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WORLD OF AVENTURIA

GEOGRAPHY, GOVERNMENT, CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY OF AVENTURIA

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The Dark Eye

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The Dark Eye

WORLD OF AVENTURIA

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WORLD OF AVENTURIA

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The Dark Eye

WORLD OF AVENTURIA

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WORLD OF AVENTURIA

Welcome to the World of Aventuria!

Aventuria is a continent measuring some 3,000 maddenmiles from north to south, and a little under 2,000 maddenmiles wide at its broadest point. Despite this expanse—or perhaps because of it—few Aventurians ever leave the region of their birth. Visiting one or two “real cities” is a pinnacle of excitement for the average Aventurian.

The reason for this, of course, is that much of the pristine wilderness is not friendly to casual travelers. Impassable mountains and deserts form barriers that separate the lands into distinct regions. Along with dangerous swamps, moorlands, raging rivers and lonely prairies, these obstacles tend to dissuade the typical person from undertaking extensive journeys. Staying home and appreciating what life has to offer is not only sensible but also wise, especially if one considers the dangers posed by predatory animals and gangs of outlaws scattered across the land. In addition, one has to worry about strange and magical creatures, forces of nature, the moods of the gods, and even the powers of the spheres beyond, in making travel plans. Not surprisingly, very few dare to make their way into the depths of the continent.

Of course, you aren’t the typical Aventurian, are you?

This book is for all those willing to take a chance with the whims of fortune and nature in hopes of discovering adventure in far-away lands. Here we provide a clear and unbiased look at Aventuria, including the terrain, natural environments, and the people native to these regions. All the delights and the dangers of the Aventurian continent can be found here: the frost-glittering plains of the Ice Lands, the eternal magic of the Elf Forest, the wild lands of the orks, and the rough charm of Thorwal. You will hear about the burning solitude of the Khôm Desert, the ancient, gleaming cities along the mighty Mhanadi River, the steaming jungles of the south, the mighty, ill-tempered metropolis of Al’Anfa, and even the inconceivable horrors of the demon-plagued realms.

In addition, the people and nations of Aventuria are just as fascinating and dangerous as the secrets the land conceals. As such, this book takes a closer look on the peculiarities of Aventurian culture, examining philosophies, diversions and the daily struggles of its people. Still, players and Highlords should keep this one thing in mind: while the information contained in this book provides a great deal of information on the people and nations of Aventuria, not even the greatest of Aventurian sages has an equally broad knowledge of his own world. Instead, numerous experts specialize in various topics: experts in the arts of assassination, masters of Svelltian agriculture and scholars of the Spheres.

Highlords, it is your responsibility to sparingly use the information about the lands and people outside your game’s immediate setting. After all, in Aventuria news does not spread within minutes (as it happens in our modern world), but instead within weeks, months, or even years. In general, the people have little interest in typical news from other lands, so much so that there is little that the common folk will ever see or have need to know about. This centered approach is important to capturing the wild, untamed feel of Aventuria.

Players, you will also have to distinguish between what you know of Aventuria, and what your character knows. Almost every Aventurian will know far more about his homeland than what this summary contains; yet a character will only have fragments of knowledge

about far-away lands, acquired either through hearsay or in whatever adventures he or she may have lived through already.

We hope that this guide to Aventuria will be useful in your future gaming sessions. Perhaps this book can even instill a longing for travel that will lead you to roll your dice for many, many years to come. Let the world of The Dark Eye come alive on your game table—our world (and yours) awaits!

September 1999

For the editors,

Britta Herz

Adventurers, ahoy!

The World of Aventuria is looking for heroes willing to take up the challenge of the ages. Do you have what it takes?

The Dark Eye and Aventuria have been around for more than two decades now in the form of *Das Schwarze Auge*, as it is known in its original German incarnation, though it only made its way into the English language in 2003. Just like any other game that has been around for so long, we have a huge catalog of rulebooks and supplements that we can draw from to translate into English. On one hand that’s a boon, but on the other hand it creates an interesting problem for us, one that loomed over us throughout the production of this book.

When this book was originally released in German, it had dozens of sourcebooks to draw rules and world information from—sourcebooks which have not yet been translated into the English language. What that means is that if we just simply translated this book into English and published it as-is, a great deal wouldn’t make sense, at least yet. And, of course, there are portions of this book (most specifically, the final chapter detailing numerous individuals important to Aventuria) that utilize rules that are not covered in *The Dark Eye Basic Rules*.

Additionally, the timeline has advanced from that presented in the *Basic Rules*. Some nations have fallen and others have merged, and many borders have changed. Rather than try to adjust this sourcebook, along with all of the future *The Dark Eye* products that we translate into English, to fit in the world of 20 Haal (as presented in the *Basic Rules*), we have chosen to incorporate the changes that happened during the years of 20-29 Haal. A brief description of the events that transpired during that time is included in the first chapter of this book, **The History of Aventuria**.

So, what you have in your hands is a somewhat edited version of the original *Geographica Aventurica*—the World of Aventuria. We have removed some sections that require a greater knowledge of Aventuria than we currently have available, and have made some minor changes to other chapters in order to bring it into line with the *Basic Rules*. We will, however, make *all* of the cut material available in other forms, either in future products or on our website. Be sure to check out www.thedarkeyerpg.com on a regular basis—we will make periodic updates, to include some of this material.

Good luck, and good gaming!

January 2006

Chris Trossen

THE HISTORY OF AVENTURIA

The questions that surround the creation, legend, and history of Aventuria are much in debate. The wise and learned discuss these themes, form theories, and look for some proof behind the tales and myths we learn at our mother's knee, as it has been since ancient times. Occasionally, prophets and mediums of Aventuria hand down visions or realizations for the scholars to ponder. The rest of the time, determined explorers seek out forgotten sources of lore from which new theories can be born (and others laid to rest). Most rare of all, a creature could surface that was actually present in the days of legend and is willing to share that knowledge—this was the case with the re-emergence of the dragon, Fuldigor, who was discovered to have a lair near Brazen Sword.

The chronicle below is based on such sources, gathered together and winnowed to eliminate any obvious falsehoods. Where information seemed contradictory or was unclear, everything is presented so that the readers of this tome may consider all available information before venturing abroad. In the end, no one knows the will of the gods, whose power is great enough that even truth can alter over time at their will.

Of course, this work is not easily accessible to the common man of Aventuria, nor should it be. Any information that can be distilled to the understanding of a common swineherd is not likely to prove useful to a scholar or adventurer needing detailed knowledge of an area. For those who have the determination to arm themselves with knowledge as well as a sword and shield, however, the covers of this book will always be as an open door.

—Master Cyrus Blackspere, of the Aventurian Explorers Society

MYTHS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

THE WORLD'S CREATION

In the beginning, there was only Los, the All-god, alone within infinity. He enjoyed his solitary existence, and was extremely perturbed to realize suddenly that he was not alone. His peaceful existence was disturbed by Sumu, the first giant, who was born out of the collected thoughts of Los.

The All-god was very angry at Sumu's appearance. He was swept away by his rage and anger and struck out at Sumu, hoping to send her away. Sumu defended herself, but was unable to withstand the All-god's blow and fell to the ground dead.

Los did not escape unhurt; drops of his divine blood drops fell to the ground as well, turning into the deities. At the sight of his own blood, his reason was restored to him. He looked at Sumu's corpse and felt regret, weeping divine tears. Even gods cannot always reverse their actions, and so Los was left mourning the death of the first giant. His tears fell upon the corpse of Sumu, which became the world of Ethra. From the union of his tears and her flesh came the humans and all other living creatures, while the hair on her body formed all plants in the world.

HOW TIME CAME TO PASS

In the beginning, there was only order and stagnation. All infinity existed within the first sphere, and was unchanging. Within that sphere, however, came a golden ship known as the Ship of Time.

The Ship of Time pulls the world through infinity, causing change. It steers toward the future, turning its back on the past. It is driven by the desires and hopes of all beings, and neither man nor god may try to divert its course. Of course, this did not stop Satinav the Thirteen-horned, once a half-god and mighty magician whose ambition was to equal the All-god himself. In an effort to control time, Satinav shot up a rope into the vastness of eternity. He hooked the Ship of Time and climbed the rope until at last he reached the prow of the ship. With a mighty leap, Satinav swung himself on board the ship and reached out his hand to take of the wheel—certainly a near catastrophe for all of existence.

Luckily, Satinav's steps on the deck of the Ship of Time sent out vibrations to all creatures, just as a skipping rock sends ripples across the surface of the water. Los saw Satinav and became angry, as was his wont when surprised. He waved his hand and chains formed themselves from nothing, binding Satinav to the Ship of Time, within sight of the wheel but just out of reach.

Satinav is now a passenger aboard that ship and always will be, unaffected by time due to his place in the boat, ahead of the wake that stirs all things. He will stay on the ship for all eternity in penance for his crime. Los was not without pity, however, and brought Satinav's wife and daughters to keep him company. To pass the time, he has begun writing the logbook of the vessel, which is a history of all things in infinity. His daughters help him: Ymra, who records the past and the memories of all beings on a black page, and Fatas, who shapes the future out of hopes and writes them down on a white page.

THE WAR OF GIANTS AND THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE DRAGONS

During her death struggle, Sumu gave birth to the giants. They were as mighty as the gods themselves, made from the mixed blood of Los and Sumu. Immediately after their arrival, they created the Twelve Great Dragons (amongst them also Fuldigor, whom we mentioned earlier). After they were born, however, they discovered their birthright, the Creation born of their mother's very flesh, had already been divided among the children of Los, with nothing left for them.

Angered at their half-siblings' selfishness, the giants Ingerimm, Efferd, Firun and Peraine charged the godly fortress Alvera. Their giant sisters, all huge and powerful (their names are now forgotten) followed them. Only a giant by the name of Tsa did not want to partake in the fighting—her brother, Satinav, was still tied to the Ship of Time. Subsequently, the giantess Kauca (a feared typhoon of the southern Sea of Pearls was named after her) was able to smash the gods' citadel. It fell to earth as countless glittering stones, where they still lay today, so numerous no one

could collect them all. In this age, we call them Gwen Petryl, and they are scattered along all the shores of Aventuria.

The gods did not long allow this loss to go unanswered, however, and struck back. Hesinde hurled great and powerful spells, Rahja intoxicated the giants, and Phex surrounded them with fog. Following the advice of Nandu and Hesinde's wisdom, Rondra decapitated the 300-mile tall giant, Rashtul, with her blade made of eternium. The giant fell, and he now lies in eastern Middenrealm, forming the Wall of Rashtul. The wild Ogeron aspired to swallow peaceful Travia, but Praios' sun scepter ripped him into a thousand pieces (his dismembered body then formed the modern race of the ever-hungry ogres).

The battle lasted for eons, much longer than the limited mind of humans could comprehend. While they were thus occupied, however, the Sultan of Demons saw his chance to take over the undefended world. He sent his unholy troops to infiltrate every refuge of the battle-torn world.

The Sultan of Demons might have succeeded were it not for Tsa, a peaceful giant, and the mild-tempered goddess Travia. The two saw the danger and advised their sisters and brothers to immediately cease fighting. The pair pointed out the evil embodied in the Sultan of Demons and the threat he posed to the world. They ceased their war, then, and together forced the Sultan back from the face of Ethra.

From within himself, Praios created Ucuri, the first demigod, and sent him to the giants. The gods and giants met in the sixth sphere to form a treaty. Efferd, Firun, Ingerimm, Peraine and Tsa moved into the Alveran region. The godly citadel was rebuilt, and six of the twelve dragons, children of the giants, were chosen to serve as its guardians while the others watched over the third sphere, the world.

Unfortunately, the giants still felt they were being slighted. They received no honor, were given no duties or lands, and were left much as they had come. They became upset, and a quarrel broke out again. This disagreement was mirrored among the dragons, some of whom felt honored by the gods enough for everyone, and some of whom felt more loyalty to their slighted creators. This eventually led to the First Dragon War, which left the world burned and devastated.

The battle between the dragons raged for untold ages, until lion-headed Famerlor eventually overthrew his brother, Pyrdacor, putting an end to the fighting. Along with five other dragons, Famerlor settled by the gates of Alveran, while the others—with the exception of Pyrdacor—moved into their domain in the world of Ethra.

At the end of the First Dragon War, the treaty that bonded the immortals was engraved into the Mystery of Kha, a stronghold of pure diamonds, which rests in the first sphere. The Mystery has six castles, each of which is also part of the immediate world. In each castle lives one of the six Lords of the Elements, who have control over fire, water, ice, earth, stone, and air respectively.

THE AGE OF THE DRAGONS

As majestic as the sight of a gliding Emperor Dragon might seem, these creatures are long past their zenith of power and glory. In ancient times, they existed in much greater numbers;

there was once a true culture among the dragons, of such subtlety and grandeur that no human society has yet come close. A gigantic city by the Wall of Rashtul, tailored for four-legged, winged creatures the size of dragons, still serves as a witness for these times.

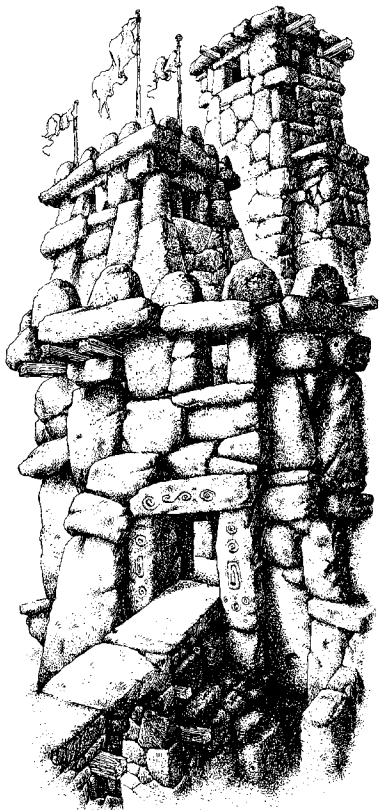
It is uncertain when the era of the dragons took place, as it is quite impossible to give any dates or time frames regarding the Aventurian prehistory—often, even the order of events are subject to mere speculation. Nevertheless, the assumption that Aventurian dragons are the descendents of the Elder Dragons rather than a separate species does seem plausible.



TROLLS AND CYCLOPS

Upon close inspection, it appears as if elves, humans and dwarfs were not the first cultural creatures in Aventuria. Instead, all evidence points towards trolls, an ancient race that once ruled the land from a stronghold called the Troll Peaks. Today, only a few hundred of these creatures are left. Legends of troll kings still circulate today, and a huge fortified structure without known origin is referred to as "Troll Castle". Very little is known about trolls and their history; these large creatures are not always on good terms with humans, and are generally unwilling to discuss their worldviews.

Cyclops keep to themselves as much as trolls do. They are supposedly children of Ingerimm, making them nearly as ancient as the troll race. Their native strength and mastery of the forge speaks for itself. Many great Aventurian weapons come from the smithy of a Cyclops.



HISTORY OF AVENTURIA

THE NAMELESS

All creatures agree that the world could be better off, that things are never altogether right for everyone. The imperfect nature of creation is blamed on the Nameless, a god that once wanted to rise above all others. The Nameless—who once had a name in the past, though nobody knows it anymore—wanted to rule the world as a singular god. He confused the mortals and tricked them into praying to him alone (some sources say that a troll helped with this task).

Initially, the other gods only observed his actions without interfering. After an eon of observation, however, they agreed to finally put him in his place. To prevent any further trouble, the gods were eager to also abolish all life on Aventuria, but Hesinde and Phex loved the immortals and secretly hid twelve by twelve of each kind. The gods, led by Praios, Efferd, Ronda and Ingerimm, moved against the Nameless. They and their Alveran troops—their host from on high—ploughed the earth and all life with it, rendering the world void for a time.

PROPHETS AND BOOKS—A SHORT ADDITION TO PREHISTORY

The following are a few sources from which we accumulated the information presented here about Aventuria's prehistoric times. These books were used:

- Breviary of the Twellegod Order
- Annals of the Godly Age
- Sphairologia—the Revelation of Nayrakis
- Secrets of Life
- The Chronicles of Ilaris
- Beginning of Time
- The Arcanum
- Compendium Drakomagia
- Prem's Animal Life
- Illumnestra—one of the most important prophets, said to have visions of the Celestial Order
- Niobara of Anchopal—once an advisor of Rohal the Wise; met with Elder Dragon Fuldigor
- Rohal the Wise—greatest magician of all times; ruled more than a hundred years as Steward over the New Empire

After the war was won, the gods punished the Nameless by taking his name and banning him from the world. That satisfied the Twelve, but they regretted the utter destruction of life. Only then did Hesinde and Phex reveal their subterfuge, much to the relief of the other gods. The mortals were set upon the earth once more to multiply and be fruitful, and the gods were pleased that they had not enacted a revenge that even they could not undo.

The Nameless swore revenge against the gods. He even returned once, followed by a gruesome army of demons. He was defeated again by the gods, who then chained the Nameless to a starless gap in the sky (a constellation between the Mare and the Griffin). Nevertheless, even gods cannot entirely extinguish another deity, and so the Nameless still tempts humans to this day.

THE SECOND DRAGON WAR AND THE FALL OF LIZARD CULTURE

The lizard races were once a blooming, prosperous people in Aventuria. Buildings such as the Pyramid of H'Rabaaal, and even entire preserved cities, stand as testament to the advanced cultural and scientific understanding of the lizard races' ancestors. One could almost wish that the monuments could speak to release their secrets to us, but that is still impossible.

Instead, we must rely on what scraps of myth and legend remain, found in their current form of a handful of fairy tales found in Tulamidian culture. According to them, the lizards followed the Emperor Dragon, presumably Pyrdacor, whom they worshipped for his knowledge and power. Pyrdacor ruled over the jungle Zze Tha (located in the area of today's Khôm Desert).

After the end of the First Dragon War, Pyrdacor's old domain was taken from him—quite a merciful punishment. Pyrdacor persisted in influencing the world's order, however, which eventually led to the Second Dragon War. The gods finally defeated him (some sources claim they were helped by Elder Dragons) and took his earthly existence. These battles ravaged and burned great parts of Aventuria; some parts were removed entirely from this sphere. Pyrdacor's stronghold was destroyed and dispersed among all winds—the most important artifact from the dragon's shelter, the First Dark Eye, supposedly lies buried under the ice of Yeti's land.

With the defeat of Pyrdacor, the lizards faced their downfall. Only a few of their descendents (Achaz and Marus) still live in the southern jungles by Maraskan and Orkland. Only in the south did the lizard high culture prevail until about 1800 b.H.; H'Rabaaal was their political and religious center. The Tulamidian state of Mirham, however, eventually conquered even this last stronghold of lizard society. The expanding human race gained strength and eventually sealed the fate of the reptile creatures.

THE FIRE-BIRTH OF THE DWARFS

According to legends, Angrosh created the dwarfs about ten thousand years ago, with the express mandate of protecting the treasures of the earth—that this event occurred right at the beginning of Pyrdacor's terrible and destructive reign is surely no coincidence. For a time, the dwarfs remained hidden from the Pyrdacor (also known as the God Dragon) as they lived under the earth. They were carefully hidden and stayed out of Pyrdacor's sight until Ordamon the Brave, the leader of the eighth and smallest dwarf tribe, tried to rob Pyrdacor's secret lair.

Ordamon was caught. He withstood torture and was eventually released again, but unknowingly led Pyrdacor's magical spies to the sacred city of the Angroshim (an ancient name for the dwarfs). Standing before the gates of the city, he realized his folly. Still, he managed to warn his people moments before flames consumed him from the inside out. Many, many dwarfs died in the ensuing battle, but the city was saved.

This was the beginning of the overt hostilities between

HISTORY OF THE LIZARDFOLK

- ca. 9000 b.H.: Founding of the lizard-empires under dragon-god Pyrdacor
- ca. 8200–5200 b.H.: War against the dwarfs
- ca. 3100 b.H.: Second Dragon War sees victory of the Twelvegods over Pyrdacor and his minions
- ca. 1200–2750 b.H.: Tulamides under Bastrabun drive out lizardfolk and exile most of them on the island of Maraskan, in the swamps around Selem and in the jungles of the Rain Mountains
- ca. 1800 b.H.: Tulamidian victory over H'Rabaa; end of the lizard high culture

Pyrdacor and his dragons and the dwarfs. Organa, daughter of Ordamon, fought with Ancarion, son of Pyrdacor, and defeated him though she died in the effort. In retaliation, the dragons wiped out the eighth tribe. Victory was still on the side of the dwarf people, however—they won this major battle. The costs of such a victory were high, though: only the city of Xorlosh survived the dragonfire. Two others were blown up or melted away, their fates lost to the mists of time. In the following years, the Angroshim fortified their mines and tunnels as the war with the dragons lingered on. Pyrdacor's negotiators repeatedly offered peace for the exchange of the treasures of the earth, but the dwarfs honored their god-given duty and dismissed all schemes.

The war still lasted for thousands of years. Pyrdacor developed ever-new plots, the most horrible of which involved the calling of magical stone creatures that the dwarfs could not harm. Weapons immediately became useless, and all seemed lost. Then, when hope had all but fled, a number of dwarfs began having visions of throwing down all arms and armor and using the powers of nature under the open sky to oppose their mighty enemy. Most doubted these visions and assumed that dragon magic had to be responsible for such nonsense. A few dozen followed the call, however, led by Brandan, son of Brodosh. They were the geodes, the first druids of Aventuria.

The first few decades were spent learning the new skills they would need for survival in the open world. As their power grew, however, they began searching out ways to help their

brethren beneath the earth, who lost a little more ground with every attack. Two hundred years after heeding their visions, Brandan formed an alliance with the Elemental Lord of Stone, who was upset at Pyrdacor's abuse of his children.

The combined power of the geodes and the Lord of Stone drove the dragons into retreat. Borders were drawn along the Yaquir,



the Wall of Rashtul and the Darpat, and the dragons were tricked into promising eternal peace—a binding oath, thanks to Brandan's guile, that they were forced to honor. It is uncertain what kind of reward the Lord of Ore received from Brandan.

After Brandan then deceived the dragons into promising eternal peace to the dwarfs, Angrosh was showered with admiration and worship; long festivities were held in the name of the Lord of Fire. Singers and songwriters came up with numerous hymns praising the victory, and whoever performed the most beautiful liturgy stood in high honors. These efforts were among the highest artistic and technological achievements of the dwarf race, along with the spring lock and the crossbow, and led to the formation of the first organized priesthood among the dwarfs, the Ingerimm Devotional Brotherhood.

THE GEODE REVOLT

Unfortunately, the advance of dwarfdom stops there. Xagul, the first High King of the Dwarfs, came to power following the end of the war of the dragons. He was under the influence of geode Abatrox, a well-meaning but radical druid who aspired to free the Angroshim from their earthly bonds. Xagul ordered the destruction of tool shops and forges at Abatrox's suggestion. Taking a good thing too far, he wanted to abandon all memory of the old arts so that the dwarfs were forced to live above the earth's surface, under the control of the Geodes. Luckily, Arch Geode Darbash overthrew

Abatrox. Xagul died by his own hand upon hearing of the revolt among his people.

In the following period, priests of Ingerimm tried to save the remains: they created a new writing system, the Rogolan, to preserve knowledge for future generations. Thus formed the written language that was later adapted by all Angroshim.



ORDAMON'S CROWN AND THE SECOND DRAGON WAR

The next era burdened the dwarfs with a series of bitter infighting. The peace with dragons was the ultimate cause for this—while tribes grew, natural resources did not. The resulting struggle undermined social ties. In the beginning, the Mountain King's authority was great enough to preserve order, but soon the world of the dwarfs was shaken to its very foundation.

Aghira of the Aboralm tribe was the most beautiful girl of all the dwarf lands. When she came of age to be married, suitors from every dwarf city came to seek her hand, bringing gifts and presents with which to woo her. Aghira was proud and ambitious,

HISTORY OF AVENTURIA

however, and nothing that she received was enough to tempt her. Only Calaman, Son of Curthag of Curoban's Tribe, managed to impress the girl so that she would at least consider him.

To prove the worth (and ambition) of Calaman, she suggested that a proper dowry gift would be a little thing from Pyrdacor's stronghold (namely Ordamon's Crown). Quick as the wind, Calaman was on his way. It did occur to him that he was about to disturb the peace that existed between dwarfs and dragons, but Aghira's beauty did away with all sense of reason in him.

In the valleys of Wall of Rashtul, the dwarf met a creature whose stature resembled that of the Angroshim. Yet it was of a taller figure, more slender, not as strong yet more adroit and nimble, and it called itself a human. These creatures lived in tents or natural caves by the side of the dragon empire, constantly on the run from Pyrdacor's lizard troops.

Assaf, one of the humans, joined the dwarf in his task. Together they entered the dragon's stronghold and stole Ordamon's precious crown. When he returned, the sight of the gem overwhelmed Aghira. The wedding was immediately set for next year. The girl could not restrain herself, however, and began showing off her jewels to everyone who would consent to view them. Soon Calaman's adventures were well-known stories, told in every house.

While many honored Calaman for his bravery, some despised him for jeopardizing the peace with his rash actions. To set an example, the dwarf officials banned him from his native land for life. He was followed by members of his clan who supported him, however, leaving their homes and caves against the will of elders to move out into the world. They wandered as far as the Troll Peaks, settled there and became known as Diamond Dwarfs. Only Aghira stayed back in Xorlosh, as she feared the loss of her treasures more than anything else.

The crown was either to be given back or to be sacrificed to Ordamon's soul, but the jewelry had spent too much time in Pyrdacor's stronghold—inflicted with the dragon's evil character, a lust for power, and treacherous greed, the gem influenced its new owners. Neither Aghira nor her clan was capable of handing over the crown. In the end, when the dwarf king, Xuragosh, personally came to demand it back, Aghira's clansman Brogar led him into a trap and killed him—the first dwarf blood spilled by dwarf hands since their creation in the dawn of time.

Angrosh became very angry; he shook the ground, and set even cold stone aflame with his fury. According to the legend, Aghira was turned into burning stone; her kinsmen fled from Xorlosh towards the northern Orkland, where they built the mystical fortress-city of Umrazim before vanishing from the pages of history. The rest of Brogar's tribe left the city as well and moved into Brazen Sword—only to disappear from the face of the earth.

By now, the dwarfs recognized the true power of the doomed crown. They tried to destroy the piece without success, for any who could finally bring himself to strike a blow against it was made too weak to actually break the piece. In the end, the crown was returned to the dragon in the hopes of ridding the dwarf race of its evil influence. It was too late, however; the greed for gold kept lingering within the heart of every Angroshim and worked constantly against their strength as a group. In a final

and crucial battle, Pyrdacor tried to make use of the dwarf's weaknesses—thus the Second Dragon War began. This time, however, Pyrdacor clearly went too far. He was finally banned from Ethra by the gods. From this point forward, Angroshim history correlates with human development.

HISTORY OF THE DWARFS

About 8500 b.H.: The city of Xorlosh is founded

8200 b.H.: Dragons attack Xorlosh

6000 b.H.: Angroshim settle on the Amboss

5800 b.H.: Dwarfs from Amboss defeat a large army of Dragons

5500 b.H.: Pyrdacor sends Ore Creatures against the dwarfs

5400 b.H.: Expedition of the Geodes under the leadership of Brandan

5200 b.H.: Treaty with the Lord of Ore

5100 b.H.: The invention of poetical worship and formation of the Ingerimm Devotional Brotherhood

4900 b.H.: Xagul becomes first High King of dwarfs

4500 b.H.: Rogolan is being accepted as the universal writing system

4068 b.H.: Calaman steals Ordamon's Crown from Pyrdacor's stronghold

4065 b.H.: Day of Wrath: For the first time, one dwarf kills another; the earth shakes, and the sons of Brogar move into Brazen Sword

3100 b.H.: The Second Dragon War ends with Pyrdacor's defeat

THE EIGHT TRIBAL FATHERS OF THE DWARFS

Furalm, Brogar, Harbosh, Gurthar, Aboralm, Xoldarim, Curoban, Ordamon the Brave

THE ORIGIN OF THE ELVES

"The origin of the elves is a well-kept secret, yet it springs not from the darkness but from within the light."

—Rohal the Wise

Truly, the origin of the elves is subject to mere speculation. It is certain that they, just like nymphs, dryads and fairies, come from the world of light. There is probably an overlapping region between Aventuria and the World of Light, which the elves call sala mandra and which sits by the forests north of Lake Lamprey. The appearance of the first Light Elves most likely coincides with the emergence of dwarfs and the rise of the Lizard Empire.

Some philosophers and magicians assume "sala mandra" refers to the Salamander Stones, where legend has it that Madaya, the last of the Old People, lies asleep and dreams up the fate of her people, the elves. Madaya was the patron of the elves, and stood as their protector. When the Nameless began pulling the elves into reality, tempting them with greed and power, she withstood him and kept her people safe. During the struggle, however, she was forced to give up her place in reality. It is



said that light elves, the ancestors of silvan elves, sprang from Madaya herself.

In the following time, the elves descended from the Salamander Stones. They showed a preference for settling along riverbanks, where they successfully fought off orks, goblins and—with the help of dwarfs—even Pyrdacor's lizard troops. They expanded across the face

of the land, becoming prosperous and content. The elves did not adhere to their traditional life style, however—a failing that could have been due to the influence of the Nameless. Instead of recalling their humble connections to nature and the light, they called themselves “High Elves” and worshipped Pyrdacor, the Lizard God. Under the rule of Simia, their first king, they erected amazing cities. The elves’ arrogance and vanity spread like a cancer, but it ceased abruptly with the beginning of the Second Dragon War.

Today's Lea Elves, the shy Ice Elves and even the Steppe Elves of the Green Plains all trace back to the High Elves. The Lea Elves migrated quickly and lived in far-away places such as Albernia and even Fountland, but all elves retreated far away from areas of human settlement. Only in 1024 b.H., did the Treaty of Trallop ensure the lasting sovereignty of the elfish regions.

HUMANS IN AVENTURIA

Today we can distinguish between three different groups of native Aventurian people: the Tulamides, the Nivese and the Forest People of the South (though the origin of the latter is in doubt).

THE HISTORY OF THE NIVESE

The fairies recognize only these especially red-haired individuals as human. They claim that the red-haired people have been in existence almost since the beginning, which would give proof to the great age of Nivese people. Their lives differ a great deal from that of western immigrants and their descendants—they strive for a balance with the laws of nature and seek brotherhood with the wolf, just as the Sky Wolves command it. What happens if these god-like creatures become angry is described in the following Nivese myth of creation.

In the beginning, the land was flat and unimaginably huge. Summers were long, and winters were short and mild. At that time, the mystical Sky Lovers gave birth to two children: a human child and a wolf pup. Both were siblings and lived in peace, as did their children. From their parents, they learned that the fur of the wolf kept the humans warm, and the young wolves learned in return how to use language.

One day, the Sky Wolf Liska wandered the earth. She was great with child and needed badly to rest. A woman by the name of Vae took her in and asked her son, Mada, to clear his bed for the guest. He was upset about being made to give up his place for an animal, but he did as his mother bid him to do. The next morning, he stepped back into the hut to find two cubs with golden fur—Liska had borne them during the night, then went to hunt while they slept.

Greed came over Mada, who could only see how rare their coats were and what a price they might bring. He grabbed both of them and ran. As he left the house, however, the young wolves began to whine terribly. Mada was terrified that he would be found, and so killed both cubs to keep them silent. His act only ensured his discovery, however, as Liska could sense the lives of her pups as she could her own.

When Liska discovered the murder, she cried out, “You humans will never forget this day!” She bounded off then and ascended to heaven. She put the bodies of their children on a silver plate, which appears on the firmament every morning. (It is referred to as Madamal, or “Mada’s Shame” ever since.) Furious and revengeful, Liska returned with Gorfang, Redtail, Ripgrief and the rest of the Sky Wolves. They devoured the land, turned over the earth and covered it all with a sea of urine. They would certainly have destroyed the entire earth, but Liska was moved when she spied two human children, cowering and crying much as her own pups had done. She begged her father for mercy and he consented, calling away the rest of the Sky Wolves. Only a small piece of the earth was left standing, however, scattered with mountains and lakes and surrounded on all sides by a sea of a salty broth.

Today, the Nivese live in the area between Kville and Brazen Sword. In earlier times, however, their settlements stretched much further to the south, all the way to Nostria, Andergast and Albernia, according to Admiral Sanin's reports—even today, one still finds many red-haired people in these regions.

Orks and goblins were a constant threat to the Nivese. While the redpelts were satisfied with the occasional attack, orks led entire wars against the Nivese. Some traditional tales speak of battles in the Brinask marshland during “the years without summer.” The hard winters had decimated the herds of the Nivese, and the humans were weak and malnourished.

The orks achieved one victory after another, and all seemed hopeless. The shaman Jukuk-Speaks-With-Beasts, however, used his powers to call upon the creatures of the land and river. Thousands of beavers built countless dams in the streams of the marshland, all of which were swollen from a heavy rainfall. The humans laid a trap in a moor pit that was drained by the dams, and lured the orks into it.

Once they were there, the dams were opened all at once. The hapless brutes were drowned as a whole, and Jukuk had saved his people. He was disgusted by the hundredfold murder, however, as the Nivese were never given to great violence. He disappeared into the forest and never returned.

When the people of Gyldenland settled in Aventuria, they mixed with the Nivese population, but most of the wolf folk retreated to the regions they occupy today. Being nomadic people, the Nivese would generally settle on empty land. The sparsely populated Fountland forms the exception. The first

HISTORY OF AVENTURIA

western settlers tried to enslave the shepherds, but the Nivese either ignored the laws of nobility or migrated further west, leaving the region altogether. That did not help the authorities of the Fountland, since Nivese tent camps formed the last haven of security for anybody traveling through the winter. Finally, the “Edict of Festum” was passed by a congress of nobility, which freed the nomads of all custom and interest payments as long as they did not stay in a city or within five miles of a castle or fortification. Further, the treaty liberated all Nivese from Fountlandian jurisdiction.

HISTORY OF THE NIVese

About 1200 b.H.: The “years without summer”; battles against the orks in the Brinask marshland

1000 b.H.: Establishment of a human settlement in Svellt Valley; orks are expelled and the Nivese fortify their borders

222 b.H.: Edict of Festum ensures autonomy and independence of Nivese-controlled Fountland

THE PEOPLE OF THE DIVINE JAGUAR—THE FOREST PEOPLE

The Forest People have no written language, relaying all their history as tales and myths called tayas. If you ask a forest man about the creation of his people, he will answer:

In the beginning, there was the forest, and in it were all the trees, plants and animals, and all was good. The Tachik (jungle skunk) ate as many greenberry leaves as it needed, the arm-thick snake ate the Tachik until it was satisfied, and the jaguar feasted on the bark apes. Moreover, of course, the greenberry bushes grew enough leaves for all the Tachik. Kamaluq looked at his world and was content. In his wisdom, however, he foresaw a creature with two arms, two legs, pale skin and ugly hair growing from the face. These brutes threatened the forest, chopping its trees for swimming houses and killing animals for joy. So, Kamaluq beat them at their own game. He created mankind by combining parts of every animal and every plant, and he formed them into pairs. He breathed life into them, and since they were his people, he gave them a well-formed body of a beautiful color so that they would not have to hide behind clothes.

It is uncertain if the Forest People really originate from the Aventurian mainland. Scholars have discussed a possible migration from the southern continent of Uthuria, which would hint on nautical capabilities of the Tocamuyac tribe. Old lizard and Tulamide documents refer to short, dark-skinned people dwelling in southern jungles and forest-covered islands. This migration must have taken place before the arrival of Gyldenland people, which is why we look at those jungle tribes as native people.

The few available documents, coupled with the tayas and information gleaned from several ruins seem to hint at a highly developed society of the so-called Kemi Forest People, which seems heavily influenced by lizard culture. Why this culture ceased is unclear. The Forest People will only say that the Kemi – who naturally belong to a different tribe, for their own would

never do such a thing – behaved like white-skinned intruders. This was not the way Kamaluq would expect of his people, so they were punished.

After the fall of the Kemi, many different tribes formed, all quarreling with one another. The Wudu tribe finally re-established an empire to the east of the Rain Mountains. They worshiped Visar, the

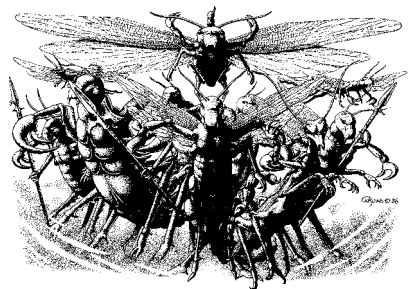
god of death, and maintained an extensive cult of death and sacrifice. Their center of worship was the Visra volcano; their prophet was Nemeka (the “pale-as-death”), a deont of Boron from Bosparan. The Wudu Empire lasted for about 400 years and disappeared with the second colonization of the Pearl Sea shore by Bosparan people.

Because of the many quarrels among tribes, entire villages became victims of Al’Anfanian woodcutters and slave hunters. The western jungles were more fortunate, as the Rain Mountains formed a protective wall against intruders. Slave hunters rarely dared to enter this territory, though around 330 H., settlers tried to colonize these lands as well. The shaman Manaq foresaw the approaching danger, though, and realized the importance of unifying all tribes to form an effective alliance against the attackers.

Manaq accomplished this difficult task in just two years. The settlers, who had already built villages along the Mysob and Soudask, were driven out. The news of the defeat spread quickly and sparked the Manakus Riots in Al’Anfa and other cities.

Manaq was also the driving force behind the discovery of the Jaguar Temple of Gulaghal; he furthermore made important decisions regarding the regulation of tribal privileges and responsibilities, which are still in place today. The guardians of Gulaghal come from the Mohaha tribe, from the Oijaniha tribe come the guardians of Kun-Kau-Peh as well as the priests of the Ghost Spider, the Anoiha people are responsible for the protection of the cave of Gron’gu’mur, and the Napewanha watch over the adherence of the taboo of H’Rabaal.

Those were the only major agreements that were accomplished before old feuds started up again. Nevertheless, the Forest People seem to live under a lucky star—all attempts to colonize the jungle were futile. The disturbed, half-crazed settlers that escaped the jungle alive told of suddenly rising fogs,



glowing red eyes staring through the mist, inhuman screams, and razor-sharp teeth.

In recent times, there has been only one serious incident: The Jaguar Temple of Gulaghal holds the Kettle of Rebirth, an ancient lizard artifact. In 23 Haal, Borbarad attacked the temple with a group of undead and ordered the shaman to activate the kettle—he wanted to transform his six-fingered hand. His plan failed and he disappeared again, but he left the guardians as well as the shaman behind as undead. It is due to the efforts of the new High Shaman Tonko-Tapam Bohantopa that the temple is now cleared of demonic and undead forces.

HISTORY OF THE FOREST PEOPLE

- ca. 11000–5000 b.H.: Forest People tribes originate in Aventuria, possibly migrating there by sea from the southern continent of Uthuria
- ca. 5500–1800 b.H.: Southern Aventuria is dominated by lizardfolk, with the political and religious centre at H'Rabaaal
- ca. 3800–1800 b.H.: Empire of the Kemi
- ca. 1650–1250 b.H.: Empire of the Wudu
- 338–330 b.H.: The shaman Manaq unites the nations and tribes of the Forest People.
- 333 b.H.: The united tribes drive the white settlers from their land; 'Manakus Riots' in Al'Anfa
- 23 H.: Borbarad seizes the Temple of the Jaguars at Gulagal
- 24 H.: Tonko-Tapam Bohantopa liberates the temple and becomes new High Shaman

THE RISE OF THE TULAMIDES AND THE ADAMANTINE SULTANATE

The first record of Tulamidian ancestry comes from the records of the dwarfs: about 4,000 years ago, Calaman encountered human people in the area of the Wall of Rashtul, worshipping "a beast-like god by the name of Feqz." These humans lived in remote villages, constantly on guard against Pyrdacor's lizard troops from the neighboring region of Zze Tha.

The rise of the Tulamides began with the Second Dragon War and the fall of the Elder Dragon. Led by their heroes Rashtul and his son Bastrabun, the Tulamides colonized Mhanadistan and drove the lizards to the south, to the swamps of Selem, and towards Maraskan. Bastrabun built a magical fortified wall to protect the humans against lizard attacks, a wall that was subsequently named after him. He was honored with the title of sultan. Shortly after the sultanates Khunchom (on the Mhanadi delta and Yalaia peninsula), Thalusia (by the rivers Ongalo and Thalusim), Elem (by the Szinto) and Gadang (around the area of Fasar) emerged in the 'Land of the First Sun.' Other sultanates formed were Nebachot (around the city-states of Baburin and Perricum), Oron (around Elburum), Gorla (around Anchopal) and Alhanian (by the river Radrom).

A few rulers developed a greed for power, however. They grew wise in the ways of magic and called themselves the Magician-Moguls of Gadang. Eventually, they conquered Mhanadistan and the land of what is now Arania. They built

the city of Zamorrah at the crossing of the Gadang and Mhanadi River, as well as numerous fortifications that have been deserted and forgotten.

These wizards were powerful magicians. They eventually destroyed the resisting lands of Gorla by conjuring the Great Swarm, a plague of locusts so virulent that is feared today. Sulman al-Nassori, the Sultan of Khunchom, finally defeated the Magician-Moguls with the help of many magical artifacts. He destroyed Zamorrah as well, expelling the independent sultans and placing Satraps in place as city governors.

Sulman al-Nassori and his successors subsequently ruled over a mighty empire that reached from Al'Anfa to Ysilia, with its center located by the Mhanadi and the Aranian region. Sulman pronounced his empire the Adamantine Sultanate, naming it after a gigantic jewel that Bastrabun had brought back from his lootings.

THE ADAMANTINE SULTANATE

Despite their traditional quarrel with the lizard people, the Tulamides in the central region adapted the reptiles' ceremonies and rites. The sultans separated themselves almost entirely from the common people: they were worshipped as demigods and served by clerical devotees.

Nevertheless, even the Adamantine Sultans eventually had to accept that they were just part of the ever-changing world. Their moment of humility came when a Bosparan army appeared by the upper Yaquir River, apparently on the hunt for goblins. They were assumed easy prey, and order was given to attack the strangers—only to have the Sultanate army suffer a humiliating defeat. The following war against the Bosparans took the life of the last Sultan of Nebachot. His widow, Dassareth, unified the wealthy region of Oron with the rest of Nebachot; she chose Zorrigan to be her new residence. Under her rule and that of her female successor's government, the empire earned the name of Haranija, Land of Queens ('Arania' to the Bosparans).

Arania and the Bosparan people exchanged and shared their cultures to a great degree: the first Tulamidian temple, built in Llanca, was built in the name of Efferd. Another was devoted to the worship of Raia (located in Zorgan).

Over the next centuries, the Adamantine Sultanate shrunk even further: The 100-year reign of Sheranbil the Fifth was followed by a century of disorder, during which the empire was weak and fell prey to foreign invasions. In the end, the Gorian dynasty was replaced by yet another, which included the Ferkina clan. The northern and southern border regions revived, however. The south saw the rise of the Great Sultanate of Elem, supported by legions from Wajahd, a mysterious underwater kingdom. It grew into an empire, defeated Thalusa, Mengbilla and Mirham, and then fell apart again as a star fell into the sea by the area of Selem. In the North, Arania went through the Silver Moon Age, a period of immense growth that reached its peak about 1,000 years ago.

Concluding this era, Bosparan Emperor Murak-Horas defeated the Adamantine Sultanate, which had already been reduced to the areas of Mhanadistan and Gorla. He occupied

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Khunchom but eventually died of a battle wound. His daughter, Hela-Horas, blamed her father's death on the Tulamides and was ever after eager to humble the Tulamides and grind them beneath her heel.

EARLY TULAMIDIAN HISTORY

- ca. 3000–2750 b.H.: Tulamidians under the heroes Rashtul-al-Sheik and Bastrabun ibn Rashtul drive out the lizardfolk from Mhanadistan and settle there
- ca. 2750–2500 b.H.: Era of the sultanates
- ca. 2600–2319 b.H.: Time of the Magician-Moguls of Gadang
- ca. 2350–2318 b.H.: The Scorpion Wars
- 2317–1010 b.H.: The Adamantine Sultanate
- 1874 b.H.: First encounter with a Bosparan army on the upper Yaquir River
- ca. 1865 b.H.: War against the Bosparans; last Sultan of Nebachot dies; his widow Dassareth declares Zorrigan as new capital of the northern Tulamides
- 1702 b.H.: Queen Dolopia III proclaims the independent Kingdom of Arania
- 1502–1408 b.H.: Rule of the legendary sultan Sheranbil V the Undying
- ca. 1400–1300 b.H.: Tulamides settle in Upper Yaquiria (the later Emirate Almada)
- from ca. 1270 b.H.: Rise of the Great Sultanate of Elem
- 1099 b.H.: Elem is destroyed by a falling star; Great Sultanate collapses
- 1010 b.H.: Emperor Murak-Horas defeats the Adamantine Sultanate in the Battle of the Gadang

THE NORBARDES

The Norbardes originated from the Tulamidian tribes of Al'Hani and Beni Nurbad, who wandered out of Balash 2,500 years ago. In the course of their long and challenging history, they scattered all across northern and eastern Aventuria, from Olport to Tobria to the Brazen Sword. They lived in friendship with the Nivese and the elves, who had already occupied the land before the arrival of the Norbardes. They traded goods and news with the natives and were thus always-welcomed guests.

Shortly before the fall of Bosparan, the Norbardes founded the city of Starpnika by the Born River. A harsh winter followed and took many lives, but the Norbardes held on. Not a hundred years later, the Kunga Suula founded their goblin empire within today's Fountland. The Nivese and the elves were forced out, while the Norbard queen Danutja formed a treaty with the redpelts, a deal that served both sides quite well. Centuries later, Knights of the Order of the Theater brought the kingdom of

Kunga Suula to a halt and used this opportunity to drive the Norbardes out of Starpnika. The Priest Emperors continued to prosecute the Norbardes, but after that dark era the oppression ceased. Today, the merchants and Norbard traders can still be seen traveling the northern plains with their wagons and carts.

HISTORY OF THE NORBARDES

- ca. 2600 b.H.: The Tulamidian tribes of the Al'Hani and Beni Nurbad migrate northwards
- 1018 b.H.: Starpnika founded
- 943 b.H.: Goblin empire founded by the Kunga Suula
- 695 b.H.: Order of the Theatre conquers Starpnika
- 658–528 b.H.: Norbardes prosecuted under the rule of the Priest-Emperors

THE SETTLERS FROM GYLDENLAND

In modern times, native peoples are not a major part of Aventuria's culture. Immigrants from a far-away continent called Gyldenland populate most of the continent.

THE FIRST SETTLERS

The Song of Jurga is the oldest known source that tells of the early colonization of Aventuria by the people of Gyldenland. The 104 verses talk of people that are generally known as the "Hjalding People." They refer to themselves as "Children of Swafnir." They arrived in the bay of Olport, coming from the north of the western continent. It is certain that these people are the ancestors of the Thorwal people; it seems likely that they mixed with the local Norbardes and built cities along the rivers and coastal regions.

Less than a hundred years later, the Gyldenland people arrived in southern regions, close to today's city of Kuslik. (Rumors have it that they were banned convicts, but solid evidence is not at hand.) A short time later, godly Horas formed an empire with borders similar to those of modern Fairfield. He reigned for 500 years, established the city of Bosparan, then decided to finally take a seat among his ancestors in the realm of gods and leave the humans to their own fate. He is still worshipped and honored as a deity in the area of Fairfield.

HISTORY OF THE THORWALIANS

- ca. 2625 b.H.: Hjaldingars from Gyldenland set foot in Olport Bay
- 1861 b.H.: Admiral Sanin discovers Thorwal, followed by Thorwalian raids on coastal towns of the Old Empire
- 701–562 H.: Southern Thorwal under the rule of the New Empire
- 29–32 H.: Naval war of the nascent Thorwalian state against the Horasrealm

THE BOSPARAN EMPIRE

The land of Horas now went through a time of expansion. Many armies followed routes set by exploring adventurers, eager to take over land. One of the most well known campaigns is that of Admiral Sanin the Elder, who moved along the coast towards the north and along the rivers into the interior of the continent.

According to records of the time, the Bosparan emperors expected to encounter no real resistance whatsoever. The first encounter with dwarfs gave the troops of the Emperor a taste of reality—the Angroshim attacked an outpost by the Valley of the Yaquir River, and killed all of the men except one. They carved a message into the body of the survivor, and then sent him back to Bosparan.

The army was reinforced; increasingly more troops moved towards the east, south and north. While it was impossible to confront and defeat the dwarfs, the goblins were driven out of the area entirely by the Bosparan army. Cities like Punin, Drôl, Havena, Ferdok, and Gareth were built. Emperor Belen-Horas, the initiator of this successful campaign, declared himself a godly Emperor and assumed the mantle of divinity. Fortunes shifted, however—forty trolls came down from the mountains and slaughtered an army of a thousand men. Belen-Horas sent one expedition after another to beat back the troll army, an endeavor known as the Troll War. The effort lasted for 16 years, and nearly exterminated the trolls entirely. In addition to the Bosparan victory, the army of the Adamantine Sultanate was defeated in the Battle of the Darpat River Bend.

The price for these victories, however, was high. More and more troops had to leave the borders to fuel these conflicts, giving orks and ogres a chance to fall in and attack the empire. Ultimately, the man-eating beasts feasted on the population of Gareth, who had no army left to protect themselves. These horrible events were linked to Belen-Horas's declaration of godliness, which must have angered the gods.

When the Emperor died, his son was only eight years old. A council was appointed to rule the empire in his stead until the successor was of age. The council acted wisely and started the Age of the Peace Emperors, during which the empire flourished greatly. The young provinces of Nostria and Andergast, however, used the opportunity to secede from Bosparan. The two most notorious troublemakers of modern times therefore also represent the oldest nations in Aventuria.

When the Emperor Haldur-Horas came of age, it became clear he had not learned from the wisdom of the council. He had the dubious honor of putting an end to the glorious Age of the Peace Emperors, all to satisfy his own greed. The city of Gareth had accumulated great wealth. According to the Emperor, that was only because its citizens were not paying enough taxes. He tripled taxes with a swift hand and sent in the troops as the Gareth people rejected his orders. The army attacked the city walls for 200 days, forcing the population to its knees, when they finally surrendered, their prosperity in ruins.

Haldur was murdered only 2 months later, and his son Fran swore revenge. Of course, he looked no further for the killers than Gareth. There, he arrested and tortured individuals arbitrarily, earning him the name "Fran the Bloody." On top of the campaign

of terror, taxes were raised yet again—when the tax collectors began arresting those who could not pay, the smoldering conflict broke into a bloody riot.

The people of Gareth stormed the garrison and chased away the soldiers of the Emperor. The news spread like a wild fire through the entire nation—masses of people came to see the free city. When the Emperor's armies arrived to retaliate, they were opposed by a force double their size. The general did not dare order the attack. When Fran heard of this, he sent out a second army as reinforcement. In the meantime, a count by the name of Hluthar gathered an army of his own to fight by the side of the Gareth people. He arrived at the city simultaneously with Emperor Fran-Horas, and the two sides immediately began fighting.

The battle raged with merciless fury—no one was willing to step back and victory seemed impossible for either side. The Emperor then conjured up the Archdemons; their servants descended to earth only to slaughter first the army of Gareth and then that of the Bosparans. One could have counted the survivors on one hand: Emperor Fran-Horas was one of them. Fran would not speak a word afterward, and barely ate or drank. He died 4 years later, his screams echoing through the halls of the palace for hours as though the demons had come for him at last. His corpse was never found.

THE DARK AGES

With the terrible death of Fran-Horas, an age of ignorance and violence swept across the land. Most regions of the country were deserted. Orks moved in en masse, with no one to oppose them. Science and art were abandoned, emperors came and went; they died or were overthrown and killed. For centuries, the once-mighty army of Bosparan was paralyzed; humans living in scattered provinces worshipped ork deities and strange idols. Then, the elves and dwarfs accomplished in the Battle of Saljeth (by today's Griffinsford) what the humans had failed so miserably to achieve—with unified strength, the orks were defeated.

The empire slowly recovered. The emperors of the Kuslik dynasty had streets built and reclaimed lost territory, while the Battle of Gadang eventually crushed the Adamantine Sultanate and made it part of the Bosparan Empire. Emperor Hela-Horas, the 'Beautiful Empress,' was declared a goddess once again, though she was warned against such hubris. She cared little about doubts and warning words coming from the Gareth priesthood, however, and ridiculed the messengers, even burned them publicly.

The city by the Gardel was horrified and moved against Hela-Horas. Gareth put together an army and sent it toward Bosparan with the goal of removing the insane emperor. Hela retaliated and moved her loyal forces against the approaching army; both forces met by the Alamadan village of Brig-Lo.



HISTORY OF AVENTURIA

In a manner similar to her ancestor, Fran-Horas, Hela called on demons to help give her victory, uncaring if her own troops were killed in the process. Naturally, the demons were only too willing to ascend from the Outer Hells and fall on their mortal victims. What the empress did not know was just how much the gods despised such behavior by now. Four warriors dressed in golden armor appeared in the front row of the Gareth army. As we know today, they were the avatars of the deities Praios, Rondra, Efferd and Ingerimm.

The gods' presence wreaked havoc among the demons. Hela's troops ran off in sheer panic; they were driven back to the palace of the empress, followed by an angry Gareth mob. When she tried to take refuge there, lightning shot from the sky, breaking the walls of the palace and giving way to the empress' residential halls. She called upon her dark craft again to summon the dead to protect her, opposing the attacking legions with skeleton troops. As she ordered the attack, though, a disembodied voice spoke, its words drowning out all other sounds. It said, "It ends here, Hela," and she sank before her throne, instantly dead.

The battered Gareth forces demanded revenge for the devastating demonic battles. Taking their revenge, the army wandered through Fairfield for half a year, plundering and looting every building in sight. Afterwards, goblins came to finish the job—it was to take another 700 years before the central province of the Old Empire recovered again.

HISTORY OF THE OLD EMPIRE

- 1876 b.H.:** Bosparan army moves up the Yaquir
- 1874 b.H.:** Bosparan army defeats the troops of the Adamanine Sultanate
- 1866 b.H.:** Belen-Horas declared himself a godly Emperor
- 1866–1850 b.H.:** Troll Wars
- 1865 b.H.:** Battle by the Darpat River Bend, conquest of Nebachot (today's Perricum), victory over the Adamantine Sultanate
- 1864 b.H.:** First move of the ogres
- 1863 b.H.:** Founding of Nostria and Andergast
- 1847 b.H.:** Independence of Andergast and Nostria
- 1849–1612 b.H.:** Age of the Peace Emperors
- 1611 b.H.:** 200 days of Gareth
- 1562 b.H.:** Second riot of Gareth
- 1561 b.H.:** First Demon Battle
- about 1550–1150 b.H.:** The Dark Ages
- 1246 b.H.:** Orks take Baliho
- 1134 b.H.:** Battle of Saljeth
- 1010 b.H.:** Battle by Gadung, Bosparan annexes the Adamantine Sultanate
- 993 b.H.:** Second Demon Battle, the looting of Bosparan

THE SOUTH DURING THE BOSPARAN AGE

The greed of the Bosparan Empire during its heyday was without measure. The cities of Corapia (Chorhop), Belenas (Mengbilla) and Brabak were built, Sylla was annexed and following threats of Svelinya-Horas, and the Tulamidian settlers hurried to leave Al'Anfa and Mirham.

Initially, the strength of the Wudu tribe prevented any further expansion. With the help of legions from the underwater world Wajahd, however, Elem rose to great power, colonizing Thaluma and ending the reign of the Wudu people. Belenas was conquered and renamed as Mengbilla. The decadent and cruel nature of Elem became legendary, and only a falling star ended the tyranny by destroying the entire city.

Mengbilla was conquered once again under the rule of the Kuslik dynasty, and Al'Anfa as well as Selem were rebuilt atop of the ruins.

THE SOUTH DURING THE BOSPARAN AGE

- 2600–1300 b.H.:** Age of the Tulamides; Mirham and Al'Anfa are built
- 1868 b.H.:** Bosparan people start to build cities in the south
- about 1800 b.H.:** The Tulamides defeat H'Rabaal
- 1634 b.H.:** Bosparans drive out Tulamides
- 1611 b.H.:** Annexation of Sylla
- 1650–1250 b.H.:** Rule of the Great Sultanate of Elem
- 1100–993 b.H.:** Mengbilla is conquered once again by the Kuslik Emperors; rebuilding of Al'Anfa and Selem

THE NEW EMPIRE

After the fall of Bosparan, Gareth became the empire's capital. Raul, a young army leader, was crowned the first Emperor of the New Empire (also called "Middenrealm"). A peaceful period followed; during this "Age of the Wise Emperors," the nation's leaders acted with both caution and wisdom. Under their command, the empire expanded more than ever, ranging from the icy plains in the north to the farthest south; humans even populated the island of Maraskan.

Festum, a small city by the mouth of the Fount River, began to grow. The so-called Knights of the Theater explored the land along the Fount River's two major tributaries. The city of Neersand likewise prospered around the same time, and eventually the Thorwal troops joined the knights. The former threat from the west coast was now a powerful friend, and the newfound allies set out to travel and explore the Bodir.

Unfortunately, the last of the Wise Emperors died very young, and his son Rude was only three years old. A council of priests and elders held the power as regents until Rude was old enough to govern, but the heir to the throne was killed before his fifteenth birthday. The blame fell on the priests of Rondra, as the body had marks in the shape of a lion. The clergy of Praios stepped in to assume control, before matters got out of hand and the warrior-priests could pull off their expected coup.

The empire's new leaders closed the temples of the Great Lioness one after another, prosecuting and killing the clergy and devotees of Rondra. Events such as the Harvest Feast Massacre of Gareth in 658 b.H. brought fear and pain to many hearts. Ultimately, they executed the Grand Master of the Order of the Theater—the last of the opposition—his order defeated in the Battle of Dragon's Rift. To the citizens and especially the church of Praios, this was the sign that the priests could do no wrong.

The common people suffered greatly, however, especially the devotees of Rondra. Taxes were tripled and labeled as “godly appreciation”—which made them harder to refuse but no easier to pay. People starved, and when the inevitable rebellion broke out, it was led by an old man named Rohal. He succeeded and drove the priests out of the palace.

While the people were eager to lynch their oppressors, Rohal instead mercifully exiled them to the island of Jilaskan. He took the throne for himself and remained there for more than one hundred and twenty years. During this period, schools and sciences flourished, elven prose became fashionable and the Seminar of Elven Communication was founded.

The long reign of Rohal seemed unnatural, however. The memory of Hela-Horas still in their minds, citizens of the empire would no longer suffer the threat of supernatural oppression—no matter how fair their leader might seem. They proclaimed, “Out with the demon, he has no place on a throne!” Knowing he could no change their minds and their hearts, Rohal left his palace with a “Farewell!” and was never seen again.

Once again, the nation was without a leader. A powerful guild of magicians claimed that Rohal was one of its members, and thus were the rightful rulers. A second guild quickly said the same, and with no more reason than that, war returned to the empire. The War of the Wizards is one of the darkest chapters of Aventurian history: many lives were lost and the devastation was beyond measure. So great were the destructive energies released that some regions are still so contaminated by dark magic that life there is all but impossible. There were no winners or losers; followers on both sides fled in great numbers, crazed with fear.

The unification of noble men and warriors, outlined by the Gareth Pamphlet, finally ensured stability. The House of Gareth became the hereditary heirs of the title Emperor, and the magicians were prohibited from every ruling again. Additionally, in the wake of the war, many academies of magic were closed down while spells of possession and control were outlawed entirely. A great deal of magical knowledge was lost forever.



There was finally peace among the people, but before long the nation's officials and leaders spoiled that peace. They lacked foresight, fortune and forcefulness—it was their fault that the throne lost its authority and prestige. Albernia, under the governing hand of Prince Toras, seceded from the empire. The once-rich province was ruined in the following year by a terrible earthquake, allowing Gareth to handily resume control over the land again. Nevertheless, other

regions had similar desires of independence, following Albernia's example. The fall of the New Empire became imminent, though, once the noblemen of Fairfield swore an oath, at the hunting castle Baliiri, in which they promised not to lower their weapons until they defeated the “Gareth oppressors.”

HISTORY OF THE NEW EMPIRE

- 993–940 b.H.: Reign of Raul of Gareth
- 940–660 b.H.: Rule of the Wise Emperors
- 830 b.H.: Colonization of Maraskan begins
- 658–528 b.H.: Age of the Priest-Emperors
- 656 b.H.: Knights of the Order of the Theater are defeated
- 527–404 b.H.: Reign of Rohal the Wise
- 403–398 b.H.: War of the Wizards
- 397 b.H.: ‘Gareth Pamphlet’
- 393 b.H.: An invasion of orks is halted after the battles of Ferdok and the Blood Fields
- 292 b.H.: Albernia declares independence
- 291 b.H.: Earthquake of Havena, a giant wave destroys almost the entire city
- 249 b.H.: Oath of Baliiri, Fairfield declares its independence

AL'ANFA AND THE SOUTH DURING THE AGE OF THE NEW EMPIRE

Emperor Raul decided that the southern provinces were to be unified and governed by the Paligan family, with the city of Sylla being the capital. Later on, the royal residence was moved to Al'Anfa. Emperor Gerbald the First eventually outlawed slavery, a move that was especially unpopular among the Tulamide people. In order to keep the peace, the next Emperor, Menzel, reversed the law and granted slavery for the Tulamide provinces. Themodates of Shoy'Rina became vice-king, following the wishes of the Al'Anfanian population.

The growth of Al'Anfa was spectacular: even the Manakus Riots could not halt the rise of the city. 150,000 inhabitants populated the township, and it quickly gained a reputation of being the most corrupt and demoralized district in Aventuria. Citizens and visitors alike engaged in dubious pleasures, among which human sacrifices were considered rather harmless activities. Punishment followed close behind, however: the Great Plague took the lives of two-thirds of the population.

The people of the city understood the message very well, and quickly banned the vice-kings to a palace city (which was built on the ruins of Mirham) while the Council of the Twelve (consisting of rich citizens and deonts of Boron) took control. The Boroni Velvenya Karinor assumed the title of matriarch and declared the Rite of Al'Anfa as a new church.

The nation of Brabak had time to advance as well: Governor Thiralion de Sylphur was crowned Ariakon the First, King of Brabak. The city of Al'Anfa declared its formal independence; Mengbilla, Corapia and Port Corrad followed not much later. About 100 years later, Brabak and Al'Anfa engaged in a war over H'Rabaal. Sylla initially supported Al'Anfa, but quickly joined

HISTORY OF AVENTURIA

with Brabak and declared itself independent. Brabak won the war, but it again lost the land around Khefu and Hôt-Alem in the following decades to Middenrealm.

THE SOUTH DURING THE AGE OF THE NEW EMPIRE

991–145 b.H.: Vice Kingdom Meridiana

853 b.H.: Alphana (Al'Anfa) becomes capital of Meridiana

763 b.H.: The destruction of Mirham

657 b.H.: Brabak and Hôt-Alem form the government of Brabakia

307 b.H.: Great Plague of Al'Anfa

about 145 b.H.: Al'Anfa and Brabak separate from the empire

135 b.H.: Independence of Mengbilla

127 b.H.: Independence of Corapia

90 b.H.: Independence of Port Corrad

49–46 b.H.: War between Al'Anfa and Brabak

32 b.H.: Corapia is conquered by the Caliphate, renamed Chorhop

THE FALL OF THE NEW EMPIRE

Speaking of this period as a downfall is probably an overstatement—today, Middenrealm is still the largest realm in Aventuria. It did lose a number of provinces, however, during the subsequent 250 years. Fairfield was the first to declare its independence after 8 years of civil unrest. The ensuing treaty, the Peace of Kuslik, allowed the Gareth monarch Eslam to constitute only one rule: the ruler of Vinsalt was only to hold the title of a king, not that of Emperor. Maraskan and Fountland quickly followed the example set forth by Fairfield. The Novadi people witnessed the appearance of Rastullah by the Oasis of Keft, and the emerging 'Caliphate' split from Middenrealm as well.

The line of unfortunate Emperors continued and eventually caused a war of succession after the death of Valpo the Drinker. Seventy-four regents came and went during those 31 years of quarrel. A ferocious individual by the name of Perval put an end to the mayhem and placed himself on the throne. The empire had a leader again, but its people were bleeding to death.

After Perval's reign, his children Bardo and Cella shared the throne, but they concentrated rather on a lavish lifestyle than governmental duties. Their cousin Reto could not bear the sight; he removed the siblings from the throne and, naturally, assumed it himself. The empire recovered under his rule, and Maraskan was re-conquered again (although local resistance was never broken). Reto's son Haal was not as capable as his father, however: Arania and Khunchom split from the empire and declared their independence just shortly after his inauguration.

THE FALL OF THE NEW EMPIRE

241 b.H.: Peace of Kuslik, independence of Fairfield

238 b.H.: Fountland secedes

234 b.H.: Maraskan secedes

233 b.H.: Rastullah appears in Keft, Khôm tribes split from empire

145 b.H.: Al'Anfa and other southern cities declare independence

91–60 b.H.: War of Succession

6 b.H.: Battle of Jergan, Maraskan is re-conquered

0 H.: Emperor Haal's inauguration

2 H.: Arania and Khunchom declare independence

THE CALIPHATE OF UNAU

After the appearance of the one-god Rastullah and the declaration of the 99 Orders, Khôm declared itself independent from Middenrealm. Subsequently, the Novadis people established a powerful nation that included the Khôm desert and its bordering regions; it proved its strength during the war against Al'Anfa (15–17 Haal). Currently these desert warriors are under the command of Caliph Malkillah the Third, who just recently moved his residence to the old caliph city Unau, demonstrating the powerful position of orthodox desert sultans. Further information on the history of the Caliphate of Unau can be found on p. 86.

RECENT HISTORY

SPECIAL NOTE

The following section describes in general the events that transpired after the year 20 Haal, the timeframe in which The Dark Eye Basic Rules core book is set. This will take you up to date with the year 29 Haal. While it does not go into details about the invasions by the ogres and orks, it should, in addition to the information provided about each Aventurian nation in the chapter entitled The Nations of Aventuria (starting on p. 34), provide you a sufficient grounding to design and play in a campaign set in the "current" Dark Eye timeframe.

MIDDENREALM

Despite his weaknesses, Haal successfully defeated the Maraskan rebels in Tuzak and forced them to retreat to Boran. Two years later, the Emperor declared himself a god; the Gareth people still remember the glamorous celebration of this event today. Another grand feast was held for his son, Prince Brin, commemorating his engagement to Princess Emer ni Bennain, as it coincided with the royal tournament (held at the court of the Emperor).

A few years later, ogres invaded the eastern province of Tobria (there are speculations about a correlation between this attack and the dismissal and disappearance of an imperial magician by the name of Galotta). The army of more than a thousand man-eating ogres was defeated at the Trollgap, a passage between the Troll Peaks and Black Sickle. A little later, Emperor Haal disappeared mysteriously during a journey through the Fountland. Adding insult to tragedy, Queen Amene of Vinsalt assumed the title of Horas (the title of the first emperors). Her action was seen as a clear violation of the peace treaty of Kuslik, and relations between the two nations worsened dramatically. War was nearly at hand.

At the same time, the orks left their traditional settlements and overran the cities of the Svellt Valley, as well as the Middenrealmian provinces of Griffinsford and parts of Meadows (they still occupy major parts of the Svellt Valley today). They even reached the gates of Gareth, where they were eventually defeated in the Battle by Silk Meadows.

During this time of weakness, the Darpatian count, Answin of Ravensmouth, saw his opportunity. He took over the throne of Gareth by force, plunging the nation into civil war. Subsequently, honorable heroes took matters into their own hands, defeated Answin, and Prince Brin finally accepted the mighty patrimony of his father. He did not accept the Emperor title however, as there was no proof for Haal's death yet; rather he followed Rohal's example and assumed the title of Protector of the Empire.

ARANIA

Duchess Sybia discontinued the tributes to Gareth in the name of Prince Arkos, who was to be the next king. Naturally, his sister had similar ambitions; she wanted to be queen, and subsequently tried to kill Arkos. Her plan failed.

Arkos became king and married Princess Eleonora of Baburin. Just a short time later, Dimiona repeated her attempt to grasp the power; she did succeed in separating the Elburian land from the kingdom and transformed it into the 'Moghulate of Oron.' Eventually, Arania became a kingdom in 29 Haal.

THE BORBARAD CAMPAIGN

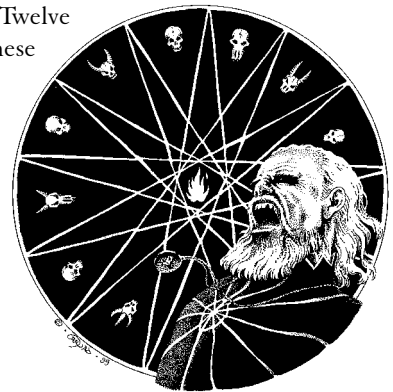
The ork battles put the empire through a hard test, but that was nothing compared to what was to follow: Borbarad, the Master of Demons, returned. His spirit was conjured up in Weiden, devastating a vast expanse in the process. After acquiring a body and sending his adherents visions to join his ever-growing army, he moved on to conquer Maraskan, Tobria, Warunk, Beilunk and parts of Darpatia.

The sorcerer also attempted to subdue Fountland, but the vicious Count Uriel of Needmark was the only ally he could find. In the Battle of Ox and Oak, the army of Uriel defeated the Bronnjars, led by Thesia of Elmstone. Borbarad was defeated in the Battle of the Vallusian Meadows, however, where the loyalist army of the Fountland joined the Middenrealm's army in a bitter fight against his army and that of Uriel.

The horror of war was far from over, though. Maraskan was lost, and the rain of demonic fire hit not only Wehrheim and Havena, but also Gareth, the imperial capital. Not until the Third Battle of Demons by the Trollgap did the alliance of free peoples destroy Borbarad and smash his demonic crown into seven pieces.

The prize for victory was steep—many brave heroes and stern soldiers gave their life to save the souls of others. Both the Protector of the Empire and the famed "Sword-King" Raidri Conchobair fell. Moreover, the empire never could recover the lost lands; the gruesome helpers of Borbarad, who acquired a shard of the crown for themselves, continued the legacy of their former master there. They stepped into power as Heptarchs.

Today, the humans of Aventuria can only hope that the Twelve choose to take on these infernal forces themselves.



MIDDENREALMIAN RECENT HISTORY

2 H.: Suppression of the Tuzak Uprising by Haal

4 H.: Haal is declared a minor god

5 H.: Prince Brin is engaged to Princess Emer

10 H.: Battle of the ogres at the Trollgap

11 H.: Brin marries Emer, becomes King of Garetia

15–17 H.: Al'Anfa tries to invade the Caliphate

17 H.: Emperor Haal disappears; Queen Amene the Third declares herself a Horas Emperor, Count Answin attempts to take over the throne

17–20 H.: Orks attack the Svelltian League and the Middenrealm

21 H.: Brin becomes 'Protector of the Empire'

22 H.: Borbarad returns

26/27 H.: Borbarad invades Tobria and Maraskan, Glorana assumes power in the Far North

28 H.: Battle of the Vallusian Meadows, Dimiona fails to control all of Arania

22–24 Ingerimm, 28 H.: Third Battle of Demons by the Trollgap, Borbarad is defeated, Brin dies

29 H.: Proclamation of the Kingdom of Arania

from 29 H. on: Heptarchs establish their empires in the east and north of Aventuria

THE CONTINENT OF AVENTURIA

AVENTURIA AT A GLANCE

Geographic Borders: Sea of the Seven Winds in the west, Ifirn's Ocean in the north, Sea of Pearls in the east, Brazen Sword mountain range in the northeast, Southern Sea in the south

Covered Area: Roughly 300 miles long, from Yeti's Land in the north to Benbukkula Island in the south; the widest stretch from coast to coast is 1,900 miles

Terrain: All types of land, from frozen tundra to tropical jungles

Mountains and Mountain Ranges: Black Sickie, Brazen Sword, Frozen Peaks, High Eternans, Goldenrock, Kosh Mountains, Maraskan Mountain Range, Red Sickie, Salamander Stones, Troll Peaks, Rain Mountains, Rashtul Wall

Major Inland Lakes: Lake Alavi, Blue Lake, Lake Cichanebi (salt lake), Loch Harodrol, Lake Angbar, Lake Lamprey, Oxwater, Lake Thuran, Lake Ysli

Estimated Population: 4,060,000 humans (without Dark Lands; 279,000 in the Dark Lands, not counting Oron); approx. 20,000 elves, 40,000 dwarfs, 80,000 orks and 200,000 goblins

Nations: Al'Anfa, Andergast, Arania, Fountland, Brabak, the Caliphate of Unau, Heptarch Empires (Dark Lands), Horasrealm, Middenrealm, Nostria

Important Cities: Al'Anfa (80,000), Fasar (23,000), Festum (28,000), Gareth (189,000), Grangor (9,850), Havena (25,700), Khunchom (13,200), Kuslik (21,800), Rashdul (7,250), Vinsalt (19,850), Zorgan (14,500)

Important Traffic Routes: Fount, Darpat, Great River, Mhanadi, Svellt, and Yaquir Rivers are the most important waterways; a well-built network of roads runs through Fairfield, Middenrealm, parts of Nostria, Andergast, and the Fountland

Religions: Twelvegods belief throughout most of Aventuria (including the Dwarfen faith of Angrosh, Swafnir religion of the Thorwal people and the worship of Horas in Fairfield); Rastullah the One-God is followed among Novadis people; Rur and Gror are worshipped in Maraskan; the Nivese religion of the Sky Wolves; the worship of Kamaluq as well as other nature religions among the Forest People; ritual worship of Borbarad and demonic cults throughout the Heptarch Empires

Strange Locations: See description of each nation in *Nations of Aventuria*, starting on p. 34

Holidays, Festivities and Masses, etc.: See *Calendars and Holidays*, starting on p. 34

a few weeks each year. Another land of ice is located in the Far North, but it is no godly power that keeps this land frozen: the Archdemon Nagrach and his servant, Glorana, control the taiga and tundra north of Fountland.

The Nivese prairie sits in the northern region of Firun's domain. This landscape is dominated by tall grass, rolling hills, and sparse birch tree groups. The Svellt Mountains mark the western border, while the forest-covered Salamander Stones set the southern limits along with the Fountlandian Woods. The rivers Kvill and Oblomon run through these lands. The winters here are harsh, long and snowy, usually lasting from the middle of Travia until the beginning of Ingerimm, but do eventually pass into short springs and summers.

The Fountland is home a majority of the Aventurian population. Here are cities that actually deserve that title, with Festum one of the largest in Aventuria. The Fount and Wealbeck Rivers are important waterways that begin in the northern interior and move south, emptying into the Tobrian Sea. A network of highways connects the major cities, and the countryside is safe for miles around each. Those who forsake the roads and take to the open country, however, will most likely pay a steep (and even deadly) price for their arrogance; one can roam the Fountlandian forests for weeks without ever meeting another soul, and though orks may not be plentiful, dangerous animals still abound.

The Svellt Valley is also home to a number of human cities. One of the most prestigious is Lowangen, which is home to an academy for magicians. The Ork Skull Steppe sits behind high mountain ranges, west of the stream. True trees are a rare sight here; shrubs, scrub trees and grass are the only vegetation. The Bodir is the most important river, running down into the Sea of the Seven Winds by the city of Thorwal.

The Orkland borders the Stone Oak Forest in the south, which is the neighbor to the huge forests of Andergast and Nostria. The Wide, Raller and Narrow Rivers all unite east of the Kosh Mountains to form one of the most important waterways in Aventuria, the Great River; they all spring south of the Darkencrest.

The Great River runs towards the south through forests and hills, leaving the peaks of the Kosh Mountains to its right. It takes a sharp turn towards the west once it streams north of the Iron Forest. It then narrows and becomes hazardous to cross, moving fast and even becoming rapids in some places; the cliffs between Elvenhus and Elenvina speed the raging river as it cuts through this section of the country. After this fast passage, the river turns again, slowing and widening, leaving the Windhague Mountains to its left. It then continues until it eventually reaches the coast, opening into the Sea of the Seven Winds, by the Middenrealm province of Albernia.

The northern border of Middenrealm is marked by the strange Lake Lamprey, south of the Salamander Stones, as well as by the Fog Moors. The woods become sparse here and the fields are rich and fertile—this is the home of Gareth,

ETERNAL ICE AND STEAMING JUNGLES

In the far north, Firun's icy breath envelops the land with eternal frost. The regions of the Misty Peaks, the Frozen Peaks, Yeti's Land and the Grimmfrost Wastes are mostly covered with a thick layer of ice. Only a small part of the coast thaws for just

THE PEOPLE OF AVENTURIA

HUMANS

the empire's—and Aventuria's—largest city. Winters in the Middenrealm are also cold and carry plenty of snow, but they are not nearly as strong as the Fountlandian winters. The climate becomes milder the further one moves south; the cultivation of wine in the valley of the Yaquir shows to all how Rahja has overcome Firun's icy grip. The Black Sickle Mountains and Troll Peaks mark the eastern border of Middenrealm; beyond it, one finds the Empires of Black Magic—former allies of Borbarad. These lands used to be green, fertile and covered with woods, but demonic powers overtook nature's bounty, turning flourishing meadows and blooming fields into deserted wasteland.

The island of Maraskan, located east of the continent, also fell prey to those wicked forces—two such doomed empires share the island. The jungles were not exactly safe in earlier times, but at least people feared only their lives. Today, weird and gruesome creatures grasp for one's soul as well.

The gigantic Khôm Desert covers almost the entire width of the continent. Without a local guide, this sea of sand is as deadly a labyrinth as the Fountlandian forests. Paths lead from oasis to oasis, but quite often, the marking poles are broken or covered with sand. Northeast of the Khôm, on the other side of Khoram Mountains, one finds the hills and fertile basins of the Mhanadi region sitting next to the Gorian Desert (compared to which the Khôm looks like a paradise). This wasteland is entirely dead, though even the dead can sometimes walk.

Fairfield sits on the western side of the Khôm, protected from hot desert winds by Goldenrock and Eternan Mountains. As the name suggests, Fairfield is the most fertile and most one of the densely populated regions in Aventuria; major cities are often only a two-day's journey apart.

If snow is a rare occurrence in northern Fairfield, it is utterly unknown in the south. The geographic line from the cities Dröl to Selem marks the onset of steaming jungles, the home of the Forest People. This far to the south, only the Rain Mountains are high enough to carry snow on their peaks all year round. They separate the country into two halves, east and west. The western half, except for Brabak and the mouth of the Mysob, is home only to the forest people. The eastern half is home to the gigantic metropolis of Al'Anfa; many forests have been cut and cleared since that city's rise to power.

The Forest Islands link to the last of the mountain peaks, lining up like pearls on a string. The immense variety of spices that grow here gave rise to the powerful trading house of Stoorrebrandt. Many pirates of the area would have lost their heads to the authorities long ago were it not for one or the other of the hidden bays throughout the chain.

In the upper north, various small tribes and clans of humans known as the Northland Barbarians or Fjarningans live along the coast of Ifirn's Ocean and in the warmer valleys south of the Grimmfrost Wastes. Further south, the Nivese live in forests and prairies along with dark-skinned, black-haired Norbardes. The Thorwalians live in the northwestern coastal area; it seems as if they mingled with the Norbardes to produce the Gjalskländers, who feature red, blond and dark hair along with varying skin colors.

The people of Middenrealm live further south, bordering the regions inhabited by the Nivese and Thorwalians. They make up the largest part of the Aventurian population; scholars are certain they are the descendants of Gyldenland immigrants who mixed with the native population (like the Tulamides). Their skin is light, and their hair color ranges from blond to black. Most people of Middenrealm live in northern cities (such as Riva), the Fountland, and all regions south of Thorwal and Salamander Stones. They are especially concentrated in the region of the Horasrealm and the Middenrealm.

The second largest group of humans is the Tulamides, a group native to Aventuria. They live south of the Yaquir and are the ancestors of the Novadis, who believe in the One-god Rastullah instead of the Twelvegods. The wild Ferkinas live near the Wall of Rashtul. The culture of the Ferkinas is very old; it presumably dates back to the reign of the dragon Pyrdacor, making the Ferkinas the ancestors of the Tulamides.

An equally ancient civilization is that of the Troll Peakers—they still adhere to their original lifestyle living in the Troll Peaks. The Troll Peakers view the giants as their ancestors and the dwarfs as their brothers (they themselves are 'only' about two paces high).

The Forest People inhabit the southern tip of Aventuria and the nearby forest-covered islands; they are also part of the native Aventurian population, although they themselves probably came from Uthuria a long time ago.

ELVES

The Salamander Stones are the lands of the Silvan Elves, while the Lea Elves settled in the area between the Kvill and Oblomon Rivers (and can be found nowadays along many rivers in northern and central Aventuria). The Children of the Wind, or Steppe Elves (a small elven people of horse riders), populate the Green Plains, while the Ice Elves live in the Grimmfrost Wastes and along the shores of Ifirn's Ocean.

DWARFS

The Kosh Mountains, the dwarf city of Xorlosh, the Anvil, and the Iron Forest are traditional homes of the dwarfs (of the Anvil and Ore tribes). At times, they have spread to regions east of Kosh as well, especially around Lake Angbar (the Hill Dwarfs). The Diamond Dwarfs (from the Mountains of Beilunk) had to leave their homes due to the Borbarad invasion and moved to The Gorge.

CONTINENT OF AVENTURIA

OTHER RACES

The shaggy yeti live in the far north on the island of Yeti's Land. Orks are found in the plains of the Orkland, while goblins live mostly in Red Sickle. Orks, goblins and sometimes ogres gather in nomadic tribes—which move across the land, plundering and looting—and are thus found throughout the whole continent.

The gigantic trolls and cyclops have to be the oldest creatures of Aventuria; the latter are especially well known for their skilled use of the forge. Kobolds, fairies, grolms, and other magical people also live across the continent in small numbers. While kobolds and grolms certainly originate from this world, fairies come from Otherworld, a realm that sometimes connects to this world through trans-dimensional portals.

THE NATIONS

The noble republic of Fountland is the northernmost organized state still intact. Middenrealm sits at its southern border; this feudal empire (ruled by an emperor) is currently led by regent Emer ni Bennain for her daughter Rohaja. The petty kingdoms of Andergast and Nostria, both quite hostile towards each other, are located in the northwest.

The long-standing rival of Middenrealm is Fairfield, which sits to the west of Goldenrock and Eternan Mountains, with Vinsalt as its capital city. Since Queen Amene the Third declared herself a Horas, this region is an empire too. Both the Kingdom of Brabak and Al'Anfa have forged alliances with some of the southern city-states.

The Nivese and Forest People do not live in formal nations; instead, they organize into tribes and clans. The Thorwalians also do not recognize kings or princes—they elect “hetfolk” who in turn elect a “Supreme Hetman.” The authority of a hetman or hetwoman, however, in no way compares to that of a monarch.

The Heptarchies or Dark Lands in the north and east of the continent came about after Borbaradian troops invaded and conquered these areas. A dark witch called Glorana rules the land between Paavi and Bjaldorn, the gruesome Dimiona governs Oron (which split from Arania in the past), and Yol-Ghurmak (located east of the Black Sickle, the former city of Ysilia) is controlled by Galotta, a powerful black magician. The undead emperor dragon Rhazzazor rules the area east of the Troll Peaks (by Warunk); Xeraan, another devotee of Black Magic, governs the eastern coast between Beilunk and Vallusa. The former Grand Marshal of the Middenrealm, Helme Haffax, oversees the major parts of Maraskan; only the power of a demon-tainted jungle limits his powers (some say the forest is under the command of a chimera or other monstrosity).

RELIGIONS IN AVENTURIA

Twelvegods: This is the most common belief in Aventuria, prevalent in Fountland, the Svellt cities, Middenrealm, Horasrealm, Arania and the southern cities. Temples devoted to the Twelve, as well as houses devoted to Rastullah, can be found in Tulamidian regions, though the religious teachings merged with the dualistic worldview of ancient Tulamides. The gods are individually worshipped by various groups as noted below:

Boron: Punin, Al'Anfa (where worship of Boron is almost a state religion)

Efferd: Albernia (province of Middenrealm); many coastal cities, especially Havena and Bethana

Firun: Former major deity in Bjaldorn; recently gained popularity throughout northern lands

Hesinde: Fairfield, Kuslik; among scholars and magicians

Ingerimm: The Middenrealm province of Kosh; among all dwarfs (also found under the name of Angrosh)

Peraïne: All rural areas, Arania

Phex: Arania, Tulamide lands; hardly any public worship

Praios: Entire Middenrealm; among nobility

Rahja: Fairfield, especially Belhanka; Arania; the Middenrealm province of Almada

Rondra: Thunderbrook, Meadows, northern Arania

Swafnir: Thorwal, Prem, Olport; seen by some as son of Rondra and Efferd, Thorwalian whale-god

Travia: Darpatia

Tsa: Worshipped in Fairfield (serfs) and recently also in Griffinsford, a Middenrealm province

OTHER GODS:

Borbarad: Master of Demons, Bringer of Magic, celebrated throughout the Heptarch Empires (east of the Troll Peaks and Black Sickle); there also worship of the demonic archenemies of the Twelvegods

Kamaluq: God of the Forest People, often depicted as a black jaguar

Rastullah: Khôm Desert, parts of Mhanadistan (larger cities will also host temples of the Twelvegods); One-god (the Twelve are thought of as his servants)

Rur and Gror: Southern part of Maraskan (Sinoda), neighborhoods of the Maraskan exiles along the east coast; the Twin Gods of the Maraskan worldview

Sky Wolves: Mystical creatures worshipped by the Nivese of the northern plains and Brazen Sword

The Nameless: Worship of this enemy to the Twelvegods is prohibited everywhere; the practice of this cult is prosecuted without mercy. A few lost souls still serve this deity (also called “Rat-child”) in hidden temples and cultural sites throughout Aventuria

AVENTURIAN SOCIETIES

The forms of human co-existence that developed in Aventuria—partly after long years of bloodshed and pain—are as diverse as the habitats in which they were born. It ranges from the freedom-loving Thorwalians and the absolute power of the Fountlandian *bronnjars*, to the proud knights of the Middenrealm and the cruel slaveholders of Al'Anfa. This chapter offers an overview of these different cultures, and the social structures that hold them together.

FEUDALISM

The cultures of Aventuria are dominated by feudal societies—roughly two-thirds of the continent's population lives under this social system. The following terms are used to describe feudal societies.

Feudal Pyramid: A description of the base power structure of a feudal society, wherein a broader base of tenants ensures the power of every liege; the feudal structure is often compared to a pyramid.

In the Middenrealm, this pyramid has the largest number of tiers of all Aventurian feudal societies. Beneath the emperor as monarch are the crown vassals or provincial lords, who were also called imperial generals in the past. Among them are all kings, dukes, princes and margraves that govern a province more or less independently.

Most provinces in the Middenrealm are divided into several counties. Today, the most important role of the counts is that of high judges, with the power to decide over life and death of their subjects. Each county is made up of roughly a dozen baronies. The barons—as vassals of the counts—constitute the base tier of the pyramid: they serve as judges, protectors and rulers of the common folk, collect taxes and tributes and defend law and order—at least in theory.

In the Horasrealm, the tier of the pyramid representing the counts is not as fully developed as in the Middenrealm; there is a lower tier of signores, however, who have extensive rights as leaders of a given village. The equivalent in the Middenrealm would be noblemen and squires, but their authority is that as landholders, with lower vassals owing fealty to them.

Feudal Realm: A nation ruled by a noble class with a king or an emperor at its head, who distributes parts of his lands to other nobles to govern and defend them.

Investiture: The granting of land to a noble that leads to vassalage. The noble granting the fief is called a *liege*, while the noble being invested with it is called a *tenant*. The liege vows to protect his tenant loyally, which basically means that he will support him with all his might if hostile forces attack the tenant. The tenant in turn pledges solemnly to serve his liege loyally in word and deed: the tenant may not conspire against his liege or start a revolt against him, he has to give him the advice most favorable for the entire realm and he has to support his liege personally and with troops in the event of war.

Knighthood: This class of noble warriors forms the base of the entire feudal system. Knights are not only excellently trained fighters on foot as well as on horseback, but they are also required to keep a chivalric attitude and act as protectors of the weak and champions against all evil. Although this ideal is often ignored, it is nevertheless a shining example that can serve as guideline for all aspiring heroes. Even children from the highest strata of nobility up to the emperor are trained as varlets (servants to knights) and eventually knighted.

Monarch: The supreme noble, whose lands were 'granted him by the gods'. Although his actions are restricted by numerous laws, customs and political restraints, in theory he is only responsible to the gods as the original source of all legitimacy in his realm. Currently accepted monarchs are the emperors of the Middenrealm and the Horasrealm, the Shahi of Arania and the kings of Andergast, Nostria, Brabak and Mirham (though the latter rule at the mercy of the powerful houses they are presumed to lead). The powerful regents of Fountland and Thorwal—the Noble Marshal and the Supreme Hetman—are not considered to be monarchs, as they are enthroned by their equals, and may step down from their post to let someone serve who is not of their bloodline or court.

Vassals: All other nobles who have been invested with a fief.

FREEMEN AND BONDSMEN

Beneath the social level of knight lies the common man. Laborers, farmhands, and servants all come from this stratum of society; they typically own no land to speak of, and have little in the way of wealth. They may be owned outright by the nobles on whose land they toil. They are the backbone of a nation's economy, performing all the physical labor required to keep the flow of commerce moving smoothly to the king's coffers.

Bondage: Legally, this term describes the lack of the rights associated with "freedom:" the freedom of movement, freedom of arms, and legal capacity. Just like a minor, bondsmen have a patron—almost always the local baron—who protects them from enemies, hunger and poverty, chooses a suitable bride or bridegroom for them, appears for them in court and assigns a task and shelter to them. Conversely, this also means that they are not allowed to bear arms or own real estate, they have to live where their patron assigns them to and generally have to do whatever he tells them. Similarly, they are subject to his jurisdiction and the patron can impose corporal punishment. Usually, this patronage is lifelong and hereditary. The only ways to escape it are either release granted by the patron or flight.

Apart from the rule of the barons over their bonded peasants, there is also the temporary patronage of freemen (such as artisans and magicians) over their apprentices. That patronage ends when those win back their freedom with their letter of craftsmanship or ordainment, respectively. Only the children of freemen are allowed to join a guild, as the patronage over the minor is conferred from the parents upon the guild—

ADVENTURIAN SOCIETIES

and bonded parents do not have the guardianship over their children to begin with.

In the Middenrealm, four fifths of the rural population and two thirds of the total population are bondsmen.

Freedom: In terms of central Adventurian law, this term means freedom of movement—the right to leave one’s place of residence and freely choose another one—and freedom of arms—the basic right to bear arms and to fight in the imperial army. Furthermore, freemen have the invaluable privilege of legal capacity—the rights to appeal to a court of their own volition, to enter marriage, to join a guild, engage in financial transactions and acquire real estate.

Freemen are also simply called imperial citizens. Approximately every third Middlerealmian is such an imperial citizen, including virtually all people living in towns or cities as well as a small percentage of peasants. The Horasrealm has slightly more freemen than the Middenrealm, while Nostria and Andergast have considerably fewer.

THE BURGHERS

Towns and cities have already replaced castles as major centers of culture, education and science; in particular, the Imperial Capital of Gareth and the trading towns of the Horasrealm are powers that are growing ever more self-confident and can no longer be ignored by the noble classes. In the Middenrealm, the League of Imperial Cities under the leadership of Gareth has been founded as a semi-official representative body speaking for all burghers.

Town rights: Towns and cities have numerous rights villages do not have: the rights to build a city wall, to establish a militia or guard, to hire mercenaries, to make their own municipal laws and to dispense justice in a free court (see *Justice and Law in Adventuria*, p. 129).

Burgomaster: The person who is responsible for representing a city or town in all external affairs is often called the burgomaster. He runs the town council and is also frequently the supreme judge in a given settlement, if he has had legal training. His main tasks are to supervise the city’s officials and to set the political guidelines for his city. Generally, the members of the town council elect him. If the city is not entirely free and belongs to a noble count or provincial lord, the patron of the city appoints a bailiff with the same rights.

Town Council: This council consisting of 12 or 24 (in some cases even more) councilors is the governing body of a town or city. Its members are never elected, but rather chosen from among the ranks of the patricians or the bourgeoisie. Frequently, individual councilors hold important offices such as keeper of the seal, captain of the guard, captain of the fire brigade or keeper of the wine cellar. Membership in the town council is always honorary and quite expensive—and thus only open to the richest burghers of a given town.

Patricians: In virtually all towns or cities, there are a small number of venerable families whose members are either affluent merchants or prosperous landowners. In rich and

powerful cities, they behave just like noble dynasties, feeling superior even towards barons who have just been invested with a fief. The patricians (or bourgeoisie) own the vast majority of a city’s financial resources and often dominate the town council as well.

Guilds: Guilds are part of every aspect of a craftsman’s daily life; birthdays, weddings and funerals as well as the holidays of the guild’s patron saint are always celebrated together with the other members of a guild. Invalid master craftsmen and their relatives gain monetary support from the guild’s coffers. In some places, the guilds have the right to bear a coat of arms and a signet all of their own and are allowed to take measures against competitors who are not organized in a guild (the so-called “bunglers”). The fact that rich merchants build large factories in the Horasrealm where they employ underpaid bunglers has almost ruined the old guilds.

To keep the number of practicing craftsmen and workshops low (and the prices up), the number of apprentices, who remain bonded to their master during the long, arduous years of their apprenticeship, is also kept low. After their trade test and their acquittal, the apprentices become journeymen (and most of them stay in that rank for the rest of their lives). Only rarely, a workshop is vacant so that a merited journeyman can take a second trade test to become a master craftsman. The master craftsmen are the leaders of the guild and elect a speaker from among their midst who has to represent the guild in all external affairs, keep the charter, manage the guild coffers and hold court over the town’s craftsmen.

Free Guilds: This is a catch-all term for the numerous organizations or fraternities of workers and craftsmen without any chartered rights and privileges who still find strength in numbers—from the scholar’s guild and the minstrel’s guild to the porter’s guild, the carter’s guild and even the beggar’s guild.

THE PEASANTRY

Four out of five Middlerealmians live as peasants in rural regions. This number is even higher in Nostria and Andergast, and does not drop considerably even in the comparatively urban Horasrealm, as it takes about four peasants to feed a burgher or noble with the fruit of their labor. Only in Nostria is the percentage of free peasants is clearly above the average of other regions.

Like the other classes, the peasantry is divided into several strata (ranchers, crofters and peons) among which strife is nothing out of the ordinary and the social boundaries nearly impermeable. Every village is headed by a village judge who goes by different names depending on what region you are in: alderman, bailiff, magistrate, mayor or peasantmaster. The village council—the gathering of all ranchers—is also quite important. Free imperial citizens are usually found only among the ranks of the ranchers and the village craftsmen who can afford to pay the taxes a freeman has to pay.

THE DESPOTISM OF THE FOUNTLANDIAN BRONNJARS

Fountland is a state governed by nobles without a monarch. The nation's countless small fiefs have become hereditary inheritances and are today ruled by frequently egomaniacal nobles with grandiloquent titles. They conceive of themselves as small kings and do not think much of cooperation between fiefs.

As the local nobles do not have a liege to whom they would owe loyalty and as they do not have to pay taxes, Fountland is more like a union of smaller states, rather than a true realm. Twice a year, the Noble Congregation convenes at Festum; this institution passes laws, settles disputes and elects a Noble Marshal and six Noble Commanders as official representatives of Fountland every five years. Their actual power depends on the personal power of the respective holders rather than on the office in itself.

Bronnjars: This is the Fountlandian name for landowning nobles. They are infamous for their absolute power and their bad-tempered, oftentimes cruel treatment of their bondsmen.

Flat Nobles: According to the Fountlandian law of succession, every child of a noble inherits his father's title—even if he misses out in all other regards. Thus, there are countless destitute dukes and counts that are snidely called "flat nobles," spending their lives as connivers at the courts of more affluent nobles. In return for their host's hospitality, flat nobles often cede their right to vote during the Noble Congregation to their hosts.

Bondsmen: The bondsmen are not only the wards, but also the personal property of their bronnjar. They can be treated as gently or cruelly as his fancy commands—harassment and abuse are common, as are mindless games that risk the lives of the serfs.

Socage Farms: A typical form of settlement with the homestead or castle of the bronnjar at its center. The bronnjar's menial staff, along with some bondsmen who dwell in poor shanties nearby, till this so-called masterland. The other bondsmen live on farms in the vicinity. They have to pay high taxes and even give away some of their children to the bronnjar as hostages. He puts them to work in his menial staff, ensuring the parent's docility.

THE TULAMIDIAN PLUTOCRACY

In Arania and the city-states along the Mhanadi, the ancient traditions of social rank and personal income are closely intertwined. They are still the social standard to which most of the nation cleaves: the rank into which a person is born is irrelevant. A noble can become a freeman or even a bondsman

through impoverishment, while a successful freeman can be accepted among the ranks of the nobility.

The old Tulamidians did not have a feudal system in the narrower sense, as either large family clans or an absolute monarch with his viziers and mercenaries ruled the land. Even today, a clearly structured noble hierarchy can only be found in Arania, which was part of the Middenrealm for many years.

THE ARANIAN NOBLE HIERARCHY

In Arania, there is a strange mix of Middlerealmian feudalism and Tulamidian clan structure. The monarch is regarded as the mother of the entire people and the other nobles as subordinate leaders of tribes, clans and families: beneath the *Mhaharani Shahi* (the queen) stand several *sultana* (princesses); beneath the sultana is the *emira* (countesses), and beneath the emira the *beyrouni* (baronesses). Beneath a beyrouni stands either a *harani* (a squire) or a freewoman who has been appointed magistrate of a village and is now holding the title of *kadi*. Men can also hold all these ranks, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

Noble rank can either be inherited in the form of gainful real estate or cattle, or it can simply be bought—for example by rich merchants—as long as the aspirant pays for the characteristic costs of holding noble rank (such as the provision of troops). In the latter case, the aspirant finds a place in the noble hierarchy as a *bey* or *bey* (noblewoman or nobleman), somewhere between harani and beyrouni.

Freemen: As a rule, only a person who maintains a household without any outside aid and who is able to pay an annual tax of 20 ducats per adult living in her household (instead of doing military service) is regarded as a freeman. Hence, most freemen are rich peasants, merchants or successful craftsmen.

Servants: Anyone who cannot pay his own taxes has to pledge servitude to his clan leader (in most cases one of the harani or beyrouni). Legally, he has to be considered as something similar to a *half-freeman*, as his patron can assign him tasks requiring half a day's work. Moreover, he is subject to his patron's jurisdiction and is only allowed to wear a dagger. On the other hand, he can still buy property and place contracts. Rich freemen can have half-free servants as well.

Slaves: Slaves usually end up as such because they were unable to repay a debt or were sentenced as criminals to become the bonded slave of their former victim (or creditor). They are subject to their owner's jurisdiction and placed under their owner's guardianship.

A slave is obliged to work for his owner the whole day, but the slave also has a right to shelter, food and clothing as well as a "hire-purchase agreement." If the slave works long enough, he can eventually regain his freedom. Slaves are sold only in exceptional cases and almost always live in their owner's house. There are very few plantations run on slave labor. Most often, owners release loyal slaves at some point in time (upon the owner's death, for example) or exalt them to the state of half-free servants.

THE NOVADIAN CLAN SOCIETY

The Novadis still hold to a clan-based society according to their ancient traditions, especially among those living in or around the Khôm Desert.

Tribe: A group of nomadic cattle-breeders consisting of up to 100 members. The men mostly think of themselves as descendants of a mutual ancestor who founded the clan. Women join a clan through marriage, and their daughters eventually leave the clan after their wedding.

The duty of the individual member to contribute to the survival of the entire clan is sacred, as is the duty of the clan as a whole to help individual members who need aid. The ties to one's own clan are always more important than any other worldly duties and obligations.

Hairan: The leader of a clan is lord over life and death during his clan's treks through the desert. His word is the law. A hairan can only be replaced in an oasis during the rainy season.

Sheik: Each desert tribe consists of 15 to 25 clans that meet only during the rainy season in an oasis that is regarded to be the shared property of the entire tribe. During such meetings, the sheik—often the hairan of the most respected clan—settles disputes between individual clans and organizes the collection of the tribute paid to the Caliph's court.

Sultan: Since ancient times, the desert people have been divided into larger tribal unions that own several oases. Today, there are nine sultans, who are set above the tribes in terms of status and authority. They are not rulers, however, but serve as mediators between the clans, the tribes and the Caliph's court, rather than being the rulers of their people. In times of war, they also draw together the fighters that form the backbone of the Caliph's army.

Caliph: Initially, the Caliph was the supreme warlord of the desert tribes; this office was limited in duration to times of war. Ever since the appearance of Rastullah, however, the Novadis regard themselves as holy warriors that are bound to spread Rastullah's word. Thus, the caliph at Unau became their permanent leader and warlord.

In agricultural areas, the caliphs have appointed *emirs* as administrators—the true desert warriors would find the thought of being actually governed extremely discomforting, even unbearable.

Mawdli: A mawdli (the plural is *mawdliyat*) knows Rastullah's commandments by heart, and are addressed whenever there is a complex legal dispute to settle. They primarily live in the oases and act as advisors to sheiks and sultans.

The hairans of the nomadic clans rarely appeal to the mawdliyat. To them, survival is usually of greater importance than the exact legal position of a given dispute. Moreover, it has to be admitted that the mawdliyat are divided into several schools of thought when it comes to the proper interpretation of Rastullah's laws, and thus interpretations and advice can vary widely.

THE SLAVEHOLDER SOCIETIES OF THE SOUTH

This social structure is prevalent in the southern city-states of Al'Anfa, Mengbilla, Chorhop, Selem, Thalusa and to some extent Fasar.

Grandees: The ruling class of these cities is virtually always comprised of a small, elite group of wealthy persons (slavers, planters, ship-owners, generals, etc.) whose power is only restricted by the limits they set for themselves. Often, the grandees purport themselves as large families (as in Al'Anfa), while in other places they call themselves guilds, circles or orders.

Regardless of what they call themselves, one thing never changes. The rulers are always corrupt and decadent. They divide up their city-state like a giant cake—and now they fight over the crumbs like cruel children.

Fanas: In Al'Anfa, the members of the large, but mostly poor middle and under classes are called fanas; elsewhere they are simply called mobs, plebs or rabble. There is a minority among them that is well off but still not allowed among the ranks of the grandees. Most fanas, however, are miserable hucksters, craftsmen and laborers who work endlessly to fill the coffers of their grandee employers.

Slaves: Beneath the fanas are only the slaves. Most of the slaves in the cities of the Deep South are Forest People from the Rain Mountains, or the descendants of those unfortunate souls who were taken from their homes. Up to one quarter of the inhabitants of a typical city-state are slaves that are used and abused without any consideration. The suffering of his slaves is negligible for a grandee compared to the constipation of one of his most favorite pets. The death of a slave is simply a calculable loss of resources.

THE THORWALIAN TRIBAL STRUCTURE

The Thorwalians have retained a primal social structure. The most important features of that structure are the sense of community among a given group of fighters taking to the sea, as well as the free elections held to fill nearly every rank of authority. The chain of authority is not top to bottom, but essentially exactly the other way round.

Otta: This term (the full expression would be *ottajasko*) applies to the community of sailors and warriors on a given ship (although an otta can comprise several vessels). Most of the time, the members of an otta all come from the same coastal village. An otta is led by a hetman, and its members rule over the nearby villages from their semi-permanent camps or villages (the *ottaskins*).

Clan: A large, regional community of relatives (excluding the *ottajaskos*). Guided by an elder who is well versed in the laws and traditions of his people, warriors, fishermen and peasants co-exist (it would be an exaggeration to say that they actually "live together").

Hetman/Hetwoman: The lifelong title held by the elected leader of an *otta* or a village. A hetman is expected to be strong and charismatic. A larger city usually has a High Hetman, while the Supreme Hetman leads the entire nation.

