

Tradetalk

The Chaos Society Magazine

#10

Glorantha
Hero Wars
RuneQuest
Cthulhu
Stormbringer
Corum
Hawkmoon
Pendragon

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WENELIA & RAMALIA SPECIAL

Genertela South Coast • Wenelia • Kingdom of Ramalia

The Mraloti • Legends of the Arstola Forest

Tradetalk

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Hi fellows,

WELCOME TO TRADETALK's first Maniria special. Yes we had (again) to much good stuff for only one issue on this topic. This issue is a "Venelia & Ramalia Special", written by Nick Brooke, Jeff Kyer and Jamie "Trotsky" Revell, while issue 11 will focus on the long ago announced "Handra & the New Fens" by Marc Willner, updated and rewritten by Peter Metcalfe. Additional material about the Harandings and Newtlings will be provided by Julian Lord and Ian Thomson, respectively. Because of the split of the material into two issues, this issue's cover somewhat inappropriately shows a scene in Handra.

The RuneQuest article, "Ritual Magic Part II, or 'Didn't you used to be related to that Orlanth fellow?'" by Stephen Martin has also (finally) made it into this issue of Tradetalk, along with "Legends of the Arstola", another Aldryami article by Shannon Appelcline. Also by Shannon is "More Adventures in the Young Kingdoms" for the Stormbringer role-playing game.

Next issue will feature "Insects from Shaggai" for Call of Cthulhu, and should include another Aldryami article as well.

Issaries News

Issaries continues to develop supplements for Hero Wars. Although Issaries has released **The Complete Griselda**, and **Barbarian Adventures**, the first book of the Sartar Rising campaign series. Shortly **Orlanth is Dead!** (the second book of the series) will follow. Afterwards, they plan to publish Hero's Book, **Hero Wars 2nd Edition**, **Orlanthi Narrator's Kit**, **Imperial Lunar Handbook Volume 1**, **Adventures in Dragon Pass**, and **Raising the Dragon** (parts 3 and 4 of the Sartar Rising series). All of the material for most of these books is already in house in draft form, and will appear as soon as possible, but no dates can be given for them. Even the order will not necessarily follow what is provided here.

In the meantime, Issaries has released another Prefinished Work to please their fans, **Revealed Mythologies**. This 110 page sourcebook details the mythologies of the Malkioni (westerners), Vithelans (Easterners), and Doraddi (Pamaltelans) of Glorantha, which previously have been obscured by the mythology of central Genertela. Each section of the book provides the core mythologies of these powerful and important cultures, accompanied by Godtime maps from the culture's point of view. Each mythology is also accompanied by a glossary of the culture's important divinities, places, events, and philosophies. It also includes a 10

Editorial



page consolidated index.

Issaries did recently announce that they have had to raise the price of the Prefinished Works, from \$25 US to \$30 US. However, they are currently working to make these books available from sources in England and Japan, which will hopefully make it easier and less expensive for fans in Europe and Asia to purchase them.

Unspoken Word

Uz: The Trolls of Glorantha is available. This 68 page supplement for Hero Wars has a full color cover, and is published under license from Issaries, Inc. More regional books are in the works. Also coming is at least the book on Imther by Harald Smith and Martin Crim, adventures among the Exiles in **Wintertop's Shadow** by Ian Cooper, the CharUn nomad book **Sons of Kargzant** by Wesley Quadros and Martin Laurie, and a Dragon Pass scenario book.

Unspoken Word #2 **Bandits and Outlaws** is still planned for release this Spring, followed later this year by #3 **Far Point**.

Merchandising

New old Archive miniatures licensed to Dark Ages Miniatures. Have a look at this limited 25th Anniversary minis at: www.glorantha.com/news/pr02_01.html

A New miniature line by Lance & Laser will hit the shelves in March. Would

you like to show your interest in Glorantha to the public? T-Shirts, Sweat-Shirts, Mugs, Mousepads etc. are available from **CafePress**: www.cafepress.com/glorantha for general gloranthan content or **Issaries Inc.** logos. www.cafepress.com/orlanthi for Heortlings. www.cafepress.com/lunarempire for Lunars.

Other shops to follow (see the general glorantha shop).

www.cafepress.com/lasharp is still available!

Please have a look, but hurry, some items are available only for a short time!

Other Stuff

The Chaos Society will produce a lot of material in the coming months.

