

CALIDAR

Game Mechanics

CAGM01



Calidar Publishing

BRUCE HEARD



CALIDAR

Game Mechanics

Introduction

The WORLD OF CALIDAR is intended to be easily converted to the most common fantasy role-playing games. For this to be possible, the following pages set up simple conventions used to describe creatures, spells, and game effects so everyone can understand and easily express them in their chosen system. Much of this is often abstracted in Calidar products, leaving referees at liberty to interpret the author's intent in ways that best suit their purposes. However, mechanics need to be suggested more explicitly at times. This pamphlet lists terms and concepts defining common game effects and abilities. A second section also summarizes what the Calidar Universe and the Great Caldera are like, which would be useful for first-time adventures in this world.

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Game Mechanics

Listing Conventions: In most cases, scores allocated to character or monster statistics are expressed as percentages of customary ranges used in the players' chosen game system. For example, a range of scores running from 1-20 is easy to translate from percentiles; on the other hand, the corresponding percent scores aren't quite so intuitive for a range of 3-18 or +10 to -10. Table 1 translates percentile ratings to match commonly-found numerical ranges. All results are rounded to the closest number.

Die Rolls: A variety of dice commonly used in hobby gaming are referred to in this book. For example: a d6 is a common six-sided die; a 3d20 refers to three 20-sided polyhedral dice, a d% is a (percentile) roll of two d10s, one expressing single digits and the other showing tens. Other dice include d4, d8, and d12.

Career Paths: These refer to the heroes' prevailing occupations, such as being wizards, priors, rogues, or warriors of various types. The assumption is that heroes progress along these career paths, gaining specialized proficiencies and becoming more powerful as they advance. Use the closest analogy in the chosen game system.

Life Force: "LF" refers to the extent of a hero's career advancement or to the relative vitality of a monster. This rating impacts directly the odds of heroes and monsters performing successful attacks. It should be assumed in this book that attack abilities and the amount of inflicted damage are consistent with a creature's Life Force and its intended challenge level. A numeral is added to express how far along their career paths heroes have progressed, or how tough monsters are. This number is a percentage of the maximum range used to measure a character's career or a monster's vitality.

For example: a warrior whose career is measured in increments ranging from 1 to 40, an "LF3" means 3% of 40, or close to "1" (that is: $[40/100] \times 3 = 1$). Under the same conditions, an "LF1" monster could be a small pest, while a mighty dragon might be better described as "LF58." A "+" or "-" modifier following the LF rating indicates single life points that should be added or subtracted from the total during a game. An "LF3-1" creature would be puny.

A lot of games do not have an actual limit to a player character's possible career achievements. Referees should decide carefully what their campaigns' "practical" career ranges should be as the basis for a game-balanced conversion. This neither prevents heroes from growing past the 100% mark, nor does it limit monsters. Life Force ratings exceeding 150% or 200% of the practical basis are entirely conceivable.

Though it is assumed in this book that the Life Force range for heroes and monsters is the same, it may not necessarily be correct in the players' chosen game system. It is entirely possible to use two different practical ranges, one for player characters and the other for monsters (and for that matter, to substitute the concept of Life Force to one more representative of challenge level). Referees should adjust these numbers until they "feel right" in their games.

Life Points: "LP" are a byproduct of Life Force, which determines the ability of a creature or of an object to sustain damage, based on the referee's chosen game system. *Death's Door* refers to a creature's lowest amount of life points before being irreversibly destroyed. A creature at *Death's Door* is assumed to be either disabled or unconscious.

Spell Potency: "SP" refers to a spell's complexity. Most fantasy role-playing games rank spells according to a spellcaster's career advancement. SP is expressed in 10% increments (10%, 20%, 30%, etc.) of all spell ranks available in the chosen game system, rounded up. Adjust as desired.