Jarl: A jarl is the equivalent of a clan elder for a larger region under the rule of an *otta*. Just like the elders, the jarls are there to settle disputes and take care of minor administrative tasks. Jarls are elected by the inhabitants of several villages. Conflicts and squabbling with the hetman of the region's dominant *otta* are part of a jarl's daily life.

OTHER PEOPLE AND RACES

Among all other human people, the clan or the tribe is the most important social unit. Most of the time, there are no other clearly defined hierarchies or structures whatsoever. The **elves** do not have states or rulers, but every family or clan has particularly experienced members whose word is respected when it comes to their respective field of expertise (the healing arts, for example).

Though the **Dwarfs** have Mountain Kings who act as supreme judges as well as contact persons for higher-ranking humans, most dwarfs feel obliged only to their family—even the tribe is never as important as one's own kin. The **orks**, on the other hand, have a rigid caste system, while the **goblins** live in clans that follow the instructions and premonitions of their wise female shamans.

ON GENDER EQUALITY

Since Adventurian women are usually in no way inferior to their male counterparts when it comes to strength and endurance, both genders are generally considered to have equal rights. In the Middenrealm, for example, a female smith is part

of everyday life in a village, just like a female knight who tries to win the heart of a noble's son is nothing out of the ordinary. Only in particularly backwardly regions, such as Andergast, is a mild form of patriarchy still practiced.

A far clearer kind of gender segregation can be found in (rural) Tulamidian regions, where women are highly respected but do not have any economic power; in most Tulamidian cities, however, the circumstances can be called rather "Middlerealmian." The only thing that is different here compared to such cities like Gareth is the strict division of labor. Women can be merchants, scholars, magicians or deonts, but female dockworkers, smiths or fighters are still a rarity.

Arania is a notable exception to that rule: here, women in their role as managers of the family household have gained the upper hand over their men and are also determining the fate of the entire nation.

Patriarchy in its strictest form is found among the Novadis. Norbard clans, on the other hand, are usually led by the *muhme*, an old woman. In Nivesian society, the men are responsible for the hunt, while the women take care of the yurt—it is entirely possible and commonly accepted, however, to switch between these gender roles.

Division of labor among gender-lines is an utterly alien concept to the Thorwalians. In their culture, it is often the woman who takes to the sea while the man waits with the children for his wife to return with her hard-won riches.

Lacking any form of hierarchy anyway, there is absolute gender equality in elven clans. Among the dwarfs, however, women play a special role, as they are far rarer than their male counterparts. Dwarfen women often have the privilege to be able to choose from a large number of suitors. Orkish women have no rights at all, while the culture of the goblins follows matriarchal principles based on female fertility and the intuitive abilities of the female shamans.



AVENTURIAN ARMIES AND NAVIES

On the following pages you will find an overview of the armies and navies of the most important Aventurian land and sea powers.

AVENTURIAN ARMIES

Despite the terms used, armies (in the sense of troops that are constantly ready to enter battle and are paid with money taken from the coffers of a ruler) actually only exist in the Middenrealm, the Horasrealm, Arania, Al'Anfa and to some extent in the Caliphate. Usually, the military power of a country is represented by a war band—the followers of the local ruler consisting of nobles, knights, warriors and home guards. Typically, such a war band is only gathered in times of war, with the exception of a personal guard based close to the palace of a given ruler. At best, the members of such a mob are marked as parts of a military unit with sashes or patches on their jerkins, and most of the time they are not trained to fight as a group in battle.

War bands are deployed to attack neighboring countries as well as to defend against incursions by hostile forces. In case of an attack on a country, badly equipped bands of peasants and the militias of the local towns and cities are forced into service as well.

The story is entirely different for standing armies: here, the troops are recruited from volunteers or “hired” fighters of a given region, while the officers mostly come from either among the nobility or the graduates of the local warrior academies. Since these troops are normally duty-bound to their home country, however, rulers almost always have an elite guard under their personal command (or that of the Marshal of the Empire, the Grand Marshal, the Mautaban or a comparable member of the military).

In the Middenrealm and the Horasrealm, there are also the rulers' own regiments—the “standing” variant of a war band—and the yeomanry regiments that are only conscripted in the event of war (one regiment per county). The morale of the yeomanry regiments is generally low, as their service is forced and they are often badly equipped. Their impact on the battlefield is negligible at best.

Though it is possible to avoid such duties by paying a hefty amount of money, most peasants and craftsmen cannot afford it. Sometimes, however, a count relieves his entire county from military service either by sending a mercenary unit to aid the Emperor or by paying for the unit's upkeep.

MILITARY UNITS

The smallest military unit is the banner. A banner consists of about 50 fighters and is subdivided into batches, lances or routs of 10 fighters—a further subdivision into “hands” or “stars” of five fighters is only common for “special forces.” In the cavalry, a banner is called a squadron; for archers and support units, the term company is used. Depending on the branch of

the service, a complete banner including staff officers, scribes, physicians, deonts and messengers can comprise sixty heads, but most banners are almost constantly understaffed.

Ten banners or squadrons form a regiment; the regiment's classification commonly results from its main weapon, although, for example, a pikemen regiment can include only six banners of pikemen, plus two banners of halberdiers, one banner of swordsmen and a company of archers. Support regiments often include banners that are responsible for the protection of their precious siege engines.

Even though the regiment is the most common unit size on the battlefield, ten regiments are occasionally combined in one legion during war campaigns, or in peacetime to create a more manageable organization structure.

Two older designations for military units that are no longer in common use still deserve to be mentioned here: the battalion, for 100 fighters (mostly used for pikemen), and the troop, for 25 horsemen in the cavalry (the 25 horses are regarded as part of the unit as well).

Also, remember that an army on the move always entails camp followers such as support units, laundresses, cooks, grooms, and families of the officers, whose numbers rival that of the members of the fighting units at all times.



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BRANCHES OF THE MILITARY

The primary military distinction between army units is that of infantry and cavalry.

Light infantry are those troops that have been trained in close quarters fighting and are equipped with sword and shield, axe and shield, spear and shield or bastard sword. These units enjoy an excellent reputation, but they often suffer the heaviest losses during a battle as they trade in heavy armor for increased mobility.

The extensive training of heavy infantry focuses on the more tactical combat of distinct units fighting against each other. They have mastered various strategies and advances that can only show full effect in the square or equivalent formations. The typical members of this branch are equipped with long pikes or halberds (glaives, partisans, guisarmes and similar pole-arms) as well as a short sidearm. Moreover, their armor is heavier than that of the light infantry (the pikemen wear at least cuirass and helmet, the halberdiers partial or full suits of armor). These contingents are provided frequently by towns and cities. Specially equipped marines and amphibian units are also considered to be heavy infantry; although they are mostly lightly armed, they often have ranged fire support, snipers and even grenadiers.

Archers equipped with longbows, war bows or crossbows (and arbalette or balestra in the Horasrealm) are regarded as part of the infantry as well. Despite their low reputation in armies heeding to the rules of Rondra, their massive firepower can be decisive in a battle.

Finally, all “support units” are seen as infantry, too—from the sappers who build entrenchments and undermine enemy fortresses and the bombardiers with their catapults (deployed in the Horasrealm not only for sieges, but also in open battle) to the batterers with their rams and siege towers and the pioneers who build bridges.

Only those horsemen that are truly lightly armed, with short lances, sabers or ravenbeaks and a shield for protection, are classified as light cavalry. In accordance with their similarly light armor, they are sometimes called cuirassiers; their task is to act as skirmishers and scouts, and they enjoy the reputation of fearless daredevils.

The task of heavy cavalry (also called chargers, battle riders or dragoons, depending on their home region), on the other hand, is to surround or disrupt the enemy’s infantry. To this end, they are equipped with long lances and sabers, bastard swords or maces as sidearms; mostly, they wear partial or full suits of armor. As the fighters of such units have to bring their own steed and armor in most armies, they consist primarily of the nobles of a given country.

Other forms of cavalry include mounted archers (to be found most frequently among the armies of the Tulamidian lands, but also in the Horasrealm as arbalettieri), scouts and messengers. The latter are often assigned to a headquarters regiment rather than being organized in units of their own.

RANKS

In the Middenrealmian army the common ranks are recruit, private, corporal (in command of a hand or a siege engine, but often simply the deputy of a sergeant), sergeant

(in command of a lance, batch or rout), ensign/standard-bearer (in command of the “first batch,” deputy of a captain or simply the person carrying the unit’s standard; usually, the of graduates of warrior academies enter service in this rank), lieutenant (deputy of a captain—most often in the cavalry—or in command of half a company of sappers or bombardiers), captain (in command of a banner or squadron), colonel (in command of a regiment) and marshal; in the Horasrealm the corresponding ranks are called recruit, soldier, corporal, sergeant, ensignio, lieutenant, capitan, colonello and marshal; in the new Aranian army, the rank of tshaush is equivalent to that of corporal, bashar to sergeant, beybashar to standard-bearer, agha to captain and miralay to colonel.

MERCENARIES

Apart from the regular armies that essentially exist only in the Middenrealm, the Horasrealm and Arania and the diverse noble guards, mercenaries form the backbone of most countries’ military power. Mercenaries are professional fighters from all branches that are hired by nobles or rich merchants to go to war or to protect caravans.

The commanding officers of mercenary units are often deonts of Kor, and the code of honor most mercenaries adhere to—the Code of Khunchom—goes back to one of them. This “model contract” all would-be employers should read carefully includes not only details in regard to payment (generally three silver thalers per day for a private, five to eight silver thalers per day for an officer and often even more for specialists), shares to booty and death grants, but also passages dealing with start and termination of the work contract as well as the proper behavior of an employer, among other things.

The most important and most famous Aventurian mercenary units are the Kuslikan, Hylailan and Premian Sea Mercenaries (roughly a regiment in strength each), the Tulamidian Riders from Fasar (two regiments), the Uhdenberg Legion (roughly a regiment), the Lions of Thalusa (six companies) and the Al’Anfan Ducat Guard (five companies, probably the best mercenary unit on the entire continent). The main centers of mercenary activity are the Horasrealm, Mhanadistan and Al’Anfa, where individual mercenaries can be hired as bodyguards, strong-arms or thugs.

AVENTURIAN HOSTS

What follows is a brief examination of the armies maintained by the various Aventurian realms.

AL’ANFA

Nominally, the Al’Anfan army is divided into three “Black Legions” and the fighters aboard the “Black Armada.” In the entire history of the city, these units were never at full strength—essentially, the city troops consist of 17 banners of permanently hired mercenaries (including the Ducat Guard and the Black Alliance of Kor), 10 banners of city and temple guards, 5 banners of order warriors and about 500 freebooters. Ever since Al’Anfa lost the war against the Caliphate, these troops only secure the city’s holding, even though some of the units—such as the

AVENTURIAN ARMIES AND NAVIES

Basalt Fist—are still a match to a full regiment of opponents of any kind.

The southern city-states each have small war bands whose members are loyal to the respective ruler at their command. In addition to that, the cities have their own militias and hire mercenary units (provided their coffers are well-filled). A standing army worthy of the name does not exist in this region; only Trahelia has a handful of regular units.

ARANIA

Of the nine regiments of the Mhaharanyate, six are mounted and one is even equipped with armored chariots. Apart from these special features, the Aranian army is structured along the lines of the Middenrealmian troops. The ranks are given Tulamidian names, and many officers are female (in accordance with Arania's ancient traditions).

THE CALIPHATE

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of Novadi troops are cavalry, traditionally organized in tribal units and renowned for their untamable fierceness. This fiery passion proved to be the downfall for the Caliph's cavalry, however, in the war against the disciplined troops of Al'Anfa.

Caliph Malkillah III saw the problem and reorganized his army. He even introduced the concept of permanent units of 50 fighters (as is common across Aventuria), divided into two groups: spahija (cavalry) and askarija (infantry). The cavalry are mostly fighters armed with lances or mounted archers, while the infantry is subdivided into archers and fighters trained for close combat. This army's elite forces are the three batalyuni of murawidun ("the Caliph's wards"), fighters that received intensive training from childhood on and are unwaveringly loyal to their ruler.

After a failed attempt to become the primary power in war-torn Rashdul, the (regular) Novadi army has been reduced to 1,500 horsemen, 1,000 foot-soldiers and 300 murawidun. Due to this, Malkillah has to rely on the support of the tribal sultans once again.

THE DARK LANDS

Since all of the Heptarchies are founded on military power, it comes as no surprise that they all have large contingents of troops. The exception is Glorania, which has only a smattering of mercenary units at its command). Xeraan's demonoid Legion of Yaq-Monnith and Rhazzazzor's undead Infinite Army-Worm also deserve special mention.

Galotta, Haffax and Dimiona rely on line troops of varying quality and loyalty. All troops of the Heptarchs count on magic in all its (dark) forms, whether they have entire companies of undead among their ranks, receive air support by flying demons or build mind-boggling siege engines. Frequently, the fighters (or at least the officers among them) have entered pacts with one of the arch demons.

DWARFS AND ELVES

Neither dwarfs nor elves know any distinct form of military structure. Although most members are capable of bearing arms, they rarely interfere in human affairs and essentially do not wage war as a race at any time. On those rarest of occasions when dwarfs or elves came to the humans' aid in battle (during the Ork Storm and in the Trollgap Battle), virtually all of the fighters were volunteers, with the dwarfs loosely organized along clan-lines and branches and the elves acting wholly on an individual basis.

FOUNTLAND

Contrary to the Middenrealm or the Horasrealm, there are no regiments of the guards or other standing troops in Fountland. Instead, the nobles of the larger regions of Sevirya, Fount Stronghold and March are obliged to deploy contingents in the event of war that add up to an overall strength of about 7 regiments; in addition, there are 2 regiments of naval troops and the militias of the free towns and cities.

The noble contingents are often as badly equipped as they are miserably trained; the vast majority of troops consists of yeomen. As Fountland has never been involved in any war with another country, though, it is difficult to comment with any accuracy about the fighting power of its soldiers.

A noteworthy peculiarity of Fountland is the Winged Ones—an order of Seviryan nobles with about 100 members, easily recognizable due to the eagle, swan or dragon wings on the backs of their suits of armor. Of the order's members, three are equipped with artifacts of impressive magical powers, all in the form of those highly vaunted wings. It is said that the ground starts to shake when the Winged Ones gather under the command of their "arbiters" (those three members equipped with the magic artifacts).

THE HORASREALM

Largely unscathed by the wars of the recent past, the Horasrealm has a powerful army at its command, consisting of 19 regiments of the guards (four of them mounted), 56 banners of mercenaries (seven of them mounted) and 22 banners of warriors belonging to an order (all of them at least partially mounted). Most of these units are considerably undermanned, however; nepotism, class conceit and corruption further reduce the army's actual effectiveness dramatically.

Still, some regiments of the Horas Legion (the Imperial Royal Guard) are definitely among the best units in entire Aventuria when it comes to training and equipment—the only thing they lack is experience. The army of the Horasrealm is not as heavily armed as the Middenrealmian army, but the troops are well-trained in pike formations, massive employ of crossbow fire and assaults on horseback, as well as artillery and magic support.

THE MIDDENREALM

Despite the Ork Storm, the Answin Crisis and the Borbaradian Invasion (and the loss of territory the invasion entailed), the 25 regiments of guards (seven of them mounted) and the nine regiments of provincial lords (six of them

mounted, consisting of nobles and knights) still represent the largest Aventurian army. Only a few of these regiments are at full strength, however, and those that are had their ranks filled hastily with inexperienced recruits.

The main forces of the guards are heavy infantry equipped with halberds and pikes, supported by heavy cavalry. In case of emergency, every county can enlist a yeomanry regiment, but the morale and equipment of these troops are far below the usual military standards. Mercenary units are uncommon in the Middenrealm, though their numbers are on the rise. Due to the losses taken in recent years, tactics based on formations have become less prominent, whereas the capabilities of the individual fighter have been emphasized again (the Middenrealm has the largest number of warrior academies of all Aventurian nations).

POSTRIA AND ANDERGAST

In both of these warring kingdoms, traditional war bands and noble entourages can be found. They are made up of noble commanders, a small number of knights accompanied by a handful of squires and finally a large mob equipped with improvised weapons, consisting of bondsmen the nobles forced into military service.

Both countries are able to muster about 500 professional fighters (and to force roughly 2,000 peasants into military service), but has never put such an ability to the test. It has to be mentioned that both nations have a magic academy and never hesitate to use magic in battles (up to now to no lasting effect).

Efferdan, the new King of Andergast, has announced his intent to reshape his land, but it remains to be seen if—or how—this will affect the army.

ORKS

In the end, the orks suffered heavy losses during the Ork Storm (17–20 Haal), but were nevertheless able to hold the prize they had taken in the early stages of their war campaign, the Sveltian City League. Since the blackpelts reproduce far more quickly than the other races, it must be assumed that there will be several ten thousands of orks ready to fight again within a few years. Moreover, they will be able to draw upon the experience and knowledge of the surviving veterans—and the legendary “Black Marshal,” Sadrak Whassoi, will lead them again.

Orks mostly fight in loose, clan-oriented mobs with a wild mix of various weapons. They also possess catapults, armored chariots and a considerable number of mounted archers.

THE THORWALIANS

Although individuals from the far north are counted among the most dangerous fighters in Aventuria, they have never developed a military organization that exceeds the boundaries of their ship or village communities. The typical Thorwalian weapons are axe and shield, but javelins and all sorts of edged weapons are also quite common. Bearing arms is a way of life in Thorwal, and training in the use of those arms is a considerable portion of every youth’s education; every Thorwalian above the age of 14 has to be considered “armed and dangerous.”

THE TULAMIDIAN CITY-STATES

Khunchom, Rashdul, Thalusa and Fasar each have the personal guard of their respective provincial lord, militias and mercenary contingents (such as the famous Tulamidian Riders) at their command. In the cities, the level of training enjoyed and the quality of equipment used by the militias is very high. The personal guards (that also serve representative functions) can be seen as capable fighting forces as well—hence, it comes as no surprise that the cities have been able to defend their independence so far.

AVENTURIAN NAVIES

Every Aventurian nation with a coastline tries to demonstrate its power and independence through supporting a heavily armed navy. While every coastal nation can use a strong defense against pirates and other sea-going raiders, navies are expensive; only the richest nations can support a true navy of any size. Many realms have been ruined when they attempted to form a navy of their own, as the building and maintenance costs of a fleet far exceed the financial resources necessary to run an army.

In most cases, heavy sailing vessels (carraques, shivones, hulks, zedrakks) or rowing vessels (galleasses, triremes) form the backbone of a fleet, all armed with various types of ballistas and catapults. Lighter units, such as rigged caravels, cogs, thalukks and lorchas, rowed biremes and dromones fulfill reconnaissance tasks.

Organized fleets are often subdivided into flotillas of a half dozen vessels. Most fleets are small, prohibiting much advancement in the way of naval tactics and complicated maneuvers. Naval warfare is usually two ships dueling, exchanging one or two salvos over a longer distance before they quickly enter into boarding range. Because of this, most warships carry large contingents of naval mercenaries.

Apart from the war-fleets of the larger and smaller realms mentioned in the following paragraphs, the seas are sailed by a large variety of sailors who ignore the doctrine of Efferd and prey upon any who cross their paths. These pirates can be encountered primarily in the southern Sea of Pearls and the Charybbean Sea. Frequently, their ships outnumber the fleets whose crews are entrusted with ensuring law and order on the high seas.

AL'ANFA AND ITS ALLIES

The “Black Alliance,” forged by the cities of Al’Anfa, Mengbilla and Mirham, has more than 200 vessels at its command. Most of them are galleasses, triremes and biremes propelled by slave labor and manned with ruthless and often excellently trained sea mercenaries—and sometimes even by the dreaded Al’Anfan ecclesiastical troops.

All the Al’Anfan military might cannot hide the fact, however, that the era of rowing vessels is coming to an end—even in the southern Sea of Pearls and the Charybbean Sea. As the Black Alliance has only a few serious enemies, though, it controls the seaways between the Forest Islands, in the Straits of Sylla and in the Golden Bay almost undisputedly—at least, for now.

AVENTURIAN ARMIES AND NAVIES

ARANIA

Situated on the coast of the Sea of Blood and locked in almost constant battle with the Heptarchs and the monstrosities spawned by the sea, Mhaharani Eleonora has twelve squadrons at her disposal, each led by a galleass of the Perricum class (originally Middenrealmian vessels that came into the Mhaharani's possession when Arania gained its independence), consisting of biremes and triremes as well as several fast thalukks as convoying ships. This fleet is at the command of Admiral Pelioe of Rathmos.

THE CALIPHATE

Without a harbor of its own (as Khannemouth is nominally Fountlandian territory), the Caliphate has a hard time maintaining a fleet. The Caliph's activities remain restricted to the raids of some Rastullah-fearing pirates, with El Harkir certainly being the most famous of the lot.

THE DARK LANDS

On the Sea of Pearls and the Tobrian Sea, the fleets of three Heptarchs threaten the seafaring of their neighboring nations. Moghuli Dimiona of Oron has about 20 biremes, triremes and thalukks at her disposal, many of which are occupied with the supply of the Oronian occupation army on the Yalaiad peninsula. Lord-Principal Helme Haffax of Maraskan commands more than 50 vessels of various sizes and classes—in many cases, former parts of the Middenrealmian Pearl Seas Fleet—that are deployed as coast guard and freebooters.

Portifex Maximus Xeraan owns the most important “active asset,” although he nominally does not entertain a war fleet at all. He has roughly 3,000 pirates with about three dozen ships at his command, based at Mendena, on Rulat and along the former east coast of Beilunk. These fleets are often allied with numerous sea monsters and demons through a pact with Charyptoroth (Xeraan himself wears the shard of Charyptoroth). These creatures range from sea serpents and algae-beings to Giant Kraken and the dreaded Ma'hay'tamim (those infamous demon arks that serve as spawning-pools and breeding-grounds for further abominations). These “ship demons” are often manned with krakonians, renegade risso, bloated zombies and bloodthirsty human mercenaries.

FOUNTFLAND

Though the roughly 80 armed ships of Fountland are considered to be a naval fleet with admiral ranks of its own, they are actually nothing more than armed merchant vessels and their convoying ships. This fact does not diminish the quality of the vessels or their crews, however; after all, the shivone is originally a Fountlandian design, and the training enjoyed by the crews rivals that of the Horasian sailors.

The Fountlandian fleet is mainly financed by the trading cities of Festum and Neersand (and through loans the Noble Marshal Office takes—mostly from the merchant prince Stoorrebrandt). The Festumian merchants introduced convoying quite early during their rise to wealth, and now they are profiting considerably from it when their ships have to sail across the Sea of Blood.

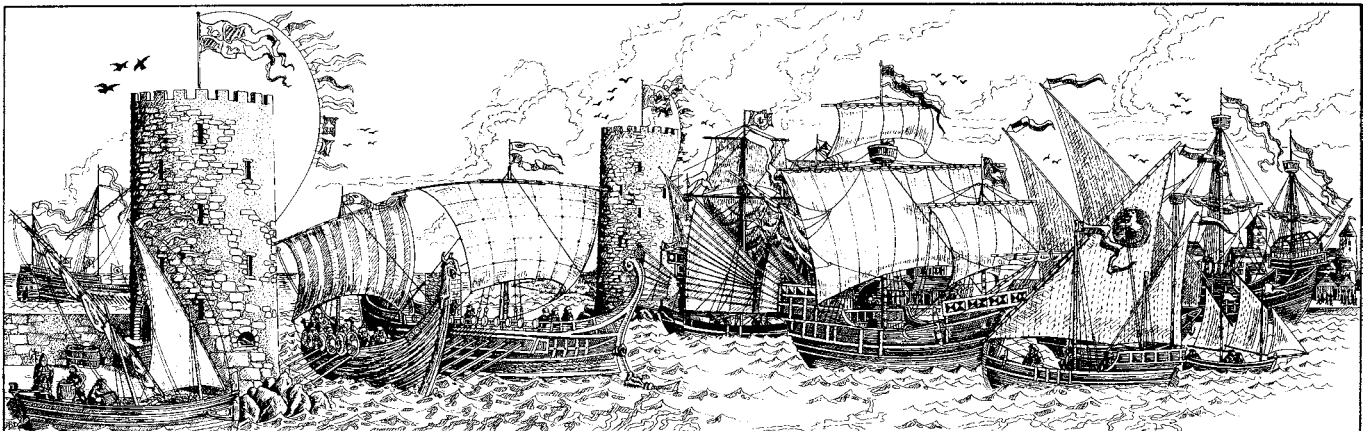
THE HORASREALM

With more than 150 vessels, the fleet of the Horasrealm (which has included the fleet of the Sea King of Cyclopea for more than ten years now) may not be the largest, but certainly is the most powerful Aventurian fleet. Early on, naval officers attached great importance to standardized equipment for individual vessels, as well as to broadside battles and fleet tactics. The designs of the modern shivones of the King Therengar class or the galleasses of the Sea King Mermydion class reflect these clever decisions.

The Horasian fleet is divided into three sub-fleets (Home Fleet, Cyclopean Fleet and Expedition Fleet) and subdivided further into flotillas that have been distributed to the realm's harbors (though it has to be admitted that the staff officers of the Expedition Fleet have never come any closer to their actual area of deployment in the South Sea than Brabak). Though the service in the Horas Fleet is hard, dirty and dangerous work, young Horasians constantly join the navy, proud to be part of the fleet that represents the independence and revived glory of the Old Realm's successor.

THE MIDDENREALM

The greatest military power on firm soil naturally makes its presence known on the Aventurian seas as well with two fleets: the Western Fleet (that is based at Havena and Harben) and the Pearl Seas Fleet (which operates solely out of Perricum).



The Western Fleet comprises slightly more than three dozen vessels, many of which are galleys of various sizes (including a ship of the Perricum class) that are not fit to sail the high seas and are exclusively deployed to secure the delta of the Great River and the mouth of the River Tommel. Fast caravels patrol the coast between Nostria and Grangor to capture the few pirates who raid in the area. The Western Fleet of the Middenrealm is at the command of Admiral Annlir Ancirir Galahan, the provincial lord Margrave of Windhague.

After the severe battles during the Borbaradian Invasion, the definite independence of Arania, numerous acts of sabotage and countless desertions, the Pearl Seas Fleet of the Middenrealm is merely a shadow of its former glory. It consists of two dozen vessels of different sizes and classes—virtually all in very bad shape and manned by sailors who have lost their spirit. The fleet is at the direct command of Imperial Admiral of the Fleet Rudon of Mendena (who resides in Gareth, however).

Worth mentioning is also the “Southern Fleet” of the Garetian Empire that is supposed to represent the power of the Crown in the South Sea and the colonies. In truth, it is more like a delinquent squadron of the Middenrealmian navy. Its four vessels (led by the modern shivone Star of Beilunk, while the other three units are swimming coffins that claim to be hulks and triremes) are based at Hôt-Alem and at the command of Vice-Admiral Deirdre ni Sanin who was “promoted” to commander of the flotilla due to alleged involvements in the mutiny instigated by her father.

POSTRIA

The original Nostrian fleet was destroyed by the Thorwalians nearly a decade ago, threatening an end to the Nostrian presence on the seas. The size and wealth of the nation has proved an impediment to rebuilding the navy, however, as has the ongoing hostilities with Andergast, which necessarily draw the lion’s share of Nostrian military spending. Hence, apart from some rafts manned by bombardiers and fishing-boats equipped with awe-inspiring “war-paint” on Lake Thurán, Nostria owns exactly a single war-ship—and is still vastly superior to Andergast in a sea-battle.

THE SOUTHERN CITY-STATES

Whether you look at Brabak, Sylla, Chorhop or the Kemi realm, only the smallest fleets sail under the flags of these states and cities. They are all very generous, however, when it comes to the distribution of letters of marque—nine out of ten vessels of the Syllan fleet are pirate-ships, and Thorwalian ottas take to the seas for Brabak. Virtually all of them have an enemy in common (and only the fact that they have it gives them at least a small chance of survival): Al’Anfa.

THORWAL

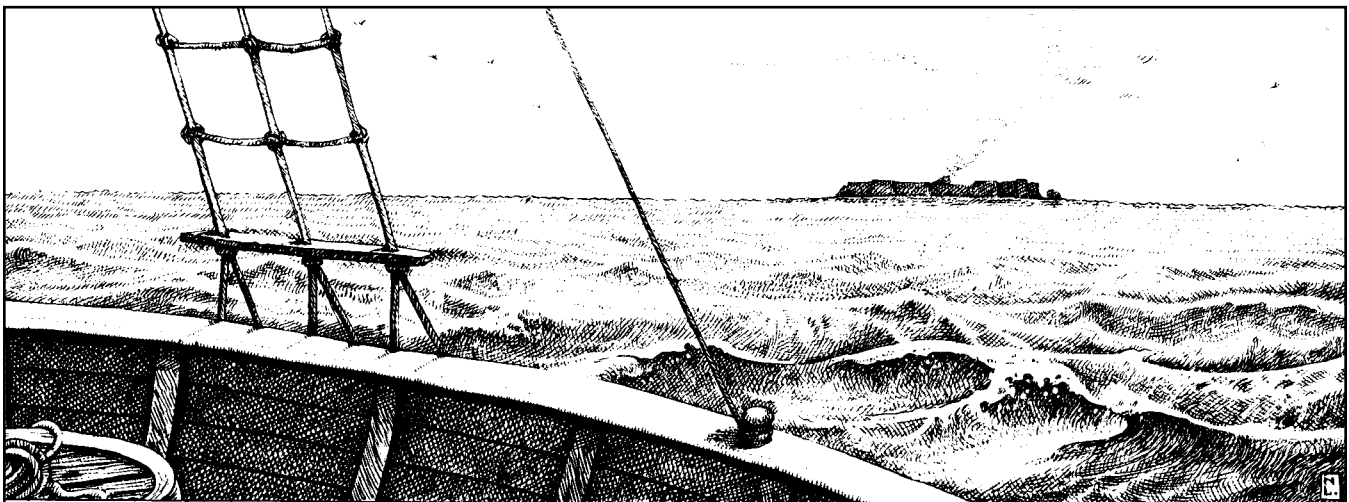
Though the Thorwalians are famous as the greatest nation of seafarers, they do not have a navy in the classic sense. What they have, however, are roughly 300 ottas and the same number of gnarls, which they use as trade vessels as well as landing-crafts when they want to pillage a settlement. Since their fast and handy ships are neither suitable for battles fought with ordnance nor for boarding another vessel, the people from the far north have to rely on their superior experience as sailors as soon as they see war-ships of other nations on the horizon.

This problem has been approached in recent years with an ambitious program initiated by the Supreme Hetman Tronde, and it seems as if the Thorwalians have come up with a new design that is suitable for modern naval war without interfering with the need for a close-knit community aboard their ships—the only thing the design still lacks is some heavy ordnance.

THE TULAMIDIAN COASTAL CITIES

With the “Guardians of the Mhanadi,” about three dozen vessels of all sizes and classes are based at Khunchom, from whence they strike against the pirates of the Dark Lands. At least one novice of the Church of Efferd is assigned duty on each of these vessels at all times. Moreover, the crews do not consist entirely of Tulamidians, but also include volunteers and sea mercenaries from all four corners of Aventuria.

The Thalussian fleet comprises a dozen zerdrakks and thalukks. Up to now, the fleet has kept out of the fighting taking place in the Sea of Pearls, but this restraint might well be due to the recent change of power structures in the city.



THE NATIONS OF AVENTURIA

HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

This section of the *World of Aventuria* describes each of the continent's nations in detail. For the most part, these descriptions should be self-explanatory. These descriptions do use a number of terms that may not be familiar to most readers, however. Most of those terms are related to the governments or militaries of these nations and are defined in the two previous chapters, **Aventurian Societies**, starting on p. 23, and **Aventurian Armies and Navies**, starting on p. 28; if you have skipped those chapters in order to get to the "meat of the book," you should refer back to them when you come across unfamiliar terms. Of course, some of the words and phrases you come across will be in the "original" Aventurian language and will have no direct English translation.

Each of the nation entries begins with a brief statistical snapshot. Additionally, each entry provides a brief overview of one or more cities; these overviews include a similar snapshot of each city. Not all of these nation and city "snapshots" contain the same information; only those entries that apply to that specific nation or city are included.

Some specific individuals or families may be listed; those names are provided to assist Highlords in crafting adventures, though specific character information on those individuals is not listed so as to give Highlords the greatest amount of flexibility. Likewise, the names of interesting and unique places is given; while there is not enough space in this book to specifically describe each, future *The Dark Eye*

products may provide more detailed information. Finally, when dates are given, they are listed using the following convention: day-month(-year), such as 13 Praios or 27 Efferd, 470 b.H.

A few specific entries require some additional description:

The **Important Traffic Routes** entry lists major roadways using the convention of "Vallusa-Festum-Neersand" which indicates the road begins in the city of Vallusa, continues on to Festum and ends in Neersand.

Special Features literally lists features of the various cities that are strange or not-usual. Universities and magic academies and the like are listed under this heading. Magic academies list additional information in parentheses, specifically the "type" of magic taught. Though this information is designed to be used with other game products not yet published in English, we have chosen to leave it in to give Highlords more options in designing their adventures and to better make this product compatible with future *The Dark Eye* products.

Important Pubs and Taverns are provided for most city entries, listing not only drinking and eating establishments but also hotels and hostels. The great majority of these list some statistics in parentheses, such as (Q5/P5/B12). These indicate, in order, the Quality and the relative Price of the establishment (on a scale of 1 to 10, with average being 5) and then the number of beds available in the establishment. Highlords should use their own judgment in applying the Quality and Price modifiers.

A WORLD FROZEN IN ICE—THE FAR NORTH OF AVENTURIA

"And when your strength is fading, then lie down and let Firun's breath blow you into the Halls of Boron. This fight is not yours to win."

—A conversation between an old Leskaran man and his daughter

THE FAR NORTH

Geographical Borders: Isles of the Bear, Ice Cliffs, Frozen Peaks, Grimmfrost Wastes, Misty Peaks, Yeti's Land

Terrain: Mountains or elevated plateaus perpetually covered with ice, sparse coastal zones that thaw in the summer

Mountains: Ice Cliffs, Frozen Peaks, Misty Peaks

Rivers and Waterways: Frisund, Nuran Leskari and Nuran Rudoc Rivers

Estimated Population: 2,500 humans, 2,000 Ice Elves, 500 goblins, 500 yetis, sometimes orcs of the Whitefur tribe

Important Cities and Villages: Frisov

Important Traffic Routes: Firun's Straits, a sea passage

between Yeti's Land and the continent

Dominant Religion: No information available

Social Structure: No information available

Influential Families/Clans: The Norbard Clan of Irgjeloff (Frisov)

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Firunhild, a hermit who is said to live amidst the eternal ice; she is a devotee of the Winter God and has not eaten for 23 years.

Strange Locales: The Valley of the Walking Thunder in Yeti's Land, the Crystal Caverns in the Misty Peaks Mountains, the Canyon of Egil's End and many others, some of which may be illusions of half-crazed, half-frozen explorers.

FIRUN'S EMPIRE

The grim deity of Firun is said to rule Aventuria's far north: he covers the land with a thick layer of ice and grants only a slow spring, leaving summer and fall to share only a few weeks each year in some small coastal and inland areas. The most famous settlement of any decent size in the region is Frisov, a small whale-hunter's town of about 250 people. Frisov sits by the mouth of the Frisund River, which acts as a warm wedge between the Misty Peaks and the Ice Cliffs. In this area, trade in fish-oil, whalebones, and fur are common, even though the latter was formerly sold only in Paavi. The locally gathered amber is also a valuable trade item in the bay area.

Although the thick blanket of ice that covers the land seems to have existed forever, this could not be possible. Fabulous treasures, frozen wonders, and even entire cities are said to rest under the ice, though very few explorers ever come back with news of such discoveries. Explorers brave (or foolhardy) enough to weather the harsh cold often find the bodies of previous fortune hunters, frozen and preserved in ice so that it is nearly impossible to tell if the corpse is a day, a week or many years old. The Far North is no place for the living—only the dead wander through the clear, cold nights, lost under the brilliant stars above.

Once in a great while, however, adventurers find a living devotee of Firun. Such hermits have widely varying reactions to meeting strangers, often taking on their god's cold, harsh, and unpredictable temperament as they pass the years alone. A few servants of the wrathful god go on a pilgrimage to cross the icy mountains without food; if the fasting hero ever gets to the other side, he is sure to be among the strongest and bravest of his tribe. Of course, any interference would be looked on most unkindly, should any foreign explorers be so foolhardy as to interfere.

Despite the icy grip with which Firun holds most of the continent, he does not control the entire land (which could explain his merciless character). The smoke of volcanoes veils the Misty Peaks, and Yeti's Land is said to be home to the Valley of the Walking Thunder, which contains many plants and animals that seem to be native to Maraskan or southern Aventuria than to the frozen wastes.

PEOPLE OF THE FAR NORTH

There is a surprising amount of ethnic diversity in the Far North, despite the low population. The icy region is also home to white-furred yetis, which dig snow caves during the wintertime. The

Ice Elves live in the area of Grimmfrost Wastes (more about this species on p. 52), and there is rumor about a tenacious group of "Ice Barbarians" who live here as well.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The biting cold and eternal solitude of Firun's land take a heavy toll on soul and body—expeditions to this area require careful preparation and will demand great sacrifices. In addition, everything one could expect to find in the Far North is so rare and sparse that quests will fail as often as they will succeed. Nevertheless, there is a certain kind of adventurer for whom any amount of risk is worth the rare and priceless treasure at the end of the journey. Those poor souls are the ones who come here, to the end of the earth in search of treasure beyond their wildest dreams.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

FRISOV

One of the largest in the Far North, this town is a whale-hunters' village by the mouth of the Frisund. It has recently gained population due to immigrants from Paavi.

Population: 250

Government: Norbard Irgjeloff dedicated himself to the position of reeve after his predecessor fell victim to an accident.

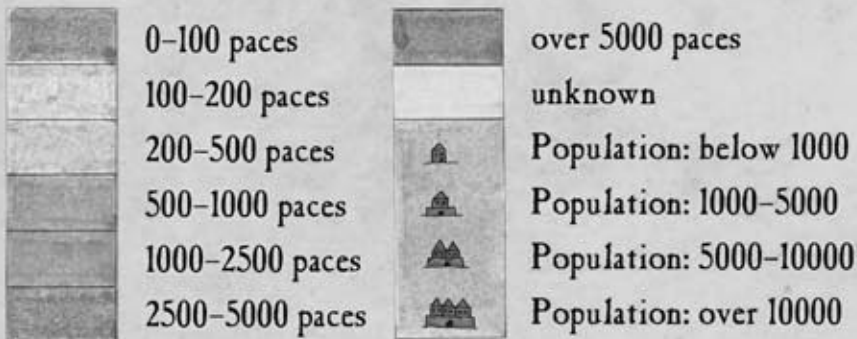
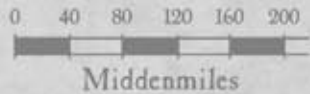
Garrison: Five bouncers of Irgjeloff

Temples: Shrine of Efferd

Major Pubs and Taverns: Wind's Break (Q3/P3/B6)

Mood in the City: Many friends are the best life insurance.





DIRAD
ADRAK
KARKIS
INIRK
SORKTEN
SIGORAST
GANDAR
NARKEN
SERREKA
ASO
BERIK
METAK
DIBREK
SKERDU
ORKIN
LASSIR
GEVRI
MANREK

Freydir's Bank

Swafnir's Rest

Ifirn's Ocean

Gulf of R

Brinask Marshes
Firn's Wall
Ogre Fangs
ORKLAND
Blood Barrier
Rorwhe
Deepenborg
Low an
Thasch
BLADEGRASS STEPPES
Darker
Griffins
BROADLEA
Lake Thas
Juborn
Kendrar
Sulta
Hjallor Mountains
Grey Mountains
Great O'lockhai
Northern Stone Oak Forest
Stone Oak Forest
Hjalland
Prem
Thorwal
Runin
Gulf of Prem



ENDLESS PLAINS AND SKY WOLVES— THE LAND OF THE NIVese

"Whoever lays eyes upon the endless plains, the sea of grass and flowers and the clear nights filled with countless stars will comprehend the wonderful might of godly hands."

— From *Wolf Land*, by Kara Ben Yngerrimm

THE LAND OF THE NIVese

Geographical Borders: Kvill River in the west; Upper Frisund and Fount Rivers, Lakes Alavi and Blue in the east; Green Plains, Salamander Stones in the south; the Gulf of Riva in the north

Terrain: Steppe, flat with a few slight hills

Mountains: N/A

Rivers and Waterways: Kvill, Oblomon, Nuran Leskari, Ceamon, Nuran Trasic, Nuran Riva, Lemon and Frisund Rivers

Estimated Population: 60,000 (75% Nivese, 20% Norbardes, 5% elves and Middenrealmians)

Important Cities and Villages: Farlorn, Gerasim, Oblarasim, Leskari

Important Traffic Routes: The marked routes of: Riva–Gerasim/Oblarasim, Tavalink (by the Gulf of Riva)–Oblarasim–Eestiva–Paavi, and the coastal route Riva–Tavaljuk–Ceamon Mouth (by the mouth of the Caemon River); almost all rivers serve as trade routes (at least for the kayaks of the Nivese).

Dominant Religions: Faith of the Sky Wolves among the Nivese, Twelvegods belief among the rest of the population

Social Structure: Nivese tribes and Norbarde clans, independent peasants and merchants

Influential Families: Norbarde clans: Mogoljeff; Nivese tribes: Lieska-Leddu, Takku, Rika-Lie and Lieska-Lie

Local heroes and mysterious characters: Kailackinnen, Damiano of Valavet, Karuukijo

Strange Locales: Tenjos, the Kuri

THE NIVese

The true masters of the northern lands are the Nivese, a nomadic people who trek year after year with their herds of karen beasts from southern winter camps to northern summer grazing grounds. A Nivesian is about as tall as a Middenrealmian, slender, with often with slightly crooked eyes and red hair.

Generally speaking, the Nivese are a friendly people. They believe strongly in hospitality and will share their meager possessions with strangers as a matter of course. The Norbarde traders are especially welcome as guests of the Nivese, as they bring news and useful goods that can be traded for the Nivese's abundant furs (for more information on the Norbardes, see p. 43).

The Nivese do not share faith in the Twelvegods with their neighbors; instead, they worship the Sky Wolves—mostly Gorfang, as the pack leader, and Liska as mediator between humans and godly creatures. The Nivese have a special relationship with wolves, which are considered ancient siblings of humans. Some Nivese individuals are said to even be able to transform into wolves (the Children of the Wolf). Furthermore, the Nivese mythology knows countless spirits, whom the Nivese claim to remain in contact with today.

HISTORY

The Nivese are certainly part of Aventuria's native population. They have no written historical records, therefore any attempt to determine specific dates is doomed to failure. Nevertheless, important events have found their way into the world of legends and tales. Even today, for example, one will hear the story of a dragon that fell in love with a Nivesian maiden, then ate a herd of a thousand cattle because his love remained unreturned.

SHAMANS, DIPLOMATS AND WOLF-MEN

Many large trading concerns maintain hunting parties that bring in fur from the endless plains of the north. This is a common cause of dispute between settlers and the Nivese people, as wolves are clearly a part of the hunter's prey. Explorers working for such concerns will most likely at some point encounter Damiano Tergidion of Valavet, whom the Nivese respectfully call "Naaenaju" (Biting Wolf).

This deont of Hesinde originally came from Elmstone. He moved into the north twenty years ago, living among the Nivese and acting as their advocate. He is incredibly knowledgeable about the northern wilderness and the means to survive there; he despises violence, but is quite ready to use it if he has no choice.

Karuukijo, the son of a shaman and a wolf, is a bit less concerned with the ethics of pacifism. He avenges all misdeeds without mercy, obeying the predator blood that flows within him. Karuukijo is the leader of the pack. The Nivese honor

THE STEPPE

The land of the Nivese stretches from the Gulf of Riva to the Salamander Stones, from the Kvill to the Letta and the Fount Rivers. The southern area (referred to as taiga) sports light pine and birch tree woods; the endless tundra of the Nivese Steppe sit in the north and east. The Tenjos—a maze of tower-like rocks that reach a few hundred paces straight into the sky—is about a day's journey east of the spring at the head of the Nuran Riva. Many tales and legends surround this rock formation, with disappearances and strange sightings abounding. Similar tales are also told of the Kuuri (an extinct volcano, perhaps, with a large crater in the top and a lake in the center, nearly forming a ring of mountains around it.). The lake is beautiful, and its waters surprisingly warm, but those who bathe in it have been known to disappear without a trace.

him as a deliverer of the people, who will renew the bond between humans and wolves in the future. Kailaekinnen is of a milder nature. This shaman of Lieska-Leddu just recently drew attention for his prophecy of the demon winter in the east of the Nivese land.

Ill-minded Ossipa Mogoljeff is actually not involved in this phenomenon. She leads the Norbard clan, Mogoljeff, and is currently trying to re-establish the fading glory of the Nivese as the primary trade partner of those settlements along the Oblomon and Frisund.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Emphasize the desolate vastness of the land. Characters who maintain a close relationship with nature (hunters, witches, druids, and the Moha) are fit for a journey into the northern land, even if they come from utterly different natural settings. Adventurers who are less used to nature may accompany such characters, but will have trouble surviving on their own.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

FARLORI

This tiny settlement consists of ten wood and two stone buildings (Firun's temple and the tavern/trade station). The local Nivesian population hunts for survival and trades for all other necessities (weapons, tools, etc.) with the pelts they collect.

Population: 130 (almost exclusively Nivese)

Temples: Firun

Special Features: An important temple of Firun, kept largely for travelers and a few locals; the Sky Wolves have no set temples or official clergy.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Ugdalf's (Q4/P6/B5)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Ugdalf Urrisk, not exactly a significant tradesman but the only around for more than a hundred miles.

Mood in the City: Mistrust for all strangers who are not Nivese by origin.

GERASIM

The city by the junction of the Oblomon and Selserbrook Rivers is home to Silvan Elves and humans. It was originally an elven settlement that accepted human refugees, on the condition that the humans learn and accept the elven way of life. The inhabitants live exclusively in tree homes, built in the style of the Silvan Elves.

Population: 950 (45% Silvan Elves, 15% half-elves, 40% humans)

Government/Politics: No official government, but Anastasius Silverhair and Moonglow Oakfield (both masters at the local academy of magic) have significant influence; even mixed-blood elves respect their authority.

Temples: Firun, Hesinde, Travia

Special Features: The School of the Straight Way Academy of Magic (movement, gray); an important temple of Travia. So far, the bold laws of the city are still enacted: no tree must be cut for

the construction of human houses, and no one is allowed to possess any more than what life demands.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Silent Forest Hostel (Q5/P5/B12)

Town History: In 650 b.H., local elves harbor refugees from the Fountland

Mood in the City: Elves continuously withdraw from city life while the human population grows.

LESKARI

A small port by the mouth of the Nuran Leskari River, on the Gulf of Riva. In earlier times, this town was a commonly frequented rest stop on the route to Paavi, the fur trade center. Leskari has gained importance as a trade market ever since Paavi fell prey to Glorana the Ice Witch.

Population: 450

Government/Politics: Judge Darek represents the high order of the court, supported by his large clan of kinsmen.

Garrison: 5 town wards

Temples: Firun, Swafnir

Special Features: An important temple of Firun; with Judge Darek, small presents keep the friendship alive

Major Pubs and Taverns: Thorleif's (Q4/P5/B12), the northernmost tavern of Aventuria that serves real Premian Fire.

Mood in the City: Whale-hunters are not welcome here

OBLARASIM

Oblarasim is a gold-mining town on the Oblomon River. Only the size of the population justifies the title of a city, for the rest of the place seems more like an overgrown camp. Skewed barracks line up along muddy tracks, and every other hut is either a tavern or a brothel. At least the latter gave refugees from Glorana's wicked reign a place to work ...

Population: 750 (40% Silvan Elves, 60% humans)

Government/Politics: The strong rule the weak

Temples: Firun, Travia

Special Features: The Lea Elves living in the city are regarded as 'badoc' (i.e. impure, disharmonic) by their kinsmen

Major Pubs and Taverns: Silver Coin; Travin's Dream Tavern; Goldberg's (the gambling tables offer prizes that keep the promise of the name, but the quality of the establishment does not). As far as bedrooms are concerned, there will always be some rat-hole that is still available.

Mood in the City: Mistrust is everywhere; weapons are kept ready, and fights between elves and humans are daily business.



THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

THE REALM OF THE BLACK BEAR—THE FOUNTLAND

*"The silent ruffle of tall dark trees
Along the stream's own silver band.
This sound, just how it lightens me—
My heart is yours, oh Fountland."*

— From *Ode to my Homeland*, by Hannik of Hundehufen

Geographic Borders: Misa River and Dragon Stones in the south; Red Sickles and Green Plains in the west; North Weal Downs in the north; and Brazen Sword in the east

Terrain: Mostly dense forests, cultivated land around villages

Mountains: Weal Mountains, otherwise see geographic borders

Estimated Population: About 150,000; 28,000 live in Festum (15% Norbades, 5% Nivese)

Major Cities and Villages: Festum, Vallusa (although it legally does not belong to Fountland... yet), Norcastle, Firunia, Ouveymas, Needmark, Neersand, Burntgrub

Important Traffic Routes: The Fount and Wealbeck Rivers are the main waterways. Roads lead from Festum to Norcastle and from Neersand to Needmark; a coastal road runs from Vallusa—Festum—Neersand; primary ports are Festum and Neersand.

Dominant Religions: Twelvegods; especially honored are Rondra (by the nobility), Travia, Peraine, Ifirn; widespread superstition

Rulers: Fountland is a noble republic headed by Marshal Thesia of Elmstone

Insignia of Nobility: Silver snow-wolves in a blue circle, upon a red background

Social Structure: Feudal rule by Bronnjares; bondsmen and serfs make up most of the population

Important Clans/Influential Families: Elmstone, Needmark (noble families), Stoerrebrandt (trading people)

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Urnislav of Uspiaunen (the magician who exiled giant Milzenis to Fountwood), Rondragabund of Riedemer (saint of Rondra and Knight of the Order of the Theater)

Strange Locales: Brazen Sword, Dead Man's Moor, Nagrach, Fountwood Forest, the Transweal

Local Festivities and Holidays: 8 Firun (the national holiday); 1 Phex (Day of Renewal); 7–12 Peraine (Meeting of Bards in Norcastle, happening every four years); 1 Efferd (the naval parade by Festum); exposition of goods during Ingerimm and Travia (a week long, starting the first market day).

The winter covers the land with snow as deep as a standing man, and howling wolves gather quickly in their hunt for prey. Seeking out the protection of a human settlement is, again, a wise decision.

The Fountwood is an especially treacherous place, one that is easy to become lost in. The river enters it shortly after Firunia, while the roads wisely avoid it altogether—there are no paths or bridges leading into these woods. The giant Milzenis lives in the middle of the forest, magically chained to a spring from which from which he can only travel as far as half a day's journey. Milzenis is actually said to be quite a calm fellow, but he does get upset if he feels disturbed in his home. Who knows, though, how thankful he might become if someone were to lift his curse ...

Firunia is the door to Sevirya, a forest- and swamp-covered northern province that stretches from Green Plains to the slopes of Brazen Sword by the city of Needmark. Brazen Sword is the highest mountain range on the entire continent—so far, nobody has crossed it successfully. Its peaks stand more than twelve thousand paces high, and dragons are said to live here in greater numbers than anywhere else in Aventuria. Even the elder dragon, Fuldigor, is known to roam the area of Brazen Sword. The foothills are spotted with marble, tin and copper mines, and the valuable atan pine tree is cut in the higher mountain regions (the bark's healing powers are well known and in high demand).

The Dead Man's Moor is located halfway between Green Plains and Brazen Sword. This land is under the influence of Thargunitoth, Boron's wicked arch enemy. Many devotees of Black Magic travel to this ground, either to practice their dark art or to simply take in the unholy presence. The river Nagrach has a similar reputation; it is named after the Archdemon of Icy Death and seems to not come from this world...

The Nagrach River separates Sevirya and the Transweal; the latter is a range of rugged clefts and mountains in the eastern part of Fountland, including the Weal Mountains and the more southern Widdershins. The mountain area is devoid of any human settlements, but according to Fountlandian tales, there are numerous witches that meet in this location along with strange elf, faerie and half-human creatures. The Wealbeck River borders the Transweal to the west, while the Fount Stonghold lies behind the Wealbeck and stretches all the way to the Fount River. The majority of the population lives here, between the river and the forest. The northern Half of the province, however, is mostly covered by the Redeye Swamps, the home of the redeyes or swamp grunts. These creatures are not exactly vicious (when encountered alone), but the area is still unpleasant both to behold and to travel through.

BETWEEN FOUNT AND WEALBECK RIVERS

Following the course of the Fount River for roughly a day's journey from the great river's mouth, one finds the deep forest for which Fountland is so famous. The river valley is dotted with many small villages, all nestled close to the river's edge. It looks like a charming, safe, civilized place. A few hours of travel into the woods, however, reveals the true face of this environment:

The Fountwood is so deep and wide that one could walk the forest for days without meeting another human soul. Elks and boar roam about, as well as wolves, silver lions, and the infamous black bears. A trip into this deserted wilderness should only be attempted in a group, never alone. Waiting out the winter over a glass of Meskinnes is the smartest plan altogether.

The March is a Fountland province located west and south of the Fount River, bordering on Xeraan-held Pirate Coast as well as on Middenrealmian Tobria (governed by Duke Bernfrey). Even though Xeraan tries to maintain mostly normal relations with his northern neighbor, he is still treated with suspicion and mistrust (he is a practitioner of Black Magic, after all). Agents from both sides cross the borders at night, while guardsmen patrol the river banks. The Dragon Stones in the south and Red Sickle in the west provide the borders for the Mark. The Red Sickle Mountains are the last large retreat for goblins that still live according to their matriarchal traditions.

SERFS AND BRONNJARS

The Congregation of Nobility in Fountland elects the Noble Marshal, who will then head the state for a term of five years (currently Thesia of Elmstone). The competencies and limitations of this position really just depend on personal authority—the marshal is, after all, the head of the army and takes on the duties of a king. Still, rulership mostly rests with the noblemen, who have virtually boundless control over their land. This is especially the case for the Bronnjars of Sevirya.

The so-called “flat nobles” are once-wealthy families who lost their property due to heritage division or gambling, though they still hold privileges of nobility (such as voting rights within the Congregation). Finally, on the very bottom rung of the hierarchy, countless serfs struggle to make a living. The few independent cities have gone their own way, led by the example of Festum.

THE NORBARDES

Suddenly, you find yourself in the wilderness with no gold left, holding on to fifteen feet of delicate brocade, a copper kettle, four dead chicken, a goat, and a cembalo. Before you can realize what happened, the clan of Norbardes that sweet-talked

you into buying all the junk is gone, vanished from the face of the earth. Well, perhaps these traveling merchants are not quite that greedy and reckless, but they are certainly business-oriented thinkers, moving in huge clans through Fountland and Nivese territory.

The Norbardes were the second people to colonize Aventuria after the Nivese, and their looks compare easily to that of their Tulamide ancestors. They shave parts of their head (a strip from forehead to neck for the women, completely bare for the men) and the men often grow long mustaches. Women usually lead a Norbard clan (they are referred to as Muhme (‘venerated aunt’). Hesinde and her daughter Mokosha are celebrated as major deities; the latter is especially honored, as she is the patron of the traveling merchant (her symbol is the diligent honey-bee).

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Norbardes can be used in a variety of ways. For example, if the adventurers forgot rope or torches at home, these items can be placed in the hands of such traveling folk—who, of course, expect something in return for the convenience. The Norbardes move around continuously and have a keen interest in just about everything, as Hesinde would have it. In that way, they pick up all kinds of secrets and rumors that they can share with a friendly guest by the nightly campfire.

Remember, though: while these traders are generally welcome everywhere, they are also victims of mistrust. If a Norbard clan is staying in a village when something is stolen (or worse), it usually doesn’t take long for the townspeople to find the wrongdoers—or, more specifically, a Norbard scapegoat. Despite their joyful lifestyle, the Norbardes form a strong community with each other, as much as a protective measure against such suspicion as for any other reason.



THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

HISTORY

About 816 b.H.: Emperor Gerbald gives the land beyond the Born River to the Knights of the Order of the Theater

804–695 b.H.: Founding of the cities Festum, Neersand, Norcastle and Needmark

656–526 b.H.: Reign of the Priest-Emperors

238 b.H.: Independence from Middenrealm

28 Haal: Uriel of Needmark sides with Borbarad; the defeat of Borbaradian host in the battle by the Vallusian Meadows

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Fountland is interesting for many different character types. A wanderer can easily get lost in Festum, one of Aventuria's largest cities, while hunters, witches, druids and Nivese roam the huge forests. The winter here is harsh and long, forcing the inhabitants flock to urban centers or dig in for the winter. Be sure to also point out the deserted plains and immense forests—Sevirya's name resembles Siberia for a good reason. A source for adventures could be the absolute assumption of authority by the nobility (as they control serfs without regard and mercy) or the eccentricity of the flat nobles. This land offers an abundance of interesting characters and situations as humans try to make a living in a rough land.



IMPORTANT CITIES OF THE FOUNTLAND

BURNTGRUB

This city is separated into two parts: Upper Burntgrub, which sits on a steep, fortified hill, and Lower Burntgrub, located by the foot of that hill. The countess' castle sits at the top; the Elmstone lands are governed from here, and only wealthy citizens live in the surrounding areas. Lower Burntgrub is home to many entertainment venues and dubious characters.

Population: 1,300

Insignia: A winged, red figure of Rondra on a golden shield

Government/Politics: Town governor Linjan of Hattenford

Garrison: 40 guardians of Elmstone

Temples: Hesinde, Peraine, Phex, Praios, Rahja, Rondra, Travia, Tsa

Special Features: To pay tribute for the victory by the Vallusian Meadows, Countess Thesia covered the shield and armor of the Rondra statue with gold.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Old Trench Hotel (Q7/P7/B16); Northland House (Q6/P7/B26); Huntsmen and Wild Boar (Q4/P4/B16)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Lower Burntgrub hosts many wagon builders due to the central position on the Fountside Road and the connection between Norcastle and Needmark.

Mood in the City: People from Needmark are not welcome here.

FESTUM

Festum, located by the mouth of the Fount River, is among the largest cities in Aventuria. Mighty trade associations such as Stoorrebrandt and Northland Bank brought wealth to this seaport town, though the Borbaradian presence in the Sea of Pearls slowly eats up these fortunes. A toll bridge connects the city with Granary Island—the river is a mile wide in this location. Jodek's Peak tops the western panorama of the city.

Population: 27,500 (this is the official estimate, but in reality it is probably higher)

Insignia: White swan on a red background

Government/Politics: Festum does not obey the nobility, as it is an independent city. It is ruled by the Grand Council, which is elected by all citizens who pay the voting toll.

Garrison: 600 members of the warrior guild, 800 sea soldiers

Temples: Temples of all the Twelvegods, Swafnir, Rur and Gror, Rastullah, Mokosha

Special Features: The old city was once planned on a drawing board and consists mostly of blocks arranged around the market square; the Admiral of Severitz Naval Academy; a goblin ghetto in the western quarter of the city; Mercury Hall Academy of Magic (gray, transformation of the inanimate); important temples of Hesinde and Efferd.

Important Pubs and Taverns (a Small Selection): Market Hotel (Q10/P10/B22); Old Lighthouse (Q4/P4/B10); Pearl of the Sea (Q5/P5/B8); Reef of the Withering Throats (Q1/P3/B28)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Moha ship builder Kalatau Monalduin; the main offices of the Stoorrebrandt merchant family

Town History: Similar to many townships and villages in southern Fountland, Festum was built to serve as military outpost against goblins in 804 b.H.; independence is declared peacefully in 238 b.H., but the empire nevertheless remains vengeful. Only in 17 b.H. does Reto welcome the Noble Marshal of Festum; a dark spot in the city's history is the conquest of Granary Island by the Thorwal warlord, Atmaskot "Blood Guzzler," in 68 b.H. After his execution, his skin was used to build the Thorwal Drum—an unusual thing for the calm and business-minded people of Festum to do.

Mood in the City: The city and its freedom is something to be proud of—no one in Festum (no matter how unimportant he or she may be) owes anything to anybody.

FIRUNEN

This is a port and trade city halfway down the Fount River. Many ships unload their cargo here, where the river leaves the road and continues on its way into Fountwood. As pirates of the Dark Lands threaten the safety of sea travel, the trade over land across the Green Plains and through Norcastle has increased lately—the “Door to Sevrya” has gained additional importance.

Population: 1,500

Insignia: Red lion and red river against a silver backdrop

Government/Politics: A council of twelve rules this free city; its goal is to regain independence from Festum.

Garrison: 35 town guards, 10 to 40 mercenaries

Temples: Efferd, Firun, Hesinde, Peraine, Phex, Rondra

Special Features: Firunen became a pilgrimage destination for all devotees of the winter god Firun after the fall of Bjaldorn.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Festum House (Q7/P8/B28); Old Lionsfort (Q7/P7/B22); The Jolly Wagoner (Q4/P4/B14); Zalpuk Hostel (Q5/P6/B4)

Mood in the City: A busy mix of Norbardes, Nivese, traders and rafters.

PEERSAND

Located by the mouth of Wealbeck River as it enters the Sea of Pearls, this city is home to Fountland’s naval fleet. The houses of the city have been built alongside the river, just a bit off the bank, then surrounded by a strong wall.

Population: 1,800

Insignia: A round blue kettle on a silver field topped by a red mural crown

Government/Politics: Tjeika of Needmark is the warden of the crown and city governor. Ever since Festum lost its position as leading seaport, Neersand tries to gain popularity among foreign tradesmen by advertising the “safe haven by the Wealbeck” and charging only minor port fees.

Garrison: 50 town halberdiers, the warrior academy with 25 students, the operating crews of two river galleys, 4 small and 4 medium sized war hulks, six caravels of the Bornian fleet (about 1,000 sailors and sea soldiers).

Temples: Efferd, Peraine, Rondra

Special Features: School of Mind Control Academy of Magic (gray); School of Rondra and the Knights of the Theater of Fountland by Neersand Warrior Academy; the whirling waters by the mouth of the river allow only a skilled pilot to enter the seaport.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Residence Hotel (Q6/P6/B29); Hotel Neersand (Q5/P8/B26); Wealbeck View House (Q6/P8/B25); Ram Horn Tavern (Q4/P7/B14); Dune Pub (Q4/P5/B16)

Mood in the City: As Neersand is the starting point for most expeditions into Brazen Sword, everyone is used to strange characters.

NORCASTLE

Being an important merchant city in Sevrya, this settlement obviously profits from land trade. The city fortifications consist mostly of a palisade wall with enforced stone gates. The buildings of the city are mainly constructed of wood.

Population: 2,700

Insignia: Separated diagonally, a white fortress on a red background in the top left, blue ermine in the bottom right (blue and silver)

Government/Politics: Governor Natascha Petrilowska (Free City); Tsaden of Norcastle (born 15 Haal), a bastard child of the fallen Count Isidor of Norcastle; he still struggles to find acceptance among local Bronnjars.

Garrison: 100 town guards

Temples: Firun, Hesinde, Peraine, Rondra

Special Features: The famous Norcastle Giants (a big, heavy horse) are bred here; the well-known statue, “White Rondra of Norcastle” stands in front of the Temple of Rondra; Hall of Life Academy of Magic (healing, white); winter camp of Nivese clans outside the town.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Hotel by the Market (Q5/P4/B20); The Bathhouse (Q5/P4/S20); Albin of Hollerow Hostel (Q5/P5/B16); The Karen (Q3/P5/B20); Ogre’s Fist Tavern (Q2/P4/B10)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Several large trading associations have offices in this city, the most prominent among them being the Surjeloff Norbard clan.

Mood in the City: Open to the world, as a city of trade ought to be.

NEEDMARK

Standing by the port, this poor city appears no worse off than any other. A bit further within its streets, however, one finds a sea of small, skewed wooden houses, whose owners can only dream of wealth. Greytooth, the dark, unpleasant fortress of the Count of Needmark, overshadows this already miserable sight. The only relief to the eye is the picturesque view of Brazen Sword, located east of the city.

Population: 1,450

Insignia: A black and silver shield, with stag-beetle pincers pictured in the center of the shield

Government/Politics: Count Alderic of Needmark rules the city, squeezing every last drop out of it. His primary goal is to repay the debt he owes his sister, Tjeika, for assuming the throne.

Garrison: 30 guards of the count

Temples: Ingerimm, Peraine, Praios

Special Features: Probably the only city with a seaport that is prettier than the city itself; numerous tales abound concerning the Ingerimm temple (according to some of them, the temple was built on a volcano that is appeased only by the clergymen’s constant forging).

Important Pubs and Taverns: Hotel Needmark (Q4/P5/B12); To the Brazen Sword (Q4/P6/B24); Huntsmen’s Rest (Q4/P5/B12); Glowing Stove (Q6/P5/B14)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Arascha Walroder (a Rondra devotee whose services are not for sale)

Mood in the City: Oppressed and hopeless

OUVENMAS

Ouvenmas’ prime passed years ago. The new count mercilessly exploits his people. Craftsmen have packed up and left town since nobody can afford their highly taxed goods anyway, and there are only few travelers that still come along the road to Needmark. It is only a matter of time before those pretty house facades begin to crumble and reflect the actual poverty of the citizens.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

Population: 1,700

Insignia: White boar head on red background

Government/Politics: Count Ljasew of Utzbinnen-Ouvenmas; the political strategy of the count is limited to increasing his fortune.

Garrison: 20 bailiffs

Temples: Peraine, Phex, Rondra, Travia, Tsa

Important Pubs and Taverns: New Moon Hotel (Q6/P6/B26); By the Old Ouve (Q5/P6/B27); Fat Ertzel's (Q5/P8/B18); Ertzel's Scraggy Brother (Q5/P5/B14)

Special Features: The wonderful moated castle Ouvenstam in the northeast of the city; an important temple of Peraine.

Mood in the City: Depression and despair—the opposite used to be the case under the rule of the count's predecessor, Tsaiane of Ouvenstam (she is now worshipped as a holy woman); people from Needmark are not welcome here.

Population: 3,800

Insignia: A red tower against a blue field

Government/Politics: A council of twelve governs the city, and two governors exchange position of leadership on a weekly basis. The goal of this council is to halt the Fountlandian influence, or to at least delay it.

Garrison: 20 town guards, 100 town militia, 25 Ardarites, 100 fighters of the 'Tobrian Homeland Army' as well as two riverboats with 15 crew members each.

Temples: Efferd, Peraine, Travia, Rahja

Special Features: As the city can not expand horizontally, it grew vertically; the streets between high buildings (some are up to six floors tall) look almost like valleys; the city wall is 15 paces high and protects the settlements against storm tides

Important Pubs and Taverns: Hotel Tobrian Square (Q8/P-variable/B22); Hotel March Square (Q9/P9/B24); Rider's Tavern (Q5/P5/B10); Bridge Pub (Q3/P3/B35)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: The "Vallusian Violet" is a famous porcelain design

Town History: The first great victory over the Borbaradian troops was won in the Battle of the Vallusian Meadows (28 Haal).

Mood in the City: With a demonic enemy in the south and too good a friend in the north—Vallusa is currently not the right place for anybody seeking safety and quiet happiness.

VALLUSA

A port city on an island by the mouth of the Misa River as it enters the Tobrian Sea. A bridge connects Vallusa with Fountland; a second bridge to the south was destroyed after the troops of Borbarad conquered Tobria.

DRAGON SHIPS AND PREMIAN FIRE— THORWAL AND GJALSKA

Geographic Borders: Ingval River, Stone Oak Forest, Great Olochtai and Firun's Wall Mountains; Ifirn's Ocean and the Sea of the Seven Winds

Terrain: Chalk Coasts, Gjalska Fjords, Olport Stones island chain, gulf coasts that are kept warm by the current from Gyldenland; Brinask Marshes, Highlands of Gjalska and Waskir, Lower Thorwal Heath (between Thorwal and Kendrar).

Mountains: Hjalдор Mountains, Grey Mountains

Rivers and Waterways: Ifirn's Ocean; Sea of the Seven Winds; Gulf of Hjalding; Gulf of Prem; Swafnir's Rest; Njurun Lake (near Waskir); Bodir, Merek, Nader, Gjalska and Waskir Rivers; the border rivers Ingval and Svelt.

Estimated Population: 80,000 (20% Nivese, Norbardes and Gjalskan people, 1% orks)

Important Cities and Villages: Thorwal, Prem, Olport, Kendrar, Murty and Overthorn by the Gulf of Hjalding, Gjalskaland villages, Enqui (occupied by Thorwal, see p. 50)

Important Traffic Routes: The sea route from Enqui through Olport, Overthorn, Prem and Thorwal to Kendrar; the coastal road from Salta through Kendrar to Thorwal; road from Bordir to Phexcaer; the side branch of the Bodir road leading through Waskir to Olport; wagon trail between Waskir and Murty.

Dominant Religions: Swafnir, Travia, Efferd, Ifirn, Firun

Rulers: The officials ('Hetfolk') are elected by cities and Ottajaskos; along with the Jarls of Thorwal, they chose Tronde Torbensson to be their Supreme Hetman.

National Symbol: The sperm-whale amidst circling waves is a common image seen on flags, emblems, insignia and official signs

Social Structure: Based on the standing of the communities of sea warriors and on the importance of general elections for almost every official title, Thorwal governs itself from the bottom up;

men and women enjoy equal rights; basic principles of this society are the Otta(jasko) ship communities, the land-based clans, the Jarl, Hetman/-woman, the Ottajara (a Rite of Passage and finding acceptance among the Otta); (refer to the section on Thorwal Tribal Structure, p. 26).

Influential Families: Alternating, the most well-known are: the Ottas of the Wind Conquerors, Storm Children and Geraldssons (Thorwal), the Ottas of the Storm Spears (Prem) and the Storm Drifters (Olport); the domestic power of Tronde is represented by the Foamrider Otta.

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Jurga Tjalfsdotter (once led the Hjalldings from Gyldenland to Aventuria), Torstor Om (legendary Phexian hero), Hetman Orozar Sevenstroke (mystical figure who once challenged Swafnir), Hetman Faenwulf (a lost legendary hero), Halmar (war hero, ruled the Old Empire for nine years), Hetwoman Asgra Asgardotter (mythical Child of Swafnir), Walkir Zornbrecht (treacherous traitor, ancestor of the Zornbrechts in Al'Anfa), Hetman Hyggelik the Great (war hero).

Current Figures: Tula of Skerdu (witch), Ifiriane Raskirsdottir (deont of Ifirn), Captain Asleif "Foggwulf" Phileasson (famous adventurer), Bridgera Karvsolmfara (High Priest of Swafnir), Jurge Swafnirsgræhd (visionary, chosen by Swafnir), Asleif Nellgardson (famous Skald), Master Aleya Ambareth (scholar of theoretical magic at Thorwal Academy), Hetman Eldgrimm Oriksson the Táll (conqueror), Frenja Thorkillsdottir (pirate woman from Lassir), Chief Rastar "Ogrescare" bren Movred (war veteran from Gjalskaland), the giant Yumuda (only female giant in Aventuria, visionary).

Strange Locales: Temple of Swafnir in Olport (the oldest temple in Thorwal, with a collection of donations and artifacts



that represent the history of the entire nation), Holy Pillar of Efferd by Olport, Eternal Ice Crystal of Ifirn by Olport, haunted swamps in Gjalskaland, Berik Island (many magically talented but odd characters), the pirate island of Gandar, Tulas Jolskrim (longhouse) by Skerdu, Yumuda's Island (northwest of Olport Stones).

Local Festivities and Holidays: 30 Ron–2 Eff.: pilgrims journey in the name of Efferd from Prem to Thorwal during the night of the changing moon phase, row-boat competition, Games of Imman; 1 Eff.: symbolic sacrifice of model ships by the Pillar of Efferd; 1 Tra: Day of Homecoming; starting the second day of Rohal in Tra: Games of Imman (two weeks long) take place in the city of last year's champion; from Hes. on: Hesinde Disputations at Thorwal's School of Clairvoyance; 1 Fir.: Winter Solstice (festivities during the time of the moon phase change include the catching of the winter demon); 30 Fir.: Day of Ifirn (symbolic burning of the winter demon); 14 Rah: the founding of Prem is celebrated.

The people of Thorwal have lived in the uninviting coastal strip in northwest Aventuria for more than two and a half millennia already. They maintain a culture of unique communality, marked by devotion, bravery, strength, and honesty, but also by superstition and pride. The foreign observer will encounter an abundance of folk tales and a confusing legal system. The knowledge of the people is handed on through Skalds, the Thorwal bards, yet many aspects of their history remain in the dark. All that is left is the myth of tattooed, weapon-bearing giants who were eager to drink and quarrel any time. Their ancestors seem to originate from legendary Hjalldingard in Gyldenland.

A true Thorwal soul takes the world as it is, trusting only in Swafnir, the son of Efferd and Rondra. They understand themselves as the people chosen by the whale-god, and they accept in good faith the harsh winters and the twists of personal fate (such as succumbing to the uncontrollable Whale-Rage and being outcast as a Child of Swafnir). Yet, these good-hearted people are as swift to anger as they are to laugh. When whale hunters and slave traders raise their ire, they hunt down the offenders without mercy. Anyone who has witnessed how passionately these sailors throw themselves and their ships into the furious sea, without hesitation, understands how the time of the Thorwal people and their great dragon ships has not yet passed.

HISTORY

About 2620 b.H.: The Hjalldingans leave Gyldenland and arrive in Aventuria (near Olport) under the lead of Jurga

2600–1800 b.H.: Founding of Olport, Thorwal and Prem

1861 b.H.: Admiral Sanin the Elder discovers the settlement of Thorwajld; subsequently, the Hjalldingans lead a merciless war against the hated settlers of Bosparan, seen as offspring of their Gyldenlandian oppressors. They loot Grangor, Bosparan and other cities, which earns them the name "Thorwal Pirates."

1500–1000 b.H.: Settlement of Aventuria's northeastern coastline, building of Hjalldingfjord, Riva and Tjolmar; the Hjalldingans and Norbards mix to form the Gjalskan tribes

702 b.H.: First (naval) Battle of Salta; Gareth is victorious and occupies Thorwal for two centuries; the Priest-Emperors outlaw the Swafnir faith

562 b.H.: Second (naval) Battle of Salta; Thorwal throws out the Priest Emperors

87 b.H.: Granary Island in the harbour of Festum is plundered by pirates under the lead of Atmaskot "Blood Guzzler;" the Fountland people prosecute the Ottas of Thorwal

8 Haal: Hetman Eldgrimm the Tall conquers Kendrar and moves the southern border of Thorwal towards the banks of the Ingval River

14–16 Haal: Death of Hetwoman Garhelt; her son, Tronde Torbensson, takes her position

15 Haal: An attempted ork invasion fails after the legendary sword Grimring (aka Blade of Destiny; the blade of Hyggelik the Great) appears

from 15 Haal on: War against Al'Anfa, many Ottas either join the battles on their own or serve in the navy of the Fountland

29 Eff., 17 Haal: Occupation of Enqui, which rejected repeated warnings and continued to hunt whales

from Bor., 17 Haal on: Occupation and liberation of Salta, its port and some parts of Nostria by Hetman Eldgrimm the Tall

from Per., 17 Haal on: Some Ottas participate in the defense against the Orkstorm; many refugees from the Svellt nation find shelter

Ing., 28 Haal: Thorwal warriors (under the lead of Foggwulf) and Gjalskaland mercenaries (headed by Rastar "Ogrescare") fight in the Third Demon Battle on the side of the free people

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Thorwal is seen as one of the least civilized areas in Aventuria, yet it offers a wide spectrum of cultures: From the 'cosmopolitan' city of Thorwal, the historic Olport and ancient Prem, to the Gjalskan "barbarians," the Svellt Valley refugees squatting in Enqui, the Nostrians in conquered Kendrar and the weird folk dwelling on some of the Olport Stones Islands. Yet the local mood remains somehow the same everywhere: filled with pride for the homeland and a healthy desire for adventure and competition, as well as a yearning for distant lands.

Challenge a Thorwalian—and you might end up on a journey taking you to the most remote parts of the world! Anger a Thorwal woman, and you may have a brawl on your hands—and afterward, the two of you might as well end up in a pub, drinking like fast friends, assuming you proved yourself worthy of the honor. Countless songs talk of heroes and lovers throughout Thorwal history and their legendary deeds—today, any Thorwalian worth his or her salt is still ready to go down in history. Thorwal itself is a demanding place to live, requiring courage, strength, some craftiness and much appreciation for pathos in order to appreciate the capricious nature of their homeland. This pirate and seafaring nation serves as an ideal starting point for many expeditions, leading into Gyldenland, the Eternal Ice, the Deep South, or even the Land-o'-Giants.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

IMPORTANT PLACES IN THORWAL

KENDRAR

A typical Nostrian port town by the Sea of the Seven Winds, Kendrar is flourishing under the rule of the Thorwalians.

Population: c. 1,100

Government/Politics: Hetman Eldgrimm the Tall

Garrison: 50 warriors of Eldgrimm's Otta

Temples: Swafnir, Travia, Phex, Rahja

Town History: This Nostrian town was conquered by Eldgrimm Oriksson the Tall, after a bet, thus moving the border of Thorwal down to the Ingval River.

Mood in the City: The citizens are comfortable with the Thorwalians and are indeed glad about losing their Nostrian tax duties. The Thorwal use Kendrar as a trading hub, which generates profits for both sides; further, they love the "foreign" flair of "their" city.

OLPORT

This city of the Hjaldingans (and home of Thorwalian 'nationalism') is their oldest settlement, located by the mouth of the Nader River where it enters Ifirn's Ocean. High-rising chalk cliffs and long winters are the typical of this ancient port.

Population: ca. 2,500 (40% Nivese and Norbardes, 5% elves)

Government/Politics: Tegal Raskirson is Hetman of the Nader area. He is the 41-year-old captain of the Storm Drifter Otta, who spends more time out at sea than in the ancient fortress of the hetfolk.

Garrison: 100 warriors of the Storm Drifter Otta

Temples: Efferd, Swafnir, Ifirn, Travia

Special Features: Whale-shaped Swafnir temple decorated with various artifacts from 2,500 years of local and Thorwalian history; Eternal Ice Crystal of the Ifirn temple; ancient Hall of the Wind magician's academy (transformation of the inanimate, elementalism, grey), a fortified temple of Efferd; numerous steep, sharp rocks which rise above the water of the port entrance (such as the Column of Efferd) or remain hidden in shallow depths—a local pilot is needed for successful passage.

Important Pubs and Taverns: the Hostel (Q4/P5/S20), run by Selma Halmarsdottir, the only tavern available

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: the Nikku Rangoldson family maintains the only snow-badger breed in Thorwal

Town History: 2,600 years ago, Jurga supposedly came ashore by today's Jurga Square and founded the settlement of Olafjord; the academy of magic is almost as old as Olafjord itself.

Mood in the City: Hospitable but rough; the traveler encounters a lifestyle that has been shaped by the elements of water, wind and ice (and ultimately by the power of several gods).

PREM

This port-city of Thorwal sits on the shores of the Gulf of Prem; built partially on steep cliffs, it rises above the basin of the haven. Self-proclaimed "Guardian of the Gulf."

Population: about 2,750

Government/Politics: Hetwoman Thora Thurboldsdottir

Garrison: 50 warriors of Hetwoman Thora, 35 fighters of Castle Defiant, 20 port guards

Temples: Swafnir, Rondra, Travia

Special Features: The distinctive landmark of the city is the "Independent Warrior School of Castle Defiant," which is located high above the city; the Swafnir temple has been built right below the castle, resting on poles above the sea (each hour, an artificial fountain rises from below the water); Hjalske distillery (home of the genuine Premian Fire); The Stone, a five and a Half pace high monolith of black stone, smoothed by centuries of wind and water; an astounding collection of coastal and high seas maps at the hetman's house.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Premian Yard (Q5/P9/S16), Middenrealman style)

Mood in the City: People here have a direct approach, as is typical for most Thorwalians; genuine mix of 'pirates' and 'honest seafolk.'

THORWAL

This is the largest city of the Thorwalian lands, located on the mouth of the Bodir River as it enters the Gulf of Prem. It has been the political center of all Thorwal people for most of its 2,000 years.

Population: About 8,500 during the summer, around 12,000 during winter months

Government/Politics: Hasgar Tildasson, Hetman of the Bodir (of the Surenisdottir Otta), and Supreme Hetman Tronde Torbensson steer the fate of the (a bit anarchic) community, in unison with the People's Council and the Captain's Assembly; only known punishments are exile, fines or execution, jail sentences are unknown.

Garrison: 90 warriors of the Hetguard, 50 soldiers of the Wind Conqueror Otta, 30 bailiffs and port guards; two-thirds of the population are armed and ready to go to battle anytime

Temples: Swafnir, Travia, Efferd, Phex, Peraine, Tsa

Special Features: School of Clairvoyance Magician's Academy (clairvoyance and analysis, grey); largest map collection of Aventuria; colorful mix of people in the western city (Harbor or Foreigner's Town); much-visited imman stadium; orktown; Ugdalfskronir, former imperial keep with warrior school; semi-annual Hjalding (meeting of hetfolk from all Thorwal).

Important Pubs and Taverns: None in the eastern part of Thorwal (traditionally, guests are welcome in private homes); numerous establishments in the western part of the city, with widely varying cost and quality.

Mood in the City: Rough, direct and heartfelt during the summer; crowded and lively during the winter, with hefty drinking orgies that may result in friendship or fistfights; only whale hunters and slave traders are not welcome here.

WASKIR

This settlement is located in the highlands between the Great Olochtai mountain range, the Gulf of Hjalding, and the Grey Mountains.

Population: ca. 2,250

Government/Politics: Anhild Iransdottir is Hetwoman of Waskir of the Farseesson Otta, who quarrel constantly with the Nunnur Otta

Garrison: 50 warriors of the Farseesson Otta, 30 warriors of the Nunnur Otta

Temples: Rondra, Travia, Ifirn/Firun

Special Features: The superstitious folk worships many demi- and quarter-gods, as well as legendary heroes; supposedly child sacrifices at midsummer feast to appease swamp spirits; a fortified Rondra temple serves as a refuge; Waskir (a spelt schnaps distilled from sugared spelt beer).

Mood in the City: Rugged and provocative, superstitious, cut off from the rest of the world during winter months.

UNWANTED NEIGHBORS—THE ORKS AND THEIR LAND

Geographic Borders: Highlands surrounded by the mountain ranges of Great Olochtai, Firun's Wall, Blood Barrier, Stone Oak Forest, and the Thasch Mountains

Terrain: Highland steppe, sparse hills and mostly treeless mountains

Mountains: See above

Rivers and Waterways: Bodir River, Anchorite Lake (northwest of Phexcaer), Lake Dairuch (in the Blood Barriers)

Population: Roughly 80,000 orks, about 3,000 humans in the Bodir valley; also Achaz, Grolms, Deepdwarves... and three giants

Important Cities and Villages: Khezzara, Kharkush, Phexcaer, Orrakhar

Dominant Religions: Shamanistic Orkish faith in Brazoragh and Tairach

Ruler: Ashim Riak Assai, the 'Aikar Brazoragh'

National Symbol: In modern times a white bull's skull on a red disc on black

Social Structure: Caste system with dominating warrior and priest castes; the god-king and messiah of the orks Aikar Brazoragh is main authority.

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: The giants Orkmuncher, Ninefinger and Glantuban; the "Grey Count," Jirtan Orbas of Phexcaer; supposedly a group of griffins led by Garafan.

Strange Locales: Phexcaer ("town of thieves"); "Orkenhoard" (legendary treasure); the settlement Ohort (which is mainly occupied by the Holberks, a magical cross breed of elves and orks); lost ruins of the dwarfen city of Umrazim.

The Orkland is mostly comprised of barren steppes surrounded by tall mountains, though with care one can also find green meadows, swamps and birch tree woods along the Bodir and its tributaries. Small coniferous forests are scattered throughout mountain valleys, but aside from these sparse traces of vegetation, the highlands and mountains are barren. Only few plants and animals can survive the cold, dry winters and hot, arid summers; some of those tenacious species are the Orkland rabbits and the prairie bulls.

The most important inhabitants of the Orkland, however, are orks; they have lived here for many thousand years. They are bi-pedal, with bestial faces. They are covered in fur that ranges in color from dark-brown to black, earning them the nickname, "Black Furs."

Orks live in a warlike caste society: the Ergoch (slaves, captives of war and women, usually owned by the chief of the tribe), Yurach (banned or exiled individuals), Grishik (peasants), Drasdech (craftsmen), Khurkach (warriors) and Okwach (famous warriors and very skilled craftsmen), all led by the Harordak (the chief and the shaman of the tribe). These people are primarily fighters; art or other luxuries are disdained as being "soft." They move across the land, living in big Riyachart round tents (yurts); their clothes are made of crude wool or leather and they following a rigid color code according to caste. Tattoos, decorative scars and hair colorings are quite common. Orks know how to handle bow and arrow, but their typical weapons are axes, hammers and a curved sword known

as arbach. These creatures speak their own language, but have no knowledge of writing. All tribal and racial history, legend and culture is preserved and taught by Tairach priests.

The religion of the orks has only two main gods: the bull-headed Brazoragh (god of battle, hunt, leadership and weather) and Tairach, the god of knowledge and death. The priest of Brazoragh is also the chief of the tribe; a Tairach priest usually functions as shaman. Other gods, such as Gravesch (deity of forgery and fire) or Rikai (god of farming) play only a minor role.

The major ork tribes are the Orichai with 20,000 members (the "typical" orks; heavily fragmented into separate clans), the Korogai, renowned for their metalcraft (around 20,000, a large part living in the occupied Svelt valley), and the Zholochai (about 15,000 individuals) who represent the warrior elite. Aside from that, there are the Truanzhai (about 10,000, semi-nomadic, living as traders and crafters in western Orkland), the Olochtai (a clan of 4,000 that is considered barbaric even by ork standards), the Mokolash (2,500 orks living in the swamps of the Bodir springs), and the nomadic clan of Tsharshai. A few new clans formed during the ork wars, such as the Gharrachai, the Thasch, Hilval and Rorwhed orks. The infamous Tordochai, who lived for revenge ever since their defeat in the battles of 400 years ago, are supposed to have been extinct since the Orkstorm.



THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

HISTORY

About 4000 b.H.: First record of orks who, according to their own history, have lived in Orkland for several ten thousand years; destruction of the dwarfen city of Umrazim

About 2500 b.H.: Hjaldingans drive orks out of coastal areas

1699 b.H.: Ork uprising in Albernja, where they are kept as slaves, fails due to a plague

1550–1150 b.H. (Dark Ages): Several tribes and clans of orks move into Middenrealm and temporarily even occupy Gareth

1246 b.H.: Nargazz Bloodfist conquers Baliho and builds an ork empire, the 'Kinkdem of da Norrth'

1134 b.H.: A unified army of elves and dwarfs defeats the orks in the Battle of Saljeth and ends the occupation of Middenrealm; the appearance of Griffin Scraan

725 b.H.: The outpost of Myrburg is granted city status (later named Phexcaer)

From 695 b.H. on: Beginning of thorough human settlement in the area of the upper Bodir River valley

393 b.H.: Middenrealm is weakened by the War of Magicians, the tribes of Tscharshai and Tordochai attack the land again; divided by a tribal feuds, the Tordochai are defeated by the "Blood Fields" of Gareth while the Tscharshai lose a crucial battle near Ferdok

From 10 Haal on: Ashim Riak Assai unifies ork tribes; founding of Khezzara

15 Haal: Due to the appearance of the legendary blade Grimring, the planned orkish invasion of Thorwal is aborted

23 Peraine, 17 Haal: Beginning of the "Orkstorm" under the military supervision of the 'Black Marshal' Sadrak Whasso; after a quick defeat of the Svelltian City League, parts of the seized lands are colonized

Beginning of 19 Haal: Orks attack Middenrealm; Griffinsford falls, the orks prevail in the battle of Orkenwall; a fake attack on Warkhome enables the army to advance along the Great River and the Rakula, where ork troops are finally defeated in the area of Silk Meadows (1/2 Phex); Griffinsford is liberated by the end of the year and most orks are driven back to Bearwoods; the last orks are expelled in 27/28 Haal; however, the occupation of the former Svelltian League continues

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Orkland is one of a few places in Aventuria that may serve as a ground for far-reaching expeditions, especially those involving the history of dwarfs. Another opportunity for adventure lies in cautious, diplomatic contact with orks and mounting the first visit to Khezzara. Finally, it should be mentioned that giants, grolms, unicorns and dragons—and don't forget those ancient griffins—know their fair share of well-kept secrets in addition to common information.

IMPORTANT PLACES IN ORKLAND

KHEZZARA

This capital of Orkland was erected in 15 Haal, about 50 miles behind the Thasch Gate (the broad pass between the Thasch and the Blood Barrier). The town is secured by an earthen wall topped by palisades and a good dozen towers. There are only few stone buildings; among them is the palace of the Aikar Brazoragh, a stronghold which serves as a treasure chamber for stolen goods; lots of smithies, brickyards and wheelwright's shops for the gigantic ork chariots.

Population: estimated 5,000 (about 5% human slaves)

Insignia: A white bull's skull on a red disk on black

Government/Politics: As the capital and palace city, Khezzara follows the Aikar Brazoragh

Garrison: Estimated 500 Khurkach of all tribes; about 1,000 additional troops dispersed throughout tent-camps in the area

Mood in the City: Militant and barbaric

KHARKUSH

This Ork settlement in the southern foothills of Firun's Wall is supposedly located close to the old dwarfen city of Umrazim; it is further the unofficial capital city of the Korogai and center of ironwork, armor smithing and weapon smithing in ork lands.

Population: ca. 1,500 Korogai

Garrison: ca. 500

Temples: Gravesh

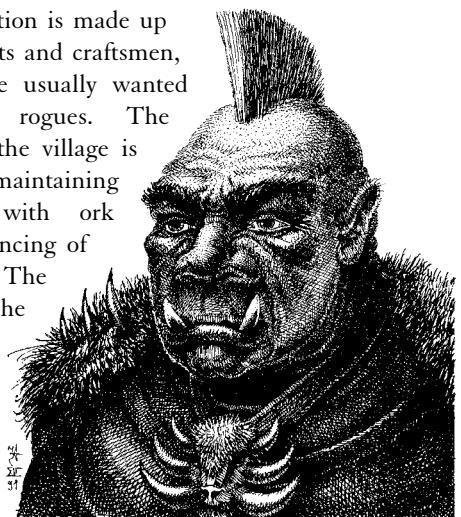
Special Features: Dwarfencol fuels the furnaces of ork forges, which results in a good yield and excellent steel.

ORRAKHAR

An ork town on the shores of Lake Dairuch by the western side of the Blood Barrier mountains. It is inhabited by about 1,000 Zholochai and survives through fishing and the trade of forged goods. It is typical for the Zholochai orks that Khurkach make up about a third of the population.

PHEXCAER

A small town in Orkland. One half of the population is made up of citizens, peasants and craftsmen, the other half are usually wanted scoundrels and rogues. The primary trade of the village is farming, fishing, maintaining trade relations with ork settlements and fencing of stolen property. The local bridge is the only opportunity to cross the Bodir River for many dozens of miles in either direction.



Population: ca. 1,300, nearly all human

Government/Politics: Many small gangs and a few influential individuals form a complicated power structure

Garrison: None, most people of Phexcaer wield and are capable of handling weapons

Temples: Phex, Peraine

Special Features: It is wise for one's own safety to become a "member" in one of the local gangs, no matter how short the stay may be (costs vary between 1 and 10 ducats)

Important Pubs and Taverns: Several establishments of varying quality, in addition to brothels and gaming halls

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Only simple goods are produced here, but absolutely anything can be bought and sold in this city if one just brings enough money and patience.

Town History: Founded under the name of Myrburg during the Age of Wise Emperors; besieged by orks in 396 b.H., but saved by the giant Orkmuncher, only to be attacked and occupied again just a few decades later. In 196 b.H., the rogue Jirtan Orbas and his gang saved the city from an attack of the Zholochai, and Orbas becomes governor of Myrburg. The town is renamed Phexcaer, one of the largest temples to Phex in Aventuria is erected. Since then, the town has become a refuge for all kinds of shady characters. It was left nearly untouched during the Orkstorm due to the appearance of the Thorwalian "Blade of Destiny."

Mood in the City: No respect for law, anarchy, only softened by the common interest of keeping the town alive; tensions between citizens and "crooks;" rivalries between gangs; the life of a stranger does not count for much.

SMOOTH SKIN AND BLACK FURS— THE FORMER SVELLTIAN CITY LEAGUE

Geographic Borders: Svellt Valley between Darkencrest, Thasch, Blood Barrier and Firun's Wall mountains, including the Rorwhed, the steppe north of Darkencrest to the coastal area of Riva; geographically speaking, the river region around the city of Enqui belongs to Svellt as well

Terrain: Old Svellt Swamps, Svellt Swamps, Rorwhed Mountains, Brinask Marshes, Gashok Steppe, shores of the Gulf of Riva

Rivers and Waterways: Svellt River and its tributaries, which form the rivers Lowangsvellt and Darkensvellt; the Svall; rivers and lakes of the Brinask marshlands; Kvell River (at Riva)

Estimated Population: 25,000 (10% orks, about 1% elves and dwarfs), 4,000 in and around Enqui

Important Cities and Villages: Independent: Riva; paying tribute: Lowangen; occupied: Gashok, Deepenborg, Rorkvell, Enqui (occupied by Thorwal); villages: Yrramis (fortified ork outpost) and New Lowangen (settlement of the dualist faith); geographically speaking, the house-boat settlement of Parkauki in Brack belongs to the region as well

Important Traffic Routes: Svellt, Svellt Road from Lowangen to Deepenborg, Tjolmar and Riva and to Gashok

Dominant Religions: The ork gods, Travia, Phex, Firun, Rahja (Eternal Vineyards, Circle of Levthan in Deepenborg); dualists who worship Praios as protector of welfare and Boron as deliverer of misery (Gashok, New Lowangen); significant temple of Efferd in Riva, important in earlier times: Firun (Deepenborg), Phex (Gashok).

Rulers and Social Structure: The land, villages and a few cities are ruled by three Korogai ork tribes, who either enslave humans or view them as lower caste creatures; independent cities still enjoy their civil liberties and town rights; the Svelltian League is practically dissolved. The strong rule the weak; travelers will encounter an abundance of customs that are more or less devoted to Rondra.

Influential Personalities: King Arion of Westak-Deepenborg; Chief Mardugh Orkhan; "Emperor" Reno and his "General," Otho Urdorf of Svallington-Bispellsprings; Storani Vardari (maker of instruments from Riva); Hetman Ingald Ingibjarsson of Enqui.

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Rik Tarlanen, the "Yellow Eye" (bounty hunter), Benja Bear Hunter, martyr Odelinde (Rondra, Deepenborg), Copper Moon (priestess of Rikai, an ork deity), Mardugh Orkhan (devotee of Ingerimm!), a circle of witches in the Rorwhed mountains (under the lead of Yerinn), Bringimox (old warlock in the Gray Forest), Kantala (Nivese, Wolf's child).

Strange Locales: Boron temple in Rore Springs (Rorwhed Mountains), the Gray Forest near Ansvell (between Lowangen and Deepenborg), the witches' circle at Mount Silvercap (Rorwhed).

Fairs, masses: "Market and Games" during Phex and Travia in Lowangen

Once a flourishing economic power, the Svelltian City League has been reduced to a small group of isolated, self-sufficient settlements due to the orkish invasion. The once well-kept streets are now falling apart; gangs, highwaymen, and high tariffs threaten tradesmen and travelers alike, who naturally prefer to take their business elsewhere. Only Riva seems untouched by the decay, while even Enqui (which has never even been a formal part of the league) has undergone drastic changes, mostly due to the massive number of refugees. Twelve years have passed, however, since the orks celebrated their victory here. A new generation has grown up, and the winners

and losers have all grown accustomed to the daily routine of a shared life and culture.

The lives of the Svellt Valley people are determined by three tribes (apart from all the Korogai orks who settled here) that formed just recently during the Ork Wars. The northern Rorwhed Orks are led by Chief Mardugh Orkhan, a Tairach priest blessed by Ingerimm. He rigidly follows his goal of forming a functioning nation and believes in the power of progressive diplomacy. An oft-repeated saying of his is, "one does not slaughter the cow that gives milk." Sometimes, Orkhan even forms treaties with defeated enemies or neighbors (a political

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

approach that often benefits both sides). In the south, the Thasch orks once besieged Lowangen, led by Harkhash Drugh. Their anger at the human resistance only fuels continuing bloody skirmishes.

The Hilval orks reign in the center of Svelltland, an area by the upper run of the Hilval River that is close to their native land. They believe in the forceful collection of tributes, but aside from that they prefer a peaceful and reclusive lifestyle. Thus, no human could say with certainty if the old chief Shurak Yellowtooth is still head of the tribe.

In the area of the Hilval orks one can find the self-proclaimed Emperor Reno I of Svelltia and his wild bunch. Reno Goodpart is a fur-trader by profession and hopelessly unfit for this job. Yet, he is the last hope for all Svelltland people—and a welcome straw-puppet for the shady Otho Urdorf, a former lieutenant and strategist from Deepenborg.

Ultimately, the Svelltland is home to venerable citizens and lawless scoundrels, reputable thieves, “honorable” street criminals, rebels, and civilized as well as barbaric orks. Locals honor both human and ork deities.

HISTORY

2000 years ago: Tjolmar is allegedly founded by dwarfen survivors from Umrazim

1000 years ago: Thorwalian records indicate the founding of Hjalmeßfjord; later on, the city receives the name Riva

561 b.H.: Official founding of Riva

543 b.H.: First reports of Gyldenland settlers by the Svellt, establishment of Lowangen

398 b.H.: Orks destroy the small town of Roremund, the predecessor of Deepenborg

340 b.H.: Document of Lowangen; Lowangen, Tjolmar and Deepenborg form the City League

316 b.H.: Gashok becomes a member

123 b.H.: Riva becomes a member; the league now has a seaport

56 b.H.: The Zorgan Plague spreads

17 H.: Thorwalians take over Enqui; shortly afterwards, orks (mostly Korogai from Firun’s Wall) attack the Svellt Valley. The City League falls apart, and many residents seek refuge in the region of Enqui and Lowangen.

From 19 Haal onward: End of fighting; occupation and/or tributes of the defeated towns and cities

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Svelltland and its townships offer a variety of scenarios (regarding civilization, vegetation, and relations between humans and orks). It is a wild land, where fists overrule a signed treaty anytime. Strange customs and codes of honor have developed here among those humans that were defeated by orks; ragtag gangs, heroes and strange figures dominate the Svelltland, now more than ever. This land holds something for every brave adventurer, be it to protect a journey, defend the honor of the gods, negotiate with orks, or to find a character of doubtful or mysterious reputation.

IMPORTANT PLACES IN SVELLTLAND

ENQUI

Lonesome port city by the Svellt delta. Its buildings are mostly pole constructions, with a few stone houses by the port. The most notable reason for visitors to come to the city is the craftsmen’s quarter, the strange Palace on the Hill of Will-o’-the-Wisps or the Thorwalian quarter. Apart from that, the city is a showcase of crushing poverty, as masses of refugees live in ramshackle huts or on rafts and barges.

Population: ca. 4,000 (10% Thorwal people, 60% refugees)

Government/Politics: Hetman Ingald Ingibjarsson is the young governor of this town, and has a hard task ahead of him in a city where those who have power rule, not merely someone with a title and a fine house; the Thorwalian population obeys Thorwal jurisdiction and patrolling Thorwalian armed rafts secure the area; whale hunting is punishable by death.

Garrison: 70 warriors of the Ingibjara otta, 50 warriors of the town guard

Temples: Peraine, Firun, Efferd, Swafnir, Rondra, Phex

Special Features: The city’s “palace” hosts a gaming hall, two brothels, and an abundance of crooks selling seized or stolen property; most Thorwalians reside in a newly built Ottaskin settlement outside of city limits.

Town History: Once an independent whale hunter town, Enqui was attacked and conquered by Thorwalians in 17 Haal; however, the city was never bothered by orks. Many refugees have settled here.

Mood in the City: Despair and greed; the legendary Thorwal uprightness is confronted by those rough customs of lawless mobs. Naturally, there is a strong desire among refugees to finally return to home.

GASHOK

This is a small town by the crossing of two important traffic routes, from Lowangen to Thunderbrook and from Trallop to Deepenborg and Riva.

Population: 950 (10% orks)

Garrison: 30 ork warriors

Temples: Tairach; the Dualists are allowed to practice their cult on an open field; the once important Boron temple is now desecrated, and most people avoid it out of superstitious beliefs; the public temple to Phex stands empty as well—the deonts have gone into hiding.

Special Features: Mostly shrewd, lawless mobsters, ex-dualists, whores and half-orks live here (along with rigidly orthodox dualists who view the ork occupation as a test of moral and religious strength). The ork camp sits further east, a little outside the city.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Wild Man’s House (Q5/P7)

Town History: A formerly free city and important member of the Svelltian City League, occupied by orks since 17 Haal

LOWANGEN

A heavily fortified free trade city on an island in the Lowangsvellt River, surrounded by orkish-held territory.

Population: 9,700, along with the many refugees from various ork wars

Government/Politics: An elected council of guilds determines city law and names the magistrate; prosecution is via fees or execution—there is no prison; humans pay annual tribute to orks

Garrison: 800 regular troops, 750 militia

Temples: Phex, Travia, Tsa, Rahja, Hesinde, Peraine, Boron, Firun, Ingerimm

Special Features: Academy of Shaping Magician's Academy (gray, transformation of living creatures); Magician's Academy Hall of Power (black, control); castle of the Gray Staffs of Perricum; Svellt Valley Draught-horses; Festival 'Market and Games' during Phex and Peraine

Important Pubs and Taverns: Hammer and Anvil Guesthouse (Q4/P5); Salamander Stones Tavern (Q7/P9); Ork's Demise Pub (Q3/P4); Bright Refuge Hotel (Q8/P8)

Town History: Town rights for 500 years, then the first siege by orks 70 years later; founding member of Svelltian City League; in 17 to 18 Haal; payment of tributes since 19 Haal

Mood in the City: This town lives off its former wealth; the humans here are defiant and always looking for allies against the orkish threat

RIVA

Riva is a wealthy, independent port city by the mouth of Kvill River on the shores of the Gulf of Riva. It has a sturdy, well-fortified castle, a large harbor, cobblestone roads, a long city wall, and well-crafted wooden houses give this settlement its character. The town Hall is a large stone building. This city is a major trade center north of the Orkland.

Population: 2,300

Garrison: 50 town guards and some militia

Temples: Firun, Efferd, Phex, Tsa, Travia, Rahja

Special Features: The Nivilaukaju (according to a Nivese legend, this a woman who was turned to stone by Liska; every new moon phase, the Nivese sacrifice a karen to appease Liska); Storerbrandt College Academy of Magic (gray, clairvoyance and combat); public school.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Many, most of good quality

Prominent Craftsmen: Vardari, maker of musical instruments (Q15/P10, string instruments)

Town History: Riva was built about 600 years ago on top of the ruins of the Thorwalian village of Hjalmefford; a former trade port of the Svelltian City League; peaceful coexistence here between humans, elves and Nivese.

RORKVELL

A former human mining town in the Rorwhed Mountain region, and a stronghold of the Rorwhed ork population.

Population: 330 (25% humans, 10% Deepdwarves, 5% dwarfs)

Government/Politics: Chief Mardugh Orkhan is the unchallenged leader. Some of the human population has lived here for a long time, while others were brought in as slaves; the dwarfs are allied with orks.

Temples: Altar of Tairach and of Ingerimm

Special Features: Mardugh Orkan is a deont of Ingerimm; "Black Spirit" of the Boron temple (a bound soul of a former Boron deont); Alvinia the witch; Deepdwarves living in mines under the village

Mood in the City: Quarrels and even fights are quite common here, but Mardugh's rigid authority does ensure a relatively peaceful community.

