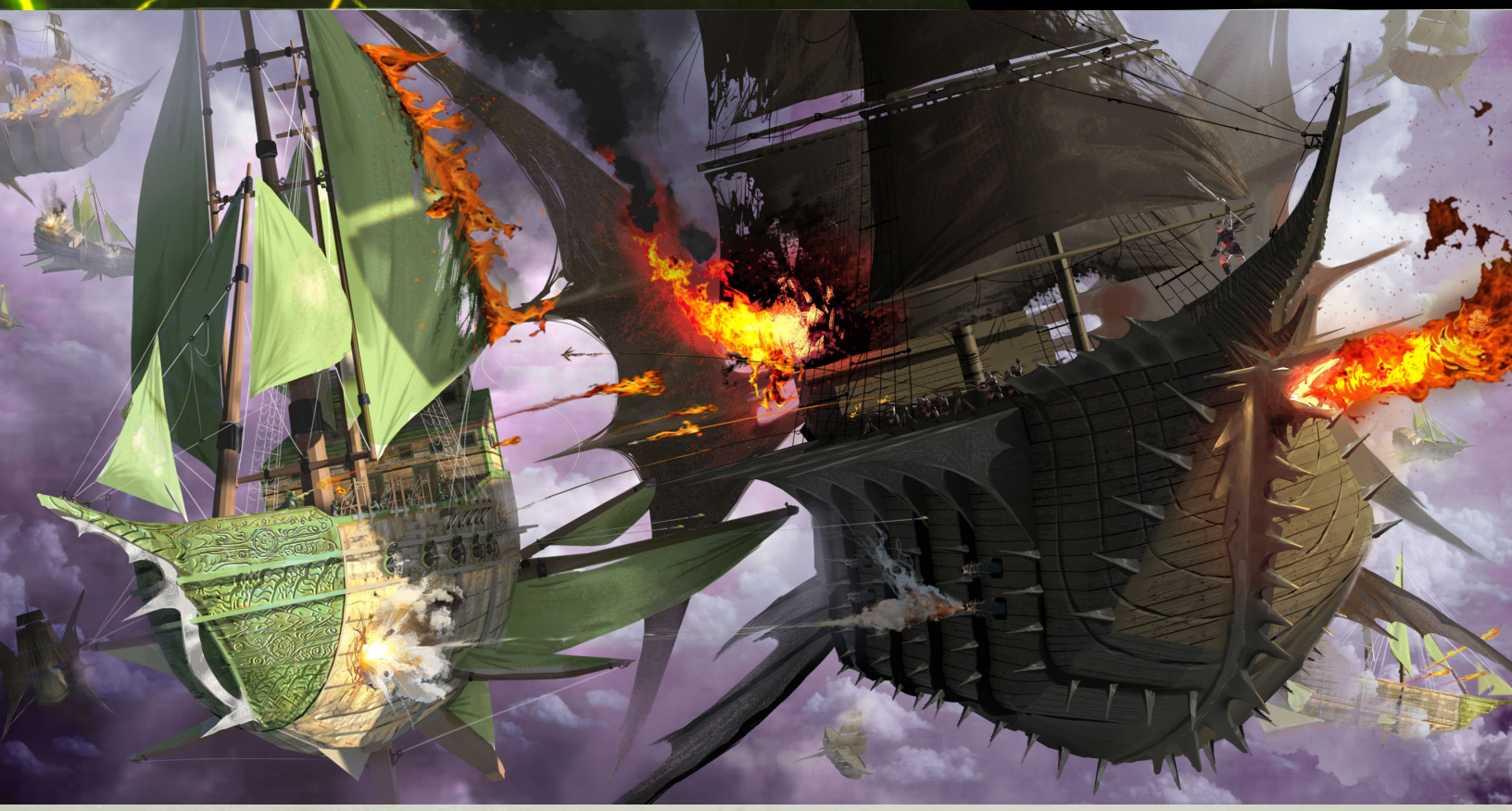
*Land dragons are naturally well-suited to such tasks and can carry even the heaviest burdens with ease. Their natural aggressiveness is such that teaching them to attack is a simple matter. It is harder by far to keep the creatures from attacking each other, particularly during the mating season, when male dragons normally battle to compete for females. Protected by layers of dense hide and exoskeletal bone plates, land dragons are practically immune to small or medium-sized weaponry. When their heads, undersides, frontal areas, and limbs have been augmented with plate armor of hammered iron, the creatures are nearly indestructible, and can be employed as living battering rams – a tactic that in the past has proven to be very effective against the greatest enemies of the Saurans, the Kang.*

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** During the Uprising, the Saurans and their land dragons invaded the Kang Empire from the west. After destroying the Kang outposts of Sathir and Kang-Tu, they returned to their homeland, strengthened by their great victory. Typical signs of this onslaught might be: (1) Kang patrols seeking vengeance; (2) Sauran raiding parties headed to or from the border, possibly bearing captured loot and/or Kang prisoners; (3) crews of Vajra slave laborers, guarded by Kang as they are forced to help rebuild the fortified outposts near the border. |
| 2-3 | 2 | **Extreme Weather or Hazard:** The volatility of the region may produce extreme conditions, such as clouds of dense smoke and ash from volcanoes, which can darken the sky for days; earthquakes, landslides, and lava flows, that may change the landscape overnight; aberrant weather such as acid rain or black lightning, which pose grave dangers to any luckless folk caught in the affected area(s). |
| 4-6 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The Sauran tribes live in walled stone enclosures. Those found living outside such places may be outcasts or loners. The insectoid pests known as raknids dwell in hives constructed partly above ground with extensive tunnels beneath. |
| 7 | 4 | **Water:** Finding water in these lands is a challenge. Rainfall is rare and can be tainted with ash or sulfur. Underground springs and geysers provide somewhat reliable water sources. Encountering a spring or geyser typically means Saurans live nearby (see encounter #3). Grasses, weeds, and scrub trees grow around larger springs, where one is likely to encounter travelers (see encounter #6), wild herds (see encounter #20), or predators hoping to feed on both. |
| 8-9 | 5 | **Roadway:** The only "roads" found in this region are the ruined remnants of ancient Drakken roadways, or the trails made by the passage of Saurans, whether on foot or mounted upon land dragons. In some places, one may also encounter strange obelisks bearing indecipherable runes, which some believe mark the path to the legendary caves of Erendor. Due to earthquakes and other natural hazards, many trails simply end suddenly or have been rendered impassable. |
| 10-11 | 6 | **Traveler:** Several small clans of Orgovian traders are known to have established relationships with Sauran tribes. In exchange for firegems, the Orgovians offer tools, fabrics, and trinkets. Aamanians may also be encountered here as they make a pilgrimage to the Well of Saints. More common travelers include Saurans, Kang soldiers, and Harakin warriors (see below). |
| 12-14 | 7 | **Sauran:** An encounter with Saurans could mean coming upon one of their many settlements, hearing and feeling the thunderous approach of a war band mounted on land dragons, observing a group of Saurans performing a ritual led by a priestess of Satha, or being spotted by Sauran hunters. |
| 15 | 8 | **Raknid:** The humanoid, man-sized insects known as raknid build massive hives in the Volcanic Hills. They prey on most types of lifeforms, including other humanoids, and aggressively defend the territories around their nests. |
| 16 | 9 | **Kang:** Since the Uprising, the Kang Empire has actively sought vengeance against the Saurans who attacked their settlements. Kang war parties of varying sizes raid the Volcanic Hills, mounted on striders and accompanied by trained packs of tarkus. Some may even be equipped with siege engines intended for use against Sauran land dragons. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | 10 | **Harakin:** Mounted upon dractyls, Harakin hunters are known to range into the Volcanic Hills. They seek food and resources and view all others as prey, making them very difficult to appease or barter with. |
| 18 | 11 | **Cthonian Demon:** Cthonian pyro demons, lava demons, and smoke demons thrive in the chaotic terrain and lava flows of the Volcanic Hills. Some believe earthquakes, rockslides, and eruptions of noxious smoke and lava are caused by these entities. |
| 19 | 12 | **Araq:** Bands of Araq mounted on swift duadir may be encountered along the western territories of the Volcanic Hills. Most come here to hunt land dragons, from which they derive food, horn, bone and hide. Araq are also known to set massive dragon-traps in the areas around the Hills, hoping to catch young land dragons. |
| 20 | 13 | **Wild Herd:** Wild durge, land lizards, and megalodonts are all known to roam the area, feeding upon the grasses, weeds, scrub trees, and salt deposits found in the Volcanic Hills. |







# The Baratus

The Baratus are a race of windship pirates who have long defied the stereotypes that most Talislantans have about the Wild Tribes. While they are bestial in appearance, with claws, fang-like incisors, striped fur, and long manes like the Mondre Khan, they are also literate, and are skilled in metallurgy and other crafts. Though their warrior-clans once roamed the plains of Talislanta like the other Wild Tribes, the Baratus left their old haunts and took to the skies in windships, where they became legendary for their raids on the cloud-cities of the Archaens.

## *Ancestry and History*

The fate of the Baratus changed when they came upon a windship that had made a forced landing in their territories after becoming lost in a storm. The Baratus seized the vessel, and soon learned how to operate it; from that point, the Baratus became pirates, using the vessel they'd found to capture other windships. In time they amassed a sizable fleet, which they used to prey upon the vessels and cloud-cities of their enemies, the Archaens.

Following the Great Disaster, the Baratus disappeared from Talislanta. Some thought they perished in the cataclysm, but the other Wild Tribes believed that they had escaped. So began the prophecy that the Baratus would return one day to lead them against their enemies.

Over a thousand years passed, but the prophecy finally came to pass. The Baratus returned and helped lead an Uprising that very nearly resulted in the defeat of the civilized nations of Talislanta. However, when the war ended in a stalemate, the Baratus sailed south, to a hidden stronghold somewhere in the Far Seas, or so it is believed.

## *Culture*

The culture of the Baratus is said to most closely resemble that of the Za, to whom they may be related. Like the Za, Baratus are raiders. They operate in clans that are said to range in size from twenty to a hundred individuals. Unlike the Za, the Baratus are windship pirates. Each clan owns at least one ship, typically equipped with ballistae, grappling hooks, and occasionally, fire-throwers.

Baratus value courage in battle above all things. Among these people, respect is never just given; it must be earned. Baratus rarely take prisoners, but will occasionally spare opponents who exhibit valor in battle. In Baratus society, males and females are considered equals, and both sexes are warriors.

Unlike the other Wild Tribes, Baratus covet the knowledge of the ancient Archaens. Whenever possible, they seek to acquire enchanted weapons and artifacts, as well as books and scrolls that contain Archaen lore.

### *Language*

Baratus are fluent in Low Talislan and sign. They are the only Wild Tribe that is literate, and some Baratus are fluent in other languages as well, such as Chana and Elder.

### *Government*

All Baratus clans have a chieftain, who may either be male or female. Clan chieftains prepare strategies for raids and command the clan's vessel(s) in battle. Any warrior who has earned respect and renown in battle may challenge a clan chieftain to combat, and take over his or her position by winning. Such challenges are rare, and fights are to the death.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Baratus are not religious; they tend more towards fatalism and living for the moment. After many generations of study and practice, Baratus have learned certain magical skills such as astromancy, enchanting, and basic alchemy.

### *Worldview*

Since the Uprising ended, the Baratus appear to have once again gone back to their previous trade as windship pirates. To date, they have mainly focused on small raids, their victims being limited to the occasional Cymrilian, Phantasian, or Farad trading vessel. Whether they will once again join or help plan another Uprising of the Wild Tribes remains to be seen.

Both Cymril and Faradun have put a bounty on Baratus ships, which can exceed ten thousand gold lumens per vessel. It is said that the rulers of both countries would pay ten times this amount or more for information leading to the location of the Baratus' hidden stronghold.



# The Crescent Isles

The Crescent Isles are a chain of small islands located in the northern part of the Far Seas, a body of water that stretches from the island of Nefaratus to the northern tip of the Kang peninsula. Uncharted at its southern and easternmost extremes, the Far Seas are often wracked by tropical storms, particularly during the spring months. Giant sea scorpions, sea demons, and other malefic entities are known to infest these waters.



Many of the Crescent Isles are small and relatively insignificant atolls, appearing on no known map or sea chart. Some, ages-old coral reefs or mounds of tide-worn stone, are barely visible above the waves, and can pose a hazard to all but the most experienced or prescient navigators. There are, however, plenty of islands of note, whether in fact or sailors' legends.

## Fahn

Fahn is a beautiful island, considered a veritable paradise by those who have visited there. Beaches of sapphire-blue sand ring the shore, and its forests exhibit an abundance of tropical flora, including hundreds of species of flowering vines and dendrons. Clear springs and pools dot the interior, where flocks of many-colored avir come to nest among the treetops. This well-aspected land is populated by a tribe of primitive people known as the Sawila.

## The Sawila

The Sawila have pale white skin and manes of colorful plumes running along their heads and neck. Slender and comely to the eye, they attire themselves in costumes of bright feathers, combs made of sea dragon's scales, and necklaces of seeds and shells.

### *Ancestry and History*

Sawila claim to be descended from a race of avians that migrated across the eastern seas to Talislanta sometime after the Great Disaster. If their tales are true, then these folk may be related to the Aeriad of Vardune.

### *Culture*

The inhabitants of Fahn are a peaceful and simple people who live in communal settlements, typically located at the center of a grove of fruiting trees and shrubs. They make their homes in graceful dwellings fashioned of woven grasses and suspended from the boughs of towering deodars; the resemblance to the nests of certain avian species has been noted by more than one Talislantan naturalist. Wind chimes of many fanciful shapes hang from the branches of these trees, filling the air with their gentle and melodious sounds.

Sawila revere all feathered avian species as avatars of their god, Arial, and will never harm another avian creature. Thousands upon thousands of avir migrate to Fahn each year; these migrations coincide with certain of the Sawila's

spell-weaving rituals, leading some Talislantan scholars to speculate that the lifestyle and customs of the Sawila may well be holdovers of their ancient avian ancestry.

Sawila songs are part oral history and part magic. Their music is composed of multiple layers of vocal harmonies, accompanied by wind chimes of varying pitch and timbre. The Sawila also practice many decorative crafts, such as weaving, pottery, macrame, the making of wind chimes, fashioning beads and implements from seashells, making decorative headdresses and garments from feathers, and painting with clay pigments. Among themselves, Sawila use necklaces of shells as currency, or for barter. They do not trade with other peoples, and so have no use for gold or currencies.

### *Language*

The Sawila are fluent in Chanan, and also converse via an expressive and graceful version of sign. Their language is sung rather than spoken, the melodic patterns conveying emotional content and even more subtle shades of meaning. Some say that the Sawila dialect sounds like the warbling of songbirds. Male and female names have four syllables, and a sing-song quality, such as Iakela, Eladia, Akatia, Selanea, and the like.

### *Government*

The Sawila have no formal government, but follow whatever pursuits they desire without harming others. Though disputes are rare, a council of seven tribal elders is available to advise members of the group as needed. Among these folk, crime is unknown. It is ironic, then, that so many Talislantans refer to such folk as "primitive," when in many ways they are far more advanced than "civilized" peoples.

Sawila are gentle creatures who abhor violence. Still, if threatened they will use their spell-weaving abilities in defense of their settlements. Their people have long been victimized by the Imrians and Mangar, who covet the exotic-looking Sawila females as slaves and consorts.

### *Worldview*

The Sawila tribes lived in isolation for untold centuries until the Imrians, Na-Ku, and Mangar began to prey upon them. Since then they have grown suspicious of outsiders, and they now take greater pains to protect themselves from attack. The Sawila have no formal relations with any other nation or government.

## Calling the Elementals

*Excerpted from a short monologue attributed to the famed Talislantan naturalist, Thystram, who, though widely known as an astute observer of the world around him, was prone to occasional excesses of style concerning his writings, as can be seen in the following:*

*"Nothing could be more beautiful or inspiring than the spell-songs of the Sawila tribes, who dwell upon the Isle of Fahn, in the Far Seas. To hear the music of the Sawila spell-singers is to know the voice of magic as it sounded long, long ago. Their melodies, sung in pure and simple tones yet woven into harmonic tapestries of dazzling complexity, are akin to the ancient calls of the elemental spirits of wind, water, earth, and fire.*

*"When the Sawila sing their wind spirit songs, clouds chase across the sky to gather or disperse; thunder, lightning, and rain come or go, all at their behest. When they sing to the spirits of the water, streams and rivers heed their commands. The seas around their island home grow calm, or roil in anger; they yield up sunken treasures, or convey to the Sawila such denizens of the deep as they wish to summon. When the earth songs are sung, the ground shakes and trembles beneath their feet, to open or close as they desire; rock turns to earth, and earth to dust. And when the fire spirits are called, they bring warmth, awaken volcanoes from their sleep, or do as they are beckoned.*

*"Should you ever hear the songs of the Sawila, you will know the true meaning of wonder. For these are the ancient songs that once were heard throughout Talislanta, before the coming of the so-called civilized peoples, and the havoc that they have wrought upon the world."*

### *Magic & Religion*

The Sawila practice a form of natural magic called spell-weaving, which consists entirely of verbal and somatic elements. They worship Arial, an elemental spirit of the wind whom they envision as a winged Sawila of great beauty, and her consort, Makk, a spirit of the sea. They claim to have derived their spell-weaving abilities from Arial and her avatars – the winged creatures known as avir. It is said that the Sawila can employ their subtle magics to speak to all creatures of the air and water, and even to effect changes in the weather. Sawila cover the bodies of their dead with fragrant blossoms and seashells, then cast them out to sea on bowers of woven branches.

# The Mangar Isles

The Mangars are a cluster of four small islands located close to one another. Covered in jungle growth, the hidden lagoons and grottos on these islands are home to numerous small pirate bands, known collectively as the Mangar Corsairs.

## The Mangar Corsairs

Mangar are of average stature, with dark brown skin and narrow eyes. It is the custom of the men to shave their heads, wear long mustaches, and decorate their chests with intricate and colorful tattoos depicting sea dragons. Mangar women shave their heads as well, but retain a long scalp-lock, typically confined by a ring of copper, brass, or gold. They also wear tattoos, though usually on their backs or arms. Both sexes dress in high boots, loose pantaloons, brass armbands, and earrings, with curved daggers tucked into their belt-sashes.

### The Fine Art of Backstabbing

*The Mangar possess a talent for treachery that is ingrained upon them from an early age. Mangar children are taught that to survive and prosper, they should never trust the word of others. Instead, they are told to trust only their instincts, and to do whatever is needed to achieve that which they desire. This behavior is evident in all aspects of clan life and is typified by the Mangar game of ska-wae, where it is acceptable to cheat, so long as one does not get caught.*

*Mangar will do anything to obtain an advantage over their rivals. When courting a prospective mate, they will bribe, cajole, threaten, and sometimes even kill to win a potential mate's affections. To rise to the rank of ship's captain, a Mangar corsair may have to eliminate a half-dozen rivals, using guile, duplicity, or the simple expediency of a knife in the back. Competition for the position of clan chieftain is even more fierce, and may entail the use of blackmail, sabotage, slow poisons, or outright warfare.*

*The Gao say that to meet a Mangar in combat is to understand the true nature of the Mangar soul. Where Gao rely on swordsmanship and daring, Mangar prefer ambushes, dirty tricks, and sneak attacks. A Gao is gracious both in victory and defeat. Win or lose, a Mangar will put a knife in you the minute your back is turned. To put it simply, the Mangar trust no one, and are in turn trusted by none.*

### *Ancestry and History*

For ages, the Mangar claimed descent from the Baratus, a race of fierce, sky-roving pirates extant during the Archaen Age. When the Baratus returned to Talislanta during the Uprising, it became clear that these claims were false; the Baratus are related to the Wild Tribes, and the Mangar are not. More likely, they are descended from the same folk as the Oceanians.

### *Culture*

Justly renowned as murderers and cutthroats, the Mangar Corsairs are the bane of ships that traverse the waters of the Far Seas. They are regarded with hatred and fear by sailors from many lands. The Mangar range far and wide in their swift-moving carracks, preying on other vessels, torturing victims, and robbing them of their valuables.

There are many different pirate bands, all rivals of one another. In lean times they prey on each other, sometimes fighting over potential plunder. The makeup of these bands is frequently quite diverse; captives freed from Imrian vessels, shanghaied sailors, exiles from foreign lands, and even Chana Witchmen have been found amongst Mangar crews.

Mangar are superstitious, and often read the skies and seas for omens. On a day judged to be governed by ill omens, a Mangar crew will not set sail except under threat of bodily harm. There is a powerful taboo against mutiny, which is believed to bring a terrible curse upon the mutineers. Despite this, Mangar are occasionally willing to risk the effects of a curse rather than endure the torment of an especially cruel or avaricious captain. One thing no Mangar will do is to cross the wake of a Black Savant vessel, which they believe will invite the most evil sort of misfortune.

Mangar live in fortified port settlements surrounded by walls of rough-hewn stone. They practice shipbuilding and sail-making, talents at which they exhibit considerable ability. They have limited metallurgical skills, however, and so prefer to steal quality tools and weapons rather than make their own. Mangar sometimes sing shanties that glorify the deeds of past corsair captains and bands, and sometimes attempt a few rounds of the mangarello, a foot-stamping dance of considerable activity but little grace (thought to be better-performed when one is exceedingly drunk on grog). Or, better yet in the eyes of the Mangar, they will prod captives with spears and force them to "dance the mangarello" for their entertainment – usually off a plank, and preferably into sea demon-infested waters.

When not on the hunt, Mangar favor ska-wae, a dangerous game played with curved daggers and dice. Mangar with fewer than the customary number of fingers are not uncommon, a direct consequence of poor ska-wae play.

Thieves by trade, Mangar traffic in currencies from many lands and cultures. Gold lumens are preferred, but no currency is refused. Slaves are used as barter, consorts, hostages, or for cruel sport.

### *Language*

Mangar speak the Sea Nomad tongue, and also converse in a form of sign. Common names generally utilize the prefix Mang-. Common male names include Mangido, Mangaza, and Mangoro. Female names end in -el, as in Mangidel, Mangazel, Mangorel.

### *Government*

Corsair captains rule their crews with an iron hand, dividing booty and maintaining a semblance of order whether at sea or at home. In large settlements where there are several captains, the one who is strongest or has the biggest and best-armed crew will claim the role of leader. Captains pass judgment on all cases of insubordination and attempted mutiny. Punishments range from a few strokes of the lash to torture, mutilation, or an invitation to "dance the mangarello."

The Mangar's main defenses are speed – running from pursuers in their swift carracks – and concealment. Mangar settlements are always located in secluded, hidden lagoons chosen for their defensibility. Mangar sometimes set traps to poison or incapacitate giant sea scorpions and other aquatic predators who live too close to their settlements.

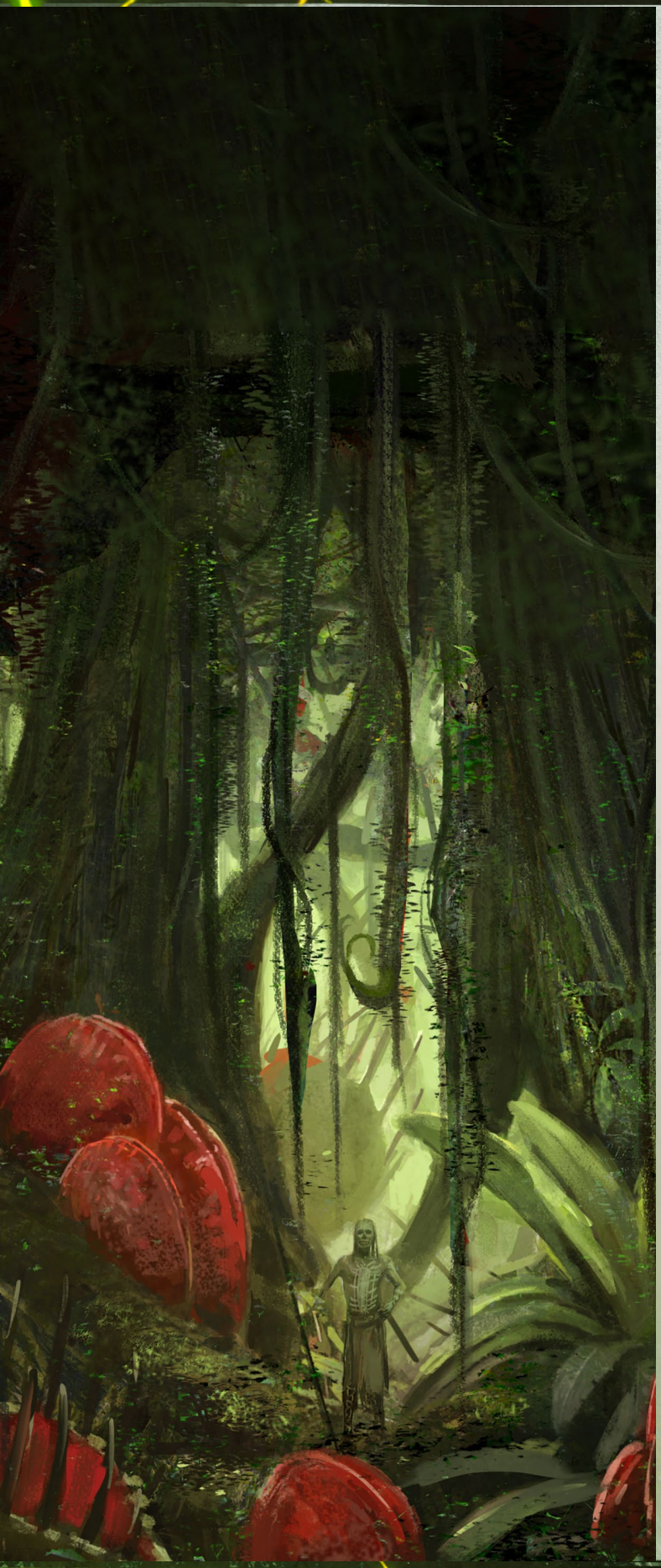
### *Magic & Religion*

The Mangar bow before no god, but have a superstitious fear of sea and air elementals. To placate these entities, they sometimes burn offerings of incense from brass censers hung from the bowsprits of their carracks. Aside from this, there are no other rituals or observances. Mangar sometimes cozen a few spells and charms from captive Chana, though it is a rare corsair who exhibits any great talent for magic. Mangar bury their dead at sea, tossing the bodies overboard without ceremony.

### *Worldview*

The Mangar have ties with no other nation or peoples. Like most sensible seafarers, the Corsairs steer clear of Nefaratus and give the vessels of Black Savants a wide berth. They mark the cannibals of Pana-Ku as enemies and regard the Sea Rogues of Gao-Din as rivals.





# Pana-Ku

Pana-Ku is a volcanic isle, wreathed in jungle, and ringed by a dozen or more reefs and lesser atolls. Some of these atolls are volcanic in nature and alternate between periods of activity and dormancy. The large volcano that gave birth to the main island of Pana-Ku has been dormant for centuries, though it still smolders ominously, occasionally releasing clouds of noxious vapor. This hostile isle is home to the Na-Ku, a folk of horrific appearance and habits.

## The Na-Ku

Na-Ku are hunched and misshapen creatures who have oily indigo blue skin, yellow eyes, skull-like visages, and a serpentine tail. They dress in crude loincloths of animal hide, and wear necklaces of humanoid teeth and bones.

### *Ancestry and History*

Some Talislantan scholars believe that the entire Na-Ku race may have been spawned (some say voided) by the Na-Ku's king, a horrible demon-like creature known as Narug. Others think the race may be a mutated species of Darkling, or a cross between Darkling and some species from the lower planes.

### *Culture*

The Na-Ku are cannibals who prey on other humanoids. Like termites in a hive, the Na-Ku exist solely to satisfy the desires and urges of their ruler – the horridly obese King Narug. At his behest they go forth in their canoes to hunt for food, slaves, and consorts, whom they feed to their king. Despite frequent hunting and raiding expeditions, the Na-Ku are barely able to keep up with the King's prodigious appetite. As a result, most Na-Ku must make do with such scraps and leftovers as they can scavenge, hide, or steal.

Na-Ku live in crude, domed huts made of thatch. They prefer to eat man-flesh but are not particular about type and quality: humanoids, wild animals, carrion, dead aquatic creatures that have washed up on the shore, and even fellow Na-Ku are all considered equally edible. Food (alias meat) is the only thing of true value to the Na-Ku, who, due to the gross appetites of their King, are always hungry.

### *Language*

The Na-Ku speak Chanan, though their version of the language has been mangled and garbled over time so that it bears little resemblance to the tongue spoken by other natives of the Far Seas. Common names end in the suffix -Ku, as in Kyo-Ku, Dja-Ku, Mo-Ku, etc.

### *Government*

The King is the undisputed ruler of the Na-Ku; his word, conveyed through the witchdoctors, is the law. As the King is maniacal by nature, his commands are not necessarily governed by logic. Nonetheless, his subjects must obey or face the consequences. Individuals accused of failing to obey the King's dictates in any way, or of slacking, hoarding food, or any of a hundred other offenses, are taken to the King for punishment. In most cases the defender is simply devoured by the King without trial or ceremony.

### *Magic & Religion*

Superstitious and ignorant by nature, the Na-Ku are in awe of magic. They revere their horrible King as a god and obey his decrees and the commands of his witchdoctors without question. Na-Ku witchdoctors act as seers and spiritual advisors, but rarely possess actual spellcasting abilities. Dead Na-Ku are viewed as food by all living Na-Ku.

### *Worldview*

The Na-Ku have no relations with any other race or nation and are shunned by all decent folk. In recent years it is said that the Na-Ku have declined in number, a situation that may be attributed to the Mangar Corsairs, who make it a regular practice to kill these folk on sight.

## Feeding the Demon King

Following a wreck at sea, the Farad procurer, Famal of the House of Coros, was taken captive by a group of Na-Ku cannibals, which he recounts as follows:

*"After being pulled from the water by a group of Na-Ku, I was brought by dugout canoe to the island and thrown into a crude bamboo cage supported by two pairs of wooden wheels. With me in the cell was a six-legged creature that I took for a tardisite, and two sailors from our ship, both of whom were quite dead. Ignoring my pleas, the Na-Ku took hold of a pair of ropes affixed to the wheeled cage and dragged the rude conveyance inland. After a time, we passed through a ring of thornwood and entered a village of thatched hovels. At this point we joined several other wheeled cages, each pulled by a team of Na-Ku. The eerie procession continued inland for a mile or more, finally coming to a halt at the base of a great volcano.*

*"Here I saw a sight that will haunt me to the end of my days: the horned demon king of the Na-Ku, seated upon a throne decorated with humanoid skulls. The monster was over twenty feet in height, and perhaps half again as wide; never have I seen a thing so grotesquely obese. Alongside the king's awful throne his servants had built a crude wooden ramp that extended upwards, terminating in a platform that was level with the demon-king's head. Now I saw the purpose of the wheeled cages, for this was how the Na-Ku conveyed food to their ruler.*

*"Shaking with fear I watched as a cage containing a dead nar-eel and an urthrax was rolled up the ramp, and its contents thrown into the gaping mouth of the demon-king, who chewed up the meat and spat out the bones. Another cage, this one filled with the bodies of other sailors who had drowned in the shipwreck, was brought up; then another, and another.*

*"When the time came for my cage to be brought, I uttered a prayer to the Golden God Avar, promising to donate the sum of my wealth if only he would spare me. Slowly, the Na-Ku began to roll my cage up the ramp. Then, a miracle! One of the wheels of the shabbily built contraption fell off; the wheeled cage tottered once, twice, then toppled off the ramp and came crashing to the ground. The bars of the cage gave way; I squirmed free of the debris and ran for all I was worth into the jungle.*

*"After many days and numerous brushes with death I made my way to the western coast, where a week later I was spotted and rescued by a Farad merchant vessel. Upon arriving safely in Tarun I went forthwith to the church of Avar and donated the sum of twenty gold lumens – admittedly, somewhat less than I had promised, though in truth I had signed no contract and in any event, the pact was made under extreme duress and therefore not binding."*

# The Scimitar Isles

For many years, these four small atolls, situated near the perilous Mangar Islands, were thought by most experts to be inhabited only by a few exotic species of wild beasts — such as the rare silver draconid, prized by naturalists and collectors. The Mangar Corsairs insist otherwise, stating that one of these isles serves as a hidden base for an ancient race of sea dragon hunters known by their ancestral name: the Sun-Ra-San.

## The Sun-Ra-San

The Sun-Ra-San are a semiaquatic race. They have silvery skin, covered with fine scales, and deep blue eyes. The Sun-Ra-San resemble their "civilized" brothers, the Sunra of the Kang Empire, but in general are larger and more muscular of build. They wear armor of sea dragon scales and boots of rainbow kra's hide, and carry spears and daggers made from the bones of sea dragons.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Sun-Ra-San are the descendants of an ancient race of seafarers who once spanned the waters of the Far Seas. They may also be related to the Batrachians, a race of amphibious creatures that dwell in the ocean depths far below the surface. The Sun-Ra-San tribes escaped from the Eastern Lands in time to avoid subjugation, and fled to the Scimitar Isles, where they now live much as their ancient ancestors did before the time of the Great Disaster.

### *Language*

Sun-Ra-San speak their race's ancient tongue, called Sun-Ra-Sa, and are also fluent in sign; the latter is useful when attempting to communicate underwater. Common names are hyphenated, male names beginning with Su-, while female names begin with Sa-. The second syllable always starts with an R, as in Sur-Rin, Sun-Ran, Sul-Run (male); Sar-Rin, San-Ran, Sal-Ra (female).

### *Culture*

Sun-Ra-San live in castles carved from giant mounds of coral. Their peoples are hunters of sea dragons and other large aquatic carnivores, whom they kill for meat, hide, scales, and bone; nothing is ever wasted (see sidebar). Sea dragons provide food and the raw materials required to make all that they need. Their ship's hulls are made of dragon rib bones, with the hide being stretched across the framework to form the hull. Sea dragon scales are used to make armor, weapons, tools, boots, and garments.

Like the Sunra, the Sun-Ra-San have a great love of learning. The young must learn to write the ancient Sun-Ra-San script, and to read the ancient sea charts and scrolls (inscribed on specially cured dragon hides) that contain the history and culture of their people. Dragon hunters value freedom above all things and would sooner die than serve under a master. One day they hope to return to free the rest of their people from the Kang.

The various Sun-Ra-San tribes trade among each other, using the scales of the rainbow kra as currency. They also trade with the Sawila of Fahn, and perhaps others in the region. Sun-Ra-San ships may sometimes be encountered far from shore, laden with sea dragon ivory, scales, and sunken treasure.

### *Government*

The Sun-Ra-San elect their leaders by popular vote. The ruler of each settlement, whether male or female, is accorded the title of Eminence. A council of eleven elected advisors assists the Eminence in all decisions, and may even overrule him or her by majority vote. The council also acts as the Sun-Ra-San's judicial system.

The Sun-Ra-San maintain a fleet of well-armed dragon barques, which are used for dragon-hunting and the defense of their people. Their port settlements are well-hidden, and have never been found despite numerous attempts by the Mangar and others.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Sun-Ra-San worship an elemental sea deity named Aqus. They have a great love of the sea, and revere the moonfish as an avatar of their elemental deity. Priests of the sect are practitioners of aquamancy. Like the Sunra, the Sun-Ra-San believe that the spirits of their dead will be reborn as moonfish.

### *Worldview*

The Sun-Ra-San have ancestral ties to the Sunra of the Kang Empire, but have no official diplomatic relations with any other nation, though some are sympathetic to the cause of the Wild Tribes. For security reasons, the existence and location of the Sun-Ra-San colony remains a secret. The dragon hunters have grown in number over the past few decades, to the point where they may soon be sufficiently strong to challenge the Mangar Corsairs for dominance of the Far Seas. The Kang, current rulers of the Kang Empire, are said to fear these folk and what they represent to their people.

## Places of Note

### Rune Island

A barren and precipitous mound of volcanic stone, Rune Island is notable primarily for the countless runes and hieroglyphs etched across the entire surface of the rocky isle. Talislantan scholars have long argued over the meaning of these cryptic runes, who or what created them, and to what end. A thorough study of Rune Island has never been completed, owing to such factors as time, the requisite cost in labor and materials, and a natural aversion to the isle's less-than-hospitable inhabitants: giant sea scorpions and nar-eels.

### Fetish Island

Scholars of many lands are intrigued by Fetish Island, named for the hundreds of stone images and totems that can purportedly be found in the jungles of its interior region. Most of these artifacts are one or two feet in height and weigh up to thirty pounds. The Na-Ku of Pana-Ku claim that these stone fetishes have magical properties; specifically, that the totems are alive, and speak in tongues. Unfortunately for the future of academic research, the isle is infested with several virulent predatory and parasitic species, including grey ikshada, urthrax, and alatus.

### Hunting Sea Dragons

*Like their ancestors, the Sun-Ra-San rely upon the massive creatures they call sea dragons for their survival. They hunt the great beasts in their dragon barques, tracking their prey by its wake and through the use of age-old aquamantic divinations. Upon sighting a sea dragon, the Sun-Ra-San give pursuit, until at last they draw within range of their harpoons. This is the moment of truth, for the hunters' aim and skill are all that stands between them and certain death. Should the first shots fail to strike a vital area, the dragon will dive deep, dragging the hunters and their ship down in a deadly maelstrom. If the attack is successful, the wounded sea dragon will not dive, but will instead attack the ship, thrashing wildly and snapping at the hunters with its great jaws.*

*When the creature has been defeated, the Sun-Ra-San offer a prayer of thanks to their elemental god and ask forgiveness of the sea dragon, whose death the hunters have caused so that their people might continue to live. This done, the body of the dragon is towed back to the Sun-Ra-San's settlement. Here, the creature will be brought ashore and stripped of its meat, bones, and scales; nothing is wasted. Afterward there is a great feast, during which the hunters will regale their people with the story of their exploits, and the bravery of the sea dragon.*



## Encounters on the Water

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 01-10 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The weather may change quickly, and in the worst cases could be strong winds with rough seas, dense fog banks, a lack of wind for days under blistering skies, intense lightning storms with lashing rain, or even a dangerous maelstrom (see encounter #18). |
| 11-25 | 2 | **Ship:** An encounter might mean spotting another ship or being spotted, finding a shipwreck or abandoned ship, or observing a ship being attacked or pursued. The vessels involved could be of mixed types – fishing boat, merchant ship, pirate ship, warship, or windship. See encounters described below. |
| 26-28 | 3 | **Land:** An encounter of land could mean spotting a partially submerged reef, hitting a submerged reef, finding an uncharted island, coming upon a coral settlement of the Sun-Ra-San (see encounter #12), or seeing the Floating City of Oceanus (see encounter #24). |
| 29-30 | 4 | **Mishap:** Something is wrong with the ship or its crew. This could be a leak, talk of mutiny, spoiled or infested food, man overboard, disease, being entangled in seaweed, a stowaway, a torn sail, fire, or a magical mishap. |
| 31-32 | 5 | **Angorn:** These winged eels glide over the water, often in large numbers. When in a frenzy of hunting fish, they may inadvertently fly onto the decks of ships, becoming a hazard to crew, sails, and rigging. |
| 33 | 6 | **Cthonian Sea Demon:** Nearly invisible in water, these demons originate from the lower planes, but occasionally find their way into the Talislantan reality via portals or rifts in the dimensional fabric. Entryways of this sort are typically located far below the surface; some may date back to the Forgotten Age, while others may have been created by Hydrans or others who delve in the occult. Cthonian sea demons are vicious and destructive, and will blindly attack anything that moves in the water. Encounters range in type from a "school" of small sea demons to a single sea demon of almost any size – including gigantic leviathans capable of swallowing a ship. |
| 34 | 7 | **Dead Calm:** This type of weather phenomenon may occur suddenly and without warning, leaving sail-powered ships of any size becalmed and basically dead in the water. This condition may last for a short time, or for many days, causing ships to drift aimlessly with the currents. |
| 35 | 8 | **Kra:** These giant, sightless eels hunt prey by sound and vibration. When aroused, they may slither aboard ships to grasp whatever they find in their massive jaws and plunge into the water to return to their undersea caves and grottos. |
| 36-45 | 9 | **Mangar Corsairs:** Feared and loathed by other sailors, the Mangar Corsairs travel the seas in fast carracks. Their ships are the fastest sail-powered waterborne craft in Talislanta – even if far away when spotted, Mangar ships can catch almost any other vessel on the water. They delight in boarding other vessels and making off with valuables and captives, and consider the torture of victims a sport. |
| 46-50 | 10 | **Baratus Pirates:** The Baratus fly windships which may be equipped with ballistae, grappling hooks, or even fire-throwers. They are especially greedy for ancient Archaen books, scrolls, or enchanted artifacts. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 51-54 | 11 | **Na-Ku Cannibals:** Ever searching for victims to appease their gluttonous king, the Na-Ku prowl the seas in long, swift canoes. They prefer stealth and the light of the moons when hunting. |
| 55-67 | 12 | **Sun-Ra-San Dragon Hunters:** These semiaquatic folk live in settlements carved from mounds of coral. They sail the seas in dragon barques from which they hunt and harpoon aquatic predators, particularly sea dragons. Sun-Ra-San ships are said to be carved from the bones of ancient sea monsters, and resemble stylized "sea dragons" from ancient times. The sails look like dragon wings, and the vessels ride low in the water, as the lower decks are flooded for the comfort of these amphibious folk. The Sun-Ra-San are deadly enemies of the Kang, and some of their clans are sympathetic to the cause of the Wild Tribes. Sun-Ra-San despise the Mangar, whose ships they will attack on sight, as well as any ship that they deem as a threat. |
| 68 | 13 | **Skalanx:** Also known as sea scorpions, these giant insectoids prefer to hunt other large aquatic creatures, including water kra, but may also attack ships with their massive pincers. |
| 69 | 14 | **Zaratan:** Typically benign unless provoked, a passing pod of zaratan fears no other creatures of the ocean and can simply dive deep if threatened. The only exceptions are if the pod is threatened, or if any newborn zaratan are in the group. In such cases, the adult zaratan will attack, seeking to ram and sink vessels that they perceive as a threat. Kra, sea dragons, and sea scorpions avoid them. The Sea Nomads have domesticated zaratan and ride them as living guardians of the Floating City. |
| 70-75 | 15 | **Zandir Trade Ship:** Typically encountered while hugging the coastline, these colorfully-sailed ships carry finely-crafted blades and utensils, fragrances, herbs, spices, silks, excellent wines, and opals. They seek metals, precious stones, magical artifacts, and information regarding dangers ahead or safe routes. Though they despise their age-old enemies, the Aamanians, Zandir are usually open-minded as regards other peoples. They seem to be especially friendly with the Gao, who some say have a "special relationship" with the Sultan of Zandu. |
| 76-81 | 16 | **Imrian Coracle:** Imrians may be encountered aboard huge barge-like coracles made of sea dragon hide and bones and drawn by trained kra, which transport smaller boats of woven reeds used for raids and landing ashore. Imrian vessels may hold captives from the Crescent Isles, the Dark Coast, or lands beyond. Imrians may wish to trade herbs, strange beasts, brass rings (their currency), and captives in exchange for intoxicants or other captives. However, they are just as likely to attack a lesser force and attempt to capture as many victims as possible. |
| 82 | 17 | **Black Savant Iron Galleon:** These black-hulled ships are rumored to sail where others fear to go, including the Midnight Sea and even the Aethereal Seas between dimensions, but are most often encountered traveling between their island home of Nefaratus and Khazad. Black Savants pursue mysterious errands and have little need of outsiders. Most sailors regard it as bad luck to cross the wake of a Black Savant vessel. |
| 83 | 18 | **Maelstrom:** These dangerous whirlpools may be found in almost any sea or ocean. They can appear suddenly, created either by natural forces or other means, including aberrant weather conditions, undersea interdimensional rifts, sea demons, or malevolent creatures such as Hydrans. A maelstrom can pose a hazard to ships of all sizes, pulling ships off course or potentially dragging them downwards to a watery doom. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 84 | 19 | **Hydrans:** These sinister and highly intelligent cephaloids are said to dwell in eerie looking coral "castles" located in the deepest ocean depths. They are rarely seen outside of such places, but are attracted to powerful enchanted items and artifacts, which they covet above all things. Hydrans have been known to sink ships that carry potent enchanted items or artifacts, either by creating maelstroms or interdimensional portals, or using their innate psionic-like abilities to compel pilots to crash their ships into rocks or sail directly into such hazardous conditions. |
| 85-88 | 20 | **Batrachians:** These water-breathing humanoids traverse the seas and oceans of Talislanta, harvesting sea plants of various types and scavenging sunken ruins for valuables, which they trade to the Oceanians, the Gao, and others. They typically travel in small groups, though tribes of up to a hundred or more sometimes travel together in search of food or shelter. Batrachians are aware of goings-on from the seas and oceans of Talislanta, and the shores of distant lands. Unless threatened, they are generally peaceful, and may be a valuable source of information.` |
| 89 | 21 | **Quaga:** These giant mollusks can be found in lakes, rivers, and oceans, and are known to attach themselves to the bottom of slow-moving or stationary vessels. The largest of these creatures can grow to ten feet in length and weigh over 500 lbs – large enough to damage or crush smaller vessels, and impede even larger ships. Quaga are carnivorous, and are known to eat almost anything they can catch, including humanoids. The violet pearls found in the shells of these creatures are rare and extremely valuable |
| 90-93 | 22 | **Aeriad Barge-Fort:** These wide-hulled ships are made of intricately-woven reeds with a great tree serving as the ship's central mast. Crewed by semi-avian Blue Aeriad from Vardune of the Nine Kingdoms, barge-forts are typically only encountered close to the shore, and almost never in open waters. They generally carry agricultural products such as fruits, grains, and vegetables; however, if more heavily-armed, an Aeriad barge fort may be carrying items of far greater value, such as Green Aeriad botanomantic wares, rare plants, and herbs, or important dignitaries from Vardune. The Blue Aeriad who pilot and guard such vessels are known to be somewhat high-strung and prone to aggressive behavior toward any ships they find suspicious-looking. |
| 94 | 23 | **Ghost Ship:** An abandoned vessel, typically with its sails in tatters, drifting slowly with the currents, or strangely unmoving, regardless of wind or tides. Most Talislantan sailors hold such ships in superstitious dread, believing them to be haunted or cursed. Others steer clear of them because they may be plague ships, carrying disease, pestilence, or undead entities such as shadowights or necrophages. |
| 95-00 | 24 | **Oceanian Sea Nomads:** Sea Nomads live upon the Floating City of Oceanus. They patrol the seas upon domesticated zaratan with the primary intent of protecting their city from predators and pirates. They typically avoid outsiders, but are known to seek trade with the Sea Rogues of Gao-Din, Zandir merchant ships, and Phantasian windships. They are generally not aggressive, and if threatened they will usually flee by diving far below the surface (zaratan have both lungs and gills, and Oceanians use simple breathing apparatuses made from the inflated stomach-sacs of nar-eels). They may be hunting a dangerous predator (such as a skalanx or kra) or protecting the Floating City of Oceanus, which will be somewhere nearby. In this case, Oceanian Sea Nomads will warn interlopers to leave the area, and may attack any who choose to ignore their warnings. |

## Encounters on the Islands

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** Weather conditions can change quickly on the islands, and a clear day can quickly give way to hurricane-force winds, typhoons, or even haunted types of aberrant weather like a ghost wind or witch wind. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** If on one of the main Crescent Isles, this will be the typical dwelling of the dominant culture. If a less populated or newly discovered island, this could be the home of a hermit, a refugee, someone stranded on the island, or it might be the camp of Imrian, Mangar, or Na-Ku raiders, whose vessels will likely be somewhere nearby. |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Trail:** Many of the Crescent Isles are covered in jungle crisscrossed by footpaths created by its inhabitants. An encounter might mean finding a long-hidden trail, being chased by wild predators or hostile natives, coming upon travelers (see encounter #4), or being victims of an ambush. |
| 7-9 | 4 | **Traveler:** On the main Crescent Isles, this will most likely be members of the dominant culture. On a less-populated or newly-discovered island, travelers could be explorers or castaways from distant Aaman, Zandu, the Nine Kingdoms, and Faradun. They may also be Imrian, Mangar, or Na-Ku raiders. |
| 10 | 5 | **Oddity:** Many of the Crescent Isles hold mysteries not yet discovered, and some of the islands themselves remain unexplored. One may find such things as buried treasure, ancient crypts or burial grounds, weathered stone dolmens etched with the runes of forgotten spells, the ruins of shrines or settlements, the wreckage of vessels from ages past, bubbling fountains of enchanted waters in hidden grottos, and other wonders. |
| 11-12 | 6 | **Avir:** The avir of the Crescent Isles are renowned for their brilliant plumage. Some of the most exotic and multicolored varieties may bring high prices in places such as Zandu and Cymril. |
| 13-14 | 7 | **Imrians:** Imrians encountered on the islands will almost certainly be slavers come ashore to take captives. They likely have a large coracle anchored nearby with smaller boats stowed on the beach. |
| 15-16 | 8 | **Mangar Corsairs:** Mangar may be encountered on any of the islands of the region. The various bands of Corsairs keep hidden encampments throughout the Crescent Isles where they stow supplies, loot, and captives. They likely have a ship anchored nearby. |
| 17 | 9 | **Na-Ku Cannibals:** The long canoes of the Na-Ku move swiftly and stealthily, and are able to traverse the rivers and larger streams of the bigger islands. They seek captives to return to the island of Pana-Ku and their immense king, whose appetite is insatiable. |
| 18 | 10 | **Draconid:** A rare species of silver draconid inhabits the Crescent Isles. Collectors and practitioners of the arcane arts pay high prices for them due to their rarity and their ability to track magical emanations. |
| 19-20 | 11 | **Rare Plants:** Many exotic plants, both beneficial and dangerous, thrive on the Crescent Isles. Some have healing properties or intoxicating effects. The venomwood tree is of particular interest to the Na-Ku, who fashion poisoned arrows from its branches and sap. |



To the south of the wilderness of Zaran lies the region known as the Dark Coast. Hemmed in to the north by the low-lying Topaz Mountains, the terrain here is predominantly thick and tangled jungle, interspersed with sections of marshland and tropical forest. The mountains that ring the coasts are covered in dense blankets of nearly impenetrable greenery, and heavy-hanging clouds of perpetual mist. Here, long-dormant volcanoes may erupt without warning, spewing rivers of lava capable of immolating great swathes of jungle as they flow to the sea. Caves, sinkholes, and tunnels beyond number lay hidden beneath the foliage; some reportedly connected to the Underground Highway, others serving as the lairs of dangerous creatures such as Satada, Subterranoids, andrak, and things unknown.

This region is home to many unusual species of plants and animals, including all sorts of predatory beasts, poisonous plants, and stinging insects. Legends abound of ancient civilizations and lost cities, all swallowed up by the jungle long ago. Green and scarlet varieties of lotus grow throughout the region, being most common in the central swamplands. Amber wasps also proliferate in this portion of the coast, an indicator that the swamps may well be rich in amber. The region's hidden riches have lured countless adventurers and seekers of fortune; many, if not most, to their doom.

The Boru and Kiru Rivers effectively divide the Dark Coast into three territories: the western rainforests, home of the Green Men; the central swamplands, home of the Moorg-Wan; and the eastern jungle lands, home of the fierce Ahazu.

# Western Rainforests

The rainforests of the Dark Coast are draped in a dense canopy of tropical greenery supported atop the spreading branches of giant deodars, some over a hundred and forty feet in height. Drenched by torrential rains from the Gulf of Mog, the forests are a riot of flowering vines, massive ferns, and barrel-shaped baobab trees. The hot and humid weather is ideal for plant life of all types, and also for the region's humanoid inhabitants, a race of sentient plant folk called the Green Men.

## Speaking the Language of Plants

Excerpt from the logbook of the Green Aeriad botanomancer, K'Ya Cha:

*"The weeks that I have spent among the Green Men have finally begun to yield results. They have come to trust me, and to understand that I mean them no harm. One of their number, a creature named Lahsa, today agreed to act as an interpreter, allowing me to communicate with some of the local forms of plant life. From our discussions I was able to acquire a fund of valuable knowledge, both in the practical and theoretical realms. For instance, I learned that the primary difference between plants and humanoids is their perception of time. To plants, humanoids are mercurial, chaotic, and unpredictable. By contrast, plants are steady, patient, and respectful of the natural order.*

*"All plants and trees are members of the plant kingdom, a hierarchy that ranges from the humblest lichens to the greatest and most ancient mang. As a general rule, the great trees tend to speak more eloquently than shrubs and plants. Having lived longer, they are wiser than their younger brethren. Stretching their limbs above the top of the forest, they can detect scents and sounds carried by the winds; through their network of roots they can detect the presence of other creatures by vibration. According to Lahsa, trees have a sense of history, a field of knowledge that they hold in high regard. Plants and shrubs, on the other hand, are more concerned with the here and now.*

*"Of all the plants we spoke with, the least sociable by far was the spitting crocus, which hissed at me as I approached and ordered me to go away (Lahsa apologized for the plant's rude behavior, saying it was typical of the species). A spiny-stemmed repente likewise affected a standoffish demeanor, but under the gentle prodding of Lahsa it finally allowed me to touch it without stinging. A great span-oak proved to be most cooperative. It talked with us about its history and lineage for hours, until the twin suns set in the west, and the great oak fell fast asleep."*

# The Green Men

Green Men are small in stature, with mossy green skin and hair, and bright yellow eyes. Imp-like in appearance, they dress in abbreviated garments made of soft, woven mosses.

### *Ancestry and History*

The origins of the Green Men are uncertain. Some believe that the Green Men were created by the Archaen sorcerer, Viridian. However, the Green Men themselves claim descent from an ancient race of plant-folk known as the Narada, a highly intelligent species who are said to have, over time, become rooted to the soil and evolved into the tree-like entities now known as Mang.

### *Language*

Green Men speak the secret language of the plant world, a lilting cant that is said to be quite pleasing to the ear and is reminiscent of the music of wooden flutes (see sidebar). Common names are "soft" sounding, with no hard consonants: Laomo, Lahsa, Eloa, and Alaho. Gender distinctions are not apparent.

### *Culture*

Green Men are the gentlest and kindest of all Talislantan races. They possess the ability to influence all things that grow in the earth and enjoy a symbiotic relationship with their environment. Green Men derive all that they need to survive in the rainforests: shelter, clothing, and sustenance. They reproduce by budding, the young sprouts reaching adulthood in about six months. Green Men make their homes in the boles of great, living plants which they call d'oko. They live in communal groups of up to eighty individuals, reproducing with a process similar to cross-pollination. Here, they tend the great d'oko plants that serve as their homes with great care and affection.

Green Men view all things in nature as connected and part of the same living, breathing organism. They coexist with many species of plants and animals that are regarded as dangerous or hostile by other Talislantans, including the giant mantrap plant, stranglevine, exomorphs, and alatus. The uncommonly mild and sensitive disposition of these benign forest creatures is such that, if removed from their homeland, many Green Men gradually wither and die of sadness.



### *Government*

The Green Men have no ruler or governing body, but live according to the laws of nature. There is no crime among the Green Men, any more than there is crime among any members of the plant kingdom.

Green Men are incapable of harming other living things, regardless of the provocation. Their only defenses consist of a variety of ingenious snares and pitfalls, which they excel at making. Many of these devices employ living plants — such as yellow stickler, stranglevine, and violet creeper — none of which ever molest the Green Men. When threatened, the natives usually flee deeper into the forest to entice pursuers into their cleverly laid traps. If trapped or cornered, Green Men surrender without a struggle.

### *Magic & Religion*

Green Men have an affinity with the elemental spirits of plants, earth, water, and air, but practice no formal religion. Their reverence for the rainforest is derived from a love of all things in nature. Some Talislantan naturalists claim that Green Men observe the changing of the seasons; in particular, the coming of spring; Green Men have certain secret rituals and celebrations to which no outsider has ever personally borne witness, involving organized chanting, singing, and perhaps dancing. More research into the subject is required.

### *Worldview*

Shy by nature, Green Men avoid contact with most of the "civilized" races, though some exhibit a fondness for Ariane, Muses, Green Aeriad, Gnomekin, and Mogroth. Green Men are often preyed upon by slavers from Imria, who sell the docile creatures as servants and gardeners. Imrians invade the Dark Coast in numbers during the rainy season, when the Green Men's young are just beginning to mature. Unscrupulous buyers in Faradun, Rajanistan, and the city-state of Hadj are known to covet Green Men slaves. Curiously, the Moorg-Wan and Ahazu never harm the Green Men, believing that doing so would arouse the wrath of the jungle.

# The Central Swamplands

This region is essentially one vast and nearly impassable bog. Sodden marshlands ring the coastal areas, where untold numbers of avians come to nest and raise their young. Water raknids also favor these places. Inland, the gnarled branches of hag-trees hang heavy with trailing mosses and vines, and the air reeks of the stench of rotting vegetation and brackish waters. Metal tools and implements seem to rust overnight in the sweltering humidity. Green and scarlet varieties of lotus grow throughout the Central Swamplands, though harvesting these rare plants is no simple matter, for these swamps are home to a race of amphibious humanoids called the Moorg-Wan.

## The Moorg-Wan

The Moorg-Wan are squat, four-legged humanoids of massive size. Their ponderous frames are covered with thick folds of loose brown skin. They wear no garments of any kind but make crude tools and weapons of wood and bone.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Moorg-Wan may be a degenerate or mutated species of Imrian; an even earlier connection may be made with the ocean-dwelling Batrachians. The Moorg-Wan claim that they are a distinct people, spawned from the primordial ooze at the beginning of time. Curiously, this account does not differ substantially from the Imrians' version of their genesis.

The Moorg-Wan did not participate in the Uprising, as they feared that doing so would enable their enemies, the Ahazu, to invade their home territories.

### *Language*

The Moorg-Wane have their own language, a crude tongue punctuated by much slurping, gurgling, and frothing at the gills, which is said to be almost impossible for non-aquatic beings to replicate. They also communicate by a version of Sign that is somewhat different from other varieties of sign language, as it makes use of an extra set of appendages and a tail. Common names start with a "moor" or "mur" sound, as in Moorok, Muurg, Moorug, Muurek, or Mugwan.

### *Culture*

The Moorg-Wan live along the banks of the Boru River; the sodden territories between the two rivers are their ancestral breeding grounds. Their mud-palace dwellings resemble great, oozing piles of muck and silt connected by networks of above-ground tunnels. Clans range from small villages of twenty or thirty individuals to great mud "cities" with populations of up to five hundred.

Moorg-Wan eat plants, mollusks, the eggs of other creatures, and, on occasion, their own young. They consider the lotus plant a delicacy, and jealously guard their supplies. Their tribes dredge the riverbanks for amber and mine the mud for sapphires and semi-precious stones, which are found here in abundance and used as goods for barter. The Moorg-Wan have no organized economy or mercantile tradition to speak of, but sometimes trade with other tribes in their territories, exchanging such goods as amber, food, wooden clubs and tools, and young female consorts.

### *Government*

The dominant male in any tribal group of Moorg-Wan is its chieftain. The chieftain is aided by his shamans, who intimidate their superstitious followers with the threat of curses and evil omens. There is no organized system of laws among these folk, though there are numerous taboos. Most revolve around obedience to the tribal shamans, who decide what is and is not taboo in the first place. Offenders are judged by the shamans, killed, and fed to wild animals – no Moorg-Wan would ever eat such taboo-ridden offenders for fear of acquiring a curse themselves.

Moorg-Wan are a belligerent and aggressive people who guard their territories with considerable fervor. Their favorite weapons are the bwan — a heavy thornwood club — and daggers made from foot-long thorns. At close range, the powerful creatures sometimes drop their weapons and attempt to rend opponents with their webbed claws, or to butt them to the ground and trample them underfoot. Moorg-Wan settlements are mud fortresses, surrounded by thornwood barricades and mud walls up to ten feet in height. All able-bodied males are considered warriors and are required to defend the settlement if needed. Moorg-Wan war parties regularly patrol the territories that border Ahazu lands, searching for intruders.

### *Magic & Religion*

Moorg-Wan shamans are the spiritual advisors of their race. They possess no actual magical abilities but are obeyed because their people believe that they speak for Moorg, the Mud God. Purportedly, the worship of Moorg involves many strange mating and fertility rituals, the nature of which is perhaps best left to the imagination.

### *Worldview*

The Moorg Wan are the sworn foes of the Ahazu, a race of four-armed humanoids who live in the jungles that lie to the east. The two races have fought over the territories that lay between their two lands for centuries. Moorg-Wan fear the Imrians, who sometimes hunt them with nets and capture-poles, employing captives as slave-laborers in their Lagoon City of Kragan.



## Life Among the Moorg-Wan

*While exploring the southern jungles of Talislanta, the Cymrilian magician Alderon was unlucky enough to have been held captive for a time by a tribe of Moorg-Wan. Years later, in a letter to an associate, he gave his appraisal of these denizens of the Dark Coast:*

*"The Moorg-Wan, gross though they may appear to us, exhibit certain of the attributes of civilized peoples. They covet purposeless riches, particularly sapphires, which they spend an inordinate amount of energy dredging from the muck and mire of their environs. They are religious, as is evidenced by their reverence of Moorg, the giant Mud God. They raise their offspring from egg to larval newt, then set the young adults to work in the mud mines. Those who find sapphires are rewarded with food; those who do not are slain and served up as their brothers' next meal."*

# The Eastern Junglelands

The Eastern Junglelands cover a region of rugged hills, mountains, and cliffs. Hanging vines and heavy vegetation make passage through the region a slow and difficult endeavor. Poisonous serpents and predatory beasts abound in this place, where few civilized folk care to venture. Better suited to this dangerous environment are the local tribes known as the Ahazu.

## The Ahazu

These fierce, four-armed folk may exceed seven feet in height and are imposing to behold. They have bright yellow skin, with fiery red markings lining the face and neck and running down the back of the arms, legs, and spine. Their features are almost demonic: sloping forehead, forked tongue, thin nostrils, and dark green eyes, devoid of pupils as well as mercy and compassion. Long and lean of build, Ahazu dress in reptile-hide loincloths, with numerous thongs tied below the shoulder and at the elbows, wrists, knees, and ankles.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Ahazu are a savage and warlike people of unknown ancestry. Some scholars believe that the race may be a mutated variety of Araq, though the Ahazu are not entirely reptilian in appearance. Certain cultural similarities also suggest a common bond with the Kang, possibly through some unknown "missing link."

The Ahazu did not participate in the Uprising, as they feared that doing so would enable their enemies, the Moorg-Wan, to invade their home territories.

### *Culture*

Ahazu are nomadic predators who make no permanent dwellings, preferring instead to sleep in the treetops. The typical Ahazu tribe is constantly on the move; once they claim a territory as their hunting ground, they guard it aggressively, hunt until the area is played out, then move on to the next area.

Ahazu have two basic modes: hunting and fighting. When hunting for food, the Ahazu never venture beyond their borders. The appearance of a group of the yellow- and red-striped warriors anywhere outside of their jungle lands is a certain indicator that the Ahazu are on the warpath, launching a raid, or tracking a fleeing opponent. Flight is advisable, for Ahazu in such a state are liable to attack anyone they encounter.

Ahazu are beset by dark moods and governed by strange passions that other races do not comprehend. They are prone to fits of shan-ya, literally, "battle madness." When the rage is upon them, Ahazu will attack any living creature in their path, even their own comrades. In such a condition Ahazu are completely devoid of fear, feel no pain, and attack with incredible ferocity – it is said that a single Ahazu in shan-ya can sometimes kill a dozen or more foes in the span of just a few moments. To die during a fit of shan-ya, slaying enemies by the score, is considered the greatest possible death for an Ahazu warrior.



## On the Warpath

The Thrall warrior, Cesta, once worked as a mercenary guard on an expedition into the Junglelands. Her account of an attack by a band of Ahazu follows:

*"Far in the distance I heard the fierce howls of an Ahazu band on the warpath. There was little time to take defensive action. We herded the mounts into a grove of parasol trees and took cover behind a stand of thornwood. A moment later the Ahazu war party came into view, running towards us through the dense undergrowth. Now I understood the reason for the Ahazu's striated skin: it helps them blend into the jungle shadows and makes them difficult to see clearly. We fired our crossbows as the first line of warriors came into range. The Ahazu took several casualties but kept on coming. The magician, Balmundos, prepared to send a spell of fire into their midst. The Ahazu unleashed a hail of three-bladed throwing knives. That was the end of Balmundos.*

*"Another second and the Ahazu were upon us, leaping and scrambling over the thornwood barricade. In close combat, the four-armed warriors had a decided advantage. I countered with wide strokes of my greatsword, using the long blade to keep the attackers at arm's length – an excellent strategy, but an inadequate response, for the Ahazu were too many. They overran our position, and soon I was the only one of my group still standing. Surrounded and outnumbered, I could think of no response but to fight until the end. Suddenly one of the Ahazu let out a blood-curdling scream. Frothing at the mouth, he set upon his companions like one possessed, wielding a three-bladed knife in each of his four hands. From the other Ahazu I heard the cry, 'shan-ya,' repeated several times. While they were occupied with the mad one, I made a strategic withdrawal into the jungle."*

Ahazu adhere to a warrior code that prohibits them from attempting to escape if captured in battle, which is considered a grave humiliation. If taken in such a manner, an Ahazu becomes the captor's slave for life. The pact can be broken only if the captor assaults the slave, at which point the Ahazu will be free to do as he pleases. This arrangement can be deceptive, however, as an angry Ahazu may regard even an accidental bump or touch as an "attack."

Ahazu aspire to certain ideals – to hunt with skill, show courage in battle, "move swiftly and strike like the wind," and neither ask nor grant any quarter in battle. They are extremely demanding and unforgiving of themselves. Ahazu warriors who feel that they have fared poorly in battle may become despondent and hurl themselves over the cliff known as Leaper's Ridge to their deaths. The area below this cliff is said to be littered with the bones of thousands of Ahazu, some dating back over a thousand years.

### *Language*

These folk have their own language, simply known as Ahazu, which is typified by harsh shrieks and yells, frequently punctuated by violent gestures and the brandishing of weapons. Ahazu people also communicate in a peculiar version of sign, using four hands to convey meaning with great rapidity. Neither form of speech has a written equivalent. Common names include Y'azu, K'yaz, I'zu, S'azu, Y'ozu, A'zu, and so on.

### *Government*

When on the hunt, an Ahazu tribe will be led by the group's best tracker, who is called the Hunter-Chief. The best warrior, called the War-Chief, leads the tribe when it is intent on battle. Either chieftain may be a male or female. While Ahazu may fight each other to settle disputes, violence of this sort is accepted as part of the warrior life. No punishment needs ever be meted out among these folk, for Ahazu who have failed in any way to live up to the tribe's standards generally commit suicide.

Ahazu excel at jungle warfare, their striated coloration enabling them to blend into the surrounding vegetation. Their warriors wield heavy three-bladed throwing knives in combat and are fearless; there are few more terrifying experiences than an all-out charge by a band of screaming, blood-crazed Ahazu (see sidebar).

### *Magic & Religion*

The Ahazu have no spellcasters and consider magic the domain of cowards and weaklings. They are said to revere a warrior-deity who determines the outcome of all battles; Ahazu observe no formal rituals or holidays as regards this unknown deity, or any other occasion. To die anywhere but in battle is considered dishonorable.

### *Worldview*

Most Talislantans who are aware of the existence of the Ahazu regard them as fierce, bloodthirsty savages (such impressions are not far from the mark.) The Ahazu have no known ties to any other tribe, race, or nation. They regard the Moorg-Wan as their ancient enemies and territorial rivals, and often engage in vicious battles with the swamp people. Ahazu will never do harm to a Green Man, believing that such actions anger the ancient Forest Gods, and may yield terrible consequences.



# Places of Note

## Leaper's Ridge

The wavering cliffs of Leaper's Ridge stand amidst the jungles of the Dark Coast, in the territories of the Ahazu tribes. There is a narrow stream here that drops over the cliff in a four-hundred-foot-long ribbon of water, terminating in a rainbow-hued cloud of mist and vapor. The waterfall is not the region's main attraction, however, at least as far as the local indigenes are concerned. For Leaper's Ridge is a place where old Ahazu tribesmen, or those despondent over having fared poorly in battle, sometimes come to hurl themselves to their death. Their remains litter the jungle floor beneath Leaper's Ridge, attracting scavengers such as urthrax.

# Gao-Din

Gao-Din is a small and rocky isle located some ten miles off the western coast of Mog. It is a dismal place, with treacherous swamplands and jungles lining its coastal regions. Inland, limestone cliffs rise from the murky vegetation, culminating in a great, central mound of stone. Here, looking out across the Azure Ocean, stands the Rogue City of Gao-Din: home to a motley folk known as the Gao, or the Sea Rogues.

## The Sea Rogues of Gao-Din

The Gao are a people of mixed blood originally descended from the ancient Phaedrans. Gao have intermarried with many different peoples over time, and so exhibit no single set of characteristics. The local style of dress is diverse and flamboyant, and features a wide array of cloaks, sashes, tunics, pantaloons, bandanas, ear baubles, eye patches, and high boots.

### *Ancestry and History*

Formerly a penal colony of the old Phaedran Empire, Gao was abandoned by its makers during the Cult Wars of the early New Age. The prisoners incarcerated in this heavily fortified installation were simply left behind to fend for themselves. Showing a degree of ingenuity born of desperation, they salvaged an abandoned Phaedran vessel and embarked upon a career as sea-roving pirates. Soon thereafter, Gao-Din was declared an independent city-state, and the Rogue City of Gao was made its capital. Since that time the Sea Rogues of Gao have prospered, and their small settlement has become a haven for thieves and outcasts of many races and nationalities.

### *Culture*

The formal penal colony of Gao has grown into a city of sorts, its old fortifications expanded upon and modified for purposes of defense. Gao buildings are made of stone, brick, driftwood, or anything available. Architectural styles reflect the preferences of dozens of races and ethnic groups.

The city's current population, composed mostly of thieves, outcasts, and freed slaves, is a remarkable mix of racial and cultural types. Rivals and even deadly enemies under normal circumstances, the inhabitants of the Rogue City generally coexist with a minimum of difficulty in Gao-Din.

### An Encounter with the Sea Rogues

*"Forced by circumstances beyond my control to obtain passage on a Zandir merchant ship, I had the opportunity to examine the methods of the Sea Rogues firsthand. We were headed for Faradun, and rounding the southernmost tip of Mog, when a red-sailed Rogue vessel was first sighted. The Zandir captain responded by ordering full sail astern and directing his crew to assume stations suitable for battle. Having no little aversion to sea travel in the first place, I viewed this development with a marked lack of enthusiasm, an attitude which also seemed evident in the faces of most of the crewmen.*

*"Nonetheless, the captain would not be swayed from action. Mounting the ship's forecastle, he struck a defiant pose and called out a challenge to the approaching pirate vessel. In the next instant, he was swept away by an immense stone fired from the Sea Rogues' ballista; a remarkable shot, actually, considering the distance between the two ships. The first mate, relegated by default to a position of command, ordered a general surrender.*

*"The Rogues overtook our vessel and leaped on board with a great show of flamboyance. Their captain, a gallant fellow attired in a dashing cloak and silken hose, politely bade all passengers to divest themselves of their valuables. When all had complied, the Rogues gathered up their spoils and departed, the captain enhancing his exit by employing a low, sweeping bow. Though he and his Rogues had divested us of our valuables, they left us our lives, and also, our dignity; commodities far more precious than the few baubles and coins that each of us had lost."*

In popular folklore, the Gao are perceived by many Talislantans as glamorous adventurers, a perception that the Gao work hard to encourage. Crude, crass, or abusive behavior is not tolerated among the Gao, who value good manners. Though the Sea Rogues' swashbuckling antics and charming manners set them apart from the murderous tactics employed by the Mangar Corsairs, there is no escaping the fact that the Gao are pirates who rob and plunder for a living.

The business of Gao-Din is piracy, and the fencing of stolen booty is a primary concern. These dealings are handled using secret contacts with agents in many countries on the mainland. Ransoming wealthy captives is another profitable endeavor. The King of Thieves is allowed a ten percent cut of all booty captured by ships that utilize the city's walled-in harbor facilities, but does not otherwise burden the population with taxes or tariffs.

### *Language*

Sea Nomad and Low Talislan are spoken throughout Gao-Din, with embellishments sufficient to archive the desired effect of charm and manners. Most Sea Rogues know at least one of these two languages, along with their native tongues. Common names vary wildly according to background; there are no ethnic Gao names per se.

### *Government*

The Rogue City of Gao is ruled by an individual known as the King of Thieves, elected by popular vote once each year. The King's primary duties are to arbitrate disputes, set fair prices for black market and contraband goods, and enforce the three basic tenets of Gao's thieves' code of honor, which are:

1) It is illegal to kill a fellow thief (i.e., a citizen of Gao) while in the city proper.
2) It is illegal to reveal the seven secret passwords to any non-citizen.
3) It is illegal to steal any item worth more than twenty gold lumens from a fellow thief while in the city proper.

The punishment for failure to comply with the code's tenets is determined by the King's appraisal of the circumstances. In most cases, individuals found guilty of breaking either the first or second tenets are bound, gagged, and fed to the monsters of the sea. Those found guilty of breaking the third tenet are given two weeks to reimburse the victim of the theft three times over. Failure or inability to comply with this edict once again brings the sea demons and scorpions to bear.

Gao citizenship is not easily obtained, though it is technically available to any thief, outcast, or scoundrel who seeks it. To reduce the chance of spies or informants infiltrating Gao's close-knit society, all individuals applying for citizenship must allow themselves to be subjected to scrutiny by the King's advisors, a group traditionally comprised of fellow thieves, wizards, and the like. Those who pass their rigorous tests are granted citizenship and taught the seven secret passwords required to gain access to the city. Those who fail are seldom heard from again.



### *Magic & Religion*

All Gao are free to worship or not, as they please. Accordingly, many diverse cults and religions proliferate in the Rogue City, though most have only a handful of followers. Gao bury their dead at sea in a formal ceremony that entails the laying of wreaths upon the water.

Magicians of many sorts can be found throughout the city. Their talents are considered useful by the Gao, who sometimes use magic to disguise themselves, their booty, and their ships.

### *Worldview*

Officially, the city-state of Gao-Din has no formal relations with any other government, religious group, or secret society. Neither does Gao rule out the possibility of association with almost any government, group, or individual, providing there is a profit to be made by entering into such a relationship. Only the Imrians, Rajans and Aamanians seem exempt from this policy, the Sea-Rogues having a definite aversion to slavers and religious fanatics. Like other seafaring nationalities, Sea Rogues steer clear of the mysterious Black Savants, whose dark vessels occasionally ply the waters of the Azure Ocean. Curiously, Gao-Din has an agreement of sorts with their rivals, the Mangar Corsairs (see sidebar).

## Professional Courtesy

*If it is true that there is no honor amongst thieves, then the relationship that exists between the Mangar and the Sea Rogues of Gao-Din must be regarded as peculiar, to say the least. Both are pirates by trade, though their methods are as different as night and day. The Mangar are cutthroats who are known to subject their victims to torture, humiliation, and cruel sport. The Gao are swashbucklers whose gallant treatment of their victims – females in particular – is the stuff of popular folk legends. The Mangar are despised; the Gao are romanticized. Further, there is no love lost between the two, who regard each other with considerable animosity.*

*Yet despite such differences, an unwritten agreement exists between the Mangar and Gao, which, with few exceptions, has remained unbroken for centuries. In short, the two have divided the seas and oceans of Talislanta between them. From the western shore of the Bay of Cicz eastward to the Far Seas, and north to the Sea of Madness, the waters are considered the territories of the Mangar. From the eastern shore of Baratus Bay west through the Azure Ocean belongs to the Gao. The southern tip of Faradun marks a line of demarcation between the two territories that are observed by both peoples.*

*Cynics have suggested that the division of territory between these two peoples is one of geographical convenience only. However, this does not explain why the Mangar will seldom pursue even the richest merchant ships west beyond the horn of Faradun, or why the Gao will abandon the pursuit of vessels that pass beyond this point to the east. Rather than convenience, it appears that the relationship between the Mangar and the Gao is primarily one of professional courtesy.*

# Imria

Imria is a large island located off the southern coast of Mog, in the Azure Ocean. Its dense jungles, twisting inlets, and underwater grottos teem with such dangerous creatures as lurkers and the giant, sightless eels called kra. Mount Talus, a large and intermittently active volcano, rises above the southwestern jungle, and sea demons prowl the coastal waters in force. Perhaps the most dangerous inhabitants of the isle, however, are the amphibious humanoids known as the Imrians.

## The Imrians

Imrians are tall and muscular, with sloping shoulders, and dark, deep-set eyes. Their scaly yellow-green skin is covered with a coating of translucent slime, which serves to keep moisture in when they are on dry land. Their hands and feet are webbed, and their powerful jaws are lined with a double row of sharp teeth. Both the males and females dress in crude loincloths of kra hide and wear necklaces of brass rings.

### *Ancestry and History*

Talislantan scholars believe that the Imrians are probably descended from the Batrachians, a race that dwells mainly in the deepest oceans and seas of Talislanta. The Imrians disagree, claiming that they are the fabled First Folk of legend (see Magic & Religion).

### *Culture*

The Imrians have a single large settlement called Kragan. Located in a great lagoon situated in the center of the island, this place consists of hundreds of reed and thatch hovels, each plastered with mud and supported on stilt-like poles. The tallest of these structures tower forty feet or more above the lagoon and are occupied by the wealthiest Imrians — the King of Imria dwells within the highest. The least prosperous Imrians own hovels that stand just above the water or are partially submerged, depending upon the tide. Slave laborers and those awaiting sale are housed in floating pens, moored by heavy lines to the lagoon bottom.

Imrian habits are generally unappreciated by the other intelligent races of Talislanta (see sidebar). Most consider the amphibians' taste for slugs, worms, and leeches to be disgusting, and find it impossible to enjoy a decent meal in their presence. The Imrians themselves find most common types of food and drink revolting, but regard ten-year-old brine and giant water bugs as great delicacies. The light coating of slime that covers the body of a healthy Imrian is likewise unappealing to some — especially clothiers and launderers, who dread the appearance of an Imrian in their establishments.

Imrians are slavers, a profession that other Talislantan peoples regard as repulsive, even among those who use slaves; Imrians are generally regarded as a backward society. The Imrians, aware that this is how they are perceived, exhibit considerable defensiveness, hostility, and insecurity regarding the issue of their nobility and lineage. Imrians slavers prey on the primitive tribes that dwell along the southern coasts and isles of the Talislantan continent: the Moorg-Wan, Ahazu, and Green Men of the Dark Coast; the Witchmen of Chana; Sawila, and to a lesser extent, the Mogroth of Mog. They also traffic in narcotic herbs, exotic beasts, and various forms of contraband, selling mainly to the Farad. Brass rings are employed as currency among these folk.

Imrians are among the few Talislantans who do not fear to sail into the open sea. They range far and wide in their massive, barge-like coracles, which are constructed from the bones and hide of kra. Smaller vessels of woven reeds are used for shore raids and to transport captured slaves back to the larger ships.

## The Outcasts

*"I was approaching the settlement of Tabal by canoe, in the company of a pair of surly Jhangaran guides, when both were distracted by a disturbance that emanated from the dense vegetation lining the near shore – a sound perhaps best described as a droning chant of some sort, accompanied by a rhythmic, metallic clanging.*

*My Jhangaran guides panicked and jumped overboard, leaving me alone in the boat. Arms flailing wildly, they struggled to shore and ran screaming into the settlement. A minute later the heavy wooden gates slammed shut and were barred from within. A few of the braver Jhangarans peeked nervously over the top of the walls; the rest hid themselves from view.*

*As I sat in the slowly drifting canoe trying to make sense of what had transpired a ragged band of several dozen Jhangaran Outcasts emerged from the jungle and headed towards the settlement. They seemed a motley group, dressed in rags, banging crude iron gongs and pots, and dragging their feet or limping as they went. All looked glassy-eyed, and in ill health; some few gibbered and drooled, apparently without control, as if perhaps they were deranged.*

*A spokesperson for the Outcasts called out to those who huddled inside the settlement. "Hear!", said he. "We, who have nothing, come to you for alms." The Jhangarans inside Tabal let out a moaning, wailing sound, as if faced with a fate worse than death. One among them cried out: "Anything! Only come no closer to the settlement, and do not visit your accursed stigma upon us!"*

*A moment later two heavy sacks were thrown over the wall in the direction of the Outcasts. The Outcasts made no response, but stood completely still. From within the settlement I heard more groaning and cursing. Then a third sack was thrown over. Apparently this appeased the Outcasts, for they come forth to claim the offerings, which I now saw consisted of leftover food, some sagging wineskins, bundles of old rags, used utensils, and the like. The ragged group then headed back into the jungle. Perhaps it was my imagination, but it seemed to me that the Outcasts did not appear so sickly or downcast now as they did before; in fact, most seemed in good spirits, and even spry."*

### *Language*

Although most Imrians can speak a crude version of the Low Talislan tongue, their slurred and gurgling manner of speech can be difficult for outsiders to comprehend. When among their kind, Imrians prefer instead to converse in Piscine, the language of other aquatic creatures. Imrians use a crude written symbology and numerology that they claim was developed by their ancient ancestors, though its appearance seems to imply, rather, that it was created from bits and pieces pirated from other primitive writing and number systems and patched together in haste with little sense of logic or organization. Deciphering such writings is difficult for non-Imrians, not because of their intricacy, but because of their hodgepodge nature.

### *Government*

The Imrians are ruled by a king, who lives in the city of Kragan. His primary responsibility is to oversee the slave and narcotics trades, though the King is also commander in chief of the Imrian military. The Imrian hierarchy is based on a military command structure: the King commands his Captains, who give orders to their lieutenants, on down to the lowly "mud soldiers."

The Imrians have a naval force of several hundred coracles, but their ships are flimsy in comparison with the wooden-hulled craft of other Talislantans. Imrian military capabilities are considered mediocre at best. The settlement of Kragan is more formidably protected by its hostile environs than by the Imrians themselves.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Imrians worship no god, and mock those who do as ignorant savages. They have no ritual observances as regards the dead, and merely feed their bodies to the kra. Considering themselves to be superior to the other races of Talislanta, they are incapable of comprehending any position bearing greater esteem than King of Imria.

The Imrians claim to be the First Race, from whom the "lesser species" supposedly descended. They say their people rose from the primordial seas that gave birth to all life on Archaeus. The Imrians cite as evidence certain ancient coral tablets, held in their possession for many generations. Retrieved from a sunken crypt by their early ancestors, the tablets purportedly contain the secret history of the Imrian race, dating back over 20,000 years.

Those Talislantan scholars who acknowledge the existence of the Imrian tablets believe that they do indeed contain priceless historical information — not relating to the Imrians, but of an ancient and advanced civilization that sank beneath the waves untold ages ago. There are thought to be several thousand of the coral slabs in the city of Kragan, many of which may contain priceless secrets from the Forgotten Age.

### *Worldview*

Before the founding of the Nine Kingdoms, the Imrians ruled a large stretch of Mog and Taz, but when the Thrall tribes united, they cast the intruders back into the sea — to this day, the two races hate one another. Several bloody defeats inflicted by the armies of the Nine Kingdoms have also persuaded the Imrians that slave raids into Astar to capture Muses are no longer profitable. Despite such setbacks, the Imrians continue to foster dreams of conquest.

## Imrian Settlements

### The City of Kragan

The Imrians have but a single settlement, the City of Kragan. It is accessible from the sea by several hidden, winding inlets, each heavily guarded by slave warriors, wild beasts, and Imrian guards.



## Among the Imrians

The Farad procurer, Falalas of the House of Nazir, was required by his superiors to handle certain transactions with the Imrians. These are his thoughts, as recorded in his ledger:

*"This evening I was required by my superiors to entertain an Imrian captain and his chief slaver in my quarters, to finalize a lucrative transaction involving the acquisition of eight dozen slaves. I did not relish the job, as the Imrians are a repulsive lot who reek of mudflats and rotten shellfish. Nevertheless, the obligation to my House was the prime consideration. From the start, the affair went badly. In response to my offer of dinner, the Imrians requested aramatus, a variety of giant armored leech, boiled alive in brine and served in its shell, with a ragout of sand crawlers and sea slimes. When this request was brought to the kitchen my cook tendered his resignation at once. In a panic I sent a pair of assistant procurers to the marketplace to find foodstuffs suitable for my Imrian clients.*

*"In the interim I sought to entertain my guests as best I could. Two hours passed, during which time the Imrians drank a cask of fermented brine, all the while growing louder and more obstreperous with each passing minute. The transaction seemed in dire jeopardy when finally, my two assistants returned, carrying with them a steaming, eight-foot-long aramatus coiled up in a great iron tureen. The meal was served and the Imrians ate with relish, cutting the aramatus into sections and cracking open its shell with iron tongs and knives. After dinner they toasted me with mugs of brine, affixed their marks to a contract, and departed. My chambers were a mess and my furnishings covered with slime, but at least the deal was done."*

# Jhangara

Bordered to the east and west by twin forks of the Axis River, Jhangara is a hot and humid land traveled by few civilized people. Its terrain consists in large part jungle, murky swamp, and bog, becoming progressively more dense and inhospitable towards the southern coastal regions. Here, untamed marshlands predominate, populated by numerous unfriendly species of animals and plants such as malathropes, stranglevine, and the horrid insectoid predators known as water raknids.