Armor Rating: "AR" expresses how difficult it is to strike a creature. This can be the result of natural defenses, magic, armor, agility, or a combination thereof. Analogy is the rule of thumb for classical monsters or specific armor worn by heroes. If needed (for entirely new monsters), a numeral can be added, expressing how potent one's armor rating is, as a percentage of the chosen system's practical range, rounded to the closest unit, where "AR0" is unarmored and "AR100" is the best protection. For example: in a game system whose unmodified armor ratings range from 10 to -10, an "AR5" yields a 1, *worth a 9 in the chosen system* ($[20/100] \times 5 = 1$; $10 - 1 = 9$). An "AR80" yields 16, *worth -6 in the chosen system* ($[20/100] \times 80 = 16$; $10 - 16 = -6$). The lowest AR value ought to be the one for a basically unarmored target in the chosen game system. The highest AR value should be the toughest rating listed for armor or monsters, although nothing prevents a referee from using ratings in excess of 100 if needed.

Type of Attacks: This lists what forms of attacks and how many of them a character or a monster generally performs during combat (abbreviated as "TA"), such as 1 sword, 1 spell, 1 bite, 2 claws, etc.

Damage Rating: Analogy is often used in this book to describe the sort of damage a weapon inflicts ("DR"). For example, the type of weapon is mentioned specifically. Inflicted damage remains in accord with the chosen game's weapon statistics. Damage from natural attacks (bites, claws, talons, tail, etc.) should be consistent with the level of challenge a monster's Life Force infers. Referees are encouraged to adjust these ratings as needed.

Damage can otherwise be expressed as follows: **Very Low** (as a dagger), **Low** (like a short sword), **Medium** (as a mace), or **High** (like a two-handed sword), and **Very High** (for an even larger weapon). This damage rating can be multiplied as needed when writing a number before it, such as 2Hi meaning *double high* damage. A "+" rating can also be added at the end, increasing rolled damage by a flat value (each "+" is equal to the weapon's minimum damage, times the number of pluses). So a "DR: 3Hi+2" damage rating could be seen as a fairly serious attack. "Attack score", "roll to hit", "combat damage", etc., are well known terms to all fantasy role-players worth their salt.

A *critical hit* is an attack whose unmodified roll scored the best number on the die (this may or may not translate well to the chosen game system, but the term is referred to in this book; a secondary roll may be required to confirm a critical hit—referees will rule as appropriate). Likewise, a *critical miss* is an attack whose unmodified roll scored the worst number on the die.

Weapon and Spell Ranges: Referees should use the ranges for weapons and magic commonly found in their chosen game systems. If any need listing within the context of this book, distances for ranged attacks are otherwise expressed in feet (one single value for spells; three for missile weapons, such as short/medium/long). Referees are encouraged to adjust these values to reflect indoor or outdoor ranges, as appropriate. Though most spells have a finite range, missile weapons released in the Great Vault do not, other than the gravitational pull of nearby worlds. On the other hand, the ability to hit a faraway target outside a weapon's rated long range demands a Critical Hit (see previous paragraph), provided the target is still visible.

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Table 1. Range Conversion Chart

%	10 to -10	10-22	1-12	1-18	1-20	1-21	1-30	1-36	%
0	10	10							0
3							1	1	3
5	9				1	1			5
6				1				2	6
7							2		7
8		11	1					3	8
10	8				2	2	3		10
11				2				4	11
13							4		13
14						3		5	14
15	7				3				15
17		12	2	3			5	6	17
19						4		7	19
20	6				4		6		20
22				4				8	22
23							7		23
24						5			24
25	5	13	3		5			9	25
27							8		27
28				5				10	28
29						6			29
30	4				6		9		30
31								11	31
33		14	4	6		7	10	12	33
35	3				7				35
36								13	36
37							11		37
38						8			38
39				7				14	39
40	2				8		12		40
42		15	5					15	42
43						9	13		43
44				8				16	44
45	1				9				45
47							14	17	47
48						10			48
50	0	16	6	9	10		15	18	50

Table 1. Range Conversion Chart (continued)