DEEPENBORG

This city lies by the mouth of the Ror, as it enters the Svellt. It is unusual in that it boasts the only fortified castle in the area, sitting high above the banks of the Svellt River.

Population: 1,200 (5% orks)

Government/Politics: King Arion the Third of Westak-Deepenborg governs, but only with the consent of local orks; their General T'Rahgh presides over city law, tariff tolls and tribute payments

Garrison: 20 personal guards of the king, 50 ork warriors

Temples: Tairach (formerly Rondra), Travia, Hesinde, Rahja (Eternal Vineyards, Circle of Lethvan), Firun (missing deont), Boron

Special Features: The ruins of Castle Roremund (destroyed by orks in 398 b.H., ghosts roam here); both royal family and ork occupants live in Deepenborg Castle

Important Pubs and Taverns: Duck's Beak Guesthouse (Q6/P5); Northern Light Hostel (Q5/P5); The Golden Treasure Eatery (Q8/P8)

Prominent Merchants: Royal Trade Office, the fur market

TJOLMAR

Old city by the Svellt. The Svellt Road ends here, while the route to Riva begins from this city as well. Mostly pole houses, as a means of dealing with yearly floods. The only architectural structure of note is the ancient dwarf bridge with two fortified ramps.

Population: 1,220 (5% dwarfs)

Government/Politics: Tjolmar has a town council, and a peace treaty with orks

Garrison: 20 town guards, 10 ork and 10 dwarf warriors in each bridge ramp, respectively

Temples: Firun, Ingerimm (ancient dwarf cult), Ifirn, Rahja

Important Pubs and Taverns: Trallop Giant Tavern (Q6/P9)

Town History: Tjolmar was built about 1,500 years ago, presumably by the Hjalldingans/Early Thorwalians; the dwarfs of Tjolmar betrayed their neighbors during the ork war by letting the invading forces across the bridge—thus Tjolmar itself was spared, and is still the only tribute-free city in the southern part of the former City League—and into the League proper.

Mood in the City: Tense relations between humans and dwarfs; strangers are generally not trusted

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

IN DEEP FOREST, BY LOVELY MEADOWS— THE LAND OF THE ELVES

Geographic Borders: Salamander Stones (Silvan Elves), the northern rivers and streams by Frisund (Lea Elves), Green Plains, Lake Lamprey, north-western border of Red Sickle Mountains

Terrain: Forest-covered mountains and meadows by the river

Mountains: Salamander Stones

Rivers and Waterways: Kvill, Oblomon, Frisund, Amper, and Rathil Rivers; Lake Lamprey

Estimated Population: 4,000 humans, 6,000 Silvan Elves, 12,000 Lea Elves, 500 steppe elves

Important Cities and Villages: Thunderbrook, Uhdenmount, Kvirasim

Social Structure (Elves): Clan structure

Influential Families (Humans): Kolenbrander of Trallop (tradesmen, they control the trade with Thunderbrook and Uhdenmount), Kowang (Ore Barons of Uhdenmount, of Norbard descent), Mountainwatch (also Ore Barons of Uhdenmount, related to Kolenbrander).

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Athavar Peace-Song (deceased magician of the Silvan Elves), Heleon (Rondra deont, initiated the construction of a temple by Thunderbrook), Mother Herdgard (built the Travia temple on the Green Plains).

Strange Locations: Salamander Stones, Lake Lamprey, Fog Moors

Local Holidays/Festivities: In Thunderbrook, many holidays that commemorate Rondra are celebrated with a heartfelt passion

All elves have very sharp senses and innate magic ability. Most elves living outside of the Salamander Stones are Lea Elves, whose homes are the river meadows north of the highland range (spreading to the cold Frisund River and Lake Alavi). Lea elves build their pole houses in places like Garetia and Almada; some even move into the cities, where the 'pointy-ears' typically find a mixed reception at best. The cities of Thunderbrook, Kvirasim, and Oblarasim host a large number of Lea Elves.

Closely related to them are the 'Children of the Wind,' a nomadic group of steppe elves that move across the Green Plains, the highland between Kvill and Brinask and the steppe between Kvill and Letta.

The Ice Elves live even further north, in the Grimmfrost Wastes, to be precise (along Icebreak Bay and Amber Bay). Their homeland consists of ice, cold seawater and rocks. Firewood is rare; these elves commonly build their shelters out of ice. Those who live in such harsh lands cannot afford hospitality, and thus strangers will encounter little more than peaceful but decisive rejection. Those who cannot care for themselves cannot be allowed to endanger others.

Ask a Garetian about the origin of elves and he (depending on his experience) will answer that they stem "from the Netherhells" or "out of the Salamander Stones." The first assumption is entirely false, and the latter is only true for Silvan Elves. The homes of these creatures can barely be described with human words—neither hut nor tree house accurately describe these elven shelters, which are made out of living wood. The Silvan Elves live as hunters and gatherers, and except for the settlements of Kvirasim and Gerasim, they have no contact with humans. They are generally peaceful and compassionate people, but they are also quick to defend their homeland.

A quarrel between Silvan Elves and humans could have unpredictable results; an injured traveler will never know whether to expect pity and support or Firun-like indifference to his plight.

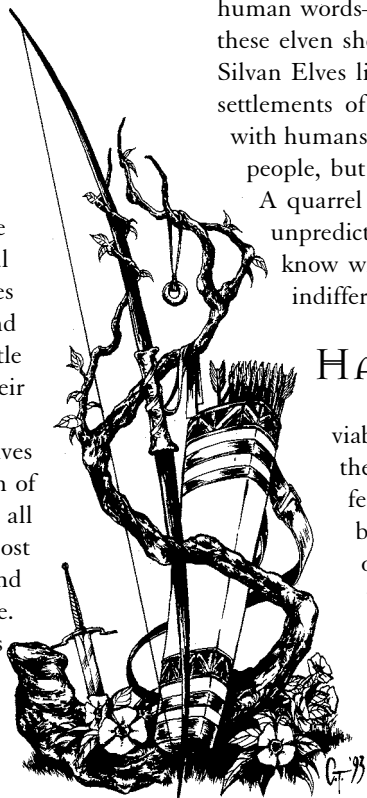
HALF-ELVES

An elf and a man can certainly produce viable offspring, though humans generally view these mixed-bloods with mistrust and superstitious fear—very few would admit openly to such a family background. The elves are a bit more tolerant, if only because it typically falls to the elven mother to care for these children. They do view such a member of their community as belonging to a different culture, however; as a result, creatures of mixed origin are not truly accepted anywhere. Many will try to pass as a human, which does work sometimes. Pretending to be an elf among elves is impossible.

THE ELF PEOPLE

The physical characteristics of elves include slender bodies, pointed ears, large, slanted eyes (which can be of unusual colors, like purple); and elegant, athletic movement. Some humans harbor odd beliefs about these creatures—supposedly, they procreate by sprouting from budding trees during the full moon. It is said their glance has mystical powers (of seduction); that if in danger, elves can remove themselves from this world and travel to the Faerie realms. Those tales are little more than nonsense, however, despite their widespread popularity among humans.

Another major assumption, that all elves are notorious thieves, is based on their notion of personal property, which stands out among all other Aventurian cultures. Except for the most intimate possessions (one's name, bow and musical instrument), all property is negotiable. If a market stand has many, many more apples than the owner could possibly ever eat, for example, then why ought one ask before taking an apple?



THE SALAMANDER STONES

The peaks of Salamander Stones are up to 3,000 paces high. This mountain range belongs to one of the most wild and, at the same time, most romantic lands of Aventuria. Clear streams have cut deep valleys and canyons into the land. The mountainsides are covered with mighty maple, pine, redwood, spruce, and birch trees that stand up to 100 paces tall. The light falling through the interwoven branches of the forest paints shimmering designs of light on a carpet of grass, flowers and ferns. There are anthills as big as two grown men, gigantic mushrooms that could feed a party of five, and butterflies that sparkle with myriad colors—even the creations of the great Daria Windest are put to shame. It is obvious to any wandering traveler that this must be the land of the Silvan Elves, even though they almost never show themselves.

This idyllic setting should be approached with caution, however; the saber-tooth tiger is not any less hungry here than elsewhere, and the Kvill adder is just as poisonous as in other parts of the continent. It is said that, in case of a battle between elves and humans, the forest becomes as deadly as it is beautiful.

THE FOG MOORS

The Fog Moors extends west of Lake Lamprey—it is truly a gloomy and hostile place. Dense fog hangs over a stinking morass of stagnant water, spotted with dead tree trunks. A constant gurgling sound from beneath the water, caused ostensibly by rising swamp gases, challenges the strength courage of any wanderer.



The pathway between Trallop and Thunderbrook along the lake might be a safe choice; the tracks leading directly through the swamp, however, should only be used with great caution. Explorers who are unfamiliar with the wilderness and its dangers should look for a local guide to help them through the maze. Scattered bands of orks are eager to take any traveler's life and possessions. Some magicians supposedly retreated to this area after the War of the Wizards, and even though they are almost certainly long dead, one might still run into one of their successors (or, in a less fortunate situation, they might find you first).

THE GREEN PLAINS

Vast grasslands, generally called the Green Plains, stretch northeast of the Salamander Stones and north of Red Sickle. There are almost no trees on the Green Plains. Small ponds serve as the only water sources, fed by the rain and drying up during the dry seasons. Neither streams nor rivers are anywhere to be found, though some small brooks occur here and there during the seasonal thaw, also quickly drying up as the summer approaches.

The area is mostly inhabited by steppe elves and goblins; the only human settlement worth mentioning is Travington. This town is still quite young, and grew up around the Travia temple built by Mother Herdgard in 10 Haal. Currently, Travington hosts about 200 individuals, with its population slowly rising—due to the Borbaradian occupation of Tobria, all goods traded between Middenrealm and Fountland are now traded via the Green Plains. The Green Plains offers an opportunity for everybody, including both thieves and guards, to better their finances.

LAKE LAMPREY

Many mysteries surround this largest Aventurian lake, and the number of explorers who have attempted to pierce these secrets is beyond counting. It is the nature of secrets to resist any investigation, however; hardly any of those brave adventurers ever return. The investigators of Aventuria have to rely on mere speculations: a freshwater serpent colony is said to live in the depths of the lake, as well as a portal that supposedly connects the continent to the Seventh Sphere. Another rumor speaks of a Satinav (time) gate that leads to Havena and the time of the great earthquake and flood.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Letting elves appear behind every tree is a big mistake in Aventuria. Elven senses detect approaching groups very quickly, and their ability to keep out of sight is legendary. Thus, any encounter (say, out of curiosity) is entirely up to these shy forest folks, not the interlopers into the woods.

The second major misconception is that elves are either like humans (emphasize their exotic nature), or that they are lovely and harmless creatures of aesthetic beauty. The elegance and intuitive relationship with nature reflect the elves' animalistic character, which humans initially perceive as innocent. This impression is not entirely inaccurate, but only to the extent that a predator is innocent of murder when hunting for its next meal.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

IMPORTANT PLACES IN THE LAND OF THE ELVES

THUNDERBROOK

Palisades, built only a dozen years ago to weather the Ork Storm, surround approximately 100 wooden and stone houses. A pilgrim expecting a mighty fortress of Rondra is going to be quite disappointed. The local temple of the lioness sits outside of the city, in a cavern behind the famous Thunder Falls.

Population: 2,100 (25% Lea Elves, 5% Silvan Elves)

Insignia: Silver wave-pole on red background, topped by a wall crown

Government/Politics: 'Rondracracy' under Princess-Deontess Aldare VIII Thunderclap of Thunderbrook

Garrison: 40 Rondra deontes, 60 Rondra warriors and 50 town guards

Temples: Rondra, Hesinde, Travia

Special Features: Wooden buildings of the Seminar of Elven Communication and Natural Healing Magician's Academy (gray) in an elm grove; a monastery of the Anconites (Order of the Healing Beneficiaries) just outside of the city; legendary Lake Lamprey.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Guesthouse Lovely Tune (Q5/P6/B10); Thunder Fall Pub (Q2/P3/B22); Hotel Thunder Fall (Q7/P8/B18)

Town History: Following a vision, Rondra-deont Heleon led a dozen of fellow fighters (those that had survived the massacre of the Priest Emperors) to the Thunder Fall

Mood in the City: Utterly peaceful

KVIRASIM

Kvirasim is one of the most amazing cities of the Aventurian continent, as it is almost invisible to the approaching traveler. This is not due to elf magic, however, but rather that the tree houses are hidden in such a way so that they become visible only when one stands directly below them. Local humans quickly blend in with elves as they adapt the local clothing styles and behavior.

Population: 760 (70% Silvan Elves, 20% Lea Elves, 10% mixed-blood elves)

Government/Politics: Problems are discussed among the different elf clans; everybody is allowed to participate in the decision-making process

Temples: Peraine (one deont)

Special Features: For decades, missionaries of Peraine have tried to spread their belief to no avail

Mood in the City: Elven composure, calmness and tolerance

UHDENMOUNT

This old mining town in Red Sickle Mountains by the upper Rathil River has been independent for the last 270 years. This city was built as a trading outpost for elves and humans and was granted trading rights in the Trallop Treaty. Uhdenmount is the highest city (sits on the highest land) in Aventuria.

Population: 1,850 (40% humans, 30% dwarfs, 10% Lea Elves, 10% goblins, 10% orks)

Insignia: A black hammer and ax crossed in front of a silver background, topped by a wall crown

Government/Politics: Competing Ore Barons keep the city under their rule and the governance of their Mining Council; the strong rule the weak, and carrying a weapon is mandatory. Trallop Gorge Kolenbrander is the most important trading partner of this city.

Garrison: 200 mercenaries of the Uhdenmount Axmen and the Uhdenmount Legion, 30 town bailiffs of the Mining Council

Temples: Ingerimm (ork deonts, among others), Peraine, Firun; those sites are also visited by orks and goblins as they represent the embodiment of their gods as well

Special Features: home garrison of the Uhdenmount Legion (which is composed of humans, dwarfs, goblins and orks), Tiljaniel Forest (occupied by Lea Elves), several mines (slate, ore, some silver); Therbunites hospital, Boron Tunnel outside of the city (underground burial site)

Important Pubs and Taverns: Hotel Court Uhdenmount (Q8/P10); Wagon Station Brother O'Aves (Q6/P5); Shanjas Divan Guesthouse (Q7/P7, services of Rahja); Mercenary's Tavern (Q4/P4)



ODDITIES AND SALTARELS— UPSTART KINGDOM OF NOSTRIA

Geographic Borders: Ingval and Ornib Rivers, Lake Thuran, Tommel River, Lakeland, Sea of the Seven Winds

Terrain: Narrow coastal strip, lakes, forest-covered highlands

Mountains: None worth mentioning

Rivers and Waterways: Ornib, Ingral, Urlan, Tommel, and Nabla Rivers; numerous waters of the Lakeland area

Estimated Population: 40,000

Important Cities and Villages: Nostria, Salta, Salterhaven

Important Traffic Routes: Havena–Nostria–Salta–Thorwal Road; the Tommel and Ingval Rivers serve as waterways; Nostria and Salterhaven are the main seaports of the region

Dominant Religion: Twelvegods belief is predominant

Rulers: King Kasimir

National Symbol: Silver Saltarel fish on a blue background

Social Structure: Kingdom; more free peasants than in the Middenrealm

Important Royal Families: Almost all noble families are somehow related to the king, thus they all have some (varying) degree of importance

Local Heroes: None worth mentioning

Strange Locales: Chalk cliffs of Halleru

Local Festivities and Holidays: 13–14 Rondra: Tournament in capital; 2 Praios: birthday of the king

The Nostrian Lakeland stretches from the Tommel River to the Albernian border. Mostly pine trees grow in this sandy, meager soil. Fertile grass-covered hills sit north of Lakeland, giving way to forest regions in the east. The chalk cliffs by Halleru (south of Joborn) are indescribably beautiful; it is said that a group of Satuarian Sisters meets on their peaks once a year, during the Night of Witches.

The Nostrian forests are known for their abundance of game; the famous Nostrian crown deer roams in these forests. First and foremost, the saltarel must be mentioned, as this fish is pictured on the nation's arms; it repeatedly returns to its breeding grounds on the coast, and has made the region famous.

The people of this land have mostly dark or honey-brown hair; blond is possible, but occurs less often. Half the population lives in the towns and cities, while the rest dwell in villages and tiny settlements. Nostria is a quiet, peace-loving region. Its residents are fiercely proud of their homeland, though those from more "exciting" lands often find little within Nostria to keep their attention. Nevertheless, travelers should hold back on their jokes—angry Nostrians are no less dangerous than raging Thorwalians or Albernians.

The most important events in recent Nostrian history were the ongoing wars with Andergast. While these quarrels were subject to countless jokes throughout Aventuria, the Nostrians themselves had nothing to laugh about. Boron was the sole beneficiary of these conflicts.

A king heads the state (currently Kasimir IV) and governs the land, along with a small group of noblemen. No other state issues as many official titles (where else can one find Wojwodes, Enormities and Bombasts?). The competition among authorities is therefore fierce.

HISTORY

Local history starts with the year of independence (1847 b.H.). The Nostrian history is as idealized and unreliable as nowhere else in Aventuria—useful sources are thus hard to come by. It is certain though that Nostria and its neighbor state Andergast have repeatedly declared war on and later formed peace treaties with each other (currently, some kind of truce exists between those two rival nations). Of particular note is the Fraternization of Joborn in the year 860 b.H. (see also **History of Andergast**) and the Thorwalian occupation of Salta and northwestern Nostria (17 to 22 Haal).

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The land of Nostria as an upstart nation that would love to be of some worldly importance. Nostria offers adventures for nearly all kinds of characters.

IMPORTANT PLACES IN NOSTRIA

NOSTRIA

This is a port city by the mouth of the Tommel River, where it enters the Sea of the Seven Winds. It is also the residence of King Kasimir IV of Nostria. The narrow, angled alleys lead past two-story buildings, as well as the town houses of the Nostrian nobility. The King's castle is an elaborate fortress by the right shore of the Tommel.

Population: 6,400

Insignia: Silver Saltarel fish under a silver rampart against a blue backdrop; wall crown on top

Government/Politics: Kasimir IV rules as legitimate king; Nostria is an important port by the Sea of the Seven Winds, so trade relations with Havena are frequent and steady (recently, there have been cautious efforts to form such bonds with Thorwal as well).

Garrison: 250 royal Nostrian warriors

Temples: Boron, Efferd, Peraine, Rahja, Rondra, Travia, Tsa

Special Features: Many representative buildings in the Poltrion-Tormlyn-Style (pompous street fronts with ramshackle buildings behind)—rarely does a capital city represent its land this accurately; Magician's Academy of Light and Darkness (transformation of the inanimate, white)

Important Pubs and Taverns: Nostrian Court (best hotel in town, Q8/P9/B40); Father Balder (clean, thick stews, Q5/P5/B12); Wooden Leg (miserable establishment by the port, Q2/P3/B10); Mouse Hole (only for those who can't afford the Wooden Leg, Q1/P1/B15)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: None worth mentioning; Nostrian craftsmen are known for their ability to improvise

Mood in the City: One is proud of what has been accomplished, despite all the hardships of a never-ending war

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

SALTA AND SALTERHAVEN

These twin cities by the mouth of the Ingval River are the dockyard and sawmills for Stone Oak wood coming from Andergast (in spite of all wars and against the will of the monarch). It is further the economic center of Nostria. Many craftsmen have settled around the marketplace area: the well-known smith's quarter and the temple of Ingerimm are both located in the southern part of the city.

Population: 2,900 (1,800 in Salta, 1,100 in Salterhaven)

Insignia: Silver fishnet on a red background, wall crown on top

Government/Politics: Count Albio III

Garrison: Two companies of the Count's guards, 50 royal warriors, and 20 town and port guards

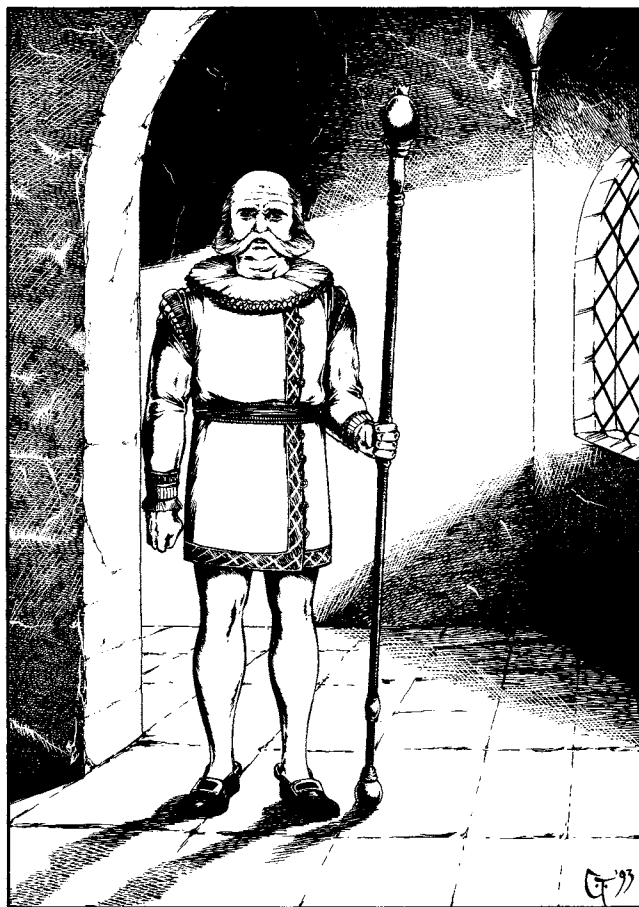
Temples: Hesinde, Ingerimm, Travia in Salta; Efferd in Salterhaven

Special Features: The small monastery of the Sisterhood of Mada has been added to the temple of Hesinde

Important Pubs and Taverns: Gilden Ingval Hotel (Q10/P10/B45); House of Wisdom (run by the clergymen of Hesinde, Q5/P5/B12); Red Coin (it is advised to sit with your back against the wall, Q2/P3/B8)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Dardane Brusik—she controls almost half of the Stone Oak trade in town

Mood in the City: Thorwalians are not welcome here; there is competition between both halves of the city. One should remember to distinguish between Salta and Salterhaven when addressing locals.



WOODCUTTERS AND COURTIER— THE KINGDOM OF ANDERGAST

Geographic Borders: Stone Oak Forest, outskirts of Bladegrass Steppes, Lake Thurán, Ornib and Ingval Rivers

Terrain: Raftland, Thurania, Bladegrass Steppes

Mountains: Stone Oak Forest

Rivers and Waterways: Ingval, Andra, and Ornib Rivers; Lake Thurán

Estimated Population: 40,000

Important Cities and Villages: Andergast, Joborn, Teshkal, Andrafall

Important Traffic Routes: (Count's) road from Andergast to the eastern border (continuing towards Griffinsford)

Dominant Religions: Twelvegods belief, Hesinde, Rahja (worshipped by royal families and the courtiers), Rondra and Firun (worshipped by the minor nobility), Tsa and Peraine

(worshipped by the common people); local influence of druids.

Rulers: King Efferdan I of Hussbek-Galahan

National Symbol: A green Stone Oak tree against a silver backdrop

Social Structure: Feudalism on two levels (king and barons)

Important Royal Families: Zornbold (old dynasty of kings), Galahan (new dynasty of kings)

Local Heroes and Saints: Dorlen of Joborn (saint of Rahja), several heroes who are always ready to fight against Nostria

Strange Locales: Andra Falls (waterfalls), Stone Oak Forest (monstrosities gather in these woods), several Sacred Groves

Local Festivities and Holidays: 14 Rondra: Knight's Tournament and Royal Ball in Andergast; first week of Travia: street fest in Andrafall

Andergast is a small country that derives its meager wealth from breeding Teshkal heavy horses and selling hard, fireproof Stone Oak wood, which is probably the most sought-after wood in Aventuria. The capital city grew out of a tiny woodcutter's town; until recent years, Andergast was little more than a group of small settlements and keeps dispersed throughout dense forests. The constant battle against Nostria in the west, however, and the northern threat from the orks have adapted these people to a sinister, robust, and superstitious life, rejecting

any modernity or innovation—they have neither resources nor interest in any cultural advance or modern trends.

Recently introduced succession laws have placed the old king's son-in-law on the throne: the young King Efferdan of Hussbek-Galahan is the husband of Queen Varena, the oldest daughter of former King Wendolyn VII. Efferdan himself is an exiled nobleman from the Horasrealm who settled here after fleeing Kuslik. He brought along a small group of followers and courtiers who opposed the rule of the Horas Empress. With the help of his sister-



in-law, Princess Irinia, he is trying to develop this old-fashioned woodcutter nation into a modern state. That means foremost having to tame the rebellious minor nobility, strengthening and enforcing the sleepy town of Andergast, and slowly recovering forest and wastelands from gangs of thievish orks and lawless rogues. Besides his followers from Elmstone, he can only count on the help of a small group of young and heroic fighters (who ultimately hope to secure a position in the future nation of Andergast).

HISTORY

The history of Andergast begins with the year of independence (1847 b.H.). The history of Andergast is marked by continuous border wars with Nostria; only recently the fighting ceased as both sides agreed on a (potentially short-lived) truce. Worth mentioning is the Fraternization of Joborn, a Rahja miracle, which ended the Seventh War in 860 b.H.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Andergast is quite a rough place for any adventure, and in their stubbornness and rigidity, its inhabitants look almost comical. It can be quite difficult to take serious any of those over-achieving royal reformists that are rushing to and fro in the court. This land presents a good background to games that do not focus on a long list of dynasties or details of church and leadership. Andergast demands the spirit of enterprise; further, the orks must be driven out of the forest with decisiveness and courage.

IMPORTANT PLACES OF ANDERGAST

ANDERGAST

The capital is a small, smoky settlement in the middle of a sparsely populated forest. By northern standards, however, this place is considered a major city.

Population: 5,850

Insignia: A green oaken branch on a silver background, above a red crown

Government/Politics: King Efferdan, advised by a council of tradesmen, craftsmen and woodcutters

Garrison: A company of city guards (about 30), Royal Guards (about 50 Halberdiers)

Temples: Rondra, Praios, Travia, Hesinde, Tsa, Peraine, Ingerimm

Special Features: The streets are bare and muddy; Half-timbered buildings are skewed, often leaning and resting on each other, forming dark alleys that rarely see any sunlight; pigs roam everywhere and dig up the earth, turning streets into mud tracks; castle Andergast, the "king's castle" is only a small fortress (yet

the biggest in this country); the second-largest building hosts the Magician's Combat Seminar (battle magic, gray).

Important Pubs and Taverns: Fat Ham tavern

Mood in the City: There is a strange sense of excitement and optimism in the air, which does not really match this old-fashioned place

JOBORN

Since earliest times, this city has been fought over by Nostria and Andergast. Joborn and its people have had enough of war, however, and aspire to become an independent (or at least communally governed) township.

Population: 850

Insignia: A red stag beetle on white background

Government/Politics: ever-changing

Garrison: Currently 30 town guards

Temples: Fortified temple of Peraine and Travia, Rahja

Important Pubs and Taverns: Joborn Manor

Town History: Joborn has been occupied a countless number of times; through the Fraternization Miracle of Rahja, the devotee Dorlen brought at least a short period of peace to this town

Mood in the City: The people here know well how to take life as it comes; the fortified temple is central to their lives—they store grains and maintain refuge chambers in its vaults; Joborn pretzels have become known as long-lasting "everbread"

TESHKAL

This town sits on the northwestern border of the Bladegrass Steppes. It is best known for the breed of heavy horses that is raised here. After weathering a few ork attacks, the construction of town fortifications (trenches and palisades) has been initiated.

Population: ca. 900

Insignia: A black horse head on green

Government/Politics: Baroness Ossyra of Teshkal (she does consider the opinions of three major horse-breeding families)

Garrison: 15 guards of the baroness, one company of town militia

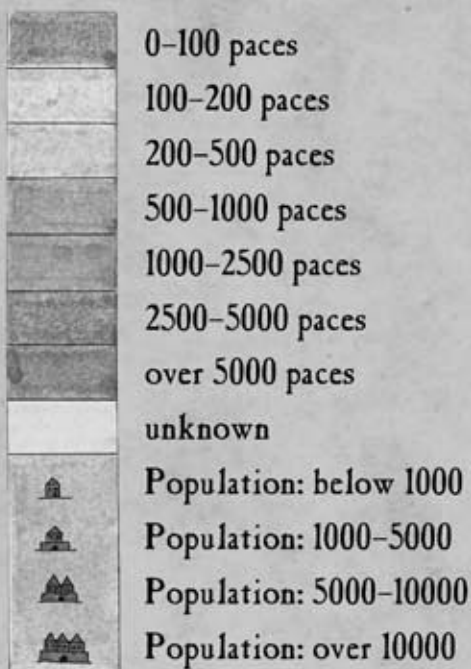
Temples: Fortified temples of Rondra, Travia and Peraine, Rahja

Important Pubs and Taverns: Tramping Hooves Hostel (Q5/P6); Ork Tooth Tavern (Q4/P4)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: The horse auction in Ingerimm is worth mentioning; some equipment traders have settled here

Mood in the City: Farmer-like stubbornness and tenacity, but one that is used to strange travelers passing through; the local opulation deeply despises the orks

0 40 80 120 160 200
Middlenmiles



Sea of the Seven Winds

CYCLOPS ISLANDS

PHENOS PUTRAS KUTAKI MYLAMAS HYLAILOS
PAILOS Tereimon BALTREA Rethis HYLPIA TENOS
PHRYGAIOS DUBAR

Cyclops Sea





THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

UNDER THE GRIFFIN'S FLAG—MIDDENREALM

Geographic Borders: Sea of the Seven Winds; Tommel River; Darkencrest Mountains; Fog Moors/Lake Lamprey; Dragon Stones, Black Sickle, Troll Peaks, and Rashtul Wall Mountains; Yaquir Valley

Terrain: All types

Mountains: Windhague Mountains, Kosh Mountains, the Anvil, Iron Forest, Dragon Stones, Black Sickle, Troll Peaks, Rashtul Wall

Estimated Population: Gareth City (189,000), Garetia (315,000 humans, 1,000 dwarfs, 500 elves), Darpatia (257,000 humans, 800 dwarfs), Kosh (79,000 humans, 15,000 dwarfs), Griffinsford (47,000 humans, 1,000 dwarfs), Free Tobria (15,000 humans, 500 dwarfs), Northern Marches (169,000 humans, 10,000 dwarfs), Almada (220,000 humans, 2,000 dwarfs, 1,000 elves), Albernia (210,000 humans, 500 elves), Windhague (12,000 humans), Meadows (116,000 humans, 1,000 elves)—a total of 1.6 million humans, 30,000 dwarfs and 3,000 elves.

Important Cities: Gareth, Havena, Punin, Warkhome, Perricum, Rommilys, Angbar, Elenvina, Perainefords, Griffinsford, Trallop, Harben

Important Traffic Routes: Great River, Yaquir and Darpat Rivers; a network of well-developed imperial highways runs through the country

Dominant religion: Twelvegods belief is predominant

Rulers: Imperial Regent Emer ni Bennain

National Symbol: Red griffin in a golden circle against a blue background

Important clans and Influential Families: House of Gareth (imperial family), noble families of provincial rulers, Rastburger family (a merchant's clan from Havena), Stoerrebrandt (trader from Fountland, has branch offices in every large city), artisan guilds have a large influence throughout most cities.

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters (a small selection): Hluthar of the Northern Marches (saint of Rondra), The Green Knight (a noble yet eternally tragic character from Garetia), Yassia (witch, Albernia), Emperor Haal of Gareth (disappeared in 17 Haal under mysterious circumstances), Rhys the Cutter (saint of Ingerimm, Albernia).

Strange Locales: Farindel Forest (Albernia), Demon's Fallows (on the outskirts of Gareth), The Gorge (sacred volcano in the northern Rashtul's Wall), Nahemas Tower (in the drowned part of Havena), Hanging Glacier (holy site to Firun in the Black Sickle), other "magical" forests such as the Imperial Forest in Garetia and the Bluefirs (in Meadows).

Local Festivities and Holidays: 1 Pra. (major holiday of Praios), 10 Pra. (Memorial Day, commemorates the Ogre Battle), 6 - 9 Ron. Founding Day (National holiday commemorating the founding of the nation), 15-16 Ron. (Sword Fest, several knightly tournaments), 1 Eff. (Colors and Lights Festival in Perricum), wine harvest celebrations in Almada starting 15 Tra., 12-15 Phe. (Trade fair in Trallop), 21 Ing. Day of Weaponsmiths (Celebration of trade and craftsmen guilds), 21-23 Ing. (Trade fair in Angbar), 22 Ing. Commemoration of the Third Demon Battle.

AUTHORITY STRUCTURE

The Emperor holds the ultimate authority in the Middenrealm hierarchy and maintains his courts in Gareth. Legally, he owns the entire land and lends parts of it to his

vassals. These bondsmen owe service and loyalty to the Emperor, who in return assures their safety and protection. The provincial lords represent the next level of authority below the Emperor; they do not all rank the same, however, in terms of prestige and authority.

The provinces of Kosh, Garetia, Darpatia, Albernia and Almada are led by a King; the Northern Marches, Meadows and Tobria are ruled by a Duke, while Margraves head the settlements of Griffinsford and Windhague. These provincial lords split up their estates to subordinate Counts, who then continue to distribute to the land among Barons. The Barons themselves continue the chain of interdependency by supplying the lower nobility (namely landed Knights and Squires) with land.

The Mountain Kingdoms of the Angroshim (their surface holdings forming 'Mountain Freeholds') hold an exceptional status, according to the Lex Dwarfia. While dwarfs are subordinates of the Emperor, they can only be judged by their mountain king.

THE PROVINCES

ALBERNIA

Provincial lord: Queen Invher ni Bennain, residing at Havena

Wide meadows, lakes and swamps cover the land. The Moorsap is the infamous marshland of the Great River delta that surrounds Havena. A corduroy road transects the Moorsap, providing a passable road through that otherwise impassable region; however, any that leave the dam will most likely disappear into the ground forever.

Another local danger is the Farindel Forest between when Winhall and Honeyngton—many more people have stepped into these woods than left them. What happened to these travelers will always remain a mystery; speculation speaks of ancient curses and a gate leading to the realm of faeries.

Both the long coastline and the legacy of the Thorwalian ancestors have shaped the independent spirit that has developed in this area; Efferd is a widely worshipped deity, and bards share their bittersweet songs night after night. Spirits and fairy creatures, such as water sprites and nymphs, play a major role in local beliefs and customs.

WINDHAGUE

Provincial lord: Margrave Radulf Eran Galahan, Admiral of the Western Fleet, residing at Harben

The high peaks of the Windhague Mountains and their forest-covered valleys shape the landscape of this small province by the Sea of the Seven Winds. The few inhabitants of this mountain range live by the western side of the mountains; some of the remote valleys, however, are home to several ork tribes as well as witches. Gangs of brigands also use these valleys as hideouts. Even a few prison camps are scattered throughout the forest, where villains repay their sins by chopping wood

for the Emperor's fleet in Harben. The dwarfs, who once lost a battle against the West Wind Dragons in this area, tend to shun Windhague altogether—it is rare that one finds one of their mine tunnels here.

NORTHERN MARCHES

Provincial lord: Duke Jast Gorsam of the Great River, residing at Elenvina

The landscape here consists mostly of mountain ranges, though the north also sports rolling hills and dense woods. The Great River winds its way through the Kosh Mountains, the Ingra Knolls and the Iron Forest. The part of the river between Elvenhus and Elenvina is infamous and feared by locals for its countless underwater rocks and dangerous river pirates. It seems to those who live here that the druid cult has always been part of this rough, fissured land, home to Brendan's Ring (the most sacred of all Geode sites) and Xorlosh, the sacred mountain refuge of the dwarfs.

KOSH

Provincial lord: Queen Rohaja of Gareth, represented by Prince Blasius of Eberstamm, residing at Angbar

This area is as mountainous as the neighboring province of Northern Marches. It includes Kosh Mountains (hence the name of the region) as well as extensions of the high Anvil mountain range. Swamps and fertile lands sit next to the Great River and the area around Lake Angbar. There is an obvious connection between the Kosh area and dwarf culture—they make up a quarter of the population and have turned the province into a center of Aventurian craftsmanship.

The dwarf influence might also be the reason for that distinct straightforwardness, or even stubbornness, that the average person seems to possess. Further, so-called Basketmen are typical for the Kosh region; these people are mountain farmers who move into lowlands and valleys during summer months to sell the goods they produce during the long winter period.

GRIFFINSFORD

Provincial lord: Margravine Irmenella of Griffinsford, residing in Griffinsford

Fertile fields in the southwest, dense and remote forests in the northeast and the highlands of Darkencrest Mountains mark the region of the Griffinsford land; traditionally, Praios is worshipped by a majority of the locals. The region has suffered tremendously under the rule of the orks that fell upon the land in 17 Haal. The immigrants coming from the equally devastated provinces of Tobria, Warunk and Beirunk are welcome here (so long as they can be fed), for they can help rebuild what the blackfurs once demolished. There are still ork gangs roaming the countryside, occasionally attacking single farm houses or lonely travelers.

GARETIA

Provincial lord: Queen Rohaja of Gareth

The lives and aspirations in this core province of the empire really center around one goal: to feed almost two hundred

thousand Garetians. Fertile fields cover the land, pushing the Imperial Forest further and further back. Noble and wealthy men hunt the outskirts of this woodland (their countless country castles and retreats are scattered throughout the area surrounding the metropolis), but the center of the forest is said to contain a legendary city of the High Elves—the discovery of this city has been the goal of many lost expeditions. Garetia is an ancient place with a long past, and not just because of the historical Demon's Fallows (the eternally scarred battlefield of the First Demon Battle), which is located just southwest of the capital.

ALMADA

Provincial lord: Queen Rohaja of Gareth, represented by Crown Regent Dschijndar of Falkenberg-Ravensmouth, residing in Punin

Capital City: Punin

The mild climate of Almada makes for an easy living: cultivating wine and tending horses are common activities in these lands. The locals themselves possess a certain joviality that results in a loose tongue and (influenced by the Tulamide legacy) a certain eagerness to quarrel. One subject of discussion and disagreement, for example, is the Emperor's throne. There are voices that speak in favor of cutting all ties to the empire; most of the nobility feel deceived by Gareth, especially after the inauguration of Rohaja, Queen of Gareth—according to Alamadanian customs, the throne belongs to the male successor. Because of this, the separatist movements have gained renewed attention and momentum in recent years.

FREE TOBRIA OF THE TWELVEGODS

Provincial lord: Duke Bernfrey of Ehrenstein, residing at Peraineifords

Not much is left of what was once the largest province of the empire. Except for a small, meager strip by the western side of the Black Sickle and the Dragon Stones (which are ruled by imperial dragon Apep, who governs as a marshal in service of the duke), all of the land has fallen into the hands of Borbaradian troops. The only connection to the empire is the Sickstep Pass and a few dangerously narrow mountain trails that lead through the Dragon Stones.

Overall, this region is only sparsely populated, as most refugees coming from the east move on towards Garetia, Almada, and even as far as Albernian. This is no surprise, considering the high altitudes and worthless soil that settlers to this region would have to put with, not to mention that this area borders the demonic lands of 'Emperor' Galotta. Who knows if some Arkhobal demon doesn't live in that oak tree behind the next turn ...?

DARPATIA

Provincial lord: Queen Rohaja of Gareth, represented by Princess Irmegunde of Ravensmouth

Capital City: Rommilys

Darpatia also suffered under the Borbaradian invasion, yet is far more fortunate than Tobria. In earlier times, the province extended all the way to the Radrom River, where Black Sickle

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

and the Troll Peaks form today's eastern boundaries. Refugees live here in great numbers, and large untouched forests are just waiting to be turned into useful farmland. New settlers receive all possible help, as the Darpatian people are hearty and welcoming, worshipping and living under the peaceful laws of Travia. Even the House of Ravensmouth (which will govern until the inauguration of the still youthful Queen of Gareth) follows the commands of the laws of the Benevolent Goddess precisely—at least when it comes to marriage policies and the protection of the family's welfare.

MEADOWS

Provincial lord: Walpurga Lionhead of Meadows, residing at Trallop

This province is the center of Aventuria's cattle farming. Cattle barons (some coming from noble families) maintain huge parcels of grazing grounds, live in luxurious mansions, enjoy their wealth thoroughly and are otherwise quite hostile towards each other. These large-scale entrepreneurs do not shy away from unconventional methods when they seek to eliminate competition. Aside from these cut-throats, however, true Rondralike knighthood does still exist in its traditional ways in most parts of Meadows.

Unrest and riots broke out when Lord Baeromar of Goltring-Meadows placed himself on the throne without even asking first; with help from the Northern Reaches, Duchess Walpurga defeated the troublemaker. Subsequently, the Northern Reaches duke Jast Gorsam now has influence in the entire area all the way to the Pandlaril River.

Additionally, the infamous Borbaradian campaigns actually started in the area of Meadows, leaving a scar upon the land. It was in a valley between the Red Sickle and the Dragon Stones that a sinister magician conjured up the Demon Master; today, a barren desert of dust still reminds the traveler of this sacrilegious act.

HISTORY

993 b.H.: The Second Demon Battle near Brig-Lo; Bosparan falls, Gareth becomes capital city, Raul is crowned Emperor

808 b.H.: Slavery is outlawed

660–527 b.H.: Age of the Priest Emperors

527–404 b.H.: Reign of Rohal the Wise

403–398 b.H.: War of the Wizards

249–241 b.H.: Elmstone separates from Middenrealm

233–219 b.H.: The Khôm Desert separates from Middenrealm

18 b.H.: Reto seizes power

10 Haal: Ogres destroy Tobria and burn down Ysilia; Battle of the Thousand Ogres in the Trollgap

17 Haal: Emperor Haal disappears mysteriously in Fountland; Answin of Ravensmouth seizes the throne

17–19 Haal: (Third) Ork Storm

18 Haal: Answin's regime topples; Brin of Gareth becomes Protector of the Empire

29 Haal: Third Demon Battle in the Trollgap, Brin dies; Emer ni Bennain becomes regent of the empire

29 Haal: Crown Princess Rohaja, daughter of Emer, becomes Queen of Gareth, Almada, Kosh and Darpatia

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Middenrealm is home to more than one and a half million humans, but even that is not enough to do more than thinly populate the land. There are still many areas without even a single human soul: these are the places where black magicians build their towers, brigands go into hiding and where druids and witches perform their rituals. Here, the sinister past all too often meets the present—in short, it is a great place for explorers. The Highlord of a Middenrealm campaign should differentiate between the provinces—he or she is encouraged to come up with a few additional regional oddities and strange customs.

This land offers a wide potential range of tension-filled interactions between feudal nobility, merchant families and guilds of uprising cities, as well as the many different orders and churches that are trying to spread the word and glory of one of the Twelve. All this calls for a genuine hero to struggle in the name of justice. Tobria, Darpatia and the city of Perricum are all good base camps for most expeditions into the Black Lands—the latter offers many expeditions that lead into the demonic empires that lie beyond the Black Sickle and The Troll Peaks.

IMPORTANT PLACES OF THE MIDDENREALM

ANGBAR

Residence of the princes of House Boarstem and capital of the Kosh kingdom; largest dwarf settlement outside of the mountain kingdoms; it is also the center of Aventurian craftsmanship.

Population: 5,000 (35% dwarfs)

Insignia: A red dwarf bagpipe against a golden backdrop

Government/Politics: Imperial Prefect Bosper of Stippwitz; imperial city

Garrison: 3 companies of Imperial Angbar Sappers, 1 banner of Imperial Angbar Longswords, 1 company of Royal Kosh Halberdiers, 2 squadrons of Royal Angbar Battle Riders, 50 dwarf militia, 10 Guard Sheriffs (bodyguard of the prince)

Temples: Ingerimm, Rondra, Boron, Hesinde, Efferd, Phex, Praios, Tsa

Special Features: Angbar is home to the main temple of the human rite of Ingerimm; silver and iron mines outside of the city; the castle of the white magic order of Rohal's Guardians; guilds and trade associations are of major importance; many local dwarfs engage in fishing

Important Pubs and Taverns: House Sirbensack Hotel (best house in town, Q10/P8/B18); Bagpipe (dance Hall, Q7/P5); The Bloody Bull (Q4/P4/B22)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Grisom, son of Gorben (a blacksmith), the wheelwright's shop Artaxesh and Sons (building war chariots for 800 years)

Mood in the City: Inviting, friendly towards dwarfs

BALIHO

The center of Meadow's cattle business; the town is divided into the two parts: the northern part is the home to the nobles of the city and is well-maintained; the southern part of the city is wild, but not run-down or abandoned. It hosts most of the area's entertaining establishments.

Population: 3,100

Insignia: Two silver wagon wheels against a red background, all under a wall crown

Government/Politics: Count Avon Nordfalk of Mossground; imperial city
Garrison: 1 company Dragonsgate Pikemen, 1 squadron Ducal Meadows Horsemen, 10 knights (under the authority of the count), 20 town bailiffs

Temples: Phex, Praios, Rahja, Travia, Shrine of Efferd

Special Features: The Sword and Shield Warrior School at a water castle north of the city; a 1,000-year old oak serving as a gallows tree

Important Pubs and Taverns: Silver Coin (cattle driver's bar, not entirely safe, Q3/P4/B10), Emperor's Pride and Ork's Demise (Q5/P5/B12), the North Star Game House (Q8/P9), Hotel Pandlaril (P8/Q8/B22)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Jobdan Boswitz and Marja Ganjeff (cold-blooded cattle barons)

Mood in the City: Many quarrels and fights between cattle drivers or rivaling cattle barons; everyone's dagger is sheathed loosely and ready for a fight

DWARROW

Craftsmen's town in Darpatia. The refugee village outside of Dwarrow (about 250 East Darpatians live here in wood cottages) was only recently fortified.

Population: 1,200 (40% dwarfs)

Government: Town Master Kirgam, son of Ugin; imperial city

Garrison: 20 town guards

Temples: Ingerimm, Peraine, Praios, Tsa

Special Features: Important Ingerimm temple; the famous Dwarrow drum skins; silver mines in the vicinity

Important Pubs and Taverns: Angrosh's Hammer (good dwarf brew, Q6/P7/B10), Whipcrack (ferryman's hostel, only sleeping halls, Q4/P3/B40), Darpatia pensioners hotel (Q5/P6/B10)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Wagon-builder Taif and Daughters; many dwarf art shops and smithies

Mood in the City: Dwarfen bustle paired with the refugee's determination to reconstruct all that was destroyed

ELENVINA

Trade city on the banks of the Great River, protected by the ducal castle of the Northern Marches. The city consists mostly of grand architecture, such as the triumph arc, the Trade Hall and the temple of Praios. The latter is quite splendid, second only to the Gareth Sun Palace.

Population: 4,000 (about 150 dwarfs)

Insignia: Golden duke's crown on blue above a blue miniver; the images are separated by a waveline

Government/Politics: Imperial Prefect Quendan of House Twinbridge Castle

Garrison: 3 banners of Imperial Northern Marches Pikemen, 1 banner of Ducal Riverguards, 100 mercenaries from the Order of the Thunder, 30 town guards

Temples: Efferd, Hesinde, Phex, Travia, Praios

Special Features: The Academy of Leadership Magician's Academy (control, white); the dome of the Trade Hall is the largest free-standing dome in Aventuria; the town hosts an organ built by elf Silverkind and the dwarf Ingrosh; a local trademark is the Elenviner, a thoroughbred horse.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Father River Guesthouse (Q5/P5/B18); Hotel by the Triumph Arc (best place in town, Q10/P10/B15); Grapnel's (miserable establishment, Q1/P3/B16); the Pensioners House, Water View (lower medium price range, Q4/P4/B10)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Darka Danzmann, ship owner; many dwarf weaponsmiths

Mood in the City: Open-minded and tolerant, the way a trade city ought to be; the people of Elenvina are moderately well off and generally appreciate culture over simple entertainment

ELVENHUS

This is a port city on the Great River, located between the Iron Forest and the Kosh Mountains. The city is separated by the river, with ferries keeping the two parts connected. The northern portion of the city is home primarily to the dwarfs; the southern part (the actual city) holds the port and all temples except that of Ingerimm.

Population: 2,450 (20% dwarfs)

Insignia: A shield divided in three: red on a silver-blue background, three black stripes against a silver backdrop below

Government/Politics: The town curate Galburga of Hardenfels, whose goal is the complete extinction of river pirates; imperial city

Garrison: 2 companies of Imperial Northern Marches Axmen, 1 banner of Ducal Northern Marches Riverguards

Temples: Efferd, Ingerimm, Rahja, Rondra, Travia

Special Features: quarries for the famous Kosh basalt (a stone of magic-inhibiting properties) north of the city; the community house of the Healing Order of the Anconites is located in the southern part of the city

Important Pubs and Taverns: The Staggering Unicorn (a solid establishment, P5/Q5/B14); Keelson Guesthouse (Q1/P2/B22); Hotel Admiral Sanin (two rooms are connected by a secret door—those rooms are often used by secret lovers for whom it would be inappropriate to rent a double-room, Q7/P8/B11).

Mood in the City: Friendly, as long as one is not a river pirate or an acquaintance of such a person

ESLAMSGRUB

This small city is an important trade station and resting place. Approximately 100 houses sit inside its city walls. In some places, the destruction caused by the Ork Storm is still visible.

Population: 1,500

Insignia: Golden grain above a blue wave-lined shield on a red background; a wall crown sits above

Government/Politics: Town marshal Ginaya of Deepensprings; imperial city

Garrison: 1 squadron of Griffinsford Border Horse, 8 town bailiffs

Temples: Peraine, Praios, Rondra, Travia

Special Features: Beer—a specialty called Eslam's Brew

Important Pubs and Taverns: Pale Ork Skull (affordable accommodation, Q3/P4/B12+1); Riva Parlor Guesthouse (hearty meals with plenty of turnip syrup, Q6/P7/B12)

Mood in the City: Orks are hated by most, and hairy humans are met with suspicion; otherwise, Eslamsgrub is a very hospitable and welcoming place

Town History: Emperor Eslam II had this city built as a trade station between Warkhome and Griffinsford

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

FERDOK

The port brought modest wealth to this city. The streets are built in an orderly fashion and are well paved. The flow of goods that travel from Gareth and the central empire to the west coast turned out to be quite a profitable business for the (taxing) authority.

Population: 2,450 (about 4% dwarfs)

Insignia: Three blue tournament lance-heads on silver

Government/Politics: Regent Ernbrecht of Roachbow governs in the name of Count Grovin of Great River

Garrison: 2 squadrons Imperial Ferdok Lanciers (all female), 15 town and 10 royal customs guards patrolling the river

Temples: Efferd, Ingerimm, Peraine, Phex, Praios, Rondra

Special Features: The famous Light Ferdok Barley Brew (known well throughout Aventuria); the first major port on the Great River; the tin foundries are known for their artful miniatures; the local count is a dwarf

Important Pubs and Taverns: River's Devil (Q4/P4/B12), Ferdok Court Hotel (Q8/P8/B16); Beaver's Castle (Q3/P3/B28); Hammer and Anvil (Q5/P5/B10); Anchor's Place (shady establishment, Q4/P3)

Mood in the City: This town wants to be more tolerant than Gareth, thus people take it upon themselves to be thoroughly straightforward

GARETH

This capital of Middenrealm is without a doubt the largest city of Aventuria and is home to more people than, say, the entirety of Fountland. Nearly all Aventurian goods—be it whale blubber from Frisov or shrink-heads from the rain forest—can be found here.

The city's core, Old Gareth, is the only part of the city encircled by a wall; generous avenues, ostentatious town houses and huge chancellery buildings characterize this quarter. Wealthy noblemen and rich merchants live in splendid mansions (surrounded by gardens that are more like huge parks) in New Gareth, the western part of the city. This quarter is also home to the New Imperial Residence and the Sun Palace, the main temple of Praios—together they are the center of worldly and clerical power.

The South Quarter presents itself in quite a different light. People here appreciate the small things in life, such as catching a fat street-rat before the stray dog gets to it (even better if one catches the dog along with the rat!). Narrow alleys, sky-high house blocks, burned ruins, skewed shacks, prostitutes and impoverished beggars, as well as the random corpse in a dark corner, are a typical sight in this part of town.

The Kilngrounds, a section of the city just east of Old Gareth, offers an only slightly less horrid picture. Gigantic house blocks dominate the scene, and there is only little space left for anything else. Occasionally, a fire will clear entire blocks—coincidentally, that might just be the same location that a wealthy investor had in mind for future projects.

Steedknoll, a village north of the city, is slowly growing together with the ever-expanding metropolis. This settlement houses a cattle market, racetrack and countless farmhouses. Many refugees from the defeated eastern provinces have "settled" here; these people work as day laborers and otherwise live from hand to mouth.

Population: 189,000

Insignia: A red fox against a golden background

Government/Politics: Mayor and council of Gareth (from Old Gareth); magistrate under the order of the Count of Raul's March (from New Gareth); council and city of Kilngrounds; a overseers of the treasury; court and military affairs in the southern quarter

Garrison: 250 town guards plus garrisons of several Royal and Imperial regiments

Temples: all Twelvegods (many temples twice), additional deities such as Ucuri, Aves or Simia

Special Features: Magician's Academy of Magical Armor (anti-magic, white); Sword and Staff Magician's Academy (battle, white); major Praios temple in New Gareth (City of Light, home to the Sun Palace); important Phex temple (patron deity of the city) and Ingerimm temple (guilds); imperial residence; Demon's Fallows (cursed since the First Demon Battle); Silk Meadows (the battlefield where the orks were once defeated).

Important Pubs and Taverns: Hotel Sea Eagle (probably the best establishment in all of Aventuria, Q10+/P10+/B32); Elm Staff Hotel (mostly magicians, Q6/P8/B22); Sword and Armor Hotel (adventurer's and mercenary's pub, Q5/P4/B38); Hero's Rest Hostel (for the modest traveler, Q2/P2/B36)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Thorn Eisinger, the blacksmith of a hundred heroes; wheelwright Ferrara; every trade and craft available in every degree of quality

THE HISTORY OF GARETH

1869 b.H.: Founding of Gareth by the Bosparan

1864 b.H.: Attacking ogres decimate the population and the size of the city

1611–1610 b.H.: Revolt against Haldu-Horas' drastic increase of taxes; the Emperor brutally squashes the rallying masses

1562–1561 b.H.: Renewed revolt against the cruel leadership of Fran-Horas, the First Demon Battle takes place south of the city

994/993 b.H.: Hela-Horas declares herself a goddess; she publicly executes a delegation from Gareth and subsequently triggers a mighty uprising; this war leads to the Second Demon Battle near Brig-Lo and the eventual looting of Bosparan; Gareth becomes capital of the New Empire

393 b.H.: Orks suffer defeat by the gates of the city in the battle by Bloody Fields

249–241 b.H.: Elmstone separates; Gareth is now capital city of Middenrealm

21 b.H.: Day of Shame, outrage over a scandalous audience with the imperial twins Bardo and Cella

18–1 b.H.: Reto forcefully claims the throne

0–17 Haal: Emperor Haal

17–18 Haal: Answin Crisis

17–19 Haal: Ork Storm, the Blackfurs are defeated by Silk Meadows

17–28 Haal: Brin of Gareth becomes Protector of the Empire

21–23 Haal: Schism within the church of Praios

28 Haal: Night of the Burning Sky—Borbarad's flying demons shower the city with fire

29 Haal: Inauguration of Rohaja as Queen of Garetia

GRIFFINSFORD

Griffinsford suffered terribly under the Ork Storm, but by now locals have repaired most of the damage. The city stretches all around Praios' Mountain, where both the temple and margrave's residence have their place. Most wealthy citizens live on Praios' Mountain area as well.

Population: 3,800

Insignia: A golden griffin on a blue background

Government/Politics: Margravine Irmenella of Griffinsford

Garrison: 1 squadron Imperial Griffinsford Border Horse, 1 banner of Provincial Griffinsford Longswords, 3 companies of town militia and a dozen town guards

Temples: Ingerimm, Peraine, Praios, Rondra, Travia, Tsa

Special Features: An important temple of Praios; fortified castle in the port's entrance; desecrated ritual site to Peraine where the Duglums Plague once entered the city; dog race in Rahja

Important Pubs and Taverns: Count's Head (Q6/P5/B22); Boot (Q4/P5/B12); The Thirsty Horse (Q5/P6/B24)

Mood in the City: Optimism and a willingness to rebuild what has been destroyed; a heartfelt hate for anyone who looks even remotely like an ork

HARBEN

This capital of the Windhague province has been built into the mountain on terraces; from the landside, one can reach the city only via a small, guarded mountain pass. South of the fishing harbor is a heavily fortified military port (sporting its own Rondra temple), main naval base of the Imperial Western Fleet.

Population: 1,700

Insignia: Three silver ships, arrayed in an inverted triangle in front of a blue backdrop; above sits a wall crown

Government/Politics: Imperial Prefect Bosper of Mersington; imperial city

Garrison: 1 banner Royal Albernian Elite Guard, 2 banners of Provincial Windhague Axmen, 900 sailors and naval warriors

Temples: Efferd, Praios, Rondra

Special Features: An important temple of Efferd; military port

Important Pubs and Taverns: Dolphin (soldier's pub, Q3/P3); Hotel Admiral (Q8/P9/B14); Masthead (well-managed establishment, Q5/P5/B12)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Female shipwright Trondhilde Azzenbrat, who can even patch fishnets

Mood in the City: Strangers are often suspected of spying

HAVENA

The largest harbor city in the western New Realm, Albernia's capital of Havena lies at the mouth of the Great River. In addition to wealthy neighborhoods of villas, one can also find farm yards and closely build poor neighborhoods contained within the city walls. In the west of the city the Lower City stretches, the part of town that in 291 b.H. was destroyed by a large earthquake, and is still regarded as being cursed. Havena is an important trade city, that has left its prosperous days far behind.

Population: 25,700

Insignia: a silver crown over waving silver lines on a blue background

Government/Politics: residence of King Cuanu ui Bennain and Queen Invher ni Bennain, his daughter

Garrison: One banner each of the I and II Imperial Albernian Guards Regiment, 2 squadrons of the Royal Bodyguards Regiment "Niamad Bennain" (heavy cavalry) 2 banners of the Havenian Riverguard Regiments (longsword), 1 squadron Abilactrian Light Horse, 100 city bailiffs

Temples: all Twelvegods except Firun

Special Features: Magic is forbidden except for magical healing.

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Branch offices Gerad Ongswin & Son and Alvida Rastburger

City History: Founded in the year 1869 b.H. by the members of an expedition under Admiral Sanin, but was nearly destroyed 200 years later by orks. After 1611 b.H., became the Prince's residence. After Rohal's disappearance, the weakened city was ruled by several factions of mages, each acting in their own best interests, until Niamad Bennain, descended from river pirates, finally defeated the mages and officially put a ban on the use of magic. That ban remained for a long period, only loosened in 12 Haal. The most destructive event in the city's history was the Great Seaquake of 16 Ing. 291 b.H. where Efferd, in his rage, sent a giant flood wave ('The Deluge of Wrath') to wash over the city; only 5,000 of the city's original 60,000 residents survived.

Mood in the City: loyal to Efferd and mercantilistic, traditional Albernian; though the finest days of the Havenian docks are long over; nevertheless still an important trading harbor on the Middenrealm's western shores. The Boron Cult and magicians are both mistrusted and feared.

HONEYNGTON

Twice the capital of Albernia, both times Honeyngton ceded the honor to Havena. The city's people see themselves as residents of the second largest city of the province, and thus as big-city dwellers. However, they bear little grudge against the Havenians—the widespread reverence for Peraine has taught the residents humility. Honeyngton's central location makes it the heart of Albernia, much more than the "outback" metropolis Havena could ever hope to be.

Residents: 2,697

Insignia: Quartered, in the first and fourth fields is Saint Teria's earthen pot and honeycomb in gold on red, in the second and third fields are the Prince's Crown and the three-towered gate in silver on blue.

Government/Politics: Residence of Countess Franka Salva Galahan, ruled by Reeve Cuil ui Harmlyn.

Garrison: one banner of the II Imperial Albernian Guards regiment, one banner of the Royal Bodyguards Regiment "Niamad Bennain," one squadron Abilactrian Light Horse, 30 city guards

Temples: Peraine, Hesinde, Praios, Tsa, Boron, Phex, Travia

Special Features: St. Teria's Honey crucible, every four years Honeyngton's Bard gathering.

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Paper manufacturer Karjelin, Family Braelghan (maker of Honeyngton sausages), Apiculture Vialligh.

City History: Founded around 1820 b.H. as a leper colony, Honeyngton grew quickly, due to the miraculous healing of the sickness through the Goddess Peraine, earning it status as

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

Provincial capital. Served as capital until 1611 b.H. when the Prince's residence moved to Havena. In 291 b.H. was again for a period of 20 years the Prince's residence after Havena was destroyed; before and afterwards was the second most important Albertain city.

Mood in the City: friendly and hospitable, as long as guests respect the laws of Travia and Peraine. Still proud of their former status of Prince's City, and maintains the seat of the most important Countess of Albertain.

KYNDOCH

The Windhague town of Kyndoch is located right by the intersection of the imperial highway and the Great River (the barony sitting on the other side of the river goes by the same name, yet it belongs to Northern Marches). This small town ships mostly fruit, wine (the (in)famous Windhague Tongue-Twister), grains and wood to the rest of the continent.

Population: 1,250

Government/Politics: Town mayor Efferdan Windock

Garrison: 1 banner Royal Albertain Pikemen

Temples: Efferd, Phex, Travia

Special Features: ferry across the Great River

Important Pubs and Taverns: Wave Breaker (Q4/P4/B10); Ferryman Hotel (Q7/P9/B12); Wild Pig (Q1/P2/B12)

Mood in the City: Torn and rugged-looking adventurers may be mistaken for escaped convicts coming down from various mountain camps

PERAINEFORDS

This is the capital of Free Tobria by the upper Tizam River. Duke Bernfrey of House Ehrenstein resides in an estate close to the Peraine monastery. During recent times, the construction of city fortifications (palisades) was completed. Many refugees live in this city, and most goods are short in supply and expensive.

Population: 4,000 (most of them refugees from southern Tobria)

Insignia: A silver stork above a silver wave-lined shield against a green backdrop, a wall crown is shown above

Government/Politics: Chancellor Delo of Gernotsprings

Garrison: 1 regiment Tobrian Home Guards, parts of the Wolf Guard regiment, mercenaries of the Storm Banner

Temples: Peraine, Rondra, Firun

Important Pubs and Taverns: Gleaming Steel (Q3/P3/B20, provides only one large sleeping hall)

Mood in the City: Varies between optimism and despair, as almost everybody here has experienced a tragic loss

PERRICUM

This port city by the mouth of the Darpat River is a stronghold of the Rondra church and serves as an important outpost in the fight against the Dark Lands.

Population: about 10,000

Insignia: A silver dolphin jumping over a golden sabre, on a blue backdrop

Government/Politics: Imperial city

Garrison: (currently, most of the troops listed here exist only on paper): I Imperial and Royal Garetian Guards regiment (Perricum Guards), II Imperial Darpatian Guards regiments (II

Warkhome Guards), III Imperial Home Guards regiment (The Troll Peaks), 4 banners Royal Garetian Halberdiers, 2 squadrons Royal Garetian Horse Guards, 2 banners Provincial Perricum Sabers, about 1,000 sailors and sea soldiers of the Royal Sea of Pearls Fleet, as well as a constantly changing number of knights of the Ardrite Order and the church of Rondra.

Temples: Efferd, Rondra, Praios, Boron, Hesinde, Phex, Ingerimm, Rahja

Special Features: Perricum has recently strengthened its position as military outpost against the Dark Lands; it is home to Lion's Castle (the highest temple of Rondra and the seat of the Sword of Swords), a castle of the Ardrite Order, the admiralty of the Sea of Pearls Fleet, and an IGIA residence as well as the High Castle of the Order of the Gray Staffs; Magician's Academy School of Exorcism (anti-magic, white), which trains exorcists and soul healers and has already treated many war veterans.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Emperor Reto Hotel

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Armory and tool shop Rutaris and Daughters

Mood in the City: A restless city; the last frontier before the Dark Lands, so a visitor is likely to meet many refugees, warriors and all kinds of brave (or reckless) characters

HISTORY OF PERRICUM

About 2700 b.H.: Tulamide settlers from Khunchom founded this town under the name of Nebachot

1865 b.H.: St. Leomar along with Bosparan troops captures the city; renamed to Perricum

PUNIN

Almada's capital is, after Gareth and Havena, the largest city in the Empire, and is influenced by the Garethian, Horasian and Tulumidian cultures. Wide-reaching trade agreements, the Academy of Higher Magic and the two Aventurian main temples (Boron and Tsa) make the Imperial city on the Yaquir a melting pot of the most diverse peoples and occupational groups; they also and have an important influence on the skills of the city. Due to this mixture, the citizens are somewhat less hotblooded than the country Almadani, yet still proud advocates of their ideals and traditions.

Residents: 20,300 (10% Tulamides/Novadis, 1% each elves and dwarfs)

Insignia: two crossed golden keys on a green background

Government/Politics: Burgomaster Rinaya di Madjani

Garrison: one banner each of the I-III I&R Almadanian Guards Regiment, 3 banners of the Great Prince's Bodyguards Regiment "Eslam" (light cavalry), 3 squadrons of the Puninian Horse Guard cavalry (ravensbeaks), 1 squadron of the Imperial Valquirian Horse Archers, one banner each of the Ragathian Cuirassier Regiment and the Heavy Guard Horse Regiment "Yaquir," one squadron Tulumidian riders, 100 city guards.

Temples: All Twelvegods except for Firun; main temple of Boron (Rite of Punin), very important Temple of Tsa, in addition temples for various divine children and demigods, one prayer-house to Rastullah.

Special Features: Eslamidian residence, Mada thermal baths, gladiator (in reality: show fighters') academy, Yaquir Stage, arena for horse and wagon sports, and the Academy of Higher Magic (grey, metamagic), once founded by Fran-Horas.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: long-established merchant family Sfindini (printers) and Galandi; important but less traditional are the Assirefs (armorers) and Ganielle Dallenstein (art trade)

City History: Founded in the year 1847 b.H., the 'Heart of Almada' was long fought-over, as desert riders of the Adamantine Sultanate raided north of the Yaquir river; magician's academy founded in 1612 b.H. by Crown Prince Fran (the latter Fran-Horas). During the following centuries place of many bloody feuds of the Almadanian nobility; Prince's Residence in 991 b.H., Free Imperial City in 201 b.H.. In 18 Haal the 'Battle of the Twelve' took place before the town gates, leading to the city's renunciation of the rule of Answin the Usurper.

Mood in the City: Culturally a colorful mixture of Tulamides, Novadi, Middenrealians, Horasians, dwarfs and elves; very open to magic and enterprises. Tension between "Peppersacks" (rich merchants) and ancient nobility, rich and poor, adherents of the Twelvegods and Rastullah believers.

RAGATH

The seat of the Count of Ragath acquired its status as Imperial City in 25 Haal. In order to buy their freedom from the count, the residents indebted themselves to Radia of Franfield of Ragathsprings, Reeve of the hinterland. That generated a competition for power between the Imperial Reeve and the Reeve of Ragathsprings. The former Tulamidian-influenced Almadanian style of construction is now hard to find; both the fortress and the city are mostly built in old Gyldenlandian and the newer Garethian styles. Buildings in the wealthier neighborhoods are predominantly constructed of stone, with hints of both grandeur and fortification.

Residents: 1,830

Insignia: Golden Griffin on a red background (now halved)

Government/Politics: Imperial Reeve Sforigan of Ragath, who is attempting to deflect the influence of the Reeve of Ragathsprings

Garrison: 2 squadrons of the Imperial Ragathian Battle Rider Regiment (in a state of rebuilding), 1 banner of the Yaquirian Heavy Guards Regiment (pikemen), 20 mercenaries of the "Almadanian Bills," 30 Castle Guards of the Count

Temples: Praios, Rahja, Peraine, Ingerimm (old cult) Phex

Special Features: If the city debts, including interest, are not repaid to Radia of Franfield by 37 Haal, her family will retain control of Ragath as a security; city also has a magnificent Temple of Praios

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Caya Culfaran (smith), tin foundry of Garosh, son of Giltrax, Winepress Jarcosan

City History: In 1866 b.H. the fortress Ragath was founded, and then overrun by goblins 300 years later. In 991 b.H. declared county seat; Imperial city since 25 Haal

Mood in the City: Ragath is one of the best fortified cities in the province, guarding the gate to Almada; the citizens are proud and upstanding

RIDGESROCK

Ridgesrock is surrounded by walls that are far too mighty for this poor town; in the heart of the city sits a castle that is also quite over-sized. The Ridgesrock people live mostly from woodcutting and mining. The local passage through the Kosh Mountains—the Griffin Pass—ensures a steady income through custom fees, yet the city is so hopelessly indebted that these measures could hardly help to accumulate any wealth for its citizens.

Population: 1,400

Government/Politics: Town Master Odumir of Ibenborg-Ibenborg; imperial city

Garrison: 1 company Imperial Northern Marches Crossbows, 1 banner Ridgesrock Honor Guards

Temples: Boron, Ingerimm, Peraine, Praios, Rondra

Special Features: Small misdeeds are punished with rigid fees; hot sulfuric springs; due to high tariffs, goods and products are more expensive than for dozens of miles around

Important Pubs and Taverns: Wild Unicorn (Q3/P5/B16); Kosh View Hotel (Q6/P9/B20); The Wise Count, Pensioners Hotel (Q4/P6/B10)

Town History: Count Greifax the Crazy ruined the city with his outrageous military spending

Mood in the City: Sometimes a traveler will encounter suspicion and mistrust—Count Greifax enforced and cultivated this attitude during his reign

ROMMILYS

Darpatia's capital by the Darpat River. Several princely and count residences, as well as other city houses belonging to noble families, line the streets of the Oldcastle city quarter. A Praios temple, an IGIA branch office and a monastery of the Order of the Banishing Light are located here. The southwest quarter of the city hosts various entertainment venues and a Rahja temple.

Population: 8,900 (and an additional 1,000 pilgrims and refugees)

Insignia: Two big red keys next to each other on a golden background, a rose above

Government/Politics: Prefect Godefried of Gorz-Windwater

Garrison: 1 regiment 'Ogrewatch' Imperial Darpatian Guards, a company of Royal Darpatian Guards ("Troll Peaks Blades"), 50 town guards

Temples: All Twelvegods

Special Features: Institute of Information Magician's Academy (clairvoyance, white); main temple of Travia; community houses of the Mephalite Order, the Badilakan Order and the Order of the Banishing Light; exemplary sewage system.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Pearl of Darpat Hotel (elegant guests, game tables Q10/P10/B27); Holy Sword (Q4/P4); The Lively Darparelle (Q5/P5/B12); Travia's Stove (pilgrim's hostel close to the Travia temple, Q4/P1/B40+)

Mood in the City: Rommily's people view their city as the stronghold of order, loyal magic and good manners, opposing the neighboring Dark Lands

TALADUR

The Imperial City, Taladur is in many respects a border city; it lies at the edge of County Forestguard, is the last outpost of the dwarf residents of Anvil and Iron Forest, and last station on the Iron Path to Kosh and the Northern Marches. The pursuit of wealth and influence, familial feuds and political intrigue are standard operating procedures for the city's clans, whose rivalry with each other—focused on gaining the most strength and power—is embodied by their 'battle towers.'

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

Residents: 1,350 (around 15% dwarfs)

Insignia: Golden tower with ramparts and gate, on blue background

Government/Politics: Residence of Count Rabosh, son of Reshmin of Forestguard; ruled by Imperial Reeve Salatori Ernathesa

Garrison: 30 Axemen of Count Rabosh, 1 group of Pikemen (Lansquenets of Taladur), diverse mercenaries of the nobility

Temples: Ingerimm, Travia

Special Features: 16 fortified towers of various noble families

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Zayxobar Armory, Tandori Wiremill, Ubolosh Silver Smith, Hayando Falconry, Amazetti Bronze Smelter

City History: Former dwarf trading post with the elves of the Yaquir valley, Taladur gained prestige for the humans with the settling of Almada; the residents inherited the dwarf virtue, but also gained their quarrelsomeness.

Mood in the City: Diligence and humorlessness plague the Taladurians—nowhere else in Almada exists so much competition amongst the residents; the Imperial Reeve has the law on his side, but Clan Tandori is the real power.

TRALLOP

This city by the shore of Lake Lamprey spreads over four islands and sits by the mouth of the Pandralil River. The population lives off of trade with Baliho, Uhdenmount, and—to a small extent—Thunderbrook (a dangerous road west of Lake Lamprey through the Fog Moors connects Trallop and Thunderbrook).

Population: 3,500

Insignia: A silver lamprey against a blue background, a wall crown is pictured above

Government/Politics: Duchess Walpurga of Meadows

Garrisons: 1 banner of Imperial Meadows Guards, 1 squadron of Ducal Lancers ('Round Helmets'), 3 banners of Ducal Pikemen, 1 banner of Ducal Guards, 80 knights of the Order of the Thunder

Temples: Boron, Firun, Peraine, Phex, Praios, Rahja, Rondra, Travia

Special Features: Important Phex temple (Hall of Mist); the houses belonging to the Therbunites and the Badilakans orders are the only accommodations in this town; trade fair 12–15 Phex

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Tradesman Trallop Gorge Kolenbrander

Mood in the City: A general mistrust for strangers

WARKHOME

A mighty wall as well as a ditch encloses this garrison city in northern Darpatia ('The Iron Heart of the Empire'); the count's castle sits on a rock in the southwest of Warkhome. Clean, rectangular street design, pretty houses and several large barracks dominate the city's appearance.

Population: 14,800 (including refugees)

Insignia: A blue portcullis on a silver background

Government/Politics: Imperial Prefect Roderic of Quintian–Quintian (for Count Dexter Nemrod, head of the IGIA (the Imperial Secret Service); imperial city

Garrison: 1 regiment Imperial Darpatian Guards, 2 squadrons Royal Darpatian Light Horse, 1 banner Warkhome Iron Guards,

150 town guards, 50 artillerymen and siege engineers, 10 Imperial Treasure Guardsmen

Temples: Efferd, Ingerimm, Praios, Rahja, Rondra, Tsa

Special Features: Important temple of Praios; a monastery of the Holy Order of the Banishing Light; Warkhome Imperial Academy of Strategy and Tactics; the home of the imperial ducat mint; a ferry crosses the Dergel river

Important Pubs and Taverns: Night Drill (soldier's pub, Q3/P3), Count's Hotel (Q8/P9/B15), Mother Travine's (Q5/P5/B14)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Armorer Bakshan Arvo

Mood in the City: The enemy is never far away; the virtues of discipline, strength and loyalty are of crucial importance within this "steel heart of the empire"

WINHALL

Lying at the southern bank of the Tommel river, this small city is the portal to the Kingdom of Nostria. Ruled for years by the mostly-absent Count, then Margrave Raidri Conchobair, the city has only recently woken from its blessed sleep under his ambitious daughter Rhianna. The construction of the Temple of Rondra was completed—and dedicated to the memory of Raidri Conchobair—under the name "Temple of the Sword King."

Residents: 1,389

Insignia: Black raven with outstretched wings over a black city wall, on a silver background

Government/Politics: Residence of Countess Rhianna Conchobair

Garrison: 1 banner of Imperial Albernian Axemen (in the process of rebuilding), 30 Winhallian Tommel Guards

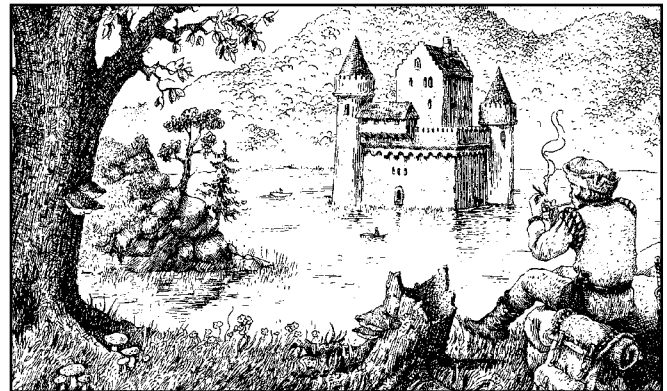
Temples: Rondra, Boron, Praios, Peraine, Firun,

Special Features: Important Boron temple, Temple of the Sword King (Rondra), Rondra's Art of Sword-Fighting Warrior Academy

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Herxen family (hides and furs)

City History: Built around 1690 b.H., over the ruins of Tommelsford, which had been destroyed by orks, Winhall was the capital city of the fiefdom of the same name, (which seceded from Albernia in 248 b.H. under Count Conchobair). In 189 b.H. Count Hjalbin lost his freehold to the Bennains as a gambling debt; it was bestowed to Raidri Conchobair by Prince Cuanu ui Bennain of Albernia in 10 Haal. Since 21 Haal given to Margrave Raidri by Imperial Protector Brin, the province fell back to Albernia after his death. Cuanu awarded Rhianna Conchobair, the illegitimate daughter of Raidri, the fiefdom after her father's death.

Mood in the City: Rurally friendly



INGERIMM'S GOVERNORS—THE DWARFS OF AVENTURIA

Areas: Anvil, Iron Forest, Kosh Mountains, some in Darkencrest and northern Rashtul Wall

Estimated Population: 37,500 (9,500 Ore dwarfs, 8,500 Anvil dwarfs, 7,500 Hill dwarfs, 4,500 Diamond dwarfs, 4,000 dwarfs in several different human cities all over the continent, 1,000 in Darkencrest, 1,000 in Dragon Stones, 800 Wild dwarfs, 700 Deepdwarves)

Important Cities and Villages: Xorlosh (1,600)

Dominant Religions: Angrosh (Ingerimm) faith

Rulers: High king of the dwarf peoples, Albrax, son of Agam; Mountain King Arombolosh, son of Agam (Freehold Forest Guard, Anvil dwarfs); King Cendrash, son of Odmar (Diamond dwarfs); King Nirwulf, son of Negromon (prefect of the Hill dwarfs); Mountain King Tschubax, son of Tuagel (Freehold Xorlosh, Ore dwarfs); Mountain King Fargol, son of Fanderam (Freehold Iron Forest, Ore dwarfs); Mountain Kings Gilemon, son of Gillim (Freehold Koshim, Ore dwarfs); Gorfar, son of Gurobead (Imperial Domain Shradok, Ore dwarfs).

National Symbol: Two crossed hammers in front of a flame above an anvil (symbol of Angrosh)

Social Structure: Dwarf tribes and clans determine the politics of mountain kingdoms

Influential Families: The age of a clan greatly determines its importance

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Mountain King Raxamosh (in alliance with the elves, he defeated the orks near Saljeth); Organa, daughter of Ordamon (she defeated a horde of dragons led by Pyrdacor's son in 8200 b.H.); Brandan (also called Brendan, a mighty Geode that defeated Pyrdacor's creatures in 5200 b.H.).

Strange Locations: The Gorge (volcano, sacred site to Angrosh, in northern Rashtul's Wall); Malmazrom, the 'Cave of the Hammer' (Ingerimm/Geode sanctuary in Anvil Mountains)

Local Festivities and Holidays: Annual holidays are uncommon; Kosh's native festivities (Angbar Trade Fair 21–23 Ingerimm; Kosh Valley Beer Fest on first Market and Praiosday in Travia) are celebrated together with the human population.

THE ANGROSHIM

The Dwarfs—the Angroshim—are strong, long-lived, and tenacious. With a height of about 1.4 paces, they are not exactly the tallest creatures of Aventuria, but neither are they the shortest). They are known for their frugality, as well as their ability to handle their drinks. Dwarfs are not exactly quiet and—as rumor has it—they have a strong aversion to water.

The Angroshim worship Ingerimm, whom they call Angrosh, and it is in his place that they protect the treasures of Ethra. The most important property of every dwarf people is the Holy Hall, each inside of a mountain. The dwarf kingdoms are headed by Mountain Kings, who act more like high judges than absolutist monarchs—often they serve as mediators between humans and dwarfs. In times of great threat, the dwarfs may also elect a High King, an honor that is currently bestowed upon an Anvil dwarf by the name of Albrax, son of Agam.

The core of a dwarf community is the clan, whose kinsmen are usually related. These clans will be loosely affiliated by tribes; the common Angroshim is far more devoted to his clan, however, and feels less loyalty to the tribe as a whole.

The dwarf society consists of four different cultures: the Ore, Anvil, Hill and Diamond dwarfs (for the sake of completeness, the Wild dwarfs in Brazen Sword and the Deepdwarves from Orkland should also be mentioned).

The Geodes hold a special position in society—they view themselves as mighty “deonts of the earth,” living a quite non-dwarf lifestyle among the woods and meadows. When examining the Geodes, one has to distinguish between two different schools: the Servants of Sumu view the world as filled with spirits and souls with whom one has to live in harmony. The Masters of the Earth, on the other hand, attempt to put themselves above the inanimate environment, trying to channel its energies.

THE DWARF PEOPLE

ORE DWARFS

The conservative ore dwarfs, the largest and oldest of the dwarf cultures, live in underground cities in the areas of the Kosh Mountains, Ingra Knolls and Iron Forest. Their lifestyle is highly traditional, providing them with a complicated ritual for almost everything they do.

The ore dwarfs greatly respect age; brotherhoods, guilds, orders and warrior clans play a major role in their society. Ore dwarfs dislike leaving their home for long periods of time, which is why “small” errands are often handed over to the traveling adventurer.

ANVIL DWARFS

Most humans would characterize the common Angrosho as a quarrelling, hard-drinking loudmouth who does not especially care about hygiene (to say the least). While untrue as a whole, these stereotypes do fit the dwarfs that inhabit the caves, meadows and woods of the Anvil area. While ore dwarfs adhere to sinister rituals and ceremonies, Anvil dwarfs lead a bit less rigid of a life: drinking, feasting, bawling along to thumping rhythms and bagpipe screeches and maybe a genuine fistfight are the features of a good pastime.

Other dwarf people, whose culture is quite similar to that of the Anvil dwarfs, live in Dragon Stones and Darkencrest.

HILL DWARFS

This people of Angroshim may be the most ‘weighty’ of all dwarf cultures, for they appreciate nothing more than a good meal and their greatest invention—the Ferdok beer. Hill dwarfs live in the foothills of Kosh Mountains around the Lake Angbar area; mineral resources in this region are scarce (thus they do not live in caves but circular huts). The art of forgery is well known to hill dwarfs, although they have not refined this craft as well as other dwarf cultures did. Further, they care little about accumulating wealth; quite contrary to their brothers and sisters, they are happy to spend their gold on a comfortable and joy-filled life.

THE PATIIONS OF AVENTURIA

DIAMOND DWARFS

Diamond dwarfs engage in trade and maintain a thievish culture, just as Phex would have it. Regarding the arts, they are blessed both by Angrosh and Hesinde. Their city and Holy Hall was located in the Beilunk Mountains area, but the Borbaradian invasion forced them out. Currently, diamond dwarfs are exploring the Goldenrock and Rashtul's Wall regions.

A DWARF CITY

A typical dwarf typically sits by the edge of a valley and is by no means exclusively an underground settlement. The furnaces often sit under the open sky (due to the poisonous gases that develop during the smelting process) along with gardens, lakes, sheep pastures and maybe some living houses.

A thick wall, upon which crossbowmen stand guard, often secure these cities. A massive steel gate bars the way into the mountain where one can find forgeries, mushroom gardens, quarters, weapon chambers and of course, the temple to Angrosh, the Holy Hall.

HISTORY OF THE DWARF PEOPLE

About 8500 b.H.: Founding of Xorlosh

About 8200 b.H.: Battle of the Burning Sky: dragons attack dwarf settlements and mines, only Xorlosh survives

About 6000 b.H.: First Angroshim settle in the Anvil area

About 5100 b.H.: Formation of the first devotional brotherhood of Angrosh, which leads the religious movement

About 4500 b.H.: Introduction of Rogolan as the first universal written language of the Angroshim

4065 b.H.: Day of Wrath, for the first time in history, dwarf is slain by dwarf; Aboralm's people flee north and the sons of Brogar move into Brazen Sword

1876 b.H.: Anvil dwarfs attack a Bosparan army outpost; they encounter Gyldenland people for the first time

1134 b.H.: With the help of Elf King Tasilla, Mountain King Raxamosh defeats the orks by Saljeth (later Griffinsford)

883 b.H.: The Lex Dwarfia is announced; this document assures the special privileges of the Angroshim

28 Haal: Albrax, son of Agam, becomes high king

THE WILD DWARFS

The wild dwarfs, who call themselves Brobim, live in Brazen Sword and have lost almost all of their craftsmanship abilities—the preparation of firestone is their most advanced technology. In addition, they have lost their former bond and knowledge of Angrosh; they worship their ancestors as higher beings.

UMRAZIM AND THE DEEPDWARVES

The deepdwarves (presumably the former people of Aboralm) appear to be descendants of the masters of Umrazim,

a legendary, lost city in Orkland said to house unimaginable treasures. Deepdwarves avoid the light. Until recently, they lived only in mountain caves that surround the Orkland; now, they are slowly spreading into the Middenrealm area.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Dwarfs may trust a group of humans when it comes to small, petty affairs, however, an important task does require a dwarf to accompany a group of characters and vouching for his non-dwarf comrades.

IMPORTANT PLACES OF THE DWARFS

XORLOSH

This city, hidden in a valley in the northern Iron Forest, is the sacred home of the Angroshim and the residence of Mountain King Tschubax, son of Tuagel. This settlement is built both above and below the ground. It sports furnaces, magnificent houses and temporary quarters for the dwarfs that visit the city (those are located just outside of city walls). A heavy steel gate leads to the inside of the mountain, which protects tool shops, quarters, weapon chambers and the Holy Hall of Angrosh.

Population: 1,500 (only dwarfs)

Government/Politics: Mountain King Tschubax, son of Tuagel

Temples: Angrosh

Special Features: Main temple of the dwarf Ingerimm following; humans can visit this city only with a rarely granted permission

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Dwarfs are naturally great craftsmen

Town History: Xorlosh was built about 8,500 years ago and is therefore the oldest known settlement of Aventuria

Mood in the City: A joyful mood paired with a devout Angrosh faith



IN THE NAME OF HOLY HORAS— FAIRFIELD AND ITS BORDERING PROVINCES

Geographic Borders: Windhague Mountains, Goldenrock, High Eternans, Loch Harodrol, Sea of the Seven Winds

Terrain: Phecadi Valley, Yaquir Valley, Lower Yaquiria, Land of Sikram, Chababia, Drôl March, Cyclops Islands

Mountains: Windhague Mountains, Goldenrock, Eternans

Rivers and Waterways: Yaquir, Phecadi, Sikram, Onjet, Chabab, Harotrud

Estimated Population: About 600,000 (Horasians)

Important Cities and Villages: Vinsalt, Kuslik, Grangor, Arivor, Methumis, Neetha, Belhanka, Silas, Bethana, Drôl, Rethis, Teremon, Horasia, Aldyra, Pertakis, Bomed, Thegun

Important Traffic Routes: Imperial roads: Seneb–Horas Road (Bethana–Arivor–Methumis–Neetha), Yaquir Road (Kuslik–Vinsalt–Brig–Lo); Royal roads: Goldenrock Highway (Grangor–Vinsalt–Marudret–Methumis), Coastal Highway (Grangor–Drôl)

Dominant Religions: Twelvegods belief, especially Hesinde, Rahja, Rondra, Efferd, Nandus, Peraine and Tsa (the latter among peasants); holy Horas as mediator between gods and humans

Rulers: Empress Amene-Horas, governing as Amene III, Queen of Yaquiria

National Symbol: A gold and red eagle on green (symbolizing Yaquiria), a golden sun disc on blue (representing the Old Empire)

Social Structure: Feudalism with an ascending middle class living in the cities

Important Noble Families: Firdayon (imperial family, controlling Horasia and Chababia), Thaliyin (Kingdom of Hylailos), Berlinghan (Dukes of Methumis), Garlishgrotz (Dukes of Grangor), Marvinko (Sikram County), Oikaldiki (Thegun County)

Local Heroes and Saints: (Arch-)Holy Horas, St. Geron, St. Lutisana, St. Thalionmel, St. Rahjalina; several local saints

Strange and Peculiar Locations: Ruins of ancient Bosparan; the hunting castle Baliiri near Vinsalt (declaration of independence); Mantrash'Mor in Goldenrock (monastery to all the Twelvegods); the stronghold of imperial dragon Shafir in the High Eternans; citadel of Uppercrags (one of the most modern fortresses in Aventuria); Chabab Fords near Neetha (miracle of St. Thalionmel).

Local Festivities and Holidays: 7 Pra.: Horas' appearance (official ceremonies); 8 Ron.: Fall of Bosparan (reflection and commemoration); 20–29 Hes.: Vinsalt Opera Days; 19 Tsa: Independence Day, 4 Per.: Day of Thalionmel (local holiday in Neetha); 8–12 Rah.: trade fair and carnival in Grangor; 20–25 Rah.: knightly tournaments in Arivor.

A good thousand years after the fall of Bosparan and the destruction of Fairfield by Garetian armies, this region has risen once again as a mighty and highly developed empire, competing with Middenrealm in many ways. The diverse landscape is characterized by warm sun, sufficient rain and fertile soils; there are still untouched cedar forests and marble ruins dating back to the Bosparan Age.

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The nobility is the ruling class in the Horasrealm, yet enterprising town-patricians challenge this power structure. The Horas empress repays services to her state with titles and honors, drawing many noblemen to her court and encouraging them to delegate their power as defenders and governors of the land to the State Council of the Golden Eagle. This order of mostly scholars of civilian and state law represents the imperial administration, which over the last years has developed into a mighty, self-sufficient and hard-to-control bureaucracy.

Socially, however, the nobility still stands for the status quo for which even the richest merchant strives. Cabals and duels of honor, salons and lounges (where the political, cultural, artistic and scientific elite meet) mark life in this upper strata of society. The nobility occupies itself with mistresses and pet dogs, sparkling 'Bosparanian' champagne and perfumed tobacco, sporting wigs, laced handkerchiefs and calling cards—titular importance is crucial. Nowhere else in Aventuria will one find more ranks and varying degrees of power (there is a Genuine Secret Councillor and a Governing Court Councillor, for instance). Here are some noble titles of ascending power (titles in *italic* represent titular ranks that hold no estate or governing power): Esquiro/a, Signore/a, Cavalliere/a, Gransignor/a, Baron/ess, Comtess/a, Count/ess, Marchese/a, Duke/Duchess, Granduco/a, King/Queen, Emperor/Empress.

Trade companies hold most of the economic power, their business relations extending from Ifirn's Ocean to the Forest Islands. Some bank and trade houses even hand out shares that are traded by investors and speculators. Wealthy families, newly-rich merchants and manufacturer owners dominate the city life. Ceramic, linen and luxury goods such as glassware and mechanical devices are mass-produced by privileged manufacturers—'classic' guilds have little influence. Advanced technologies also gave rise to printing houses, which now publish novels, non-fiction books and even periodicals.

The country is spotted with mansions, small summer castles and large estates; a Barony is separated into several different estates (each of a few villages) belonging to the rural nobility or stewards of the royal houses. Many people are desperately poor; they survive as day workers or traveling harvest helpers, pulling carts with their meager belongings from one farm to another in hope of some work.

The empire is divided into the Kingdom of Yaquiria (Fairfield proper), the Kingdom of Drôl, the Kingdom of Both Hylailos (the Cyclops Islands) and the colonies on the Forest Islands, all four political entities having different political power, of course.

In Yaquiria, the wealthiest and most important part of the empire, the power of the Queen and Empress is held in check by the Crown Convent (comprised of representatives of the cities,

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

the clergy and the nobility), convening every three months in Arivor to discuss and influence laws and political priorities.

The Empress is supported by two factions of the Crown Convent: the Hesinde Patriots emphasize the importance of culture and technology; they tend to favor inner reforms such as reconstruction and education programs. This group is led by Princess Aldare, State Secretary (and Hesinde deont) Abelmir of Marvinko, and Duke Eolan of Methumis. The Horas Patriots support political and military might and glory, an extended system of treaties, expansion of the colonial estates as well as the radical defeat of all unrest. The Archduke of Horasia, Hakaan of Horasia, is their best known spokesperson; State Marshal Folnor Sirensteen and State Admiral Gilmon Quent are naturally in favor of this group's aspirations.

The other factions are basically loyal to the state as well, yet they stand up for their own interest with stern opposition to the patriots: the Rondrians symbolize the old knightly world view and the lower (rural) nobility; they disagree to modern armies of mercenaries, imperial dominance, bureaucracy, the power of merchants and other modern affairs. Nepolemo ya Torese, a very influential man, is their leader: as 'Archregent' he governs the county Arivor, as High Deont the local Rondra following, and as Grand Master and Seneschal the Ardarite Order. Another Rondrian leader (for the time being) is Duke Cusimo of Grangor.

The Libertarians work towards freedom of thought and trade, refuting imperial customs, political pressures and bureaucracy—some even advocate the distribution of positions based on merit rather than blood. Their official representative is Count Mondino of Belhanka, an individual known for his ability to live life to its fullest (despite his lack of property). Other libertarian supporters include tradesmen such as the wealthy shipowner Fiaga ya Terdilion.

The Kingdom of Dröl has no king per se; a senate of nine Dröl city patricians ('His Majesty the Senate of Dröl') takes care of political affairs and governs the area that extends north of Mengbilla. The Guardian of Order, Marchese Praionor VII di Balligur, shares his influence with a wealthy trade company owned by Senator Fildorn di Cerastelli. Overall, the Dröl people are interested in spreading the glory of their home city.

HISTORY

2485–1850 b.H.: Horas' appearance and time of settlement; the Gyldenland people move into Fairfield and announce Bosparan to be their new capital

1849–1612 b.H.: Peace Emperors. Bosparanians acquire large parts of western and central Aventuria

about 1550–1150 b.H.: Dark Ages. Fairfield remains as one of the last strongholds of civilization

1155–993 b.H.: Kuslik dynasty. These rulers strengthen the country; Silem-Horas emphasizes culture and codifies Twelvegods belief

993 b.H.: Fall of Bosparan: the population of Gareth rises against conjurer-empress Hela-Horas, destroys the capital and loots the surrounding areas

935–250 b.H.: Kuslikan Age: Fairfield continues to be exploited and oppressed under the rule of the Kuslik Dukes; however, Rohal the Wise allows for the construction of Vinsalt in the area of ancient Bosparan

249–241 b.H.: War of Independence. Count Khadan Firdayon vows along with other noblemen to fight for the independence from the Middenrealm (the meeting takes place in the hunting castle of Baliiri); after 8 years of civil war, Fairfield becomes an independent kingdom under Khadan I, and the Firdayon family moves into the king's castle; the ducal family of Galahan maintains control over Kuslik

17 Haal: Horas-Proclamation. A document proves that the Firdayon family descended from Silem-Horas; Queen Amene III assumes the title of Horas and subdues the Cyclops Islands as well as Dröl

26 Haal: Princess Kusmina of Kuslik attempts several times to have the queen killed; instead, she is exposed and executed. The house of Galahan is stripped of all its power, and the Princedom of Kuslik becomes part of the Archduchy Horasia; many additional constitutional changes are passed without much opposition from the crown convent

27 Haal: After border skirmishes, the Congress of Oberfels results in the Peace of Weidleth, a treaty between the Middenrealm and the Horasrealm, which settles all border disagreements



INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Horasrealm is a land of modern culture and technology, as well as of political conspiracies and intrigues. Common heroes are either uncultivated Middenrealmian or northern people, making a mess of everything they start, or they are part of the Horasian society, eager to gain social status and constantly striving for respect among their military, clerical or academic peers. If presented that way, the Horasrealm is ideal for a cloak-and-dagger-style game, with an emphasis on courage, diplomacy, style, humor, elegance and the always slightly inflated attitude.

For adventures that go beyond lodge houses, tea parties and glamorous ballrooms, one can embark on expeditions into the colonies or search for the forgotten ruins of the ancient Bosparan days.

IMPORTANT CITIES OF THE HORASREALM

ARIVOR

This conservative "City of Rondra" unites the power of nobility, church and order.

Population: 7,370

Insignia: Quartered, green and silver, two passant black lions in the top right corner

Government/Politics: Arivor is governed by an arch-castellan appointed by Nepolemo ya Torese, the seneschal of the Ardarite Order and 'Archregent' of the county of Arivor

Garrison: A company of Ardarite warriors

Temples: Rondra, Hesinde, Travia, Boron, Tsa, Rahja

Special Features: The ruins of the old castle sit next to the theater (where the Crown Convent meets) on Goldenhelm Rock; below Goldenhelm, in Swordfields, the tournament court, the High Castle of the Ardarites, the Rondra temple and the Palazzo Acano, the magistrate building of Arivor county, mark the center of power.

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Saladan the Blacksmith

Town History: The Horas Emperors used to reside in Arivor during the winter; after the fall of Bosparan, both goblins and the Garethians looted this city until Lutisana of Kullbach, along with eleven companions, defeated the goblins and founded the legendary Order of the Theater. Since then, the city is closely tied to Rondrian culture, and the High Deont is also the ruler of the surrounding land.

Mood in the City: The people of Arivor despise most modern ideas; many of them manufacture weapons; the city becomes a hotbed of intrigues during the Crown Convent's meeting

BELHANKA

The flourishing trade city of Belhanka is known for its sensuous arts and its close ties to the church of Rahja.

Population: 4,870

Insignia: Quartered, silver and red; a green garland of roses with red blossoms in the upper right corner, a golden cup with a red heart in the upper left, a rampant horse in the bottom right corner and a purple grape in the lower left

Government/Politics: Belhanka is a free city under the rule of a powerful city council; the impoverished count is solely a representative figure

Garrison: 2 companies of Hylailian Naval Mercenaries, 20 town guards

Temples: Rahja, Efferd, Tsa, Peraine

Special Features: The city is scattered across several islands by the mouth of the Sikram River. Belenora is the main island hosting the flower market and the magic school, Spiritwalk Academy (movement, gray); Jardinata is home to the palazzo of the count and the mansions of the patricians; Paradisela hosts the Rahja temple (where the lover of the goddess is chosen once a year)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Trading house and shipping office Terdilion, caravel dockyards Cabazzo, six different perfume manufacturers

Town History: After the fall of Bosparan, Belhanka was one of the first cities to revive again as the Cup of Rahja was brought here; the growing wealth enabled the citizens in 4 b.H. to buy the count's political power before his wasteful spending ruined the city.

Mood in the City: Belhankans indulge into the sensuous and the artful, while the scent of perfume lingers in the air.

BETHANA

This old port town is home to the Aventurian main temple of Efferd.

Population: 1,580

Insignia: Half-split and divided, a black anchor on silver in the top right quarter, a silver trident in a golden crown on blue in the upper left quarter, the bottom half pictures a golden Horas eagle on green

Government/Politics: Baroness Hesindiane of Bethana-Aralzin and the city council preside over town regulations

Garrison: 1 company of Archducal Horasian Bowfolk, 10 town bailiffs

Temples: Efferd, Hesinde, Travia

Special Features: Bethana hosts the Efferd temple in which the Keeper of the Circle (the highest deont) resides; the loyal magician's academy Hall of Perfect Battle (combat, white); the IAC credit bank emerged from the oldest trading house in Aventuria.

Town History: It was here where Gyldenland settlers first stepped on Aventurian ground; the settlement grew around a monument devoted to Efferd and even survived the destruction that followed the fall of Bosparan

Mood in the City: A quiet, sleepy town consisting of old buildings and narrow alleys

DRÔL

Known for its velvet lace, this city shares the cultures of both Fairfield and the Southern Colonies.

Population: 2,200

Insignia: Divided red over gold, top the golden crown of the kingdom of Drôl, bottom a red rose

Government/Politics: A nine-headed senate of patrician families rules the kingdom and the city of Drôl

Garrison: 50 town guards, 1 company of royal halberdiers, 100 sea soldiers and mercenaries

Temple: Efferd, Phex, Boron, Rahja, Praios

Special Features: Drôl is known for its artful flower arrangements (real, painted or carved), the town park with its hanging gardens must be the most exceptional example. The numerous lace shops helped the city accumulate its wealth.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

Town History: After the fall of Bosparan, Drôl became the capital of a province that extended from Neetha to Chorhop. The eventual loss of Neetha changed the fortunes of the city, the di Balligur family (long holding the title of a Margrave and Guardian of Order) lost its power to the citizens. In reality, Mengbilla controlled the city until the Horasrealm conquered the land.

Mood in the City: Southern customs dominate—a joy of living, corruption and a certain carefree attitude prevails; numerous domestics from the Chirakah tribe of forest people characterize the city picture

GRANGOR

This wealthy city of islands and channels is the most important port for the trade with the Aventurian North and the main naval port of the Horasrealm as well.

Population: 9,850

Insignia: split in white and black, on each field a lily in reverse colors

Government/Politics: A free city; its rich citizens elect a new Town Master every five years

Garrison: 120 town guards of the Twin-lily Guard, 30 channel watchmen, 40 mercenaries, about 2,000 sailors and marines of the imperial fleet

Temple: Efferd, two Travia temples, Phex, Tsa, Boron, Rondra, Peraine, many additional shrines

Special Features: Grangor sits on four islands by the mouth of the Phecadi River, the islands are interconnected via numerous bridges; the only peculiar attraction is the local School of Apparitions (illusion, grey)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Liegerfield & Sandfort trading company

Town History: A water dragon destroyed this ancient city three times, Thorwalians plundered it more than once. With the independence came the status of a Free City; since then, Grangor has grown to a leading mercantile power in northwest Aventuria.

Mood in the City: Grangor is a flourishing and modernized trade city, its citizens are known for their uprightness and matter-of-fact attitude



KUSLIK

A bastion of knowledge and the arts, culturally Kuslik is one of the leading cities in Aventuria.

Population: 21,800

Insignia: Half-split and divided, a linen scissor with three needles in blue on silver in the upper right, open folio with the letters HH in silver on blue in the upper left, golden Horas eagle against a blue background in the bottom half

Government/Politics: Archduke Hakaan is also the Baron of Kuslik; Burgomaster Efferdan Pitchstone leads the city's administration

Garrison: 100 town guards, 1 company of the Archducal Guard, 1 company Baronial Guard, 400 marines, 100 naval mercenaries

Temple: Hesinde, Praios, Rondra, Efferd, Peraine, Phex, Tsa, Rahja plus numerous shrines devoted to a countless number of saints and demigods

Special Features: Kuslik is the major stronghold of the church of Hesinde and further maintains the largest library in Aventuria (Hall of Wisdom). The town has three magician's academies: The white Hall of Antimagic, the Hall of Metamorphosis (transformation of the inanimate, gray) and the Institute of Arcane Analysis (independent, no specialization). The Hall of Arts and the Magical Theater are proof of the artistic ambitions of the Kuslikans.

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Royal Kuslikan Coaches wheelwrights

Town History: This ancient town, once founded by Horas himself as Cuslicum, used to be Bosparan's seaport by the Sea of the Seven Winds. The wise Kuslik Emperors, who led the Old Empire into a bright future, originate from this area. After the Fall of Bosparan, the city was a regional capital, but since the independence, Vinsalt has become more dominant as a center of politics and intrigue.

Mood in the City: Kuslik is conscious of its tradition, independent and quite skeptical of the cult and power of Horas authorities. The people here are friendly towards Gareth; they have an overall cosmopolitan character.

METHUMIS

The enormous university, a prestige object of a scholarly duke, largely influences Methumis and its character as a city.

Population: 3,400

Insignia: Three blue fish on silver, accompanied by three black fishing hooks

Government/Politics: In place of his brother Count Eolan, Prince Romin of Berlinghan rules the city

Garrison: 1 company of ducal guards, 50 sailors and marines of the Imperial Horasian Navy, 25 town guards, about 50 students of military arts

Temple: Efferd, Hesinde, Tsa, Rahja, Phex, Ingerimm

Special Features: The Count Eolan University has faculties all over the city; one of them is the Academy of Magical Knowledge (clairvoyance, white). This institution is one of only a few higher schools that exist in Aventuria; also famous are the town fortifications ('Colorful Walls'), the probably largest fresco painting in Aventuria, and the New Residence in the northern part of town.