Twin forks of the Axis River border this region to the east and west, separating it from Aaman to the north and the deep swamplands of Mog to the east and south. No roadways are to be found in this marshy region, any passage through being limited to shallow-bottomed boats and a network of trails that must be cleared daily to prevent them from quickly becoming overgrown. No safety is to be found anywhere in this region; the swamps from shore to shore being infested with water raknids, lurkers, and skalanx, and the trees above being populated by Arborin, winged alatus, and worse. The only humanoids to have established any sort of settlements in this land are the strange and superstitious folk known as the Jhangarans.

## The Jhangarans

Jhangarans are odd and ungainly in appearance. They have marbled brown and sepia-colored skin, elongated limbs, elliptical craniums, and pinched, angular features. Both the males and females are hairless and may attain heights of over six and a half feet. They go about barefoot, and wear only loincloths and bands of coarse cloth wrapped about their arms and legs.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Jhangarans are thought to be descended from several wild humanoid peoples. Their striated skin suggests a possible connection with the Ahazu tribes of the Dark Coast. Otherwise, little is known about these people and their history, as the Jhangarans themselves do not keep records, nor do they seem to care about their ancestral past.

### *Culture*

Jhangarans are a sullen and superstitious people, prone to displays of hostile or even violent behavior. They live in tribal groups, typically comprised of individuals of the same occupation. Conditions in a typical Jhangaran settlement are abysmal. Open ditches serve as sewage lines, and the air is heavy with the stench of filth and decay. The huts are alive with insects and vermin, and ragged bands of filthy children run around unattended. An outer wall constructed of crude axe-hewn timbers affords their settlements some protection from against attack by bandits, wild beasts, and murderous hordes of water raknids. The tribes subsist on sea-slugs and raw meat, do not use fire, and do not know metalworking or magic. Jhangarans have a great weakness for alcohol and consume as much cheap ale and grog as they can afford. Unfortunately, alcohol makes them mad and unpredictable.

The Jhangaran people are divided into four different tribes, who differentiate themselves by the color of the arm- and leg-wrappings that they wear. Mud-Miners wear grey, Marsh-Hunters wear green, black is for Mercenaries, and red for Outcasts. Rivalries between the four tribes are common, the effects of which may range from prejudicial behavior to all-out warfare. The strangest of the tribes are the Outcasts, who wander the swamps and jungles of Jhangara in groups ranging in size from a half dozen to as many as a hundred individuals (see sidebar). The other tribes regard them with superstitious dread and will do almost anything to keep a group of Outcasts from approaching their camps and settlements. The Jhangarans believe that all Outcasts bear with them the "mark of doom." A Jhangaran who is so much as touched by one of "the cursed ones" is immediately branded an Outcast. He or she then has two choices: commit suicide, or join the Outcasts. To kill an Outcast, the Jhangarans believe, brings a terrible curse upon the murderer and his or her family.

### *Language*

The Jhangaran tongue is a mangled dialect derived from Low Talislan. Jhangarans generally begin all conversation by the use of a single imperative, delivered in a gruff or forceful manner, as in, "!Hold!" "!Hear!" and the popular Jhangaran insult, "!Die!" Common names are harsh sounding, with hard consonants, as in Yazk, Jhank, Kozk, and Kyuk.

### *Government*

Jhangarans are anarchists who observe no laws and argue constantly among themselves. The loudest and most obnoxious individuals usually prevail in a given situation and may temporarily be regarded as a "leader" of sorts. A single settlement can have as many as eight or ten such figures, each striving to be heard over the others. Accordingly, projects requiring group cooperation are usually doomed to failure from their inception, explaining

the dismal living conditions that are typical of Jhangaran settlements.

Jhangarans will band together to defend their clans, tribes, or settlements, but lack organization and discipline. Settlements are fortified, but defenses are crude at best. Jhangaran mercenary warriors are considered highly unreliable and are employed only because they work so cheaply.

### *Magic & Religion*

Jhangarans have no religion and know nothing about magic. They observe only two ritual days of note: Jha, a holiday viewed by the populace mainly as a good excuse to get as intoxicated as possible, and the Septennial Concordance, a fourteen-day period in which the seven Talislantan moons remain in alignment. During this time, no citizen of Jhangara will dare to venture forth into the swamps at night. The Jhangarans claim that the Horag, a monster of immense proportions, stalks the swamplands during the Septennial Concordance, searching for victims. Jhangarans accidentally caught in the swamps after sunset during such times have been known to slit their own throats rather than face the terror of this fearsome monster.

### *Worldview*

The Aeriad and Zandir tolerate Jhangaran excesses in order to obtain valuable trade goods, but most other Talislantans consider Jhangarans to be untrustworthy. The unscrupulous Farad make no such distinctions and employ Jhangarans to harvest the narcotic plant known as k'tallah.

During the Uprising, a massive group of Jhangarans traveled through Mog and invaded Astar, expecting an easy victory over the peaceful inhabitants. Instead, they were sent fleeing back to Jhangara in fear, the victims of a concerted telempathic attack by the Muses. Since then, the tribes have mainly kept to their own territories.





# Jhangaran Settlements

## Karansk

The inhabitants of Karansk are Mud-Miners, who make their living by dredging the riverbanks and swamplands for sapphires, amber, and gold. The mud-mines of Karansk are dangerous places — virtual quagmires, teeming with alatus, urthrax, and other vermin.

## Tabal

The denizens of Tabal are Marsh-Hunters, who scour the marshes along the shores for caches of scintilla and trap wild beasts to earn their sustenance. These commodities are traded to Zandir free traders, who travel to this southeastern harbor in their swift vessels.

## Jhangkin

Situated on the banks of the western fork of the Axis River, Jhangkin is a crude military installation where Jhangaran Mercenaries gather while awaiting their next assignments. The swamps around Jhangkin abound with water raknids, marsh striders, and bog devils.

# Mog

Mog is a vast swampland cut by countless small tributaries of the Axis River. Travel on foot through this region is quite impractical and recommended only to those who possess an unreasoning fondness for wading in murky, knee-deep waters. Explorers who venture into this realm generally do so in flat-bottomed boats, the gnarled roots of giant bombo trees serving as suitable anchorage for this type of craft.

The swamps of Mog teem with a variety of unusual plant and animal species. Morphius, a parasitic plant whose blossoms emit a sleep-inducing fragrance, grows among the branches of certain trees, as does stranglevine. Deadman, a plant whose pale, white leaves exude a deadly contact poison, is of use in deterring wood whisps and flits, both of which are a great nuisance to travelers. K'tallah and black lotus, two herbs which possess extreme hallucinogenic and mind-altering properties, are highly sought after by dealers of contraband goods. But the region's primary resource is amber, a substance that has long provided a livelihood for the inhabitants of the region, the Mogroth.

## The Mogroth

The Mogroth are a race of tree-dwellers who bear some resemblance to giant, humanoid sloths. They stand up to eight feet in height and are covered with a thick coat of fur that confers protection from biting insects and parasites. As such, Mogroth require little in the way of clothing, and rarely wear anything more than a simple loincloth and perhaps a necklace of woven grasses.

### *Ancestry and History*

The ancestors of the Mogroth were probably tree-dwellers, descended from the Wild Tribes who ruled ancient Talislanta in the time before the Archaen Age. Despite the possible connection, the peaceful Mogroth played no part in the Uprising.

### *Culture*

Mogroth make their homes in simple huts of woven leaves and grasses, erected in the branches of large mung-berry trees. They live in communal groups composed of their large extended families: silver-backed elders, mature adults with brown- or buff-colored fur, and tawny-hued offspring. When it becomes clear that too many families are congregating in a single area, several wander off to establish a new settlement.

Mogroth are slow-moving creatures of placid temperament. They never argue among themselves and are patient to a fault – Mogroth have been known to sit for days waiting for a single cluster of green mung-berries to ripen rather than search for other provender. They have a great appreciation for natural beauty and may stop to admire a particularly fascinating flower or crystal moth for hours at a time. Mogroth tend to be trusting, and even naïve. While they generally abhor violence, these powerful creatures can become extremely dangerous if driven to anger.

### Mogroth Adaptation

*The largest swampland in all of Talislanta, Mog is known for its dangerous and difficult terrain. The country is a virtual morass of sodden marshes, bogs, sinkholes, and deadly quickmires. Though stagnant ponds, muddy pools, and brackish streams abound, potable water is often scarce. The swamps are overgrown with hanging vines, the tangled roots of giant bombo trees, and dense undergrowth. These regions act as natural breeding grounds for insect pests such as amber wasps, flits, and Tazian flies, which at times are known to swarm in numbers sufficient to blot out the light of the twin suns.*

*Having dwelt in Mog for many thousands of years, the Mogroth have adapted to the challenges posed by their environment. Because traveling through the trees is easier and faster than slogging through the muck, Mogroth have developed long arms and powerful, grasping claws that enable them to swing easily from branch to branch. When navigating the swamps on foot, the slow-moving and deliberate gait of the Mogroth enables them to sense and avoid sinkholes, unsafe ground, and other obstructions. Their keen sense of smell is also an advantage, enabling Mogroth to determine by scent whether a given source of water is safe for drinking or not. Perhaps the greatest advantage possessed by these creatures is their dense fur, which repels water and also protects them from biting or stinging insects.*

Mogroth subsist on the bitter leaves and fruit of giant mung-berry trees, which are shunned by other creatures. Biased towards their views on the subject, the Mogroth maintain that only those of refined tastes are capable of appreciating the mung tree's distinctive savor. Mogroth are especially long-lived, a condition attributed to their slow metabolism.

Mogroth barter for goods and have little appreciation for the value of coinage. Though Mogroth generally shun the ways of civilized peoples, some have taken to dredging the swamps for bits of gold and amber, which they trade for casks of grog. The most ambitious of these creatures sometimes travel to Jhangara or the Nine Kingdoms, bearing sacks of gold and amber. Slow and somewhat dull-witted by nature, Mogroth seldom strike a hard bargain for their wares, a fact which draws unscrupulous merchants to them like whisps to blossom-nectar. They are sometimes taken advantage of by crafty entrepreneurs from Faradun and Kasmir.

### *Language*

Mogroth communicate in Low Talislan, speaking in slow, measured tones. Common names tend to be long (five syllables is about average) and mellifluous, with numerous "soft" consonants. Female names end in -a, as in Malamanala and Malonamola. Male names end in -o, as in Molomolano and Mamonamolo.

### *Government*

Inhabitants of the same settlement show considerable cooperation, but none seems to take on the role of leader. Among these slow-moving and patient folk arguments are very rare, and crime is virtually unknown.

Mogroth erect simple defenses against predatory beasts around their settlements, but otherwise have no organized military of defense. They will band together if their settlements are threatened, particularly if Imrians are involved.

### *Magic & Religion*

Mogroth practice no formal religion, but exhibit a reverence for the natural world. They have no capacity for magic of any kind.

### *Worldview*

Mogroth do not regard themselves as a consolidated race or nation and have no formal relations with other peoples. Individual Mogroth sometimes trade with merchants or traders from other lands, such as the Green Aeriad, Muses, Djaffir, and Jhangarans. Mogroth have great animosity only for the Imrians.

## Mogroth Settlements

### Mogran

The largest of the Mogroth settlements is located here, since the boglands are rich in amber, rare herbs, and gold washed down from the mountains. Consequently, the site is also coveted by the Imrians and the Farad; to protect themselves, the Mogroth have dredged a moat around the village of Mogran and have lined the riverbanks with triple rows of sharp wooden stakes.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** While the Mogroth took no part in the Uprising, a horde of Jhangarans crossed through their territory en route to Astar. In their wake they may have left crude trails, signs of their campfires,or abandoned items of various types. |
| 2 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The sweltering heat and humidity can reach such extremes as to be hazardous to the health of individuals with low or compromised CON; heavy rains can turn bogs and marshes into quickmires or sinkholes, or cause dangerous and sudden flooding. |
| 3-4 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The typical Jhangaran settlement is surrounded by a mound topped with a wall of rough-cut timber, which provides some protection from flooding and attackers. Inside, the conditions are filthy and infested with vermin. Squalid huts do little to protect Jhangarans from the weather and muck. Mogroth weave huts from leaves and grasses and erect them in the branches of mung-berry trees. Commonly, they protect their tree homes by growing plants such as yellow stickler, strangelvine, and deadman around them. |
| 5 | 4 | **Trail:** Due to the rising and lowering of flood waters, and the rapid rate of plant-growth in this region, trails here may appear and disappear with no warning. Travelers should beware of predatory creatures who may also be following a trail, such as water raknids (see encounter #17), Arborin, or Jhangarans, who may wait in ambush. |
| 6-7 | 5 | **Traveler:** The resources within Jhangara and Mog bring merchants here despite the dangerous and unpleasant landscape. Typical travelers might be: (1) Green Aeriad botanomancers, searching for rare and exotic plants; (2) Farad or Zandir merchants coming to trade trinkets and intoxicants to Jhangarans and Mogroth in exchange for gold, amber, or narcotic plants such as k'tallah and scintilla; (3) Mogroth carrying sacks of gold and amber and heading to the Nine Kingdoms to trade for grog or other enticements; (4) Jhangaran outcasts traveling between settlements to barter for money or food in exchange for not bringing the stigma of doom upon its occupants. |
| 8 | 6 | **Arborin:** These hostile plant-folk move silently through the treetops, spying on travelers and waiting for opportunities to attack, rob, or capture them. |
| 9 | 7 | **Amber Wasp:** The nests of these stinging insects are fashioned from spun amber and are valued by collectors and traders. |
| 10 | 8 | **Alatus:** These flying leeches are particularly bothersome to travelers without proper shelter for the night. They may be found in or around most types of caves, pits, and tunnels; sleeping in the shadows by day, and flying forth to hunt by night. Alatus are known to carry and transmit a disease called blood fever. |
| 11 | 9 | **Lurker:** Wading in even ankle-deep water can bring one within the deadly grasp of a lurker – a lumpy, mud-burrowing, carnivorous invertebrate that can easily be mistaken for a submerged rock. Lurkers conceal themselves in bogs and swamps, waiting to capture unwary creatures or travelers in their powerful tentacles. |
| 12 | 10 | **Imrians:** Imrians encountered here will be hunting for Mogroth to slaughter and eat, and steal their wealth. They likely have a large ship anchored off the coast with smaller boats stowed nearby. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 13 | 11 | **Jhangarans:** The four different clans of Jhangarans may act quite differently to travelers. Mud-Miners and Mercenaries are the most likely to seek parley or even trade. Marsh-Hunters may outright attack a lesser force. Outcasts will likely cajole then threaten in exchange for alms. All four tribes are keen for alcoholic beverages, however, and may be temporarily distracted by such. |
| 14 | 12 | **Banes:** While rarely encountered in swamps, banes sometimes enter Jhangara or Mog in order to hunt, or merely to satisfy their curiosity about other lands and peoples. Jhangarans refer to banes as "night demons," and are greatly afraid of them. |
| 15 | 13 | **Marsh Strider:** Known for their irritable nature, marsh striders might be encountered as hatchlings about a foot tall to adults standing over seven feet tall. |
| 16 | 14 | **Mogroth:** Mogroth are childishly trusting, naive, and slow to anger, though very dangerous if threatened. They despise Imrians, who prey upon their settlements, and will attack them on sight. Toward other cultures, Mogroth may wish to trade amber and gold in exchange for intoxicants. |
| 17 | 15 | **Water Raknid:** Water raknids lair in the shallow waters of lagoons, and hide their queens' radiant eggs – known as scintilla – along the shore. Their warriors patrol these areas and also hunt along the shoreline. They may also venture deeper into the bogs and marshes of Jhangara and Mog in pursuit of prey. |
| 18 | 16 | **Rare Plants:** Many exotic plants, both beneficial and dangerous, thrive here. Merchants from other lands, particularly Faradun, seek k'tallah and black lotus, both of which possess mind-altering properties. Other plants, fruits, and herbs have healing properties, enhance the flavor of foods, or may be used in the concoction of poisons and other alchemical mixtures. |
| 19 | 17 | **Tazian Flies:** A swarming horde of thousands of bright red Tazian flies is a frightful sight to behold. Seeking shelter is strongly advised, as they are believed to carry terrible diseases, and deliver them in methods equally terrible to experience. |
| 20 | 18 | **Urthrax:** These vermin thrive in the bogs and dank waters of the region. They may also be encountered in and around Jhangaran settlements. |

# Nefaratus

Rising ominously above the waters of the Far Seas is the Isle of Nefaratus, a shadowy mound of stone rimmed with jungle. A row of onyx towers dot the isle, each a hundred feet in height and decorated with the graven images of leering devils. Within, the inhabitants of Nefaratus gaze into mirrors of polished obsidian and work their strange enchantments and divinations. These are the Black Savants, members of a secret magical order that dates back to the Forgotten Age.

## The Black Savants

The Black Savants stand nearly seven feet in height, and are stoop-shouldered and gaunt in appearance. Their traditional costume includes boots, gloves, cloak and robes of satiny black cloth, with their features hooded and veiled. Only their eyes are normally visible, cold, unfeeling orbs like twin shards of onyx. The morbid appearance of these folk becomes understandable when one realizes that they are not truly alive, but are the reanimated forms of a people who lived long, long ago.

### *Culture*

On the island of Nefaratus, the Black Savants live in onyx towers, each edifice housing a single cabal, or group, of magicians. Each cabal is charged with a specific task that has to do with the ultimate goal of locating the lost souls of the Savants' people.

Not being truly alive, Black Savants never eat, sleep, or rest. Since returning from the dead, they have become supernatural entities, immortal and more powerful than they ever were in life, yet bearing the awful burden of the loss of their compatriots' souls.

### *Magic & Religion*

Though they are often thought of as diabolists, the Black Savants do not revere devils (see sidebar). However, they occasionally consult with arch-devils and other powerful entities of the lower planes when in need of information. Like their ancestors, the Thane, the Savants are occultists in the truest sense of the word: they are seekers of secret, lost, and forgotten lore.



### *Ancestry & History*

The Black Savants are the descendants of the Thane, a reclusive people whose black-hulled vessels once plied the waters of the Midnight Sea and beyond. Knowing of the coming of the Great Disaster in advance, the Thane constructed a vast necropolis in northern Khazad, in which the entire population of Thanatus was interred in stasis, awaiting the day when the effects of the Great Disaster had passed. Unfortunately, only a few hundred Thane ever awoke from their long sleep. The rest remained in stasis,

their souls believed to have been stolen – perhaps, some say, by members of the Cult of Sephar (see The Shadow Realm, page 234.)

After leaving Khazad, the Black Savants established a sanctuary on the island of Nefaratus. They have remained here ever since, seeking some way to bring their people back from the dead. Sailing in their mysterious black-hulled vessels, they travel far and wide across Talislanta and beyond, through the portals of the Iron Citadel in the Shadow Realm to the depths of the lower planes, conversing with soul-traders and travelers, all in search for some sign of "the lost ones."

### *Language*

Black Savants are mute, a side effect of the process that was used to preserve their physical forms. They converse in an ancient form of Sign language, which foreigners find difficult but possible to translate; the Savants have many secret signs, forgotten with the ages by the rest of the world, for use when they do not wish to be understood by outsiders. Savants also read and write in the old Archaen tongue, and some are said to be fluent in the dead languages of the Forgotten Age, as well as the languages of creatures who hail from the lower planes.

### *Government*

The Black Savants appear to have no central government, though there is a magical hierarchy of sorts. Each cabal has its leader, called an Archimage, who assigns tasks to the others. Furthermore, each cabal is charged with a specific task: the exploration of a particular region of the lower planes, the interrogation of certain lower-planar entities, or the search for some obscure magical tome or artifact that might contain a clue about the location of a lost soul. Some Savants use obsidian mirrors as viewports – or perhaps gates – to other dimensions. Others perform strange experiments involving the concoction of volatile essences and reagents. Their efforts are said to have but a single goal: to bring their people back to life.

## The Black Savants

*Kabros, self-proclaimed scion of the great sorcerer, Koraq, claimed to have had firsthand knowledge of the mysterious folk known as the Black Savants. He wrote a brief monograph on the subject, an excerpt from which appears below:*

*"The assumption that the Black Savants are necessarily evil simply because they dress in a forbidding manner and avoid contact with other peoples is, I believe, erroneous. This is not to imply that the Savants should be embraced as our friends; I would recommend against that. A policy of objectivity, on the other hand, might be of use when attempting to understand these people.*

*"It is important to understand that the Black Savants are not diabolists, as has long been suspected, but occultists. They monitor activities on the lower planes, but only to obtain information. True, the Savants admit to keeping demons as slaves, and express a decided preference for the company of devils. Does this in and of itself justify categorizing them as an evil race? Perhaps, and perhaps not. After all, are not each of us obsessed with our demons?"*

### *Worldview*

The activities of the Black Savants have long been subject to speculation. Black Savants are not known to have relations with any Talislantan peoples or nations, and appear to evince little interest in the concerns of the present age. They are said to consort with entities from the lower planes such as Ebonites and Tarterans, trading soulstones, enchanted items, and captive demons for occult secrets and artifacts. Their midnight-black vessels are rumored to sail the cursed waters which lie at the edge of the world. Sailors who have encountered such vessels at sea claim that they are propelled by the efforts of night demons, chained to the oars with silver shackles and driven on by giant, copper-skinned devils. Others claim to have seen the black ships pull into certain port cities on moonless nights, only to depart before the coming of dawn.

# Oceanus

Oceanus is a waterborne city built entirely upon great barges made from the trunks and fibers of giant sea kelp, intricately tethered to each other. A great profusion of sails, masts, and riggings is employed to give the city impetus. Though incapable of swift or precise movement, Oceanus can be steered along a designated course. The floating city is home to a seafaring people known as the Sea Nomads, or Oceanians.

## Oceanian Sea Nomads

The Sea Nomads of Oceanus are a green-skinned, dark-haired folk of average height and slender build. Their style of dress is best described as eccentric, the most popular fashions being vests of iridescent scales, loincloths of rainbow kra's hide, and necklaces of colorful shells. Their warriors augment this basic wardrobe with shields of zaratan shell and fierce-looking helms made from the skulls of aquatic predators, such as nar-eels.

### *Ancestry and History*

According to their historians, the Sea Nomads once dwelled in a far-off land. When the Great Disaster struck, the inhabitants fled in boats; in their haste, or so the historians claim, the escapees left behind a witch named Jezem, noted as a practitioner of black magic. Out of spite, Jezem placed a curse upon her people, that they might never again dwell upon land without invoking consequences of the most dire sort. Though the nature of these consequences was never specified, the survivors thought it best not to tempt fate by testing the efficacy of the witch's magic. Accordingly, they became nomadic seafarers, and built the floating settlement of Oceanus as a means of getting around the witch's curse.



### *Culture*

The floating city of Oceanus stands as perhaps the ultimate testament to a Talislantan's defiance of nature – or of common sense, depending upon one's point of view. Construction of the settlement remains an ongoing process, both to accommodate a growing population and to control the damage of wind, water, and sea dragons.

The Sea Nomads have learned how to utilize the ocean's natural resources to fit their needs. The primary source of building materials is yellow aqueor, a giant species of kelp that can grow to lengths of up to five hundred feet. The plant's massive trunk, cut into sections and dried by exposure to sunlight, takes on a buoyancy and tensile strength similar to wood. The leaves are edible, and the fibrous stems can be used to make rope, parchment, mats, baskets, and even a type of coarse cloth. Other materials used in construction include coral, sponges, the hide and bones of sea dragons, and adhesives derived from the secretions of various species of shellfish.

Oceanus is completely self-sufficient; its inhabitants grow, catch, harvest, and make all that they need. Even so, the Oceanians sometimes barter with other folk, such as the Sea Rogues of Gao-Din and the occasional Zandir merchant ship or Phantasian windship.

### *Language*

Oceanians speak the old Sea Nomad tongue, the written version of which is inscribed upon tablets made from the bones of sea dragons. Those who trade with other seafaring races will usually know a bit of Low Talislan, sign, or some other tongue.

### *Government*

The Sea Nomad population is an amalgam of nine different clans. Each has its chieftain, who arbitrates disputes among his or her people as needed. Together, the nine chieftains rule the Floating City by council.

Oceanus is defended by a volunteer militia comprised of members from each of the nine clans. The Floating City is protected by fortified towers, which are positioned at various points around the perimeter of the city. Each of these towers is equipped with a massive ballista made of sea dragon horn and bone.

### *Magic & Religion*

Sea Nomads worship the elemental spirits of water and wind. While the majority of Oceanians know little of magic, their priests and priestesses are skilled in a primitive form of aquamancy that is mainly used to predict storms and alter weather patterns in the vicinity of the Floating City.

As evidenced by their fear of Jezem's curse, the Oceanians are a people governed by superstition. Practically any event can have portentous significance to these folk, from the shape and color of clouds in the sky to the movements of sea creatures, the flight patterns of avir, the position of the moons and stars, and any other phenomena that other Talislantans would consider normal.

### *Worldview*

Aside from their infrequent trade contacts, the Sea Nomads rarely interact with outsiders. They know very little of the world beyond their Floating City, which seems to suit them just fine. Their only true enemies are the Imrians.




## Riding Zaratan

*The Sea Nomads of Oceanus obtain all that they require for survival from the waters of the Azure Ocean. To do so, they depend to a great extent on the zaratan, a species of large aquatic herbivore domesticated many centuries ago by the seafaring folk. These placid but powerful creatures are employed both as steeds and beasts of burden. Sea Nomad warriors ride zaratan when patrolling the territories around the Floating City, and when repelling aquatic predators such as rainbow kra and sea scorpions. Oceanian engineers use zaratan as floating workstations when performing maintenance work on city structures, and to transport large quantities of heavy materials.*

*Creatures of the deep by nature, zaratan are also used for underwater operations. Equipped with crude breathing apparatuses, Nomad gatherers ride their zaratan below the surface to cut and harvest the giant stalks of the yellow aqueor, a plant used extensively in all Oceanian construction. Zaratan are also used when scavenging the ocean floor for giant mollusks and the remains of ancient sea dragons. The latter are particularly prized by Sea Nomads, who use the bones of these great creatures in favor of metals, and employ their scales as coins known as radiants.*

# Phantas

Phantas is a semi-tropical isle covered in vegetation and surmounted on all sides by wavering cliffs of white stone. The isle is home to an incredible variety of life forms – plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms that defy classification and are to be found nowhere else in Talislanta. High above the island, tethered to the ground by chains of adamant, is a singular structure: a great castle built in the clouds, called Cabal Magicus. Here dwell the last descendants of an ancient race of magicians known as the Phantasians.

## The Phantasians

A pale-skinned people, the Phantasians average around six and a half feet tall and are very thin, with delicate features reminiscent in some ways of the Thaecians. They dress in long, trailing robes, conical caps, and necklaces of colored crystals.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Phantasians are believed to be descended from the Archaens of ancient Elande, a great sky-city that was destroyed during the Great Disaster. Refugees fleeing from Elande in windships settled on Phantas, where they built Cabal Magicus.

### *Culture*

Cabal Magicus is a fabulous castle that hovers high above the isle of Phantas, tethered to the ground below by chains of adamant. The castle was constructed along the same principles as the sky-cities of the ancient Archaens, which were purportedly fashioned from solidified cloud-stuff. The modern-day Phantasians have long since forgotten the secret of manufacturing such materials, and now all they can do is merely keep Cabal Magicus afloat.

Like the ancient Archaens, the Phantasians once lived in splendor and ate only the finest and most costly fare. Now they subsist on bland foods grown in their hydroponic gardens, as well as nutritive elixirs of various sorts. Once among the most skilled practitioners of magic, the Phantasians have forgotten much of the fabled knowledge possessed by their ancient ancestors. Among the few secrets left to them are the talents associated with the building of windships and the art of distilling dream essence. It is these abilities that provide the Phantasians with their livelihood, such as it is.

Phantasian society and civilization both are in a state of decline and appear to be on the verge of collapse. There is a sadness about these folk, whom many deem to be relics of a forgotten era. More than a few Phantasians prefer the old colonial Archaen worldview to the more liberal views currently in vogue among such folk as the Cymrilians. A return to the old ways, and Archaen-style dominance, would be looked upon with much favor by these folk – assuming there was some practical way to recapture the glory of those halcyon times.

### *Language*

The Phantasians speak a particularly archaic version of High Talislan, which to most modern Talislantans sounds somewhat stiff or stodgy. Common names similarly have an old Archaen sound, as in Astramiros, Cascalo, Malderune, and Lamir.

### *Government*

The ruler of Phantas is the Magister, an official elected by a secret ballot of the city's foremost magicians, a group of seven known as the Phantasian Cabal. The Magister's responsibilities include the formulation of trade and social programs and the arbitration of disputes. The Magister's decisions can be overruled by the Cabal, a situation that leads many to believe that the Magister's position is more a figurehead than anything else.

Cabal Magicus once had a large fleet of windships and numerous heavy weapons such as fire-throwers, bombastions, etc. Most of the fleet is now gone, and many of the weapons are so old that they work only falteringly. Some believe that it is doubtful that the city could withstand a concerted attack from the air, and indeed, since the Uprising, the greatest fear is an attack from the Baratus, a situation the Phantasians seem ill-prepared to deal with.

### *Magic & Religion*

Religion never was the strong suit of the Archaens, nor is it much of a factor in Phantasian culture. The old Archaens thought of themselves as akin to gods; the Phantasians merely wish they were. Some of the talents of the old Archaen sorcerers are still evident among the Phantasians, though these are limited to a few dints of thaumaturgy, sorcery, and windship arcanology. Among these abilities is the art of concocting dream essence – the stuff of which dreams are made, captured and distilled in amberglass vials.

### *Worldview*

Cymril remains Phantas's closest ally, though the relationship shows signs of strain. Some members of the Phantasian Cabal have proposed that Phantas should sell windship arcanology to underdeveloped countries in exchange for gold; the Cymrilians oppose such actions, which they regard as irresponsible. An anonymous consortium of foreign investors has offered to acquire a controlling interest in Cabal Magicus, but so far the Phantasian Cabal has resisted such a plan. In addition to the Baratus, other threats to the city may be posed by the Farad and Rajans, both of whom now possess basic windship arcanology.

Phantasian dream merchants still sail across the skies of Talislanta in their archaic windships, carrying goods to such far-distant lands as Cymril, Thaecia, Zandu, Faradun, and the Kang Empire. They mainly sell dream essence, magical mixtures, and other exotic wares to foreigners.



## Aboard a Windship

*"In the course of my travels, I was fortunate enough to meet up with a Phantasian dream merchant whose windship had broken down along the coast of Faradun. In return for my assistance in repairing the ship's damaged levitationals, the Phantasian agreed to transport me to Zanth, capital of Zandu. The two of us affected the necessary repairs in short order and took to the air.*

*"En route, the Phantasian and I discussed our respective situations over a bottle or two of Zandir wine. He professed to have become tired of the business of selling dream essence and took to drinking heavily. It soon became apparent that my host had lost all semblance of sobriety; singing loudly and off-key, he reeled across the ship's deck, arms akimbo and head thrown back in a crude version of the Caperetto, a popular dance of the day from Archaen times.*

*"Just then the windship hit a sudden downdraft, causing the vessel to lurch precariously to portside. I grabbed the ship's rail barely in time to avoid being thrown overboard, but the Phantasian was not so fortunate. Wine bottle still in hand, he plunged into the sea and was never heard from again. With a heavy heart, I took command of the windship and its contents, and once again set sail for Zanth."*

# The Thaecian Isles

Although many of the Thaecian Isles are of a size and significance unworthy of prolonged discussion, some few are not without certain interesting characteristics.

## Thaecia

Thaecia, the island for which its archipelago is named, is a place of rare and splendorous beauty. Located off the southwestern coast of the Talislantan continent in the Azure Ocean, here waterfalls cascade into shaded lagoons, and fields of flowers sway in the warm ocean breezes. To the west, the rest of the Thaecian Isles curve northward in a graceful arc. This pleasant isle is home to a pleasure-loving people known as the Thaecians.

## The Thaecians

Thaecians are slender and graceful in stature, with silvery complexions and hair a deep blue color. They dress in diaphanous robes of many hues and styles.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Thaecians are believed to be descended either from the ancient Archaens, or from a race of neomorphs created in their image. They are probably related to the Thiasians, to whom they have close ties.

### *Language*

Thaecians are bilingual, fluent both in High Talislan and their native tongue, Thaecian. The latter is regarded as the most "romantic" of Talislantan languages and may be expressed in any of three forms: written, spoken, and — using fluid hand gestures and facial expressions — somatic. All three forms of the language are said to be quite beautiful. Common names are likewise pleasing to the ear, and usually begin with the prefix Th-, as in Thasha, Thalias, Thelaeus, and Thania.

### *Culture*

Thaecians live in fanciful pavilions constructed of a translucent gossamer fabric artfully stretched over frameworks of silken cords. They build no cities, but simply erect pavilions wherever they wish to live. As such, small colonies of Thaecians are scattered across the main island and certain of the smaller isles. The single settlement of noteworthy size is Caprica, site of the Festival of the Bizarre (see sidebar).

Thaecians are devout pleasure-seekers who enjoy indulging in all manner of stimulating pastimes. Like the Muses of Astar, they show an aversion to hard work of any sort. Much of their leisure hours are occupied by the pursuit of various romantic confluxes and the study of certain forms of magic. The folk of this isle are partial to the nectar of rainbow lotus flowers, a secret distillation of which is used to create "Thaecian nectar," a drink noted for its exotic flavor and exhilarating properties.

Among themselves, Thaecians generally prefer to barter for goods and services. Coinage is usually used only when dealing with foreigners, in which case the standard is the gold lumen. When troupes of Thiasian performers visit Thaecia, they are paid either in gold or items bearing minor enchantments.

### *Government*

The Thaecians have no formal government. Instead, Thaecian elders maintain order and keep alert for criminal activities, which among the Thaecians themselves are quite rare. Violent offenders and criminals are tried before the elders. Those judged to be guilty are banished to the isle of Nearwan, where felons are constrained within webs of perdurable force for the duration of their sentence.

The Thaecians have no army or navy and disdain violence, which they consider an over-strenuous form of physical activity. They depend upon their enchanters to protect Thaecia from aggressors, a task that has proven to be well within their capabilities.



### *Magic & Religion*

Thaecians revere the entity known as Creator, but practice no formal religion, build no temples, and have no clergy. To these folk, faith is considered a subject for private meditation, rather than public observance. Thaecian enchanters and enchantresses are renowned for the creation of wondrous images and illusions, which they capture within glassine spheres known as orbs. By placing these devices to the forehead, the holder can experience unequaled panoramas of color and sound. Thaecian orbs can also be used to store spells, which can be released by breaking the orb. Such devices are sometimes found in old Thaecian tombs, interred along with the deceased in glass sarcophagi.

### *Worldview*

Thaecians will trade with anyone who exhibits peaceful intentions and a modicum of civility. Their wares include magical orbs, philters, powders, rare fragrances, and vivid inks, all of which are in great demand in such lands as Cymril, Sindar, Faradun, Zandu, and Hadj.

The Thaecians welcome visitors from other lands, particularly the Thiasians, whose performing talents they greatly admire. Due to past difficulties, the Imrians are treated with a notable lack of tolerance. The Thaecians allow Imrian ships to stop at Thaecia to purchase nectar, gossamer, and other products. None, however, are allowed to stay so much as a single night on any of Thaecia's islands. Thaecia currently has no treaty relations with any other nation, and generally remains neutral in all matters involving foreign powers.

## The Festival of the Bizarre

*"I have seen many strange sights in the course of my travels, but few to compare with the Festival of the Bizarre. To gain entrance, one must be attired in costume or makeup. Wearers of the most outlandish garb are awarded a silver goblet, entitling them to drink for free while at the festival. Competition for this honor is understandably keen and produces some truly unbelievable results. While I was in attendance, a trio of Cymrilian contortionists won goblets for appearing in the guise of a tanglewood tree (I will refrain from citing particulars concerning how this feat was accomplished.)*

*"Multicolored tents and pavilions litter the festival grounds, each housing some sort of attraction or entertainment: a duel of spellcasters for wagers, abominations from the Aberrant Forest, illusory panoramas, romances, sensations, improbabilities, and things defying description. The visitor is invited to observe, partake of, or otherwise experience as he or she desires. Rare delicacies from all over the known world are available, as well as more common fare, at nominal cost.*

*"The climax of the festival is the awards ceremony, where valuable prizes are given to those who have submitted an attraction or other entry. For the categories "Most Unique," "Most Provocative," and "Most Absurd," the prize is ten thousand gold lumens. The grand category, appropriately entitled "Most Bizarre," carries with it a prize of one hundred thousand gold lumens. A committee of twelve Thaecian enchanters and enchantresses serve as judges, registering varying degrees of approval or disapproval using magically exaggerated facial expressions and gestures."*

# Eros Isle

Situated to the northeast of Thaecia, this sylvan atoll is one of the most beautiful islands in the Azure Ocean. Southerly winds and water currents caress the island, causing the temperature to remain warm and pleasant throughout the year. The fortunate inhabitants of this paradisiacal realm are a graceful people known as the Thiasians.



## The Thiasians

Thiasians have violet skin, black hair, and comely features. Lithe and slender in stature, they dress in garlands of flowers, sashes, or abbreviated sarongs. Those who have been taken to civilized lands prefer silkcloth and other finery.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Thiasians are believed to be descended from the same rootstock as the Thaecians, their neighbors to the south. The two peoples have had close relations for centuries, and if Thiasian legends are to be believed, they may share a common ancestor: a figure known only as the Enchantress of the Shoals, who lives on the island of Cella (see "Magic & Religion").

### *Language*

Thiasians converse in Low Talislan, though body movement, posture, and gesticulation are used to convey different shades of meaning. Common names begin with the prefix Th-; female names end in an A. For example: Thian, Thanin (male); Thia, Thani (female).

### *Culture*

Thiasians are hunter-gatherers who live in fanciful dwellings constructed of woven vines, seashells, and bits of colored coral. These dwellings are well-hidden and scattered about the isle, mostly to discourage raids by Imrian slavers. Each communal abode houses a single extended family of loose relations – typically the mothers of a family and their children, as Thiasians never marry and change partners frequently.

The Thiasians are a flirtatious and promiscuous people. Mothers tend to raise their children for the first month or so, then grow bored with the responsibility and allow the older members of the tribe to take over. Young children, around the age of five or older, are often unsupervised and allowed to run free about the island.

The Thiasians are renowned for their exotic dances and performing talents, but are said to lack interest in most practical matters. This is generally true, though Thiasians are not quite so shallow as they may seem. The Thiasians have a rich culture and express themselves through dance rather than words. Their performance art is used to celebrate and mourn, express love and anger, or emote frustration, boredom, or any of a dozen other emotions. It is customary for performers to wear expressionless white vizards that conceal their features, as facial expressions are considered a distraction from the truer meaning of movement, song, and music.

Seashells and bits of colored coral are valued by the Thiasians and are used to "purchase" or trade for items. Native Thiasians are attracted to objects that glitter, including gold and precious stones. However, there is no organized economy on the island. Thiasian performing troupes often travel by boat to Thaecia, where they are paid to entertain the pleasure-loving people of that sunny isle. They are especially popular during the Thaecians' Festival of the Bizarre.

### *Government*

The eldest member of the family generally presides over the communal home, assigning chores as needed. No other form of Thiasian government is evident. Criminal behavior is rare among the Thiasians, but not unknown; crimes of passion are generally the occurrence. Offenders may be chastised by their peers, or in extreme cases, banished from the island.

The Thiasians have no military or warriors. They prefer to run if confronted by hostile invaders, but they will fight if cornered, attacking invaders with spears, nets, or knives, or luring them into quickmires and bogs. The proximity of their island to Thaecia, and their close relations with the Thaecians, affords them protection from hostile races such as the Imrians.

### *Magic & Religion*

Though they are not known as a religious people, the Thiasians are said to revere the Enchantress of the Shoals as the mother of their race. According to their legends, long ago the Enchantress gave birth to a pair of twin daughters: one silver, one violet. One was the first Thaecian, and the other, the first Thiasian.

Like the Thaecians, Thiasians seem to have a natural aptitude for magic. Few study the arcane arts, however, and so such innate talents as may be present generally go undeveloped.

### *Worldview*

An exceptionally attractive people, Thiasians are greatly favored by other races both as performers and consorts. Some travel to the mainland on the windships of wealthy Cymrilians, who come to Thaecia in great numbers during the Festival of the Bizarre. Others have been known to join the crews of Gao vessels, attracted by the flamboyant lifestyle of the Sea Rogues.

Though their proximity to Thaecia affords them some degree of safety, the Thiasians are sometimes preyed upon by Imrian slavers, who seek to capture them for sale in Faradun or the Kang Empire; so it is that their people can sometimes be found far from their homeland.



# Parthene

At the far western tail of the Thaecian Isles chain, in a distant region that many scholars believe lies at the very edge of the world, sits the island of Parthene. Shrouded in mist and ringed by dangerous reefs, this rock-bound isle is home to a strange sect known to the outside world as the Parthenians.

## The Parthenians

Parthenians stand up to seven feet in height, and from a distance appear to have glossy bronze skin and hair, and appear to dress in golden helms, shimmering yellow cloaks, armored vests, and iron arm and wrist bracers. Under close inspection, it can be seen that Parthenians wear neither helm nor armor, and do not have bronze-colored skin or hair – rather, they themselves are made entirely of bronze. Their "hair" is braided wire, their cloaks and vests fashioned of flexible, metallic cloth.

### *Ancestry and History*

Parthenians are not natural lifeforms, but advanced automatons whose "ancestors" were created over a thousand years ago by the ancient Archaens, the most advanced magic users Talislanta has ever known. The Great Disaster brought an end to the Archaen Age, and the knowledge of how to construct advanced automatons such as the Parthenians was lost forever. The reasons for the Parthenians' creation are speculated upon; some believe that they may have been created in an effort to locate the sunken city of Aurantium, either to acquire treasure or to find lost items or artifacts.

### *Culture*

The Parthenians are rumored to sail the unknown waters that stretch far to the west, across regions that many Talislantans believe lay at the very edge of the world. Employing non-Parthenian workers and being uniquely suited to deep dives themselves, they scour the ocean floor, hauling whatever sunken valuables they find aboard their ships using winches.

The Parthenians occupy a strange settlement called Parthan, an iron castle of ten towers, each over a hundred feet in height. Its facilities include a dry dock for Parthenian vessels, where triremes are maintained and repaired, and quarters for their humanoid workers and hirelings.

Parthenians do not sleep or eat but must periodically ingest a liquid lubricant similar to refined lamp oil. Gender differences, even of a surface sort, are nonexistent; Parthenians do not reproduce, though they do possess the knowledge to build new "bodies" to replace those who are lost or damaged beyond repair. The renowned naturalist, Thystram, stated that there are only one hundred Parthenians in existence at any given time; all are considered parts of the whole, like a complex machine of a hundred segments.

Thrystram's estimate may or may not be accurate, for while Parthenians possess the ability to repair themselves and even construct new mechanical bodies, they do not know how to create sensoria – the complex devices that serve as their "mechanical minds." Thus, all Parthenians encountered in the present age are equipped with Archaen-made sensoria, barely two hundred of which are known to still exist. Not surprisingly, Parthenians regard these devices as the most rare and priceless artifacts in existence, and will go to any lengths to recover lost (or previously undiscovered) sensoria. New Parthenians are made by transferring the sensoria from a worn-out or destroyed Parthenian into a new body – a process that erases any memories it contained.

Though they seldom exhibit overtly hostile behavior, Parthenians are not known for personal warmth; not surprising, given the fact that they are intelligent machines. Parthenians once kept other humanoids as slaves, but after being reproached by a visiting group of Sindarans, they no longer do so. Among their kind, Parthenians use no currency. When trading with other races, Parthenians always pay in gold or silver talents – five-pound ingots stamped with the Parthenians' seal.

Parthenians have developed no culture or customs but seem to have been programmed to perform specific functions. These include the operation and maintenance of their triremes, and the search and recovery of lost wrecks and sunken treasure. As Parthenians refuse to discuss their motives with outsiders, they remain among the more enigmatic entities in Talislanta.

### *Language*

Parthenians converse in a peculiarly stilted version of Old Archaen. Thystram claimed that they had no names, but referred to each other by number, as in Seven, One-Five, Two-Four, etc.

### *Government*

The Parthenians are governed by an individual known as the One; possibly the first of the line. The One supervises the population of Parthan, ensuring that all goes in accordance with the Master Plan – apparently an ancient document or set of instructions, which serves as the Parthenian manifest. If a copy of the Plan still exists, its location is kept secret and well-guarded.

The Parthenians have no warriors or army, but seem to have adequate means of defending themselves. Their metal-hulled triremes are armed with heavy fire-throwers and other weaponry. Parthan, also made of metal, is virtually impregnable.

### *Magic & Religion*

Parthenians do not practice magic, though they seem to possess some skill for certain types of technomantic operations. They have no religion, but are said to revere a metal statue or idol of some humanoid being whom the Parthenians acknowledge as their creator. Thystram stated that the image – worn by age, salt air, and repeated polishing – could not be identified.

### *Worldview*

Parthenians may sometimes be encountered on the high seas, sailing in great triremes. On rare occasions, Parthenian vessels have been known to stop in port cities to hire workers. Sometimes these are slaves whom the Parthenians treat as any other living being. They never stay long, often pulling into port and then departing on the same day or night. Parthenians appear to be neutral as regards the interests of all other races and species, and have no known treaties or relations with any Talislantan government, group, or individuals.



## Cella

Nearly as lovely as Dalia, this isle is home to an enigmatic figure known only as the Enchantress of the Shoals. The stories and legends of the Enchantress abound; some say she is a temptress who once seduced Kabros, wizard-king of ancient Phaedra. Others believe she is an Archaen whose potent magics have preserved her youth and beauty for countless centuries. The Thiasians revere her as a demigoddess, the mother of their own people and the Thaecians.

It is said that the Enchantress of the Shoals will grant a wish in return for a favor. The nature of the favor required by the Enchantress is, alas, a matter impossible to determine short of inquiry in person at her manse. Reliable reports verify the potency of her magic, which is perhaps the most efficacious in the region.

## Dalia

Dalia is, like so many of Thaecia's islands, a place of scenic and peaceful vistas. Of particular note are a series of bluffs overlooking the ocean, located on the isle's western coast; the view at sunset is said to be unsurpassed anywhere in the known world. The occasional appearance of a neurovore (or "brain leech," as these small, winged parasites are sometimes called) should hardly deter those with an avid appreciation of nature's wonders.

## Garganta

Largest of the Thaecian Isles, Garganta is a great and irregular mound of volcanic rock. Here live the gargantuan, mountain-mimicking stone beings known as Monoliths, believed to be the oldest creatures in the world. Generally silent and implacable, Monoliths can sometimes be persuaded to reveal bits of their knowledge, which is said to be quite comprehensive. Normally several days or even weeks are required before a Monolith will deign to respond to any query; less if the Monolith is one of the few unhinged individuals occasioned to acts of violence. As fewer than one in five Monoliths is predisposed to such irrational behavior, the chances of attaining enlightenment at little cost are fairly good. Visitors to Garanta are advised to beware of depredators, however, as these creatures come here to mate during certain times of the year.

## Orb Island

This isle is uninhabited save for such noxious entities as water raknids and the spawn of giant sea scorpions. A rare and exotic variety of crystal dendron grows here, the globular "fruit" of which is employed in the making of the finest Thaecian orbs. Thaecian enchanters commonly offer up to fifty gold lumens apiece for these crystalline objects, which they are understandably somewhat reluctant to gather for themselves.

## Nearwan

This small tropical isle has traditionally been a place of exile for individuals convicted of crimes in Thaecia. There are perhaps as many as forty criminals consigned to Nearwan at any given time, including thieves, interlopers, and individuals rendered insane as a result of dabbling in unsafe magical practices. Each is imprisoned in a web of perdurable force approximately one hundred feet in diameter. They subsist on fruits and vegetables, which the exiles are allowed to grow within their enchanted prisons. Thaecians assigned to monitor these pariahs check the facilities daily, usually by windrigger.

## Peridia

Peridia is a small and rocky isle of little interest save for its massive subterranean grotto, known as Cavernciff. Accessible only through an underwater entranceway, the ceilings of this spectacular cavern glitter with encrusted gems and crystals. Climbing the slick and jagged walls is said to be a difficult task, and the presence of lurkers and sea demons has given many adventurers pause to consider another means of attaining affluence.

## Twin Islands

These two rocky islands lie off the north coast of Garganta. Each is an ages-old Monolith, worn and weathered by untold centuries of wind and water. On rare occasions, the two can be heard conversing with each other, their rumbling voices carrying for many miles in all directions. It is said that one of these two Monoliths can utter nothing but the truth, while the other — a deviant sort — speaks only lies. Opinions differ as to which one is which, as neither of the two is particularly talkative or swift to respond, even by Monolithic standards.

## Farique

There is an enchanted fountain on this mystical island, high atop a peak surrounded by dense jungle, the waters of which are purported to confer continued youth and longevity. A single ounce of the "Waters of Farique" sells for as much as five hundred gold lumens, but is difficult to obtain; the fountain emits but a trickle of liquid, and the dense jungles of the isle are rife with ravengers, alatus, and water raknids.

## Encounters on the Islands

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The weather may change quickly on the islands and could take the form of dense fog, intense lightning storms with lashing rain and wind, unbearable heat and humidity, and dangerous flooding following storms. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** If on one of the main islands, this will be the typical dwelling of the dominant culture. If a less-populated or newly-discovered island, this could be the home of a recluse, a refugee, someone stranded on the island, or the camp of Imrian raiders or Gao-Din pirates, whose vessels will likely be nearby. |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Trail:** Many of the islands are covered in vegetation and crisscrossed by footpaths created by the inhabitants. An encounter might mean finding a hidden trail, coming to an intersection, coming upon travelers (see encounter #4), or being victims of an ambush. |
| 7-10 | 4 | **Traveler:** On the main islands, travelers will most likely be members of the dominant culture. On a less-populated or newly-discovered island, travelers could be explorers from distant Aaman, Zandu, the Nine Kingdoms, and Faradun. They may also be Imrian raiders or Sea Rogues. |
| 11 | 5 | **Alatus:** These flying leeches are particularly bothersome to travelers without proper shelter for the night. They may be found in or around most types of caves, pits, and tunnels; sleeping in the shadows by day, and flying forth to hunt by night. Alatus are known to carry and transmit a disease called blood fever. |
| 12 | 6 | **Lurker:** Wading in even ankle-deep water can bring one within the deadly grasp of a lurker – a lumpy, mud-burrowing, carnivorous invertebrate that can easily be mistaken for a submerged rock. |
| 13 | 7 | **Crag Spider:** These giant arachnids lair among the cliffs, caves, grottoes of the islands. Some are quite intelligent and may even ally with pirates as guardians of hidden stores in exchange for victims. |
| 14-15 | 8 | **Imrians:** If not on Imria, Imrians encountered on other islands will almost certainly be raiders come ashore to take captives. They likely have a large ship anchored nearby with smaller boats stowed on the beach. |
| 16 | 9 | **Raknid:** Water raknids lair in the shallow waters of lagoons and grottoes, and hide their queens' radiant eggs – known as scintilla – along the shore. Their warriors patrol these areas and also hunt along the shoreline. |
| 17 | 10 | **Rare Plants:** Many exotic plants, both beneficial and dangerous, thrive on the islands. Some have healing properties, intoxicating effects, enhance the flavor of foods, or may be used in the concoction of poisons and other alchemical mixtures. |
| 18 | 11 | **Ravenger:** These adaptable creatures may be encountered in the trees, on the ground, and in the waters of the islands. They are known to follow travelers in hope of scavenging scraps of food or refuse. |
| 19-20 | 12 | **Sea Rogues of Gao-Din:** When not on their home island, these people may be encountered on any of the other islands. Some pirate crews keep hidden encampments on the islands where they stow supplies, booty, and captives awaiting ransom. They will likely have a ship anchored nearby. |

## Encounters on the Mainland

The following encounter ideas may be used in any of the three territories of the Dark Coast.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** In addition to the constant heat and humidity, the Dark Coast may experience storms of sufficient force to topple giant deodar trees, dangerous flooding following monsoon-like rains, and even aberrant weather such as acid rains or black lightning. |
| 2-3 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Typically the only dwellings encountered in the Dark Coast will be those of the three indigenous cultures, and only within the boundaries of their particular region. Green Men live in communal groups within the twisting trunks of living plants called D'Oko. Moorg-Wan build "mud-palaces" of oozing muck and silt with above-ground tunnels connecting them. These settlements will be barricaded by living thornwood and mud walls as high as ten feet. Making no permanent homes, Ahazu live as nomads and sleep in the treetops. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Trail:** The terrain of the Dark Coast consists primarily of dense jungle, sodden marshlands, and tropical forest. There are no established roads, merely footpaths that may disappear into a bog or become impassable due to fallen trees and flooding. An encounter might mean finding a hidden trail, coming to an intersection, coming upon travelers (see encounter #4), or being victims of an ambush or snare (see encounter #14). |
| 6-7 | 4 | **Traveler:** Rarely, one might encounter traders, explorers or adventurers from Aaman, Zandu, the Nine Kingdoms, or Faradun. More likely, one will encounter the predominant culture of the region. Though peaceful, Green Men may become fearful of strangers and attempt to lead them into a snare (see encounter #14). Moorg-Wan may trade among themselves, but seek no parlay with outsiders – their war parties actively patrol their borders and most likely react with hostility toward intruders. As with the Moorg-Wan, the Ahazu seek no trade; they are either hunting or looking for a fight. If encountered outside their territory, they are on the warpath and should be avoided at all costs (see encounter #5). |
| 8-9 | 5 | **Ahazu:** The Ahazu are nomadic, moving within their territory of the Dark Coast as hunters. Each tribe claims a portion of the territory until choosing to move or being forced by another tribe. They will likely view strangers as enemies, and may attack or attempt to frighten off interlopers into their territories. It is also possible that Ahazu war parties may be encountered on their way to or from an attack on the settlements of the Moorg-Wan, their ancient enemy. |
| 10 | 6 | **Alatus:** These flying leeches are very dangerous; those that live in this region are known to nest not only in caves, but also in the treetops; they may attack without warning any time after suns-set. Alatus are known to carry and transmit a disease called blood fever. |
| 11 | 7 | **Amber Wasp:** The nests made by these stinging insects are fashioned from spun amber and are valued by collectors and traders. |
| 12 | 8 | **Lurker:** Wading in even ankle-deep water can bring one within the deadly grasp of a lurker – a lumpy, mud-burrowing, carnivorous invertebrate that can easily be mistaken for a submerged rock. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 13 | 9 | **Green Men:** Good-natured though shy, Green Men typically avoid contact with outsiders. They are preyed upon by Imrians, who seek to capture them for sale as servants and gardeners. Moorg-Wan and Ahazu never harm Green Men, believing that doing so will anger the Plant Gods. |
| 14 | 10 | **Imrians:** Bands of Imrians encountered here usually will be hunting for Green Men to capture and trade as servants. They likely have a large ship anchored off the coast with smaller boats stowed on the beach. |
| 15-16 | 11 | **Moorg-Wan:** The war parties of these hostile, six-limbed humanoids roam their territory seeking intruders, particularly their hated enemies – the Ahazu. |
| 17 | 12 | **Raknid:** Water raknids lair in the shallow waters of lagoons, and hide their queens' radiant eggs – known as scintilla – along the shore. Water raknid warriors patrol also hunt along the shoreline, and sometimes venture deeper into the bogs and marshes of the Dark Coast, looking for prey. |
| 18-19 | 13 | **Rare Plants:** Many exotic plants, both beneficial and dangerous, thrive on the Dark Coast. Particularly valuable are the green and scarlet varieties of lotus. Some plants, fruits, and herbs have healing properties, intoxicating effects, enhance the flavor of foods, or may be used in the concoction of poisons and other alchemical mixtures. |
| 20 | 14 | **Snares & Pitfalls:** The Green Men are particularly adept at setting traps fashioned of living plants, such as yellow stickler, stranglevine, and violet creeper. The Moorg-Wan may also set pitfalls of muck and ooze disguised as solid ground. The Ahazu consider such tricks as cowardly. |





# Carantheum

The kingdom of Carantheum is located in the Red Desert, a great expanse of scarlet sand surrounded by the Wilderlands of Zaran. It is a harsh land, swept by desert winds and scorched by the burning rays of Talislanta's twin suns.

Aside from the Sanctuary Mountains to the west, the terrain here is flat, and broken only by wave upon wave of blood-red dunes, like a vast arid sea. Sandstorms some many miles wide can occur without warning, and pose an extreme hazard to caravans, land-arks, and duneships. Travel to Carantheum, despite efforts to improve conditions, remains a perilous proposition for other reasons as well – from the east, the only practical routes lead through territories claimed either by the Saurans, Za bandits, or the fanatical Rajans. The ancient Wilderlands Road, sole causeway between Carantheum and the west, is beset by bandits, wild beasts, and other dangers.

Amid this hostile environment stands the citadel of Dracarta, home to a proud people called the Dracartans.

## The Dracartans

The Dracartans are tall and jade-skinned, with chiseled features. They dress in flowing robes of fine white linen, and adorn themselves with necklaces, bracers, and torcs of red iron.

### *Ancestry and History*

Formerly a tribe of poor nomadic wanderers, the ancestors of these hardy folk settled in the Red Desert some centuries ago. With the re-discovery of the lost art of thaumaturgy, the Dracartans learned how to create red iron, a metal superior in all aspects to common black iron. The Dracartan people prospered, and Carantheum soon became a strong and prosperous nation.

In the wake of the Uprising, the Dracartans allied with the other desert peoples: the Djaffir, Hajin, and Yitek. The new Desert Kingdoms confederation now includes Djaffa and other nearby territories, and is also home to many displaced peoples like the Marukans and Hajan.

### *Culture*

With little more than their ingenuity and thaumaturgical talents, the Dracartans have built a flourishing and sophisticated civilization in a barren desert. Their architecture tends to be on a grand scale, and aesthetically pleasing. Their city skylines are comprised of domed towers,

and their circular structures are made of whitewashed stone, which the Dracartans make from thaumaturgically solidified sand. Red iron plating is used for defensive purposes, and to add decorative touches.

Dracartans exhibit an admirable degree of tolerance for the ways and beliefs of most other peoples, with the exceptions of Faradun, the Kang Empire, and Rajanistan. The former two, while accorded a modicum of courtesy in Carantheum, are regarded with suspicion and distrust. The prevailing attitude towards Rajans is less indistinct and can be categorized as "murderous." Enemies of the Dracartans since their nomadic days, the Rajans have long sought to wrest control of the Red Desert and its wealth of minerals from Carantheum, and there is no love lost between these two peoples.

### *Magic & Religion*

The folk of Carantheum revere Jamba, the mysterious god of their nomadic ancestors. Dracartans build pyramid-shaped shrines in honor of their patron, whose ways are said to be beyond the understanding of mere mortals. According to legend, it was Jamba who guided the Dracartans into the Red Desert and told them where to find the fabled seventeen Ruby Tablets.

## The Academy of Thaumaturgy

*The Academy of Thaumaturgy in Dracarta is the only place in Talislanta where the ancient art of thaumaturgy is taught. The inner walls of this red iron-plated building are heavily reinforced with alternating layers of metal and ceramic plating – precautions deemed necessary due to the volatile nature of the work that goes on inside. For it is here that the Dracartan thaumaturges work their wonders, distilling elemental essences, transmuting matter into different forms, and concocting the marvelous substance known as quintessence.*

*By skillful utilization of the magical properties of this crystalline compound, Dracartan thaumaturges can transmute the very nature of a substance. Thus, they can solidify water, liquefy stone or metal, turn sand into glass, or place elemental forces in suspension. However, quintessence is so unstable that, in its most rarefied form, it must be stored in amberglass vaults over five feet thick, lest even the smallest quantity escape into the outside environment.*

Carantheum is famed for its thaumaturges, who are greatly esteemed for the wondrous products which they create. Not the least of these is the elusive substance called quintessence, a crystalline powder derived by a secret alchemical process (see sidebar). Dracartan thaumaturges transmute the bodies of the dead to solid form, after which the deceased are buried in underground tombs.

### *Language*

Most Dracartans are bilingual, speaking a simplified version of High Talislan as well as the language of their ancestors, known as Nomadic. The former, stripped of some of its more pretentious effects, is used extensively in everyday life, and in all dealings with civilized peoples. The latter tongue is reserved for matters about the Dracartans themselves, and to converse with nomadic peoples such as the Djaffir and Orgovians. Common male names end in an -a, and female names end in -al. For example, T'Jama, K'tara, M'Dara for men; T'jamal. K'Taral, M'Daral for women.

### *Government*

Carantheum is ruled by a king, who is chosen through a process known as the Test of the Ancients. This ordeal consists of three separate parts: a journey through the desert, the scaling of a mountain of glass, and the retrieval of a magic scepter from a vault deep inside a crystal mountain. The test is held once every twelve years, unless the premature death of a reigning king requires otherwise.

Carantheum is currently regarded as the capital of a loose confederation known as the Desert Kingdoms. Though the Dracartans do not exercise authority over any of the member-states of this confederation, they have established mutual defense and trade pacts with Djaffa, and they have granted shelter to many of the other displaced desert peoples.

The Dracartan military is known to be quite large. The capital city of Dracarta has a large fleet of armored duneships, many divisions of aht-ra cavalry, and dozens of hurlants capable of propelling spheres of dangerous substances such as red menace, yellow peril, and others. The city is surrounded by trifold walls, and despite the best efforts of the Rajan army, it has never been successfully penetrated. The citadels of Anasa and Nadan are also heavily armed and fortified against attack, and harbor even more troops and duneships.

### *Worldview*

The Dracartans have good relations with the Nine Kingdoms, whom they regard as friends and allies. Despite several costly defeats, Rajanistan continues to covet the Red Desert's riches, and remains a constant threat to the Dracartans. The Kang Empire is also believed to have an overly acute interest in this region. Even before the Uprising, Za bandit tribes preyed upon caravans heading to and from Dracarta. If anything, the situation has worsened, and raids by Beastmen and Araq are also more common now than before.

Carantheum produces most of what it needs, except for water, which is obtained from deep underground wells but at times is in short supply. When needed, the Dracartans obtain stores of the life-giving liquid from Astar of the Nine Kingdoms, using thaumaturgy to solidify water from Lake Zephyr, cut it into massive blocks, and transport it to Dracarta in massive land barges. Merchant caravans from many lands come to Dracarta to acquire red iron, for which they trade goods of all varieties: amberglass from Cymril, woven goods and hardwoods from Vardune, scintilla and amber from Jhangara, metal and precious stones from Arim, beasts from Djaffa, and more. Duneships and land barges skim across the desert on red-iron runners, bringing cargoes to and from many distant lands.

## Dracartan Settlements

### The Crimson City of Dracarta

Dracarta is one of the most important trade centers on the continent. It is striking to behold, its tri-fold walls and towers plated with gleaming red iron, and its streets paved with white stone. Merchant caravans from many lands come here, bearing goods of all descriptions to trade for the Dracartans' wares.

### Anasa

Anasa is a Dracartan citadel that stands at the southern edge of the Red Desert. Primarily a military outpost, it has its fleet of duneships and a garrison of desert scouts. Djaffir merchant tribes often come here to sell their wares.

### Nadan

Nadan is a fortified settlement located at the northern edge of the Red Desert. It is notable for its duneship construction yards, and for its large population of Yassan, many of whom are employed here as highly skilled workers.



# The Yassan

The Yassan are a short and stocky people, with metallic grey skin, flat features, and six-fingered hands. They dress in hooded yellow tunics and breeches with heavy leather boots and gloves, a costume well-suited to their preferred line of work.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Yassan are thought to be descended from a race of neomorphs created by the ancient Archaens. Displaced during the aftermath of the Great Disaster, the Yassan spent many years wandering in the Wilderness of Zaran. Eventually they were found by Dracartan desert scouts, and their clans granted sanctuary within the walled settlement of Nadan.

## Work for Hire

*"My first encounter with the Yassan occurred while I was traveling by land-ark across that region of the Wilderlands known as the Barrens. The ship's navigator, a Zandir whom we all suspected of favoring an afternoon tipple or two, failed to notice the appearance of a large boulder, partly submerged in the sandy soil and laying directly in the path of the land-ark. The resulting impact damaged both the vessel's starboard fore wheel and aft rudder, causing the land-ark to come to a halt, listing precariously to one side. After berating the navigator and cuffing him soundly about the ears for good measure, the ship's captain ordered his first mate to raise a yellow flag, indicating that the ship was in distress and in need of assistance. 'Distress' would also describe the state of the ship's passengers, for we were stranded perilously close to territories known to be occupied by hostile Beastmen tribes.*

*"As luck would have it, a clan of Yassan technomancers passing through the region spotted our signal and came to our aid. Without delay they retrieved block and tackle, extensible hoists, and other tools from their wagons and set to work. In short order they righted the land-ark, raised the hull, and removed the damaged fore wheel and rudder. Within an hour the damaged parts were repaired, along with several cracks in the hull and a slightly bent axle that even the ship's carpenter had not noticed. The captain was overjoyed, until he was presented with a bill for the Yassan's services, the extent of which caused his swarthy features to go pale. Still he paid the technomancers without complaint, knowing full well that the quality of the workmanship was well worth the price."*

### *Culture*

Yassan are artisans by trade, skilled in the working of metals, stone, and glass, and adept at building, repairing, and maintaining most types of mechanisms and structures. While certain aristocratic Talislantans denigrate them as "commoners" or "manual laborers," the Yassan are highly intelligent and possessed of an independent spirit. They are arguably the most skilled artisans on the continent, and can build or repair just about anything. Yassan fees tend to be high, but the speed and quality of their workmanship is unsurpassed. It has been said that Yassan society is essentially one large trade guild.

The Yassan know no ancestral homeland, nor do they know much of the origins and history of their people. Despite this, they have created a unique and diverse culture, which emphasizes hard work, honesty, and a respect for craftsmanship that is unmatched by other peoples. Since being taken in by the Dracartans, the majority of Yassan now reside in Nadan. Most live in Dracartan dwellings, modified to suit their needs and decorated to their tastes.

### *Language*

Yassan are fluent in both Nomadic and a native dialect of High Talislan. They are also able to read and write technomantic symbology. Yassan names usually have but a single syllable: Ome, Yan, Ang, Enk, etc. There is no difference in male or female nomenclature.

### *Government*

The clan unit, based on the extended family, serves as the Yassan hierarchy. At its head is the eldest male or female, followed by his or her eldest son or daughter, and so on down the line. Yassan have no government other than this, though as guests in Carantheum, they honor all Dracartan laws. Serious offenses, almost unknown among the law-abiding Yassan, are usually handled within the clan.

Yassan have no organized military. In return for sanctuary and shelter granted to them by Carantheum, all Yassan spend one year in the Dracartan military engineer corps. They perform a vital function, helping to maintain and repair Dracartan duneships, roads, and fortifications.

### *Magic & Religion*

Yassan believe in the entity called the Creator. They worship together as a family, giving thanks for their homes, jobs, and health. The typical Yassan home has a small shrine with a beautifully crafted, seven-pointed star sigil, representing the Yassan concept of Creator. Yassan dead are placed in coffins of intricately carved stone, and buried in the desert.

Yassan are skilled in the mechanical aspects of technomancy, a lost branch of the arcane arts that is practically unknown to Talislantans of the New Age. Their knowledge of complex mechanisms, as well as their exceptional manual dexterity, enables them to repair, assemble, disassemble, or modify just about anything that has working parts, including the most complex windship levitationals and essence accumulators.

### *Worldview*

As citizens and subjects of Carantheum, Yassan observe much the same political agenda as their patrons. Those who live outside of Carantheum typically remain neutral as regards other nations and peoples. However, a Yassan will never work for anyone he or she does not trust. This includes the Kasmirans, whom the Yassan accuse of stealing their trade secrets. Yassan are in great demand in civilized regions, where their clans are involved in maintenance, engineering, and construction.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The Red Desert is so hot that travelers and steeds (other than aht-ra) can perish from thirst in as little as two or three days without adequate supplies of water. Conversely, temperatures drop steeply at night, which may pose a danger to those who do not have access to a tent or proper clothing. Far worse are the sandstorms, which can occur suddenly and may last for hours or even days. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Encountering a dwelling might be coming upon a small, fortified Dracartan settlement, where one may find shelter and water. It could also mean finding the camp of travelers (see encounter #5) or raiders (see encounters #6, 12, and 13), ancient ruins or crypts, or even the lair of a beast such as a sand demon (see encounter #11) or manrak nest (see encounter #8). |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Water:** In the Red Desert, the only water to be found will typically be in the few well-known wells or oases. The former are usually capped by a heavy stone slab, and may be guarded by Djaffir or Yitek nomads claiming it as their property. Either may serve as a camping site for travelers (see encounter #5), or as a watering hole for wild beasts of various sorts. A well or oasis may have gone dry, either as a result of natural causes or due to the presence of a sand demon or drought demon (see encounter #11). |
| 7-8 | 4 | **Roadway:** The Wilderlands Road is the main roadway in the Red Desert, where one may encounter travelers (see encounter #5) or raiders (see encounters #6, 12, and 13). A roadway encounter might also mean finding an ancient and forgotten tributary of the Wilderlands Road, which might lead to almost anything, including ancient ruins, crypts, or some sort of dwelling (see encounter #2). |
| 9-12 | 5 | **Traveler:** One may encounter travelers on the Wilderlands Road and its tributaries or out in the desert wilderness. Most will be mounted on aht- ra or greymanes, or sailing aboard a duneship or land barge. Windships from Cymril also fly the thermals of the desert on their way to and from settlements in Carantheum. Travelers in this region may include: (1) a contingent of Dracartan cavalry escorting Yassan technomancers on their way to make repairs to roadways or settlements; (2) a Dracartan armored duneship patrolling the desert against raiders; (3) a Dracartan land barge hauling trade goods such as solidified water from Lake Zephyr in Astar; (4) merchants from the Nine Kingdoms hoping to trade various goods for red iron; (5) Orgovian traders or Yitek tomb robbers carrying goods or artifacts of some sort; (6) a Djaffir caravan bringing beasts and goods to trade in the markets of Dracartan settlements. |
| 13 | 6 | **Araq Warband:** While generally small in number, Araq warbands may travel great distances across the Wilderlands and into the Red Desert. They consider all others as prey, and have a taste for humanoid flesh. |
| 14 | 7 | **Caravan-Bug:** Many tribes of these tiny creatures have established trading colonies near Dracartan settlements. Larger folk may not immediately notice their long caravans crossing the desert. Generally friendly, the insects possess a limited form of speech and may trade news of the region in exchange for tiny morsels and treats. |
| 15 | 8 | **Manrak:** These terrifying humanoid insects hover in the sky, searching for prey to incapacitate with venom. Unfortunate victims may be taken to nests in the ground, or stung, paralyzed, and fed upon immediately. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | 9 | **Depredators:** Depredators from the nearby Topaz Mountains are known to fly high above the Red Desert at night, looking for easy prey. Small parties, lost or foolhardy individuals, and wounded creatures or travelers are especially favored. A depredator may snatch up a victim and carry it many miles before alighting to feed. |
| 17 | 10 | **Rajan Scorpion:** These dangerous and highly aggressive insects may grow to be a foot in length. They burrow in the sand to camouflage themselves, patiently awaiting potential victims. The venom from their sting is quite lethal, and is sought after by assassins. |
| 18 | 11 | **Cthonian Demon:** Cthonian demons originate from the Demonrealms, making their way to Talislanta through interdimensional rifts, portals, or by the use of certain types of summoning spells. Naturally, in the Red Desert they take the form of sand demons, which are about as dangerous as one would expect an actively malicious sandstorm to be, or drought demons, which can drain a well or oasis of water in surprisingly short time (more powerful individuals can accomplish the task in just a few hours). Sand and drought demons hide in dry wells, sand dunes, or abandoned ruins, and feed on creatures of all sorts, sucking them dry and leaving nothing but lifeless husks. Though legends say that these entities are able to create mirages, that is likely not true (see encounter #19). |
| 19 | 12 | **Mirajan:** This type of spiritform is found only among the arid lands of Djaffa, Carantheum, and Rajanistan. Referred to by some as "the phantoms of the desert," mirajans are said to be the spirits of dead Rajans come back to torment the living. They usually take the form of humanoids dressed in ethereal robes, their features concealed beneath the folds of their garments. Mirajans hide in abandoned ruins or oases and come forth at night, armed with ghostly scimitars or curved daggers. Once a mirajan has chosen a target, it will continue to attack each night until that target is slain. |
| 20 | 13 | **Za Bandits:** A small or large contingent of Za bandits may be coming to raid, or have already done so. In the latter case, they may have captives, gold, red iron weapons, trade goods, steeds, or other valuables taken in a raid on a caravan or settlement. |



# Djaffa

Enclosed to the east by the Red Desert and on the other three sides by the Wilderlands of Zaran, the land of Djaffa consists primarily of scrub plains and desert. Rain is scarce, and sandstorms are common. The days are sweltering; the nights are cold. Except for a few scattered oases, practically nothing grows in this arid region, yet this arid land has long been home to the nomadic peoples known as the Djaffir.

## The Djaffir

The Djaffir are slender and wiry of build, dark-skinned, and average height. Flowing headdresses, robes, and cloaks of beige or white linen are worn by both of the Djaffir tribes, along with boots of soft animal hide. All Djaffir wear traditional fetish masks made of cured hide and decorated with occult symbology.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Djaffir are descended from a large group of nomadic tribes displaced by the Great Disaster. Some believe they are distantly related to the Kasmirans, a prospect which neither people seem to relish. Since the Uprising, the Djaffir have become a part of the new Desert Kingdoms confederacy.

### *Culture*

The Djaffir people are separated into many families and clans, but each belongs to one of two main tribes: merchant traders, or bandits. By far the most numerous of the two tribes, the Djaffir merchants make their living by buying and selling goods from distant lands and importing them across the continent in large caravans. They also breed aht-ra and other beasts, which they sell at markets ranging from the western lands to the Kang Empire. The bandit tribes are mainly caravan robbers, though on rare occasions they have been known to raid small settlements and encampments, taking anything of value that can be carried off.

The Djaffir have two settlements, which grow or contract in size according to the comings and goings of the various merchant and bandit tribes. These “desert cities” are comprised entirely of tents and pavilions, allowing them to be moved at need.

Djaffir men can take as many wives as they can maintain. No wife is more important than any other, nor are any offspring favored over the other based on maternal origin.

## Sport with the Rajans

*"Both the Djaffir merchant tribes and their bandit brethren have no love for the Rajans, and will seldom pass up an opportunity to "pull their beards," as they like to put it. I am reminded of an incident that occurred at the eastern edge of the Wilderlands of Zaran. The Djaffir merchant tribe I had been riding with was known to do business with certain merchants in the city of Hadran, in the Kang Empire. To do so, the Djaffir either had to follow a circuitous route through the Volcanic Hills or trespass through a heavily patrolled sector of Rajanistan. Naturally, the Djaffir always chose the latter approach, as it was the shortest of the two.*

*"On this particular occasion, the tribe decided that they would show their utter disdain for the Rajans by venturing into their territories during broad daylight. I assured them that they need not be so bold merely to impress me, which they considered a grand joke. On the next day we rose before dawn and approached the Rajan border. There we waited, mounted on our swift ontra, a cool night wind blowing at our backs. When the twin suns finally broke across the horizon, the tribe's chieftain raised his scimitar and let out an exultant cry. The rest of the tribe replied in kind, and we were off, thundering across the plains and into Rajanistan.*

*"The first Rajans we encountered were a band of Virds, barely risen from their sleep. We rode directly into their encampment, the Djaffir capsizing tents and slashing indiscriminately with their blades and were gone before the Virds knew what had transpired. The Djaffir were wild with the thrill of battle and becoming ever bolder with each passing mile. At the sight of a Rajan merchant caravan, the nomads shouted in unison some deprecating remark, and then descended upon their rivals, wreaking havoc upon the Rajans' baggage trains before again dashing off towards Hadran.*

*"This last incident aroused the attention of a contingent of Rajan cavalry, who set off after us in hot pursuit. When the bridge at Hadran finally came into view, my heart leaped with joy, then just as quickly sank; blocking the bridge was a unit of Shadinn land lizards. With the Rajans at our heels and the Shadinn ahead, our doom seemed imminent. Though certainly aware of our plight, the Djaffir continued to ride at full gallop towards the bridge. The Shadinn responded, charging forth on their armored lizards to meet us head-on. This was what the Djaffir had hoped would occur. Scattering like leaves on the wind, the nomads rode in between and around the Shadinn's lumbering beasts, who nearly fell over themselves trying to match the agile maneuvers of the Djaffir's swift steeds. The pursuing Rajan cavalry arrived on the scene only to become hopelessly entangled with the Shadinn host, which by this time was in a state of utter disarray. In the ensuing crush of Rajans, land lizards, and Shadinn, the nomads were able to make the bridge. Four of our group had suffered slight wounds, a small price to pay for such sport, at least in the opinion of the Djaffir."*

Women are allowed to do anything a man can do, except rule a tribe or take more than one husband. There is evidence to suggest that Djaffir women have begun to rebel against these inequities, but the ancient traditions are not easily changed.

Though they will use force if necessary, Djaffir bandits are not known to engage in wanton or senseless violence. Neither are they known to attack the caravans of other Djaffir, a fact that has led many to suspect collusion between the sheiks of the two tribal groups. Some go so far as to cite the distinction between Djaffir merchants and bandits as one of semantics only. The implication is that there are no bandit or merchant tribes per se, only Djaffir, i.e., a Djaffir who has nothing to sell becomes a bandit. When he has stolen something and wishes to sell it he becomes a merchant. Unsurprisingly, the Djaffir do not take kindly to such talk.

It is the peculiar custom of all Djaffir to wear leather fetish masks, which cover the entire face. The Djaffir will not remove these masks except in the privacy of their tents, believing that "the face mirrors the soul," and that their masks protect them from hostile magic. These devices do indeed seem to confer some protection from magical influences, and certainly are of practical use against sandstorms. Individuals of a more skeptical nature claim that the Djaffir wear masks simply to conceal their identities from those they intend, by one means or another, to eventually relieve of their money.

Djaffir caravans are large and heavily armed against attack. They carry goods to and from the marketplaces of many countries, trading in spices, ornate rugs, copper or brass utensils, bolts of silkcloth from the east, mochan, dried fruits, and wines. They also breed and sell domesticated animals such as aht-ra, which are in wide use among the peoples of the Desert Kingdoms and elsewhere as steeds and beasts of burden.

### *Language*

Djaffir speak Nomadic and Talislan. First names often begin with the prefix Dj-. Examples include Djamal al Arin, Djeral djen Harune, and Djalla il Faruud.

### *Government*

Each clan has its chieftain, who directs the day-to-day activities of the group. Both the bandit and merchant tribes are in turn ruled by a sheik, who governs the lesser chieftains. At the head of all the chieftains and the two sheiks is the Caliph of Djaffa, who is regarded by his people as their spiritual leader. Aside from his duties as an arbiter of all tribal disputes, the Caliph of Djaffa performs no other known function. Even so, it is said that at a single word from the Caliph, all the tribes of Djaffa would unite to do his bidding.

The Djaffir make no fortifications, but rely on mobility for defense and offense. After the Uprising, they entered into a mutual defense pact with the Dracartans of Carantheum, with whom they share intelligence gathered from other lands.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Djaffir are a devoutly religious people who revere the Creator, whom they depict as a desert wanderer who watches over all nomads. Djaffir "priests" and "priestesses" possess the skill of wizards, but serve mainly as tribal healers and seers. They are often called upon to interpret the meanings of events, which are regarded as omens of symbolic, if not actual, significance. Djaffir wizards make the fetish masks worn by all of their people.

### *Worldview*

The Djaffir are allies and friends of the Dracartans, both of whom despise the Rajans. They are also on good terms with the Yitek, Yassan, and to a lesser extent, the Danelek. The Djaffir and Kasmirans have been trading partners for many years, despite some animosity between the two. Djaffir complain that the Kasmirans are cheap, while the Kasmirans complain that Djaffir merchants are no different than Djaffir bandits. Some say both make valid points.

## Djaffir Settlements

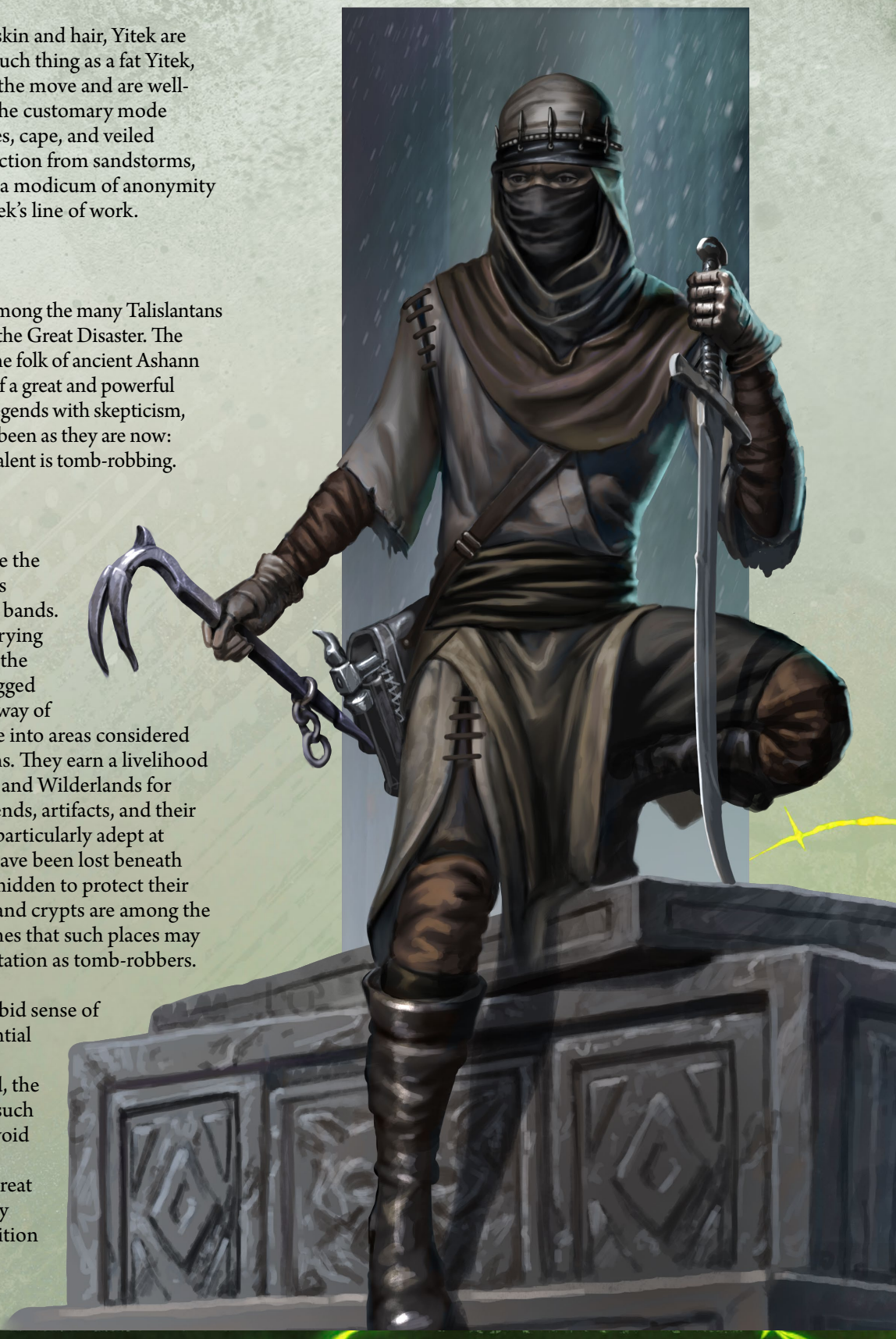
### Al Ashad & El Aran

Al Ashad is a southern tent settlement. The wells are heavily guarded, for water is a precious commodity in this region. It is said that the Djaffir merchant tribes prefer this settlement due to its proximity to the Wilderlands Road. The northern oasis-settlement, El Aran, is identical in most respects to Al Ashad. Djaffir bandit tribes reportedly prefer this place, due to its isolated location in the desert lands. Sand demons proliferate in this region.



# The Yitek

A desert people with dark brown skin and hair, Yitek are thin, wiry, and active; there is no such thing as a fat Yitek, for their people are constantly on the move and are well-adapted to a nomadic existence. The customary mode of dress includes loose-fitting robes, cape, and veiled headdress. The latter affords protection from sandstorms, and also provides the wearer with a modicum of anonymity — a useful function, given the Yitek's line of work.