%	10 to -10	10-22	1-12	1-18	1-20	1-21	1-30	1-36	%
52						11			52
53							16	19	53
55	-1				11				55
56				10				20	56
57						12	17		57
58		17	7					21	58
60	-2				12		18		60
61				11				22	61
62						13			62
63							19		63
64								23	64
65	-3				13				65
67		18	8	12		14	20	24	67
69								25	69
70	-4				14		21		70
71						15			71
72				13				26	72
73							22		73
75	-5	19	9		15			27	75
76						16			76
77							23		77
78				14				28	78
80	-6				16		24		80
81						17		29	81
83		20	10	15			25	30	83
85	-7				17				85
86						18		31	86
87							26		87
89				16				32	89
90	-8				18	19	27		90
92		21	11					33	92
93							28		93
94				17				34	94
95	-9				19	20			95
97							29	35	97
98									98
100	-10	22	12	18	20	21	30	36	100



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Ability Scores: These ratings help define heroes and non-player characters. In general, they refer to one's physical strength (Str), body agility (Agt), manual dexterity (Dex), stamina (Sta), intellect (Int), wisdom (Wis), personality (Per), etc. Body agility (Agt) may affect Armor Rating. Dexterity (Dex) is related to hand-eye coordination, therefore to the ability to cast projectiles and/or to perform close-up work such as picking locks. A numeral is added, ranging from 1-100, zero being lowest. This rating can be used as a percentage of the chosen game's normal range for Ability Scores (of mortal creatures). For example, an Agt score of 50 would be dead average. Certain game feats may require a die roll under an ability score as a way to determine success or failure (an Ability Check). A *critical failure* is a check whose unmodified roll scored the worst number on the die, as appropriate to the chosen game system.

Skills: Heroes and non-player characters may have specific knowledge. A die roll may be needed to determine whether a skill is used properly while under adverse conditions. These are called Skill Checks.

Defense Checks: Certain types of attacks allow a victim a chance to avoid or reduce their effects. This usually involves rolling a die against a specific score, depending on the chosen game system. Monsters' defense checks ("DC") are generally those of warrior heroes (W) with equal Life Force, but some may defend as mages (M), Priors (P), or Rogues (R), as appropriate to the chosen game system.

Morale Checks: Some game systems may call for an ability check or a roll under a set Morale Rating ("MR") to determine whether a foe decides to flee. If needed, MR is expressed as a percentage of the chosen game's total allowable rating.

Bonuses and Penalties: Bonuses and penalties are listed as +/- modifiers. They are intended to alter equipment ratings or game checks to reflect the ease or difficulty of a situation. The impact of modifiers varies with the range of related values. On a 1-20 scale, a +1 modifier refers to one increment (+5% of the range). On a greater scale, a +1 modifier may instead result in a 10 point increment (such as a +10% modifier on a percentile score). On a small scale, 1-10 or less (such as armor and damage rating), the smallest increment available should be more appropriate. Referees should use their best judgment, keeping in mind game balance, flexibility, and the context for which these modifiers are intended. Use values that are customary for the chosen game systems. This conversion process applies to all tables listed in this book.

Time and Movement: Time is counted in blocks of 10 seconds or 10 minutes (abbreviated 10 sec and 10 min). Durations measured in seconds are intended for combat encounters—therefore, seconds listed in this book may convert into different durations within the chosen game system, as appropriate to the context. Movement ("MV") is expressed in feet, first by increments of 10 minutes (a slow dungeoneering pace) and then by increments of 10 seconds (usually when fighting), such as 90' (30') respectively. It is assumed that heroes and monsters have at least one action each during encounters, which is another way time may be measured in this book. Using the metric system, 10 feet equal approximately 3 meters, 10 yards equal approximately 10 meters.

Philosophy: "PH" refers to an individual's general ethos and personality. Traits are organized in three broad categories corresponding to the Heart ♥, the Mind ♠, and the Spirit ♣. Each features two opposing trends (with a middle-ground third if neither of the first two are appropriate). Up to ten personality traits describe each trend (some or all of them may apply). For example, Heart features either *benevolent* (+) or *malevolent* (−) trends, and a *dispassionate* (*) one if neither of the previous two applies. The general idea is that the prevailing three trends are the ones with the most traits best describing personality. As an option, one could simply list the number of appropriate traits (or itemize them in parentheses) as a way to express how intense trends are. Using the elven deity Delathien as an illustration, his philosophy can be summarized as ♥ *dispassionate* (*), ♠ *instinctive* (−7), ♣ *lively* (+6), or just ♥ * ♠ −7 ♣ +6. Trends and traits are described below.