Town History: Methumis came to be under the rule of the Peace Emperors, but was destroyed after the Fall of Bosparan; the city revived only after the independence

Mood in the City: The students, which come from all parts of Aventuria, give the city its charm—its bustle outdoes even the busy local port

ΠΕΕΉΑ

The “White Guard,” for a long time the southernmost city of Fairfield, is militarily up to date but lacks economic strength.

Population: 5,500

Insignia: Two crossed red swords over a red four-piered bridge on silver, blue waves below

Government/Politics: Residence of Archduke Timor Firdayon of Chababia

Garrison: 3 companies I&R Vinsaltian Pikemen, 1 squadron Uppercrag Light Horse, 4 companies Archducal Chababian Pikemen, 1 company of the Ardarite order, 50 marines of the Horas fleet

Temple: Rondra, Praios, Efferd, Hesinde, Rahja, Phex, Tsa, Horas

Special Features: Neetha is home to the Thalionmel Bridge (a place of pilgrimage for many followers of Rondra) and to a castle of the Ardarite Order; a castle of the Gray Wands sits by the Chabab River

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: The dockyards of Igurio and Daughters; Archducal Corset Manufacture

Town History: After the fall of Bosparan, Neetha was assigned to the province of Drôl, after the independence the deeds of St. Thalionmel protected it against the Novadis. The growth of the Horasrealm has yet to benefit this region; however, the recapturing of the Cyclops Islands by Amene-Horas’ troops has at least brought an end to Neetha’s isolation.

Mood in the City: Neetha was cut off from Vinsalt for a long time, so the locals have become very stubborn and suspicious.

ΣΙΛΑΣ

Silas is known for its Hesinde temple and the craftsmanship of the many local dwarfs.

Population: 3,300 (10% Angroshim)

Insignia: Two silver bugles with golden belts over a silver greyhound with a golden collar on red

Government/Politics: Countess Irionya governs this city in place of her son, Count Croenar of Marvinko

Garrison: 3 companies of the count’s halberdiers, 20 town guards (5 of them are market guards), 20 channel custom guards

Temples: Hesinde, Tsa, Ingerimm, Peraine, Efferd

Special Features: The Temple of the True Serpent dates back to Bosparan times and is—next to Kuslik—the empire’s main

Hesinde temple; the lizard garden near the Tsa temple is home to an unbelievable number of different reptiles from all over Aventuria.

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Radox & Dollberg goldsmiths

Town History: Once home to the mighty and pompous Silem-Horas palace near the Sikram bridge, the good location led to the founding of Silas on the spot of the ruined palace after Bosparan’s Fall; the local Marvinko family once almost acquired the throne of the Emperor.

Mood in the City: This is a busy place; the countless Diamond Dwarfs, most of them are jewelers or goldsmiths, during the last years even refugees from the Beilunk Mountains, are a visible trademark of Silas.

VINSALT

The capital of the Horasrealm is naturally the political center, but it also competes with Kuslik over cultural importance; the glamour and glory of the Horas Court permeates the entire city.

Population: 19,850

Insignia: Rohal the Wise (in natural colors) holding a red model of the city, on silver

Government/Politics: Baron Tanglan of Vinsalt, powerful town guilds and naturally the court of the Emperor all influence local politics

Garrison: Imperial Body Guard Regiment “Horas’ Guard,” 5 companies II Imperial Elite Guards, 1 squadron I&R Vinsaltian Guard Horse, 50 temple guards, 50 town bailiffs

Temples: All Twelvegods, Phex and Travia each twice; shrines to

several demigods (especially Horas and Nandus)

Academies: The warrior-academy Art of War and Life; the magician’s academy Anatomic Institute (healing, white)

Special Features: The debris of old Bosparan ruins was used in construction of the modern palace and on temple hills; the old Bosparan city south of the Yaquir is a run-down, dangerous place and a hot-bed of crime, but a grandiose palace quarter is in planning for “Southern Vinsalt.”

Town History: The ruins of Bosparan were long deserted; only Rohal eventually allowed for the construction of Vinsalt; initially, this city was the residence of a count and (since the independence) also of the king; it is now the Emperor’s official seat.

Mood in the City: Joyous, turbulent and always a bit dramatic and blasé.



ISLES OF FIRE—THE KINGDOM OF BOTH HYLAILOS

"The Isles of fires by the edge of infinite waters. A last sign of culture borders elementary nothingness."

—from the notes of Harika of Bethana on her voyage to Gyldenland

Geographic Borders: Sea of the Seven Winds, the Cyclops Islands

Terrain: Pailian Volcanoes, Kingswood (forest in the middle of Hylailos)

Mountains: The volcanoes Amran Nemoras (2,000 paces high) and Nun'Kun'tur (both on Pailos), Amran Kutaki (on Kutaki), Amran Khallas (on the western shore of Pailos)

Rivers and Waterways: Sea of the Seven Winds, Cyclops Sea (area between the islands), Sea of the Mourning Bells (west of Pailos), Nyssides (sole year-round river, Hylailos)

Estimated Population: 20,000

Important Cities and Villages: Rethis, Teremon, Garen (on Hylailos)

Important Traffic Routes: Coastal road on Pailos and Hylailos

Dominant Religions: Twelvegods belief, especially Efferd, Peraine, Rahja

Rulers: Palamydas Thaliyin A'Layis Hyphon dyll Rethis, the Sea King of Both Hylailos

National Symbol: The symbol of the Horasrealm along with the old insignia of the Cyclops Islands (a golden eye with a red eyeball on blue) as a heartshield on the chest of the Horasian Eagle

Social Structure: Feudalism, no important middle class

Important Noble/Influential Families: House Thaliyin (family of the Sea King), Cosseira (Dukes of Teremon)

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Gil-Pathar, a legendary cyclops blacksmith; many cyclopes, minotaurs and fairy creatures of all kinds; Algor Tonn (alchemist, inventor of the Hylailian Fire); several sea kings, especially: Odenius the Ingenious (mechanical wonders) and Merymakos I (established the "Unity of Land and Sea" treaty with fairies).

Strange Locations: Labyrinths, fairy woods (Hylailos, Phenos), Oracle of Praios on Baltraea, gigantic "Columns of the Sky" (Mylamas); on Pailos: Rainbow Falls of Tsa, the Fifth Lighthouse, ruins of Palakar (necropolis destroyed by a volcano).

Local Festivities and Holidays: Last Windsday in Peraine: Regatta of the Seven Winds (from Teremon to Rethis); every 4 years in the beginning of Boron: Regatta of the Brave; 1 Praios: crowning ceremony of the Sea Kings.

The sunny, dry and often barren islands off the coast of the Horasrealm offer their inhabitants a relatively safe life, one far away from wars and demonic threats. The biggest islands are home to the only two large cities, Rethis and Teremon; besides those there are only a few fishing villages and pirate hideouts. The islands produce some well-known goods: Phraisheep wool, spices, Efferdfruit (cuttlefish, mussels etc.) and the highly valuable purple.

Prisoners of the Horasrealm toil away in numerous mines, while banned noblemen live a much easier life: Their 'home' is the Merymakon, a complex of mansions on Hylailos that sports even an old Gyldenlandish stadium.

The islands and their secrets tempt and attract all kinds of folk: Alchemists search for sulfur, cinnabar and other substances. Daredevils visit the fairies in their spellbound forests, while the truly brave explore the abyss of volcanoes, hoping to find a cyclops and perhaps acquire one of their valuable weapons.

HISTORY

1868 b.H.: Discovery of the islands and initial settlement by Gyldenland people

1830 b.H.: Appearance of the griffin Garafan in Baltraea

1646 b.H.: Rohafan the One-Eyed has all followers of Praios killed

1560 b.H.: A stream of refugees arrives after the First Demon Battle

1559 b.H.: Pailos demands independence; after the victory of Thalassocratess Menkirdes she proclaims: "Pailos is mine, as if it were a second Hylailos," coining the term "of both Hylailos"

1111 b.H.: "Unity of Land and Sea" treaty with the fairies (initiated by King Merymakos I)

241 b.H.: The Peace of Kuslik suspends all trade relations with Fairfield and maintains the island's loyalty to the Emperor in Gareth

61 b.H.: Sea King Palamydas disappears during a hunting trip

18 Phex 17 Haal: the Treaty of A'Layis Hiphon; Merymdion II secures independence from Middenrealm via an alliance with the Horasrealm

4 Praios 18 Haal: Merymdion II dies; Amene becomes the queen of both Hylailos and Pailos

27 Haal: Sea King Palamydas returns from the fairy forest

20 Hesinde 27 Haal: Palamydas vows loyalty to Amene and becomes Sea King again

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Cyclops Islands are like a mystical extension of the Horasrealm: today a duel in Vinsalt, an affair with Countess O., tomorrow on a hunt for minotaurs. While adventures in Fairfield have a more worldly character, it is 'on the Cyclopes' (as the Horas people refer to these islands) where one can easily run into fairies, fauns and water sprites.

After all, the islands are also a place of ancient traditions and stories; they were never harmed by wars or foreign troops, and so it's possible that some distant mystery—maybe even dating back to the early age of Gyldenland settlers—still awaits discovery.

IMPORTANT CITIES ON THE CYCLOPS ISLANDS

RETHIS

There is a constant bustle between the white lime-washed houses of the capital city. Ships from all harbors and the Horasian fleet dock here regularly.

Population: 2,020

Insignia: White over blue, the upper white half shows a black ship, the blue half depicts two silver dolphins

Government: Prefect Aldemar of Highrock and Marvinko in the service of Amene-Horas and Sea King Palamydas

Garrison: 300 marines and sailors of the Imperial Horasian fleet, 2 companies of the Sea King's sea guards, 1 company of Arivor Longswords, 15 town and port guards

Temples: Efferd, Praios, Tsa, Horas shrine

Special Features: A stone light house in the shape of a Cyclops; A'Layis Hiphon, the castle of sea kings; the Merymakon, a penal colony (an additional 500 "locals") outside of the city

Important Pubs and Taverns: Silver Jug (modest and simple, Q7/P7), Green Moon (bad reputation, Q4/P4), The Flying Fish (port tavern, Q3/P4/B10), Travia's Castle (the name says it all, Q6/P5/B50), Pirate Scare (sailor's tavern, Q4/P5/B8)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Purple-dye shops, dockyards of the Sea Kings

Town History: Since its founding in 1849 b.H., the fates of the archipelago were determined from within this city

Mood in the City: The outlook on life is typically southern and easy-going, yet everyone works hard and with devotion

TEREMON

The dark houses are lined up along a steep cliff, topped by the duke's residence; a bay offers incoming ships protection against storms.

Population: 1,610

Insignia: A white steed and a golden purple-mollusk on purple
Government/Politics: The town prefect is Brilydion A'Hiralphis dyll Lyios, in the name of Duke Berytos Cosseira, who counteracts the power of the Sea King and the Horas by working only towards his own hedonistic interests

Garrison: About 150 sailors and marines of the Imperial Horasian fleet, 1 company of the Sea King's guard, 25 town guards and port watchmen

Temples: Rahja/Aves, Efferd, Hesinde

Special Features: Library/cartography in the temple of Hesinde; Love Caves in the Rahja temple (statue of the many-breasted Rahja); mighty fortifications that protect the city against pirate attacks

Important Pubs and Taverns: Cyclops View Hotel (luxurious, Q7/P8/B30)

Mood in the City: One lives a calm life, yet always in the shadow of ducal festivities and the troops of Horas

ROSE AND MOON—LAND OF THE ARAPIANS

Geographic Borders: Rashtul Wall, Gadang and Mhanadi rivers, Gorian Desert and Mhanadi Delta

Terrain: Baburin Basin, Palmyramis (between Baburin and Fasar), Gorian Steppe, Gorian Desert, Elburian Coast, Chalukistan, Yalaiaid

Mountains: Foothills of the Rashtul Wall

Rivers and Waterways: Barun-Ulah, Gadang, and Mhanadi Rivers

Estimated Population: Almost 600,000 (75% Tulamides, 25% Middenrealmians)

Important Cities and Villages: Zorgan, Baburin, Anchopal

Important Traffic Routes: Braun-Ulah Road, new pilgrim's road Zorgan-Anchopal (the "Transaranica")

Dominant Religions: Twelvegods belief, chiefly Peraine, Rondra, Rahja and Phex

Rulers: Mhaharani Eleonora Shahi and Mhaharan Arkos II Shah

National Symbol: Golden Aranian cat on turquoise

Social Structure: Tulamidian wealth-based aristocracy with Middenrealmian feudalistic traits

Important Noble Families: Bensunni Dassareth (ruling dynasty), al-Nabab (Zorgan), Revennis (Baburin)

Local Heroes and Saints: St. Arkos, St. Leomar of Baburin (Rondra), St. Ascandear of Baburin (Rahja), countless saints of various villages, tribes and clans

Strange Locations: Peraine Grove near Anchopal, ruins of Zhamorrah, High Gorian Plateau, Sphinx of Ras'Lamasshu, Witches' Dance Ground near Zorgan, ruins of Keshal Fennek

Local Festivities and Holidays: 12–14 Rondra: knightly tournament in Baburin; 5 Travia: anointment ceremony and hunting games in Zorgan; 15–30 Travia: wine-feasts everywhere; 24 Phex: fortune day; 7–12 Peraine: minstrel festival in Zorgan; 27 Peraine: Grove Initiation in Anchopal; 1–7 Rahja: Feast of Joys.

Arania is the largest nation of the Tulamides. Monuments such as the tombs of the Magician-Moguls hidden in yew groves and date-tree plantations, with their treasures and spells, still remind visitors of the mysterious history of this land. But Arania is also a land of fertile wheat fields, abundant fruit gardens and vineyards—Peraine and Rahja are two of the major deities of the Aranian people. Most buildings are outwardly

fortified, while their inner yards are usually built in an open and inviting style—a shady orchard is, after all, a great luxury that has become popular abroad as well (such a retreat is called an "Arangeria"). Only Gorla, home of the Gorian Desert, is a barren place (for Aranian standards), where tenacious nomads fight drought, the ever-present red dust from the Gorian Plateau and scarce resources by domesticating ostriches.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

Arania is an important economic power, home to many peasants and craftsmen. In addition, the area is home to the Moon Office Merchants (called Mada Basari in Tulamidian), a lay-order of the God of Trade that owns many caravans and outposts throughout the Tulamidian lands (rumor has it that this group shares some not-so-public information with Aranian royalty). Princess Sybia, a trade lord's daughter, is referred to as "Moonsilver Sultana" and is considered the highest deont of Phex; she both leads and represents the Mada Basari Order. It is common to buy one's way into noble ranks by accumulating wealth through business or adventure—earning money is considered entirely reputable among the Aranian people.

Women are held in high esteem in Aranian society. Contrary to southern Tulamidian customs, females hold domestic power: the privilege of controlling the treasure chest and maintaining a dominant position in trade affairs has emerged from common household duties, while the ideals of knighthood ask of men to treat women with courtesy. A husband himself will be insulted if his wife does not attract any adorers—the romantic wooing of a lady is a sign of status also for the mate, and chastity is only a minor concern.

The 100-man strong knightly Order of the Rose is a bright example of military as well as artistic unity, dedicated to the protection of the Church of Rahja and its teachings. The Bearer of the Amethyst Lioness, Mhaharan Arkos Shah, is the head of the order. In general, orders of various gods or saints are very common to Aranian culture, and many monasteries (some of them being the most wealthy land owners) host more or less god-fearing brotherhoods and sisterhoods. Some abbots are even recognized as Haranim or Beyrounim of the surrounding lands. These monasteries are often cultural and academic centers of an entire region.

Witches band together into a special kind of sisterhood; they exist in great numbers and have quite some considerable power, as guild magic is shunned (and once even prosecuted) by officials for centuries. Even the Grand Vizier of Arania, Mara ay Samra, is a publicly known witch. It is not clear if they have anything to do with the numerous wild cats that stray the cities and villages without harm, but it is certain that anybody who harms such a cat would have to face the anger of all Aranians.

HISTORY

2900-2500 b.H.: Age of the Fire Peoples: the sultanates Nebachot (around the area of Baburin and Perricum), Oron (around Elburum), Gorja (around Anchopal), Khunchom (by the Mhanadi and on the Yalaiad peninsula) and Gadang (around Fasar) existed in the area of modern-day Arania

2500-2325 b.H.: Magician-Moguls: wizards from Fasar control Aranian lands, building many now-deserted or -lost towers and forts

About 2325 b.H.: Scorpion Wars: Khunchom Sultanate defeats the Magician-Moguls in fierce battles and through the use of magical artifacts; all conquered lands become part of a new large empire

2300-1870 b.H.: Adamantine Sultanate: the Aranian region supplies the sultanate with grain and is initially governed

by Satraps, 'viceroys' or governors of the Adamantine Sultanate; only over time do the mighty Satraps of Nebachot regain their confidence to accept the sultan's title once again

About 1865 b.H.: War against the Bosparanians: the last sultan of Nebachot falls; his widow, Dassareth, unifies the wealthy Oron region with the remains of Nebachot and chooses Zorrigan to be her new residence; under her and her successors' rule, the region comes to be known as Haranija, Land of Queens; formally independent since 1702 b.H.

1200-750 b.H.: Moonsilver Age: Arania flourishes (climaxing about 1,000 years ago); Queen Mygdonia, a blessed regent, resides along with King Arkos (the First) at Zorgahan; Arkos is a courageous fighter who wields the blade Zhimitarra—the Amethyst Lioness—and is one of the twelve founders of the Order of the Theater; the court is also home to Pher Drodont, a magician who is quite familiar with dragons

From 738 b.H. on: Garethian Age: after King Amaryd's death and the loss of the Amethyst Lioness, Queen Ithome is forced to hand the kingship to Emperor Menzel; Arania becomes an imperial province led by local princes, while Gorja and Khunchom are added; the War of the Wizards and the Zorganpox take their toll on the land; under the lead of Emperor Reto, Arania becomes outpost and supply base for the campaign against Maraskan; Sybia al-Nabab, a Zorgan far traders' daughter, marries the Aranian Prince Muyaraban a year before Reto leaves his position; she soon becomes the mother of Arkos and Dimiona

Since 2 Haal: Independence: in the name of Prince Arkos, Sybia discontinues all tributes to Gareth and plans for his future inauguration.

25 Haal: Dimiona fails in her attempt to kill the Prince Arkos

26 Haal: Prince Arkos is crowned Prince and Heir-Apparent and marries Princess Eleonora Baburin

28 Haal: Dimiona tries again to gain control over all of Arania; she fails and instead separates the Elburian region, the later Mogul Empire Oron, from Arania

Praios 29 Haal: Kingdom of Arania (Maharanyate) is proclaimed

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Arania seems to have sprung right out of "1001 Arabian Nights," filled with smart-talking djinni, wise story-tellers, seductive dancers, deceitful traitors, ancient monuments and treasure chambers that offer great opportunities for exotic adventures. Those could be developed around artifacts from ancient times, romantic love affairs or bold spy jobs and mighty spells. In this region, adventurers are highly respected individuals—that is, if fortune is on their side.

IMPORTANT CITIES IN ARANIA

ANCHOPAL

The Grove of Peraine has made this oasis settlement by the edge of the Gror famous. It draws many hundreds of pilgrims each year.

Population: 1,000 to 1,500

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

BABURIN

This town is mostly known for being a stronghold of the Rondra following—the oldest intact statue of the goddess stands here. Fine arts and Businesses thrive here as well.

Population: 7,200

Insignia: Silver sphinx on red beneath silver ramparts

Government/Politics: Sultan Merkan ordered a vizier to be the town regent

Garrison: Chariot regiment Nebachot, 20 town guards

Temples: Rondra, Rahja, Phex, Hesinde, Boron, Tsa, Peraine, Ingerimm

Special Features: The three-winged Rondra temple resembles the cuirass of a fallen female giant and serves as main temple of the Tulamidian rites of the Church of Rondra—the building holds the statue of the Six-Armed Rondra (formerly located at Nebachot), while the painting of the prone goddess by St. Ascendear is owned by the Rahja temple; in Baburin, one can also find the main house of the white healer-magicians of the Anconite Order.

Mood in the City: As northern and southern populations have mixed with each other, the “Baburian Jumble of Tongues” became reality; the peace with Middenrealm turned this border fortress into a turbulent market-place by the Barun-Ulah.

Insignia: A golden oil lamp under a silver star against a red background

Government/Politics: The town obeys the rule of Sultana Mara ay Samra of Gorla, while it is governed by the palace vizier of Gorla

Garrison: Horse regiment The Fearless, 1 company of the Sultana’s personal guards

Temples: Peraine, Rondra, Phex, Rahja

Special Features: The Peraine Grove stretches south of the Anchopal fields and protects them against dust storms from the Gor, the city itself hosts the Healing Well, which pilgrims use to fill their pumpkin jugs with sacred water; the fortress of Keshal Rohal at the Star’s Gate is a castle of the Gray Wands.

Town History: Ever since the Scorpion Wars against the Magician-Moguls, Anchopal has been sitting in the middle of a barren steppe—only the miracle of Peraine brought forth a grove that now protects the settlement against incoming winds.

Mood in the City: Anchopal stirs and bustles along with every incoming caravan; otherwise it is a lively but small oasis surrounded by steppe.



ZORGAN

The capital city of Arania is part of the front-line against the Mogul Empire, its people especially focusing on the worship of joyous Rahja and cunning Phex.

Population: About 14,500 (about 30% Middenrealmians)

Insignia: A golden palace on turquoise beneath a silver Half-moon

Government/Politics: Zorgan is led by the palace vizier of Sultana Sybia, city quarters have their own Kadis (magistrates/mayors)

Garrison: 1 regiment Iron Tigers

Temples: All Twelvegods

Special Features: Zorgan has recovered from the Plague of the Zorganpox, which occurred 100 years ago—the old part of town (Zorrigan) is still partially deserted, yet is still equally colorful and dubious (mostly inhabited by artists, illusionists and prostitutes); the modern quarter, Sulaminiah, is home primarily to temples, market places and offices (among them is the Moonsilver Palace, the main office of the Mada Basari) as well as the Magician’s School of Existent Pretence (illusion, grey); the new large temple of the Threefold Rahja depicts the goddess as an adored dame, a sensuous dancer and reckless rider; the royal family resides in the Mirror Palace north of the old quarter, while the almost rural Shahmiran is home to the highest temple and High Deont of Peraine.

Mood in the City: A lively, large seaport town; despite the short distance to Oron, the locals have kept their active, joyous and sensuous outlook on life

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

THE SHIKANYDAD OF SINODA—FREE MARASKAN

Geographic Borders: The southern tip of Maraskan; the eastern coast of the Shikanydad borders on the Sea of Pearls, the western shore on the Gulf of Tuzak; the undefined northern borders run along the foothills of the Amdeggyn Massif

Terrain: Flat coastal strip, forested hills towards the inland, altitude increases drastically in the north

Mountains: 3,000-pace tops of the Amdeggyn Massif

Estimated Population: About 15,000; growing

Important Cities and Villages: Sinoda

Important Traffic Routes: The former fishing port of Sinoda is insufficient for ships from the continent and is supported by irregular landing points (beaches, bays); the old roads leading towards the northern portion of the island have lost their function.

Dominant Religions: Rur and Gror belief

Rulers: None; the Alabaster Council is an alliance of the former Maraskan nobility, the Wezyradim (a caste of magistrates) and

former rebels and freebooters. Only rarely do the four mystical Tetrarchs apply their power; of them, only Mulziber (Festum) and Keideran-Dajin (Khunchom) are generally known.

National Symbol: White pearl on yellow

Social Structure: Oligarchy, strongly influenced by religion; day-laborers and free farmers toil on large plantations

Important Noble Families: the Haran's ("Baron's") family of Sinoda; a sizable portion of local nobility (Harans, Baruuuns, Dshunkars) originates from the occupied part of Maraskan and therefore owns no land (while still holding power); the Wezyradim are equal to other noblemen.

Local heroes: King Dajin VII, whose rebirth is expected (the most influential local myth); many rebel leaders of the last decades, for example "The Haran"

Strange Locations: The monkey island of Beskan

Local Festivities and Holidays: 29 Rondra: begin of the Maraskan New Year

THE LANDSCAPE

The core of the Shikanydad is one of the most cultivated regions in Maraskan—one will find an abundance of rice farms and plantations growing sugar cane, pipe tobacco, tea, spices, fruits, and almonds. The immediate environment of Sinoda is spotted with many alabaster mines. Mountains rise the further north one travels.

Eventually, the traveler runs into a jungle, home to the phenomenon of Peraine's Army (huge insect armies); numerous campaigns of the Uzatdadim (Maraskan militia) are fought in this area.

The northeast is bordered by extensive swamplands and mangrove forests, which are populated by lizardfolk. "Idyllic" is the best word to describe the scene of shore and palm trees. Fishing is an important part of life here and many locals dive for pearls (especially in the area of Sinoda). The climate is comfortably warm and sometimes too hot; the inland regions are unbearably humid.

THE STATE AND ITS POPULATION

Maraskan people are a cultural mix of Tulamides and Middenrealmian populations. Their language is hard to understand and considered to be a dialect of Garethi, despite its large Tulamidian influences. The people are known for being talkative, loud and utterly incapable of keeping a secret. The last assumption seems unlikely however, seeing how a secret organization by the name of Brotherhood of the Second Finger of Tsa has been able to operate undercover here for two hundred years now.

Maraskan people view the world as a gift of Rur and thus as complete; the daily and utmost appreciation of it is therefore one of their major goals. The locals are commonly described as hot-headed and quarrelsome, treacherous and rebellious. Orthodox Tulamides refer to them as people of a cursed island.

HISTORY

830 b.H.: Middenrealmians settle Maraskan

719 b.H.: The immigration of the Beni Rurech tribe (of Ferkina origin) leads to the emergence of the Maraskan people; their Twin-Gods belief spreads over the course of only a few years to become the dominating religion of the region

666 b.H.: The first attempt to gain independence from the New Empire results in civil war, occupation by the Sun Legion of the Priest-Emperors and the tyranny of the Arethinides dynasty

234 b.H.: The second attempt at independence succeeds, creating the Maraskan kingdom

6 b.H.: Emperor Reto conquers Maraskan; this conquest is followed by massive streams of refugees to the continent and thus the formation of large immigrant communities in the coastal cities of eastern Aventuria, especially Festum, Khunchom and Al'Anfa; the New Empire pays a steep price for this new addition to its territory—three decades of jungle war and civil unrest ensues

27 Haal: The defection of Helme Haffax to the Borbaradian cause turns the whole island over to the Dark Lands

29 Haal: An invasion led by exiled fighters, freebooters and former rebels liberates the south of Maraskan and leads to the formation of the Shikanydad

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Shikanydad is a front-line state whose major goal is the conquest of the much larger portion of the island; hardly any Maraskanian doubts such a campaign would be successful. The war is conducted without mercy, and negotiations with the minions of Black Maraskan (mostly viewed as demons) are out of the question. The Alabaster Council is a gathering of independent chiefs and warlords, rather than a real government. The actual power relations between its members are difficult to make out, as temporary alliances are constantly forged and dropped. Having been imprisoned or prosecuted during the Middenrealmian occupation (for example, as a pirate or rebel leader) is a sign of honor.

The priesthood is quite influential, yet it rarely uses its power. The Maraskan character unites many contradictions—the tolerant, peaceful religion and the philosophical tendencies of scholars are opposed by the willingness to the use of brutal force at any time; this seems to be the legacy of the Ferkina tribes and could also be accredited to the country's dangerous environment—and the local belief in rebirth.

The Shikanydad can be an appropriate setting for most heroes, but serves especially well as a base camp and starting point for campaigns into Black Maraskan. Overzealous promoters of the Twelvegods belief should expect some mockery, however—when it comes to the world and its deities, the Maraskan people have the last word... always.

SINODA, "THE STING"

Over the course of only a few days in 29 Haal, this formerly picturesque southern Maraskan port town and center of tobacco cultivation doubled its population. Since then, Sinoda has become a hopelessly crowded, ever-growing city with seemingly never-ending construction activity and a small port that has become utterly insufficient. The town scenery used to be dominated by small cubical houses (most of them lined in alabaster from nearby mines), but new city quarters are emerging year after year and the immigrants from Festum are introducing their traditional brick towers to this area. The Alabaster Residence is once again home of a true Haran and also hosts the regular meetings of the Alabaster Council.

Population: 2,000 (growing, should reach 4,000 by 32 Haal)

Insignia: A white pearl on yellow

Government/Politics: The town master is Haran Reojian; Sinoda is also the capital city of the Shikanydad

Garrison: 200 armed fighters serving the War-Wezyradim, most of them belonging to the Beni Fountrech (who were born in exile in Festum); 20 additional guardsmen of the Haran and some of the Baruuns, as well as former guerilla fighters; the civilian population is well-used to using their reapers (straight-bladed scythes) as weapons

Temples: Rur and Gyor, Efferd (Efferd's temple is in ruins; a small attached building, however, is still in use).

Magic Academies: Reborn School of the Fourfold and Beautiful Transformation of the Benisabayad (transformation of living creatures/anti-magic, grey)

Special Features: The cultural center of the city is the Abudijian Theater, in which one can marvel at the gruesome "Honeyngton Tales"

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Many blacksmiths (originally from Tuzak), upholsterers and printers (cloth as well as paper), local stonemasons, tailors, weavers and carpet makers from Khunchom as well as Al'Anfa

Town History: The youngest of the Maraskan cities received its town rights only in 516 b.H.; Sinoda has been governed by the present Haran family for the last 300 years (except for the years of foreign occupation).

Mood in the City: Optimistic, vivid, and bellicose





Sea of the
Seven Winds

CYCLOPS ISLANDS

PHENOS PUTRAS KUTAKI MYLAMAS
PAILLOS Tereon BALTREA HYLAILOS Rethia
TENOS ARKIS
HYLPIA
DUBAR
PHRYGAIOS

Cyclops Sea

Askanian
Sea

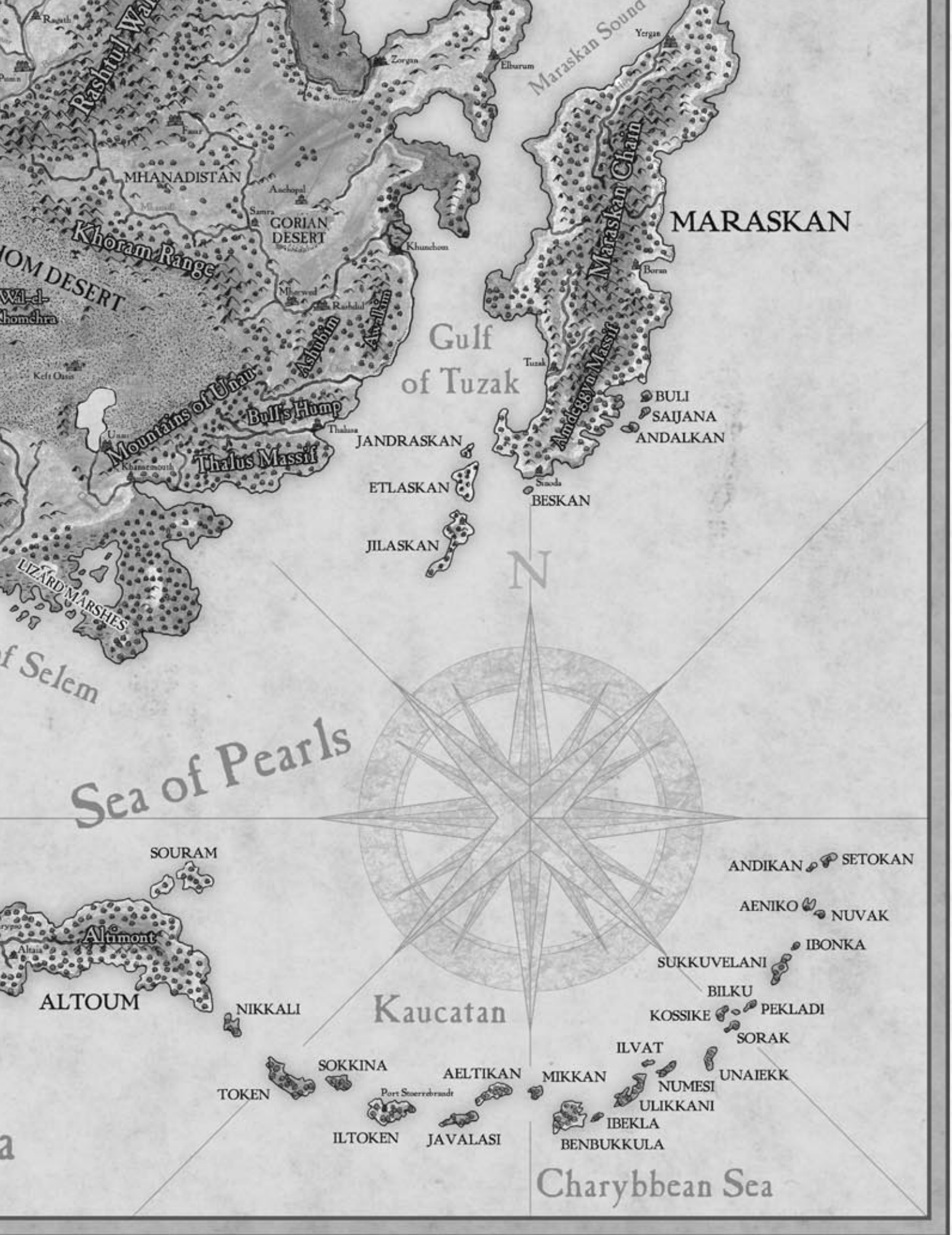
WITCHES ISLAND

0 40 80 120 160 200
Middenmiles

	0-100 paces
	100-200 paces
	200-500 paces
	500-1000 paces
	1000-2500 paces
	2500-5000 paces
	over 5000 paces
	unknown
	Population: below 1000
	Population: 1000-5000
	Population: 5000-10000
	Population: over 10000



Southern Sea



PROUD SONS OF THE DESERT—THE CALIPHATE

"36. He who pleases Rastullah will practice benevolence on all God-Names throughout the year. (...)

41. He who pleases Rastullah never holds back his anger when his honor (...added: or) his friend's, father's, son's, horse's, wife's or daughter's honor is in doubt or has been hurt."
— excerpt from Rastullah's 99 Commandments

Geographic Borders: Midsection of the Yaquir River; Goldenrock Mountains, (High) Eternan Mountains, northern border of the Lizard Marshes, Mountains of Unau and Khoram Range

Rivers and Waterways: Yaquir, Mhanadi, Szinto, Arrati, and Chanab Rivers; Cichanebi Salt Lake

Estimated Population: 50,000 (90% Novadis, 10% others, mostly Tulamides)

Important Cities and Villages: Unau, Mherwed, Keft

Important Traffic Routes: several caravan routes

Dominant Religions: Rastullah belief, its main prayer-house stands in Keft

Rulers: Caliph Malkillah III Mustafa ibn Khalid ibn Rusaimi

National Symbol: A golden-colored split lizard skull on red

Social Structure: Alliance of nomadic tribes

Important Noble Families: Maugirides (family of the caliph)

Local Heroes and Saints: Hahmud Dhach'gamin, author of the first report about Rastullah's appearance; ar-Yerhani, the first Mawdli, Malkillah ibn Hairadan, founder of the Caliphate

Strange Locations: Keft Oasis

Local Festivities and Holidays: 9 Efferd: Fourth Rastullahellah, Day of Reminiscence; 22 Boron: Fifth Rastullahellah, most important festivity; 25 Firun: camel-race in Unau and Mherwed; 5 Tsa: First Rastullahellah, a time of fasting; 18 Peraine: Second Rastullahellah, a holiday with many troop parades and ceremonial loyalty vows; 1 Nameless: Third Rastullahellah, Day of Vendetta.

The Caliphate is home to the Novadis of the Khôm Desert area. They follow the order of Rastullah, whose voice announced the 99 Commandments 250 years ago in the region of Keft. Since the appearance, the quarrelling desert nomads have rallied around their shared belief and created an alliance that just recently proved its strength to the troops of Al'Anfa—there is still no army that could challenge these people on their own territory. The Novadis view themselves as "chosen by Rastullah;" they are proud, righteous, easy to anger and experienced in warfare. Caliph Malkillah's ability to govern these people borders on magic.

Most Novadis are nomadic cattle herders that move their small clans, along with their goats, sheep and horses, from one waterhole to another. Only during the wet season do they gather on family grounds to cultivate some land. A few farmers have settled along the great rivers close to the region's borders, living a rather calm and peaceful life in service of the Emirs and Beys of the caliph—a desert dweller, however, could never commit to such a regulated and subjugated lifestyle.

The core region of the Caliphate is the Shadif steppe south of the Khôm proper, known for being home to the most valuable horse race of Aventuria. Its population, the Beni Shadif, is the leading tribe of the Novadi people—the caliphs of the last four generations came from their tribe. The traditional residence of their



HISTORY

- 233 b.H.:** Rastullah appears in Keft, announces the 99 Commandments
- 230 b.H.:** Emperor Eslam recognizes the independence of Khôm
- 226 b.H.:** Tugruk Pascha's attack on Neetha, the attempt to conquer the city, is repulsed by St. Thalionmel
- 222-218 b.H.:** Malkillah, the first caliph of the Novadis, conquers the Szinto Valley
- 2nd Century b.H.:** Internal wars and weak caliphs paralyze the Caliphate; only Mherwed is taken in 134 b.H.
- 104 b.H.:** Grand Vizier Rafim al-Maugir (a Ben Shadif) topples Caliph Hashnabnah and calls himself Malkillah II
- about 70 b.H.:** Malkillah II conquers southern Almada (south of the Yaquir, the modern Emirate Amhalassih)
- 34-26 b.H.:** Chamallah (36-12 b.H.) cannot subdue Fairfield; he conquers Chorhop, however, and does not return until Unau revolts
- 25 b.H.:** Caliph Chamallah moves his capital to Mherwed after defeating the Unau revolt
- 4 Haal:** Hasrabal of Gorla kidnaps Nedime, a daughter of Caliph Abu Dhelrumun
- 15-17 Haal:** Al'Anfa attacks the Caliphate after growing tensions; the unfortunate Caliph Abu Dhelrumun dies (as does his foe Patriarch Tar Honak); with the help of desert tribes, Sultan Mustafa of Unau becomes Malkillah III after the expulsion of the Al'Anfan troops
- 28 Haal:** The Caliphate attacks the city of Rashdul, then under the command of sinister conjurers, but fails to defeat them; lots of line troops are lost, and subsequently, the influence of city- and farm-dwelling Novadis diminishes while the desert sultans gain power
- 29 Haal:** Caliph Malkillah moves his residence back to Unau once again on 23 Boron (in the beginning of the year 263 after Rastullah's appearance), the strong position of the desert sultans is being reconfirmed

sultan has been for a long time and is again now, Unau, a desert town on the southern shore of the Cichanebi Salt Lake. Additional to the Shadif Sultanate, the most loyal—and also original—region of the state, the caliph rules three additional provinces (Balash, Amhalassih and Szinto) which are governed by announced Emirs and two or three subordinate Beys. They, along with their viziers and magistrates, are known to be greedy and corrupt.

The nine proud tribal sultans present a quite different picture: they are the leaders of the Beni Novad, Beni Terkui, Beni Kharram, Beni Shebt, Beni Kasim, Beni Ankhra (all in the Khôm Desert), the Beni Erkin near the Mhanadi Springs as well as the quarrelling Beni Brachtar (in Chababia) and Beni Arrat (in Arratistan, west of the High Eternans). The sultans head small tribes and clans, yet they can't truly govern them (just as the caliph has no power over the sultans). Independence is highly valued, while it is mostly the Rastullah belief that unites these groups. The sultans of Fasar, Selem and Rashdul are mere allies of the caliph; their loyalty is questionable.

The Mohaha eunuch called The Mautaban commands both bodyguards and the small army of the caliph, and carries the starblade Esravun (made of meteor iron). As an executor (in both senses), he is more famous and more feared than any other servant

of the caliph. In the case of an attack from or against neighboring lands, however, it is the warriors of local tribes that the caliph relies on. In the desert, these fighters are nearly impossible to defeat.

Two other groups also help determine the course of politics in the region: the first is a group that the caliph has gathered together at his court consisting of the successors of the tribe leaders, individuals the caliph treats both as guests and hostages. To their Council of the Nine; despite its common disagreements, the caliph will listen well if all nine members speak with one voice.

The other notable forces are the law schools of the Mawdliyat (plural of Mawdli, political and religious judges and exegetics) which study the commandments of Rastullah; their members forming a kind of priesthood in all but name. Two traditions are of major importance: the fairly liberal School of Unau and the very rigid School of Keft, which has a large following among desert tribe members. The latter gave rise to the hermit Abu Machad, who won the respect and devotion of many young Novadis by preaching against a pampered, spoiled life in the city and by praising the traditional ways of the nomads. The caliph dislikes his tirades against even the slightest compromise towards non-believers, yet he cannot (and would not) move against Machad.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

"Dangerously alien" is always the best way to describe this Caliphate: one does not just go on a journey to Keft or Unau, for both land and people have no mercy for mistakes or ignorance. This region offers an ideal background for strenuous journeys and trade expeditions. Forgotten places in the middle of a hostile desert leave nothing but legends to prove their existence (one is more likely to stumble across such a lost city in a sandstorm than to actually find it) and would certainly function well as game focal points. In addition to tales and ruins, a game could center on those numerous feuds between the Novadis and the neighboring people. For foreigners, it is nearly impossible to make any friends here, only exceptional characters will accomplish such a task.

IMPORTANT NOVADIS SETTLEMENTS

KEFT

The place of Rastullah's appearance and revelation, Keft is a sacred and central part of the Novadi culture.

Population: 1200, plus about 600 additional pilgrims

Insignia: A white tent on gold

Government/Politics: Mawdli Marwan al-Hendj is the highest authority

Garrison: 150 Murawidun (scimitar fighters), 20 temple guards

Temples: Rastullah

Special Features: Even today, Keft consists of nothing more than flat clay buildings—time seems to have stopped for centuries; the modest law school of the orthodox Mawdliyat (who avoid any involvement in city life) is isolated from the rest of the town

Town History: The oasis became known only after the appearance of Rastullah, and has since then been the spiritual focus of the Novadis

Mood in the City: The conservative attitude of the half-nomadic Keft people is as strong as the aversion against foreign infidels; trade and business is only conducted by those who live here; numerous petty fights among pilgrims

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

MHERWED

The former residence of the Caliph is still an important stronghold for the defense of the Mhanadi provinces of the Caliphate.

Population: 5,500 (65% Novadis)

Insignia: Golden donkey's head (frontal) on a red background

Government/Politics: Mherwed belongs to the Emirate of the Mhanadi and is governed by its Emir

Garrison: 100 Spahija (lancers), 50 Murawidun (scimitar fighters), 50 town guards

Temples: Rastullah, Tsa (secret), Phex (secret)

Special Features: The new palace of the caliph is deserted and mostly empty—the caliph decided to use its valuable interior to decorate the praying-houses of Unau and Keft instead. What remains is the Sorcery School of the Caliph (conjuring of elementary powers, gray); its leader is Mwadli Mherech ben Tuleyman, a grandson of Caliph Hashabnah (who was toppled by Malkillah II).

Town History: This ancient city is famed for being the birthplace of Bastrabun ibn Rashtul—it had little more to offer until it became the capital city for a few decades

Mood in the City: The loss of the caliph's court brought poverty to Mherwed, but at least now followers of the Twelvegods can meet for their services without trouble

UNAU

This desert settlement is the traditional capital city of the Caliphate and represents the largest military victories of this nation.

Population: 7,800 (almost solely Novadis people)

Insignia: A gold-colored split lizard skull on blue

Government/Politics: Unau belongs to the caliph, but it is governed by Grand Vizier Jikhbar ibn Tamrikat

Garrison: 200 Spahija (lancers), 100 Murawidun (scimitar fighters), 50 guards of the "Yellow Hearts"

Temples: Three prayer-houses devoted to Rastullah

Special Features: Shepherds make up a large portion of the population, though it is only during the wet seasons (starting Ronda and Tsa) that they live in the city and cultivate land; many others work outside of Unau on the salt lake (its salt is next to glass and porcelain the most lucrative source of income). The underground water system of the city supplies the settlement and the caliph's palace Al'Shoriot with mountain spring water (the caliph just paid for an extension of this vital structure).

Town History: Unau was built by the Middenrealm to further the subjugation of Khôm, but instead it became the base of Novadis power

Mood in the City: The presence of the caliph brought glory (and a much better water supply) to Unau, while its citizens still maintain their distrustful attitude towards infidels; the mourning spirits of the victims of many battles still echo through the night.



HEIRS TO THE ADAMANTINE SULTANATE— MḤANADISTAN, BALASH AND THALUSIA

Geographic Borders: Rashtul Wall, Khoram Range, Mountains of Unau, Gorian Desert, Gulf of Tuzak

Terrain: Upper Mhanadistan, Balash, Thalusia

Mountains: Rashtul Wall, Khoram Range, Mountains of Unau, Ashubim (also Rashdul Mountains), Awalakim (aka Khunchom Mountains), Thalus Massif, Bull's Hump (between Ongalo and Thalusim Rivers)

Rivers and Waterways: Gadang, Mhanadi, Ongalo, and Thalusim Rivers

Estimated Population: 600,000 (75% Tulamides, 25% Middenrealm people)

Important Cities and Villages: Khunchom, Rashdul, Fasar, Thalusa

Important caravan routes: Cedar Road (Fasar–Punin), Sultan's Road (Mherwed–Rashdul–Khunchom)

Dominant Religions: Twelvegods belief, mostly Rahja and Phex

Rulers: Several rulers of towns and city-states

Social Structure: Tulamidian money-based aristocracy

Important Noble Families: Kulibin (Khunchom)

Local Heroes and Saints: Rashtul the Father, Bastrabun the Magician, Sulman al-Nassori (the first Adamantine Sultan), Sheranbil V the Long-Lived

Strange Locations: Ruins of Yash'Hualay (lizard town in the area of the Mhanadi delta); caves in Al'Saffach mountain (old lizard relics)

Local Festivities and Holidays: 2–8 Boron: Carnival (and Aventurian meeting of the jesters) in Khunchom, 19–25 Peraine: street- and harvest-festival in Fasar

Tulamides have lived in Mhanadistan for thousands of years, as evidenced by the very traditional lifestyle people lead, especially in the outskirts of the land—almost as if Satinav himself forgot these folk altogether. The Ferkina tribes live in the western mountain ranges; the Shai'Aian are native to the Rashtul Wall, while the Mherrech live in the area of the Khoram Range. These mountain folk are mostly raiders, riding on small ponies and maintaining archaic, bloody customs—they accept neither the Twelvegods nor the teachings of Rastullah. Among the Tulamides of Mhanadistan and Arania, they have about the same reputation as orks have in the Middenrealm: some city and farm people will not even recognize them as human, even thought they merely continue the life of the original Tulamide culture.

The Upper as well as the actual Mhanadistan is the hilly area between the Gadang River and the Khoram Range, a somewhat fertile land where people grow mostly wheat and millet. This provides enough food to feed the large city of Fasar as well as the surrounding villages and even allows for some trade. Any complex government structure disappeared with the arrival of the Novadis about 200 years ago; the former baronies of the Fasar March have become independent “village-states” under local rulers. Town names like El'Rampart are evidence of the traditional mingling of cultures. There is even an old count's castle in the far west (Erkenstein on the Cedar Street) that still keeps Novadis forces at bay.

The Balash is a fertile and wealthy land by the Mhanadi River, extending from the mouth of the Gadang River to the delta—locals refer to this area as the Fertile Sickie. This is the cradle of Tulamide culture, home to such ancient cities as Khunchom, Rashdul, Mherwed and many others. Politically, Mherwed is part of the Caliphate, while Khunchom and Rashdul are independent city states: Rashdul has recently grown under the rule of mighty Sultan Hasrabal and extended far beyond the Balash, controlling both the southern and eastern region of Gorla all the way to the Sea of Pearls.

Thalusia is the least modernized and poorest region of the Tulamidian Southeast: Middenrealmians have never really settled the valleys of the Ongalo and Thalusim Rivers, and local customs reflect this. The sultan of Thalusia is as incapable of controlling the large plantations landlords as the princes and dukes before him were. Each Hairan, Baron, Sheik and Bey governs his serfs and slaves with the help of mercenaries. Some of these workers escape oppression by joining gangs of brigands and descending into a lawless life.

Hired soldiers are nowhere as common anywhere else as they are here by the Mhanadi River: the most important temples of Kor, the mercenary's god, stand in Fasar and Khunchom. Knighthoods exist only in northern Arania. In the heart of the Tulamidian lands fighting for money is considered a craft like any other—an attitude that emerges from the teachings of Phex, the god of trade and fortune.

Nowadays, more and more mercenaries are hired through the Moon Office of the Mada Basari. This merchant's order worships Phex and controls numerous bases and caravanserais along the Mhanadi River; they trade many of the Mhanadian valuables, whether fruits, porcelain or gem stones.



THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

One of the customs of Phex is the practice of young men disguising themselves in simple, grey clothes and wandering the lands for a year and a day, trying to make it on their own. The position of an “adventurer” is thus quite respected, and fairy tales of glorious fortune hunters earning the goodwill of Phex are very popular. Even the powerful nobility relies on the help of adventurers, especially since there is no universal bureaucratic order in place. The separation between the slow-handed, superficial and perhaps even benevolent nobleman and his practical, sly and sometimes treacherous majordomo, steward or vizier has become a standard stereotype, but this cliché of the helper doing the dirty work and carrying out inhumane orders to keep his master’s reputation clean is often not too far from the truth.

The Tulamides have learned to respect power, be it that of a wizard, a large-scale merchant, cattle-baron or landlord. The concept of restricting governmental power to only a few noble families (and keeping out the merchants and mages) is considered to be a sign of northern foolishness.

The separation of a settlement into a Lower City for the mob and an Upper City for the wealthy, which cannot even be entered by the poor, is common to most regional cities. This gap between different layers of society is nowhere as obvious and crass as it is in Fasar, where the nobles wander the bridges between their towers, never descending to the common people. Further, the Mhanadistan people laugh at and mock the idea that the powerful and mighty should have any responsibility for their subordinates—a concept not so foreign to the Aranian. Here, power is to be used and relished—an attitude which is reflected by an art-loving, sensualist and wasteful lifestyle that occupies itself mostly with horse and camel races, hunting excursions with falcons and leopards, wine-parties, ostrich-pulled buggies, elaborate feasts and love affairs.

In such ways, it is another local custom in Mhanadistan and Thalusia to take away a woman’s power and imprison her in a highly secured seraglio or harem—a tradition that becomes more and more rigid the further south one ventures: women here are kept like pets or cattle, depending on their youth and beauty.

In short, Mhanadi is a place where refined civilization and bloodthirsty barbarity become an inseparable mix. This land is not exactly lacking the rule of law, but rather there are too many different coexisting laws and cultures for a peaceful unity to settle in.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

Mhanadistan is a land of the Tulamides, yet it has a rougher, less coherent character than Arania. Life can be very short if one interferes with the business of a mighty city or country lord, therefore, this land is ideal for adventures that focus on intrigues, feuds, reckless raids and courageous robberies. Good and bad becomes less important as it is the effectiveness of a mercenary and the slyness of a thief that truly counts. Aside from that, Mhanadistan gave rise to the Aventurian civilization, and is thus naturally full of ancient tombs and forgotten lizard temples.

HISTORY

3000–2750 b.H.: Early Tulamidian Age: Led by Rashtul and his son Bastrabun, the Tulamides settle in Mhanadistan and drive out the lizardfolk into the Rain Mountains, the swamps of Selem and to Maraskan

2750–2500 b.H.: Age of the Sultanates: Mhanadistan undergoes political change as the Sultanates Khunchom (by the Mhanadi and the Yalaiad Rivers), Thalusia and Gadang (around Fasar) arise; the realms of Nebachot (around Baburin and Pericum), Oron (around Elburum), Gorla (around Anchopal) and Alhania (by the Radrom River) develop in the north, while Elem (by the Szinto River) emerges in the southwest

From 2600 b.H. on: The tribes of the Beni Nurbad and Al’Hani, predecessors of the Norbades, move north

2500–2325 b.H.: Age of the Magician-Moguls: these wizards from Fasar dominate Mhanadistan and what is now Arania; they build the city of Zhamorrah by the junction of the Gadang and the Mhanadi Rivers

2325 b.H.: Adamantine Sultanate: with the help of magic artifacts, Sulman al-Nassori, sultan of Khunchom, defeats the Magician-Moguls, destroys Zhamorrah and adds the Mogul territory to a new large empire

2300–1010 b.H.: Sulman and his successors control a huge empire which extends from Al’Anfa to Ysilia with the Mhanadi region at its core; the earlier enmity towards the lizards is followed by an adoption of their rites and ceremonies; the Adamantine Sultans withdraw from public—they have themselves worshipped as demigods and served by the priesthood; Nebachot is lost during the first war against the Bosparanians (about 1865 b.H.); Haranija (Arania; around Baburin/Oron) become practically independent; the Adamantine Sultanate continues to shrink even further in size over the following centuries.

1502–1408 b.H.: The almost centennial reign of Sultan Sheranbil V is followed by a century of confusion during which the empire remains weak

1010 b.H.: Emperor Murak-Horas is victorious in the battle by the Gadang River and occupies Khunchom (he himself dies of a battle wound); his daughter Hela-Horas is eager to destroy Tulamidian pride

993–150 b.H.: Garethian Age: The New Empire gives rise to the duchies Balash (along with the counties Rashdul, Khunchom and Gorla), Thalusia and the March Mhanadistan (around Fasar); they are exempt from the prohibition of slavery throughout the Middenrealm

738 b.H.: The new province of Arania develops and gains the county of Gorla from Balash; Rashdul eventually revolts against the Priest-Emperors and separates as well; part of the duchy Balash (that is, the remaining county Khunchom) is added to Arania under the rule of Rohal

From 150 b.H. on: Independence: the advance of the Novadis hands independence to Thalusia and Fasar; only the most northern county of the Mhanadistan March is still controlled by the Emperor and becomes a part of Arania; Mherwed suffers defeat and Rashdul, Fasar and Thalusa form a rather weak union against the Novadis; this city alliance strengthens the separatist movement of Khunchom as Arania itself becomes independent, and eventually Khunchom joins the union as its fourth member; the alliance falls apart after the Al’Anfan campaign against the Caliphate.

IMPORTANT CITIES OF MHA PADISTAN

FASAR

This fourth-largest city in Aventuria is located in the highlands of Mhanadistan, as well as a melting-pot of peoples and cultures.

Population: Roughly 23,000 (50 % Tulamides, 25% Middenrealmians, 20 % Novadis, 3% dwarfs)—probably more

Insignia: A green hill and red fox sitting on top, against a silver background (old arms of the Free Imperial City of Fasar)

Government/Politics: Several “Eminencies”: Prince Khajid ben Farsid; Malik Bey, sultan of the Novadis; Lazlo Fitz Stratzburg, Guardian of Order Tulamidistan; Manach ter Goom, far trader; Habled ben Cherek, tradesman, and others

Garrison: 1,000 Tulamidian horsemen (mercenaries), 99 Novadi mercenaries, 100 temple guards of Rahja, 50 Sun Legionnaires and Praios temple guards, 300 mercenaries of diverse Eminencies

Temples: All Twelvogods except for Efferd and Firun; several demigods and a few ancient Tulamidian idols

Special Features: Fasar has been without city walls for centuries and has grown in an entirely chaotic manner south of the Gadang springs. The white towers of the Eminencies rise high above the skewed shacks of the impoverished masses; they are connected with bridges and galleries so that the high society can live truly elevated lives, escaping crowded alleys. Some parts of the city, such as the Prince’s palace, the large Al’Achami Academy of the Powers of the Mind (control, black) or the dwarf’s quarter are surrounded by a wall, while other Eminencies live in palatial structures that are more like a city within a city. Novadi and Shai’Aian tent camps are scattered around Fasar.



Town History: Fasar is one of the oldest human cities and used to be the capital of the Magician-Moguls from the Gadang area, until victorious Khunchomans claimed the city. They placed Satraps as governors of the city; soon they became Emirs, Sultans, Margraves and, after the independence in 150 b.H., also Princes, but they still have to share their power with other Eminencies.

Mood in the City: Fasar is a city of eternal power struggles; those not involved protect themselves by looking the other way or adopting a cynical attitude. Everybody cares about his own business and pretends to be invincible, mocking those that stand in the way of danger. Only the stupid offer themselves as target by wearing the colors of the Eminencies without their approval.

KHUNCHOM

This turbulent port city is the “melting pot by the Mhanadi,” where Tulamides mingle with many other people.

Population: 13,200

Insignia: Two crossed blue Khunchomer scimitars on silver

Government/Politics: Grand Prince Selo Kulibin and nine city viziers

Garrison: 600 Khunchom guardsmen, 200 sailors and marines of the Khunchom Fleet

Temples: all Twelvogods (except Firun); also Kor, Rastullah, Rur and Gror

Special Features: Two of the nine Mhanadi River arms (the Green and the Deep Mhanadi) run through the city, providing Khunchom its unique nature. The weapon foundries as well as the Maraskan Trade Office have both helped the city gather its wealth. The House of the Codex harbors one of the most important shrines of the mercenary god Kor. The Dragon-Egg Academy (transformation of the inanimate, grey) is famous for its magical artifacts.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Noble Mhanadi Hotel

Town History: The ancient city of Khunchom became famous more than 2,000 years ago as the center of Tulamidian culture and residence of the Adamantine Sultans. The last Emperors of Bosparan eventually subdued the city and kept it under imperial control, the last years as a part of Arania. Since 2 Haal, the city has regained its independence.

Mood in the City: Khunchom is quite cosmopolitan and open-minded; its alleys are bustling with life by night as much as by day. A great jester’s festival in the beginning of Boron draws many spectators into the city.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

RASHDUL

Rashdul represents all of the Tulamidian fairy tales—especially today, as wizard-sultan Hasrabal controls the city.

Population: 7,250

Insignia: Golden pentagram in a golden pentagon, against a black background

Government/Politics: Sultan Hasrabal and his Shanja Eshila and their city vizier

Garrison: 250 Rashdul horsemen, 20 town guardsmen, 200 horsemen of the Beni Avad

Temples: Phex, Rahja, Rastullah, Boron (Rite of Punin), Boron (Rite of Al'Anfa), Hesinde

Special Features: Rashdul sits on a mountainside above the fertile region of the Mhanadi Plains and is a city not only of trade but also of magic: The very large Pentagram Academy (conjuring of elementary powers, gray) competes in size with the sultan's palace and has a record of more than 213 Grand Masters to look back upon. East of the city, one will find the tomb caverns of the Rashdul nobility.

Town History: The “unimaginably old” town of Rashdul was founded while lizards still ruled the river valley—3,000 years of history seem to have been nothing but beneficial to the city's character without changing it, especially since the mighty lords of Gareth never quite laid their eyes on this far-off land.

Mood in the City: As a part of Tulamide culture, locals are loud, vivid and brightly colored. Sultan Hasrabal rules the city with a soft hand, as long as tributes are steady and he feels safe in his position.

THALUSA

This Tulamidian port city by the mouth of the Thalusim River sits in the middle of rice fields and swamp lands.

Population: 3,700

Insignia: White over blue, a black bull on white

Government/Politics: Despotic rule under Sultan Dolguruk; he also claims the control over large plantation owners in the surrounding regions of Thalusia

Garrisons: 300 “Lions of Thalusa” (mercenaries of the sultan), 250 Thalusian guard troops

Temples: Rastullah, Praios, Efferd

Special Features: A wall surrounds all of Thalusa; the port holds many house boats and occupied wrecks. The “Hole” is a publicly displayed dungeon, right in front of the bleak but defensible palace of the sultan.

Town History: This old Tulamide city has always managed to stay out of grand politics; under the rule of Silem, it was conquered by the Bosparanians. During the Garethian Age, the dukes of Thalusa resided in this city; the last town regent, the paranoid Ras Kasan, derived his power from their former existence. Today's Sultan Dolguruk used to be his executioner.

Mood in the City: The townsfolk practice the traditional Tulamide customs and are still (and rightfully so) very fearful and servile towards the town regent and his potential informers. Foreigners are welcome only in the port area.



FADING GLORY OF ANCIENT TIMES— SELEM AND THE LIZARD MARSHES

“So, you think parchment is for reading? Do you know not that books are written to take hold of the knowledge, to capture it...?”

—Heshdan al-Azzar, *Feruzef of the Silam-Horas Library* by Selem

Geographic Borders: Szinto River, Shadif Plain, Bed of Selem (Urlem Lake) and Sea of Pearls

Terrain: Selem Swamps, Lizard Marshes, Tar Swamps

Rivers and Waterways: Szinto; hundreds of nameless lakes throughout the swamplands

Estimated Population: 1,800 in Selem (about 120 Novadis, about 300 Achaz), some 12,000 humans in the lower Szinto Valley, about 2,200 humans inhabit the Lizard Marshes, living mostly in the trade stations of Port Zornbrecht and Port Kellis (30% Novadis), some hundred Achaz and small Zilite population, Marus throughout the swamps, an unknown number of Krakonians below the sea in the Bed of Selem.

Important Cities and Villages: Selem, Port Zornbrecht (on a headland south of Selem), Port Kellis (on a headland southeast of the mouth of the Chaneb river)

Rulers: (Nominal) Marshal-Gubernator Oderin du Metuant (Al’Anfa; residence in Port Corrad), Great King Ghulsev XXIX as successor to the Elemite rulers (limited to the city), both positions somewhat challenged by the authority of the Sultan of Selem, Eslam ibn Qusrah, and that of the Emir of Malkillabad, Sheik Jassafer.

Important Noble Families: The Old Families (descendants of the first Tulamide settlers; their blood is said to be tainted by the blood of lizards)

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Several—for example, Krsh Tss’Kt (“The Prophet of Renewal,” an Achaz messiah), Tübalkain of Thousand Years (Ice Conjurer); Arch Librarian Heshdan al-Azzar, Josmabith saba Marbod, High Sister of the Noionite Order (both in Selem).

Strange Locations: Hall of the Last Secrets, Selem-Horas Library (both in Selem); Noionite Monastery (Szinto valley); Ban of Bastrabun, the underwater world of Wahjad, about 2 dozen pre-Tulamide and lizard ruins.

It is said that the town of Elem (also called Lem) was a large, wealthy and powerful place, but also spoiled and deeply heretical, and so the gods themselves destroyed it. Today, Selem represents little more than a faint memory of the old glory and has long since become a synonym for poverty, decay and unrest of all kinds. This city has endured many foreign occupations with the lethargic passiveness of a bystander.

The fertile Szinto Valley is a real breadbasket, while Selem has not much more to offer than the products of the Lizard Marshes—goods with which no upright and honest Novadi would ever want to have anything to do. The traveler will have to make his way through malicious swamps and thick mangrove forests, avoiding the various poisonous creatures and large lizards (such as devourers and alligators), battling with pressing heat and humidity.

No normal human lives close to where the Achaz, and even stranger creatures, dwell. The former live in pole houses; they are known for their worship of “Hranga” as well as their fishing and hunting lifestyle. Despite these hardships, humans do occasionally enter these lands on their search for spices, reptile skins, Tsa’s Spring of Eternal Youth, and the treasures and artifacts of ancient Achaz kings.

HISTORY

About 3000–2500 b.H.: The lizard kingdom of Ciszck’Hr comes to be in the area of today’s Lizard Marshes

2700–2600 b.H.: The Tulamides establish the city of Elem as an important trade post

About 2750 b.H.: Founding of the Ban of Bastrabun, a magic bulwark that protects the Shadif against the Lizard Marshes

About 2500 b.H.: The Sultanate of Elem achieves practical independence

2317 b.H.: The first Adamantine Sultan grasps control over Elem

1398 b.H.: Selemite troops, among them also lizard mercenaries, drive the local population out of the Shadif

1334 b.H.: Founding of Great Elem (Tulamidyia: Hôt-Elem; today: Hôt-Alem)

1260 b.H.: With the help of Achaz and Krakonian mercenaries, the Great Sultanate of Elem conquers the emirates of Mirham, Thalusa and Mengbilla

About 1100 b.H.: A meteor falls into the Bed of Selem; the tidal wave destroys Elem

1082 b.H.: The fleet of the Old Empire conquers Elem

219 b.H.: Malkillah I conquers Selem

22. Firun, 15 Haal: Al’Anfans conquer Selem; the Great King pays homage to the patriarch; the Sultan of Selem breaks camp, dismantles his tent city in the Szinto Valley and flees

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Lizard Marshes and Selem are perfect places for digging up the past and letting the players discover the territory on their own, for no Aventurian knows just what the swamp looks like from the inside. The Achaz, Zilites, Marus, Krakonians and other lizard races present a whole array of exotic figures. Encourage awe and respect for the mysterious past by connecting every solved riddle to an even larger mystery of long gone cultures. Wahjad on the ocean floor below the Bed of Selem, the Hall of the Last Secrets to Selem (a former Magician’s Academy rendered useless by means of ill-begotten conjurations) and the rotting archives of the Selem-Horas Library all offer material for unique adventures. In addition, there are the dark mysteries of the Lizard Marshes and the unspeakable cults that worship dying gods, just to mention one possible plot.

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

SELEM

This rotten city by the Szinto River mouth belongs to the Caliphate (or Al'Anfa, depending on how one looks at it) only on paper, as it is little more than an isolated and publicly ignored haven for the crazed and addicted. Ruins of Old Elem surround the populated parts of town—ten thousand and more could find space within these skewed and tumbled structures. The deteriorating mansions of the Old Families lay scattered around the hill that is home to the Great Emperor's palace; here, the ruler dwells in isolation from the rest of the city's population. Several trading posts—Little Grangor, Little Al'Anfa, Little Festum and so on—are located on islands by the mouth of the Szinto River.

Population: 1,800 in Selem (about 5% Novadis, about 17% Achaz)

Insignia: Black moray on blue

Government/politics, peculiarities, town history, written sources: See regional descriptions

Garrisons: 20 personal guards of the Great King

Temples: Efferd, Peraine/Tsa, Boron (Rites of Al'Anfa), Satuarua & Satinav, various secret temples of lizard idols

Important Pubs and Taverns: Caravansera

Mood in the City: Hidden behind the all-encompassing decay are the horrors and mysteries of times long gone; that which is not dead lies eternally in Selem

THE LAND OF THE DIVINE JAGUAR— THE JUNGLE OF THE FOREST PEOPLE

"Certainly the Great Kamaluq has struck the pale-skinned blind, for they cannot distinguish a proud warrior of the Oijaniha from a fetid dirt-eating Mohaha that rolls in the mud by the river sides."

Geographic Borders: Southern tip of the Aventurian continent

Terrain: Tropical highlands and forest-covered plains

Mountains: Rain Mountains

Estimated Population: About 25,000 (Forest people)

Dominant religion: Kamaluq belief of the Forest People

Social Structure: Tribal structure among the Forest People

Important and powerful groups: Tribes of the Forest People

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Manaq (a legendary chief who defended the tribes against white intruders two hundred years ago), Tonko-Tapam Bohantopa (High Shaman), Hey-Shey (local hero)

Strange Locales: Kun-Kau-Peh (Valley of the Ghost Spider, which spins the thread of life), Gulagal (Jaguar Temple, a pyramid, certainly not of Mohaha origin)

THE FOREST PEOPLE

The Forest People are shorter than the average Middenrealmian; they commonly sport copper-colored skin, dark eyes and straight bluish-black hair. Their graceful bodies move with a certain athletic energy; their only two pieces of clothing are the loincloth and leather shoes (at times knee-length boots); the latter provide some protection against the numerous poisonous animals that roam the forest grounds.

Northern Aventurians not intimate to the land commonly refer to Forest People as 'Mohas,' which is not quite correct. The Moha ("Mohaha" is their correct name) are only the largest of the many quarrelling tribes. There are the Anoiha, Oijaniha and the Keke-Wanaq as well, just to name a few. The Tocamuyac differ from the other tribes in that their round reed-boats connect to form a sort of floating villages, which travel all of the Sea of Pearls.

The Forest People worship a cult of nature; their major deity is the Godly Jaguar Kamaluq. He once created the Forest People to defend his empire, the jungle, against destructive intruders—here we have a religious self-justification that is unique among all other people of Aventuria.

THE JUNGLE AND THE FOREST PEOPLE

Evergreen trees, colorful singing birds and crystal-clear lakes cover this land. Pretty Moha maids and young men enjoy a merry bath, only to finish the day with a lavish meal of fresh fruits prepared on a palm leaf by the beach. Unimaginable treasures of long-gone kingdoms, uplifting and intoxicating herbs, ecstatic dancing in native villages and never-ending sunshine—these are the dreamful images many Aventurian adventurers may have of the southern jungles. Unfortunately, in reality the region looks quite different.

Dense jungle covers the southern tip of Aventuria, stretching well into the Rain Mountains (reaching heights that in the north only allow for the growth of moss and lichens—yet there are peaks in the Rain Mountains that carry snow all year). Every day, the jungle receives as much rain as Gareth sees in three months; the undergrowth is dripping with humidity. Further, one is far more likely to encounter well-camouflaged poisonous creatures than to lay eyes upon those colorful birds.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

A hunter from Svellt Valley is certainly better prepared for life in the jungle than, say, a member of the Horas high society would be; nevertheless, any traveler to this land will have to face unknown dangers and challenges. While the Forest People themselves have a real 'home turf' advantage, the outcome of an encounter with them should always be unpredictable. The natives may choose to ignore the foreign intruders only to attack them later, or they can meet them right away with hostility or curiosity. At this point, the course of interaction really depends on the behavior of the various characters. Remember that natives adhere to laws and taboos which most travelers would never dream of—an incident with possibly fatal consequences is easy to provoke. Another burden is certainly the pressing heat and humidity, a factor which may even cause reductions of Endurance, Strength and Constitution.

BORON'S RAVEN AND SLAVE GOLD— THE BLACK ALLIANCE OF AL'ANFA

Geographic Borders: Loch Harodrol, Rain Mountains

Terrain: Askania, South-Elemite peninsula, area surrounding of Al'Anfa

Mountains: Rain Mountains

Rivers and Waterways: Hanfla, Nordask, and Arrati (Osdask) Rivers

Estimated Population: 100,000

Important Cities and Villages: Al'Anfa, Mengbilla, Mirham, Port Corrad

Important Traffic Routes: Caravan route from Port Corrad to Mengbilla, Palace Road from Al'Anfa to Mirham

Dominant Religion: Twelvegods belief, mostly Boron (Rite of Al'Anfa)

Ruler: Patriarch Amir Honak of Al'Anfa

National Symbol: The golden silhouette of a golden crowned raven against a black backdrop

Social Structure: Al'Anfanian slaveholder-society

Important Families: Honak, Zornbrecht, Paligan (Al'Anfa), Shoy'Rina (Mirham), Garbelstone (Mengbilla)

Local Heroes and Saints: St. Nemekath, St. Velvenya Karinor (first matriarch of the Rite of Al'Anfa), Bal Honak

Strange Locations: Visra volcano, swamps of Al'Bor (a mysterious region of Mengbilla which hosts a secret Boron temple)

Local Festivities and Holidays: 1 Rahja–1 Praios: Feast of Joy; from 2 Boron on, for four days: trade fair and slave auction; 30 Boron: Day of the Great Sleep



The Al'Anfanian portion of the Alliance includes not only some of the mainland but also large parts of the Forest Islands, which provide slaves and jewels to the empire. It is this colony that has made the Black Alliance a prime enemy of the Horasrealm, even though their territories border only in the area of Drôl and Mengbilla. It is in this region where Horas Legions and the Black Cohorts often engage in bloody battles.

The actual power of the Black Alliance focuses on the sea: Al'Anfa demands a customs fee from every merchant that passes South Aventuria, and its Black Armada is always ready to back up such claims: Several thousand seafarers on 120 ships, among them the infamous Black Galleys, form one of the largest battle fleets in Aventuria (not to mention the numerous corsairs and privateers that roam the waters).

The Armada protects not only the shores, but also the three major trading convoys: the Silk Caravan from Port Corrad to Mengbilla, the Adamant Convoy, which comes from the Forest Islands and carries gems and spices and the Northland Fleet. The latter, after years of meager income, is profiting again from trade with Sea of Pearls ports such as Khunchom, Sinoda and Pericum—as well as Mendena, Jergan and Elburum.

The pirate haven Charypso on Altoum is not an official member of the Black Alliance, yet is closely associated, similar to the relationship with the Great King of Selem and the Sultanate of Thalusa. The alliance itself is very eager to turn these city-states into loyal followers.

The Grandes are patient and love large-scale projects that will bear fruit only in the years and decades to come. The locals are convinced that, one day, Al'Anfa will rule Aventuria; meanwhile, the ends justify all means. It seems as if all partners of the Alliance silently agreed upon letting the northern empires fight the Borbaradian threat and wear out their own troops. Conquering the subsequently battle-torn and weakened empires would be easy game—until then, one might as well secure a few profitable deals with the heptarchs...

Before the coming of the Borbaradian empires, most Aventurians would have referred to Al'Anfa and the Black Alliance as the darkest and most wicked place on their continent. The slave trade, drug trafficking and even common business with velvet, diamonds, opals, fancy woods, cocoa and spices all contribute to the bad image of Al'Anfa (while also contributing to the wealth of its population).

The unscrupulousness by which wealth is gathered and kept together is just another factor adding to the bad reputation of this “plague-spot of the south”: here, one will stop at nothing just to get ahead, and it seems as if even the highest clerics are just out to accumulate wealth and power. The Guardian of Order of the Church of Praios, for example, is also the openly corrupt High Judge of the city. Typical for this part of Aventuria is the strict and formal adherence to laws: throughout the Black Alliance, the Boroni, Grandes and the cartels justify their tyrannical rule with old and often contradictory regulations which they demand be followed to the letter. Should neither twisted laws nor intrigues further the cause, however, the Hand of Boron will come into play—the patriarch's secret service that is feared because of its skilled assassins.

In the Alliance, no church is as powerful as that of Boron. The position of the patriarch has been handed on through heritage for the past three generations—since then, martial law has turned the patriarch of the Church of Boron into the most powerful leader of the Black Alliance and all its loyal cities.

THE PATIOMS OF AVENTURIA

HISTORY

- 5500–1800 b.H.:** Lizard Age: Lizard creatures dominate the south of Aventuria, their political and religious center is H'Rabaa; the influence and power of the lizard people slowly wanes
- 2600–1630 b.H.:** Tulamidian Age: Elem erects border forts Mirham and Al'Anfa
- 1800 b.H.:** The emirate of Mirham defeats H'Rabaa and puts an end to the reign of the lizards
- 1634 b.H.:** Bosparanian troops expel the Tulamides from the region and establish the colonial city of Belenas by the Nordask River
- 1650–1250 b.H.:** The Wudu Empire: this tribe of the Forest People worships the death god Visra and maintains an excessive cult of death and sacrifice; their "Pale-as-death" Prophet Nemeka is a deont of Boron who was once banned from Bosparan; their center of worship is the Visra volcano near deserted Al'Anfa
- 1260–1100 b.H.:** Great Sultanate of Elem: supported by mercenaries from the underwater kingdom of Wajahd, Elem rises to power, subdues Thalusa and destroys the Wudu Empire; in **1200 b.H.**, Belenas is conquered and renamed Mengbilla; the heresy and ruthless cruelty of Elem becomes legendary; only a falling star puts an end to the reign of terror, destroying the capital
- 1100–993 b.H.:** Bosparan Age: the Kuslik Emperors re-conquer Mengbilla and build Alphana and Selem (on the grounds of former Elem)
- 991–145 b.H.:** Vice-kingdom Meridiana: the south becomes a province under the lead of House Paligan
- 853 b.H.:** The capital of Meridiana moves from Sylla to Alphana, which receives its old name Al'Anfa again
- 763 b.H.:** Mirham is destroyed; the Al'Anfanian family Shoy'Rina obtains the vice kingdom under the lead of Rohal the Wise
- 361 b.H.:** Founding of Port Corrad
- 333 b.H.:** Manakus riot: the slaves of Al'Anfa revolt
- 307 b.H.:** The Great Plague reduces the population of this largest and most spoilt metropolis in Aventuria (which had grown to about 150,000 people); the vice-kings are banned to the newly built palace city atop of Mirham's ruins; the "Council of Twelve" (consisting of citizens and deonts of Boron) grasps control; Velvenya Karinor, High Deont of Boron announces the Rites of Al'Anfa and becomes first matriarch
- From 145 b.H. on:** Independence: after years of self-government, Al'Anfa formally declares its independence; Mengbilla follows (135 b.H.) and so does Port Corrad (70 b.H.)
- 49 b.H.:** The war with Brabak begins; Patriarch Bal Honak invokes martial law but has to abandon Sylla
- 16 Haal:** During a reckless attack on Mherwed, Bal Honak's son, Tar Honak, dies; Amir Honak manages to consolidate the empire

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The Black Alliance is a great power and an exotic world, filled with foreign delights and dangers. The cities of this land possess a certain atmosphere of corrupt temptation, inviting and relentless at the same time. Entanglements and bad surprises are part of the game; not being familiar with the intriguing ways of the Grandes families and cartels could result in a short life—executioner's blocks and slave chains are never far. The decadent Roman Empire as well as the bloody and ruthless rule of the Spanish colonial masters in Latin America are perfect models for the Black Alliance.

IMPORTANT CITIES OF THE BLACK ALLIANCE

AL'ANFA

This capital city of the Black Alliance is also known as "City of the Red Gold," "Black Pearl," and "Plague-spot of the South"—all names it has undoubtedly earned.

Population: 80,000 (25% slaves)

Insignia: A golden crown on black (rarely used)

Government/Politics: Theocracy under the rule of Amir Hanok and plutocracy (a money-based hierarchy) under the High Council of Twelve (consists of Boron priests and Grandes)

Garrison: 1 company of warriors of the "Basalt Fist" Order (Boron), 2 companies of warriors of the "Order of the Black Raven" (Boron), 2 companies of warriors of the "Black Lion Order" (Kor), 5 companies of the "Ducat Guard" (mercenaries), 5 companies of the "Black Company of Kor" (mercenaries), 2 companies of temple guards, 6 companies of town guards, 300 freebooters

Temples: Boron and all other Twelvegods; several demigods and idols

Special Features: A gigantic 40-pace tall, almost finished monumental statue stands over the port entrance near the infamous slave island; the Bal-Honak Arena is known for its brutal gladiator fights; the University maintains departments of law, medicine, natural studies, Al'Gebra, nautical studies, military strategy and magic (clairvoyance/battle, black)—this institution represents education, knowledge and the sciences; the estates of eight powerful families sit on Silver Mountain, as does the gloomy City of Silence, the Boron temple, the path for the funeral procession, the graveyard and the high-rising Raven's Rock; the dark Visra volcano is located about three miles north of the city.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Pearl of Al'Anfa Hotel, Hotel Residence

Important Trade Houses: Honak, Zornbrecht, Paligan, Karinor, Bonareth, Ulhart, Wilmaan, Florios, Kugres (all Grandes families)

Mood in the City: The second-largest town of Aventuria never sleeps—even at night there is a constant bustle in the streets; the Grandes are arrogant, scrupulous, cynical, cunning and pleasure-seeking, while their subjects are eager to imitate that behavior.

MENGBILLA

The port city by the Nordask River is famous for its purple-dye shops and infamous for its slave market.

Population: 5,000

Insignia: A white shark head on black, frontal

Government/Politics: A High Council consisting of nine representatives of the most important cartels elects a Great Emir to be the highest judge and commander, currently Dulhug Ankbese; the high priests of the Boron temple carry quite some political weight.

Garrison: 100 town guards, 100 "Black Guards"

Temples: Boron (Rite of Al'Anfa), Efferd, Rahja, Hesinde (Praios and Phex cults are prohibited)

Special Features: Mengbilla is ruled by a few cartels (disguised as guilds) such as the slave and drug traders, courtesans, alchemists and the Garbelstone family; even visitors regularly have to pay their dues so they do not fall into slavery.

Outstanding Merchants: Main office of House Gerbelstein

Town History: Founded as Belenas, this place was later renamed Mengbilla and became subject to Elem; the city gained temporary independence in 135 b.H. and is now controlled by Al'Anfa

Mood in the City: Gloomy; a melting pot of various abhorrent Tulamidian and Middenrealm customs, this region is mainly controlled by criminal groups and cartels.

MIRHAM

Al'Anfa entirely controls this royal residence. The city is home to decadent noblemen and their slaves.

Population: 1,150

Insignia: Golden king's crown on black

Government/Politics: King Damian as 'Mirhamionette' of the Al'Anfanian Council of Twelve

Garrison: 100 Al'Anfa town guards

Temples: Boron (Rite of Al'Anfa)

Special Features: The white King's Palace is next to the New Residence in Gareth the largest building in Aventuria and therefore dominates the character of the entire town; only the four gray towers of the School of Variable Shape (transformation of the living, black), formally part of and ruled by the royal court, do not quite fit into the picture.

Town History: Initially built to serve as a Tulamidian border fort, Mirham is an ancient settlement; today's palace city was established only a few centuries ago by Vice-King Huntas II

Mood in the City: Mirham is a sole residential town in the midst of a jungle; many noblemen were once sentenced to live here in isolation, and so they dream of old times and new opportunities to reestablished the old royal power in Al'Anfa.

PORT CORRAD

Al'Anfa occupies and controls this port city on the mouth of the Arrati River with harsh martial law.

Population: 800

Insignia: Four silver crowns (1:2:1) on black

Government/Politics: Generalissimus Oderin du Metuant, who is also the oppressive general prefect of Al'Anfa

Garrison: 10 "Black Raven" guards of the general prefect, 50 fighters of the Al'Anfan Foreign Legion, and 50 mercenaries of the "Black Company of Kor"

Temples: Boron (Rite of Al'Anfa), Efferd, Phex, Travia

Special Features: Many pirates roam the bays of the surrounding swamplands, especially hunting down stragglers from the annual Silk Caravan

Town History: Established in 316 b.H., this town went through a period of growth under the rule of the Rhudainer merchant dynasty, which was quickly terminated by the Al'Anfanian conquerors during the Khôm War

Mood in the City: The city is still under martial law; slaves from every corner of the continent make up most of the population

HARPY'S BANNER AND CROSSED SABERS— THE COLONIAL CITIES OF THE SOUTH

Geographic Borders: coastal strips of the southern-Aventurian peninsula

Terrain: Askania, Mysobia, Trahelia, Sylla peninsula

Rivers and Waterways: Mysob, Soudask, and Tirob Rivers

Estimated Population: about 100,000

Important Cities and Villages: Brabak, H'Rabaa, Chorhop, Sylla, Hôt-Alem, Khedu

Dominant religion: Twelvegods, mostly Efferd, Phex, Boron

Social Structure: Various forms of the southern slave system and the Tulamidian money-based aristocracy

Important Noble Families: De Sylphur, Charazzar, Hammerfist (Brabak), Zeforika (Chorhop and Brabak), Alshera (Sylla)

Local Heroes and Saints: St. Elida of Salta (saint of Efferd), "pirate king" Captain Brabacciano (during the Age of the Priest-Emperors)

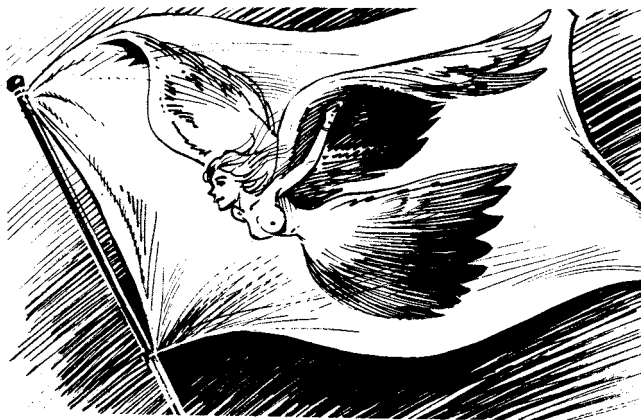
Local Festivities and Holidays: 3rd and 4th week of Rahja: a colorful street fest celebrates the new year

Many port cities dot the coastline of Aventuria's southern peninsula, though their political ties and influence seldom stretches far into the hinterlands. These settlements profit from both sea trade and piracy. Genuine noble families are rare, while rich ship owners and merchants govern the land. Each city's wealth is based on the trade of valuable wood, tropical fruits, exotic animals and other similar natural resources. (Brabak, for example, produces fireproof Iryan leather made of lizard skins.)

Theoretically, it is possible for an individual to move upwards on the social ladder, yet the wealthy live in isolation from the public, trying to imitate the lifestyles of the northern nobility. Apart from fortune games, show fights are popular among people of all trades and backgrounds—colorful costumed acrobats and illusionists delight the crowd and present a scene much less bloody than that of Al'Anfa's arena battles.

The most powerful nation in the region is the kingdom of Brabak. It hosts most of the 100,000 local humans, and the empire of

THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA



King Miziron III governs 80,000 people. Nevertheless, this monarch is anything but a self-indulgent and mighty tyrant, as the great families of the empire limit his power: the ten members of the Brabak Audienza are only supposed to advise the king. They have developed into a kind of government themselves, however, interfering with the monarch's plans and often cutting his large spending.

Each of the three largest Grand Families is entitled to send two representatives to the Audienza. The deSylphur are the ruling dynasty and support most of the royal staff and administrative positions (they generally support peaceful trade). The Charazzar are a century-old royal family from H'Rabaa; their obvious physical degeneration may be due to the traditional custom of incest, while some even suggest that lizard magic may be the cause. This family supports the development of plantations and slavery; its members have the right to claim the position of the Royal Grand Marshal. Their wealth is largely due to the trade of jungle plants, valuable wood and Iryan leather. The Hammerfist emerged from a Thorwalian Otta; they reject the idea of slavery and continue to battle the Black Alliance at sea. Traditionally, this family appoints the Royal Grand Admiral.

Four additional Grande Families maintain each one seat in the Audienza: the Geraucis are mostly ship-owners and merchants, while the Bocadilio are commonly in the business of speculating and owning as well as lending land. Both families usually do support the king. The Zeforika family, allies of the Hammerfist, are successful dock and shipyard owners. Last, the duBerilis earn their money by running brothels and maintaining an army of semi-enslaved debtors, whom they lend to paying clients. This practice explains their traditional alliance with the Charazzar, as they share their attitude towards slavery.

The remaining southern cities are city-states under the influence of larger powers: Chorhop formally belongs to the Caliphate, Hôt-Alem is a protectorate of the Middenrealm and Sylla has close ties to Arania. Only the small kingdom of Trahelia (see p. 98) has been able to defend its hard-won independence.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The kingdom of Brabak and the other colonies are similar to Central and South America during the age of piracy: Few settlers populate the border regions of an exotic wilderness, while countless freebooters travel the seas. Ancient secrets, relics, intrigues and decadent lifestyles dominate the urban scenes; all the while, the lack of authority leads to a less governed individual life than seen elsewhere in Aventuria.

HISTORY

5500–1800 b.H.: Lizard Age: lizard populations dominate southern Aventuria; H'Rabaa becomes their political and religious center, which also influences the development of the realm of the Kemi Forest People (supposedly from 3800 to 2000 b.H.)

1800–1630 b.H.: Tulamidian Age: the emirate of Mirham defeats H'Rabaa and puts an end to the Lizard Age, Aranian freebooters establish the city of Shila (today's Sylla)

1886–993 b.H.: Bosparan Age: Corapia (today's Chorhop) is founded in 1868, establishment of Brabak in 1755, acquisition of Sylla in 1611; all cities undergo periods of independence

991–145 b.H.: Vice-kingdom Meridiana: Raul unifies the south to form the large province of Meridiana with Sylla being the capital city; only the town and region of Corapia becomes a part of the Drôlian March; in 853, Alphana (Al'Anfa) becomes the new capital of Meridiana while the power of Brabak and Hôt-Alem slowly wanes; since 657, both cities form the separate entity of Brabakia

from 144 b.H. on: Independence: Governor Thiralion di Sylphur becomes Ariakon I, King of Brabak, while Corapia breaks away from the Middenrealm in 127 b.H.; Brabak wins the war against Al'Anfa (49–46 b.H.) in the area of H'Rabaa. Sylla, formally aligned with Al'Anfa, becomes independent; throughout the following centuries, Brabak loses the land around Khedu and Hôt-Alem to the Middenrealm; in 32 b.H., the Caliphate takes Corapia and renames it Chorhop

IMPORTANT COLONIAL CITIES OF SOUTHERN AVENTURIA

BRABAK

This port by the cape is a preferred residential area for rich noblemen, a powerless king and some ruthless practitioners of Black Magic.

Population: 2,950

Insignia: A red harpy on gold

Government/Politics: Just like the kingdom, this city is governed by King Mizirion III and the Grandes of the Audienza

Garrison: 1 company of Royal Halberdiers, 150 marines of the Royal Fleet, about 250 freebooters

Temples: Efferd, Phex, Rahja, Boron (nominally Puninese, but with Al'Anfan liturgy)

Special Features: The Dark Hall of Spirits is one of the oldest and darkest magic academies; between the school and the king, there seems to be a silent agreement of not interfering with each other's business (after all, the Dark Hall was an ancient institution already before the current dynasty took over the throne)—magicians can focus on their studies of demonology and necromancy without disturbance.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Brabak Admiral and Gilden Mysob hotels

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Dockyard of the Zeforikas, Geraucis shipowners

Mood in the City: Since “East, West and South meet here,” many Brabakians have come to believe that they live in the center of the world and nothing could happen without their knowledge of it; at the same time, one cultivates an attitude of tolerance and liberalism that invites all kinds of controversial philosophers, free-thinkers, obscure preachers and scrupulous black magicians—their company is even regarded as chic.

CHORHOP

The Caliphate and the Black Alliance both struggle to control this port city by the Soudask River. Phex, the God of Fortune, is considered a major deity.

Population: 1,350 (20% Novadis)

Insignia: The fur colors of a leopard (black rings on gold)

Government/Politics: Nominally subject to the Caliph in Unau, the city is governed by a Steward Curate of Phex, dockyard-owner Adnan Zeforika. A lottery system determines the appointment of the state's nine highest positions

Garrisons: 70 guards

Temples: Phex, Rastullah, Boron (Rite of Al'Anfa)

Special Features: Behind the scenes, both the Novadi Hairan Rastafan ibn Thabarullah and the Boronic “Guardian of the Night” possess much power, which is why the foreign policies of the city are unpredictable

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: The galley-dockyards of the Zeforikas, wood and iron carvers

Town History: The Tulamide rebels established this city as they were running from prosecution by the Adamantine Sultanate; later on, the Peace Emperors settled here and renamed the place Corapia; after being part of the Drôlian March for a long time, Caliph Chamallah conquered and renamed the city.

Mood in the City: The Chorhopian passion for gambling is widely recognized; every tavern owns at least a few game tables; equally well-known is the people's eagerness to imitate the glory of the wealthy Al'Anfan high society.

HÔT-ALEM

This small, often fought-over port city by the mouth of the Tirob River is the only southern colony of the Middenrealm.

Population: 1,800

Insignia: Three white scimitars vertical on red

Government/Politics: Governed by a Prince-Protector (currently Refardeon II), Hôt-Alem is property of the New Empire

Garrison: 1 company of princely town guards (“Protector Salpikon”), 2 companies of the “Lions of Thalusa”

Temples: Efferd, Praios, Boron (Rite of Punin), Rondra

Special Features: Hôt-Alem, as a base of Middenrealmian influence, is home to a bastion of the Golgarite Order (which is loyal to Punin); the local Praios-Illuminate Solareon di Morundi is also one of the Twelve Orderly Inquisitory Counselors. Port Emer is located on the island of Brinland, about 60 miles off shore.

Town History: This town was built to serve as an outpost of the sultanate of Elem; the Praios following gained local support during the battle against the Wudu; after changing hands numerous times, the town belongs to the Middenrealm again (since 20 Haal).

Mood in the City: The upper society tries to imitate the lifestyles of Middenrealm (the Protector's Palace is a miniature version of the Gareth New Residence); they adore Gareth fashion styles and hold various tournaments and hunts throughout the surrounding lands.

H'RABAAL

Surrounded by jungle and plantations, this city is home to ancient lizard ruins and monuments, with some newer buildings almost hidden in between.

Population: 950 (10% Mohas, 5% Achaz)

Insignia: Black armor-turtle on green

Government/Politics: The family of the Charazzar (led by the old ‘king’ Azzaph) controls this city

Garrison: 20 town guards, 1 lance of Royal Brabakian Halberdiers

Temples: Hesinde, Tsa, several lizard deities

Special Features: In and around H'Rabaal, there is much archaic evidence of the Lizard Age: the temple complex itself is either covered by jungle underbrush or has sunk into the swamp, yet six pyramids are still well visible; some of the old houses were made of large turtle shells (these gigantic creatures are now extinct); the Napewanha, a local group of forest people, fear and avoid the city.

Town History: This place is one of the oldest settlements in Aventuria; it was established more than 5,400 years ago as a religious center for southern lizard populations. The Charazzar have ruled here as kings and moguls ever since the Tulamides conquered the land in 1800 b.H.; later, they lost their domain as they were subdued by the kingdom of Brabak.

Mood in the City: The H'Rabaalese follow obscure, traditional customs and are otherwise quite solitary characters (they may even behave in a hostile way towards strangers, unless a Charazzar gives orders to the contrary); there are no hostels or accommodations.

SYLLA

Proud freebooters live in this city; they mostly quarrel with Al'Anfa and Charypso. The cutlass is a symbol of rank.

Population: 1,600

Insignia: Two golden, crossed cutlasses below a golden turban against a turquoise background

Government/Politics: The female leader of the city, referred to as Harani, is chosen out of a group of most successful corsairs (currently Zulhamin Alschera); a Harani will be admiral and town governor

Garrison: None (about 1,000 armed individuals)

Temples: Efferd, Phex, Rahja, Tsa

Special Features: A famous site is the 80-pace tall lighthouse in the shape of a slim pyramid; the poorest of the poor live in its lightless caverns and hallways; the Aranian Mada Basari maintains an important office in the city

Town History: Aranian pirates and freebooters (mostly women) established Shila in about 1800 b.H.; the settlement later falls into Bosparan hands; under the rule of the Wise Emperors, Sylla became the longtime capital of the southern province of Meridiana; in later days, its was often allied with Arania.

Mood in the City: The aranian-tulamidian heritage is still very much alive and shapes the local culture (names, traditional costumes and sabre dances).

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KINGDOM IN THE JUNGLE— TRAHELIA OR THE KAHET NI MEMI

Since 4 b.H., Kahet ni Kemi—or, according to the old reading, “Trahelia”—has been practically independent from the Middenrealm. The empire of Nisut (Queen) Peri III is mostly made up of small settlements and forts in the coastal area. Forest people and lizardfolk live mostly out in the woods, but at times one might also encounter them in villages. Humans are careful to keep up good relations with these people—anything to the contrary would certainly lead to the downfall of the local human population.

There is the ever-present threat of the jungle absorbing roads and farmlands of the realm, while the climate throughout the entire land is nearly unbearable to Middenrealmians. There are no large cities, and even the royal court lacks the gold and the workforce to rebuild Khefu (the largest settlement and thus the capital of the Kahet ni Kemi) and revive the glory of past centuries. Yet, it is the memory of the country’s heritage that drives the Kemi people to prevent any quarrel in this melting pot of cultures. The state-sponsored church of Boron supports that effort; it maintains uniquely ascetic and orthodox rites and worldviews.

The country’s political relations to the outside world are quite stable; a treaty with the Horasrealm and the friendship to former archenemy Brabak has ensured peaceful times.

KHEFU

The capital city of the realm sits near the marshlands of the far-reaching Astaroth River Delta. The slow, muddy river is alive with crawling creatures, snakes, alligators and fish. Friendly, indulgent southerners walk the alleyways of the city as well as dark-dressed knights of the Boronic Order of Laguan. A major part of the town is the eastern “island city” with its palaces, “Old Khefu,” with its floating marketplace (which may at times consist of hundreds of boats), and the infamous “south quarter,” (home to the poor, the forest people and those who avoid the light). This rundown part of town stretches around the old Horasian garrison building.

Population: 1,200 (20% Tulamides, 20% Forest People)

Garrison: 1 company of Neseruken elite troops, 1 company of warriors belonging to the Holy Order of Laguan

Temples: Boron, Rondra, Praios, Efferd, Rastullah

A REFUGE FOR FREEBOOTERS— ALTOUM AND THE FOREST ISLANDS

Geographic Borders: A chain of islands by the southern tip of Aventuria

Terrain: Tropical wilderness, coastlines, tropical highlands on Altoum

Mountains: Altimont (Altoum)

Rivers and Waterways: Ilara River (Altoum)

Estimated Population: About 10,000 (70% Forest People)

Important Cities and Villages: Charypso, Port Stoorrebrandt

Important Traffic Routes: Sylla Straits (a narrows between Altoum and the continent)

Dominant religions: Nature religions of the natives, Twelvegods among the “civilized” peoples

Social Structure: Only Port Stoorrebrandt offers a somewhat orderly life, otherwise anarchic pirate communities and tribal structure of the Forest People

Influential Families: Stoorrebrandt (dominates the spice trade, has branch offices on Iltoken), the “Black Serpent” pirate gang

Local Heroes, Saints and Mysterious Characters: Dagon Lolonna (a cruel corsair from Charypso, leader of the Black Serpent), Hamarro (the “soft pirate”)

Strange Locations: The ruined city of Altaia (on Altoum); Ibonka Island; maelstrom off Setokan

flat western parts of the island, especially the basins of the Ilara River, are mostly swamplands. A pirate refuge by the name of Charypso (allied with Al’Anfa; sworn enemy of Sylla) is located in this region. It is here that the cruel pirate Dagon Lolonna meets his challenger, young Captain Hamarro. Hamarro, the mongrel with brown skin and velvet dark eyes, is friendly and courteous towards captured dames of the high society (which earned him the name “soft pirate”)—quite a few Grandessa daughters from Al’Anfa dream of being kidnapped by Hamarro himself just once.

The ruined city of Altaia, southeast of Charypso, was recently burned to the ground by a horrid Borbaradian chimera. Nobody lives here anymore, but at times one can encounter magicians of “versatile interests” examining this area. Further east, the traveler reaches the Altimont mountain range, home of the peaceful (and highly magically adept) Darna tribe. The Haipu tribe live solitary and reclusive lives in the forests along the eastern coasts.

SPICES

The islands Token, Iltoken and Sokkina (the ‘Spice Islands’), as well as the Cinnamon Islands around Benbukkula, are famous for their abundance of spices. The people of the Miniwatu tribe populate the former islands while half of Iltoken belongs to the Stoorrebrandt family. Port Stoorrebrandt,

ALTOUM

Altoum, located just southeast off the southern Aventurian mainland, is the second-largest island of the continent. The

a colony of the well-known Festum trading house, is located in the northern part of the island. A local accountant recently disappeared along with a shipload of spices and tropical woods. Whoever manages to get him to Festum for a “discussion” of the matter can certainly count on Stoorrebrandt’s gratitude.

PIRATE TREASURES

Most freebooters know of hidden bays and small forest islands in which a crew can remain undercover (and of which the Black Serpents know nothing). Of course, there are always numerous rumors of buried treasures; from time to time, a stranger in a far-off Havena port tavern may even offer a map to such a site. These parchment or leather pieces are not necessarily fake documents, but their authenticity is certain only when either the gold has been found or a throat has been cut over the possession of this document.

ЇВОНКА

For the Utulu, a native tribe that lives on the eastern Forest Islands, Ibonka is a taboo zone. Truly, all visitors ought to be warned about a visit to this island, despite the countless stories of legendary diamond fields. The few that ever returned never spoke a word again or were barely capable of a frenzied giggle. Only pirates seem to know no fear; they joke of how beautiful naked Utulu maids and lads live on this island—who would not lose their mind over such a sight? The fact that they do, however, never steer their ships towards the island must surely be due to unfavorable winds ...

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The open sea, tropical beaches, island groups and hidden bays— all this creates a picture that is more than fit for any ‘Spanish Main’-style pirate adventure. In this scenario, seafaring professions and Thorwalians have an opportunity to shine; the exploration of an island might demand the experience of a wilderness-adapted individual (preferably a Moha).

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IMPORTANT PLACES ON THE FOREST ISLANDS

CHARYPSO

This large pirate hideout stretches from the shore of the Ilara River all the way to the northern cliffs and rocks. Most houses are mere ruins, at best skewed shacks.

Population: 1,700

Government/Politics: Rule of the mob

Garrison: 15 “bailiffs” (experienced thugs), about 400 freebooters

Temples: Efferd, Phex (both in miserable condition)

Important Pubs and Taverns: The Drunken Parrot (Q2/P5/B22), Lavish Loot (Q30/P6/B14) Merciful Perval Hotel (Q4/P8/B16, Dagon Lolonna, the ruthless leader of the Black Serpent pirate gang, resides here in a suite that deserves Q8).

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Agnild Galmstump, carver of wooden legs

Mood in the City: If you think Al’Anfa represents the pinnacle of vice and violence, then Charypso will have you reconsider that assumption

PORT STOERREBRANDT

This port city and “Fountlandian colony” on the island of Iltoken mostly exports spices to all of Aventuria.

Population: 670

Insignia: A silver falcon on red (trading house Stoorrebrandt)

Government/Politics: Radulf Hadermann as the representative of House Stoorrebrandt

Garrison: 1 company of Neersand mercenaries, a handful of former mercenary marines from Llanka (Thorwalians)

Temples: Rondra, Swafnir, Travia

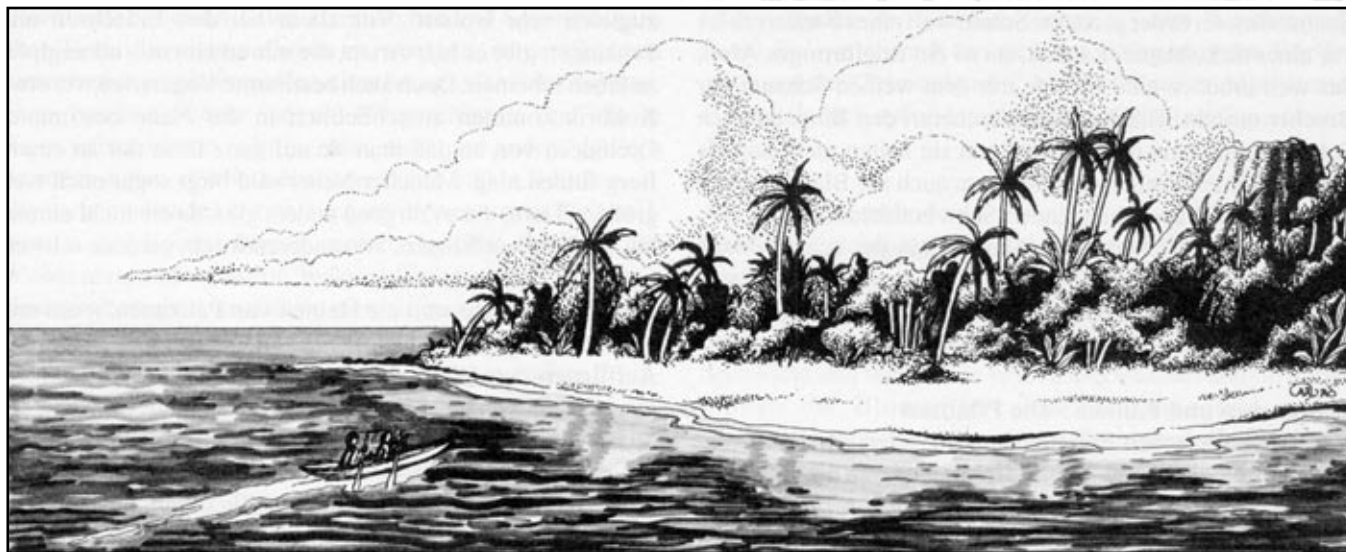
Special Features: Thhe only safe haven of the Forest Islands

Important Pubs and Taverns: The Shrunkn Head (unpleasant sailor’s pub, Q2/P4/B10), Hotel Vikko Stoorrebrandt (Q6/P7/B10)

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: All of the city is a “branch office” of the Stoorrebrandt trading house

Town History: In 24 b.H., Vikko Stoorrebrandt bought this land from the Miniwatu for a dozen metal weapons

Mood in the City: Marked by loyalty to the Stoorrebrandt trading house



THE PATIONS OF AVENTURIA

THE DARK LANDS

This term—sometimes also called “Black Lands” or Heptarchies—refers to all those nations and regions that were (and still are) conquered, partly devastated and subsequently occupied by Borbarad’s demonic troops and are now ruled by his successors, the so-called heptarchs. (They were named after the seven beams of the Demon’s Crown, an artifact of Borbarad’s reign.)