## *Ancestry and History*

Like the Dracartans, the Yitek are among the many Talislantans whose ancestors were displaced by the Great Disaster. The Yitek claim to be descended from the folk of ancient Ashann and say that they were once rulers of a great and powerful kingdom. Others regard the Yitek legends with skepticism, stating that their tribes have always been as they are now: wandering vagabonds whose only talent is tomb-robbing.

## *Culture*

The Yitek are nomads who traverse the Desert Kingdoms and Wilderlands regions in small- to medium-sized bands. Yitek bands are highly mobile, carrying everything they need and own on the backs of their aht-ra. Like their rugged mounts, Yitek require little in the way of food and water, and so can venture into areas considered uninhabitable by other Talislantans. They earn a livelihood by scouring the Desert Kingdoms and Wilderlands for ancient ruins, using old maps, legends, artifacts, and their instincts to guide them. Yitek are particularly adept at locating sites and structures that have been lost beneath the shifting sands, or deliberately hidden to protect their contents. Ancient burial grounds and crypts are among the most coveted finds, due to the riches that such places may contain — hence, the Yitek's reputation as tomb-robbers.

The Yitek are known for a morbid sense of humor, a trait that is perhaps essential to their trade, but that other folk sometimes find distasteful. Indeed, the nature of the Yitek's profession is such that many Talislantans prefer to avoid prolonged or unnecessary contact with them. Few Yitek evince any great concern for such views, which they attribute to ignorance and superstition (see "Magic & Religion").

### *Language*

Most Yitek speak both Nomadic and sign, and also can read a smattering of dead languages, magical scripts, and the like. Yitek names have two parts: band affiliation (common ones include Yata, Yato, Yeta, Yuta), and personal name. Common personal names for men include Maj, Fej, Naj, Nas, Fas; female versions end in -i, as in Maji, Feji, Nasi, etc.

### *Government*

Yitek bands operate as small communes, with everyone contributing to the group's welfare. Each band has a nominal chieftain or leader, generally the oldest and wisest male of the group. The chieftain's main responsibility is to locate favorable sites for excavation, to negotiate the sale or trade of recovered goods and artifacts, and to distribute the profits fairly. Among the Yitek, stealing from or committing violence against another member of the group, hoarding food or water, or coveting another's spouse are considered serious crimes. Should a member of the band be accused of such an offense, the chieftain may be called upon to judge the offender's case. The punishment for all but the most trivial offense is expulsion from the group.

Yitek bands rely more upon mobility and stealth than force of arms or numbers. They can travel great distances in short periods, leaving little or no trace of their passage. When in hostile territory, Yitek often travel at night, hiding and sleeping during the day. Or they may simply ride day and night for as long as it takes to accomplish their objective. If pressed, Yitek will fight, and fiercely, but it is not their preference.

### *Magic & Religion*

Yitek appear to have little interest in matters of religion. This may be more an issue of pragmatism than spirituality, for in the pursuit of their profession, Yitek often have to undertake actions that others would regard as taboo, such as opening crypts, "desecrating" ruined temples or burial grounds, and so on. It is interesting to note that the Yitek are among the least superstitious people in all of Talislanta, but even so, most of them carry a charm or two to ward against curses and the like, just in case. These devices are not made by the Yitek, but are usually obtained by trading with other peoples such as the Orgovians.

While all Yitek are taught by their elders to decipher old runes and sigils, the tribes have no wizards or shamans. Yitek bury their dead without ritual or ceremony, knowing all too well the transient nature of monuments to the dead.

### *Worldview*

Both the northern and southern Yitek tribes are on good terms with the Djaffir and Dracartans, whom they mark as friends. The Yitek also get along well with Yassan, and sometimes hire Yassan clans to help in heavy salvage or excavating operations that the Yitek themselves are not equipped to handle. Yitek are one of the few Talislantan peoples who deal amicably with the Orgovians; they are fair traders and know better than to stint when it comes to the customary exchange of gifts. The Yitek have no love for the Farad, Za, Beastmen, or Rajans, all of whom have been known to pursue and attack Yitek bands.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The scrub plains and deserts of Djaffa rarely experience rainfall, but are occasionally subject to heat waves so extreme that even the nomads of this region find it necessary to take shelter from the twin suns by day, and travel only at night. Sandstorms are a constant threat; far less common and far more dangerous are weather anomalies such as ghost winds, which emanate from ancient tombs and crypts. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Encounters of this sort are generally limited to the discovery of abandoned ruins, or the tents and pavilions of a Yitek or Djaffir encampment. It could also mean finding the camp of travelers (see encounter #5) or raiders (see encounters #6 and 13). |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Oasis:** An encounter could mean finding one of the well-known oases in Djaffa, which are common camping sites for travelers (see encounter #5). It might also mean seeing an illusion created by a mirajan (see encounter #11). |
| 7-8 | 4 | **Roadway:** The Wilderlands Road crosses the southern portion of Djaffa. One may encounter travelers (see encounter #5) or raiders (see encounters #6 and 13). An encounter of roadway might also mean finding a tributary of the Wilderlands Road leading to something interesting, such as a dwelling (see encounter #2) or oasis (see encounter #3). |
| 9-12 | 5 | **Traveler:** One may encounter travelers on the Wilderlands Road and its tributaries or out in the desert wilderness. Most will be mounted on aht-ra or greymanes. Windships from Cymril also fly over Djaffa on their way to and from Carantheum, and may land in Djaffa to camp overnight. Travelers in this region might be: (1) Djaffir merchant caravans returning from distant lands or heading to them; (2) Djaffir bandits, who favor attacking non-Djaffir caravans, and may or may not consider travelers as easy targets; (3) Orgovian traders carrying odd goods and wares acquired from across the Wilderlands; (4) a windship or land-ark carrying merchants from the Nine Kingdoms; (5) Dracartan soldiers aboard a duneship, possibly bringing their Djaffir allies news of bandits or other dangers; (6) a band of Yitek nomads traveling to or from a newly discovered tomb or secret burial vault. |
| 13 | 6 | **Araq Warband:** While seldom encountered this far west, Araq warbands have been known to launch raids deep into the Red Desert and beyond, even as far as Djaffa. They consider all others as prey, and have a taste for humanoid flesh. |
| 14 | 7 | **Wild Herd:** Small herds of durge, greymanes, and land lizards roam the scrub plains of Djaffa. The Djaffir sometimes hunt such creatures for food, but more commonly to capture, breed, and sell them in distant markets. Creatures such as manrak, depredators, and ravengers prey upon them as well. |
| 15 | 8 | **Manrak:** These humanoid insects sometimes fly from as far away as the Maruk Mountains to hunt for prey (typically smaller sorts of steeds or humanoids). They occasionally lair in abandoned ruins as well. |
| 16 | 9 | **Ravengers:** Able to hover on the winds for days on end, these winged scavengers are extremely opportunistic yet patient. They may follow a party of wounded, starving, or thirsty beasts or humanoids for long periods of time, waiting until the weakest ones fall or perish, in order to feed on their remains. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | 10 | **Rajan Scorpion:** Nests of these foot-long insects may be found hidden just beneath the sands, or in the vicinity of wells and oases. They are very aggressive, and if encountered in numbers, they may attack even large groups of beasts or humanoids. |
| 18 | 11 | **Mirajan:** Said to be the spirits of deceased Rajans, these hostile spectres are known to lure incautious travelers to their lairs through the use of mirages (illusions). |
| 19 | 12 | **Morde:** Flocks of these winged scavengers lair in caves and arroyos among the scrub plains, and ruins or caves elsewhere. They are known to follow beasts or travelers in the hope of scavenging the remains left by larger predators, scraps of food, or even refuse. They are semi-intelligent and capable of speech, but are considered harbingers of ill fortune by most of the nomad tribes of the Desert Kingdoms. |
| 20 | 13 | **Za Bandits:** Contingents of Za bandits have been known to launch raids into Djaffa. If en route to a raid, they will be aggressively looking for potential victims to kill and rob. If returning, they may be in possession of captives, gold, red iron weapons, trade goods, steeds, and/or other valuables. In the latter case, Za who are laden with stolen booty usually seek to avoid further conflict. |





# Faradun

Faradun is an exotic land located on the southern coast of Talislanta and bordered to the north by the rugged peaks of the Topaz Mountains. Blown by winds from the Far Seas, Faradun's climate is uniformly hot and oppressive. Arid and hostile terrain dominates the north-central region, gradually giving way to patches of jungle along the coast. Neither is friendly to travelers: the northern deserts are frequented by Rajan caravans, most of them heavily armed, and some accompanied by Rajan paladins and warrior-priests. The western Ghostlands are haunted by dire spirits and shadowights, while jungles are crawling with fierce predators such as exomorphs, water raknids, and omnivrax.

To the east lie two topographical anomalies: the shimmering Sea of Glass, and the Emerald Mountain. Both places were once frequented by Cymrilian glass-miners, who came here to quarry the green crystal that was used to build the old city of Cymril, and to unearth the rare crystal sarcophagi in which their ancestors, the Phaedrans, were interred long ago. Such activities ended during the Uprising, when it was discovered that the Farad had stolen secret windship arcanology from the Cymrilians and sold it to the Rajans.

Along the southern coast lives a mercantile folk of less-than-scrupulous habits, known as the Farad.

# The Farad

The Farad are a dark and saturnine folk of above-average height, with flint-grey skin, stony visages, and narrow eyes as black as coal. The customary mode of dress for Farad men includes elaborate headdress, voluminous robes, broad sashes, and velvet boots, all hung with ornate tassels, fringes, and beads of colored glass. Men over the age of twenty wear their beards in twin braids bound with silver fastenings, the length and the degree of ornamentation employed being considered signs of status. Farad women wear long silken gowns and veils, and adorn themselves with necklaces of silver loops, rings on each of their fingers.

## *Ancestry and History*

Some say the Farad are related to the Rajans. Others claim the Farad are descended from the ancient Baratus, a race of sky-roving pirates. Neither theory is very complementary to the Farad, who much prefer to claim descent from the Archaens. Since the Uprising, Faradun has had much closer ties to the Rajans, and together the two have formed a consortium of sorts that they refer to as the Axis.

## *Language*

Farad speak High Talislan, which they regard as a sign of status. Farad nomenclature is twofold: each individual has an informal name, used primarily during one's youth, and a formal title. Informal names are generally short: Avi, Fe, Nir, Sej, Jir. Formal names are derived from the names of the great mercantile Houses, such as Falal of the House of Nageth, Sulemar of the House of Zorastin, etc. Male and female nomenclature is distinguishable only by such titles as Madame or Sir.

### Culture

The Farad live in walled villas made of brick and stone, with wrought-iron bars over the doors and windows. They bear an unsavory reputation as unscrupulous merchants that is tempered only by their great wealth and apparent competence in mercantile endeavors. Generally speaking, a Farad will buy or sell anything from anyone, with no questions asked. Trusting no one, Farad merchants require prospective clients to sign elaborate contracts for all but the most basic transactions. Bribes, favors, and special incentives are common Farad practices; when attempting to make a deal, a Farad can be most accommodating, and even obsequious. Conversely, Farad possess a capacity for cold-blooded, emotionless behavior that is matched only by the soulless logic of the barbaric Harakin.

### Government

The social, mercantile, and political hierarchy of Faradun are all related; each reflects the nation's utter obsession with commerce. The ruler of Faradun, known as the Cral, wields absolute power, and is responsible for determining market prices for all goods which are to be bought or sold in the capital city. Second in line of authority are the monopolists, individuals given power by the Cral to determine the availability of various wares. Each is responsible for a single commodity, such as slaves, contraband, gemstones, metals, narcotics, and so forth. Next come the usurers, who lend money at exorbitant interest rates to finance commercial ventures approved by the monopolists. Dependent upon the usurers are the procurers, who travel far and wide, acquiring merchandise from various sources and establishing new trade contacts. Finally, there are the mongers: the shop owners, peddlers and hawkers who make up the vast majority of Faradun's citizenry. Each House has its own monopolist, usurers, procurers, and mongers.

The laws of Faradun are harsh, and not altogether comprehensible to outsiders. Thieves can be sentenced to torture, imprisonment, maiming, or any of a dozen more inventive forms of punishment. Death is the mandatory sentence for embezzling funds, a crime considered more heinous than murder. Conversely, in Faradun, goods stolen from other lands can legally be resold as "pre-owned" merchandise. The Houses police themselves, and consequently, many crimes go unreported.

The capital city of Tarun and its port facilities are heavily fortified against attack and are considered to be impregnable. Towering sea-gates protect the harbor and can be closed at need. A sixty-foot wall encompasses the city, protecting Tarun from assault by land. Faradun has no army of its own, but hires foreign mercenaries to protect its holdings, properties, and its fleet of merchant vessels.

In recent years, Faradun has begun to produce windships. Some claim that the Farad stole the arcanology required to construct such vessels from the Cymrilians. However, the Farad say that they discovered this information in the Hadjin tombs.

### Magic & Religion

The Farad have a religion of sorts, revering the golden god Avar, the deity of material riches and personal gain. The merchant-priests of Avar exhort the attainment of wealth by any means. To illustrate the point, they sell blessings, golden idols, and other holy items in the god's gilded temples. They also handle funeral arrangements, selling the gold-chased coffins favored by wealthy Farad and offering advice on how best to safeguard their lavishly decorated tombs from would-be thieves.

Farad wizards tend to be pragmatic by nature. Most have little actual interest in the arcane arts, but study magic only to further their desire for wealth and power.

## Visit to Tarun

From a Farad mercantile brochure:

*"The scenic port city of Tarun offers many attractions not readily available in other lands. In the marketplace of Tarun, you can buy practically anything – provided you can afford the price, of course. The list of available commodities is practically endless; virtually anything that can be owned, rented, or otherwise exchanged under contract can be obtained here. For the discriminating buyer there is a wide selection of the rarest mixtures and substances. The list includes aphrodisiacs, soporifics, tonics, potions, powders, poisons, and antidotes; k'tallah, euphorica, kesh, skullcap, stimulants, invigorants, and rare varieties of dream essence not available elsewhere, to name but a few.*

*"Also bear in mind that Tarun is a leading supplier of 'previously-owned' goods. We stock items in all categories, from personal possessions to lost artifacts, missing religious relics, books and scrolls, jewelry, antiquities, and valuables of all sorts. Our previously-owned goods are guaranteed untraceable for one month (exceptions and restrictions may apply; see contract for details). And remember, we also purchase previously-owned items at competitive prices."*

### *Worldview*

Faradun's alliance with Rajanistan has proved beneficial to both parties, the Farad now being protected by the Rajan military, and the Rajans now having access to Farad trade goods, as well as the port city of Tarun. Elsewhere, the Farad's unscrupulous trade policies have brought them great prosperity, as well as the enmity of many Talislantans. Following the sale of windship arcanology to the Rajans, Farad mongers and procurers were banned from both the Nine Kingdoms and Carantheum.

Despite this, the port of Tarun is still visited by the merchant ships of many nations: Imrian slave vessels, Zandir free traders, Sunra dragon barques bearing gold and riches from the Kang Empire, Aamanian ore traders, and even Corsair vessels from the Mangar Isles and Gao-Din. The Farad have an extensive network of buyers and sellers located throughout the continent. They have their hands in just about everything, from legitimate trade concerns to shadowy operations involving the sale of narcotics, stolen goods and arcanology, and other forms of contraband (see sidebar).

## Farad Settlements and Places of Note

### Sard Island

A man-made isle that lies off the southern coast of Faradun, Sard Island is home to several of the wealthiest monopolists, who live here in fortified castles of elaborate design.

### The Port City of Tarun

The sprawling port of Tarun, with its ominous sea gates and impregnable defenses, is the capital of Faradun and its center for trade. Prices for food, drink, and lodging are reasonable; any sort of entertainment or diversion imaginable can be arranged through the auspices of the Farad procurers, who claim to be able to grant their customers' fondest desires.

### The Ghostlands

This region is so arid and barren that not even snakes and vermin dwell here. Necrophages, shadowights, and other unclean spirits, being somewhat less particular concerning their accommodations, haunt the region in force. The Ghostlands have long been used as a place of banishment by the Farad.

### Maledictus

Somewhere in this waste is the shadowy ruined city which the Farad refer to as Maledictus, which means "cursed," or more aptly, "haunted." Precisely who or what it is that haunts the ruins is uncertain. Some claim that a cabal of shadowizards inhabits the city. Others theorize that night stalkers, ghasts, or the ghost of the legendary warlock Mordante are responsible. Most frightening to the Farad is the idea that Maledictus is haunted by the disembodied spirits of all those who have been cheated or ruined by the unscrupulous merchants and monopolists of Faradun. Whatever the case may be, no Farad will ever dare set foot within the vicinity of these ruins.

### The Coastal Jungles

The jungles of Faradun's southeastern coast are rife with malathropes, alatus, and other unpleasant creatures. The climate is abysmally hot and humid, the terrain alternating between flooded swamp and mountainous jungle. However, costly k'tallah, tantalus, and scarlet lotus grow here in substantial quantities, a fact not lost on the Farad. Keenly aware of the dangers inherent in such work, the mercantilists send work crews composed of cheap slaves and convicted felons into the jungles to gather these rare and costly plants.

### Random Encounters in Tarun

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-4 | 1 | **Clash of Cultures:** Ships from many nations drop anchor at the port city of Tarun, including Aaman, Imria, the Kang Empire, Zandu, the Mangar Isles, Gao-Din, and others. Their mingling in the streets, markets, and pleasure houses of the city may result in quarrels, which may lead to brawls, which may cause damage to merchandise or even murder. Farad justice is swift, though crewmembers of merchant ships may be dealt with less severely, and either fined or suffer public punishment (see encounter #7). |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 5-6 | 2 | **Mercenary Patrol:** Each Farad mercantile House provides its own mercenaries who patrol the streets, markets, shops, and homes in their domain. Since the Uprising and Faradun's alliance with Rajanistan, these forces now include Rajan warriors and Shadinn executioners. The patrols are tasked with preventing theft and keeping the peace. Travelers from "enemy nations," such as the Nine Kingdoms, Carantheum, or Djaffa, will likely be detained and brought before a leader of the House for questioning, and possibly extorted for safe passage away from Faradun, or worse. |
| 7-9 | 3 | **Market Mishap:** Virtually anything may be found for sale in Tarun, including "previously-owned" goods. This type of encounter might mean the travelers have spotted something for sale which they know was stolen from them or an associate. It could mean they have been enticed or tricked into consuming kesh, k'tallah, euphorica, or some other addictive substance. Perhaps they see someone they know among the captives of Imrian slavers. |
| 10-12 | 4 | **Street Performers:** A group of performers has attracted a small crowd. They might be provocative dancers, musicians, jugglers, tumblers, magicians, or conjurers. Among them will be Farad mongers enticing the crowd to buy tokens to performances within pleasure houses around the city. These crowds also attract pickpockets and other scoundrels. |
| 13-14 | 5 | **Rampage:** A creature has gone berserk. This could be a beast of burden, such as a land lizard, mangonel lizard, or ogriphant, which has broken its fetters and is charging down the street. It could also be an entity summoned by a magician who has lost control of it, such as a Cthonian demon. |
| 15 | 6 | **Jungle Work Crew:** The Farad use criminals and slaves for forced labor, sending them into the jungles to gather valuable plants such as k'tallah, tantalus, and scarlet lotus. As these work crews are shackled at the ankles and the jungles hold dangerous creatures like alatus, lurkers, and malathropes, the chances of returning alive are slim. This encounter might mean that a work crew preparing to leave the city has revolted, overpowered their guards and scattered into the crowds. Will the travelers help or hinder them? This encounter could also be used as a mishap for travelers who find themselves part of a work crew after awakening from a night of debauchery or as a form of punishment for crimes against Faradun (see encounter #7). |
| 16-17 | 7 | **Public Punishment:** Each of the Houses reserves a spot in its primary market square for the public shaming and punishment of criminals. Depending upon the severity of the crime, a miscreant may find themselves locked in stocks or pillories, roped to a pillar or post for flogging, or sentenced to death at the hands of a Shadinn executioner. The mob often delights in mocking and harassing criminals. Farad procurers may take the opportunity to pay a criminal's debt, forcing them into indentured servitude for a specified amount of time (see encounter #6). |
| 18 | 8 | **Military Display:** Using windship arcanology stolen from the Cymrilians, the Cral and the leaders of the Farad merchant houses have invested in the construction of two types of windships: large cargo ships used to transport goods and slaves, and warships capable of defending them. When new windships are constructed, they are flown over the city as a form of aerial parade intended to display Faradun's power and advanced arcanology. It is believed that leaders of the Nine Kingdoms and the Baratus both seek information about the design and weaknesses of these new windships. |
| 19-20 | 9 | **A Proposition:** The monopolists, usurers, procurers, and mongers of the merchant Houses are constantly scheming to increase profits. Travelers to Faradun may be propositioned by these merchants for a variety of reasons, some legitimate and some nefarious. Examples include: (1) a procurer wishes to establish trade for a resource native to the traveler's homeland and wants the traveler to take a letter of introduction to a merchant there; (2) a usurer has learned that a rival House has invested in the secret construction of a windship and wishes it destroyed in order to financially weaken the rival; (3) a monger's shop continues to lose wares to a mysterious thief who leaves no trace. Will the travelers apprehend the culprit for a reward? |

# The Old City-State of Hadj

Hadj was once a walled city built in the middle of an arid plain that stretches for miles in all directions. The city was overrun by Wild Tribes during the Uprising, and its inhabitants forced to flee for their lives. The Hadjin Road, which intersects the old Wilderlands Road to the north, is now in disrepair, and littered with debris. Hadj, once known for its opulent palaces, marble causeways, and scenic fountains, has fallen into ruin, ravaged by thieves and scavengers.

Since the Uprising, the Old City-State is now surrounded by tribes of Beastmen and Za, who scour the ruins in search of ancient treasures to sell in the Bandit City of Zaran and elsewhere. Za have been known to capture Yitek tomb-robbers, Yassan technomancers, and others who may have useful skills, and force them to work for them. Orgovian traders and Farad procurers are the only merchants that the Za and Beastmen allow to operate in the vicinity of Hadj; any others found in this area are captured and either killed or sold as slaves to the Farad.

# The Hadjin and Hajan

The Hadjin are a tall and slender folk similar in stature to the Cymrilians. They once daubed their pale green complexions with colored powders and dressed in the finest layered robes, upward-sweeping caps, and long velveteen gloves. For all but a lucky few, such luxuries may no longer be as easy to acquire as in days gone by.

No Hadjin currently live in the Old City-State. Those members of the Hadjin aristocracy who were fortunate enough to escape with their lives and some portion of their wealth can now be found in places such as Carantheum, Kasmir of the Nine Kingdoms, and the eastern land of Ispasia. Their former servants, the Hajan, have either stayed on with their masters or sought gainful employment in other lands.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Hadjin are descended from the Phandre, a sect of magicians who fled from the Western Lands during the Cult Wars, taking with them a vast store of wealth that had been accumulated by their ancestors. Once inhabitants of the city of Hadj, the Hadjin are now among the many Talislantan peoples who have been displaced either by the Great Disaster, or more recently, the Uprising.

### *Culture*

The Hadjin aristocracy possessed no useful skills to speak of, but were the inheritors of an incredibly vast store of wealth left to them by their early ancestors. They lived in luxury, their every need attended to by loyal Hajan, a class of highly refined servitors who regarded themselves as "penultimates" — second in status only to their Hadjin masters.

Born into great wealth, the Hadjin still consider themselves superior to the common folk. They are in the habit of waving themselves with scented fans when in the presence of outsiders, whom they deem odious, coarse, and offensive in terms of appearance and odor.

### *Language*

Hadjin and Hajan both speak High Talislan, and regard less-sophisticated tongues as vulgar, uncouth, and uncivilized. Common names for Hadjin always include a grandiose title followed by a first name and family name. For example: His Exemplary Eloquence, Hast-Boncour; or Her Sophisticated Elegance, Helse-Boncour. Other family names of high pedigree include Damour, Jalour, and Qualour.

Hajan have no titles, but use similar-sounding personal and family names.

### *Government*

The hereditary ruler of Hadj is known as the Hadjin Grandeloquence. Since fleeing Hadj during the Uprising, the Grandeloquence has suffered an unprecedented loss of personal and family prestige — the ultimate punishment for a Hadjin. It is said that the Grandeloquence has offered to pay a fortune to any who could help rid Hadj of the Wild Tribes who currently occupy it and the surrounding territories.

### *Magic & Religion*

Though their ancestors were skilled in magic, the Hadjin lost all interest in the arcane arts soon after building their city-state. Few Hadjin ever possessed the dedication required to attain such abilities, though after the Uprising some may be more inclined to take up such studies.



### *Worldview*

The Hadjin have fallen far since the Uprising. Due to their previously haughty demeanor, they have few real friends. The Dracartans seem to have taken pity on them and have offered sanctuary to many Hadjin. The Kasmirans likewise welcomed Hadjin "refugees," but only those who were willing to pay exorbitant "relocation fees."

## Places of Note

### The Hadjin Tombs

The Hadjin Tombs consist of a number of giant, obelisk-like structures, built centuries ago to house the Hadjin dead. Over seventy feet in height, most of these megaliths still stand, though some have fallen or now lurch precipitously at odd angles. The tombs contain untold thousands of mummified corpses, each interred with the deceased's most prized possessions.

Prior to the Uprising, visitors to the city were allowed to arrange for a guided tour of the ruins, at prices of over two hundred gold lumens per day. Now that the Tombs and their remaining contents have fallen into the hands of the Za and their allies, only the Farad and their mercenaries are allowed to explore the ruins.

# The Monads

Monads are massive creatures who stand over seven and a half feet in height, and may weigh as much as seven hundred pounds. They are entirely hairless and have striated black and white skin. A comparatively tiny cranium and immense torso and limbs are other characteristic features. Breechcloths and sandals are their preferred attire, augmented by cloaks in cold weather.

### *Ancestry and History*

Monads are a hybrid race created in ancient times by the magicians of Phandril, who bred them for heavy labor. Unlike most of their masters, Monads survived the Great Disaster, and are still extant in Talislanta today.



## All from the One

*"Among several of the more curious features associated with Monads is the fact that they appear to be completely devoid of sexual characteristics. The natural question, at least in the mind of my occasional traveling companion, the rogue magician Crystabal (who seldom thought of anything but this subject), was, how do such creatures procreate? While visiting the city of Hadj, I chanced to learn the answer to this question, and so I will relate it to you.*

*"As I rode through the city on a cargo dray acquired from a Marukan dung merchant (another story entirely) I saw a solitary Monad trudging along the road. On its broad shoulders was a great bundle of parcels; a short distance behind, its owner, a Hadjin aristocrat, reclined in comfort within a canopied palanquin. Suddenly the Monad slowed to a stop, laid its bundle down, and sat upon the ground. The Hadjin, seeing what had transpired, instructed his Hajan servitor to have the Monad pick up its parcels and continue without delay. The Hajan repeated these orders to the Monad. The Monad seemed not to hear but sat with its eyes closed. The Hajan servitor raged and threatened; her Hadjin master held a scented handkerchief to his nose in obvious distaste. Still the Monad remained immobile. At this point the Hajan servitor, a woman of middle years, risked the ire of her master and informed him that he must wait a moment, for the Monad was about to reproduce.*

*"This the creature did, by the most incredible process imaginable. Concentrating intently, the Monad split itself down the middle, the separation occurring along a vertical axis from the head down through the entire torso. For a short time, each of the halves squirmed and twisted about, changing in form with each passing minute. Finally, there were two new Monads, each fully formed and identical in appearance, though both were smaller than the original by half. The division of the Monad into two creatures took perhaps ten minutes in its entirety, during which time I could not help but stare in complete fascination at this miraculous occurrence. The Hadjin aristocrat likewise witnessed this event, which caused him to become physically ill, and in the process soil his rich garments. The Hajan driver turned her head, either from a lack of interest in the procedure or to disguise the enjoyment she felt at observing her master in such an undignified condition."*

### *Culture*

The Monad population has no homeland, but is scattered across the continent of Talislanta. Most Monads were sold into slavery following the Great Disaster, ending up in such lands as Faradun, Rajanistan, and the Kang Empire. In the Nine Kingdoms, where slavery is illegal, they are treated well and may be hired at reasonable rates. A large portion of the Monad population now resides in Carantheum, providing a cheap source of labor.

Monads are asexual beings who prefer to live in simple dwellings with others of their kind. They do not mate or have children; they simply divide themselves into two separate entities (see sidebar). No one knows exactly how the process works, or how often it occurs. Bred strictly for size and strength, Monads possess no formal skills or training. They follow instructions well, however, and are tireless and loyal workers. Most Talislantans regard Monads as dumb, lumbering creatures, useless except as pertains to the most menial and physically strenuous labors. Others believe there is more to these simple beings than meets the eye (see "Language").

### *Language*

Monads are mute but understand common Sign language. Among their kind, they favor a complex variation of Sign that seems to have been devised by the Monads themselves and is incomprehensible to other peoples. Scholars who have studied the Monad language describe it as rich, detailed, and cryptic; some go so far as to claim that Monads have a "secret culture" that is completely beyond the ability of non-Monads to perceive.

### *Government*

Monads have no rulers, leaders, or government. Peaceful by nature, they generally adhere to the basic laws and customs of whatever the land is in which they reside. Despite their great size and strength, Monads are remarkably gentle creatures who usually abstain from violence. If forced to defend itself, a Monad may use its great bulk to knock down or restrain an attacker, while continuing to maintain an outwardly placid demeanor.

### *Magic & Religion*

It is not known if Monads believe in a supreme being or beings, though they may regard their ancient Archaen creators in this manner. Monads possess no facility for magic.

### *Worldview*

As a race, Monads evince little capacity for self-determination, and have no formal relations with any other people or nation. Most Talislantans do not think they have the intellectual capacity to even comprehend such matters.

## Random Encounters in and Around Hadj

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The weather around the arid plains of this region is typically hot and dry. When the rare rain does fall, it may cause flash flooding. Towering dust storms or cyclones are less common, but also very dangerous to those without shelter. |
| 2-3 | 2 | **Tracks and Traces:** Creatures who passed this way tend to leave evidence. They could have been Farad or Orgovian caravans, Za bandits, Beastmen, a wild herd (see encounter #11), or predators such as behemoths or malathropes. |
| 4-5 | 3 | **Aftermath:** Prey and predator have clashed here. This could be the site where a caravan or tribe was attacked by raiders. It might also be where predators brought down herd animals like land lizards or megalodonts. If the carnage was recent, scavengers such as morde or ravengers may still linger about. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | **Traveler:** Few civilized people come to Hadj willingly. These include Farad and Orgovian traders. Others, such as Yitek, Yassan, and Monads will likely be trying to escape the Za and Beastman tribes, who capture such folk and force them to work in the ruins of the city. Escapees are likely being pursued. |
| 7-9 | 5 | **Za:** The Za tribes live among the ruins of Hadj and outside its crumbling walls. From here they trade with Farad and Orgovian merchant caravans. It is also from here where they form raiding parties, which may be encountered in the surrounding region. These small or large contingents may be heading to a distant settlement, tribe, or caravan in hopes of gaining riches and captives. They may also be hunting escapees or wild beasts. |
| 10 | 6 | **Farad Caravan:** Their caravans of varying size head to and from the city of Hadj and the Hadjin Tombs. The Za and Beastmen trade relics uncovered in the ruins to the Farad for laborers, food, weapons, clothing, raw materials, such as iron ingots, and for gemstones or silver and gold coins. The typical caravan will be protected by Farad or Za guards, many of whom will be mounted on aht-ra (Farad) or greymanes (Za). The caravan will also include cargo drays and burden beasts. Slaves, if present, will be transported in cages atop the beds of drays, or chained and forced to walk behind Burden Beasts. |
| 11 | 7 | **Orgovian Traders:** Orgovian bands of up to twenty members travel upon lopers and carry a mix of trade goods with them. The Za and Beastmen trade relics uncovered in the ruins to the Orgovians for food, weapons, clothing, and commodities from many lands. Always well-armed, Orgovians and their lopers will fight if threatened. They find being offered coins to be offensive, and will only barter. |
| 12 | 8 | **Yitek Tomb-Robbers:** Mounted on aht-ra, a small to medium-sized band of Yitek carries everything it needs with it. The Yitek rely upon speed and stealth more than force, but may also be accompanied by armed mercenaries while traveling in this region, and will fight fiercely if needed. The Za and Beastmen of the area consider them rivals for the buried treasures in and around Hadj, and may attack them or try to capture them and force them to work as laborers and treasure-hunters. |
| 13-15 | 9 | **Beastmen:** Small to large packs of Beastmen lair within the city of Hadj and in the surrounding region. For the most part, they and the Za maintain a truce, but conflicts over supplies, treasures, or captives are not uncommon. If they spy travelers, they will almost certainly attack unless heavily outnumbered, in which case they will seek other packs to join them in the hunt. |
| 16 | 10 | **Behemoth:** Whether singly or in small groups, possibly with their young, these massive beasts hunt land lizards and young megalodonts. A charging behemoth often causes other creatures to run or stampede. |
| 17-19 | 11 | **Wild Herd:** Small and large herds of greymanes, land lizards, lopers, and Megalodonts roam the region. Smaller herds may attract Za or Beastmen hunters. Few are foolish enough to hunt among a large herd as a stampede can be disastrous. Upon rare occasions, a solitary and massive ogront may be seen. |
| 20 | 12 | **Spirits of the Dead:** The region in general, and particularly around the Hadjin Tombs, has become a place of woe and death. One may encounter disembodied spirits, shadowights, or even mirajans. |

# Rajanistan

Far to the east, beyond the crimson sands of the Red Desert, lies the warlike nation of Rajanistan. It is a harsh and barren land, inhospitable to most forms of life, with patches of date-palm, nettle, and briar bush found only in the vicinity of the few small oases scattered across its far-ranging territories. Among the few resources extant in this region is black oil, which when refined can be used as fuel for lamps, and for other purposes. Pools of black oil can be found throughout the deserts of this region, but water itself is so scarce that it is said to be worth its weight in gold.

Rajanistan is bordered to the west by the Wilderlands of Zaran, the only thing separating its territories from those of its neighbor and enemy, Carantheum. The Jade Mountains form its southern border, merging in a northward-sweeping arc with the treacherous Volcanic Hills. To the north, the Rajan Desert stretches almost to the bridge at Hadran and the border of the Kang Empire.

Avoided by most sensible peoples, this unforgiving land is home to several nomadic tribes, known collectively as the Rajans.

## The Rajans

The Rajans are a dark-skinned folk with blood-red eyes. Horn-like protrusions jut forth from their chins and foreheads. The Rajan people range in size; the giant Shadinn are powerfully built and well over seven feet in height, while the Virds are wiry and just over five feet tall; the ruling-class Rajin are well-built and averaging just over six feet in height. Most dress in dark grey capes, veiled headdresses, and loose-fitting garments bound with cords at the wrists, ankles, and waist. These same cords are used for many practical purposes by the Rajans, including the strangling of enemies.



### *Ancestry and History*

The Rajan tribes are likely all descended from the Torquarans, rulers of a dark empire that once spanned much of the Talislantan continent. The folk now known as the Rajans were once nomadic hunters who eked out a meager existence in the harsh deserts. In the year 404, one group united under a chieftain called the Khadun, and conquered or converted the other tribes of Rajanistan.

### *Culture*

The Rajans are a warlike people who have long sought to dominate the Desert Kingdoms and central regions of Talislanta. Their goal is ostensibly to unite all the desert peoples and convert them to their beliefs – by the sword, if necessary. Rajan society is dominated by the Death Cult, whose leader is known as the Khadun. The Khadun controls all aspects of Rajan life, including the military, religion, and trade; all Rajans are required to obey his edicts without questioning, on pain of death.

Most Rajans live in the city of Irdan, a massive fortress built into the side of the Jade Mountains, to the south. The other Rajan tribes, including the Aramut, Zagir, and Shadinn, make their homes in tent settlements scattered across Rajanistan. All the minorities in this land originate from the same rootstock as the Rajans and have similar cultures; they share a common language, homeland, and nomadic background. Conquered by the Rajans long ago, they have been assimilated into the ranks of Rajan society.

Rajanistan is rich in black oil and gold, both of which are obtained by slave labor and transported by caravan from the Jade Mountains to the fortress-city of Irdan. The Rajans use their resources to purchase weapons, slaves, and narcotic herbs from Faradun, the only nation with whom the Rajans have formal trade ties. Since the Uprising, the Rajans have also had more dealings with the Za, but most do not trust the Wild Tribes and their allies.

Fatalistic by nature, Rajans believe that the harsh circumstances of their existence are punishment for the sins of their ancestors. In essence, Rajans think the Talislantan world is purgatory. For these people, death is the means of ascension to a better life in the next world – the Rajan concept of paradise, where the faithful will be rewarded by attaining revenge on their enemies, power, wealth, and the means to satiate all mortal desires.

### *Language*

The Rajans have their own language, called Rajanin, which they claim is derived from the ancient Torquaran tongue. Common male names begin with the hyphenated title "Raj," which means "servant of Death" in Rajanin. Examples include Raj-Khan, Raj-Amon, and Raj-Omir. Female names begin with "Suraj," meaning "property of," followed by the name of the male who claims her as his own. In the case of an unmarried woman, this is the father; after marriage, the female takes the name of her husband. Examples include Suraj-Khan, Suraj-Amon, and Suraj-Omir.

### *Government*

The Khadun is the absolute ruler of Rajanistan, and high priest of the Death Cult. A group of thirteen necromancer-priests known as the High Council are charged with the administration of the Khadun's edicts. The Khadun is the ultimate authority in Rajanistan; he passes judgment on individuals who have committed serious offenses. Under his iron rule, Rajanistan is among the most repressive states in Talislanta. The punishment for most crimes is the removal of the offending body part: liars have their tongues cut out, thieves lose a hand, and voyeurs lose an eye. The penalty for adultery is especially grim.

Rajanistan maintains a large standing army, though it is composed mostly of conscripts and low-class Vird infantry. The Rajans are believed to be constructing a fleet of windships, having recently acquired windship arcanology from the Farad.



### *Magic & Religion*

Rajans worship the Khadun, whom they say is the earthly manifestation of the dread entity known as Death. More accurately, the Khadun is the central figure of a cult of personality that exists primarily to further his own goals. Devotees of the Death Cult believe that only by dying can they become one in spirit with the Khadun, and so are eager to sacrifice their lives for any cause that he endorses. Along the same line of reasoning, the Rajans claim that by killing non-believers, they convert them to their morbid religion — "conversion by the sword," in the most literal sense.

The Death Cult operates out of the Temple of Death in the city of Irdan. Here, the Khadun resides within his sanctum, protected by his legions of fanatical followers: among them, Rajan necromancer-priests, who are said to consort with the spirits of the dead, and the assassin-mages known as Rajin (see sidebar).

### *Worldview*

Rajanistan's alliance with Faradun has proved beneficial to both parties – the Farad are now protected by the Rajan military, and the Rajans now have access to Farad trade goods, as well as the port city of Tarun. The Rajans continue to covet the ore-rich sands of the Red Desert, but have thus far been unable to wrest these territories away from the Dracartans, whom they envy and despise. The Khadun has sworn to crush Carantheum, even if every man, woman, and child in Rajanistan must die in the attempt.

## Rajan Settlements

### The Holy City of Irdan

Irdan is a walled fortress built into the lower slopes of the Jade Mountains. This massive citadel is the only major settlement in Rajanistan and serves as the country's capital. Aside from occasional visits by Farad merchants, the city is closed to foreigners. Gold and lamp oil is smelted into ingots in Irdan, then conveyed by caravan to Faradun, where it is traded for weapons and other goods.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The twin suns blast this barren landscape during the day, and the nights are uncomfortably cold. Extreme weather here takes shape as dangerous sandstorms and heat waves so severe that even the nomads of this region find it necessary to travel only at night. Rainfall is very, very rare. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Encounters of this sort are generally limited to the discovery of abandoned ruins or the tent settlement of a Rajan tribe, in which case there will almost certainly be a precious oasis or well nearby. It could also mean finding the camp of travelers (see encounter #5) or raiders (see encounters #6 and 13), or even the lair of a beast such as a vasp (see encounter #8). |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Oasis:** An encounter could mean finding one of the larger oases, which are usually at the center of a Rajan settlement (see encounter #2). It could also mean discovering a smaller oasis where travelers might camp (see encounter #5). For the unlucky, this encounter might indicate seeing an illusion created by a mirajan (see encounter #11). |

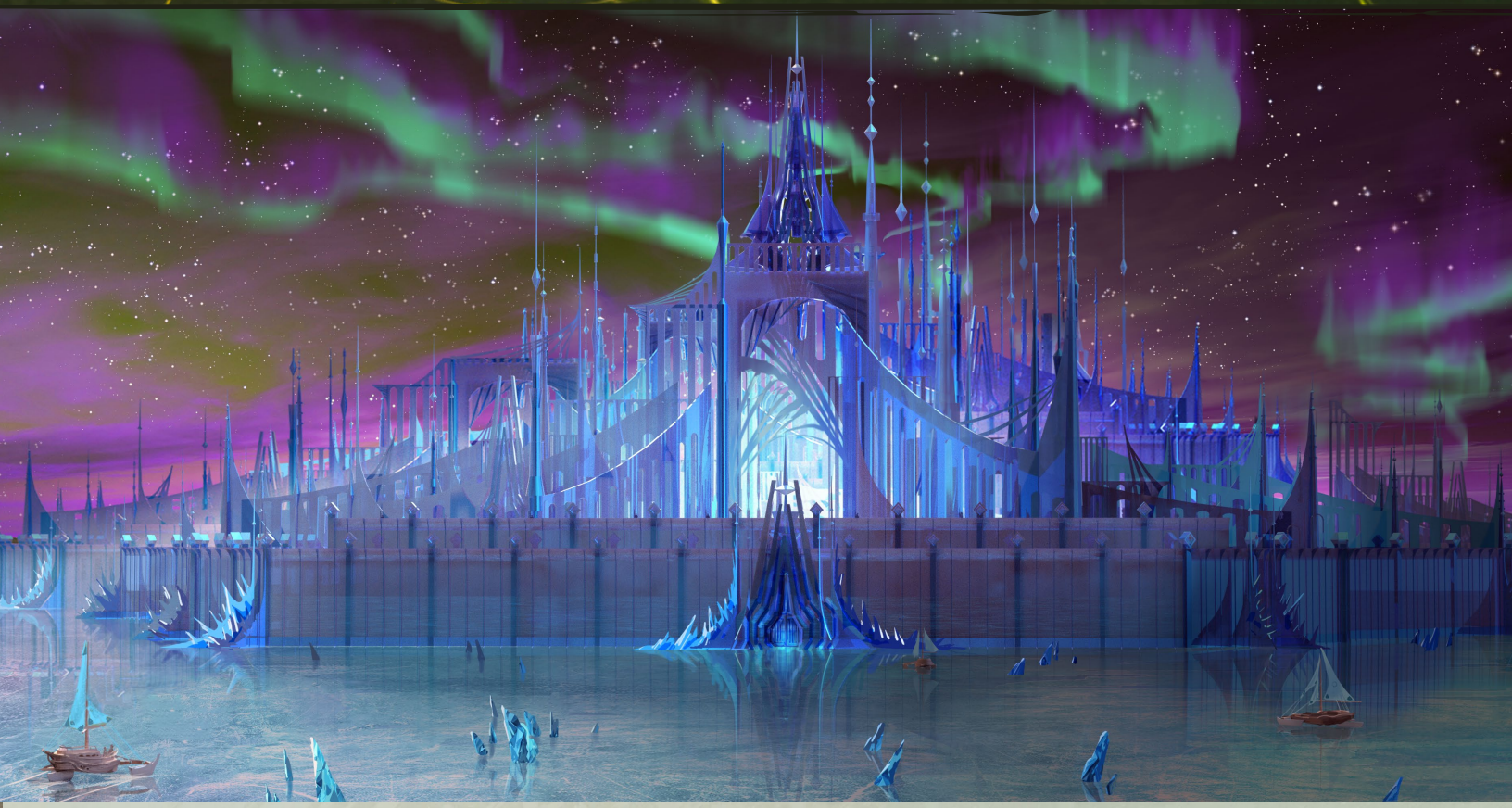
| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 7-8 | 4 | **Roadway:** There are no true roads in the barrens of Rajanistan. However, one may find traces and tracks left in the hardpan and grit by passing herds (see encounter #7), Rajan tribes, or raiders (see encounters #6 and 13). The most well-worn trails often lead to an oasis. |
| 9-10 | 5 | **Traveler:** The most common travelers are the Rajan tribes, who may be moving from oasis-to-oasis, or may be part of a caravan heading to or from the Jade Mountains to transport black oil and gold. Some Za tribes come here seeking alliances, but are just as likely to raid as trade. Recently, windships from Faradun have been appearing in the skies as they ferry laborers, soldiers, and trade goods between the cities of Tarun and Irdan. |
| 11 | 6 | **Satada:** These raiders travel the Underground Highway in small to large numbers, and may be encountered on the surface when emerging from hidden entrances to seek captives. They prefer the night and may stalk the oases near small Rajan settlements or campsites. |
| 12-14 | 7 | **Wild Herd:** Small herds of durge and land lizards roam the region. Creatures such as duadir, depredators, and ravengers prey upon them. |
| 15 | 8 | **Vasp:** These giant insectoids lair among ruins, sinkholes, and ravines. Using their keen night vision, they typically come forth under the light of the moons to hunt. |
| 16 | 9 | **Depredators:** Depredators from the Jade Mountains fly high above the region at night, looking for easy prey like small parties, lost or foolhardy individuals, and wounded creatures or travelers. A depredator may carry a victim for many miles before alighting to feed. |
| 17 | 10 | **Rajan Scorpion:** Nests of these foot-long insects may be found hidden just beneath the sands, or in the vicinity of wells and oases. They are very aggressive, and if encountered in numbers, may attack even large groups of beasts or humanoids. |
| 18 | 11 | **Mirajan:** Said to be the spirits of deceased Rajans, these hostile spectres are known to lure incautious travelers to their lairs through the use of mirages (illusions). |
| 19 | 12 | **Ravenger:** Able to hover on the winds for days on end, these winged scavengers are both extremely opportunistic and patient. They may follow a party of wounded, starving, or thirsty beasts or humanoids for long periods of time, waiting until the weakest ones fall or perish, in order to feed on their remains. |
| 20 | 13 | **Za Bandits:** A small or large contingent of Za bandits may be coming to raid, or may have already done so. In the latter case, they may have captives, gold, black oil, trade goods, steeds, or other valuables looted from a caravan or settlement. |

## The Rajin

*The Rajin are a secret branch of the Death Cult, which rules Rajanistan. They are essentially a cult within a cult; only assassin-mages can belong to this cell, which serves both as the personal bodyguard and covert militia of the Khadun. No one joins the Rajin by choice. When in need of new initiates, the assassin-mages send forth agents to steal young children, whom they drug and take from their homes at night. The victims, typically boys under the age of five, are brought in secret to a Rajin sanctuary for training. Such incidents are quite common in Rajanistan but are never reported, for to do so would mean swift and certain reprisal.*

*Awakening in darkness, the young initiates are accosted by hooded figures who tell them that they have died. They offer to give back their lives, but only if they agree thenceforth to serve Death. Those who refuse are slain; those who consent are "reborn," and given new names. No longer are they allowed to speak of their families or their former lives, which are now meaningless. So begins a period of intense indoctrination and instruction in the arts of torture, interrogation, Death Cult dogma, necromancy, and a type of martial arts called rajira – the Rajan art of assassination. When the initiates have reached the age of eighteen, they are ready for a final test. In secret, each is given the name of another initiate whom he or she must kill. Those who survive the test are officially acknowledged as Rajin.*





# L'haan

L'Haan is a land of vast snowfields, glittering ice peaks, and frozen lakes. Located in the nethermost reaches of eastern Talislanta, the region is predominantly wilderness, and is largely unpopulated except by great herds of snowmanes and wooly ogriphant.

To travelers from other parts, L'Haan presents a daunting challenge. There are no roads in this region, where even the deepest trails made by the herds are quickly covered over by snowfalls. The terrain seems to morph constantly, the windblown snowdrifts creating ever-changing patterns, like glittering white dunes in a frozen desert. The only shelter from the frigid wind and near-constant snows are ice caves, a naturally occurring phenomenon that can usually only be found by those who know how to navigate in the trackless wilds of this land, and even these places are sometimes inhabited by dangerous predators such as frostweres and tundra beasts.

Along the shores of the Sea of Ice live the only civilized folk native to L'Haan, the Mirin.

## The Mirin

A people of noble bearing, the Mirin are tall and statuesque. They have bright blue skin and hair as fine and white as gossamer. Accustomed (some say immune) to the cold, Mirin are comfortable dressed in little more than robes, boots, and headdresses trimmed with frostwere's hide.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Mirin are believed to be descended from Archaens whose cloud-city fell to earth following the Great Disaster. Pursued by vengeful bands of Wild Folk, they fled north into the wilderness. Along the way many died from exposure, wild beasts, and battles with their pursuers. Facing certain death, the last members of the group commended their souls into the hands of whatever deity held sway over the region. According to Mirin legend, their prayers were heard by the forgotten god Borean, an ancient elemental deity who granted them a miraculous boon: immunity to cold. The grateful survivors went on to establish the first shrine to Borean, and later, the first Mirin settlement.

## A Visit to The City of Rhin

*"After a long and arduous journey, I arrived, more than half-frozen, at my destination: the capital city of Rhin. It is truly a beautiful place, its fantastic spires glittering like cut diamonds in the light of the twin suns. All the buildings here are made from ice, carved with great precision into a variety of lovely shapes and forms. Ice sculptures of winged elementals, ice dragons, and notable figures from past ages line the promenades and causeways. The people are proud of bearing but mild, and an atmosphere of peace and serenity pervades the city.*

*"Unfortunately, as beautiful as I have found Rhin to be, the place lacks one virtue for which I can find no acceptable substitute: warmth. I mean this not in the figurative sense, but quite literally. It is freezing here, both indoors and out. True, inside the walls of an ice castle one is protected from the winds, but to what avail when all about is nothing but solid ice? The Mirin are immune to cold, and orbs filled with amberglow provide such illumination as they require, which is not much; even at night, the light of the moons and stars, reflected off the ice castles and promenades, is sufficient to illuminate the city. They have no use for fire or fireplaces, which in any event would prove ruinous to the local architecture.*

*"This is not to imply that the Mirin were oblivious to my discomfort. Quite the contrary; upon noticing that I was shivering and beginning to acquire a blue coloration not unlike that of the Mirin themselves, my host immediately took pains to provide me with the warmest fur garments that could be found. When I retired to my chambers for the night, I discovered that my host had provided piles of fur blankets for my comfort, and also the company of his lovely daughter. The former helped ease the chill considerably; the latter, while pleasant in the extreme, was for the most part ineffective, for the Mirin, warm-hearted though they may be, give off not even the slightest amount of body heat."*

### *Culture*

Mirin live in crystalline ice castles constructed from blocks of solid ice, cut from glacial ice quarries and carved into useful and decorative forms. Chief among these is the capital of Rhin, a place of enchanting beauty (see sidebar). The Mirin are a scholarly folk who practice many useful skills, including alchemy, at which they excel. Mirin are also skilled in the art of making ice schooners, which they use to sail the frozen lakes of L'Haan. They are also skilled in the arts of war, which are essential to the survival of their people, who are under constant threat from the ice giants of Narandu.

It is the custom among the Mirin to undertake a ritual "bonding of spirits" with a chosen mate or close friend. The procedure, known as "melding," creates a type of innate psychic link between the two individuals. While melded individuals cannot communicate via this ability, each will instinctively know if the other is in danger or great distress.

Mirin adamants are the coin of the realm, though the lumen is honored here as well. Exports include alchemical products, hides, and horn; imports include scintilla, fabrics, and spices. Despite generous offers from other lands, the Mirin refuse to trade any but the smallest quantities of blue diamonds or adamant, substances which they consider vital to the defense of their land. There is a merchant's guild in every Mirin settlement, through which all trade arrangements must be made.

### *Language*

Mirin converse in the Elder Tongue, a language dating back to ancient times; some say they learned it from the lesser elementals who serve Borean. Examples of common male names include Miralos, Mirtos, Miral, and Miros. Common female names include L'Mir, L'Lis, and L'Halla.

### *Government*

L'Haan is ruled by a hereditary monarchy and magiocracy led by the Snow Queen, a white witch of exceptional capabilities. Subservient to her are the royal ministers, each of whom has a single area of responsibility, such as defense, alchemy, justice, hunting, shipbuilding, public works, and trade. The Minister of Justice is the chief judiciary official in the country.

L'Haan's military is superbly equipped with adamant weapons and armor, well-trained, and experienced from long campaigns against the ice giants of Narandu. The army consists primarily of light cavalry mounted on swift snowmanes. The Mirin "navy" has a substantial fleet of ice-traveling vessels of various sizes and purposes.

### *Magic & Religion*

A deeply religious folk, the Mirin revere Borean, the god of the north wind. Mirin priests and priestesses are the spiritual advisors of their race, and regard Borean as the protector of their land and its ecology. They do not build temples in his name, but erect altars on the snowy steppes around frozen lakes such as Lake L'Lal and Lake Rhin. It is only in such

open and natural surroundings, the Mirin say, that one can truly feel the presence of the god of the north wind.

### *Worldview*

Isolated from much of the rest of the continent of Talislanta, L'Haan was virtually untouched by the Uprising. Even so, the Mirin have not known peace for many, many years. They remain at war with the ice giants of Narandu, whose forces have sought to conquer L'Haan for centuries. In the past they have fought against the Rasmiran, members of a sect of anarchists that was exiled from L'Haan to the Outcast Isles, in the Midnight Sea. At least some of the Rasmiran are believed to have returned to the continent, though their exact location is currently unknown.

## Mirin Settlements and Places of Note

### The City of Rhin

On the eastern shore of the Sea of Ice is the Mirin capital of Rhin, a walled city of shining ice castles. Rhin is renowned for its alchemists, who are skilled in the art of magically forging adamant. The Snow Queen lives in a fabulous ice palace in this city.

### The City of L'Lal

L'Lal stands on the western shore of the Sea of Ice, and is the closest of the Mirin cities to the territories of Narandu. L'Lal is surrounded by ice walls over fifty feet in height, and the greater part of L'Haan's formidable military force is stationed at this fortress, warding against possible invasion by the ice giants of Narandu.

### The City of Myr

Most populated of the Mirin settlements, Myr is located on the western lakeshore, opposite Rhin. This city is famed for its shipyards, where graceful ice schooners and smaller ice skiffs are constructed. The walled city is also L'Haan's foremost supplier of blue diamonds.

### The Outcast Islands

The frigid and rock-strewn Outcast Islands serve as home to the exiled cult of Rasmirin. Numbering only a few hundred or so renegades, the Rasmirin population dwells in rude ice fortresses, ever plotting new schemes to overthrow the Snow Queen of L'Haan. Their ancestry, history, and culture are similar in most respects to the Mirin, though the Rasmirin revere the destructive forces of nature, as represented by the elemental spirits of storms and darkness.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** For travelers from other lands, the near-constant frigid wind and snow may seem extreme, but the true extreme weather takes the form of gale-force winds bearing painful sleet or blinding snow, and dangerous avalanches of snow and ice. |
| 3-6 | 2 | **Dwelling:** This encounter could mean coming upon a small Mirin settlement with fanciful buildings and arches carved from blocks of ice. Mirin might also be found living in tunnels, galleries, and balconies cut from sheer ice cliffs. One might also find natural ice caves used by travelers to shelter from the weather, or by predators such as frostweres and tundra beasts to lair. |
| 7-9 | 3 | **Trails and Traces:** There are no permanent roadways in L'Haan. Even the trails cut by wild herds soon vanish beneath the shifting snow. This encounter could mean coming upon the remnants of the tracks of a herd of snowmanes or wooly ogriphants, and the tundra beasts, tundra lopers, and frostweres who hunt them. It might also mean finding the fresh remains of such creatures after predator and prey collide, though even these are quickly buried in snow. |
| 10-12 | 4 | **Traveler:** When merchants from the Nine Kingdoms come to L'Haan, they typically do so by windship rather than braving the treacherous overland journey. Aamanian pilgrims have been known to risk an overland journey on their way to holy sites in the Mystic Mountains. However, one is more likely to encounter Mirin, whether traveling frozen lakes by ice schooner or riding snowmanes. They might be scouts of the Mirin military, merchants traveling between Mirin cities, or priests and priestesses on a journey to erect a new altar to Borean. |
| 13-14 | 5 | **Wild Herds:** Small to large herds of snowmanes and wooly ogriphant migrate between vast fields of snow lilies in central and northern L'Haan, and some graze by digging into the tundra of the southern regions. Small herds of tundra lopers follow their migrations, preying upon the young, old, or injured. Frostweres and tundra beasts also hunt among the herds. |
| 15 | 6 | **Frostwere:** Often hunting in mated pairs, frostweres prefer to stalk at night and rely upon their white fur to camouflage them from their prey. When springing to attack, their piercing howls may be heard for miles. |
| 16 | 7 | **Tundra Beast:** Packs of these large, sometimes two-headed carnivores lair in ice caves across the region and come forth to hunt during the day and night. They prefer to prey upon the wild herds of the area, but will attack travelers as well. |
| 17-18 | 8 | **Crystal Moth:** With wingspans ranging from two inches to two feet, a swarm of these ice-blue insects feeding upon an expansive field of snow lilies is a sight to behold. Collectors and artisans pay handsomely for their delicate and beautiful wings. |
| 19 | 9 | **Cthonian Ice Demon:** Also known as frost demons, these entities originate from the Demonrealms, making their way to Talislanta through interdimensional rifts, portals, or by the use of certain types of summoning spells. Such rifts and portals might be discovered in ancient ruins and tunnels beneath the snow or deep within ice caverns. These demons are drawn to the heat of living things. |
| 20 | 10 | **Ice Giant:** Towering creatures of animated ice, ice giants from Narandu sometimes venture into L'Haan during aberrant weather, making their way past the Snow Queen's sentries and scouts. If encountered alone or in small numbers, they may be lost and searching for living creatures to eat. A larger force will be following the commands of their demonic ruler, the Ice King, and ultimately clash with the Mirin military. |

# Narandu

Narandu is an immense, frozen wasteland that stretches across much of the far northern regions of Talislanta. Here, jagged mountains of ice pierce the bleak tundra, and frigid winds howl through chasms ringed with hoarfrost. Even creatures who are well-adapted to cold avoid this place, where wooly ogriphants have been known to freeze solid overnight.

Aberrant weather is a common occurrence here, with storms of icicle rain and black lightning being most prevalent. Over time, the very soil of this region has been buried under a mile or more of permanent ice, the surface which buckles and fractures constantly, creating an ever-changing web of deep ice-canyons, ravines, sheer cliffs, and mountains. In this tortuous region, where no natural life can survive, are found the monstrous entities known as ice giants.

## The Ice Giants

Ice giants are entities composed entirely of solid ice. They are frightening to behold, standing well over ten feet in height and weighing as much as one ton. Spiky protrusions of ice cover their bodies, and their hands and feet are clawed. Though referred to in legend and by the Mirin as "giants," these creatures may be more aptly described as "ice demons."

Indeed, scholars of the current age now believe that ice giants are a form of Cthonian demon, summoned or otherwise brought forth from the lower planes by an entity known as the Ice King. Some believe the Ice King is a greater Cthonian demon of exceptional power that has continuously spawned lesser demonoids like ice giants for centuries, slowly extending its deadly cold influence over ever-larger portions of northern Talislanta. Others have gone so far as to speculate that the Ice King is a Sepharan Elder, who for centuries has sent forth summoned demons to Talislanta from the Black Pit of Narandu.

Traveling in groups of up to two hundred individuals, ice giants stalk the tundra of Narandu. Their very bodies emanate a piercing cold, so much so that large groups of ice giants can effectively lower temperatures in a wide-radius area. They advance without rest, destroying all living creatures in their path and turning even verdant plains into wastes.

Whatever the truth may be, by moving further and further south each year, the ice giants have slowly extended their territories, converting temperate lands to bleak tundra (see sidebar). The Gryphs of Tamaranth have long warned of these intrusions, though generally to little avail. Even scholars who acknowledge the veracity of the Gryphs'



claims contend that the ice giants' southern progress is so gradual as to warrant little concern; most estimate the rate of advancement at less than one-half foot per year. Although the ice giants advance along nearly a thousand-mile front, these scholars claim that the loss of land in real terms is so minimal as to be insignificant. Whether they are right or wrong remains to be seen.

# Places of Note

## The Ruins of Farnir

Deep in the frigid interior of Narandu lie the ruins of Farnir, a city frozen under layers of crystalline ice. Before the coming of the ice giants, Farnir reputedly was the site of an enlightened civilization, steeped in the arts of magic and alchemy. No less a personage than the great sorcerer Koraq claimed to have visited here, and the ancient mage was reportedly impressed by the talents of the Farnir mages. Their talents did not extend into the realm of military defense, since Farnir was overrun by advancing ice giant hordes several centuries ago. The Mirin and Ariane claim that some of the Farnir magicians still live, frozen in stasis by the extreme cold.

## The Black Pit of Narandu

One of the more unusual features of this region is the great chasm known as the Black Pit of Narandu. Located just north of Tamaranth, this supposedly bottomless fissure is the source of many colorful legends. Some claim the Black Pit is a magical gateway that leads to some demon-haunted realm. Others, noting the clouds of steam which issue from its gaping mouth, theorize that the Black Pit exits into a vast, underground sea.

### The Big Freeze

Excerpted from the Chronicles of Talislanta, by the wizard Tamerlin:

*"Any region inhabited by a sizable force of ice giants undergoes a complete and rapid transformation. The ground freezes solid, often to a depth of six feet or more. All sources of water in the affected area, from ponds to streams and even rivers, turn to solid ice. Dark clouds form in the atmosphere above, blocking the rays of the suns so that even during the day it is nearly as dark as night. And lastly, all living plants and animals freeze solid, captured in such attitudes and positions as they were at the moment the freeze took effect.*

*"Because the fearsome cold emanated by ice giants is magical, the freezing process can be reversed, but only by the application of counter-magics. The Ariane possess such capabilities, as I witnessed when one I had been traveling with used his magics to rescue a young equs that had been frozen in mid-stride. Once the freezing process had been reversed, the creature returned to its normal state and ran off to the south, apparently no worse for the experience.*

*"It occurred to me then that an untold number of creatures and beings might still exist, alive yet frozen in stasis, in lands conquered by the ice giants since they began their southerly advance. My companion confirmed this theory and told me that the Ariane believe that an entire city and its inhabitants had once been frozen in such a manner, perhaps even as long ago as the end of the Archaen Age. According to legend, this city is located deep within ice giant territory, and has remained unseen by outsiders for many centuries. Whether its people still live, or whether they have long since been devoured by ice giants, is a matter for speculation — or perhaps investigation, someday. At this point in the discussion the two of us, half-frozen despite our protective devices, were compelled to depart the area for warmer climes."*

# The Shadow Realm

At the northernmost edge of the Wilderlands lays the Shadow Realm, an eerie place haunted by the ghosts of a dozen vanished civilizations. The landscape is correspondingly unpleasant, and consists largely of broken hills, outcroppings of wind-blasted rock, and thickets of stunted tanglewood and thornwood. Shattered ruins, worn beyond recognition by centuries, litter the region.

Among the only intelligent beings known to permanently inhabit this forlorn land are a cabal of Ebonite shadowizards known as the Malum. These spectral entities originally hailed from the Nightmare Dimension and came to Talislanta long ago, sometime after the Great Disaster. They established a stronghold in the Shadow Realm called the Iron Citadel, which was constructed around an interdimensional rift that the Malum refer to as the Nexus.

The Iron Citadel is a massive structure, its black iron walls standing over forty feet in height, its five towers embedded with orbs of carved obsidian that constantly scan the surrounding environs, alert for intruders. At the center of the Citadel, surrounded by ancient stone quays, is the Nexus: an inter-dimensional gateway and port frequented by traders from across the lower planes. Entities of many kinds can be found in the Iron Citadel, as the absolute neutrality of this place is enforced by the Malum and their allies (see sidebar).

## The Ebonites

Ebonites are spectral beings who hail from the city of Ebon, an ancient city located on the dark shores of the Underworld. Tall and preternaturally thin, Ebonites resemble humanoid shadows, with eyes like smoldering white coals. The Malum, who control the Nexus in the Iron Citadel, are Ebonite in origin.

### Ancestry

The Ebonites are an ancient race of uncertain origin. Some say that like shadowights, they were once living beings, changed into spectral form by Death as punishment for their sins or transgressions. Others say that these entities are a vital part of the unending cycle of life, death, and rebirth; their function being to help facilitate the passage of souls, in various forms, through the various stages of eternity.

### *Culture*

The Underworld city of Ebon is populated by thousands of shadow-beings, who serve in a variety of professions as traders, sailors, warriors, artificers, scholars, magicians, and so on. It is a place as dark and cold as the grave, yet despite appearances, the city is very much alive, and an important center of trade, being frequented by merchants from across the lower planes, including Tarterans, Zoab, Sepharans, and even Brood.

Ebonite artifacts, apparel, and weapons exhibit an elaborate, if somewhat morbid, sense of design. Ebonite architecture incorporates elements derived from mausoleums, tombs, and cenotaphs. Their ships are draped in black and resemble nothing so much as massive funeral barges. Ebonite weapons and armor are exceedingly well-made and are decorated with ornate scrollwork and symbology.



# Visitors from the Lower Planes

The interdimensional portal known as the Nexus is a virtual gateway to the lower planes, and entities from many strange realms have been known to pass through it to Talislanta. While mindless or destructive entities such as Cthonian demons are not tolerated, all manner of Shaitan, spiritforms, and other intelligent entities have been known to pass through the portals of the Nexus.

Those who may find their way to Talislanta through the Nexus include:

## GARGOYLES

*Gargoyles are a species of lesser Shaitan commonly found throughout the lower planes. Though not very intelligent, they are powerfully built, rugged, and aggressive, traits that cause them to be in some demand as soldiers and bodyguards. In the latter capacity, they can sometimes be found in the company of Tarteran merchants and Zoab traders who travel to the Iron Citadel to trade with the Ebonites. Occasionally some elect to remain in the Iron Citadel, where they find work as sentinels or laborers – or, less commonly, adventurers.*

## THE THAGE

*Thage are a primitive race of humanoids from a dimension bordering the territories of the Brood, who are their sworn enemies, and whose hatred is mutal. These strange creatures have striated black and white skin, the patterns of which they can alter at will to blend into almost any type of dark or shadowy environment. Their natural camouflage abilities, cold-blooded physiology, and the absence of a soul makes Thage virtually invisible to demons – a useful talent for creatures who live on the lower planes, and one that occasionally compels Tarteran demon hunters to hire Thage as mercenaries. Thage practice a strange form of sympathetic magic that involves the carving of miniature images from deadwood root. They consider deadwood root from Talislanta to be among the most efficacious types, and sometimes travel to Talislanta to get fresh supplies of this commodity.*

## THE CHIMERANS

*Chimerans are a race of humanoid shape-changers who hail from an unknown region of the lower planes. They possess the ability to alter their appearance and gender at will, allowing them to mimic almost any humanoid race of similar size. All Chimerans are multilingual, and are adept at learning new languages. They use their exceptional intelligence, charisma, and beauty to seduce others, a talent that has allowed them to survive among the lower planes, and one that they use to their advantage whenever possible. Among the inhabitants of the lower planes, Chimerans are in considerable demand as translators, ambassadors, and especially as courtesans. They can often be found in higher-class establishments where traders from the lower planes congregate, such as the Shadow Realm.*

## THE TAU

*The Tau are a strange race of mute, eyeless humanoids who hail from a remote region of the Underworld. They are slender and graceful in form, with bone-white skin and long white hair. Members of a secretive cult of assassin-monks, Tau revere a white, winged deity that is the Tau culture's manifestation of Death; followers of this winged deity sometimes refer to themselves as messengers, harbingers, or "angels" of Death. The chief tenets of their religion include bringing a "merciful death" to any who are suffering and to rid the omniverse of the Sepharans, whom the Tau regard as evil entities who are antithetical to the natural order of life, death, and rebirth. Tau are secretive and tend to keep to themselves. They are known to have dealings with both the Black Savants and Ebonites, however, and are usually open to dealings with any other races or entities who are enemies of the Sepharans. Though blind, Tau possess an uncanny ability they call inner vision, which allows them to "see" as clearly as sighted folk, and also to see astral, invisible, and ethereal presences.*

## THE BLACK SAVANTS

*The Black Savants are a mysterious and reclusive folk who currently make their home on the island of Nefaratus in Talislanta. They are known to consort with entities from the lower planes and often travel to the Shadow Realm to do so, trading such things as soulstones, enchanted items, and captive demons or devils for occult secrets and artifacts. They never deal with Sepharans or Brood, and have little interest in the concerns of the Zoab.* *(see page 183, Nefaratus, for more information on the Black Savants).*

### *Language*

Most Ebonites speak Elder Tongue, but many are conversant in multiple languages, including Archaen. Common Ebonite names tend to have an archaic flavor, such as Orantheus, Malorean, Narual, Chandaros, etc.

### *Government*

The city of Ebon is governed by the Ebon Cabal, a group of thirteen shadowizards of exceptional power. The Cabal rules on all matters involving the Ebonite population, sets official policy concerning political or trade relations with other realms, and oversees all that transpires within the city walls.

### *Magic & Religion*

Ebonites possess the ability to learn magic, and are likewise known for an obsessive interest in spirits and the Underworld from which they hail; Ebonite shadowizards are practitioners of necromancy and wizardry. Ebonite enchanters are renowned for their talents, which include the making of soulstones, enchanted cloth called shadowsilk, and the magical metal called ebonite.

### *Worldview*

The Ebonites claim to be strict neutrals as regards all other creatures and beings. The Malum declared the Iron Citadel to be a neutral zone, and generally allow almost any entities or peoples to pass through the interdimensional portal of Nexus, as long as they refrain from violence while in the Iron Citadel. The Ebon Cabal, in agreement with the Malum, professes to favor a balance of power between the forces of the lower planes, and as such, they generally avoid any involvement with the machinations of devils, demons, or other races and nations.

The Nine Tarteran Princes have, at one time or another, attempted to foster good relations with Ebon; usually in the realms of trade and commerce, and typically in an attempt to gain some advantage for themselves. These attempts at negotiation have usually made little headway.

Ebon generally enjoys good relations with the Black Savants, with whom they have mutual interests. Not the least of these is the recovery of countless Savant souls stolen from the tomb-city of Necron many centuries ago, and never found. As it is widely believed that the entities responsible for this heinous act are the Sepharans, Ebonites rarely have dealings with them.

## The Demon-Hunters

*In Tarteran society, advancement in the hierarchy is possible through the acquisition of wealth and renown. The profession of demon-hunter offers both as well as the prospect of a violent death.*

*Tarteran demon-hunters specialize in tracking and killing demons of all types, Cthonian and otherwise. They can detect and identify even the faintest evidence of demonic activity in a region, and locate the source, or sources, of such presences. To protect themselves from demonic attacks, they wear the traditional demon-hunter's argentium mask and chain mail, plus as many enchanted weapons, talismans, and amulets as they can afford.*

*The black diamond "heart-stones" that all demons possess are a valuable commodity. Traders from across the lower planes covet these precious stones, which have magical qualities and may bring as much as a hundred gold lumens per carat weight. The risks of demon-hunting are commensurate with the rewards; the more powerful the demon, the larger and more valuable its heart-stone, and the greater the renown earned by its hunter.*

*Though Tarterans have had a virtual monopoly on the demon-hunting trade for centuries, they are not entirely without competition. Brood have also taken to hunting demons, in addition to the various species of minor and lesser Shaitan devils that they capture and sell as slaves. As such, conflicts between Tarteran demon-hunters and Brood hunters are becoming more and more common in the Midnight Realm.*

# The Tarterans

Tarterans are a hybrid species of humanoid reputed to be half devil and half Archaen – the latter, a species of mortal beings who once inhabited the land of Talislanta. In terms of their facial features and physical stature, Tarterans resemble their mortal forebears, they also possess certain physical characteristics commonly associated with devils, including horns, bat-like wings, spurs of bone on their chins, and fiery red skin.



## Ancestry

It is said that the Tarterans were created by the sorcerer Arkon, who made the first two Tarterans by combining elements of both devils and mortals. According to the tale, while Arkon was away on an extended sojourn, he left his two creations to guard his skyborne manse. Upon his return, the sorcerer was perturbed to find that the pair had produced an astounding number of offspring, and that his manse was overrun with implets and adolescent Tarterans. In a fit of pique, he expelled his creations from his home and banished them to the lower planes, where they wandered for many years until settling in a perilous place ravaged by chaotic elemental forces and infested with demons. To the Tarterans it seemed as good a place as any to make a new home, which they came to call the Midnight Realm.

### *Culture*

Tarterans are known for their intrigues and machinations. Individuals constantly plot to gain status, attain an advantage over their peers and rivals, and to eventually surpass their superiors. Guile and cunning are required to meet such ambitions, for a careless or hasty act can easily result in one's downfall.

Counterbalancing the cutthroat nature of Tarteran society, to some degree, are the concepts of oaths and honor. Sworn oaths, even those bought at the price of mercy, are iron bonds among Tarterans. To break an oath is to lose honor and status. However, because only the letter of an oath must be upheld, rather than the intent, a clever Tarteran can often find a loophole in almost any oath.

### *Government*

Tarterus is governed by the Nine Princes, each of whom is the absolute ruler of his princedom. Beneath him in rank and status are his knights, each awarded the status of military commander as a reward for his or her loyalty. Second in line are the emissaries, who serve as advisors to their Prince, as envoys to the other princedoms, or as spies and assassins – whatever their Prince requires.

The nine princedoms engage in considerable trade with each other, and with merchants and representatives from other dimensions, such as the Black Savants, the Zoab, the Ebonites, and the Ebonite Malum of the Shadow Realm in Talislanta.

All manner of goods and services are bought and sold, a specialty being black diamonds – the dark heart-stones of demons, which are acquired by Tarteran demon hunters and valued for their use in making soulstones and other enchanted items.

### *Magic & Religion*

Like the ancient Archaens before them, Tarterans are capable of learning magic, though few have the patience required to devote long years to the study of the arcane arts. For this reason, most prefer to attain magical power through the acquisition of enchanted items, weaponry, and artifacts. The Tarterans practice no religion.

### *Worldview*

Tarterans do not entirely fit in among devils or mortals. In either world, they are regarded as outsiders, or worse, but Tarterans do not seem to care what others think about them, and as such observe no proscriptions about who they will or will not deal with. Essentially, a Tarteran will do whatever he or she considers necessary to gain an advantage of some sort, whether personal, political, or economic.

## The Zoab

Zoab are repellent creatures who hail from a distant dimension that lies adjacent to the lower planes. Half-humanoid and half-larval in appearance, they measure approximately five feet in height and ten feet in length. Zoab skin is slightly translucent, covering their pale flesh and partially revealing the internal organs. The air around these creatures is heavy with the nauseous reek of Ulu scent, a "fragrance" that non-Zoab find faintly nauseating.

### Ancestry

Zoab are the descendants of a long line of kings called the Old Exaltar, who once ruled over an empire that extended across large parts of the lower planes. For three thousand years, the Empire prospered, until conflicts with the Cult of Sephar and its allies forced the Zoab to withdraw to their home plane, bringing an end to their plans of conquest and colonization.

Though the empire has been in decline for centuries, the Zoab still possess matchless wealth, resources, and a vast fleet of dimension-spanning trade vessels. With these, the new Exaltar still hope to reclaim the grandeur of their ancestors.

### *Culture*

On their home plane, the Zoab live in cities resembling great clusters of crystalline globes, connected by coils of translucent tubes and anchored to one or more atolls. Large, disk-shaped platforms, surrounded by spherical structures of varying utility, serve as landing pads for their windships.

In Zoabian society, deference to authority is of paramount importance, and is used to mask one's true feelings and intentions. In reality, Zoab are crafty, greedy creatures concerned only with the acquisition of riches and their comfort.

Zoab subsist solely on liquids; the blood and vital fluids of small living creatures are especially favored. To feed, Zoab possess a hollow, sharp-tipped tongue that can be used as a siphon to suck up liquids; with the ability to extend these tongues up to three feet at a startling speed, the Zoab can also effortlessly penetrate skin and flesh, injecting their targets with powerful digestive fluid that quickly turns solid organic substances into liquid to be consumed.



### *Language*

All Zoab are fluent in Zoabian, their native language, and little else. Though Zoabian merchants are usually conversant in the Elder Tongue, few Zoab bother to learn the languages of other species. When conversing with outsiders, most rely on translators. Common Zoabian names typically include the prefix Zo- or Zu-, followed by the individual's place of birth. Examples include Zoamir of Narubaru, Zolar of Mangle Strand, Zunabo of Malnir, Zunar of Ulu-Wood, and the like.

### *Government*

The Zoabian Empire is ruled by a figure known as the High Exemplar. In days past, the High Exemplar was chosen for his intelligence, courage, and ability to lead. Now, the position is awarded each year to the highest bidder, ensuring that only the wealthiest Zoab ever serve in this capacity.

Second to the High Exemplar, Exaltar are the next wealthiest Zoab, and comprise the ruling class. Gluttons and voluptuaries, they possess an insatiable appetite for all pleasures of the flesh, particularly those of a sadistic or depraved nature. Dignitaries of this order are carried from place to place by their slaves and are attended to by a class of individuals known as Sycophants, who are fawning, servile, and eager to please. The High Exemplar awards rich trade contracts to the Exaltar, for which he is paid a fortune in bribes.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Zoab are atheists who have no use for the concept of religion. Magic, on the other hand, is held in higher regard, but only as it can be used to obtain riches and power.

Zoab often deal in enchanted items and soulstones, but the main source of the Empire's vast wealth is radian crystal, a type of violet-colored stone that is naturally imbued with arcane force. Cut and polished to precise standards, radian crystals can be used to power levitational devices and magical constructs of all sorts.

### *Worldview*

Zoab are considered repulsive by most other peoples, mainly because of their larva-like appearance and lack of personal hygiene. Outwardly obsequious, particularly while engaged in trade transactions, Zoab are cunning folk who think nothing of lying or cheating if they can get away with it. Though few others like them, Zoab are considered integral to trade and commerce among the various inhabitants of the lower planes and bordering regions.

Zoab trading vessels can be encountered throughout the lower planes, and are also known to visit the Iron Citadel in the Shadow Realm. They spend freely and are generally welcomed in such places, though despite their deferential veneer, Zoab are known as ruthless businessmen.

Zoab are one of the few races who have regular contact with the Brood, who supply them with slaves, black diamonds, and other wares. In return, Zoab merchants pay them in black vantic, a powerful narcotic that induces a death-like stupor and dark dreams. Zoab are also known to employ Brood as bounty hunters, torturers, and assassins.

Zoab shun the Sepharans, whom they regard with great trepidation as the enemies of their ancestors. To safeguard their interests from Sepharans, Zoab merchants often pay exorbitant sums to hire mercenaries to protect their ships and assets.

## The Sepharans

The Sepharans are an ancient race of humanoid beings who hail from a dark and mysterious region of the lower planes bordering the Demonrealms. Tall and thin, they exhibit a deathly white pallor, their skin tattooed head to toe with occult symbols. Both males and females sport a head of writhing tendrils in place of hair, and three eyes: a pair of black orbs set with pearly white pupils, plus a third eye, larger than the other two and set vertically in the center of the forehead. The paired eyes function as ocular organs and are sensitive to light and color; the third eye is blind to visual stimuli, but possesses other potent capabilities.

Sepharans decorate their faces and bodies with intricate arcane symbology called calligraphs. These markings have dark magical significance, and also serve to identify the wearers as members of the secret society known as the Cult of the Sephar.

### Ancestry

The ancestors of the Sepharans originally hailed from the Void, a mysterious region of the lower planes that is said to border the nethermost reaches of the Demon Realms. According to accounts, it is a chaotic dimension, black as the depths of space, in which jagged islands of black and white marbles stone hover, adrift in a sea of endless night.



According to their written histories, the first Sepharans were superstitious creatures who dwelled in darkness, and lived in constant fear of more powerful entities such as Brood and Shaitan. This changed when the Sepharans chanced upon a set of ancient black magical tomes, from which they devised their own form of magic, called Sepharan Symbolatry (See Magic & Religion).

### *Culture*

On their home plane, Sepharans are said to dwell in ominous-looking temples, erected on islands that drift endlessly across the darkness of the Void. These towering edifices are plated in brass, and engraved with arcane symbols that confer protection from Shaitan - ancient enemies of the demon-worshipping Sepharans.

Within these cursed places, acolytes prostrate themselves before giant stone effegies of three-eyed, horned idols: symbols of the Cult from ancient times, said to have black magical properties (See Lost Lore, Sepharan Idols). These places are regarded with fear and revulsion, even by many denizens of the lower planes. For it It is said that here, Sepharans traffick with Cthonian demons, and engage in rituals that struck fear into the hearts of even the darkest necromages of ancient times.

### *Language*

Like most of the races that date back to ancient times, Sepharans read and speak the Elder Tongue. Acolytes of the Cult are also fluent in Runic, a secret language comprised entirely of symbols traced in the air, rather than words or sounds. Sepharans communicate in Runic whenever they are around outsiders, in order to prevent others from learning their secrets.

Similarly, Sepharans keep their real names secret, mainly to protect themselves from hostile magic. All Sepharans have a common name and a true name. Common names have an archaic flavor, such as Sepharos, Narrios, Quaru, and Zur. A Sepharan's true name is represented only by a symbol, and will never be willingly revealed; among Sepharans, knowledge of an individual's true name is believed to confer power over that person.

### *Government*

The Cult of Sephar is ruled by a cabal of six ancient and powerful Symbolators known as the Sepharan Elders. These mysterious entities dwell in a secret sanctum hidden on one of the lower planes, and are almost never seen. They communicate with the Cult's acolytes and followers through the three-eyed idols found that are found in all Sepharan temples. All who serve the Elders know that their dictates are to be obeyed without question, on pain of consequences far worse even than death.

### *Magic & Religion*

All Sepharans are adherents of the Cult of the Sephar, a black magical sect that reveres Cthonian Demons as "deities". Acolytes of the Cult are skilled in the Dark Art of Sepharan Symbolatry, a strange form of magic that enables practitioners to cast spells through the use of occult symbols known as calligraphs.

According to the Sepharans, the most potent calligraphs ever devised are a long-lost set of ancient occult sigils that represent the Six Cthonian Arch-Demons of the Apocalypse. Sepharans believe that using these calligraphs, the Sepharan Elders will someday be able to raise the Six Arch-Demons, release them from their magical prisons, and bring about the destruction of the Omniverse.

### *Worldview*

Sepharans are shunned by most other folk, who regard them as the most sinister entities in the lower planes. For untold ages they have been confined to their own dismal realms, prevented from gaining access to the material planes by an alliance that is said to include the Shaitan, the Tarterans, Black Savants, and others - chief among them, the Tau, whose Assassin-Monks hunt Sepharans who dare to venture outside the relative safety of their hidden temples.

The motives of the Sepharan Elders have long been a subject of concern to Talislantans, and to many others throughout the Omniverse. It is known that the Elders covet ancient occult writings of all sorts, and will use any means to acquire such artifacts, from which they seek to devise ever more powerful calligraphs. Almost certainly, the Sepharans were instrumental in causing The Great Disaster. which led to the fall of the first great civilizations of Talislanta. Acting through their surrogates, they are believed to have also instigated the more recent conflict known as The Uprising.

## The Brood

Brood are a vile species of horned humanoids who originate from the darkest reaches of the lower planes. Gaunt in stature and black as night, they stand over seven feet in height and exhibit a coldly hostile demeanor. Their appearance is neither a pose nor a ploy; Brood are amoral and exceedingly aggressive, and are known to abruptly turn on any creature that they deem a threat, including those of their own kind.

Brood are hunters, slavers, and soul-stealers who prey on creatures of all sorts, including other humanoid races and most types of minor demons and devils. They have no industries, and make no ships, tools, or weapons. Instead, Brood coerce other life forms to serve their needs, using them as slaves, steeds, or living weapons (see sidebar).

## Ancestry

Brood hail from an uncharted region of the lower planes known as the Dark Dimension, a realm described by some as a nightmarish landscape of twisted obsidian spires, bottomless chasms, caves, and tunnels. It is a place devoid of light, inhabited by such frightful creatures as void monsters, null-beasts, bat manta, voraks, and other things too awful to describe, such as the dreaded white worm – purportedly the only entity that Brood truly fear.

### *Culture*

Brood roam the black depths of the Aethereal Sea in living ships known as Broodwyrms, massive creatures that range from three hundred to six hundred feet in length and up to sixty feet in diameter. Brood use the internal chambers of these creatures as living quarters, and to house bat manta steeds, stores of food, captured slaves and beasts, and other cargo.

Most Broodwyrm ships carry many trained bat manta, which the Brood use as steeds. Flying silently on these mounts, pairs of Brood hunters usually travel well ahead of their ships, searching for potential prey.