♥ Heart

Benevolent: Friendly, altruistic, humble, merciful, considerate, generous, truthful, trusting, tolerant, magnanimous

(Dispassionate)

Malevolent: Wicked, selfish, insensitive, vengeful, deceitful, unscrupulous, mistrustful, jealous, manipulative, spiteful

♠ Mind

Rational: Analytical, calculating, patient, straightforward, cautious, stubborn, methodical, conventional, principled, obedient

(Practical)

Instinctive: Impulsive, hasty, emotional, unpredictable, bold, creative, curious, adventurous, cunning, unruly

♣ Spirit

Lively: Mirthful or sarcastic, cheeky, flamboyant, passionate, outspoken, hedonistic, shameless, feisty, indomitable, eccentric

(Even-Tempered)

Stern: Ascetic, aloof, brooding, formal, dreamy, haughty, enigmatic, reserved, self-conscious, dour

If any of the opposing trends are selected, they prevail regardless of circumstances. For example, if *benevolent* or *malevolent*, a god always acts accordingly. However, if a deity is *dispassionate*, *practical*, or *even-tempered*, this could mean two things, one or both of which may be true:

1. Individual personality traits in either of the opposing trends are weak or marginally relevant (therefore the god is neither fish nor fowl).
2. The deity leans toward one or the other opposing trend at different times, depending on circumstances, such as when besotted, jubilant, angered, fearful, saddened, under pressure, etc.

Other traits can be substituted for those suggested above, as long as not more than ten traits per trend are selected (for example: austere, arrogant, boorish, vain, crafty, forgetful, greedy, romantic/sentimental, etc.)

Siege Weaponry and Ship Damage: Within the context of Calidar, game mechanics would not be complete without a word about skyships. Values from the chosen game system can be used directly. Another simple approach is available here to help give some perspective for different types of skyships.

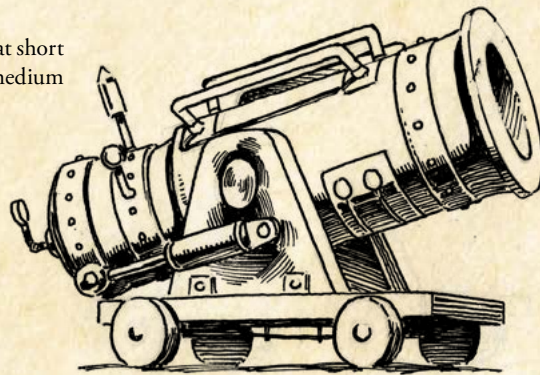
Structural Rating (SR): This number indicates how much damage a skyship can withstand before its enchantments fail catastrophically. At about 70% SR loss, a skyship becomes hard to maneuver and, if not in the Great Vault, starts losing altitude. A ship the size of the *Star Phoenix* has 120 SR, meaning approximately 1 SR per foot of length (rounded up to the next ten). Subtract 20% for a clipper-style vessel (such as Alorean skyships). Add 20% for a skyship designed primarily for war rather than speed (such as Draconic vessels). Double this rating for a dwarven ironclad.

Armor Rating (AR): Lightweight or fragile vessels, such as rafts, river boats, canoes, or longships have with an AR10 or less. A typical wooden, multi-decked skyship, such as the *Star Phoenix*, possesses an AR25. A dwarven ironclad could reach AR40. Magic can easily modify these ratings. If either the attacking vessel or its target is moving, up the target AR +15. If both are moving, add instead +30 AR to the target. If winds are gusting, increase the target's AR another +5 to +20. Referees are welcome to tweak these ratings for best results.

Damage and Range Ratings: Damage from individual weapons or siege machines (catapults, ballistae, trebuchets, etc.) applies directly to a skyship's SR. Unless noted otherwise, siege weapons require a minimum range to operate. Ranges are listed here in yards (meters). As an optional reference, common siege weapons of Calidar are listed below.