GLORANIA: THE FROZEN REALM

Still-free Fountland separates this empire of Glorana (“The Ice Witch”) from the demonic realms of Tobria; it is the northernmost of all the Dark Lands. The region extends from Brazen Sword in the east all the way to Blue Lake in the west, from the Northweal Downs as southern border to the Grimfrost Wastes in the north. The Archdemon Belshirash (or Nagrach) as ruler of twisted ice and frost has covered the land with a white shroud of eternal winter. Snow and ice will not thaw even during summer months, but a few small areas, heated by volcanoes or hot springs, are fit for some farming and grazing Karen cattle herds.

The Ice Palace near the crowded city of Paavi is Glorana’s center of power. From here, she sends looters and mercenaries on iceboats (sail-powered sleds) all across the land to capture strong young men and women or summons a horrid pack of demons, Nagrach’s Wild Hunt, to this task. Theriak, the “Blood of Sumu” (a highly condensed liquid life-force), is the wealth of this region; the captives toil under demonic supervision in the icy deserts to unearth this valued commodity until they are literally wasted.

Few humans live in Glorana’s empire; among them are many Nivese and Norbardes. About half of them live in the towns and cities of Paavi, Eestiva and Bjaldorn, where one of the very few Twelvegod sanctuaries still stands. This Crystal Palace, dedicated to the winter-god Firun, offers refuge and shelter to the few fugitives that successfully escape from the grip of the Ice Empire.

Glorana’s supremacy is challenged by Kyrjaka, a demon she-wolf, as well as by Iloinen Swan-Daughter, a demi-goddess, who roam the icy lands with their warriors, seeking to overthrow the witch (for different reasons).

THE DISPUTED LANDS OF TOBRIA

The eastern province of the Middenrealm (along with it the marches of Warunk, Beilunk and parts of Darpatia) was the first to fall under the attack of the Dark Hordes. The determined warriors of this region, under the lead of their young Duke Bernfrey, lost everything but a small stretch of land by the southern border of the Dragonstone mountains.



In occupied Tobria itself, three “heptarchs” battle over supreme power: former Imperial Court Magician Galotta controls the northwestern part (along the Black Sickle mountains) and has aligned himself with the arch-demons Blakharaz and Agrimoth. He rules over a realm that he supposes to be the Next Empire. Impassable forests are controlled by demons, either by possessing or horribly transforming the plants and animals. Surrounding villages suffer under the tyranny of diabolic creatures and unscrupulous noblemen acting in the name of an insidious law system. Galotta himself governs over Yol-Ghurmak (the former city of Ysilia) by the Ysli Lake—an architectural marvel sprung from the sketchboard of a madman.

The undead dragon Rhazzazor rules the southwest of Tobria, the once rich and fertile region around Warunk and the former Darpatian County of Troll Peaks, now collectively known as Warunkia. This “dragolich” has gathered around himself a group of necromancers, for he is a creature of and devotee to Thargunitoth, the arch-demon of undeath and nightmares. The Omegatherion, a many-bodied demon summoned during the invasion, has devastated great parts of the land, while seemingly leaving life in the cities and villages undisturbed—life that consists of those ever-present legions of skeletons, man-hunters and zombies roaming the streets, that is. Further, mercenaries and guards drag innocent individuals or would-be refugees to Warunk and the Golden Pyramid so they may, literally, pay their blood tax. The Wall of Death, the former Ogre Wall, is now the strongest bulwark against any Middenrealmian offensive; it is located in the Trollgap to the west of the Tobrian Heptarchies.

The coastal area between the Beilunk Mountains and the marshy shores south of Vallusa, plus the baronies of the hinterland are subject to the rule of the black magician Xeraan, ruling from the port city of Mendena. He is in alliance with the arch-demon Tasfarelel, the Lord of Greed, and possesses the Shard of Charyptoroth. He serves his demonic master by squeezing the last scrap of gold out of the land and its people to fill his vast treasure vault with gold. For this purpose alone, he established a virtual religion, the cult of the Demon Master, which hands out positions and honors to those who are willing to pay. Xeraan reigns with brutal tyranny and continuously threatens the pirates traveling the eastern seas between Vallusa and Thalusa with the conjuring of terrible water monsters into paying him stiff taxes and fees. The heavily fought-over and besieged port city of Ilsur is the only place in the region currently not controlled by Xeraan.

The struggle for power over the entire eastern mainland has not yet led to a full-scale war; but since the area of the Black Sickle is a good defense against foreign attacks (only a few passes, heavily guarded), however, it is only a matter of time until the three heptarchs will get at each other’s throat.

ORON: PLACE OF DARK AND ROTTING LUST

The Mogulate Oron, the former eastern part of Arania, is the smallest but also the wealthiest of all the Heptarchies. It includes



the hilly lands by the Chaluk Gulf and the Elburian coastline—a region that provides good grazing grounds and fertile farmlands (as well as valleys covered with thorn bushes and mangrove shores). A wall of demon-altered rose bushes and black wild vines separates Oron from Arania.

Dimiona, daughter of Princess Sybia of Arania, the former ruler of all Arania, rules over the region and tries to protect the image of a normal, orderly society (for example, the Twelvegod cults are not prohibited; instead, believers are suppressed through high taxes and church fees). Nevertheless, the female “priests” of cult of Belkelel have a large influence in the Mogulate, which is why this place is a cesspool of wicked perversions and lustrous temptations.

The capital city of Elburum is the most shocking example: blasphemous activities in brothel- and game-houses show mere disdain for the laws of Rahja and Phex—a life (or at least physical, political and mental safety) is worth nothing. Elburum is also a key location for the trade between the various Dark Lands and therefore a center for espionage and intrigues. Secret informers, deceitful merchants and perfidious schemes show the character of this realm.

THE BLOODY SEA

Since the return of Borbarad, the sea region between Vallusa in the north and Jilaskan Island in the south has become the home of various sea monsters, allies of Charyptoroth and bloodthirsty pirates. The major vessels on this water are demon-arks—large structures (or even beings?) that have grown out of demons, ships, animals, seaweed and evil spirits. They host deep-sea monsters, ruthless mercenaries, and flying and floating demons.

Fish and toad people roam the shores, which also serve as hideouts for pirates; on the open sea, large floats of seaweed may appear out of nothing and take hold of a ship, rendering the crew helpless and destined to starve to death. Taking all the ‘inconveniences’ into account, it is to no surprise that very few ships of the free lands still travel the northern Sea of Pearls (and in armed and guarded convoys). Certainly, the captains and seafarers of these vessels are daredevil adventurers, all quite aware of the dangers that lay below them.

MARASKAN: CURSED AND TABOO

With the exception of the Shikanydad of Sinoda (see p. 81), Maraskan is also controlled by the Dark Hordes. The traitor Helme Haffax (former Imperial Grand Marshal and Prince of Maraskan), supported by the treacherous warriors of the Blood Templar Order, leads a blood-thirsty regiment in the name of Belhalhar. His centers of power are the city of Jergan (where he resides on the stolen Lily Throne), Tuzak and Boran. Similar to the preceding Middenrealm occupants of this island, Haffax never extended his domain away

from the coastal strips of the island, though he managed to take over a few advanced jungle forts and the hidden Endurium mine, located in the heart of the Maraskan mountain region.

Adherents of Charyptoroth (humans, the Achaz lizardfolk and fish creatures) have some control over the southeastern part of the island, centered around the Boneyard of the Serpents, an inaccessible maze of mangrove forests and overgrown channels as well as steep-rising cliffs, sandbanks and smaller islands.

What nobody knows is that large segments of the steaming jungles, dense forests and foggy mountain valleys are actually not controlled by Haffax. Rather, they are the domain of an ancient lizard chimera (and master of chimaerology) who lives in her Dark Fortress: the Skrechu, the serpent-bodied Asfalothic monstrosity that is bearer of Asfaloth’s splinter of the Demon Crown. In the circle of her influence, the laws of nature seem to be suspended; the separation between the elements fades away and chimeras and mutants have become powerful beings.

INFORMATION FOR THE HIGHLORD

The dark lands represent the ghastly and gruesome side of Aventuria, expressed through the perversion of nature and human relations, cruel battles with no allies, constant fear for one’s sanity and, of course, the obvious existence of demons and undead creatures. Each of the Heptarchies has been given its own kind of atrocity and horror and maintains its own atmosphere, so that they are fit for varying game-styles and experience levels.

Naturally, the Heptarchies represent a threat to the free lands—but do not assume that marching armies of the undead or demonic air raids are the actual danger other nations have to fear. Instead, stress the importance and of numerous spy campaigns, intrigues, commando operations and generally the use of precision strikes—the same strategies the allies use against the heirs of Borbarad.

HISTORY

2 Rahja, 22 Haal: Liscom of Fasar, a black magician, conjures up the spirit of Borbarad, which was tied to Limbo for more than 400 years; as a consequence of his actions, two baronies in Meadows are left devastated.

22 Boron, 23 Haal: The dark elf Pardona provides a body for Borbarad and in return wants to govern at his side, but Borbarad rejects her offer. After gaining corporeality, he gathers more power through his disciples and begins to corrupt important individuals while traveling through Aventuria in disguise.

11 Ingerimm, 24 Haal: Borbarad destroys the oracle on Altoum and the city of Altaia; in the following year, he gains influence over Prince Herdin of Maraskan.

End of 25/beginning of 26 Haal: Borbarad’s followers open a Portal of Horror on Maraskan and conjure up the progenitors of the demon arks. A short time later, chimerologist Abu Terfas (working in the service of Borbarad) fails to obtain control over Arania.

Boron, 26 Haal: Helme Haffax, former Grand Marshal of the Middenrealm, becomes Prince of Maraskan. In Tsa, Borbarad’s unholy troops (with the support of Maraskan mercenaries) liberate the Answinsts imprisoned on the fortress island of Rulat. In the summer of the same year, spherequakes shake the area of the Gorian Desert: Borbarad either seals or renews alliances with various

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arch-demons and calls the dragon Rhazzazor back into life. The far north has no summer period anymore.

20 Ingerimm, 26 Haal: Mendena falls. This attack signals the beginning of the Borbaradian invasion on Tobria—a third of the duchy is quickly defeated. The Amazon Fortress of Kurkum is conquered during the Nameless Days of the year while at the same time, hordes of the undead are raised in Tobria.

29 Rondra, 27 Haal: Battle of Eslamsbridge; Borbaradians defeat Imperial and Tobrian armies; Warunk falls two weeks later.

Winter, 27 Haal: Under the banner of the Demon Crown, Count Uriel of Needmark takes Bjaldorn; during Tsa, fighters of Helme Haffax attack Boran, the last independent city of Maraskan. Haffax reveals himself to be one of Borbarad's allies. The subsequent Borbaradian offensives during the spring take possession of Beilunk, Ysilia and the Ogre Wall; Uriel's Fountland campaigns continue to be successful.

24 Praios, 28 Haal: Battle of the Vallusian Meadows—the Imperial army and volunteer fighters accomplish their first victory on the battlefield against the Dark Hordes (led by Helme Haffax) and Uriel's treacherous Fountlandian army. Uriel dies, Fountland remains independent. Uneasy standstill on the Tobrian front.

1 Tsa, 28 Haal: Dimiona of Zorgan proclaims herself Queen of Arania, but encounters resistance and subsequently establishes the much more modest Mogulate of Oron. Meanwhile, Galotta styles himself Emperor.

22-23 Ingerimm, 28 Haal: Battle of the Trollgap aka Third Demon Battle—a collective attempt of all enemies of Borbarad to retake the Wall of Death (the former Ogre Wall) and to advance into Dark Lands fails; however, Borbarad himself is defeated by the Stigmatized Seven. The Demon Crown bursts—the owners and bearers of the seven splinters become the future Heptarchs.

IMPORTANT CITIES OF THE DARK LANDS

OLDTOLL

A small town in Warunkia, this former capital city of the county of Troll Peaks is now one of the major garrisons for the Black Dragon Empire; it was heavily damaged by a summoned hurricane during the invasion, but locals have rebuilt it almost entirely. Oldtoll is a headquarters for the Manhunters and hosts many dark casemates of the Endless Column.

Population: About 950

Government/Politics: Military rule under Siriam Grim, master of the Manhunters, and the undead Korobar, a former wizard

Garrison: About half a regiment of the Endless Column, a half company of the Dragon Guard, about 50 Manhunters

Temples: Thargunitoth, Borbarad

Special Features: Nearby stands an old earth sanctuary, which the troops of Rhazzazor have not yet conquered

Mood in the City: If one disregards the smell (and sheer presence) of the Endless Column, then this place is actually a notably pretty and busy town

BEILUNK

Mighty walls surround this port city by the mouth of Radrom River where it enters the Gulf of Perricum; servants of the Dark Dragon besiege the city while ships supply the population inside city walls with the most necessary items.

Population: About 10,000 (about 2,500 refugees from Tobria)

Insignia: Parted into three sections (blue-green-blue), the top section depicts a golden griffin; the midsection shows three Bedon blossoms

Government/Politics: Worldly rule of the church of Praios (under Gwiduhenna of Faldahon); this region is still a part of Middenrealm; the Arcanum Interdictum is in effect everywhere (prohibition of all magic)

Garrison: Some Sun Legionnaires and Rondrian warriors, numerous warriors of the Order of the Banishing Light, about 200 town guards, about a fifth of the population is capable of bearing and using arms

Temples: Praios (next to Gareth, this is the most important and impressive temple of Praios), Rondra, Efferd, Phex, Hesinde, Rahja

Special Features: The large, freestanding dome of the Praios temple; chorales sung from its walls almost constantly are obviously an effective protection against demonic attacks

Town History: Established about 2,500 years ago by the Al'Hani Tulamides, this settlement was destroyed during fights with Bosparan settlers and then rebuilt quickly once again; from 990 b.H. on, the city was home to the Sword and Staff magician's academy (which has since moved to Gareth). In 12 b.H., the region became a march and was separated from Tobria; during the nameless days of 27 Haal, a miracle of Praios saves the settlements from being conquered. Since then, deonts of Praios govern the city.

Mood in the City: Ever-present Praios cult; constant chorales; food and commodities are short in supply, yet the population is determined to stand firm and hold the city; many people share little space as there needs to be room for farms and grazing grounds for livestock.

BJALDORN

Formerly a free town in the forest north of Fountland, Borbarad's troops have ravaged this place. Glorana's mercenaries and some of Count Uriel's henchmen have settled in the partially destroyed buildings—a frightening group of cutthroats, traitors plus an unknown number of goblins. The strong rule the weak. The dome of Firun's temple, the large ice Crystal Palace, was destroyed by dark magic; in response, the grim deity has encircled park and temple with a thick wall of ice several paces high.

Population: About 700

Insignia: None; at times, decapitated heads decorate the flagpoles

Government/Politics: Mercenary leaders govern for as long as they carry a head on their shoulders

Temples: Firun (practically inaccessible)

Special Features: The Firun temple is a sanctuary to all those of a pure heart, it allows them to merge with the wall of ice and eventually step through it to seek refuge from Glorana's servants

Important Pubs and Taverns: Lovely Belkelel brothel; Court of Blood tavern ("Say, what's that meat you serve in your soup?")

Mood in the City: brutal

BORAN

Several rows of palisades and forts secure this eastern Maraskan port city built on a promontory above the Sea of Pearls with its circular historic Maraskan quarter in the middle of the city. The local population has rebuilt destroyed buildings; followers of Rur and Gror consider this city to be a holy site.

Population: About 7,000

Government/Politics: Dictatorship under Nedimajida of Tuzak (a relative of the former royal family); nevertheless, there is fairly little military or espionage activity

Garrison: About one regiment of armed forces (Karmoth guards, Red Legion, mercenaries, Blood Templars)

Temples: Charyptoroth, Borbarad, Rur and Gror; insantuary of Belhalhar close to the town

Special Features: This place is one of the holy cities according to the teachings of Rur and Gror; a few armed insurgents are still hiding within this city

Town History: After the Middenrealnian occupation of the island (6 b.H. to 28 Haal), this became the only free city of Maraskan; it was betrayed by the end of Firun 27 and conquered by Borbaradian troops

Mood in the City: Notably quiet; the population seems to have come to terms with their occupants, but unrest broods below the surface.

EESTIVA

This town by the Letta river has one of the few bridges in the area. Once the proud home of an impressive Ifirn temple, refugees from surrounding lands now crowd the city (mostly Nivese and Norbardes). A few iceless patches allow for some fishing and cattle tending, while the city itself is an important trading post for Theriak. Eestiva is further home to the Gatherers (pirate gangs on sail-sleds).

Population: 1,200

Government/Politics: Anarchy/despotism among the gangs of the Gatherers

Garrison: About 150 members of the Gatherers and other cutthroats

Temples: Shrines of Kor and Nagrach

Mood in the City: For being a pirate hideout enclosed by eternal ice, this place is actually quite well supplied

ELBURUM

Since the inauguration of Dimiona, this former Aranian port city on the Elburian coast has become the capital of Oron and center of the stately Bel'Khelel cult. Residence of Moguli Dimiona and Great Vizier Merisa. The city offers many business and entertainment opportunities.

Population: About 5,500

Insignia: A purple poppy blossom on black

Government/Politics: Satrap Merisa is the political leader while numerous palace eunuchs make up the administration

Garrison: A total of about two regiments, among them units of the Royal Scorpions, the Redcapes, the Elburum Satrap Guards and the Order of the Horned God

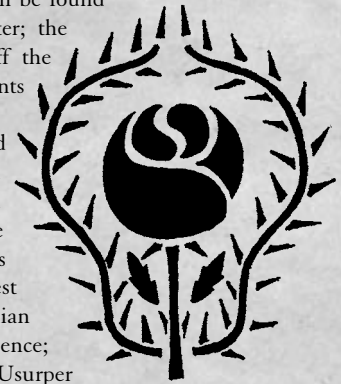
Temples: Belkelel, Tasfarelel, Hesinde, Peraine (both decaying and powerless), a secret temple to Phex

Special Features: The palace quarter Shorioroth is home to the Mogul and Satrap Palace as well as the magician's academy, School of Pain (healing, black); the "Amusement Mile," with its

brothel- and game-houses, can be found in the Zhinbabil dock quarter; the port island Elburial (just off the shore) offers cheap amusements for sailors of modest means.

Town History: This old Tulamide city is a traditional port (mostly for business with Maraskan) and capital of the county of Elburum; it lost its importance after the conquest of Maraskan and the Aranian proclamation of independence; Countess Merisa the Usurper surrendered the city without a fight to Dimiona.

Mood in the City: Elburum presents itself as a wealthy trading post where "free spirits" can find joy and entertainment. In its core, however, this place is rotten, a sparkling and ruthless soul trap which captures all those who seek pleasure, leading them into the hands of demonic cults.



ESLAMSBIDGE

This small town by the Tobimora used to be famous for its lace and the local bridge; nowadays it is known for a battle that raged in this area, as well as the "Pandemonium," a pyramid-shaped place of worship to Borbarad and all arch-demons (the building is still under construction).

Population: About 1,000

Government/Politics: Imperial Sacral Master of Construction Agriman Aldenkover

Garrison: Many human, non-human, demonic and undead warriors and construction workers

Special Features: A dangerous presence of demonic apparitions

Mood in the City: Marked by the building of the temple, the atmosphere in Eslamsbridge is a gloomy bustle

HEMANDU

Hemandu was once a tiny settlement around the Octagon (an old fortress of the Arethinides, a Maraskan noble house) and the main monastery of the Templars of Jergan (who defected to Helme Haffax and the Borbaradian side); it has since grown to the size of a small city.

Population: About 1,500

Government/Politics: Despotism under the rule of High Master Belharion Menning

Garrison: 5 companies of Blood Templars

Temples: Belhalhar

Town History: The Battle of Jergan took place nearby in 6 b.H.; afterwards, the town became the seat of the Templars of Jergan

Mood in the City: Center of the Belhalhar cult; many cult followers, traders in 'religious arts,' slavers and mercenaries

ÏLSUR

A port town by the Tobrian Sea; parts of it are burned and devastated since the invasion and the subsequent partial recovery by the "Sword March."

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Population: About 700 (200 loyal to the Sword March, 500 people under Borbaradian control)

Government/Politics: Disputed; Tharleon of Thunderbrook commands the Sword March while Girtle Coffinail leads the Borbarad forces

Garrison: 50 warriors of the Sword March, 150 Borbaradians

Temples: Peraine, Rondra, (Efferd) / Belhalhar, Borbarad

Special Features: The Sword March fighters are only in control of Cliffrock Castle, the nearby Holy Springs of Peraine, as well as some of the areas in between these places; waterways are the last line of supply for these resisting forces; the springs somewhat keep the demons and the undead at bay.

Mood in the City: Marked by constant fighting; one side fights with embittered stubbornness while the other is just as stubborn and disillusioned; a novice to the local scene only has a small chance for survival

JERGAN

Built into a narrow valley by the mouth of the Hira River, this northern Maraskan port city is the residence of Helme Haffax, residing on the ancient Lily Throne.

Population: About 8,000

Government/Politics: Despotic rule under Prince-Commander Helme Haffax

Garrison: Blood Templars, Karmoth Guards, Red Legion (each one banner), about 25 informers of the Velvet Gloves, one banner of town guards, plus sailors, marines and pirates, about 200 mercenaries

Temples: Belhalhar, Charyptoroth, Borbarad, Rur-and-Gror (secularized)

Special Features: Jergan is an extremely packed city, with many residential towers; hanging bridges cross the Hira River

Outstanding Merchants: Many; they mostly offer products from other Heptarchies

Town History: During the time of settlement of the island, this town became capital of Maraskan and was later succeeded by Tuzak; the Battle of Jergan took place nearby and preceded Emperor Reto's conquest of the island in 6 b.H.; with the announcement of the Principdom-Commandery, Jergan became the capital of Borbaradian-held Maraskan.

Mood in the City: A trade station for business between the various heptarch empires; the Templars control this region while the population remains surprisingly calm

LLANKA

Once an important Aranian port town by the mouth of the Tern River where it enters the Gulf of Perricum, this haven has become useless to any larger ship after the appearance of a demonic water creature. The city is decaying.

Population: 3,300

Insignia: A red lobster on silver (now black)

Government/Politics: Keresh Bel ben Kerry, son of the former baroness, is the official head of the city; he often drowns his worries in wine

Garrison: Numerous cutthroats of the Order of the Horned God, a few Redcapes and Satrap Guards, a few hundred pirates and Ferkina mercenaries

Temples: Charyptoroth- and Tasfarelel-shrines, Hesinde, Travia
Special Features: Since the expulsion of the deonts of Efferd, the Crusher, a giant lobster and demonic water creature lives in the waters by the port, sinking entire ships; the port itself is abandoned except for a few pirates and their fast boats, numerous

Lobsteroids and Krakonians who seem to worship the Crusher; former Thorwal naval mercenaries toil as slaves.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Many grimy taverns, brothel houses and game halls

Mood in the City: Llanka is a deteriorated and ruinous place, a meeting point for the scum of the eastern coastline. The local craftsmen are either slaves or were deported to Yasairabad

МЕНДЕНА

This port city by the Tobrian Sea is also the capital of Xeraania and residence of Xeraan. Pirates and seafarers of the Dark Lands set the character of this place.

Population: 4,000

Insignia: Black Crown of Borbarad over a red gate against a silver background

Government/Politics: Despotic rule under Xeraan and Harbor Protector Yasmina of Darbonia

Garrison: 4 companies of guards and marines (among them the Swords of Borbarad), the "Undeclared Legion of Yaq-Monnith" serving as the personal guard of Xeraan, 30 town and port guards

Temples: Borbarad, shrines of Charyptoroth and Tasfarelel

Special Features: this settlement hosts the Borbaradial, the main temple of the Borbarad religion; its High Prophet and Portifex Maximus is Xeraan; the Golden House is Xeraan's residence and supposedly also the location of his Infathomable Treasure; demonic forces have built many of the new port structures.

Town History: At times, this city was the residence of Tobrian dukes (usually after a destruction of Ysilia); the city is also the place where Jarlak—saint of Firun and duke of Tobria—killed the notorious Boar of Mendena.

Mood in the City: A heavily taxed but growing trade harbor, home to many freebooters; the Borbarad religion is visibly present everywhere

ПААВИ

The largest city in Glorana's empire and also her residence—she lives in the Snow Palace east of the city—Paavi is home to countless gold-diggers and fortune hunters, lured here by prominent discoveries of valuable metal. Many Nivese herders, Norbarde merchants and various villains roam this place. Located in the most northeastern part of Aventuria, ice encircles the entire city; only a few patches of land are still fit for farming and raising animals.

Population: Around 5,000

Government/Politics: Despotism under the rule of Glorana and the commander of her personal guard, Halman of Gareth

Garrison: About 25 of Glorana's personal guards, various mercenaries

Temples: Until 63 b.H., this was a Norbarde trading post, when Geldana of Gareth (shortly after escaping Perval, her brother-in-law) announced Paavi to be a duchy; the local population grew rapidly to its current level during the (faked) gold rush of the year 25.

Mood in the City: Food is short in supply; everything is unbelievably expensive; the only way to ensure survival is to align oneself with Glorana and the Nagrach cult; the local scene is somewhat a mix between a declining gold-diggers town and a Siberian Gulag.

ШАМАХАМ

Shamaham is an important garrison town of the Xeraanian Empire, located in the northeastern foothills of the Beilunk Mountains. This small town used to have good relations with the Amazons of Kurkum.



Population: 650

Government/Politics: Baroness-Archprelate Iolitta of Shamaham, Captain of the Mactaleanata

Garrison: About 600 mercenaries and guardsfolk

Temples: Borbarad, Belhalhar

Special Features: Ruins of the old Amazon castle Kurkum are only a few day-journeys away

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Many blacksmiths

Mood in the City: The population lives quite well off the locally stationed warriors

TUZAK

This is a Maraskan port city where the Roab river empties into the Gulf of Tuzak; the city proper (along with the "White Residence," the former King's and Prince's palace) sits on a plateau about 150 paces above the port.

Population: 9,000

Government/Politics: Commander Rayo Brabaker; it is a slightly chaotic port mostly used by pirates and smugglers

Garrison: Karmoth Guards, Red Legion, Blood Templars (each one company), many mercenaries, sailors, marines and pirates

Temples: Belhalhar, Charyptoroth, Tasfarelel, Boron, Rur and Gror (secularized)

Special Features: It should be possible to enter Maraskan through Tuzak, since some Tulamides from Khunchom and Thalusa have revived their trade relations with Maraskan. The magician's academy just outside of the city is now closed.

Important Pubs and Taverns: Several grimy pothouses

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: A handful of blacksmiths and printing-houses

Town History: This place is one of the earliest settlements on Maraskan and has become known for the "Tuzak-Wyrm," which burned the city to the ground several times; for a long time, Tuzak was capital of Maraskan.

Mood in the City: Busy, dominated by ruthless pirates and the constant threat of Templar roundups; the population suffers under the weight of taxes

WARUNK

Once the capital of the march of the same name, this is the current residence of undead emperor dragon Rhazzazor and his necromancers, and also the capital of his empire. Warunk is located on Newt Mountain in a bend of the Radrom River. It is the only option to cross the stream for miles. The city used to be pretty and clean, but is now marked by the scent of decay.

Population: 10,000 living individuals

Government/Politics: Despotic rule under Rhazzazor and his henchmen

Garrison: More than 1,000 troops (main camp of the Dragon Guard, additional man-hunters, Skeleton Guard, Endless Column, mercenaries)

Temples: Thargunitoth, Kor, Rondra

Special Features: The Golden Pyramid in Upper Warunk (stronghold of Rhazzazor); a part of the Beast of Many Bodies; the Skull Tower of Rakolus by the Radrom cataract; the Summoning Circle of Karasuk is practically a magician's school (necromancy, black).

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Despite all hardships, the production of the famed Sembelquist cheese is still active

Town History: About 2,500 years ago founded by the Alhani

Tulamides; the region becomes a march and is separated from Tobria in 12 b.H.; plagued by the Night Demon in 3 Haal; Xeraan conquers Warunk during the Borbaradian invasion, but has to hand it over to Rhazzazor.

Mood in the City: Omnipresent necromancy saturates the region with an aura of decay while desperate humans try to maintain a civil and orderly facade

YASAIRABAD

Since the harbor of Llanka has become practically inaccessible, Yasairabad has become the naval base of the Mogulate of Oron. Yasairabad sits by the Gulf of Perricum, west of Llanka.

Population: 1,100

Garrison: 1 banner Elburian Satrap Guards, a half-banner of Redcapes, sailors and naval mercenaries of the imperial fleet

Mood in the City: Many local craftsmen were forced to move here while their families were deported to live somewhere else; yet, this is a business town on the advance

YOL-GHURMAK (YSILIA)

This former capital of the duchy of Tobria on the shores of Lake Ysli has had a rough past—after the fall of the city and its resultant burning and plundering, Galotta has put all his effort into an insanely thorough large-scale reconstruction to let 'Yol-Ghurmak' become the residence and most important estate of the Demon Emperor. The sight of the city is marked by bizarre architecture; demons, goblins and undead creatures walk the otherwise deserted streets.

Government/Politics: Despotic rule under the almost direct control of Emperor Galotta (who is also the architect of the city)

Garrison: 100 fighters of the Irrhalken Guard, 50 manifested Heshtothim demons, 3 banners of the Imperial Demonic Guard, along with them many informers, henchmen and bailiffs

Temples: Blakharaz, Agrimoth, shrines of other arch-demons, Borbarad

Special Features: Mostly mad, barely inhabited architecture (giant open spaces, sky-high towers built in the style of Gargoyle architecture, monstrous barracks and palaces, walk-in statues) and magical creatures; Galotta's palace and his private magician's school, the Heptagon Academy; most important temples of Blakharaz and Agrimoth.

Prominent Craftsmen and Merchants: Master mechanics Leonardo of Havena and Sorp Sanderwick are held captive here

Town History: Established by the Alhanians (a tribe of Tulamides later to become the Norbarden) about 2,500 years ago, this city was destroyed and rebuilt numerous times (last time during the March of the Ogres in 10 Haal and during the Borbarad's invasion during 27 Haal); the settlement was renamed Y-G. and declared capital of Galotta's empire in 28 Haal; since then, the city is in a state of hectic construction (with substantial aid of demons).

Mood in the City: Marked by its architecture and demonic population; except for the military forces and numerous courtiers, the place appears to be deserted; many of the people that were forced to move here have not yet adapted to life in the city; regular military parades and public show trials.

THE SEAS AND THE LANDS BEYOND

THE SEA OF PEARLS AND THE LAND O' GIANTS

"The current and the constant southwest wind have carried us so far north that, according to Quadrant and Foliant, we ought to be on the same latitude with Vallusa. If our sounding and calculations are correct, then those cliffs we spot in the north must be at least one and a half miles above the sea. Thick, yellow-black smoke rises many miles into the air while thundering waves foam around the base of these rocks—again, if our estimations are to be trusted, then we ought to praise Efferd for having led us past this shore back to the southwest. These breakers must be at least eighty paces high...."

From the log of the Princess Lamea, the flagship of the Red Harika flotilla, specific locations and times have been removed on the order of Horas admiralty

For ages, the Sea of Pearls has been known for being a difficult, if not entirely impossible, body of water to cross, at least for those who are returning from Land o' Giants. During recent times, only two captains have successfully crossed this sea: Ruban the Traveller (aka 'Fares to Land o' Giants,' who has not yet arrived in the eastern continent, but has made several attempts) and Harika of Bethana, who continued her travels east even after the discovery of the shorelines.

Reports from both ancient and modern times talk of maelstroms, steady southwest winds, large regions in the southern waters with no wind at all, and a bay which supposedly brings forth greater storms than the Kaucatan Ocean (which

itself is a veritable hurricane breeding ground). During recent times, the danger of passing these waters has doubled because of emerging demonic monstrosities and many Borbaradian pirates—there is no hope for a safe passage. Even just passing Weal Cape and crossing Firepeak Bay is nearly impossible, as volcanoes throw hot magma miles into the sea, forming countless razor-sharp reefs.

The furthest human advance into the Sea of Pearls is Korelkin Island, an outpost of the Horasrealm, which is supposedly located 600 miles east of Maraskan shores (this island is not listed on any map).



ABOUT THE LAND O' GIANTS

"And thus Ingerimm drove his sword into the ground and shook the body of Sumu, so that Trolls and Cyclopes alike fell to the ground. As they looked up—behold! They saw a wall rise between the two people, taller than 3,333 Trolls and mightier than 4,444 Cyclopes. And the children of Ingerimm ceased to fight, for they could not see each other. The Cyclopes turned west, towards the water, and the Trolls turned east towards the Fire Mountains, where they found wives among the Black Ogres. In twelve by twelve by twelve years, thus came to be the people of the Dark Mountain Giant, and Sjutusch was their leader."

— One of the many variations on the genesis of Brazen Sword, in this case taken from the apocryphal addition "Cyclopes Age or Fire versus Water" to the "Annals of Godly Age"

Whether it was the sword of Rondra or that of Ingerimm, whether piled bodies of giants turned to stone, or whether Sky Wolves ripped the land apart—it is a fact that the Brazen Sword mountain range parts Aventuria and the Land o' Giants more efficiently than the Rashtul Wall separates Garetia and Mhanadistan. Like shark's teeth, these mountains line up in several rows, while their pathways lead through clouds into the sky. We can only speculate what lies beyond them.

Misty Meadows is the only region that has been somewhat explored; it was discovered by coincidence and shipwreck rather than by calculation and navigation (the passage through the fjord is hard to make out, hidden behind cliffs). The Thorwalian mercenaries that once stepped onto this shore disappeared

forever; yet, a deont of Efferd in Festum received visual images showing the few surviving crewmembers as they stood in a foggy mountain valley, in front of a dark metal gate that barred the entrance to a cave. Further, he perceived two shipwrecks, one Thorwalian Otta and one cog of a much older construction date.

BROGAR DWARFS AND FINSTERBINGEN

"But as they saw daylight again, the land of the children of Brogar was in praise of Ingerimm, as burning stone flowed from the ground and the earth shook in all places, except for the places that rose like islands from the magma. In the east, a mile-high mountain rose from the ground, shaped like an Anvil, glittering like gold."

Leaving the gift of Ingerimm behind, the dwarfs moved east to make the mountain theirs. But as they arrived they found the mountain covered with foul yellow sulfur, and the mountain itself was made of black pumice. They were about to return when Ingerimm punished them for their greed and turned all land behind them into fire and molten rock. He ordered his brother, Dragon Fuldigor, to drive the dwarfs into the mountain or else burn them on the spot. He did as he was ordered, and thus, the Black Dwarfs of Darkenbing came to be. Bing stands for „useless rock“ or „hole in the ground,“ where the dwarfs dug farther than they should have."

— Excerpt from the Kosh fairy tale of the Black Dwarfs

"The tyranny's end comes with the Grand Master, as he returns with his thousand armored men from eastern lands."

— A Needmark saying

Dwarfen descendants of Brogar are said to live in Land o' Giants, as do the last Knights of the Order of the Theater (along with their treasures). It is not surprising, then, that there are many tales originating in the Needmark region of warriors from beyond the Brazen Sword who have mastered the art of sword and magic to fight the "Uncalled Ones" (who, as the story goes, may be called upon with the Goblin Drum).

Further rumors center on the civilization of the Maars; their secret informers are said to constantly survey Aventuria to prepare for the upcoming invasion. More local hearsay claims that these very people once established the gigantic metropolis of Maarhynia, although other cultures have also been accredited for this settlement—namely a long-gone family of giants that once attacked Brazen Sword and invaded cities of the elves.

"The old sources refer to this major region of the eastern continent as Rakshazastan, which simply means Land o' Giants in Tulamidya. Countless rivers wind their way through jungles and isolated plantations. The masters of this land are of Tulamidian origin; they came to this region almost 2,000 years ago and defeated the local culture of non-human Maarhys, yet, the subjects outnumber their masters by far."

The Parhnias are a peaceful human-like people, with colorful skin and green hair. They think of themselves as children of Earth Mother Parhini and make a living by gathering and cultivating fruits. Supposedly, they were living in large tree house settlements when the Marhys enslaved them to work on plantations. The new human rulers then adopted that tradition without delay."



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THE SEAS AND THE LANDS BEYOND

The forest-dwelling Rakshaza giants are bark-skinned hobgoblins, about 4 paces tall. They have been subdued by the smaller races, who make use of their great strength. Today, these people are known for being calm and obedient, except during times of war.

The Maarhys are strange alligator people, whose former capital Maarhynia is a legendary lost city; they live a simple life in the midst of the jungle, sometimes in alliance with the snake-bodied Naghas, who hate all humans. The former home of the Naghas is a boiling hot swamp; the human fortress of Ribukan guards its only access to the sea.

Rakshazastan is not an unified state, but rather a union of emirates, mogul and satrap princedoms all ruled by a Adamantine Sultan, who derives his power from Khunchom authorities of old. His might is not based on military might, however—the sultan is head of the largest merchant shipping fleet and could easily starve out any revolting prince. The Rakshazastani honor Phex as the God of jewels and shadows. The Shadows, the uncanny magistrate-priests of the demigodly Adamantine Sultan are so devoted to this aspect of Phex that many have sacrificed their human existence to become supernatural shadow creatures.

Most cities carry the names of the sultans that established them (such as Yal-Mordai or Yal-Kharibet). The upper society lives outside the city on a fleet of mighty palace or house boats, which may shoot at or move away from the city during revolts or riots.

The region of Rahyastan (also called Eastland) is home to Aranian freebooters (especially in the area of Shahana city) who resist the Diamond cult of Rakshazastan as they have for hundred of years. Rahyastan is the only country of the eastern part of the continent which generally honors the Twelvogods and which calls a mighty cavalry its own.

The coast between northern Rahyastan and Fountland stretches for about 2,000 miles and is commonly referred to as Bone or Brimstone Shores. The Ice Desert is located just north of it; Firun's children—the Frost Giants, and his grandchildren—the Snow Goblins, live in this hostile environment. Several volcanoes rise a mile high out of the ice. The goblins living in those mountains are said to have black fur and a vicious character; presumably, they are allies of gloomy Sword Magicians."

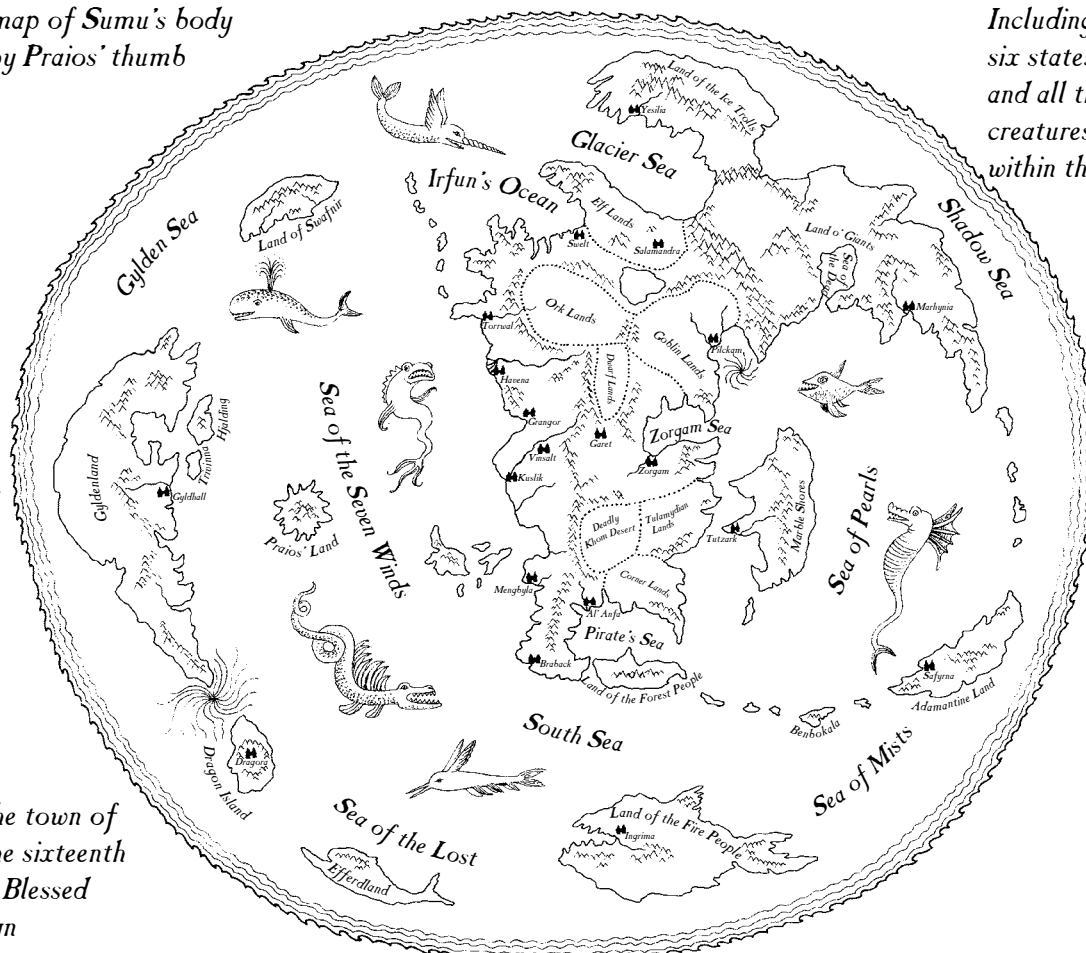
— Tale told in the bazaars of Khunchom; from the previously unreleased diaries and logs of Ruban the Traveller, ch. 2 'Historical Introduction'

"..We sighted a land in the east that stretched far from North to South, and some wide rivers led into it. We could make out boats by the shore, which seemed to have three hulls and two masts. Given the color of the wood, Esindio presumed that it might be Vizrangyi wood.

As they recognized us, many of them jumped into their boats and steered towards us; from about a mile's distance, they shot at us with spear slings and barely missed. As they approached, we noticed

Complete map of Sumu's body
Measured by Praios' thumb

Including all thirty-six states, twelve seas and all the terrifying creatures that dwell within them



Drawn in the town of
Kuslik in the sixteenth
year of the Blessed
Rohal's reign

their green hair and a skin color like old brass. They wore nothing but long, black skirts, cut open on the sides, and a blackened chest plate. Almost three quarters of them were women. We cast south and got away with a good breeze.

We made out signs and writings on one of the spears stuck to the side of our ship; Esindio assumed they might be for magical purposes. He could not detect any 'residual radiation,' but it should be noted that a few hours had passed until the examination was conducted."

— From the log of *Princess Lamea*, the flagship of the Red Harika expeditionary flotilla; specific times and locations have been removed on the order of Horas admiralty; this excerpt belongs to one of the least coherent passages, which might indicate that important portions of the text are still kept secret

BEYOND THE SOUTH SEA

The Aventurian people know little about the islands and continents that lie south of Hôt-Alem; unlike Gyldenland and Land o' Giants, few humans ever truly explored this region (and the Tocamuyac tribe, which is supposed to cross the region in their reed-island boats on a regular basis, makes no fuss of it). The South Sea is perceived to be even more ominous than all the other oceans, and it is difficult to distinguish between authentic reports and mere sailor's tales. Many of those familiar with the sea south of Forest Islands use it as a hideout—naturally, these rogues and looters would rather preserve the aura of danger and mysticism that surrounds the South Sea.

"The sea seems to boil all around us, almost as if Praios has cursed us for sailing on his sacred day and as if he has incited his brother to turn us all into stew. With all our strength, we are trying to escape this ring of islands, but I am afraid the Mohas will soon be of no use, except maybe for salted meat. Only Satinav's book will show how much longer our Thorwal rowers will be able to endure such torment...."

— Excerpt from one of the many 'discovered logs,' strangely, ship names and report covers have been removed from all of these books...

We know that there is a group of islands only a few hundred miles south-southwest of Token that southern merchants and freebooters use as base camp. This archipelago of Efferd's Tears is even said to be the home of several thousand humans.

An expedition by a Brabak caravel, the *Korisande*, also found another group of islands, located about 1,000 miles southeast of Benbukkula, which at the time had been used by the Al'Anfa/Charypso Black Serpent pirate gang as secret refuge. Sea creatures such as the Risso fishmen folk, as well as the human Ruwangi people—who claim to originate from an even more southern region—inhabit these mostly volcanic islands.

Throughout their home islands, the Risso are known for being mighty seafarers and merchants, as sea creatures pull them swiftly across the ocean, either above or below the water. It remains unclear if 'Efferdland' is a part of this region (as old maps would have you believe). Further, it is not certain if this area is truly home to the Lobsteroids (whose demonized, perverted forms currently work in alliance with the rulers of the Dark Lands to threaten Aventuria's east coast). The Risso themselves

tell of an land called Uthuria, a human settlement from where they purchase white jade, purple onyx and head-sized glowing crystal geodes—Uthuria's ground contains so many rare stones that the local population trades them away for nearly nothing.

The Risso know almost nothing about the land itself, which is said to be little more than a dry and barren desert. There is some talk of cone-shaped mountains that rise out of the golden sand, with sides so smooth and straight-lined that a distant civilization must have constructed them eons ago. The Uthuru, the current population of this land, grow tall, with dark skin and curled hair; they are said to worship Praios and his griffins, while they are governed by a sun priest-emperor (appointed by Praios himself), residing in a labyrinthine city made of pure gold. The Uthurus are presumably distant relatives to the Utulu population of the outer Forest Islands.

Aventurian scholars speculate that Uthuria was once the land of such legendary people as the Gryphones, Ucarians or the Lucides, Praios' chosen peoples. Today, nobody knows anymore if these people shared the same culture, represented different castes or were entirely separate species altogether. Further, we are not certain if these people had the heads of birds or cats.

The hostile inner lands of Uthuria (which even the Uthuru avoid) is said to once have been the location of a wonderful fresh water ocean; rumor has it that a boiling sea of sulfur now in its place prohibits any life in this area. Nevertheless, there is also talk of black one-eyed dwarfs living by its shores, traveling the sea on glass boats with crystal oars and salamander skin sails).

"The calm zone seems to be the larger than first assumed. For three days, we have seen the same strange weather pattern: hot fog rises until about noon, then hot winds followed by a fierce thunderstorm. Meanwhile, we have removed about three tons of salt from the hull of our ship—some of the copper plates have already corroded a great deal. The sailors we sent down to take a look at the bottom of our ship had a hard time diving into the water; in the sparse light, they also believe in having seen gigantic ray-like shadows in depth."

— Excerpt from the log of *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

Several reports and logs claim that in the Deep South—approximately on the same latitude with the Risso archipelago—the ocean is covered with seaweed fields thick and solid enough to carry entire cities; sea serpents are said to mate on this surface. According to a prominent tale, Charyptoroth's first-born children, Schamaschtu and Bahamuth (the parents of all sea monsters) meet on these platforms, fighting the Whale King, the first of its kind; these claims are based on myth, however, rather than fact. We know for sure that portions of such seaweed floats (sometimes the size of Altoum island) do come loose at times, floating north and endangering any reckless explorer: a ship caught in it is hopelessly lost, once food and water have run out.

"After the initial survey of the island, we assume it to be the size of a county. We noticed neither two-legged cultural beings nor any larger animals, but we did make out very large seagulls nesting in steep cliffs;

THE SEAS AND THE LANDS BEYOND

further, we managed to kill a few six-legged marmots. We raised the Eagle Standard and called the land Nova Albernia, for its climate and animal world is so similar to the land of my ancestors. The island is now property of Horas, Your Majesty. After climbing a tall mountain (and finding some sterling gold in a small stream), we used the Meulenar scope to scan the surrounding sea; we noticed three icebergs drifting in the south. Ordered our new course to be east-north-east."

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

The reports from the travels of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika expedition, also mention sightings of 'albatross' birds with eight paces of wingspan, as well as horned (and apparently quite savory) pearl-biter fish. Further, there is mention of red sails that appeared on the horizon, shaped like the claws of a lobster. In the stomach of a krakenewt-like being, one could even find the lower arm of a humanoid being: devoid of any hair, the color a stark white, like that of a troll's...

THE SEA OF THE SEVEN WINDS

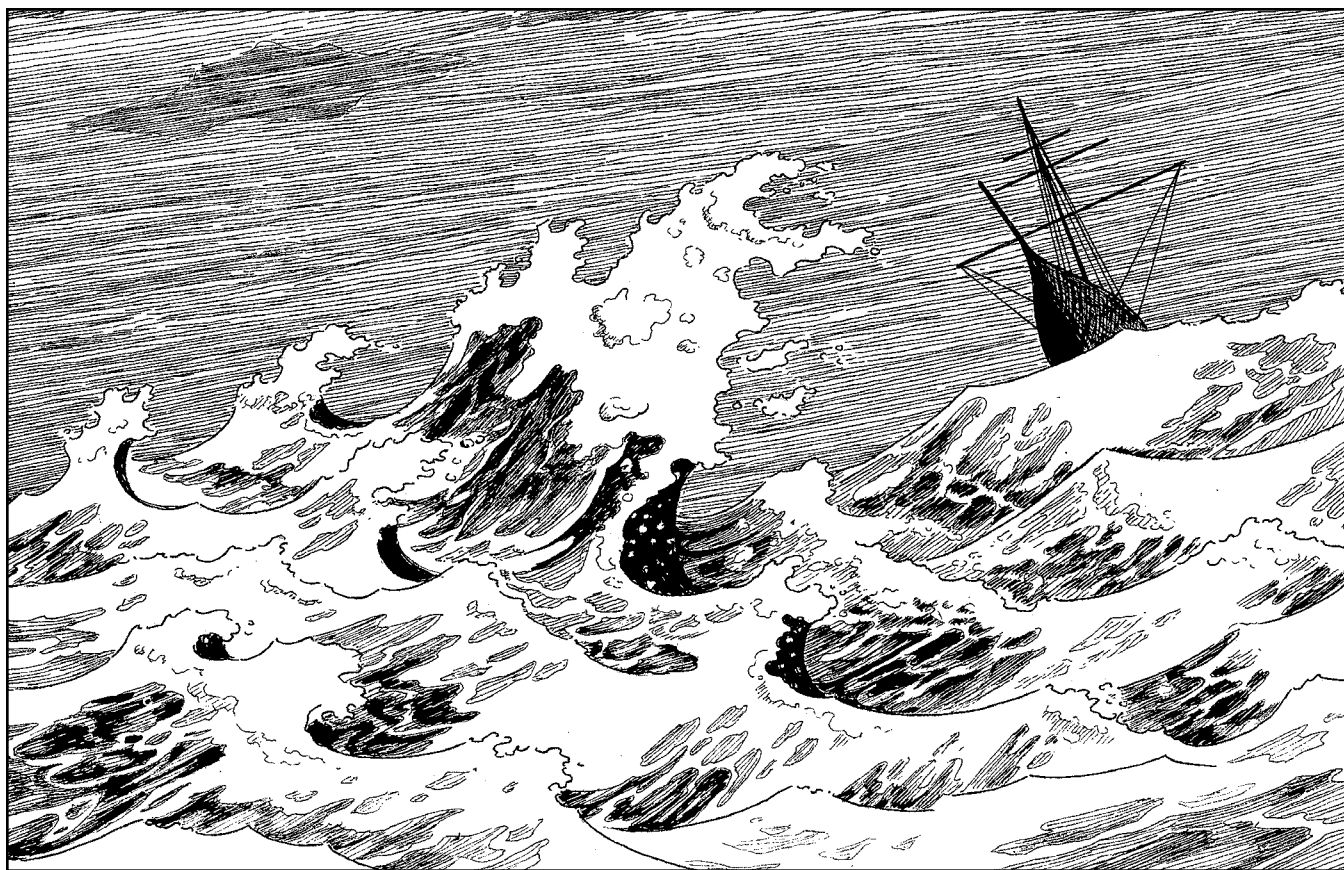
"We have left behind us the region of the Pailian Maelstrom; the thin column of smoke of Amran Nemoras has disappeared below the horizon, and for two hours there has been nothing but green-blue water. The triplecross tells us that we are on the latitude of Mengbilla. I had the course adjusted to west-south-west and ordered

the deonts to exercise the rites of the Old Unpredictable, so we may soon hit the Ascanian breeze..."

— Excerpt from the log of the *Windsbride*, Captain Jastek, 227 b.H.

Without doubt, the Sea of the Seven Winds is Ethra's largest ocean; it stretches from the icy north to the boiling sea in the south, and extends for 3,000 miles from the eastern Prem peninsula to Hjaldingard in the west. Only a few islands interrupt this vast area of water: the only known ones are the Wailing Islands, the Swafnirland and Dragon Island, and reports of these places are based largely on myth rather than geographic exploration. There are even tales of an island with a dimensional portal inside a great and active volcano...

The major local winds are the northern Firun's Breath, the steady western Beleman (one of the major hindrances for the voyage to Gyldenland) and the dreadful Rondrikan from the northwest, which never decreases in fierceness below that of a storm. Coming from east-north-east, The Ascanian Breeze emerges on the latitude of Mengbilla, somewhere far out on the ocean and gains strength the further it moves away from Aventuria; it is a good wind to catch for travels to Gyldenland. Aside from the unsteady northeastern Brabak Drift, the Ascanian Breeze offers the only opportunity to travel out west, while a returning explorer can coast back on the Gyldenland Current. This current starts in the shallow waters east of Gyldenland and works its way across the Sea of the Seven Winds to eventually arrive at the Olport Stones (on its way giving rise to the mighty Rondrikan).



SWAFNIRSLAND, IFIRN'S COLUMN AND THE ISLAND OF YUMUDA

*"After weeks, the shouter calls out an island,
Of blooming trees and white shores all.
In the midst of a golden hall to stand,
Swafnir greets and returns our call."*

— From the Song of Jurga, 39th verse

This verse and the next, which presents an island of 'fire mountains,' hot springs, fruit-trees and fish-filled lakes, are really the only evidence of what is now known as Swafnirsland. This region, according to the travel descriptions of the Song of Jurga, would be located on the latitude of Yeti's Land, about 1,000 miles away from Dirad. The existence of the isle itself is in doubt, however, as not even Captain Asleif "Foggwulf" Phileasson (who, according to himself, has traveled the northern route to Gyldenland several times) has been able to find this island.

The Island of Yumuda is home to a poor and lonely giant of the same name (and the last female of her kind). It is located about one-third down the route between Dirad and Swafnirsland. At times, Thorwalians make their way to this rocky island to ask this very wise giant for advice.

The northernmost island, referred to as Ifirn's Column, is reportedly quite large, with a diameter of several hundred miles; a single sky-high mountain sits in its center. The few seafarers that ever reached this place during summer months (in winter, Ifirn's Column is surrounded by at least 200 miles of pack-ice) talk of a harsh, barren, yet fascinating landscape, marked by bizarre rock formations arching over gurgling streams, large hot springs and even hidden valleys and woods that are home to bears.

THE WAILING ISLANDS

Similar to the Sea of Pearls's Korelkin, the position of this group of islands (discovered in 5 b.H. by Harika of Bethana) is still a state secret of the Horas admiralty. Nevertheless, the Red Harika expedition claims to have found these islands with the use of an "Emperor Reto map." It should therefore be possible to find the way back to these islands.

Supposedly, the Wailing Islands were named after the steady howling created by wind breaking through the abundant rock formations. Those can be found all on all four islands, along with harpies, bird creatures and singing whales; there is even rumor of a gigantic screaming fire mountain.

THE WALL OF EFFERD

"About a quarter hour before the hour of Rondra, we felt our ship shake and lose speed; we were worried about a collision with seaweed floats, which would have rendered us helpless against our pursuers. It was not a float, however, as the trembling agitated the sea greatly, causing a wave to form behind us and pull us backwards, despite the wind that was driving us forward. Eventually, the wave built itself up to a height of about thirty paces, carrying us on its top.

Below us, we made out the three enemy galleys—just a short moment later, the raging wave crushed them all. As the water had finished its destructive work, it sank down (like an obedient Novadi

camel) and we gradually regained speed. I wrote out a letter of recommendation that Sister Jandara should be raised into the rank of Master of the Surf and raised the pars efferdi to seven-twentieths."

— From the log of the Windsbride, Captain Jastek, 224 b.H.

"The Maelstrom closed as quickly as it had opened; mere debris was left from what once was Beleman II. Oh, how could we have shown off the true craftiness of our Gyldenland shipbuilders! One imagines how we could have displayed our ability to travel the open seas even with such small galleys, given a determined crew (which, truly, they do not have). It hurts to have lost the cargo to the sea and our comrades to Efferd, yet it hurts more to think of what could have been done with this beautiful vessel, its two hulls and ten sails... Thus we set the sails of the one long-boat we had left, and the nineteen of us were on our way east-south-east."

— From the tales of Gilman Quendt, which were stored at the temple of Efferd (by Bethana) in the years between 2 and 4 Haal

"...passed a school of sperm whales today, counting more than twenty animals of every size and age. Many older specimens displayed scars that harpoons, ship's rams or even large ammunition could have caused. At times, we saw dolphins jump in the distance, staying with the whales just as caravels screen the line of shivoons. I took this to be a good sign for our return; I had Nanduyan perform the rites of Efferd and ordered a sharp eastern course...."

— Excerpt from the log of the Princess Lamea, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

The mysterious events mentioned here occur in various locations throughout the Sea of the Seven Winds; if the seamen's calculations are correct, all of these events happen along a straight geographical line that runs between Ifirn's Ocean and the Boiling Sea. This so-called "Wall of Efferd" seems to keep any Gyldenland ship from traveling across it, while Aventurian vessels apparently have no problem passing the area. Scholars of ancient mythology as well as of late-imperial magical tomes relate this phenomenon to a curse Efferd once cast over the emperors of the Gyldenland and all their vassals; allegedly, he cast this spell after an emperor turned towards the worship of demons and began honoring Charyptoroth.

THE GREAT MAELSTROM AND THE DRAGON ISLE

"This maelstrom is definitely larger than those southwest of Pailos, yet it is smaller than the ones we encountered off Setokan. It seems as if the dragons coming from the northwest are waiting like vultures for edible debris, and the smashed bodies of fish indicate that there is plenty of supply. Further, they are evidence of sharp rocks that must sit just below the surface.

We kept a good distance from the maelstrom and also tried to stay away from the island with the eyrie of those dragons. Still, I ordered the Lamea and Gyliduria to aim their eels and snots at the sky, and further had the leaden balls exchanged for grappling bats."

— Excerpt from the log of the Princess Lamea, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

THE SEAS AND THE LANDS BEYOND

The Princess Lamea expedition did manage to locate one of the largest and most legendary maelstroms ever mentioned in seafarer's tales. This obstacle has a diameter at least five miles wide and is located in the heart of a curved chain of islands. Westwind Dragons circle over the outermost of these land formations, the largest of these isles. Volcanoes rise from the center of the island, and sea around it spouts fire from its bottom—this mostly forest-covered region is most likely a product of Ingerimm's creation. Even Captain Harika did not dare to find out if this large isle is truly the home of Elder Dragon Umbracor, called The Destroyer.

GYLDENLAND

The following text selections are mostly excerpts from the log of the Princess Lamea, a shivonella under the command of Harika of Bethana. Under secret orders of the Horas admiralty, this expedition explored the Sea of Pearls and the coast of Land o' Giants, trying to find an eastern route into Gyldenland. On 21 Peraine, 29 Haal, the Princess Lamea returned to Grangor after several years of journey. The escort vessels, the shivonella Gylurgia of Bethana and the caravel Avesfriend were lost on this trip; only 27 of the 189 crewmembers of the expedition survived.

It should be noted that the expedition approached Gyldenland coming from the west, which explains the order in which we have listed the following excerpts.

OF STEEP CLIFFS

"...and finally saw land emerge on the horizon. As we were approaching, the rocky shore seemed to rise mile-high and the land beyond, a barren wasteland, reached even into the clouds. As the clouds opened up, however, we made out a city in these heights, possibly 200 miles away and gleaming like the citadel of Alveran. But the walls were split asunder..."

After two days of traveling north, we watched a wide river coming down the mountains and raining over the edge of the cliff. The color was of such radiant green that it colored the sea for miles.

Further north, the mountain-like cliffs lower and give way to a primeval forest. Sharp south of us another river joined the ocean, this time yellow with clay or mud. An island in the north, covered with steppe grass, shows no signs of civilization. Continuing along the coastline ..."

— Excerpt from the log of the Princess Lamea, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER

"Nothing but hip-long hair covered the bodies of these savage men and women (which is to no surprise if one considers the heat in this land). They embellished themselves with jewelry made of hammered gold and gem stones the size of pigeon eggs (though crudely cut). They were without suspicion and showed genuine interest in the knives and scissors we had brought along, and further seemed willing to trade fairly.

But when Tanarion stepped ashore to appraise the moon-silver jewelry, the men and women started yelling loudly and ran off, leaving their bargain and all behind. Thoroughly surprised, we were about to gather the valuables when they started shooting arrows at us from the

forest, where they must have hidden their weapons. We retrieved all we could carry and hurried to the boats; we were not without casualties, however, as one arrow pierced the leg of mercenary Frenja.

As she died a painful death the next morning (the arrow must have been poisoned), her lover Thorenja became enraged and tried to split Tanarion's head with an axe to avert the "pointy-eared curse." I had her put in shackles for 3 days."

"An addition to the earlier descriptions of those copper-haired, brown-skinned savages (specific times erased): according to Doctor Lysvalis, an inspection of their jewelry revealed surprising inconsistencies. A part of them—probably the pieces they made themselves—are produced in a simple yet artful manner, revealing that these people are skilled in melting gold yet know nothing about smelting ore. Some of the jewelry seems to have been acquired by trade from people that are skilled in the art of carving beetle-shells and know quite well about the art of smelting ore. The carvings suggest that these people ride on strange two-legged creatures with a long neck and tail..."

— Excerpts from the log of the Princess Lamea, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

THE BLACK POMADS

"...recognized a tall tower by the shore and are now steering towards it.

"Two hours later: the tower is certainly 80 paces high and reminds of Mhanadian termite hills. There is a large settlement or city around the base of the tower. We cannot make out any fortifications; the inhabitants must have noticed us, for we noticed movement throughout the settlement. We anchored all three ships by the outer anchorage, as there is no port in sight. I ordered the guards to be especially attentive. Along with a few officers and crew members, I will row to the shore.

At night: I returned aboard despite the hearty welcome and invitation. I left Alrigio and six men behind to represent our expedition.

These people call themselves Ban Bargui, which means something like 'Children of the Wind.' They are of athletic growth, about 9 spans tall (some are even taller) and sport skin as dark as the night. Further, they are blessed with an abundance of metallic hair that shimmers in shades of copper and gold (at times also blue and silver). Their faces have sharp features and are characterized by slightly tilted eyes and slender (but not pointy) ears.

Men and women dress in long soft breeches and boots that seem made for riding, often colorfully embroidered. In addition, they wear short vests (also lavishly decorated), while women may also wear a chest-cloth — these garments seem to indicate the individual's standing in society or perhaps affiliation with a tribe or clan. Except for thin silken veils, the Ban Bargui wear nothing on their heads (during harsh weather they may wear tight-fitting leather caps).

The body armor they are so proud to show me is made of a solid steel chest plate to which a coat of mail has been attached, as well as tight conical helmets. As weapons, they use a kind of spear-halberd, useful also for horsemen (which seems to include almost everybody). The dagger is very similar to ours; last, they use surprisingly strong and far-reaching horn or composite bows.

Their city, Bjongku, appears to be a winter camp or trade post for these people, as it contains only a few solid constructions. Instead, we saw countless numbers of large wagons pulled by heavy horses and several pens enclosing two-legged, yellow-furred creatures that carry their masters at wicked speeds, as I have witnessed myself. The high tower, appearing even stranger now that we are close, must truly have been built by insects, for it shows no signs of conventional architecture. Humans seem to have altered its hallways and chambers to make it fit for living; the Ban Bargui have decorated the inside with furniture and large rugs.

These people claim that 'out there,' on those vast grass plains that begin behind the city and stretch far to the north and northeast, they own cities that walk on a hundred times hundred legs — despite the tales I have heard about gigantic insects (and on saying 'hundred legs,' Tugmak pointed to a tasty centipede), I still cannot quite believe them. Supposedly, these 'city-bearing leg worms' are peaceful but cannot be directed, and so one follows their path. Their eggs, of which they lay hundreds every week, supply not only food but also thread for either fine or crude cloth. This silk—may it have fallen from the sky, been stolen or truly come from the rear-end of a millipede—is the best commodity for trading we have encountered so far, and it is offered at a notably cheaper prize than in foul Al'Anfa.

The Ban Bargui appear to be at war with an eastern empire that once ruled the entire continent (but has since lost much land to rebels). Since our appearance and language seemed to remind the Ban Bargui of their enemies with their 'landships' and 'artificial birds,' we hastened to assure them that we have never heard of this land before. (I assume this place to be the empire of Cantera, an ancient nation that once subdued the Hjalding people and even sent ships towards the west)."

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

ENDLESS FORESTS

"The fjord coast is now behind us in the north, and a vast, 200-pace high endless forest covers the southern coast (almost a straight line ENE by E). Even though some trees are similar to those from the vicinity of Brabak and the Forest Islands, most of them are unknown to us. We have turned back northwest to enter to mouth of a huge river, which carries yellow-brown water for dozens of miles into the sea."

"...have now spent the third day on the river, which has narrowed its stream from seven miles to one mile wide. So far, we have encountered four large and eleven small streams that join this river, which has by now turned W. Except for a few sandbanks close to the shore, we have not had any problems with the passage (our main navigator is on longboat of the the Avesfriend, probing the passage). The forest is very thick and allows no sight between the trees up to a height of some two dozen paces. There seemed to be some movement in the treetop (triangulated to a height of up to 300 paces), and some thought they saw a tree house, but even our smallest boats could not get ashore.

There are all sorts of fish in this river, varying in size from a finger's length to three paces; we have encountered many different birds and multipedes that are somewhat onerous but not aggressive; in the trees creatures the like of bears and apes, another one looks like a large, naked mole."

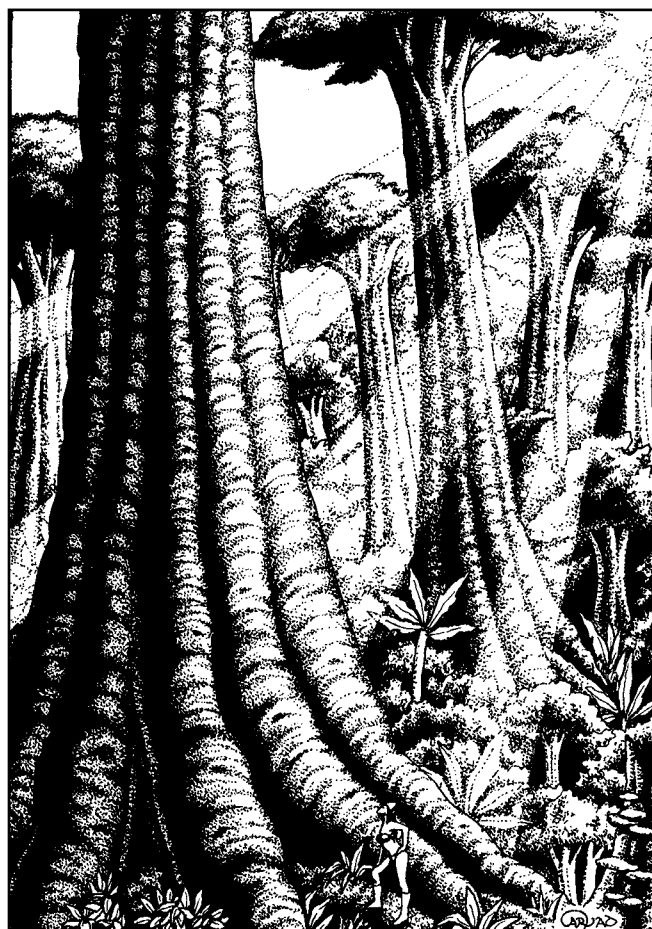
"The air is heavy and hot like liquid lead. 21 of my crew are down with disease. We will return now rather than suffer serious losses. No doubt, these woods are home to cultural beings that prefer to hide from us—we found a few artifacts of a foreign culture in the river. Tallest tree so far triangulated about 450 paces high."

"...following the coastline again. For the last four days nothing but jungle along an east-west line, yet the trees are smaller now. Lots of smaller islands just off the shore."

"Found a settlement, which seems similar to the crude jungle forts on the Forest Islands, yet more organized. The population seems to be of human descent, if one takes into account their height and number of arms and legs. They dress in baggy trousers, caftans and wear turbans on their heads. Many visible weapons, mostly sabers."

"The 'Draydal' seem to maintain a cruel system of slavery, for I have not seen anyone stir a finger unless it is to use the whip. The captives are creatures of all kinds—apparently, all blessed by Hesinde with reason—and the veiled, pale Draydal keep them like cattle. Would we not have arrived in such great numbers and so well armed, we would have probably met a similar fate.

Among the slaves, we recognized many humans; some of them were Ban Bargui, others had a pale skin color and again others could have been Cyclopaean or Moha people. Further, we saw what seemed to be upright walking cats with short, spotted fur and other small, white-skinned creatures with slender arms and legs—initially, we mistook them for children. Last, we made out a group of rude, large pig-like beings whose



THE SEAS AND THE LANDS BEYOND

upper body was more that of a human while the lower body and head resembled that of a spotted, hairy pig, despite the flat nose.

Next day: the Draydal seem to be the rulers of this region and could possibly obstruct the continuation of our journeys. After seeing the inside of their temple, a pyramid with inlaid steps, our scholars have realized that these people worship the Nameless with bloody sacrifices. We have decided to leave today.

At night: With a few well-placed shots, we set their three ships ablaze and are now heading east-north-east under full sails.

Before us a mountain range, about three miles high both in the south and in the west, divided by fjords. There are fortified castles on some of the mountain peaks, and we can make out the golden banner of the Draydal waving atop these fortresses.

Disregarding the protests of Captain Jerrago and others (attached), I have decided to risk breaking through the lines of these guarded fjords. Should we encounter serious resistance, then we will have to turn around, but if we succeed, we shall push on forward! Ordered battle stations for all ships. The longboats are on guard so they may pull our ships out in any case...

— Excerpts from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

A precise report describing the advance on the fjord is missing; further, the log ceases to mention the accompanying vessel Avesfriend. It appears that the ship became the victim of the so-called “Draydal.”

“...the south-western arm of the sea seems to lead back west and thus separates a large mass of land. I had the course set to north-east...”

“...again a narrow strait in front of us, this time leading sharp northeast. Mountainous shores line each side; the northern coast rises higher than the southern...”

“...after passing a basin with a diameter of about 400 miles, we encounter another narrow passage leading southeast.”

“...Above the northern coast we could make out a moving structure of some kind, which at first we all assumed to be a large bird. After examining the flying object through the scope, it became clear to us how it was easily the size of three to four shivoons. Different eyewitnesses from both ships later agreed on having seen a ‘bellow,’ to which basket-like objects were fastened with thick ropes; some even reported seeing movement on and around this vessel. Many colorful rags and cloths were blowing in the wind like sails or long banners, smaller flying objects, maybe the size of giant auks and also fairly bird-shaped, kept swarming around the large structure. The ‘bellow’ was moving further inland, so we decided against a pursuit.”

“The pirates were determined and skilled fighters and seafarers, and their double-bodied two-mast ships were certainly swift and easy to maneuver; yet, they withdrew after we sent three of them to Efferd’s grace. Currently following a chain of islands towards east-north-east. If our calculations are correct, then we should already be traveling the Sea of the Seven Winds—what an amazing triumph for science this would be...”

—Excerpts from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

At this point, the log of the *Lamea* goes on to describe the Dragon Islands and the Great Maelstrom.

THE BURNING-HOT DESERT

“...We have traveled around a few foothills and are now looking at some truly scorched earth, sitting flat between a southern mountain region and a blue ridge in the north. This desert, mostly sand and rocks, stretches all the way to the shore; in the distance we made out a flat-top mountain, about 500 paces high and with a small diameter, which reminded us of the Gor... Strangely, a river as wide as a mile enters the sea here, next to which we see the walls of a city (about the size of Neetha).

Later on: the population is fairly reserved and uncommunicative; however, they granted us permission to refill our fresh water reserves and further sold us some food. All of them are of short growth; they veil themselves entirely, but proportions and sound of their voice have us assume that they are of human descent. The color of their veil seems to indicate rank and position in their society; one of the few folks in dark blue (he appeared to be wearing armor plates under his veil) instructed us to leave the city by sundown while pointing to the mountain and making ominous gestures with hands and fingers.”

“...The coast with its countless rocky and narrow bays is probably home to many more pirates than we can assume. The shoreline keeps rising; grass and sparse woods seem to grow on the upper side. We somewhat managed to repair the Gylduria—everything is in running order again. We are following the coastline.

Later: the shoreline has suddenly dropped to sea level—there is a giant step of almost 500 paces that reaches into the land as far as we can see.”

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

THE ISLE OF WOMEN

“...steering away from the swampy islands towards northeast, we approached a very fertile-looking land after two days. Humans inhabit this land, and they appear civilized: we saw grain fields, large plantations, meadows and pastures encircled with boulders as well as high-rising guard towers and fishing boats by the shore. A port city seems to be located about eight miles straight ahead.”

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

“Eventually, Uргуол did help us to return home. That weasel recommended us to a captain who apparently transports grains. He must have owed that horned fellow something, for otherwise Uргуол’s rude manners would have never convinced him so easily to grant us passage. That short, stubby fellow with his hilarious tail has quite earned himself the blessing of the gods! Half a moon later we arrive at the islands and truly, we meet with the Dame of Neetha again.”

— Excerpt from the travel report of seafarer Progon of Rethis

“The island belongs to the empire, even though we never get to see any officials or authorities of the Thearch outside of the port

area. The locals pay tribute in the form of grains, vegetables and wine—they certainly have enough of it. The land is fertile, the soil dark and heavy; countless rivers and streams run through this land. A mountain range in the northeast protects this region from rough sea weather and holds back the rain and warm winds coming from the inland. The locals grow wine along the lower mountainsides and tend goats (as well as other animals quite unfamiliar to the Aventurian eye) throughout the upper regions.

In comparison to Neetha or Kuslik, these island towns are rather small and usually located by the coast, or at least close to a navigable river. Mostly families of merchants, fishermen and craftsmen live in these settlements, while the majority of the human population (along with their temples and monasteries) live in small hamlets scattered between fields, meadows, groves and vineyards. The people here highly respect the art of farming and raising cattle, and so it seems strange that there are no pictures of Peraine or the stork (as these activities commonly express the worship of Peraine). Instead, the population honors The Mother and The Daughter—I cannot say with certainty if these terms refer to an actual deity. The priestesses are not very communicative, especially since we had only few women among us (foreign men are not allowed within the temple building at all)."

— From the travel report of Efferdtreu Neethanier, captain of the Dame of Neetha, 57 b.H., Hesinde archives, Kuslik

"I cannot say with certainty if this island has some kind of ruler or not. There is a First Mother of Satu's Blood. For all I know, she is some kind of duchess and descendant of the former imperial family. Further, she is the highest-ranking priestess of The Mother and The Daughter, which would make her the mother of all those living on the island. Maybe she is a kind of matriarch, acting similar to the authority figures of Al'Anfa patriarchy: she is both deont and worldly dignitary.

In general, women occupy important clerical positions, yet both men and women are temple guards and Warriors of the First Mother (the latter train hard at warrior monasteries). These soldiers are held in such high regards that they serve other houses and estates as well—one hundred of them are even part of the regular tax duty."

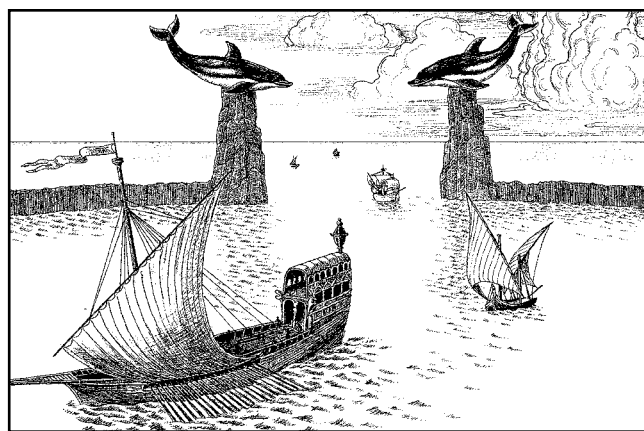
— From the travel report of Averian Vogelflug, deont of Aves, 57 b.H., Hesinde archives, Kuslik

"The Mother bore us a Daughter. The Daughter bore us the First. The First gave birth to all of us. Praise the Mother! Love the Daughter! Obey the First among us! Dance, you mothers and daughters of Satu's blood! With you is The Mother and the power she brings forth. Dance, you sons and fathers of Satu's blood, for with you is The Mother and amongst you is Her."

— a note found by the corpse of Petracus, helmsman of the Dame of Neetha, delivered by his captain in 57 b.H.; rewritten copy in the Hesinde archives, Kuslik

"It seems as if Petracus was executed, as somebody had skillfully separated his head from the body. There were no other injuries. Egnesia found the corpse in the proximity of the temple quarter, left there for the dogs and ravens to fight over; I have not yet been able to find out who killed him and why. Believe me, these people can hold their tongue to the grave."

— From the travel report of Efferdtreu Neethanier, captain of the Dame of Neetha, 57 b.H., Hesinde archives, Kuslik



THE CITY OF TRIVINA

"The preceding descriptions are correct in that Trivina does have a large port, which in size and number of anchored ships exceed those of Grangor and Perricum. Moreover, the public buildings, often decorated with gold-colored roofs, rival in size even the most ostentatious constructions of Gareth; their style seems similar to Early Helaian architecture, yet they are more massive and compact.

Many living and storage houses are scattered in-between; all of them are at least three stories high and about a third of them are built in the style of the previously mentioned 'termite hills.' We are making these observations from the distance—guards tell us that we are not allowed to leave the harbor area proper—a few attempts to do so anyway have quickly taught us that we ought to listen to them.

Judging by the various flags we see, the port is home to many imperial vessels, some double-bodied ships from the pirate islands and a few slim boats that remind us of Thorwalian Dragonships. Further, we recognize large row-galleys from the Narkramar and the pirate coast along with grain freighters from Era'Sumu traveling under imperial flag.

With hands and feet, we try to communicate with officers and crewmen, but many of them seem taken by some superstitious fear, unwilling to talk to us. Some, we noticed, keep pointing to a temple building by the side of the mountain; by looking through the Meulenar scope, we can make out a large golden eye-symbol on the side.

The enormous dolphin statues by the port entrance, symbols of a successful journey and a safe return, seem rather threatening. The Efferd temple in the port area does also present the Old Unpredictable as ruthless creator of raging floods and maelstroms, bringing about shipwrecks and terrible storms, and so it does not surprise me to see sea snakes and giant octopus among his followers—creatures we would usually associate with the Mistress of the Nightblue Abyss.

Our knowledge of Old-Gyldenland language is, to say the least, inept, which makes it hard to communicate with the officials; yet it appears as if Trivina maintains the status of an Imperial Free City, and is as such subject to the rule of the imperial crown (at Cantara?). It becomes increasingly obvious to us how heavily regulations burden the local trade; we are being treated almost like beggars since we have no Aventurian merchandise left for trade. I am afraid we will have to sell the Gylduria to pay for the repair of the Lamea (and maybe to get a few more sample goods to take home with us)...

We have the opportunity to watch some of those catfolk work in their boats, though a conversation is unfortunately not possible at all. They seem to subdivide into different races, the same way

THE SEAS AND THE LANDS BEYOND

that Thorwal and Moha, Ferkina and Nivese people are different from each other. The shortest of them are about one and a half pace tall; the largest exceed a height of two paces. Aside from the hair on their head and neck, their fur is generally short. They wear nothing but a large belt, to which weapons and tools are attached (at times they may also wear a cape-like mantle). Their tails are always fully developed and extended to the ground, helping them balance and climb through shrouds and yards in such swift and elegant manner as no human ever could."

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

THE CAT PEOPLE

"You wish to hear about cats? Is it those small purring mouse hunters you inquire about, those pets that rub your leg for some attention over their prey? Maybe you are thinking of noble, wild predators that hunt the steppe and rain forest, deadly and without a sound? Or do you mean to ask about talking two-legged cats with skillful fingers and upright walk, that may confuse your senses as dancers and astonish you with their ability to swing the blade like only a Rondra warrior can? All tales, you say? Oh my dear, your father himself has seen them, over there, in Gyldenland!"

— Recently overheard at a carnival fest by Khunchom

"I will talk of the third life of Asuoe, the rebirth of the Fire Cat. When I met her in this life, she was glowing with the age of a blooming orchid: the short, silken hair shimmering red-golden, a sharp green glance about her observant eyes and upright walk, graceful her pace and wise her words. The elegant wedding adornment wound around her supple body and noble brow. The bent tip of her tail telling and her ears adjusted towards the White Tom-Cat of the Azaanuoa, whose wooing praises she had answered."

— Fragment from the *Chronicles of Asuoe*, of Gyldenland origin, very old; Hesinde archives, Kuslik

"Cat would be the wrong word—the man was more of a jaguar, taking bloody revenge and fighting his foes with a slim, truly deadly blade instead of teeth and claws. He had a dark and silky fur, tail and ears as well as split pupils like cat; his teeth were razor sharp and he despised clothing. U'aeisz's weapons were superior to ours, specifically made for him and had his name engraved. Truly, a genuine warrior as Rondra would have it!"

— From the reports of seafarer Progon of Rethis

"Do you see not who rules the Gyldenland? Who was it that came over here and had to give up what we call the Lion's Helm—lost it just there where they worship a large panther? And why are they all bloody predators—Kamaluq, Rondra and Zerzal? I tell you: beware of the cats!"

— From a text fragment found in Khunchom, attributed to the Ilaris sect

THE EMPIRE

"Once, the realm of Cantera and Corabis ruled the entire land between the southern Sea of Silence to the northern Ice Wall, from

the Iron Hills in the west to the Forbidden Sea in the east. Those times are long gone, however, and even though some imperial land galleys and their winged troops still dare to enter the Lost Provinces between the Great Orismani river and the Iron Hills, the land certainly belongs to the Ban Bargui, just as the henchmen of the Golden One (an ally of the Draydal) rule the triangle between the Orismani and the Desert of Tears.

The land of Narkramar, the Sea of Floating Isles, the pirate coast and the islands of Talaminas are supposedly all located in the south—these regions remain independent. Most of the provinces still ruled by the Thearch either govern themselves or function under the order of a warlord of Sacred and Royal Blood. At least their titles indicate such heritage—as far as I know, for coups and wars have thinned the royal blood line to such a degree that these individuals hardly are still part of the Blood Tree. These high-ranking city municipals still behave the way one would expect, wearing masks and keeping away from the common folk, all in the tradition of the Centropolis. In addition, their armies and magicians are not much less powerful than those of the central power—were two provinces deign to form an alliance, the Star Throne might be in danger. Imperial informers and spies know how to prevent this, however, by means of skillfully dispersed misinformation and undercover intrigues.

Dorinthapoles, for almost 2,000 years now capital of the empire, may be about ten times the size of Kuslik, maybe even larger. The workmen's quarters (hosting merchants, craftsmen and day workers alike) stretch for miles and miles, surrounding the Pillar of the Stars that is home to the Thearch's palace. This royal residence alone is said to host 20,000 humans: this tally includes members of the Veiled Family, high bureaucrats and their separate courts, the Adamant Legion, the White Advisors, the theurgists, elementarists and sphaeromancers, provincial hostages, lower-ranking officials, the serfs and slaves.

The military might of the empire rests on the large number its disciplined Myriads. Those consist mostly of foot soldiers supported by some additional (cavalry) troops and possibly land galleys and insectopters (depending on the terrain). Since Dorinthapoles is far and the roads are bad, however, many commanders started centuries ago to build up their own power bases, shaping them after the example set forth by the celestial court.

The major travel-ways in the empire are rivers and channels on which pleasure longboats of the nobility, swift courier galleys and armored military vessels hurry from town to town—even if all else is lost, the empire will hold the rivers to the end, for there is no sea power that could match the number and construction of these vessels.

The beliefs in this land are manifold, so long as nobody threatens the god-given authority of the Thearch (who is also the supreme priest); even prominent sect members may advance into the highest positions. Aside from the worship of the Thearch, there is no actual state religion; upper-class citizens honor Chrysir and Brajan, warriors worship Khorondar and Bal Alar while city officials pray to the deities of Sind and Schemar."

— From the daybook of Nazir ter Vaan; handed to the High Temple of Hesinde in Kuslik on 6 Ingerimm, 29 Haal

"Deep in Gyldenland, a river is said to cross the land from north to south, already as wide as a mile as its springs from the earth. It joins another river running east to west and a tower stands

where those two rivers meet, rising into the sky well beyond the clouds. Alveranides, creatures of light with white wings, dwell there together with the mortal saints of Praios. The Veiled Servants, 144,000 of them, have houses along the shore; they eagerly serve the will of the Twelve as mediated by the Alveranides. The true mystery of this place, however, is that the tower is the location of Talamisora, and further holds the name of the Nameless stored in its depths.”

— From a text fragment found in Khunchom, attributed to the Ilaris sect

“...Despite contrary orders, we have once again turned west; so far, we have encountered many fishing villages, but no larger settlements. By the mouth of some river, we had to retreat from the area as we ran into three large galleys; we did manage to shoot down one of the pursuing flying machines, though. We are now steering towards Cape Trivina to pass it just out of sight and then turn northeast into the Gyldenland current. With the help of Efferd, we shall be home in four weeks.”

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

THE HJALDING PEOPLE

“We would have drowned like dogs lest that pirate ship come our way! Slim body, two rows of oarsmen and a seal-like figurehead in front, pointing straight forward on water level like a ram. This vessel had rigging like none I had ever seen before! Three masts, with rectangular sails made of shiny black cloth and hardly any ropes; the flag pictured the blood red body of a sea serpent.

Had I not known any better, I could have mistaken Captain Thjork and his men for Thorwalians: they were mainly tall, strong men, pale-skinned with blond or red hair. Men and women were impossible to distinguish—due to the horrific cold, everybody was clothed in thick furs. They helped us off our floe of ice and tied us immediately, calling us a meager booty. That was when the fever finally overcame my defenses and raged in my chest like the Nameless itself—of the journey, I know only that it was rough. Even during summer time, Ifirn’s Ocean is already a difficult water to navigate—I know what I am talking about—but never have I seen such rough sea! Over and over again, there was rumbling and clumping alongside the hull, as if the ship would rub against icebergs, not unlike the way whales clean their skin of mussels.

The storm finally ceased and our ‘hosts’ made out the Pearl Shimmer, the vessel they must have been after. This boat, already heavily damaged, had no masts left and leaned so far to the side that little seemed to keep it from sinking altogether. Captain Thjork gave us two choices: to fight at the side of his men or to sleep with the fishes. The storm must have taken its toll on his crew, and so we were his last resort. Thelia, however, was of no use to the captain—her inflamed leg left her with no choice. I never saw her again.

The following battle on the ice-covered shipwreck was worse than all that came before! Thjork’s men were after cargo and captain of the ship—all those who dared oppose them were slaughtered or sent down the icy sea...

A small chest of gold was the payment for the job, and the strange gnome already proposed another contract. I cannot imagine why, but



Captain Thjork refused the offer. Before sailing back north, the pirate captain handed us our share and told us to never cross his path again. Apparently, people from eastern lands fetch a good price in Trivina.”

— From the travel report of seafarer Progon of Rethis

“Hjaldings? You mean the northern city of Jaldingafort, I am sure. Yes, many hunters and fishermen live there. They trade mammoth skins and bone of seal, but southern tusks are profitable. Well, there’s supposed to be a few clans that live further north, far off the coast. I would keep away from this region! These people, mercenaries as we know them, are bloodthirsty and aggressive, men and women alike. They hunt humans not even for gold but for sheer excitement!”

— Written record of a conversation overheard in a Trivina tavern, from a report of Seafarer Progon of Rethis

“Isjolf, whom we had captured earlier, told us that many of his people have turned away from the sea to become warriors and soldiers—they wanted to be more than mere fishermen working in the service of the Thearch. Thus, hunters now live inland by the many lakes and birch tree forests below the Ice Wall—these brutal men are in pursuit of everything that will pose as prey or put up a fight. Further, there are fishermen that still obey the empire; they have mingled with all kinds of southern people and still live in Hjaldingard. Last, there are the Children of Swafnir, people that have stayed truthful to their old ways and thus have spread all across the land. Like the sperm whale, they fight at sea, though rarely will there be enough of them to staff an entire ship.”

— Excerpt from the log of the *Princess Lamea*, flagship of the Red Harika flotilla; specific times and locations removed by the Horas Admiralty

THE ICE WALL

“In the farthest northern region of Gyldenland, a wall of ice rises to a height of about two-hundred paces; Lord Firun himself erected this bulwark during the return of the Nameless to protect his empire from all creatures of the doomed land. Yet, this frosty rampart also gives life, for many streams spring forth from it and flow into the land of Efferd, until Praios dries them up in the Deep South.

Below the Wall of Ice roam those that were once part of Firun’s empire; they have forlorn his goodwill and try to regain it by hunting huge six-legged mammoths and pursuing the most dangerous creatures of all: humans.”

— From a text fragment found in Khunchom, attributed to the Ilaris sect

LIFE IN AVENTURIA

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

The following text is a translation of parts of a heretofore unpublished work titled *In Nandus' Name, Education, Culture and Science in the 26th Century*. It was collected by the church of Nandus and printed in parts by Stührmann & Mezzani of Grangor. We have adapted some of the texts in minor details and would like to take the time to point out that the perspective of this text might be overly biased in favor of the Horasrealm and the Church of Nandus.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

It is hard to describe a world in which magic phenomena and divine intervention are rare, but nevertheless existent, using terms and expressions of our own Earth—a world in which these forces never existed and that was plunged into centuries of stagnation several times by the decline and fall of empires. Very generally speaking and from a purely technological point of view, Aventuria has entered the Age of Enlightenment and Discovery. The Horasrealm is at the forefront of this development, with some provinces of the Middenrealm, Nostria and Andergast, as well as Thorwal, being the least developed nations.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Despite all nay-sayers and critics, the worship of the Twelvegods is the most widespread Aventurian religion, at least partly due to the fact that this belief system is the one that is closest to the cosmic truths and human desires alike since the Edict of Silem-Horas. Even the forced worship of the

Archdemons in the lands of the Heptarchies, the tribal culture of the Novadis with their worship of Rastullah (although Rastullah is also honored in the lands of the Tulamidians who also believe in the Twelvegods) and the veneration of ancestors and spirits in the lands of the Forest People have not been able to change this.

The Cult of Twelve is no monolithic block of mindscapes. Rather, it offers room for a multitude of schools of thought. These different schools often emphasize different hierarchies of the gods, attach special importance to some of the children of the gods or accentuate their workings differently (often diverging from the Edict of Silem-Horas or the rules of the Church of Praios). Typical representatives of such sects or of (mostly) ethnic preferences are the beliefs held by Norbards and Thorwalians as well as the Maraskan dualism.

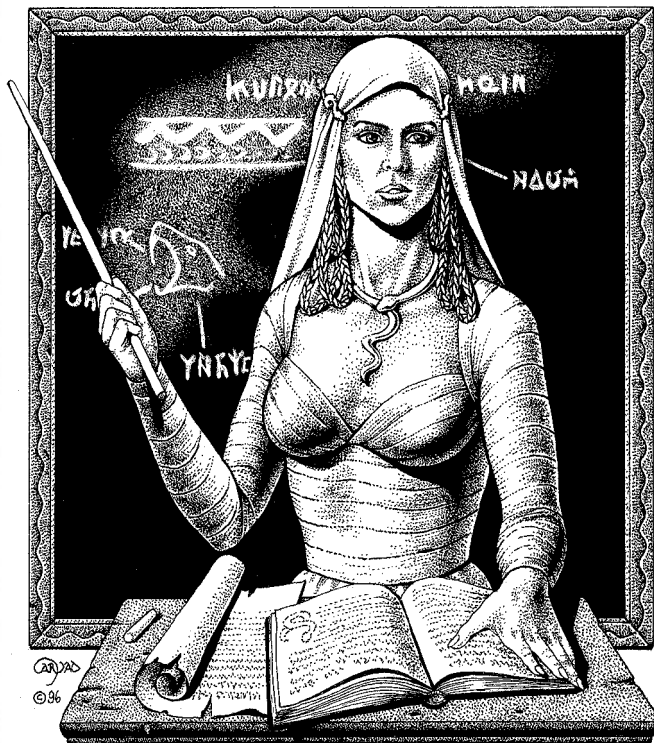
The worship of demons in the Black Lands has been mentioned above, but one has also to mention that numerous cults of the Nameless One are on the rise even (or especially) in these darkest of times; therefore, we have to be ever vigilant against these tempters.

There are as many philosophies that attempt to explain the structure of the world, the Mystery of Kha and the role of humans and gods within it as there are philosophers. Especially worthy of mention are the *Neo-Rohalists* (who teach a pure philosophy and world-view without any ethnic judgments), the *Honorable Servants of Tsa and Simia* (whose maxims are highly moral, but whose followers nonetheless preach constant change and renewal), the *Warkhomian School* of the philosophers of the state (that develops models for highly functional communities—even Imperial Privy Councilor Dexter Nemrod is an adherent of this school) and finally the *Magician-Philosophers* (whose almost agnostic ideas in regards to the nature of the world and models of explanation are often the cause of heated arguments with the Church of the Twelve).

Besides these major schools of thought, a great number of other philosophies have come into existence, but adherence to many of those is punishable by incarceration and banishment, as their theses are simply considered too dangerous and volatile. Centers of free thought are Brabak, Fasar and Thorwal, where the locals do not seem to care about the ramblings of madmen and where freedom of thought has been a long-honored tradition.

MAGIC

The return of Borbarad and the subsequent forced cooperation between the rival guilds of magicians (and even the Daughters of Satuarua and the Servants of Sumu) has furthered the art and science of magic in the past few years more than in all the four centuries prior to these fateful times. The largest advances have been made in the field of Elemental Hexology, but many spells of the druids, witches and geodes have also been deciphered and finally put into writing. Even the magic of the shamans and barbarian cultures has been catalogued



and archived (at least in part). Furthermore, old spells were rediscovered, especially those of the 'Codex 66' (a collection of lost and hypothetical spells), and vital information has been spread and exchanged between different branches of sorcery.

Unfortunately, the return of the Demon Master has also bolstered—often involuntarily—the knowledge of beings called forth from the Netherrealms. Luckily, these advances also include methods of banishing such unholy creatures.

After long years of stagnation, the art of magic is becoming ever more recognized as an applied form of science. This is especially the case in the lands of the Tulamidians and Al'Anfa, as the use of magic has fallen under strict legal scrutiny in the Middenrealm. The underlying philosophies have not fallen by the wayside, but few dare to openly apply them, lest they be accused of heresy.

MATHEMATICS AND GEOMETRY

Since the (re-)discovery of the number zero almost 150 years ago, the rediscovery of the "Bosparan Squareroot" and the publication of the *Kuslikan Angular Tables*, the field of mathematics as a basic science has not advanced much. The influence of this art on daily life is not to be underestimated, though—be it in the form of the *Festumian Compounded Interest Tables* and the economic fractions, or be it in ship-building and architecture where geometry is the basis for design. Adding machines and interest spindles are true wonders of dwarf mechanics, but the abacus is still widely in use. Of course, these machines are of no use for certain mathematical calculations (such as the construction of a pentagram using a ruler and compass or the quadrature of the circle).

ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY

Not only the piercing of the spheres, but also their disruption upon the return of Borbarad, has made astronomy harder than ever, especially since all the catalogues of stars used for the creation of horoscopes and navigation have to be adjusted and revised—not to mention the painstaking work of realigning star-maps, astrolabes and orbitariums. These devices, not unlike the interest spindles and adding machines mentioned above, are dwarf translations of human knowledge into mechanics and describe the course constellations or stars take in the skies.

Much of what we know about the stars is founded on the research of countless Tulamidian astronomers. In the cold clear air of the Gorian Desert, a new, gigantic telescope is to be erected in the near future. According to plan, it will far surpass the heretofore largest telescope of Aventuria, which is situated in the Goldenrock mountains and features a lens with a diameter in excess of two spans.

Astrology, on the other hand (as have many other forms of soothsaying), has become ever more popular in these troubled times, despite the lack of a uniform system of evaluating one's findings. Because there is no set method of determining the truth of any given method, however, the gods alone know the truth of any predictions beyond assessing the character of a client or the shortest spans of time.

GEOGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHY

It is with some pride that Aventurian explorers note that only a few spots on the continent remain uncharted, namely the highest mountains, the heart of the Khôm Desert and the deepest jungles. But although the wilderness surrounding civilized towns and cities has been named and measured, it has not *explored* to any further extent. Even today, nine-tenths of Aventuria remain largely unexplored, although much of this will change if explorers like Asleif Phileasson and Harika of Bethana continue to push the borders of our knowledge beyond the horizon, venturing forth farther than any man or woman has ever gone before.

The most important descriptions and maps are found in the libraries of the Kuslikan temple of Hesinde, the Admiralty of the Middenrealm and the Mapry of the Thorwalian Supreme Hetfolk. Even in these established places of knowledge, however, many of the maps seem to be works of pure fantasy rather than science—only the Thorwalian coastal and river maps are considered to be truly trustworthy.

Although the findings of most of the exploratory expeditions of late suggest that Ethra is actually globe-shaped, this knowledge remains purely "academic" for most inhabitants of Aventuria, as only explorers and adventurers would dare to find out what lies behind the horizon. Few people care if the spices from "down under" grow on a flat or a globe-shaped world—the next game of Imman or the play performed in the local theater is of much greater importance (if one doesn't have to care for the crops and livestock, and can avoid the hardships of war).

BOTANY AND ZOOLOGY

The study of animals can be considered almost complete, as only very rarely does news of creatures never seen before reach our ears. Furthermore, the description of animal behavior appears to be similarly complete, and even the different forms of making use of animals seem to have been exhaustively established.

In the study of plants, we are still far away from reaching such a broad base of knowledge, although many trees, scrubs and herbs of the rain forests and even Maraskan have been described (and for some, even their effect and use has been catalogued).

The generalization and categorization of plants and animals into systems without contradiction has yet to be discovered, though, especially as the research of Margrave Thronwig has been delayed by many years due to the taking of his city Warunk by the Black Hordes.

The army in service of Borbarad has also introduced many less pleasing species, but all of these aberrations, monstrosities and demonoids fit far better into demonology than zoology.

MECHANICS AND ENGINEERING

In the field of theoretical mechanics, leverage and its effect, the rotary motion, the buoyant force and friction seem to have been explained in detail, while the laws of projectiles appear to be much more complicated than initially expected and are thus not yet fully researched. Most of these principles have become an

integral part of daily engineering life, as they provided the basis for new catapults and similar war-machines, for ship design as well as the construction of mills and water-powered elevators. In recent years, however, all efforts focused on military uses for new inventions.

It can be assumed that the Angroshim (the dwarfs) have the most in-depth knowledge in the field of mechanics, but a handful of human tinkers, specifically Leonardo of Havena, Master Sanderwik of Festum (both of whom have been abducted and forced to work for “Demon-Emperor” Galotta in Yol-Ghurmak) and the graduates of the School of Mechanics in Aldyra have appeared before the public with impressive inventions and innovations over the last few years. Most likely, the Little People still guard some secrets they will disclose in the future—for a price, that is.

ALCHEMY AND METALLURGY

The most spectacular alchemical product is certainly the flammable oil called Hylailan Fire (or Mengbillan Fire, depending on where it was manufactured) that saw heavy use in the numerous wars of the past few years. As alchemists also produce poisons of all kinds and occasionally burn down their laboratories, this profession’s overall reputation has taken considerable damage over the years. This treatment is not entirely fair, though: after all, the alchemists also invented porcelain, delight us with fireworks and continually improve the average quality of glass.

Meanwhile, glass even lives up to optical standards and starts to rival lenses of finely honed crystal—unfortunately, the prices for such glass lenses are still mostly prohibitive. Moreover, the healing arts have profited to a great extent from the alchemists’ methods of boiling, precipitation, distillation and dilution.

Only the diverse metals and alloys the alchemists work with find rather practical uses and gain broad recognition—all processes that turn iron ore of different qualities into fine steel are of special interest to many Aventurians. However, the gentle arts employed by gong and pipe casters as well as steel smelters and, of course, smiths are generally treated as jealously guarded secrets of a given guild.

SHIPBUILDING AND SEAFARING

Without any doubt, the shivoon (and all its variants) developed in Grangor and Festum a few decades ago has to be regarded as the pinnacle of Aventurian shipbuilding. Apart from the shivoon, large carracks and handy caravels sail the Aventurian seas. The era of rowing boats, however, seems to come to an end; these gigantic vessels are now only deployed for some special military tasks. In Thorwal—a nation that appeared to be stuck for a long time in the ancient tradition of exclusively building dragonships—several new designs combining the advantages of sailing and rowing vessels are currently tested.

The vast majority of seafaring still takes place along the coast, especially as no foolproof method of determining longitudes has been developed so far. Nevertheless, more

modern methods of positioning (such as south pointer, log-line, long-glass, quadrant and Hylailan triplecross) make sailing the high seas less hazardous than a few short years ago.

LAND TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS

Aventurians typically travel on foot or in coaches of various kinds—riding horses are usually reserved for the affluent. Since the major roads have been extended to allow for coach traffic, travel (and doing trade) is still rather easy. It is not overly expensive to travel by coach, as long as you restrict yourself to a sleeping berth in a dormitory and simple fares while you are spending the night at an inn. These well-established traffic routes, however, only make up for a very small part of all possible routes (villages and hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants are often many miles away from the nearest coach route). Thus, the shank’s mare will probably stay the most important means of transportation for years to come.

Fast and persistent riding horses are the key to continent-wide communications. Messenger services such as the famous Beilunk Riders, the Silver Falcons of the merchant house Stoorrebrandt or the Blue Arrows (now part of the Mada Basari) keep noble and merchant houses connected with a speed of up to 240 middenmiles per day (provided the messengers can change horses at changing stations on their way).

Furthermore, semaphores or blinking towers are still popular, even if they have high maintenance cost and need highly trained personnel. They have spread beyond the coasts of Fairfield to that realm’s inland, and some can also be found along the endangered coasts of Arania and Fountland. Their rate of transmission for shorter texts far exceeds that of the average mounted messenger.

Apart from carrier pigeons, conjured messenger demons, signal drums and runners, the Miraculous Collusion available to most deonts needs to be mentioned. Though this means of transmission is not always reliable, it is definitely the fastest one known in all of Aventuria.

MILITARY AND WARFARE

The wars of the last few decades (Khôm War, Answin Crisis, Orkstorm and Borbaradian Invasion) either sped up the imminent changes in warfare (as new weapons were invented and put to use) or foiled them (for example, formations in battle were made impossible due to a simple lack of manpower). In troubled times such as these, it comes as no surprise that the militaries in all nations were the first institutions to profit from the scientific and technological developments described in this chapter.