Tradetalk will continue with #11 (**Handra & the New Fens**) in April and #12 (**Heortland**) in August.

Legacy of Pavis (the sequel to **Masks of Pavis**) will hit the shelves in March, and the third **Tentacles Tome** about Pavis will be out for the Tentacles Convention in May. **Ye Booke of Tentacles #4** is also near completion. Only a few pages need to be finished before we can send it to the printer.

The Chaos Society will also produce a **Glorantha comic book series** by Guillermo Ortiz and Mariano Krasinski from Argentina. Each full color comic will be 48 pages each, available for 13,- EURO. Issue #1 should be available in March, and we hope to release two issues each year after this premier issue.

Tradetalk Website

We are proud to announce that you can order Unspoken Word and Moon Design products through our web site. We accept credit card orders from all around the world (American Express, VISA, Master Card and Diners Club). We want to announce once again that this is an absolutely Secure Site — special thanks to Graham Robinson, who made it possible.

Articles Wanted

Articles for our Heortland special, Tradetalk #12, are still welcome!

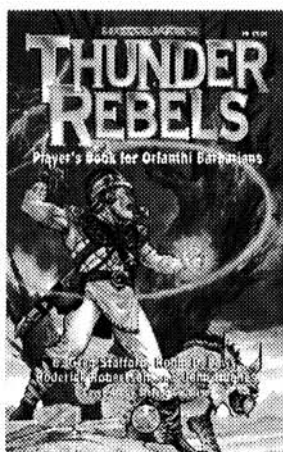
We also need articles for issues after #12. We have no plans yet for what topics these will have, but our poll suggested that we might need more articles about Dragon Pass, the Aldryami and the forests of Glorantha, the Lunar Empire, and Ralios. If you have written or plan to write articles about any of these subjects or regions, please contact us.

See you in a couple of months.

André

Seasonal Events

The *Heortling Sacred Calendar* (see *Thunder Rebels*, pp. 103-117) is a frame to hang a Heortling campaign on. Sometimes you can be casual about time and season, but at other times it will be critical to how things are done, or even to what is done.



Thunder Rebels,
Players Book
for Orlanthi Barbarians

BY ROBIN D. LAWS, GREG STAFFORD, JOHN HUGHES AND RODERICK ROBERTSON
SECTIONS BY OTHERS
BASED ON THE CAMPAIGN
BY GREG STAFFORD

This is the book to familiarize players with the day to day life of a Heortling barbarian. It gives new information about their culture, new character generation professions, and almost fifty subcults of Orlanth and Ernalda to join. It also includes myths and maps to help adventure on the Divine Plane, including a map of Orlanth's own divine Storm Realm.

NARRATORS can use the seasonal events to determine the time and place for player heroes to meet. Even if a structured scenario is planned, preceding the action with a clan event helps the player heroes forge stronger bonds with their community. This will help them later when they need support. For example, a scenario might require that the player heroes speak to the chieftain. However, the chieftain is a busy and important man; he rarely just hangs out at his stead, and the heroes could easily spend a long time wandering around, always a day behind. "See him next holy day," they are told. Everyone knows he will be there because it is part of his job. Naturally, many people gather to speak to him at that time, further complicating the heroes' efforts to see him.

Once the players are together on the holy day, the narrator should run them through the normal religious observances as well (see *Thunder Rebels*, pp. 131-140, 183-185, and 212-215). The ceremony does not have to be a major event, but be sure to describe the flight to Kero Fin, Orlanth's mead hall, etc. It is important that the player heroes become familiar with their religion's ceremonies and the Otherworld. In *Orlanth is Dead!* (the next book in the *Sartar Rising* series) these are interrupted, and the impact will be more dramatic if the players have become used to the normal procedures.

Clan Moot

The clan moot is a formal meeting of all adult members of the clan. This happens three times per year, in Sea Season, Earth Season, and Storm Season. (A tribal moot is held in Fire Season, attended by the chieftain and other

representatives) The date listed is the ceremonial day that opens the meeting, but it commonly goes on for days. Other events, such as the seasonal market, happen nearby in time and space. Four types of business occur at the moot.



Ritual business is described in *Thunder Rebels*. Shortly after nightfall the good gods and goddesses are invoked, sacrifices are made, entrails are read, and the offal so loved by the gods is burned. Wyters are fed, protectors summoned, and other magical tasks are performed to protect the people, place, and peace.