- **Scorpion:** M+4 damage (300/600/900, line-of-sight trajectory at short range, otherwise parabolic; no minimum range; half-damage at medium and greater ranges)
- **Ballista:** Hi+6 (200/400/600—as scorpion)
- **Light Catapult:** M+8 (200/250/400—Min. 100)
- **Heavy Catapult:** Hi+10 (250/400/600—Min. 125)
- **Trebuchet:** VH+12 (250/500/800—Min. 150)
- **Battering or Ship Ram:** M+8 (range n/a)
- **Kragdûr Culverin:** Hi+10 (200/250/400—as scorpion)
- **Kragdûr Firemouth:** VH+12 (250/400/600—Min. 60)
- **Alorean Thornbush:** M+4 (200/250/400—as scorpion; ensnare within razor-sharp thorns 15' radius until burned or hacked away)
- **Alorean Podkin:** M+8 (250/400/600—Min. 100; M+4 continual acid or rust damage within 20' radius for the next 1-2 minutes or until doused or splattered surface is destroyed).

Final Comment: Though a generic campaign setting requires a bit of up-front work to adapt it to an existing role-playing game, there is a silver lining—two of them, in fact. First, the setting remains more usable with different systems, and we all know that publishers regularly replace their core mechanics or go out of business, don't we? The plethora of game systems currently in the hobby is nothing short of bewildering, and ultimately divisive. Second, by simply altering the ranges used to convert game statistics, judicious referees can tailor their games up or down to better fit their players' expectations. Say for example that a monsters' Life Force typically runs on a scale of 1 to 36. An "LF6" monster is therefore worth an equivalent value of "2" in your game system. Now, increase this range from 36 to 50, and that monster now shows instead a relative value of "3." By the same token, everything else in the game, including non-player characters, becomes tougher as well, all in a consistent manner except heroes, who now face a greater challenge. A party of adventurers seems a bit weak in your campaign? No problem either, since the opposite measure also holds true.







- Caldwen Colleges of Wizardry
Numbers in red refer to this chart:
- 1. Anzael: Enchantment
 - 2. Abyzael: Alteration
 - 3. Balthezul: Conjuraton
 - 4. Lamerith: Abjuration
 - 5. Caramial: Invocation
 - 6. Nygardae: Necromancy
 - 7. Meggidon: Divination
 - 8. Incubael: Illusion
 - 9. Arcanial: Grand Wizardry

Legend

- Capital
- Provincial Capital
- Large Town
- Small Town
- Fortification
- Mountains
- Hills
- Plains
- Grassland
- Desert
- Taiga
- Forest
- Jungle
- Swamp
- National Border
- Provincial Border
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads

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Stereographic Projection

The Great Caldera

Cartography by Thorfinn Tait
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An Overview of Calidar

Inspired from the VOYAGE OF THE PRINCESS ARK stories published in Dragon Magazine in the 90s, the World of Calidar is a fantasy setting for use with any role playing game. It focuses on skyships, atmospheric flight, and space travel. Its universe spans more than just one world. With its three moons and another two known planets, there are endless adventures to run and plenty more to explore. Calidar brims with magic. Semi-sentient souls inhabit these worlds. They are the source of life, and life itself is the source of power for mages, for priors, for the gods, and for the land itself. Calidar's tone and style match the Mystara Gazetteers from the golden age of TSR, with an emphasis on narratives in the spirit of the *Princess Ark*'s short stories.

Three Moons, Three Empires: Calidar is the name of a planet around which circle three moons, one for each of the main off-world races — humans, elves, and dwarves. For centuries, these rival empires have coveted the big blue world that looms large in their skies. Facing overpopulation and their lunar resources' approaching depletion, they've yearned for new lands over which to expand.

The Dread Lands: Learning how to travel through space enabled colonists to finally set foot on Calidar's surface, only to discover that its vast and rich lands were hostile to newcomers. Soon after colonies were established, not only did fellfolk tribes—native of this world—relentlessly attack them, but nature itself rebelled, with wildlife and foliage coming alive, spurred on by powerful elemental spirits. It didn't matter where colonists landed. Whether they chose wind-swept mountains, forests, swamps, sun-drenched deserts, or icy reaches near the poles, the outcome always was the same. Newcomers were prompt to call this deadly wilderness the Dread Lands.