The most important new weapons that appeared on the battlefield over the last few years were the pike—which brought many cavalry attacks to a bloody end—along with all kinds of field artillery, ranging from the “snot” (a light torsion-driven war-machine mounted on a carriage that unleashes a ball of lead or a hail of small stones) to the “cyclops” or hammerthrower (a gigantic siege engine with which an ox can be catapulted over almost a middenmile). In addition, ranged weapons usable on horseback such as the Horasian arbalettes and balestras were invented. Due to their complex mechanics

and their resulting fault liability, however, these weapons did not see widespread distribution.

There has been a certain trend in military engineering and doctrine towards attaching greater importance to massive deployments of lightly armored infantry and mobile versatile cavalry, supported by artillery (and the occasional magic spell). Of course, when the Duodecennium of Wars came, these new principles could be upheld only in the largely unscathed Horasrealm.

Despite these recent developments, the heavy losses suffered during the Ork War and the repelling of Borbarad brought the role of the individual fighter and his or her skills back to the forefront. This attitude is reflected in the extensive training at the warrior academies as well as the spread of "small unit" tactics. The Maraskan resistance fighters employed this specific strategy against the occupying forces of the Middenrealm. It is considered to be less pleasing to Rondra, but due to its undeniable efficiency, some militaries have begun to use the hand (a unit of five fighters) or the rout (10 fighters) instead of the classic banner (with 50 fighters) as the basic structural unit of their troops.

PRINTING AND WRITING

Although most books are still handwritten, the printing press with movable letters of hardwood or lead alloys was invented on Maraskan sixty years ago. It revolutionized the market for books. For the first time in Aventurian history, it is possible to publish periodicals and journals. Furthermore, ancient knowledge has become available to a far broader scope of readers.

Books are not printed on parchment (which is still the material of choice for documents and personal letters), but rather on paper made of rags or oaktree bark. Nevertheless, books are still very expensive as their binding and illumination requires extensive efforts. As local noble houses own many print shops, the free distribution of knowledge is still limited to a certain extent.

Since large parts of the populace are still illiterate, scribes enjoy an excellent standing. Due to efforts taken by the former Scribe School at Zorgan and the temple of Hesinde at Kuslik, certain standards regarding orthography, style and grammar have become widely accepted, at least for Garethi and its variants).

MEDICINE

The most remarkable innovation in recent years has been the introduction of magic in the healing arts. Even if only counts, princes and rich merchants can afford this treatment, the post of "magic court physician" is a highly renowned one (and involves less personal risks than that of, say, magic bodyguard).

Apart from that, physicians and field surgeons still perform their bloody tasks in the conventional fashion, of course, and the changes of the last few years in that regard can be called marginal at best. Even though some knowledge of the Forest People has been incorporated into the Middenrealmian healing arts (and despite the good progress anatomy has seen thanks to the lax regulations in Al'Anfa), medical science in general

does not seem to have advanced that much in recent years. Badly trained barbers, physicians with crude bone-saws, and incompetent charlatans still largely dominate the field.

Epidemics and diseases, such as the "Red Death" that raged across Chababia a short time ago, are not easy to cope with by either magical or mundane means. It is common knowledge that cleanliness, fresh air and clean water help with the recovery process and that they even can prevent a disease from spreading further (otherwise, the streams of refugees from Tobria probably would have spelled doom for the entire Middenrealm), but epidemics still can only be fought effectively by those blessed by Peraine. With the spread and the growing popularity of Thorwalian and Tulamidian bathhouses, personal hygiene has experienced a definite upswing. Special houses where infected people can be quarantined have contributed considerably to rob epidemics of at least some of their imminent horror.

Healing arts focusing on ailments of the soul constitute a new, largely unexplored field, but after many amateurs worsened the mental state of their patients rather than improving it, competent deonts (particularly of Boron and Rahja) stepped in and took on the challenge of caring for the mentally ill with remarkable success.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

Finally, the question of who benefits from all these inventions and innovations remains. Unfortunately, it has to be admitted that only one in ten Aventurians ever has the opportunity to benefit from these novelties. General education is still sorely ignored by most Aventurian ruling classes, ranging from Fountlandian bronnjars to Kuslikan manufacture owners, and even regarded with utter skepticism or conceived of as dangerous nonsense. Moreover, knowledge is expensive, and a part of power the ruling classes are not fond of sharing.

Only the novices of a religion or a magic school, graduates from warrior academies, a small number of open-minded merchants, and a handful of scholars know about the basic principles of science presented here. Despite all the efforts taken by the Church of Nandus, this is probably not going to change over the course of the next few decades.

AVENTURIAN TONGUES AND DIALECTS

The linguistic heritage of Aventuria is a rich and varied one, with dozens of alphabets and vocabularies used across the face of the land. Language differs by nationality, culture, tribe, and sometimes even village. This section talks about some of the more common linguistic branches and their geographic origins.

HUMAN LANGUAGES

Originating in central Aventuria, the most important Aventurian language is Garethi, the language of the Middenrealm. Commonly spoken dialects that derive from it are the native tongues of Andergast and Nostria, the Horasrealm (under the name of Horathi), the Cyclops Islands, and

Fountland, as well as in the Svelltian City League. It is spoken as a trade language in many southern city states, on Maraskan, as well as in Khunchom and Thalusa.

Tulamidyā has influenced the Garethian dialects of Brabaci and Maraskani considerably, whereas Fountlandian and Horathi differ from High Garethi only in regards to pronunciation and a few words in their respective vocabulary. On the other hand, Alberned—the dialect used in Albernia—has adopted elements of Thorwalian and Isdira, and the Trahelian language of Gatamo is interspersed with many words from Mohan.

Ever since the rule of Emperor Silem-Horas, all variants of Garethi make use of the 31 letters of the Kuslikan Script. Garethi arose in central Aventuria as a new variant of Bosparano, the “high tongue” of the Old Empire (with simplified grammatical structures and elements from many other old languages incorporated into the new tongue). Bosparano in turn is based on Old Gyldenlandian (or Aureliani), the language spoken by the first settlers from the enigmatic continent to the west of Aventuria.

The second important Aventurian trade language is Tulamidyā, the main language of the continent’s original Tulamidian population. It is still the native tongue in Mhanadistan, the Balash, Thalusia, some regions in Arania (where the number of speakers has started to increase again most recently) as well as the Khôm Desert and its neighboring areas. Moreover, it is used as a trade language all over southeast Aventuria including Maraskan. It has many dialects, though the most distinctive of these is Khôm-Novadian. Khôm-Novadian is so different from the standard Aranian-Balashidian variant of Tulamidyā that it is almost a language all of its own. All variants of Tulamidyā, however, are rich in consonants and sound rather harsh to the average Middenrealmian.

The modern variants of Tulamidyā evolved from Ancient Tulamidyā, which has to be considered a dead language. It died out almost a thousand years ago, although its alphabet was kept in use much longer. Since the expansion of the Novadi people, the most recent Tulamidian alphabet consists of the 19 Sacred Glyphs of Unau, which are derived from the 56 letters of “modern” Tulamidyā. In keeping with its ancient traditions, of course, it’s interesting to note that the 56 letters evolved from the nearly 300 letters of Ancient Tulamidyā, which were in turn based on the approximately 5,000 letters of Zelemja.

Zelemja is a mix of Ancient Tuladmidya and Rssahh (see *Nonhuman Languages*), using the Chrmk, the alphabet of Rssahh. Though today it is still spoken only in Selem and its neighboring regions, Zelemja has remained unchanged for nearly 3,000 years.

Another independent tongue that evolved from Ancient Tulamidyā is Alaani, the language of the Norbardes, which is also very rich in consonants. In the course of the Norbardes’ migrations, Alaani has lost so many of its ties to Tulamidyā that are virtually no surviving common linguistic structures. Understood by virtually no one outside the Zibiljas, the Alaani alphabet is apparently a bastardized version of the Chrmk; the exclusive source and use for this alphabet are the chronicles of the oldest Norbard families.

Another nearly dead language is Ruuz, also belonging to the Tulamidyā family. It was originally spoken by the Beni Rurech,

the Ferkina tribe that settled in Maraskan. On Maraskan, only a minority of the population (philosophers and priests of the Twins) still understand this language, which is intricately interwoven with the Maraskan faith of the Twin Gods.

Many dialects of the Forest People language—which will be summarized under the moniker of Mohan here for reasons of simplicity, although this does not do justice to the vast variety of different dialects—see widespread use in southern Aventuria. All variants share an innumerable amount of different syllables, clicking noises and the lack of a written form.

Another language lacking a written form is Nujuka, the language of the Nivese. Nujuka makes use of several additional vowels that do not appear in Garethi, and it also contains an immense number of terms for objects and events characteristic for the typical Nivesian environment. Interestingly and very much unlike Mohan, Nujuka is something like a single standard language used by all Nivese tribes and families.

The last living human language worth mentioning is Thorwalian, which evolved from a Gyldenlandian language spoken by the Hjaldingans at the time of their arrival on the new continent. In recent centuries, the growing number of terms adopted from Garethi has eventually made it possible for a Thorwalian and a Middenrealmian to enter at least a rudimentary form of communication, even while using their respective mother tongue. Today, the ancient runic alphabet of the Thorwalians (and the *Saga-Thorwalian* closely connected to it) is known only to the skalds.

ΠΟΠΗΥΜΑΠ LANGUAGES

Humans are neither the only nor the oldest inhabitants of Aventuria. They share the continent with a multitude of other races. While some may be tempted to classify these other races as primitive, the truth is far different. Some of these races already knew poetry, elocution and secret codes while man still dwelled in dark caves, trying to figure out how to master fire.

There are two languages spoken by other races that are undoubtedly the most important to humans. They are the melodic Isdira, used by all elven people (Isdira is almost without variant and had been unchanged for centuries), and the dwarfen language—Rogolan—which is the standard language for all Angroshim and has only a few regional dialects.

Isdira is written in 27 intricate letters, while Rogolan uses the 24 angular “Dwarf Runes” (of which only 20 are still in common usage today). Both languages strike humans as extremely alien—Isdira due to its flexibility and ambiguity (depending on the stress and inflection used, one word can have several different meanings as well as different grammatical functions), and Rogolan due to its vast vocabulary. As a counterpoint to Isdira, however, Rogolan is typically more comfortable for humans to use of the two, as its grammar is very rigid and well-structured.

Both languages have evolved from ancient forms: Rogolan from Angram (which has been preserved in form of pictograms), Isdira from the high elven Asdharia (no known written separate form of this language exists); even the elves living today think of Asdharia as very complex and hard to learn, and no fluent human speaker has ever been found.

Another independent ancient language with few existing variants is Orkese. Its dialect, Ologhaijan, is spoken primarily in the Orkland and can be called its “high tongue” to a certain extent, while the dialect Oloarkh is used by the marauding orks and has adopted many loan words from Garethi, becoming the common language. The marauding orks even teach this variant of Orkese to the ogres who have joined their bands.

Just like Orkese, Goblinese is a language that has no written form. Among the Redpelts of the Sick Mountain it is still in widespread use, while most of the nomadic goblins speak a crude mix of Goblinese and Garethi.

The complex, muttering Trollish is used by a very small number of speakers. As this language lacks a short means of writing (the trolls mostly “write down” their stories and their history in form of three-dimensional petroglyphs), it is incredibly hard to learn and thus virtually unknown.

The common trade language of the Scaled Folk is called Rssahh, or Reptilian (which has been in use for many thousand years). Several dialects of this language exist; it was developed by the lizard people, and is incredibly hard for humans to pronounce, due to its bold use of consonants.

The written form of Rssahh currently in use today employs the letters of Chmrk, a syllabic script with about 5,000 different signs. Chmrk is also the basis for the written form of Zelemja. Chmrk in turn evolved from the far more complex alphabet called Chuchas, the alphabet of the old Lizard Realms (the humans know this alphabet under the name of Yash-Hualay Glyphs or Proto-Zelemja).

Two remaining non-human languages of some distinction but that are seldom used are the Kobold language and Dragonnic. The Kobold language is virtually unknown outside of the kobold race. It is so fast that it is reminiscent of birdsong, and only a very few human or elven spell-casters can speak it.

Dragonnian is also unknown to the vast majority of humans, being more a language of the mind than a language of the tongue. The Drakned-Glyphs developed by Pher Drodont, which are said to be suited to written Dragonnic speech, are used regularly by many magicians as a form of secret language.

SECRET LANGUAGES AND CODES

Apart from several guild languages, which are mainly used to protect secrets of trade and manufacturing, the secret languages used by thieves and spell-casters deserve special mentioning here.

The most important thieves’ languages are the finger and hand signs of Atak (originating in the Tulamidian culture and still used by many of the local merchants, who are very fond of gesturing during negotiations and transactions) and the “beaks” of Vulpinian (or Foxish), astonishingly widespread symbols used to mark buildings or trade goods in an inconspicuous way. Moreover, Vulpinian also makes use of several code words and double meanings for Garethi terms that have nothing in common with the usual meaning of a word, so that they can be included in any utterance without giving the thief away.

Especially popular among magicians is Zhayad, which is in all likelihood an artificial ancient language. It is claimed to be the only language in which demons can be summoned the

proper way, due to the rumors of Zhayad being the language of the Seventh Sphere. Zhayad also has a written form consisting of about 400 letters and ligatures, but only those that can be notated in Kuslikan Script are used regularly.

Two other secret codes are Nanduria and Arkanil. Nanduria, also called the Nandus Script, consists of 26 letters that are used by alchemists and artifact manufacturers for engravings and are quite popular among witches as well. More complex than Nanduria, the Rohal Script—another name for Arkanil—stems from the time of the Magician Wars. Its letters are said to harbor such potent magical energies that only a few scholars dare to write them down.

Finally, the Ravenspeak of the Al’Anfan church of Boron has to be mentioned. This language, which had originally been derived from Tulamidya, is now slowly beginning to exert a certain influence on the local language that sired it in the first place.

MEASURES, MONEY AND WEIGHTS

“Hence we declare as eternal measures the cubit, the stick, the claft and the march for length; and for weight there shall be the splinter, the ounce, the pound and the greatpound; and for value there shall be the golden crown, the silver tenth, the iron shilling; for now and ever in all provinces of the great empire of Bosparan. Given in the year 1487 after Horas’ emergence, by the hand of Arch Chamberlain Bilador, in the name of Her Majesty Hela-Horas, Empress of the Bosparanian Empire.”

This—the third, at the time—attempt to standardize Aventurian measurements and currencies lasted for five years (until the end of the Old Empire). Even the Priest-Emperors were unable to enforce a standard (based on the number 12). Hence, merchants still have to convert from Mengbillan Ounces to Warkhome Grans, from Selemian Coppershillings to Puninan Doubles. The reformation of measurements, under the reign of Rohal in the year of 454 b.H., finally brought unity to Aventurian measurements despite fervent resistance, even though there are still a few local exceptions.

MEASURES OF LONGITUDE, AREA AND VOLUME

The most important measure of longitude is the pace, which is divided into 5 spans, which again is divided into 10 fingers (“half-fingers” are seldom used). Then there is the middenmile, which is divided into 1,000 paces. The plummet, which is used for heights and nautical measures of sea depth, is approximately 10 paces long; it is divided into eighths for more precise measures. To determine travel distances, many regions still use different measures: The baryd of the Novadis (15 middenmiles) and the Nivese day (12 middenmiles) are the most well-known.

All of the measurements are squared to determine the size of an area. They are called anglepace, anglespan or anglemile. There is also the square (25 times 25 paces), the hectare (100

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times 100 paces) and the acre (2 times 2 middenmiles). The latter was also used to measure fiefdoms. In southern Arania, the morning (about 3,000 anglepaces) is also known—the area that can be plowed in one morning.

The most common measure for volume are the fingerful or flow (1 finger times 1 finger times 1 finger) and the spanful or urn. Innkeepers, as well as wine and beer merchants, prefer to use the quart of 100 flows or the draught (a quarter of a quart), and the cask of 10 spanful. The large ochs (of 12 casks) is seldom used. (The latter corresponds with the measure used to calculate the volume of ship cargo, which, if filled with water, is as heavy as a freestone.)

The most common Aventurian weights are the greatpound and the freestone (1,000 greatpounds), as well as the scruple, a thousand of which make a stone. 25 scruples are an ounce. The fine measures are carat (one fifth of a scruple) and grain (one twenty-fifth of a scruple), used exclusively by apothecaries and goldsmiths, who also use the carat to determine the purity of any material, be it gold or vitriol.

In the Middenrealm (and the Horasrealm), measures and weights are regulated by imperial law. Manipulation of weights and measures is severely punished (even noblemen are punished), if the tax collectors, sheriffs or palatinate counts discover it during one of their many controls – correct measures and weights are the base for a functional tax system. That is also why barons (who are given exact copies of the imperial measures as a symbol of their dignity) often control the measures of merchants on the marketplace as well as the duties of the farmers and citizens themselves. In most countries of Aventuria, the matter is handled similarly – but of course there are black sheep everywhere.



EARTHLY & AVENTURIAN MEASURES

Longitudinal Measures

1 finger	2 centimeters
1 span	20 centimeters
1 pace	1 meter
1 middenmile	1 kilometer

Square Measures

1 anglespan	20 x 20 cm
1 anglepace	1 square meter
1 hectare	1 hectare (100 x 100 m)
1 anglemile	1 square kilometer
1 acre	4 square kilometers

Dry Measures

1 flow	8 cubic centimeters
1 draught	200 cubic cm (0.2 liters)
1 quart	800 cubic cm (0.8 liters)
1 urn	8 liters
1 cask	80 liters
1 ochs	960 liters

Weights

1 grain	1/25 gram
1 carat	1/5 gram
1 scruple	1 gram
1 ounce	25 grams
1 greatpound	1 kilogram
1 freestone	1 ton

CURRENCIES

All attempts to unify currencies have failed utterly, leaving money exchange a still profitable occupation. The most widely used currency of Aventuria remains the currency of the Middenrealm, which is based on the ducat of 1 ounce of pure (mint) gold. One ducat is 10 silver thalers (of 5 scruples of silver), which corresponds to 10 bronze farthings (of 5 scruples), which again equals 10 iron kreutzers (of 5 scruples).

Ducats of the realm may only be manufactured in the mints of Gareth, Warkhome, Punin and Havena. Despite the succession from Emperor Haal to Protector of the Realm Brin to Imperial Regent Emer, the ducats still bear a griffin on one side and the portrait of Emperor Haal on the other. The coins of Emperor Reto are still legal tender, while older coins are only valued at 8 thalers.

Silver thalers may be minted by provincial lords. Farthings and kreutzers may be minted by a count, which is why a vast number of pictures and insignia appear on different coins. Only weight and shape are controlled by the taxmen—and here controls are even more rigid than the control of weights and measures: every forger, whether he is a noble or a simple peasant, is thrown into the tower for the rest of his days.

The currency of the Middenrealm is also legal tender in the Horasrealm, even though many people accuse the Vinsaltic ducats of having a lower percentage of gold. A peculiarity of the Horasrealm is the horasdor, a 20-ducat coin, weighing half a greatpound. It is

hardly used, even in the Horasrealm, because hardly any innkeeper or merchant has the appropriate change.

Most countries and city states of the Tulamides use the ducat and the thaler as well. In the Caliphate of Mherwed, though, the golden maravedi (2 ducats), the silver zechine (2 thalers) and the copper muwlat (5 farthings) are the currencies of choice. The main currencies of Al'Anfa are the golden doubloon (2 ducats), the orear or shilling (1 thaler) made out of copper and gold, and the copper dirham (like the kreutzer).

In Fountland one pays with the lump (1 ducat), the penny (1 thaler) and the slighting (1 farthing).

As a marginal note, one has to mention the local currencies of Vallusa (whites, dusts, flints; will lose their value when Vallusa belongs to Fountland), of Thrahelia (suvar, hedsh, ch'ryskl), the Amazons (amazon crown) and the dwarfs (many different coins, depending on the clan, usually highly valued).

All these different currencies mean that individuals will have to deal with exchange offices more often than they would like. Depending on the business they have to pay between 10% and 30% of the money for changing it to another currency. Whether you want to torture your party with different currencies all the time is your choice, but it can be very useful if the heroes have just too much money ...

It is also important to realize that currencies are not in use in many, mainly rural, areas of Aventuria. Often communities rely on the exchange of goods, which might also cause problems when wanting to exchange currencies. Finally, there are banks in Aventuria who give out checks for deposited sums.

COST OF LIVING

Assume that a normal craftsman makes a profit of 5 ducats per month, that a draught of beer in a tavern costs 6 kreutzers, a greatpound of bread on the marketplace 15 kreutzers, a good linen shirt 8 thalers, and a sword or simple leather armor 10 ducats and up.

TRAVEL IN AVENTURIA

Aventuria is a very sparsely populated continent. Though some areas seem tamed and civilized, the sight of Gareth's or Fasar's narrow alleyways, the prospering villages and towns of Fairfield or the cultivated soil of the Aranian lowlands are the exception, not the rule. Many middenmiles of deserted land or dense forest lie between villages and cities.

For this reason, trade routes between villages, market places and cities are the lifeblood of the continent. Roads that can be used for carriages and navigable rivers not only attract merchants and hasty travelers carrying money and goods to the individual countries, but also bandits and river pirates eager to take these resources away.

CROSS-COUNTRY TRAVEL

'Against the efforts of the provincial lords illegally taking toll on the Emperor's roads, but also against the statements of honorable merchants refusing to pay the toll on the provincial lords' roads, it shall be explained and laid down which roads are the Emperor's and how they are made up, which roads are the provincial lords' and

how they are made up, and how and with whose money they are to be kept intact and which laws are valid on them...

—Taken from an edict of the Great Chancellery of Emperor Alrik, 298 b.H.

Although the Realm is now smaller than during the heyday of the Eslamidians, the classification given in the edict is still valid for all roads, some of which have existed since the Bosparanian era and have not been expanded until today. It defines three types of roads: imperial roads, imperial highways, and other roads. In the Horasrealm, Fountland and Arania, the roads' legal classification and banditry is similar to the situation in the Middenrealm.

IMPERIAL ROADS

In modern terms, an Imperial Road is a roadway of at least four paces in breadth, plastered with slabs of granite or basalt and sporting a slight curve on the sides in order to make rainwater run off the road and into the ditches. The course of an imperial road is well-chosen, avoiding detours and crossing rivers on bridges of stone, with ferries or at specific fords. Every 15 middenmiles, a (mostly fortified) inn can be found which also serves as a station for messengers, a stable with horses to lease and a base for the patrols of the Road Watch, sometimes even providing a blacksmith who performs simple repairs on carriages.

In the Middenrealm, an imperial road is subject to imperial law as enforced by the riders and the toll collectors of the Road Watch. The Road Watch is comprised of troops from the Imperial Seneschal's Treasure Guard. On those roads, tolls are only taken on the outer borders of the Realm (by the time a traveler first steps on an imperial road). The money flows into the imperial treasury, which also pays for the maintenance of the roads. Additional income hails from the leasing of the hotels and inns to local innkeepers.

Banditry on imperial roads, including attacking inns and waystations, is a serious crime that can easily cost the offender's head. It also promises great profit, should one deem the risk worthwhile, as the roads teem with heavily packed carriages and mule caravans and the riders of the Road Watch are few and far between. Rumors even say that some riders boost their pay by closing one or two eyes to the actions of a generous donor.

IMPERIAL HIGHWAYS

The stretches of roads known as imperial highways in the Middenrealm and as royal roads in the Horasrealm and Fountland are of lesser quality than the imperial roads. These roads also have to be broad enough for two carriages, cross rivers on well-suited and safe places and sport an inn at least every 20 middenmiles. In the Middenrealm, the maintenance and safety of imperial highways lie in the hands of the provincial lords, who take tolls on the borders of their holdings and lease inns along the road. Mostly, however, the provincial lords are even more niggardly than the Empire. The roads are often neglected for many years at a stretch, until public outcry becomes great enough or until income from the roads drops significantly. This is also true for the Horasrealm and Fountland, but to a lesser degree as these roads are subject to the central government in both countries.



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WORLD OF ADVENTURIA

WORLD OF ADVENTURA

The last place one can be charged for simply traveling during a journey is on a ferry, which typically charges a fare for each passenger. The fare varies according to the breadth and the fierceness of the river, lying between one and eight farthings per leg and three and thirty farthings per wheel. The biggest problem with ferrymen and ferrywomen, however, is that they often refuse to cross the river if the ferry is not fully occupied. A hasty merchant might have to pay thrice the normal fare to get his carriages across the river in time.

IMPORTANT PASSES

Wherever possible, Aventurian roads and trade routes are built around mountain ranges, even if long detours have to be made. Roads through the mountains are expensive to build and to maintain, insecure because of sudden changes in weather and falling rocks, almost never able to be used in winter, not profitable for innkeepers, and tend to slow down carts pulled by oxen or horse carriages.

Nevertheless, there are passes mostly used by single travelers, sometimes by mule caravans and in rare cases by trading wagons.

CARAVAN ROUTES

Along the routes mentioned above, and also where no path or track can be found, travelers and traders form traveling communities known as caravans. For the most part, these communities comprise two dozen packing animals (karens in the far north; camels in the Khôm Desert and its outer reaches; mules, donkeys or heavy horses in other regions) and a dozen people, some traveling on horseback. Depending on the terrain, a caravan also takes additional animals with it, which carry nothing but supplies and water.

Even though it is not particularly wise to travel dangerous territories in small groups, trading caravans of more than appropriate sizes exist, sometimes exceeding the numbers given above by up to five times. At the beginning and the end of trade routes, one mostly has to wait until enough people have come together to form a caravan, but patience is almost always rewarded with traveling companions, a good private deal and a secure trip. There are always travelers who know how to fight, and even if not, everybody can help hire mercenaries.

STEP AND STONE

You do not have to play out the entirety of a journey if you don't want to; you can very easily skip some parts of it, especially those with little or no chance of encounter. If the heroes are about to undertake a long journey—from Havena to Beilunk, for example—it certainly is wise to play out only one or several short passages of the journey, leaving the rest to a simple summary.

In the portions of the journey that you do choose to focus on, it may be important to note whether a city will be reached before the sun sets, or if the “shortcut” the heroes took turns out to be a really bad choice. Using events and dangers on different days of the journey can give your players a good impression of the time spent covering the trip as a whole.

ENCOUNTERS

Even if marches through the wilderness are exhausting and dangerous, we strongly recommend not choosing encounters that will lead to a fight for every single day of a journey. Try to create a proper image of the dangers of the land the heroes are traveling through and plan encounters with the local fauna—and, of course, encounters with rapacious bandits or people carrying information for the hero's next adventure.

MEANS OF TRAVEL

On Foot

Wanderers with light luggage—i.e., not carrying more than a walking stick, a dagger, a bread bag and a water skin—can travel up to 40 middenmiles a day. For the most part, however, heroes travel heavily packed, carrying one suit of armor, two or three weapons, supplies for several days and personal items. With these heavy possessions, heroes mostly travel about 30 middenmiles a day. Always keep in mind that a traveling group cannot be faster than its slowest member.

Traveling on foot requires good constitution and a decent amount of rest. During a forced march, it is extremely important to stay at an inn and sleep in a bed. Once at that inn, the heroes need to spend another six hours resting before they can look forward to the next leg of their journey. Anything less will result in a reduction of speed.

As a Highlord, you can ask for Survival tests to determine the quality of a night's rest in the wilderness and accordingly modify the amount of regeneration. You can also give a bonus point if the heroes are especially careful or stay at a well-kept inn.

Apart from particular dangers in different kinds of terrain, carelessness is a wanderer's greatest enemy. One false step can cause severe injuries, making it harder or even impossible to go on. Survival tests are suited to simulate some of these dangers in play. Avoid asking for too many checks, though; this could spoil the players' mood. Heroes acting at least a little disciplined should only get into serious trouble if unusual danger relevant to the current adventure is at hand.

On Horseback

A group of travelers on horseback will not be able to bridge more than 35 middenmiles a day, while a single horseman with light luggage will be able to ride up to 50 middenmiles per day. For a group of travelers, it must be noted that horses also have to eat. On top of that, a horse's hooves have to be cared for during longer journeys. In addition, different kinds of horses are more or less suited for certain tasks. There are especially tenacious horses for traveling and exceptionally strong ones with great carrying capacity.

In some kinds of terrain, travelers will have to dismount and lead their horses, as riding would be too dangerous. In normal terrain, horses are unlikely to trip, but soft ground, underbrush and forced speed increase the danger of accidents. It's rarely the horse's fault if the rider falls, however. Most falls are caused by carelessness or levity on the rider's part. You can use Danger Sense, Perception or Survival tests to see if the rider pays the attention necessary to deal with difficult terrain.

Also, from time to time ask for a Ride test, modified according to the present terrain; it is an appropriate way to simulate the danger of falling in play.

Camels

Camels are especially well adapted to desert climates, able to store large amounts of water and persevere for many days without drinking. These animals are not as fast as horses, but very tenacious and able to carry heavy loads.

For journeys through the desert, it is always wise to use camels as packing animals. If necessary, one can even ride these animals, giving exhausted or hurt party members an opportunity to rest. Outside the desert, travelers on camels or packing camels can be found in Arania and Almada, but these animals will not survive very long in most northern regions.

Carts, Carriages and Coaches

Simple oxen carts, merchant carriages, covered wagons used by settlers, stage coaches on the roads of Aventuria: there are many different kinds of vehicles that travel the Aventurian roadways (even sleds).

An oxen cart can cover about 25 middenmiles a day, a normal horse cart about 30, and a traveling coach or stage coach about 50 middenmiles. Carts and carriages need at least simple cart tracks, while traveling coaches can only be used on well-maintained roads.

If the heroes do not have a coach of their own, they can rent one (which is uncommon) or travel by stage coach, which costs about 4 ducats per person per 100 middenmiles. Normally, a ride on a trader's carriage will be much cheaper, while a trip on a peasant's cart is possible in exchange for entertainment and assistance.

Messengers and Express Coaches

Changing exhausted horses can increase the traveling distance for a rider or a coach. This requires professional planning and good organization, as is the case for most messenger services. More information on these organizations can be found in on p. 132.

Anyone who wants to engage in such express rides without proper preparations will certainly have many problems; most significantly, the horses the traveler needs to continue are often not easily available in small towns or villages. When an adventure calls for such improvisational methods to organize an express ride, the players will surely feel a certain thrill at doing so.

For reasons of comprehensiveness, it has to be noted that a mounted messenger can cover an average distance of 180 middenmiles a day (less in difficult terrain); an express coach can bridge 120 middenmiles a day on an Imperial Road—always provided that horses can be changed at regular intervals.

SEA TRAVEL AND TRADE

"I think I will trust in this ship, despite the tight space and the low amount of duty-free goods. The markings on the bow below the name 'Admiral of Seweritz' account for fourteen sunken pirate vessels and nine heavy storms that we survived. Originally we were transporting salt from Unau, but everyone who joined in Khunchom invested in spices, which, they say, will draw great profit in Festum."

—From a letter from Arms Officer Isora Nattelbeck to her mother, relayed by the brotherhood of Efferd; dated 16 Rondra, 30 Haal

If an Aventurian has to go on a long journey, the preferred form of transportation will always be the ship—at least for those who can afford it. Firstly, one can stay on the same transport from the beginning to the end of the journey; secondly, one can carry more cargo; and thirdly, there are fewer pirates than highwaymen (except perhaps in the Charybbean Sea or the Bloody Sea).

Most sea journeys follow the coastline for many middenmiles, because it helps orientation and salvage is more likely in case of a wreck. Exceptions are the routes from Selem or Thalusa to Port Stoorrebrandt on Iltoken, or from Selem into the Strait of Sylla. Of course, it is possible to lose sight of the coast for a day or two if the winds are unfavorable.

Ships usually anchor at night (a problem, due to the proximity to the coast) or try to reach a harbor. The demurrage at a given port of call lasts between half a day and a day, depending on how many goods are to be handled. Water and food rations are always replenished at each stop; you never know when they might become scarce.

North of Thorwal, almost no vessels sail from Travia to Peraine. In the northern Sea of Pearls and between Grangor and Thorwal, boat traffic virtually ceases between Boron and early Phex. On all other oceans, boating takes place all year round.

Assuming sound winds and a travel of 12 hours duration, a slow cargo sail covers about 120 middenmiles per day; a usual fast sailing-ship (caravel, small shivoon, thalukk, longship), 140 middenmiles. Fast ships that can sail for 24 hours a day reach up to 250 middenmiles per day.

A galley, which can be operated for 8 hours a day, covers 70 middenmiles; forced oaring (12 hours of oaring) results in about 100 middenmiles; courier-dromones (24 hours of oaring, changing shifts, known route) even up to 200 middenmiles.

The cost for a sea journey varies depending on accommodation, ship type and route. An example would be a passage from Havena to Kuslik, on a hammock in the lower deck of a slow grain-transporting vessel for four ducats. In a cabin on the *Oblivious*, the luxurious and fast flagship of the shipping company Terdilion of Belhanka, one would surely have to pay 25 ducats. The greater the distance, the lower is the difference between these price levels. The travel from Havena to Beilunk might cost between 15 and 50 ducats. Horses are charged the same price as a human—the same applies to (approximately) a freestone of cargo (of personal belongings).

The most important—and free—Aventurian seaports and trade nodes are: Neersand, Festum, Vallusa, Beilunk, Pericum, Zorgan, Khunchom, Al'Anfa, Brabak, Mengbilla, Rethis, Neetha, Belhanka, Kuslik, Grangor, Havena, Nostria, Thorwal, Olport and Riva. All those cities have a good connection to the hinterland, docks for all types of vessels or calm anchorages, craftsmen and often even shipwrights. They also offer the type of entertainment that you would expect in the docklands (the besieged Beilunk is an exception).

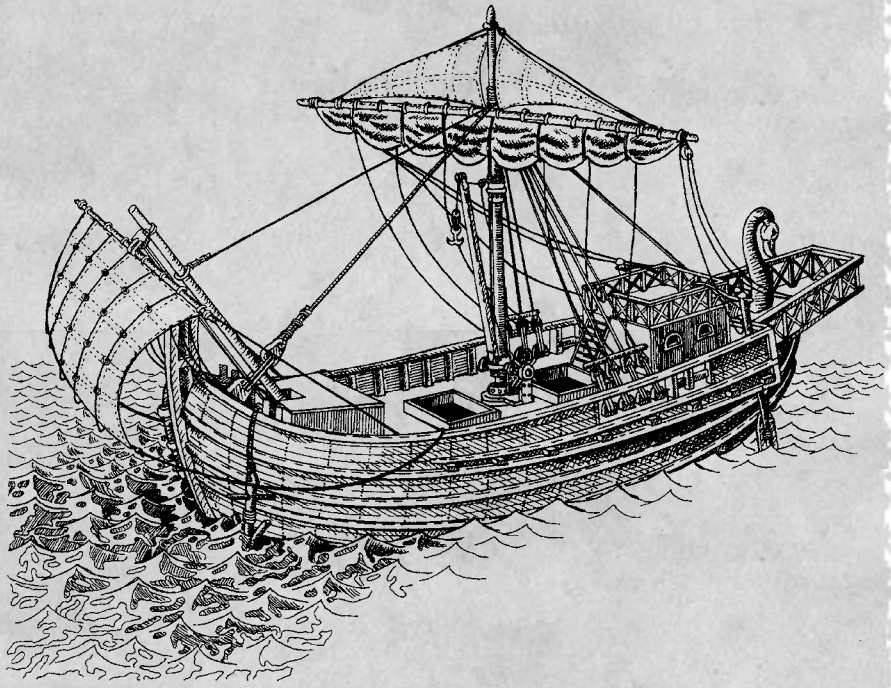
Ports with a dubious reputation, despite their sometimes good equipment, are Thalusa, Selem, Port Corrad, Sylla and Charypso, Hôt-Alem, Chorhop, Prem, Enqui and Harben (which is a military port). The most important ports of the Black Lands (and therefore pirate strongholds) are Mendena, Jergan, Yasairabad, Elburum and Tuzak.

SHIP TYPES

When it comes to the transport of goods and passengers, the most recognized ship types in northern Aventuria are the cogs (usually with one mast, square-rigged sails) and the hulks (similarly built, larger vessels with three masts), the quick caravels on the west coast (fast ships with two or three masts, usually rigged with triangular "Havenan" (Lateen) sails), heavy carracks (high-sided ships with three or four masts) and modern shivoons (galleons; only slightly smaller ships with three or four masts, but faster and more maneuverable than carracks). In southern Aventuria, the bellied potts (ships with one square-rigged mast and a large spritsail) as well as the thalukks (smaller, faster and more maneuverable than caravels) and zedrakks (quite large ships with three to five masts and a low gauge, enabling them to enter estuaries of rivers) and their smaller relatives, the lorchas, are common.

Seagoing oared vessels (biremes, triremes, dromones and galleasses) are seldom used for cargo transport due to the low cargo space and the fact that they have to avoid the open seas. They are usually used as warships, dromones sometimes as fast couriers.

The same applies to the Thorwalian longships or ottas, which do not have to fear the open seas, but have only little space for trade goods. The Thorwalians use the half oared, half sailed gnarl for peaceful trading purposes. Both ship types are able to sail rivers for a long way, due to their low gauge.

JUSTICE AND LAW
IN AVENTURIA

Although all people of Aventuria share certain social and moral rules, only the Gyldenlandians initially had a specific judicial system in the narrower sense. A number of elements thereof—such as texts of law, a separation of instances, and imprisonment as a form of punishment—were very alien concepts to the Aventurian natives. All cultures that were not influenced by the Gyldenlandian settlers—Nivese, Mohans, elves and dwarfs among others—have still not incorporated these ideas into their lives. Only the Tulamidians have adopted the majority of their legal customs from the settlers, together with their worship of the Twelvegods.

The following text deals with the characteristics of law and justice as they are typical for large parts of Aventuria—including the Old and the New Empire, the Aventurian south and Fountland. Among all other cultures, the sense of justice is determined by the customs of the respective clan or tribe. In those places, law is often considered to be whatever the Nivese shaman, the Mountain King or the common elven sense dictates.

The legal forms resulting from the large variety of Aventurian cultures are so diverse that we refrain from trying to give an overview—the closer study of individual cases is something we leave to the wanderlust of our readers.

THE LAWS

The oldest preserved code of law is the ancient *Ius Divi Horathis*, written around 1900 b.H. during the rule of Empress Dalida-Horas. It was followed by the *Lex Imperia* by Emperor Yarum-Horas (1437 b.H.). The laws within both are primarily of historical interest, rather than having a continuing impact on modern jurisprudence.

Aventurian jurisdiction is defined primarily by the time-honored, multi-volume *Codex Raulis* (954 b.H.) by Emperor Raul, the *Ius Concordia* (527 b.H.) by Rohal the Wise and the *Garethian Pamphlet* (397 b.H.). Moreover, the *Imperial (Land) Reform Act* (11 b.H.) by Emperor Reto and the latest *Imperial Reform* by Protector Brin are of special importance to the Middenrealm today. In the Horasrealm, an extensive code of law is in the final stages of preparation, with an expected release in about ten years.

A multitude of individual laws and precedents from earlier legal proceedings exists, as well as special regulations for certain legal aspects. For example, the Garethian Trade Law Regulations from 299 b.H. have become the binding trade laws in the Middenrealm and even far beyond its borders.

THE JUDGES

The Praios-granted right to hold court is primarily a privilege of the noble class. Even though there are other institutions that claim the right to dispense justice, noble jurisdiction is the most widespread and commonly accepted practice in most Aventurian regions. In Thorwal, however, the elected hetfolk or the jarls (in more important and far-reaching cases) ensure that justice is served.

THE COURTS

Not every damaged person can appeal to a court: this right is closely connected to the standard rights of a citizen. Only freemen can sue others; bondsmen, wards and children need a free or noble patron to go to court in their name.

According to the role of the plaintiff, two different proceedings are used in Aventuria. The older court of arbitration is particularly widespread among Thorwalians and dwarfs as well as in Arania and Tulamidian lands, and in Nostria and Andergast, though the process is losing ground there to more modern judicial methods. In many provinces of the Middenrealm (especially in the duchies and Almada), it is a form of proceeding that is slowly dying out.

In a court of arbitration, the judge is merely an arbiter. There are often no official plaintiffs, as everyone assumes that relatives and friends will speak in favor of the damaged person. The case has to be presented as consistently as possible, since the judge will probably not engage in any investigations of his own. There is no difference made between civil cases and criminal cases: the damaged person sues the person he holds responsible for the damage done, no matter whether the case is about real estate, stolen cattle or murdered family members.

Unfortunately, the judge in his role as arbiter frequently lacks the power and the enthusiasm to proceed to action after he has passed his judgment. If the person who lost the case does not accept the judgment, the judge has to allow the person who won the case to enforce the judgment—even by violent means. Actually, this often leads to long and bloody feuds between clans and tribes. Only in semi-feudal Arania—and of course in the Middenrealm—do noble judges have the necessary means to bring misbehaving losers back in line.

The younger inquisitorial court formally is the proceeding of choice in the entire Middenrealm, but it has become especially popular in Garetia, Darpatia and the Horasrealm. (Under the prescriptions of the worship of Rastullah, the Caliphate has a legal proceeding quite similar to an inquisitorial court.) In this

proceeding, the damage done does not constitute the violation of a law—the crime itself is seen as an infringement upon the order given by the gods and the state, and this order has to be protected not by the damaged person, but rather the authorities themselves. The victim and his relatives are of negligible importance and are at best seen as interesting witnesses to the crime.

As a general rule, any crime has to be pursued. Moreover, permanent investigators and plaintiffs are employed by at least those Supreme Courts that have to deal with capital crimes. In the Middenrealm, these investigators are often called inquisitors. They are often laymen or even deonts of the Church of Praios (for example, the court chaplain of a noble judge). In the Horasrealm, those investigators are nearly all members of the bureaucratic State Order of the Eagle whose titles they assume—most free courts have advocates, while Supreme Courts employ procurators. Both types of proceedings are prone to bribery, and often the judge accepts gifts from both parties before finally deciding in the favor of the more generous one.

In almost every Aventurian region, legal proceedings are highly traditional, almost ritualized events during which time-honored customs are followed to the letter. Most start in a religious fashion with a prayer to Praios, the Lord of All Laws and Protector of Order. Due to the influence of the Church of Praios, finding the truth is more important than settling the dispute between victim and perpetrator in an inquisitorial court. Therefore, a confession by the accused is seen as the hardest evidence possible that can be procured, even if it is gained by resorting to torture.

BREAKING THE LAW

It is a commonly accepted idea all over Aventuria that there are different categories of violations of the law that have to be addressed by different courts and punished appropriately to the severity of the crime. In many places, it is far more important during legal proceedings to determine to which category a crime belongs, rather than pinpointing its exact juristic definition.



Misdemeanor: These are the most harmless violations of the law, only pursued when a damaged person appeals to a court. Indecency, disturbance, vagrancy and similar offenses up to and including unarmed brawling in public are considered to be misdemeanors, as well as the so-called “petty theft” (with goods not exceeding 5 ducats in value) during which nobody must have been threatened or hurt, and nothing must have been forcibly opened or otherwise damaged.

Crimes: This category includes the largest number of offenses, such as grand theft (with goods exceeding 5 ducats in value), breaking and entering, arson, fraud, libel, insult and defamation. The everyday activities of many adventurers can be found in this category...

Capital Crimes: Traditionally, this category takes in acts of violence such as rape, bodily injury, robbery, piracy and kidnapping, arson that has led to injury or death, murder and manslaughter. It also includes seditions like poaching, smuggling, false return of income, counterfeiting, conspiracy against the monarch and high treason, as well as crimes against the natural order (entering a pact with demons, disavowal of divine truths and insulting or speaking disdainfully about the gods or their servants and representatives). The latter kinds of crime are often described as “unwholesome trouncing on the fundamentals of Realm, Ethra and Alveran.”

As a general rule, even an attempted felony is punished as harshly as if the actual deed itself had been committed.

PUNISHMENTS

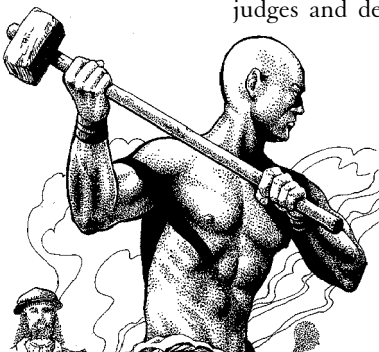
There is a multitude of possible punishments that can be enacted in Aventuria. The degree of punishment mostly depends on the severity of the crime. The assumed or testified motivation of the culprit is also very important in that regard: anyone who breaks the law because of an error, temporary irresponsibility or even thoughtlessness will probably get away with a mild form of punishment. Anyone who displayed selfishness, premeditation or cruelty can expect to be punished more harshly. Repeat offenders and strangers also have to cope with an especially merciless judgment. In the Middenrealm, it is regarded to be particularly reprehensible when magic was used during a crime.

In courts of arbitration, there is also a “justified violation of the law.” Whether it is manslaughter in self-defense or petty theft to keep oneself from starving to death, anyone who can deliver proof (probably through eye witnesses) that he was forced to break the law to prevent a greater evil is frequently found not guilty at all. In inquisitorial courts, however, many rigorous

judges and deonts of Praios claim that there is no such thing as a justified violation of the law. These hardliners always demand at least a symbolic punishment whenever a law has been broken.

Middenrealm:

Any possible violation of the law is punishable



with a deterrent sentence in the widespread inquisitorial courts. For misdemeanors, humiliating punishments are common, ranging from public reprimands (the so-called “obloquy”) and being put in the pillory, to fines of up to 10 ducats or incarceration for up to a month; moreover, corporal punishment “on hair and skin” is also possible (which means that the culprit is either shaved bald or flogged).

In the case of crimes, prison terms and fines without any upper limit are permitted and often combined with humiliating sentences and/or corporal punishment. Thieves or cheats can have their “wicked body part” (the hand or the tongue, for example) mutilated, although this is only permitted when dealing with repeat offenders.

Capital crimes are either punished with long prison terms and heavy fines or, more frequently, with forced labor in a quarry or mine or even banishment to a penal colony (set up by the Middenrealm in the jungles near Hôt-Alem). Brands as accompanying measures are not uncommon. The death penalty is also permitted; nobles are beheaded, while all others are hanged. Occasionally, the body of the executed culprit is burned after the sentence has been carried out (some special cases apply; arsonists, for instance, are burned alive, well poisoners are drowned, etc.).

Horasrealm: Punishments are very similar to those of the Middenrealm, but mutilating criminals is seen as barbaric. The Horasrealm has set up several penal colonies on the Cyclops Islands.

Fountland: The Fountlandians follow the example set by the Middenrealm as well, but the punishments for non-nobles are harsher, and many bronnjars are fond of mutilations and floggings even in the case of minor offenses.

Svelltland: The earlier inquisitorial courts so pleasant to Praios have nearly vanished; they have been replaced by the ruthless enforcement of some sort of order dominated by bounty hunters and lynch mobs. The only common punishments are fines, flogging and hanging.

Arania: Courts of arbitration are the standard of Aranian jurisdiction; it is assumed that a judgment has to make even the damages done to the victim of a crime. Hence, virtually all violations of the law are punishable with an appropriate fine, paid by the culprit to the victim or the latter’s relatives. In the case of crimes, the entire property of the culprit is commonly confiscated and the culprit himself can lose social rank, so a noble can end up as a freeman or even a servant. Capital criminals can either be turned into slaves that have to work for the victim or the crown (in a quarry or on a galley) or they are put to death.

Thorwal: Courts of arbitration are the rule here as well. The judge determines an appropriate fine to be paid to the victim (the so-called thurgold) in the case of misdemeanor or petty crimes. When it comes to capital crimes, either a heavy fine (that often ruins the culprit and his entire clan) has to be paid or the culprit is outlawed and banished (usually the hardest sentence), beheaded, hanged or drowned (only for the most notorious offenders).

Southern City-States: The legal system is a wild mix of inquisitorial courts and courts of arbitration. Most of the time, the judge chooses the kind of legal proceedings he can profit from the most.

COMMUNICATION AND THE PRESS

COMMUNICATION, ENVOYS AND NEWSPAPERS

"Aventurian nations depend on armed legions and filled granaries, but they depend even more on information. Even though the value of a single message may often be underrated, it can decide prosperity and poverty, profit and loss, war and peace."

— From *Middenrealm for 1000 Years*, from the temple of Hesinde in Punin; 7 Haal

Since the beginning of time, all cultural races have striven to communicate not only from face to face, but also over long distances. Whether to administrate and maintain a vast commonwealth or the simple desire to converse; gossip and mysterious messages from faraway countries are always welcome. It is said that the old lizard rulers used methods reminiscent of the Dark Eyes used today, but that may also just be the stuff Tulamide tales are made of.

The traditional means of communication of the elves and dwarfs are very reliable. The former use the renowned treetoppers, who can relay messages even through howling wind and storm, as well as arrows to which messages are attached and even far-reaching magical songs. The dwarfs employ tube callers and courier runners in their tunnels.

Many human cultures (Forest People, Maraskanians and Nivese) use often complex drum signals to transmit messages. The latter people also employ horns for communication. Such horns were also in use for a long time in the lands of the Tulamides and in Gyldenland, and are still used in mountainous areas. The Tulamides also rely on a system of carrier pigeons that is over a thousand years old. It is also used in other places, but is considered less reliable due to birds of prey and bad weather.

The newest method for the transmission of messages is used in Fairfield. A system of towers, called clatter towers or semaphores, uses widely visible signals to relay short messages from one tower to the other. The messages are transferred in a speed that is only exceeded by magic or the miraculous communication that deonts employ. The biggest problem with semaphores is the dependency on the weather. If rain, snow or fog obstructs visibility, messages cannot be transferred. Semaphore routes can be found in Fairfield along the coast from Grangor to Dröl, along the Yaquir from Kuslik to Uppercrags, and from Pertakis via Arivor and Silas to Methumis. Outside the Horasrealm there are routes under construction along the coasts of Fountland and Arania and from Perricum to Gareth. One is even planned along the coasts of Thorwal.

The already mentioned miraculous communication is also a widely used method of spreading news from one point to the next, especially where church business is concerned. Many newspaper reports start with "As voiced by usually well-informed deonts..."

COURIER SERVICES

The usual methods to transfer private messages or to make information widely known are the courier services based all over Aventuria. They rely on their steadfast riders, which again rely on a dense network of way stations where they can exchange horses or transfer the message from one rider to another. The way stations are usually combined with inns along the imperial roads, at all estates of counts and more important nobles, and at the gates of most cities. In the wilderness they use a common (and usually well-defended) station. In all cases, they also collect local information and take it from one area to the next. Apart from the riders, most courier services employ runners in the cities, in mountain ranges and in bogs, as well as company-owned or leased ship connections.

The speed of a message heavily depends on weather and season, but is usually twice as fast as a normal rider can travel in a forced ride. Records like Havena to Beilunk in four days (which means a daily mileage of over 250 miles!) are the exception, but are quite possible in case of emergency.

The prices for transferring a message by express delivery are exorbitantly high, so that only noble houses and rich merchants can afford it: the approximate price is one silver thaler per mile for most couriers. (These mile specifications are written down, together with the route suggestions, in the logbooks of the courier services—a useful compendium for any traveler, but not available for sale.)

The larger courier services (Beilunk Riders, Blue Arrows, Silver Falcons, Postservice Pertakis) have come to an agreement among each other and with all important dynasties, condemning any assault on a courier and even excluding the sovereign or merchant who ordered the assault from any further use of any courier service. For a sovereign or merchant, this means being virtually blind and deaf to the world around. In many places, couriers have a sacred status and may not even be attacked in times of war.

If needed, messages can either be written in a secret script or encrypted by a *Cryptographo* spell, which can only be read by the recipient. This is expensive, but creates even more security.

The most well-known courier services are as follows.

THE BEILUNK RIDERS

They lost their main office due to the Borbaradian invasion and suffered great losses in the battle of the Trollgap, including their long-time leader, Colonel Leon Rukaris. Despite their losses, however, they could soon regain their former numbers. The Beilunk Riders are known to be the fastest and most reliable courier service. They own way stations and offices in almost all of free Aventuria, as well as several ships. There is even a special boot camp for couriers who are bound to travel to inaccessible regions.

Price: 1T/mile plus 1D/day, min. 5D, max. 75D

Average daily distance: 180 middenmiles

Weight: Max. 10 ounces

Encryption: Depending on method, 1F to 1T per word

Reliability: 99.5%

Special services: Transport of goods via express carriage (120 miles/day), extra fast delivery (200 miles/day guaranteed) for a much higher price

THE BLUE ARROWS

They were once a part of the Royal Aranian Trade Company, but are now part of its successor, Mada Basari, a joint venture of the Mhaharanyate Arania, the RATC and the Church of Phex. The Blue Arrows have offices south of the Gareth-Beilunk line (but in Festum as well) and north of the Selem marches. They mainly rely on courier riders and are known to be very reliable.

Price: 8F/mile, min. 5D, max. 100D
Average daily distance: 160 middenmiles
Encryption: Depending on method, 2F to 8F per word
Weight: 1 greatpound
Reliability: 98%
Special services: Transport of goods up to 10 greatpounds by courier (double price)

THE SILVER FALCONS

The Silver Falcons of the merchant house Stoorrebrandt deliver messages and smaller quantities of goods all over Aventuria (excluding Al'Anfa and its allies, as well as the Heptarchies). Even though their network is not as elaborate as that of the Beilunk Riders, their lower fees make them accessible for the middle classes.

Price: 1 farthing per mile and ounce for "slow delivery" (100 miles/day) up to 5F/mile/ounce for guaranteed maximum speed (at least 180 miles/day); at least 1D
Avg. daily distance: 160 middenmiles
Encryption: Depending on method, 1F to 1T per word
Weight: Max. 10 greatpounds
Reliability: 95%
Special services: Transport of goods, storage for retrieval, carrier pigeon delivery across certain areas if needed, secure transport (99.5%) for triple price

Besides these companies there are other, smaller ones who usually belong to the sovereign of their country of origin—for example, the Middenrealmian Imperial Courier Service (ICS), which also delivers private messages (only slightly slower than Beilunk Riders, similar prices), but is related to the Imperial Garethian Information Agency (IGIA). Others are limited to a certain region, such as the Postservice Pertakis, which transports mail with regular carriages throughout the Horasrealm—slow (50 miles/day) but cheap (1F/mile up to 5 ounces of weight).

NEWSPAPERS, FLYERS AND PERIODICALS

Due to the advent of the letterpress, information, rumors and gossip are all now widely available to the public at large. This technique employs moveable type made of wood, lead alloys or brass. In the beginning it was used primarily for civic decrees, but by now the technique is wide-spread and even some regular newspapers have appeared. They have a circulation of up to 1,000 and are not only read in academic circles but also—mainly as placards—in small towns and villages. Wherever the papers are distributed there usually is a person who can read it, even if it is only the mayor or the local deont.

The center of the art of printing and typography is Fairfield, especially after the conquest of Maraskan by the Black Hordes. Many large cities of the Middenrealm (Gareth, Havena, Punin) employ this new technique, as well as Festum and Khunchom.

Printers have a high social standing, especially if they print schoolbooks, periodicals, government decrees or communiqués. There are also pamphletists, however, who ramble from town to town equipped with a portable printing press and a case of letters. They make their living by printing decrees of local authorities or flyers.

The most famous periodicals are the Garethian *Aventurian Courier* (it has the highest circulation), the Horasian newspapers and gazettes *Bosparan Herald* and *Bosparan Gazette*, the urban *Havena Fanfare*, *Hesinde's Mirror* (the quarterly publication of the temple of Hesinde in Kuslik), the *Flag of Festum*, the Al'Anfanian *Templecrier* and the *Seawind*, a publication of the Brotherhood of Efferd and the temple of Bethana, for all nautically interested readers.

There are other traditional means of distributing news, specifically town criers who talk through town and use bells for attention (and are also available for private advertisements). There are also bulletin boards (usually near temples) and announcements inside the temples, which point out the latest decrees or upcoming events.

One has to note that, besides newspapers, there are other services in Aventuria that gather information instead of disseminating it. Because of that, they are often referred to as "information agencies." There are the Imperial-Garethian Information Agency or IGIA, the "secret service" of the Middenrealm. It also operates the *Aventurian Courier*. The Horasian Order of the Eagle also has a branch known as the Directorate for Peculiar Affairs, the Vinsaltic equivalent to the IGIA. Additionally, the churches of Praios, Hesinde, Nandus and Phex (the latter more or less secretly affiliated with the agency Nanduria from Fairfield and the Aranian Mada Basari) are exceptionally interested in various kinds of information.



CALENDARS AND HOLIDAYS

The common human calendar consists of 12 months of 30 days each (also called god's name or moon, even though it does not fully correspond with the cycle of Mada, the moon). Each month is assigned one god of the pantheon of twelve (Praios, Rondra, Efferd, Travia, Boron, Hesinde, Firun, Tsa, Phex, Peraine, Ingerimm, Rahja, in that order). The year begins midsummer on the first of Praios, which corresponds with July on Earth.

Each year, five days between the 30th day of Rahja and the 1st day of Praios are not assigned to any god; they belong to the Nameless One and are commonly feared. At this time no stars are visible on the meridian. If possible, one should not leave the house, trade goods or start any type of work. A birth at this time is always a bad sign, and those children are typically either killed or abandoned. Generally, one should spend this time praying and waiting for the 1st day of Praios.

Additional to this division of time, there is another calendar that follows the phases of Mada, which divides time into weeks of seven days each. The days are usually known as Windday, Earthday, Marketday, Praiosday, Rohalsday, Fireday and Waterday (in that order; there are regional differences). The phase changes of Mada are always on an Earthday.

The Novadis are an exception: they do not divide the year into months and weeks, but in 40 segments (the so-called Names of God) and five extra days named Rastullahellah, which follow each eighth Name of God. The 23rd of Boron in common reckoning marks the beginning of the Novadi year, which corresponds to the advent of Rastullah in Keft.

The calendars of the orks, goblins and elves are fully based on the phases of the moon. None of these cultures use a 365-day year. The dwarfs, though, know a year of twelve months of 30 days each, even though they associate the Nameless Days with the power of "The Dragon".

CALENDARS

Different countries relate the beginning of their calendar to various rulers or historical events. Hence, one counts the years after Golgaris' appearance in Al'Anfa, the appearance of Horas in the Horasrealm and the Novadis see the advent of Rastullah as the beginning of their times. Arania, Nostria and Andergast count the years after their respective independence, and the Middenrealm counts the years of rulership of its current emperor. The only calendar that is recognized all over Aventuria is the "Fall of Bosparan," but only the Fountland and some Tulamide city states actively use it, though. Some calendars know the year zero, others do not.

We are using the year 30 Haal as the year of this book's publication. It corresponds to: 2515 Horas, 1023 BF (Bosparan's Fall), 1877 o.i. (of independence of Nostria and Andergast), 338 GA (Golgaris' Appearance), 264 Rastullah, and 29 of Aranian and 27 of Thrahelian independence.

THE DARK EYE DATING CONVENTIONS

The *Das Schwarze Auge* game products currently in print in Germany use two different dating conventions, one corresponding to Bosparan's Fall and one corresponding to Emperor Haal's inauguration. While we have chosen to use the Haal dating convention, both can be used interchangeably. The Fall of Bosparan occurred in 993 b.H., and thus the inauguration of Haal occurred in 993 BF, 993 years after the Fall of Bosparan. Both reckonings know a "Year Zero."

HOLIDAYS

The list below shows some of the holidays that are recognized all over Aventuria. It is not complete, but offers a good overview. The most important regional holidays can be found in the respective country's descriptions, beginning on p. 34. Note that the following table shows the actual terrestrial months (as shown in the *Basic Rules*, beginning on p. 149) that each of Aventuria's months corresponds to (in terms of climate on the northern hemisphere, that is).

THE SKIES OF AVENTURIA

All Aventurian cultures view the celestial bodies above as an expression of divine will and order. The most important elements of the Aventurian sky are:

- **The Sun.** Its steady course marks the beginning and the end of all days (the term "Praios' Run" is synonymous with day).
- **The Moon.** Mada's Mark and its waxing and waning phases. The course of the moon cannot be completely calculated, as it casually diverges to the north and south.
- **The North Star.** It never moves.
- **The Circle of Twelve.** It comprises conspicuous constellations whose slow movement across the Aventurian sky corresponds exactly with the annual coming of sowing and harvest.
- Eight very bright cursory stars or planets. They seem to choose their path across the sky at their own whim.
- Uncountable other stars and constellations. They rise regularly from the east, but the time it takes them to complete their way to the western horizon differs. (The stars of Ethra do not rise every night. Like the constellations of the Circle of Twelve, it mostly takes them one year to cross the sky, but there also are faster and slower stars as well.)

According to the Theory of the Spheres, which was established by Rohal the Wise and the astrologer Niobara, stars and planets lie even beyond the spheres of the dead and the gods. In this Sixth Sphere, the order of heavens is visible to all eyes able to perceive it. Power, influence and competences of gods, demigods, Elder Dragons and other beings are given

AVEPTURIA'S NORTHERN SKY ON WEDNESDAY, 1 PRAIOS IN THE YEAR 12 HAAL



CALENDARS AND HOLIDAYS

Praios (Pra.) [July]

- 1 Praios Midsommer; most important holiday for all who believe in the Twelvegods; processions with large statues of griffins, homage to all sovereigns, emphasis of the god's order
- 2–3 Praios Festival of Praios and Griffin Festival in Middenrealm; traditionally nobility is given on this date
- 1st Praiosday in Praios an eight-day-long tournament in Gareth; jousting, games for the people, bard competitions, Imman tournament

Rondra (Ron.) [August]

- 1–30 Rondra (except 8) Theater festivals; Arivor, Kuslik, Vinsalt; theater plays, trickster procession
- 5 Rondra Day of the Oath in the lands of Twelvegod faith; most important holiday of the church of Rondra, ordination of new deonts; fasting, meditation
- 6–9 Rondra National holiday in the Middenrealm; memorial of the victory of the Second Demon Battle and the exclamation of the Middenrealm
- 8 Rondra Bosparan's Fall; Fairfield; black day
- 15–16 Rondra Sword-Celebration; lands of Twelvegod faith; lesser holiday of the church of Rondra; tournaments, contests, profane entertainment

Efferd (Eff.) [September]

- 1 Efferd Day of Water; mainly coastal cities; most important holiday of the church of Efferd; processions, i.e. *Colorful Lights of Perricum* (with fairs, games and lantern processions)
- 9 Efferd Fourth Rastullahellah; Novadis; rest and prayer
- 16 Efferd Celebration of the Fog; lands of Twelvegod faith; sacrifices and prayers to Phex; mainly thieves and merchants
- 30 Efferd Fishermen's Holiday; coastal areas, important holiday of the church of Efferd; sacrifices and prayers to the souls of the drowned
- 30 Efferd Examination Day; centers of the cult of Hesinde; ritual arrangement and assessment of the temple's treasures; final exams in many wizard academics

Travia (Tra.) [October]

- 1 Travia Day of Return; mainly for Thorwal, Norbades, Fountland; visits to friends, reception of strangers
- 1–3 Travia Celebration of Harvest; lands of Twelvegod faith; important holiday of the church of Travia, blessing of granaries, assessment of the fields, ritual feeding of geese
- 4 Travia Day of Heroes; centers of the Rondra cult; memorial day, holy to Rondra, of the Harvest Feast Massacre, demonstration of determination and strength
- 12 Travia Day of Loyalty; lands of Twelvegod faith; lesser holiday of the Travia faith, oaths between friends and many weddings
- 29 Travia Day of St. Gilborn; centers of the Praios church; memorial of Gilborn from Punin, who was killed 400 years ago by Borbarad

Boron (Bor.) [November]

- 1 Boron Day of the Dead; lands of Twelvegod faith; memorial day for all of the faith of Boron; prayers for the souls of the deceased, deonts are loose of their vow of silence
- 2–8 Boron Jesterdays in Khunchom; processions, official trickster tournament
- 22 Boron Fifth Rastullahellah; most important holiday for the Novadis, wild riding games, feasts, election of the new Hairans
- 30 Boron Day of Great Sleep; Al'Anfa; most important holiday for the Al'Anfan rite, ritual sacrifices (Flight of the Ten)

Hesinde (Hes.) [December]

- 7 Hesinde Rohal's Veiling; centers of guild wizardry; official expositions for education of the people; display of fireworks
- 20 Hesinde Beginning of the opera season in Vinsalt
- 30 Hesinde Festival of Enlightenment; lands of Twelvegod faith; most important holiday of the church of Hesinde; processions, symbolic lighting of houses and temples, burning of the "straw of stupidity"

Firun (Fir.) [January]

- 1st Firun Day of the Hunt; north and Middenrealm; festivals for midwinter, processions with masks
- 8th Firun National holiday of Fountland; election of the Noble Marshal every 5 years
- 30th Firun Day of Ifirn; wherever snow covers the lands; sacrifices and prayers for the end of winter; sacrifice of the "winter monster" (a straw figure) caught on the First of the month

Tsa (Tsa.) [February]

- 5 Tsa First Rastullahellah; Novadis; fasting and asceticism; voluntary stay in the desert
- 19 Tsa Independence Day; national holiday of the Horasrealm
- 30 Tsa–1 Phex Day of Renewal; northern Aventuria; holiday of the cult of Tsa; prayers; launch of ventures of all kinds, welcoming spring; for adherents of Simia and dwarfs, ritual lighting of a fire at The Gorge

Phex (Phex) [March]

- 16 Phex Day of Phex; lands of Twelvegod faith; holiday of merchants and thieves: trade with the God of merchants
- 24 Phex Day of Luck; lands of Twelvegod faith; lesser holiday of the church of Phex, jokes and pranks between the people
- 30 Phex Holiday of Engrossing; faith of Hesinde; meditation and consciousness of the self

Peraine (Per.) [April]

- 1 Peraine Festival of Seeds; mainly in rural areas; important holiday of the church of Peraine, blessing of the fields and ritual sowings
- 4 Peraine Day of Thalionmel; western Aventuria, esp. Neetha; holiday of the church of Rondra, believers dip their weapons into the river Chabab, where St. Thalionmel died defending Neetha against the infidel Novadis
- 7–12 Peraine Annual convention of bards; alternating between Honeyngton, Norcastle, Bethana and Zorgan; competitions and performances
- 18 Peraine Second Rastullahellah; Novadis; Loyalty, oaths that are voiced on this day are valid for one year; military shows and processions

Ingerimm (Ing.) [May]

- 1 Ingerimm Day of Fire; most important Ingerimm-holiday for the dwarfs; construction of a furnace, ritual consecration of weapons and machines; processions
- First Marketday of Ingerimm Trade Fair in Festum for one week
- 8 Ingerimm Day of Departure; mainly among dwarfs; end of the festivities that started on the 1st; ritual departure of warriors, craftsmen and miners
- 21 Ingerimm Day of Weaponsmiths; mainly in cities guild festivals, release of apprentices, important holiday of the church of Ingerimm for humans
- 22 Ingerimm Battle of Troll's Gap; Middenrealm; memorial of the Third Demon Battle

Rahja (Rah.) [June]

- 1–7 Rahja Festival of Pleasures; lands of Twelvegod faith; festivals on the roads; processions with all fathomable joys of Rahja, election of the Lover of the Goddess

Nameless

- 1 Nameless Third Rastullahellah; Novadis; Day of Revenge

form in celestial bodies and constellations. Every one of them is attached to a subsphere. The Mystery of Kha, the ancient pact of the celestials, lays down one common axis of rotation for all the subspheres, but their rotational time still varies.

Next to this rather complex view of the world, there are countless other religions and theories that often grasp only a tiny part of the truth. It cannot be denied that astrologers succeeded in drawing accurate maps of the movement of the stars, but they were never able to figure out the precise course of the constellations, as they always shift their position towards each other. Additionally, maps drawn by the greatest sages of Aventuria lost their accuracy during the recent Spherequakes and the Third Demon Battle. Apparently, this event triggered changes in the rotational times and courses of the celestial bodies. For this reason, all astronomical knowledge might need to be retouched in the near future.

THE COURSE OF THE SUN

The most important part of the sky is dominated by the course of the sun and the twelve constellations. This Circle of the Sun, also known as the Circle of Twelve, needs one year for one complete rotation. Each month, a different constellation is on top of the circle. The plane the constellations move in is not parallel to Ethra; it diverges slightly to the south. The Circle presumably rotates around a diverging axis, which is fixed by the North Star and an invisible southern spot below the horizon.

The day the sun reaches its highest point at noon is called summer solstice (1 Pra); the lowest point is reached on the day of the winter solstice (1 Fir).

THE CIRCLE OF TWELVE

The Circle of Twelve comprises about 100 stars that form twelve constellations (the Griffin, Sword, Dolphin, Goose, Raven, Snake, Ice Bear, Lizard, Fox, Stork, Hammer and Anvil, and Steed). They are attributed to the Twelvegods; every month, the symbol of another patron-deity is at the top of the Circle. Hidden by the bright light of the sun, it cannot be seen during the day, but when night falls, the governing constellation shines in all its glory. The movement of the stars during one night is too small to notice, but during the passing of one month, the passage of each constellation through the sky becomes visible. The influence of these constellations on birth and history is incontestable. Even children can guess the order of the world by the six feral animals of winter and the six signs of cultural advancement of summer. All Hesindian texts speak of the Wall of Stars, the only defense against the cold, black void of the Netherhells below.

THE NORTH STAR

The most prominent star in the sky of Aventuria is the white glow of the North Star. It is the brightest of all stars and can be seen even at daytime, except during noon in the months

of summer. It is part of the axis all other celestial bodies revolve around. All Aventurian cultures know the directions by the light of the North Star. From the center of the continent, it hovers about two hands' breadth above the horizon.

Since the era of Rohal, bards and magicians call it the Star of Los, while even older texts use the term Polar Star. Thorwalians use the Star of Ifirn to navigate their ships through storms, night and fog. Nivese perceive it as the reproachful Eye of Liska. Tulamidians and Novadis call it Al'Khashema (the "Star of Shelters"), a name that could hail from ancient stories speaking of Kha, the Diamond Turtle. Maraskani see Rur hurling the Ethran Disk towards his brother Gyor, the Catcher, whose star remains hidden somewhere beyond the southern horizon. The Mohans see the light shining from Kamaluq's Hut. The language of the dwarfs speaks of Agam Bragab ("Shiny Apple"), the first of all diamonds. Elves use the term Dha, which means both "reliable" and "trustworthy." Many scholars tend to classify sentient races by their ability to perceive the North Star and its peculiarities, such as orks, goblins, trolls and ogres.

THE NORTHERN SKY

The northern sky comprises all stars whose courses lie between the Circle of Twelve and the North Star. While all these stars rise north of this line, the curvature of the sky leads the most southern stars to a zenith above the Aventurian south. In astrological terms, the northern constellations are attributed to the virtues of trade. Well-known constellations are the Hound, Hero, Dragon, Emperor's Star, Elvenstar, the Antlers, Ogre's Cross and Uthar.

THE SOUTHERN SKY

The second half of the sky stretches between the Circle of Twelve and an imaginative counterpart of the Star of Los. Due to the curvature of the axis, it is smaller than the northern sky, and its stars are harder to see. In astrological terms, the southern constellations (prominent are: the Boat, the Rings, the Harp, the Dagger, the Rubies, Satinav, the Goblet and the Unknowable) are linked to inner virtues.

MADA'S MARK

Next to the sun, the moon is the second largest celestial body. But, unlike the sun, Mada's Mark does not rise in one fixed line, but strays from it in complex cycles. For this reason, its zenith sometimes lies above the southern islands, but mostly somewhere above Aventuria, with its northernmost reaches somewhere in the area around the Misty Peaks.

Mada's Mark is primarily found in the northern sky. For this reason, the term "midnight" can mean the same as "north." Using the distance between the course of the sun and Mada's Mark, some astronomers try to measure the present power of the Nameless One or the Netherhells. If Mada's Mark strays closer to the divine Circle of Twelve, the dark forces are weak, but if it moves towards Uthar's Portal or Satinav, respectively, destruction reigns freely. Approaches to the Ogre's Cross in the North are linked to forces of nature and monsters, while southern positions are believed to foretell arcane catastrophes.

CALENDARS AND HOLIDAYS

The second peculiarity of Mada's Mark is the phases of the moon, constantly waxing and waning. During one week, a small crescent appears on the lower end, followed by the lower (Chalice) and the upper half of the disk (Wheel, full moon). After that, the lower half diminishes to a thin crescent (Helmet) before disappearing (new moon or Phase of Mada Dead and Reborn). A few days later, a new crescent appears, forming the beginning of a new chalice.

This impressive spectacle might have lead to the first steps towards accurate chronology: all native Aventurian cultures—Nivese, Tulamidians, Mohans, elves, dwarfs, goblins and orks—know the phases of the moon (one week) and the moon's orbit as a means of measuring time (28 days, not one month). Eager to harmonize chronology with the Circle of Twelve, settlers from Gyldenland replaced the moon with the month (30 days).

Mada's Mark appears as an uneven disk or ball. According to common belief, it is a giant topaz created by Praios to imprison Mada's mind. The Nivese view it as a silver plate carrying the murdered whelps of the celestial she-wolf Liska. Regardless of their individual views, almost all cultures perceive the moon as a memorial of some sort, be it the first murder of wolves or the crime of Hesinde's daughter, who bestowed the gift of magic onto mankind.

THE PLANETS

The eight known planets (Horas, Ucuri, Simia, Kor, Nandus, Aves, Marbo, Levthan) can be discerned by their luminosity (three of them shine even brighter than the North Star), but also by their exceedingly confusing courses, though some astrologers claim them to be perfectly logical. Mostly, the planets cross the constellations on straight or slightly curved paths, sometimes changing their speed and suddenly performing so-called epicycles, moving in circles or in opposite directions. It is the seemingly free-willed course of the planets that makes them so interesting to Aventurian astrologers.

Through the Goldenrock Telescope, the planets appear as spherical figures of bright light (a theory concerning this phenomenon is currently being tested by the Hall of Wisdom). Attempted observations using Dark Eyes could not provide hard facts. Guessing from ancient documents, there could have been more than eight planets in the past. The signs in the Draconian Room of Spheres in the Wall of Rashdul even picture twelve planets.

Masters of astronomy can calculate the position of one or more planets up to one month in advance (during this time, the

position of the constellations also changes considerably). With Rohal's help, the famous Niobara is said to have succeeded in drawing a horoscope for the movement of the planets which remained valid for 58 days. Even the greatest scholars were and are still not able to provide any forecasts exceeding this period.

Ancient documents also mention a group of shiny pieces that may yet be discovered. Said texts claim that the dragon Fuldigor named them Mahrya and linked them to the virtue of sacrifice. Are they an unknown godlike being, a shattered planet or the meaningful relict of an era long forgotten?

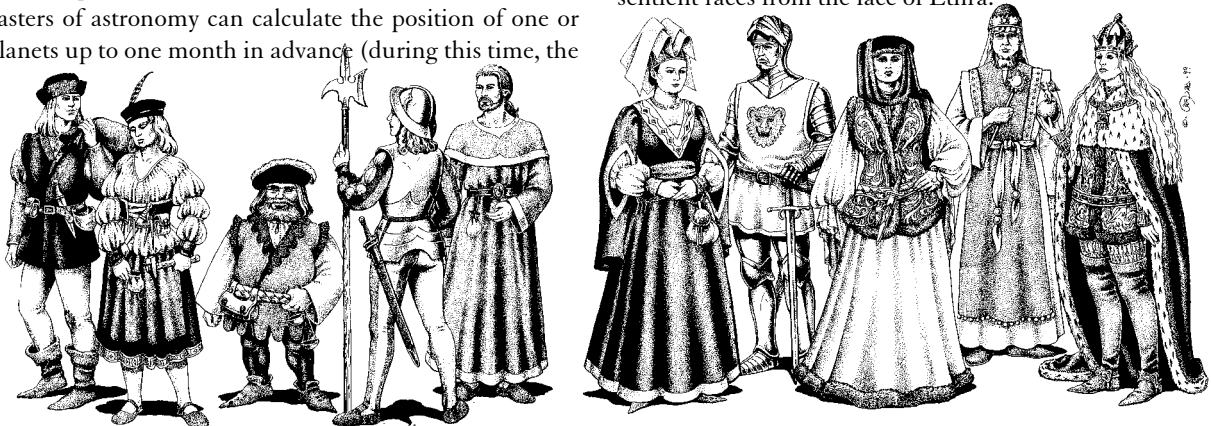
STARDUST AND COMETS

Next to planets and constellations, the Aventurian sky is dotted with a countless number of hardly visible stars and celestial clouds. No mortal knows all the celestial lights between and even inside the constellations. From time to time, one of them falls down to Ethra as a meteor, possibly forming another Dark Eye, a meteorite (also called "Shard of the Wall of Stars" or "Spark from Angrosh's Anvil") or a shooting star, granting wishes and gifts by the hand of Phex. Sometimes, even new stars appear in the sky. Are they heroes made immortal by the supreme will of the gods, loot gathered by Phex or the eyes of infant Celestial Wolves? The elves claim that stars are born and die like every living being. Could they be right?

An equally unusual sight are comets crossing the sky in a few days, hours or even shorter periods. Sometimes, they are called lion stars or dragon tongues. According to old tomes, comets like Al'Nazir be'Rashtul, the Bosparan Comet or Al'Turum Zhamorraai even return after fixed periods of time.

ECLIPSES

Unexpected solar or lunar eclipses (unlike the more or less regular ones) are terrifying to Aventurians, violating the most basic of natural laws. These eclipses always involve supernatural interference, the actions of the Nameless One, demons or celestial powers. The time of the three Demon Battles has seen solar eclipses casting black, green or red light on the battlefield. Sages and deonts explain these phenomena with demons crawling out of Limbo or the gathering of malevolent forces. Legends from the Dark Ages speak of the blackening of Praios' Disk. During the Nameless Age, the sun was said to have been veiled for thirteen years, a phenomenon that almost wiped all sentient races from the face of Ethra.



AVENTURIAN SUPERSTITION AND FORTUNE TELLING

This chapter should help clarify what Superstition means to both players and heroes within the game setting. To players, Superstition is a flaw noted down on their character sheet, offering points and helping to learn more about the hero's personality. To Aventurian heroes, though, there is no superstition as we understand it. In Aventuria, divine and arcane phenomena are real.

Believing in miracles and magic is not superstition, but a willingness to accept Aventurian reality. A hero with Superstition is even more aware of these phenomena and explains to what extent he heeds traditions, ghost stories and intuitive thoughts, or whether he clings to more tangible facts and reason. Regardless, to him, a realization gained from superstition will be just as plausible and logical as Hesindian science.

Remarkably, superstitious natures are more susceptible to magic. Opening their minds to the supernatural by their thoughts and actions, superstitious Aventurians almost seem to hurl themselves into the effects of Heptessence, while knowledgeable people recognize the true nature of things, being able to face them more effectively.

For players, it is hard to differentiate hidden knowledge from superstitious beliefs. In superstition, there always is a spark of truth; in Aventuria this is especially true, even if the hidden truths behind a superstitious warning can be hard to read. Nevertheless, completely absurd traditions also are widely spread. Mostly, the inventors of these traditions only intended to mollify fate and protect themselves from harm.

Innumerable superstitious beliefs exist on Ethra; even the superstitions relevant for the players' heroes are far more extensive than these pages could possibly contain. What your hero believes depends on his place of birth, his parents, his education and the experiences he had in his life. View an existing Superstition score as a means to measure how strongly your hero clings to his superstitious beliefs and his willingness to accept even the most insane of superstitious customs. It is your task to decide which superstitious beliefs your hero heeds.

In addition, a Superstition score expresses his susceptibility towards the supernatural. As an example, a Thorwalian with high Superstition traveling a demonic frozen desert will not wait for cats, floods, half-elves or gnomes showing up to play out his superstitious tendencies. His surroundings will shake him to the core; there is no way for him to remain totally calm.

FETISHES, TALISMANS AND CHARMS

These things are supposed to bring good luck and drive off bad luck, to heighten the abilities of their bearer or to make up for his weaknesses. In Aventuria, some pieces of jewelry

are believed to contain magical potential—pendants, earrings, rings or brooches. In Nivese, Tulamidian and Mohan cultures, talismans that consist of many pieces and that have been put together by a friend without the knowledge of its bearer are believed to be especially potent.

Religious or arcane symbols can be used in the process—small animal statues, pieces of living creatures (like hair from the mane of a lion), a foxtail (an all-time favorite) or the mummified hand of a kobold (which, in truth, mostly stems from a small monkey). Relics—(reputed) mortal remains of saints or pieces of holy artifacts kept in small boxes or bags—are extremely popular with the average churchgoer but less so with the churches themselves. This is not because the churches forbid venerating these things, but because the black markets of Almada, the Horasrealm and the regions close to the Dark Lands are running rampant with false relics.

Not only the shape or the images of charms are meaningful, but the materials they are made from are also chosen with equal care. Gold or amber is used to form an Eye of Praios, which protects its bearer from injustice and lies; dark onyx, the stone of Hesinde, depicts the closed Dark Eye that drives off demons; wood from an apple tree is carved into the shape of small stork statues that are supposed to offer healing through the blessing of Peraine.

HAIRSTYLES, TATTOOS AND LULOA-PAINTINGS

Not only is hair color subject to superstition—everybody knows that all red-haired people are witches and tend to be aggressive, dishonest and malevolent—but also the way people wear their hair or beards. Many Aventurian cultures attribute different meanings to the way the hair is braided or if it is covered with a hat or cap, and whether the number of braids in a man's beard is even or uneven. This is not only a question of social standing; everybody knows that kobolds are sometimes caught in a young man's or woman's uncovered or unbraided hair, seducing them to perform immoral acts.

Thorwalian tattoos are intended to not only adorn the body, but also to protect their bearer. Of course, how much a Thorwalian's tattoos are supposed to adorn or protect depends on the superstitious tendency of the individual, but at least the sign of his otta can always be found on his skin. The signs and pictures of Luloa, a way of adorning the skin with permanent colors invented by the Forest People, have both ritual and superstitious meanings, as they are believed to protect from bad luck, the evil eye and curses.

MAGIC NUMBERS AND SYMBOLS

Stylized emblems of gods, letters resembling the arcane language Zhayad or ancient runes whose meanings have already been lost to the mists of time are often used as symbols. To the superstitious Thorwalians, circles are believed to protect lives, while spirals depict death. On the contrary, the spiral means life to Albernians, but the circle of Praios is also believed to offer protection.

These symbols adorn rune stones used for fortune telling and amulets. People carve them into their possessions, brand their livestock or draw them into the air with their bare hands to dispel magic or bad luck.

The numbers 3, 7 and 12 are lucky numbers in the Middenrealm; 6 and 12 are said to be perfect numbers. It is not just adherents to the faith of the Twelvegods that take 13 for an evil number; many Aventurians treat the number as Nameless and refuse to utter it. An exception is the Novadis, who take 13 for a lucky number and believe that 12 is a symbol for bad luck.

The Tulamidians believe in the magic number 5, the elemental number 6, the demonic number 7, the holy number 9, the powerful number 12 and the lucky number 13, always trying to relate even higher numbers (the bells on a dancer's dress, the price of a Shadif stallion) to them through multiplication. 2 is believed to be the pure expression of perfection, a very powerful number able to bring both good and bad luck. Many Tulamidians tend to make mistakes twice, trying to make up for the first time.

The dwarfs are masters of numerology, making contact to divine powers and calculating all aspects of the world.

ANIMALS, PLANTS AND STRANGE CREATURES

An Aventurian's knowledge of the rules governing his world is very limited in most cases. He does not know about the anatomic structure of cat's eyes, but he sees them glow at night and notices that a cat does not trip in the dark. It is not unlikely that the superstitious belief of cats being able to see in the dark and look into the very souls of humans by the light in their eyes hails from this observation. In addition, every wise Aventurian knows that witches keep cats as familiars, that elves speak to them and order them to carry messages to their loved ones and that cats in heat concentrate the power of the earth in their bodies, making it possible for humans to use it by stroking them. Similar beliefs concern ravens (which are regarded as witches' animals or Boron's messengers), toads, snakes and even fleas, which always find itchy places to scratch.

Potent plants are the plants linked to deities, such as Peraine's garlic. Ebony grows where dwarfs lost their gold. Mandrake grows under trees that have witnessed a murder. The mandrake draws its magic from the hate that lead to this dreadful deed, but if the murderer pulls it out of the earth, it has to serve him. Another superstitious belief states that exceptionally big and strong plants are enchanted humans or elves; for this reason, they must not be harmed.

There also are innumerable explanations for the miraculous powers attributed to certain creatures, such as healing herbs,

poisonous plants or magical beasts. Thrashbeard grows where a dwarf died by magic. Kobolds hiding in mines change precious silver into worthless metal. Whoever touches a unicorn will attain immortality.

RITES OF BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

Of course, Aventurians also cherish the moments able to change their lives profoundly. At birth a parent or other close relative says a prayer of thanks or help to Tsa, and Boron's name is called on when a loved one dies. Tsa and Ingerimm deserve special sacrifices during the building of a new house, as do Tsa and Efferd at the launching of a ship, Aves before the beginning and Travia after the ending of a long journey.

Moreover, there are different rules to be followed in order to placate fate. Bad luck can be avoided by crossing borders, thresholds and portals right foot first. Stepping over the line that marks a future wall of a newly built house creates a "kobold portal." A dead person's mouth has to be opened so that the soul can find her way home (Forest People). A dead person's mouth has to be closed with a piece of cloth so that his spirit cannot rise as a restless ghost (Middenrealm).

CULTURAL SUPERSTITIONS

As mentioned above, an Aventurian's superstitious beliefs strongly depend on his people and the country he was born in. Everything important to a certain people is deeply rooted in their superstition: Thorwalians attribute special meaning to the weather and the sea; Nivese superstition is strongly linked to their worship of wolves; the Novadis venerate the animals of the desert, especially birds and their flight. Elves know *badoc*, which disturbs one of their most precious values, the harmony of the soul, and the Forest People fear all things taboo.

Dwarfs are, perhaps because of their deep mistrust towards all things magic, one of the most superstitious people of Aventuria. "He who washes Mother Earth off his skin will be washed off Her skin in turn! Grolms are dwarf children abducted by gnomes and disfigured by magic. He who feels the ground shake without all others noticing will die soon"—all these sayings are accurate examples of dwarf superstition.

FORTUNE TELLING

It does not matter if an Aventurian believes that his future lies in the hands of the gods or that it is shaped by his own deeds—gazing into the future will never be possible for him. Few Aventurians claim to be able to tell the future or to be knowledgeable in the art of prophecy. Even rarer is the fortune teller who really knows how to part the mists of time.

Characters with a desire to know their fates should not waste their breath on charlatans. These "soothsayers" rely on wits and sweet words, foretelling a glorious future to young heroines and a beautiful and brave maiden to handsome peasant boys. Of course, these common fortune tellers cannot be expected to tell the truth—prophecies of pain and sorrow do not fill one's purse or draw new customers into the fortune teller's tent, regardless of how

brooding and mysterious it looks. People celebrating at fairs do not search for answers to their most urgent questions, but rather the exotic flair of glittering glass spheres, colorful Inrah cards and the excitement of the mysterious.

Astrology is another means of trying to foresee the actions of the hand of fate, using the progress of the planets and the stars through the sky to prophesy the forthcoming. It is a 'scientific' form of prophecy and can mostly be found in places adhering to the Hesindian faith—in the temples of the goddess, in magic academies and in the towers of magicians.

The heroes will often be confronted with the art of prophecy in the form of talented mountebanks, clear-sighted witches or shamans. It is an individual talent, depending on the aptitude and the (often very) personal teacher of the fortune teller.

Although tradition mostly dictates the objects or natural phenomena used for prophecy, the exact way the fortune teller performs his task varies individually. A very gifted fortune teller will, from time to time, know the true meaning of seemingly accidental events—a bird's cry, a sudden gust of wind, etc. Mostly, prophecies rely on means which are (at least in common belief) linked to divine or magical powers. A great number of professional fortune tellers tend to specialize in three or fewer means of prophecy, truly excelling in only one of them. Adventurians trying to tell the future on a more casual basis—which is certainly true for your hero—usually are limited to one way of prophecy.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF FORTUNE TELLING

Observing the forms and intensity of hand lines, the art of hand reading is widely known, as hands are both an instantly available and very individual means to tell the future. Talented charlatans are also very successful with hand reading, as calluses, dirt or jewelry on a customer's hand can tell much about him.

Another possibility is the art of the Tulamides to read a person's eyes, observing the tiny veins, the pattern of the iris, the color of the eyeball and the wrinkles on the lid. Both kinds of fortune telling can give information about the nature and the future of a given person, but cannot provide universal prophecies. This is also true for drink reading, which is very common in southern Aventuria and concentrates on the patterns of tea leaves or wine spices remaining inside the drinking vessel.

Prophecies from a crystal sphere sprang from the legends surrounding the rare Dark Eyes. Very few spheres—the crystal balls of the true illusionists and the cristallomancers of the lizardfolk—are more than a precious masterpiece of craftsmanship, but the reflections of the light inside the sphere can be a viable means to assist in meditation. Additionally, they are the most common tool of charlatans.

The behavior of animals is interpreted in various ways. The Novadis rely on the flight of birds, while followers of Travia



closely observe the behavior of their geese. The predictions gained from this mostly concern a given region or temple.

Far more complex is the art of dream interpretation. Mostly, only deonts of the Twelvogods are able to perform it successfully. The Bishdarelite branch of the Church of Boron and the Noionites, an order associated to the cult, are the true masters of this art. Witches and shamans also have access to this method, but they have a harder time telling true dreams sent by the Twelvogods apart from the nightmares sent by the archdemonic counterparts of Boron and Hesinde—or from profane dreams.

Runecasting is closely related to bonecasting. Sometimes, the bones used by a shaman are also carved with symbols resembling runes. Runecasting can be subject to very different rules. Thorwalian runes are only carved on one side, while druidic runes use both sides. On top of that, there are many alphabets which vary greatly regarding the number of their letters.

Many fortune tellers cast all runes available; others cast a random number, and few choose the runes by chance. Some cast them on an empty surface, others draw stars with five or six tips or use a special cloth. Many only interpret the runes that fall around a central spot, while others spend hours observing the position of each and every rune, the relation to other runes and the meaning of runes overlapping each other. If bones are used instead of runes, it generally is the geometric structure that is being used for clairvoyant prophecies. There are very few shamans who are able to interpret the position of individual bones.

Inrah cards are most common among mountebanks, both for charlatanry and for real fortune telling. Thanks to the invention of printing, almost every traveling group of mountebanks owns one or two decks and has at least one person familiar with interpreting them. Nevertheless, many fortune tellers prefer hand-drawn cards fixed onto thin wooden plates.

Inrah was first mentioned in Thalusa over 500 years ago. The motifs depict a fusion of many peoples' legends. These often gaily colored cards depict the thirteen known gods, the eight planets (demigods) and Mada's Mark, Sumu and Los, symbols of life and death, signs from day-to-day life (the Sultan/the Emperor, the Bull or the Bread) and, in the Khôm Desert, Rastullah and Rur and Gyor on the island of Maraskan.

These 49 cards form the occult part of the game, the so-called symbol cards. The profane part consists of the 72 trump or elemental cards in the lines of the six elements, with the picture cards of the Prince, the Magician, the Fortune Teller, the Knight and the Squire and the number cards from ace to seven.

Prophecies using Inrah cards employ a variety of different methods. The most common formation is the Tree, which consists of 12 cards, but the small and the large Wheel of Fate are also applied. If the master of Inrah does not wish to see the future itself but seeks help with a difficult decision, he uses the Star instead.

PLAGUES AND DISEASES

"What, brothers and sisters, do we know about the will of the Goddess? Are we in the position to determine who rightfully carries the burden of an illness and who does not? Who shall we help? Thus it is written: thou shalt help one ill person for all ill people, and all ill people for one ill person!"

— From a passionate speech of Brother Jodewin, a deont of Peraine from Perricum, in the year 71 b.H. on the epidemic of Zorganpox of that time

The air of Aventuria is said to have healing effects of its own—an it is true that plague and pestilence have had significantly less effect on Aventurian (compared to, say, European) history. But still there are illnesses in Aventuria, filling the whole spectrum from simple nuisances to deadly epidemics. Some may be caused by poor hygiene, some by animal bites or parasites, while the most dangerous are thought to be possessions by demons or even godly curses.

The following chapter provides a short overview of Aventurian illnesses, their use in the game as well as rules for handling them. See *The Dark Eye Basic Rules*, p. 88 for the Treat Disease talent.

HEALER HEROES

Even though every character can employ the talent Treat Diseases, only characters with training can treat diseases effectively. As a Highlord, you can apply difficulty decreases for test made by professional healers. A trained person is someone who has professionally worked with different kinds of illnesses (also wounds, poisoning and mental conditions). Hence, the character professions of barber-surgeon, apothecary, medical scholar, physician, magician (if from an academy that focuses on healing), witch (if toad is the familiar), geode (servant of Sumu), Zibilja, and deont of Peraine, as well as members of the healing orders, like the Therbûnites or the Anconites can be considered "professionals." This is also true for heroes with a TP of 10+ in three healing talents.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

In order to recognize and to treat a disease, the hero has to make two Treat Disease tests. The healer can take both tests to heal himself, which may be more difficult than treating another person.

A diagnosis can be made by succeeding at a simple test with no difficulty increase (but see below for lingering diseases). Success at this test grants all knowledge of the methods given under treatment and remedies; a failure means that the healer cannot diagnose the disease; a spectacular failure means that the diagnosis is wrong. The latter may cause additional damage to the patient, if the Highlord chooses. A diagnosis takes one game turn, three game turns for lingering diseases.

Given that the necessary aids are available, a second test (taking half an hour) determines if the treatment is successful. The difficulty increase always equals at least the level of the

disease, even if there are extenuating circumstances (like environment (appropriate or not), hygiene (good or poor), missing or improvised aids, treatment in a good sanatorium, etc.) modifying the test. If this test is successful, the patient receives as many VP as the healer has unused talent points left.

A day later (and every day after that) a consecutive test (taking half an hour) can be made, with a difficulty increase of one-half a level. Unspent talent points raise the VP (of course, only those lost to the disease).

A failure of the second test means that the patient does not regain any extra VP and still has to cope with the disease; a failure in one of the consecutive tests means the healing stops and the patient suffers D6 DP extra. Unsuccessful tests cannot be attempted again the same day. Several daily treatments (even if performed by different healers) have no additional effects.

REGENERATION AND NATURAL HEALING

All diseases are the same in that the hero cannot regain vitality points or remove exhaustion points naturally for the duration of the disease (spellcasters regain one ASP per night). Instead, the patient regains as many VP as the healer has unused talent points left from his treatment test (see above).

The diseased can roll CN (difficulty increase of the level of the disease) once per damage roll to halve the damage effects. If the test succeeds by an additional +10, no damage is taken with this roll / this day. This CN roll is modified by circumstances (e.g. Resistance to Disease, Prone to Illness).

The damage of a disease should be evenly distributed over a day. Unless otherwise stated in the description of a given illness, natural regeneration starts after recovery.

MAGICAL HEALING

For treatments with spells, the disease level is generally used as difficulty increase. Note that general healing spells (*balm of healing*, *witch's spit*) do give the patient vitality points, but do *not* cause recovery. Only special healing spells (such as a reversed *curse of pestilence*) are able to remove the disease. The *rest, body and mind* spell allows the patient to roll CN with a difficulty decrease of $SP^*/2$. The healing effect of *hibernate like bear* stops all diseases of a level up to SP^* for the duration of the spell, stronger illnesses are slowed down ten times. The use of healing herbs that have previously been charged by *elixirs of sumu* should result in a corresponding difficulty decrease of the treatment test. *Reckon pestilence* (difficulty increase of 1/3 level) can be substituted for the first Treat Disease test. A successful *band of pain* makes the spellcaster take the first damage roll without having the chance to reduce it with a CN roll. Diseases caused by still-active Hektabeli (sickness demons) can be cured by applying the *penatgramma* or *revert invocatio maior* exorcisms.

DIVINE INFLUENCE

The deonts of Peraine have taken the role of disease fighters (because many diseases are believed to be caused by Peraine's adversary, Mishkara). Miraculous healing caused by deonts of Peraine (or of the Therbûnite order) is therefore not a rarity. This can be done applying miracles (raising the Treat Disease TP of the deont) or special liturgies. In the latter case, demonic influence inflicts a difficulty increase according to the level of the disease.

Other than Peraine-deonts and their respective orders, servants of Travia, Boron, Hesinde, Tsa and Rahja should also be able to cause the necessary miracles or perform said liturgies (deonts of Boron and Rahja are specialized in the treatment of addictions).

Direct intervention of the Goddess is not unheard of (in legends and lectures), though the chances of such happening during gameplay should be rare and preceded only by an appropriately complex adventure.

AVENTURIAN DISEASES

On the following pages you will find a list of common Aventurian diseases.

TERMS

Most terms are self-explanatory; the following rules cover the majority:

Duration: incubation time / actual duration of sickness (or until premature healing or death).

Cause: standard causes for this infection. Contact means touch, proximity means arm's length, nursing means prolonged proximity. Remember: 5% equals one point on D20. If ever a cause is present, heroes can roll CN with a difficulty increase of one-half of the level of the disease (be sure to include Resistance to Disease, lowered CN due to overexertion and so forth); if successful, the hero is unaffected. In especially dangerous areas or following direct contact, rolls should be made once per day; prolonged exposition to the disease should increase the difficulty. The probabilities of infection can be converted to DIs as follows: 5%: -2, 10%: -1, 15%: +/-0, 20%: +1, etc.

Treatment: All manner of tending to the patient without applying special herbs or brews, along with any damage reductions. Identification of the disease and knowledge of treatment (Treat Disease test) is necessary. *Rest* means no exertions: no hiking, climbing or combat; *bed rest* requires

patience, warm blankets and a weatherproof resting place. Any damage reductions due to medication are applied to the damage reduction of the CN roll (reduce, then halve).

Level: This is both the severity of the disease (see above) as well as the chance to know the sickness (Treat Disease test): If a D follows the level, a lingering disease is hard to discern (difficulty increase of one-half level)

ADDITIONAL NOTES

First, if the disease is not a central part of the adventure or an important, signifying a role-played event for the hero, the Highlord should usually not follow all of the dice-intensive procedures but rather use general judgment.

Second, we ask you to think carefully about the inclusion of diseases in your game. Many players are deterred by such a realistic style of play. It is not much fun to role-play diseases. If there is a physician in the group, though, he should not be unemployed throughout his life, even if he only works his art on NPCs.

CHILDREN'S DISEASES AND HARMLESS SICKNESSES

There are many sicknesses that may be noteworthy in everyday life of common Aventurians, but are merely a minor annoyance to most heroes.

Adult Aventurians have usually survived all of the (highly contagious) children's diseases, such as crimson (level 2D), gooseblains (level 1), autumnpox (level 3D) or redcheek (level 2) and are usually immune to them. It seldom happens that these illnesses reappear during adulthood, but are usually over after a few days in bed (duration: level days, damage: level points of exhaustion per day; effects doubled if not resting). They usually do not cause noticeable damage and the fever accompanying them can be treated everywhere. For orks and goblins, human children's diseases are much more severe, often deadly (crimson and autumnpox: level tripled, contagious on 25% if sick person is near, damage D6+2 DP / day, duration D6 plus tripled level days).

Simple illnesses such as dripnose (level 1), the bowelflow/ swift difar (level 2) or the grassa (level 3) usually cause a lowered endurance and strength without any noteworthy loss of vitality points (duration: D3 plus level days, damage: D3 plus level DP per day, level times D3 points of exhaustion per day). Strenuous hikes, combat and drunk nights are not advisable during the sickness (duration doubled, Highlord's choice). These sicknesses are only seldom treated, and even then only with household remedies.

COMMON DISEASES

BATTLEFIELD FEVER (ALSO JAUNDICE OR SEVEN DAY FEVER)

Symptoms: Constantly rising fever accompanied by strong body pain and sudden cramps. After seven days either less fever or yellowish lips, the latter signifying death in a short while. If the patient survives, the negative effects recover within two days.

Duration: 3 days/7 days

Damage and Consequences: 1D, 1D+1, 1D+2, etc. DP plus 1, 2, 3 etc. points exhaustion on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd day and so on. ST, AV and PV drop 5 points. On seventh day possible death by jaundice (20%), with D6, 2D6, 3D6, etc. DP in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. hour. Sometimes a *yearly fever* occurs as a late effect.

Cause: Bite of scavengers or touch of their excrements (10%), damage by ghouls (15%), nursing a diseased (5%)

Peculiarities: Elves suffer seriously from this illness (+1D DP per day, death by jaundice 30%)

Treatment: Bedrest and general fever treatment (1DP less per day), plentiful lukewarm drinks (danger of death by jaundice lowered by 10%)

Remedies: Alcoholic potion made from yoruga and golmoon (prevent death by jaundice). Daily use of thrashbeard ointment on the diseased (prevents yearly fever).

Level: 6 / 8 (elves)

PLAGUES AND DISEASES

BLACK FURY

Symptoms: Similar to rabies, but lower fever and more rage. An enormous use of power can be observed during the first three days. Additionally, black scales appear all over the body, which are also called black spots or fury spots.

Duration: D20 times 10 days/2D+6 days

Damage and Consequences: Fits of rage (10%, hourly chance). ST is doubled during such a fit. Otherwise like rabies, but only 2D+4 DP from the third day on. Recovery like rabies, the scales recede slowly over the course of four weeks, until then appearance is reduced to *ugly*. Appearance lowered by one level if spots remain (25%).

Cause: Getting bitten by a person with black fury (80%), nursing someone who fell ill of rabies (10%).

Peculiarities, Treatment, Remedies: Like rabies.

Level: 10 (S during incubation period)

Bloody Snot

Symptoms: Mucous membranes in mouth and throat swell and secrete red-brown slime, coughing, low fever

Duration: 3 days/D6+6 days

Damage and Consequences: D3+1 DP plus 1 point exhaustion per day; ST, AG, AV and PV -2 points each; danger to fall ill with Blue Wheeze (20%).

Cause: Long stay in the rainforest (20%), proximity to a sick person (30%), leaves and branches of the rainforest sometimes carry the contagion (5%, 10% if touched)

Treatment: Rest in bed (duration -D6 days, danger of aftereffects lowered by 10%)

Remedies: Only Moha-shamans know of it, and they keep it a good secret

Level: 3D (for Forest People: 3)

BLUE WHEEZE

Symptoms: Strong pain in the thorax, medium fever, restless sleep, feeling short of breath; from the second day, coughing and wheezing with blue-violet phlegm. Pale, slightly blue facial color and blue tongue, blue lips in the course of the following days. Increasing weariness over several weeks up to total enfeeblement. Once the victim is greatly weakened, it can be deadly within hours, usually with dropping fever and euphoria, later sudden sweats, vomiting, extreme feeling of oppression and tachycardia. Sometimes sudden recovery in the course of the disease.

Duration: 1 day/usually 7-21 days, sometimes longer

Damage and Consequences: ST, CN, DE, AG, AV and PV quickly halved on first day, from the fourth day on loss of one point each every four days. If CN drops to 1, patient loses one point CN permanently after recovering. If CN is at zero, death occurs within D6-1 hours. Per day 1D+1 DP; every 5 days

additional loss of one permanent VP. From the third day on chance of sudden recovery (5% per day). Then the fever ceases and the facial color usually regenerates after three days of tranquil sleep. (DP decrease by 2/4/6 on 1st/2nd/3rd following day). Then the patient regains 1 point of AG, DE and combat values, as well as 1 point of ST per day.

Cause: Falling ill of dullskull or bloody snot (see above), nursing someone who fell ill of blue wheeze, bloody snot or dullskull (5%)

Treatment: No hiking or combat (1 DP less per day, probability of recovery from the 3rd day on 10% per day), full rest in bed (2 DP less per day, 25% probability of recovery from the 3rd day on)

Remedies: None known. Preparations made from sansaro and olginroot give strength and delay weariness (CN reduction every 5 days)

Level: 9

BRABAK SWEAT (SWAMP FEVER)

Symptoms: Hallucinations, panic and fear at onset, followed by an extensive doze with fevers of varying strength a few hours later. The fevers are highest on the third day and then wane. The diseased is unconscious most of the time, but has some periods of consciousness.