Brood evince no capacity for, nor appreciation of, art, music, or any other culture. The sole exception is the skulls that Brood bedeck their living ships with, which may or may not pass for "art."

### *Government*

Brood live in clans. A clan may have just a few members, or it may number into the hundreds or thousands. The strongest member of a clan serves as its leader, until he is slain or usurped by a stronger individual. Clan rulership is subject to challenge from within or without; a particularly strong clan chieftain may on occasion seek to take over another clan by challenging and defeating its leader. This practice passes for "government" among the Brood.

Brood clans traffick in everything from souls to slaves, trained beasts of various sorts, poisons, weapons, and stolen artifacts. Slaves such as gremlins, sardonicus, night demons, servitor imps, and gargoyles are usually restrained by strictors, which are the serpentine creatures that Brood use as living "slave collars." Captured souls are kept in soul cages, which Brood make from the spines and tendrils of phasms.

### *Magic & Religion*

Brood are illiterate and know nothing of spellcasting. Some clans recognize the value of enchanted items and weapons, however, and seek to acquire such things when they can. Brood exhibit no religious tendencies, nor do they seem to comprehend the concept of gods or religions.

### *Language*

The Brood language is largely unknown to outsiders and appears to consist only of hissing sounds and clicks. Even magical means of translation are only partially effective in deciphering Brood speech, which has puzzled many generations of scholars and linguists. Not surprisingly, to outsiders, Brood names sound like a random combination of sibilants and hard consonants: Syzzyk, Zrysk, Zhyrr, and similar.

### *Worldview*

Mercenary by nature, Brood claim alliance with no other race or species. They are not particular about potential trading partners and will deal with anyone who has something they want. They respect only strength, however, and would-be trading partners who exhibit weakness may be robbed of their wares, or worse.

Openly or in secret, most other denizens of the lower planes trade with the Brood, though few express any desire for closer relations. Though Brood produce little of value themselves, they are shrewd traders who understand the value of most goods and commodities. They prefer to be paid in slaves or captive creatures, but will also barter for souls, certain types of enchanted items, or intoxicants – black vantic, a powerful narcotic made with black arrack and vantic toxin, is especially favored by these folk. If cheated, or even pressed too hard while haggling, a Brood may decide the haggler is an enemy and erupt into violence.

The Zoab believe that Brood are an inferior species, useful only as pertains to their abilities as hunters, slavers, torturers, and assassins. Nonetheless, they are often eager to trade with Brood clans, though they prefer to do so in secret.

Tarterans exhibit a strong dislike of Brood, considering these creatures to be about the same as other vermin or parasites. Some Tarteran scholars warn that the species is spreading across the lower planes like a plague, and recommend that the Brood be exterminated before it is too late.

## Servants of the Brood

*In their journeys across the lower planes, the Brood have discovered several life forms that they have deemed useful, and so have coerced into serving their needs. These include:*

- *Bat manta: These winged creatures hail from the Dark Dimension. Brood capture and train bat manta for use as flying steeds.*
- *N'aru: Also known as "spirit worms" or "soul-stealers," n'aru are a species of ectoplasmic parasites normally found in the depths of the lower planes. Brood use n'aru to remove the souls of living beings, which are then imprisoned in soul cages and sold to buyers.*
- *Strictors: Serpentine entities native to the Underworld and adjacent regions, strictors haunt ancient ruins and tombs, feeding on crypt-wyrms, larval demons, and other vermin. Brood use trained strictors as living whips and restraints, as traps to ambush prey, and to hunt and retrieve small and elusive creatures.*
- *Vorak: A smaller relative of the bat manta, voraks are ravenous creatures resembling a clawed hand with webbed talons. Brood use the vorak as thrown weapons and torture devices.*

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 01-19 | 1 | **Shadow-Things:** In this realm where it is always dusk or darkest night, strange things may be seen moving in the shadows, flying overhead, or lurking just below the surface. These include fiends, shadowights, shadowarriors, bat manta, demons, void-dwelling beings such as Brood, or almost anything from the lower planes. |
| 20-22 | 2 | **Chasm:** This may be anything from an ancient well or excavation site to a sinkhole that suddenly caves in somewhere close to (or directly underneath) the PCs. In the hole may be water pure enough to drink, one or more snipes from the nearby Sinking Land, a Cthonian sand demon, a band of Satada tunneling their way to the surface, or a treasure or artifact of some sort. |
| 23-25 | 3 | **Abomination:** A strange and unnatural-looking creature of some sort – possibly a failed sorcerous experiment, a mutation, the victim of a magical mishap, or a Cthonian demon seeking a form or substance to absorb. The abomination may have any number of unusual traits or abilities; it might be unintelligent, highly intelligent, harmless, animate in some unnatural way, eerily emotional, insane, or vicious. |
| 26-30 | 4 | **Ruins:** Recently uncovered by a recent windstorm or some type of aberrant weather, ruins may be in surprisingly good condition (perhaps because they were protected by magic), or so damaged and decrepit that they are extremely unsafe to explore unless one has the proper skills. If explored, the ruins may turn out to be an ancient tomb, mausoleum, a temple, part of a city, a dungeon, an abandoned or haunted wizard's tower, or something else entirely. |
| 31-35 | 5 | **Wrecked Windship:** An aerial vessel of some sort that crash-landed, either recently or long ago. The windship may be Cymrilian, Farad, Rajan, or Baratus; or it may be of extradimensional or unknown origin. It may be a small windskiff, or a much larger trading or war vessel. It's possible the windship can be repaired (GM's choice), but if not, it may be valuable as salvage. In either case, it may still contain valuable items of some sort. |
| 36-40 | 6 | **Shadowizards:** One or more shadowizards from the Iron Citadel, riding on bat manta. They may be en route to or from some other place, or they may be looking for someone or something that entered their domain. They may or may not show any interest in the PCs. |
| 41-45 | 7 | **Morde:** A small or large flock of these bat-winged scavengers can be seen picking over the remains of one or more corpses. The victim(s) may be humanoid or not; cause of death may or may not have been natural. If humanoid, the corpses may have valuable items on them. |
| 46-50 | 8 | **Ravengers:** A small or large flock of these omnivorous and potentially dangerous scavengers have spotted the PCs. If they're hungry enough, they may risk an attack, especially if the PCs' group is small or weakened in some way. If any members of the party are badly wounded, the ravengers will definitely begin to follow, waiting for the chance to feed on the party's remains. |
| 51-55 | 9 | **Depredators:** One or more of these frightful, three-eyed avian predators might be spotted flying above. They pose an extreme danger to flying creatures and aerial vessels, but rarely attack prey on the ground. If encountered in the air, an attack is all but certain. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 56-60 | 10 | **Unknown:** The party feels a presence of some sort in their vicinity. Roll vs PER to see if they can detect the source of this feeling. It may be nothing, or it may be a residual trace of some sort of magic or enchanted device in the area. If it's daytime, something invisible or well-camouflaged may be nearby, such as a spirit, a Cthonian demon, an exomorph, or a shape-changer of some sort. If it is night, there may be something lurking in the shadows, such as a fiend, pseudo-demon, shadowight, nightstalker, etc. This encounter may result in combat, or it may not. |
| 61-65 | 11 | **Yassan Technomancers:** A small or large clan travels with at least one armored cargo dray drawn by land lizards. They may be looking for salvage, or heading to or from a client who hired them to repair something. They may be fleeing the area for some reason, or rushing to help someone in need. If not too busy, the Yassan may be available for hire. |
| 66-70 | 12 | **Araq Hunting Party:** A small or large band, mounted on swift duadir. If hunting a land dragon, they may pass by. But if hungry, they may view the PCs as their next meal. |
| 71-75 | 13 | **Tremors:** The party feels the ground shaking underneath their feet. The tremors may be mild or severe; they may be caused by something burrowing beneath them – possibly Satada, Subterranoids, or a giant land kra. It could be a herd of wild creatures approaching, such as megalodonts, ogriphants, or a behemoth. Or it could be an earthquake, either occurring naturally or caused by something like an earth elemental or Cthonian demon. |
| 76-80 | 14 | **Windship:** An airborne vessel, spotted from a distanc. It may be flying to or from the Iron Citadel, or somewhere else. It may be Cymrilian, Farad, Rajan, an Ebonite vessel, or a ship of unfamiliar make and origin. Whoever is aboard the windship may see the party, or they may not. |
| 81-85 | 15 | **Omnivrax:** Omnivrax are extremely aggressive and will eat almost any living organism. They are known for their exceptional hunting, tracking, and fighting capabilities, and also for their exceptionally low intellect – omnivrax have been known to attack statues, scarecrows, and even their own shadows. Regardless, they will certainly attack a party of travelers. |
| 86-88 | 16 | **Manrak:** The presence of these flying insectoids is heralded by a high-pitched buzzing sound. They may be attacking some other creatures or individuals, attempting to inject them with paralytic venom so they can carry them back to their hive, which may be nearby, or located some miles away. The Manrak may or may not have spotted the PCs, but if they do, an attack is likely. |
| 89-90 | 17 | **Djaffir:** A small or large band of Djaffir nomads, mounted on aht-ra. If merchants, they may approach to see if there is an opportunity to trade or barter. If bandits, they may approach and try to rob a group of all its valuables. |
| 91-92 | 18 | **Dracartan Land-Ark:** A large landborne vessel, heading to or from the Iron Citadel from their home in Carantheum. The appearance of a Dracartan ship so far north is highly unusual, and they likely have a very important purpose; possibly to purchase or trade for some unusually rare commodity or artifact, or because they seek information that only the Malum of the Iron Citadel might have. |
| 93-95 | 19 | **Mystery Ship:** A mysterious looking aerial craft seems to be heading to or from the Iron Citadel. The ship is black and has black sails – no crew is visible on deck. Is this a Black Savant ship, an Ebonite soul trader vessel, a Tarteran pirate vessel, a ghost ship from ancient times, an illusion... or something else? |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 96-100 | 20 | **Aberrant Weather:** The weather in the Shadow Realm is more often aberrant than average. Dense fogs and abrupt drops in temperature to the point of freezing are common, and such conditions may last for an hour or more, or pass as quickly as they began. They may also warn the coming of deadly icicle rain or ghost wind (see Aberrant Weather Conditions, page 229). The cause of such weather may remain a mystery, or it might turn out to be a group of ice giants from nearby Narandu, a Cthonian ice demon, or some other horror. |



# The Sinking Land

The Sinking Land is situated in the furthest northeastern reaches of the Wilderlands of Zaran, just west of the Volcanic Hills and south of the Opal Mountains. The skies above this region are ever dark and grey, the earth below a vast quagmire of inert, brown sludge. Passage through the Sinking Land is deemed next to impossible, the muddy terrain tending to slowly swallow up creatures or beings who remain stationary for more than a few minutes.

A few species of plants and animals have somehow managed to adapt to this bleak and depressing environment, including several varieties of giant fungi, the flat-rooted barge tree, and the intelligent mud-dwelling creatures called Snipe.

## The Snipes

Snipes are large mollusks whose shells, constructed of convoluted spirals of glistening calcinate, measure approximately four feet in diameter. A single appendage serves a dual purpose as the snipe's eye and mouth stalk; a second appendage serves as a "foot" or fin, helping propel the snipe through muddy terrain.

### *Ancestry and History*

Snipes are a highly evolved species of mollusk of uncertain descent. They may be among the oldest sentient species in Talislanta.

### *Culture*

Snipes are nomadic creatures who burrow beneath the muddy surface of the Sinking Land, navigating by a form of sonar. Despite their awkward-looking bodily form, snipes are surprisingly swift. They can move through the ground as fish swim through the water and can withdraw their eye-mouth stalks into their shells in the blink of an eye. Snipes are also interested in the movement of "mud-tides" and "mud-currents," which affect subsurface travel. A snipe will not "swim against the tide" if it can avoid doing so.



## The Great Hunt

*The Great Hunt is a tradition of the Gryph clans of the Tamaranth forest. The event takes place once a year, following the spring rains. Only the most skilled hunters of each clan are allowed to participate; to be chosen is considered a great honor. Before embarking on the Hunt, the participants gather around the great council eyrie at the settlement of Dhar. Here the group separates into small hunting parties of two individuals. Each party is assigned its territory, and then the hunting parties fan out across the forest, awaiting the coming of dawn. At first light the hunters fly forth, armed with duar and heavy crossbows. The Great Hunt has begun.*

*Flying through the forests of Tamaranth, the hunters search for dangerous predators such as omnivrax, malathropes, and behemoths. The largest and deadliest predators are tracked down and engaged in combat; fierce battles between the hunter and the hunted are not uncommon. The vast majority of the creatures being hunted will not be killed, but will instead be driven out of Tamaranth into the surrounding territories. The Great Hunt lasts for two weeks; when it is over, the woods of Tamaranth are virtually devoid of large predators and other violent creatures, at least for a time. After the Great Hunt, a feast is held at Dhar to honor the participants. Hunters who have shown exceptional skill and valor are awarded with traditional necklaces made from the claws and fangs of their prey, and then all return to their clans, to tell their people stories of the hunters' exploits.*

Snipes are intrigued by the doings of other creatures and enjoy juicy gossip (see sidebar). Insatiably curious, they often follow individuals who enter their territories, listening in on their conversations and occasionally offering their opinions. Some snipes are amused by the appearance of humanoids, who they think look naked without shells. So innately nosy are these creatures that they, in fact, have a unique culture and an "economy" based upon the exchange of information. They require fair payment in return for the knowledge that they possess; one bit of gossip or news for another is the going rate.

### *Language*

When desiring to communicate with others, Snipes extend an eye-mouth stalk some three feet above the earth. They are fluent in several tongues, among them Low and High Talislan, and they are always interested in learning new languages and dialects. Snipes keep their names secret from outsiders.

### *Government*

Among these creatures, the most knowledgeable snipes are regarded with the greatest esteem. Such a snipe, referred to as the Great Sage, will usually be the one consulted should another snipe wish to know something. Otherwise these creatures have no leaders or government.

If threatened, snipes burrow into the mud. While they are not violent, if seriously threatened snipes will sometimes tunnel beneath creatures who mean them harm, creating cave-ins and pitfalls. They have no natural weapons.

### *Magic & Religion*

Snipes revere the deity called the Creator, whom they depict as an extremely large and intelligent snipe. They are said to hold ritual observances deep underground, though no outsider has ever witnessed such a ceremony.

### *Worldview*

Eye-mouth stalks poked above the ground, Snipes see and hear most everything that occurs in their territories and will happily relate all that they know. They expect news in return, however, and will not give information unless this consideration is met. As travelers in the Sinking Land are quite rare, the appearance of such individuals elicits much excitement amongst these creatures.

# Places of Note

## The City of the Four Winds

It is perhaps possible that no reasonable person would care to enter the Sinking Land were it not for the legends concerning the City of the Four Winds. Once known as the capital of the ancient kingdom of Elande, the City of the Four Winds is believed to be the last surviving vestige of an advanced and enlightened civilization. It was built by the greatest magicians of Elande's Golden Age, who invested the city with magical properties, allowing its buildings to hover suspended above the ground. According to legend, the city and all its treasures and wonders survived the Great Disaster, and still floats somewhere above the Sinking Land, moving slowly on the winds. Travelers who claim to have caught a glimpse of the fabled city describe it as being most enchanting, its wind-worn towers and archways still capable of conjuring up visions of the halcyon age of Elande. The sorcerer Kabros sought and claimed to have found the Lost City, but of his discovery he would only say, "The city of the Four Winds must be believed to be seen, and seen to be believed."

# Tamaranth

Tamaranth is the oldest of Talislanta's woodland regions. Thickets of low-lying trees and light vegetation dominate the perimeters, progressing in stages towards the ever-deepening woods of the interior. Here, ancient span-oak and fernwood tower above the forest floor thick with carpets of moss and trailing vines. Swift-running streams course through the underbrush, and the woods teem with an abundance of plant and animal life.

There are no roads per se in Tamaranth, which remains a pristine wilderness largely untouched by the countless wars and disasters that have affected the rest of the Talislantan continent over the years. There are said to be several trails that lead through Tamaranth, but if so, they are well-disguised; certainly from above by the near impenetrable canopy of giant span-oaks that blanket the forest, and possibly also by some form of mystical or elemental magic.

Outsiders who wish to travel to this region are well-advised to do so only with a skilled guide, and more importantly, only with permission of the two humanoid peoples who live here: the avian Gryphs, and the reclusive Ariane.

## The Gryphs

An impressive race of winged humanoids, Gryphs stand up to seven feet tall, with wingspans over twenty-four feet. Their bodies are covered with a thick feathery down, usually brilliant red or orange. They have hawk-like visages and bright, piercing eyes.

### *Ancestry and History*

Originally the first inhabitants of Tamaranth, the Gryphs claim descent from an ancient race of avians who are said to have fled from their ancient homeland and migrated to Talislanta following the Great Disaster. Gryphs have inhabited the forest of Tamaranth for untold centuries. They share a common ancestry with the Aeriad of the Nine Kingdoms, though the Gryphs have not suffer from the effects of devolution as their western brethren have.

During the Uprising, a large contingent of Gryphs took up arms against the Stryx, allies of the Ur Clans and their age-old enemies. The Gryph intercession allowed Cymril time to rebuild its aerial armada and helped prevent the Wild Tribes from defeating the (then) Seven Kingdoms.

### *Culture*

The Gryph clans live in eyries built in the tops of the tallest span-oaks. Their dwellings resemble great nests constructed of tightly-woven vines and roofed with canopies of living, leafy boughs. Few stand at altitudes of less than one hundred feet, making access by non-avians a somewhat chancy endeavor. A Gryph settlement may consist of as many as forty eyries, each housing a family of up to eight individuals. The largest settlements often include great "Council Eyries" spanning two or more trees in length and breadth.

Like the birds of prey they resemble, Gryphs are hunters by nature. They have exceptionally keen vision, which enables them to spot even the slightest movement on the ground from great altitudes. The clans subsist primarily on fresh game, usually large predators and other dangerous beasts.

The Gryphs are an independent and strong-willed race who prize freedom above all things. Gryphs are uncomfortable in enclosed spaces and cannot survive for long in captivity. They are also an honorable people; a Gryph's word is his or her bond, and their promises are never broken.

### *Language*

Gryphs speak avian and Talislan. Gryph names are similar to Aeriad names in that both sound a lot like bird calls, for example, Rawk, Kyaa, Chak, Kyaw, and Kree. Unlike Aeriad, Gryphs do not "stutter" when speaking, though they pronounce ch and k sounds very forcefully.

### *Magic & Religion*

Gryphs revere the deity known as the Creator, whom they depict as a powerful winged warrior. Unlike the Aeriad, Gryphs hold no formal religious ceremonies or observances, though every Gryph warrior says a silent prayer to the god before going into battle.

### *Government*

Each Gryph clan has its chieftain, who serves as a leader in war and peace. At the Great Council Eyrie, the chieftains of all the clans come to meet each year during the first week of Jhang (see Talislantan Chronology). Here, decisions that impact the Gryphs as a people are discussed. Outsiders who break Gryph laws may be imprisoned in wooden cages and suspended from the highest trees. Here they may be allowed a few days, or perhaps weeks, to contemplate the consequences of their actions.



Gryphs consider themselves the self-appointed guardians of Tamaranth and the surrounding environs, and are known to patrol far beyond the borders of their territories. They are skilled in the use of a type of two-pronged spear called the duar as well as the heavy crossbow, utilizing either sharp or blunt quarrels. Normally, each clan guards its own grove of trees and the territories beneath, but in times of grave danger two or more clans often join forces. At such times, the forests resound with the piercing war-calls of Gryph warriors, a prelude to battle.

### *Worldview*

Through their travels and communications with other avian species, the Gryph clans are often aware of events that have transpired in even the most faraway places. Except for the Ariane, and to a lesser extent the Blue Aeriad of Vardune, they have close relations with few peoples. Although they are territorial by nature, Gryphs will sometimes leave their eyries to travel to distant lands. A rare few choose to live amongst men, taking to adventuring for profit or working as mercenary scouts, guides, or bounty hunters.

Gryph clans trade hides, horn, weapons, tools, and other useful goods among themselves, and also with certain Orgovian bands. They also trade rare herbs to the Ariane in exchange for healing salves and philters. Gryphs despise Stryx, whom they regard as a living plague, and will break off from other activities to attack Stryx who have ventured too close to their domains.

## Gryph Settlements

### Dhar

Located in the southern Woods of Tamaranth, Dhar is the largest of all Gryph settlements, consisting of nearly a hundred communal eyries nestled high in the treetops. Among these is the ancient Council Eyrie, where the chieftains of all the Gryph clans come to meet each year during the first week of the month of Jhang.

# The Maze-City of Altan

In the north-central region of Tamaranth, surrounded on three sides by the purple-hued peaks of the Amethyst Mountains, is a sylvan valley of rare beauty. The woods here exude an ancient magic, as if permeated with the essences of a forgotten age. At the foot of the mountains stands the maze-city of Altan, home of the Ariane.

## The Ariane

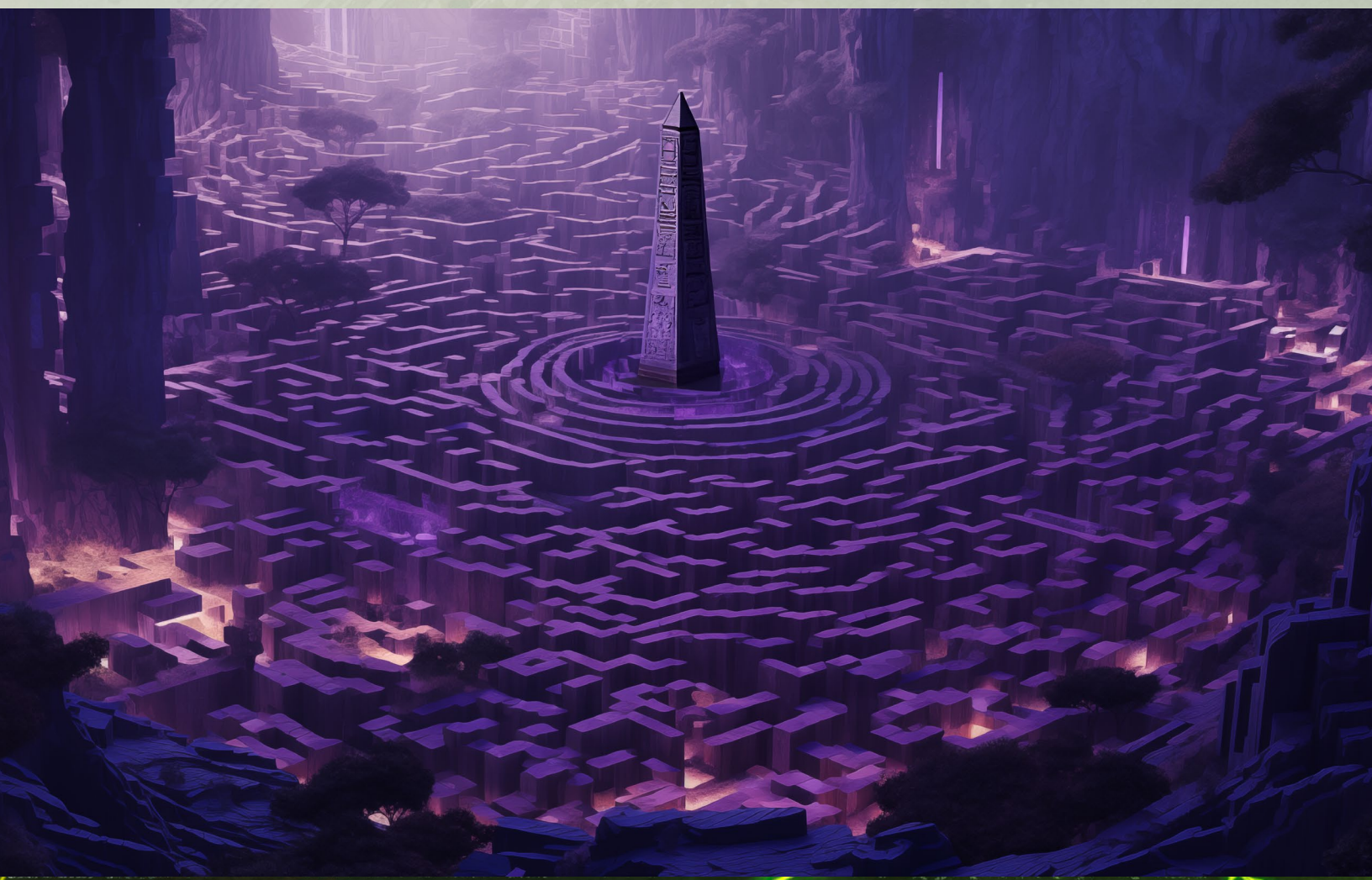
The Ariane are striking in appearance. They have skin the color of onyx, long snowy-white hair, and grey eyes flecked with sparkling silvery motes. Tall and slender of build, Ariane exhibit a grace and serenity approximated only by the enchanting folk of Astar or Thaecia. Their mode of dress is simple but elegant; their capes, flowing garments, and high boots are all made of spinifax, a silken cloth derived from the flax-bearing pods of the thistledown plant.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Ariane are the oldest of Talislanta's inhabitants. The fabled mystic, Hotan, referred to them as "the Elder Ones," and claimed to have discovered Ariane records dating back to the Time Before Time. Talislantan scholars now believe that the Ariane were originally not native to Talislanta, but came ages ago when their own home was ravaged by a terrible cataclysm.

### *Culture*

Altan is situated in a wooded valley surrounded by the Amethyst Mountains. It is a place of magical beauty, its timeworn structures overhung with all manner of fruiting and flowering vines. The maze-city was fashioned over centuries from a single mound of violet stone. Radiating outward from a central obelisk, each of the city's many unique structures was designed, formed, and polished smooth solely through the use of transascendent magics.



The ways of the Ariane are difficult for others to comprehend. On the surface, they seem closed and introspective, as if dreaming or lost in thought. In truth, the Ariane possess an altogether different view of the world than most Talislantans and are practitioners of the mystic doctrine known as Transascendency — a philosophy based on the concepts of reincarnation and animism.



The Ariane's belief in Transascendency has influenced their culture in many ways. To the Ariane, all creatures great and small, and even less animate things such as fire and water, are alive. Fearing to harm some reincarnating life form, the Ariane eat only ripened fruits and vegetables. Their tools and utensils are fashioned from stone or dead wood, never from living trees. Ariane make a distinction between physical age and "spiritual age," i.e., the number of incarnations that a given spirit has gone through. Spirits who have experienced seven or more incarnations are deemed "wise" or "venerable" by the Ariane. All others are still considered "young."

Ariane value the experience of existence itself above all things, and consider knowledge to be the greatest of treasures. They record the collective histories and experiences of their people on tamar – orbs of violet stone, magically imbued with the thoughts and memories of those who create them. Each Ariane has his or her own tamar, within which is contained the total of that individual's experiences. The devices are also used to contain messages, historical data, and other information. By the exchange of tamar, the Ariane can communicate their thoughts and feelings in ways that words cannot convey. The great obelisk that stands at the center of the maze-city of Altan is itself a massive tamar, which has served as a repository for the accumulated knowledge of the Ariane and their ancestors for countless centuries.

When Ariane decide to take a mate, the commitment is not just for life but for all eternity. Such "soulmates" may remain bonded to each other throughout numerous incarnations, humanoid or otherwise.

### *Language*

All Ariane are fluent in the Elder Tongue, old Archaen, and common Low Talislan. Additionally, their transascendent abilities allow them to commune with all things in the natural world. Among their people, Ariane do not use names, for each knows who the other is.

### *Government*

Ariane Elders, known for their mastery of transascendent magics, serve as advisors to their people. When decisions of great importance are to be made, the Elders gather around Altan's central obelisk and meditate on the problem, sometimes for days or even weeks. When they have arrived at a solution, the Elders call their people together and explain their views.

The Ariane have no formal laws, but believe firmly in the right of all living things to exist in peace. However, individuals or creatures which engage in violent or disruptive acts are dealt with decisively. The usual punishment is banishment from Tamaranth, though violent offenders may be imprisoned. The length of internment varies according to the severity of the infraction; the Ariane's somewhat abstract conception of time tends to add to the duration of such stays.

While the Ariane are a non-violent people, they are not averse to the use of force when it comes to defending their lives or land, and many are surprisingly proficient with their weapons. Mounted on swift silvermanes, bands of Ariane regularly patrol the heights surrounding Altan. Unwanted intruders are sternly urged to depart, occasionally encouraged by a fusillade of arrows. In extreme cases, Ariane reserve the right to kill, preferring to think of it as simply hastening the natural process of reincarnation.

### *Magic & Religion*

Joined in spirit as members of the nature-oriented cult of Transascendency, Ariane can commune with all things in nature (see sidebar). Masters of transascendent magic claim to be able to "read" a person's past lives; Ariane high masters of the art are reportedly able to maintain a constant consciousness throughout any number of future incarnations, and can choose the nature of their successive future reincarnations. To the Ariane, time is the river upon which all living things flow en route to their next incarnation. "Following the river" in astral form, high masters are said to be able to see into the past or the future.

When an Ariane dies, there is no mourning. It is merely part of the cycle of life, death, and renewal. The body is returned to the earth, and the spirit moves on to its next incarnation. The late individual's tamar is brought before the great obelisk at Altan, so that the deceased's life experiences can be transferred within.

### *Worldview*

The Ariane are strict neutrals; they never involve themselves in the affairs of other peoples or governments. Secure in their hidden city, they have remained aloof from the affairs of other Talislantans for thousands of years. The majority of the Ariane spend their entire lives in the city of Altan, where they strive to master the secrets of transascendency. Yet for some, the search for enlightenment requires them to journey beyond the forest of Tamaranth, perhaps even to distant lands. Such an individual is known as a druas, meaning "seeker." Ariane encountered outside of Altan will always be druas, those who have left the maze-city to gather experiences in the outside world.

Visitors to the maze-city are few, this due as much to Altan's isolated location as to the reclusive nature of the Ariane themselves. Gryphs from the surrounding forests of Tamaranth sometimes visit to obtain medicinal mixtures or to deliver news from other regions. The Ariane also provide the Gryph clans with bolts of fine spinifax, which the Gryphs use to barter for goods from other lands. Travelers in need of food or shelter are never turned away, though outsiders not accompanied by a druas may not remain in the maze-city for longer than seven days.

#### Communing with Nature

*The Ariane possess a unique view of existence, attributing sentient virtues to all things in nature: plants, trees, earth, stone, wind, water, and so on. By communing with nature, they can communicate telepathically with the elemental spirits that reside in such entities – creatures invisible on the material planes but existing in tangible form on the elemental plane. For example, earth and stone are often reluctant to answer questions in haste, preferring instead to ponder for a time before making their reply. Lakes, streams, and other bodies of water possess knowledge of events transpiring within their depths, but may have a distorted view of occurrences reflected in their surfaces due to the action of waves and ripples. Carried upon the winds are countless secrets, many from far-distant lands. Even the most modest breeze may know a thing or two, though elemental spirits of the air are unable to discern whether the words they bring are true or false. Plants and trees, having a marked lack of interest in the affairs of men, may also prove to be limited sources of information. Communes with beasts and animals may yield more productive results, provided the creature being addressed is not occupied with other concerns.*

*Ariane "rock sculpture" is the process of gently shaping stone without the use of hammer or chisel; a single work may take a lifetime or longer to complete. Altan itself is such a work, on a vast scale. Ariane music is composed of natural sounds: the calls of insects, avians, and animals; the sound of water coursing along a stream; the whisper of the wind. Ariane "conduct" their ambient symphonies of sound by communing with the elemental spirits around them.*

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** The typical weather beneath the thick canopy of the ancient forest is cool and pleasant. However, when cold northern winds from the Crystal Mountains collide with hot thermals from the Plains of Golarin, tremendous thunderstorms may erupt over the region. In some cases, these may topple huge trees and cause streams and rivers to overflow their banks. |
| 2-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** This encounter might mean spotting a Gryph eyrie high among the tallest trees. These huge nests are constructed of woven vines and protected by a roof of living boughs. If found in a full-blown settlement, there may be as many as forty eyries. Flocks of nighthawks and nag-avir (see encounter #11) also nest in the trees, though much closer to the ground. A dwelling might also be the lair of predators, such as omnivrax, exomorphs, and malathropes. |
| 5-6 | 3 | **Roadway:** There are no actual roads winding through this primal wilderness, so "finding a roadway" might mean finding a game trail or the track of a predator. It could also mean spotting a hidden trail, which may be disguised by nature or magic and might lead to a Gryph settlement or the maze-city of Atlan. |
| 7-9 | 4 | **Traveler:** The most common travelers encountered in this region will be Gryphs, who patrol Tamaranth and the surrounding area. Gryphs also travel to and from the maze-city to trade with the Ariane. One might also encounter Orgovians who have trade relationships with Gryph clans. Orgovians take offense to being offered coins (they only barter), and in some cases may even react violently. Rarely, one might encounter an Ariane druas, either heading away from or toward the maze-city. |
| 10-12 | 5 | **Silvermane:** Small- to medium-sized herds of silvermanes roam the forest. They will observe travelers closely and may speak with those they consider civilized. If deemed a threat, the herd will likely warn the nearest Gryph settlement. The silvermanes of Tamaranth communicate openly with Gryphs and Ariane, whom they consider co-guardians of the forest. |
| 13 | 6 | **Omnivrax:** Usually acting alone, these fearsome predators make their way into Tamaranth from the Plains of Golarin. They tend to remain dormant during the day and emerge from their lairs at night to stalk anything or anyone they come upon. |
| 14 | 7 | **Malathrope:** The uncontrolled laughter of these terrifying predators reveals their madness and lust for violence. They may travel considerable distances in order to stalk, torment, terrify, and eventually devour other intelligent beings. They prefer the night, but if hungry enough, will hunt during the day as well. Signs of a malathrope include partially eaten victims whose faces are frozen in fear, four-clawed tracks, unintelligible runes clawed into tree trunks or even stone, and echoes of hideous, mocking laughter. |
| 15 | 8 | **Exomorph:** Renowned for their camouflage ability and skill as predators, Exomorphs find ample prey within the forests of Tamaranth. An encounter with an exomorph could mean: (1) finding evidence (tracks, a fresh kill, a terrified survivor, its deep-throated roar); (2) being hunted by the exomorph and perhaps feeling as if being watched; (3) spotting the creature in the distance as it seemingly appears from nowhere to attack another victim; (4) coming upon its lair (a cave or nest of tangled vines high in the trees). |
| 16 | 9 | **Caravan-Bug:** Finding sanctuary in the ancient forest, tribes of these tiny insects have established trading colonies in Tamaranth. Larger folk may not immediately notice their long caravans crossing the forest floor. Generally friendly, these creatures possess a limited form of speech and may trade news of the region, or even the world at large, in exchange for tiny morsels and treats. |
| 17-18 | 10 | **Nighthawk:** Though preferring to hunt at night, these raptors may be encountered in daylight as well. They nest among the tall span-oaks and fernwoods of Tamaranth. Some say the Gryph can communicate with nighthawks, and employ them as lookouts and messengers. |
| 19-20 | 11 | Nag-Avir: A type of small avir colored yellow and green, the nag-avir is native to the forests of Tamaranth and has spread to other woodland regions. They may be encountered in flocks of two dozen and seem quite delightful at first. However, they tend to follow travelers, mercilessly squawking for morsels of food. This may go on for days unless the birds are satiated with a large quantity of edibles. Their calls may be heard for a considerable distance and are certain to attract nearby predators. |

# Urag

Urag is a harsh and wind-swept region of arid plains, winding canyons, and sprawling mountain ranges. Once a thriving forest, the area has been reduced to a near wasteland by centuries of neglect and abuse. Its streams are fouled with offal and refuse, its woods felled for timber and fuel, its hills and mountains ravaged by crude mining techniques.

Stripped of much of its vegetation, the land is scarred by the forces of erosion and aberrant weather, such as acid rain, black rain, and black winds. Deep ravines terminate in pools of sludge and alchemical wastes; streams and rivers smolder, emitting clouds of noxious vapors or even bursting into flame by some form of spontaneous combustion. Puddles of unidentifiable slime and rancorous alchemicals are scattered across the landscape, while floods of polluted water and massive mudslides are all too common occurrences.

None but the hardiest species of plants or animals can thrive in Urag, though numerous varieties of mutated life forms can be found here. The individuals responsible for defiling this land are a brutish folk known as the Ur.

## The Ur

Standing between seven and eight feet tall and weighing upward of five hundred pounds, the Ur are frightening to behold. They have leathery hide of a yellow-green color, curved fangs, and facial features only a mother could love: furrowed brows, pointed ears, and deep-set black eyes. Necklaces of teeth and bone, pieces of hammered plate armor, and filthy garments made of fur and hide constitute the typical Ur clansman's wardrobe. Rings of black iron are commonly employed to restrain their hair, which the Ur wear in double or triple topknots.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Ur are a savage people who settled in the region after being driven from southern Narandu by advancing hordes of ice giants. Talislantan naturalists of the New Age theorize that they are an offshoot of the Kharakhan, a race of giants who hail from the Wilderlands of Zaran.

The Ur clans were at the heart of the Uprising, an event whose beginning was signaled by a full eclipse of the black moon, but was prophesied long before by the giant three-eyed stone idols that the Ur consider avatars of a god. The belief in this prophecy was so strong that the three great Ur clans put aside their age-old enmity to unite and lead a vast coalition of Wild Tribes against the so-called civilized nations of Talislanta.

Though the war ended in a stalemate and an uneasy truce, the Ur conquered a number of territories which they continue to occupy to the present day, including sections of the Brown Hills, Sapphire Mountains, and the Gorge at Akbar. Most important, the Ur and their allies among the Wild Tribes proved that they are a force to be reckoned with. A threat, while presently idle, is still a threat.

### *Culture*

The Ur are a warlike folk who rule by force of arms. They are crude and vulgar and are prone to outbursts of violence. Ur believe that only the strong survive, and the weak obey or perish. Ur admire strength and power; it is the only thing they respect.

Ur live in crude fortresses of stone and earth, which they optimistically refer to as "castles." There are three main Ur clans, each of which resides in its settlement. The Ur possess some talent for the making of siege engines such as fire-throwers, war towers, crude battlewagons, and scourges. They also brew alchemical toxins and slag, dumping the remains into streams and lakes.

Barter is used extensively for inter-clan dealings, though Ur also know the value of gold and use currency when it is available. Darkling slaves produce most of the tools, weapons, and implements that the Ur require; Ur slave-drivers make sure that they meet their quotas.

### *Language*

Ur speak a rude version of the Northron tongue, liberally punctuated with curse words and epithets. Male names are monosyllabic and harsh to the ear, as in Grud, Vrak, Durg, and Grag. Female names are little different, but end in a vowel.

### *Government*

The Uprising led the three Ur clans to put aside their differences and work together towards a common goal: the destruction of their enemies, the descendents of the hated Archaens. Though the three clans have retained their independence, the three Ur-Kings now meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual interest. Chief among these remains the eventual conquest of the civilized nations of Talislanta, by any means possible.

Each of the three Ur-Kings is served by his warlords: commanders of the armies of the Ur clans, which range far and wide across the ravaged terrain of Urag. Ur shamans serve as advisors to the warlords and the Ur-King. Each Ur-King makes whatever laws he sees fit for his clan; individuals who have committed an offense are cruelly punished or put to death (see sidebar).

A cruel and domineering folk, the Ur clans long ago subjugated the miserable creatures known as Darklings, a wretched race of humanoids who once controlled the region of Urag called the Darklands. Ur employ hordes of these creatures as low-class infantry, and also as slave-laborers in their mines and timber-cutting operations. Of more use to the Ur are the Stryx, humanoid avians who sometimes serve the Ur as scouts, spies, and messengers. Generally speaking, the Ur regard them as useful, if treacherous and untrustworthy, subordinates.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Ur have no gods, but prostrate themselves before immense, three-eyed stone idols that dot the Urag landscape. The nature and origin of these monstrous effigies is unknown, even to the Ur themselves. Scholars believe they were fashioned long before the Ur clans settled in the region, possibly by a cult of demon-worshippers from the lower planes known as the Sepharans (see The Shadow Realm). Icons depicting these three-eyed idols are worn by Ur shamans, and are said to have magical properties. Aside from the reputed powers of these icons, Ur shamans are usually incapable of performing any but the simplest hoodoos and charms.

### *Worldview*

Since they arrived from the northlands, the Ur clans have succeeded in ravaging much of Urag. They have hunted many animal species into extinction, killing great numbers of creatures to indiscriminately harvest the hides, claws, and meat. They have felled entire woodlands for timber and firewood and have ruthlessly stripped the hills and mountains of valuable ores, leaving behind gaping pits and mounds of toxic slag. Having squandered much of Urag's natural resources, it is believed that the Ur clans must eventually seek to expand into "fresh" territories; aside from a desire for vengeance against the ancestors of the Archaens, this is perhaps is one of the strongest motives behind the Ur's plans of conquest.

## Crime and Punishment

*The Ur have little tolerance for slackers, thieves, and spies. Those who commit such offenses face certain retribution, often of the most grisly sort. There are several forms of corporal punishment commonly practiced by the Ur. The first and most common is imprisonment in a crude spherical cage made of hammered metal, called an iron orb. Victims usually have to squat to fit into these devices, which are intended to be cramped and extremely uncomfortable. Once the victim is inside, the cage is either rolled down the side of a mountain or attached to the tail of a wild beast, such as a behemoth or omnivrax, which is then set free and allowed to run where it will. Many Ur gather around to watch the spectacle, which may be repeated several times, depending upon the severity of the crime and the durability of the offender. Fatalities are not uncommon, though victims who survive five rolls may be considered "rehabilitated" and allowed to go free.*

*For the most serious offenses the favorite punishment is "trolling". This procedure involves binding the offender hand and foot with iron manacles, then using a chain winch to lower the victim head-first into a moat or pit filled with sewage, stagnant water, and hordes of vermin such as urthrax and alatus. The objective is not to drown the victim, but to repeatedly dunk the offender in and out of the water; in essence, to use the victim as bait for the many vermin and scavengers that live in the moat. The punishment is regarded by the Ur as fine entertainment, and often continues until there is little left of the victim but bones.*

# Ur Settlements and Places of Note

## Krag, Vodruk, and Grod

The Ur clans have three large settlements: Krag, Vodruk, and Grod. These primitive stone fortresses consist primarily of rude hovels made of earth, cracked stone, and rough-cut timbers. Surrounding each settlement is a ditch filled with raw sewage and crawling with scavenger-slimes, urthrax, and other vermin. These places are havens for disease and filth and contribute much to the pollution of the local environs. Petty conflicts between the three rulers and their disparate factions are common, and often result in bloodshed.

## Acid Plains

For centuries the Ur have used this place as a dumping ground for waste products derived from their slag furnaces. Crews of Darkling slave laborers, assigned to dump or retrieve wagonloads of toxic wastes, are generally the only humanoid beings who enter the Acid Plains. The Plains are largely devoid of life except for abominations, urthrax, and other types of mutated vermin.

## The Toxic Hills

Source of the Smoke River, this area was once used for the testing of poisonous alchemical agents, which the Ur hoped to develop for use in warfare. The chance discovery of a substance known as quintoxin led to the inadvertent contamination of the entire highland. The clans evacuated the area post-haste, leaving behind several hundred gallons of quintoxin in large, open cauldrons. The status of this virulent substance remains unknown; Darkling slave crews sent into the area have never returned, and the region is considered completely uninhabitable.

## The Smoke River

Running south beyond the Toxic Hills, the Smoke River is so polluted that it seems to boil, giving off clouds of noxious steam or smoke. No natural lifeforms can tolerate these waters, though abominations are rumored to dwell in the roiling deeps.



# The Obsidian Mountains

The glistening black peaks of the Obsidian Mountains form a natural barrier between Urag and Durne of the Nine Kingdoms. A network of underground trails winds its way through this region, some of which are utilized by marauding bands of Satada. Yaksha also prowl the mountains. But the Obsidian Mountains are perhaps best known as the breeding grounds of a hostile avian folk known as the Stryx.

## The Stryx

An avian race, Stryx would stand over six feet tall if they didn't tend to be hunchbacked or stoop-shouldered. Their angular bodies are covered with dark grey or black feathers, and typical specimens have a wingspan over twenty feet. They have clawed talons, horns, and misshapen features.



### *Ancestry and History*

The Stryx are a mutated species of Aeriad believed to have come to Talislanta long ago, from a distant land. Allies of the Ur clans, they fought in the Uprising, but were prevented from invading Cymril by their enemies, the Gryphs of Tamaranth.

### *Culture*

Stryx make their homes in caves dug into the sides of sheer cliffs and mountains. Most live in clans that may number as many as sixty adult males, as many adult females, and about half as many young. Stryx feed on carrion, and upon creatures weaker than themselves. Despite their unhealthy appearance, they excel at gliding, and can remain aloft for hours without difficulty. Stryx have superior night vision but see poorly in daylight.

Stryx culture is centered around death: the more dead creatures there are, the more the Stryx have to eat. Thus, misfortunes that affect other species — such as war, disease, and death — are regarded as fortuitous by the Stryx. As might be expected, this outlook has won the Stryx few admirers among other Talislantan peoples.

### *Language*

Stryx speak a form of Northron interspersed with harsh, squawking sounds used to convey varying shades of emotion. Stryx favor two-syllable names ending in -yx. Examples include Naryx, Koryx, Yary

### *Government*

Each Stryx clan has its chieftain – typically, a male warrior who has shown an ability to locate sufficient carrion to feed the members of his group. When he grows old, or should he fail to obtain adequate supplies of carrion, the chieftain will be challenged by another warrior. The victor earns the right to be chieftain; the loser is offered to the clan for its next meal, illustrating the victorious chieftain's ability to provide food.

## Life Among the Scavengers

*As is true of most scavengers, the Stryx have few friends among those not of their kind. At best, most civilized folk find scavenging for food of any kind to be an unclean and unpleasant practice. When carrion is the food of choice, the scavenger is often regarded as grotesque, horrible, a carrier of disease and death.*

*It is the fate of the Stryx and others of their ilk to carry upon their persons the lingering stench of their last meal, which clings to their garments, claws, and feathers, and cannot be easily disguised. The same is true of Stryx cave dwellings, which reek from the rotten flesh that is stored and eaten within. The very sight of carrion is often sufficient to make non-scavengers nauseous; the scent of decomposing flesh, buzzing with flies and hanging off the bone, is virtually guaranteed to do so.*

*Conversely, the Stryx regard rotting carrion as the choicest food, not unlike the way non-scavengers favor a well-aged cheese or bottle of wine. To the Stryx, the odor of carrion is as appetizing as the scent of a home-cooked meal is to others. The sound of buzzing corpse-flies is like music to their senses; the pale forms of writhing maggots are like a delectable garnish to the main course. Given such differences, it is not surprising that the Stryx do not get on well with other folks, who tend to regard them as ghouls.*

### *Magic & Religion*

Stryx Necromancers revere Taryx, the "Scavenger of Souls," a creature purported to be a minion of the entity known as Death. The so-called "Servants of Taryx" consider carrion to be a gift from their dark patron. The dead are served up as "offerings" from Taryx and eaten by the rest of the clan. Stryx shamans practice a crude form of necromancy and perform grisly sacrificial rituals in honor of their morbid god. They possess some capacity for the reading of omens and certain black magics, but generally exhibit little facility in the arcane arts.

### *Worldview*

Stryx serve the Ur clans as scouts, airborne troops, spies, and messengers. Some say the Stryx associate with the clan armies only because this allows the avians to scavenge battlefields for carrion, which it is their nature to feed upon. Stryx despise Gryphs, and have nothing but disdain for the Blue and Green Aeriad of Vardune of the Nine Kingdoms.

# The Darklands

The mountainous southern realms of Urag together comprise the region known as the Darklands — a hostile wilderland, long since stripped of much of its natural resources by the Ur. Above ground, erosion by wind and rain has rendered the land barren of vegetation and unable to support anything but the most persistent varieties of chokeweed, lichen, and briars. Far beneath the earth, toiling ceaselessly in the tapped silver and black iron mines, or hiding in secret tunnel complexes, are the main inhabitants of this region: the Darklings.

## A Culture of Lies

*Among the race of Darklings, lying is considered a valuable skill, not unlike the way other folk regard such talents as hunting, metalworking, or farming. Lying is a part of all transactions between Darklings, their associates, and their masters; it is viewed as vital to the survival of the species. Liars who exhibit exceptional fluency and believability are held in high regard by their fellow Darklings. With training and practice they may aspire to become an "intermediator" – in essence, a professional liar. Darklings often retain the services of an intermediator to assist them in transactions, or when accused of wrongdoing. In the former instance, an intermediator may be hired to lie about how much his or her client's goods are worth, in the hope that substandard goods can be bartered for things of greater value. In the latter case, an intermediator's services may be required when excuses, alibis, or denials are necessary to avoid punishment.*

*The services of an intermediator can cost anywhere from as little as a single copper piece to as much as ten gold lumens, depending upon the type and complexity of the lie. The potential for danger, always present when dealing with the Ur, is also a consideration affecting the cost of an intermediator's services. Since intermediators set their prices and always lie about the value of their services, prices tend to be on the high side. The best intermediators can lie so well that even their clients soon lose track of what is the truth and what is not. Even Darklings who claim to be intermediators may not be intermediators at all, and vice versa*

# The Darklings

Darklings are short and wiry of build, rarely exceeding four feet in height, with soot-grey skin, large pointed ears, sharp fangs, and distorted features. Most dress in rag breechcloths, with scraps of discarded metal and slag serving as rude ornamentation.

### *Ancestry and History*

Darklings are creatures of subterranean origin whom naturalists believe were descended from an ancient race of cave- and swamp-dwellers called the Boglins. Their tribes once controlled the region known as the Darklands, until they were conquered and enslaved by the Ur, who used toxic gasses to flush the Darklings out of their lairs, killing thousands in the process. The survivors were taken by the Ur and brought to their settlements, where the majority are kept in pens or cages and forced to work day and night. Those who escaped capture remained underground, hiding in holes, caves, or whatever shelter was available.

Darklings fought in the Uprising, invading the Nine Kingdoms via tunnels that intersected with the Underground Highway. The assault seems to have been half-hearted at best, and they were easily defeated and repulsed by the Gnomekin.

### *Culture*

Darklings are virtual slaves of the Ur, who force them to labor in their mines and timber-cutting operations. They receive no pay for their services, instead being "rewarded" with wretched cages in which to live, and gruel to eat. Darklings tribes that live outside the jurisdiction of the Ur trade tools, weapons, and bits of precious metal or semi-precious gems – when they are not preoccupied with stealing from each other.

Physically weak, Darklings have learned to be cunning and conniving to survive. They have acute senses, including superb night vision, and the ability to detect other life forms by scent. Nearly undetectable in shadow, they can hide almost anywhere.

The word of a Darkling is meaningless. If given a choice, a Darkling will always lie rather than tell the truth. Darklings see nothing wrong with lying. To the contrary, they regard it as a vital survival skill (see sidebar). Despite their shortcomings, it must be said for the race of Darklings that they are durable. They have been known to endure terrible deprivations, hunger, lack of sleep, insults, and abuse, yet they continue their struggle to survive.

### *Language*

Darklings speak a crude version of the Northron tongue. Most Darkling names are comprised of a single syllable, either beginning or ending with a sibilant, whispering sound. For example: Shaz, Zaas, Yash, Zhaan, and Shiz.

### *Government*

The Ur control most of the Darkling population, treating them as slaves. The Ur herd Darklings together, arm them with crude weaponry, and force them to serve as unskilled infantry. Aside from this, Darklings have no defenses or armies of their own. Free Darklings survive in small tribal groups led by their shamans.

### *Magic & Religion*

All Darklings are members of a secret society known as the Cult of Sham. Adherents of the Cult's doctrines revere Sham, the so-called "King of Lies" and patron deity of the Darklings. "Priests" of Sham are in reality thieves, charlatans, or assassins, and rarely possess any but the most limited spellcasting abilities. Though the Ur have outlawed all aspects of the Cult, Darklings continue to practice their beliefs in secret.

### *Worldview*

The fate of the Darkling race is, for the most part, in the hands of the Ur. Thousands die each year in skirmishes, in the mines, or simply from abuse and malnutrition; even more died during the Uprising. The Darklings themselves have no friends or allies, and their future is in the hands of their masters.



| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 01-10 | 1 | **Signs of the Uprising:** The Ur were at the heart of the Uprising, which ended in a stalemate. Even so, the Ur continue to rebuild their forces and remain an enemy of the Nine Kingdoms and its allies. Typical signs of this tension might be: (1) the movement of Ur war-towers, fire-throwers, and battlewagons on their way to reinforce newly conquered lands in the Brown Hills, Sapphire Mountains, or the Gorge at Akbar; (2) Ur taskmasters escorting Darkling laborers to new mines or timber-cutting operations; (3) spies from other nations coming to seek news of the happenings in Urag (see encounter #5); (4) Ur and Darkling scouts searching for escapees or intruders. |
| 11-15 | 2 | **Extreme Weather:** The weather in Urag is much like its terrain – ravaged, polluted, and unpredictable. Extreme weather and environmental events might take form as acid or black rain, black winds, noxious vapors erupting from cesspools, streams polluted with alchemical wastes suddenly bursting into flame, retaining ponds or river banks breaking down and releasing a toxic flood, and mudslides due to the deforestation of much of the region. |
| 16-20 | 3 | **Dwelling:** The Ur live primarily in three fortresses. Since the Uprising, they have been constructing new settlements, and this encounter could mean coming upon a building site or war camp. It might also mean spotting cave openings in a sheer cliff face where a clan of Stryx makes its home. One might also find a hole or other shelter where escaped Darklings have hidden from their Ur taskmasters. Abominations are able to live in even the most foul cesspools and polluted regions of Urag, and this encounter could mean the travelers are near such a place. |
| 21-25 | 4 | **Roadway:** The roads in Urag are beaten down by the passage of Ur war machines, pulled by ogriphants and other beasts of burden. These roadways weave among the sludge pits, befouled streams, and other hazards and may be attractive to travelers, but one risks coming upon Ur scouts or war bands traveling the same road. |
| 26-28 | 5 | **Traveler:** It is rare to encounter civilized folk traveling within Urag. However, this encounter could mean spotting Gnomekin scouts emerging from a concealed cave leading to the Underground Highway, Gryph scouts flying to or from Tamaranth, or Cymrilian windships on a reconnaissance mission. |
| 29-30 | 6 | **Oddity:** The deforestation and devastation wrought upon the landscape by the Ur resulted in mudslides and a massive amount of erosion. In some cases, these events uncover buried objects; such things might be crypts, monoliths, sunken temples, or other structures from an ancient civilization. Whether out of fear or lack of interest, the Ur tend to leave these places untouched and unexplored. |
| 31-40 | 7 | **Ur:** One might encounter individual Ur scouts, or a large war band with beasts and war machines. They might be hunting and gathering food, hauling lumber and stone as building materials for a new fortress, searching for escaped Darklings or prisoners, or escorting captives toward a camp or settlement. |
| 41-45 | 8 | **Darklings:** Most Darklings in Urag are the servants of the Ur and will be found with Ur scouts when traveling or working in Ur settlements. Some have escaped their overlords and have taken shelter in the wilds of the region. They may spy upon travelers and attempt to steal food or valuables. They may also attempt to deceive travelers into helping them reach the Underground Highway and safety from their Ur taskmasters. |

| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 46-50 | 9 | **Stryx:** Stryx fear those more powerful than themselves, and serve the Ur as scouts, spies, and messengers. An encounter with them could mean spotting one of their dwellings (see encounter #3), coming upon a Stryx who has been injured while bearing a message, or being spotted by them, in which case they will likely fly to the nearest Ur clan and spread the news of intruders in the land. |
| 51-55 | 10 | **Abomination:** Some creatures have survived the toxic waste and corruption of Urag, but have not gone unaffected. These abominations will be strange and unnatural-looking creatures with a variety of traits or abilities. Their intelligence varies widely, as does their reaction to travelers, from curious and helpful to a vicious hatred or mindless violence. |
| 56-60 | 11 | **Satada:** Underground tunnels weave beneath the Obsidian Mountains and into Urag. They can be quite dangerous due to cave-ins and the seepage of toxins from the surface. Seeking captives, the Satada know how to traverse these passages safely and use them to raid on the surface between Urag and Durne. |
| 61-70 | 12 | **Urthrax:** These vermin may be encountered in small to large numbers in the wastes of Urag. While generally content to feed upon the plentiful refuse here, a swarm of these creatures can be very dangerous if disturbed or threatened. |
| 71-73 | 13 | **Yaksha:** These ferocious predators thrive in the mountains surrounding Urag. Their hideous shrieks echo down the mountainsides. |
| 74-80 | 14 | **Scavenger Slime:** These oozing, animated bags of viscous fluid dwell in the waste waters and slag pits of Urag. They will attempt to engulf and digest any organic matter they encounter. |
| 81-85 | 15 | **Morde:** Flocks of these bat-winged scavengers nest among the cliff faces and stunted trees of Urag. The Stryx treat them like pets and trust their keen sense of smell to lead them to carrion or recent battle sites. An encounter with morde might mean spotting them circling such a place, or finding them picking over the remains of dead beasts or other travelers. |
| 86-90 | 16 | **Wild Herd:** Durge, orgriphants, and the occasional ogront roam the mountain slopes and scrublands of Urag. The Ur hunt them for their hides, horn, and bone, and to capture them and train them as beasts of burden. Behemoths also hunt these herds. |
| 91-95 | 17 | **Smokk:** Found only in Urag, this species of flightless bird possesses the ability to locate precious stones and metals. A smokk brings high prices, though few are willing to brave the dangers of Urag and then part with the smokk once they have it. Catching them is also difficult as they are surprisingly fast runners, and their harsh, piercing cries can be heard for long distances, which tends to attract unwanted attention. |
| 96-00 | 18 | **Behemoth:** These massive beasts might be encountered singly or in small groups. If their young are present, they may be very aggressive. They prefer to hunt herds of large animals, but may attack Ur war machines and battlewagons due to their size and noise. A charging behemoth often causes other creatures to run or stampede. |

# Xanadas

Xanadas is an isolated region located high amidst the towering peaks of the Opal Mountains. The entire country is mountainous, with not so much as a single square mile of plains, flatlands, or even hills. There are no roads anywhere in the region, and even the few trails that exist are difficult to find, and inaccessible to all but the most skilled climbers.

Like the lands that lay to its north, Xanadas is covered with deep layers of snow and ice, rendering it impassable for most months of the year. Only during the warmest weeks of summer, when the snows melt into crystal clear streams that cascade gently down the mountains and gullies, is it possible to travel with any degree of comfort in this region.

In Xanadas, atop the highest mountain in the known world, called Mount Mandu, stands an ancient edifice known as the Temple of the Seven Moons. Here, where even the dreaded ice giants are unable to go, dwell the fabled Chroniclers of Xanadas.

## The Chroniclers

The Chroniclers of Xanadas are ancient beyond reckoning, their slender forms stooped with age. Their golden skin is wrinkled, their long hair and beards have gone white; still, their almond-shaped, golden eyes remain bright as coins. Customary attire includes silver and black robes, and long cloaks and caps decorated with arcane symbols.

### *Ancestry and History*

The last survivors of an ancient and secret order of mystics, the Chroniclers are believed to have resided in the Temple of the Seven Moons for untold thousands of years. They were followers of a great seer and mystic named Xanadas, who disappeared sometime before the coming of the Great Disaster, and whose tenets they still follow.

### *Culture*

Self-appointed recorders of Talislantan history, the Chroniclers observe and record phenomena of all sorts: the positions of the stars and planets, the delicate fluxes of time and space, the emergence and disappearance of plant and animal species, and so forth.

Seated on pedestals of lavender stone, they gaze into crystals of polished blue diamond, monitoring and noting the activities of the continent's peoples. Every event of note is recorded in massive leather-bound tomes. When filled with information, these books are stored in great underground vaults. There are said to be only twelve Chroniclers at Xanadas, all of them old beyond reckoning.

The Chroniclers are said to welcome visitors, whom they question at length to supplement or verify their observations. It is their custom to allow any who come here to study; on occasion, some people do. Otherwise, life in the Temple continues as it did when Xanadas was still there, for the Chroniclers believe that Xanadas will one day return, as he prophesied (see sidebar).

The Chroniclers perform their work strictly through a sense of duty, and have never sought compensation. Their needs are said to be provided for by enchanted vessels, which supply an endless source of food and drink.

### *Language*

The Chroniclers are fluent in many languages, including Quan, High Talislan, and old Archaen. The twelve are named after their founder, and are called Xantheus, Xanthar, Xantil, Xanthir, Xandros, Xanademos, Xanpelos, Xanmoro, Xandavius, Xanwar, Xanmilos, and Xanfalir.

### The Legend of Xanadas

*According to legend, many centuries ago a great mystic named Xanadas was summoned by Death to meet his inevitable end. His followers grieved upon hearing of their master's imminent demise, but the sage bade them not to worry, and said that he would visit with the gods for a time, after which he pledged to return to the material plane and relate the secrets of the afterlife to all who waited for him.*

*Though many scholars think the legend to be a bit far fetched, others point out that the tale is supported by certain odd traditions observed among the Chroniclers. These include the leaving of a light in each of the Temple's windows by night, the custom of setting one extra place at all meals, and a few other minor eccentricities. When asked the significance of such observances, the Chroniclers merely shrug and cast their eyes heavenward.*

### *Government*

The Chroniclers have had no leader since Xanadas departed. However, Xanadas provided his followers with a strict set of laws and dictums, which he instructed them to carry on in his absence. These include abstinence from intoxicants, diligence by night and day, modesty in dress and mien, neatness, legibility of transcripts, and unshakable neutrality as regards all outside influences. For the most part, the Chroniclers have remained true to the wishes of their founder, though they have been known to indulge in a tipple of wine from time to time, strictly to "soothe the nerves and cleanse the blood."

While outsiders who visit the temple seeking knowledge and enlightenment are treated with hospitality, those who come seeking personal gain may find the Chroniclers to be less than personable hosts. It is said that the Chroniclers have access to cogent magics, which they can employ at need to defend themselves and the Temple.

### *Magic & Religion*

The Chroniclers revere the memory of their founder, Xanadas, as a being of near-deific wisdom. They are adept in many forms of magic, through which they are purported to have extended their lifespans almost indefinitely.

### *Worldview*

Few Talislantans are aware of the existence of the Chroniclers. Most who have heard of these folk regard them as little more than the stuff of legends, though a few know the truth. As specified by Xanadas, the Chroniclers remain neutral as pertains to all outside influences.





## The Wilderlands Road

An ancient thoroughfare that dates back to the Archaen Age, the Wilderlands Road runs from the eastern edge of the Nine Kingdoms across the Borderlands and beyond, to the gates of the Kang Empire. Though commendably long, the roadway is neither safe nor particularly reliable. In the spring, heavy rains sometimes render sections useless for weeks on end.

During less rainy times of the year, the highway is heavily traveled by Djaffir merchant caravans, Aamanian pilgrims, massive land-arks from the Desert Kingdoms, and sometimes Dracartan duneships. Regardless of the time of year, the presence of bandit gangs and predatory beasts makes passage along the Wilderness Road in anything less than a large, well-armed group a foolhardy, and possibly suicidal, endeavor. Since the Uprising, the Wilderlands Road has become even more dangerous thanks to the proliferation of Beastmen and Za tribes, both of whom may be encountered throughout the region.

## The Aberrant Forest

To the south of the Borderlands lies the Aberrant Forest, a woodland region rendered weird and grotesque by a magical mishap of unparalleled proportions. All manner of rare and exotic vegetation can be found in this place, though nothing that grows or lives here is as nature intended it to be. The plants and trees are gnarled and twisted into strange forms, murky streams flow uphill, and at times the very ground seems to undulate as if alive. From the underbrush, animate tendrils of tanglewood reach out to ensnare the incautious traveler, and hedgerows of serpentine thornwood make swift passage through these woodlands an implausible stratagem. Less identifiable types of flora and fauna make their presence known by biting, tripping, speaking in tongues, or even more unusual methods.

Among the many anomalies found in the Aberrant Forest are the Arborin, a species of sentient, tree-dwelling plant-creatures native to the Aberrant Forest, and likely descended from a race known as the Ghaun. Hostile plant-folk who readily attack creatures that stray into their territorial groves,

Arborin build no permanent settlements and revere no god. They subsist on stump water and humus and are a quarrelsome and bitter lot. When immobile, they can blend into their surroundings, their gnarled forms being practically indistinguishable from the limbs of the trees in which they dwell. In combat, Arborin warriors wield crude wooden clubs and blowguns that fire missiles made from thorns; these darts are tipped with a vegetable toxin that induces drowsiness in most types of living creatures. Once drugged, victims are captured in nets of woven vines, hung from the treetops, and left to die – a warning to others who would venture into Arborin territories.

Arborin tribes consider themselves to be masters of the Aberrant Forest, fearing only the Ravant, a monstrous creature that dwells in the nearby wood. They are also known to raid the settlements, taking the females and sashesh, of the other folk who inhabit these woods: the Verdir.



# The Verdir

Verdir are tall and somewhat gangly in appearance, with skin the color and texture of new grass. An elongated cranium decorated with a mane of yellow-green leaves is typical of members of this unusual species. Verdir wear loincloths of woven grass, with bracelets and necklaces of vines. The women augment this costume with garlands of meadow blossoms in a variety of hues.

## *Ancestry and History*

The Verdir are believed to be related to the Green Men of the Dark Coast, though their people may have been "mutated" or altered, either by the Great Disaster or some other phenomenon.

## *Culture*

Sentient plant-folk, the Verdir tribes live in villages made of living plants, set atop the giant flowering lily pads that grow in the lakes and ponds of the Aberrant Forest. They make useful tools and implements from woven vines, leaves, gourds, and roots, and have domesticated a type of large water bug known as a cibant; they employ these creatures as steeds to carry them to and from their floating settlements. Verdir subsist on sunlight, rainwater, and minerals derived from plants, roots, and tubers.

Verdir reproduce via a strange combination of humanoid and plant activity, involving the transfer of pollen from male to female. The process is apparently pleasurable, as Verdir spend much time either preparing to mate or participating in the act. Dedicated pleasure-seekers, male and female Verdir mate often, and prefer variety in their choice of partners. Verdir young begin life as seeds, growing together in a pod-like protuberance that forms on the back of the impregnated female. When the pod is approximately a foot in length it is gently removed, planted in the soil, and watered regularly for seven days. At the end of this time a dozen or more young "seedlings" emerge from the soil. They remain rooted for another two weeks, feeding on sunlight and water and growing like weeds. At the end of this time the young uproot themselves and begin to walk about. Vestigial root fibers on the feet disappear after a few days.

The concept of currency or barter appears to have no meaning to the Verdir, who give freely and ask nothing but friendship in return.

### *Language*

Verdir speak the secret language of plants. Their names are long, colorful, and flowery in both the figurative and literal sense. Names such as Brilliant Blue Sun Blossom, Seductive-Scented Meadow Flower, and Blush-Red Luminous Lake Petal are average for these people.

### *Government*

Each Verdir settlement is governed by an elder known as the Dao, who is regarded as a great and wise sage. The Dao makes all decisions of importance to the settlement, such as when to hold various lustral rites, what to serve at these celebrations, and when to go forth and collect sashesh, a potent hallucinogen. The Verdir follow his commands without question.

Verdir have no weapons or armies, and virtually no talents as warriors. The waters surrounding the Verdir settlements provide sufficient protection from most predators, in particular the hostile Arborin tribes and a local monster known as the Ravant, which is greatly feared. As Verdir are plants rather than beings of flesh and blood, they are not bothered by carnivores, though herbivorous creatures will sometimes graze on sleeping Verdir. When faced with danger, Verdir either flee or attempt to blend into the foliage. Given the natural coloration of these folk, the latter form of defense can be quite effective.

### *Magic & Religion*

Verdir have no formal religion, though they recognize a being known as the Kagan as their "Great Creator." They know little about this individual except for the general location of his abode, yet dedicate rituals to him and erect images in his name on the off-chance that he may indeed be some sort of deity. The Verdir figure that the practice is harmless, and may well offer benefits in the afterlife, if there is such a thing.

Verdir "plant" their dead, returning them to the soil from which they sprang.

### *Worldview*

The Verdir are a peaceful folk who pose no threat to other peoples. They sometimes socialize with the inhabitants of other Verdir settlements, but otherwise have no formal relations with outsiders. A rival race of plant-folk, the Arborin, are actively hostile towards the Verdir.

# Places of Note

## The Myrk

The Myrk is an eerie swampland located in the western part of the Aberrant Forest. Unpleasant creatures such as giant alatus and skalanx reside in the brackish waters of the Myrk, and the fetid smell of dead and decaying vegetation hangs heavy in the air. An island overgrown with masses of swamp-trees and vines sits at the center of the Myrk.

## The Wild Wood

This woodland region is notable for the large, misshapen, and mainly hostile varieties of flora that grow here. Of particular concern is the Ravant, a malefic and terrifying monster over ten feet tall with metallic claws and spines. It is said to be indestructible and is greatly feared by both the local Verdir and Arborin tribes.

## Unique Creature -- The Ravant

The Ravant is a nightmarish monster that some say was created by the Kagan, a sorcerer of reclusive and mysterious habits who makes his home in the depths of the Aberrant Forest. The Ravant is the personification of the destructive forces of nature; its sole purpose is to destroy. Its claws are capable of slicing through metal armor with ease. It stands over twelve feet in height and weighs over 2,000 lbs. Its armored visage is adorned with spikes and sharp protrusions; its tail, an eyeless serpent whose bite means death.

The Ravant is believed to be virtually indestructible, though due to its heavily armored exoskeleton the monster cannot stay afloat in water; despite the presence of bat-like wings, the monster is too heavy to fly.

### Stats

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **INT -5** | **PER +5** | **WIL +10** | **CHA -10** |
| **STR +14** | **DEX -5** | **CON +15** | **SPD +1** |

**Ability Level:** 40

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite or Claws: d20 + STR, Tail: 1d4 + level 25 poison

**Special:** Virtually indestructible -- regenerate 10 HP per round, tireless, immune to poisons, immune to magical or non-magical control or influence, magic resistance (+10 to resistance rolls)

**Armor:** Exoskeletal plates, PR 12 **Hit Points:** 500

| D20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | 1 | **Aberrant Event:** The magical mishap which rendered the forest into the twisted and weird place it is now has not entirely subsided. Strange events may still occur – time passing differently, streams flowing uphill, the terrain shifting into new formations, the foliage suddenly transforming into new shapes grotesque or beautiful, or the moving of malicious plants to surround travelers. |
| 4-6 | 2 | **Arborin:** Considering their territorial and foul nature, an encounter with these plant-folk will usually end in violence. The Arborin may blend into the trees in an attempt to ambush travelers; they may also be encountered traveling toward a Verdir settlement, intent on raiding it in hope of taking captives and the hallucinogenic crop called sashesh. This encounter could also mean finding victims of the Arborin, dead or alive, who have been drugged and entangled in vines in the treetops as a warning to others. |
| 7-8 | 3 | **Emperor or Empress Plant:** These malevolent succulents send tendrils into other plants and creatures, taking control of them and puppeteering them at alarming distances. An encounter with an emperor plant could mean spotting normally passive plants acting to entangle prey to feed the emperor plant, being attacked by plants or creatures under the emperor plant's control, or coming upon a living barrier of briars meant to protect the emperor plant itself. |
| 9 | 4 | **Grue:** Generally encountered alone, a grue may range in height from one foot to fifty or more feet, depending upon its stage of development and how much it has fed upon plants, trees, and plant-folk such as Arborin and Verdir. An **e**ncounter with a grue might mean spying it from a distance as it feeds, meeting plant-folk being pursued by the grue, or confronting the grue itself, which may or may not act aggressively toward travelers who do not threaten it or interfere with its insatiable feeding. |
| 10-13 | 5 | **Rare Plants:** Many varieties of unusual plants, both beneficial and dangerous, grow in the Aberrant Forest. Some have healing properties or intoxicating effects. Some have existed here for many years, while others are recent mutations. |
| 14 | 6 | **The Ravant:** It remains unknown whether this creature truly stalks the forest or is just a legend. Both the Arborin and Verdir tell of glimpsing its metallic claws and spines through the trees and hearing its terrifying cries. An encounter could mean finding traces of a large beast's passage, such as claw marks and tracks or ravaged woodland creatures. Travelers might also hear its roar in the distance. Those getting too close might feel the ground tremble at its approach and witness trees being pushed aside. Retreat is advisable. |
| 15-16 | 7 | **Stranglevine:** Entwined in the branches of one or more trees, a stranglevine waits to entangle victims with its tendrils. An encounter might mean spotting the remains of past victims littering the ground and dangling among the trees, or being ambushed by the stranglevine itself. |
| 17-20 | 8 | **Verdir:** These sentient plant-folk seek only peace and harmony among the turbulence of the Aberrant Forest. An encounter with them could mean spotting one of their plant-villages growing upon giant lily pads in one of the many ponds and lakes of the area. Travelers might also meet Verdir riding the large insects called cibants, or fleeing from Arborin or other enemies. Verdir might also come to the aid of travelers in distress. |

# The Borderlands

The Borderlands lay to the east of the Nine Kingdoms, in the Wilderlands of Zaran. These territories consist of the Barrens, the western Wilderlands, and the Nine Kingdoms' old border outposts of Akmir, Ikarthis, and Karfan.

## The Barrens

The Barrens is a region of shifting deserts, rocky hills, salt flats, and wide stretches of scrub plains. Herds of land lizards, valued throughout Talislanta as pack and burden beasts, roam the area in great numbers. Also native to the alkali plains of this sector are mangonel lizards, a combative species of reptile employed as war steeds by the Thralls of Taz. The craggy hills of this region are riddled with underground passageways, many the work of earth demons. Other caves serve as lairs for the Enim, a giant race of cannibalistic Shaitan (devils) who regard Talislantans as fine dining.

The only humanoid people indigenous to this hostile environment are the Danelek, hardy tribesfolk who live among the great salt flats and oases of the Barrens.

## The Danelek

The Danelek have glossy black skin, and stark white hair worn in long dreadlocks. They dress in loincloths and sandals, their warriors wearing ornaments such as feathers, ear and neck rings, bones, stripes of paint, animal claws, and the fingers of slain victims.

### *Ancestry and History*

Some say the Danelek are a lost tribe of Dracartans who passed through the Plaguelands en route to the western Wilderlands and were changed in mind and body. The Danelek believe otherwise, claiming that their ancestors once ruled the Four Nations before those ancient kingdoms were destroyed during the Sorcerers Wars that preceded the Great Disaster.

During the Uprising, the Danelek fought against both the Wild Tribes and their enemies from the civilized nations, their only interest being the defense of their own territories and salt mines.

### *Language*

Most Danelek can converse both in Low Talislan and sign. The nomenclature of the Danelek uses three-syllable, hyphenated names that always end in the suffix -lek. For example: Na-ta-Lek, Ka-na-Lek, Ma-na-Lek, and Ja-ma-Lek.

The oral history of each Danelek tribe is kept by its Naz (tribe leader), who passes stories down from one generation to the next.



### *Culture*

The Danelek tribes roam the Barrens region of the Borderlands, hunting for land lizards and wild game. They also mine the salt flats for rock-hard salt crystals, which the tribes trade to other peoples. A Danelek tribe may consist of twenty to forty families, all living together in huts fashioned from blocks of salt. Danelek society is governed by a caste system, at the top of which are the Warriors. Shamans are next, followed by Hunters and Traders.

The Danelek are a primitive people of harsh and occasionally cruel habits. Travelers passing through the Barrens may be amused by the fact that the Danelek perspire through their tongues as well as their pores, but showing such amusement is ill-advised, as the Danelek do not take lightly to being ridiculed. Danelek warriors are protective of their tribe's territories and will attack small caravans or groups of travelers who stop to drink from their oases without permission. Stealth, ambush, or a stab in the back are all permissible under their code of conduct.

Danelek warriors carve notches into the handles of their war-axes to represent the number of victims they have killed; this is the extent of "art" among the Danelek, most of whom are too hard-pressed by the demands of their environment to devote their energy to purely aesthetic pastimes.

Because they live in such a barren land, the Danelek are largely dependent on trade for other goods such as food and modern implements and weaponry. Among the things they have to offer are land, salt crystals, gemstones, rock urchins gathered from caverns in the hills, and mangonel lizards herded from the salt flats. In addition to trade, the Danelek also employ theft and enjoy the spoils of combat just as readily.

Among the Danelek tribes, salt crystals are used as currency (see sidebar).

### *Magic & Religion*

Danelek worship the Creator, who is said to have given their people salt, as well as spring rains and the oases – the necessities of survival in this harsh land. Danelek shamans are skilled in the healing arts and are said to have some small talent for divining the location of water and salt crystals. However, few have actual spellcasting abilities.

### *Government*

Although of a single culture, the Danelek are sharply divided into tribal units centered around hereditary family leaders known as the Naz. Each Naz is the undisputed leader of his or her tribe; all others are subservient. The Naz is guided by several traditional beliefs held as indisputable by the Danelek: that their people own the local salt flats and oases, and that the Danelek are permitted to kill those who steal water or trespass into their territories.

Danelek villages have no fortifications. In the event of an attack, gongs are sounded, alerting the tribe's warriors of danger. Danelek are skilled at guerilla tactics and can survive in desert regions for extended periods without difficulty. They make excellent Wilderlands scouts and guides.

### *Worldview*

Danelek tend to prefer the company of their kind and are generally distrustful of strangers. Their tribes have trade relations with some of the Orgovians, Djaffir, and even the Za, but rarely associate with other folk. The Danelek practice of ambushing travelers who stop at their oases has not endeared them to many other Talislantans.

## Salt of the Earth

*Among the Danelek tribes of the Wilderness of Zaran, salt is an important commodity. Blocks of salt are used in the construction of Danelek abodes. In powdered form, salt is used to preserve durge and land lizard meat. Keeping meat from spoiling allows the tribes to store food for extended periods.*

*Salt crystals, which the Danelek say are created when black lightning strikes the salt flats, are used both as a form of currency and for barter. Brilliant and durable as gemstones, salt crystals are valued according to their hardness and clarity. Danelek sometimes cut and polish their crystals to enhance their worth and beauty.*

*The importance of this substance is such that the Danelek zealously guard their salt mines from rival tribes and outsiders. Clans have been known to go to war over disputes regarding the rights to a particularly rich salt mine, and many an unsuspecting traveler has been killed for daring to trespass through salt flats claimed by one or more of the local Danelek tribes.*

# The Borderlands Outposts

The old Borderlands outposts of Akmir, Ikarthis, and Karfan were all overrun during the Uprising. They are now abandoned, and in a state of complete disrepair. The territories around these ruined structures are under the control of Wild Tribes such as the Za and Beastmen, and the western edge of the Borderlands is now defined by the Wilderlands Wall (see The Nine Kingdoms, page 06 ).

# The Displaced Peoples

Several different peoples inhabit the vast territories of the Wilderlands. Most are descended from refugees who survived the Great Disaster, their homelands destroyed and long ago fallen into ruin. Some are exiles from the Kang Empire or other lands, while others are either members of conquered races, or hybrids created by Archaen sorcerers and later abandoned. The most common of these displaced peoples are the Bodor, the Marukans, the Orgovians, the Rahastrans, and the Xambrians.



# The Bodor

An amber-skinned people, the Bodor are short, round-faced, and somewhat portly of build. Their choice of costume is eccentric, and consists of loose-fitting smocks, blousy pantaloons, chain-loop earrings, and bracelets of lacquered metal.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Bodor are descended from a race of neomorphs, created by the ancient Archaens and abandoned after the Great Disaster. Since that time, their people have had no permanent home and have traveled throughout Talislanta.

### *Culture*

Bodor are musicians of consummate skill. They possess a unique ability called soundsight (see sidebar), which enables them to see sound as colors. Their favored instruments include the tambour, glass flute, glass bells, the intricate spiralhorn, and the four-man bellows-pipes. Bodorian music is intricate and complex and requires exceptional virtuosity. Some Bodor are skilled in making or repairing musical instruments, but they generally practice few other talents, and being averse to manual labor, they are sometimes considered lazy by other Talislantans.

Bodor travel in musical troupes of up to a dozen individuals, seldom staying in one place for any great length of time. A troupe will always have at least one wagon, in which they carry their young and all their possessions. They tend to be clannish, affecting a quiet and soft-spoken demeanor offstage, but can be quite outgoing when performing for appreciative audiences.

Bodor generally prefer to work for gold and silver lumens, though they may also accept such things as accommodations, meals, and travel arrangements in exchange for their services. A troupe's Maestro takes an additional percentage from each of the other performers to cover travel, lodging, and other expenses.

### *Language*

Most Bodor speak High and Low Talislan. The former is used when negotiating contracts and engagements with prospective employers, while the latter is employed when speaking to the common folk. Among their people, Bodor converse using a musical language called Bodorian, which requires no words to convey meaning. Bodorian names are gentle, short, and lilting, with examples such as Boda, Salo, Dore, Mifa, Sola, and Tido.

### *Government*

All Bodor troupes have a leader, or Maestro, who books all engagements, makes travel arrangements, purchases supplies, and contracts mercenary guards or guides as needed. The Maestro also conducts the troupe in performance, a position requiring the most refined sense of soundsight of all the troupe. In musical terms, Bodorian virtuosos, or master musicians, may command as much or even more respect than a Maestro. Still, it is the Maestro who resolves all disputes, most of which arise over a clash of creative egos, or differing interpretations of the various musical pieces in the troupe's repertoire.

Bodor possess little aptitude for combat. When they must travel through dangerous territories, Bodor often hire armed escorts of mercenaries to protect them. These arrangements are often negotiated as part of the troupe's performance contract, along with expenses for travel, food, and lodging.

### *Magic & Religion*

Bodor believe in the entity called the Creator, whom they regard as an aural, rather than physical, presence. They envision their patron deity as the first musician and greatest magician, who composed the music of the spheres from his own essence.

When a Bodor dies, he or she is buried in a wordless ceremony, while the remainder of the troupe plays a traditional funeral ode over the gravesite.

### *Worldview*

Bodor are strict neutrals who have ties with no other races or nations. Their traveling troupes can be encountered throughout the Wilderlands, and in such lands as Zandu, Faradun, the Nine Kingdoms, Carantheum, and the Kang Empire.

## Soundsight and the Color of Language

*"During my travels through the Wilderlands, it was my good fortune to spend some time in the company of a troupe of Bodor musicians. I found them to be a pleasant and easy-going folk who are partial to good food and drink, playing far into the night, and sleeping late into the day. In short, we had much in common, and so got along famously. While with the troupe, I learned much about the uncanny talent possessed by all Bodor, called soundsight. This ability allows Bodor to see sound as shapes and colors, and is an integral part of their music and everyday lives.*

*"According to the Bodor, all sound is comprised of color, intensity, shape, and texture. In musical terms, the use of soundsight enables Bodor musicians to play with perfect pitch, and in perfect time. Their visual connection with the music allows Bodor instrumentalists to develop superior tone, and to match or blend tonal colors with great accuracy and subtlety.*

*"From my traveling companions I also learned that soundsight also has certain non-musical applications. Because language is primarily sound, it too can be seen by the Bodor, who claim that every language or dialect has its color and texture. All voices are likewise unique, no two looking exactly alike. Simply by watching an individual speak, Bodor can often determine what part of Talislanta the speaker is from, the speaker's emotional state, and even whether or not the speaker is telling the truth. Bodor say that the most colorful Talislantan languages are those spoken by the Thaecians, Sarista, and the Zandir. The language of plants, which is spoken by the Green Men, is said to resemble a garden in bloom. Bodor especially favor the spell-songs of the Sawila, which they say are intricate, complex, and beautiful beyond compare. Conversely, the least colorful speech is that of the Aamanians, which the Bodor say is bland and utterly devoid of interest."*

# The Orgovians

Orgovians are a wiry, rugged people, hard and spare as flints. Their notable features include dusky-orange skin, protruding chins, squinty eyes, and nostrils that resemble vertical slits. They dress in loincloths, leather vests, curl-toed boots, and brown felt headdresses. Iron armbands are worn for decoration, typically by the dozen.

## *Ancestry and History*

The Orgovians are the last remnants of a people who once hailed from the small kingdom of Orgovia. Following the Great Disaster, their homeland was overrun by savage tribesmen, and their nation was driven into ruin. They now roam the Wilderlands of Zaran and surrounding regions, making their living as traders.



The Orgovians remained neutral during the Uprising, and were largely left alone by both sides.

## *Culture*

Orgovians are nomadic traders who range from the Wilderlands of Zaran to the Desert Kingdoms, and sometimes as far as the Eastern and Western Lands. They travel in small armed bands of up to twenty individuals, carrying parcels of goods from many lands on the backs of their loper steeds. Orgovian bands are loosely organized and usually consist of one or more extended families, plus several men or women from other bands who have joined the group through marriage or choice.