Planetary Life Force: What the three empires did not know is that most worlds of Calidar's universe are receptacles of colossal magic, a life force ebbing and flowing eternally from all that rises and dies thereon. This world is semi-sentient in some ways, reacting against the injuries of civilization and the encroachment of careless newcomers who do not respect the sanctity of nature. But a time came when Calidar's world soul suffered from an outer-planar malady. It recovered, but during its moment of weakness, the Dread Lands became dormant in a small region. Colonists seized this opportunity and rushed to establish new dominions on the Great Caldera, a small ring-like continent. The growing presence of civilization there prevented the return of the Dread Lands, and all was fine until the colonies rose against their imperial overseers and wrenched independence from them.

Sailing Among the Dead: Reeling from their losses and opportunistic raids from their lunar peers, the empires vowed to retake what they had fought so hard to establish, and never recognized the Great Caldera's independence. But wars across the Great Vault are expensive. Enabling warships to travel from the moons to Calidar (and to worlds beyond) requires oil of *seith*, or *seitha*. It is a concentrate of magical life force that sometimes can be found in the bowels of the moons. With this substance and the right rituals, a flying ship can enter limbo, the realm of the rightfully dead, and navigate through it. It is a mystery of Calidar that time and space in the netherworld differ from the world of the living, enough so that skyships reappear far away in the Great Vault, well beyond the reach of a traditional journey with simple ethereal sails. Precious and rare, *seitha* is far more common in the Dread Lands than anywhere else, hence the empires' fierce desire to recover their colonies so they may exploit Calidar's arcane resource more easily, for sooner or later the empires will clash, and much *seitha* will be needed.

A Universal Peril: The independent states fear the return of the empires. They have become tacit allies to protect their freedom and to keep *seitha* out of rapacious imperial hands. Elves, dwarves, humans, gnomes, and also native fellfolk of the Great Caldera work together to help ensure their success, for an even greater danger lurks far away beyond the darkness of the Great Vault. It is known as Ghüle, an artificial planet bereft of soul and built by monstrous gods. Within the confines of its vast dungeons, malevolent lords housed millions of orcs and other creatures of evil. Seemingly on a whim, the masters of Ghüle hurl this world into Calidar's universe. As it hurtles through the Great Vault and slingshots round mighty Soltan, orcs and demonic horrors raid nearby worlds and their moons, plundering treasures and enslaving all in their path. When the orcs return to their monstrous universe, their beastly gods feast on the captives, and if there aren't enough to satisfy their hunger, they devour their servants as well. Therein is rooted the orcs' reckless rage and determination to challenge the mightiest empires, to ignore whatever hardships and losses they must endure, and to never return empty handed.

Godly Puppets: But what can fledgling realms of the Great Caldera do to oppose such ghastly peril? Another mystery of Calidar is that its world soul's magic can be called upon if enough sapient minds pool their thoughts and beliefs. It is so that the people of the empires as well as those in the Great Caldera have, with the help of prophets, created gods in their image. Divine patrons emerged from the vast pool of Calidar's life force, both to lead their faithful and to behave as their mortal creators hoped they should. They too, among the divine, gaze with

An Overview of Calidar



somber concern at the dimness of Great Vault's outer reaches. They worry about losing these legions of worshipers upon whose fragile existence the gods rely. To be more truthful, it is their foes' nightmarish power they most fear, for if it grows strong enough, Ghüle's hellbound overlords may break into Calidar's universe and devour its gods as well.

Epic Heroes: Yet, it is in the hands of a mere few mortals that lies the fate of the gods. On Calidar, one isn't thought to be quite dead until all memories of one's deeds are forgotten. It is the prevailing belief as well as the origin of countless ancient legends. The strange marvel of Calidar's world soul makes it so that mortal champions, fearless adventurers, notorious villains, and frightening monsters do not age, so long as their tales are told across the land. These few are bold enough to defy fate itself and reach for the stars, beyond which even the divine dare not venture. Competing deities will just as soon endeavor to sway to their sides these epic heroes or their villainous rivals, so they may bestow mighty quests upon them, possibly offering them in return for service and glory a path to true immortality and an honored place among gods.