Duration: 1 day/5 days

Damage and Consequences: 1D6 DP on the 1st day, 2D6 DP on the 2nd day, 3D6 DP on the 3rd day, etc. negative attributes (if applicable) tripled, while CO drops to zero. Possible lasting damage (10%, one roll for each possible effect), lasting fears (permanent increase of negative attributes by D6, maximum 2 attributes). After awakening, the diseased is totally weary and apathetic, but fully recovers within a day (including all effects). Most victims will never forget their dreams during this disease.

Cause: Bites of swamp animals (5%), mosquito bites (10%), nursing a diseased (5%)

Peculiarities: One can only fall ill of swamp fever once in a lifetime. (Exception: Mohas, who are immune to this disease.)

Treatment: Bedrest and general fever treatment, for example employing thrashbeard (1 DP less per day), golmoon tea, professional psychological care after the disease, Treat Psyche with a difficulty increase of the highest negative attribute value to prevent a lasting trauma.

Remedies: Chew fresh or dried donf-stems (duration -2 days, faster recovery, fears only with 5% chance)

Level: 4/7

DULLSKULL (HEAVY HEAD)

Symptoms: Tiredness, faintness, weakness, headaches, low to medium fever, seldom high fever (5%), coughing, sore throat, runny nose, sometimes dizziness of varying severity (50%, on rolling 20 on D20, short-time unconsciousness)

Duration: 2 days/D3+4 days

Damage and Consequences: D6-1 DP and 1 point of exhaustion per day. IN, CH -1 each. AG, CN, AV, PA -2 each, ST -4. Severe fever means additional 2D6 DP. Danger to fall ill with Blue Wheeze (5% per day).

Cause: Lack of sleep (20%), proximity to a sick person (20%), no appropriate clothes in spring or fall (10%), excessive lying in a Praios or Hesinde temple (20%, curse)

Peculiarities: Dwarfs who are ill of dullskull become totally intolerable and have a tendency for fits of rage (violent temper +5)

Treatment: General rest (duration -2 days), bedrest (duration -2 additional days)

Remedies: Many household remedies, thrashbeard (1 DP less per day, with rest in bed duration -1 additional day)

Level: 4

EFFERD'S SYNDROME (DUNGEON SYNDROME)

Symptoms: Insidious illness that is accompanied by clouded senses. The diseased feels exhausted and suffers light fever, followed by clouded vision and later even hallucinations.

Duration: Usually until reaching land or being freed

Damage and consequences: ST and CN are halved over the course of the disease. Per day the patient suffers D6-1 DP and 1 point exhaustion; additionally (25%) Perception is lowered by D6, AG and DE by 1 point.

Cause: Longer sea journeys or imprisonment (at least 6 weeks, then 5% chance per week, +5% per additional week), side effect of being cursed by deonts of Efferd or Praios (20%)

Treatment: General fever treatment, prayers and conversations

Remedies: Dungeon Syndrome: Fresh sansaro lessens the effects of the disease (no effects on Perception, AG or DE), if taken daily over the course of two weeks, the disease ceases. Per fresh leaf of mermansweed taken, the probability for both illnesses is lowered by 20%.

Level: 10D

LUTANIAS

Symptoms: Strong constriction, shortage of breath, fear; the diseased feels paralyzed by fear.

Duration: 2 days, at night/2D6 days

Damage and Consequences: D6 DP per day, CO, ST, AV and PV halved; claustrophobia +2D6 points (not lowered by CN roll). It is possible to retain permanent strong claustrophobia (10%) of +1D6, which often goes along with constriction and feelings of suffocation (then 50%). After the end of the disease all values rise by one point per day.

Cause: Rat or bat bite (DP taken in %), bite of a diseased person (30%)

Treatment: Careful psychological help (Treat Psyche lowers chance of lasting damage to 5%), professional psychological help (Treat Psyche test with a DI of +5 +claustrophobia) lowers claustrophobia to normal level, no danger of a lasting trauma.

Remedies: Pollen of a lulany, administered as a potion (damage halved, duration -2 days).

Level: 5

PARALYSIS (BASILISK'S GAZE)

Symptoms: One week after infection, a slow paralysis commences, which also affects the eyes. Thus the diseased has a piercing stare, also called "basilisk's gaze." Three to five days after complete external petrification, the inner organs quickly become petrified as well and the victim dies at full consciousness. If the victim survives the disease, the petrification completely ceases within half a day.

Duration: 7 days/D6+3 days

Damage and Consequences: AG and ST drop by one point per day. Once *both* values have dropped to zero, the victim loses 2D6 VP per hour.

Cause: Demonical (Belzhorash, Thargunitoth). Touched by undead (10%), damage by undead (20%), stay within wastelands caused by a basilisk (20% per day)

Peculiarities: Whoever looks into the eyes of the diseased can temporarily be paralyzed—if a D20 roll is higher than the sum of the current AG and ST of the diseased person, the onlooker will be paralyzed (as for the *paralyze* spell) for a number of GT equal to the excess of the D20 roll over the sum of AG and ST minus RM of the person watching.

Treatment: Nonsense.

Remedies: Chew fresh preserved donfstems (stops the process of paralysis within D6 hours)

Level: 8 (D during incubation)

RABIES

Symptoms: At first pain when swallowing, then cramp-like fits of suffocation, from the third day on light to severe fever, hallucinations, often fits of rage, which occur more seldom due to increasing weariness. Usually death after sordid lingering illness from the sixth day on.

Duration: D20 times 10 days/1D6+6 days

Damage and Consequences: Fits of rage (5% chance every hour), 1D DP on the 1st, 1D+2 DP on the 2nd, 2D+2 DP on the 3rd day, then 3D+2 DP per day for another D6+3 days. Daily reduction of Perception by 3 points, ST drops by 1, 2, 3, etc. point on the 4th, 5th, 6th, etc. day. As soon as ST has reached zero, the fits of rage cease and the heart can stop beating any time (25% per day). The survivor regains 2 points of ST and 3 points of Perception per day of rest in bed after recovery. Permanent loss of 1 point of ST and D6 points of Perception.

Cause: Bite of a rabid animal (80%)

Peculiarities: One can only fall ill of rabies once. If survived, one is immune to both rabies and black fury (this is true both ways). Elves, though, cannot fall ill of either disease.

Treatment: Golmoon tea reduces damage rolls by 4 points if drunk daily after the fourth day of sickness

Remedies: None known. Taking an oily drink made of yoruga prevents the disease for D3+3 months. The speedy intake of a triple dose after a bite lowers the risk of falling ill: 100% in first week, 95% in second week, etc., down to 10%. Surviving incubation time without falling ill results in immunity from rabies (but only rabies).

Level: 10 (S during incubation period)

SLEEPING SICKNESS

Symptoms: Deep sleep of indefinite duration, heartbeat and breath are very low, the sick person can easily be mistaken for a dead person (Perception test, difficulty increase of 15)

Duration: 1 hour/indefinite. Each day there is a 10% possibility that the sick person awakes, after that recovery is quick. ST and CN then regenerate with 1 point/hour during fits of shaking.

Damage and Consequences: D6-2 DP and 1 point overexertion per day, CN and ST drop 1 per day

Cause: Magical disease. Nightly visit of a grave, disturbing a druidic ritual or witch circle, bat bites, touching undead, some parasites (10% each)

Peculiarities: Sick elves often start sleepwalking (20% per day) for D6 hours; it seems as if he is totally awake until he suddenly falls asleep again.

Treatment: Impossible. It is recommended to lay the sick person into a warm bed to prevent other diseases.

Remedies: Oil of a yagan-nut, doubles chance of awakening if applied onto the eyelids

Level: 4D

SWIFT DELUSION

Symptoms: At first hasty and hectic movements, then fierce fits of rage and tendency to violence, even towards friends. On the second day total rage, followed by coma, which is only broken by short frenzies.

Duration: 3 days/7 days

Damage and Consequences: 1D DP on the first, 2D DP on the following days. CL is halved (round up) each day; if applicable, violent temper rises by as many points as CL is lost. Frenzies with tripled ST in coma every D6 hours. Seldom (10%) permanent loss of 1 CL point. After awakening the recovering person's consciousness is slightly clouded. Per day 1 point of CL is regenerated.

Cause: Sacrilege (5%), especially if against Hesinde (20%)

Treatment: Intercession of a deont, especially of Hesinde (decided by the Highlord)

Remedies: Pollen of lulany in a solution. If given in the early stage of disease, 2 DP less per day. Otherwise halves damage of the following day and shortens disease by D2 days.

Level: 9

TRAUMATIC FEVER

Symptoms: Loss of control of speech in the beginning, progressing to totally incomprehensible words and sentences, then breaking down into a feverish, restless doze. The sick person feels weary and can only be transported on a stretcher. In the following 2 weeks, frequent but lessening fevers, increasing weariness, sometimes unconsciousness and deep sleep (if ST is at zero). After the fever is over, normal regeneration starts; the sick person regains one point of ST per day.

Duration: 1 day/2D6 days

Damage and Consequences: 2D6, 2D6-1, 2D6-2, etc. DP and loss of endurance on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd day, and so forth. Each day ST drops by 1 (not if CN roll successful).

Cause: Dirty wounds (see table)

Treatment: Bedrest and general treatment of the fever (1 DP less per day)

Remedies: None known; can be prevented by correct treatment of wounds with herbal bandages (successful Treat Wounds test)

Level: 6

PLAGUES AND DISEASES

TRAUMATIC FEVER TABLE

If a hero has suffered more than 5 DP from open wounds in one day (due to combat, animal bites, thorns, etc.), a CN test has to be made in the evening to determine if the hero may get sick. ('Wound' means 'open damage,' not just wounds as per combat rules). Modifications to the CN test are:

- +1 Lost more than 25% of VP
- +2 Lost more than 50% of VP
- +3 Wounds caused by fangs, teeth or dirty weapons
- +4 Wounds caused by undead
- 7 Hero has Resistance to Disease

YEARLY FEVER

Symptoms: recurring sudden fever, similar to jaundice (10% per quarter) with medium body ache, seldom (20%) with cramps. Usually for a lifetime.

Duration: D6 days each time

Damage and Consequences: Per fever D3 permanent VP loss. ST, AV, PA lowered

by 3 points. After fever almost immediate regeneration of attributes.

Cause: Result of jaundice (10%)

Treatment: Rest in bed and general fever treatment (1 DP less)

Remedies: Incurable except by a miracle of Peraine, but a brew of sansaro, quinja and donf prevents the fever for 6 months.

Level: 12

ZORGANPOX

Symptoms: At first pale, pea-sized pox on face and body, after two days increasing fever, nausea and severe weariness the pox turn red. Then the (non-itchy) pox swell with first watery liquid, then with pus. On the 13th day the pox break open, accompanied by severe fever which usually causes death. If the diseased survives the fever, recovery is quick but leaves scars of the pox.

Duration: 13 days/13 days

Damage and Consequences: From 3rd to 12th day 1D+2 DP per day, all physical attributes are lowered to a third (round

down) of their normal value on the 3rd day. On the 13th day there is a fever of D20+10 DP. Lost attribute points are regained within one day, scars appear within three days. The remaining scars deface the survivor, reducing his appearance by two levels (on the scale of Beautiful/Good-Looking/Normal/Unattractive/Ugly); at the same time, the survivor gains 1 courage point.

Cause: Challenging the Nameless (up to 10%, up to the Highlord), contact with a diseased (25%), nursing a diseased (50%)

Peculiarities: After surviving zorganpox, one is immune to the illness.

Treatment: Unsuccessful physicians and quacksalvers often try their skills at this disease. General fever treatment and rest in bed are advisable (2 DP less per day).

Remedies: Applying xordai-brew to the pox (1 DP less per day, 90% recovery from the pox without fever and scars)

Level: 10

VARIOUS ADDICTIONS

Addictions to low dosages of poisons and other drugs of any kind, including healing herbs, are widespread in some regions of Aventuria. Alchemists seem to suffer heavily from addictions, given their ease of obtaining such substances, but addictions are also prevalent among common people.

Addictions (if not noted otherwise, their level corresponds with the poison level; the Highlord must determine the level for herbs) are very complicated diseases. They require intensive treatment and there are usually no remedies.

Addiction means that the addicted person has to take a dose of his preferred drug every d3 days. If he cannot do so, he suffers from a difficulty increase to all his talent tests of one-half the poison level, and a difficulty increase of one-third the poison level to all his attribute tests. After another d3 days, these effects are doubled; d3 days later the difficulty increases rise to one-and-one-half times the poison level for talent tests and the poison level for attribute tests; the patient also suffers from a loss of half the poison level in VP per day until he takes another dose of the drug or else the addict dies.

The addicted person requires rest and seclusion for a longer period of time than someone who simply has a disease. The healer can try one test per week on each Treat Poison, Treat Disease and Treat Psyche. The difficulty increase for all tests corresponds to the level of the disease. If both Treat Poison and Treat Disease are successful, the physical effects are suspended for one week; on a success of Treat Disease and Treat Psyche, the mental effects are suspended for one week. The addiction is only cured if all tests are successful. If the cured person ever takes the drug again, though, his addiction is renewed.

OTHER DISEASES

Some states of physical and mental health can only be seen as diseases in a broader sense. Apart from various mental confusions and the mysterious *Duglum plague*, which is transmitted by Demons, there is *Lycanthropy*. The latter disease cannot be fully healed by the use of talents, but it is more of a curse than a disease.

AVAILABILITY AND OCCURRENCE OF PLANTS FROM THE TEXT

Plant	Test	Area of Growth	Parts used
Thrashbeard	+6	Stoneoak Forest, Mirkridge, Kosh	whole lichen
Yagan-Nut	+6	Maraskan, Arania	squeezed oil
Lulany	+18	Central Aventuria	pollen
Mermansweed	+4	West Coast	leaf
Donf	+8	South of Gerasim	stem
Yoruga	+10	Nostria, Albernia	root
Golmoon	+8	North of Nostria-Vallusa	tea of leaves
Sansaro	+18	Sea of Pearls between Selem and Charypso	fresh, whole plant
Quinya	+10	South of Harodrol	berries
Olginroot*	+25	Rashtul's Wall	root
Xordai	+21	Maraskan	bark

*special: a brew of olginroot protects the user from non-magical and non-demonic diseases for one week (if taken prior to infection).

AVENTURIAN Poisons

Heritage disputes, unbearably loud neighbors, rivals in love—all those problems occur in Aventuria as they do everywhere else, and are sometimes solved with one of the preparations below, if an honest blow or a Rondra-complaisant duel are not an option. Naturally, this way of solving problems is illegal in almost all parts of Aventuria. The *Warkhome Index* (which is not only part of Middenrealmian law, but also in the Horasrealm, in Fountland, Arania, Nostria, Andergast and the Caliphate of Mherwed) outlaws the use of *velvet whiff*, *shurin bulb*, *tinzel*, *swampnode*, *gonede*, *sunsura*, *black lotus*, *omrais*, *coucris*, *tulmadron*, *boabungaha* and *purple flash*, and punishes any offender severely.

Whoever kills or permanently damages his victim counts as a poisoner (for whom there are no mitigating circumstances) and is put to death by the most disgraceful and painful means. Production of such poisons is punished with 30 years in the dungeon—and possession of such a substance carries a sentence of 5 years.

Besides perfumes, love elixirs or healing potions, alchemists are still diligently distilling poisons, for this is still a most lucrative practice. Usually substances from poisonous plants or animals are extracted, distilled, concentrated and then mixed with other components that increase the poison's effect. Some mixtures are even empowered with astral energy or particular spells.

Weapon Poisons: Small wound, great effect: weapon poisons, usually stiff pastes, are basic equipment for any assassin, but are sometimes also used for hunting. They are applied to the blade or tip of the weapon, and enter the bloodstream of the victim as soon as one damage point is done with the weapon.

Food Poisons: In this case the poison is mixed with food and consumed. Only rarely is the victim actually willing to do so or cognizant of what he is doing. In order to be effective, then, the mixtures or powders have to be secretly mixed with wine or a meal, and are preferably muted in odor or taste. In order to poison food or drink without the victim noticing, the assassin has to succeed

in a Cook test, in order to modify the food to suit the poison. The victim can try to detect the poison with a *Perception* or *Danger Sense* test in order to notice it before eating a deadly dose, with a difficulty increase of the level of the poison plus the Cook talent points that the assassin has left.

Contact Poisons: The poison takes effect upon contact with skin. Contact poisons are especially suited for traps (or deadly door handles!), but usually a thin leather glove suffices to prevent poisoning. Cloth is typically not a suitable substitute. Contact poisons are also easily useable as weapon poisons.

Breath Poisons: Breath poisons made of fine dust or pollen, which the victim has to inhale. (Poison gas for means of an assassination is unknown in Aventuria.) If handled carelessly they are as dangerous for the assassin as for the victim. They are best suited for traps. Some breath poisons are used in low dosages to act as narcotic drugs. In order to apply a breath poison in close combat, the assassin has to succeed an DE+8 test. If the test fails, the poison has no effect; if the unmodified test would fail, too, the assassin has poisoned himself. Small funnel-shaped blowpipes make the test easier by 5 points.

Poisons

Prices, durability, and effect of the poisons listed below vary, depending on the quality. We use average values here. The prices are given for one application/use and usually include the bribe needed to obtain illegal substances. The code after the name of the poison describes its level as well as whether it is a weapon, food, contact or breath poison. If you, as the Highlord, want to improvise a poisonous substance, apply D6 times level DP (start and duration earlier/faster for higher-level poisons). If the poison is to reduce attributes, apply three times the level as 'point-hours' (e.g., a loss of 2 points ST for 3 hours for a lvl 2 poison).

Level: Make a CN test with a difficulty of the poison level as soon as the hero is poisoned. If the test is successful, the hero takes only half the rolled damage. If the roll succeeds, even on a difficulty increase of poison level plus 10 points, the hero takes no damage at all from this (single) act of poisoning. The test can be modified by immunities or resistance against special types of poisons.

Effect: The numbers or text before the slash shows the full effect of the poison, that listed after the slash is the halved effect.

Start and Duration: When the effects begin to take place and how long they last

Durability: The time span (under normal circumstances) after which a poison works only with half effect (as per successful CN test); after double that time span, the poison is rendered harmless.

Price: The average market price where available (see above), for one dose, includes cut for a fence—prices are significantly lower

in Al'Anfa or Mengbilla.

Production: The difficulty increase to an *alchemy*, *plant lore* or *cook* skill, as stated

ARACHNAE (I/W)

A weapon poison that is distilled from the digestive secrete of the cave spider. Arachnae slightly paralyzes the victim (AV/PV -2 each) and is thus popular with kidnappers.

Effect: Paralysis, as above/lighter paralysis (-1 each)

Duration: 1 hour/6 GT

Start: Immediately

Durability: 3 months

Price: 5 D

Production: Alchemy +3

ARAX (5/W)

A distilled version of arachnae, which has stronger effects (AV, PV, AG, DE, ST -2 each) and is used as weapon poison as well. Counts as animal poison for purposes of immunity/resistance.

Effect: Paralysis, as above/lighter paralysis (-1 each)

Duration: 1 day/12 hrs

Start: 2 GT

Durability: 6 months

Price: 30 D

Production: Alchemy +10

BANEDVST (I5/F)

A very rare and peculiar alchemical food poison. Its recipe is known to only few magicians and deonts.

Effect: No ASP-regeneration the following night; loss of 1D6+2 ASP/GT/no ASP regeneration; one-time loss of 2D6 ASP

Duration: 3D6 GT/immediate

Start: 1 GT

Durability: 12 months

Price: 250 D

Production: Alchemy +10

AVENTURIAN POISONS

BLACK LOTUS (10/B)

One can extract the pollen of black lotus (see below), but only by taking extreme precautions—even the slightest inhalation might be lethal, for poisoner as well as victim. A deadly herbal breath poison.

Effect: 2D6 DP/GT, hallucinations (CL, IN halved; no perception tests allowed)/half damage; CL, IN -3 each

Duration: 2 hours

Start: 5 CR

Durability: 2D6+15 days

Price: 100 D

Production: Plant Lore +10

BOABVPGANA (19/B)

A very dangerous herbal breath poison, which the only forest people and a few alchemists of the south know how produce. A diminutive pinch suffices to kill the victim unless it receives help immediately, which is probably only possible through magic.

Effect: Suffocation (1D6 DP/CR)/coughing (1D6-2 DP/CR)

Duration: until death/30 CR

Start: 5 CR

Durability: 6 months

Price: 250 D (Mohas exchange for high-quality metal weapons)

Production: Plant Lore +12

COVCRIS (12/FW)

This herbal poison is extracted from Mirhamian silk lianas. It is deadly even for a troll, and easy to handle (available as food and weapon poison). Aventurian assassins often call it “kingmaker.”

Effect: 1D6-1 DP/CR, itching (CL, DE -1 after 10 CR), spasms (ST, AG -3 after 15 CR)/1D3 DP/CR, twitching (AG, ST -1)

Duration: 2 GT/50 CR

Start: 10 CR

Durability: 3 months

Price: 90 D

Production: Alchemy +12 or Plant Lore +9

DRAGONSPIT (7/WF)

This heavy green liquid is brewed from several disgusting ingredients (Unauan salt brine, mercury, wolfrat's dung, viper's blood, etc.). Because it is seldom deadly, it is one of the few legal poisons. Duration and effect strongly depend on the varying quality of this alchemical weapon and food poison. It is also used in traps for hunting.

Effect: 1D6+1 DP/GT, swelling, pain, dizziness/halved

Duration: 1D6+1 GT

Start: Immediately

Durability: 12 months

Price: 40 D

Production: Alchemy +6

FEAR POISON (4/W)

This alchemical weapon poison is made from mandrake root, berserk's spit, dust from a crypt, bunny feet and shark teeth. It does not physically damage the victim, but rather causes him to flee in panic from the first being it perceives after being poisoned.

Effect: Similar to *horriphobus* spell/slight fear (all fears +2, CO -2)

Duration: 7 GT

Start: Immediately

Durability: 18 months

Price: 25 D

Production: Alchemy +5, *horriphobus* cast onto brew

FIRETONGUE (5-6/F)

This clear liquid is extracted from the spleen of the firetongue fish, which has its habitat in the South Sea and off Maraskan. In the past this clear liquid was rare, but recently exceptionally poisonous and misshapen firetongue fish have appeared in the bays of Maraskan (lvl. 6; 2D6 DP/hour). This food poison tastes slightly sour.

Effect: 2D6-2 DP/hour, swollen tongue, impossible to talk/halved

Duration: 5 hours

Start: 5 GT

Durability: 36 months

Price: 25 D

Production: Alchemy +7

GOLDGLUE (5/CW)

This plant extract of the naftan shrub can be processed into a pale yellowish, honey-like glue that dissolves any living tissue with which it comes into contact. Even small spots of this poison on the skin can cause serious injuries. As a weapon poison, it only does half damage (round down).

Effect: 2D6-3 DP/hour/halved

Duration: 2D6 hours

Start: Immediately

Durability: 1D6+6 months

Price: 30 D

Production: Alchemy or Plant Lore +6

GONEDE (8/W)

This weapon poison is processed from the poison of the yellowtail scorpion, and is popular among desert raiding parties.

Effect: 1D6+5 DP/GT, cramps, twitching, choking/halved

Duration: 5 GT

Start: 10 CR

Durability: 9 months

Price: 70 D

Production: Alchemy +9

HALFPOISON (8/WF)

This alchemical weapon and food poison is created from red lotus, the wood of a tree split in half by a lightning and Brabakian vitriol. It seems to be able to halve the physical capabilities of the body.

Effect: CO, AG, ST, AV, PV, INI halved/-3 each

Duration: 7 GT/1 GT

Start: Immediately

Durability: 3 months

Price: 60 D

Production: Alchemy +8, *plumbumbarum* spell cast onto brew

KELMON (5/CW)

This herbal weapon and contact poison is extracted from the nettles of the carnivorous disdychonda plant.

Effect: 4D6 DP and complete paralysis/2D6 DP, AG, DE, ST halved

Duration: 6 GT

Start: 5 CR

Durability: D6+9 months

Price: 30 D

Production: Alchemy or Plant Lore +8

MANDRAGORA (2/W)

A light herbal weapon poison, extracted from mandrake root.

Effect: 1D6 DP; vomiting (take no actions during combat)/1D3 DP; +3 difficulty increase on all tests/actions

Duration: 30 CR

Start: 5 CR

Durability: 8 months

Price: 3 D

Production: Alchemy +3

OMRAIS (11/WF)

Produced from the poison of the desert scorpion, it is sold as food and weapon poison. Omrais is disapproved of by assassins, because many victims are said to have survived the attack.

Effect: 1D6-1 DP/CR, stings in the body (+4 difficulty increase on all actions)/half damage, +2 on all actions

Duration: 100 CR/50 CR

Start: 1 GT

Durability: 6 months

Price: 80 D

Production: Alchemy +8

PURPLE FLASH (20/F)

An odorless and tasteless soluble alchemical powder (which can be mixed with food as food poison), for the sophisticated assassin. Purple flash is made from purple lotus, stings of Maraskan tarantulas, saltarel oil, vermilion and much more. The victim is often unaware of what is happening; the only symptom of poisoning is foggy-purple eyesight. Even an autopsy of the body (a process forbidden in many places) usually does not give any clues.

Effect: 1D6 DP/CR/halved

Duration: Until death/2D20+30 CR

Start: Immediately

Durability: 12 months

Price: 300 D

Production: Alchemy +10

SLEEP POISON (5/WB)

This poison is made from mandrake, elm leaves and marmot milk. It causes a deep sleep from which the victim can only be awakened magically. It is an alchemical food and weapon poison.

Effect: As above/victim is stunned and unable to move, but can perceive hazily

Duration: 7 GT/1 GT

Start: Immediately

Durability: 1 year

Price: 35 D

Production: Alchemy +5, *sleep of a thousand* sleep spell cast onto brew

SUNSVURA (9/WF)

Refined from the poison of the Maraskan tarantula, it is a virulent weapon and food poison.

Effect: 1D6+3 DP/GT, rage (treat as the disadvantage), then delirium/half damage, rage, then delirium

Duration: 10 GT

Start: 1 GT

Durability: 9 months

Price: 90 D

Production: Alchemy +6

TINZAL (7/W)

Distilled nettle viper poison; weapon poison.

Effect: 1D6+1 DP/GT, suffocation (ST -4; no athletics tests allowed)/half damage, athletics tests +3

Duration: 2D6 GT

Start: 1 GT

Durability: 12 months

Price: 40 D

Production: Alchemy +6

TULMADRON (15/FW)

It is mined from very rare rock in the Khoram Mountains. There is hardly any need to process it, if it is used as weapon or food poison. Only known mineral poison. Dwarves are immune to tulmadron.

Effect: 1D6 DP/CR, hallucinations, pain (all attributes -4)/half damage, all attributes -2

Duration: 3 GT/50 CR

Start: 20 CR

Durability: Unexposed to light and air: unlimited

Price: 200 D

Production: Alchemy +9

VELVET WHIFF (5/B)

The pollen of creeping death (see below) can cause pleasurable dreams, but if overdosed (2.5x the normal dose in a 24-hr period) it is often deadly. It is a very popular herbal breath poison in Al'Anfa.

Effect: 2D6 DP/hour, sleep and wild dreams/half damage, dizziness, intoxication

Duration: D6 hours/D6-1 hours

Start: 1 GT

Durability: 2 months

Price: 20 D

Production: Alchemy +9 or Plant Lore +6

WURARA (4/W)

The Mohas extract this arrow poison (weapon poison) from the sap of hellweed. Is rendered harmless in the bloodstream after duration and is therefore used for hunting big game.

Effect: 1D6 DP/hour, shivering, impaired vision (EN lowered by 2/3; perception tests +5)/1D3 DP/hour; EN-10, perception tests +2

Duration: 1D6 hours

Start: 1 GT

Durability: 4 months

Price: 15 D

Production: Alchemy +5 or Plant Lore +4

POISONOUS ANIMALS AND PLANTS

The easiest method of being poisoned is simply being bitten by a venomous animal or unwittingly eating a poisonous plant. Such animals and plants exist all across Aventuria, though they are more common in the south and on Maraskan.

AVICULARIA (3/W)

Found in southern Aventuria, south of the Yaquir river. 1D20 DP after bite, distributed over the same number of CR.

BLIND FISH (1+/W)

Found in the Southern Sea, Sea of Pearls, and Sea of Seven Winds. 1 DP, CL and RM -1. If CL is 0, the victim falls into a coma for D20 GT. Poison level rises by 1 per bite.

BORON VIPER (10/W)

Found in southern Aventuria and Maraskan. 2 DP/CR, AV/PV/AG/ST -1/CR for 3D6 CR, then regeneration of combat values and attributes by 1 per hour. If ST is 0, then paralysis; per GT a D20 roll, if 20, the heart stops beating.

CAVE SPIDER/TREE SPIDER (5/W)

Found over all Aventuria. AV, PV, AG, DE, CN, ST -1 each per bite. Regeneration of 1 point each per day.

DESERT SCORPION (7/W)

Found in Khôm, Mhanadistan, and Arania. 2D20 DP after bite, distributed over the same amount of CR.

EMERALD SPIDER (5/W)

Found in Thorwal, Orkland, and Svelltvale. CN test or the victim is unconscious for 3D6x5 CR. If CN test is successful, then slight nausea (all attributes -2) for 10 CR.

FIRE PEWT (9/W)

Found in Thorwal, Orkland, and Svelltvale. Insidious poison, caused by bite (1 DP per hour), which results in death if antidote is not taken.

FIRE SCORPION (8/W)

Found in Khôm, Mhanadistan and Southern Aventuria: Effect like the *hellpain* spell (with 7 points left: intense pain, uncontrollable muscle twitching, loss of 7 endurance points per CR until unconscious, 4 points exhaustion afterwards), lasts D6 x D6 CR.

KYILL VIPER (6/W)

Found in Svelltvale, Meadows, Salamander Stones, and Green Plains. Per CR 2 DP and ST-1 for 3D6 CR.

LEAFHEAD VIPER (12/W)

Found in southern Aventuria. Effect comes 2D20 hours after the bite, D6 DP/hour for D6 x D6 hours. CL and IN lowered by 1 per

In the following list, we have presented the most commonly encountered specimens. Raw animal and plant poisons can be found in every good apothecary and can be refined to be used as weapon poisons (animal poisons) and food poisons (plant poisons). Their durability is very limited, however; no longer than a week, at best (which is why they aren't available outside of their home regions).

As stated above: A successful CN test (with a difficulty increase of poison level) halves the effect of the poison.

hour, if not 1 is rolled as damage. Additionally: hallucinations (courage test, if failure CO -1). The attributes regenerate within D20 hours after the poison effect is over.

MARASKAN TARANTULA (AGE+/W)

Found in Maraskan, Arania, and Mhanadistan. The poison level depends on the age of the animal. Age (usually 2D6 years) x D6 DP per bite.

MORAY EEL (2/W)

Found in Southern Sea, Sea of Pearls, and Sea of Seven Winds. 1 DP/GT, 2D6 total.

MORFU (5/W)

Found all across Aventuria, except in Maraskan. It shoots (numerous) horn splinters (1D6-1 HP), which cause 1D6 DP each.

MYSOB VIPER (5/W)

Found in southern Aventuria. 1D6+2 DP on the first bite, 2D+4 on the second bite, and so forth.

PETTLE VIPER (3/W)

Found in northern and central Aventuria. D20 DP (first bite), D6 DP (second bite); takes effect immediately after bite.

AVENTURIAN POISONS

PORALEC VIPER (20/W)

Found only in Maraskan. All 2 months the victim rolls a CN+2 test. If it fails, ST is lowered by 1 and VI is lowered by 1D3, both permanently. Can only be stopped by a special brew together with a *clarum purum* spell (20).

PALM VIPER (3/W)

Found in southern Aventuria. Inflicts 5D6 DP, immediately after the bite.

PSEUDO-BASILISK (1/C)

Found in northern Aventuria. Inflicts 1D6 SP and a cough that puts the victim out of action for 2D6 CR. Disadvantage *evil stench*, until washed *thoroughly*.

RATTLESPAKE (2/W)

Found in Khôm, Mhanadistan, Arania, and Almada. 2D6 DP immediately after bite.

SAGVARA SPIDER (8/W)

Found in northern and central Aventuria. 3D20 DP and CL-5, IN-3 for 1D6+3 GT.

SPIITING VIPER (5/C)

Also known as the spitting cobra, it is found in Mhanadistan and southern Arania. 2D20 DP directly after hit.

SPOTTED SHARK (12/W)

Found in the South Sea and the Sea of Pearls. 1D6+2 DP, AV/PV/AG/DE/ST -1 each after every 2nd bite. Regenerate each with 1 point/hour.

YELLOWTAIL SCORPION (3/W)

Found in Khôm, Mhanadistan, and southern Aventuria. Single 3D6 DP.

HERBAL ANTIDOTES

Here are a few herbs which have favorable effects against poisoning.

Hiradroot: This is found in Mhanadistan and Arania (test +10, or 12 ducats), and stops the effect of any snake poison.

Menchal Cactus: The sap of this plant, found in the Khôm Desert (test +8, or 18 ducats), halves the effects of all poisons.

Black Poppy: The black poppy, located in Pailos (and only in the ruins of Palakar (test +12, or 5 thalers), causes calm sleep with double regeneration.

Pale Poppy: This flower is found all across Aventuria (test +12, or 7 ducats). It is generally good against pain of any kind. Ignore wound penalties or penalties inflicted by low VI.

Needhelp: This grows near the Salamander Stones (test +15, or 50 ducats) and is a potent antidote for tulmadron.

Owlingroot: An herb that grows near Rashtul's Wall (test +10, or 3 ducats per dose (fresh) or 50 ducats per dose of brew), it is the "universal remedy" against all kinds of poisons and diseases. Freshly taken, it lowers the level of all poisons up to level 19 by 1; a brew strengthens the immune system, making the user almost immune to poisons.

IMPORTANT POISONOUS PLANTS

In the table below we give the most important effects of the untreated plants. You can find more effects above in the section on Aventurian poisons.

Name	Level	Main Effect	Poison Parts	Occurrence
Cheria Cactus	1/F	CL, IN -2 each for 2D6 GT, hallucinations	Thorns, fruit	Around Khôm, Shadif, Szinto
Creeping Death	2/B	1D6 hours ecstasy in delirium, then 3D6 hours hangover (attributes -2)	Blossoms	south of Loch Harodrol
Demon Claw	8/F	1D+2 DP/GT for 3D+3 GT	Whole mushroom	All Aventuria south of Riva, rare
Disdychonda	5/C	4D6 DP after 5 CR	Nettle leaves	All rainforests
Firemoss	1/C	1DP per 5 CR; total up to 5D20 DP	Sap	Northern and central Aventuria
Hellweed	4/F	1D6 DP/hour for 1D hours	Tendrils	Southwestern Aventuria, Forest Isles
Horush	3/F	1D6+4 DP, per pip, from the 2nd pip on	Seed from pod	Southern Maraskan
Ivigor	1/C	1 DP when touched swiftly	Whole plant	Northern and central Aventuria
Lotus, black	4/B	1D6+3 DP, CL, IN -1 each for 1 GT per breath	Blossom, pollen	All Aventuria south of Havena-Perricum
Lotus, purple	3/B	1D6 DP, CL, IN, AG -1 each for 1 GT per breath	Blossom	All Aventuria south of Havena-Perricum
Lotus, white	1/B	1D6-1 DP, CL, IN -1 each for 1 GT per dose	Blossom, pollen	All Aventuria south of Havena-Perricum
Malomis	sp/B	Hallucinated smells	Blossoms	Not in nature
Merach Bush	10/B*	5D20 DP, if alcohol is drunk 3 days before or after	Fruit	Thalusia, Unau Mts., Rain Mts.
Mirblereed	8/F	Disease: addiction	Blossom cobs	West coast between Salta & Mengbilla
Naftan Shrub	5/C	2D6 DP on touch	Sap	All Aventuria south of Riva
Orkland Puffball	sp/B	Disease lvl 7: 2D6 weeks 1D6 DP/week, no regeneration	Spores	Orkland, Svelltvale, Andergast
Poppy, purple	1/F	Intoxication for D6+12 GT, then violent temper +5 for same time period, CO/2, causes addiction (disease lvl 13)	Seed capsule	Almada, Arania, Fairfield, southern Aventuria
Poppy, grey	2/F	as purple poppy, but stronger: effect 2D6+6 GT, separation of soul and body	Seed capsule	All Aventuria
Poxporeshroom	1/F	3D6+4 DP on breath	Spores	North of Nostria-Vallusa
Shurin Bulb	2/F	1D6+4 per corm	Corm	All Aventuria south of Riva
Slimy Swampnode	1/C	3 DP on contact with skin	skin	Fountland, northern Tobria
Suppurating Toadstool	4/F	1D6 DP, ST, IN -1 each, stomach ache, vomiting	Skin	All Aventuria south of Riva
Funnypickle	1/E	ST+3, CL-1D6+2 for 2D6 hours Hangover (attributes -2) afterwards	Fruit	Maraskan
Vragisroot	1/F	2 DP overexertion +1 per root, dreams	Boiled roots	All Aventuria south of Havena
Floating death	1/F	Euphoric intoxication, increases Rahja's desires	Fruit, blossom	Fountland, northern Tobria

FOLIOS AND PARCHMENT COLLECTIONS

Since the invention of the printing press 50 years ago, the circulation of written work has increased in a way that would not previously have been possible using ink, pencil and gold-leaf. This does not mean, though, that every citizen can enter a bookstore and buy the title of his choice (the Horasrealm may be an exception to the rule). Most printing presses are in the hands of sovereigns; those books that contradict the contemporary ideology still have to be written by hand—as is also the case for magical works.

On the following pages we are going to present to you a sample of Aventurian works. The tomes listed here are merely a section of the books in circulation, and is not a complete directory of Aventurian books.

In order to improve a Talent from a book, the hero has to have a TP in Read/Write of at least 4 and understand the language of the book.

The *availability* indicates where the book can be acquired—from a merchant, at a bookstore or in the library. A d20 roll vs. availability quickly determines if the book is available at the current location.

The given *value* of the book strongly depends on its condition. Often books in a bad condition are sold at 50% of their value. One has to note, though, that used books are seldom for sale—books are still such a rare commodity that their owners typically do not wish to part with them.

The *subject* tells the reader what talents can be improved by reading the book, as well as in what range the improvement can take place. If the reader has a TP of at least the first bracketed value, he can use the book as a teacher (see **Teaching Yourself**, *The Dark Eye Basic Rules* p. 127), thus using the standard column although he is teaching himself. Once the talent prowess exceeds the second value given, the book is only interesting to the reader as a reference. Hence, the entry “Dance (3/11)” means that a hero who has a TP of 3 in Dance gains a bonus to his improvements until he has reached a TP of 11. If



he possesses two books of the same subject, the modifiers for the improvements are cumulative. For example, whoever is in possession of the *Herbarium Kuslikum* and the *Folio of Herbal Lore* and wants to improve his TP from 8 to 9 can do so using the A column of the ACT.

1000 YEARS OF THE MIDDENREALM

(Temple of Hesinde in Punin, 1000 BF, 500 pages)

A special edition of the temple of Hesinde in Punin, with splendid illustrations as well as numerous cuttings and engravings. A compendium of all areas of Aventurian life, interesting even for the already well-educated Aventurian. Manuscripts are in the temple of Hesinde in Punin; 500 numbered originals, no copies.

Availability: 4

Value: 150–250 D

Subject: All Lore Talents (6/8), Alchemy, Cartography, Light Engineering, Mining,

Printing, Trade (each 3/5); CL 12 needed to gain bonuses

AL'EMAZZIN

(Omar bin Kasim, Khunchom, 912 b.H., 240 pages)

A complete, though difficult to understand, dissertation on lizardfolk and saurians in general. It includes numerous descriptions and a theory that interconnects amphibians with lizardmen and dragons. Only fragmentary translations exist, which all miss the main points of the book. The manuscript is lost; of the 20 originals, 17 are unaccounted for. There are about 150 copies total of four different translations.

Availability: 1 (for a copy; the originals are

in the academies of Fasar and Khunchom, while another one is in private possession in Methumis)

Value: 200 D (original)/5–15 D (copies)

Subject: Animal Lore (12/14); CL 13 and Ancient Tulamidian 12 needed to gain bonuses

ALMAPIAC OF POPULAR BELIEF

(Gilda of Honeyngton-Salperin, Honeyngton, 72 b.H., 180 pages)

A comprehensive collection of superstitions, carefully researched with few comments. Entertaining reading not only for magicians and deonts, but anyone with an interest in such matters. The manuscript is in the family's private collection. 120 first copies,

FOLIOS AND PARCHMENT COLLECTIONS

about 500 excellent copies.

Availability: 6

Value: 12 D (original)/5–8 D (copies)

Subject: Treat Psyche (0/3); after reading the book, make a CL test; if the character fails the test, increase superstition by 1 (or gain superstition 1)

APPALS OF THE GODLY AGE

(also: From the Beginning of Time or The Brazen Sword; various authors, first versions from the Settlers Age, 250 to 600 pages)

At times crude, at other time Hesindial, this is a collection of legends, myths, tales and heroic epics; often biased depending on the political situation at the time of writing. About 3,000 extant copies exist, of which 2,000 are printed; about a dozen author originals still exist.

Availability: 18 (any copy)

Value: 5–50 D (depends on version)

Subject: History (0/2), Religious Lore (2/5)

BESTIARY OF BELHANKA: THE KNOWLEDGE OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

(Belhanka at the time of the Peace Emperors, 70 pages)

Believed to have originally published in two volumes (one can deduct it from the references), the volume concerning plants is lost. The remaining text of the first volume describes the most important animals and beasts of Aventuria. A naïve text, full of superstition, but the basic information is still valid. All originals have been destroyed, but roughly 800 copies and translations from Bosparano remain and are considered close to the original.

Availability: 10

Value: 10 D

Subject: Animal Lore (0/3)

BREVIARY OF THE TWELVE- GODLY ORDER

(College of the Twelvegods, Gareth, since 312 b.H., about 70 pages)

The first edition was written and compiled by order of Emperor Eslam III; later editions were (heavily) revised by the college. It is the schoolbook of the Middenrealm: it covers correct belief and resulting civil duties, with a foreword by the current emperor. Many manuscripts and originals of various editions (all locked in the imperial archives); about 5,000 copies.

Availability: 1+ (originals—only in closed archives)/19 (copy)

Value: 5 D

Subject: Religious Lore (0/5)

CAMELS AND CALIPHS: MY TRAVELS THROUGH THE KHÔM IN THE YEAR 982 TO 988

(Ardo Stoerrebrandt, Festum, 1 Haal, 84 pages)

Private print of the travel journal of Ardo Stoerrebrandt. A description of the Khôm desert and Mhanadistan from an economic point of view. Colorful and humorous descriptions—mainly entertainment. 100 numbered originals, about 20 copies.

Availability: 2

Value: 25–50 D (original)/5 D (copy)

Subject: no special subject

EDIFYING OEUVRE ON BIRDERY FOR YOUNGMAN AND YOUNGWIFE (Rover Bronnegeeser, Festum 224 b.H., 120 pages)

A complete dissertation on birds in Aventuria. In parts it has a quite eccentric style of writing, but it is as entertaining to read as it is amusing. There are many marginal notes on hunting and survival, as well as an appendix of 20 pages with brilliant theories on the technical aspect of flying. The manuscript is in the family's private collection. 50 first copies; as well as 50 shortened copies (without appendix).

Availability: 1

Value: 25 D (original)/10–15 D (copies)

Subject: Animal Lore (5/7), Survival (5/7), Fly (4/8; original only)

OF THE ESSENCE OF THE STATE, ITS PRESERVATION AND ADVANCEMENT

(Dexter Nemrod, Rommilys, 15 Haal, 320 pages)

The most extensive and probably best book on state lore. Many pragmatic strategies, judicial principles, criticisms, old and new theories and theses, references and quotations. Dynamically written, but hard to read without prior knowledge. Good lecture for the contemporary politician. The manuscript is in the imperial archives in Gareth; 200 originals (said to be abridged by imperial and clerical decree; mainly in the hands of ruling sovereigns).

Availability: 1

Value: 60 D

Subject: Statecraft (9/14); CL 12 to gain bonuses

FOLIO OF HERBAL LORE

(Sisterhood of Mada, Grangor, 12 Haal, 400 pages)

Printed edition of a collection of copies, which has circulated since the dark ages and has been continuously updated. Illustrated encyclopedia of all known plants, harmful and helpful. About 200 older copies and variants, by now well over 700 prints (first print in the temple of Rahja in Grangor).

Availability: 6

Value: 50 D (new print)

Subject: Herbal Lore (2/10)

GREAT AVENTURIAN ATLAS: NEW LORE AND TRUTHFUL REPORT OF ALL PEOPLES AND COUNTRIES FROM IFIRN'S OCEAN TO THE ISLES OF FIRE MOUNTAINS

(About 80 pages)

A constantly revised atlas, which is based on reports and maps of the expeditions of Admiral Sanin III (1812–1795 b.H.). It includes maps and descriptions of the most important coastlines of Aventuria and the surrounding islands, older editions contain almost exclusively the west coast and the south. Many editions have been 'corrected' by local authorities. Original maps and texts of Sanin are lost; about 100 editions dated before BF; 300 modern editions of good quality; about 1,000 copies with a sometimes remarkable loss in quality.

Availability: 1 (all editions), 2 (newer editions), 8 (second copies)

Value: 300–500 D (originals)/200–400 D (first copies)/50–200 D (second copies)/120 D (contemporary editions)

Subject: Geography (8/14)

HERBARIUM KUSLIKUM: AVENTURIAN FLORA

(Temple of Hesinde in Kuslik, Kuslik, 12 Haal, 9 volumes at 200 pages each)

Clearly the fundamental collection on the flora of Aventuria. In parts it is very legible and contains many sources, sketches and drawings, which makes it obligatory for every botanically interested person. A collection of various versions of the manuscript is in the temple of Hesinde in Kuslik; the first edition with 50 subsequently added drawings (all in the possession of the temple); 200 exact copies, about 500 copies of an abbreviated version with varying quality of the drawings.

Availability: 5 (2nd copy), 2 (1st copy), 1 (original)

Value: First copies are worth 25–30 D per volume, other copies between 50 and 200 D for all volumes

Subject: Plant Lore (3/4 for any one volume, complete 3/12). Second copies significantly worse.

THE HORAS APOCRYPHA

(Anonymus, Bosparan or Bethana, ca. 1800 b.H., 50–150 pages)

This book compiles legends that circulate regarding the works of the Godly Emperor Horas. Sometimes pictures, sometimes old city maps, often complete text passages in Bosparano, frequently commented. No other work exists in so many different variants; the

origin of the book is still dubious. Some people claim to possess originals, or such possession is attributed to them, but it has never yet been proven for anyone. There are about 200 copies in about 30 different variations.

Availability: 0 (original), 2 (any variation)

Value: Between 50 and 250 D

Subject: Religious Lore (12/14), History (12/14), State Lore (10/12)

HOW TO FIGHT, RIDE AND DRINK BEER

(Anonymous, probably Havena, 14 Haal, 60 pages)

A very unconventional book that is full of strange grammar and spelling mistakes. A collection of lively tips and tricks for adventurers, mainly on the subjects described in the title; astonishingly helpful. Manuscript unknown; 3 known first copies, about 600 copies, often with additional comments and additions—the most voluminous copy has 152 pages.

Availability: 7 (any copy)

Value: 3–12 D (depends on copy)

Subject: Carouse (0/6), Ride (2/4), Brawling (0/8)

THE INEXPENSIVE BREVARY FOR THE TRAVELING MERCHANT

(Various authors commissioned by Stoerrebrandt, Festum, 4 Haal, 64 pages)

Short, but solid overview of the economy and infrastructure of the most important cities and regions of Aventuria. By now there are almost 5,000 printed copies. A revised edition that recognizes the current political landscape is bound to be released soon.

Availability: 18

Value: 5 D

Subject: Appraise (2/6), Fast Talk (Haggle) (4/6), Geography (3/6)

OF PATHS AND WAYS

(Dhara Tuzirim, Beilunk, 37 b.H., 80 pages)

Basic knowledge for every traveler. It lists roads, routes, passes, shortcuts, fords, bridges, boat connections, etc., together with dissertations on road conditions, weather, as well as useful hints on dangerous situations. Concise descriptions for orientation in civilized parts of Aventuria, but inaccurate sketchy maps in the appendix. The manuscript is in a private collection; 200 first editions with hand-drawn maps; about 500 copies, sometimes with better maps than the original.

Availability: 6

Value: 16 D

Subject: Geography (5/7), Orientation (2/5)

PREM'S ANIMALS

(several authors, Prem, 70 b.H., 120 pages, 30 drawings)

It is possible that Hetman Ragnar himself is the author of this text. This volume is a comprehensive account of the zoology of the west and north coast, the Orkland, Albernica, Fairfield and the Cyclopean Isles. It is strongly slanted by a Thorwalian viewpoint. The original is in Prem; about 200 first copies are available, usually commented; about 100 uncommented copies of commented versions are also available, more pages, but less original content.

Availability: 2

Value: 25–35 D for first copies, otherwise 10 D

Subject: Animal Lore (3/6; second copies: 4/5)

THE RAHJASUTRA

(Khunchom, probably 648 b.H., 160 pages)

A very vivid dissertation on the numerous ways to please Rahja, with an emphasis on imagery. Also contains an introduction on the techniques of seduction. Probably a compilation of other works on the same topic. No manuscript, 10 originals, about 40 first copies, about 300 second copies of varying quality (especially the pictures).

Availability: 1 (original or first copy); 3 (second copy)

Value: 500 D (original)/200 D (first copy)/20–120 D (second copy)

Subject: Seduce (3/7), Erotic Arts (8/10)

RASTULLAH IN KEFT

(Hahmud Dhach'gamin, Keft, 233 b.H., 48 pages)

The holy book of the followers of Rastullah, and revelation of the god. The manuscript in the prayer-house of Keft; about 100 first copies, about 300 second copies, and 40 copies in Garethi from 3 different translations.

Availability: 1 (first copy), 3 (second copy)—about 6x higher in the Caliphate

Value: for Rastullah believers between 50–400 D (depending on the credibility of the copy), otherwise about 10 D

Subject: Religious Lore (8/10)

SAND, SALT AND SUP/BETWEEN BODIR AND WEALBECK/THE STEAMING FORESTS/HOMELAND, FOREIGN LANDS

(Bastan Munter, Kuslik, 334–328 b.H., 120/250/330/280 pages)

Races, cultures, religions, languages, customs, history of all Aventuria—informative and intriguing to read. Every deont of Hesinde has to know this famous tetralogy.

The manuscripts are in the temple of Hesinde in Kuslik; about 300 first copies.

Availability: 4 (single volume), 1 (full collection)

Value: 30–60 D, complete about 250 D

Subject: History (4/6 per volume), Geography (6/8 per volume), Religious Lore (6/7 per volume); complete volume: as **Special Experiences** (*The Dark Eye Basic Rules*, p.126) up to TP 9.

THE SMALL DIFFERENCE

(Praiowyn Lightenstone, Warkhome, 15 Haal, 80 pages)

A complete dissertation of all cultural beings of Aventuria, but racially biased. It should be read with great care, and not taken at face value. The manuscript is in the temple of Praios in Warkhome; 100 first prints, few copies.

Availability: 1; in libraries of temples of Praios 5

Value: 10 D

Subject: Useless

THE VADEMECUM OF COMBATIVE CRAFTS

(Krona Adersin, Gareth, 8 b.H., 128 pages)

The *Adersin-Vademecum* almost landed its author to jail for high treason, for it explicitly details the known arts and styles of fighting, specializing on the style with sword and shield. Numerous illustrations of fighting stances, and many accompanying comments and criticisms. Is, in a way, the 'manifesto' of the 'Apprentices of the Sword.' Expanded, printed edition (by Krona's sons) awaited.

Availability: 8

Value: 15 D

Subject: Bastard Sword (4/6), Swords (4/6); special abilities Off-hand Fighting and Shield Fighting I can be learned at 75% AP cost.

Other popular titles of the last few years (all printed by now, at least in low numbers) are: *In the Tents of Nivese Shamans* of the former Margrave of Beilunk Hagen, a second edition with woodcuts of the *Monster Manual* (obscure, old collection of horrid monsters), the *Manual of Construction*, which presents old dwarfen knowledge on construction to the reader, as well as the political works as *The Wrestling Master*, the Novadi collection of laws *Thus Spoke Rastullah* (very practically oriented exegesis), Comtessa Tegalliani's *On Dance*, a courtly book on manners. There are also a vast number of hymnbooks for deonts, songbooks for soldiers and travelers, as well as *The Sayings of Emperor Haal*, which has been, after the *Breviary*, the most-read book of the Middenrealm for the last 20 years.

WHO'S WHO?— IMPORTANT AND NOTABLE PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

The following chapter on special personalities of Aventuria is an overview and orientation for the Highlord as well as for the players. The entries consist of a concise description and the usual set of attributes, talents and spells. It will help you understand the person's strengths and weaknesses, as well as their use in the game.

CHARACTER INFORMATION

Short Characterization: This should be self-explanatory; the terms inexperienced, experienced, average, competent, masterly, brilliant and perfect are meant to define a general level of skill, so that you can assign other attributes or talents to the character with appropriate levels, if needed.

Outstanding Attributes, Outstanding Talents and Important Spells and Rituals: Those skills that determine the character's style—there may be other Talents with a high value as well.

Peculiarities: Personal notes and idiosyncrasies.

Connections and Financial Power: Here we categorize connections and financial power of persons, which represents the hierarchy in the relevant region. It is important to know that for some countries there is only limited information—Ashim Riak Assai has “immense connections” among orks, but so has the Patriarch of Al'Anfa in the south and Nahema all over Aventuria.

The same applies to the categorization of financial power: there is a difference between the Messenger of Light, the Horasian Empress and Nareb Emmano Wrathbreak. Still, all these people are holders of “immense financial power within their sphere of influence and their geographic area. The levels used are: minimal, low, sufficient, considerable, great, very great, and immense.

Game Use: Ideas on how to connect these people with the heroes.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Translating a game from one language into another is more difficult a proposition than you might expect. It's one thing to take a stand-alone board game and translate its rules (and other associated text) into a different language. It's entirely a different feat to take an existing game line, with dozens of supplements, and bring it to a different country, especially one where the market is significantly different.

Those are the problems we've run into with the *World of Aventuria*. *Das Schwarze Auge* has been in print in various editions for over twenty years now, but this is the first translation into English. It's not the fact that we're translating a book from German into English that's causing us the problems, it's that we're translating a book that references half a dozen others—books that are currently not available in English—that's causing the problems.

For the most part, it wasn't until this chapter that we ran into the problems. As we pointed out in the introduction to this book, we cut some material that either directly referenced other *Das Schwarze Auge* products or that we felt would only make sense once we've translated more of the extensive library of game products into English. But no other section directly referenced other products as much as this chapter does.

And therein lies the problem. There are literally hundreds of new professions, talents, spells and the like that have been added to the game within those dozens of DSA products that aren't yet published in English, and this chapter makes wide use of those new elements.

That presents us with a quandary. Do we just cut out those entries that use these new elements, or do we change the entries to

conform to the rules presented in *The Dark Eye Basic Rules*, or do we do nothing? Or perhaps a little of all three?

What we've chosen to do here is a little of all three. Perhaps it's not the choice that you would make, but it does give you the most amount of flexibility in using these characters in your campaigns without having to wait to get those rules in your hands.

So, with that said, here's what we did (in general terms): we have left the listed professions unchanged; we have either deleted or changed the Advantages, Disadvantages and Talents that are not covered in the *Basic Rules* (though we have included two of the most commonly used Talents and one new Advantage; see the **Missing Pieces** sidebar on p. 155); **Important Spells** causes us more problems as only a handful of the hundreds of available spells have been translated into English, so we have kept the entire information block (which means that you will either have to use the most applicable of the currently available spells or make up your own, at least until we can get the books that contain all of that information translated and published!). Spells and powers that are not described in the *Basic Rules* are set off within brackets to aid you in determining what they are; the magical disciplines available include: Abilities, Anti-Magic, Clairvoyance, Communication, Damage, Demonic, Domination, Elemental, Force, Healing, Illusion, Influence, Invocation, Limbo, Meta-Magic, Object, Spirits, Summoning, Telekinesis, Temporal, Transformation and Transmutation.

Good luck, and keep an eye on the official The Dark Eye website (<http://www.thedarkeyerpg.com>). We'll keep you informed on the progress of the sourcebooks we still have coming!

MISSING PIECES

As we said previously, a good majority of the notable personalities in this section were generated using rules and game elements not yet available in English-language *Dark Eye* products. Now we don't have the room in this book to publish all of that information, but we can provide you some of the most commonly used ones.

So, below, you will find two brand new Talents and one new Advantage to help you use these personalities, and to better customize your own characters.

Statecraft (CL/IN/CH) (Specialized)

This is a talent that few travelling adventurers need, but if he's a young noble, he might have some knowledge in this field—and if he's planning a career as diplomat or imperial official, he simply has to have more than basic understanding in this field.

Specializations: Diplomacy, Intrigue, Administration

Related Talents: Housekeeping (+10), Law (State Law) (+10)

Treat Psyche (IN/CH/CH) (Professional)

A professional therapist can reduce psychic damages done by harmful magic and can (temporarily or permanently) reduce Negative Attributes. With a successful test, an enchanted or enslaved mind (such as caused by the spells *Be My Friend* and *Horriphobus*) can be set free again. *Treat Psyche* is hard to master—and can be harmful to the patient:

For treating the ill effects of a spell, the Difficulty Increase of the test is the SP* of the spell, tripled. The Highlord must determine which specific effects of the spell can be reversed. If the test fails, the patient usually suffers from a Negative Attribute: the patient gains d6+5 points in an appropriate Attribute of the Highlord's choosing for d6 days. A test takes two hours, during which the therapist and the patient must be in complete seclusion.

For treating the momentary effects of a Negative Attribute (to talk a comrade with Fear of Heights into crossing a shaking rope-bridge, for example) the Difficulty Increase to the test is double the value of the Negative Attribute in question. On a success, the Negative Attribute is lowered by d6 plus the remaining TP for one hour. Only one test is allowed per situation. A failure results in the

temporary increase of the Negative Attribute by d6 points. Such a test takes one Game Turn.

For permanently removing points of Negative Attributes, the Difficulty Increase for the test is (18 minus the value of the Negative Attribute). A success lowers the Negative Attribute by TP* points for d6 weeks. If the Negative Attribute is reduced to 0 or lower, it is permanently reduced by 1 point. Failures may be catastrophic for the patient: the Negative Attribute isn't reduced and one of the Mental Attributes (CO, CL, IN, CH) is reduced by one point for d6 days and the Negative Attribute in question is increased by d6 points for d6 days. If the Negative Attribute is raised over a value of 12, it is raised permanently by 1 point. Such a test takes one full day, during which the therapist and the patient must be in complete seclusion.

Notes: Treat Psyche *cannot* heal any physical damage done to a victim by a spell. A healer cannot use this talent on himself. Treat Psyche can be a profitable profession: a specialist can charge between 10 to 100 ducats per session (talent test), to be paid in advance—depending on his social standing, not on his quality! Reducing a Negative Attribute by a *Treat Psyche* test requires no spending of AP (otherwise see *The Dark Eye Basic Rules*, p. 129).

Related Talents: Human Nature (+10), Persuade (+10)

Prophecy (12 GP, gift): With this gift the character achieves insight for far-reaching future developments. Whenever he uses his chosen method of divination (be it astrology, card-reading, drug-induced visions, runecasting, reading the entrails of sacrifices or the flight of birds), the Highlord should make a hidden roll to determine what the character sees; additionally, the Highlord can activate this gift in suitable situations during the campaign and/or when the character is 'in the right mood.' Successes, even critical successes, shouldn't mean that the character sees the future clearly; the Highlord should keep the 'glimpses of the future' ambiguous and shady at best—there is no single future, only a host of possibilities.

This gift's starting value is 3; tests are made against IN/IN/CH; use of this gift costs 2d endurance and 1 point exhaustion. Possession of this gift should be discussed with the Highlord.



PERSONALITIES OF THE FAR NORTH AND THE NIVese LANDS

ALEKS BOLSHANJEFF, NORBARD FENCE

Aleks Bolshanjeff has a bald pate, a hip-long ponytail, strong muscles, a tall frame and always wears a winning smile. He roams the lands between Wealbeck and Kville, alone and clanless. Apart from his usual business, he also trades stolen goods, which he obtains in Fountland and sells in Riva for a good price. Only his debauched lifestyle prevents him from accumulating vast riches.

If the Norbard is drunk or believes that he can trust his companion, he will talk about the love of his life—a blonde, slender woman, a few years older than he but who looks not a day over 25. They met more than 10 years ago near Norburg, lived in a log cabin for several months and fell madly in love before she mysteriously vanished one morning. He is still searching for her today.

Born: 2 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Light brown

Profession: Master merchant and fence

Outstanding Attributes: CL 14, CH 14, Greed 8

Outstanding Talents: [Trade 10], Treat Wounds 9, Fast Talk 14, Survival 11

Peculiarities: The woman for whom Aleks searches desperately is Selinde... better known as Haal of Gareth.

Connections: Sufficient

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: Aleks is a very smart businessman, but no brute. He may help the heroes out of a mess, but in doing so, he looks for help in his search as a reward.

ELDORION CRYSTALSHINE, "THE HUNTRESS"

The ice elf fought on Maraskan, side by side with her lover, Prince Halman of Albernia. Her hail of arrows caused the enemy's defense to fall, but at great cost to her innocence. Shocked by this slaughter, she turned away from humans and lived in seclusion after many years' journeys. Now, she tries to teach her half-elfen daughter Madayra the customs of her people.

Born: Around 90 b.H.

Hair: Silver-white

Eyes: Amber

Profession: Perfect markswoman

Outstanding Attributes: IN 17, AG 21

Outstanding Talents: Bow 23, Perception 17, Bowyer 17

Important Spells: *eye of the eagle* 17, *unseen* 16; [trackless stepless 16, icewalk 16, body of the wind 13, eye of hawk 18, eagle's wings (blue falcon) 15]

Connections: Considerable, but never used (royal families of Albernia and Gareth)

Financial Power: Minimal

Game Use: Last survivor of her clan, a tragic existence; last savior from emergencies, archery teacher or mystical-sorrowful encounter in the ice

ILOINEN SWANDAUGHTER

The blood of Firun, Ifirn and the celestial wolf Wrenchgram flow in the veins of this woman, who still looks like she is a fourteen year-old girl. She has decided to lead a life in Aventuria in order to fight the unholy powers of the arch-demon Nagrach in the ice realm of Glorania.

Born: Around 90 b.H.

Hair: Copper-red with white strands

Eyes: One amber, the other blue

Profession: Master magician, brilliant ranger

Outstanding Attributes: CL 18, IN 20, DE 17; Gift: Danger Sense 17

Outstanding Talents: Javelins 17, Survival 18, Perception 17

Important spells: Mastery of survival spells from satuaric (witches') and ice elf origins

Peculiarities: Divine ancestry, ageless, deont of Ifirn

Connections: Worldly low, divine immense

Financial Power: Minimal

Game Use: She and her Ifirnsack fight Glorana and her minions, who devastate the lands of Firun. The characters might wish to join her in this cause.

KAILÄKINNEN, GREAT SHAMAN OF THE NIVese

The body of this shaman of the Nivese tribe Lieska-Leddu may show signs of his age, but his mind does not. He was the first one to warn of the return of the Inexpressible. The aims of this traditional Nivese medicine man are the reconciliation between men and wolves as well as peace between the tribes. His actions are subtle, but effective; even though this vivid, friendly man may seem harmless, he is a merciless enemy of every blasphemer.

Born: Around 63 b.H.

Hair: White

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Perfect Nivese shaman

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16, IN 17, CH 17;

Gift: Prophecy 18; Claustrophobia

Outstanding Talents: Treat Wounds 16, Treat Psyche 14, Plant Lore 17

Important Spells and Rituals: [Perfection of all Nivese shaman's rituals; blessed by the Sky Wolves with the Gift of the Skies (can use Karmic Energy)]

Peculiarities: Medium-sized bone club with over 30 ASP

Connections: Very great (Nivese), otherwise sufficient

Financial Power: Minimal

Game Use: He can ask the heroes to track down blasphemers and/or to undo a sacrilege. Can be helper and prophet against the inexpressible in the farnorth, but can also act as a conscience for dishonest heroes.

PARDONA

This 5,000 year-old elf became a monster to her own kind through her ambition and lust for power. Her supernatural strength of will led her into studies that were shunned by her race, and thus led her people into disaster. Blinded to the world as a whole, she fell into delusion and became paranoid. She closeted herself with her research and became the greatest chimaerologist of all times.

After she was cast into the netherhells in a summoning accident, she made a pact with the Nameless, who helped her escape. She is now his agent on Aventuria and sees the humans as tools for her evil schemes. She has grown impatient and ambitious, especially after Borbarad rejected her as a threat to his own power. Her hatred for all who do not bow to her will has grown, and will not be restrained.

Born: Unknown

Hair: Silver-white

Eyes: Golden

Profession: Perfect chimaerologist, brilliant summoner and master of intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: CL 20, CH 21

Outstanding Talents: Willpower, Fast Talk, Arcane Lore (perfection), many physical and social talents, intuitive and lore talents masterly

Important Spells: [Abilities, Demonic, Domination, Influence, Invocation, Transformation—almost all spells of these

disciplines have been mastered, along with all Elven spells; knows even some *Temporal* spells]

Peculiarities: Pact with the Nameless and 'acquaintance' of several archdemons, thus great summoning advantages

Connections: Low (few spies, the nightelves that she created)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Probably the most powerful chimaerologist of Aventuria, whose plans (right now mainly for the Ice Realm) are laid out for centuries in advance, and in which the heroes might play a part without noticing.

RASTAR "OGRESCARE" BREN MORVED, A GJALSKLANDISH CHIEFTAIN

The best-known chieftain of the Gjalskian barbarians gained fame in the Thousand-Ogre Battle (hence the name), in the Thunderstorm race, in the Ork War and the Third Demon Battle. Age has taken its toll on him, but he's still not content to settle down.

Born: 17 b.H.

Hair: Red-brown

Eyes: Black

Profession: A master axe-fighter, charioteer and brawler

Outstanding Attributes: ST 20, CO 20; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: [Drive Chariot 14], Brawling 17, Carouse 12, Wrestling 16

Peculiarities: A chariot drawn by two wooly rhinoceroses

Connections: Sufficient (great in Gjalskland and Svellt Valley)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: The classic lout, who may be a challenger or rival but gains friendship due to his kind and unreserved nature.

UIGAR KAI, ORKISH SHAMAN

Uigar Kai was the former high shaman of the orks, disgraced when he tried to overthrow the Aikar Brazoragh a few years ago. The coup failed and he fled to the Frozen Peaks, where he has gathered more orkish warriors. He now wages war against Glorana as well as ice elves and the human settlements.

Uigar Kai is desperate for power and willing to sacrifice anything to achieve it. He and his minions made a pact with a demon, probably Nagrach, which brought them a long life, immunity to the cold and a dense coat of white fur. Two armored and heavily armed

war-ogres make up his personal guard.

Born: Around 25 b.H.

Fur: White

Eyes: Yellow

Profession: Perfect shaman and masterly brigand leader

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CH 17, Gift: Prophecy 15; Greed, Vengefulness

Outstanding Talents: Orkish History 17, masterly Wilderness Talents

Important Spells and Rituals: [Perfection of orkish shaman rituals, knowledge of Nagrach-pleasing invocations and necromantic rituals]

Peculiarities: Owns the Black Staff, an item which dramatically increases his casting powers

Connections: Sufficient (brigand leader)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: The mysterious sorcerer king at the end of the world, who obviously craves for world domination

THE WHITE MAN

The highest deont of Firun wears a snow-white polar bear hide, and is never seen without it. The head of the pelt acts as a hood, covering his face so effectively that his visage and identity were always veiled, even to his closest associates. He has not been seen since the Crystal Palace of Bjaldorn fell under siege of the Ice Realm, but it is said that a swift, tough polar bear still fights the minions of Glorana. Has Firun given his highest servant the shape of an animal and the power to withstand the demonic cold to hunt his antagonist?

Born: Unknown

Hair: Unknown

Eyes: Unknown

Profession: Perfect deont of Firun: a taciturn and pious soul marked by the merciless hunt in the north—unpitied of the weak but appreciating the brave.

Outstanding Attributes: High physical toughness

Outstanding Talents: Wilderness and hunting talents masterly or perfect

Peculiarities: In human form, he wears the polar bear's cloak, a hunting spear and a golden ring with the Gleaming Quartz, the artifact of Firun

Connections: Minimal

Financial Power: None

Game Use: Thanks to Ifirn, he might help heroes of good heart that are in need. Demonists and blasphemers will be hunted and killed—he may even accept the help of the heroes for this task.



PERSONALITIES OF FOUNTLAND

DRAVUVO KAIBA, 'MAYOR' OF THE FESTUMIAN GOBLIN QUARTER AND 'CAPTAIN' OF THE GOBLIN BANNER OF THE FESTUMIAN MILITIA

Dravuvo Kaiba is the contact of choice for the Festumian magistrate concerning the red-pelted population of the city. He has proven to be a tough negotiator, even though he often has to ask for time to think things over. Usually he roams western Fountland in search of herbs and pelts, officially commissioned by Festumian tanneries. On his journeys he exchanges news with messengers of various goblin tribes. Sometimes he can be found in the remote city of Uhdenberg—nobody knows how he manages to cross the Red Sickle that quickly.

Born: 6 Haal

Fur: Red

Eyes: Yellow

Profession: Masterly chieftain, competent local politician

Outstanding Attributes: IN 13, DE 15

Outstanding Talents: Streetwise 14, Human Nature 9, all Wilderness Talents 7+; speaks Garethi fluently with a strong Fountlandian accent

Connections: Sufficient (humans considerable (goblins))

Financial Power: Sufficient (thus probably the richest goblin of Aventuria)

Game Use: Contact for both the 'civilized' goblins of Festum and Uhdenberg and some tribes of the Red Sickle; speaker for Mantka Riiba

LINDION DARKHAIR, SILVAN ELF

Lindion is an amoral, merciless hunter, who heeds only the laws of nature. He is totally disinterested in financial matters: He takes what he needs and keeps it for as long as he needs it—equipment and company alike, as he has proven in his loveless affair with the Amazon princess Gilia.

Born: Unknown

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Perfect ranger and hunter

Outstanding Attributes: DE 16, AG 17, IN 17

Outstanding Talents: Survival 18, Traps 14

Important Spells: *be my friend* 16; [*eagle's wings* 15; *lightning find you!* 12]

Connections: Low

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Lindion first thinks of himself, then of other elves. He is neutral to disapproving towards humans and would only help them if it coincides with his interests.

MANTKA RIIBA, THE KUNGA SUULA

The matriarch of the goblins of Festum is exceptionally wily for a goblin. She is also a shaman, giving her arcane powers with which to awe her followers. She has not only secured the professions of clearers, rat-catchers and trash collectors for her people, but has also managed to control smuggling and fencing in Festum.

Born: Around 1000 b.H.

Hair: Red-brown

Eyes: Red-violet

Profession: A brilliant shaman with a strange charisma

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, IN 17, CH 18; Local Knowledge (all of Festum)

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 18, Persuade 12, Streetwise 12

Peculiarities: The Mantka Riiba really is the Kunga Suula, high shaman of the goblins with a knowledge (own or inherited) from 2,000 years of goblinic history

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: Even in the role of Mantka Riiba, she is an eerie informant, rival or employer.

SEPHIRIM ISYAHADAN, HIGH DEONT OF THE NAMELESS

Sephirim, a man of many faces, was born in the Nameless days of the year to an awful destiny. An early prophecy predicted that this man would cause great peril, and thus far it seems all too true. Sephirim is skilled at playing fair when he means foul, of charming his victims into his clutches. By the time he drops the façade of the charismatic noble and reveals the true face of the powerful deont of the rat-child, it is usually too late.

Born: 20 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Blue and green

Profession: A charming seducer and masterful man of intrigue

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Willpower 15, Persuade 16, Human Nature 14

Peculiarities: Glass eye (green, on the right), a birthmark on his chest shaped like the horned demon head

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Sephirim is the man in the shadows; a puppetmaster obscured behind countless lies and intrigues. His methods and plans can be discerned, but never fully seen—or exposed. He is the symbol of an immense, unfathomable danger.

STOVER REGOLAN**STOERREBRANDT, MERCHANT, SHIP-OWNER AND PATRON**

He is probably the richest man of Aventuria and the current, long-standing patriarch of the trade house with the same name. He cultivates his jovial, uncle-like image, but has the power to force concessions out of sovereigns through a myriad of methods (trade boycott, buying up debts, marriage politics) giving him power unequalled in Aventuria.

His empire consists of 68 offices, 25 ships, 150 wagons, as well as shipwrights, cartwrights, mines and plantations. He promotes art and the exploration of magic, is known to be a Fountlandian patriot and a loving father—all most profitable pursuits, indeed.

Born: 16 Phex, 42 b.H.

Hair: Grey-white

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Perfect merchant, brilliant politician

Outstanding Attributes: CL 17, CH 14

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 14, Etiquette 12, Fast Talk (Haggle) 17 (19), Appraise 20, Calculate 14, Law 13, Trade 20

Peculiarities: Can always call on mercenaries, magicians and artifacts for protection

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Employer for really big expeditions, a patron for artists and scientists

THESIA J. ELMSTONE, COUNTESS OF ELMSTONE, NOBLE MARSHAL OF FOUNTLAND

After her valiant performance on the Vallusian Meadows, where the army of the 'winged' riders turned the fate in favor of the allied forces, Jadvice was quickly promoted to Noble Marshal by the Fountlandian nobility. Since then, the most famous Sewerian bronnjar in modern times can be found leading the Fountlandian army. She has the austerity and competence of a veteran commander and uses all her power to prevent any Borbaradian infiltration.

Born: 29 b.H.

Hair: Light blonde

Eyes: Blue-grey

Profession: Brilliant fencer, witty public speaker and politician

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CL 15, CH 18

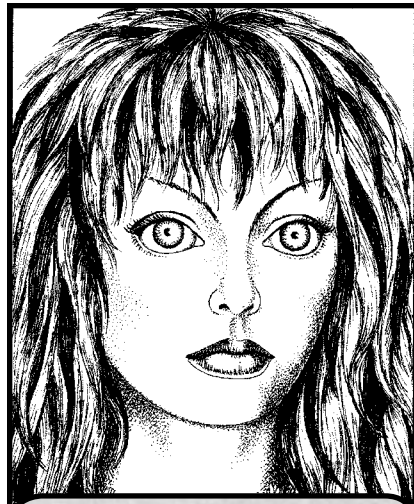
Outstanding Talents: Swords 18, Willpower 15, Warcraft 15, Ride 14, Carouse 14; a number of special combat abilities

Peculiarities: Her age does not touch her beauty

Connections: Very great

Financial Powers: Great

Game Use: Employer of Ronda-pleasing heroes, mostly on expeditions against Glorania



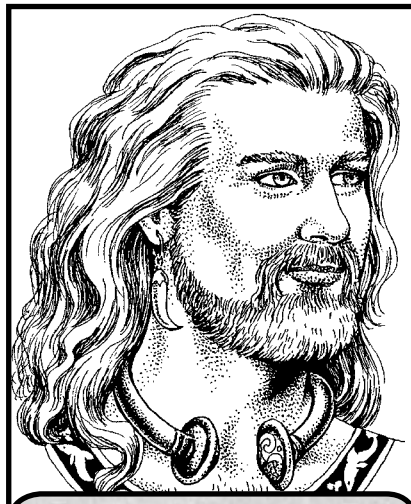
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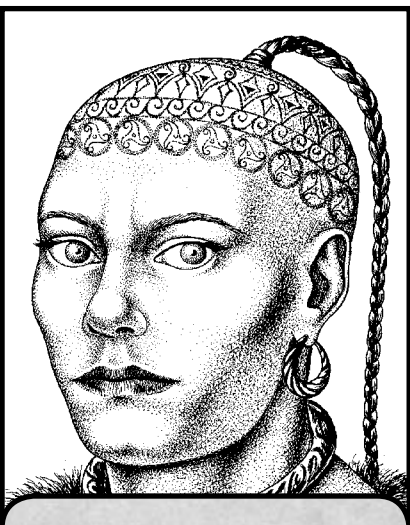
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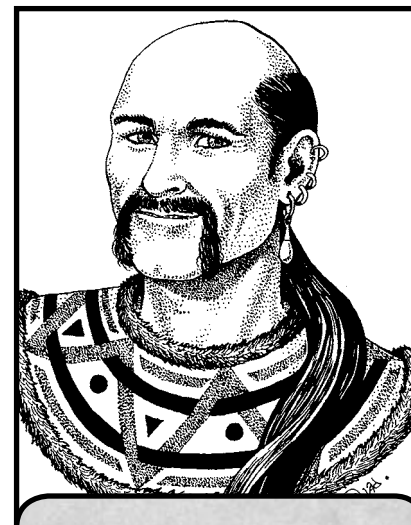
Iskir Ingibjarsson



Thesia J. Elmstone



Tula of Skerdu



Aleks Bolshanjeff



Sadrak Whassoi

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

TJEIKA OF NEEDMARK, CROWN WARDEN OF NEERSAND

Tjeika is the charismatic (and usually pitied) daughter of the despotic Count of Needmark, and has been the Noble Marshal for two times running. She accompanied her father in his cruel campaign towards Tobria to support Borbarad, but did not take part in any of the cruelties inflicted there. Instead, she quarreled with Count Uriel at the gates of

Neersand and defected to the defenders' side, earning the title 'Savior of the City.' In Rahja, 29 Haal, she declared her former husband dead and married Squire Orshin of Sumovicz-Suddingen, whose influence might help her to be re-elected as Noble Marshal yet again.

Born: 3 b.H.

Hair: White-blonde

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant, wily politician

Outstanding Attributes: CL 15, IN 14; vanity
Outstanding Talents: Seduce 13, Etiquette 15, Fast Talk (Lie) 15 (17), Statecraft 10

Connections: Great in southern Fountland, not that good in Seweria due to her father's infamy

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: A secret planner, who changes attitudes quickly and convincingly, asks the heroes for help; or just someone who wants to gain power, one way or another.

PERSONALITIES OF THORWAL, THE ORKLAND AND THE SVELLTLAND

ASHIM RIAK ASSAI, THE AIKAR BRAZORAGH

This mysterious leader of the black furs united the clans of all orks in 10-15 Haal, then proclaimed the beginning of the Ork Storm in the beginning of the great year 2000 (17 Haal). He resides in Khezzarra, where he has gathered the chieftains of all the clans around him. According to former captives, he is a warrior by nature but also able to speak various languages.

Born: 15 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Red

Profession: Brilliant prophet, perfect warrior-priest, with an air of divinity

Outstanding Attributes: CO 21, ST 21, CN 21, IN 18; Gift: Prophecy 21, no notable disadvantages

Outstanding Talents: History (Ork) 18, Tongues 18, Statecraft 14, several masterly combat and nature talents, speaks several tongues of the north

Important Rituals: [Brilliant in all orkish shaman rituals]

Peculiarities: is a priest of both Brazoragh and Tairach; combines abilities of a fighter and a shaman; despises cowardice or hypocrisy, but shows no mercy as victor either.

Connections: Immense (chief of all orks)

Financial Power: Very great as Aikar Brazoragh; private finances unknown

Game Use: The brain of all orkish activities in north-western Aventuria; the heroes may only meet him in a diplomatic mission to Khezzarra

as well. He participated in the front line during the conquests of Enqui and Salta, in the raids in the Horasrealm, as well as in the battles against the Hranngar-Beasts in the Sea of Pearls. He is Hetman Tronde's advisor concerning questions of tradition and law, and he is also very fond of drinking and brawling.

Unfortunately, his lofty plans for the future of Thorwal may not only conflict with those of Tronde, but may also cause a war against all Aventuria; the Thorwal of his dreams reaches from the Gulf of Riva to the Southask—and Hjaldingard is next.

Born: 2 b.H.

Hair: Ginger

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Brilliant skald and historian; masterly politician and fighter

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CL 14, CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Axes 16, Carouse 14, Teach 16, History (Thorwal) 17 (19), Geography 14, Religious Lore 12, Law (Thorwal) 15 (17), Statecraft 10, Legend Lore (Thorwal) 17 (19)

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: Iskiri is not only a troublemaker in the otherwise harmonic Thorwalian family life, but also an employer when it comes to collecting Thorwalian history all over the continent—and in bringing his dreams to fruition.

JOOST STONEBRIDGER, TRACKER

The taciturn, ragged-looking man from Stonebridge in northern Meadows once was a tracker and a fighter in the Uhdenberg Legion, the "pack comrade" of Sadrak Whassoi. In the Svelltian League, he is known for his knowledge on orks; very few Aventurians have fought as many battles against them as he has, and ever fewer have lived with them.

Stonebridger was a slave of the Zholochai

tribe for one year. He fought his way up into the hunter's caste, then fled as the clan he lived with changed chieftains. He is married to the Norbard Javanka and spends most of his time in Tjolmar, but he is sometimes seen in Lowangen or Northern Meadows.

Born: 14 b.H.

Hair: Blond/grey

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant tracker and ork expert

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, AG 16

Outstanding Talents: Bow 16, all wilderness and physical Talents competent or better, Orkish Nature 15, Warcraft 10

Connections: Sufficient (limited to Meadows and the former Svelltian League)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: An important informant regarding orks, possibly a guide into the eastern Orkland, also suitable to get heroes out of "ork problems."

SADRAK WHASSOI, THE BLACK MARSHAL

Once was a mercenary in the Uhdenberg Legion, he soon left all pretence of a 'civilized life' behind. Whassoi murdered the Guard Captain von Arpitz of Meadows, and served the invading orkish armies as strategist and human-knowledge advisor during the Ork Storm. The Zholochai-warrior is a chosen of the Aikar Brazoragh, which may also be reason why he is still living at his advanced age. Whassoi is a warrior in body and soul, who proved his abilities during the ork storm—and who is intent to show them again...

Born: 15 b.H.

Hair: Black-brown

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant fighter and strategist

Outstanding Attributes: ST 18, CO 16, IN 15

Outstanding Talents: Warcraft 18, mastery of several combat and nature talents

ISKIR INGIBJARSSON, THE "LAST HJALDINGAN"

The older brother of the hetman on Enqui is a role-model for many young Thorwalians, because he can not only tell tales of his ancestors but of his own deeds – reflecting the old sagas –

Connections: Great (high commander of the orks)

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: The symbol for orkish menace; if the orks have any military victories in the north-west, he planned it. The heroes will probably meet him on the battlefield.

TRONDE TORBENSSON OF THE FOAMRIDER-OTTA, SUPREME HETMAN

For 15 years, he has been the hetman of the hetmen, and thus chief of all Thorwalians. His build is average for a Thorwalian. Although he is muscular and of one pace and four and a quarter span tall, his lack of a beard (he is neatly shaven) makes a bigger impression on most that see him.

Wearing his war coat and his barbarian war axe, he looks like an uncivilized daredevil, but his real aim is to transform the loose confederation of the Thorwalians into a 'real' state. He is supported in this endeavor by his wife, Bryda Garulfsdottir, his young daughters, Jurga Trondesdottir and Kjaska Byrdasdottir, and the men and women of the Foamrider-Otta.

Born: 26 b.H.

Hair: Ginger

Eyes: Blue-grey

Profession: Seemingly uncivilized, but an able diplomat and politician with good common sense

Outstanding Attributes: CL 15, IN 16, ST 17

Outstanding Talents: Carouse 13, Human Nature 14, Statecraft (Thorwal) 13 (15), Seafaring 10

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Mainly as an employer for adventures in Thorwal and an initiator of expeditions for curious heroes

TULA OF SKERDU, POWERFUL WITCH

The ageless Thorwalian high witch with her tattooed bald skull, the heavy golden jewelry and her fur clothing may be the most terrifying 'beauty of the night.' She lives on Skerdu in an old longhouse and usually steers her longboat Al'Anfa-bound. Its crew is said to have fallen into sinister, slavish love with her, and every once in a while sailors follow her sinister, sorrowful singing to a mysterious, possibly sinister demise.

Born: Unknown

Hair: Red (bald)

Eyes: Green

Profession: Brilliant high witch, impressive and dangerously alien

Outstanding Attributes: IN 16, ST 17, AG 16; ageless

Outstanding Talents: Bind/Escape 14, Helmsman 14, Seduce 13, Perception 17, Throwing Axes 16, Weather Sense 12, almost all physical talents competent or better

Important Spells and Curses: [All witch curses, some ice elven and druidic spells; favorite curses: *infertility*, *restless*, *hail* (especially against enemy ships)]

Peculiarities: Height: 1.92 paces; wild cat familiar 'Dewman'

Connections: Great among northern Aventurian witches, considerable in Thorwal

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: Tula is someone who uses others for assistance without asking them, and seldom helps anyone in return. To meet the most-feared witch of Aventuria is one adventure, and to gain her trust is yet another—and one that requires they sail with her through the netherhells and back again.

PERSONALITIES OF THE MIDDENREALM

ALARA PALIGAN, WIDOW OF THE EMPEROR

The wife of the missing Emperor Haal has shared her bed with more men than a prostitute in the harbor of Havena, a well-known secret that has been the scandal of the court for years. Whomever the lady from Al'Anfa grants the favor of her charms cannot be sure whether it is a blessing or a curse. He might be rewarded by riches, but he might also be entwined into an intrigue that otherwise would cause *her* head to roll... The former empress knows that she isn't getting younger and that make-up cannot veil her age for much longer, but that doesn't stop her from dreaming of a fountain of youth.

Born: 26 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Profession: Master of intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: CH 16, Superstition, Greed

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 13, Etiquette 14, Fast Talk 12, Statecraft 10

Peculiarities: Alara possesses a number of

the most expensive beauty ointments in Aventuria, including some magical ones

Connections: Immense—has had Rahjaic relations with many powerful people of the realm, and family relations to Al'Anfa

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Alara can be a dubious employer or the focus of an adventure, as many influential people have a grudge against the empress.

ALRIK OF BLUEFIR AND OF THE MOUNTAIN, GUARD COLONEL FOR SPECIAL DUTIES

As a young captain, he saved the Imperial army on the Silk Meadows and was promoted by Prince Brin to be the highest commander of his age ever present in the Imperial forces. Ever since, he can be found in the front lines of daring cavalry attacks, making the difference between victory and defeat.

Alrik fought in the battle of Griffinsford and against the hordes of Borbarad. Bluefir is quite young for a colonel, and wherever he appears (he travels a lot) he is the heartthrob of

all young ladies—and often seems to be more liked by Aves than by Rondra. It is said that he has even visited the fairy realms.

Born: 4 b.H.

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Deep green

Profession: Brilliant cavalry officer, competent strategist

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, AG 16, ST 15; Gift: Danger Sense 10

Outstanding Talents: Jousting 17, Swords 17, Ride 16, Etiquette 10, Human Nature 10

Peculiarities: He doesn't seem to be so well-off with Ingerimm, for it is said that he returns from every battle with a broken sword.

Connections: Considerable (one of the heroes of the Middenrealm)

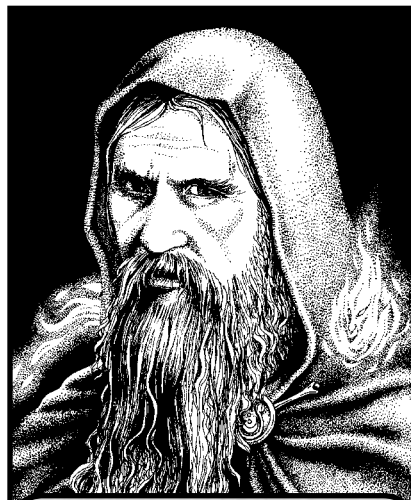
Financial Power: Considerable (if not in service, he is living off a nice pension)

Game Use: Employer or commander of daring, Rondra-pleasing endeavors, usually under the direct command of the Imperial Regent; alternatively, the commander of the proverbial cavalry that rescues the heroes from danger.

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA



Alara Paligan



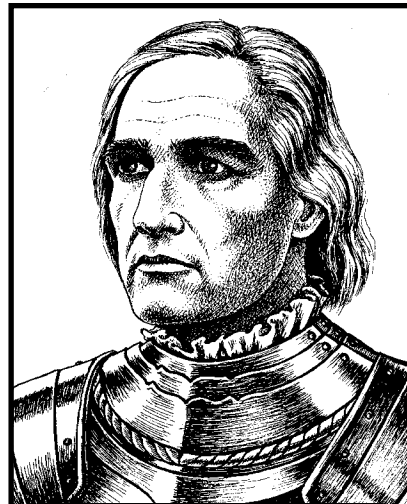
Archon Megalon



Ayla of Shadevale



Regent Emer ni Bennain



King Cuanu of Albernia



Djindar of Falconberg-Ravensmouth



The Revered Couple of Rommily



Count Dexter Nemrod

AMANDO LACONDA DA VANYA, SECRET INQUISITION COUNSELOR

Probably nobody within the church of Praios knows more about the machinations of the Borbaradians than his eminence, by now Illuminatus and High Deont of the temple of Praios in Punin. He has closely observed the development of the marked ones from the very beginning. In questions of church-politics he seems to side with the Prince-Illuminata of Beilunk, but he avoids expressing his political views.

Born: 43 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant inquisitor and expert of black magic

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CL 15

Outstanding Talents: Religious Lore 16, Arcane Lore 15, Law 14, Human Nature 12

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: Even though he is an arch-conservative hardliner, he can be a vital source of information for the heroes; if it serves a good purpose, he might overlook a few religious mistakes of the heroes.

ARCHON MEGALON, DRUID

For a druid he is very scientific, more interested in the secrets of the human soul than the forces of nature. Archon is quite a bookworm and often appears in the most unlikely places, where he seeks answers or tries to manipulate a large number of people according to his will. All the same, he was the (secret) court wizard in Havena!

Born: 38 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue-grey

Profession: Brilliant caster of domination-spells, and master of human psychology

Outstanding Attributes: CL 19, CH 18, CO 17; Gift: danger Sense 14

Outstanding Talents: Human Nature 15, Willpower 13

Important Spells and Rituals: [Almost all druidic spells and rituals brilliant, some perfected; numerous domination and influence spells]

Peculiarities: Silver snake-circlet of Ashin of Springs, which provides him with various divinations; always wears an amulet to increase his RM

Connections: Considerable (a suspect person, who is probably prosecuted in various places)

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: The classic "joker" for everything related to magic—there's always a reason why Megalon might be interested in a location or an artifact ...

ARRIUS OF WULFFEN, COURT DEONT OF THE ROYAL GARETHIAN COURT

From 'simple' (lesser nobility) circumstances, he has made his way into the high society of Gareth. He drew attention by organizing the heroic resistance against the Tordochai attack on Gareth during the battle on the Silk Meadows. His courage and charisma have led him to become a counselor to Regent Emer.

Wulffen, who is mainly the Regent's personal guard (officially he is Captain of the Sun Legion), always tries to be up to date with the happenings of Gareth city, in order to be able to give counsel to the Regent—even in complex matters. He is known to be one of the strongest supporters of the neo-Praiotic ('Braniborian,' after the Celestial Dragon of Justice) ideology, which emphasizes justice above all—a law which is also binding for the nobility.

Born: 3 b.H.

Hair: Light brown

Eyes: Green

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CL 14, CH 14, ST 15

Outstanding Talents: Willpower 13, Persuade 12, Etiquette 11, Teach 12, Human Nature 12, Religious Lore 12, Arcane Lore 10, Law 12, Statecraft 10, Treat Poison 14

Connections: Considerable (contact with the royal court, many deonts and guildsfolk)

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: A sociable Praiotus, and also one with many connections. He might be the heroes' key to a royal audience.

AYLA OF SHADEVALE, THE SWORD OF SWORDS

Since the year 23 Haal, Ayla has been recognized as the highest ranking deont of Rondra in all of Aventuria. Yet, she still seems to be haunted by the experiences of the quests of her youth: Even though she does not allow any compromises regarding faith, she is quite open-minded—towards magic, for example—which has caused some criticism among her peers.

Born: 19 Peraine, 10 b.H.

Hair: Medium-blond

Eyes: Green

Profession: A strict, but open-minded high deont

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, CH 16, ST 19

Outstanding Talents: a lot of armed melee talents masterly and better; Persuade 14, Human Nature 14, Willpower 14, Teach 10

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: The Sword of Swords will always listen to an honorable hero, and she will often find ways to help them.

BALDUR GRIFFAX OF RIDGESROCK, FORMER COUNT OF RIDGESROCK

Once a powerful count, Baldur was driven by visions and dreams into "putting up a great army against the enemies from the east," which was ruinous for the treasury of the county of Ridgesrock. He lost his position, but escaped prosecution. He now roams the woods as a hermit for 15 years now. His brother, Guardian of Order Pagol Griffax, has put up quite a sum for his capture, to be paid so long as he is basically unharmed.

Born: 36 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant prophet, inexperienced magical dilettante, maniac

Outstanding Attributes: IN 17; Gift: Prophecy 15; Superstition, Delusions

Outstanding Talents: Hide 16

Spells: (Magical Dilettante) *See true and pure*; Protective Spirit

Connections: None

Financial Power: None

Game Use: Mad prophet who always escapes his prosecutors, but his visions might become important (but cryptic) clues.

BAHRAM NAZIR, THE RAVEN OF PUNIN

The Exalted, who has acted as the head of the Rite of Punin for almost half a century, was an irreconcilable enemy of the heretical Al'Anfan Rite of Boron worship for most of his life. Now, though, he has become more moderate and has even cooperated with Al'Anfanians against Borbarad. He has long served his god, but nothing indicates that Boron intends to call the 90-year-old priest anytime soon.

Born: 58 b.H.

Hair: White

Eyes: Dark brown

Profession: Perfect prophet and rhetoric, masterly religious leader

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, IN 20; Gift: Prophecy 18

Outstanding Talents: Religious Lore 18

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: The Raven of Punin rarely appears in public. He could very well call for the heroes, however, if Boron sent him a vision that is related to the heroes.

BLASIUS OF BOARSTEM, PRINCE OF KOSH

Being a traditional sovereign, he highly values the church of Rondra and its ideals—less by deeds than by flowery tales of his deeds in the ork wars. He is almost closer to Travia

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

than to Rondra, for he loves visitors, every kind of good food and drink and homely coziness more than anything.

Born: 25 b.H.

Hair: Grey-brown

Eyes: Blue

Profession: A leisurely, hardly ambitious sovereign

Outstanding Attributes: ST 15, CH 14, CL 11

Outstanding Talents: Carouse 16, Axes & Maces 10, Cook 10

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Blasius dreads politics, and may be a stressed (and stressful) employer.

BRIN OF RHODESTONE, ABBOT-MARSHAL OF THE ORDER OF KEEPING, MASTER OF THE COVENANT OF THE MIDDENREALM

The squire of the heretic predecessor of Ayla of Shadevale was chosen by the high deont herself to be the leader of the church province (an 'archbishop') of the Middenrealm. By now he has succeeded in silencing most of his enemies. His courage and youthful fire have caused many swordsmen to renew their faith for not only war, but also tedious exercise and the willingness to wield the sword to do good to please the goddess. During times of war, these views have come into fashion throughout the Middenrealm.

Born: 2 Haal

Hair: Red

Eyes: Green

Profession: A hot-blooded young man, who is often criticized by members of the church for his views

Outstanding Attributes: CO 13, AG 14; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Ride 10, Carouse 11, Religious Lore 12, Persuade 10

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: Employer for Rondra-pleasing quests

CUANU UI BENNAIN, KING OF ALBERNIA

As comrade-in-arms of Raidri Conchobair, Brin of Gareth, Waldemar of Meadows and Helme Haffax, he fought the 1,000 ogres, fought Ansvin of Ravensmouth, drove the phony sovereign Isora of Elenvia out and finally led the militia into the Third Demon Battle. From this battle, the once luminous hero returned as a sorrowful fighter, the last of his generation (Raidri, Brin and Waldemar dead, Helme Haffax a turncoat). Back in Albernia he crowned his heir and daughter,

Invher ni Bennain, as Queen by his side in order to let her rule the country.

Born: 36 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Perfect warrior, brilliant politician and diplomat

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CL 15, ST 15

Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 13, Etiquette 10; diverse armed melee talents masterly and better

Peculiarities: Took part in 'pretty much everything'

Connections: Very great (but usually not used; father of two queens, grandfather of a future empress)

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Cuanu can serve as example for the horrors of the Demon Battle, as an old sentimental hero who wants one more wish to be fulfilled, or as a desperately fighting lion if his family is in danger.

COUNT DEXTER NEMROD OF WARKHOME, HIGH PRIVY COUNCILOR OF THE REALM

By now almost seventy years old, the count of Warkhome is still known for his loyalty with the Realm (not necessarily with the Royals, though), and notorious for his harsh treatment of enemies of the state and black magicians. After long years of being a warrior, investigator and even Grand Inquisitor, he now dedicates his time to politics and counter-espionage against Borbaradians.

Born: 36 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Ice-grey

Profession: Perfect head of secret service

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CL 16

Outstanding Talents: Human Nature 18, Statecraft 17, Crossbow (Balestrina) 16; many social and lore skills masterly

Peculiarities: More and more estranged to imperial politics

Connections: Immense (as count, commander of the IGIA and counselor to the Regent)

Financial Power: Great (private wealth)

Game Use: The grey eminence in the shadows; if Nemrod appears in person, one can be sure to be involved in a realm-wide 'situation'; otherwise one contacts his adjutant Drego of Narrowfens

DREGO OF NARROWFENS, IGIA AGENT

Obviously, not much is known about the personal adjutant and commander of Dexter Nemrod's guards. Nominally, he is commander of the notorious '11th Squadron,' but his activities exceed his official duties. He

aids the High Privy Councilor of the Realm's investigations, speaks publicly in his name and also negotiates with "private detectives."

Born: 5 b.H.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Grey-green

Profession: Masterly bodyguard and investigator, competent politician

Outstanding Attributes: All good

Outstanding Talents: Various fighting techniques masterly; Statecraft 10, Persuade 12

Peculiarities: Heavily increased RM due to a Praios amulet

Connections: Considerable (one of the ten most important members of the IGIA)

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: The contact to the IGIA for heroes of medium level who want to bypass all the bureaucracy; generally suspicious (due to his profession), but flexible enough to approve "unusual measures"

DJINDAR-FRITJOFF OF FALCONBERG-RAVENSMOUTH, HIGH CHAMBERLAIN OF ALMADA

The half-Maraskanian is reputed to be one of the most able judicial experts of the Middenrealm. He became High Chamberlain of Almada because of his conscientiousness and his keen logic, both of which are essential in order to survive the undergrowth of Almadan vanity and intrigues. Thus strictness and pragmatism define his public appearance, while in private he is a kindly man.

Born: 5 b.H.

Hair: Dark blonde

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Strict ruler, free-thinking philosopher

Outstanding Attributes: CL 17, IN 15; Curiosity

Outstanding Talents: Law 18, Statecraft 12, Etiquette 11

Peculiarities: Fine humor, surprising thundering laugh

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: One will hardly encounter Djindar under normal adventuring circumstances. He might approach the heroes to seek a lost philosophical manuscript or to research the Almadan nobility—in the latter case, he is more interested in frightening the observed person than to receive information.

THE REVERED COUPLE OF ROMMILYS

Traviata definitely is the more prudent one of the Holy Couple of the church of Travia and—despite her young age—emanates an

almost mystical aura, with which she heads the sacral branch of the church. Trautman, on the other hand, is more of a rhetoric and diplomat who oversees the worldly matters of the church. Both are known to be very religious and they jointly control the fate of the church of Travia.

Game Use: the Revered Couple might initiate the construction of a temple or ask for support of refugees

TRAVIATA OF RAVENSMOUTH

Born: 4 Haal

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Obliging and attentive—a brilliant deont and host

Outstanding Attributes: IN 16; Gift: Prophecy 13

Outstanding Talents: Religious Lore 14, Cook 12

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Immense

TRAUTMAN OF FALCONBERG-RAVENSMOUTH

Born: 1 Haal

Hair: Dark blonde

Eyes: Brown-green

Profession: Obliging, attentive and eloquent—a brilliant diplomat

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 14, Etiquette 12, Persuade 12

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Immense

EMER NI BENNAIN, REGENT OF THE MIDDENREALM

The popular and beautiful regent of the Middenrealm is not only a good ruler, but also a masterly fencer. During the Third Demon Battle, she wielded the legendary sword Sevenstroke against Borbarad's Black Hordes, which only increased respect for her in the eyes of warriors and deonts of the Celestial Lioness.

Tragically she lost her husband, Brin of Gareth, in this battle. Now she is courted by various nobles and wealthy merchants, but she shows no sign of accepting any suitor any time soon. Surrounded by favorites, flatterers and the powerful of the Realm, she tries to secure the heritage of her daughter Rohaja, the future empress, with lion-like directness.

Born: 18 Rondra, 8 b.H.

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Deer-brown

Profession: Brilliant regent with a good sense of justice

Outstanding Attributes: CL 15, CH 17; Fear of Heights

Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 14, Persuade 16, Etiquette 12; some armed melee talents masterly

Peculiarities: Depending on the Highlord's decision, Emer can possess almost any magical artifact, wondrous weapon, precious items, etc.

Connections: Immense; Emer is sister of the Albernian Queen Invher Ni Bennain, by the way

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Can be used as an employer, if the heroes either reached a high level and have a good reputation or have rendered great services to the Middenrealm.

ESLAM OF ESLAMABAD 'AND ALMADA'

For some he is the anticipated offspring of royal blood who deserves the throne, for others he is a dangerous rogue and demagogue. Nevertheless, he divides the most hot-blooded province of the Middenrealm in two fronts. Nobody who met him can deny his strong charisma, not even Queen Rohaja of Gareth. What that means for the realm as a whole, however, is anyone's guess.

Born: 6 b.H.

Hair: Black-brown

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Brilliant rhetorician and diplomat

Outstanding Attributes: CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 16, Human Nature 14

Peculiarities: Is said to be in the favor of Madalena, the head of the temple of Rahja in Punin

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: The agitator of Almada can either be an employer of the heroes or a victim of their secret observations.

GARUL THE BLACK, DRUID

In the hamlets of the Ironwood in the Northern Marches, it is a known fact that all missing children "were taken by Black Garul." It is said that he is a sinister sorcerer, who spies the lands through the eyes of black crows, lives with bears and wolves and has driven many charcoal-burners insane. Indeed, Garul cultivates the druidic practice of taking apprentices without asking the parents (or even the apprentice himself) and to abandoning ungifted or resisting apprentices in the woods. He is not responsible for all kidnappings in the Northern Marches, however, nor does he practice necromancy or demonology. He just prefers animals and plants as familiars, and dislikes unsteady and moody humans.

Born: 39 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Brilliant animal expert, master of nature lore

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CL 15; Gift: Danger Sense 10

Outstanding Talents: Animal Lore 17, Plant Lore 15, all other nature Talents at least competent, all Treat Talents masterly and up

Important Spells and Rituals: (Elemental/Earth) [All common druidic spells masterly, some witch and elven spells, few guild magician spells; all druidic rituals]

Connections: Minimal

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Can be used as adventure-hook for low- to mid-level heroes, who turns out to be better than his reputation and can become a contact for druidism and nature lore

HARTUWAL GORWIN OF THE GREAT RIVER, LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR AND HEIR APPARENT OF THE NORTHERN MARCHES

This student of warcraft in Warkhome was also one of the most successful graduates of the law seminar in Beilunk. With the adaptable arrogance of a nobleman, his conversations can feel like an interrogation. He is not entirely cold blooded, however, and occasionally the hot temper of his ancestors may cause others to question his public image of a smart fox.

Born: 9 b.H.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Tactician and reformer, who is firmly loyal to the Realm—the only question is whether he may be even more loyal to the Northern Marches ...