Orgovians have dealt exclusively in barter ever since the fall of the old nation of Orgovia and the subsequent devaluation of its currency, a lead coin called the yatma. If offered coin instead of barter for their wares, Orgovians may accuse the unwitting offender of attempting to rob them, generally with disastrous results (see sidebar). They tend to be suspicious of civilized folk, whose ways the Orgovians neither fully understand nor trust.

## *Language*

Most Orgovians speak Low Talislan and sign. Common male names typically begin with the prefix Or-, such as Orfir, Ordavo, Orva, and Ortu; female names begin with Org-, as in Orgovia, Orgala, Orgolas, and Orgavi.

## *Government*

Since the fall of their old kingdom, Orgovians have been suspicious of all governments and institutions. Their bands have no leaders; instead, decisions are made by majority rule. The band may elect to expel any member who fails to adhere to accepted customs or practices, or who commits an act of violence toward a fellow Orgovian.

Orgovians rely on the speed of their mounts and pay close attention to their surroundings to avoid potential trouble. If faced with no recourse, or if offended in some manner, a band will attack en masse. In such cases, Orgovians exhibit great ferocity. The traders carry fierce-looking prod-hooks and star-throwers to defend themselves against thieves and brigands. Their steeds, called lopers, are quite vicious and will also fight if threatened.

## Trading with Orgovians

*"Merchants and entrepreneurs who plan to have dealings with the Orgovians would do well to keep several facts in mind. First and foremost, in all dealings with Orgovians, the most important factor is the appearance of fairness. Until proven otherwise, foreigners are regarded as potential thieves, assassins, or worse. It is the custom among the Orgovians to exchange gifts before entering into trade negotiations of any sort. Be prepared to do so, and do not stint in your offering – your generosity and overall trustworthiness will be judged based on its value. Bear the added cost of these gifts without complaint; the price of the offering is deductible as a business expense and is well worth the investment in any case.*

*"By all means do not offer coins to an Orgovian, either in payment for goods or as a gift. These people use barter exclusively in all transactions, so remember to bring other goods to trade. Fine fabrics, jewelry, rare spices, and ornate Zandir blades are highly valued by Orgovians; trinkets and worthless brummagem are not, and may be regarded as a sign of bad faith. If coins are all you have, you might try to hammer them flat and barter them as precious metals, allowing the Orgovian to determine their worth by weight rather than denomination (using the phrase, "these are not coins," may also be helpful).*

*"Should your gift or offering fail to meet with the Orgovians' approval, you may put aside all thoughts of trades or transactions. Instead, your primary concern now becomes one of survival. Bow politely, say your farewells, make whatever excuses you wish, but leave the area without delay. For once you have curried an Orgovian's disfavor or distrust, you will be regarded as an enemy. Should you argue or haggle at this point, the Orgovians may perceive that you are trying to cheat them and elect to do violence upon your person. Such difficulties, while not always inevitable, occur with some frequency. This may go far to explain why many merchants prefer to deal with the Djaffir, who – though conniving in their own right – are at least more placid of temperament than Orgovians."*

### *Magic & Religion*

The Orgovians once had a god, but no more. After the Great Disaster, they said their god had abandoned them, and so they returned the gesture. They know little or nothing of magic, which they regard with suspicion and distrust.

### *Worldview*

Orgovian clans travel far and wide, and have access to goods and commodities from many distant lands and strange places. They are canny traders and have a knack for obtaining rare merchandise that may be difficult to find elsewhere. Only by dealing in unusual and uncommon wares are Orgovians able to compete with the Djaffir merchant tribes, whose goods are generally of a more common and widely marketable sort.

Though suspicious by nature, Orgovians will deal with most anyone, provided they are offered fair value for their wares. They despise bandits and cheats, and routinely kill such individuals to trade their scalps and possessions for useful goods. The Orgovians are on good terms with the Yitek and Djaffir, both trusted trading associates. The Dracartans also enjoy good relations with these people, as do the Sindarans of the Nine Kingdoms; many Sindaran collectors maintain close friendships with Orgovian traders to obtain items that they wish to acquire.

# The Rahastrans

The Rahastrans are a tall and dark-skinned folk who carry about them an air of mystery and magic. They wear cloaks, gloves and long coats of blue fustian, and pendants of carved amethyst. Every Rahastran carries a deck of enchanted cards known as the Zodar.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Rahastrans are the direct descendants of a sect of cartomancers who once served the rulers of the ancient kingdom of Phandril. According to their legends, their people were banished after a Rahastran displeased the ruler of Phandril by giving an unfavorable reading regarding the future of the kingdom (the reading turned out to be accurate, as Phandril was destroyed during the Great Disaster). Since that time the Rahastrans have been wanderers, who give their allegiance to no government.

### *Language*

Rahastrans are fluent in both Low Talislan and old Archaen. Because they travel so extensively, many can pick up a smattering of other tongues along the way. Common names are highly individualistic, reflecting the eclectic tastes of the Rahastrans; examples include Rashir, Tarean, Dalusia, and Falusche.

## Fate in the Cards

*"The ability to foresee the coming of unfortunate or tragic events utilizing the Zodar is a burden carried by all Rahastrans, who are viewed by many Talislantans as harbingers of doom and ill fortune. Often shunned as loners and outsiders, it is not surprising that many Rahastrans become moody, somber, and withdrawn. So it is that the majority of these people rarely remain in one place for long, preferring to travel from place to place as dictated by the cards.*

*"To a Rahastran, the knowledge bestowed by the Zodar is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, they know that the cards may show them how to attain whatever they desire, whether it be riches, love, or influence. Some say that the power of the Zodar is addictive, and that this is the true nature of the Rahastrans' attachment to their cards. Yet weighing heavily on the mind of every Rahastran is the knowledge that the Zodar also holds the key to their fate, and that one day they will draw the card that foretells their death."*



### *Government*

Rahastrans consider themselves masters of their own fates, their actions influenced only by the cards of the Zodar deck – and even then, they consider the cards less an influence and more a viewport into the future, a way of learning the details of a situation they may not otherwise be aware of. They normally adhere to the laws of whatever land they are visiting to avoid unwanted attention.

Normally non-violent, Rahastrans will use their magic to defend themselves if left with no other alternative. Many Talislantans believe that it is bad luck to harm a Rahastran, and so give them a wide berth.

### *Culture*

Rahastrans are traveling seers who wander from place to place, earning a living as fortune-tellers or gamblers. It is the custom of these individuals to trust in the luck of the Zodar, an archaic and magical game employing a deck of twenty cards, each marked with a different arcane symbol. While Zodar is often thought of as a game of chance, the cards are most often used to divine the future, or to reveal a person's deepest thoughts and desires. In addition to supplying a livelihood, the Zodar guides virtually every aspect of a Rahastran's daily life. It is said that no Rahastran would ever make an important decision without first consulting the cards and reading the portents, nor would he or she take any action that the cards indicate to be unwise.

Rahastrans tend to be loners; there are no bands or tribes of Rahastrans, nor do they have any homeland. Some Talislantan scholars believe that there may be no more than a few hundred Rahastrans extant on the continent.

To the Rahastrans, life is an intricate game of chance. Most tend to be loners, though some can tolerate the company of a few trusted companions, at least for a time. Because they can predict the future, Rahastrans are regarded with mixed emotions by other Talislantans, who are fascinated with the Zodar, yet fearful of the secrets that the cards may reveal.

### *Magic & Religion*

For Rahastrans, the Zodar is religion, magic, art, and craft. They turn to the cards for spiritual guidance, and ascribe sentient virtues to their cards, which they claim are imbued with divinatory powers by the higher spirits. Able to foresee the means of their death in the cards, Rahastrans often prepare a will indicating how their possessions are to be divided among their chosen heirs and successors.

### *Worldview*

Rahastrans are deeply distrustful of the Aamanians, who in the past and present have persecuted and hunted their people as witches. Consequently, a Rahastran will never travel to Aaman unless such a trip is decreed by the cards. Generally speaking, Rahastrans regard most other peoples neither with animosity nor trust.

## The Xambrians

Xambrian Wizard Hunters are a race of loners about whom very little is known; though they are called "Xambrians", Wizard Hunters are in fact descended from a race of neomorphs created long ago in the time before The Great Disaster (see "Ancestry & History" below).

Xambrian Wizard Hunters stand up to six feet in height and are lean of build. They have bone-white skin, usually tattooed with black clan markings, and long, raven-black hair. The customary mode of dress includes a cape, high boots, vest, and breeches of black strider hide, with gauntlets of fine silver mesh.

### *Ancestry and History*

The strange folk who are known today as Xambrian Wizard Hunters are the descendants of a race of neomorphs called Warloks. Created long ago by the necromancers of Torquran, they were used to hunt down and assassinate rival wizards. The Torquar bred these Warlok wizard hunters to be highly resistant to magic, and imbued them with the innate ability to detect and dispel magic.

Warloks proved to be adept at hunting and killing wizards, until it was discovered that the neomorphs had a singular flaw: lacking a soul, Warloks proved to be susceptible to possession by spirits. It soon became evident that all Warloks had become possessed by the souls of a people known as the Xambrians - a peaceful folk of mystical sensibilities, who'd been exterminated some years before by the Torquar. Freed from their masters' control, these "Xambrian Wizard Hunters" (as they came to be known) turned on the Torquar, and helped bring down their dark empire.

The ancestors of those Wizard Hunters who survived The Great Disaster can still be found across Talislanta in the current age: a people without a country, protected yet haunted by the souls of the long-departed mystics of ancient Xambria.

### A Shadow Across the Soul

*Of all Talislantans perhaps none are so tortured in mind and spirit as Xambrian Wizard Hunters. Possessed by the souls of an ancient race of mystics who were eradicated by the necromancers of Torquaran, they are never truly at peace. For these folk, life holds little in the way of happiness or serenity.*

*Driven to seek justice for the terrible wrongs done to the Xambrian people no Wizard Hunter is free to pursue his or her aspirations. Marriage, raising a family, building a home, or even settling down in one place for any length of time are not possible. Traveling through hostile wilderness, spending weeks or even months completely alone, always waiting for the Calling but never knowing when it will come – this is the fate of all Xambrian Wizard Hunte, who are regarded with superstition and mistrust, by most Talislantans. It is no wonder then that some folks say of the Xambrians are a doom-haunted folk who bear a shadow across their souls.*

### *Language*

Most Xambrian Wizard Hunters speak Low Talislan and can read and converse in old Archaen. Common Xambrian names usually end with the suffix -an, a tradition among the families of old Xambria. For example: Javan, Xiran, Shian, Ishan, and Xian.

### *Government*

Wizard Hunters have no government, and recognize no law or authority. They owe allegiance to none, but can be compelled to serve the Xambrian spirits that possess them. This compulsion is known to Wizard Hunters as The Calling.



At any time, a Xambrian Wizard Hunter may receive "the calling" – a type of psychic summons from their spirit-guides, informing the Wizard Hunter that one of the enemies of the Xambrians has returned to Talislanta - typically in the form of a reincarnator, malevolent spirit capable of possessing and taking over the body of a living host. Once a Wizard Hunter has received the Calling, he or she will not rest until the Reincarnator has been tracked down and destroyed.

### *Culture*

Xambrian Wizard Hunters have no homeland, no clans, and no families. They do not marry and can mate only with other Xambrians; no other union will bear fruit.

When not driven by the Calling Xambrian Wizard Hunters will sometimes take work as Wilderlands guides, mercenary scouts, bounty hunters, or adventurers. They do so not because they covet riches or recognition, but so that they can survive and continue to serve the Xambrian spirits that both possess and protect them.

### *Magic & Religion*

Xambrian Wizard Hunters are not religious. Though they can read magical writings and possess innate abilities that may seem magical, they do not practice magic and are in fact highly resistant to all forms of magic (see Players Guide, Xambrian Wizard Hunter).

### *Worldview*

Xambrian Wizard Hunters owe allegiance to no king or nation. A grim and moody lot, they are regarded with suspicion by most Talislantans. Many regard them as cursed (see sidebar) and want nothing to do with them. Like their Warlok ancestors, Xambrian Wizard Hunters' regard for modern-day magic-users of any sort ranges from distrust to hatred.

# The Fallen City-State of Maruk

Built upon the ruins of an unknown civilization, the city-state of Maruk was originally a place of notable splendor. Many centuries ago, the city fell under a curse that manifested in various bizarre ways – plagues, famines, beseigement, and the like. Attempts were made to remedy the problem, but time and again, these efforts met with failure.

Maruk now lies in ruins, the city laid waste by the Wild Tribes during the Uprising. Its people – a dispirited, destitute, and ill-fortuned folk known as the Marukans – are now among the many Talislantans displaced by the Great Disaster, wars, and other catastrophes.

# The Marukans

Marukans have pale complexions, sunken eyes, and limp brown hair. Impoverished and downcast, they dress in tattered garments made of sackcloth and walk about with their eyes downcast.

### *Language*

Marukans are conversant in Low Talislan. Common male names include Merdmire, Marud, Merduk, and Marik. Female names end in the suffix -a, as in Merdmira, Maruda, Merduka, and Marika.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Marukan are descended from the ancient Numenians, a people whose lands were destroyed by the Great Disaster. The survivors sold salvage from the ruins, eventually earning enough to acquire a tract of land from the Hadjin, upon which they erected the city-state of Maruk. For a time, the Marukans prospered, selling food crops to Carantheum and the former city-states of Danuvia and Hadj, but some time afterward, a series of misfortunes beset them. Their crops failed, their animals died, and their people became dispirited. The Marukans continue to labor under this curse to the present day, the Uprising being just the latest in a long line of troubles to befall their people.

### *Culture*

Marukans are perhaps the most downtrodden and ill-aspected of all the Talislantan races. They suffer from an ancient curse that has brought ill fortune upon their heads. Considered harbingers of doom in many lands, Marukans are shunned as if they carried the plague. Fear of curses and

## The Talismancer's Art

*The Marukans are a people hounded by misfortune. To make their lives more bearable, they resort to the use of luck charms, or talismans. These devices are created by the talismancers of Maruk, who throughout many generations have devised a great number of magical charms, each suited to a particular ill or woe. The most common type by far is the standard luck talisman, an all-purpose item that is said to confer protection against most common forms of bad luck, misfortune, and mishap. This device, while certainly of practical utility and unquestioned efficacy, is by no means deemed sufficient to protect the wearer against the more severe forms of maledictions. For such purposes, talismancers recommend that their customers augment the standard luck talisman with additional charms, each designed to foil a specific malady, accident, or affliction. These include:*

*Talismans that protect the wearer from accidents – household accidents, accidents that occur outside the home, accidents involving vehicles, or accidents occurring during a particular month or year*

*Talismans to guard against fever, the ague, falling hair, dizziness, bloating, emaciation, wrinkles, or excessive body odor*

*Charms intended to ward against black magic, witchcraft, shamanism, diabolism, demonology, unclean spirits, vengeful ghosts, creatures of the night, invisible stalkers, or things that lurk in closets or under beds*

*Amulets that grant relief from curses, oaths, mordets, the Evil Eye, graven images, totems, fetishes, poison, wild animals of various sorts, noxious vermin, and so on.*

*For all the complexities of Marukan talismancy, even its most devout adherents do not claim that these devices are foolproof, nor do the Marukan talismancers guarantee that their creations confer even the most limited of beneficial effects. The reason for this, they say, is that the curse that follows the Marukans affects all things that they do, even the making of luck talismans themselves. Yet all agree that it is far better to wear such charms, cursed or not, than to risk the consequences of going without any protection at all.*

bad luck dominates what is left of Marukan culture, and consequently, the people have taken to wearing "luck talismans" of many types and descriptions (see sidebar).

The dispossessed Marukans of the current age are mainly forced to beg or sell minor talismans and charms to survive. More fortunate Marukans continue to work as dung-merchants, selling the refuse of herbivores as burnable fuel – many were forced to take on such base professions following the Great Disaster.



### *Government*

The government of Maruk collapsed after the fall of the city-state, and is no more. The displaced Marukans abide by the laws of whatever land they choose to eke out a living in at a given time.

### *Magic & Religion*

Marukans are superstitious folk who believe that their lives are controlled by the caprices of fate, luck, and omens. Hoping to change their fortunes, they seek the aid of talismancers – minor magicians who specialize in the making of luck medallions, charms, and other enchanted items (see sidebar). These individuals claim to be masters of talismancy, a field of magical study considered somewhat specious by other Talislantans.

### *Worldview*

Beset by misfortune and rendered homeless by the Uprising, Marukans hope and pray that their luck changes, and the gods of good fortune someday smile down upon their people as they once did in ancient times. So far, their pleas have gone unanswered.

Some believe that buried far below the ruins of Maruk are the remnants of the great city of Numenia. If true, these lost ruins may contain riches, artifacts, and secrets from the distant past. Would-be treasure-hunters are advised to be wary of the presence of Beastmen, whose packs now roam the areas in and around the ruins of the old city-state.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** Typical weather along the Borderlands is hot and windy. Extreme weather may take shape as brief but intense whirlwinds of dust and debris, or storms bearing no rain but lashing the ground with black lightning. |
| 2-3 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Encountering a dwelling might mean finding the ruins of an outpost or waystation built by the Nine Kingdoms, now abandoned or occupied by Za, Beastmen, or monsters using it as a lair (see encounter #6, 13, and 16). One might also encounter a Danelek settlement, which can include up to forty families living in huts fashioned from salt blocks. If in the hills, this encounter might mean spotting a cave entrance, which could lead into the network of tunnels beneath the region where the dreaded Enim like to lair. |
| 4 | 3 | **Water:** Finding drinkable water, particularly in the salt flats, is no easy task. An oasis, well, or spring will likely be considered part of a Za, Beastman, or Danelek tribe's territory and may be guarded. |
| 5 | 4 | **Roadway:** The Wilderlands Road runs through the Borderlands. This encounter might mean finding the Wilderlands Road itself, a trail leading to it, or some other track or trace, such as that made by Danelek cargo drays or a wild herd or pack (see encounter #9, 14, and 15). |
| 6 | 5 | **Traveler:** Since the Uprising, one will rarely find civilized folk traveling in the region. However, one may still meet, for example, a band of Bodor musicians being escorted by armed mercenaries, Orgovian traders mounted on lopers, a well-armed Djaffir caravan, a group of Aamanian pilgrims protected by warrior-priests, or even a Xambrian working as a guide for a group of treasure-seekers. |
| 7-8 | 6 | **Beastmen:** Small to large packs of Beastmen roam the region, stopping to make temporary camps. They seek caravans to raid and wild herds to hunt, but particularly enjoy tracking and killing civilized folk. |
| 9 | 7 | **Behemoth:** These gigantic predators usually hunt among the wild herds, but may charge wagons or other large, noisy conveyances. A charging behemoth often causes other creatures to run or stampede. |
| 10 | 8 | **Catdrac:** these feline-reptilian hybrids usually travel in prides of three or more individuals. They typically prey on smaller animals, and are generally not a threat to humanoids. Trained catdrac are prized as guard beasts, and can even be used as mounts by small or average-sized riders. |
| 11-12 | 9 | **Danelek:** An encounter with the Danelek can be precarious. They are more likely to ambush travelers than to barter with them or provide aid. An encounter could mean spotting them transporting salt crystals upon cargo drays, finding one of their settlements, or sighting one of their oases. |
| 13 | 10 | **Enim:** These Shaitan inhabit the tunnels beneath the Borderlands; some folk believe a portal to their realm lies below. An encounter with Enim is most likely to occur underground, but they have been known to come forth at night to wreak havoc on any creatures they come across. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | 11 | **Horned Devil-Man:** Often mistaken for a statue sitting atop a ruined tower or column, a horned devil-man is as likely to engage in conversation as it is to murder or rob travelers. If in a talkative mood, it may provide news of the area in exchange for an amusing tale or unusual food and drink. |
| 15 | 12 | **Satada:** Satada have many hidden, and often guarded, entrances to the Underground Highway throughout the Wilderlands. From these, they emerge to either trade captives to the Za, or hunt for more captives. An encounter could mean crossing paths with a small or large group, and it could mean spotting the Satada entering or exiting a concealed tunnel or pit. It might also mean coming upon escaped prisoners with the Satada on their trail, or being spotted and hunted by these malicious beings. |
| 16 | 13 | **Vasp:** These giant insectoids lair among ruins, sinkholes, and ravines, where they wait to leap upon unsuspecting victims. Using their keen night vision, they typically come forth under the light of the moons to hunt alone. |
| 17 | 14 | **Wild Herd:** Small to large herds of aht-ra, land lizards, durge, greymanes, mangonel lizards, and ogronts roam the scrub plains of the Borderlands, grazing upon tough grasses and stunted trees. Beastmen, Za, and predators hunt the herds, often causing tremendous stampedes. |
| 18 | 15 | **Wild Pack:** Large packs of lopers and lesser-sized packs of duadir and omnivrax stalk the region. While focused primarily upon the wild herds, they may attack travelers. |
| 19-20 | 16 | **Za Clan:** A Za clan may be a small scouting party, a large raiding party of up to five hundred individuals, or anywhere in between. They may also have one or more Kharakhan giants among them. The Za will likely be mounted on greymanes and may have carts pulled by land lizards. They may be at camp or on the move. If coming from a raid, they may have captives, gold, weapons, trade goods, beasts, and other valuables taken from their victims. |

# The Plains of Golarin

East beyond the Darklands of Urag lie the grassy steppes of the Plains of Golarin. It is a place of some mystery – the crumbling ruins of an unknown number of ancient civilizations litter the terrain, long abandoned by their makers and overgrown with weeds and creepers. Past inhabitants dead and forgotten, these territories are now home to the savage folk known as the Beastmen.

## The Beastmen

Though they are essentially humanoid in form, Beastmen have many features that are more reminiscent of creatures of the wild: coarse fur, fangs, pointed ears, and claws. They dress in crudely made boots and loincloths of animal hide, augmented with whatever items they can steal or scavenge from other peoples.



### *Ancestry and History*

Beastmen are believed to be descended from the Wild Races that once ranged throughout Talislanta before the coming of the Archaens. More specifically, some naturalists have theorized that Beastmen may be a degenerate subspecies of Jaka, though it is perhaps best not to say this to a Jaka, as the two races are not on friendly terms.

The Beastmen were among the Wild Tribes who attacked the independent city-states during the Uprising. While they have mainly honored the truce that was negotiated at the end of the war, few expect this situation to last forever.

### *Language*

Beastmen converse in sign, as well as a primitive version of Low Talislan punctuated with growls, yelps, and howls. Members of the Beastclans typically use fierce-sounding battle names, such as Red Claw, Long Tusk, Running Beast, Plains Stalker, Knife Hunter, and the like. Beastman clans will either be named after their chieftains, or the territories that they claim as their own.

### *Government*

The leader of any Beastman pack will always be its most dominant male member. Among the Beastfolk, the strongest rule – until they are deposed by younger, stronger individuals. Packs sometimes band together for raids or defense, but such alliances are usually of short duration, and the Beastmen do not know military tactics. Their talent lies in tracking, scouting, and laying ambushes against weaker opponents. The only law among these people is the law of survival.

### *Culture*

The Beastmen range the length and breadth of Golarin and beyond in heavily-armed packs; a single group can number from a half-dozen to several hundred individuals. They prey on caravans from the Nine Kingdoms, Carantheum, and the Western Lands, as well as smaller groups of travelers and would-be adventurers.

Beastmen packs are nomadic, stopping only to rest or make camp in the ruined cities that lie scattered across the plains. Some use the ruins as bases, from which they launch raids into the surrounding territories. Those who live among the ruins never build or maintain these facilities, but simply use whatever is at hand. Beastmen are not particular

## Hunting Men

*A handful of sentient creatures who inhabit the Talislantan continent, such as the Chana and Na-Ku, practice cannibalism, but only the race of Beastmen is known to hunt other humanoids for sport. The techniques vary from one tribe to another, but the favorite method of the Plains Riders is to simply chase prey and bring it to the ground. Mounted on darkmane steeds, the hunters will follow their quarry for miles, driving them onwards, wounding and harassing them, but not killing or maiming them outright, as this would ruin the "sport." Finally, when the victims are too exhausted to continue, the hunters close in and finish them off with bows or spears.*

*The pack known as the Long Manes prefer to attack from ambush. They are noted for setting up elaborate blinds, either in the tall grasses or in the low branches of densely-foliated trees. Blinds may also be set in the vicinity of a watering hole or ruined structure. Lures, such as a handful of gold or silver coins, are sometimes left to attract prey. Once the blind has been set, the hunters remain completely still until their prey approaches within bow range. As soon as the intended victims are within range, the hunters fire from hiding, then run forth to claim the kills.*

*The Red Fangs prefer trapping to hunting. A variety of traps are used, ranging from the small but deadly sickle-trap, which can maim a man or mount, to covered death pits, deadfalls, snares, and so on. The pack will usually set a line of traps through regions commonly traveled by traders or travelers, spacing the devices at intervals of up to a hundred yards or so. A few members of the clan will ride out to check the traps once or twice a day, to collect whatever has been caught.*

*Beastmen who engage in hunting or trapping of this sort seldom do so for food. Instead, it is the thrill of the hunt, and the kill, that motivates them. The best and most successful are known to exhibit their ghastly trophies like big game hunters, mounting the heads of their victims on poles or hanging them from the saddles of their darkmanes.*

concerning their eating habits, having an equal fondness for herd beasts, carrion, and luckless travelers. They are even known to break off whatever they are doing to feast on fallen opponents, carrion, or other types of food.

On the hunt, a pack of Beastmen may stalk prey for hours, singling out the slowest or weakest individuals in a group, herd, or pack. Once a target has been chosen, Beastmen pursue the victim relentlessly, harrying the victim until he or she becomes too weak from exhaustion to continue. Skilled trackers, Beastmen will never quit a blood trail. They sometimes set cruel snares in the hopes of trapping unwary prey, and have been known to hunt men for simple sport when food is plentiful (see sidebar).

### *Magic & Religion*

In ancient times, the wild races were said to worship a deity known as the Beast-God. Some think that the ancient Cult of the Beast may once again be on the rise. Though Beastmen sometimes grieve over the loss of a mate or companion, they have no burial customs. Instead, the dead are left where they fall, to be eaten by wild animals – or by the Beastmen themselves, if food is scarce.

The Beastmen know nothing of magic, which they regard with awe.

### *Worldview*

Beastmen usually have little loyalty even to their own packs, but occasionally have dealings with other wild races, such as the Za. Beastmen hate and fear the winged Gryphs of Tamaranth, who attack packs that venture too close to their territories.

Beastmen packs will sometimes barter for goods with others of their kind, or with peoples of similar interests, such as the Za. Coins are used when available, but may be treated as barter goods unless those involved in the transaction know the difference between various denominations.

# Places of Note

## The Watchstone

In the north-central region of Golarin stands the Watchstone, an immense pillar of grey basalt several miles in height. An age-worn stairway carved into the face of the Watchstone winds upward in a slow, twisting spiral. From the summit, it is said that one can see clear across Golarin. The Watchstone is considered a holy place by the Orthodoxists of Aaman, who claim that from this lofty height one may glimpse the gates of paradise. Ravengers favor the high elevations as well, primarily for purposes of preying on groups of rapturous and incautious Aamanian pilgrims. While the origins of the Watchstone remain uncertain, it is believed that this structure was created by the Drakken — a race of giant, intelligent reptilians who ruled the continent of Talislanta before the Archaen Age.



| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** Most days on the plains are hot and windy. When foul weather hits, it may come as polluted storms of acid rain blowing on a black wind from Urag to the west, or as cold but clean rainstorms from Narandu to the north. |
| 3-4 | 2 | **Dwelling:** This encounter likely means finding the ruins of an ancient civilization, which may be inhabited by Beastmen or other creatures (see below). If not inhabited, Beastmen may have set traps and snares here hoping to catch travelers. |
| 5-7 | 3 | **Tracks and Traces:** There are no roads on the plains. This encounter could mean finding the trails or traces of passing Beastmen mounted on darkmanes, or those of migrating herds of beasts. It might also mean finding the remains of a clash between predators and prey. |
| 8 | 4 | **Traveler:** Few civilized folk travel the Plains of Golarin. Even so, one could meet a group of Aamanian pilgrims protected by warrior-priests heading for the Watchstone, a Xambrian working as a Wilderlands guide for a group of treasure-seekers, a patrol of Gryph hunters from Tamaranth, or even an Ariane druas heading to or from the Maze-City of Atlan. |
| 9-10 | 5 | **Oddity:** The plains have a very long history with many mysteries half-buried upon it. Such mysteries might take the form of crypts, monoliths, sunken temples, or other structures or objects from an ancient civilization. |
| 11-13 | 6 | **Beastmen:** This pack may range in size from less than a dozen to several hundred. If not at camp, they are likely mounted on darkmanes and hoping to find a wild herd or travelers to attack. If a small pack of Beastmen, they may be checking their traps and snares, typically set in ruins and around sources of water. |
| 14 | 7 | **Ravenger:** These scavengers follow the wild herds and packs of Beastmen in search of scraps or easy prey. They may be very persistent, and have been known to follow travelers for days. |
| 15 | 8 | **Avir:** A species of drab, ground-nesting avir thrives on the grassy steppes due to the camouflaging colors of their wings. The sudden flight of a flock of avir is often a sign that wild beasts or riders approach. |
| 16 | 9 | **Malathrope:** These murderous predators prefer the night, but if hungry enough, will hunt during the day as well. Signs of a malathrope include partially eaten victims whose faces are frozen in fear, four-clawed tracks, unintelligible runes clawed into tree trunks or even stone, and echoes of hideous, mocking laughter. |
| 17 | 10 | **Morde:** Bat-winged scavengers thought to carry pestilence, morde nest in the stunted trees and ruins of the plains. An encounter with morde might mean spotting them circling in the sky above the remains of dead beasts or travelers. |
| 18-19 | 11 | **Wild Herd:** A variety of beasts feed upon the grasses and trees of the plains – land lizards, durge, greymanes, darkmanes, mangonel lizards, megalodonts, ogriphants, and ogronts. In turn, they are fed upon by packs of Beastmen and other predators. |
| 20 | 12 | **Behemoth:** These gigantic predators usually hunt among the wild herds, but may charge wagons or other large, noisy conveyances. A charging behemoth often causes other creatures to run or stampede. |

# The Kharakhan Wastes

To the northeast lie the Kharakhan Wastes, a region despoiled by firestorms and other unnatural phenomena during the time of the Great Disaster. The burnt and blackened ruins of Kharakhan, a city occupied in ancient times by the giant reptilians called the Drakken, stand here like massive tombstones, dismal monuments of a bygone era. Where once flowed mighty rivers, winding chasms now cut across the plains and lowlands. Giant land dragons graze on dry grasses, heedless of crag spiders and other noxious predators.

This place is now populated by the last of a giant folk called the Kharakhan, and by the insidious reptilian hybrids known as the Araq.

## The Kharakhan

Kharakhan are massive folk, averaging over twelve feet in height and weighing upwards of a thousand pounds. They have dusky grey-black skin and savage features, and wear their hair long and tied-back in a queue. Kharakhan dress in loincloths, sandals, and crude armor made from boiled land lizard hide.

### *Ancestry and History*

The Kharakhan are descended from a nameless tribe of Wild Folk who were extant during the latter part of the Archaen Age. It is believed that when the Great Disaster struck, the tribe was exposed to magical emanations, and suffered a mutation that caused them to grow quite large. Persecuted thereafter as freaks and misfits, they fled into the northern Wilderlands. They settled among the ruins of old Kharakhan, a place suited to their great size, and eventually came to be known as the Kharakhan giants, or simply the Kharakhan.

The Kharakhan joined the Uprising and were part of the force that laid siege to the city-state of Hadj. Following the truce, most returned to their home territories, though some joined the Za tribes and became raiders and bandits.

### *Culture*

The Kharakhan are hunter-gatherers who range throughout the northern Wilderlands territories in massive armored conveyances known as war wagons. Though the giants call the ruins their home, they are often on the move, hunting for food and useful salvage. Those who joined the Za may be encountered almost anywhere in the Wilderlands or Plains regions.

Though they are fearsome in battle, the Kharakhans' great size is both an advantage and a disadvantage. While their size affords them protection from lesser predators,



it also means that they cannot use tools and implements employed by humanoids of smaller stature, and so are forced to make most of what they require from raw materials. Kharakhan also require substantial amounts of food and water to survive, both of which are often in short supply in the regions that they have been forced to inhabit.

Kharakhan clans barter among themselves, exchanging tools, weapons, and raw materials like scrap metal, bone, and hide. Kharakhan will sometimes trade with peoples such as the Orgovians and Djaffir. Those who travel with the Za simply take whatever they need by force.

### *Language*

Kharakhan speak an ancient and obscure dialect of Low Talislan, which to the ears of civilized Talislantans makes them sound even more savage and unsophisticated than they are. They are also able to read Drakken-glyphs, a talent that appears to have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. Common Kharakhan names begin with the prefix Kha-, as in Kharun, Khatos, Kharos, Khamon, and Kharis.

### *Magic & Religion*

Kharakhan are said to revere one of the Forgotten Gods, Kron the Mighty. However, they have no magic and do not observe formal religious rituals of any known type.

### *Government*

Kharakhan respect wisdom, age, and experience. The eldest member of any band of Kharakhan is regarded as its nominal leader and is consulted when the tribe requires advice or guidance. These individuals are referred to as sages, for they know all the ancient lore of the Kharakhan race and are considered qualified to speak for the other members of the clan. The clan's sage is consulted whenever disputes arise. Most are settled amicably, though serious conflicts may be settled by a "duel." The contest may take the form of a wrestling match, or an event similar to a tug-of-war.

Kharakhan rely upon their size and heavily-armored war wagons to deter aggressors. They will fight if given no recourse, at which times they are known to exhibit great ferocity and bravery in battle.

### *Worldview*

The Kharakhan have no traditional enemies, though neither do they have many friends. Swifter, more numerous creatures have taken over the territories that they once called home. Some say it was an easy decision for the Kharakhan to join the Uprising, for their people were otherwise headed towards extinction, and had nothing to lose.

## The Araq

Araq are reptilian humanoids whose features primarily resemble those of a serpent; they have scaly brown hide and a singular dorsal crest that runs from the peak of the forehead to the base of the neck. Araq dress in arm wrappings, boots, and loincloths of land dragon hide.

### Trapping Land Dragons

*The decrease in the land dragon population can be attributed to a single cause: the Araq. Ranging throughout the northern regions of the Volcanic Hills, bands of Araq scour the lava flows for land dragon eggs, which they destroy and devour. They hunt immature newts and set immense traps in areas where the mature adults come to graze on wireweed and sedge. These devices are equipped with scything blades and poisoned spikes and are designed to maim their victims. Once a land dragon has been injured, Araq hunting parties will pursue and harass the giant creature until it is exhausted and can no longer defend itself. Then they set upon the victim in numbers, stripping their prey of its horn, claws, bone, and hide. The dragon's soft inner parts are consumed; the rest is often left to rot.*

*The wanton hunting of eggs, newts, and adults has reduced the land dragon population to such an extent that it has impacted on the local environment. The most evident effect has been an increase in the number of raknid colonies throughout the region (land dragons normally keep the raknid population in check by digging up the insectoids' nests and feeding upon their larvae). The Sauran tribes, who use trained land dragons as beasts of burden and in combat, are so concerned that the land dragon may become extinct that they have taken to going out of their way to hunt and kill entire bands of Araq.*

### *Ancestry and History*

Araq are hybrids of Sauran and an unknown humanoid ancestor, created long ago by an Archaen sorcerer whose name has since been forgotten. Turning upon their creator, the Araq escaped into the Wilderlands, where they have remained ever since.



### *Culture*

Araq roam the wilderlands in small war bands, preying upon all creatures that cross their path. They have hunted the land dragon almost to the point of extinction, utilizing the horn, bones, and hide of these massive creatures to make their weapons and equipment (see sidebar).

Being Sauran and humanoid, Araq display the worst traits of both. They are extremely aggressive and have a taste for humanoid flesh. From the races of men, the Araq have inherited greed, lust, dishonesty, and a propensity towards fits of unconscionable and murderous behavior. Araq are aware that they are not natural life forms and despise themselves as much as they do other creatures; this self-hatred may be at the root of the highly aggressive and violent behavior they exhibit. Only through conscious effort are Araq able to restrain their murderous impulses.

Araq require little food or water to sustain themselves and can survive for up to six weeks without either. Their brown hide renders them completely immune to the effects of Talislanta's twin suns, and their dorsal membranes act as effective regulators of body temperature.

### *Language*

Araq converse in a mixture of Talislan and Sauran. They rarely assign proper names among themselves, and usually differentiate only between "yours." If more specific information is required, they may point ("You!") or use descriptions such as "man with hair like rotten wood," "Jaka who smells vile," and so on.

### *Government*

Araq recognize no authority and have no leaders. Bands tend to be loosely organized at best; individuals come and go as they please. Arguments and violent exchanges among members of the same band are common, and murder is not given a second thought.

### *Magic & Religion*

Araq are atheists. They despise magic, which they blame for their creation, and bear a special hatred for spellcasters of all sorts. Araq eat their dead, just as they will eat almost anything else.

### *Worldview*

Araq mark all other creatures as hated foes. They have no relations with other peoples and are widely despised by most Talislantans. Araq are instinctively territorial; bands seem to arbitrarily designate a region as "theirs," and attack all other creatures that trespass into these places. When a band can no longer find sufficient food in one region, it simply moves to another. Their wars with certain of the Sauran tribes of the neighboring Volcanic Hills have at least served the useful purpose of keeping the population of both races in check.

The Araq never joined in the Uprising, as they despise all other humanoids and mark them as enemies. Instead, they preyed on any who came too close to their territories without regard for whom they fought for.

# The Plaguelands

North of the ruined city-state of Maruk, this cracked and barren plain was laid waste centuries ago by some unknown catastrophe, possibly in conjunction with the Great Disaster. It is a widely-held belief that any living thing that passes through the Plaguelands will be changed or transformed in some unpredictable manner, and consequently, few intelligent creatures willingly venture into this region.

## Omen

This cursed place is avoided by most Talislantans. In ancient times, Torquaran executioners erected at Omen a mountain of skulls, representing untold numbers of their victims. The mountain stands to the present day, and is sometimes visited by descendants of the victims, the Xambrians, who seek to commune with their ancestors.

## Noman's Land

This narrow strip of wasteland separates the forests of Tamaranth from the Shadow Realm. It is believed to be haunted by shadowy creatures from the Nightmare Dimension, a place ruled by an entity known as Noman. The region is generally shunned by decent folk, though practitioners of black magic sometimes come here to study the phenomenon known as Mordante's Gate – a permanent magical portal that is believed to be an entrance into the Nightmare realms.

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Extreme Weather:** One should expect oppressively hot and dry weather in the wastes. In extreme cases, a ghost wind may blow from the Shadow Realms to the north, or smoke and ash may drift across the sky from the Volcanic Hills to the east. |
| 2-3 | 2 | **Dwelling:** Both the Araq and Kharakhan live as nomads, but this encounter might mean finding one of their camps. The Kharakhan may camp among the immense pillars, monuments, and other remains of the blasted city of Kharakhan, but they do not consider it their home. |
| 4 | 3 | **Water:** Fresh water is scarce in the wastes; the Araq and Kharakhan know where to find it. The Kharakhan cap wells with giant metal discs to protect the precious water within. This encounter could mean finding such a well, or a natural spring or pool. |

| d20 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 5-7 | 4 | **Tracks and Traces:** No real roads run through the Wastes anymore. This encounter could mean finding trails or traces of passing Kharakhan war wagons, Araq mounted on duadir, or migrating herds of land lizards and other beasts. It could be the site where an Araq trap has been tripped, injuring a land dragon whose blood trail might be followed. |
| 8 | 5 | **Traveler:** Rarely do travelers venture here. Because some Kharakhan have trade ties with Orgovians and Djaffir, one might encounter Orgovian traders mounted on lopers, or a well-armed Djaffir caravan. Those seeking knowledge of black magic may pass through on their way to seek Mordante's Gate within the region called Noman's Land. |
| 9 | 6 | **Oddity:** The ruins of Kharakhan still hold many mysteries. One might find relics from the age of the Drakken, like discs of great size made from strange metal, or hidden openings into buried vaults and chambers of immense size. |
| 10-12 | 7 | **Araq:** Always hating and always hunting, Araq fear nothing as they wander the wastelands in small bands upon their duadir mounts. Avoiding them is strongly advised. |
| 13 | 8 | **Crag Spider:** These giant arachnids lair in the chasms, ruins, and caves of the region, where they await those unfortunate enough to become stuck in their webs. |
| 14-16 | 9 | **Kharakhan:** These clans move about the wastes in huge armored war wagons. Though suspicious of travelers, an encounter with the Kharakhan need not always begin in conflict. Some clans trade with merchants from other lands and may be keen to trade with travelers. |
| 17 | 10 | **Land Dragon:** These giant reptilians roam the wastes in dwindling numbers, as they are the Araqs' favored prey. An encounter could mean feeling the rumbling approach and seeing the enormous creature in the distance, hearing the mournful cries of a land dragon maimed by one of the Araqs' cruel traps, or observing an Araq clan battling one. |
| 18 | 11 | **Depredators:** These predators fly over the wastes at night, looking for easy prey. Small parties, lost or foolhardy individuals, and wounded creatures or travelers are especially favored. A depredator may carry a victim many miles before alighting to feed. |
| 19 | 12 | **Wild Herd:** Land lizards, durge, greymanes, megalodonts, and ogronts migrant through the wastes and graze upon the dry grasses and gnarled trees of the region. Araq, Kharakhan, and packs of predators hunt these herds. Araq riding duadir are known to stampede herds into pits, chasms, or over cliffs. |
| 20 | 13 | **Wild Pack:** Predators of the region may hunt in packs of various sizes. Loper and duadir packs may range in size from a few to fifty or more, while omnivrax are usually encountered alone. Striders typically hunt in mated pairs. These predators follow the wild herds, but may attack travelers who are not well-defended. |

# The Banditlands

Bordered to the west by the Red Desert and the east by the Volcanic Hills, the Banditlands are among the most hostile territories in all the Wilderlands. This land of arid hills and scorched dust flats is the bane of merchants and travelers alike, who must suffer the depredations of desert kra, manrak, and depredators. The rugged peaks of the Zaran Mountains serve as hiding places for the savage bandit tribes known collectively as the Za.

## The Za

The Za are lean and muscular, most standing at or just under six feet in height. Their skin is a pallid yellow in hue, leathery in texture, and lined with creases and wrinkles. Za shave their skulls and forgo all but the most abbreviated attire. Necklaces of hammered black-iron disks are favored, as are bands of reptile hide worn on the head and upper arms. Males generally wear long, braided mustaches; females, two long braids, one above each ear.



### *Ancestry and History*

The Za believe that all the indigenous peoples of Talislanta are descended from a single race: the Wild Folk. In ancient times vast tribes of Wild Folk held sway over the entire continent, and once fought the ancient Archaens to a standstill. Divided by war, pestilence, and finally the Great Disaster, the Wild Folk split into numerous smaller groups and factions. The Za claim to be the largest such group.

The Za played a major role in the Uprising, which they viewed as an opportunity to reclaim the territories once dominated by their ancestors: the Wilderlands of Zaran. Though the Uprising ended in a stalemate, the Za and a handful of Beastmen tribes succeeded in taking the former city-state of Danuvia. The old walled city is now held by the Za, who call this place Zaran.

### *Language*

Most Za are conversant in both Low Talislan and sign. Common names are usually constructed of two syllables and start with the prefix Za-. For example: Zai, Zakai, Zakhan, Zaiyan, and Zahai.

### *Government*

Za bandit clans are led by a chieftain – an individual who, by dint of his prowess in battle and cunning, has shown himself to be the strongest leader. The chieftain will continue to hold this position until it is taken from him by force or guile. Za laws are simple and direct: obey the band's chieftain or be prepared to usurp his power.

During the Uprising, many Za fell under the sway of the Baratus, whose leader bore the name of their legendary chieftain from ancient times: the Tirshata. Though the Baratus departed the continent of Talislanta after the war ended in a truce, many Za remain loyal to the Tirshata, and wait patiently for his return

### *Magic & Religion*

The Za have no religion or god. They know nothing of magic, and generally fear and despise spellcasters of all sorts.

### *Culture*

Originally known as a race of nomadic bandits who ranged far and wide throughout much of central Talislanta, Za remain the bane of the Wilderlands of Zaran. Many of their clans continue to roam the Wilderlands; others use Zaran as a stronghold, and a place to store, sell, or trade stolen goods, slaves, and other contraband (see "Zaran" below).

Za clans range in size, from small scouting parties to great raiding bands of as many as five hundred individuals. They prey upon merchant caravans, land-arks, and travelers of all races. Za carry their possessions with them on the backs of their mounts and in carts drawn by older greymanes or land lizards. Contending that the Wilderlands region rightfully belongs to them, Za rationalize that they are justified in robbing and murdering any who trespass in "their" territory.

Za are fierce and cruel, seldom taking prisoners. Exceptionally valorous foes are sometimes accorded the dubious honor of being taken alive, so that they may later be slain ritually. The Za drink the blood of these vanquished enemies from skull-cups, believing that this gives them the strength of their foes. Za are sensitive to insults and have long tempers (see sidebar).

Though Za get most of what they need in the way of weapons, tools, and implements by raiding, their craftsmen exhibit no lack of native talent. Their skills include decorative metalworking, tanning and preserving hides, and carving wood, bone, and stone.

Za clans trade among each other often, exchanging stolen goods, food, and weapons. Barter is used among the tribes, as are foreign currencies of various types and denominations. Za sometimes trade with other wild tribes such as the Danelek, Orgovians, Beastmen, and Kharakhan.

### *Worldview*

Most of the civilized peoples of Talislanta regard the Za and the other wild races as mere savages – "sub-men" is the term used by many. There is considerable prejudice against these people, about whom most civilized Talislantans are generally ignorant. Hatred of the Za has become even more widespread after they took the old city-state of Danuvia and massacred its entire male population, effectively ending the Danuvian race. For this reason, Danuvians will attack Za on sight, gladly risking their own lives for any chance to avenge the death of their people.

## Blood for Blood

*The Za are a grim and unforgiving folk who will never forget a wrong or turn their backs on an insult. The offended party is expected to seek retribution, or else suffer the loss of face and esteem. To signify the intent to seek revenge, a Za will say the words, "blood for blood." Among the Za this phrase is considered a solemn oath – an unbreakable pledge that the injured party will not rest until the insult has been avenged, in equal or greater kind. With these three words, the Za is thereafter committed to a blood feud, which by Za law cannot be settled until blood has been spilled.*

*A blood feud may exist between individuals, families, or entire tribes. It may last a few moments or may be passed down from one generation to the next, until the terms of the pledge have been fulfilled. A blood feud need not result in the death of the offending party to be satisfied, though this is often the case, as matters tend to get more heated the longer an unsettled feud drags on. Because the injured party is entitled by Za law to seek redress, the offender may not launch a blood feud of his or her own in response. Once matters have been settled, the feud is considered over and done with.*

*The longest-running and greatest blood feud on record is that between the Za and the Archaens, which is said to have begun soon after the onset of the Great Disaster. According to the Za, the call of "blood for blood" was spoken when the ancient Archaens broke a part of their truce with the Za's ancestors – as part of a conjoined effort of the two peoples in their war against the former rulers of the continent, the Drakken, the Za had been ceded the rights to the continent of Talislanta, and in return, the Archaens were ceded the rights to the skies above Talislanta. After the war, however, a few sects of Archaens settled on the surface, in remote territories that had been promised to the Wild Tribes. This led to a series of hostilities between the two sides, culminating in the first Beast Wars.*

*The Za have yet to avenge this affront, which took place over a thousand years ago, in a way they consider justice, but it has not been forgotten.*

# Zaran

Zaran is a walled stronghold built on the ruins of the capital of the city-state of Danuvia, which was overrun by the Za tribes during the Uprising. Since then, the place has become infamous as a den of thieves, a center of illicit trade, and a base of operations for Za raiders.

The stronghold of Zaran is controlled by three of the largest Za tribes, each of which holds a different part of the old city. Though the three work together to guard the city from potential attackers, conflicts between the rival tribes are common and are known to lead to violence.

Many of the Wild Tribes come to Zaran to barter for goods and weapons, as do thieves, spies, assassins, and cutthroats from across the continent – and, some say, the occasional Baratus windship. Other traders known to frequent the stronghold include Farad slave-mongers, Ferran thieves, Yitek tomb-robbers, and small bands of Orgovians. Needless to say, Zaran is a dangerous and lawless place, and folk from civilized lands come here only at risk of their lives.



| d100 | # | Encounter |
|---|---|---|
| 01-10 | 1 | **Wreckage:** The wreckage or remains of a caravan, tribe, pack, or other group. The remains may be recent, and may include still-smoldering cargo drays, wounded or dead beasts and humanoids, or, rarely, a scattering of coins or other valuables that were somehow missed by others. If not-so-recent, all that may be left are the charred hulks of cargo drays and the bleached bones of those who were slain. The source of the attack may or may not be evident. |
| 11-20 | 2 | **Recent Passage:** Tracks or other traces may evince creatures who passed by, either recently or some time ago. These may include caravans, riders, drays, Beastmen, or the tracks of carnivores such as behemoths, or more insidious creatures like exomorphs, malathropes, and Cthonian sand demons. |
| 21-30 | 3 | **Returning Za Bandits:** A large or small contingent of Za bandits, might be returning to Zaran from a raid. With them may be prisoners that they plan to sell into slavery; gold, weapons, trade goods, steeds, or other valuables taken in a raid on a caravan or merchant tribe; magic or alchemical wares stolen from a Pharesian peddler or other trader; artifacts or treasure stolen from Yitek tomb-robbers; one or more important hostages taken for ransom; or perhaps someone the PCs know. |
| 31-40 | 4 | **Leaving Za Bandits:** A large or small contingent of Za bandits might be about to leave Zaran for some other destination. They may be planning to attack one of their enemies; heading out to launch a raid on a nearby settlement, caravan, a tribe or merchants, or some other target that they hope will be laden with valuables. They may be hunting for escaped slaves or others who are wanted by the Za or one of the Za's clients (such as the Farad). They may be planning to meet with other Wild Tribes to discuss joint raids. |
| 41-45 | 5 | **Farad Caravan:** A large or medium-sized Farad caravan might be heading to or from Zaran. The caravan will include a contingent of guards (typically Za or Farad) large enough to protect it, at least half of which will be mounted on equs (Za) or aht-ra (Farad), plus a number of cargo drays and burden beasts. If it is a slave caravan, female and very young slaves may be transported in cages strapped to the beds of the drays; male slaves will typically be chained together at the waist and made to walk behind the burden beasts. Caravans may also carry quantities of food (dried meats and fruits), weapons, shields, iron ingots, bolts of cloth, articles of clothing, and occasionally, chests of silver, gold, or gems. |
| 46-55 | 6 | **Beastmen:** A large or small pack of Beastmen heading to or from Zaran. If hungry and in large enough numbers, they may regard any smaller, weaker-looking groups or individuals as potential food, and attack. If hungry but not strong enough to outnumber potential targets, they may follow in the hope of meeting up with another pack of Beastmen, in which case the two packs will parlay briefly; if they can agree how to split the "spoils," they will attack. If not, they may fight each other. |
| 56-60 | 7 | **Orgovian Traders:** Mounted on lopers, heading to or from Zaran, likely carrying a mix of trade goods and found items. They will be well-armed and will fight if threatened in any way; their lopers fight with them, and are also very fierce. If approached with respect and offered gifts of some value, they will agree to barter. Orgovians have very little interest in small talk, however, and may become irritable if they believe that others are wasting their time. Approaching them with coins is a sure way to start a fight. |
| 61-65 | 8 | **Bandit City Patrol:** Small or medium-sized contingents patrol the bandit city of Zaran. Typically these contain a mix of Za and Beastmen trackers, though such groups may also include mercenary types such as Jhangarans. The Za will usually be mounted on equs; the beastmen will typically be on foot. Patrols of this sort are generally not well-organized or even highly motivated; most only do such duty because they are forced into it by their superiors. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 66-70 | 9 | **Yitek Tomb-Robbers:** A medium-sized band of Yitek tomb-robbers, mounted on aht-ra and accompanied by armed mercenaries hired to protect them, might be headed to or from Zaran. If heading to the city, they will usually be carrying curios, salvage, and artifacts exhumed from one of the many tombs or ruins in the region; if conveying heavy cargo, the group will include either burden beasts or cargo drays. If departing Zaran, the band will be carrying whatever amount of silver or gold they made from selling their wares. |
| 71-75 | 10 | **Satada:** A small to large clan of Satada might be heading to or from Zaran; they may be seen emerging from an underground cave or passage, or headed towards a pit or tunnel that leads to the Underground Highway. If heading to Zaran, they will typically be delivering slaves, hoping to trade them for iron weapons. If leaving Zaran, the bands will usually be better-armed than usual, and may be looking for a chance to use their new iron weapons on someone. |
| 76-78 | 11 | **Danelek Salt-Miners:** A small or large caravan of Danelek salt-miners might be seen heading to or from Zaran, in heavy cargo drays loaded with massive salt crystals, and drawn by teams of land lizards. They are always alert to danger, and respond aggressively if approached in any manner that they might deem threatening. Danelek trade salt for iron tools, weapons, and other goods, and rarely for coin, if ever. |
| 79-80 | 12 | **Marukan Dung Merchants:** A small or medium-sized family of Marukan dung merchants might be seen mounted on large cargo drays pulled by burden beasts. If heading to the city, the drays will usually be loaded with dried beast-dung, which Marukans and others burn as a source of fuel. If heading away from Zaran, the drays will be empty, and the Marukans will be carrying the few coins or goods that they've been able to trade for their dung. Many Talislantans consider Marukans to be bad luck, and so avoid them. Others are just repelled by the smell of the dung wagons and the Marukans who drive them. |
| 81-82 | 13 | **Caravan-Bugs:** A large or medium-sized band of caravan-bugs, heading to or from Zaran, where many of these tiny creatures have established trading colonies. Most humanoid-sized people barely take notice of these insects as their long caravans travel across (and sometimes below) the arid terrain. Caravan-bugs are generally friendly, and are surprisingly knowledgeable about what is going on in the territories they've visited in their travels. |
| 83-90 | 14 | **Morde:** These winged scavengers abound in and around Zaran, where they come to feed on refuse, the picked-over leavings of Beastmen, and corpses of all sorts. They will usually be too busy feeding or looking for food to bother with other creatures, and if threatened will usually just fly away, squawking and cursing loudly as they go. |
| 91-94 | 15 | **Megalodonts:** Small or large herds of wild megalodonts are sometimes found in the vicinity of the city. The appearance of a small herd may attract hunters from inside or around Zaran, who attempt to kill these massive creatures for food, hide, and horn. The appearance of a very large herd will cause most sensible folk to run for cover, as a large number of megalodonts can be extremely dangerous should the herd stampede for any reason. |
| 95-98 | 16 | **Behemoths:** Behemoths hunt in the region for large creatures to eat, such as burden beasts, land lizards, or even young megalodonts. Their arrival in an area can often cause other wild creatures to run or stampede; even trained beasts may be hard to control if they see or detect the scent of these huge and fierce carnivores. About the only creatures that won't run from a behemoth are mangonel lizards, who aren't afraid of anything, and land dragons, who are large enough to eat behemoths. |
| 99 | 17 | **Land Kra:** These massive serpentine creatures burrow underground, and are attracted to vibration and sound on the surface. If detecting potential prey, they burst upwards from the ground, attempting to grasp creatures in their jaws and drag them below the surface to feed. |
| 00 | 18 | **Spirits of the dead:** Haunted spirits, shadowights, and even mirajans can be found in this region. |

# The Labyrinths of Sharna

To the south of Carantheum stand several maze-like structures of certifiable antiquity, which scholars attribute to the Sharna, a long-dead race of whom little is known. Artifacts from the Sharna labyrinths are highly valued as curios and collectibles, if for no discernible reason other than their avowed scarcity. In truth, the Sharna appear to have had an uncommon talent for creating items of the most tasteless and unaesthetic sort. Though the ruins are deserted, the surrounding territories are home to a race of furred folk known as Ferrans.

## The Ferrans

Ferrans are rodent-faced humanoids of short stature. Their bodies are covered with a coat of dirty brown fur, and they dress in scavenged bits of clothing and gear.

### *Ancestry and History*

Ferrans are believed to be descended from the Jaka or Beastmen. During the Great Disaster, their ancestors hid in underground tunnels and burrows to avoid the destruction. Eventually, they adapted to their subterranean surroundings, smaller and more agile forms being best suited to movement underground.

Ferrans did not take part in the Uprising, though they did their best to steal from both sides as the opportunity arose.

### *Culture*

Ferrans live in underground, maze-like warrens comprised of narrow tunnels, pits, shafts, and peepholes. Compact in size, with excellent night vision and keen senses, Ferrans navigate such places with ease. Ferrans congregate in groups called packs, which may range in size from well over a hundred individuals to just a dozen or so. The packs come forth at night to scrounge for food or to rob unwary travelers of their possessions, taking stolen goods back to their lairs and hiding themin deep holes. Ferrans will eat practically anything except carrion; what others regard as garbage may well be considered a feast by Ferran standards.

Ferrans are virtual packrats who hoard items of all sorts. Every male has his hide-hole, in which he keeps his most prized possessions – much of it useless junk by the standards of other folks, but every piece a precious treasure to a Ferran. Scavengers by trade and preference, a Ferran will not acquire by honest means anything that he or she can steal — however, the preferred term for such activities is "finding."

Ferrans avoid direct conflict whenever possible, preferring instead to utilize stealth, speed, and the element of surprise. If attacked, they are capable of releasing a noxious scent that most creatures find repulsive.

### *Language*

Ferrans speak a crude version of Low Talislan. Common names end with a double X, K, or Z, as in Pixx, Firzz, Shizz, Fezz, and Dworkk.



### *Government*

Ferran packs are led by a pack leader; typically, a male who has shown that he has a real nose for scavenging and pilfering and has amassed a rich horde of "treasure." Pack leaders plan thieving raids, allocate loot, and also attract the most coveted females. If a Ferran is not pulling his or her weight, the pack leader may expel the culprit from the pack. Such as loss of face can only be remedied by performing some heroic act of theft or scavenging.

Ferran lairs have hidden entrances, pits, mazes of tunnels, and secret passageways to increase their defensibility. A pack may sometimes have to fight off rival packs from neighboring areas that encroach upon their territories. To the Ferrans, the wider the territory, the greater the opportunities for "finding" loot.

### *Magic & Religion*

Ferrans have no talent for magic and lack any interest in the concept of religion. "Finding," and acquiring, a mass of loot is all that matters to these folk. Ferrans bury their dead above ground, covering the body with stones and debris after dividing up the deceased's possessions.

### *Worldview*

Ferrans have no allies, nor any formal relations with other nations or peoples. Their packs are found throughout the Wilderlands region, and to a lesser extent, in the Western Lands. Ferrans sometimes travel to other countries, where they may operate as thieves, spies, and adventurers. They are seldom welcome in civilized lands, for the Ferran scent is considered offensive by most other races.

Ferrans packs sometimes trade among each other, though such activities are rare due to territorial rivalries and the biological imperative to scavenge.

## The Library at Jalaad

The crumbling ruins of the ancient city of Jaalad are located near the Zaran Mountains, in the Wilderlands of Zaran. Though the ancient city has long since been stripped of most of its hidden treasures by generations of Yitek tomb-robbers and Za bandits, the Library at Jalaad remains intact. This is primarily due to the efforts of a cabal of cryptomancers known as the Callidians, who have endeavored to protect the facility's store of iron tablets since the time of the Great Disaster.

## The Callidians

Tall and frail in stature, the Callidians have skin that is deep orange in hue. They dress in starched headdresses and robes of yellow linen, and walk with a slow and stately gait.

### *Ancestry and History*

Callidians are direct descendants of a sect of magician-scholars who once lived in the city of Jaalad. They can trace their ancestry and history back over a thousand years, to the time before the Great Disaster.

Jalaad was attacked by Beastmen during the Uprising, but the Library's defenses proved too strong, and the assault repelled (see "Government," below).

### *Language*

Callidians possess the ability to comprehend and converse in almost all languages. They are experts at analyzing and deciphering all types of written works, including ancient texts and charts. Common names have archaic sound, such as Callidius, Cronus, Galius, Hiberius, and Malius.

### *Magic & Religion*

Except as pertains to its role in history, foreign cultures, and mythology, Callidians have little interest in matters of religion. They are skilled in cryptomancy, a field of magic that has numerous practical applications to these folk. The passing of a Callidian is a most solemn event, and the funeral is attended by all members of the cabal. The deceased is laid to rest along with his or her ancestors in an underground crypt located far beneath the Library of Jalaad.

### *Culture*

The Callidians have helped preserve and maintain the Library of Jalaad since the time of the Great Disaster. They

are the keepers of a purportedly vast archive of ancient lore, recorded on stone and metal tablets, faded scrolls, texts, and enchanted orbs. It is believed that perhaps as many as two hundred Callidians live in Jalaad, forming an insular and largely self-sustaining community. Their people live inside the Library, in quarters set aside expressly for their purposes. They are assisted by Monads, who tend the gardens where tubers and provender plants are grown under ancient orbs of illumination.

Callidians are serious and studious by nature. They prefer to spend their time reading and are normally averse to frivolous behavior. Every Callidian specializes in least one field of knowledge and may have familiarity with many minor fields, as well. Though rich in wisdom and lore, Callidian society is essentially stagnant, and has remained unchanged for over a thousand years.

### *Government*

Callidian government is organized like a lyceum or institute. At the head of their scholarly hierarchy is the Scholar Emeritus, followed by sages and sophistes of varying degree. Disputes are adjudicated by debate; problems are examined intellectually, researched thoroughly, and solutions devised based on precedence and Callidian traditions. The Scholar Emeritus has the final say in all such issues, though he or she will seldom rule against precedence and tradition.

The Library at Jalaad is fortified with strong outer walls and massive iron gates, both of which are protected by ancient wards and symbols of great power. The Callidians deal sternly with looters and vandals and possess magics and artifacts capable of repelling even the most hostile invaders. So effective are these defenses that Jalaad has withstood the assaults of bandits, vandals, and even hostile armies for many centuries.

### *Worldview*

Shut within the Library, the Callidians have little contact with the outside world. They sometimes deal with Orgovian traders, from whom they purchase certain rare herbs and mixtures. In return, the Callidians translate writings or identify artifacts that the Orgovians find unfamiliar. On rare occasions, scholars from other lands come here to do research; Callidians require no payment for such services, which they view as an obligation to the people of Talislanta. However, donations are gratefully accepted.



# Places of Note

## The Old City of Ashann

The shattered ruins of the Old City of Ashann consist of seven concentric rings, the outermost of which encompasses an area approximately two miles in diameter. Desert scouts from nearby Carantheum claim that the region is largely uninhabited save for sand demons, depredators, and the mysterious beings known only as the Wanderers of Ashann – tall, shrouded figures, who can sometimes be glimpsed walking among the ruins, and who some believe are descended from an ancient and reclusive race known as the Withen.

Each of the Wanderers carries a staff inscribed with a curious symbol: a staring orb, set in the center of a silver pentacle. Some believe that the Wanderers are blind and can only see using these staves. What the Wanderers are searching for remains unknown.



# Aberrant Weather Conditions

The Great Disaster of ancient times wreaked havoc with the Talislantan environment, causing drastic changes in the climate and ecology of such regions as the Sinking Land, the Wilderlands of Zaran, the Wastelands of Kharakhan, and other areas. Clouds of toxic smoke, alchemically active fumes, and magically irradiated dust particles dispersed into the upper atmosphere as a result of this cataclysmic event continue to affect weather conditions throughout many parts of the continent. The most common of these meteorological anomalies include:

**Acid Rain:** A yellowish rain with caustic properties, believed to be caused by clouds of corrosive gasses commingling with ordinary rain clouds in the upper atmosphere. Acid rain withers plants, discolors stone, causes non-magical metals to become pitted, and does 1 point of damage per round to organic substances (wood, cloth, hide, etc.) and unprotected living creatures. The duration of an acid rainfall is generally one to twenty (d20) rounds.

**Black Lightning:** Black lightning is comprised not of electrical energy, but of arcane energy. Its cause remains unknown; certain Talislantan aeromancers have theorized that this uncommon effect occurs in regions where a black wind (see below) has dispersed, investing the surrounding area with unstable magical energies. A dark, swift-moving thundercloud is often the only warning that such a storm is about to occur. A "rain" of black lightning may last up to ten (d10) rounds, producing bolts of varying power (d10 x 6 points of damage). There is a 50% chance each round that a creature or object in the affected area will be struck; objects or creatures at higher elevations are most likely to be struck, as are individuals carrying magic items or enchanted weapons and armor; black lightning is attracted to magic items as ordinary lightning is to metal.

**Black Wind:** A dark, swift-moving cloud of unnatural vapors, charged with accumulated magical energies. The effects of a black wind are unpredictable: instances of random metamorphosis, transmutation, changes in skin tone or bodily height, toxic contamination, and various cursed maledictions have all been reported. Similarly, the duration of a black wind's effects is often impossible to predict. Black winds seem to originate in areas where vast amounts of magical energy have been unleashed, either all at once or over the course of time. As black winds are magical in nature, the effects of these strange phenomena can usually be neutralized by the use of countermagics.

**Ghost Wind:** A chilling wind believed to blow forth from the spirit realms, emanating from the countless ruined cities, graveyards, and battlegrounds that litter the Plains of Golarin and the Wilderlands of Zaran. These swirling winds, while seldom intense enough to cause great difficulty to travelers, have an ominous effect on most types of living creatures. Wild beasts become agitated and may even stampede, and domesticated animals may panic or desert their masters. Intelligent beings often experience a vague sense of fear or impending doom; in extreme cases, individuals may experience temporary fits of insanity, or claim to be possessed by vile spiritforms. Less frequently, a ghost wind may carry in its wake one or more shadowights, fantasms (pseudo-demons), or other incorporeal entities. A ghost wind passes swiftly, though its effects can last for several hours afterward.

**Icicle Rain:** A dangerous type of frozen precipitation resembling a hail of dagger-sharp shards of ice, ranging up to a foot in length. Icicle rain does 1-4 (d4) points of damage per round to living creatures, vegetation, and all but the most durable sorts of objects, equipment and structures. The duration of an icicle rainfall rarely exceeds ten (d10) rounds. The Ariane attribute such occurrences to the exhalations of the Ice Giant population of Narandu, an explanation sufficing primarily for lack of any other.

**Witch Wind:** In colloquial speech, "witch wind" is often used to refer to any strong, howling wind. In legend, it is believed that witch winds bear strange sounds and portents if one listens carefully enough – moaning voices, curses, ancient chants and incantations, terrible secrets, mystifying prophecies. A witch wind occurring in open or flat terrain may develop into a tempest, a raging storm capable of capsizing ships at sea and causing great damage to all but the sturdiest of structures. Such storms may last for hours, or pass after just a few moments.

## Talislantan Chronology

The Talislantans employ a lunar calendar based on the cycles of the seven moons. The calendar is divided as follows:

**Seven days** = One week
**Seven weeks** = One month
**Seven months** = Forty-nine weeks
**343 days** = One year

The months are named after the seven moons, each month corresponding to the time when its namesake is in the full phase. In order, the seven months (and moons) are:

**Ardan** (the purple moon)
**Drome** (the yellow moon)
**Jhang** (the crimson moon)
**Laeolis** (the blue moon)
**Phandir** (the green moon)
**Talisande** (the silver moon)
**Zar** (the dark moon)

The days of the week have no names, but are referred to by number in the month (the twelfth of Ardan, the thirty-seventh of Drome, etc.) Days with numbers divisible by seven (7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, and 49) are called "high days"; in many Talislantan cultures and religions, high days are considered sacred – a time for fasting, penance, sacrifice, and the like.



| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| **1st of Ardan** | The annual Clash of Champions, in which chosen representatives of Aaman and Zandu meet and cross swords atop the Great Barrier Wall. The victorious nation is awarded proprietorship of the Wall for the year, reaping a vast profit in toll revenues. |
| **3rd of Ardan** | A Jhangaran holiday called Jha, viewed by the populace mainly as an excuse to get as intoxicated as possible. Customarily, a rather gloomy occasion. |
| **7th of Ardan** | Zandu's laws are temporarily rescinded for one evening, known as the Night of Fools. During this time, the capitol city of Zanth is transformed into a veritable madhouse, with costumed revelers dancing drunkenly in the streets until the wee hours of morning. |
| **14th of Ardan** | Known as the Day of Reckoning in times past, this was a day that the Za bandit tribes believed their legendary ruler, the Tirshata, would make known his identity and unite the various Za clans; it was customary for the Za to sit in ritual circles on this day to await omens or signs of some sort. One day, they received such an omen, thus instigating the Uprising. Since then, the Day of Reckoning is still celebrated by the Za, and remembered by the other nations of Talislanta. |
| **21st of Ardan** | The Sindarin Trivarian Competition is a tournament in which the most accomplished Sindarin Nadirs are pitted against each other to compete for a garish trophy called the honorarium. The event attracts much interest in Sindar, and the winners are accorded much honor and prestige. |
| **1st of Drome** | The most skilled Kasmir trapsmiths gather on this day for the Kasmir Trapsmith Convention, at which they display new products and hold seminars on all aspects of the business. |
| **2nd of Drome** | This day marks the anniversary of the opening of the Great Barrier Wall. The Aamanians, who won the first Clash of Champions on this date, still contend that they were shorted a month and a day's toll revenue when the tournament was rescheduled to the 1st of Ardan the following year. |
| **7th of Drome** | The Caliph's Feast is an annual gathering of all the Djaffir tribes, held either at El Aran or Al Ashad. The Feast is preceded by the Caliph of Djaffa hearing complaints, arbitrating disputes, and accepting offerings from the various tribes; a great feast is held thereafter, lasting three days and three nights. |
| **30th of Drome** | This date marks the anniversary of the One Day War. The occasion is characterized by unrestrained laughter and feasting in Durne, celebrating the Gnomekin's swift victory over an invading army of Darklings in the year 67. |
| **42nd of Drome** | Before the Uprising, a colorful pageant known as the Conjugal Feast was held on this day in Danuvia. It featured a procession of attractive men, each competing for the affection of the Danuvian queen; the top three contestants were appointed to the queen's harem of male consorts, while the remaining eligible males were bid upon by other Danuvian women. Since the Uprising and the slaughter of the entire male Danuvian populace, this event has taken a more grim bearing. Now it serves as a time of mourning, a demonstration of determination to survive, and the time to take sacred oaths of vengeance. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **49th of Drome** | This day marks the spring equinox, where a traditional celebration is held to usher in the median season. It is considered a national holiday in Astar, and provides the Muses yet another excuse to avoid work. |
| **1st of Jhang** | On this day, the Kang honor their god of war, Zoriah, with the Feast of the Red God. The event is marked by large-scale bouts of ritual combat, followed by drunken revelry. |
| **7th of Jhang** | The Day of Rage, the anniversary of the massacre at Dracarta, is observed by two nations. It is a black day in the memory of the Rajans; conversely, it is marked by feasting in Carantheum |
| **30th of Jhang** | The Sea Rogues of Gao-Din know this day as Gao Liberation Day, marking the anniversary of their liberation from the Phaedrans. The Sea Rogues are known to be uncommonly charitable on this day, sometimes reducing the ransom of hostages, sparing condemned felons, and so forth. |
| **49th of Jhang** | On this day, Taz hosts the Tournament of Challenges, featuring exhibitions of martial prowess. Thralls compete in the various categories for prizes of up to 10,000 gold lumens. |
| **1st of Laeolis** | The anniversary of the Battle of the Sea of Sorrow is a national day of mourning in both Aaman and Zandu, during which solemn gatherings of hooded mourners lay floral wreaths upon the Sea of Sorrow's waters. |
| **25th of Laeolis** | This is the longest day of the year in L'Haan, where the twin suns shine until the stroke of midnight. |
| **27th of Laeolis** | The Vigil of Xanadas is held in observance of the "Long Wait," which marks the anniversary of the mystic Xanadas' passing into the next world. The descendants of his original followers spend the day and night scanning the horizons, searching for some sign of Xanadas' return. |
| **49th of Laeolis** | On this evening, the moon Laeolis passes Phandir in the night sky, producing an eerily luminescent "ghost moon." It is considered an ill-aspected evening by most Talislantan peoples. |
| **1st of Phandir** | This day marks the beginning of a two-week-long spectacle known as the Magical Fair. Its numerous attractions all commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the free kingdom of Cymril. Exhibitions of magical wares and adjuncts are held throughout the duration of the fair. |
| **7th of Phandir** | At the midpoint of the Magical Fair is the Windship Regatta, a race in which crews from the isle of Phantas and and other distant locales compete against Cymrilian astrogationists – the prize for first place is a crystal trophy and 20,000 gold lumens. |
| **14th of Phandir** | This day marks the closing ceremonies for Cymril's Magical Fair. Numerous events are featured, including the Lyceum Arcanum's Annual Awards Dinner, magical duels for wagers and prizes, and (every second or third year, as warranted) the coronation of Cymril's Wizard King. |
| **35th of Phandir** | On this day, a festive celebration called Charad is is held by the Hadjin nobility; attendance is restricted to only the wealthiest members of Hadjin society. The highlight is a grand masquerade ball held in the royal palace of the Hadjin Grandeloquence. |
| **49th of Phandir** | On this day occurs the conjunction of the twin suns. |

This section contains information on some of the more notable places, items, and discoveries from Talislanta's past. This information is not widely known, but may be discovered in ancient ruins, crypts, caves; by trading secrets with Gnorls, Mangs, Snipes, or other creatures who love knowledge; or by traveling to places such as the Library at Jalaad, where the lore of past ages is hoarded and kept safe from the ravages of time, wars, magical catastrophes.

# Lore of the First Millennium

## The Alien Vessel

The remains of the strange ship that was found by the early ancestors of the Archaens have never been found, despite numerous attempts by the Phaedrans, and their successors. For thousands of years scholars believed that this vessel originated from another world outside the Archaen solar system. However, recent discoveries have indicated that this ship was probably of extra-dimensional origin. The Sindarans, descendants of the Neurians, believe that this vessel may have been of Neurian make, and so are especially anxious to locate any articles that may have originated from it.

Artifacts that might be found on this site include portions of the ship's hull, pieces of twisted metal, and items of unknown purpose.

## The City of Arcanopolis

Arcanopolis, also known as the City of Secrets, was the first Archaen settlement. It was said to have been built of green stone, though this story may be a fabrication. The inhabitants were pagans, who revered deities not unlike the greater elementals. Arcanopolis was razed by Drakken armies from Golarin and Kharakhan, who boasted that they had left not one stone standing atop the other. The ruins have never been located, and the stones were likely carted off and used for other purposes. Buried somewhere in the wreckage lies the Archaen Orb, or its shattered remnants.

Artifacts that might be found here include the Archaen Orb, ancient stone tablets, pagan idols, witchstones, dolmens, witch gates, discarded Drakken weapons and armor, and common items. If any magic items are found, they will probably be fairly primitive, and will be based on the practice of Witchcraft.

## The City of Phandril

The city of Phandril was the second city built by the early Archaens, and stood for over two thousand years. Abandoned during the latter part of the Third Millennium, Phandril was razed by hordes of Sub-Men, who left little behind save for a few fragments of shattered stone. The giant mausoleum towers in which the Phandre interred their dead fared far better, thanks in large part to the superstitious beliefs of the Sub-Men, who feared to disturb the dead lest they bring down a curse upon their ancestors. The same cannot be said for the more "civilized" Talislantans of later eras, who had no qualms about grave-robbing. These ancient mausoleums were purchased by the Hadjin during the New Age, in what may well have been one of the most profitable real estate deals of all time. Thousands of these structures can still be found in the present day, though some lean at odd angles or have toppled to the ground.

Artifacts that might be found here include Phandre glass sarcophagi, windship components and accouterments, and enchanted items of many sorts.

## The Witchgates

Before they established their first settlements, the early Archaens erected many dolmens and stone effigies in the deep woodlands of what is now known as Werewood. Some had magical properties, none more so than the Witchgates: stone archways that are believed to have served as portals to other locales, and possibly other dimensions or worlds. These ancient artifacts were employed in pagan rituals devoted to their deities, who are now remembered only as the Forgotten Gods.

Artifacts that might be found here include the aforementioned Witchgates, dolmens, pagan idols, and other ancient articles of witchcraft. A number of these have been exhumed from parts of southern Werewood; however there has been little exploration of the interior regions. This is particularly true of Witchwood, a section of the forest where many of these stone structures still stand, and continue to be utilized in the rites of the Dhuna witchfolk.

# Lore of the Second Millennium

## Ashann

In ancient times, Ashann was renowned for its Astromancers, whose portents and divinations were greatly valued by the Archaens. The city once consisted of seven concentric rings, the outermost of which encompassed an area approximately two miles in diameter. These rings were constructed of deep blue basalt, measured nearly a hundred feet in width, and stood over forty feet in height. The pattern formed by the rings was said to have been integral to the casting of certain auguries, though the validity of this theory is difficult to ascertain owing to the present condition of these structures, most of which were demolished during The Great Disaster. Portions of the rings still stand, and the outlines of the original structures are still visible in the parched terrain.

The only intelligent folk currently found in the vicinity of the old city are the mysterious beings known as the Wanderers of Ashann — tall, shrouded figures, who can often be seen walking amongst the ruins. The Wanderers' motives remain unclear; some say that they search the ruins of the Old City of Ashann for some lost artifact or item of occult significance. Others claim that Ashann was once their home, and that the Wanderers come here to watch over the remains of their long-departed ancestors.

Artifacts that might be found here fragments of faded blue basalt and little else. The ruins have been picked over for centuries by tribes of Za bandits and other scavengers. Yet there may still be other artifacts buried far beneath the blue sands of this region.



## The Four Nations

The Four Nations, and the four walled cities that served as their respective capitals, were built upon the ruins of the immense Drakken citadel of Golarin; a structure of such vast proportions that its ruins provided most of the necessary materials used to construct all four of the Archaen cities. The four cities were built along the four cardinal compass points, one facing north, one south, one east, and one west.

Some of the towers, columns, and archways of the Four Nations still stand to the present day, though most of these structures were destroyed during the War of Four Nations. As the ruins were stripped by surrogate armies of the Torquaran soon after this debacle, much of the history and culture of the Four Nations remains a mystery.

Artifacts that might be found here include fragments of stone and metal, some bearing portions of ancient runes, enchanted and mundane luxury items, weapons, and utensils. The contents of the four vaults were described by Erastes as containing "the gilded tomb of Irkhan, the mysterious elixirs of immortality, the Nine Books of Knowledge," and a fourth, unspecified treasure.

## Golarin

Golarin was the greatest of the Drakken cities; a cyclopean structure constructed from giant blocks of black porphyry, carried by land dragons from the Onyx mountains. The outer walls were said to exceed one hundred feet in height; the black iron gates stood well over sixty feet, and were wide enough to accommodate a fully armored land dragon.

The Drakken possessed no knowledge of magic, but had developed a thriving culture. They knew how to forge iron, and used a complex written language of glyphs and symbols. Drakken symbology was three dimensional, and could only be expressed if carved in relief upon stone or metal; different meanings were indicated by the depth at which these symbols were carved.

Artifacts that might be found here include fragments of black porphyry from the shattered walls of Golarin, Drakken glyphstones, Drakken silver coins, Drakken weapons and armor, and the Tomb of Orrix, whose mummified remains are believed to lie buried beneath the ruins of Four Nations.

## Jalaad

The crumbling ruins of the ancient city of Jaalad are located near the Zaran Mountains, in the Wilderlands of Zaran.

During the Second Millennium, Jalaad was known as a center of scholarly activity. The outer walls and interior structures were constructed of white marble, inlaid with blue jade. Many generations of Yitek tomb-robbers and Za bandits have stripped the ruins of most items of value, leaving a few structures of pitted, scarred, and yellowed stone.

The sole exception is the Library at Jalaad, a towering edifice warded by powerful enchantments, which remains relatively intact. The Library is occupied by the descendants of a cabal of Callidian cryptomancers, who have endeavored to protect the facility's store of red iron tablets since the time of The Great Disaster. Individuals who wish to explore the Library may do so only by permission of the Callidians, who deal sternly with looters and vandals.

Artifacts that might be found here: fragments of stone tablets, shards of blue jade (rare), and the contents of the Library at Jalaad. Several large ossuariums are located in the subterranean levels of the city, and may contain other items of interest, such as Jalladian funerary relics. However, these areas are said to be haunted by necrophages, who come here to gnaw on the bones of the dead.

## Kharakhan

The Drakken citadel of Kharakhan was similar in most respects to the city of Golarin, but was constructed of a peculiar red stone that some modern-day geomancers believe was mined from the nearby Volcanic Hills. This material contains deposits of red iron ore, and is extremely durable. Perhaps as much as 50% of the original structures remain intact to the present day, though the outer walls of the city were either destroyed or dismantled over the centuries. The subterranean levels of Kharakhan are believed to contain numerous relics and curios, though many of the underground passages and tunnels are probably unsafe.

Artifacts that might be found here include Drakken glyphstones, silver coins, weapons and armor, and the Tomb of the Great Dragon, Orrix, whose mummified remains are believed to lie buried beneath the ruins of Four Nations.

## Kasraan

The ruins of Kasraan lay to the southeast of the old City-State of Danuvia, in the area known as the Desertlands of Zaran. In ancient times, the Kasir (as the inhabitants of Kasraan were known) were a mercantile folk, who earned a living transporting goods between the other Archaen cities by caravan. By the Third Millennium, the caravans were replaced by armored conveyances that resembled fearsome metallic dragons, providing protection from hordes of Sub-Men.

The Kasir were very successful, and were said to be so wealthy that the streets of Kasraan were paved with gold. While this is undoubtedly an exaggeration, many Kasir merchants and moneylenders were known to hoard vast sums of gold and precious stones, storing their riches in underground vaults of elaborate design.

Though the city of Kasraan was long ago reduced to a shamble by the ravages of war and time, the catacombs located below the ruins remain largely intact. These subterranean haunts contain the petrified remains of the merchant kings and queens of ancient Kasraan, sealed within crypts of solid stone. Gaining entrance to the royal vaults is said to be a formidable task: the Kasir were skilled in the making of elaborate trap mechanisms and took exceptional pains to safe keep the bodies of their monarchs from tomb-robbers and other entrepreneurial types. The modern-day Kasmirans are believed to be descended from the Kasir.

Artifacts that might be found here include devious Kasir trap mechanisms, iron dragons, Kasir ledgers, enchanted and mundane luxury items, and stores of gold and precious stones.

## Numenia

The walled city of Numenia was built into the side of the southernmost peak of the Maruk Mountains, overlooking what was once a rich and fertile plain. In ancient times, this place was a center for the study of Theosophy, visited by priests and savants from across the continent. The city was constructed of white and black opaline, and was renowned for its ornate temples. The high priests of the Numenians were equally famed, and were purported to be capable of performing miracles. Perhaps the greatest miracle was the giant idol known as Icon, which stood guard over the city, and was said to possess the ability to speak in tongues.

The black magicians of Torquaran placed a powerful curse on Numenia, causing its fertile plains to be poisoned and instigating a terrible war between the two rival nations. Though Torquaran was defeated, Numenia was eventually overrun by Wild Tribes, and abandoned. During The Great Disaster the city was destroyed by an earthquake that leveled

the surrounding mountains, burying the ancient tombs and temples beneath tons of rock and debris. The ruins of Numenia remain buried under tons of rock and sand, largely unexplored.

Artifacts that might be found here include the idol Icon, Numenian temple artifacts, prayer wheels, holy items, Numenian scriptures, the tombs of Numenian priests and priestesses, and various religious reliquaries.

## Osmar

The ruins of Osmar are located at the western edge of the Plains of Golarin, to the east of the Dead River. The original city was said to have consisted of five great towers, enclosed within an outer wall built in the shape of a pentagram. In ages past, the inhabitants of this city functioned as enchanters and artificers, creating magical weapons, armor, wands, and other articles to the specifications of the Phandre wizards of Phandril. The Osmarins' magic workshops were said to operate night and day, turning out enchanted goods for sale to the other Archaen cities.

Today, little remains of Osmar save its towers, which continue to stand like silent sentinels, overlooking the Dead River. The ruins are now the domain of the Beastmen tribes, who continue to scour the surrounding areas for lost artifacts. Beastmen who hail from the Osmar ruins are often well-armed, their pack-leaders sometimes attired in battle armor and enchanted weaponry of ancient make.

Artifacts that might be found here include Osmarin blades of blue iron, Osmarin battle armor, enchanted wands and staves, enchanted and mundane luxury items, and other magical components.

## Torquaran

Located to the south of the Kharakhan Wastes, the ruins of Torquaran stand as grim reminders of the most sinister empire in the annals of Talislantan history. The Torquar were black magicians who practiced a dangerous form of magic that combined certain aspects of Necromancy and Demonology; scholars now believe that the Torquar were serving a race from the lower planes known as the Sepharans. The original walled city of Torquaran was constructed of black and red basalt, with rows of iron barbs lining the walls and parapets; the latter, designed both to keep invaders out and prevent the city's inhabitants from escaping. Today, little remains of the city save a few stark stone towers, rows of blackened and defaced effigies, and the rusted hulks of ancient killing machines.