Official business begins at dawn with a law recitation by the lawspeakers. Court begins at noon on the first day. Anything that needs legal sanction comes to court—transfers of land or responsibilities, sale or transfer of property, petitions for aid, complaints against other clan members or lawsuits against members of other clans, etc. Everything is done in public. The clan ring and chieftain listen, then make decisions (or put them off). This can take anywhere from half a day to two or more days.

Unofficial business includes meeting friends, making wedding deals for children, trading, gawking at the big shots, looking for opportunity, recruiting for warbands or hero bands, and listening to news and gossip.

Emergency business is usually the subject of special moots called by the chieftain as needed. The usual sacrifices are offered and the usual protections gained, but the business is held to the one cause that summoned the meeting, whether it is to deal with strangers or decide what to do about ghosts in the carrots.

The South Coast of GENERTELA

Original by Ken Rolston & Marc Willner; rewritten and updated by Peter Metcalfe



A Brief Survey

The southern coast of Genertela is a region apart from the rest of the continent. It generally has mild weather and plenty of rain, making it a suitable human region except where damage from the Gods War (such as Prax) is still so horrible. The whole western part of the southern coast is called Slontos Coast. Seacoasts and river mouths are natural places for settlements to begin and to flourish, and such occurred in this region in prehistoric times. However, the natural and man-made disasters of the Jrusteli Destruction destroyed the greatest port cities and lesser ones as well, and removed all reasons for the survivors to remain. Coasts were abandoned, except where the offshore fishing was still possible.

Dormal Opened the Seas here in 1580. Although they had been abandoned before the coasts again attracted many people, and old cities were rebuilt or replaced.

Now (1620), some forty years later, a regular pattern of trade and naval control has grown up. Sea-going nations control their portions, or contend with their neighbours.

The Holy Country is the best place where Dormal began. It harbours a large bay, protected from the sea. It was never under Jrusteli control, and the few cities which were important in the area were all destroyed at the end of the Second Age.

When the Pharaoh set up his Holy Country and made it a magical place he decreed the Pharaonic Navy to patrol the bay. However, they were only oared, and the water-priests' magic aided them greatly.

Dormal's rituals pay immense homage, in the form of sacrifices and stone or metal goods, to the spirits of the waters. This is basically a propitiatory sacrifice to the gods and tribute payment to the local priesthood, usually mermen or intelligent fish.

Dormal is credited with Opening the Oceans. His heroquest did take him to conquer several water gods, and then settle by making the sacrifices mentioned. He sailed along the coasts and taught everyone his magic and his arts.

However Dormal never claimed to have broken the curse, just to have sidestepped it. The curse, which had originally been from Zzabur, ancient sorcerer of the Malkioni, still sinks every boat that does not perform Dormal's rites.

Several known attempts had been made beforehand to sail out to sea. One well known such attempt was that of Handra Liv, who founded the city bearing his name, also called City of the Seven Isles. He and his followers had large well provisioned boats and tried to sail out from the land, among the many islands that litter the coast there. They entered a great motionless grey sea of fog, where the water was like warm ice and where monsters attacked them, destroying most of the people and boats. Although they felt no movement they found themselves heading back inland, towards the islands where Handra settled.

Other attempts had been made as well, with much less success than even Handra Liv had. Ships, boats, and heroquests into the watery domain all failed before Dormal, and succeeded after him.

Dormal's first voyage was from the Holy Country to Handra and then to Three Steps Isle, where the Wolf Pirates now live, before returning to his home port. For his second voyage, he sailed westward along the Slontos Coast, then north into the Neliomi seas, and then set off westward, determined to reach Luathela. Apparently he made it, for his worshippers have reported visiting him on the Hero Plane, and his worship is powerful.

Dormal's cult has little political power as a religion but its faith is strong among the sailors. The cult are critically important, for they alone know the sacrifices and rites to open the oceans every time a ship sets sail from port. But the Dormali cannot control access to the seas as the Dawn-Age Waertagi did as each priest recognises his own contact with Dormal first, his ship and her crew second and then that of any higher priestly authority above him



highlands. They are collectively the Slontan Islands, a term that now also embraces some islands which were not part of Slontos.

The lands of the Slontan Coast are arranged almost neatly along the mouth of rivers.

This begins with the Holy Country, then goes west.