So, what are those empires like? In a nutshell, the human powerbase located on Munaan, is more like Byzantium on steroids, a monotheistic theocracy bent on serving a one true god. Elves of Alore are tree-hugging Nazis with living skyships that suck sap and can grow deck weaponry as needed. Dwarves of Kragdûr come off as gold-loving, earth mining, steampunk Klingons (the best analogy possible). Their ships are made of steel and shoot cannonballs. The gnomes are a mysterious and highly magical race, enslaved on both Alore and Kragdûr, but free on Calidar. The fellfolk are native half-pints with large, hairy feet. They established a free kingdom in the Great Caldera. Their wild counterparts of the Dread Lands, on the other hand, only obey their tribal shamans and live in harmony with the Dread Lands (usually) and the planet's world soul. And, yes, they hate everyone else.

What Should I Start With? The first book published is [CAL1 "In Stranger Skies"](#), the initial Gazetteer. It introduces recurrent heroes and their skyship, the Star Phoenix, as well as their home base in the Kingdom of Meryath. The second book is an accessory devoted to the many gods of Calidar and their

pantheons. [CC1 "Beyond the Skies"](#) originally introduced the mechanics given in this pamphlet, as well as insights on the ancient history of Calidar's races and how they created their gods. The third book's estimated release is **December 2017**. [CAL1 "Dreams of Aerie"](#) describes a mini-setting centered on a flying circus and provides a wealth of adventures connecting with all parts of the Great Caldera and beyond. Two more books are presently in the works, intended for 2018 or later. CAL2 is the gazetteer detailing the Magiocracy of Caldwen. CC2 focuses on skyships, deck plans, legends of the sky, and vastly expanded game mechanics for aerial and combat in the Great Vault. Calidar is primarily distributed in print or digital form via [DriveThruRPG](#). If all of this piques your curiosity, drop by and peruse the [author's blog](#).

The Great Caldera: Most adventures are likely to begin here. A misnomer in that it never was part of a volcano according to sages, this giant crater is home to ten realms. Free and independent from each other, they form a loose alliance to keep at bay attempts from their former colonial overseers to reassert their past hegemonies. Elves, dwarves, native fellfolk, gnomes, and humans stand together where they once fought, making the best of what each can bring. Jealous and somewhat petty, realms of Calidar remain nonetheless rivals vying for regional supremacy. They keep a wary eye on the Dread Lands, ready to pounce upon sources of *seitha* despite the dangers of the world's vast wilderness. One is never too sure whether spirits of nature might return and wreak havoc upon settled lands. Airborne surveillance of all that lies beyond Calderan shores also is a must to keep interlopers out of the Dread Lands, especially pirates and smugglers working for the benefit of the lunar empires.

Alfdaín: The realm of elves, a vast forest with cities nestled where rivers and meadows meet, includes three federated states whose capital city is Mythuín. The Matriarchy of Andolien and the Kingdom of Lathraël are home to the Sherandol, forest elves. The kingdom of Fëoros belongs to the Elëan, winged elves living high up in the Elëaras Range. The High Matriarch, Mistress Dwëara Darkwood, administers the federation with dignity and wisdom. Elves worry most about the return of Dread Lands in their primeval forests, or so they hear from plants and trees with which they can commune.

An Overview of Calidar

Araldûr: Under King Rothbrîm II's steadfast authority at Hamarfold, the dwarves hold the Mountain-Island at the center of the Great Caldera's inner sea. Industrious and materialistic, these dwarves hail from old ethnic clans. Proud of their heritage, the Dârgilath are reputed for their engineering skills, the Bhalrûd mastered metallurgy, the Hâradhir shine as merchants and bankers, while the Khôr-Halad stand as the best among warriors. To the risk of awaking what ought not be disturbed, dwarves mine the depths in search of precious *araldium* and *blackstone*, which powers their fearsome ironclads.

Belledor: After centuries of abuse and injustice, Calderan fell-folk held on to the last bastion of freedom yet unclaimed by the colonial powers. There, they adopted the ways and trappings of outer-world civilization, and proclaimed the Free and Sovereign Republic. The *Grand Fyrst* at Seahollow, Golliwin Strikeforth, is a champion of liberty and justice, and the protector of gnomes, many of whom escaped their former masters in Aloreia and Kragdûr, and settled the cold northern mountains of Belledor. Ironically, Belledorans and their tribal kin of the Dread Lands who know of them despise each other.