Generations of occultists and tomb-robbers have come to this place over the centuries, to sift through the ruins in search of Torquar artifacts. Many articles have been retrieved from the ruins, often to the great regret of those who have found them. Countless others may remain buried in tombs, vaults, and underground pits, awaiting discovery by those who covet infernal knowledge above all other considerations. The modern-day Rajans claim to be descended from the Torquar.

Artifacts that might be found here include Torquar weapons, bottle imps, cursed tomes, diabolical artifacts, instruments of torture and death.

## Xambria

Xambria was a walled city of great beauty, known for its splendid hanging gardens, quiet shrines, and tree-lined boulevards. The inhabitants, known as the Xambrians, were a peaceful people whose daily lives revolved around the practice of mysticism - a field of magic that they may have learned from the reclusive Ariane. During the latter part of the Second Millennium, their city was attacked by surrogate forces of the Torquar, who took thousands of prisoners, marching them across the plains to the city of Torquaran. Here, they were sacrificed in the Fire Pits of Malnangar, as offerings in some sort of horrific black magic ritual In an attempt to eradicate the Xambrian people, the Torquar then destroyed all traces of their city: smashing their homes into rubble, burning their crops and possessions, and poisoning their lands.

No known artifacts have ever been recovered from the place where Xambria once stood, now marked by a mountain of skulls known as Omen.

# Lore of the Third Millennium

## Aeon

Aeon was the first of the sky cities — a fabulous construct of translucent domes, spires, and elevated causeways that floated high above the clouds. The city was fashioned from materials derived through the art of Thaumaturgy, using essence accumulators to extract raw materials from the very aether of Archaeus. Enchanted crystals provided a virtually unlimited source of energy, keeping the sky city afloat and serving as a power source for the Archaens' windships. Here, the Archaens lived in peace until the Golden Age waned, giving way to the Age of Decline.

When The Great Disaster struck, Aeon simply dissolved, reverting to the basic elements from which it had been created. No trace of the inhabitants or their possessions has ever been discovered.

No known artifacts have ever been recovered from Aeon. However, it is theorized that items of non-thaumaturgical origin may have survived dissolution, and fallen to earth in what is now the Wilderlands of Zaran. If true, then it might be possible to locate such artifacts as enchanted crystals, spellstones, enchanted and mundane luxury items, Archaen runeswords, and enchanted items of various sorts.

## Aurantium

Aurantium was a fabulous city plated with pure gold, located on the continent of Simbar. It was not an Archaen colony, but a sanctuary constructed by the Neurians — castaways from a distant dimension, who had crash-landed on the continent of Simbar long before its discovery by Archaen explorers. An advanced race of dual encephalons, the Neurians possessed knowledge of a form of metaphysics that was unknown to the Archaens — a combination of magic and science known as Technomancy. Utilizing their knowledge of technomancy, the Neurians constructed elaborate automatons and other wondrous metallic apparatus.

The Neurians shared many of their secrets with the Archaens, and entered into a partnership of sorts, allowing Archaens to live and study with them in the city of Aurantium, while purchasing magical apparatus in exchange for gold. In return, the Archaens taught them about windship arcanology, and agreed to help the dual-encephalons construct vessels capable of inter-dimensional flight so that the Neurians could return to their home. The latter project languished for centuries, thanks in large part to Archaen procrastination; motivated by greed, the Archaens were more interested in turning a quick profit than actually helping their Neurian partner.

The Neurians finally completed construction on two prototype vessels just as The Great Disaster was about to occur. Having learned of the coming cataclysm through technomatic analysis of the surrounding environs, they warned their partners that they must flee Archaeus at once. The Archeans demurred, reluctant to leave the golden city and its fabulous riches. Puzzled, the Neurians left them behind and departed the continent of Simbar just as it sank beneath the waves.

One of the Neurian vessels was said to have passed through an interdimensional nexus, and disappeared into the continuum. The other suffered a malfunction and crashed somewhere on the continent of Talislanta — possibly in the Northern Sea (now known as the Lost Sea). Most of the Archaens went to the bottom of the ocean along with the city of Aurantium, though some are said to have escaped in hastily improvised rafts and boats. The ancestors of these survivors are known today as the Oceanians. Several of the Neurians' metal-hulled ships survived along with their automaton crews. In modern times, they have come to be known as the Parthenians, after the island that they settled on after Simbar sank beneath the waves.

When The Great Disaster occurred, Pompados began to drift erratically cross south-eastern Talislanta. As Pompados' Thaumaturgic magics waned, the city began to dissolve, and pieces of the sky city were scattered from Dracarta to the Dark Coast. The inhabitants fled in their windships, taking everything of value that they could carry with them. Some are believed to have made it as far as the Thaecian Isles, though most crashed in the territories now known as Mog and Jhangara. Harried by tribes of sub-men, the Phandre and their descendants trudged through the swamps and forests until the coming of the New Age.

## Elande

Originally intended to serve as a sanctum devoted to the pursuit of magical knowledge, Elande was a sky city of modest proportions, also known as the City of the Four Winds. Elande was populated by one hundred of the best and brightest magicians of Aeon, each a paragon of achievement in the arcane arts. It was the duty of the One Hundred (as they were called) to compile information about all aspects of the Archaen world, storing this information in crystal orbs or enchanted tablets, preserving samples of various species in stasis, and recording events of note.

Unfortunately, with the coming of the Age of Decline, the One Hundred began to lose interest in their duties. The quality of their work deteriorated, as they began to view themselves as elite and superior beings. When The Great Disaster struck, Elande lost altitude, and slowly drifted to earth. In a panic, the Elandar fled south in their windships, where they were attacked by a fleet of Baratan sky raiders. All but one of their vessels were shot from the skies, to crash in the jungles of what is now the Dark Coast. The sole surviving ship reached the isle of Phantas, where the passengers established the floating citadel of Cabal Magicus.

Most artifacts predating the Age of Decline were left behind in the sky city of Elande, where many can probably still be found. These include compendiums, bestiaries, cosmologies, histories, and grimoires (stored in enchanted orbs or engraved onto tablets); samples of ancient Archaen flora and fauna, preserved in stasis in crystal spheres or silver phials; enchanted and mundane luxury items, windship parts, spellstones, enchanted crystals, essence accumulators, and other thaumaturgical wares. Some of these items may also be found in the wreckage of the downed vessels, though much was probably lost or destroyed during the battle with the Baratus. The Phantasians retained at least one essence accumulator, and some of the lesser spellstones and grimoires.

## Erythria

Established at the onset of the Age of Decline, the sky citadel of Erythria was the domain of a cabal of warrior mages designated as protectors of the sky cities, called the Erythrians. These militaristic magicians were paid exorbitant fees by the latter version of the Archaen Cabal, and assigned to construct costly battle dragons and other engines of destruction; this even though the skyborne Archaens had no true enemies, nor any tangible territories to protect. Like many of the sky cities, Erythria suffered dissolution during The Great Disaster. Its inhabitants, unprepared to deal with such an eventuality, perished and were never heard from again.

Very few artifacts from Erythria's vast store of weapons were ever found. Most are now believed to have fallen into the Volcanic Hills or Jungles of Chana when the sky city dissolved. Engines of war, weapons, and other military apparatus created by the Erythrians may remain, lost and undiscovered, in those regions.

## Farnir

The sky city of Farnir was established by a cabal of alchemists from the city of Aeon. Originally, the Farnirans specialized in the making of Elixir Vitae (a revitalizing fluid which, taken regularly, provided the Archaens with a greatly extended life expectancy), and a variety of miraculous panaceas that could be used to cure all manner of ailments. By the Age of Decline, however, the Farnirans were more interested in producing cosmetic enhancements, from which a greater profit could be derived. With the onset of The Great Disaster, Farnir plunged earthwards, and was trapped in a cloud of freezing vapor. The city and its inhabitants are believed to have been frozen in stasis, and now lie buried under layers of crystalline ice in the frigid heartland of Narandu.

Artifacts that might be found in the frozen city include phials of Elixir Vitae, cosmetic enhancements, enchanted and mundane luxury items, sophisticated alchemical apparatus, quantities of rare ingredients (many of which are now impossible to find).

## Locus

Locus was a floating sanctum that was created to serve as a meeting place for the Archaen Cabal. The original structure was functional, rather than decorative, in design, and included living chambers for the seven founding members, a council hall, and a librarium; all encased within an impermeable sphere of force. By the Age of Decline, after the original members had quit the Cabal in disgust, Locus had been expanded to include a pleasure dome, nympharium, floating gardens, and other amusements. By this time the membership included such minor characters as the zealot, Harrune the Hieromancer; the witchling, Tinzel, a long-legged creature with a shock of blue frizz for hair; the conjuror, Orfu, a glutton of such excessive habits that even the most artful enchantments could not conceal his corpulence; and the infamous rogue magician and trickster, Zanillo.

No known artifacts from the floating sanctum have ever been found. Locus was flung into space during The Great Disaster, and was never seen again.

## Shalihan

The sky city of Shalihan was known as the City of Illusions; an apt name, as almost everything and everybody in Shalihan had been created through the arts of illusion and conjuration. Clients from the sky cities flocked to Shalihan, to experience their wildest fantasies brought to life in

the form of "virtual illusions." It is said that many found these imaginary vistas preferable to reality, and spent the remainder of their lives in a virtual haze. What became of Shalihan, no one knows: the entire city simply vanished into thin air during The Great Disaster.

No artifacts from Shalihan have ever been found; all are believed to have been illusory, save the writings of Cascal, some of which survive to the present day.

## Pompados

The sky city of Pompados was home to the Phandre, formerly the ruling class of the Archaen Empire. The Phandre were enamored of pomp and ceremony; so much so, that the magicians of Pompados regarded themselves as part of a royal magiocracy, and were awarded titles according to their perceived degree of prestige. It was the duty of the Phandre to safeguard the Archaen Codex, the most important of all magical tomes.

The practice of Thaumaturgy was most popular in Pompados, where essence accumulators functioned night and day, producing essences of the most subtle and fabulous sort for sale to the other sky cities. The proliferation of these accumulators was such that the wizard Rodinn worried that their continued use might have adverse effects upon the Archaen environment. Regrettably, his warnings were ignored.

When The Great Disaster occurred, Pompados began to dissolve, as did Aeon. The inhabitants fled in their windships, taking everything of value that they could carry with them. Some are believed to have made it as far as the Thaecian Isles, though most crashed in the territories now known as Mog and Jhangara. Harried by tribes of sub-men, the Phandre and their descendants trudged through the swamps and forests until the coming of the New Age.

Though most ancient Phandrean artifacts were lost following the dissolution of Pompados, some are believed to have fallen to earth in what is now the Red Desert. The ruby tablets discovered by the Dracartans, engraved with certain thaumaturgical secrets, probably originated from Pompados. Other articles that might be found buried beneath the desert sands include essence accumulators, enchanted and mundane luxury items, the wreckage of ancient windships, spellstones, enchanted crystals, and tablets engraved with arcana. The Archaen Codex was later recovered, and now resides in a vault in the Lyceum Arcanum.



## Lore of the Phaedran Era

During the first century of the Phaedran Empire, the Phaedrans discovered numerous artifacts and texts of arcane significance that had been lost since the time of The Great Disaster, and created a number of their own works as well. Unfortunately, the vast majority of this arcane lore was destroyed or confiscated by Orthodoxist zealots at the onset of the Cult Wars. Yet some of the most cogent Phaedran and old Archaen artifacts were smuggled out of Phaedra by the Phandre, when they fled east to avoid persecution by Orthodoxist witch hunters.

Discoveries from this era could include many Phaedran artifacts, such as the works of Kabros, Solimorrion III, Damon, and others who survived the Orthodoxist inquisition. Much of what was smuggled out of Phaedra by the Phandre was eventually locked away in the lower levels of the Lyceum Arcanum by Pharos, the first wizard king of Cymril. Other artifacts were lost, stolen, or buried in the Phaedran tombs that line the shores of the Sascasm River, in Werewood.



# Artifacts from the Forgotten Age

The Archaens were skilled artificers who created all manner of enchanted and mundane items, including tools, weapons, utensils, furnishings, articles of clothing, books, and regalia. The following is a list of useful, unusual, and — occasionally — dangerous articles that might be found by those who venture to explore the ancient ruins of Talislanta and the Unknown Lands.

## The Alien Vessel

This artifact is believed to predate the First Millennium, and is of unknown origin. The vessel is believed to have crashed somewhere in Western Talislanta, but has never been found. Portions of what may have been the ship's hull, identifiable by the unusual rainbow-colored highlights that they emanate, were found in southwestern Urag and are currently stored in the Lyceum Arcanum's archives, in the crystal city of Cymril. The Lyceum has offered a reward of 1,000-10,000 gold lumens for an authentic fragment or artifact from this vessel.

## Aerial Palanquin

These fanciful and plush conveyances were favored by the Elandar of the Third Millennium, who regarded themselves as the grand elite of Archaeus. Elandar palanquins were designed to be decorative, rather than functional, and were notable for their rich and ostentatious accommodations. The Elandar rode in the front section, reclining on silken cushions. The pilot, typically a neomorphic servitor, was discreetly concealed in the enclosed aft section, so as not to detract from the appearance of the riders.

These artifacts were primarily regarded as status symbols, the most elaborate and costly palanquins being considered a measure of the owners' position in the Elandar hierarchy. The vast majority of these conveyances were lost or destroyed during The Great Disaster. They are coveted by Hadjin aristocrats, Farad wizards, and Phantasian merchants, who have been known to pay as much as 75,000 gold lumens for a restored palanquin of certifiable authenticity.

## Arcane Galleon

At the very end of the Third Millennium, Neurians and Archaens from the city of Aurantium are believed to have designed a flying ship that could travel anywhere, even in airless space. Intended for use as an exploratory vessel, this arcane galleon (as it is referred to in ancient texts) may have been the precursor of the dimension-spanning arks that the Neurians constructed in an attempt to get off-world before the coming of The Great Disaster.

Information on this project is virtually unknown; existing schematics, diagrams, and perhaps even a working prototype were lost when the continent of Simbar sank beneath the waves. If found, such artifacts could well bring a small fortune from interested parties such as the Cymrilians and Sindarans — to say nothing of the Farad or the Rajans

## Archaen Essence Accumulators

These devices were made during the Third Millennium by Phandre thaumaturges from the sky city of Pompados, and were used extensively to derive most of the raw materials utilized by the Archaens in all their works. They resembled the Dracartan accumulators of the New Age in general appearance, but were far more sophisticated. Archaen accumulators could be calibrated to exacting specifications, enabling them to derive even the most subtle types of essences, such as emotions, sensory impressions, and dreams. The accumulators owned by the Phantasians are of Archaen make, but are exceedingly old, and prone to breakdowns. Aside from these relics, no other Archaen accumulators have ever been found. A working model might well be valued at ten times the price of a Dracartan essence accumulator, or more.

## Archaen Spellstones

These artifacts were produced during the Second and Third Millennia by the Phandre. The earlier types were imbued with a single spell, and were used in the manner of magic wands. The more advanced types that were produced in the sky city of Pompados were used to enhance the wielder's spellcasting abilities as per Cymrilian spellstones of the current epoch, but were more powerful; spellstones capable of doubling a magician's total number of spells are reputed to have been made. Spellstones from the Second Millennium are valued at 500 gold lumens per level, or more if they contain rare or exotic spells. Those that originated from the Third Millennium may command prices above 2,500 gold lumens per level.

## Archaen Enchanted Crystals

Enchanted crystals were commonly used during the Third Millennium as a power source for mechanisms, automatons, windships and other aerial conveyances, and to keep the sky cities afloat. These items were similar to the enchanted crystals that are currently utilized by Cymrilian magicians, but were more efficient; the crystal's level of power increasing by +1 per every 10 carats, rather than every 20 carats. These items are valued at over 200 gold lumens per carat, and are extremely rare.

## Archaen Luxury Items

Artifacts of this sort originated mainly from the Second and Third Millennia, and include enchanted lamps, levitating beds and chairs, decorative crystal mirrors, crystalline utensils and vases, etc. Mundane luxury items are valued at 100-1,000 gold lumens, depending upon their age and condition, or ten times as much for enchanted luxury items. Both are prized primarily by collectors and antiquarians.

## Archaen Dolmens

These ancient stone monuments come in many shapes and sizes, and date back to the First Millennium. Most were employed as calendar stones, border markers, and representations of lunar or solar divinities. However, some are believed to have been used in certain pagan rites and rituals, and as such may possess magical properties. Collectors have been known to offer up to 5,000 gold lumens for the most ancient and rare types, or four times this figure for dolmens that evince magical properties of one sort or another.

## The Archaen Orb

Discovered in the hold of an alien vessel, the Archaen Orb is the oldest known Archaen artifact, dating back to the very beginning of the Forgotten Age. This device is believed to have contained the secrets of Magic, recorded in some form that even the primitive early Archaens could understand. Two other valuable artifacts, the Archaen Codex and the Nine Books of Knowledge, were created from written transcriptions of the information contained within it.

The Orb was lost, and believed destroyed, when the Drakken razed the ancient city of Arcanopolis. Even a small fragment of this artifact could command a price of up to 10,000 gold lumens from the Lyceum Arcanum. Were the Orb to be discovered intact, the finder could no doubt name his or her price, such is the great value of this artifact.

## Archaen Runesword

These enchanted weapons were popular with the Archaens, and were employed extensively throughout the First through Third Millennia. Most resemble common longswords, forged from Osmarin blue iron and engraved with runes of magical significance. Runeswords were enchanted to cause additional damage (up to +5), and were also imbued with as many as three spells, each of which could be used once per day. The level and type of spells are believed to have varied with each sword, according to the designs of its maker. Caution should be exercised when handling these artifacts, as the Archaens were known to place wards and curses upon their runeswords to prevent others from stealing their valued possessions. Runeswords may be worth as much as 100,000 gold lumens apiece.

## Archaen Stone Tablets

The ancient Archaens of the First Millennium often recorded spells and other important information on stone tablets, which were more durable than parchment. Most artifacts of this sort should be treated as scrolls, though some may be enchanted, warded, or even cursed. They generally range in value from 100-10,000 gold lumens, depending upon content and condition; cracks and other imperfections that obscure the inscriptions can render a stone tablet worthless.

## Biomantic Analyzer

These enchanted devices were employed by thaumaturges and biomancers during the Third Millennium. A biomantic analyzer resembles a crystaline rod engraved with fine symbology, contained within a silver case. To use it, the rod was pointed at the subject while the wielder spoke a command word, causing a matrix of radiant symbols to appear in the air. By examining this matrix for ten rounds, a skilled biomancer could determine the essential components of any lifeform. This "formula" could then be used to create an artificial version of the lifeform, or modified to create new forms of artificial life. These devices are valued at 50,000 gold lumens by thaumaturges and collectors of antique arcana, though they can only be utilized by individuals who are skilled in the forgotten art of Biomancy.

## Bottle Imps

The Torquarans of the Second Millennium were known to imprison lesser devils known as Sardonicus in amberglass spheres or vials, and utilize them as occult advisors. These bottle imps, as they were called, were the rage in Torquaran and elsewhere, until it was discovered that in many cases the imps were far more intelligent than their masters, and prone to vile and sinister machinations. The older, darker-hued Sardonicus are valued at upwards of 1,200 gold lumens, with lighter-skinned imps bringing correspondingly less. Would-be collectors are advised to exercise caution when dealing with these creatures: Sardonicus exhibit a malign intelligence, and can be quite dangerous.

## Biomantic Chamber

These artifacts were employed in the practice of Biomancy, which gained popularity during the Third Millennium. The typical chamber was a vat made of translucent crystal, with a sealable crystal lid engraved with complex symbology. The exact manner in which the chambers were utilized remains something of a mystery, though the general procedure is known. Vital essences, derived by the use of an essence accumulator and measured to exacting specifications, were infused into the chamber. Then the biomancer activated certain of the symbols that were engraved on the lid, creating a matrix of radiant light. For six days the contents of the chamber underwent a gradual transformation; on the seventh day, the new life form emerged from the chamber.

Thaumaturges of the New Age have long sought to find a functioning biomantic chamber, thus far without success. As an artifact of this sort could bring as much as 200,000 gold lumens, the search continues.

## Cloudship

These graceful conveyances were employed by Archaens of the Third Millennium, who used them to travel to and from the sky cities. The accommodations aboard the ship were both spacious and luxurious, allowing the passengers to travel in style and comfort. A typical cloudship carried a crew of twenty neomorph servitors (including cooks, stewards, crewmen, pilot, and navigator) and as many as a hundred passengers. An artifact of this sort might well be worth 200,000 gold lumens to such folk as the Hadjin or the Farad, who are especially fond of luxury items from the Forgotten Age.

## Cursed Tomes

The Torquarans of the Second Millennium were known to dabble in all sorts of black magical practices, from necromancy to demonology and diabolism. The written works employed in their rituals often contained terrifying curses, imprecations, and maledictions, many of which were utilized to coerce summoned creatures into service or to torment the Torquarans' enemies. Certain of these books are dangerous even to look at.

## Diabolical Artifacts

The Torquarans of the Second Millennium made pacts with devils of varying rank and order, seeking to enhance their power. Artifacts related to such practices include various types of paraphernalia used in sacrificial and summoning rites, such as cult vestments, scrolls, and books of summoning rituals, horned devil-masks, seeing stones used to contact certain lower planar entities, censers for the burning of black magical fumes, and so forth. Most of these artifacts were lost or stolen during the sacking of Torquaran, though some can still be found in underground tombs and hidden sanctums. The value of these items varies considerably, according to their nature and power, as well as the degree of interest exhibited by the collector.

## Drakken Glyphstones

Drakken Glyphstones date back to the Second Millennium, and originated either from the old cities of Golarin or Kharakhan. These great, flat stones measured as much as thirty feet in height, ten feet across, and three feet thick. Each was engraved with the unique Drakken symbology, the depth at which each glyph was carved expressing various subtle shades of meaning. Unfortunately, most of the ancient glyphstones now lay in pieces, scattered across the central plains of Talislanta. Only Kharakhan giants can read Drakken characters, a skill that they claim is intuitive, and cannot be taught. Nonetheless, scholars of ancient Drakken culture covet these fragments, and will sometimes pay up to 100 gold lumens for particularly legible specimens.

## Drakken Silver Coins

These relics from the Second Millennium were used as currency by the Drakken. The coins measure as much as six inches across, and bear the image of a dragon in bas relief. Coins in good condition are valued at up to one hundred gold lumens apiece.

## Drakken War Medallion

These artifacts from the Second Millennium were created by the Drakken, and awarded to warriors who had exhibited great courage in battle. Each resembles a seven-pointed star, carved from a large (100+ carat) firegem. The medallions were usually affixed to iron chains and worn about the neck. Value is twenty times the actual carat weight of the stone.

## Drakken Weapons and Armor

The oversized weapons and armor used by the giant warriors of the Drakken date back to the First and Second Millennia. Most were forged from black iron and engraved with Drakken symbology, the precise meaning of which remains a mystery to Talislantan scholars. As the Drakken knew nothing of magic, none of these items are enchanted. Hence, they are valued mainly as curios, and may bring prices of 100-1,000 gold lumens among collectors of antique arms.

## Elandar Compendiums

Before turning to more idle pursuits, the Elandar of the Third Millennium invested much time and energy in the compilation of such scholarly works as bestiaries, cosmologies, histories, and grimoires. The information gathered by the Elandar was imbued within enchanted orbs or engraved onto metallic tablets, then stored in hermetically sealed vaults along with samples of Talislantan flora and fauna; the latter, placed in stasis and contained within vials, globes, or cubes. These materials have never been recovered, but are believed to have survived intact in the City of the Four Winds. Elandar artifacts are currently in great demand among scholars of the New Age, and can bring prices over several thousand gold lumens.

## Elandar Levitating Boots

This form of enchanted footwear was popular among Archaens of the Third Millennium, especially the Elandar, who came to loath the prospect of walking on solid ground of any sort. These items were made in a variety of styles and sizes, and enabled the wearer to walk upon air, as desired. A pair of levitating boots, slippers, sandals, etc. would probably be valued at 1,500 gold lumens; more, if the shoes were particularly stylish or fancy.

## The Elixirs of Immortality

The most coveted possession of a nameless ruler of the Four Nations, the fabled Elixirs of Immortality have been lost since the Second Millennium. The seven silver phials in which they were contained were stored within an iron chest of Kasiran design, which could not be opened except by the use of an enchanted key. Regrettably, the owner of the chest lost the key, and, unable to open the chest, eventually died of old age. The impregnable chest and its priceless contents were set aside and then forgotten. Both the key and the chest remain missing to the present day.

## Elixir Vitae

This rare and costly alchemical substance was created by the Farnirins of the Third Millennium. A single vial was said to extend the drinker's life expectancy by approximately ten years, and was rarely sold for less than 1,000 gold lucre (the equivalent of 10,000 gold lumens in New Age currency). The secret of making elixir vitae was lost when the sky city of Farnir was frozen in permanent ice during The Great Disaster, and has never been recovered, at least as far as anyone knows; the Snowqueen of L'Haan may know the secret of Elixir Vitae, to which some attribute her exceptional longevity. The value of an active dose of elixir vitae could exceed 2,000 gold lumens, depending upon the age and perceived need of the buyer.

## Erythrian Iron Scorpion

These war engines were similar in purpose to the Erythrian war dragons of the Third Millennium, but were lighter, and were designed to resemble great metallic arachnids. The average scorpion measured over thirty feet in length, required a minimum crew of eight, and was equipped with powerful claws that could be used to crush opposing battle golems or troops. Land speed was probably SPD +2, with armor value somewhere within the PR 7 range. The most advanced models also had a tail stinger capable of spraying caustic acids, which could be used to dissolve heavy armor, barricades, or fortifications. An iron scorpion in good working order could be worth as much as 120,000 gold lumens.

## Erythrian Bombastion

Bombastions are a type of heavy siege engine utilized by the Erythrians in the ceaseless battles that ravaged the Plains of Armageddon during the Third Millennium. These devices were used to hurl amberglass spheres filled with alchemical toxins, poisonous gasses, or elemental essences at enemy troops and fortifications. The different types of bombastion, and their capabilities, are as follows:

| Type | Damage | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Heavy Bombastion** | **3d20** | Stationary, used in fortifications only |
| **Medium-Heavy Bombastion** | **2d20** | Mounted on War engines |
| **Medium Bombastion** | **d20** | Fieldpiece or war engine. |

A functioning bombastion of any type would be valued at 2,000-4,0000 gold lumens by collectors of military antiques.

## Erythrian War Dragon

These armored land conveyances were designed by Erythrian warrior mages during the Third Millennium. Most were similar in appearance to the old Kasir land dragons, though the Erythrian versions were equipped with thicker armor and heavy fire-bellows; the latter, a device used to discharge streams of fire essence against opposing armies of neomorphs. The average war dragon measured over fifty feet in length and required a crew of twelve neomorphs to operate at peak efficiency, though it could function adequately with half this number. It probably had a land speed of SPD +1, and an armor rating of PR 10. A conveyance of this sort in good working order might be worth as much as 150,000 gold lumens.

## Erythrian Siege Golem

Siege golems are gigantic metallic war engines created by the Erythrians during the Third Millennium, and used extensively in large scale military exercises on the continent of Altarus. These devices stood up to eighty feet in height, were manned by crews of thirty neomorphs, and equipped with heavy bombards and other weaponry. Land speed probably topped out at SPD -1, while armor rating may have been as high as PR 12. Siege Golems were employed primarily vs smaller war engines, fortifications, and the siege golems of opposing armies. The value of a functioning construct of this sort has been estimated at over 180,000 gold lumens.

## Erythrian Battle Golem

Battle golems (also known as juggernauts) are mechanized automatons created by the Erythrians during the Third Millennium, and employed in large scale military exercises on the continent of Altarus. These unmanned devices ranged from ten to twenty feet in height, and were equipped with magical weaponry capable of firing arcane bolts. Battle golems were rare even during the Forgotten Age, as they were very costly to build. It is believed that these constructs were also employed as sentinels in the sky cities, and so may be found in certain parts of Talislanta. A functioning construct of this sort could be worth as much as 200,000 gold lumens.

## Erythrian Flying Battle Dragon

These airborne conveyances were designed by Erythrian warrior mages during the Third Millennium. These constructs were similar in size, overall appearance, and armor rating to Erythrian war dragons, but were equipped with iron wings and fire-bellows that could discharge streams of fire essence against enemy forces. Maximum airspeed was probably SPD +2, though faster constructs may have been built for high ranking commanders.

Battle dragons were not intended for use by neomorphs. Rather, these impressive war machines were designed to be used exclusively by Erythrian commanders, and were equipped with many automatonic features, as well as certain conveniences; the battle dragon of the warlord, Rann, boasted a lavish bath and bedroom. A conveyance of this sort in good working order might be worth as much as 500,000 gold lumens.

## Farnirin Enhancements

Created by Farnirin alchemists of the Third Millennium, these enchanted mixtures were sold in small amberglass phials and employed primarily for cosmetic purposes. The most common types were used to alter skin color, hair color and/or texture, and even facial features; others were reputed to remove fat, reverse hair loss, or smooth unsightly wrinkles. Most of these enhancements were lost when the sky city of Farnir was frozen in ice during The Great Disaster. Surviving samples might bring prices over 200 gold lumens apiece.

## The Gilded Tomb of Irkhan

Preeminent among the rulers of the Four Nations, Irkhan is remembered as the wealthiest Archaen of the Second Millennium. His tomb, and everything within it, was said to have been made of pure gold. If the legends are to be given any credence, Irkhan's crypt was also notable as regards the number and type of wards employed to protect it from would-be thieves. These included, but were by no means limited to, the following: two dozen Kasiran death-traps of fiendish design, thirty enchanted glyphs and symbols, an uncountable number of minor traps and tricks, and a pair of ill-tempered guardian devils. Some say that the cost of protecting Irkhan's tomb exceeded the value of its contents, which in itself would be a cause for wonderment. Unfortunately, the veracity of these legends remains to be proven, as the Gilded Tomb of Irkhan has never been found to the present day.

## Icon

Icon was the name of the patron deity of the Numenian symbolators, who were extant during the Second through Third Millennia. He was represented by a giant leaden idol that measured over one hundred feet in height and weighed over a hundred tons. Icon stood guard over the gates of the mountainside city of Numenia. It was said that the idol was enchanted, and was capable of speaking in tongues, among other abilities; according to one legend, it was Icon who led the Numenians against Torquaran, striding across the plains at the head of the Numenian host. Icon was lost when Numenia was destroyed by an earthquake, his leaden form buried under a mountain of debris along with the ruins of the city that he was entrusted to watch.

## Jalladian Funerary Relics

During the Second Millennium, the inhabitants of Jalaad built an elaborate network of ossuariums in the subterranean levels beneath their city. Here they laid to rest the skeletal remains of the departed, which they stored in ornate funerary urns. These receptacles were made of silver, and inlaid with mosaics of semi-precious stones. When Jalaad was abandoned, its ossuariums were raided by renegade warriors and bandits, who made off with many relics. Yet others remain untouched, hidden in the deepest recesses of the ossuariums, preserved when sections of the tunnel either collapsed due to seismic disturbances or were sealed off to safeguard against robbery. The urns that can be found in these hidden chambers are valued at 2,000 gold lumens apiece by antiquarians and collectors.

## Kasiran Trap Mechanisms

The Kasiran trapmages of the Second Millennium were the ancestors of the Kasmirans, and are credited with the invention of trap arcanology. They specialized in devices that were powered by enchanted crystals and clockwork mechanisms, and operated according to both magical and mechanical principles. Though many Kasiran mechanisms were lost or destroyed during The Great Disaster, some can still be found in ancient crypts and vaults, performing the functions for which they were designed. The complexity of these devices is such that attempts to find or deactivate Kasiran mechanisms always require a minimum -10 penalty for degree of difficulty. Kasmiran trapmages value these artifacts as collectibles, but are even more interested in their practical applications. A mechanism in good working order, or a complete schematic of a Kasiran device, may bring prices above 10,000 gold lumens in Kasmir of the Nine Kingdoms.

## Kasiran Iron Dragons

These armored conveyances were created by Kasir artificers during the Third Millennium, and were used to transport goods between the various cities of the Archaen Empire. The largest measured up to one hundred feet in length, had a maximum land speed of SPD -1, and an armor rating of PR 5. Powered by enchanted crystals, these giant metallic quadrupeds provided much-needed protection from tribes of marauding Sub-Men and wild beasts. Curiously, it is said that these constructs occasionally attracted the unwanted attention of male land dragons, who are notoriously near-sighted. Most of these Kasiran artifacts were destroyed when the Archaens abandoned the old cities and took to the skies, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Sub-Men. A few may still lie buried under the rubble of the old cities, though none has been found to date. A Kasiran iron dragon in good working order would no doubt be coveted by scholars and collectors alike, and could bring as much as 100,000 gold lumens.

## Neurian Automatons

These mechanisms were constructed by the Neurians during the Third Millennium, and were made in a variety of forms, each having a specific purpose. The most common types were humanoid automatons, which the Neurians used as servitors. Thes automatons were used to record data or perform tasks adjudged to be too difficult or dangerous for living beings. Less commonly, automatons were built to resemble other types of creatures such as steeds, though it was the Archaens who were most fond of curiosities of this sort. A functioning Neurian automaton may be valued at up to 70,000 gold lumens, depending upon its capabilities.

## Neurian Technomantic Apparatus

The Neurians of the Third Millennium created many different types of advanced mechanisms and constructs based on the principles of Technomancy. Some of these were of alien make, and were quite incomprehensible to the Archaens. Others had more obvious applications, such as alchemical forges for the purification or transmutation of metals, drills for mining raw ores, metal hulled vessels, timepieces, and analytical implements of various types. Unfortunately, most Neurian apparati were lost when the continent of Simbar sank beneath the Crimson Sea. The value of any Neurian artifact retrieved from the depths of the Crimson Sea would depend upon its condition and function, the latter determination being by no means a simple task (see Unknown Artifacts, in this chapter).

## The Nine Books of Knowledge

These legendary artifacts date back to the Second Millennium, and were once owned by one of the forgotten rulers of the Four Nations. The Nine Books contained a complete transcription of the arcane secrets that were stored within the great Archaen Orb, from which the Archaen Codex was also derived. The Codex was stored in the city of Phandril, and later brought to the sky city of Aeon. The Nine Books of Knowledge were stored in an underground vault, but were lost during the War of Four Nations. These priceless artifacts have never been found, despite numerous attempts by such interested parties as the Aamanian Orthodoxists, the Rajans, and the Cymrilians, to name just a few. The Lyceum Arcanum has offered a reward of 500,000 gold lumens for the recovery of these ancient texts, or 250,000 gold lumens for the ninth book alone, which is believed to contain the lost chapter on Sorcery that was somehow deleted from the Archaen Codex.

## Numenian Temple Artifacts

These artifacts, which date back to the Second Millennium, include such items as brass temple gongs, reliquaries, idols of Icon, censers, ancient scriptures engraved on stone tablets, and so on. Most articles from this period are worth 400-1,200 gold lumens.

## Numenian Holy Items

The Numenians of the Second Millennium were symbolators, who revered the god, Icon, a living symbol of the primal force. Their holy items were medallions of brass or copper, engraved with symbols signifying various aspects of their god. These items are valued at upwards of 300 gold lumens by collectors of antiques and religious artifacts.

## Numenian Prayer Wheel

Numenian priests and priestesses of the Second Millennium carried these stone disks on pilgrimages to distant lands, swinging them back and forth on leather thongs and chanting their holy words. Most Numenain prayer wheels measured about a foot in diameter, and were engraved with cult symbols. Others, usually carried only by penitents, were two or three times this size, and extremely heavy. These artifacts may be found throughout the central regions of Talislanta, and are valued at 400-600 gold lumens apiece by collectors of antiquities and religious relics.

## Orb of Arcanalysis

These devices were created by the Phandre of Pompados during the Third Millennium, and sold throughout the sky cities of the Archaens. The typical orb resembled a two-inch diameter sphere of transparent crystal, and was employed in the manner of a lens. Used in conjunction with the skill, Arcanalysis, the orbs were effective in determining the type, level, duration, and probable effect of any form of spell or enchantment. Orbs of Arcanalysis functioned with regard to visible or invisible spell manifestations (illusions, invisible objects, mists, etc.), enchanted artifacts, symbols, or any other form of magic. The time required to complete an analysis is ten rounds, with an effective range being limited to one foot.

## Osmarin Blades

The Osmarin weaponsmiths of the Second Millennium were known for the fine blades that they fashioned from enchanted blue iron, which were used in the making of runeswords. These artifacts are considered to be superior to even the best Zandir blades, and sell for 2-5 times the price of comparable enchanted weapons.

## Osmarin Battle Armor

The Osmarin armorsmiths of the Second Millennium were unsurpassed in their craft, and were renowned for the fine suits of enchanted battle armor that they made from enchanted blue iron. Each component was custom made to fit the wearer, and inscribed with magical glyphs and symbols that served to augment the protective value of the armor. The best suits of Osmarin battle armor conferred protection vs an elemental force (such as fire, cold, lightning, etc.), +1 magic resistance, and protection equivalent to battle armor +5. These artifacts are considered to be superior to even the finest armor of the current era, and sell for 2-5 times the price of comparable enchanted armor.

## Osmarin Enchanted Items

During the Second Millennium, Osmarin artificer mages created many types of enchanted rods, wands, and staves. The Osmarin knew the secret of imbuing these items with as many as seven spell powers, the secret of doing so having been lost after The Great Disaster. Each spell power could be used once per day, or up to three times per day as regards the most expensive and advanced items. Consequently, these artifacts are valued at no less than seven times the price of wands, staves, or rods created after The Disaster.

## Pagan Idols

These stone representations of the mysterious entities now known only as the Forgotten Gods date back to the First Millennium, and are very rare. Of those that managed to escape the ravages of time and the elements, most were destroyed by Aamanian crusaders during the early years of the Cult Wars. A few of these artifacts can still be found in the depths of Werewood, buried under centuries of undergrowth, and in the territories of the Dhuna witchfolk. The latter are still used in certain pagan rituals associated with the Dhuna, many of which are believed to date back to the beginnings of the Forgotten Age.

Types of pagan idols include:

**Bajan:** Bajan was believed to be the ruler of the material world, and was depicted in the form of a golden idol. Images of him were either made of gold, or made of base metal plated with a thin veneer of gold.

**The Beast-God:** patron deity of all wild beasts, and by inference, the Sub-Men. He is depicted as a creature half-man and half-beast, who revels in his wild and savage nature.

**The Morgod:** The Morgod was a destroyer, known as the killer of the gods. Neither male nor female, the Morgod was depicted as a metal-scaled giant of monstrous aspect. Its gaze was reputed to be deadly; hence, images of the Morgod were always covered until needed for certain rituals.

**Narag the Dragon:** Despite the claims of some Talislantan scholars, Narag was probably not a god, but was more likely one of the first Drakken Kings of Kharakhan. The Sauran goddess, Satha, may have been derived from the legends of Narag.

**Kron the Mighty:** A silver-skinned warrior of great size, Kron was called the Defender of the Faithful, and was the enemy of all evil deities. Some Talislantan scholars believe that Kron may have been a Paramane of great power, though none can say for certain.

**Lissilis of the Many Veils:** Lissilis was an astral deity, associated with the stars and heavenly bodies. Her magical veils were said to conceal the secrets of creation from mortal beings.

**Sarielle the Temptress:** Goddess of magic, Sarielle was neither good nor evil. According to the male-dominated views of the early Archaens, she tempted men to learn Magic so that they would always be devoted to her.

**Death:** Legends of the ruler of the Underworld go back to the earliest known records, though, in the view of the ancient Archaens, Death was a female entity.

Collectors and scholars of Primitive Magic value these artifacts, and may pay up to 2,000 gold lumens for information regarding the location of these ancient treasures.

## Phandrean Glass Sarcophagi

From the latter part of the First Millennium to the end of the Third Millennium, it was the custom of the Phandre to inter their dead in glass sarcophagi. These were placed in mausoleum towers, and warded with Kasiran traps and magicks. Many of these structures still stand to the present day, in the vicinity of what was once the city-state of Hadjistan.

The value of a Phandrean sarcophagus is based primarily on its age, which can be determined according to the color of glass used in its making. During the First through Third Millennia there were fourteen different periods, each known by its characteristic color, as follows:

**First Millennium:** sarcophagi from the Amethyst, Jade, Ruby, and Emerald Periods, valued at 6,000 gold lumens.

**Second Millennium:** sarcophagi from the Carnelian, Amber, Turquoise, Topaz, and Opal Periods, valued at 4,000 gold lumens.

**Third Millennium:** sarcophagi from the Tourmaline, Sapphire, Aquamarine, Onyx, and Crystal Periods, valued at 2,000 gold lumens.

## Phandrean Art

The Phandre were noted for their artistes, who created works of wondrous beauty. The most famous of these were:

**Cadelius:** a renowned sculptor of the Amethyst Period. His works are valued at 60,000 gold lumens and up.

**LeFanque:** a painter of the Jade period. His pictures are valued at 30,000 gold lumens.

**Mordira:** a sculptor of the Amber Period. Her pieces are worth more than 40,000 gold lumens.

**Neos Naalo:** a painter of the Sapphire Period. His portraits of Phandre magicians are valued at 25,000 gold lumens and up.

**Sandelle:** a poetess of the Jade Period. Original copies of her works may bring 2,000-5,000 gold lumens each.

## Phandrean Windship

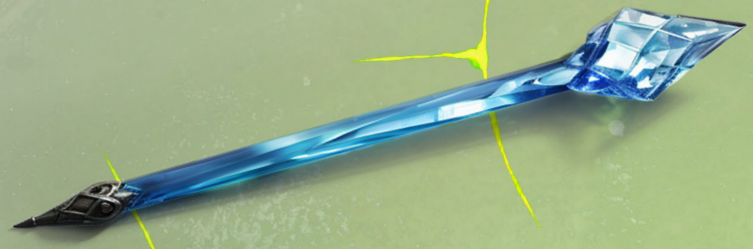
These artifacts date back to the latter part of the Millennium, and are exceedingly rare; a complete windship from this era, with all its parts intact, has never been found. Portions of ancient wooden hulls, early levitationals, ship's gear, and the like sell for 50-5,000 gold lumens, depending upon their condition and intrinsic value. The characteristics of these ships were probably comparable to the first Cymrilian windships of the New Age.

## Rod of Transmutation

The rod of transmutation was created by the thaumaturges of Pompados, during the Third Millennium. These thamaturgic wands were made of argentium (alchemical silver), and were used to alter the very substance of non-living matter, from solid to liquid or gaseous form. Up to 5 x 5 x 5 feet of substance can be affected per level of the device. These artifacts are prized by Dracartan thaumaturges, who will pay as much as 20,000 gold lumens for a rod of transmutation that is in good working order.

## Sky Chariot

Sky chariots were in common use toward the latter part of the Third Millennium. These conveyances were built for speed, rather than cargo capacity or durability, and were often employed in various types of sporting events and competitions. Most measured approximately fourteen feet in length and had a maximum airspeed of +10. Both one and two passenger types were produced. A working model of either type might be valued at up to 50,000 gold lumens by collectors of ancient artifacts.



## Sky Barge

These large aerial conveyances were produced during the Third Millennium, and were used primarily to haul cargos of goods to and from the sky cities. The average sky barge measured over two hundred feet in length, was built to accommodate a crew of twenty neomorphic servitors, and had a maximum cargo capacity of over 100,000 pounds. The maximum airspeed probably did not exceed SPD +2. Like the vast majority of Archaen artifacts these vessels possessed a certain aesthetic charm, many being decorated with the images of mythological creatures or ancient deities. A functional craft of this sort could command as much as 40,000 gold lumens.

## Stasis Cubes & Orbs

These artifacts were created by the biomancers of Imperion during the Third Millennium, who employed stasis cubes and orbs to preserve lifeforms for study, and shipment back to the sky city of Elande. The cubes and orbs were made airtight, but possessed no enchantment of their own; the Spell of Stasis was utilized as the activating principle. Depending upon their contents and condition, artifacts of this sort may be worth between 1,000 and 20,000 gold lumens, or much more than this if a specimen of a now-extinct species were to be found.

## Thane Funerary Relics

An ancient folk of morbid habits, the Thane created many types of funerary relics for use in their rituals. The most common types include:

**Death Shroud:** the black death shrouds worn by the deceased were trimmed in silver thread as a precaution vs demons. A shroud in good condition will bring 500 gold lumens or more from a collector of funerary relics.

**Funerary Mask:** these items were intended to ward the body of the deceased from demons of all types. They were made of lead, tin, copper, silver, or gold, the value of the metal used is an indication of the deceased's status. Silver masks were reserved for those of the highest rank, followed by gold, and copper. A tin mask signified that the deceased died before reaching adulthood. Lead masks were placed on traitors, or individuals who had in some way disgraced their families or themselves. New Age collectors value silver and gold masks at 12,000 gold lumens, copper and tin masks at 3,000 gold lumens, and lead masks at 100 gold lumens. The latter are rarely sold, however, for it is widely believed that they are cursed.

**Brass Funerary Urns:** these three-foot-tall brass and silver urns are sealed with paraffin, and inscribed with occult symbols. Similar items have been found which contained captive sardonicus or corpse dust. However, authentic Thane urns were used to contain the spiritform of the deceased, which the Thane believed would be reunited with the body after the end of the world. These artifacts are valued at 1,000 gold lumens by collectors of antiquities.

**Braziers of Eternal Flame:** these elaborately wrought artifacts are made of black iron, and stand approximately six feet in height, with a clawed, tripodal base. The cold fire that burns within the brazier provides no heat and consumes no fuel but burns forever, and can only be extinguished by magical means. These artifacts were manufactured in Thanatus, and are thousands of years old. They are valued at 4,000 gold lumens apiece.

**Obs**idian Mirror: these artifacts, made from polished volcanic stone, serve as viewports into the lower planes. They are quite rare, and are generally only found in the crypts of important individuals. An obsidian mirror can be used once per day for up to 10 rounds per level of the viewer and allows communication with entities from any of the lower planes of existence. Needless to say, these items are dangerous, and should not be employed except by individuals who are skilled in the arts of Necromancy. They are valued at up to 30,000 gold lumens by collectors of necromantic paraphernalia.

## Tomb of Orrix

The tomb of Orrix is dedicated to the Drakken King of the same name, who is believed to have been buried beneath what is now known as the Ruins of Four Nations sometime before the First Millennium. The mummified remains of Orrix, who was also known as the Great Dragon, are said to lay in a massive stone sarcophagus studded with firegems. The tomb has never been found, and so the value of its contents cannot be estimated.

## Torquaran Essence Extractor

These frightful devices date back to the Second Millennium, when they were utilized in operations involving the since-abandoned practice of alchemical hybridization. Crude and inhumane, essence extractors were used to drain living creatures and beings of their vital essences, which were then employed to create hybrid species. The typical extractor

resembled a misshapen alembic, from which extended a complex network of tubes. These were affixed at various points to the subjects of the experiment, and served as conduits through which the vital fluids were derived. The subjects suffered horribly, the process almost invariably resulting in death.

Dozens of essence extractors were destroyed during the fall of Torquaran, though a few may have been smuggled out of the city or hidden in underground vaults. The Rajans have offered a reward of 200,000 gold lumens for a working essence extractor, or 100,000 for a complete set of schematics. The devices are outlawed in most civilized lands, where it is a crime to possess an essence extractor.

## Torquaran Soulstones

During the Second Millennium, the Torquarans killed untold thousands of innocent victims in the Fire Pits of Malnangar, in dungeons, and torture chambers of elaborate and sinister design. The souls of their victims were not allowed to move on to the next world, but were captured in receptacles known as soulstones; the products of a primitive and dark form of magic. Thousands of soulstones were offered as sacrifices, likely to the demonic "gods" of the Sepharans. A few remain, buried in the ruins of Torquar or scattered throughout the surrounding territories. Certain practitioners of black magic have been known to pay sums in excess of 10,000 for soulstones of Torquar origin, this despite the danger posed by Xambrian wizard hunters, who regard anyone in possession of even a single Torquaran soulstone as an accessory to murder.

## Torquaran Torture Instruments

The Torquarans of the Second Millennium employed a variety of grisly instruments to torture their enemies. The most favored of these included barbed hooks, clawed tongs, vats filled with caustic alchemical agents, hollow metal spikes used to inject toxins into the veins or eyes of victims, and others too horrible to describe. Most implements of this sort bear the mark of a diabolical sigil in the form of a horned skull and lightning bolt, allowing for easy identification. Torquaran instruments are greatly favored by Rajan torturers, who will pay as much as 1,000 gold lumens for an authentic piece, or as much as twenty times this for articles that possess some form of enchantment. Outside of Rajanistan, these instruments are regarded as cursed, and are usually shunned by decent folk.

## Torquaran Weapons and Armor

These artifacts originate from the Torquaran Empire, which was extant during the Second Millennium. They were employed by the Torquarans' hybrid armies, and to a lesser extent, the Torquarans themselves. The most common types include black iron shields, helms, three-bladed axes, spiked gauntlets, bracers, and pieces of plate mail. Artifacts of this sort are distinguishable by the use of horned skull and lightning bolt motif, and are worth upwards of 100-400 gold lumens to collectors; ten or twenty times this, if the item is enchanted.

## Witch Gates

These artifacts resemble stone archways engraved with ancient symbols, and may date back to the first century of the Forgotten Age. It is believed that witch gates were integral to the pagan rituals of the ancient Archaens, though how they were employed remains something of a mystery. Some scholars of Primitive Magic believe that these artifacts may have been used as viewports, through which cult priests and priestesses could contact the Forgotten Gods. Others claim that these artifacts served as "spirit gates," through which the souls of sacrificial victims were ostensibly sent to placate the Gods.

Witch gates are now very rare, a condition that can be directly attributed to the efforts of Aamanian zealots, who destroyed many of these ancient structures during the Cult Wars. A few remain, hidden in the depths of Werewood. Some of these are still employed in the rituals of the Dhuna. Collectors and scholars of Primitive Magic will often pay as much as 12,000 gold lumens for a witchgate.

## Witchstones

Witchstones are thin disks fashioned from polished stone, similar in appearance to prayer wheels but measuring only 1-2 inches in diameter. These artifacts are engraved with strange glyphs and symbols, and are believed to date back to the second or third century of the Forgotten Age. Witchstones were worn as amulets, and were used to protect the wearer from black magic; specifically, the Evil Eye, a talent attributed to the members of certain pagan cults extant during this period. Their actual properties vary considerably, some being more efficacious than others. Despite such discrepancies, these artifacts are valued at 1,000-3,000 gold lumens.

The following is a list of artifacts that are believed to have been created by certain of the legendary magicians of the Forgotten Age. These items are very rare, and in some cases unique.

## Arkon's Pharmacopaeus

This unusual artifact was created by the sorcerer, Arkon, who was known to be a heavy user of various types of exotic, and often addictive, alchemical substances. Arkon never traveled anywhere without his pharmacopoeias, an enchanted device that served as his personal "stash" of alchemical wares. The device resembled an ornate silver snuff box decorated with fine scrollwork and raised symbology. By pressing the symbols in a certain sequence, a one dram quantity of any of the following alchemical powders could be made to appear within the box:

**Euphorica:** a synthesis of pure pleasure. Side-effects include impaired reflexes (-1 DEX) and lowered inhibitions (-1 WIL)

**Arkon's panacea:** a powerful stimulant that increases strength and endurance (+1 STR and CON) for one hour; side-effects include nervousness (-1 DEX), irritability (-1 CHA), and impaired judgment (-1 INT)

**Tantalus:** a powerful aphrodisiac

**Prismatica:** a potent hallucinogen that yields wildly colorful visions

**Meta-Morphius:** a depressant; in large doses, a soporific that enabled Arkon to sleep off the effects of other drugs.

Arkon's Pharmacopaeus can be used seven times in a given 24 hour period. It is valued at 30,000 gold lumens.



## Cascal's Mirrors

The Illusionist, Cascal, was known to have created three enchanted mirrors for his personal use. The first showed the viewer as he perceived himself; the second, as he was perceived by any other person that the viewer named. The properties of the third mirror are not known. The set is valued at 60,000 gold lumens.

## Koraq's Automaton

This mechanical humanoid, who was referred to as Ovid, was a gift from the Neurians to the sorcerer Koraq. Ovid served as a tireless recorder of the copious amount of sorcerous data that Koraq generated each day in the course of his work. This material was stored within the automaton's sensorium, and later transcribed into written form. It was within the purview of Ovid's talents to serve not only as a scribe but also as an editor; thus, conflicts between the author and his mechanical servant were not uncommon. Ovid was a vast repository of arcane knowledge, and if found intact would be valued at over 300,000 gold lumens.

## Koraq's Pocket Compendium

The sorcerer Koraq created this device as an adjunct to magical research. His pocket compendium resembled a crystal rectangle, 4 x 3 x 1 inches in size, engraved with intricate symbology. This device served as a portable cyclopedia of sorcerous formulae and quantum magical theorems; the data being accessed by pressing various symbols in combination. The procedure was purported to be so complex as to baffle Koraq's contemporary, Arkon, who claimed that it would be simpler and faster to travel to the ancient library at Jalaad and search through the archives. Arkon's comments notwithstanding, the compendium is valued at 50,000 gold lumens.

## LaMune's Fabulous Boots

This pair of black lizard hide boots was created by LaMune the Water Walker, who imbued them with three useful properties. First and foremost, the boots allow one to walk or run for an indefinite period without experiencing fatigue. Second, they bestow a +5 advantage when climbing rocky surfaces or other types of rough terrain. Lastly, LaMune's boots allow the wearer to leap up to twenty feet vertically, or forty feet horizontally. These items are valued at 30,000 gold lumens.

## Malderon's Cabinet

The wizard Malderon constructed this device, which was made of eleven rare hardwoods from the continent of Celadon. The cabinet measured five feet in height, three feet in width, and one foot deep, yet was capable of holding a quantity of material equal to a storeroom ten times this size. This seemingly miraculous feat was made possible by a form of enchantment that caused any non-living thing placed within the cabinet to be reduced to one-tenth its normal size. Removing any article from the cabinet caused it to expand to its original size. Malderon was said to have kept a large collection of books, wizardly paraphernalia, his wardrobe, and a selection of fine liquors inside his cabinet, which has never been found. This artifact is valued at 75,000 gold lumens, not including the possible contents of the cabinet.

## Miraja's Veils

These seven gossamer veils were created by the illusionist, Miraja, who imbued each with one of the properties of the spell, Miraja's Illusory Veils. The veils function like the spell in all respects save one: their effects last until the veils are removed. The Dance of the Diaphanous Veils, which both Dhuna and Sarista cultures, may be attributed to legends about these articles. A complete set of veils is valued at 20,000 gold lumens.

## Shaladin's Impregnable Vault

The Kasiran trapmage, Shaladin, designed this vault to be impervious to the best attempts of thieves. The basic design called for an outer shell of solid black iron, one foot thick and plated with adamant. The door was of similar construction, and equipped with a puzzle lock of eleven stages, six of which were trapped with some of Shaladin's most devious mechanisms. Inside was a second vault, similar in construction to the first, though smaller and with a different puzzle lock and traps. The original plans called for a third vault inside the second one, though it was the opinion of Shaladin's peers that this was overkill. A complete set of diagrams for an Impregnable Vault is valued at over 15,000 gold lumens.

## Malderon's Hats

The wizard Malderon was an avid collector of unusual headwear, a hobby that became something of an obsession with him in his later years. Though his peers attributed this odd predilection to advancing senility, there was a method to Malderon's apparent madness, for many of his hats possessed useful magical virtues. Various types believed to have been included in his collection include:

**Weatherproof:** this hat emanates an elemental aura that protects not just the wearer's head, but his or her entire body, from the effects of any type of inclement weather. It is valued at 6,000 gold lumens.

**Inconspicuous:** this wide-brimmed hat is imbued with a minor enchantment that allows the wearer to blend into any crowd (-5 to detect), and is an effective deterrent against spies and bill collectors. It is valued at 8,000 gold lumens.

**Thinking Cap:** this conical hat increases one's powers of intellect (+2 INT). It is valued at 12,000 gold lumens.

**Charismatic:** this flamboyant hat is charged with a glamour that enhances one's overall appearance and presence (+2 CHA). It is valued at 4,000 gold lumens.

**Watchman:** this hat increases the wearer's powers of perception and general alertness (+2 PER). It is valued at 6,000 gold lumens.

**Magician's Hat:** this hat contains a pocket dimension, and will hold up to 5 x5 x 5 feet of materials. Objects stored within can be retrieved by removing the hat, reaching inside, and bringing forth the desired item. It is valued at 10,000 gold lumens.

**Adjustable Hat:** this can be made to expand or contract on command to fit any head size. Aside from this, the hat possesses no other known virtues. It is valued at 500 gold lumens, primarily as a curiosity.

A collection of Malderon's Hats is on display at the Lyceum Arcanum, in the crystal city of Cymril. Many others are believed to exist, but have yet to be found.

## Shaladin's Thief-Begones

These devices resembled a set of four iron wayposts, each measuring four feet in height and inscribed with potent symbols and wards. By setting these posts around one's property it was possible to create an invisible magical perimeter that was secure from unwanted intruders, such as thieves, wild beasts, and overly persistent peddlers. Anyone attempting to pass through the magical perimeter would receive a stinging electrical shock (d10 damage), sending the would-be intruder reeling backward. No post may be located more than one hundred feet from the others for the protective field to function as intended. A cantrip of three secret words was used to activate and deactivate this device. A complete set of four thief-begones could bring as much as 25,000 gold lumens.

## Solimorrion's Ring

This ring bore the personal sigil of Solimorrion I, who used it as a seal, impressing it upon the covers of all his books and documents. Writings protected by this potent ward emanate a tangible aura of magic — an invisible field of energy that prevents them from being touched by unauthorized persons, and is harmful to devils of all sorts (d20 damage if touched). Only individuals of true faith can handle items protected by the Seal of Solimorrion; others will be repelled by the invisible aura. Solimorrion's original ring is valued at 100,000 gold lumens by theosophists and collectors. A dozen rings were created for use by Solimorrion's most trusted priests, each of these being valued at 50,000 gold lumens.

## Solimorrion's Star

Solimorrion I was known to wear a sacred medallion in the form of a seven-pointed star, which he claimed was anathema to devils of all types. It was reported that no devil could bear to gaze upon this sacred symbol without experiencing grave discomfort (-5 on all die rolls while within 20 feet of the medallion). The medallion is believed to have contributed to Solimorrion's defeat of Narishna, the black wizard of Torquar. This artifact is valued at 250,000 gold lumens.

## Sylan's Tiara

The sorceress Sylan was widely renowned as a magician of wide abilities, and was admired by such as Koraq, the Enchantress, Malderon, and many others. Yet her success also won her many enemies, to say nothing of the many jealous rivals who coveted her secrets. To protect herself, Sylan created an enchanted tiara made of silver and gold, which rendered her proof from all forms of magical influence, mind probes, and even illusions. The value of this item is estimated at 200,000 gold lumens — a somewhat inflated figure, perhaps, but one which reflects the great rarity of any article possessed by Sylan.

## Viridian's Seeds

A simulacrum created by the great Koraq, Viridian was known to prefer the company of plants to that of men. To this end, he devised numerous hybrid species of plant life to keep him company, or for the amusement or edification of his other plant companions. At Koraq's request Viridian sent several dozen silver phials of seeds to Paz, Koraq's floating domus. Mysteriously, some never arrived, but were lost in transit. The rogue magician Zanillo remains a prime suspect as regards the missing seeds, which have never been found to the present day. A single phial of seven seeds, identifiable by Viridian's seal engraved upon the lid, is valued at 10,000 gold lumens; more, if the contents of the phial prove to be particularly rare or unusual.

## Zanillo's Bag of Tricks

This unusual item resembles an ordinary leather pouch or bag, but is much more than that. Inside was stored a variety of minor magical adjuncts, which Zanillo utilized in the pursuit of his avowed profession, and to facilitate in the performance of various practical jokes and nasty tricks. The contents of Zanillo's Bag of Tricks are believed to include the following:



**Stench-Oil:** a vial of this volatile liquid is sufficient to fill a 10 x 10 x 10 area with the most nauseating stench imaginable (roll vs CON at -5 or be incapacitated by severe nausea for 10 rounds, minus one round per point of CON).

**Lubra-Oil:** a vial of this fluid will render any solid surface up to 10 square feet in area exceedingly slippery (roll vs DEX at -5 or slip and fall; roll again if trying to regain one's feet). Placed on a weapon or other article, slip-oil makes the item almost impossible to handle (roll vs DEX at -5 every round an individual attempts to grasp such an item).

**Sneeze-Powder:** a vial of this powdery dust is sufficient to cause all individuals within a 10 x 10 x 10 area to begin sneezing uncontrollably (roll vs CON at -5 to resist). The effects last for 10 rounds (-1 round per point of CON).

**Zanillo's Lock-Picks:** this packet of lock-picking tools is imbued with a minor enchantment that increases their effectiveness (+5 on all lock picking attempts).

**Portable Hole:** this unusual type of pocket dimension comes in a tiny amberglass box, and can be used to create a hole in any non-magical and non-living surface. To use a portable hole, one simply picks it up and places it wherever desired. The width of the hole can be adjusted as desired, from one inch to three feet in diameter. Maximum depth is one foot. The portable hole is reusable, and can be picked up and returned to its protective box.

**Portable Shadow:** this is a quantity of magical darkness contained within a stoppered amberglass bottle. The darkness can be poured out at need to create an area of shadow up to 6 x 3 x 3 feet in volume — sufficient for an average-sized humanoid to stand within it, and be hidden from view. The shadow emanates a faint aura of magic, and is impervious to non-magical sources of illumination. Individuals inside the area of darkness can see out of it without a problem, but will be unable to see anything inside the portable shadow.

Zanillo's original Bag of Tricks contained many more unusual items, and would probably sell for over 40,000 gold lumens, if anyone could find it. Many imitations have been discovered over the years, some containing only a few of the above-mentioned tricks. These items are worth considerably less, ranging in value from 100-2,000 gold lumens, depending upon their contents.

# Spell-Powered Artifacts

The following is a list of artifacts imbued with properties based upon rare spells, many of which can be attributed to the magicians of past ages. Enchanted items of this sort are very rare; in fact, some may be unique, though accurate information regarding this subject is virtually nonexistent. In all cases, the Gamemaster is the sole determinant of whether items of this sort can be found in his or her campaign.

Like the spells from which these devices have been derived, spell-powered artifacts are zealously coveted by Talislantan Magicians, and are rarely sold. Their value as curios alone may well exceed 25,000 gold lumens. Unless stated otherwise, these devices can be used up to three times per day.

## Amulet of Spell Negation

This amulet of carved onyx is enchanted with a first-level Aura of Spell Negation. When activated by touch, the amulet envelopes the wearer in an invisible aura of anti-magical energy. This protective aura will negate any single form of magic directed against the wearer, regardless of the level of the enchantment. The aura confers protection against all types of magic, including other auras, the effects of symbols, spells, magical manifestations or anomalies, and magical weaponry. In the latter case, the magical properties of the weapon will be negated by the aura, but not its non-magical (physical) capabilities. Note that the aura and its protective properties are dispersed immediately following the first contact with any kind of magic, or if the beneficiary attempts to cast a spell while protected by this enchantment. The amulet may only be used once per day.

## Arkon's Ring

This ring of intertwined silver filaments is enchanted with a 10th level version of the spell, Arkon's Impermeable Web. When activated by touch, the ring creates an impassable mesh of interconnecting lines of force, which may be used to entrap enemies or as a barrier against hostile creatures, interlopers, etc. The shape or form of the web (box, wall, fence, etc.) is up to the caster to determine, the maximum area of the mesh created by the spell being limited to 100 x 100 feet. Note that a web, once cast, cannot be moved or altered, and can only be rendered null utilizing an appropriate counter-spell.

Escape from an Impermeable Web is possible only by individuals or entities who possess intra-dimensional capabilities (via spell, magical adjunct or other means). Even non-corporeal entities cannot penetrate a magical barrier of this sort. Duration is 100 rounds.

## Arkon's Wand

This slender wand is made from seven narrow bands of silver twisted in a tight spiral around a central rod of blue crystal, and imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Arkon's Twister. The wand emits a powerful vortex of magical forces that can be used to entrap a single, man-sized subject in a powerful vortex of arcane force. The speed at which the victim is made to spin can be controlled by the caster, as follows:

**"Intensity One"** is sufficient to cause extreme vertigo, and to relieve the victim of hand-held objects and items secured in pockets, pouches, etc.

**"Intensity Two"** is sufficient to hurtle the victim ten feet (per level) in any direction, with the victim taking corresponding damage upon impact with any solid surface.

**"Intensity Three"** creates a vortex of such velocity that it will propel the victim through the dimensional fabric and into another plane of existence (caster's choice).

Intended victims may attempt to outrace the Vortex (roll vs SPD at -10). Range is 100 feet, and duration is10 rounds.

## Astramir's Wand of Analysis

This wand is fashioned of red iron and enchanted with the spell, Astramir's Thaumaturgic Analysis. This device can be used to identify any substance or mixture, thereby determining its true properties and/or effects. The wand serves as an infallible detector of poisons and toxins, among its many other practical applications. To utilize the wand, the wielder must first isolate a quantity of the substance that is to be identified (a phial, tongs, spatula or appropriate container of any sort will suffice for this purpose). This done, the wielder waves the wand over the isolated sampling, yielding a prismatic pattern which the caster may study and thereby deduce the desired information. The higher the level at which this spell is cast, the more detailed the information that can be determined. The analysis takes ten rounds to complete. Note that Astramir's Wand of Analysis will reveal if a substance radiates magic, but is of no use in identifying or categorizing the possible applications of enchanted items. Range is one foot and duration is 10 rounds.

## Astramir's Wand of Transmutation

This slender red iron wand is surmounted by a triangular crystal of prismatite and imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Astramir's Transmutation. This allows the caster to transmute the nature of any non-magical substance or material: from solid to liquid, solid to gas, liquid to solid, etc. The amount of material that can be affected by this enchantment is ten cubic feet. The spell has no toxic or harmful qualities per se, and yields unusual effects when used upon living creatures, as follows:

- A living entity transmuted to gaseous or liquid form is normally able to maintain integrity and control over its substance
- A gaseous being can hover and float above the ground
- A liquefied being can seep into narrow cracks and crevices, etc.
- A solidified creature or being, transmuted to a variety of rigid carbon compounds, gains an increased resistance to damage (as if wearing plate armor), but suffers a corresponding loss of mobility (-4 reduction in SPD and DEX). Range is by touch and duration is 10 rounds per level.

## Black Urn of Malnangar

These artifacts resemble sealed urns made from obsidian and engraved with occult symbols. Each contains a 10th level version of the spell, Black Mists of Malnangar, which can be released by breaking the seal on the urn. The volume of mist created by the spell is limited to 10 x 10 x 10 feet, the shape of the cloud being determined according to the caster's designs: grasping hands, snaking tendrils and anthropomorphic forms are especially popular. The mists will move by their own accord towards the nearest living creatures or beings, traveling at a speed of SPD +1. The mists contained with the urn may exhibit one of the following magical effects:

**Paralysis:** duration is 100 rounds.

**Blindness:** duration is 100 rounds.

**Strangulation:** up to ten living creatures or beings will be targeted, within the range limitations of this spell. Damage is d8 per round for 10 rounds.

The range is 100 feet. Intended victims may attempt to outrun the mists by rolling vs SPD at -10.

## Cascal's Cloak of Reflection

These cloaks of shimmering spangalor were invested with a 10th level version of the spell, Cascal's Reflective Aura. When activated by a secret word of command, the cloak envelops its wearer in a shimmering aura of light that confers protection against spells of illusion, hallucinations, visual attack forms, and radiant or prismatized light. Spells or other visual attack forms directed against the aura are reflected upon the caster/attacker. Note that a Cloak of Reflection protects only against spells or attacks directed at the beneficiary of the enchantment; i.e., the aura itself does not allow the beneficiary to detect illusions. Illusory creatures or objects (being composed of light) cannot penetrate a Reflective Aura, however. Duration is 10 rounds.

## Cascal's Cloak of Shadows

These cloaks of black spangalor are imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Cascal's Shadow Dimension. When activated utilizing a secret word of command, the cloak envelops its wearer in an extra-dimensional space that resembles an area of darkness or shadow. The wearer may step into this space and look out unseen upon the surrounding area, or hide one or more objects within the extra-dimensional space, as desired. The extradimensional space can be exited or entered at will for the length of its duration. Individuals or objects that remain within the extra-dimensional space after the spell's duration has lapsed will be trapped until they can be retrieved, or can affect an escape by magical means.

A Cloak of Shadows radiates an aura of enchantment, and may be differentiated from ordinary shadow by the fact that it is not dispersed by light. A Spell of Radiance will negate the magical properties of a Cloak of Shadows, causing its contents to be revealed. Duration is 100 rounds.

## Cascal's Prism

This one-inch crystal polyhedron is enchanted with a 10th level version of the spell, Cascal's Transfixation. When removed from its protective pouch, the prism produces a burst of kaleidoscope colors. The stabbing beams of light produced by this enchantment impinge upon the ocular nerves of the intended victim, causing confusion and disorientation. In essence, the victim is rendered dazed and unable to think or take action until the spell's effects wear off.

Range is 100 feet and duration is indefinite; transfixation lasts as long as the subjects continue to gaze into the prism. Intended victims are allowed a chance to roll vs PER at a penalty of -10 to resist the disorienting effects of the spell. Note that creatures or beings who are blind and/or do not possess optical organs cannot be affected by Cascal's Prism. Conversely, creatures or beings who possess night vision and/or are sensitive to light are most susceptible to the effects of this spell (additional -4 penalty to resist).

## Cloak of Deception

These items resemble a common traveler's cloak, but are enchanted with a 10th level version of the spell, the Veil of Deception. When activated utilizing a secret word of command, the cloak will alter the wearer's features and costume to resemble those of another person, gender, member of another race, etc. The power of the enchantment is limited, making it impossible to effect drastic changes in height, build, bodily form, etc. using this spell. Vocal characteristics can be modified as desired, though the spell does not confer the ability to converse in a language unknown to the beneficiary of the enchantment. Duration is 100 rounds.

## Dimension Chest

These chests come in a variety of sizes and styles, but have one thing in common. All were enchanted with a 10th level version of the spell, Dimension Warp. When opened, a Dimension Chest creates an instability in the dimensional fabric; a warp, which can range upwards in size from one inch to ten feet in diameter. Individuals, creatures, or objects which make contact with such a warp will be sucked in and hurtled at random across the omniverse. Subjects drawn into a warp usually suffer spatial displacement (removal to another plane of existence). On rare occasions, however, a warp may spin a subject out of time, resulting in a temporal displacement (removal to another era or time). In either case, the duration of the displacement is indefinite. Only by locating the warp's exit point and utilizing a counterspell can a displaced individual effect a return to his or her home plane (or time). Range is 10 feet, and duration is 10 rounds per level

## Dimension Mirror

These mirrors were made in a variety of sizes and styles, from ornate dressing mirrors to simple, handheld items. All were imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Dimension Warp. The properties of these items are identical to those of a dimension chest, but are activated only by touching the surface of the glass. Range is by touch and duration is indefinite.

## Koraq's Amulet of Warding

These amulets were made of amber crystal and gold, inscribed with protective symbols. Each was invested with a 10th level version of the spell, Koraq's Interposing Shields. When activated by a secret word of command, the amulet creates ten disc-shaped shields of arcane force, which encircle the wearer, moving automatically to intercept and nullify attacks by missiles, weapons, hostile creatures or beings, and magical bolts, darts, etc. The glowing shields also possess reflective qualities that are proof to radiant light and heat, but do not confer protection against illusions, mists, gases, dusts, spells with a wide area of effect, or psychic energies. Each shield will serve to thwart a single attack - contact with any of the attack forms listed will cause a shield to burst into shards of light. Range is one foot and duration is 10 rounds per level.

## Koraq's Anti-Magic Talisman

These items resemble brass periapts, and are exceedingly rare. Each is imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Koraq's Anti-Magic Aura. When activated by touch, the talisman envelopes the wearer in a shimmering aura of anti-magical energy that will confer protection from hostile magics of all sorts. Spells directed against the beneficiary of this enchantment dissolve upon contact with the anti-magic field, and are rendered ineffective. The aura does not confer protection from spells that affect the caster's surroundings, such as Arkon's Impermeable Web, spells of influence, or illusions.

The employment of an Anti-Magic Talisman is not without certain drawbacks. While enveloped in the aura, a magician can cast no other spell upon himself/herself. Further, the casting of an anti-magic aura cancels all previous enchantments, shields, auras, veils, etc. that the magician might have been employing. Duration is 10 rounds.



## Koraq's Omniscient Orb

These spherical pendants, fashioned in the shape of a golden eye, are enchanted with a 10th level version of the spell, Koraq's Ultra-Sensorium. When not being used the golden eyelids remain closed. When called into use, the eyelids open, allowing the wearer to see invisible/astral/ethereal presences or objects, detect illusions by touch, discern even the subtlest odors or scents, hear whispered conversations or other faint sounds, and detect magical emanations by sight. The wearer will also be invested with a type of "sixth sense" which will alert the individual if he or she is being watched by unseen agencies of any sort. The maximum range for all but the tactile ability is 100 feet. Duration is 10 rounds. It should be noted that individuals affected by this spell are highly susceptible to damage by extreme sensory stimuli: loud noises, noxious vapors, extremely bright lights, or spells that cause effects such as these (-1 penalty per level of the spell on all attempts to resist the effects of such stimuli).

## Lamune's Magic Slippers

These ornate slippers, made of red velvet embroidered with golden filaments, enable the wearer to walk upon the surface of any body of water. Duration is 100 rounds.

## Lamune's Winged Boots

These boots are made of handsome black reptile hide, and are enchanted with a 10th level version of the spell of Levitation. Each is also equipped with a pair of magically animated wings, that serve to increase the flyer's airspeed by +2. Duration is 100 rounds.

## Malderon's Magic Mirrors

These enchanted dressing mirrors were always made in pairs, both items being enchanted with the spell, Malderon's Magic Portal. One mirror serves as an entrance, and the other as an exit. It is not possible to enter and exit from the same mirror, as these devices only function as one-way portals. Range is by touch and duration is indefinite.

## Malderon's Magic Pipe

This ornate pipe, carved from a sea dragon's fang, is imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Malderon's Rings. When filled with dried herbs of any sort and lit, the pipe produces up to ten magical smoke rings, which may be directed to encircle and confine any creature, being, organism or object. The maximum diameter of the rings cannot exceed twenty feet. The range is 100 feet and the duration is 100 rounds.

## Malderon's Magic Vial

This device resembles a brass vial, three inches in height, with a stopper made of green glass. The inside of the vial is invested with a 10th level version of the spell, Malderon's Mists. When the glass stopper is removed, a quantity of mists is produced, which can be made to cause one of the following effects:

**Obscure Vision:** The mists created will be impenetrable by magical or non-magical means of detection, including scrying devices.

**Sleep:** Individuals who fall victim to these mists cannot be awakened until the effects of the enchantment wear off or are countered by magical/alchemical means.

**Forgetfulness:** Individuals who fall victim to these mists will become confused and disoriented; uncertain of who they are, where they are, or what they were doing before contacting the mists. Until the mists' effects wear off or are counter-magicked, such victims will be unable to remember any previously known skills, talents, or abilities requiring conscious thought. They will have a skill rating of "zero" (attribute scores or natural abilities are not affected by the enchantment).

The number of mists created by this spell cannot exceed 10 x 10 x 10 feet. The mists are stationary, though the magical vapors can be moved or dispersed by magical or non-magical winds. Color of the mists is variable, according to the caster's designs. To activate the spell, the caster gestures with both hands while reciting Malderon's incantation. The range is 100 feet and the duration is 10 rounds.

## Mantle of Stealth

These items resemble a common traveler's cloak, but are invested with a 10th level version of the spell, the Veil of Stealth. When activated utilizing a secret command word, the cloak enables the wearer to move unheard and unseen, effectively invisible to the naked eye. The cloak emanates a faint aura of magic, but is otherwise undetectable. However, individuals or creatures capable of seeing invisible objects/entities or detecting presences (by magical or non-magical means) will be able to see through the veil. It should be noted that the wearer may betray his presence by failing to maintain a reasonable degree of silence. If this occurs, the wearer may be subject to attack, though at a penalty of -5 as long as the Mantle's power is in effect. Duration is 10 rounds.

## Mordante's Rings of Summoning

These black iron rings bear the personal sigil of Mordante, and were inscribed with occult symbols that indicated their specific nature. There are several different types, each imbued with one of Mordante's summoning spells. All can be activated by speaking a secret word of command, thereby calling the summoned creature to serve the wearer. The level and type of the rings determine their exact properties. Duration is 10 rounds.

## Orb of Surveillance

These seven-inch diameter crystalline spheres are invested with a 10th level version of the Spell of Surveillance, and were widely used as scrying crystals. When activated utilizing a secret word of command, the orb allows the user to view any single individual, creature, or area (up to 10 x 10 x 10 feet). The wielder of the orb must have first-hand knowledge of the intended subject for its properties to be effective. Range is unlimited, though the orb has no inter-dimensional capability. Duration is 10 rounds.

## Rodinn's Wand of Sustenance

This elegant silver baton was invested with a 7th level version of the spell, Rodinn's Sumptuous Repast. It can be used to produce a veritable feast sufficient to satisfy up to seven man-sized individuals. Each repast consists of a main course, two side dishes, and liquid libation, of the welder's choice. The enchantment's epicurean limitations are somewhat modest, though not embarrassingly so; costly delicacies and rare vintage wines are beyond the capabilities of this spell, but the quality of food and drink produced can generally not be faulted, and the portions are reasonably generous. From a nutritional standpoint, the meal is more than adequate, though overindulgence can lead to gastric distress, intestinal disorders, and obesity; Rodinn recommended that the spell be employed for personal use no more than three times in a given week. The range is 10 feet.

## Rod of Unending Torment

This item resembles a slender iron tube with a thong of demon hide affixed to its handgrip. The rod is imbued with a 10th level version of the Spell of Unending Torment, and was used to dismay predatory beasts, bandits, peddlers, and other nuisances. When activated utilizing a secret command word, the rod can be made to unleash up to ten barbed, dart-like projectiles at any single subject. The magical darts

cause one point of damage apiece, and will penetrate any type of non-magical armor or hide. Even a one-point wound will cause the victim to be incapacitated with excruciating pain, leaving a dismal burning and throbbing pain that lasts indefinitely, or until a cure or counterspell can be obtained. The aptly named "unending torment" is both unrelenting and, to a certain degree, debilitating: victims suffer a penalty of -1 per each point of damage on all Action Table die rolls, until a cure can be affected.

The range is 100 feet.

## Sassan's Wand of Fire

This device resembles a wand of brilliant red iron, encrusted with seven small firegems. It is invested with a 10th level version of the spell, Sassan's Fiery Motes. When activated by a secret word of command, the wand can be made to project up to twenty white-hot darts of magical fire, which can be dispersed among as many as ten different targets. Each fire-mote will cause two points of damage to any living creature or combustible object that it strikes. The range is 100 feet per level.

## Thystram's Glossolary

This talisman resembles an earring shaped like a tiny cornucopia or funnel made of copper. Imbued with a 20th level version of the spell, Thystram's Glossolalia, it allows the wearer to comprehend or converse in unfamiliar tongues or dialects of any sort. To activate the Glossolary, the wearer speaks a secret word of command. This device can be used up to seven times per day.

Duration is 20 rounds.

## Thystram's Rod of Stasis

This useful device, which resembles a slender wand of translucent green crystal, was imbued with Thystram's Spell of Stasis. When activated utilizing a secret command word, the Rod can be used to preserve in stasis any living organism, including all manner of plants, animals, and even humanoid beings. The enchantment produces an effect not unlike suspended animation, rendering the subject immobile and bringing to a halt all metabolic processes. The stasis is in no way harmful to the organism; in fact, the spell can be used to "preserve" victims of poison, disease, or other maladies until a cure or remedy can be applied. The range is by touch and duration is one hour per level.

## Solimorrion's Seven Talismans of Power

Each of these golden medallions was inscribed with one of Solimorrion's Seven Secret Symbols of Power, and could be activated by speaking a secret word of command. The seven Talismans and their respective properties are:

**Banishment:** Exiles the subject forthwith to a dimension of the caster's choice.

**Stasis:** Immobilizes the subject within a glowing matrix composed of lines of pure force.

**Freedom:** Releases the subject from magical or non-magical bonds, fetters, or any other form of restraint, including charms, spells of influence, banishment, imprisonment, or an oath (provided the caster is the one who bound the subject to the oath).

**Oath:** Binds the subject to honor any pact or arrangement agreed to before the casting of the symbol. Failure to uphold the terms of the agreement will cause the subject to experience the most excruciating agonies, followed within seven days by death or dissolution.

**Confinement:** This symbol is used to capture and confine a designated subject in a prison of magical force, which can be made to take any form desired: mazes, brass vessels, gemstones, glass cages, and subterranean cells are among the more popular choices.

**Protection:** Creates a ten-foot radius circle of protection around the caster (and up to six companions or creatures, if desired) that can be made impervious to one of the following: demons, devils, malign spiritforms, or magic. The circle is stationary.

**Guardian:** This potent symbol wards any room, doorway, portal, archway, or magical gate from entrance by any save the caster, or individuals specifically designated by the caster as being welcome within.

The guardian is an Avatar (see Bestiary Extra- Dimensional Entities); it's Ability Level is determined by the level of the symbol, and it will reside within the area it is consigned to protect, held there by the symbol's magic. If approached, the Avatar will use force if necessary to repulse trespassers.

Duration for each of the Seven Secret Symbols is permanent, subject to appropriate counter-magics. A Talisman's area of effect projects outward in a 10-foot diameter circle. Range is a 10-foot diameter circle. It is

possible to avoid the effects of a Talisman by staying out of the area of effect or moving out of range of a magician who is employing such a device (roll vs SPD in the latter case).

## Thystram's Orb of Analysis

This crystal orb is invested with the spell, Thystram's Proximate Analysis. When activated by a secret command word, the wielder can identify with a reasonable degree of accuracy any living creature or organism, simply by viewing it through the Orb. The analysis takes ten rounds to complete. A flaw in the activating spell matrix devised by Thystram regrettably causes the Orb to be less than 100 percent reliable. Still, the device will unerringly reveal three of the following four determinations:

**The organism's basic type** (demon, devil, humanoid, plant, fungus, reptile, mammal, hybrid, etc.).

**The organism's basic nature** (predator, parasite, herbivore, omnivore, etc.).

**The organism's primary capability** or most notable feature (a favored form of attack or defense, means of locomotion, etc.).

**One or more secondary capabilities** associated with the designated organism (an attribute score, armor rating, or other relatively minor features).

The Gamemaster rolls a d4 to determine which category of information is not revealed by the spell. The range is 10 feet and the duration is 100 rounds. Inaccurate or unreadable information may be yielded if the organism moves out of sight range, is partially obscured, or is under an enchantment of some sort.

## Viridian's Ring of Elemental Protection

This ring of marbled green, blue, brown, and white malachite is imbued with a 10th level version of the spell, Viridian's Elemental Aura. When activated by touch, the ring envelopes the wearer in a shimmering aura of elemental energy that confers protection against non-magical forces of an elemental nature, including extremes of heat or cold, fire, drowning, mists, gases, winds, plant or animal secretions/exhalations, etc. This device does not afford protection from physical attacks, mystic forces, or magical energy, nor is it proof from illusions. Duration is 100 rounds.

# Unknown Artifacts

*"Nothing is Known;*
*All is Forgotten."*

— excerpted from a rare complete manuscript of "The Great Mysteries," the Zandir book of Paradoxy.

Despite the recent advances in New Age arcanology, searchers may discover artifacts that defy the best attempts at identification, whether by magical or non-magical means. Items of this sort, referred to as unknown artifacts, have baffled Talislantan scholars in the past, are likely to continue to do so as discoveries come to light. Some may have originated from other worlds or dimensions, and may seem alien to individuals from the Talislantan milieu. Others may have originated in ancient times, but were created at such a high level of ability that individuals of the current age cannot begin to fathom their true purpose.

The following is a list of unknown artifacts that might be found in the course of a Talislanta campaign. In some cases, the Gamemaster may want to devise properties for these items. If this is the case, the Gamemaster can make it challenging for player characters to discover this information by having them travel to distant lands to seek the counsel of individuals of greater wisdom; such as the Callidian cryptomancers of the ancient Library at Jalaad, the Chroniclers of Xanadas, etc. Alternatively, the Gamemaster may decide to keep things mysterious, ruling that some of these unknown artifacts are beyond the current level of Talislantan arcanology, and simply cannot be identified — at least for now.