Outstanding Attributes: CL 15, IN 17; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Human Nature 14, Law 16, Statecraft 15

Peculiarities: It is a public secret that the chancellor believes the time for his plans has come, now that his father Duke Jast Gorsam has become Steward and his uncle Hilberian has become Messenger of Light. He will not use all means possible, but most of them in order to bring his plans to fruition.

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: The chancellor can be an employer for difficult and secret missions of political nature, usually targeted at discreet and unknown helpers. He may also be an adversary of an intrigue being carried out by a noble of the Realm.

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HILBERIAN PRAIOGRIFF II, HELIODAN, MESSENGER OF LIGHT

He is notorious for his self-appointment as an 'Anti-Messenger' after a griffin-vision, but famous for his renunciation of all positions and ranks and his enclosure for several years. This bastard of the Northern Marches ducal line is a man of balance, peace and order for the common welfare of all Ethra. He encourages individual meditation to achieve this order, but also knows that one can falter on the way to reach it, like he did himself, blinded by Praios' radiance. To help the faithful go this path, he believes, is the mission of the Praios church. Of course, he also prioritizes the fight against demonic evil.

Born: 32 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Brilliant visionary and preacher, average politician

Outstanding Attributes: IN 17, CH 16; Gift: Prophecy 17

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 17, Human Nature 12

Peculiarities: Has a mysterious direct connection to griffins

Connections: Immense (head of Aventurian Praios deonts and all of their orders, great influence with sovereigns of Twelvegod faith).

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: A visionary who tries to save the unity of the Praios church; represents the mystical-philosophical branch of the church

HILPERTON ASGAREOL, KEEPER OF THE FLAME OF ANGBAR

The faithful severity of the rite of Xorlosh has always impressed the Exalted one. Slowly, the reverence with which he studies the arts of the old dwarf masters has started to irritate the more progressive members of his church. They are supporters of guilds, and more and more guild masters from Gareth or Punin visit him to draw his attention to the needs and chances of guilds. They usually return more infuriated with the head of the church, however, who always wants to leave it up to the power of the eternal flame.

Born: 36 b.H.

Hair: Iron-grey

Eyes: Pale blue

Profession: A masterly smith and conservative head of church

Outstanding Attributes: ST 17, DE 16

Outstanding Talents: Blacksmith 19, Engineering 14

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Righteous mystic who has to be protected from the intrigues of the guilds—or who seeks honest adventurers to explore the ancient secrets of the dwarfs for him.

IFIRNJA OF MUNTREEK, PROTECTOR OF TOBRIAN REFUGEES

That the good lady's real name is Ifirnia Breekscutter will interest those who deal with the competing gangs of the Garethian underworld (Almadanians, Old Family and Tobrians) less. It might be more important, however, to know that the heavy-muscled gang chief often forces her personal ideas with brass knuckles and short swords. Originally thought to protect Tobrian refugees, the project has turned into a gang which has its place in the business of blackmailing, forgery and trade with stolen goods. Hence Ifirnja now has a respectable position, even though her orkish manners and her lack of education prevent her from entering the highest circles.

Born: 1 Haal

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Light blue

Profession: Brilliant blackmailer and gang leader, masterly fighter

Outstanding Attributes: IN 15, ST 17; Greed

Outstanding Talents: Brawling 16, Swords 16, Throwing Knives 17, Streetwise 16, Human Nature 14; diverse combat special abilities

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: A 'godmother, rough style'; being the leader of the Tobrians in Gareth makes her a potential problem for aspiring rogues, but also a contact to the Tobrian population of Gareth

INVHER NI BENNAIN, QUEEN OF ALBERNIA

Due to Albernia's call, the second-born child could not pursue a career as Rondra-deont, but had to co-rule Albernia, for Emer relinquished her right to the throne in 24 Haal. Since 30 Efferd, 29 Haal, she has been Queen of Albernia. Wedded to Prince Romin Galahan, living in exile from Kuslik, she conveys the image of a traditional and nationalistic woman. Rumors even say that she longs for the independence of Albernia.

Born: 3 Boron, 4 Haal

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Masterly regent, competent diplomat

Outstanding Attributes: CL 15, IN 16, CH 15

Outstanding Talents: Human Nature 15, Statecraft 14, Etiquette 12

Peculiarities: Due to her high intuition, she always knows a lie from the truth

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Taking her father as her model, she is a just queen who uses force only if necessary. She may be an employer in the name of Albernia, or might influence the game as a matron or judge.

IRMEGUND OF RAVENSMOUTH, PRINCESS OF DARPATIA

Even though she is highly respected in her homeland, the sovereign of Darpatia also carries the unofficial title of "Snake of Rommily's," due to her tactics of securing her family's position all over Darpatia using witty marriage politics. Her most recent plans to take Dexter Nemrod's position as Count of Warkhome may be doomed to fail utterly, however.

Born: 6 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant in intrigues with a strong family sense

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CL 15, IN 15, Greed 6

Outstanding Talents: Swords 14, Statecraft 14, Etiquette 14, Law 12

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: As employer for anything that benefits the Ravensmouth family, or adversary in all matters that hurt them; priorities are definitely Ravensmouth, Darpatia and the Realm (in that order)

IRMENELLA OF WORTHINGTON, MARGRAVINE OF GRIFFINSFORD

The youngest sovereign of a Middenrealman province has experienced enough to shape a noble lady into a determined ruler: her husband Dragosh Correnstone was a traitor of the Rondra-church, she was kidnapped by orks and then freed, her city captured by orks and freed, and her father banned from the country. She is currently using her political skills to restore Griffinsford's respectable position in the Realm.

Born: 6 Haal

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Green

Profession: Competent sovereign

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CH 15

Outstanding Talents: Etiquette 13, Statecraft 10, Fast Talk 10

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Considerable (private)

Game Use: As employer (also for inexperienced heroes) in the region of Griffinsford, where there are still many remainders of orkish occupation.

JAST GORSAM OF THE GREAT RIVER, DUKE OF NORTHERN MARCHES

Jast Bedient is known to be obstinate and awkward. In the Ansvin-year, he was not with King Brin; while his brother appointed himself Messenger of Light, he was fighting Inquisitor Rapherian; he was late for the final battle of Troll's Gap. Yet he advanced to become one of the most powerful sovereigns of the Realm. The Northern Marches (and its troops) were spared by war, his brother is the Messenger of Light and his son is Lord High Chancellor of the Realm.

Born: 28 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Green

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Swords 16, Jousting 15, Brawling 15; Statecraft 16

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Because he is very powerful and unscrupulous, he will be a real problem for the heroes. He is not really evil, but just greedy for power.

LECHMIN LUCINA OF HARDSTONE, REBELLIOUS PRAIOTA

As early as the Ork Wars, she became famous for meticulous missionary work, which gave many homeless people something to hold on to. For her, justice given by Praios is the highest law, to which both nobles and common people are subordinate. Her teachings are often misunderstood as a call for rebellion by the people, and as demagoguery by the nobles. Yet she will not yield—what can happen to her, dwelling beneath Praios' brilliant light?

Born: 3 Haal

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Grey-blue

Profession: Brilliant preacher; a fierce fighter for justice

Outstanding Attributes: CO 14, CH 15, CL 13; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 14, Law 12, Treat Psyche 11

Connections: Sufficient

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Due to her passionate appearances and unconventional teachings, she has run into many problems. She needs more righteous diplomatic help than she admits.

LEOMAR ALMADERIC SIGISWILD OF THE MOUNTAIN, LORD GRAND MARSHAL OF THE REALM

After a successful career that cumulated in Grand Marshal, this member of one of the Realm's oldest noble families was defeated by his predecessor Helme Haffax on the Vallusian Meadows. Yet, he could still hurt the Dark Lands by the use of small, well-trained war bands. It goes without saying that this man, favored by birth, believes in Firun's concept of the survival of the fittest: it is his duty to strengthen his troops, yet he does not believe in the need to help the weak and fallen.

Born: 11 b.H.

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Blue

Profession: A pragmatist who knows no mercy; a brilliant and loyal marshal

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CL 15; Gift: Danger Sense 12

Outstanding Talents: Warcraft 18, Orientation 14, Willpower 16; various combat talents and special abilities (mainly mounted)

Peculiarities: Only few know that he ordered the slaughtering of a caravan for supplies in

the Khôm war, but those who know have sworn to remain silent—for the honor of the Realm.

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Employer for commando-missions in the Dark Lands, which are cold-blooded enough to make the heroes think twice.

NAHEMA AI TAMERLIN, THE GREY RAVEN, VEILED MASTER

She is known to be the most famous, the most beautiful and the most feared magician in Aventuria: for over three hundred years, she has influenced the history of Aventuria, be it the sea-quake in Havena, the elven settlement of the Orkland, the Ogre-storm, the fall of Tar Honak, or Gilia of Kurkum's victory on the Vallusian Meadows.

It is believed that she is the offspring of a powerful witch and a wizard. She obviously knows the secret of immortality, which she may have gained through research or even the favor of a god. Like a young hot-blooded Tulamide, she is full of high spirits, curiosity, moodiness and temperament. Her life is restless, and she dwells in luxurious houses all over Aventuria. She is fond of keeping herself in proximity to the people in power, but rarely gets involved in society with any beneficial goal in mind. Creating hate and a lust for revenge against her seems to be her favorite pastime—at least she has shown no consistent agenda.

Born: At least 350 years ago

Hair: Black as a raven

Eyes: Black

Profession: Perfect magician and lover, brilliant master of intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: CL 20, IN 20, CH 21; Gift: Prophecy 16; Curiosity

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 17, Treat Psyche 18, Fast Talk 16, Arcane Lore 18, Starcraft 17, Human Nature 17, Dance 15, Willpower 16, History 16; speaks a lot of ancient and living tongues

Important Spells and Rituals: [Almost all spells of the domination, influence, transformation and illusion disciplines at the masterly (or greater) levels; additionally a host of guild magic and witch spells (even rare ones); multiple variants of eagle's wings; can be regarded as a freewiz in the field of illusion; numerous magical special abilities]

Peculiarities: Nahema has the most powerful enemies, and the most powerful friends (numbers declining) of any woman in Aventuria.

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Can be used as a mysterious master of intrigues who wants to ridicule a

OTHER IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES OF THE REALM'S ADMINISTRATION

- Lord High Steward Fingorn of Mersingen, master of the royal court and responsible for financial matters of the crown
- The Lord Grand Admiral Rudon of Mendena, who recently moved the Admiralty to Gareth
- High Keeper of Seals Count Orsino of Falconhague
- Keeper of Secret Seals Praiodan of Luring
- High Judge and Royal Attorney Countess Efferdane of Honor's Rock to Eslamsground
- The Royal Standard Bearer Rudegrim of Strife

HONORARY POSTS OF THE REALM

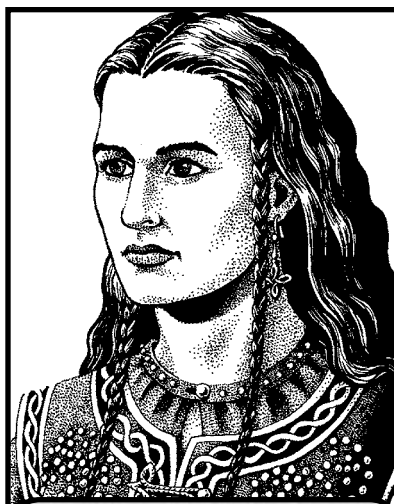
The highest titles with merely formal meaning are held by:

- King Cuano of Albernia (Standard Master of the Realm),
- Duke Jast Gorsam of the Great River (Seneschal of the Realm),
- Duchess Walpurga of Meadows (Chamberlain of the Realm) and
- Duke Bernfried of Tobria (Chivvy Master of the Realm)

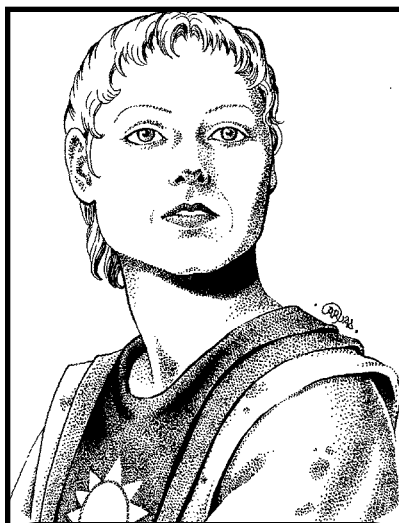
PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA



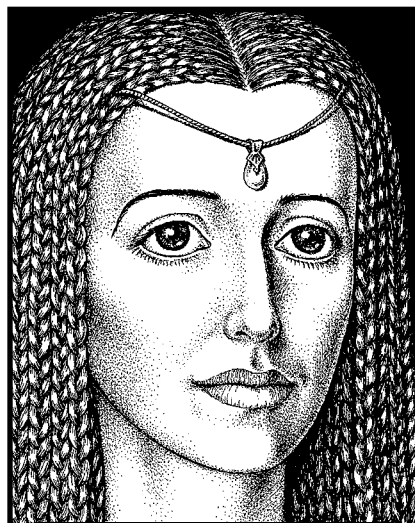
Princess Irmegund of Darpatia



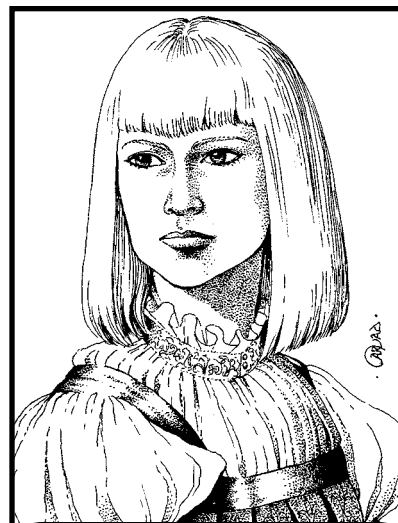
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Lechmin Lucina of Hardstone



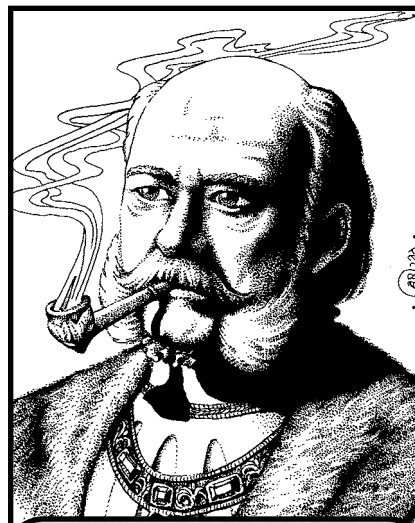
Nahema ai Tamerlin



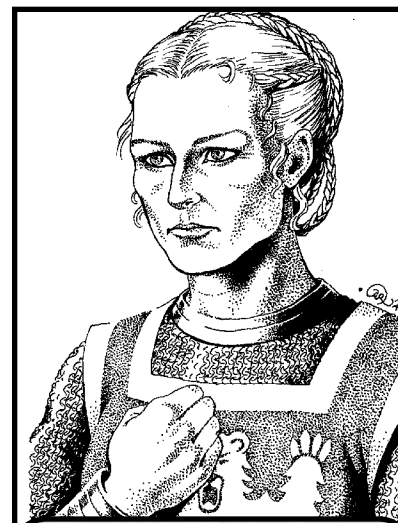
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Prince Romin Galahan



Storko of Gareth



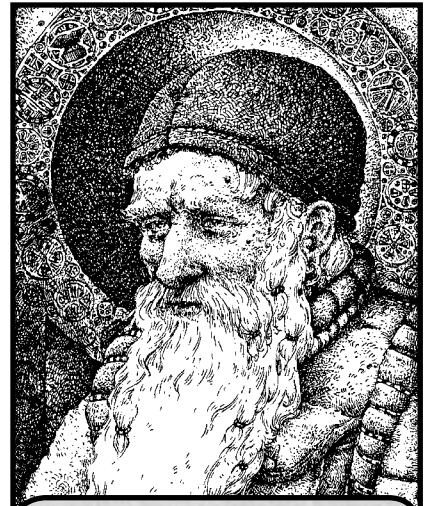
Duchess Walpurga of Lionhead



Aldare Firdayon of Vinsalt



Aillil Andara Galahan



Xenos of the Flames



Empress Amene-Horas



Landgrave Croenar of Marvinko



Archduke Hakaan of Horasia



Isora of Elenvina



Captain Harika of Bethana



Haldana of Elmstone

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

sovereign, or as employer for missions with the same outcome. She can also be the last savior of mankind, for she can cause the unfathomable with her magical powers—if she chooses to do so.

PAGOL GRIFFAX OF RIDGESROCK, GUARDIAN OF ORDER OF THE MIDDENLANDS

At the age of twelve, the youngest member of the Ridgesrock family joined the Praios church as a novice. The studies of holy scriptures and prophecies, which he eagerly pursued, made him recognize that Praios is not only the mercilessly punishing god, but is also the lord of justice. His loyalty to the Heliodian is imperturbable: just like he supported Jariel Praiotin XII in the times of the schism, he now supports Hilberian. Still, he claims and ameliorates his own position in the church of Praios, and because of the fact that his belief is usually close to Hilberianism, many archconservatives contest him.

Born: 13 b.H.

Hair: Black/grey

Eyes: Grey-blue

Profession: Brilliant theologian, masterly politician; mouthpiece of the Messenger of Light

Outstanding Attributes: CL 14, IN 15, CH 14

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 16, Law 16, Human Nature 14, History 14, Willpower 15

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great (of the church)

Game Use: His eminence is the way to the Heliodian, and waiting times could become bearable if meetings are arranged by him. On their travels, they might encounter him giving a sermon beneath the face of Praios.

PAMMI PLOTS, IMPOSTOR

Hesindiane of Dallenthin, alias Pamina Paligan, aka Pamina Pollenfy—names change as quickly as the objects that the rogue sells, usually for strange sums like 99.99 ducats. Empress Alara, King Miziron and Margrave Thronwig are among her victims, as well as those who played the Hail of Ducats lottery in the Answin crisis, as well as those who buy Gyldenland stocks and shares of Islands in the Sea of Fire.

Born: Unknown, but possibly about 40 years ago

Hair: Variable

Eyes: True blue

Profession: A brilliant trickster and impostor

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16, CH 17; Greed

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 20

Peculiarities: Magical dilettante without knowing it (*be my friend, silken tongue; Craft Mastery Fast Talk*)

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: A kind rogue, good to steal money from rich heroes and to cause problems over and over

PRISHYA OF GARLISHGROTZ TO GRANGOR, CONVOCATA PRIMA OF THE GREAT GREY GUILD OF THE MIND

A respectable leader, Prishya is both related to the counts of Grangor and Spectability of the Academy of High Magic in Punin. She represents the interests of magicians all over Aventuria, even though she often longs to return to her times of research.

Born: 38 b.H.

Hair: Silver-grey

Eyes: Blue-grey

Profession: Brilliant meta-magician, rhetoric, organizer and perfected teacher of magic

Outstanding Attributes: CL 19, CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Teach 18, Arcane Lore 19, Language Lore 14; speaks a host of recent and knows a lot of ancient tongues

Important Spells: [Masterly in the Clairvoyance, Meta-Magic and Illusion disciplines, if 'a bit rusty' concerning the practical use of spells; knows even esoteric magical special abilities]

Connections: Immense (in circles of wizards and academics)

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Prishya may be a counselor, she may aid the heroes with magical phenomena, but will always be one thing: a strict teacher

RAPHERIAN OF ESLAMSHAGUE, GRAND INQUISITOR OF THE MIDDENREALM

The ascetic and skinny former member of the Order of the Banishing Light with long hair made a dramatic appearance in public life: after being named successor to Dexter Nemrod, he instantly duelled Count Jast Gorsam (back then party member of Hilberian). He made many enemies because of this uncompromising behavior in nobility and bourgeoisie, and not much has changed since. Maybe his sense of justice and paranoia are a little extreme, but his skill in uncovering black magic has gained him a great deal of leeway among his peers.

Born: 27 b.H.

Hair: Blue-black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Competent deont, brilliant lawyer

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17; Violent Temper, delusions

Outstanding Talents: Swords 14, Human Nature 13, Persuade 13, Law 17

Connections: Very great (he commands the inquisition, strong influence among the Banishing Light, influence of the imperial house)

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: One of the "grey eminences" in the background of the Realm's politics, mainly fighting the Dark Lands and Borbaradian infiltration attempts; he is part of the most radical and arch-conservative faction of the church of Praios.

RHIANNA CONCHOBAIR, COUNTESS OF WINHALL

The bastard daughter of Raidri Conchobair (and Isora of Elenvina, living in Horasian exile, q.v.) is destined to become trouble for Albernia. Raised more by her mother than by her father, she has little sense of morality or honor and prefers power and influence.

Born: 1 Praios, 1 Haal

Hair: Dark blonde

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Competent ruler, brilliant liar

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CL 15

Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 12, Fast Talk 15

Peculiarities: (Almost unknown) daughter of exiled Isora of Elenvina

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Rhianna is a factor of unrest in the province. She would do anything to increase her influence, but is very good at paying lip service to Queen and Realm.

ROHAJA OF GARETH, CROWN PRINCESS OF THE MIDDENREALM, QUEEN OF GARETIA, KOSH, ALMADA AND DARPATIA

Regarding her sense for politics and justice, the heiress resembles her mother, which is very beneficial for the Realm. Additionally, Rohaja has inherited the fierceness of her ancestors Perval and Reto. Her commands are given in a diplomatic way, but her tone of voice make it clear that there will be no discussion.

On 1 Praios, 36 Haal she will be crowned Empress of the Middenrealm. Any who might wish to disrupt this ceremony, however, would do well to remember that she was trained in the use of swords, just like her mother.

Born: 26 Rahja, 15 Haal

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Deer-brown

Profession: Competent ruler, boisterous, but just

Outstanding Attributes: CH 14; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Etiquette 10, Ride 11, Statecraft 10, Persuade 10

Peculiarities: Rohaja and her sister Yppolita are inseparable. If they are separated, one immediately feels whether the other is hurt or not. Otherwise, see Regent Emer.

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: As a real princess, Rohaja can be rescued by the heroes (once in the life of a hero!); otherwise see Regent Emer.

ROMIN GALAHAN, CONSORT OF THE ALBERNIAN QUEEN, PRINCE OF KUSLIK (IN EXILE)

The son of the overthrown Princess Kusmina of Kuslik and consort of Invher, Queen of Albernia, still proclaims his right to the throne of Kuslik and honors the banner of the house Galahan—no matter whether this might strain relations between Gareth and Vinsalt or not. Mutely tolerated by his independence-seeking wife, he often hires men in order to raid the Horasrealm or Nostria, but usually with little success.

Born: 6 b.H.

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Green

Profession: A masterly recruiter for his goals, but inexperienced military commander

Outstanding Attributes: CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 14

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: Prince Romin is a charming but stubborn person, who cannot accept peace without justice for his family—which makes him an easy employer, as well as adversary, for the heroes.

SALDOR SON OF SABLON FROM THE FOSLARIN CLAN, CONVOCATUS PRIMUS OF THE ORDER OF THE WHITE PENTAGRAM

This loyalist, who headed the former Beilunkian war-wizard-academy for over 30 years, used dwarfen determination to reach the top of the guild. He is known to be very conservative and tolerates disobedience even less than failure.

Born: 41 b.H.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant war wizard; stubborn fighter against black magic

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CL 15, ST 15; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Staves 14, Willpower 12, Teach 13, Arcane Lore 14

Important Spells: [Damage, Attributes and Anti-Magic disciplines; almost all damage spells masterly to perfect]

Peculiarities: Not very popular among dwarfs, for they believe that it is typically humanly-foolish to put 'such a young lad' into such a high position

Connections: Very great (in the Order of the White Pentagram, considerable with other magicians)

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: A tough ally; as counselor for fighting black magic or as savior in bad situations

SELINDIAN HAAL OF GARETH, IMPERIAL PRINCE

The circumstances of his birth are quite remarkable: Regent Emer gave birth to him shortly after a battle against blackfurs in Meadows. Who would be surprised to hear that his further development was not normal either? Selindian Haal is intelligent, but shy, sensitive to sound and suffers from insomnia; he speaks to ghosts and has developed a taste for raw meat.

Born: 12 Phex, 18 Haal

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Dark brown

Profession: A competent diplomat, despite his youth

Outstanding Attributes: CH 12; Claustrophobia

Outstanding Talents: Sneak 10, Hide 11, Persuade 10

Important Spells and Rituals: Can contact ghosts

Peculiarities: Magicians and medici argue whether he is cursed by orks or not

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: The heroes might accompany the prince when traveling, but otherwise he will only be encountered in the royal court.

SIDRONA MENGREYTH, ALCHEMIST

The daughter of the notorious Aluris Mengreyth, who by now is likely a minion of the Black Dragon, she spent her youth in Brabak together with her mother. There she studied her craft in the laboratory of the Red Salamander, where her magical aptitude was discovered—too late. Since her release as an apprentice, she restlessly roams throughout Aventuria in order to practice her art in various cities—and to learn from scholars if she can save the soul of her father.

Born: 1 Haal

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant alchemist

Outstanding Talents: Alchemy 16, Plant Lore 14, Treat Poison 13, Appraise 10

Important Spells: (magical dilettante) *breath of magic*; [memorans 8, Craft Mastery (and alchemistic charging of potions)]

Peculiarities: Can possess various (also rare) potions, if the Highlord requires it

Connections: Sufficient (influential customers)

Financial Power: Considerable (and eager to show it)

Game Use: A responsible if somewhat vain scientist; useful as either an employer to retrieve rare items, or as a source for potions

STORKO OF GARETH, IMPERIAL PRINCE

The youngest brother of Emperor Reto is a brilliant personality. His cousins Bardo and Cella deported him to Al'Anfa—a fate shared by many disliked members of the family, as it was unlikely that any outsider would succeed in surviving to return from exile. The "velvet prince," though, managed to survive and has learned to skate on thin ice. He returned while his brother Reto was in power. Storko has no official function in the royal court, but he sometimes leads tricky diplomatic negotiations.

Born: 41 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Brilliant diplomat

Outstanding Attributes: IN 15, CH 15; Fear of the Dead

Outstanding Talents: Human Nature 15, Statercraft 15, Etiquette 16

Peculiarities: Storko can possess any kind of item, document or treasure, if the Highlord deems it necessary.

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Storko is the ideal employer from the royal court, or he can play a mysterious part in an intrigue-driven adventure.

TALIMEE FOGSTAR, MASTER THIEF

The half-elf is called Silvercat, and sometimes one can see her dart, cat-like, over the roofs of Gareth. During the Ork Storm she commanded the "Robber Militia" and was named a Heroine of Gareth, yet today she evades publicity in order to pursue her main trade: burglarizing rich and important people, where she has to use wit and agility to evade the guards and the traps.

Her stolen goods are sold outside the city—as a foreigner, she is not interested in dealing with the influential gangs of Gareth. Also, her dealings in Punin have already caused a feud with the so-called Almadanians.

Born: 7 b.H.

Hair: Silver-white

Eyes: Blue

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

Outstanding Attributes: IN 15, AG 17, DE 17; Gift: Danger Sense 11; Curiosity, Greed

Outstanding Talents: Many physical talents masterly to brilliant; Fencing Weapons 15, Throwing Knives 15, Streetwise 14, Fast Talk 14, Appraise 14, Pick Locks 20, Pick Pockets 12, Perception 15

Important Spells: (magical dilettante) *Move as the lightning*, *Steady Stand*, *Expose Creature*; Craft Mastery (Climb, Body Control, Orientation, Pick Locks); Protective Spirit

Connections: Sufficient (has good contacts to Arrius of Wulffen, knows some fences outside Gareth)

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: The classic independent thief, who fully trusts Phex and performs the most difficult tasks; can acquire or retrieve items for the right price; maybe she can be a mentor of a young hero-thief

WALPURGA OF LIONHEAD, DUCHESS OF MEADOWS

The war against the demon master cost the lives of Walpurga's husband, father and many serfs. As bringer of Borbarad's griffin-skin and the corpse of Brin of Gareth, her name is widely used in the Middenrealm—ill tidings are referred to as "Walpurga's News." She almost lost her mind during those events; rumor says she still talks to her deceased father.

Born: 10 Efferd, 3 b.H.

Hair: Light blonde

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Competent ruler, masterly warrior

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, ST 15

Outstanding Talents: Willpower 14, Law 12, Jousting 14, Two-Handed Swords 15

Peculiarities: Scholar of law

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: A duchess to touch: as employer, companion during an (important) quest or as judge

YANGOLD DI LAZAAR, REPORTER OF THE AVENTURIAN COURIER

Kuslikan by birth, Yangold served as a drummer and courier for the Kuslikan Sea Mercenaries starting at the age of 14. In the harbor of Havena, however, he deserted his unit to make his way on his own. His clear writing and good perception, as well as his talent to write encouraging, patriotic text (despite his love for the truth) soon led him

become a reporter for the Aventurian Courier. Since the Ork Storm, he is present on all battlefields of modern times. He does not hesitate to go with reconnaissance parties, couriers or the 'forlorn hope' if it will make a good story.

Born: 2 b.H.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Masterly war correspondent

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CL 14

Outstanding Talents: Geography 12, Warcraft 12, Cryptography 10, Legend Lore 13, Writing 14

Connections: Sufficient (due to his articles; as correspondent for the courier he is also a member of the IGIA)

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: Contact to determine the tactics of enemies or to obtain background information on the military of foreign countries; hard to find, because usually on the road

YOLANA OF THE REDWATERS, WITCH

The old witch lives together with her daughter Raxia in a ruin at the western slope of the Black Sickle, near the source of the Redwaters. A long time ago she faced Luzelin of Meadows—now Luzelin is dead and the demonologist is dancing upon the grave of a once-powerful enemy. Rumors say that Yolana and her circle made a pact with the Desecrator of the Elements (Widharc), with whose help she turned her domicile into a fortress.

Born: 11 Ingerimm, 29 b.H.

Hair: Ice-grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: A witch, who is allied with demonic powers; masterful conjurer

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 16, Masquerade 14, Arcane Lore 13, Starcraft 12

Important Spells and Rituals: [Invocation and Demonic disciplines; *Greed be great* 12, *harmless guise* 12; many invocations masterly]

Peculiarities: Wooden skin (only at her feet for now)

Connections: Considerable among witches

Financial Power: Sufficient (due to demonic powers)

Game Use: Due to her demonic powers, Yolana causes storms, heat or miscarriages in those villages that she dislikes for one reason or another. She sends demons into the swords or tools of those who wish to harm her.

YPPOLITA OF GARETH, IMPERIAL PRINCESS

Her appearance perfectly resembles her (first-born) twin sister Rohaja, but in spirit, the two are very different. Where Rohaja is fiery and bold, Yppolita is quiet and sincere. Once Rohaja is crowned empress, Yppolita will receive nothing; nonetheless she does not seem to be jealous, but rather would die for Rohaja if necessary.

Born: 26 Rahja, 15 Haal

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Deer-brown

Profession: Competent counselor to her sister, magicienne-in-training

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CL 15; Curiosity

Outstanding Talents: Starcraft 8

Important Spells: Since her early youth, she is schooled in antimagic.

Peculiarities: See Rohaja of Gareth

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: See Rohaja of Gareth

ZADIG OF VOLTERACH, "EYE OF THE NAMELESS"

It is said that the Eyes of the Nameless carry their birthmark in the form of one of their eyes. Hence one of Zadig's eyes is a gloomy abyss. Those who meet his gaze usually die. Zadig, he who sacrifices on other's altars, is led by dreams and visions and is one of the highest servants of the Nameless on Aventuria.

Born: 72 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Manifest evil, the mercilessness and vengefulness of his godly master become flesh

Outstanding Attributes: CO 20

Outstanding Talents: Knows the names of various demons of the Nameless.

Peculiarities: Mount: black unicorn. The Eye of the Nameless.

Connections: Considerable; if he has created a local cult: very great!

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: A powerful enemy, who can only be overcome by a group of true heroes. Yet he may return, driven by the hate of his master.

PERSONALITIES OF THE DWARFS

ALBRAX SON OF AGAM, HIGH KING OF DWARFS

The young brother of Ambrolsh lived as mercenary captain of the “Kor-Boys” and learned much about strategy and tactics. He was elected by all dwarfs as commander of the dwarfen army against the Black Hordes. His new camp is in Meadows, near Palatinate Thundershack in the Black Sickle. His specialty is the use of ranged combat troops.

Born: 236 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Brilliant strategist and commander

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, ST 21

Outstanding Talents: Crossbow 18, Warcraft 17, Siege Weapons 14, Engineering 12

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Albrax is an old campaigner who would love to fight in the first row, but has to get used to the role as high commander. Heroes will most likely encounter him commissioning “special tasks” or drinking with other veterans.

AROMBOLOSH SON OF AGAM

The old king of the anvil dwarfs is the unofficial judge of all dwarfs, and thus complements the feats of his brother, High King Albrax. Arombolosh is a wise and fatherly counselor of the other dwarfen kings, but also the best weaponsmith of his people.

Born: 255 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Perfected weaponsmith and masterly mediator

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16, DE 20

Outstanding Talents: Law 16, Blacksmith (Weaponsmith) 22(24)

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Arombolosh possesses the wisdom of great age and can be a good counselor to humans – especially because he can hope to not to outlive his human friends as he always has before.

XENOS OF THE FLAMES, SON OF XONIOSH, GEODE

Xenos is an aged, awesome dwarf with white beard and hair; only the eyes in his stone-like face confirm that he is alive. He is

lively, likes to drink and enjoys company on his journeys. Usually he is seen together with the beautiful ice elf, Ayalamone Silverstreak, and the white mountain dog Tark. He is one of the most powerful Geodes of Aventuria, fully dedicated to the erratic powers of fire. The brilliant dwarf is eyed suspiciously by other dwarfs because of his loving relationship with Ayalamone, yet he always is a loyal servant of the earth and fierce adversary of all evil.

Born: 872 b.H.

Hair: White

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Perfected Geode of Fire (Servant of Sumu)

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CL 19, CH 17; Gift: Prophecy 11

Outstanding Talents: Willpower 18, Carouse 14, Survival 17, Treat Psyche 15

Important Spells and Rituals: [He is the unchallenged master of fire; additionally he has mastered most druid spells and many witch spells; all druidic and geodic rituals and some old, lost spells]

Game Use: Xenos can be counselor, employer and sometimes a (difficult) companion

PERSONALITIES OF THE HORASREALM AND THE CYCLOPEAN ISLES

ABELMIR OF MARVINKO, MINISTER OF STATE OF THE HORASREALM, ARCH-KEEPER OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHURCH OF HESINDE

The minister of state is the deputy for the empress and heads Horasian foreign policy, state politics and intelligence. Count Croenar’s younger brother is known to be a Hesindian patriot and is absolutely loyal to the empress. He cunningly tends toward a carrot-and-stick approach to politics, in order to lose neither the people’s loyalty nor their respect. Additionally, he uses flyers and press releases to influence public opinion. The big and strong-necked man likes to wear green and golden robes—true Horasian and Hesindian colors.

Born: 15 b.H.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Pale blue

Profession: Brilliant statesman and planner

Outstanding Attributes: CL 17

Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 15, Writing 11

Peculiarities: Before his ordination he was a white magician, but has lost all his astral powers.

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Abelmir embodies Horasian politics and therefore is initiator or target of all kinds of intrigues.

AILLIL ANDARA GALAHAN, BELOVED OF THE GODDESS

The charming and stunningly beautiful Comtessa of Honeyngton was always known to be unconventional, so it was little surprise she became a diplomat for the Albernian Kingdom. In her early twenties she was called into Rahja’s ordination, and by now she is the

most promising deont of the goddess—with the chance to be re-elected Beloved of the Goddess many times in the future.

Born: 1 Rahja, 3 Haal

Hair: Black

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Competent in intrigues, masterly diplomat, perfected seductress

Outstanding Attributes: IN 15, CH 17

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 16, Human Nature 12, Dance 15, Sing 12, Statecraft 11, Erotic Arts 12

Peculiarities: Sister of the Countess of Honeyngton, one quarter elfen

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: As Beloved of the Goddess, Aillil has to visit many Aventurian temples. She can be used as employer for Rahja-pleasing missions, or as seductress (who follows the will of Rahja).

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

ALDARE FIRDAYON OF VINSALT, CROWN PRINCESS OF THE HORASREALM

The Crown Princess of the Horasrealm, Baroness of Aldyra, etc., aborted her career as deont of Hesinde (she is a High Magister) in order to prepare herself for her expected ascent to the throne. Still, she is very active in all Hesindian matters and advocates cosmopolitan policies. She is married to the sovereign of Khomview, the dragon Shafir, and has a son—named Khadan Varsinian—with him. In court she is usually seen together with her companion Rinaya of Punin or some other favorite.

Born: 4 b.H.

Hair: Light blonde

Eyes: Grey as ice

Profession: Competent deont of Hesinde and crown princess

Outstanding Attributes: IN 16, CH 15

Outstanding Talents: Etiquette 14, Statecraft 14, Law 12, History 11; speaks several ancient and living tongues

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: A non-intrigant member of Horasian politics; usually she awards people with imperial honors; present at ship launchings or other official matters; seldom found in academic salons.

ALRIGIA COSTERMANA YA GRAVINELLA, SIGNORA, COLONELYA OF THE 'WILD BAND'

Her real name is Alrike Kostermaan, but the wiry Grangorian daughter of Phecadi boatmen has made a successful Horasian career: she was a private in the Grangorian regiment "Phecadi Guard," then served in the Horas Legion. She became Archduke Timor's bodyguard, took the position of Cavalry Captain of the Drôlean Guard and now leads her own unit—the Wild Band—after she took it from her predecessor in a challenge. It is stationed in Chababia, but currently hired by the senate of Drôl.

Born: 2 b.H.

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Masterly mercenary commander, brilliant duelist

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CH 15, AG 16

Outstanding Talents: Various combat talents competent and better (prefers combination Kuslikan saber and buckler, or her two balestrinas), Human Nature 13, Ride 11, Etiquette 10, Warcraft 11

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: A respected commander who one of the heroes may have served for; employer for reconnaissance missions around Loch Harodrol; mainly used to give a more distanced view on Horasian issues.

AMENE III, FIRDAYON OF VINSALT, HORAS, EMPRESS OF THE HORASREALM, QUEEN OF YAQUIRIA

The intelligent and energetic ruler of one of the strongest countries of Aventuria is a passionate politician, who has devoted her whole life to the country and has transformed a disputed kingdom into the most modern colonial empire. She views the pomp and splendor around her more as part of her power than as luxury. Even her courtly lovers were always chosen for political reasons.

Born: 27 b.H.

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Green

Profession: Perfect politician and sovereign

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16

Outstanding Talents: Etiquette 16, Human Nature 16, Statecraft 18

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: The Horas Empress does not act, but makes selected people act on her behalf; one can behold her on political occasions, or may—most unlikely—be selected for a task.

CROENAR OF MARVINKO, LANDGRAVE OF SIKRAM

The elder brother of the minister of state is proud, egoistic and boundlessly ambitious, for once the house Marvinko was defrauded of the royal crown by the house Firdayon—or so he believes. The count was involved in several attempted coups and it is still said that he has good connections to influential people such as Amir Honak, Hasrabal of Rashdul or Prince Romin Galahan.

Born: 15 b.H.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Brilliant master of intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: IN 15; arrogance, prejudice

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 16, Statecraft 12

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: This perpetual schemer has contacts to various conspirators in order to use them for his goals while staying safe. He is perfectly capable of unconscionable behavior towards his confidants in order to survive.

CUSIMO OF GARLISHGROTZ, DUKE OF GRANGOR

The duke is a foolhardy daredevil who appreciates fencing and riding, carousing and partying, betting and playing, affairs and contests, but detests government affairs. He likes contact with the common people. His tendency to try to solve all problems with his charms often destroys the carefully devised plots of his advisors in an instant.

Born: 20 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Green

Profession: Competent rake, bad politician

Outstanding Attributes: CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Fencing Weapons (Foil) 18 (20) (plus several combat special abilities), Seduce 13, Streetwise 10, Carouse 12

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Duke Cusimo is a skilled fencer with the foil and known amorist, whose "victories" are almost legendary. Generally, he is the most accessible sovereign on the Horasrealm, who befriends everyone he likes—which causes problems in affairs of political nature.

EOLAN OF BERLINGHÂN, DUKE OF METHUMIS

Being the Legal Advisor of the State, the duke is the highest judge at the Supreme Court—a suitable position, for he is a political philosopher with practical experience. He is very popular in his duchy due to his great ability to mediate in disputes and the fact that he fosters education, peace and wealth.

Born: 12 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant political and law philosopher

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16

Outstanding Talents: Law 17, Statecraft 14

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Due to his strong sense of justice, he often is the victim of intrigues.

EFFERDAN UI BENNAIN, KEEPER OF THE CIRCLE AND PRINCE OF ALBERNIA

In the past, Efferdan was known to be a dreamer and pigheaded scholar of oceanic flora and fauna. For all his life he fought merfolk-slavers and -keepers, rumor says that he is even affiliated with a mermaid. Since Travia 29 Haal, he is the Keeper of the Circle of the Brotherhood of Wind and Waves and is seen as a true gift from Efferd by the faithful.

Born: 1 Efferd, 9 b.H.

Hair: White-blonde

Eyes: Blue as the sea
Profession: Perfect scholar of oceanic flora and fauna
Outstanding Attributes: IN 18
Outstanding Talents: Swim 16, Animal Lore (Sea animals) 16(18), Plant Lore 16
Peculiarities: Still appears to be in his mid-twenties.
Connections: Very great
Financial Power: Great (head of the Church of Efferd)
Game Use: The highest priest of Efferd on Aventuria can be an employer for extremely delicate adventures involving the church of Efferd or inhabitants of the sea. He is often found in Havena and Bethana.

FIAGA YA TERDILION, COUNTESS OF BELHANKA

This former adventuress and ship owner had a fast-paced career that culminated in marriage with the power-deprived Count Mondino Torbenias of Crasulet of Belhanka. The liaison between the snobby nobleman and the down-to-earth merchant was beneficial to both: he gained desperately needed gold and she gained the looked-for noble title. Now Fiaga devotes her time to the arts, gazettes and the temple of Rahja, while having her directors manage the company.
Born: 28 b.H.
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Green
Profession: Masterly merchant
Outstanding Attributes: CL 15
Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 17, Trade 16
Connections: Great
Financial Power: Very great
Game Use: The countess is one of the richest merchants, but as a social upstart she is a mockery of nobility; many Belhankan citizen are also alienated by her ambition. Her spouse, Count Mondino, mainly devotes his time to unusual arts, so that he often launches "expeditions." Politically, the count is the toll of the Libertarians—a precious ally, if one craves social acceptance.

GYLVANA OF BELHANKA, KEEPER OF THE CHALICE

Now in her mid-fifties, the Keeper of the Chalice is still an impressive beauty. As a politician, she strove for mundane power within and outside of the church of Rahja. She has wittily used competences and now heads the archive (and the network of spies). Due to her increasing age and decreasing beauty, wishes for her resignation have been voiced.
Born: 21 b.H.
Hair: Golden blonde
Eyes: Green

Profession: Brilliant master of intrigues
Outstanding Attributes: CL 17, CH 16
Outstanding Talents: Seduce 16, Statecraft 17, Etiquette 15
Connections: Very great
Financial Power: Immense
Game Use: Gylvana is very dedicated to the worldly side of the church: her involvement in the trade with Rahjaic drugs may interest spies or fanatics, her involvement in politics may make her the focus of intrigues.

HAKAAN OF FIRDAYON-BETHANA, ARCHDUKE OF HORASIA

The duke of the central Horasian province is a cousin of Amene and a pawn of the Horasian patriots—a supporter of expansionistic plans and nationalistic organizations. He is a jovial charmer, an enthusiastic gambler in imman games and horseracing. The witty planner has put all his seven children in influential positions.
Born: 35 b.H.
Hair: Black
Eyes: Dark brown
Profession: Competent statesman and schemer
Outstanding Attributes: CL 13
Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 14
Connections: Very great
Financial Power: Very great
Game Use: The companionable Duke Hakaan is involved in many plans that are advantageous for the Horasrealm—at the cost of other powers. He does not really care whether he undermines the careful foreign policy of the empress or the minister of state or not.

HALDANA OF ELMSTONE, MAGISTER OF MAGISTERS OF THE HALL OF WISDOM IN KUSLIK

The Fountlandian Haldana is the most powerful, but some say also the wisest, woman in the church of Hesinde. Under her leadership the church has become an essential part of Horasian academic life more than ever, but this seemingly ageless matriarch is becoming more and more peculiar in the opinion of the Horasian nobility.
Born: 48 b.H.
Hair: Blonde/grey
Eyes: Blue
Profession: A wise and knowledgeable woman who is strictly neutral
Outstanding Attributes: CL 20, Curiosity 7
Outstanding Talents: Persuade 17
Important Spells and Rituals: [Haldana is a deont of Hesinde and magician; Field of study: Transmutation (Festum/Kuslik)]
Peculiarities: Even though it is said that she had no affairs with men, she has two daughters that look perfectly like her.

Connections: Very great
Financial Power: Immense
Game Use: A wise counselor or oracle-like organ of Hesinde.

HARIKA OF BETHANA, CAPTAIN AND BUCCANEER

Since the Albernian captain in the service of the Horasrealm (because she lost the Bennains' favor due to too harsh dealings with Al'Anfa) has returned from her legendary voyage through all oceans, she is more of a popular hero than she was when she discovered faraway places and cultures. The captain (probably admiral soon) leads her ships in the "Thorwalian manner"—she is the daughter of a Thorwalian and a Havenian.
Born: 33 b.H.
Hair: Red/grey
Eyes: Green
Profession: Brilliant seafarer and navigator, legendary explorer
Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CL 14, IN 14, CH 14
Outstanding Talents: Throwing Axes 14, Body Control 11, Human Nature 12, Weather Sense 10, Boats 13, Orientation 14, Geography 16, Seafarer 18, Helmsman 15
Connections: Considerable
Financial Power: Considerable
Game Use: Probably the most experienced person regarding adventurous ocean voyages at the time; source of information on faraway continents; for experienced heroes, maybe employer for her next voyage

ISORA OF ELENVINA, TEMPORARY SOVEREIGN OF ALBERNIA (IN EXILE)

"Three-Year-Princess" is what mockers call Isora, who claimed the throne of Albernia in the year 18-20 Haal—while being in Horasian exile. The sister-in-law of King Cuanu has always been good at caballing against her relatives. The peak of her intrigues is currently growing up in the form of her daughter Rhianna, who was recently appointed Countess of Winhall.
Born: 29 b.H.
Hair: Honey-blonde (dyed)
Eyes: Green
Profession: Brilliant at intrigues
Outstanding Attributes: CL 17, CH 16
Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 15, Seduce 12, Fast Talk 13
Connections: Great
Financial Power: Considerable
Game Use: Deviser of complots against Albernian royal house, in order to restore her throne.

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA



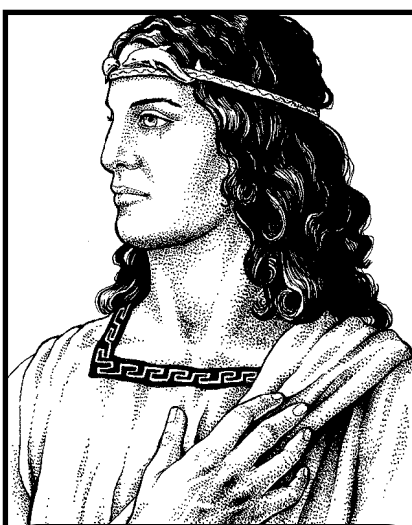
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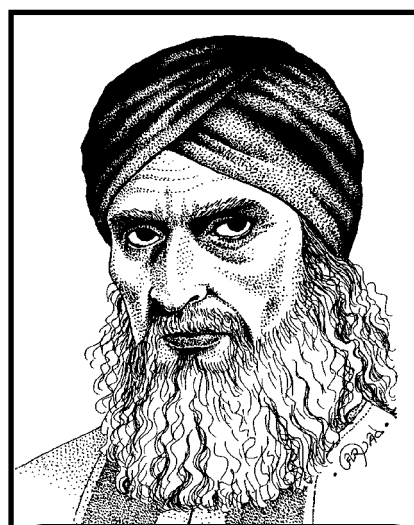
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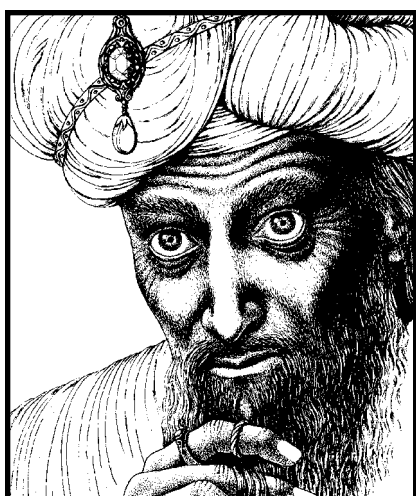
Niam of Bosparan



Sea King Palamydas



Abu Khomchra



Sultan Hasrabal



Shah Arkos and Shahi Eleonora of Arania



Captain Rateral Sanin



Prince-Commander Helme Haffax



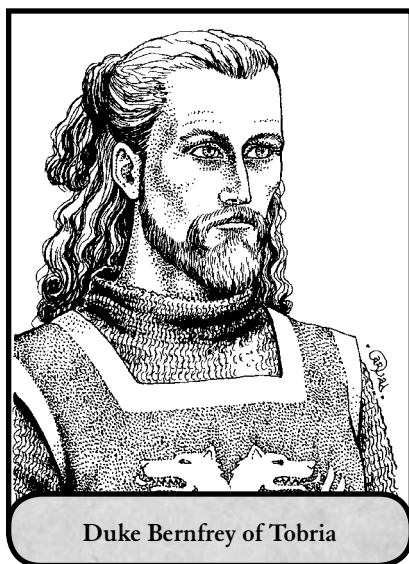
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Moghuli Dimiona



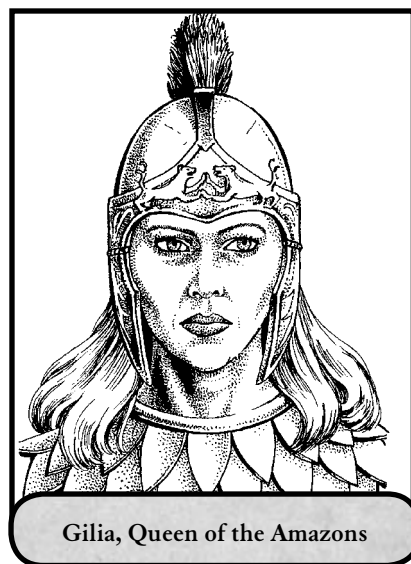
Portifex Maximus Xeraan



Duke Bernfrey of Tobria



Queen Glorana



Gilia, Queen of the Amazons

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

JUCCO D'ALENTINO-FIRDAYON, GRANDUCO

The originally Sewerian Duke Jucho of Dallenthin and Persantsy was appointed to the honorable retirement post of the Fountlandian ambassador in Vinsalt, after he served for four consecutive terms as Noble Marshal. Being 'a distant relative' of the imperial house, he was able to acquire Signory Alentino as well as the title of Archduke. Granduco Jucco appears to be a vain and venal diplomat. His political advice is as sought after as his comment and analyses, however, which he writes for gazettes and agencies.

Born: 27 b.H.

Hair: Fox-red

Eyes: Green

Profession: Perfect actor and multiple agent

Outstanding Attributes: CL 18; Greed

Outstanding Talents: Etiquette 15, Fast Talk 16, Human Nature 14, Statecraft 14

Peculiarities: Deont of Phex, since his youthful days as rogue

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Jucho is a well-informed agent for political business. He is also a secret participator in the Agency Nanduria, which he created as his personal secret service.

NEPOLEMO YA TORESE, ARCHREGENT OF ARIVOR, GRAND MASTER OF THE ARDARITE ORDER, ETC.

The long-time deputy of the diseased Archregent Dapifer ter Bredero is an honest, upright man who opposes Horas worship and all other modern reforms. Being Grand Master of the Ardarite Order and sovereign of Arivor, he possesses enough power to stop quite a few of these dreaded reforms. As a politician, he is a solid and uncreative person—as a person, wearing the robes of his order and a glittering longsword, he appears to be a hero of forgotten times.

Born: 30 b.H.

Hair: Light brown

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Competent statesman and masterly swordsman

Outstanding Attributes: AG 16

Outstanding Talents: Swords 16, Religious Lore 13

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Ya Torese is the honorable opponent of all reforms, who loathes intrigues and even shelters "decent" enemies of modernization in the keeps of his order.

NIAM OF BOSPARAN, THE "GODMOTHER OF VINSALT"

The uncrowned queen of Old Bosparan (the dilapidated borough of south Vinsalt) has been ruling for a dozen years, by means of magic as well as subtle influence. It has not been possible to prove any of her many crimes (mainly smuggling and fencing, seldom assassinations) — and no sane person would want her as an enemy, anyway.

Born: 16 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Masterly domination wizard, brilliant crime queen

Outstanding Attributes: CH 18, IN 17

Outstanding Talents: Daggers 16, Alchemy 10, Law 10; many social talents masterly and better

Important Spells and Rituals: *Be my friend* 19; [*horripobus* 16, *imperavi* 15, *geas* 11, almost all other Domination and Influence spells as well as the accompanying Anti-Magic masterly; knows various spells of Illusion, Communication and Personal Transformation.]

Peculiarities: Likes to use poisoned or magical weapons, if needed

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: The "godmother" of Vinsalt, a lady with style and without scruples; it may be advantageous to be in her favor

PALAMYDAS THALIYIN OF HYLAILOS, SEA KING OF THE CYCLOPEAN ISLES

The athletic ruler of the Cyclopean Isles is a frank and honest man, like a warrior of ancient times, and thus quite lost in the Horasrealm. This is the reason he dislikes traveling to the mainland.

Born: 88 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark green

Profession: Competent king and seafarer

Outstanding Attributes: IN 14

Outstanding Talents: Swim 14, Seafarer 14

Peculiarities: He spent 85 years in a dryad forest (without aging) and knows the life of nymphs and cyclopes.

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Palamydas is a decent regent who is unable to cope with intrigues. He will appreciate virtuous heroes who help him.

DOCTOR PRAÏOKLES BALTRAÏKOS, PHYSICIAN OF THE RICH AND THE BEAUTIFUL

The Cyclopean doctor with the "healing hands," his black curly hair and athletic tanned body is every lady's dream. Over the last few years, he became famous in Kuslikan society and has amassed considerable wealth by performing "miracles" in the areas of plastic surgery and artificial limbs. The fact that he spends his pastime in his country house outside of Kuslik, performing alchemistic experiments on kidnapped pregnant women and children from the Kuslikan lower classes in order to create the perfect human, is only known to two of his (wealthy and influential) patrons. If this would be known, he would probably lose his good reputation—as well as his head.

Born: 14 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant scholar of medicine and anatomist

Outstanding Attributes: CL 15, DE 17

Outstanding Talents: Treat Wounds 17, Treat Poison 14, Treat Disease 14, Alchemy 12, Plant Lore 12, Etiquette 11, Arcane Lore 10, Anatomy 17

Important Spells: magic dilettante; *Balm of healing* 8; [*transmutare* 4; Craft Mastery Treat talents, anatomy, alchemy]

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: For wealthy and high-level heroes, he is the contact for all above-mentioned surgery; his double-life might create an adventure: if it is found out, he might flee to Elburum or Al'Anfa.

PRAIONOR DI BALLIGUR, MARCHESE, GUARDIAN OF ORDER IN DRÔL

As a son of an age-old family of worldly and ecclesiastical dignitaries, he was prepared for the priesthood from birth. He is a good orator, actor and philosopher, who longs for the crown of Drôl. He sees his position in church as a step in the hierarchy, not as a vocation.

Born: 10 b.H.

Hair: Golden blonde (dyed)

Eyes: Sky-blue

Profession: Masterly manipulator

Outstanding Attributes: CL 13, CH 15; Greed

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk (veiling and concealing, that is) 11, Statecraft 11

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Di Balligur is the classic renaissance prelate; cultivated, intriguing and deadly. He does not restrict his plots to Drôl.

REO CORDOVAN SAPALLYO, MAGUS, SPY AND PLAYBOY

Under his real name, Horasio Halman ya Dascovia, he has graduated with honors from the academies of Methumis and Belhanka. By now, he has gained enough experiences in “field studies” that it is a terrible mistake if one takes his blasé appearance (that of the typical Vinsaltic dandy) seriously. He enjoys secrecy and masks, detests violence, but likes women and good wine. Generally he is quite modest and knows the limits of his (magical) skills, which is why he often prefers worldly solutions to his problems.

Sapallyo usually travels on behalf of the temple of Hesinde in Kuslik or the Nandus temple in Vinsalt, but is also happy to spy for the DPA (Directorate for Peculiar Affairs), his country’s secret service.

Born: 17 b.H.

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Brown

Outstanding Attributes: Generally good; Curiosity

Outstanding Talents: Numerous social and lore talents from competent to masterly, combat and physical talents also competent

Important Spells and Rituals: [(attributes, clairvoyance, telekinesis) has mastered all clairvoyance and movement spells available to him, also experienced in communication and illusion magic.]

Peculiarities: Due to his connections he can possess minor magical artifacts

Connections: Considerable (magicians,

church of Hesinde, DPA)

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: As a joker or last-minute rescuer for the heroes, for he often roams the lands; various spying and amorous affairs in the typical “secret agent” style.

SHAFIR THE MAGNIFICENT, SOVEREIGN OF KHOMVIEW, AN EMPEROR DRAGON

For several dozens of years, the dragon Shafir has settled down in the northern High Eternans. He was conferred the title Sovereign of Khomview by King Therengar—mainly for his services to the country by guarding the Kabash Gap against Novadi raids, but also for keeping dangerous magical artifacts, which are brought to him by a yearly delegation from the Hesinde church. The easy-going (at least for a dragon) and philosophical Shafir is wed to the crown princess of the Horasrealm, Aldare of Vinsalt.

Born: About 1800 b.H.

Scale Color: Red-gold

Eyes: Black

Talents: Perfect knowledge of languages; masterly knowledge of history and arcane lore, excellent analyst of humans

Important Spells: [Practically all spells with the criteria clairvoyance, domination and influence masterly and better]

Peculiarities: Probably possesses Aventuria’s largest treasure of (dangerous) artifacts

Connections: Great (son-in-law of the empress)

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: High-level heroes might seek the dragon in order to hear of long-forgotten secrets; thieves should not survive an encounter with Shafir

TIMOR HORATHIO FIRDAYON OF VINSALT, ARCHDUKE OF CHABABIA

Empress Amene’s youngest son is known to be a liberal playboy who likes to be surrounded by flatterers and conspirators. Because of this quirk, he has been removed from court several times. The duke of Neetha’s court is luxurious and decadent. It is said that he is involved in various intrigues there, most of which are designed to make him the next emperor, instead of his older sister Aldare.

Born: 1 b.H.

Hair: Red-brown

Eyes: Green

Profession: Brilliant master of intrigues and playboy

Outstanding Attributes: IN 14, CH 16

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 13, Fast Talk 16, Etiquett 16, Statecraft 10

Peculiarities: Timor secretly is a deont of Phex

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Timor promotes any intrigues that either ameliorates his position or might please Phex – he has even conspired against his mother and then denounced his fellow conspirators.

PERSONALITIES OF ARANIA

ARKOS II, SHAH OF ARANIA

Formally, Princess Sybia’s son rules Arania at the side of his consort, Mhaharani Eleonora of Arania. The talented bard lets his wife govern the country, however, while he is more interested in fine arts, heroes, beauty and charm. He never takes initiative in flirtations, though, forcing would-be partners to come to him.

Born: 1 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Masterly bard and competent warrior

Outstanding Attributes: CH 14

Outstanding Talents: Swords 14, Sing 16, Play Instrument 12

Peculiarities: Arkos wields the ‘Amethyst Lion’ Zhimitarra, one of the twelve legendary swords of the Order of the Theater

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: He loves to appear incognito as a “Red Knight” of the rahjaic Order of the Rose, and seeks contact with beautiful and noble women as well as with other adventurers who he inspires to valor and to see beauty.

ELEONORA, MHAHARANI SHAHI OF ARANIA

The daughter of the count of Baburin is the true ruler of Arania. She feels a strong affinity to Perraine and can often be encountered traveling the lands to help and comfort the diseased. The spinsterish healer only recently learned to appreciate the pleasures of life from Arkos: now she wants to make up for many lost years, and is not averse to informal relationships or short affairs.

Born: 3 Haal

Hair: Red-brown

Eyes: Green

Profession: Masterly healer and representative

Outstanding Attributes: IN 12; Curiosity

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 10, all Treat talents masterly

Peculiarities: [Eleonora is a magical dilettante (*balm of healing, sense pestilence*)]

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Eleonora is only seldom caught in an adventurous situation, but she might happen to be interested in a strange sickness or wound.

LEATMON PHRAISOP II, SERVANT OF LIFE

As a minor, the grandnephew of the former Servant of Life in Zorgan, he was the only one to survive when Oronian assassins massacred his family—only because the goddess created an apple tree in which he could hide. The church of Perraine proclaimed him to be the new Servant of Life, but he will only be able to assume office when he turns 18 (40

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

Haal). Until then, he lives under custody of Mhaharani Eleonora, while his ecclesiastical office is held by Abd-al-Ibis, the master of the Therbûnite Order in Nasir Malkid.

Born: 22 Haal

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Green with silver specks

Profession: Inexperienced heir of one of the highest church offices

Peculiarities: Since his rescue, Leatmon Phraisop possess healing powers that exceed a magical dilettante's *balm of healing*

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: The designated Servant of Life is good for all adventures that revolve around a godly child.

MARA AY SAMRA, GRAND VIZIER OF ARANIA

Mara, Sultana of Gorla and Great Vizier at the same time, is a close counselor to Mhaharani Eleonora. She does not feel like a court executive, but rather eyes and ears for her friend, for whom she often journeys. Despite her pride, she is a hot-blooded beauty, cat-like and aggressively attaching if it serves her purpose.

Born: 2 Haal

Hair: Fiery red

Eyes: Poison-green

Profession: Perfect beauty of the night

Outstanding Attributes: IN 18, CH 18; high Curiosity

Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 12, Erotic Arts 14

Peculiarities: Mara is an ageless witch who always appears together with her familiar, the hunting-leopard Shiko.

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: She knows all about Aranian politics and is a good way to include the heroes without the usual bureaucracy.

SYBIA OF ZORGAN, SULTANA OF ZORGAN, QUEEN MOTHER OF ARANIA

The resolute but warm-hearted daughter of Tulamide merchants was given the honorary title Sultana of Zorgan after many years of good rule over Arania. Also being the "Moonsilver Sultana," she is the highest (official) deont of Phex and praises clever and determined merchants. She usually wears splendid vestments in silver and turquoise blue.

Born: 31 b.H.

Hair: Red-blond

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Brilliant negotiator for Arania

Outstanding Attributes: CL 17

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 14, Train Animals (Falconry) 14 (16)

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Sybia usually appears in the service of the Mada Basari, a lay order of Phex, in order to employ heroes for spy missions. She can also just represent how much a clever person can achieve.

PERSONALITIES OF THE CALIPHATE, MHAHADISTAN AND THE LIZARD MARSHES

ABU KHOMCHRA

Abu Khomchra is the hereditary title of a Novadi mystic, who has always lived in the Wal-el-Khomchra mountains north-west of Keft. He shelters children who have been expelled from the desert tribes due to their magical aptitude. He is seen as an eerie, yet Novadi-friendly authority. The skinny hermit can only seldomly be seen in "civilized" oases, and he never enters the cities of the infidels. His word is held in high esteem by the order of dervishes, second only to the teachings of the Mawdliyat.

Born: 30 b.H.

Hair: White-grey

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant dervish and perfect hermit

Outstanding Attributes: IN 19, AG 15

Outstanding Talents: Survival (Desert) 18(20)

Peculiarities: Abu Khomchra is master of ancient Tulamidian magic. He believes in the unity of the sleeping giant Rashtul and the awakened Rastullah.

Connections: Sufficient

Financial Power: Minimal

Game Use: Abu Khomchra embodies the magical side of the Novadis—mysterious and shunned, but in times of danger ready to do all it can for the people, even though it does not even understand his methods.

DOLGURUK, SULTAN OF THALUSA

The ostracized Lea Elf joined the Cult of the Lord of Revenge in order to gain power. After a failed ritual, however, he fled to Thalusa where he became executioner. His demonic mark, the inky black skin that covers his whole body, helps him to have an aura of dread. It was especially helpful when he overthrew the paranoid sovereign Ras Kasan and seized power. He is a despot who collects torture devices and loves to see fear in people's eyes. He is reluctant to make an official pact with Oron until his city-state becomes stronger.

Born: 20 b.H.

Hair: None

Eyes: Black

Profession: Master wizard and competent tyrant

Outstanding Attributes: AG 17; Superstition

Outstanding Talents: Anatomy 12

Peculiarities: Dolguruk only reluctantly uses magic (domination, influence), because he fears Blakharaz' revenge.

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: Dolguruk is an evil tyrant who capriciously governs his city

HASRABAL BEN YAKUBAN, SULTAN OF RASHDUL

The chieftain of the Beni Avad always dreamt of a new Realm of Gorla—he is already ruling the city, the land and the academy of Rashdul and the Chaluk Valley, and nobody knows where his golemides will march next. Being a typical Tulamide potentate, the wizard sultan fancies luxury and uncontested power. Alongside Dimiona, he must be seen as the most dangerous enemy of Arania.

Born: 40 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant master of djinns and intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: CH 18, CL 17

Outstanding Talents: Arcane Lore 14

Important Spells and Rituals: [Many spells of the Invocation, Summoning, Elemental, Illusion and Transmutation disciplines at the masterly level or better, plus the 'standard' guild magic spells; he is one of the few Sahib-al-Sitta, having mastered all six elements]

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Hasrabal is the King of Wind (from the Inrah fortune telling cards), whose eyes and influence are omnipresent. He craves control over all Tulamide lands.

MALKILLAH III OF UNAU, CALIPH, RULER OF THE FAITHFUL

Born as Crown Prince Mustafa of Unau, the Caliph now has returned to Unau after leading an eventful life abroad. Over the years he has learned to only trust the desert nomads, and his former tolerance of 'infidels' has been replaced by a certain ruthlessness, even cruelty. This is very noticeable in his favorite pastime: the hunt.

Born: 8 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: A quite young but competent ruler

Outstanding Attributes: CO 14

Outstanding Talents: Ride 15, Survival (Desert) 12, Statecraft 11, Religious Lore 10

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Caliph Malkillah is a determined ruler who can not be bullied by either infidels or desert sultans. He increasingly uses his marshal and executioner, the Mautaban.

RAKORIOM MUNTAGONUS, ARCH-MAGE, LIZARD RESEARCHER

The grand old master of the Magica Transmutorica knows as much about ancient lizard secrets as any man living; it is unfortunate that he is also insane. He is caught up in the paranoid belief that lizards all over Ethra conspire to restore the old empires of the scaled folk. After he was relieved of heading the academy in Festum, the skinny, grungy old man took up residence in Khunchom, where only the influence of his old friend Khadil

Okharim (head of the Khunchom academy) has prevented the authorities from exiling him as well.

Born: Around 50 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Grey-green

Profession: Brilliant transformationist, and conspiracy theorist

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CL 17; delusions, prejudice (all scaled beings)

Outstanding Talents: History (especially lizard, whatever is known to humans) 18, Starcraft 17, Arcane Lore 17, Language Lore 17; knows a lot of old tongues and lizardic dialects

Important Spells and Rituals: [Transformation, Transmutation and Object disciplines; many spells of his field of study nearly perfected; mastery of many guild-wizard spells]

Connections: Low (many think he is insane)

Financial Power: Sufficient (and decreasing)

Game Use: An employer who honestly wants to do good but still cannot be trusted; counselor for archaeological questions (if one is willing to listen to his tirades)

SKAR SHR SHZINTH, AN ACHAZ

The former chieftain of the Zansh'Jrr in the eastern Lizard Marshes resigned from office in order to follow an old prophecy and to search for Krsh Tssh'Kt, "the one who proclaims renewal." During his journeys he had contact with humans and thus learned their language.

Born: 10 b.H.

Scales: Dark green

Eyes: Yellow

Profession: Mysterious, thoroughly alien—yet extraordinarily open-minded

Outstanding Attributes: CO 13, IN 16

Outstanding Talents: Survival 16, Ride (Flying Lizard) 14; Swamp Ken

Peculiarities: Mount: Flying Lizard, speaks Garethi and Tulamidy.

Connections: Considerable (in the Lizard Marshes)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Skar is the ideal "contact" to the achaz. He can be either an ally of the heroes if they are in need of help in the Lizard Marshes, or an adversary if the heroes enter taboo sites. Other lizards could also be a contact to the achaz: Brother Chriazzl of the Noionites in Selem; Ssarcha, a Forest Isle achaz who traveled alongside a deont of Aves; He'Itsiz, a Maraskanian achaz; Tziktzal, achaz-witch and servant of Salpikon Savartin.

THOMEG ATHERION, ARCHMAGE, SPECTABILITY OF THE ACADEMY OF FASAR

At first glance, the head of the domination academy—who appeared at the All-Aventurian Magician's Convent with a sack full of severed Borbaradian heads—is a Magician-Mogul reborn, an alien, manly Tulamidian potentate with a certain animal magnetism. He is passionate, ruthless, even possessed by everything he does. Moral bounds are unknown to him; he researches sexual magic together with the Fasarian High Deont of Rahja while testing the limits of the *imperavi* spell on unfortunate victims.

Born: Unknown, looks in his mid-forties

Hair: Black, balding

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant across-the-board black magician

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, CL 17

Outstanding Talents: Climb 17, Arcane Lore 17, Language Lore 15, Fast Talk 15; many physical and lore talents masterly

Important Spells and Rituals: [All spells of the Domination, Influence, Demonic and Invocation disciplines masterly/brilliant and up; the same with all guild-magic and common-knowledge spells; spherologist]

Peculiarities: Claims to be non-Ethran

Connections: Great (independent black magicians, great influence in Fasar)

Financial Power: Very Great (coffers of the academy, he is one of the Eminencies of Fasar)

Game Use: A role-model black magician, who pursues his research (and intrigues) unscrupulously, but is not 'rotten to the core.' Knows many mysteries from the Rashtul Wall, of the Magician-Moguls and of otherworldly realms.

PERSONALITIES OF THE DEEP SOUTH

AMIR HONAK, PATRIARCH OF AL'ANFA, HEAD OF THE ALANFANIAN RITE OF THE BORON CHURCH

The pleasure-addicted son and heir of Patriarch Tar Honak is slowly growing into a leader of the city. Deeply faithful to Boron, his goals are diverging more and more from the materialistically-oriented Council of the Twelve, but he lacks the sinister aura of his father, preventing him from fully seizing power.

Born: 8 Boron, 6 b.H.

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Grey-green

Profession: Master of intrigues, brilliant rhetoric, brilliant seducer

Outstanding Attributes: CO 15, CH 17

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 15, Human Nature 13, Statecraft 13

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: He is a collector of cursory love affairs, initiator of Boron-pleasing quests or the brain of intrigues.

HEY-SHEY, MOHA-ADVENTURER

Hey-Shey (Sun) of the Oijaniha tribe was saved from a painful death in Al'Anfa by a handful of adventurers. Together with the beautiful Moha youth, the adventurers traveled to Thorwal, where a jealous drunkard stabbed the boy. Having pity on him, the goddess of life saved him; since that time he has worshiped both rainbow and jaguar. He respects life, both that of his allies and his enemies. Due to many recurring dreams, he has gained a vast knowledge of, and talents in, healing.

Back in the rainforest, the healer helps his people in any possible manner. The Al'Anfanian grandes have spent much money trying catching him, without any result. He now dreams of uniting the jungle tribes against slavers.

Born: 7 b.H.

Hair: Blue-black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Masterly Oijaniha-warrior

Outstanding Attributes: CH 17; Curiosity, Pacifist

Outstanding Talents: Treat Wounds 18, Treat Poison 12, Treat Disease 12, Treat Psyche 13, Brawling (Hruruzat) 15

Peculiarities: Rainbow lizard amulet, which prevents Hey-Shey from dealing deadly blows in combat

Connections: Low (great among Moha-tribes)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: He-She can ask for help from the heroes, secretly or openly protect them, or try to include them in his ambitious plans.

IRSHAN PERVAL, GRAND EXECUTOR OF AL'ANFA

The man behind the scenes of the Patriarch's throne is very knowledgeable in arcane lore as well as in intrigues. Due to his charisma, it is said he can even convince people to stab themselves in the heart.

Born: 14 Hesinde, 18 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Perfected intrigue-master and diplomat, masterly magician

Outstanding Attributes: CL 16, CH 17

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 15, Seduce 12, Arcane Lore 16, Human Nature 13, Statecraft 15

Important Spells and Rituals: (Domination, Influence, Object) *Be my friend, horriphobus; [hellpain, hard melt!, burn dead matter]*

Peculiarities: Lover of the patriarch of Al'Anfa

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: Irshan Perval is the ultimate puppeteer behind the scenes of Al'Anfa and the whole south; his intrigues can extend into the northern realms.

LUCAN QUESEDA, ALANFANIAN SWORD MASTER

After a long and glorious career as famous gladiator in the arena of Al'Anfa, Lucan lost the favor of the patriarch and took part in the Flight of the Ten on the day of big sleep in 29 Haal. When he survived the jump (but became blind), the event of a century had happened—much to the displeasure of the patriarch. Yet, following Boron's will, his life was spared and he was freed. Despite his blindness, Lucan Quesada is one of the most-feared swordfighters of the south, and he claims that Boron has opened his eyes. He has embarked on a quest through the Aventurian south, though whether for wisdom or for glory, no one can say.

Born: 3 Haal

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant swordfighter

Outstanding Attributes: IN 18, AG 17

Outstanding Talents: Many combat talents brilliant to perfect; numerous accompanying special abilities (blind fighting, of course, among them)

Peculiarities: Despite his blindness, Lucan 'feels' his environment

Connections: Minimal

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: A famous swordfighter who emanates a divine aura

MIZIRION III, KING OF BRABAK

No other monarch is so often frowned upon for being bankrupt; no other monarch has to fight such a rebellious council of nobility, which controls government spending. Mizirion's strongest weapon is unpredictability, which keeps him one step ahead of his adversaries. The country is more important to him than morale, even though he is well aware of the power and reputation of Brabak abroad. His greatest dream is the 'Golden Alliance' with the Horasrealm, which would also fill up his treasury.

Born: 34 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: A competent but unpredictable monarch

Outstanding Attributes: CL 17

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk (Haggle) 20, Statecraft 12

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: Mizirion of Brabak always needs money, and therefore supports everything that seems to be lucrative. At the same time, he is always in need of help against his "loyal counselors," the noble families of the country.

NAREB EMANO WRATHBREAK, ALANFANIAN GRANDE

Being an heir of the founder of the former South Kingdom, Nareb embodies the disrespect, brutality and greed of the Wrathbreak family. Less with intrigue than with despotism, he enforces his plans with effective violence.

Born: 32 b.H.

Hair: Bald

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Despot, master of intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: CH 8, ST 19; Greed

Outstanding Talents: Wrestling 16, Statecraft 14

Peculiarities: Comes from the bloodline of the Kings of the South and Fasarian nobles; he weighs over 200 greatpounds and moves about in a flamboyant two-person sedan.

Connections: Immense

Financial Power: Immense

Game Use: Being a brutal blackmailer and quasi-despot of Al'Anfa, many adventures can revolve around him and his fight with the Honaks or Paligans.

ODERIN DU METUANT, MARSHAL-GUBERNATOR OF ALANFA

The commander-in-chief of the Al'Anfanian army is known to be absolutely loyal to Al'Anfa and the patriarch. Intrigues and diplomacy are not part of his vocabulary, and thus he does not even notice how he is being maneuvered out of serious politics. He would not hesitate to kill, however, in order to maintain his position and the glory of the city.
Born: 24 b.H.

Hair: Brown-grey (streaked)

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Brilliant commander, inexperienced in intrigues

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, ST 17

Outstanding Talents: Warcraft 17; master of several combat talents and special abilities

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Oderin can be a desperate victim of Al'Anfanian intrigues, or the merciless commander of one of Aventuria's largest armies.

SALPIKON SAVERTIN, CONVOCATUS PRIMUS OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF KNOWLEDGE

Savertin, Spectability of the School of Variable Shape in Mirham, has used his diplomatic wit to unite and to lead the individualistic wizards of the left hand. He is always traveling on behalf of the guild,

and tries to color the image of the evil black magician a little more grey.

Born: 49 b.H. (but quite vital)

Hair: Black or rainbow-colored

Eyes: Black

Profession: Gifted linguist and rhetoric, unscrupulous scientist and anatomist; fierce adversary of Borbaradians.

Outstanding Attributes: CL 18, CH 15, DE 15

Outstanding Talents: Orientation 18, Anatomy 20; a host of living and dead languages

Important Spells and Rituals: [(Transformation, Attributes, Object) *Analytica* 14, *eagle's wings (flying lizard)* 13, *granite and marble* 14, *imago* 13, *arcanovi* 15]

Peculiarities: His achaz servant Tziktzal; studies lizard magic

Connections: Very great in Mirham, otherwise considerable

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: Can be used to fight the "fire" of Borbaradiansim with the effective "fire" of ruthless black magic, or as mysterious suspect, or as employer.

TONKO-TAPAM BOHANTOPA, MOHA-SHAMAN

Bohantopa of the tribe of the Moha says that he was born at the last day of the great rain – he knows that because he can remember his birth! As a sixteen-year-old, he told his surprised mother about it, and the local shaman quickly found out that the boy has considerable talent for dream journeys.

Bohantopa reconquered the jaguar-temple that was desecrated by Borbarad and he is the new High Shaman of Gulagal (the spiritual center of the Mohas) ever since. Then he departed from the rainforest in order to find the demon master himself. While traveling he acquainted Arch-Mage Carolan Serpentstaff of Kuslik, but quickly returned home in order to protect his people.

As with most Mohas, the High Shaman's body is very short, yet lithe. When visiting civilization he wears a red coat with a long train and an apron made of jaguar hide.
Born: 12 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Profession: Perfect Moha-shaman and masterly Moha-warrior

Outstanding Attributes: IN 18, AG 15; Gift Prophecy 18

Outstanding Talents: Alchemy 12

Important Spells and Rituals: [In addition to shamanic rituals, he can also cast some other spells; 'touched by the jaguar,' he can also use karmic energy]

Peculiarities: Shaman club of tiger-thighbone, wears 4 shrunken heads on his belt

Connections: Very great among the Forest People, negligible otherwise

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: The shaman represents the desires of his people with all his power. He can be an ally or antagonist of the heroes.

PERSONALITIES OF THE DARK LANDS

APER, OF UNGOLFSFIR, WARDEN OF DRAGONSTONE MARCH, HOSTKEEPER OF TOBRIA, AN EMPEROR DRAGON

After Shafir, he is probably one of the oldest emperor dragons in Aventuria. Only a few years ago, Apep allowed human refugees to settle in his Dragonstones (a realistic claim)—even more, he entered a pact with the Duke of Tobria and the Middenrealm and agreed to protect the humans of Tobria against Borbarad's minions. His emissary in Perainefords is Dracodan of Misasprings. Apep's son, Lessankan, resides in the nearby Black Sickle and is barely tolerated by his father.

Born: About 1800 b.H.

Scale Color: Reddish gold

Eyes: Gold

Profession: Draconic potentate

Outstanding Attributes: Draconic strength and cleverness; Violent Temper

Outstanding Talents: Master knowledge of history and perfected arcane lore

Important Spells: [Master of transmutation and transformation]

Peculiarities: A fabulous hoard

Connections: Important

Financial Power: Overpowering

Game Use: A threat, if the heroes enter his territory without his consent; possibly an awkward counselor and demanding employer; for an audience, one should definitely consult Dracodan.

AZARIL CRIMSONWEED

Once Rohezel's mole within the Borbaradians, she was first forced and then persuaded to comply. Now, the elf is the advocate of "philosophical Borbaradianism." Because she is disturbing Xeraan in his plans to create a profitable Borbarad-religion, she is sent out into the free lands on espionage and infiltration missions. She slowly garners strength as Xeraan's influence in Mendena weakens.

Born: 10 b.H.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Profession: Brilliant agent, masterly prophet and Borbaradian of the 'old school'

Outstanding Attributes: CH 17, AG 16; Gifts: Danger Sense 17, Prophecy 16

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 15, Seduce 13, Teach 15, Arcane Lore 13, Fast Talk 15, speaks many languages

Important Spells and Rituals: [All common elven spells, many guild magician spells and all Borbaradian spells, at least at a master level; also knows several satuaric and druidic spells; is able to derive Borbaradian spells from existing guild spells]

Connections: Great (but secret)

Financial Power: Sufficient (private)

Game Use: A religious fanatic, seductress and agent for the (philosophical) cause of the late Borbarad; with a little bit of luck a future heptarch; she is a public menace, because she is so persuasive (and on first sight not evil at all)

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

BERNFREY OF HONOR'S ROCK, DUKE OF TWELVE-GODLY TOBRIA

Since the invasion of the Black Hordes, this tall man in his mid-thirties has lost all that he loved: his father fell in Mendenia, his brother in Eslamsbridge, his mother and his wife both died during the siege of Ysilia, and only a small strip around Perainefords is left of his former duchy. Still, the 'young' duke (as he is called by the people) is widely popular. There is no vassal who does not feel with him and would give his life for the lost home. If only he'd do more than sit around brooding ...

Born: 7 b.H.

Hair: Red-blond

Eyes: Green

Profession: Strict ruler and highly motivated warrior, inclination to melancholy

Outstanding Attributes: IN 16, ST 15, CL 14;

Gift: Prophecy: 14; manic-depressive

Outstanding Talents: Statecraft 15, Warcraft 15, Ride 14

Peculiarities: Sometimes the duke has the gift of second sight

Connections: Very great

Financial Power: Minimal

Game Use: There is a chance that the duke will welcome the heroes returning from an adventure in the Black Lands, seeking for information on his former home

DIMIONA OF ZORGAN, MOGHULI OF ORON

The breathtakingly beautiful and sly daughter of Sybia of Arania has lost all sense of right and wrong. She believes to be the right ecclesiastic and worldly ruler of Oron. Being the High Priest of Belkelel, she is a mystic who can conduct orgies of pain that last for several days, only to ponder about their philosophical meaning. Still, she is able to always have her orders obeyed.

Born: 1 Haal

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Profession: Brilliant demonist

Outstanding Attributes: CH 19

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 18, Erotic Arts 18, Anatomy 12

Peculiarities: Bears Belkelel's shard of the demon crown, she combines the powers of a Laraans-Master with those of a witch and those of a lamijah (a vampiric demon).

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: She only appears in public for exceptional executions or important festivals of Belkelel. She is more of a mysterious plotter in the background.

G.C.E. GALOTTA, DEMON EMPEROR OF YOL-GHURMAK

Gaius Cordovan Eslam Galotta is a graduate (with honors) of the academy of Elenvina and former imperial court magician, but he is famous as a high traitor of the Middenrealm, instigator of the Ogre War in 10 Haal, most-wanted criminal all over Aventuria (last of his crimes was the kidnapping of the Imperial Twins), Blakharaz-pactist, follower of Borbarad and finally the obviously megalomaniacal, self-declared "Demon Emperor" of the Middenrealm (of which he only rules the occupied part of Tobria). He is the mad architect of his palace-city Yol-Ghurmak.

Born: around 50 b.H.

Hair: Bald head, painted red

Eyes: Green

Profession: Perfect Dominator, brilliant demonologist and artifact magician

Outstanding Attributes: CL 18, DE 14; delusions, pathological hatred for the Middenrealm

Outstanding Talents: Arcane Lore 16, History 14, Human Nature 11, Engineering 11; knows many ancient tongues

Important Spells and Rituals: [Almost all spells of the Domination, Influence, Invocation, Object and Transmutation disciplines masterly; all summoning of demons from Blakharaz' domain perfected (pact); can cast almost all guild magician "standard spells"]

Peculiarities: Bearer of the Agrimoth-shard of the demon crown; basically unlimited access to various cursed artifacts

Connections: Great (as heptarch, usually underestimated and not taken seriously)

Financial Power: Very great

Game Use: One of the heptarchs; tries to infiltrate the Middenrealm through the use of artifacts, threats and intrigues; the often (unreachable) schemer of complex Borbaradian plots

(THESIA) GILIA OF KUKRUM, QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS

Queen Gilia is the most cosmopolitan ruler of the Amazons ever. She has seen trouble: she was disgraced, pardoned by Rondra and finally regained the trust of the Amazons. Yet she is understood to be an almost holy successor of her mother Yppolita—especially since she led the Amazons into the Third Demon Battle and returned with only few casualties.

Born: 3 Rondra, 3 Haal

Hair: Light blonde

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Masterly ruler, brilliant fighter

Outstanding Attributes: CO 17, CH 16, AG 16

Outstanding Talents: Wrestling 15, Sabers 18, Statecraft 11

Peculiarities: Gilia is said to be a favorite of Rondra

Connections: Very great (to the Middenrealm, Fountland and the church of Rondra)

Financial Power: Sufficient

Game Use: Gilia is as proud as is appropriate for an Amazon queen, but also quite pragmatic. From Castle Yeslinna in the Dragonstones, she battles the heptarchs and sides with all those she deems honorable and loyal to the Twelvegods.

GLORANA THE BEAUTIFUL, QUEEN OF GLORANIA

Black witch, Nagrach-pactist, queen of the Ice Realm—Glorana is one of the most powerful daughters of Satuarina, who was tempted by demonology. Now she is the despot of Glorania and hunts all who resists her.

Born: Nameless days, 24/25 b.H.

Hair: Red

Eyes: Poison-green

Profession: Brilliant demonologist and witch

Outstanding Attributes: CO 18, CH 17

Outstanding Talents: Seduce 12, Arcane Lore 14, Treat Poison 13

Important Spells and Rituals: [*Greed be great* 18, *scuttling scare* 15, *fury blood* 11, *heptagon* 9, *pandaemonium* 15, *levthan's fire (also permanent)* 13, *firebane* 14, *burden of age* 8, and other spells as the Highlord pleases]

Peculiarities: Ageless due to Nagrach's influence, bearer of the Nagrach-shard

Connections: Considerable

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: A fully corrupt yet fascinating adversary in the Ice Realm, who uses the cold of the netherhells against opponents and subordinates.

GWIDÛHENNA OF FALDAHON, PRINCE-ILLUMINATA OF BEILUNK

Her appointment as Margrave of Beilunk was quite surprising for Gwidûhenna, who was born into the march's lesser nobility. Of course, following her time with the Order of the Banishing Light, her graduation from the Beilunkian law seminar, practice as an attorney for state and church, and connections to the Jarielitic fraction of the Praios church, the appointment wasn't unpredictable, either. The height of her career, though, came with the invasion of the Black Hordes: after many fiery sermons and a Praios-miracle, she was able to enforce arcanum interdictum in Beilunk.

Born: 31 b.H.

Hair: Blonde/grey

Eyes: Grey

Profession: Brilliant preacher, competent politician

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CH 15

Outstanding Talents: Persuade 16, Law 15, Statecraft 14, Human Nature 11

Connections: Great (Margrave of Beilunk; influences radical circles of the Praios church)

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: Being an awkwardly intransigent, almost fanatical deont of Praios, she represents the part of the church that also longs for more worldly power.

HELME HAFX, PRINCE-COMMANDER OF MARASKAN

He was the commander when the Tuzak riots were suppressed; he was victor of the Ogre Battle and hero of the Ork Storm, former Imperial Grand Marshal and Count of Warkhome. Maraskan could be part of the Middenrealm today, if Haffax had not noticed that his honest, military nature did not further his career at the royal court. He soon defected to Borbarad and now strictly rules Maraskan—"his country"—from Jergan. The pact with Asfaloth (which keeps him alive), the Belhalhar-shard of the demon crown and the sword of Agrimoth constantly battle for his soul, causing the usually calm strategist to have fits of violent temper that can only be soothed by blood.

Born: 52 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Perfect strategist, competent military dictator

Outstanding Attributes: CO 19, CL 15; Violent Temper, sometimes delusions

Outstanding Talents: Warcraft 20, a host of combat talents and special abilities

Peculiarities: Bearer of the Belhalhar-shard of the demon crown, the demonic armor Argul-Vhor and the Agrimoth-sword Athai-Naq

Connections: Great

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: One of the heptarchs; a tragic anti-hero who cannot escape his pact with the demonic transmutator Asfaloth; almost unapproachable ruler of Maraskan, who sometimes is the cause of military missions against the free lands.

KYRJAKA, CALLED MADAYRAÆEL, CURSE OF THE WOLVES, CORRUPTOR OF FIRUN'S PEOPLE

The free demon possesses powers and creatures that seem to originate in Nagrach's domain. Fed by Sumu's blood, the theriak, she can manifest in the third plane for a long time. At the moment her plans led her into the Ice Realm, where she wrestles with Glorana for control of theriak-sources.

Hair: Silver-white

Eyes: Amber-yellow

Profession: Perfect Nagrach-demonologist and huntress

Outstanding Attributes: Extremely courageous and sly, demonic physical abilities

Outstanding Talents: A master of search and destroy, who prefers a long and cruel hunt

Important Spells and Rituals: [Casting powers comparable to those of sinister druids and witches with Nagrach-component]

Peculiarities: Shapeshifter (silver wolf and human woman)

Connections: Low

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: Adversary of Glorana and Iloinen in the battle for the Ice Realm

LEONARDO, "THE MECHANICUS"

The architect of the famed Princess Emer Bridge in Havena and inventor of various strange gadgets, like flying machines and diving bells, was abducted by the insane "Demon Emperor" Galotta. Now he is forced to devise demonic war machines in Yol-Ghurmak.

Born: 42 b.H.

Hair: Grey

Eyes: Green

Profession: Perfect mechanist, brilliant inventor

Outstanding Attributes: CL 19, DE 16

Outstanding Talents: Alchemy 14, Anatomy 15, Calculate 18, Construction 12, Engineering 22, Light Engineering 14, Metallurgy 12, Shipwright 10

Connections: Sufficient (in- and outside the Dark Lands)

Financial Power: None

Game Use: The benevolent, crazy scientist who is forced to invent horrible cruelties

RATERAL SANIN, BUCCANEER-CAPTAIN, FORMER MARGRAVE AND IMPERIAL ADMIRAL

The captain from the famous Albernian discoverer-family and youngest admiral of the Middenrealm made his living on the *Eagle of Beilunk*, with which he charted the coast of the Sea of Pearls. He then was promoted to be the Margrave of Windhague and Great Admiral of the Western Fleet—shoved away, he thought. In Rahja, 28 Haal, he seized his former ship and is now roaming the Sea of Pearls as a buccaneer hunting the ships of the heptarchs.

Born: 29 b.H.

Hair: Red/grey

Eyes: Dark brown

Profession: Brilliant captain and geographer

Outstanding Attributes: CO 16, CL 15

Outstanding Talents: Orientation 15, Weather

Sense 15, Geography 17, Cartography 12, Seafaring 14, Helmsman 14

Connections: Considerable (even though most of them not officially anymore)

Financial Power: Considerable

Game Use: The honorable buccaneer; savior from disaster on the Bloody Sea; seafarer heroes of medium level could sign on

RHAZZAZOR, THE LORD OF WARUNK

If one believes the rumors, the former emperor dragon has been dead for longer than humans have lived on Aventuria. That didn't prevent him from serving Borbarad after each of his resurrections, though. At the moment, he controls Warunkia and eastern Darpatia, including basically all lands between Radrom and Troll Peaks. His pact with Thargunitoth gives regular nightmares to not only him, but to all the inhabitants of these lands as well. It is only a question of time until the archdemon takes him into her realm.

Profession: Dragolich, perfected necromancer

Important Spells and Rituals: [Invocation, Demonic and Spirits disciplines; Thargunitoth-pactist in the sixth circle of damnation; almost a freewiz in the area of necromancy]

Peculiarities: Bearer of the Thargunitoth-shard of Borbarad's crown

Connections: Great (subordinate necromancers, diplomatic connections to the other heptarchs)

Financial Power: Great

Game Use: One of the heptarchs; spreader of nightmares; spiritual leader of the Endless Column

THE SKRECHU

The "Great Wyrm of Maraskan," herself the result of a chimaerological experiment, is only known to a handful of insiders. For hundreds, if not thousands of years, she has tried to recreate the old race of Ssrkhrsechim by means of chimaerological experiments, trying to create a new lizard empire. For now, she hides in Borbarad's former black fortress in the heart of the Maraskan mountains.

Profession: Brilliant chimaerologist and conspirator

Outstanding Attributes: Unknown, but believed to have outstanding mental attributes

Important Spells and Rituals: [None in the human sense; can create chimaeras at will, exceptional knowledge of transformation magic, Asfalothic creature and Asfaloth-pactist]

Peculiarities: Bearer of the Asfaloth-shard of Borbarad's crown

Connections: Considerable (many cultists, various lizard beings)

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

Financial Power: None

Game Use: The most mysterious (and least known) heptarch; involved in various lizard cults and orders, whose goal is to recreate the old lizard empires.

TORXES OF FREE SPIRIT, JESTER AND DIPLOMAT

Why the jester once took part in the Ogre Battle will probably never be known, but the death of his girlfriend Aske broke his heart and confused his mind so much that he swore revenge on the gods and the world in general (and especially Galotta, whose court jester he is right now). He then entered a pact with Lolgramoth, which also caused him to be known as the 'Eternal Rover.'

Born: Around 28 b.H.

Hair: Red

Eyes: Green

Profession: Master of intrigues and diplomacy

Outstanding Attributes: IN 16, AG 20, DE 16

Outstanding Talents: Acrobatics 20, Body Control 18, Etiquette 14 (even though he is

always disregarding it), Persuade 13; speaks almost all living tongues

Important Spells and Rituals: Various supernatural abilities due to his Lolgramoth pact, [all jester spells at least masterly]

Connections: Sufficient (but not lasting)

Financial Power: Low

Game Use: An abortive existence; avenger for his own cause, plotter of evil intrigues, part-time herald for any heptarch; a "joker" for both sides

XERAAN, PORTIFEX MAXIMUS OF THE BORBARAD CHURCH

He is notorious for his greed, and was driven to perform infamous actions by it. Hunched over since a summoning accident, he now is the master of eastern Tobria, High Prophet of the church of Borbarad (created by himself), creator and commander of a demonic cross of abducted Fairfieldian children and Zantim-demons—and as greedy as ever. One has to admit, though, that he foresaw the coming of Borbarad and used it to his own advantage. At the moment, he resides in Mendena.

Born: 43 b.H.

Hair: Bald

Eyes: Blue

Profession: Perfect dominator, brilliant prophet and creator of a religion

Outstanding Attributes: CL 20; Gift: Prophecy 16, extreme greed

Outstanding Talents: Fast Talk 16, Human Nature 14, Arcane Lore 14, Appraise 17, Statecraft 10

Important Spells and Rituals: [Domination, Influence, Demonic and Invocation disciplines; almost all domination and influence spells masterly or better, various illusions and many invocations masterly as well; suspected multiple pactist (Tasfarelel, Belhalhar)]

Peculiarities: Bearer of the Charyptoroth-shard of the demon crown

Connections: Great (his minions and lickspittles, diplomatic connections to the other heptarchs)

Financial Power: Immense (but too greedy to use it)

Game Use: Probably the most vulnerable of the heptarchs; trying to increase his wealth by controlling many pirates in the Sea of Pearls



CROWNED LEADERS

In the following tables, you will find the most important emperors and kings, sultans and caliphs of the various Aventurian periods and provinces.

TULAMIDIAN RULERS

THE SHEIK-AL-SHEIKS OF THE TULAMIDES

3002–2772 b.H.	Rashtul al-Sheik
2772–2750 b.H.	Batsrabun ibn Rashtul

THE SULTANS OF KHUNCHOM

2750–2731 b.H.	Bastrabun ibn Rashtul
2730–2709 b.H.	Perhiman ibn Bastrabun
2709–2674 b.H.	Yadda ibn Perhiman
2673–2631 b.H.	Nabatil al-Waqih
2631–2599 b.H.	Manoyla saba Nabatil
2599–2576 b.H.	Ifriqis ibn Omeid
2576–2536 b.H.	Waddif al-Sadiq
2536–2505 b.H.	Waddif al-Retef
2504–2458 b.H.	Waddif al-Nabti
2458–2423 b.H.	Waddif al-Karibi
2423–2398 b.H.	Waddif al-Yarush
2398–2358 b.H.	Waddif al-Wakiah
2358–2317 b.H.	Sulman al-Nassori

THE ADAMANTINE SULTANS,

2317–2306 b.H.	I DYNASTY Sulman al-Nassori
2306–2278 b.H.	Rhukeyef ibn Sulman
2278–2249 b.H.	Omar Shadif
2248–2216 b.H.	Gassir al-Tarifa
2216–2168 b.H.	Amir al-Dhubb
2168–2125 b.H.	Toba al-Akran
2124–2085 b.H.	Kharibet I
2085–2053 b.H.	Quasran Yanuf

THE ADAMANTINE SULTANS,

2053–2011 b.H.	II DYNASTY Rufis Riyyam al-Muktar
2011–1967 b.H.	Sheranbil I al Yakrub
1967–1963 b.H.	Sheranbil II
1963–1902 b.H.	Sheranbil III
1902–1865 b.H.	Morbai ibn Dhuri
1865–1832 b.H.	Yasmal ibn Mordai
1832–1795 b.H.	Kharibet II
1795–1781 b.H.	Sheranbil IV al-Wazzif
1781–1729 b.H.	Shahr Halel
1792–1687 b.H.	Haidan ibn Shahr Halel
1687–1635 b.H.	Abu Shadad

THE ADAMANTINE SULTANS,

1635–1579 b.H.	III DYNASTY Hasrabal al-Milta
1578–1553 b.H.	Hailif ibn Sinhedri
1553–1536 b.H.	Khorim ibn Hailif
1536–1529 b.H.	Erkhaban ibn Hailif

1528–1502 b.H.
1502–1408 b.H.

Alef-Faizal
Sheranbil V al-Shahr

THE ADAMANTINE SULTANS,

1297–1263 b.H.
1263–1248 b.H.

IV DYNASTY
Mustafa ibn Abu Nuwas
Nahema saba Mustafa

THE ADAMANTINE SULTANS,

1248–1205 b.H.
1204–1183 b.H.
1183–1106 b.H.
1106–1051 b.H.
1045–1010 b.H.

V DYNASTY
Yadail al-Musaf
Kalkarib ibn Yadail
Interregnum
Bheraimi ibn Shahr
Najari ibn Bheraimi*

*In 1011, Murak-Horas defeats the Tulamides. The lands of the Adamantine Sultans become provinces of Bosparan and, subsequently, the New Empire.

THE OLD EMPIRE

THE MYTHICAL RULERS

2485–1940 b.H.	Horas
1893 b.H.	Dalida-Horas
1878 b.H.	Seneb-Horas I
1873–1849 b.H.	Belen-Horas

THE PEACE EMPERORS

1849–1814 b.H.	Seneb-Horas II
1814–1792 b.H.	Asmodena
1792–1734 b.H.	Nasul
1734–1712 b.H.	Arn
1712–1691 b.H.	Yulag
1691–1656 b.H.	Isiz
1656–1624 b.H.	Svelinya
1624–1612 b.H.	Thuan
1612–1211 b.H.	Haldur
1611–1557 b.H.	Fran

THE DARK AGES

1557–1522 b.H.	Olruk
1522–1483 b.H.	Olruk II
1483 b.H.	The overthrow of Olruk II by Imperial Marshal Halmar
1483–1475 b.H.	Halmar
1475–1474 b.H.	Bender
1474–1470 b.H.	Dozman
1470–1419 b.H.	Yarum
1419–1394 b.H.	Niotha
1394–1363 b.H.	Dalek
1363–1322 b.H.	Dalek II
1322–1293 b.H.	Jel
1293–1252 b.H.	Usim
1251–1184 b.H.	Usim II
1184–1155 b.H.	Dalek III

PERSONALITIES OF AVENTURIA

THE KUSLIK EMPERORS

1155–1103 b.H.	Brigon
1103–1080 b.H.	Silem
1080–1052 b.H.	Obra
1052–1010 b.H.	Murak
1010–993 b.H.	Hela*

*The Old Empire fell after the victory of the rebellious Garethians during the Second Demon Battle.

THE EMPERORS OF THE NEW EMPIRE

993–940 b.H.	Raul
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THE WISE EMPERORS

940–895 b.H.	Debrek
895–874 b.H.	Nardes
874–873 b.H.	Sigman
873–821 b.H.	Sighelm
821–780 b.H.	Gerbald I
780–738 b.H.	Menzel
738–718 b.H.	Gerbald II
718–684 b.H.	Rude I
684–660 b.H.	Ugdalf
	Rude II*

*Rude II was too young to assume the throne after his father, and was placed in the guardianship of a council of deonts. Rude II was killed before coming of age.

THE PRIEST-EMPERORS AND THE REGENCY OF ROHAL

658–645 b.H.	Aldec
645–581 b.H.	Noralec
581–579 b.H.	Kathay
579–541 b.H.	Gurvan
541–538 b.H.	Amelthona
538–528 b.H.	Gurvan II
528–527 b. H	The great riot led by Rohal
527–404 b.H.	Rohal the Wise
404 b.H.	The beginning of the <i>Wizard Wars</i> , following Rohal's resignation

THE ALMADAN DYNASTY (ESLAMIDES)

391–348 b.H.	Eslam
348–330 b.H.	Tolak
330–296 b.H.	Alrik
296–265 b.H.	Eslam II
265–246 b.H.	Eslam III
246–221 b.H.	Eslam IV
221–184 b.H.	Bodar
184–150 b.H.	Bodar II
150–113 b.H.	Eslam V
113–91 b.H.	Valpo*

*During the governance of the Eslamides, the New Empire starts to fall apart. After the death of Valpo, the empire plunges into a 30-year war of succession—the Emperorless Age—from which eventually Barduron of Gareth emerges as victor. After his sudden death, his son Perval attains the crown.

THE GARETH DYNASTY

60–45 b.H.	Perval
45–18 b.H.	Bardo and Cella
18 b.H.–0 Haal	Reto
0–36 Haal	Haal*
From 36 Haal on	Rohaja

*Haal disappeared under mysterious circumstances during a hunt in Fountland in 17 Haal. His son Brin was awarded the title of Protector of the Realm by the Imperial Grand Council, to rise to Emperor 12 years after Haal's disappearance. Brin died 28 Haal in the Third Demon Battle; his wife Emer assumed regency for her daughter Rohaja.

KINGS OF VINSALT / HORASREALM

After many years of small-scale war and quarrel, Fairfield, once the core province of the Old Empire, regained its independence and recognition in the Peace of Kuslik.

241–224 b.H.	Khadan
224–193 b.H.	Dettmar
193–180 b.H.	Alborn
180–170 b.H.	Kumara
170–152 b.H.	Alborn
152–127 b.H.	Elissa
127–107 b.H.	Amene
107–81 b.H.	Barjed
81–54 b.H.	Amene II
54–22 b.H.	Therengar
22 b.H.–3 Haal	Tolman
Since 3 Haal	Amene III (assumes the title of Horas in 17 Haal)

NOVADI CALIPHS

The desert tribes separated from the New Empire and renounced the Twelvegods belief after the appearance of Rastullah by the Keft oasis.

218–207 b.H.	Malkillah ibn Hairadan
207–201 b.H.	Omar al-Karim
201–179 b.H.	Mukarib al-Kafur
179–174 b.H.	Sahir-Illam
174–173 b.H.	Abu Marwan
173–161 b.H.	Yerdawan al-Nadab
161–140 b.H.	Khusrau ibn Schiram
140–100 b.H.	Haschabnah, 'al-Schaddai'
100–36 b.H.	Malkillah II al-Yanuf
36–12 b.H.	Chamallah al-Ghatar
12 b.H.–12 Haal	Abu Dhelrumun
Since 17 Haal	Malkillah III (Mustafaibn Khalid)

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