The Holy Country

The Holy Country was once ruled by the Pharaoh, or the Man God, but he is gone now.

Part of the Holy Country includes the Rightarm Isles, a tidal archipelago that separates the Mirrorsea Bay of the Holy Country from the Solkanthi Sea. Its inhabitants worship Choralinthor, a son of earth and sea, and the god of the bay. Even after the oceans were closed the islanders still worshipped their god and maintained a close friendship with the Ludoch merfolk who lived there.

The Islanders have always provided the sailors for the Pharaonic Fleet and the merchantmen of the Holy Country. They are, by Pharaonic decree, responsible for all naval matters in the realm, and out of it. Other nations in the Holy Country have several decorative or honorary barges and ships but the war fleet is from Choralinthor.

The Rightarm islanders were exempt from all taxes as long as they provided the sailors for the Pharaonic fleet.

Arstola Forest

These thick Aldryami woods cover the southern foothills of the Mislari Mountains. Brown elves inhabit its upper reaches. Although rarely seen outside those reaches, they conduct a vicious war against the Wenelians and hope to blanket

all Maniria with their trees.

The Western Barbarians

West of the Holy Country are three Wenelian tribes, known to the Holy Country as the Western Barbarians. Once they were the Western Allies, but they turned against the Pharaoh after the Opening ruined them and are now pitiless raiders of Esrolia and Caladraland.

The Ditali are the largest tribe, dwelling amidst the ruins of a Trader Prince's vast realm. Their noble families all worship the Invisible god under the guidance of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, one of the Seven Bishops of the Slontan Church.

The Colanti are next, being the exiled fire clans from Caladraland. Once they were sad, broken folks, unjustly barred from their god. Now Colantum, the Prophet of the Spear, has put fire in their bellies and they raid their former oppressors with murderous vengeance.

The Atelli are the last but not the least. Descended from the holy micturations of the Blue Ram, they live to the north of their holy lake and wage a savage struggle against the elves.

After years of unrest and raiding, the Holy Country army seized the city of Kithma and secured it with the hideous fort Thonble. Its garrison, a legion of hell-crazed axewomen, now terrify the surrounding populace. But their brutality has only driven the Western Barbarians into an alliance with the Lion King.

The Kingdom of the Solanthi

Greymane the Lion King rules the upper Solanthi Valley. Under his leadership, all surrounding lands have been raided or forced to pay tribute. The Solanthi, with their allies the Ditali, have even robbed and pillaged Esrolia.

The Lion King is an old man now and pursues a sedate life of hunting and feasting in the Castle of Yellow Stones, his favourite wife's dowry. His sons, Hardral and Varstari, now lead the Solanthi warbands of the Solanthi in his name. Bitter enmity has arisen between the brothers as each seeks to be the next King.

Maldros Protectorate

The protectorate of Maldros is but a town, Peelo, and the local Wenelian clans.

When the Opening came, the Admiral of the Holy Country enticed the citizens of Peelo to scorn the authority of the Trader Princes upriver. In return, he gifted them with a Caladran priesthood so that they could incite Pelushi to smite the

THE LANDS OF THE SLONTAN COAST

The southern coast of Genertela is called the Slontan Coast. Long ago there was a large land called Slontos which protruded into the oceans. Now there are only hundreds of islands, mostly tops of ancient mountains or broken provincial

Solanthi raiders with ashes and hot mud.

Since the Volcano cannot defend Peelo against pirates, the town are fanatical allies of whatever fleet last visited them, be they from the Sea Alliance, the Isle of Alatan, Wolf Pirates or even Vadeli merchants. When two or more fleets visit, the town sides with the victor of the resulting struggle. This supine policy has shielded the town from most blows although much of it was recently razed when Harrek drank some watered beer.

The Haunted Fields

Around the twin mountains of Ice and Darkness are the haunted fields of Wenelia – so called because they are full of trolls and vengeful ghosts.

While most volcanoes vomit fire, lava and ash, Ice Mountain belches hailstones and icebergs. It is so cold that rainfalls are frozen to become blizzards or snowstorms and the Volor river has been frozen over in the winter.

Troll Mountain is an empty volcano, so empty that that it reaches to down to Hell. When the Hellwind blows, demons and ghosts of the vengeful dead can rise up from the underworld to plague the surrounding land. Trolls inhabit the outer crater and upper reaches. The immigrants from the underworld do not bother them for the trolls have bought peace by throwing numerous captives down the mountain.