## Listing of Unknown Artifacts

- An artifact that resembles a metal eye, measuring about two feet across. It is contained within a metallic housing that resembles a pair of eyelids. The entire apparatus is mounted upon a three-foot-tall metal tripod. The eyelids open and close at the touch of a lever. The silver-blue metal is of a type unknown to Talislantans of the New Age. This device radiates a strong magical aura, but cannot be identified by any known means.
- An artifact that resembles a pyramid of translucent glass that bears some resemblance to a Sindaran trivarian game. However, it measures about four feet from base to apex and is decorated with raised symbols of an unknown type. Like a trivarian game, the sides of the pyramid contain numerous openings where objects could be inserted. It does not radiate magic.
- A device that resembles a crystal rod of unusual design, about five feet in length. It is engraved with unreadable symbology, and has a slot carved into one end, but does not radiate magic. There is nothing in the slot, nor does the artifact evince any type of magical aura.
- An item that appears to be a silver ingot, about a foot in length, four inches across, and three inches thick. The metal is of an unknown type; it is lightweight, harder than iron, and — oddly enough — flexible. The ingot does not radiate magic.
- An object that resembles a four-inch square, ornate jewelry box or reliquary indited with intricate scrollwork, designs, and symbols. The box has no visible hinges or locking mechanism, though close examination will reveal a small button, cleverly hidden at the center of a raised sigil. If the button is depressed, the box begins to unfold like a piece of origami, taking on the form of a seven-pointed star. Pressing the button a second time causes the box to revert to its original form. The box radiates a faint magical aura.
- An artifact that resembles an ornate dressing mirror in a silver frame. The glass shows no reflection; however, if one looks closely into its surface, it is possible to discern strange, shadowy forms that cannot be identified. If touched, the surface does not feel solid; in fact, solid objects such as a person's hand will pass through the glass as if it were not there, yielding an unpleasant, icy sensation. The mirror radiates an extremely potent magical aura.

- An unusual curio that resembles a transparent glass sphere, roughly six inches in diameter, which radiates a cogent magical aura. Visible inside the sphere is the image of a beautiful female nymph, with skin and hair a deep shade of violet. The charming creature performs an alluring dance that is both fascinating and seductive to behold. Anyone who stares at the nymph for even a short time will begin to experience the desire to be with her; the feeling only intensifies each time the viewer looks into the sphere. Even a skilled magician will not be able to tell if the nymph is an illusion, or if she is a real person, in miniature.
- An artifact that looks like a two-foot diameter disk made of some sort of polished blue stone.The surface of the disk is engraved with a series of unusual symbols or markings, and rests on a decorative pedestal; the latter, also of polished blue stone.
- An artifact that resembles a cube made of an unknown type of black metal, that is seemingly impervious to harm. Any attempt to cut or scratch the metal will be to no avail; even diamond-edged tools and universal solvent will not affect. A pair of black iron disks, each measuring about two inches across and are engraved with odd sigils, are affixed to one side of the cube. The disks can be turned clockwise and counterclockwise, though doing so produces no noticeable effect. The cube's purpose cannot be discerned.



# Magicians of the Forgotten Age

The following section contains short biographical notes on some of the most renowned magicians of the Forgotten Age. This listing should by no means be considered complete; lost over time are the names of others who might well equal or perhaps even surpass those magicians who have been described here.

## Archimandius

Archimandius was one of the few Archaens ever to have left the sky cities and returned to the land below. In legend, he was known as the savior of the Landborne (the many neomorphs and hybrid races abandoned by the Archaens when they took to the skies), who claimed that Archimandius promised to lead to safety from the Great Disaster. He was revered by the common folk of that period, and the stories of his courage and wisdom are still extant among the Sarista gypsies and other Talislantans of the New Age.

When the Great Disaster struck, Archimandius led the Landborne on a great exodus across the land of Alcedon, which was torn free of the continent of Talislanta and flung into orbit above the world of Archaeus. The descendants of these refugee peoples are said to dwell in Castle Sanctum, on the flying island of Alcedon, to the present day.

## Arkon

Arkon was originally one of the One Hundred, the chosen elite of Elande. Though his creative brilliance was second to none, he was reckless and unpredictable in the extreme. His appetite for hedonistic pursuits knew no bounds, and he was addicted to no less than six different substances — each of which he had synthesized in his laboratory. Yet despite his faults Arkon was chosen to serve as one of the seven founders of the Archaen Cabal. He was also one of only a handful of magicians who were capable of comprehending the basic principles of Koraq's Theory of Magic and Anti-Magic.

A contemporary and friendly rival of the great Koraq, Arkon was a daring innovator of new spells, enchantments, and magical adjuncts. His wild and undisciplined experiments resulted in notable successes, and even more notable failures. During one especially unlucky month, Arkon succeeded in blowing up his laboratory, his home, and Koraq's workroom. The latter mishap caused Arkon's body to be transmuted to shimmering crystal, and resulted in the magician being banned in perpetuity from Paz, Koraq's floating domus. Arkon himself seemed unperturbed, claiming that he preferred his new semblance to that of the old, as it gave him a distinct advantage with the womenfolk of Elande.

Arkon is credited with the creation of several dozen original spells and at least as many magical adjuncts, including some of the most potent enchanted weapons and artifacts. An avid bibliophile, the sorcerer also collected numerous folios, volumes, and notebooks on magic and thaumaturgy. Most of his works were lost or destroyed during The Great Disaster, though some few of his spells are still in popular usage. Logbooks and papers bearing his sigil are to be handled with caution; as noted, Arkon cared little for his safety, and often experimented with volatile concepts.

## Cascal

Preeminent among the magicians of Aeon, Cascal was renowned as an illusionist of nonpareil abilities, and as the author of numerous useful spells and texts; his "Codex Magicus" (see Magical Tomes) is still in wide usage by magicians of the New Age. Cascal created Shalihan, a fabulous sky city that was composed solely of virtual illusions. In this he may have been assisted by Miraja, his female alter image and a great illusionist in her own right, whom Cascal claimed to have created in a fortnight.

Cascal enjoyed a prosperity and popularity uncommon amongst individuals of his profession. His works were lauded by the literati of Aeon and Pompados; his theories gained many adherents; women swooned at the splendor of his illusions. Such acclaim likely harmed the magician, for after several years the quality of his work began to steadily decline.

His last book, "The Earth Speaks" - a collection of prophecies attributed to deceased magicians who supposedly contacted the author from beyond the grave - proved to be Cascal's undoing. Mocked as a writer of bad fiction, Cascal was abandoned by his former friends and associates. He spent his remaining days in Shalihan, surrounded by his illusory creations.

## Drax

Reputed to have been sired by the rebel Shaitan, Zahur, Drax was the first of the dreaded Necromancer Kings of ancient Torquaran. Arcane scholars credit him with having formulated the basic principles of Black Magic, which Drax derived from the forbidden teachings of Zahur himself.

Under his leadership, the nation of Torquaran subjugated half the continent, and threatened to annihilate all who opposed them. The intervention of Diabolus — true ruler of the diabolical Shaitan, and Zahur's sworn enemy — brought Drax's reign to an end. Rather than risk a confrontation with Diabolus, Zahur elected to transport his progeny to another dimension.

Drax's works include some of the most dire magics ever transposed upon a written page: mind-rending incantations, blasphemous maledictions, spells of such power that to gaze upon them is to invite insanity, or death. Following Drax's exile, his understudy Narishna broke into the master's sanctum, anxious to discover his secrets. He returned seconds later, eyes wild with fear, and ordered Drax's works sealed in molten iron and cast into the sea.

Certain obscure cults are believed to revere Drax as an avatar of Zahur, or as a dark demi-god in his own right. Adherents of the latter theory claim that the former Necromancer King has established himself as the ruler of a distant dimension, and that he will one day return to Talislanta. His influence remains such that the name, Drax, is still employed in the most foul and obscene imprecations, and his writings are considered cursed.

## The Enchantress

The Enchantress was one of the seven founding members of the original Archaen Cabal, and was widely regarded as the most beautiful woman of the Third and Fourth Millenniums. Refusing to be regarded simply as an object of desire, she remained aloof from the other Cabal members, and spurned their advances. Her heart was closed, and her name remained a secret known to no man.

While in the service of the Cabal, the Enchantress is known to have kept a written record of the spells that she had devised. Among these were certain powerful wards intended to safeguard her secrets from outsiders. Such was the potency of her magics that none has ever been found, even to the present day.

After the breakup of the original Archaen Cabal, the Enchantress established a floating pavilion that hovered above Eros Isle, in what is now the Thaecian island chain. Prospective suitors came from across the Archaen Empire, showering her with gifts and seeking to win her hand in marriage. All were found to be lacking in one degree or another, and were sent away. One day a mysterious figure arrived, attired in a hooded cloak. He presented the Enchantress with a gift of a magic mirror which, he claimed, would reveal her true love. When he had departed, the Enchantress looked into the mirror and fell in love with her reflection. Some say that the hooded figure was Cascal, whom the Enchantress had spurned; others believe that this was yet another prank of the infamous rogue magician, Zanillo

## Etzel

Youngest of all the Archaen master magicians, Ezel was a child prodigy, skilled in several magical fields of study. Her mother was the sorceress, Sylan. The identity of her father was never proven, despite much speculation. When she was just fourteen, the great Koraq described Etzel as "a genius, though with the emotional level of a three-year-old." Based on surviving accounts of the young magician's activities, Koraq's assessment cannot be faulted, and may be regarded as something of an understatement.

Etzel was known for her temper tantrums, which often took the form of malicious spells and misdeeds directed at her superiors. She is said to have turned her first instructor into a crystal moth, and to have kept him in a jar for several months, until the poor fellow was rescued by Sylan. On another occasion, she banished a neomorphic servitor to one of the lower planes in a fit of pique. Following several similarly distressing incidents, Sylan consigned her offspring to an enchanted palace on the astral plane, where she could cause no further difficulties. It is believed that the precocious magician resides here to the present day.

Etzel authored no texts or treatises on magic, and devised no original spells of any great significance. She is known to have kept a journal for a time, though the contents of this book remain a matter for conjecture.



## Hotan

Regarded as the greatest savant of his day, Hotan traversed the continent of Talislanta in search of knowledge. He visited among the Sub-Men tribes, and lived with the Ariane of Tamaranth, from whom he learned the mystical arts of Trans-Ascendency. After many years of study, he claimed to have acquired the ability to reincarnate into the same bodily form at will, bestowing upon himself a practical sort of immortality.

Hotan spent the better part of his many incarnations compiling a comprehensive history of Talislantan civilization. Completion of this goal continued to elude him, no matter how long he worked at it. Said he: "Barring the end of the world, I see no prospect for the completion of this project." In his spare time, he devised several dozen original spells, most of which are now lost.

It is believed by some that the savant Xanadas, the wizard Absinthe, and the renowned Thystram were all incarnations of Hotan. The modern-day chroniclers of Xanadas refuse to speculate on such theories, though they claim that Hotan still lives to the present day.

## Ilse

A Torquaran witch woman of multifaceted talents, Ilse gained notoriety by the employment of various charms and seductions. From a powerful Shaitan named Nargul she plied the Six-Fold Spell of Fascination, which she employed to learn the secrets of the many magicians whom she took as lovers. Posing as a crystal moth, she spied upon Viridian, and deduced how he influenced plants. From the race of whisps she stole numerous beguiling cantrips and enchantments.

Viridian eventually learned of Ilse's trespasses and turned her into a purple thornrose; a plant with blossoms of heart-rending beauty and deadly poisonous thorns, which Viridian considered to be symbolic of the witch's dual nature. Thieves subsequently made off with Ilse's purloined magics, only a meager portion of which have ever been recovered. Certain Talislantan historians credit the Dhuna witch women with the theft of Ilse's secrets, which may explain the peculiar ability of the Dhuna to capture a man's heart with a single kiss.

## Koraq

Brilliant theoretician and sorcerer supreme, Koraq developed countless spells during his lifetime, which spanned at least sixteen hundred years; owing to the nature of his work, the sorcerer's death has never been established as fact. He is most famous for perfecting the magical field of Sorcery, the discovery of interdimensional travel, and the subsequent authoring of over two hundred volumes, folios, and treatises on the myriad planes of existence. His greatest accomplishment, however, was his "Theory of Magic and Anti-Magic", which stands to the present day as the definitive work on the principles of Quantum Magic (see Magical Tomes). Unfortunately, the theorisms defined within the pages of this voluminous libram were so complex as to be incomprehensible to his peers.

Koraq's mental faculties were such that he could create spell matrices in his head; his improvisations were remarkable, and so prolific that he was forced to employ a Neurian automaton named Ovid just to record down the many magical theorems that he would devise in a given day. His obsession with the theory of trans-temporalization led to the dissolution of his relationship with the sorceress, Sylan, and impelled him to live a life of seclusion in his floating domus of Paz.

Koraq claimed in all seriousness to have lived two lives, both of which were practically identical, though the first supposedly occurred in a separate reality. He often complained to his associates that, having already accomplished everything he would ever achieve in his first life, his second life was redundant, and lacked all novelty. Kabros, one of the great Wizard-Kings of Phaedra, claimed direct descent from Koraq, and was occasionally known to sign Koraq's name on his own writings.

## Magian

The wizard Magian was an arcanologist of keen perceptions, who was credited with having solved numerous mysteries and conundrums. It was Magian who determined that the rogue magician, Zanillo, was responsible for instigating the scandal that led to Rodinn's untimely dismissal from his post as royal advisor to the Wizard King of Pompados. Magian took copious notes on all his cases, but wrote in a cryptic, fragmented, and sometimes unintelligible style that has defied all attempts at translation. More legible accounts of the arcanologist's achievements were penned by Nastow, his assistant and understudy. Though marred to a certain extent by a tendency towards melodrama, Nastow's writings provide a unique look into the incisive mind of Magian, whose investigative techniques were admired by no less a personage than the great Koraq.

## Malderon

A magician of many talents, Malderon was a practical man, humble and modest almost to a fault. So loathe was he to take credit for his achievements that records of his existence are cloudy, and for many years scholars mistakenly believed that he was a magician of the New Age. The matter was clarified to a certain extent when the Cymrilians opened the sealed vaults that contained the Archaen Codex, revealing the fact that Malderon had corresponded with such notables as Koraq and Arkon, and was known to have had an affair with the sorceress, Sylan.

Malderon's interests were notably eclectic: he dabbled in horticulture, wrote extensively on the subject of pseudo-psychic phenomena, and compiled a sizable collection of varying styles of headwear dating back to the Forgotten Age. The majority of his work, such as it was, is largely regarded as being next to worthless, with a few notable exceptions.

In his spare time Malderon devised more than twenty spells, many of no little distinction, and penned several practical volumes on magic. Sadly, nearly all of these have been lost over the centuries, though Malderon's collection of hats is still proudly displayed in the Museum of Antiquities in Cymril.

## Miraja

Miraja was described by some as "the alter image of Cascal, greatest illusionist of the sky city of Shalihan." Cascal, never one for false modesty, concurred, calling her "the most intricate and skillful illusion ever created." Certainly, Miraja's attributes were beyond compare. She possessed both great beauty and a fine intellect; her illusions were dazzling in their complexity, vision, and scope; she devised original spells by the score, and was said to have authored a half-dozen treatises on virtual illusions, each regarded as a masterpiece in its own right. Lost since the time of The Great Disaster, certain of her works have recently come to light, lending credence to the tales of her brilliance in the field of Magic.

As to the stories of her purportedly illusory nature, Miraja claimed that she was the real Master of Illusion, and Cascal a mere figment of her imagination. Wrote Miraja in her treatise, "The Limitations of Virtual Illusions" - "So finely wrought was Cascal that he believed himself to be real, and could not be persuaded otherwise."

## Narishna

Known as the "Black Wizard of Torquaran", Narishna was the understudy of the half-human wizard, Drax. He served as necromantic advisor to nine generations of Torquaran Sorcerer-Kings, during which time there is little doubt that he was the true ruler of that ancient empire. Untold numbers of innocents (including nearly the entire Xambrian race) died in the fire pits of Malnangar and in his dungeons, where the Black Wizard consorted with entities from the lower planes - including, some now believe, the Sepharans.

The total of Narishna's work was cataloged in "The Tormentia;" a massive, iron-bound tome containing some of the direst incantations, maledictions, and Black Magical rituals ever known to mortal man (see Lost Books of Magic). Diabolists disagree regarding their opinion of the Black Wizard: traditionalists hold him in contempt for his dealings with Zahur, a pariah among the race of Talislantan devils; radicals revere him as a near-deific entity and claim that Narishna's downfall at the hands of the Arch-Mage Solimorrion I was assisted by none other than Diabolus, the ruler of the Shaitan. Urmaan, the infamous Necromancer-King of Rajanistan, claimed to be an incarnation of Narishna.

## Nauticus

The most renowned explorer of his age, Nauticus was credited with the discovery of the previously unknown lands of Celadon, Simbar, and Thanatus. Traveling in his windship, "The Voyager," he was the first Archaen to meet the Neurians of Simbar, and is credited with having helped to establish friendly relations between the two races. Nauticus was also the first to encounter the Thane of Thanatus, though with less satisfactory results; the explorer acquired a great aversion to the Thane, whom he described as "dreadful in the extreme, and not at all hospitable".

Nauticus is reputed to have kept a meticulous log of his travels across the world of Archaeus, copies of which were later sold in the sky cities. His adventures were lauded as the stuff of which legends are made, though these accounts may have been sensationalized somewhat to increase sales. Nauticus is believed to have perished when his windship's levitationals failed, causing the vessel to crash against a large coral reef.

## Solimorrion I

First of a succession of archimages by the same name, most of far lesser repute, Solimorrion I was a prophet and scholar of wide repute. As high priest of the Numenian symbolators he embodied the virtues of kindness and piety, and was the recipient of great knowledge, which he claimed to have received from divine sources. Many religions of the New Age profess kinship with Solimorrion's principles, though most have interpreted the meaning and intent of his prophecies to suit their own needs.

Solimorrion's works include symbologies, bestiaries, cosmologies, compendiums, and some of the most cogent spells ever devised. He authored many books of prophecies, only a handful of which have ever been found. The ancient Phaedrans credited Solimorrion with having written the definitive book on self-enlightenment, entitled "The Seven Paths to Knowledge"; others claim that no such book exists. Due to his association with entities from the higher planes of existence, Solimorrion is regarded by many priests, astrologers, and archimages as a demi-god. His name, employed in conjunction with certain incantations, is still used to ward against devils, demons, and lower spirit-forms. Solimorrion disappeared following an epic magical conflict with the dread Narishna.

## Rodinn

Rodinn is known in legend as "the Mad Wizard"; somewhat of a misnomer, as he was not a wizard, but a sorcerer and thaumaturge. In his day, Rodinn was renowned as one of the seven founders of the Archaen Cabal. He later served as Royal Thaumaturge to the Wizard King of Pompados, where he was accorded great respect and honors. Rodinn was the first to warn of the deleterious effects related to the excessive use of Magic, though his theories were generally disregarded by his peers. A minor indiscretion, reputedly involving Rodinn and the Wizard King's wife and seven daughters, forced the thaumaturge to leave Pompados in disgrace. It was subsequently proven that this scandal was orchestrated by his rival, the rogue magician Zanillo.

Abandoning the sky cities, Rodinn took up residence in a secluded woodland, continuing his work in solitude. During this time it is believed that he discovered the secret of concocting the potent thaumaturic substance known as quintessence. Whether by accident or by plan, Rodinn is believed to have released a great quantity of this volatile substance into the surrounding environs, with unfortunate results.

His unflattering appellation aside, Rodinn is credited with having authored numerous obscure thaumaturgic formulae, odd enchantments, and peculiar theorisms. Many scholars add to this list of accomplishments the unintentional devastation of vast tracts of territory, permanent damage to the Talislantan ecology, and the resultant fall of the first great civilizations of Talislanta.

## Sylan

Sylan was renowned as one of the seven founding members of the Archaen Cabal, and as a magician of surpassing abilities. For a time she was the lover of Koraq, from whom she learned the arts of Sorcery. Their affair proved to be short-lived, however, and their parting, less than amicable. When Sylan gave birth to a daughter, Etzel, she first blamed Koraq, then a succession of others whom she had known. When none came forth to accept responsibility for her offspring, Sylan became embittered, and swore never again to be the consort of any man.

In later years Sylan gained recognition as an advocate for the rights of female magicians, who had previously been regarded as inferiors by their male counterparts. She experimented with the creation of a race of female neomorphs, utilizing a convoluted process involving botanomantic selection and artificial insemination. The descendants of these prototypical females may well be related to the Danuvians of the New Age. Several original spells and other written works have been attributed to the sorceress, many of which have only recently been rediscovered by modern arcanologists.

Sylan eventually reconciled with Koraq, but fostered a lifelong enmity for Arkon, whom she regarded as the worst and most offensive of all male chauvinists. Once, in a heated moment, Sylan claimed to be the equal of any man, and challenged Arkon to prove otherwise. Arkon replied that he was inclined to agree, even in the literal sense, at least until a close examination of Sylan's physical attributes proved otherwise. Rather than dignify this remark with a reply, Sylan departed in silence. Laughing loudly, Arkon returned to his manse and indulged himself in intoxicants, as was his wont. He awoke to find himself transformed into a woman; a condition which took him several weeks to remedy, during which time he is said to have attracted much favorable attention among the males of Elande.

## Thaumaste

Thaumaste was a biomancer and a maker of neomorphs, who dwelled in the sky city of Pompados. In his prime, he was considered unparalleled in his chosen profession, and was retained to design many new forms of neomorphs for the edification and amusement of his Archaen clients. Races said to have been created by Thaumaste include the Bodor, Monads, Thiasians, and Yassan, among many others.

Thaumaste authored a comprehensive handbook on the processes involved in the creation of neomorphs, copies of which are both exceedingly rare and valuable. The Lyceum Arcanum, located in the crystal city of Cymril, does not even have access to a complete copy. Though justly renowned for his abilities in this area, Thaumaste was regarded as a spell caster of mediocre talents.

## Viridian

Perhaps the strangest of all spell casters extant during the Forgotten Age, Viridian was not a true man, but a simulacrum created by the great sorcerer, Koraq. Legend has it that Koraq constructed the simulacrum in his likeness, imprinting his creation with an intellectual matrix modeled upon his extraordinary mental faculties. However, a flaw in the procedure caused Viridian to prefer the company of plants to that of men; a peculiar trait that led him to adopt a green-skinned, grassy-haired semblance, and to eventually take up residence in a topiary palace of his design. Yet so alike were simulacrum and master that the two were said to share a portion of the same consciousness.

Viridian fabricated many spells and incantations, and went on to create no less than one hundred and forty-three distinct species of plants, trees and shrubs. Many, including the yellow stickler, contrary vine, whisp-bane, and the useful Viridia plant continue to flourish in the present age. Several dozen of Viridian's rarest creations were preserved in stasis by magicians from the sky city of Elande, though most probably perished during The Great Disaster.

Viridian also wrote extensively on hybrid plants, and claimed to have bred the plant-like race of Green Men from cuttings. His works are valued by horticulturists, botanomancers, and naturalists, particularly in Vardune of the Seven Kingdoms, where Viridian is regarded as something of a national hero. The Aeriad of Vardune retain perhaps the most comprehensive collection of Viridian's works in a sealed vault located in the capital of Vashay.

## Xanadus

Xanadus was renowned as a great savant and clairvoyant, and as one of the seven original founders of the first Archaen Cabal. He served as the Cabal's chronicler, recording all events of note for posterity. In his spare time Xanadus perfected certain of the most prescient forms of divination, including — some claim — the use of the enchanted Zodar deck. He often performed auguries for the Cabal, and is said to have foreseen the Age of Decline.

After the break-up of the first Archaen Cabal, Xanadus retired to his hidden sanctum, located high atop Mount Mandu. Here, he chronicled the events of the Fourth Millennium, assisted by a group of devoted followers. To support himself Xanadus continued to cast divinations for other Archaen magicians, for which he was paid in gold. Yet as his reputation grew, he became more and more disillusioned with the sorry state of affairs that had befallen the once great Archaen Empire. Foreseeing the coming of The Great Disaster, he decided to leave Talislanta, telling his followers that one day he would return. The descendants of these loyal chroniclers continue to maintain their lonely vigil even to the present day, recording the history of Talislanta while they await the return of their master.

## Zanillo

A contemporary of Rodinn, Zanillo was a magician of unusual qualities. There is no consensus regarding his capabilities; Rodinn and others considered him to be little more than a charlatan, yet Zanillo baffled his rivals by recording his spells in codes so abstract and convoluted that none could decipher them. Conversely, he was revered by his close associates even though he stole from them regularly.

Zanillo was ambitious and unprincipled, and was seldom restrained by considerations of law or morality. It is now known that Rodinn's fall from favor was instigated by Zanillo, who was renowned for the devious methods by which he dealt with his detractors and rivals. It was Zanillo who implicated the unsuspecting thaumaturge in a scandal involving the wife and seven daughters of the Wizard King of Pompados, which ultimately led to Rodinn's dismissal. Sometime later, the arcanologist, Magian, determined that Zanillo was at fault and reported him to the Cabal. However, Zanillo's associates in the Cabal allowed him to get off with nothing more than a reprimand.



Zanillo authored a variety of texts, treatises, and incantations, few of which are held in any great regard. His fondness for practical jokes and sleights of hand is reflected in his book, "Legerdemain" (see Magical Tomes). Essentially a collection of minor cantrips, petty tricks, and related banalities, the tome is considered an invaluable handbook for aspiring mountebanks, scallywags, and kleptomaniacs. It is believed that Zanillo suffered the same fate as the other members of the Archaen Cabal, who were hurtled into space along with the floating sanctum of Locus during The Great Disaster.

## Zorion

Warlord and High Commander of the Erythrians, Zorion was a warrior mage of certain power. It was he who lobbied the Archaen Cabal to recognize the Erythrians as the protectors of the Archaen sky cities, thereby establishing a powerful and profitable monopoly governing all aspects of the military. Zorion was credited with the design of over thirty weapons of mass destruction, including the siege golem, flying battle dragon, armored land dragon, iron scorpion, and many others that have long since been forgotten.

In reality, it is unlikely that Zorion did more than oversee such projects, the majority of the design work and construction probably having been handled by skilled artificer mages, alchemists, and thaumaturges. It is perhaps ironic that Zorian's mighty military establishment was of little or no use to the Archaens of his age, who had no territories to defend and no real enemies to fight. Nevertheless, Zorion gained widespread fame for his purported achievements, and statues of the great warrior mage, attired in fiery red battle armor and helm while striking a noble and defiant pose, were common throughout the sky cities. Scholars of the New Age have speculated that the patron war deity of the Kang, called Zoriah, may be based on legendary accounts of the Archaen warrior mage.

The coming of the New Age coincided with a period of resurgence in the magical arts which, while short-lived, succeeded in recapturing some of the former grandeur of ancient Talislanta. During this time, many archaic practices were re-discovered or revived. The Phaedrans were particularly active in this regard, expending a great deal of energy excavating the tombs and crypts of long-forgotten sorcerers. Regrettably, the Cult Wars brought a swift end to this otherwise promising era.

## Astramir

Discoverer of the lost art of Thaumaturgy, Astramir is a figure held in wide regard by the Dracartans. Formerly a humble priest of Jamba, Astramir accidentally uncovered the tomb of an ancient Archaen sorcerer while meditating in the Red Desert. Within, he found the fabled Seventeen Ruby Tablets, upon which were inscribed the greatest secrets of Thaumaturgy.

This chance discovery had a profound effect on Talislantan history, to say nothing of the enhancement of Astramir's career opportunities. Deciphering the contents of the tablets, Astramir learned the secrets of creating quintessence, and of altering the form and substance of matter. He convinced the Dracartans to abandon their nomadic traditions and settle in the Red Desert, where they established the kingdom of Carantheum. The lack of a king was likewise solved when Astramir appointed himself to this position. Employing Astramir's new-found methods, the Dracartans derived red iron from the desert sands, built the Crimson Citadel, and soon became one of the most powerful and wealthy nations on the continent.

Astramir authored no books, spells, or treatises of note. He did catalog numerous works translated from the Seventeen Ruby Tablets, however, including several potent incantations and sets of formulae. The fact that certain of these writings have come to be credited to Astramir himself may be attributed to the thaumaturge's immense popularity in the region, rather than any egotistical tendencies on his part. Following Astramir's death, each of the Seventeen Ruby Tablets was secured in its hidden vault; a prescription suggested by Astramir himself, who feared the misuse of these articles by future generations.

## Cerene

Cerene was a white witch of great power, who led a tribe of displaced people into the northlands during the Age of Confusion. On the shores of the Sea of Ice she established the kingdom of L'Haan, and presided over a rebirth of magical and alchemical thought, reviving interest in certain of the works of the ancient Archaens. She named her people the Mirin, and devised cogent magics that enabled them to adapt to their harsh environs, granting them immunity to the effects of cold and ice. In return, they crowned her Snow Queen — ruler of the land of L'Haan.

Over the centuries, the Snow Queen helped defend the Mirin against wild beasts, invading hordes of ice giants, and savage raiders from neighboring Harak. Her enemies reviled her as a frigid and unfeeling creature, yet she was loved by her people, who revered her as their savior and benefactor. The Snow Queen continues to preside over L'Haan to the present day, her youth and vitality preserved by the ingestion of a secret alchemical elixir, attributed to the Farnirans of the Third Millennium.



## Drugalia

Black magician of the savage Mazdak tribes, Drugalia was as evil a man as ever walked the continent of Talislanta. While still a youth he wandered into a mountain cave and was lost for several days. When the boy returned, he bore with him an iron-bound book and a strange, dark look in his eyes. Before the passing of a year he had seized control of his tribe, employing his new-found occult powers to eliminate his rivals. He then set about conquering and enslaving the neighboring tribes of the region until he had established himself as absolute ruler of the Eastern Lands. Tales of horror associated with the tyrant's rise to power and thirty-year reign nearly rival those of the ancient Torqarans.

Drugalia's magical legacy, however, is considerably less memorable. Like most of the Mazdaks he was too preoccupied with acts of wanton savagery to have accomplished much of enduring value. His sole achievement of note was quite accidental: the discovery of the iron-bound book, which scholars of the occult sciences believe to have been none other than The Pandemonicus. Those who ascribe to this theory claim that Drugalia had no magical abilities whatever, and that his powers were derived through pacts with various demonic entities.

The nature of Drugalia's demise would seem to lend credence to such concepts, if only circumstantially. Thirty years to the day after Drugalia came to power, he was purportedly visited in his tent by three demons, who bore him away to one of the lower planes. Though his cabal of Black Magicians searched high and low, Drugalia's terrible book was supposedly never found.



## Kabros

Last of the sorcerer-kings of ancient Phaedra, Kabros remains the most highly-regarded Talislantan magician of the New Age. He was one of only a handful of spell casters ever to master the abstruse concepts of the great Koraq, whom Kabros claimed as an ancestor and inspiration. His "Guide to the Lower Planes," a set of thirty volumes which took over seventy years to compile, is considered the authoritative work upon the subject, and his catalogs of extra-dimensional flora and fauna compare favorably with the works of any of his early predecessors.

Having expended the greater part of his energies upon his writings, Kabros had little time to engage in the research and development of new spells. Nevertheless, historians believe that the latter-day sorcerer produced several folios containing copious notes on spells, symbols, formulae, and theorisms, in varying stages of completion; the supposition being that these were projects which Kabros intended to perfect as time permitted. Pages from these folios are coveted by magicians and scholars alike.

The onset of the Cult Wars convinced Kabros to flee his native land in favor of sunnier climes. He was last spotted some four hundred years ago on the island of Thaecia, and may indeed still be alive. Among those writings attributed to the sorcerer and recovered in later times was an incomplete formula for the concoction of a reputed "potion of immortality"; a project which held a high degree of fascination for Kabros, particularly in his later years.

## Mordante

One of the most accomplished Black Magicians of the New Age, Mordante fancied himself a descendant of the vile sorcerers of ancient Torquaran. The concept was perhaps not so far-fetched: ancient archives, only recently discovered, indicate that the last ruler of the Torquarans was named Mordante. Whether this discovery should be attributed to coincidence, or something far more sinister, remains a matter of conjecture among scholars of the New Age.

Whatever his origins, Mordante's reputation as a cold-blooded killer was well-established, and preceded him to good effect in all his dealings. At the height of his power, his enemies were loath even to whisper his name for fear of discovery. Mordante's accomplishments were multifarious. He devised a dozen or more searing spells, cataloged entire volumes of curses and maledictions, and compiled a rare series of texts describing in lurid detail the horrid practices of the Chana Witchmen tribes (see Lost Books of

Magic). His "Black Grimoire" is considered a classic, and an indispensable reference work for practitioners of the dark arts.

Though he was purported to be of mixed blood (chroniclers disagree as to the Black Magician's lineage), Mordante rose to preeminence in Faradun, eventually attaining the position of advisor to the Cral himself. He disappeared following rumors that he was the target of a vendetta by the Xambrian wizard hunters, and has not been heard of to the present day. Such accounts lend credence to the theory that Mordante is a reincarnator, whose spiritform is capable of returning to the material plane at will, until it is destroyed by a Xambrian.

## Sassan

A foppish and over-extravagant individual, Sassan was a Phaedran magician of eccentric tastes and habits. Early on in his career he evinced a definite talent for magic, which - combined with a tendency towards pyromania - succeeded in earning him a vast reputation as a miscreant and undesirable.

Sassan, possessed of a delicate sensibility, took offense at remarks that were intended to impune his character. He exacted a measure of retribution by engaging in duels with his detractors. Employing spells of his design, plus enchantments of more traditional origin, he emerged victorious in each of these contests.

Public opinion of Sassan's qualities was seen to improve markedly soon thereafter, and Sassan was lauded as an individual of uncommon virtue. His works became widely read, and his spells gained recognition throughout Phaedra; prior charges of arson were reduced to misdemeanor status, then dismissed altogether. In response to public demand, the Wizard King, Damon, elected Sassan to undertake a courageous expedition to the Volcanic Hills, where it is believed the magician met an untimely end at the hands of the warlike Sauran tribes. Years later, Sassan was declared a public menace in absentia, and his works banned. Illicit copies of his spells are supposedly still available through certain black market outlets, and are much-prized by magicians of many professions.

## Thystram

Renowned savant of ancient Phaedra, Thystram enjoyed wide acclaim as an author of useful compendiums on a variety of subjects. His "Thystram's Collectanea" (see Magical Tomes), a listing of Talislantan flora and fauna, was considered a masterwork of naturalism. Scholars of the present day are less uniform in their appraisal of the "Collectanea," which some say is rife with errors and imaginary claims.

Through Thystram is credited with the creation of only a handful of original spells, copies of his magical compendiums are greatly coveted. Many contain long-lost spells from past aeons, archaic alchemical formulae, and other useful bits of arcana.

## Shaladin

A Kasmiran wizard of unique talents, Shaladin is acknowledged by many as the master of minor enchantments, traps, tricks, and various other methods used to safeguard against theft and intrusion. His detractors claimed that he created no such innovations, but merely copied from materials originally developed by the early Kasiran artificers, which they said he had unearthed from the depths of some ancient tomb or vault. Shaladin evinced no great concern over such individuals, attributing the bulk of their comments to professional jealousy. He created the profession of Trapmage, and served as Royal Vizier to three Kasmir kings, accumulating both wealth and honors.

Shaladin lived a long and prosperous life. Following his death at the age of 173, he was interred in an elaborate crypt of his design, which boasted no fewer than one hundred traps, wards, and perils, all intended to protect the secrets of his spells and machinations from thieves. Constructed in a secret location somewhere in the Red Desert, Shaladin's crypt has never been found. It is widely rumored among the Sarista that the rogue Valtiere - Shaladin's lifelong nemesis - had the last laugh at the wizard's expense. Disguised as a mortician, Valtiere claimed to have pilfered Shaladin's gold teeth, along with certain of his papers and notes, before the trapmage's body had even gone cold.

## Urmaan

First and only Necromancer-King of Rajanistan, Urmaan claimed to be a reincarnation of the terrible Narishna, and indeed exhibited many of the horrid traits of his reputed ancestor. Under his merciless rule, the primitive Rajan tribes subjected or exterminated all the diverse nomadic peoples of the southeastern desertlands, and established the dark nation of Rajanistan. He also established the Torquar - an elite branch of the Rajan army specializing in terrorism, assassination, and torture.

Urmaan's major accomplishments in the field of the occult came as a collector and translator of archaic Black Magical writings. At his command, hundreds of ancient tombs, mausoleums, and ossuariums were stripped of their contents, yielding an uncountable number of stone tablets, scrolls, carvings, images, and artifacts. These Urmaan had delivered to a secret sanctuary hidden in the Jade Mountains. Here, a group of forty acolytes toiled for fifty years: examining and cataloging each article, transcribing spells and texts, and deciphering cryptic notations of various sorts. At the end of the fifty years, Urmaan visited the sanctuary and appraised the acolytes' work. In the many vaults of the lower levels he found no less than one hundred and forty volumes, plus three thousand chests and cases of goods. Satisfied that he possessed the greatest collection of arcane knowledge in existence, Urmaan murdered the acolytes and sealed the doors of the sanctum forever.



The following is a brief listing of various practitioners of the Occult Sciences whose origins date back to ancient times. While detailed information on these individuals is largely unknown, their names are still remembered by modern-day Talislantan scholars and magicians.

## LaMune the Water-Walker

A contemporary of Rodinn, LaMune was credited with the creation of several enchanted items of a highly eccentric sort. Wearing a pair of enchanted slippers that allowed him to walk upon water, he set out to traverse the Azure Ocean on foot. He was never seen again, and is believed to have been taken by Hydrans.

## Sargan

Sargan was a Phaedran magician of minor talents, who achieved a considerable degree of notoriety in Phaedra following the chance discovery of a cache of magical paraphernalia once owned by the great Cascal. He enjoyed a brief but prosperous career in the field of illusion, but suffered a strange illness and died at the age of seventy. As Sargan lay on his deathbed, he was asked to reveal where he had hidden Cascal's secrets. Smiling feebly, he pointed to his head.

## Oranthus

Oranthus was a Black Magician who was extant during the Third Millennium, and an arch-rival of the estimable sorcerer, Koraq. Following a dispute, Koraq was impelled to place the untrustworthy Oranthus in stasis within an energy matrix, which the irate sorcerer then cast into another dimension.

## Melandre

Melandre was an enchantress, and the consort of Mordante, with whom she bore a son, Maelius. Little is known of either of the two, though the name, Maelius, appears in books subsequently authored by other Black Magicians. It is believed that Melandre may have been a reincarnator, as was probably the case with Mordante.



The following section features several spells and incantations that were developed by — or at least credited to — the fabled sorcerers of ancient Talislanta. Unlike the lists of spells in Chapter 04, these potent magics are not commonly known to Talislantan magicians of the current age. Many are so rare and/or obscure that most Talislantan magicians are unaware that such enchantments even exist.

Magicians who wish to acquire specific knowledge of an ancient spell must often spend weeks or even months in research, painstakingly searching through archaic tomes, tablets and scrolls, or delving into time-worn ruins and crypts. The discovery of even a single such spell is a significant find, which - if the magician is not careful - may draw the unwanted attention of his or her rivals. For this reason, possessors of the most ancient and rare arcana tend to zealously guard their hard-won secrets, lest they fall into the wrong hands.

## Format for Forgotten Spells

All spells in this section have been categorized according to the known field of magic that they fall under, including "forgotten" fields such as Sorcery and Biomancy. The Difficulty rating is for learning the spell and for casting it in addition to the spell level chosen. Aside from these additions, the standard format used in Chapter 04 applies to these entries as well.



## Animate Environs

This spell causes any inanimate objects near the caster to become animated, and subject to the caster's mental control. Objects can be made to fly off shelves and float in the air, swords can be magically drawn from their scabbards and made to slash at foes, ropes or cloaks can be made to entangle or distract, etc. The caster must specify which objects will be affected, and what they will be made to do, before casting this spell. However, once this has been done, the objects will continue to move about as if by their own volition for the duration of the spell, even if the caster vacates the area of effect or turns his or her attention to other matters.

Victims in the area of effect must roll vs Dexterity once per round to avoid being struck, tripped, distracted, or otherwise inconvenienced by the animated objects. While animated objects can cause no more than d4 points of damage per round, the effect of many objects constantly swirling about one's head and underfoot is sufficient to prevent the use of spells or other skills that require complete concentration. Two consecutive successful rolls vs Dexterity are required to escape the area of effect. The number of objects that can be affected by this spell is limited to ten per level — more than enough to keep individuals in the area of effect dodging throughout the spell. Note that objects that weigh more than 25 pounds, enchanted items, and/or items that are in the grasp of other individuals or creatures cannot be affected by this spell.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** limited to a 10-foot diameter circle surrounding the caster.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs DEX to dodge; two successive rolls are required to escape the area of effect.

## Arkon's Impermeable Web

This spell allows the caster to create an impassable mesh of interconnecting lines of force, which can be used to entrap enemies or as a barrier against hostile creatures, interlopers, etc. The shape or form of the web (box, wall, fence, etc.) is up to the caster to determine, the maximum area of the mesh created by the spell being limited to 10 x 10 feet per level; consider a level one web to be sufficient to surround a single, man-sized creature. The quantity of web produced and its duration may be modified as desired, within the limitations of the spell. To activate the spell, the caster must recite Arkon's words of warding while tracing in the air the general shape to which the web is intended to conform (the player should describe the specifics of the web to the Gamemaster as the character is casting the spell). Note that a web, once cast, cannot be moved or altered, and can only be rendered null utilizing an appropriate counter-spell.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 12
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Escape from an Impermeable Web is possible only by individuals or entities who possess intra-dimensional capabilities (via spell, magical adjunct or other means). Even non-corporeal entities cannot penetrate a magical barrier of this sort.

## Arkon's Seeker

The great Arkon created this spell, which allows the caster to locate any single living individual, creature or being, provided the caster knows the specified individual's/creature's name. The spell's range is unlimited, though the enchantment has no inter-dimensional capabilities, and may be nullified by magics which are designed to counterspells of detection. To activate the spell, the caster takes a stick or other pointed object in hand, marks one end, and utters Arkon's divination. Then, speaking aloud the name of the intended subject, the caster tosses the object in the air. When it lands on the ground, the object will indicate the direction in which the subject can be found. It is well to note that the enchantment is not an indicator of distance, however.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** none
**Range:** unlimited
**Duration:** instantaneous
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Astramir's Thaumaturgic Analysis

This useful spell allows the caster to identify any substance or mixture, thereby determining its true properties and/or effects. The enchantment serves as an infallible detector of poisons and toxins, among its many other practical applications. To activate the spell, the caster must first isolate a quantity of the substance which is to be identified; a phial, tongs, spatula, or appropriate container of any sort will suffice for this purpose. This done, the caster waves a hand over the isolated sampling and recites Astramir's thaumaturgic formula, yielding a prismatic pattern which the caster may study and thereby deduce the desired information. The higher the level at which this spell is cast, the more detailed the information that can be derived. The analysis takes ten rounds to complete.

**Magical Order:** Thaumaturgy
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot.
**Duration:** 10 rounds.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Astramir's Thaumaturgic Analysis will reveal if a substance radiates magic, but is of no use in identifying or categorizing the possible applications of enchanted items.



## Arkon's Twister

This spell allows the caster to entrap a foe in a powerful vortex of magical forces. The speed at which the victim is made to spin can be controlled by the caster, as follows:

- "Intensity One" is sufficient to cause extreme vertigo, and to relieve the victim of hand-held objects and items secured in pockets, pouches, etc.
- "Intensity Two" is sufficient to hurtle the victim ten feet (per level) in any direction, with the victim taking corresponding damage upon impact with any solid surface.
- "Intensity Three" creates a vortex of such velocity that it will propel the victim through the dimensional fabric and into another plane of existence (caster's choice).

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Weight:** 20 lbs per level
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. DEX to dodge the vortex.

The caster may attempt to entrap the victim once per round, until the vortex expires or is counter-magicked, if desired (this requires the caster to concentrate on the vortex, however). A subject exceeding the spell's maximum weight allowance will not be affected by the vortex.

## Aura of Spell Negation

This spell, which some scholars attribute to Koraq, envelopes the caster or a designated beneficiary in an invisible aura of magical energy that will negate any single form of magic directed against the caster, regardless of the level of the enchantment. The aura confers protection against all types of magic, including other auras, the effects of symbols, spells, magical manifestations or anomalies, and magical weaponry. In the latter case, the magical properties of the weapon will be negated by the aura, but not its non-magical (physical) capabilities. Note that the aura and its protective properties are dispersed immediately following the first contact with any kind of magic, or if the beneficiary attempts to cast a spell while protected by this enchantment.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** passive duration is10 rounds per level; once contact with magic is made, the spell ceases to function.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Astramir's Transmutation

This spell allows the caster to transmute the nature of any non-magical substance or material: from solid to liquid, solid to gas, liquid to solid, etc. The amount of material that can be affected by this enchantment is one cubic foot per level. The spell has no toxic or harmful qualities per se, and yields unusual effects when used upon living creatures, as follows:

- A living entity transmuted to gaseous or liquid form is normally able to maintain integrity and control over its substance
- A gaseous being can hover and float above the ground
- A liquified being can seep into narrow cracks and crevices, etc.
- A solidified creature or being, transmuted to a variety of rigid carbon compounds, gains an increased resistance to damage (as if wearing plate armor), but suffers a corresponding loss of mobility (-4 reduction in SPD and DEX).

To activate the spell, the caster touches the subject with a thaumaturgic caduceus and utters Astramir's thaumaturgic word of alteration.

**Magical Order:** Thaumaturgy.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** by touch
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs DEX to avoid being touched. Note that non-corporeal entities, having no substance, cannot be affected by this spell.



## The Black Mists of Malnangar

This dread incantation, authored by the infamous Narishna of Magical Order, allows the caster to create a virulent cloud of black magical vapors. The volume of mist created by the spell is limited to one five-foot cube per level, the shape of the cloud is determined according to the caster's designs (grasping hands, snaking tendrils and anthropomorphic forms are especially popular). The caster can cause the black vapors to issue forth from any point within the spell's range. The mists are stationary unless the caster decides otherwise; by concentrating, the caster can cause the mists to change form, move up to ten feet per round in any desired direction, seep under doors or through keyholes, etc.

The Black Mists can be made to cause any one of several magical effects to those within its area, chosen at the time of casting, including: Paralysis, Blindness, or Strangulation (d8 damage per level per round).

**Magical Order:** Necromancy.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. SPD to elude the mists for no effect. Note that as long as the caster maintains concentration, he or she may direct the mists to attack victims once per round for as long as such individuals remain within range of the spell's effects. If the caster is distracted from concentrating on the spell, the mists will dissolve into nothingness.



## Barricade

Allows the caster to erect an immovable wall of glowing magical energy. The barrier is capable of withstanding one hundred points of cumulative damage before it collapses. The maximum size of a barricade cannot exceed ten feet on a side, and one foot thick. It may be shaped as desired within these limitations, though it is not possible to create a fully enclosed area by the use of this spell. Barricades are commonly used to seal breaches in fortifications, as cover vs heavy weapons, and to slow the advance of war engines and other conveyances. An array of barricades can be used to create an impromptu fortification, within the limits indicated previously.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10 feet per level of the spell.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Battle Aura

Encases the caster in a full suit of battle armor composed of shimmering arcane energy that confers 5 protection (+1 per spell level) from magical bolts, enchanted or non-magical weapons, and all forms of physical attack. The aura's protective capabilities do not stack with worn armor, and last for the duration of the spell, or until counterspelled. A battle aura is similar to enchanted armor in function, but has no weight and does not restrict movement. The color of the armor is up to the caster to decide, though only solid or metallic colors may be utilized. Multiple color schemes, patterns, or "invisible armor" are not possible.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** self.
**Duration:** 1 round per level of the spell.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Note that a battle aura does not confer protection against spells of influence, illusions, or psychic forms of attack.

## Barrage

Allows the caster to create several spherical projectiles composed of arcane force, which can be hurled at distances of up to 100 feet (plus 10 feet per level of the spell). The spheres explode on contact with any solid surface or object, causing d20 damage in a 10-foot diameter. One sphere can be created and hurled each round, per level of the spell.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty**: 5
**Range:** 100 feet +10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 1 round per level
**Magic Resistance:** Roll vs SPD to flee the blast area for no damage; a result of partial success means the intended target takes half the total damage.

## Cascal's Illusory Arcana

This spell allows the magician to cast an illusory version of any spell which he or she knows or has seen at least once before. The concept, as envisioned by Cascal, is unique in that it allows the magician to create the appearance that he or she is casting a real spell, rather than an illusion. Thus, the magician can cast an illusory Spell of Elemental Fire, Arkon's Impermeable Web, Rainbow Bridge, or whatever. Should the victims fail to resist the enchantment, they will believe that the illusory spell is real. If the spell being mimicked was one which would, if real, cause damage to the victims, those who fail to resist the illusion will believe that they have suffered harm. Victims who have been "killed" by Illusory Arcana can indeed die of heart failure, caused by shock. Note that a roll vs. Constitution is allowed to determine if the subject can survive from a "fatal" attack.

The level of spell effect is determined by the level at which Cascal's Illusory Arcana is cast. To activate the spell, the caster performs the motions of the spell being mimicked, but utters the syllables of Cascal's Illusory Arcana. The illusory quality of the enchantment is such that it will appear to observers that the real spell is being cast.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Duration:** as per a real version of the illusory arcana
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. PER as per a common spell of illusion. Note that reflective spells or mirrors can be used to turn the illusory effects of this spell back on the caster. Also note that intended victims of an illusory version of a spell of illusion receive two magic resistance rolls.

## Cascal's Numinous Veil

This spell allows the caster to render unintelligible any form of writings, inscriptions, symbols, etc. Only the caster of the Veil will be able to decipher writings disguised by this illusory effect, the duration of which is indefinite. The spell will affect approximately one square foot (or one page) of writings per level. To activate the enchantment, the caster waves a hand, wand, or staff over the designated writings while reciting Cascal's cogent phrases.

**Magical Order:** Cryptomancy.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 1 foot
**Duration:** indefinite, or until dispelled.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs PER as per a common spell of illusion; success means that the individual will notice that the affected writings have been tampered with. The Numinous Veil must be dispelled before the affected writings can be read, however.

## Cascal's Rainbow Bridge

This spell allows the caster to refract light through any enchanted prism, producing a multi-colored bridge of solidified light particles. The bridge requires no means of support per se, but must span an area between two relatively solid things; i.e., a Rainbow Bridge cannot simply terminate in mid-air. The width of a Rainbow Bridge can range from 1-10 feet, as the caster wishes. Length is a maximum of ten feet per level, and duration is one minute per level. To activate the spell, the caster must have an enchanted prism on hand. Placing the prism at the point from which the bridge is to extend, the caster speaks Cascal's incantation, thus causing the Rainbow Bridge to emanate from the prism.

**Magical Order**: Wizardry
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. A counterspell or a spell of darkness will disperse the bridge. A Rainbow Bridge is otherwise impervious to damage, though it can be distorted by reflective spells or mirrors.

## Cascal's Reflective Aura

This spell allows the caster (or a designated recipient) to be enveloped in a shimmering aura of light, which confers protection against spells of illusion, hallucinations, visual attack forms, and radiant or prismatized light. Spells or other visual attack forms directed against the aura are reflected upon the caster/attacker. Note that a Reflective Aura protects only against spells or attacks directed at the beneficiary of the enchantment; i.e., the aura itself does not allow the beneficiary to detect illusions. Illusory creatures or objects (being composed of light) cannot penetrate a Reflective Aura, however. To activate the spell, the caster executes a secret sign and speaks Cascal's incantation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 4
**Range:** cast by touch.
**Duration:** 1 round per level
**Magic Resistance:** None. Note that Cascal's Reflective Aura cannot be used in conjunction with any other protective shield or aura. In appearance, Cascal's aura resembles other magical auras.

## Cascal's Transfixation

This spell allows the caster to produce a burst of kaleidoscope colors. The stabbing beams of light produced by this enchantment impinge upon the ocular nerves of the intended victim, causing confusion and disorientation. In essence, the victim is rendered dazed and unable to think or take action until the spell's effects wear off. To activate the spell, the caster holds forth any sort of crystal, prism, gemstone, or another reflective article. The caster speaks Cascal's dazzling word of power, causing a brilliant burst of colors to fly forth from the object in hand and strike the intended victim.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. PER to resist the disorienting effects of the spell. Note that creatures or beings who are blind and/or do not possess optical organs cannot be affected by Cascal's Transfixation. Conversely, creatures or beings who possess night vision and/or are sensitive to light are most susceptible to the effects of this spell (-4 penalty to resist).

## Cascal's Shadow Dimension

This spell enables the caster to create an extradimensional space within the confines of any area of darkness or shadow. The caster may step into this space and look out unseen upon the surrounding area, or hide one or more objects within the extra-dimensional space, as desired. In either case, the size of the area of shadow must be large enough to permit entry by the caster or designated object(s); the extra-dimensional space itself is limitless in area. To activate the spell, the caster waves a hand over the area of shadow which is to be used in the enchantment and utters Cascal's incantation. The Shadow Dimension may then be entered or employed as desired.

A Shadow Dimension may be exited or entered at will for the length of its duration. Individuals or objects which remain within the extra-dimensional space after the spell's duration has lapsed will be trapped until they can be retrieved, or can affect an escape by magical means (individuals or objects left in a lapsed Shadow Dimension tend to drift towards the Void, and may not be found in the same place where they were left). If desired, the caster may designate any single creature or being as the recipient of the spell.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot per level
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. A Shadow Dimension radiates an aura of enchantment, and may be differentiated from ordinary shadow by the fact that it is not dispersed by light. A Spell of Radiance will cause a Shadow Dimension to dissolve, revealing its contents.



## Cascal's Virtual Illusion

This spell enables the caster to create a virtual illusion — an imaginary image that in all important respects appears to be real. Virtual illusions differ from common spells of illusion in that they profoundly affect the viewer's perception of reality. Virtual objects or structures feel solid to the touch; virtual illusions of creatures or persons are capable of interaction with real individuals, and can be touched, fought, or embraced. Yet while viewers may believe that they are climbing a set of virtual stairs, they are walking in place. When reclining on a virtual illusion of a cushioned divan, they may be laying on the floor. If attacked by illusory enemies, they experience pain, though their wounds are not real; if "killed," they lose consciousness and remain in a comatose state until the virtual illusion of death is dispelled.

A Virtual Illusion spell can be used to create up to 10 x10 x 10 feet of illusory objects, materials, or creatures per level (for example, a first level spell could be used to create 10-12 humanoid figures of average size, a small furnished room, a palanquin with bearers, etc.). Player characters who intend to employ this spell must describe the particulars of the virtual illusion in detail to the Gamemaster before rolling to determine the results. A result of Partial Success will yield a common spell of Illusion, devoid of virtual properties.

The caster must have firsthand knowledge of anything that he wishes to portray as a virtual illusion, or the results will be unconvincing (+1-10 bonus on Magic Resistance, at the Gamemaster's discretion). The power of this spell is otherwise limited only by the caster's imagination, and should not be underestimated. The sky city of Shalihan and all its inhabitants are said to have been created solely of virtual illusions, the only real element of the city being the large floating disk which served as its foundation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10 feet.
**Duration:** indefinite, or until dispelled.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs PER at a penalty of -10, but only after making physical contact with a virtual illusion. If the result is anything less than Success, the subject will be convinced that the virtual illusion is real, and will continue to believe this until the illusion has been dispelled. The reversed version of this spell can be used to dis[el a virtual illusion.

## Cerene's Ice Castle

This spell, created by the Snow Queen, Cerene, enables the caster to conjure an enchanted castle of ice. The amount of construction that can be created is limited to 10 x 10 x 10 feet per level. The ice castle can be created in any architectural style desired, and may include gates, arrow slots, machicolations, or towers, as desired. Enclosed areas can be created, though adequate ventilation must be provided if living beings or creatures are to occupy the structure, or asphyxiation will result within 2d20 rounds. Each 10-foot section of the wall is capable of withstanding 100 points of damage before being breached.

**Magical Order:** Elementalism
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** limited to the area surrounding the caster; i.e., when this spell is cast, the ice castle will manifest around the caster.
**Duration:** 100 rounds +10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## De-Magick

This all-purpose enchantment was devised by the sorceress, Sylan, who found it to be of great utility when exploring certain ancient ruins and crypts. The spell can be used to temporarily suspend the effects of any type of symbol, aura, magical barrier, enchanted item, or ward. The suspension lasts for only one round, after which the de-magicked subject will once again regain its previous capabilities. The de-magicking properties of this enchantment work equally well upon all forms of magic, the level at which the spell is cast determining the extent of its effectiveness.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot.
**Duration:** 1 round.
**Magic Resistance:** Resisted Roll, comparing the level of the subject that is to be de-magicked as a negative modifier with the level at which the spell is cast.

## Dimension Warp

This spell, which many scholars believe was authored by the trapmage, Shaladin, allows the caster to create an instability in the dimensional fabric; a warp, which can range upwards in size from one inch to ten feet in diameter. Individuals, creatures, or objects which make contact with such a warp will be sucked in and hurtled at random across the omniverse. Subjects drawn into a warp usually suffer spatial displacement (removal to another plane of existence). On rare occasions, however, a warp may spin a subject out of time, resulting in a temporal displacement, i.e., removal to another era, or time. In either case, the duration of the displacement is indefinite. Only by locating the warp's exit point and utilizing a counterspell can a displaced individual effect a return to his or her home plane (or time).

A Dimension Warp may be cast anywhere: in a doorway, a room, outdoors, in a chest, upon the opening of a bottle or container, etc. Its size is irrelevant; even a one-inch warp is capable of drawing in almost anything that makes contact with it. Dimension warps are stationary, and are barely discernible by the faint aura of distortion which they emanate. To activate the spell, the caster makes an arcane gesture and speaks nine words of power. The awesome forces generated will create a hole in the dimensional fabric, the size of which may be determined by the caster.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot per level
**Duration:** indefinite.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. PER to notice the warp in time to avoid contacting it (warps radiate a strong aura of magic which can sometimes be "felt" at distances of up to five feet).

## Dispose

This spell, created by the wizard Malderon, produces an extra-dimensional hole, into which one may dump unwanted trash or other items. The hole can then be closed at the caster's command, and its contents dumped into extradimensional space. The diameter of the hole cannot exceed two inches per level of the spell.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.



## Forceblade

Allows the caster to create a blade of ambient magical force that can be made to manifest in the caster's hand or an empty sheath or scabbard, as desired. The blade can be made to take the form of any type of normal-sized sword or knife, the size of the weapon having no relation to the amount of damage that it is capable of causing. A forceblade is solid, but has no weight and is non-encumbering. On a successful hit, a forceblade causes d12 (+1 per level of the spell) damage, plus STR bonus, as applicable.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** self.
**Duration:** 5 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though enchanted and non-magical forms of armor confer protection as per their normal ratings vs a forceblade.

## Forcebow

Allows the caster to create a bow or crossbow of arcane force that is capable of firing bolts of arcane energy. Each bolt is capable of causing d12 (+1 point per level of the spell). The forcebow automatically "reloads" each time it is fired, for the duration of the spell.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 100 feet plus 10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though enchanted and non-magical forms of armor confer protection as per their normal ratings vs a forcebow.

## Forcehammer

Allows the caster to create a warhammer composed of glowing arcane force. On a successful hit, a forcehammer does d12 (+1 point per level) points of battering damage, plus STR bonus, as applicable. Each blow knocks the target back a number of feet equal to the spell's level, CON to resist.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 8
**Range:** self.
**Duration:** 5 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Forceshield

Allows the caster to create a hand-held shield of glowing arcane force, which can be used to block or parry magical bolts or non-magical attacks. The forceshield grants the caster one free parry each round, at a +3 bonus.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** self.
**Duration:** 5 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Flight

Flight is an improved version of the spell of Wizardry, Levitation. This enchantment allows the caster or a designated beneficiary to fly at speeds of up to SPD +5. Exceeding the recipient's normal encumbrance limits reduces maximum speed by -1 per additional 50 lbs. or portion thereof.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** self, or cast by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Koraq's Anti-Magic Aura

This spell is an improved version of the enchantment, Aura of Negation. It allows the caster to envelop himself or herself in a shimmering aura of anti-magical energy that will confer protection from hostile magics of all sorts. Spells directed against the beneficiary of this enchantment dissolve upon contact with the anti-magic field, and are rendered ineffective. The aura does not confer protection from spells that affect the caster's surroundings, such as Arkon's Impermeable Web, spells of influence, or illusions.

The employment of an anti-magic aura is not without certain drawbacks. While enveloped in the aura, a magician can cast no other spell upon himself/herself. Further, the casting of an anti-magic aura cancels all previous enchantments, shields, auras, veils, etc. which the magician may have been employing. Also, of concern is the fact that a miscast anti-magic can result in a temporary loss of spellcasting abilities, or the inadvertent "de-magicking" of one or more enchanted items on the caster's person.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery
**Difficulty:** 15
**Range:** self.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. It is perhaps interesting to note that, in terms of outward appearance, it is impossible to tell Koraq's aura from the aura-enchantments of Cascal, Viridian, and Zanillo.

## Koraq's Arcanalytical Modulation

This spell enables the caster to modify or neutralize any form of enchantment by altering the parameters of its matrix. An Orb of Arcanalysis, used in conjunction with the skill, Arcanalysis, is essential to the use of this spell. Note that this spell must be cast at a level commensurate with the level of the enchantment that is to be modified; or greater, if the caster wishes to increase the level and/or effects of the enchantment being modified.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level; it takes 10 rounds to modify a single aspect (level, duration, effect, etc.) of a matrix.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Koraq's Counterstroke

This spell allows the caster to divert hostile magics away from an intended target or subject employing a deflective shield of anti-magical energy. The countering shield will unerringly deflect any single bolt, beam, or burst of magical origin (including eldritch, elemental, and mystical energy). Duration is instantaneous. To activate the spell, the caster points in the direction of the hostile magic and utters Korak's word of anti-magical power.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Duration:** instantaneous.
**Magic Resistance:** None. It should be noted that hostile magics countered using this spell are not dispersed or dispelled, but merely deflected in a random direction. The Gamemaster should roll a d20 to make this determination, as follows:

1-5 = deflected upward
6-10 = deflected downward
11-15 = deflected to left
16-20 = deflected to right

## Koraq's Darkening Veil

This spell allows the caster to negate the effects of any type of crystal ball, seeing-stone, or spell of surveillance. The enchantment will cause any scrying device directed against the caster and/or his or her associates to cloud over and darken, effectively foiling spying attempts of this nature. Range is unlimited, though a Darkening Veil has no inter-dimensional capability.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** unlimited.
**Duration:** one hour per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Koraq's Interposing Shields

This spell allows the caster to create several disc-shaped shields of magical force, which encircle the caster, moving automatically to intercept and nullify attacks by missiles, weapons, hostile creatures or beings, and magical bolts, darts, etc. The glowing shields also possess reflective qualities that are proof to radiant light and heat, but do not confer protection against illusions, mists, gases, dusts, spells with a wide area of effect, or psychic energies. The spell produces one shield per level, each of which will serve to thwart a single attack - contact with any of the attack forms listed will cause a shield to burst into shards of light. To activate the enchantment, the caster recites Korak's word of warding with right hand upraised in a gesture of arcane significance. The shields appear at once and hover about the caster.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1-2 feet
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.



## Koraq's Perdurable Enchantment

This potent spell enables the caster to extend the duration of any of the following types of enchantments:

- magical gates, dimensional openings, etc.
- any illusion or illusory effect not of "instantaneous" duration
- magical mists or trap-type effects
- magical bonds or restraints of any sort
- conjured/metamorphosized creatures or beings

To be effective, the Perdurable Enchantment must be cast upon a spell which is already in effect, i.e., the Perdurable Enchantment is cast separately from the spell which it is intended to augment. The enchantment increases the effective duration of the spell upon which it is cast by a factor of ten (if cast at the first level of ability), twenty (at second level), thirty (at third level), and so forth. To activate the spell, the caster must recite Koraq's formulae, an endeavor which takes a minimum of 10 rounds to complete. The enchantment may be cast any number of times upon a given spell.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery
**Difficulty:** 15
**Range:** 1 foot
**Duration:** as stated above.
**Magic Resistance:** None. It should be noted that a miscast spell of this nature can cause disruptions in the temporal fabric, resulting in grievous consequences for the caster (such as premature aging, loss of vitality, displacement in time, etc.)

## Koraq's Spell of Transference

This complex spell enables the caster to create an opening into a neutral dimensional nexus, step within, and emerge in another locale of the caster's choice. Distance is not a factor; if desired the caster may even use this spell to gain access to another dimension, though such attempts engender additional risk. It is not possible, however, for the caster to use this spell to travel to any locale which he or she has not previously visited, or has at least scrutinized using a crystal ball or seeing-stone. The caster must concentrate fully while effecting the transference, for the slightest distraction may cause the caster to become disoriented while seeking to exit the dimensional nexus (roll vs. Intelligence if such an occurrence is likely; failure indicates that the caster exits the nexus at a location determined at random by the Gamemaster, rather than the intended destination).

Spell failure or magical mishaps are a particular annoyance when casting a Spell of Transference, and can lead to the inadvertent creation of dimensional rifts, vortexes, temporal displacements, and other inconveniences. Also, while the caster stands within the dimensional nexus, there is a 1 in 20 chance that he or she may encounter wandering creatures or beings of extra-dimensional origin, or even fellow travelers of one sort or another.

If desired, the caster may bring other creatures or beings along, though each additional lifeform increases the degree of difficulty inherent in this spell (additional -5 penalty). To activate the spell, the caster must have in his or her possession an enchanted crystal, which acts as a focus for Korak's spoken incantation.

**Magical Order**: Sorcery
**Difficulty:** 15 to learn the spell. Casting difficulty varies according to the intended destination, as indicated on the following table:

| Destination | Difficulty |
|---|---|
| Another continent | 5 |
| Another world | 10 |
| Another solar system | 15 |
| Another galaxy | 20 |
| Another plane | 25 |

**Range:** 10 feet
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. It should be noted that Koraq considered this spell to be far less reliable, and thus inferior, to the Neurian method of interdimensional travel.

## Koraq's Ultra-Sensorium

This spell increases the subject's sensory capabilities to a remarkable degree, allowing the beneficiary of this enchantment to see invisible/astral/ethereal presences or objects, detect illusions by touch, discern even the subtlest odors or scents, hear whispered conversations or other faint sounds, and detect magical emanations by sight. The recipient of the ultra-sensorial capabilities will also be invested with a type of "sixth sense" which will alert the individual if he or she is being watched by unseen agencies of any sort. To activate the spell, the caster places his or her right hand upon the forehead of the intended subject (or upon his or her head, if the caster is to be the beneficiary of the enchantment), and speaks Korak's incantation.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** maximum range for all but the tactile ability is 10 feet per level
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though an unwilling recipient can void the enchantment by preventing the caster from touching him/her. It should be noted that individuals affected by this spell are highly susceptible to damage by extreme sensory stimuli: loud noises, noxious vapors, extremely bright lights, or spells that cause effects such as these (-1 penalty per level of the spell on all attempts to resist the effects of such stimuli).



## Malderon's Magic Portal

This unusual spell allows the caster to create a magical door, which may range in height from 1-8 feet, and width from 1-4 feet, at the caster's discretion. The portal may appear as a common wooden or metal door, a curtain, or even a mirror. Exactly where a magical portal will lead is up to the caster to determine. The choices include:

1. Nowhere. This was Malderon's rather quaint name for The Void, a dark dimension having no substance. While Malderon claimed that he often hid here to avoid the unwanted attentions of peddlers and visiting relatives, individuals who do not possess the ability to travel from one dimension to another will become trapped in The Void if they pass through the one-way door.

2. Through any solid or semi-solid substance, including stone, earth, wood, metal, glass, sand, mud, etc. In this instance, the depth of the opening behind the door is limited to 1/2 foot per level.

3. To any location where the caster has previously placed another Magic Portal, thus serving as a magical means of traveling from one location to another.

All Magic Portals are "one-way doors," that can only function either as an "entrance" or an "exit," as the caster determines. To activate the spell, the caster traces the outline of a door in the desired location and utters Malderon's incantation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot per level.
**Duration:** Duration is normally limited to one hour per level. Such is the utility of this spell that magicians often use Korak's Perdurable Enchantment to create Magic Portals of long-lasting duration, forming a convenient means of access to various places.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs PER to detect a Magic Portal and thereby avoid entering it by accident. It should be noted that a miscast Magic Portal can lead to unpleasant consequences of various sorts, including inter-dimensional rifts and gates into bizarre locales.

## Malderon's Mists

This spell enables the caster to create a number of magical mists which can be made to cause one of the following effects:

**Obscure Vision:** The mists created will be impenetrable by magical or non-magical means of detection, including scrying devices.

**Sleep:** Individuals who fall victim to these mists cannot be awakened until the effects of the enchantment wear off or are countered by magical/alchemical means.

**Forgetfulness:** Individuals who fall victim to these mists will become confused and disoriented; uncertain of who they are, where they are, or what they were doing before contacting the mists. Until the mists' effects wear off or are counter-magicked, such victims will be unable to remember any previously known skills, talents, or abilities requiring conscious thought. They will have a skill rating of "zero" (attribute scores or natural abilities are not affected by the enchantment).

The quantity of mists created by this spell cannot exceed 10 x 10 x 10 feet. The mists are stationary, though the magical vapors can be moved or dispersed by magical or non-magical winds. Color of the mists is variable, according to the caster's designs. To activate the spell, the caster gestures with both hands while reciting Malderon's incantation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. CON to resist magical sleep or forgetfulness.

## Malderon's Obedient Servant

This spell conjures forth a magical servitor of humanoid semblance, that can be instructed to perform menial household chores or pack and/or move possessions, equipment, or other items, as desired. The items to be moved can be loaded aboard a conveyance or steed, tucked into a closet or cabinet, etc. The servitor can lift one hundred pounds and moves with considerable alacrity, neatly packing one bag, satchel, drawer, or a chest full of items per round. It is not capable of speech or independent action. The rogue magician, Zanillo, is said to have often employed this enchantment when rifling tombs and vaults of their contents.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 2
**Range:** the servitor manifests at the caster's side.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Malderon's Rings

This spell enables the caster to conjure one or more unbreakable rings of magical energy, which may be directed to encircle and confine any creature, being, organism, or object. The enchantment yields up to one ring per level, the maximum diameter of which cannot exceed two feet per level. To activate the spell, the caster points at the designated target(s) of the spell and utters Malderon's activating incantation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. DEX to dodge the rings for no effect.



## Mind Probe

This spell allows the caster to psychically delve into the subconscious mind of another individual or creature, in an attempt to locate secret or forgotten information that is stored in the subject's memory. The spell lasts for one round per level, during which time the caster must roll vs Perception once per round as he or she searches for the desired information. The mnemonic information derived from a Mind Probe may be comprised of visual, auditory, olfactory, and/or other elements, and is subject to considerations of language and sensory perception; i.e., it may be difficult or impossible for the caster to understand the thoughts and memories of a subject who speaks a different language, or possesses perceptive capabilities that are alien to the caster. This spell will only work if the subject remains stationary, and will function even if the subject is asleep, unconscious, comatose, or on the verge of death.

**Critical Success:** the caster locates the desired information, and may also find something else of interest (Gamemaster's option).

**Success:** the caster finds the information.

**Partial Success:** the caster intuitively feels that he or she is "getting close" (+1 on next attempt)

**Failure:** nothing found, search can continue next round unless spell duration expires.

**Critical Failure:** nothing found; caster loses psychic connection and spell ceases to function.

**Magical Order:** Mysticism.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** one foot; if the caster moves out of range the spell ceases to function.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs PER, as stated. If this spell is being cast without the subject's consent, apply the subject's WIL Rating as a negative modifier vs the caster's PER rolls.

## Miraja's Illusory Veils

This spell allows the caster to adopt one "veil" of illusion per level of the enchantment, or to do the same for a designated beneficiary. Each veil is a separate illusion, which must be penetrated or dispelled before the subject's true nature can be determined. The seven illusory veils include:

**Sex:** the subject's gender can be altered or disguised.

**Size:** the subject's height and/or weight can be disguised, and made to appear up to 50% greater or smaller, as desired.

**Race:** the subject's race and outward appearance (facial features, hair color, and skin color and texture) can be magically disguised, though basic bodily somatotype (biped, humanoid, quadruped, avian) cannot be altered.

**Age:** the subject's age can be magically disguised, and made to appear 50% younger or older.

**Apparel:** the subject's costume can be magically disguised and altered as desired.

**Voice:** the subject's manner of speech (accent, inflection, pitch, resonance) can be magically disguised, though the language the subject is speaking remains unchanged.

**Charisma:** the subject's overall presence can be magically disguised, causing him or her to appear more or less imposing, commanding, etc. In game terms, Charisma Rating can be temporarily altered by +/- 1-5.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** cast by touch.
**Duration:** one hour per level
**Magic Resistance:** None, though an unwilling recipient can avert being disguised by avoiding the caster's touch (roll vs DEX).



## Mordante's Dark Harbinger

This spell allows the caster to summon a Monitor Imp - a lesser entity from the plane of Oblivion, commonly employed as a bearer of ill-fortune and evil omens. The Imp will deliver any verbal message or relatively small item (weighing up to one pound) given to it by the caster. Distance is not a factor, though a Harbinger Imp will be reluctant to venture beyond the Gray Sphere of the Astral Plane unless it is promised a sizable reward.

To activate the spell, the caster traces a symbol in the air and recites Mordante's incantation. The Imp will appear, awaiting its commands. The caster only informs the Imp of the identity and general location of the individual or creature for whom the message is intended, and it will be off. Note that this spell takes ten rounds to cast, though no special preparations are required to affect the summoning.

**Magical Order:** Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 6
**Range:** limitless
**Duration:** 10 rounds; sufficient time to give the harbinger instructions and send it on its way.
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, Mordante's Dark Harbinger may yield consequences similar to an improperly cast Spell of Summoning.

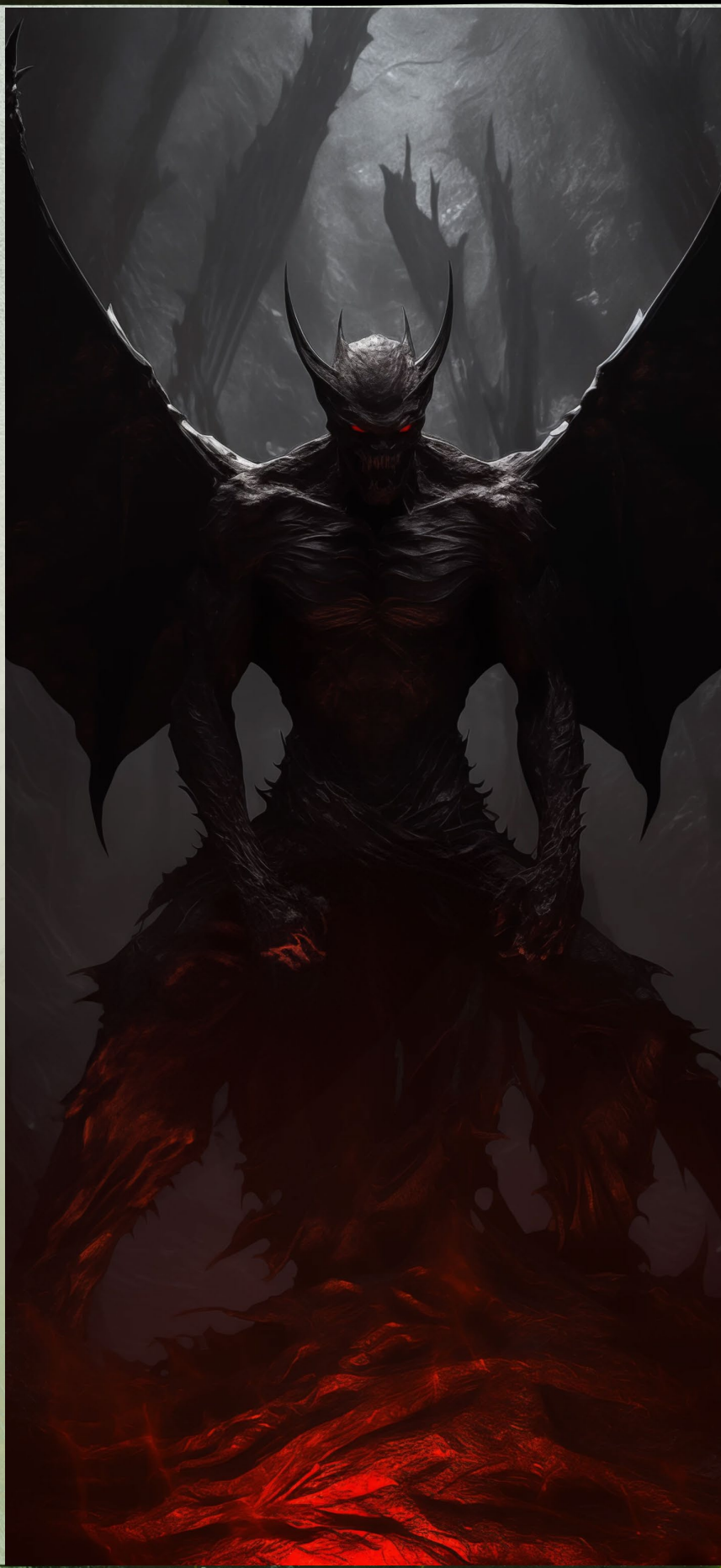
## Mordante's Dark Minion

This spell allows the caster to summon a Night Demon. The creature may be commanded spy on enemies, steal items, kidnap vulnerable targets, guard a location, or assassinate a target. They will not engage in direct combat, though, preferring to ambush targets from the shadows. The creeature may only be given a single task, but will remain until it is completed

To activate the spell, the caster traces a symbol in the air and speaks Mordante's incantation. The Night Demon will appear, awaiting its commands.

Note that this spell takes ten rounds to cast, though no special preparations are required to affect the summoning.

**Magical Order:** Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** limitless
**Duration:** indefinite
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, Mordante's Frightful Minion may yield results similar to an improperly cast Spell of Summoning.





## Mordante's Nightmare Swarm

This spell allows the caster to summon several Pseudo-Demons, also known as Fantasms - minor entities from the Nightmare Dimension known for their cowardly ways. The creatures may be commanded to attack and terrorize any subject or subjects designated by the caster. To activate the spell, the caster must burn a mixture of one dram of incense and one of black mushroom or black lotus while chanting Mordante's incantation. The fumes and spell forced together will induce a magical sleep which will render the caster insensible for one hour, meanwhile enabling him or her to extend a psychic summons into the Nightmare Dimension. One Fantasm per spell level will answer the caster's summons, with ability levels ranging from 1 to 6. The caster will be able to visualize all that transpires, and can direct the Fantasms to attack any subject wherever they may be. Range is unlimited, though inter-dimensional control of the summoned Fantasms is not possible.

**Magical Order:** Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 6
**Range:** limitless.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, this spell can lead to dire consequences, including terrifying nightmares, possession, or the direct intervention of the horrific entity known as Noman, ruler of the Nightmare Dimension.

## Mordante's Nocturnal Menace

This spell allows the caster to summon a Nightstalker - a frightful lesser entity from the Nightmare Realm, capable of attacking living creatures on the material plane by invading their dreams in astral form. The spell is particularly useful, as there is no need to observe the strictures and procedures normally associated with summoning spells. Mordante's name alone is enough to compel the Nightstalker to obey, because of a pact struck between these creatures and the Black Magician himself. Under this pact, a Nightstalker may only be summoned after dark.

To activate the spell, the caster traces a symbol in the air while speaking Mordante's arcane incantation. The Nightstalker will appear in a cloud of acrid vapor, awaiting the caster's command. The caster need only inform the Nightstalker of the chosen victim's identity and location, and it will obey. Note that this spell takes ten rounds to cast, though no special preparations are required to affect the summoning. The spell must be cast at a minimum of 11th level, as that is the ability level of the weakest Nightstalkers.

**Magical Order:** Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 11
**Range:** limitless
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, Mordante's Nocturnal Menace may yield consequences similar to an improperly cast Spell of Summoning.

## Mordante's Unseen Agency

This spell allows the caster to summon a Fiend - an insidious minor entity from the Nightmare Dimension, notable for its ability to blend unseen into darkness or shadow. Like Mordante's Nocturnal Menace, no special Preparations need to be made for the summoning. A Fiend will usually serve only as a spy, observing the intended subject or subjects for up to one day per level of the spell, then reporting back to the caster. If promised a sizable reward, a Fiend may additionally consent to steal an item for the caster, but only if it can do so without great risk to itself.

To activate the spell, the caster traces a symbol in the air and recites Mordante's incantation. The Fiend will appear, awaiting its commands. The caster needs to inform the pseudo-demon of the subject's identity and general location, and it will obey. Note that this spell takes ten rounds to cast, though no special preparations are required to affect the summoning.

**Magical Order:** Invocation
**Difficulty:** 6
**Range:** limitless
**Duration:** one day per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, Mordante's Unseen Agency may yield consequences similar to an improperly cast Spell of Summoning.

## Mordante's Winged Servant

This spell allows the caster to summon a Bat Manta - a winged creature from the Astral Plane. The Bat Manta will consent to carry the caster and/or any other individuals, creatures, goods or equipment (weighing up to a total of one-half ton) to any location on the plane to which it was summoned. It can travel up to twenty-five miles in an hour, and will serve for one hour per level of the spell. If left unattended for any length of time, a Bat Manta may return to its home plane. A level four Bat Manta will always respond to this summons.

Like Mordante's Nocturnal Menace, the summons requires no special preparations to cast. To activate the spell, the caster traces a symbol in the air and recites Mordante's incantation. The Bat Manta will appear, awaiting its instructions. Note that this spell takes ten rounds to cast, though no special preparations are required to affect the summoning.

**Magical Order:** Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** limitless.
**Duration:** one hour per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, Mordante's Winged Servant may yield results similar to an improperly cast Spell of Summoning.



## Pact of Summoning

Allows the caster to impel a summoned creature to serve as his or her familiar. The caster must first use the Spell of Summoning to bring the desired entity from its home plane. The summoned creature must be confined within a circle of protection at the time this spell is cast, or the enchantment will not function. If successful, the entity must agree to serve the caster for the duration of the spell, or until it is given its release from the Pact.

The Pact of Summoning receives its power from the caster's lifeforce, costing him or her 2 hit points per each summoned creature made to serve as a familiar. These lost hit points return if a familiar is killed or sent back to its home plane. The incantation takes ten rounds to recite, and is effective only on Minor, Lesser, and Greater entities. The spell level must equal the creature.

**Magical Order:** Ritual Invocation
**Difficulty:** 10. When casting there is an additional difficulty of 5 for Lesser Entities, or 10 for Greater Entities.
**Range:** limited to the confines of the circle of protection.
**Duration:** one year per level of the spell.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs WIL to resist

## Radiant Beam

Allows the caster to create a tightly focused (1-inch diameter) beam of radiant light energy that can be projected at distances of up to 100 feet (plus 10 feet) per level. A radiant beam is capable of causing up to d20 (+1 per level) points of damage, and will ignite combustibles in the area of effect. The burst of light travels at such great speed that it cannot be dodged or evaded.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** 100 +10 feet per level.
**Duration:** Instantaneous.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Roll to hit using the caster's magic skill as normal, though a result of partial success indicates a miss concerning the use of this spell. Also note that a radiant beam can be foiled by the use of reflective armor or mirrors, and can be dispersed and rendered harmless by clouds of dust, smoke, or mist.

## Re-Magick

This spell, developed by the sorceress Sylan, enables the caster to restore spent charges from any enchanted item. To be effective, the spell must be cast at the same level as the item that is to be re-magicked. One spent charge can be restored per each casting of this spell, up to the item's maximum number of charges.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** indefinite, or until the charge is spent once more.
**Magic Resistance:** None

## Retrieve

This spell was created by the wizard, Malderon, who often found upon leaving his home that he had forgotten to bring along some small but important article. When cast, this enchantment conjures forth a magical creation resembling a servitor imp, which may be dispatched to retrieve the forgotten item at once. The conjured imp travels through extradimensional space, and can move at a rate of up to ten miles per round. The maximum weight of the article to be retrieved cannot exceed twenty pounds. It is well to note that the imp will not retrieve any item that is not owned by the caster.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** casting range is 1 foot; the imp's range is 20 miles per level of the spell; i.e., 10 miles in either direction. Should the caster move beyond the spell's maximum range, the retrieved item will be lost in extradimensional space.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Rodinn's Spell of Instant Sobriety

This minor enchantment allows the caster to negate the effects of intoxicants of any sort, rendering the beneficiary sober and alert. The enchantment enjoys a vast reputation among magicians as an effective treatment for hangovers. To activate the enchantment, the caster snaps his or her fingers and speaks a single word.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 2, though a penalty of -1 to -10 may be applied against the caster if he or she attempts to employ this spell while intoxicated.
**Range:** 1 foot per level
**Duration:** indefinite.
**Magic Resistance:** None.
Reverse: Rodinn warned against using this cantrip as a counterspell for recreational purposes, citing the unpredictable nature and duration of magically induced insobriety.