Caldwen: This mountainous region is home to wizards and all creatures who wield the magic of life. Eight arcane colleges rule deep valleys on behalf of the High Wizard Chancellor at Arcanial, Vardalas Dardael "The Green." Caldweners are reputed to be the most skillful spell-weavers, and the most adamant foes of the old colonial theocracy on Munaan. Only here do the living coexist with manifestations of demons and the undead. Though commoners fear creatures of the dark, pragmatic mages see them as a source of knowledge about the fundamental nature of worlds and the power of magic, life, and death.

Ellyrion: Perhaps the closest heir to Munaan's hated Nicarean authority, now-independent Ellyrion styles itself after the old empire. Warriors at heart and fiercely monotheistic, they worship Teos, Munaan's sun god. Their clergy honors fallen heroes as divine scions of Teos, an unpardonable offense to Nicarea's intolerant and brutal theocracy, which once sparked the bloodiest of repressions. Deimos IV "Teospatha" stands at Teosopolis as Ellyrion's *Stratokratos*, champion of Teos and self-appointed defender of the Great Caldera. He dreams of carving an empire out of the Dread Lands.

Meryath: If there was a place for adventurers, it would be this lush, tropical kingdom. Munaanians called the Talikai first came, brutally displacing the native fellfolk, and quickly forged a lasting alliance with nearby Ellyrion. Their monarchy, now under Queen Shardwen I in Glorathon, sponsors Calidar's

ideals of epic heroism. In this utopian realm put in place by adventurers for adventurers, honor and notoriety are everything. Heroes of Meryath have become dedicated dragon hunters, as a way to avenge a mythical king slain by a mysterious dragon, and to finance their extravagant life styles.

Narwan: Desert dwellers, emirates, and jinn lie at the core of this sun-drenched realm. Today's Narwani are the descendants of Arun-Te's followers who'd fled Munaan's repressive empire. They adopted the language and the manner of the native jinn, some of whom live among them. It is said that half-bloods now walk the land, in violation of strict local laws. The Narwani are devoted to the cult of Soltan, another name for Teos, sparking fierce disputes and distrust between Ellyrion and the Sultanate. Sahir III Al-Asad enforces with an iron hand the law and the faith from his capital city, Tel Al-Maksur.

Nordheim: Ancestors of a lost Viking community brought to Calidar's universe from the real world, they worship none but the gods of Norse culture. Beliefs were so strong that many Asgardians have come to life, although they suspect they aren't quite who they think. It is a small matter for the subjects of Queen Ulvheid I of Grimsvik, who endorse the old sagas all the same. Distant kin have sailed far and wide to the Great Vault's outer reaches. There, they scavenge relics of long vanished starfolk to repeal portents of Ghûle in desperate hopes of forestalling the coming of Ragnarok as they understand it.

Osriel: Money talks in this Merchant Princes heaven. Rival city states abound in this rich land, where trade guilds compete for wealth, power, and prestige. Long ago, when colonial powers vied for regional hegemony, people from diverse origins were pulled in from other universes to help settle these lands on behalf of sponsoring gods, creating a cultural kaleidoscope. Amid a background of shameless greed, ethnic friction, and political backstabbing, Lord Ardakeen, the elected Doge of the Writ in Lorical, shapes Osriel's foreign diplomacy and administers this Machiavellian vipers' nest as best as humanly possible.

Phrydias: The smallest state in the Great Caldera, it became a Bongorese colony of the Swamp Kings of Munaan, a land of oracles and fortunetellers. Along the way, half-elves moved in from Alfdain and Ellyrion, fleeing conflicts between the two realms. Under the guidance of Phrydian seers, the two races blended together over time. Led by its Grand Lector at Phaerorth, Sethrian the All-Seeing, a prophetic diplomat and clairvoyant merchant, the island kingdom thrives today. Free of its past Nicarean shackles, Phrydians revived their old and forbidden Munaanian faiths, now with an elven twist.