Nearby is the Temple of Peace which the Trader Princes re-established so that caravans would pass unmolested by trolls between the Castes of Jara and the Yellow Stones. Every visitor is required to bring enough meat to feed a troll (although the meat is not required to be fit for human consumption).

Yolanda Confederacy

A weak confederacy of Orlanthi clans and Trader Princes in the upper Nimistor valley, Yolanda has struggled for survival since the demise of the Trade through the Old Wenelian Road. It currently pays tribute to the Solanthi.

Holy City of Kaxtorplose

Kaxtorplose is an ancient temple-city that gave refugee to many Slontans when Palangio conquered the land. It is hallowed because it contains the last road to the holy city of Erenplose, now lost beneath the waves. During Palangio's siege, only manna from Erenplose sustained the trapped refugees.

Because of its holiness, Kaxtorplose and the surrounding city survived the Trickster's Flood with minimal damage. Since that time, Kaxtorplose has contained the largest population of Slontans and its Prince-Bishop is the first of the Seven Bishops of the Slontan Church.

The Wenelian League

Like his predecessors, the Prince-Bishop of Kaxtorplose sees no reason to care about what occurs outside the City for God will protect it no matter what happens. The city nobility do not share his faith and so have found a champion in Lord Asselino from Jokalar.

As head of the League, Lord Asselino governs from the Fort of Fay Jee near the mouth of the Nimistor River. With the help of the Kaxtorplose nobility, Lord Asselino has been extending the League up the Nimistor valley. This is essential for without control over the valley and its peoples, Lord Asselino can scarcely defend the League from the Wolf Pirates. But with the manpower of the valley at his disposal, the pirates can be defeated and safety of the City secured.

Opposing the League is the confederacy of Yolanda to the north and King Greymane of the Solanthi. Currently Lord Asselino is intriguing with Hardral, Greymane's son, to support him as the next King of the Solanthi in return for Nimistor.

County of Bastis

Unlike other Trader Princes, the Count of Bastis has survived the opening. He controls the sacred Highwater temple, where all boats load their cargo for Handra, and the Old Wenelian road east to Nimistor. The Count also provides guards for the caravans through Elkland into Ralios. He has content with what he has, seeing that his erstwhile colleagues have fared much worse.

Ryzel

Dragonewts have inhabited the hills of Ryzel since Palangio established a nest for his slaves there. Although Palangio was killed over a thousand years ago, they are still his slaves and revere the Iron Vrok above the distant Inhuman King.

Although the Dragonewts can be found hunting through all Slontos, the fearsome Iron Feather bands hunt down any intelligent life that dares to approach the hills of Ryzel.

Handra

Handra was founded by Handra Liv, a Ralian seeking a holy city to give him refuge from persecution in his homeland. On the basis of a vision, he led his people to the Seven Isles at the mouth of the Noshain River, where he expected the city to be. Finding the Isles uninhabited, his followers built the Promised City instead.

The city thrived for Handra established a pact with the Mournsea merfolk, trading the sunken treasures of Slontos for goods that the merfolk could not make. This earned them the enmity of Ramalia who has vowed to destroy them. Handra has recently deflected a Ramalian

invasion but fears that it will not do so the next time.

When Dormal came to Handra he found a wealthy city. He had expected hostility because the merfolk were unused to his ships and the Handrans might hate him for disturbing their allies. But the City welcomed him for they had been waiting for the prophesised Opener. Handra built many ships for Dormal as a sign of their gratitude.

Unlike the Trader Princes, Handra has prospered since the Oceans were opened. Although Handra continues to be the source of artefacts from Slontos, they have become more important for carrying trade goods from Ralios in great quantity, and have grown immensely wealthy for it.

The city is of about fifteen thousand residents. It is nestled atop its Seven Isles, which are connected by marvellous bridges erected by the Stonemason's guild.

Its coastal fleet has many light vessels that are able to repel against any piratical incursion. Ships from the Sea Alliance and the Holy Country are welcome in its ports.

Valeki Baronies

At the fringes of Ramalia are the Valeki baronies. Originally these castle-holding barons ruled most of Ramalia and its boarish serfs. But over the centuries, the King Paruzal of Ramalia has defeated the majority of the barons and absorbed their lands into their Royal dominions. Now the surviving barons pay frightened homage to the king despite Handran incitements to resist.