## Rodinn's Sumptuous Repast

Widely acclaimed as one of Rodinn's finest creations, this spell allows the caster to conjure a full meal (main course, two side dishes, and liquid libation, of the caster's choice), sufficient to feed one man-sized creature or being per level. The enchantment's epicurean limitations are somewhat modest, though not embarrassingly so; costly delicacies and rare vintage wines are beyond the capabilities of this spell, but the quality of food and drink produced can generally not be faulted, and the portions are reasonably generous (Rodinn himself was partial to the Green Wine, rainbow kra with capers, spiced quince garnishes, and fresh fruit from the jungles of the Dark Coast). From a nutritional standpoint, the meal is more than adequate, though overindulgence can lead to gastric distress, intestinal disorders, and obesity (Rodinn recommended that the spell be employed for personal use no more than three times in a given week). To activate the spell, the caster spreads wide both hands over the area where the meal is to be served, and recites Rodinn's incantation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 1 foot per level
**Duration:** instantaneous; conjured foodstuffs vanish from the digestive tract 12 hours after ingestion, however, leaving the recipient feeling famished.
**Magic Resistance:** None. It is important to note that a miscast spell may yield tainted or spoiled food, among other unsavory effects.

## Rodinn's Spell of Sartorial Splendor

This minor enchantment allows the caster to repair the effects of travel, the elements, and general wear and tear on one's garments and overall appearance. Garments are magically cleaned and freshened, small rips and tears mended, footwear shined to a high polish, etc. The enchantment will also do as much as can be done for the beneficiary's personal grooming, serving as an effective substitute for a bath, shave, haircut and manicure. To activate the enchantment, the caster performs an arcane gesture, touches the intended beneficiary, and speaks Rodinn's effectuating cantrip.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** instantaneous and indefinite.
**Magic Resistance:** None

## Sassan's Fiery Motes

This spell enables the caster to hurl several white-hot darts of magical fire up to a distance of ten feet per level. The total number of creatures or beings that can be targeted by the fire-specks is limited to a maximum of two per level - exactly the quantity of motes created by the spell. If desired, less than the maximum number of motes may be created, or the total quantity of motes directed at a lesser number of targets (or even a single target). Each fire-mote will do two points of damage to any living creature or combustible object/material which it strikes. To activate the spell, the caster first speaks Sassan's incantation, then points with the left hand at each of the designated targets, sending forth a fusillade of fiery motes.

**Magical Order:** Pyromancy.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Duration:** instantaneous.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. DEX to dodge the motes for no damage. A result of Partial Success means the intended victim takes half damage (1 point) per mote.

## Sassan's Pyromania

This spell causes any non-magical item or substance to burst into flame at the caster's command. The magical flames produced will consume a one cubic foot quantity of any combustible material (wood, paper, cloth, etc.) per round, or a similar quantity of any other type of material (including glass, metal, stone, or even water) per every five rounds. The spell will not harm living creatures. Sassan himself considered the enchantment to have numerous uses, particularly concerning pranks and practical jokes. The flames produced by this enchantment subside the moment the spell's duration has expired, but are otherwise extinguishable only by magical means. To activate the spell, the caster points with the left hand towards the intended target and utters Sassan's special word of power.

**Magical Order:** Pyromancy
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** 1 foot per level
**Duration:** instantaneous
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## The Seven Secret Symbols of Power

This spell allows the caster to employ one of Solimorrion's seven secret symbols, which are effective vs. demons, devils, shadowforms and other entities of extra-dimensional origin; it is now believed by some that Solimorrion devised these potent symbols as a means of countering the Six Symbols of Power employed by Sepharan Cultists.

The seven seals are:

**Banishment:** Exiles the subject forthwith to a dimension of the caster's choice.

**Stasis:** Immobilizes the subject within a glowing matrix composed of lines of pure force.

**Freedom:** Releases the subject from magical or non-magical bonds, fetters, or any other form of restraint, including charms, spells of influence, banishment, imprisonment, or an oath (provided the caster is the one who bound the subject to the oath).

**Oath:** Binds the subject to honor any pact or arrangement agreed to before the casting of the symbol. Failure to uphold the terms of the agreement will cause the subject to experience the most excruciating agonies, followed within seven days by death or dissolution.

**Confinement:** This symbol is used to capture and confine a designated subject in a prison of magical force, which can be made to take any form desired: mazes, brass vessels, gemstones, glass cages, and subterranean cells are among the more popular choices.

**Protection:** Creates a ten-foot radius circle of protection around the caster (and up to six companions or creatures, if desired) which can be made impervious to one of the following: demons, devils, malign spiritforms, or magic. The circle is stationary.

**Guardian:** This potent symbol wards any room, doorway, portal, archway, or magical gate from entrance by any save the caster, or individuals specifically designated as being welcome within. The guardian is a Paramane; an entity composed of magical energy, whose level is determined by the level of the symbol. It is capable of speech, and resides within the area it is consigned to protect, held there by the symbol's magic. If approached, the guardian will repulse trespassers with a burst of magical energy.

Duration for each of the Seven Secret Symbols is permanent, subject to appropriate counter-magics. To activate the spell, the caster stands, arms spread apart, and traces the symbol in the air (or upon a solid surface, if desired) while invoking Solimorrion's secret words of power; the process of tracing the symbol creates an atmospheric turbulence in the area of the caster (swirling winds, flashes of light, etc.) that is quite noticeable, to say the least. A symbol's area of effect projects outward in a 10-foot diameter circle.

**Magical Order:** Cryptomancy
Difficulty: 7
**Range:** cast by touch; effective range is a 10-foot diameter circle.
**Duration:** indefinite.
**Magic Resistance:** it is possible to avoid the effects of a symbol by staying out of the area of effect or moving out of range of a magician who is casting a symbol (rolls vs SPD in the latter case).

## Shaladin's Alarums and Diversions

This minor enchantment allows the caster to place a special ward upon any door, chest, container, or item. If the protected item is touched by any unauthorized person or entity (including a phantasmal felon), the ward is activated, yielding one of the following effects:

- a sound like a great gong being struck will be heard
- the appearance of an illusory spectral face (of the caster's choice) which will utter an angry warning (up to seven words of the caster's choosing)
- a nearby door (designated by the caster) slams shut and locks
- the sound of approaching footsteps is heard
- the warded item/object appears to burst into flame (an illusory effect)
- any single, non-harmful effect devised by the caster will occur.

One additional effect can be produced per every two levels (i.e., add one effect at level 3,5,7, etc.). To activate the enchantment, the caster waves a hand over the object or item to be warded and utters Shaladin's incantation.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** cast by touch; effective range is a 10-foot diameter circle.
**Duration:** 24 hours.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Note that items warded in this manner radiate a faint aura of magic.



## Shaladin's Machinatus

This minor enchantment enables the caster to place a secret ward upon any room, hall, or enclosed area. If an unauthorized individual or creature trespasses into the protected area, the ward is activated, yielding one of the following effects:

- a conjured harbinger imp appears to warn the caster or another individual that trespassers have entered the protected area
- a door is automatically locked or unlocked.
- one trap mechanism of any sort located somewhere within 1,000 feet of the protected area is set, reset, or otherwise activated. As part of the machinatus, an automaton may be activated by this means.

One additional effect can be produced per level of the spell.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 7. When casting add a Difficulty of 1 per effect that is to be produced
**Range:** the spell's effects encompass a 1000 foot diameter circle.
**Duration:** 24 hours.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Note that areas protected by this ward radiate a faint aura of magic.

## Shaladin's Surprise

This spell, also known as "The Rogue's Lament," allows the caster to place a minor ward upon any door, chest, container, book, etc. If an unauthorized person or entity (including a phantasmal felon) touches or attempts to open the protected device, the intruder will suffer one point of energy damage per spell level (a one-point shock is sufficient to vaporize a phantasmal felon). The shock will also cause numbness and pain in the intruder's hand/claw etc., rendering the affected member useless for one minute per level. The ward retains its charge indefinitely until contacted by an intruder; upon discharging its energy, the ward ceases to function. To activate the enchantment, the caster passes a hand over the designated device while speaking Shaladinn's cantrip.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** cast by touch.
**Duration:** the spell's effects are instantaneous; its properties remain in effect for one hour per level.
**Magic Resistance:** none; if a protected object is touched, the spell takes effect.

## The Six-Fold Spell of Fascination

This potent spell — stolen by the witch, Ilse, from a powerful Shaitan named Nargul — enables the caster to entrance any individual by the most clever and devious magics. Individuals who have been charmed in this fashion will be utterly fascinated by the caster, and will reveal anything or perform any favor to gain the caster's approval (and/or affections, if applicable). To activate the spell, the caster must have the subject's attention; the caster then performs six subtle motions of the hands, eyes, and facial features while speaking to the subject. The spell takes approximately 10 rounds to cast.

**Magical Order:** Witchcraft.
**Difficulty:** 6
**Range:** 1 foot per level
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** vs. PER roll at a penalty of -1 per every level of the enchantment. If this roll is successful, the subject will perceive a faint aura of magic in his or her proximity. Unless the subject suspects that he or she is being charmed and takes precautions of some sort (averts gaze, walks away, utters a counterspell, etc.) the entrancement will still take effect, however.

## Solimorrion's Chains

This spell allows the caster to bind a subdued or captured foe in chains of glowing magical force. The chains render the prisoner unable to utilize magics or spells of any sort, and cannot be broken by physical means, though they can be broken by force of will. Solimorrion's Chains can only be cast upon an individual or creature who has been subdued, confined, or held fast in some manner, or who has willingly surrendered to the caster.

**Magical Order:** Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** vs. WIL, to break the magical chains of force. The level at which the spell is cast is applied as a negative modifier for this roll (one attempt only).

## Solimorrion's Hieroglyph

This spell allows the caster to inscribe a symbol representing any type of beast or humanoid being upon any solid surface. Should an unauthorized person or creature approach within twenty feet of the hieroglyph, a life-sized version of the depicted creature or humanoid will appear to bar the way. The level at which the hieroglyph was cast determines the level of the conjuration and its total hit points. The hieroglyphic creature will have abilities commensurate with a real creature of similar level, but will disappear once the spell's duration has elapsed, or if it is destroyed. A counterspell vs symbols can also be used to cause the dissolution of the creature. Once cast, Solimorrion's Hieroglyph will retain its powers indefinitely, until someone activates the enchantment.

**Magical Order:** Cryptomancy
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Spell of Instantaneous Transport

This spell, which was co-authored by Koraq and Sylan, enables the caster to instantly travel from one locale to another, or to transport another individual. The maximum distance that may be covered cannot exceed 100 miles per level. The point of arrival must be well known to the caster, for if not, he or she may materialize in an inconvenient, or even dangerous, location. Note that only one person can be the beneficiary of this spell. The spell can only be cast by touch, and has no interdimensional capabilities. Arkon is said to have employed a version of this spell to rid his home of unwanted relatives, peddlers, and other annoyances.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 100 miles per level.
**Duration:** instantaneous
**Magic Resistance:** None, unless the subject is unwilling (roll vs DEX to avoid being touched in this case).

## Spell of Coercion

This spell is commonly used to obtain the services of summoned entities, particularly those that refuse to be compliant to the summoner's commands. The spell calls into effect forces that are harmful to the summoned entity (such as radiance to a shadowight, elemental fire to an aqua demon, etc.), surrounding the victim with an aura of hostile magical energies capable of causing extreme agony. Unless the victim can resist the pain, he, she, or it will have no choice but to agree to serve the caster in return for release from the spell. It is well to note that a coerced entity will bear considerable resentment for the summoner, and may seek to gain revenge for being subjected to this effects of this spell.

**Magical Order:** Ritual Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** limited to the circle in which the summoned entity has been entrapped.
**Duration:** 1 round per level of the spell.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs WIL once per round, at a penalty of -1 per level of the spell. On a result of Partial Success, the subject's Will Rating is temporarily reduced by half concerning subsequent attempts to resist. As a result of Failure, the summoned entity yields to the summoner's demands.

## The Spell of Stasis

This spell is of exceedingly practical use to the aspiring naturalist, for it allows the caster to preserve in stasis any living organism, including all manner of plants, animals, and even humanoid beings. The enchantment produces an effect not unlike suspended animation, rendering the subject immobile and bringing to a halt all metabolic processes. The stasis is in no way harmful to the organism; in fact, the spell can be used to "preserve" victims of poison, disease, or other maladies until a cure or remedy can be applied. Thystram also found the enchantment to be of use in the subdual of predatory creatures, hostile natives, and such relatively minor annoyances as peddlers and bill collectors. To activate the spell, the caster points at the intended subject and utters the arcane formula, sending a wavering beam of magical energy in the direction indicated.

**Magical Order:** Biomancy.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot per level.
**Duration:** one hour per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. DEX to dodge the beam for no effect. Note that a miscast Spell of Stasis can yield any number of unfavorable consequences for the caster, his or her associates, or any lifeforms in the immediate area.

## The Spell of Surveillance

This spell was created either by Korak or Arkon; accounts differ as to which of the two first perfected this enchantment. It allows the caster to employ any crystal ball, mirror, or another reflective surface as a magical scrying device. When cast, the enchantment allows the magician to view any single individual, creature or area (up to 10 x 10 x 10 feet), and allows the caster to see whatever is transpiring in the area being studied. The caster must have first-hand knowledge of the intended subject for the spell to be effective. Range is unlimited, though the enchantment has no inter-dimensional capability.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** unlimited.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though magics that negate the effects of scrying devices can be used to counter this spell.

## The Spell of Summoning

This spell enables the caster to summon an entity from another plane of existence. The incantation takes 10 rounds to recite, the level at which the spell is cast determining the maximum level of the entity that can be summoned. The caster must stand within the confines of one of the Circles of Protection, or be at the mercy of the summoned entity. If the caster has not inscribed the Circles of Protection correctly, the summoned entity will be free to attack the caster or cause him some other inconvenience, according to its nature and preferences.

If the circles were inscribed correctly and the spell is successful, an entity of the desired type will appear in the second circle, where it will be confined for a period of 10 rounds — sufficient time for the caster to make one attempt to either win the entity's favor or coerce it into service. In the former case, an offering of fealty, or a promise to perform a service or sacrifice in return for assistance, may be made. In general, benevolent entities will agree to the former, while malign entities will demand the latter. If the offer is not satisfactory, the summoned creature will be free to depart.

Coercing a summoned entity may be attempted through a Spell of Coercion, threats, or the infliction of pain. It should be noted that an entity that has been coerced into service will obey the caster, albeit grudgingly. If provided with an opportunity to betray or inconvenience the caster, it will do so without hesitation.

The nature of the service that a summoned entity will agree to perform depends upon its moral views (or lack thereof), its rank or position among those of its kind, and its capabilities. For example, benevolent entities cannot be made to perform evil acts, nor will powerful entities agree to perform any service that it regards as being menial or subservient. Only a single service can be performed, the duration of which is determined by the caster's level and the type of creature summoned (see Extradimensional Entities), after which the summoned entity will be free to return to its home plane.

**Magical Order:** Ritual Invocation.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** limited to the two Circles of Protection.
**Duration:** 10 rounds.
**Magic Resistance:** None, however a caster may not summon an entity of level 20+ unless he knows the being's true (magical) name.

## Thystram's Glossolalia

This spell, which Thystram probably copied from an ancient codex, allows the caster or a designated beneficiary of the enchantment to comprehend or converse in unfamiliar tongues or dialects of any sort. To activate the spell, the caster touches the recipient's head with the right hand while reciting the incantation allegedly authored by Thystram.

**Magical Order:** Cryptomancy.
**Difficulty:** 3
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Spell of Unending Torment

This spell enables the caster to unleash several barbed, dart-like projectiles (one per level) at any single subject. The magical darts cause one point of damage apiece, and will penetrate any type of non-magical armor or hide. Even a one-point wound will cause the victim to be incapacitated with excruciating pain, leaving a dismal burning and throbbing pain that lasts indefinitely, or until a cure or counterspell can be obtained. The aptly named "unending torment" is both unrelenting and, to a certain degree, debilitating: victims suffer a penalty of -1 per each point of damage on all Action Table die rolls, until a cure can be affected.

**Magical Order:** Necromancy.
**Difficulty:** 6
**Range:** 10 feet per level
**Duration:** as stated.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. DEX to dodge the magical darts for no effect. A shield may also be used to parry the projectiles. The spell - reputedly authored by Narishna, the dreaded "Black Wizard of Torquaran" - is a great favorite among Rajan assassin mages, who find this enchantment to have numerous practical applications.

## Thystram's Proximate Analysis

This spell enables the caster to identify with a reasonable degree of accuracy any living creature or organism. A flaw in the spell matrix devised by Thystram regrettably causes the enchantment to be less than 100 percent reliable (this perhaps explains the somewhat erratic entries in Thystram's Collectanea; see Magical Tomes). Still, the spell will unerringly reveal three of the following four determinations:

- The organism's basic type ("demon." "devil," "humanoid," "plant," "fungus," "reptile," "mammal," "hybrid," etc.).
- The organism's basic nature ("predator," "parasite," "herbivore," "omnivore," etc.).
- The organism's primary capability or most notable feature (a favored form of attack or defense, means of locomotion, etc.).
- One or more secondary capabilities associated with the designated organism (an attribute score, armor rating, or other relatively minor features).

To activate the spell, the caster must be within sight of the organism which is to be analyzed while executing a series of motions with the hands and uttering Thystram's incantation. A matrix of lines and images is produced, which the caster may study and thereby deduce such information as the enchantment will yield. (Note: The Gamemaster rolls a d4 to determine which category of information is not revealed by the spell.) The analysis takes ten rounds to complete.

**Magical Order:** Natural Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** sight.
**Duration:** 10 rounds.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though inaccurate or unreadable information may be yielded if the organism moves out of sight range, is partially obscured, or is under an enchantment of some sort.

## Undo

This spell was created by the wizard, Malderon, and is regarded as among the most practical cantrips ever devised. In essence, this spell will undo almost anything that has previously been done: dispelling a spell of lesser level, mending a rip or tear, putting something that was broken back together, unraveling something that has gotten tangled, unlocking a lock, untying something that was tied, erasing something that was written, or undoing the result of a minor error or mishap. The spell cannot turn back time, or cause something that did happen to "not happen;" it can merely undo the effects of whatever happened. Malderon warned against the careless use of this spell, particularly at higher levels; while using this cantrip in an attempt to repair a tear in a new pair of silk breeches, the wizard inadvertently caused the entire garment to unravel into a pile of thread.

According to Malderon, the level at which this spell is cast determines its general degree of efficacy, which the wizard rated as follows:

| Level | Capabilities |
|---|---|
| 1-5 | Limited to very minor matters only; expectations can exceed results |
| 6-10 | Limited to matters of below-average complexity |
| 11-15 | Limited to matters of average complexity |
| 16-20 | Limited to matters of above-average complexity |
| 20-29 | Limited to matters of great complexity |
| 30+ | Most everything else, though miracles should not be expected |

Note that in all cases, the Gamemaster is the sole determinant of how this spell will function.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** indefinite.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## The Veil of Deception

This minor enchantment allows the caster or a designated beneficiary to adopt the precise appearance, mannerisms, voice, scent, and aura of any single individual. The power of the enchantment is limited only in that it is not possible to effect drastic changes in height, build, or bodily form, nor does the spell confer the ability to converse in a language unknown to the beneficiary of the enchantment. Otherwise, this spell creates a fool-proof disguise that can only be penetrated by magical means.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 7
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. A secret roll vs. PER is made by the Gamemaster to see if subjects exposed to the deception notice the presence of magic, which they can do only on a result of Critical Success. A counterspell vs illusions will dispel the veil.

## The Veil of Stealth

This minor enchantment enables the caster to move with great stealth - unheard and unseen, and effectively invisible to the naked eye. The veil emanates a faint aura of magic, but is otherwise undetectable. Duration is ten rounds per level.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Individuals or creatures capable of seeing invisible objects/entities or detecting presences (by magical or non-magical means) will be able to see through the veil. It should be noted that beneficiaries of this spell may betray their presence if they fail to maintain a reasonable degree of silence. If this occurs, they may be subject to attack, though at a penalty of -5 as long as the veil is in effect.

## Viridian's Elemental Aura

This spell allows the caster to envelop himself or herself in a shimmering aura of elemental energy which confers protection against non-magical forces of an elemental nature, including extremes of heat or cold, fire, drowning, mists, gases, winds, plant or animal secretions/exhalations, etc. An Elemental Aura does not afford protection from physical attacks, mystic forces, or magical energy, nor is it proof from illusions.

**Magical Order:** Natural Magic.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** by touch
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Viridian's Elemental Aura cannot be used in conjunction with any other protective aura or shield. In appearance, Viridian's aura resembles other magical auras.

## Viridian's Green World

This spell allows the caster to pass into the Elemental Plane, and to converse with the sub-elemental entities which dwell within all manner of plants, trees, bushes, etc. By traversing the "inner space" of this dimension, the caster can cover a correspondingly great distance on the material plane; according to Viridian's computations, one mile on the Elemental Plane is equal to one hundred miles on the material plane. If desired, the caster may bring one additional individual along per every five levels. To activate the spell, the caster speaks Viridian's enabling incantation; a pattern of magical forces will appear, converging into an aperture leading into the Green World.

**Magical Order:** Sorcery.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 1 foot per level.
**Duration:** the entrance remains open for round per level, unless the caster opts to close it before this time elapses.
**Magic Resistance:** None. Individuals utilizing this spell should be aware that the Green World is populated by numerous elemental entities, some of which may exhibit hostile intentions towards intruders who venture into their domains without express permission.

## Zanillos's Anomalies

This spell was a favorite of the rogue magician Zanillo, who was known to possess a great fondness for pranks and practical jokes of all sorts. When cast, this spell causes a rain of anomalies to fall from the sky in a 100-foot diameter area. The type of anomalies produced by this spell is up to the caster to decide. They may be quite bizarre, but will always be relatively harmless. Some of Zanillo's favorites included rains of brown sludge, pink newts, green slime, gluey droplets, purple orbs that explode and exude a rotten stench, and so forth. Anomalies may cause stains, minor damage to vegetation or lifeforms (1 point per round maximum), impediments (-1 saves vs DEX, PER, or other attribute), or any other form of minor inconvenience, according to type. All traces of the anomalies generally disappear within 24 hours (or at once, if dispelled,) unless captured and contained in an airtight amberglass vial.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 10 feet per level.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though leaving the area of effect is one way to avoid the spell's effects.

## Zanillo's Aura of Enhancement

This minor enchantment allows the caster to magically improve the perceived value of any relatively small item, article of clothing, etc. The illusory quality of this enchantment causes the affected article to appear to be of the highest quality, and consequently more valuable. One article may be enhanced per level, and the duration is one hour. To activate the enchantment, the caster must touch the designated item or items while reciting Zanillo's enhancing cantrip.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry
**Difficulty:** 3
**Range:** by touch
**Duration:** rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. PER to determine the true value of the enchanted items. The reverse of this spell, called Zanillo's Mundane Aura, causes affected items to appear to be of unexceptional-low quality, and is of some use in disguising the true worth of valuable items.

## Zanillo's Clever Exchange

This minor enchantment allows the caster to conjure a replica of any small, hand-held item and substitute it for the original item. To activate the enchantment, the caster must touch or brush up against the item which is to be pilfered, perform a secret hand gesture and mumble Zanillo's brief cantrip; the false item will be exchanged for the true article in the wink of an eye. If the caster also possesses the Thieving Talent, Swipe, add his or her skill level as a bonus when casting this spell.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 3
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs. PER, but only if the victim of the exchange is closely watching the caster. If distracted in any way, the victim does not get a chance to perceive the exchange. The conjured item radiates a faint magical aura, and can be identified as a fake if subject to magical/alchemical analysis. It will dissolve into nothingness when the spell's duration has elapsed.

## Zanillo's Phantasmal Felon

This useful cantrip allows the caster to conjure a diminutive, imp-like entity that can be directed to unlock or undo locking mechanisms, fastenings, bolts, etc. The phantasmal felon will undo one such device per level of the spell, at the rate of one mechanism per round. To activate the enchantment, the caster must approach within arm's length of the door, chest, etc. that is to be unlocked, execute a secret hand gesture, and utter Zanillo's activating cantrip.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** 1-3 feet.
**Duration:** 1 round per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None, though certain spells or devices can be employed to foil the phantasmal felon.

## Zanillo's Extravagant Flourish

This minor enchantment allows the caster to create a variety of illusory effects intended to enhance his or her appearance, presence, or seeming capabilities. Types of effects include:

**Brilliance:** The caster seems to radiate a charismatic glow.

**Eloquence:** The caster's manner of speech seems to suggest that he or she is a person of distinction; suave and sophisticated, compared to common folk.

**Sortilege:** The caster seems to emanate an aura of magic and mystery. Optionally, the first time the caster makes an entrance or appearance after casting this enchantment, his/her arrival may be accompanied by an illusory flash of "fire and brimstone."

**Flamboyance:** The caster's overall appearance is artificially enhanced, giving him/her the look of a dashing adventurer.

In game terms, the enchantment confers a bonus of +1 CHA per level of the spell, concerning the specific effect only; i.e., a caster enhanced by the "sortilege" effect may be admired by those who regard magicians in a favorable light, held in awe by those who fear magicians, or despised by those who bear ill will towards magicians.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 3
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs PER to discern the true qualities of the caster.



## Zanillo's Pocket Dimension

This spell enables the caster to turn any pocket, purse, sack, or other aperture (up to one foot in diameter) into a magical opening leading into an extra-dimensional space. The extra-dimensional space will be large enough to hold up to ten pounds per level of any type of goods or items that can fit through its opening (Zanillo himself is reputed to have kept a Barbed Horror in his satchel to foil would-be pick-pockets). As the items stored within are actually in another dimension, the bearer of the pocket dimension is never encumbered by their weight or bulk. Duration of a pocket dimension is twenty-four hours, during which time items may be added or retrieved as desired. Articles left within the extra-dimensional space after the expiration of the spell will be lost.

**Magical Order:** Wizardry.
**Difficulty:** 5
**Range:** by touch.
**Duration:** 24 hours.
**Magic Resistance:** None. If miscast, this spell may yield unhappy consequences. Zanillo himself was once assaulted by a horrific entity which emerged from the pocket of his trousers following a slipshod application of this cantrip.



## Zorion's Citadel

This spell enables the caster to create a fortress of glowing arcane force. The amount of construction that can be created is equal to 10 x 10 x 10 feet per level. The citadel can be created in any architectural style desired, and may include gates, arrow slots, machicolations, towers, or even a drawbridge. Enclosed areas can be created, though adequate ventilation must be provided if living beings or creatures are to occupy the structure, or asphyxiation will result within 10 rounds per level of the spell. Each 10-foot section of the wall is capable of withstanding 100 points of damage before being breached.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** limited to the area surrounding the caster; i.e., when this spell is cast, the structure will manifest around the caster.
**Duration:** 100 rounds +10 rounds per level.
**Magic Resistance:** None.

## Zorion's Last Stand

This spell was created to be used only in the most desperate situations, such as when one is surrounded by enemies on all sides or otherwise faced with overwhelming odds. When cast, the spell produces a barrage of ten arcane bolts that emanate outwards in a 10-foot diameter circle from the caster, forming a "starburst" pattern. The bolts will cause 2d12 points of damage (+1 per level) to all within the area of effect; including individuals who are friendly to the caster and inanimate objects, provided they are in range (the spell is not able to discriminate between "friend or foe"). No more than ten targets can be affected by this spell. Note that this enchantment requires such a high expenditure of mental energy that the caster will be exhausted and unable to perform any action for one round per level of the spell.

**Magical Order:** Erythrian Battle Magic.
**Difficulty:** 10
**Range:** 10-foot diameter circle surrounding the caster.
**Duration:** instantaneous.
**Magic Resistance:** roll vs DEX at -1 per level of the spell to dodge for no effect. A result of Partial Success means the target takes half damage from the bolt.

In Talislanta, books are a rare, and therefore precious, commodity. Penned by hand and laboriously copied by dedicated scribes, cult acolytes, and savants, written works of any sort are coveted by scholars and collectors across the continent.

Among the most valuable books are those related to the arcane arts. Even the most mundane magical tomes and reference works can seldom be purchased for less than a hundred gold lumens. Writings attributed to one of the legendary magicians of ancient times can command prices above 100,000 gold lumens.

For the aspiring spell caster, magical tomes can have many practical applications. The spellbooks of accomplished magicians may contain rare or unique incantations, alchemical formulae, or secret writings, while reference works are useful in magical research and experimentation.

In game terms, magical tomes are rated according to the following format:

- **Difficulty:** degree of difficulty entailed to master the text in question. Apply this figure as a modifier and roll vs a magic skill (or other relevant skill) in order to determine if the reader can comprehend the writings. Unless stated otherwise, it takes seven weeks to master any of the lost books of magic.
- **Experience:** experience point value gained from reading this book. This award is in addition to any bonuses to abilities that may be derived from mastery of the text.
- **Worth:** the estimated monetary value of the book if it were to be sold in Cymril of the Nine Kingdoms Factors that affect a book's worth can include its age, condition, edition, usefulness, and avowed scarcity.

If the roll is successful, the character can comprehend the text, and gains the number of experience points specified under the book's description. A partial success means that progress has been made and another roll may be attempted after another week of study, with a +1 bonus. On a failure the character cannot comprehend the writings. Another attempt can be made once the character has raised his or her skill rating by at least one point.

The following is a listing of some of the more widely known texts about the arcane arts.

## The Ariane Chronicles

This unusual and exceedingly rare volume was authored by the famed historian and savant, Hotan, who spent many years in the maze city of Altan, home of the Ariane mystics. During this time, he was allowed to study the great Obelisk, within which are stored the cumulative memories and experiences of the Ariane people. This book contains transcriptions from the Obelisk, imbued within pages fashioned from thin sheets of violet stone. The contents can be "read" by simply running one's fingers across the surface of the stone. Individuals who study this text for a minimum of fourteen days receive a bonus of +1 on the skills History and Mysticism, plus the experience points indicated.

**Difficulty:** 7
**Experience:** 3 points
**Worth:** 1000 gold lumens

## Arkon's Logbooks

Seven of Arkon's logbooks are known to exist, each bound in pebbly gray exomorph's hide and stamped with a stylized "lightning bolt" (Arkon's sigil). The logbooks describe in detail certain of Arkon's more unusual experiments, several of which employ extremely dangerous procedures (the most notable of these is Arkon's formula for enchanting a magic wand in just 48 hours. . .). At least three of these books contain one or more of Arkon's spells.

**Difficulty:** 8-14
**Experience:** 1-2 points each
**Worth:** 1600 gold lumens (copies of the originals are worth 3000 gold lumens)



## Biomantics in Theory and Practice

The sorceress Sylan authored this long lost tome, which contains a clear and concise explanation of the forgotten field of study known as Biomancy. Also featured are formulae for the design of several basic somatotypes, which may be used as templates for the creation of neomorphs. No instructions are provided for the creation of specific types, however, as the text was primarily intended to serve as a primer for neophytes. Even so, no less an authority than Koraq was said to have been impressed by the contents of this handbook, which he described as "eminently useful, particularly as pertains to the aspiring biomancer." Individuals who master the text gain a rudimentary knowledge of the Forgotten Age skill, Biomancy. First editions were bound in cobalt blue spangalor (metallic cloth), and are so rare as to be almost unknown; even the Lyceum Arcanum of Cymril does not have one in its collection. A dozen copies of the second edition, comprising the total known number of these texts in existence, were destroyed during the burning of the Library at Badijan, in the year 113 of the New Age.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 3 points
**Worth:** 5000 gold lumens

## The Black Grimoire

Perhaps the definitive work on Black Magic, Mordante's Black Grimoire explains all concepts associated with the Dark Arts, including the casting and removal of curses, the basics of summoning rituals, and communing with entities from the lower planes. The Black Grimoire is a superior practical guide for the aspiring Black Magician, and as such is an inherently dangerous work to delve into casually. Its value as a general reference is such that magicians of many sorts employ the book as a research tool.

**Difficulty:** 9
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 1000-6000 gold lumens, depending on which edition is being appraised. The earliest editions were known to contain one or more of the spells which Mordante used to summon pseudo-demons from the Nightmare Dimension.

## The Book of Mysteries

In this famous work Hotan first put forth his concepts of the meaning of life and the cosmos, explaining his theories on reincarnation and "the vital spirit". The Ariane Elders are said to have admired this book, though the story that their people first learned the arts of Trans-Ascendency from this work has been proven false. Ariane editions of the book are traditionally imbued within polished orbs of violet stone, known as Tamar. Standard versions of the text are available in several different languages. Individuals who master this book gain a bonus of +1 concerning the skill Mysticism.

**Difficulty:** 1-20 (twenty chapters, each increasing in level of difficulty)
**Experience:** 1 point per chapter (minimum of one week to master each)
**Worth:** Tamar have no monetary value among the Ariane, each of whom is given his or her stone at birth. Archaen transcriptions of the text commonly sell for upwards of 20,000 gold lumens, and are now very rare. Hotan's original text was lost ages ago, and is valued at over 50,000 gold lumens

## Chronicles of the 2nd and 3rd Millenniums

The savant and mystic, Xanadas, is responsible for this series of twenty massive volumes, each of which covers a hundred years. Xanadas himself did none of the writing, but dictated the text to his loyal followers, who performed the laborious tasks of inscribing and illuminating each page of the manuscript. The original copies remain in the archives of the Temple of the Seven Moons, which resides atop Mount Mandu. They are available for study to serious scholars of history, though one must travel to the Temple to make arrangements to view the texts. Each volume requires fourteen weeks of uninterrupted study to master, and yields a bonus of +1 for the scholarly skill History.

**Difficulty:** 7
**Experience:** 2 points per volume.
**Worth:** 1200 gold lumens

## The Book of Secrets

This unique book was written by the Enchantress, one of the founders of the Archaen Cabal. It is rumored to contain secrets about the magicians of the Third Millennium, many of whom sought to win the hand of the Enchantress by various means. Some bestowed valuable gifts upon her; some imparted secret confidences, or bragged of their previous conquests and accomplishments. Unbeknownst to the would-be suitors, the Enchantress recorded everything in her diary, which she called The Book of Secrets.

Upon learning that their utterances had been recorded for posterity, some of the magicians attempted to acquire this book from the Enchantress, both to protect their reputations and to gain advantage over their rivals. The wizard prince Mirjan searched the astral plane for three years, but found only vengeful ghosts and phasms. The rogue magician Zanillo, believing that the text had been written in invisible ink on invisible parchment, scanned the rooms of the Enchantress' home with enchanted spectacles, also without notable success. The Enchantress, anticipating just such a contingency, had taken pains to conceal her diary where no one could find it. The location of her book remains a secret even to the present day, and its contents remain something of a mystery. Nevertheless, the text is considered quite valuable, if only for the scandalous information that it might contain.

**Difficulty:** 5
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 500 gold lumens

## Codex Magicus

This is a ponderous reference of general utility, widely regarded as one of the best and most thorough volumes on magic ever produced. The text covers basic principles for apprentices, initiates, and adepts (up to level twelve), with each successive chapter covering more complex materials and concepts. The usual method for studying this book is to master one chapter per level of ability.

**Difficulty:** ranging from 4 (for the first chapter) to 15 (for the final chapter)
**Experience:** 2 points per chapter (see text)
**Worth:** 100-1000 gold lumens, depending on which edition of the book is being appraised (there are ten known editions). The long-lost original copy, if found, would not sell for less than 100,000 gold lumens

## Compendium of Dreams

This unusual set of three volumes was authored by the Phantasian Astromancer, Laslovian, who is credited with the development of the substance known as Dream Essence. The text features an astrogationist's guide to the Dream Dimension, which Laslovian claimed could be entered via windship if one knew the correct space/time coordinates (windships, being essentially magical, may be used to traverse the astral realms). The Compendium also features a comprehensive technique for cataloging, collecting, and distilling dreams of all sorts. Those who master these books gain a +1 increase in the skill Thaumaturgy (Phantasian) for each book studied.

**Difficulty:** 5 (Vol. One), 7 (Vol. Two), 9 (Vol. Three)
**Experience:** 2 points each
**Worth:** A Phantasian might pay as much as 1,000 gold lumens per volume. Few others would offer more than half this.

## The Crimson Magister

This set of three books, bound in red iron and inscribed upon plates of hammered brass, was authored by the Erythrian Warrior Mage, Zorion. Written in sparse and unadorned prose, the set serves as a practical manual of magical warfare. Each volume covers a different subject area: Volume 1 contains the known spells of Battle Magic, Volume 2 describes various types of land-based war machines and tactics, and Volume 3 covers aerial warships and tactics. Mastering all three volume allows the reader to acquire the Erythrian Battle Magic skill. These books were created to withstand the rigors of combat, and were standard issue for all Erythrian commanders. Most were lost when the sky citadel of Erythria fell into the sea, though a few copies may still be found scattered across the ancient ruins that litter the continent of Talislanta.

**Difficulty:** 5
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 500 gold lumens per volume

## Cryptomancy in Theory and Practice

This book is bound in reddish-brown serpent's hide, with fastenings of copper and brass. The text is entirely written in cyphers of great complexity, which, when deciphered, yield nothing but gibberish. The real text is written in invisible ink, and is even more difficult to decipher. Only by using a lens made from enchanted crystal can the true text be read. Mastery of this volume takes ten weeks, and yields a +1 increase in the magical field, Cryptomancy.

**Difficulty:** 7 for the false text; 14 for the true text
**Experience:** 4 points
**Worth:** 250 gold lumens

## Dalune's Practical Guide to Alchemy

The Sindaran alchemist, Dalune, compiled this four-volume set, which features detailed information on most alchemical practices. Volume One is a basic manual on Alchemical Training; Volume Two covers Elixirs and Potions; Volume Three covers Poisons and Powders; Volume Four covers advanced Alchemical Operations. Individuals who master the texts gain a +1 increase to Alchemy for each volume mastered. As might be expected of anything produced by a Sindaran, the texts are both extremely accurate and incredibly complex.

**Difficulty:** 4 (Vol. One), 8 (Vol. Two), 12 (Vol. Three), 16 (Vol. Four)
**Experience:** 3 points each
**Worth:** 100-200 gold lumens apiece, depending on age and condition. Complete four-volume sets are practically impossible to find outside of Sindar, and are rare even there.



## The Elemental Codices

This four book set is regarded as one of the most complete and authoritative works ever written on the elemental fields of magic. Volume 1 covers Aeromancy, and is bound in white silk with fastenings of pale silver. Volume 2 is bound in green sea dragon's hide with pearl inlay, and covers Aquamancy. Volume 3 is bound in black iron inlaid with precious stones, and covers Geomancy. Volume 4 is bound in red iron and inlaid with firegems, and covers Pyromancy. Mastery of any single volume takes fourteen weeks, and yields an increase of +1 in the magical field of study that corresponds with the title of the book.

**Difficulty:** 5
**Experience:** 3 points per volume
**Worth:** 500 gold lumens per volume

## Drax's Lost Works

In the long history of Talislanta no written works have ever been regarded with such trepidation as the writings of Drax, the first ruler of the dark empire of ancient Torquaran. Inscribed upon the flayed skin of his enemies and bound in demon hide, the nine volumes which together comprise this set were stored in a leaden vault, where they remained until the mysterious disappearance of their author. It is said that when Drax's successor, Narishna, entered the vault he recoiled in horror, and ordered the cursed tomes sealed in molten iron and cast into the sea. The books have not been seen since, though recent discoveries indicate that they may have been disposed of in the Northern Sea — now an arid salt plain known as the Lost Sea.

The contents of Drax's writings have long been debated, though they are believed to contain specific information on the subject of blood sacrifices, black magic rituals, and similarly grisly means of obtaining the services of extra-dimensional entities. It is known that Drax preferred such methods to priestly devotion, which he described as "base subservience". Said he: "The sacrifice of living beings is an efficient means of obtaining diabolical power. Souls can be obtained at no great expense, and serve as a great inducement to the denizens of the Nether Planes. For they hunger too, though not as we do, and must be fed."

**Difficulty:** 13
**Experience:** 3 points per volume (each takes 13 weeks to master)
**Worth:** 1500 gold lumens per volume

## The Enchanter's Omnibus

This valuable compendium was authored by the eclectic magician, Malderon. It is considered the best practical reference work on the creation of enchanted items of all sorts. Individuals who master the text gain a +1 increase in the Enchanting skill.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 3 points
**Worth:** 200-1600 gold lumens, depending upon the age of the edition; the Enchanter's Omnibus has seen many printings, and is a fairly common magical text.

## Etzel's Journal

This slim volume was written by Etzel: child prodigy, master magician, and daughter of the great sorceress, Sylan. It is believed to contain several of Sylan's most cogent spells, which the young girl may have stolen from her mother's folios. Etzel was also known to spy upon her mother, using an enchanted eye to peer through the keyhole of her boudoir. As such, her journal may also contain observations of an even more private nature. When Sylan banished her progeny to an enchanted palace on the astral plane, she searched for her daughter's diary, but without success. Some maintain that Etzel took the book with her, concealing it somewhere within the walls of her palace. If it is true, then the journal may remain there to the present day.

**Difficulty:** probably at least 8
**Experience:** 5
**Worth:** 100-1000 GL

## Fasil's Antiquarian

This set of twenty volumes is an indispensable guide to collectors of ancient artifacts, curios, and oddments of all sorts. Thousands of entries are detailed from various periods, including The Age of Mystery, Early Forgotten Age, Late Forgotten Age, and Latter Age. Notes on identifying and appraising rare collectibles of all varieties are also included. Mastering all twenty volumes increases an individual's Appraise skill by +2.

**Difficulty:** 5
**Experience:** 2 points per volume
**Worth:** 250 gold lumens per volume; quadruple this figure for First Editions.

## Experimental Thaumaturgy

This rare folio is attributed to Rodinn, royal Thaumaturge to the Wizard King of Pompados, who was later exiled following a scandal involving the Wizard King's wife and seven daughters. Before he departed from the sky city of Pompados, Rodinn authored this text, copies of which were distributed to other thaumaturges. The contents, considered radical by his peers, must in retrospect be regarded as nothing less than prescient. Rodinn anticipated the processes used to create neomorphs, and correctly identified and isolated over a hundred different types of vital essences. His assessment of the moral implications of creating neomorphs, the nature of the soul, and the responsibilities inherent in the creation of artificial lifeforms were largely ignored, though no less instructive.

If there is a flaw in this work it may be in the formula indicated for the creation of quintessence, which some believe would yield a highly unstable substance, due to a minor mathematical error. It was this mistake, some say, that led to The Great Disaster. While adequate precautions should be taken in this regard, Rodinn's text is highly valued by thaumaturges of the New Age. Fewer than a half dozen copies are believed to have survived the Disaster, though others may lie undiscovered in the wreckage of the Phandre windships that crashed in the swamps of Mog while en route to the Thaecian Isles.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 750 gold lumens



## The Florilegium

Viridian's masterful compendium features a comprehensive listing of all known plant types, their properties, and attributes, plus specific recommendations on the care, transplanting and cultivation of the most useful varieties of herbs, plants, shrubs and trees. In its original format, the Florilegium was a single, immense volume weighing close to one hundred pounds. Subsequent editions were produced in more manageable sets of four volumes. Volumes One, Two, and Three are general reference works (+1 increase in the skill, Horticulture, per each volume mastered); Volume Four contains formulae for the creation of hybrid plant species (+2 bonus for the Botanomantic skill). As Viridian was Koraq's simulacrum, his works are similarly complex and difficult to master.

**Difficulty:** 5 (first three volumes), 10 (fourth volume)
**Experience:** 3 points per volume
**Worth:** 10,000+ gold lumens per volume; the original, single-volume text is so rare that a copy may command more than 100,000 gold lumens

## The Green World

This uncanny book, authored by the esteemed Viridian, offers truly rare insights into the elemental world of plants. The text includes a listing of sub-elemental types, with information on the attributes and tendencies of the most common sorts. The most unusual feature of the book is a forty-page chapter filled with maps of various regions within The Green World, each a mind-boggling maze of lines, symbols, and inscriptions. Individuals who successfully master the complex text and accompanying charts will be able to travel throughout The Green World without fear of becoming lost or disoriented. The book includes the spell Viridian's Green World, though the student must have learned Sorcery before the spell may be cast.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 3-12 thousand gold lumens, depending upon age and condition.

## Hotan's History of the World

This is an incredible series of one hundred and forty-eight brass-bound volumes, each covering a different period of Talislantan history. The first hundred and twenty-one volumes have never been found, and are regarded as valuable collector's items. The known texts are considered useful by historians, savants and scholars, though Hotan's long-winded accounts of the renowned individuals of the day occasionally grate on the nerves. Individuals gain a +1 bonus regarding the skill, History, per each volume studied.

**Difficulty:** 5-9 (lost volumes believed most complex)
**Experience:** 2 points per volume
**Worth:** 100-400 gold lumens apiece (ten times this for lost volumes)

## Hotan's Theosophy

A comparative study of religions and cults across time, this book is an invaluable general reference for mystics, savants, and theologians. Specific information on the beliefs and customs of numerous Talislantan cults and sects can be found within this heavy, silver-bound tome. Individuals who master this text gain a +1 bonus for the skill Arcane Lore.

**Difficulty:** 7
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 25,000 gold lumens (first editions only; all others are valued at 1800 gold lumens).

## Ice Castles

This is a manual for the creation of enchanted ice castles and palaces, authored by the white witch, Cerene. The book includes many useful ideas, as well as general information on architectural concerns related to the design and construction of many different types of ice structures. Individuals who study this valuable handbook receive a +2 bonus on the spell, Cerene's Ice Castle.

**Difficulty:** 5
**Experience:** 2 points
**Worth:** 500 gold lumens

## Ilse's Lost Folios

The folios of the witchwoman, Ilse, containing dozens of purloined spells and alchemical formulae, are avidly sought by collectors of magical paraphernalia. Though the originals are probably lost forever, copies of excerpts from Ilse's notebooks are known to exist. Each will generally contain a single cogent spell or formula, though some few may yield an additional surprise or two. Forgeries, typically quite worthless, are unfortunately more common than authentic copies.

**Difficulty:** 4-8
**Experience:** 1-2 points each
**Worth:** 200-1200 gold lumens

## Kabros' Guide to the Lower Planes

This thirty-volume set is considered the authoritative work on the subject of the lower planes. Each of the books in the series covers one of the Dark Regions, including specific information on the region's physical make-up, topography, indigenous entities and organisms, etc. The first eleven volumes are feared lost; the remaining nineteen are exceedingly rare. Certain of the Dark Regions described in Kabros' guide are unique, and are mentioned nowhere else in occult literature.

**Difficulty:** 10-16
**Experience:** 5 points each
**Worth:** Volumes 12-30 are valued at 25,000 gold lumens apiece; the earlier, lost volumes would surely be worth 4-5 times this figure.

## Kabros' Treatise on Interdimensionality

This seventy-page paper was written by Kabros while he was still understudy to the wizard, Mogendrake. The text contains a perfect transcription of Koraq's Spell of Transference (see Forgotten Spells), which Kabros analyzes in detail, suggesting minor modifications that may be used to more accurately determine coordinates while in a dimensional nexus. The treatise is a brilliant work in its own right; Mogendrake became so depressed upon reading his student's work that he retired from the magic business altogether. Spellcasters who master the text gain a bonus of +1 whenever they employ any spell with inter-dimensional capabilities.

**Difficulty:** 17
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 7,000+ gold lumens, depending on age and condition.

## Koraq's Arcanologia

Koraq's treatise on Arcanology is considered among his most lucid and generally accessible works. The "book" was made in the form of a polyhedron, two inches in height, fashioned from translucent crystal. Each of its ten facets reveals a different aspect of Arcanology, from identifying spell matrices to modifying matrix components to achieve specific objectives. The information contained within a single facet takes an average of seven weeks to master, and yields a bonus of +1 to the skill of Sorcery. As many as twenty copies of the Arcanologia are known to have been created, though most were lost during The Great Disaster. The only three found to date were damaged, and some of the facets rendered unreadable. It is feared that undiscovered copies may turn out to have similar defects (if found, roll d10 to determine how many facets are readable).

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 2 points per facet
**Worth:** 70,000 gold lumens



## Koraq's Quantum Magic

Regarded by its author as his greatest achievement, Koraq's thesis on Quantum Magic may well be the most convoluted and complex of all the master theoretician's works — a compilation of dizzying concepts, that none but the most gifted minds could ever hope to fathom. The sorceress Sylan found these theorems incomprehensible; Arkon took a single look at Koraq's preliminary draft and was rendered insensible for the better part of an hour. Of those magicians who were extant during the New Age only Kabros ever claimed to be able to understand the principles of Quantum Magic, though this may have been an idle boast.

No more than three copies of this work were ever produced, each bound between translucent panes of blue crystal. Their value cannot be estimated; Sindaran collectors have offered rewards over a half million gold lumens for the recovery of a single copy. To anyone capable of comprehending these writings, this might seem a small price indeed: mastering this book will increase the reader's Arcane Lore and a Magical Skill (Order) by +2.

**Difficulty:** 40
**Experience:** 20 points
**Worth:** 500,000+ gold lumens

## Koraq's Theory of Magic & Anti-Magic

Perhaps the most brilliant (and baffling) study ever written on the occult sciences, Koraq's tome is considered the definitive authority on the nature and workings of magic. So incredibly complex is the text that fully 90% of all copies known to exist are incorrectly transcribed, rendering them next to useless; only by spending a minimum of one month studying a copy of the book can one determine if that particular text is flawed. Individuals who master this book raise the Skill rating for their chosen Magical Order by +1.

**Difficulty:** 20
**Experience:** 10 points
**Worth:** 1000-12000 gold lumens, depending on the age and condition of the volume. Flawed copies are worth perhaps one-tenth of the appraised value, primarily as curios.

## Limitations of Virtual Illusions

This intriguing manuscript is said to have been written by Miraja, an individual regarded by many as the female alter image of the great illusionist, Cascal. If so, it is unique, as it would be the only book ever known to have been authored by an illusory persona. Cascal angrily refuted all such claims, stating that it was he who created the book, and Miraja as well.

Whatever the case, the text contains much useful information regarding the creation of virtual illusions, as well as the practical limitations of the form, and a list of common problems that should be avoided. Chief among these, in the author's estimation, was "the creation of any virtual persona based upon an erotic fantasy or love interest; such figments, invested with a disproportionately large portion of its creator's emotions, may come to regard themselves as actual, rather than illusory, beings." Given the discrepancies concerning the true nature of Cascal and Miraja, this would seem to be sound advice. Magicians who master this instructive text receive a bonus of +1 concerning the casting of the spell Virtual Illusion.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 200,000 gold lumens

## Maegian's Casebook

This compilation was authored by Nastow, assistant to the renowned arcanologist, Magian. The text is both interesting and instructive, though the accounts of Magian's exploits were probably exaggerated by the loyal Nastow, who harbored a great admiration for his employer. The individual cases detailed within this tome provide many practical examples of how arcanological principles can be utilized to solve such quandaries as missing persons, hauntings, instances of demonic possession, theft, magical arson, murder, and conspiracy. Individuals who study this text for a minimum of seven weeks earn a bonus of +2 on PER checks when magic is employed.

**Difficulty:** 7
**Experience:** 3 points
**Worth:** 50,000 gold lumens

## Maegian's Notebooks

Twenty-one in number, these loose-bound folios contain insights, observations, and methodologies credited to the famed arcanologist, Magian. Any one of these books would be worth a small fortune were it not for the fact that Magian's writings were completely unintelligible, and are obscured by watermarks, stains, and accumulated grime. As such, they are practically impossible to read. It has been speculated that, if there was some way to render these books legible, the information gleaned from them would grant the reader a +1 bonus to all investigation and puzzle-solving checks for each book mastered. Unfortunately, no one has yet found a way to transcribe these texts into a more readable format. To date, six of the twenty-one existing folios have been recovered, while another ten folios were known to have been destroyed during the burning of the Library at Badijan.

**Difficulty:** 7 to read a legible version, if there were one available.
**Experience:** 2 points each
**Worth:** only 2,000 gold lumens apiece, due to ruined condition.

## The Maleficium

This tome radiates a tangible aura of magic, and is considered one of the most dangerous Black Magical texts in existence. Individuals who so much as touch a copy of this book must roll vs. WIL to resist the desire to open it and peer within. The dark secrets contained in The Maleficium are sufficient to twist the mind of the beholder; roll vs. magic skill at a difficulty of 13, or the viewer is incapacitated by terrifying hallucinations that persist until counterspelled. Black Magicians who can comprehend this blasphemous text without suffering such consequences may gain a considerable degree of occult knowledge, though perhaps at the expense of their mortal souls; the diabolical Drax wrote this book, which serves as the cult manifesto of those who revere him as a dark demi-god.

**Difficulty:** 13
**Experience:** 20 points
**Worth:** 150,000 gold lumens, but only to those who are foolish enough to deal in cursed merchandise of this sort.

## The Necromantium

This infamous series of volumes, authored by the Black Magician, Mordante, describes in lurid detail the horrid practices of the Chana Witchmen, the cannibal witch doctors of Pana-Ku, and other primitive magicians and necromantic cultists. There are reputed to be nine volumes in the series, each of which may present certain hazards to the incautious reader; three former librarians at the Lyceum Arcanum in Cymril are reported to have met untimely ends while perusing a copy of Volume Six of The Necromantium. The book has since been locked away in the institute's lower levels. Individuals who master any of these dark tomes gain an increase of +1 in the skill, Primitive Enchantment, per volume.

**Difficulty:** 9
**Experience:** 3 points per book
**Worth:** 10,000+ gold lumens each for Volumes 3-5, twice this for Volumes Six and Seven, which are now quite rare. Volumes One and Two are presumed lost.

## The Numenian Book of Names

This gilded tome served was regarded by the ancient Numenians as one of their most sacred texts. In it are listed the true (i.e., magical) names of the Sephir — the Forgotten Gods of ancient Talislanta. All known denizens of the higher and lower planes are included in this book, which is exceedingly rare and valuable. Individuals who master this text receive a bonus of +1 on the forgotten skill, Ritual Invocation.

**Difficulty:** 7
**Experience:** 10 points
**Worth:** 1000 gold lumens

## The Omnival

This is a series of at least thirty iron-bound volumes, stamped with the "all-seeing eye" sigil of the Orthodoxist Cult. The books contain a vast store of intolerant and narrow-minded doctrines, proscriptions, and cult dogma, and are valued only in Aaman. Elsewhere, the texts are considered next to worthless.

**Difficulty:** 1-6
**Experience:** One point per volume, for Orthodoxist Cultists only
**Worth:** 100-2000+ gold lumens, depending upon age and condition (Aaman only).

## The Pandemonicus

In legend, this cursed volume was created by none other than the dread demonlord, Aberon. Its contents are unknown; some demonologists claim that the book contains nothing but meaningless symbols, and that the Pandemonicus is a talisman that confers power over demons. The Black Magician Drugalia owned the Pandemonicus for a time, and many credited his phenomenal rise to power (and subsequent, ghastly end) to the horrific, iron-bound book that he inadvertently discovered in a mountain cave. The Pandemonicus has not been seen since the time of Drugalia's demise, and scholars of the Dark Arts believe that it is once again in the possession of Aberon.

**Difficulty:** ?
**Experience:** ?
**Worth:** Few scholars of the occult sciences would value the Pandemonicus at less than a quarter-million gold lumens, though it is not certain if any would care to own such a dangerous article.

## Prismatization

Cascal's masterwork on the theory and nature of illusions, in two volumes. Volume one contains the spells, "Cascal's Transfixation", "Cascal's Numinous Veil", and "Cascal's Reflective Aura". Volume two contains "Cascal's Shadow Dimension", "Cascal's Illusory Aura", and the great magician's secret procedure for the creation of enchanted prisms. Both volumes cover in detail a variety of visual effects used to enhance the depth and clarity of illusory images.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 2 points each
**Worth:** 10,000+ gold lumens

## Pyromantic Magic

This book, authored by the renowned pyromaniac, Sassan, offers rare insights into the concepts of magical combustion. Certain of the experiments detailed within are rather dangerous, and should not be attempted by unskilled magicians. Copies of the First Edition contain the spells, "Sassan's Fiery Motes" and "Sassan's Pyromania" which were omitted from later editions.

**Difficulty:** 9
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 30,000 gold lumens for authentic copies of the First Edition; 10,000 gold lumens for later versions of this text.

## The Sephar

The Sephar is believed to be an ancient and all-powerful set of calligraphs which, if activated simultaneously, would enable the Sepharan Elders to summon the Six Cthonian Arch-Demons of the Apocalypse: entities of terrible destructive power, whom the Sepharans regard as dark deities. According to legend, using the Sephar to awaken the Six Arch-Demons and free them from their magical prisons would result in the annihilation of the Omniverse, leaving nothing but chaos in it's wake - a condition the Sepharans regard as "paradise".

Long ago, the Sepharan Elders succeeded in gaining possession of the Sephar, and very nearly achieved their goal. Before they could summon all six of the Arch-Demons, they were stopped; possibly by the their enemies, the Shaitan, who may have acted in concert with others such as the Ebonites, the Tau, the Thane, and - some say - the Ariane. The Arch-Demons were imprisoned in webs of magical force, and buried deep underground - either in Talislanta, or possibly one of the older continents.

The six segments of the Sephar were divided up and concelaed with powerful enchantments, in the hope that the Sepharans would never again be able to find them. The location of the six pieces of the Sephar remains unknown to the present day.

## The Silver Matrix

Koraq's highly-regarded text explains the procedures for creating the artificial lifeforms known as simulacrums. The sections on vat techniques, matrix construction, and "common errors to be avoided at all costs" are alone worth the price of the book. Individuals who successfully master the text earn a +1 bonus when utilizing Sorcerous Hybridization.

**Difficulty:** 13
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 3000+ gold lumens

## Shaladinn's Trapsmith's Compendium

There are two versions of this useful manual, which includes schematics, mechanical diagrams, and detailed notes of hundreds of different traps, wards, and perils; many now believed to have been of ancient Kasiran design. The original version was written by Shaladin, and is a superior reference work for trapmages (+1 increase in related skills for individuals who master this version of the text). The second version is a somewhat less comprehensive manual for thieves, supposedly written by the vaunted rogue, Valtiere, Shaladin's life-long nemesis. The primary focus of this book is on a variety of methods used to de-activate or otherwise neutralize Shaladin's mechanisms. Individuals who master this version of the text gain a +1 increase in the skills Lock Picking and Traps. Both books are valuable references, particularly Shaladin's First Edition, a few copies of which contain transcriptions of one or more of his spells.

**Difficulty:** 6 (both versions)
**Experience:** 5 points (both versions)
**Worth:** 100-2000 gold lumens, depending on age and condition. First Editions of Shaladin's unaltered text are exceedingly rare, and may sell for up to 80,000 gold lumens.

## Solimorrion's Works

The esteemed Archmage Solimorrion, was known to have penned several illustrious volumes. Included were the following:

**Symbology:** a book of symbols and glyphs (+1 increase in Cryptomancy).

**The Prophecies:** a twelve book series (+1 increase in the Astrology skill per each volume mastered).

**The Naturalis:** a three-volume bestiary (+1 increase in the skill Naturalism).

**Faith Healing:** a volume on healing techniques (+1 increase in the spell Healer).

**Ritual Invocation:** a book dealing with summoning and banishing rituals (mastery yields proficiency in the magical field Ritual Invocation).

**Difficulty:** 2-8
**Experience:** 2 points per volume
**Worth:** 1000-20,000 gold lumens, depending on subject, age and condition.

## The Technomanticon

The Technomanticon was the handbook of Neurian Technomancy, a field of study about which little is now known. The text of this "book" was inscribed within a crystal pyramid approximately one foot in height, illuminated from within utilizing a radiant crystal. The Technomanticon describes the Neurian concepts of objective reality, quantification, microchronums, and the Omniverse, and serves as a practical guide to most technomantic operations.

By Neurian standards, the Technomanticon is written clearly and concisely, with opposing concepts expressed as parallel lines of logic and symbolic equations. Few monoencephalons are capable of the mental contortions necessary to derive meaning from these writings, which can be described as trying to read two separate columns of text and symbols at once. Individuals who can comprehend this text gain a rudimentary knowledge of Neurian Technomancy, and a +1 bonus on the forgotten skills Construct Automaton and Construct Quantifier.

**Difficulty:** 20 for monoencephalons, 10 for dualencephalons
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 150,000 gold lumens

## Thaumaste's Neomorphica

Regarded in its day as the penultimate reference work on the subject of neomorphs, Thaumaste's Neomorphica provides detailed instructions on the creation of artificial lifeforms, utilizing the principles of Biomancy. Over three dozen neormorphic types are described, along with the corresponding formulae required to create such organisms. A valuable addition is the index of essences, which includes notes on synthesizing several subtle variations on common types. A complete copy of the Neomorphica has never been found, though some fragments of the text may be sufficient to bestow upon the reader a rudimentary knowledge of the forgotten skill Sorcerous Hybridization. Other, less revealing, portions of the text are still valued as curios.

**Difficulty:** 20
**Experience:** 8 points
**Worth:** 1500 gold lumens

## The Thaumaturges' Opus

This excellent reference work has been attributed to the fabled Astramir, greatest of Dracartan thaumaturges. The text expounds upon the basic principles behind the utilization and synthesis of essences, and the metaphysical nature of substance and matter; subjects that are incomprehensible to all but the most accomplished thaumaturges. Individuals trained in this field of study can gain a +1 increase in the magical field Thaumaturgy by mastering this text. Others will find the book utterly lacking in any practical utility.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 2000-5000 gold lumens, depending upon age and condition. Generally speaking, only thaumaturges and scholars with an interest in this field will wish to acquire this book.

## Theoretical Botanomancy

This is the seminal work on the magical field of Botanomancy, authored by the great Viridian. It contains the basic spells, concepts, and teachings of Botanomancy, and is an invaluable reference both to the neophyte and to the experienced Botanomancer. A small number of first editions were produced which are believed to have contained 1-3 exceedingly rare spells. Mastery of the text takes fourteen weeks, and yields a +1 increase in the magical field Botanomancy.

**Difficulty:** 8
**Experience:** 2 points
**Worth:** Up to 120,000 gold lumens in Vardune, where Viridian is held in the highest regard, or about half this elsewhere. Volumes containing rare spells can bring an additional 20,000 gold lumens.

## Thystram's Collectanea

This massive tome is widely regarded as a practical guide for the aspiring naturalist. The book contains hundreds upon hundreds of entries on the flora and fauna of Talislanta - some, perhaps less accurate in all details than others. Certain scholars have claimed that more than a few of Thystram's notations appear to be imaginary, or else were written under the influence of strong intoxicants. Despite such drawbacks, the Collectanea is not without value. Individuals who devote twelve weeks to mastering the text gain an increase of +1 in the skills Lore (Plants), Naturalism, and Horticulture. An abridged edition, released in Zandu in 579, is a good deal more common (and hence, less costly) than the previous two editions.

**Difficulty:** 7
**Experience:** 3 points
**Worth:** 250 gold lumens for the recent, abridged version. First and Second Editions, when available, sell for ten to twenty times this figure.

## The Tormentia

One of the more infamous works on Black Magic, The Tormentia was authored by the legendary Necromancer, Narishna. Within the pages of this black iron-bound tome lurk the most insidious curses, maledictions, and imprecations, some of which may pose hazards to the incautious caster. Several chapters are devoted to the Necromancer's favored techniques for the torture and interrogation of enemies. Individuals who master these sections earn a +1 bonus when using either the skills Interrogate or Torture. The Tormentia also contains several formulae for the concoction of exotic poisons and venoms.

**Difficulty:** 9
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 5000+ gold lumens. Copies stamped with Narishna's sigil are worth four times this amount.

## Urmaan's Transcripts

The hundred and forty-odd volumes of archaic magic that Urmaan had transcribed for his pleasure have never been found. Incomplete copies, possibly smuggled out of Rajanistan before Urmaan sealed the transcripts away in his hidden vaults, are reputed to exist. The contents of these books are unknown, though it is believed that many contain fabulous secrets, including knowledge suppressed in ancient times by the Archmage Solimorrion.

**Difficulty:** ?
**Experience:** ?
**Worth:** Authentic copies of Urmaan's Transcripts would certainly sell for upwards of 10,000 gold lumens apiece.

## Virtual Illusions

Cascal's masterwork on the subject of virtual illusions is reputed to be the authoritative book on the subject, unsurpassed even by Miraja's "Limitations of Virtual Illusions". Contained within this silver-bound tome are many excellent examples of the art, many of which are accompanied by holographic illustrations that project upwards from the shimmering spangalor (metallic cloth) pages. Fearing that others would steal his ideas, Cascal took pains to conceal the true nature of his writings. The text was written in cyphers, but was not inscribed with pen and ink. Rather, the writings are illusory; if the book is opened without first speaking a secret word of command, the contents of the pages simply vanish before one's eyes. Practitioners of Wizardry who can master the text gain proficiency in the spell Virtual Illusion.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 3 points
**Worth:** 100,000 gold lumens



## Women and Magic

This book is identifiable by a scarlet cover indited with golden sigils. The text was written by the sorceress, Sylan, an individual known as a defender of the rights of female magicians. Sylan contended that the male magicians of Archaeus had conspired to keep their female counterparts from attaining the recognition and influence that was rightfully theirs. She claimed that magicians such as the Enchantress, Miraja, and herself were the equals of any male magician, and cited as evidence many examples of their achievements. Among these were several of Sylan's spells, plus rare enchantments created by such female magicians as Lircolais, Namaste, Dujune, Gyre, and others long since forgotten.

The publication of Sylan's book was met with indifference by most male magicians, who generally regarded it as a radical feminist tract of little intrinsic merit — thereby proving Sylan's point. Few copies were produced, and the book quickly faded into obscurity. In the New Age, Sylan's book is among the most sought after of arcane works, for it is believed to contain many forgotten spells, the majority of which can be found nowhere else.

**Difficulty:** 10
**Experience:** 5 points
**Worth:** 150,000 gold lumens

## Worlds Beyond Worlds

This twenty-volume set was authored by the prolific Kabros, esteemed sorcerer of ancient Phaedra. Each of these weighty tomes describes one of the parallel worlds of the material plane, including information on the world's physical make-up, indigenous flora/fauna/organisms, topography, and - where known - its history and legends. The books are considered an invaluable aid to the aspiring inter-dimensional traveler, and as such are greatly coveted by magicians. Kabros' work was undoubtedly inspired by Cascal's Codex Magicus, which contains a brief, and far less complete, listing of the known parallel worlds.

**Difficulty:** 15
**Experience:** 3 points each
**Worth:** 5,000-10,000 gold lumens, depending upon the age and condition of the volumes.

## Zanillo's Legerdemain

The fabulous Zanillo, charlatan supreme of ancient times, authored this eccentric tome. The text is written in no less than eleven different ciphers, ranging in degree of difficulty from level two to level twenty. Each of the book's five chapters contains one of Zanillo's cantrips, tricks, tips, or banalities (the charlatan was especially fond of practical jokes). "Legerdemain" is considered an invaluable handbook for charlatans, mountebanks, rogues, and other scallywags, and as such is in great demand. Not surprisingly, given the book's subject matter, fraudulent copies of Zanillo's work proliferate in many regions.

**Difficulty:** 2-20 (varies according to the type of cipher used)
**Experience:** 5 points per chapter
**Worth:** 100-2,000 gold lumens, depending on the quality of the edition (Legerdemain has been produced in numerous formats, some of especially slipshod quality).

Not all materials produced during the Forgotten Age are considered of value to magicians of the New Age. The following is a brief listing of some of the lesser works produced during this halcyon era. Unless stated otherwise, the degree of Difficulty for these texts ranges from 1-4.

## Eomar's Factuarium, Vols. 1-20

This set of twenty iron-bound volumes looks quite impressive, and dates back to the Second Millenium. The Factuarium purports to contain "astounding facts about the history and geography of Archaeus, many revealed herein for the first time". It is astounding primarily since all twenty volumes are riddled with inaccuracies, errors, and in many cases, blatant fabrications. A complete set might sell for 200 gold lumens to collectors of historical curiosa and antiques, but is otherwise quite worthless.

## Goyard's Compendaries

Goyard was a naturalist of little talent, who was extant during the latter part of the Third Millennium. His five Compendaries are all based on hearsay and speculation; Goyard himself never observed any of the creatures that he described, and never left his cloud palace in the city of Pompados. Even the most avid collector of antique oddities would not offer more than 50 gold lumens for any of these essentially useless volumes.

## Magique

This book bears the sigil of the illusionist, Cascal, on its gold-embossed cover. However, all the interior pages are blank. It is uncertain whether this book was intended to be a joke or not; towards the end of his life, Cascal became quite strange, and some claimed that he had lost his mind. Its value to Cascal's most ardent admirers might approach 300 gold lumens, mainly because of the gold leaf on the cover, which was rendered quite nicely.

## Nuthmire's Foligium

This set of two volumes contains transcriptions of many of the best-known spells of Malderon, Sylan, and certain of the most notable magicians of the Second-Third Millennium. The collection is quite impressive, and will appear to be a genuine find to any magician or scholar who discovers these volumes. Unfortunately, Nuthmire's talents as a scribe left much to be desired. Not one of the spells in this book was transcribed correctly, a fact which can only be ascertained after a person has learned one of the spells and attempted to cast it. Activities of this sort will always result in a magical mishap of greater or lesser proportion, the improperly written spell yielding unpredictable consequences (Gamemaster's choice). These two volumes are so dangerous that most scholars recommend they be destroyed rather than sold.

## Quatzil's Libram

Quatzil was a minor magician of the Third Millennium, who hailed from the sky city of Aeon. Her Libram, though purporting to contain the arcane knowledge of such luminaries as Sylan and the Enchantress, is a worthless compilation of gossip and mindless drivel. Most collectors agree it is not worth the price of the parchment that it was printed on.

## Sortilege: A Practical Guide

This hefty tome was authored by Nobius, a magician and scholar of some small renown, who is believed to have lived in the sky city of Elande during the latter part of the Third Millennium. The Guide features Nobius's interpretation of Koraq's Theory of Magic and Anti-Magic, which he attempts to express "in terms that will be comprehensible to all magicians". The text is indeed comprehensible, and may seem of value to those who are not familiar with the basics of sorcery. However, a skilled sorcerer will realize that Nobius' concepts are overly simplistic, and are of little practical use to anyone who wishes to learn sorcery. As an antique, the Guide might be valued at 150 gold lumens.

## Untitled

This book is bound in brass and bears the sigil of the sorcerer, Arkon. The pages are inscribed with strange hieroglyphs and symbols of unknown origin and type. In appearance, this volume seems to be a secret book of magic, and appears to be quite valuable. If a skilled Cryptomancer subjects the text to scrutiny for a minimum of one week it will become apparent that the book is an outright fraud, intended to deceive rather than enlighten. The symbology is a collection of meaningless scribbles, and even Arkon's sigil is a forgery. The last page bears an actual coded inscription which, when deciphered, yields the following statement: "Greetings from the rogue magician, Zanillo."

## The Wizard's Magister

This handsome volume, bound in black iron and silver and inscribed in occult symbology, seems on the surface to be a most impressive work. When translated by a skilled cryptomancer, however, it will be seen that the Magister is nothing more than a social register, containing a listing of the wealthiest — albeit minor — magicians of the latter Third Millennium. The book is quite useless, and appears to have been produced strictly for the edification of lesser personages who wished to see their name in print. Its value as a curiosity is perhaps 120 gold lumens, but no more.



Many conspiracy theories are prevalent among the various peoples of Talislanta, some of which are widely known, and some of which are secrets known only to a few. Each of these theories may well be true, or not. Only time will tell.

## The Sepharan Prophecy

Unbeknownst to most Talislantans, there is a much larger power struggle occurring in Talislanta - one that has been going on for thousands of years, pre-dates the Great Disaster, and involves several extra-dimensional entities and beings.

On one side of the struggle are the Sepharans, a lower-planar race that reveres demons and seeks the total annihilation of the existing order that is the Omniverse, and the "resurrection" of their old gods, the Six Demons of the Apocalypse.

It is believed that the Sepharans have influenced events in Talislanta since the time of the Torquarans, whose first ruler, Narishna, may have been half-Sepharan. Narishna was responsible for exterminating the Xambrian people, as part of a blood-sacrifice intended to release the Six Elder Demons from their age-old temporal prison. The resultant Sorcerers Wars were a primary cause of the Great Disaster, and nearly led to the destruction of Talislanta.

Following The Disaster, the Sepharans disappeared for over a thousand years. But some say they have returned, and are again seeking to influence events in Talislanta through their "avatars: the 3-eyed stone idols that they supposedly left behind in Urag, which some say were instrumental in causing the recent Wild Tribes Uprising.

According to the Sepharan Prophecy, though the Sepharans were thwarted in their first attempt to raise the Old Gods, they've never given up their plan. They are active once again, operating through various agencies in an attempt to foment sufficient chaos, death, and destruction to cause a second apocalypse that will free their ancient gods.

## The Gray Alliance

This theory is related to the Sepharan Prophecy, but is even less well-known. It is the belief of some that ages ago, an unlikely "alliance" joined together to thwart the Sepharans. This so-called Gray Alliance is seldom spoken of, and even those who claim to have heard of it seem to consider it a myth. However, according to some, the alliance may include some or all of the following peoples:

**The Ariane:** an ancient race of mystics who have long struggled to balance their innate pacifism with the need to take action against the one enemy they revile above all: the Sepharans. It is believed that after the first Great Disaster, the Ariane decided to abandon their policy of strict neutrality and take on the role of protectors of the Talislantan reality, in order to prevent the occurance of a potential second Disaster. To this end, they reached sought the assistance of a trio of unlikely "allies": the Black Savants, the Ebonites, and the Tarterans.

**The Black Savants:** Like the Shaitan, the Black Savants seek to maintain the current order of the Omniverse, and view the demon-worshipping Sepharans as anathema. According to some, the Savants have another reason why they despise the Sepharans, though this is a topic that few Black Savants have ever been willing to discuss.

**The Ebonites:** strict neutrals and traders in souls, the Ebonites claim to be a vital part of the eternal circle of life, death, and renewal. Consequently, Ebonites believe that the Sepharans pose a threat to the natural order, and therefore must be kept in check. Ebonite ambassadors are known to travel to Talislanta, entering through the inter-dimensional portal known as the Nexus, which is located in the Shadow Realm. They are said to meet with their fellows, the Malum of the Iron Citadel, in order to trade information gleaned from the lower planes and to discuss strategies.

**The Tarterans:** though the Nine Princes are constantly scheming to gain the greatest advantage over each other, they are allies of the Shaitan, who despise the Sepharans as fomentors of chaos and destruction. At the behest of their Princes - or of the Shaitan - Tarterans sometimes travel to Talislanta, sailing from the Midnight Realms to the portal of Nexus. They are said to operate out the Iron Citadel as spies, demon hunters, and assistants to the Malum - or others in the Gray Alliance.

## Other Secrets

**The Gnorls:** reclusive and mysterious, the Gnorls of Werewood trade in secrets of all sorts - including, some say, secrets about the Sepharans and their sworn enemies, the Shaitan and the Tau.

**The Dhuna:** the history of the witchfolk of Werewood goes back to the Forgotten Age. The ancient stone circles, witch-gates, and dolmens built by these people are said to contain many secrets. Some believe that certain of these stone constructs were erected to protect the Dhuna from "the evil eye" - the third eye of the Sepharans, who are able to use their demon-eyes to observe and influence others even from the depths of the Void

**Xambrian Wizard Hunters:** the ancestors of these folk, known as the Warloks, hunted down some of the most infamous necromancers and sorcerers of the Archaen Age. Some believe that the most accomplished Warloks may also have hunted Sepharans, in the belief that they were the true power behind the necromancer-kings of ancient Torquaran. If true, then the ancestors of the modern-day Wizard Hunters may well have worked with other enemies of the Sepharans, such as the Tau Assasin-Monks.




PHANDIR
ARDAN
DROME
THE LOST SEA
THE MIDNIGHT SEA
KHAZAN
the serpantine
URMANIA
THE LOST SEA
Necron
Mordantes Deep
THE AZURE OCEAN
WEREWOOD
Mushroom Forest
Vodrik
Grod
DRAG
Krag
Black pit of Naranbu
SILVANDS
Phaedran Tombs
Zandre
ARIM
Durne
ZANDU
Zann
Castabulon
Zantium
Zanti
Aamahd
JAKAR
Nadir
SINDAR
AAMAN
VARDUNE
Korak Mountains
Zib
Andurin
Vashay
KASMIR
Wilderness Wall
Kasmir
CYMRIL
Cymril
Arat
Aabaal
TAZ
Bandit Stronghold of Zaran
Alm
Sanguia
NEW DANDUIA
ASTAR
JHANGARA
Tabal
MOG
THE CINNAGER MTNS
THE LANDS OF THE SLAIN DIED
DARK CO
AHAZU LANDS
Mosrim
THE THAECIAN ISLES
Geo Sun
Phandar
IMRIA
Khazgan
WEREWOOD
WILDERLANDS WALL
THE DARK FOREST


ZAR
LAEOLIS
JHANG
THE PLAINS OF GOLARIN
THE SEA OF ICE
Myr
Rhin
THE MYSTIC MNTS
THE SEA OF MADNESS
L'HAAN
SHADOW REALM
XANADAR
HARAK
THE ORAL MNTS
THE SINKING LAND
Karang
Ispacia
Maze City of Altan
Kharakhan Ruins
TAMARANTH
Dhar
Kanifu
L'HAAN
The Omen
Ruins of Jalad
THE KANG EMPIRE
The Volcanic Hills
The Oracle
Jacinth
DJAFFA
SANCTUARY MNTS
Red Iron City
Al Ashad
Hadran
CARANTHEUM
Ruined city of Hadi
Labrynth of Shadra
Crysalis
THE FAR SEAS
The Hand of Urmash
RAJANISTAN
Irdan
THE SEA OF GLASS
Jade mnts
THE CRESCENT ISLES
Ruins of Maledictus
JUNGLES OF CHANA
FARADUN
Batre
Gated Sea City
NEFARATUS
CARANTHEUM
THE KANG EMPIRE

PRONOUNCIATION GUIDE
Aa(AH)
Ahazu (a-HA-zu)
Ahrazad (aa-ra-ZOD)
Akbar (AK-bar)
AI Ashad (ahl-a-SHOD)
Alhambra (ahl-HAHM-bra)
Altan (ALL-tan)
Ammahd (ah-MOD)
Aaman (a-MAHN)
Anasas (a-NA-sus)
Andurin (an-DUR-in)
Aramut (AR-a-moot)
Araq (AA-rak)
Arat (ah-ROT)
Archon (AR-kon)
Ariane (ar-ee-AN)
Arim (AA-rim)
Astar (AS-ter)
Avar (AA-var)
Bahahd (ba-HOD)
Baratus (bar-AH-tus)
Batre (BA-tray)
Batu (BA-tu)
Bodor (BO-dor)
Borean (BOR-ee-an)
Cella (SEL-a)
Chakos (CHA-kose)
Cicz (SIZZ)
Cthonian (ka-THONE-ee-an)
Cymril (SIM-ril)
Da-Khar (da-KAR)
Dalia (DA-Iee-a)
Danuvia (da-NU-vee-a)
Dhuna (da-HOO-na)
Djaffa (JA-fa)
Djaffir (JA-feer)
D'Oko (DOE-ko)
Domal (doe-MAHL)
Dracarta (dra-KAR-ta)
Dractyl (DRAK-til)
Drukh (DROOK)
Duar (DU-ar)
Durne (DURN)
EI Aran (el-AA-rin)
Elande (eh-LON-da)
Equs (EK-wus)
Erastes (er-ASS-tees)
Erendor (AIR-en-dor)
Fahn (FON)
Farad (FA-rud)
Faradun (fa-ra-DUNE)
Gao-Din (gow-DIN)
Garganta (gar-GAN-ta)
Gnomekin (NOME-kin)
Golarin (go-LAR-in)
Gryph (GRIF)
Gwanga (GWON-ja)
Hadran (ha-DRAN)
Harak (HAR-ak)
Imria (lM-ree-a)
Irdan (eer-DAN)
Jabutu ja-BOO-tu)
Jaka (JA-ka)
Jamba (JOM-ba)
Jezem Ueh-ZEM)
Jhangara Uan-GA-ra)
Karang (ka-RANG)
Karansk (ka-RANSK)
Kasmir (kaz-MEER)
Kha(KA)
Kharakhan (kar-a-KON)
Khazad (ka-ZAHD)
Khu (KU)
Kragan (KRAY-gen)
KTaliah (ka-TA-Ia) Lahsa (LA-sa)
Lal-Lat (Iahl-LOT)
L'Haan (la-HAHN)
Lir (LEER)
L.:Lal (el-LAHL)
Mandalan (man-DA-Ian)
Mandragore (MAN-dra-gor)
Mandu (man-DOO)
Manra (MAN-ra)
Maruk (ma-ROOK)
Matsu (MOT-su)
Mirin (MEER-in)
Mogroth (MOG-roth)
Monango (ma-NON-go)
Morphius (MOR-fee-us)
Myr (MEER)
Nadan (nay-DAN)
Nagra (NOG-ra)
Na-Ku (NA-ku)
Narandu (na-RAN-du)
Nefaratus (neh-far-AH-tus)
Oceanus (oh-see-AN-us)
Ogriphant (OG-re-font)
Ogront (OG-ront)
Pana-Ku (pa-na-KU)
Peridia (peh-RID-ee-a)
Phaedra (FAY-dra)
Phantas (FAN-tas)
Phantasian (fan-TAY-zee-an)
Quaga (KWA-ga)
Quan (KWAHN)
Rahastran (ra-HOSS-tran)
Raknid (RAK-nid)
Rhin (RIN)
R'Ruh (AIR-roo)
Sascasm (SAS-ka-zem)
Sawilu (sa-WEE-Iu)
Shadinn (sha-DEEN)
Shaitan (shy-TAN)
Sha-Nabar (SHA-na-BAR)
Shattra (SHOT-ra)
Silvanus (sil-VAN-us)
Simbar (SIM-bar)
Sindar (SIN-dar)
Ska-Wae (SKA-way)
Stryx (STRIX)
Sunra (SUN-ra)
Tabal (ta-BAHL)
Talislanta (tal-iss-LAN-ta)
Tantalus (TAN-tal-us)
Tarun (ta-RUNE)
Tarteran (tar -ARE-an)
Tau (TAOH)
Temesia (tem-EEZ-ee-a)
Thaecia (THAY-sha)
Thalia (THA-Iee-a)
Thaumaturge (THAO-ma-turj)
Tian (tee-AN)
T'Sai (SI)
Urag (YUR-ag)
Vajra (VAHJ-ra)
Vardune (var-DUNE)
Viridia (ver-ID-ee-a)
Vishana (vih-SHA-na)
Vodruk (VO-druk)
Xambria (ZAM-bree-a)
Xanadas (ZAN-a-das)
Yaksha (YOK-sha)
Vitek (YIT-ek)
Y'Lal (ee-LAL)
Yrmania (eer-MA-nee-a)
Zadian (ZAY-dee-in)
Zandre (ZAN-dra)
Zandu (zan-DU)
Zaran (ZA-ren)
Zaratan (ZA-ra-tan)
Zodar (ZO-dar)
Zoriah (zor-EYE-ah)

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## Talislanta Atlas & GM's Guide: Unveil the Secrets of an Ancient World

Embark on a journey through the mystical lands of Talislanta with the Atlas & GM's Guide, a treasure trove for Game Masters and players alike. This guide is your comprehensive map to the wonders and mysteries of a world unlike any other. Delve into detailed histories and rich descriptions of Talislanta's most iconic locales, from the vibrant City of Cymril and the imposing Wilderlands Wall to the serene Western Lands of Aaman and the majestic Kang Empire in the East.

Navigate through the Nine Kingdoms and unique locations with an array of random encounters designed to bring the diverse landscapes of Talislanta to life. Each page is a gateway to adventure, offering Game Masters endless inspiration for their campaigns. Discover ancient places of power, where the veil between worlds is thin, and great magics pulse from the earth. Unearth lost artifacts from a forgotten age, legendary magical items that hold the key to untold power, and the secrets of magicians renowned for their prowess throughout the ages.

The Atlas & GM's Guide is not just a collection of maps and descriptions; it's a repository of forgotten spells, books of magic that whisper the secrets of the universe, and tales of epic heroes and villains whose legacies have shaped the world. This guide provides everything needed to create immersive and memorable adventures that span the length and breadth of Talislanta, inviting players to explore a land rich in history, mystery, and magic.

Step into the role of a storyteller and weave tales of adventure, heroism, and intrigue. With the Talislanta Atlas & GM's Guide, thousands of stories and immersive details are at your fingertips, ready to be explored and expanded upon to tell your own tales. In Talislanta, every journey is an epic, every story is a legend waiting to be told, and every location is a chapter in the vast saga of an enchanted world.

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