Most of the surviving baronies are in the west for the King does not wish a war with the Tarinwood Aldryami...yet. The largest castle, Bizos, has a wonderful market for the Aldryami of Tarinwood come there to trade.

Ramalia

This kingdom is ruled by the survivors of the Trickster's Flood. They hate and fear the sea that drowned their homes and have absolutely no navy at all. Their coastal defences are formidable as the Ramalians seek to destroy any invader from the seas.

The kingdom has been growing over the centuries as it devours the Valeki baronies that once opposed it. A few remain independent; most of them are in the west or while the remainder border the Fens. One day, the King will take those baronies and put perfidious Handra to the sword but now he is busy absorbing what he has.

Ramalia's total population is about two hundred thousand people, most of them uncouth peasants barely distinguishable from their hunchen ancestors. Although Ramalia's oppressive government is loosely based on the ancient

Laws of the Malkioni, the King and his compatriots sold themselves to the Lords of Damnation to survive the flood. Their greatest Lord is Hastrafaj the Desiccated, who fights the powers of the sea in exchange for hideous sacrifices.

Khorst

A free port, self-governing with friendly people ruled by the Merchants' Guild. Ships that hug the coast commonly stop here to rest and hire escorts because of pirates from the nearby island Alatan. The city is also important for brave merchants use it to travel to both Ramalia and the Valeki baronies.

Alatan Isle

This is also called the Pirate Island. Once a powerful kingdom centred upon the port-fortress of Smelch, Alatan briefly commanded tribute from much of the Slontan coast. But after the Sea Alliance razed Smelch and the Holy Country sank most of their fleet, the Pirates are now a loose federation of clans rather than an organized kingdom. Their swift ships are suited to run and never fight, but they are capable of attacking merchantmen with impunity. They can also gang up a larger ship.

Although Alatan is treeless, the pirates get materials for their ships from the nearby Trachodon marsh, and from the Tarinwood elves beyond them. The merchants guild of Khorst is sometimes accused of aiding them. The pirates of Alatan are bold enough to raid any of the Slontan Islands despite the guardian fleets.

Tarinwood

This is an Aldryami Woods. It is ancient, surviving from the God Time. Humans do not go into this place.

The forest is slowly encroaching upon the lands of Valekos, and the merchants are glad for the safety. Ramalians are scared for their future, and animosity is high.

Elkland

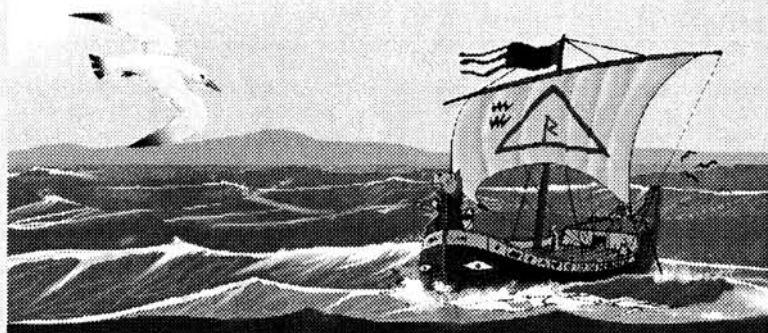
This is heavily wooded, but scarcely populated land. Its natives are people who worship their elk kin, and other nature spirits. They have no kings recognising only their clan. They shun farming preferring to live by the hunt and gathered roots.

Other Populations:

Slontos Islands

The Slontan Islands have about fifty thousand people. Most of the Mournsea, which surrounds the islands, is relatively shallow and breed many fish and other foods.

The Naval Powers



The Pharaonic Navy

In 1615, when the Pharaoh last reviewed it from atop the Tower of Presence the Fleet consisted of three equally sized squadrons, each with its fleet wyter and practised bands of wizards and priests. Then well organized and disciplined, it worked in close co-operation with the Ludoch of Choralinthor.

The fleet was generally uninterested in expansion, being content with patrolling the seas between themselves and Handra, and all of the east-west traffic to Teshnos.

Now the Pharaonic Fleet is a sorry sight. Many ships that once graced the Mirrorsea now rest at its bottom, The surviving few are little match for the merciless Wolf Pirates.

The Sea Alliance

Based out of the Five Cities of Nolos and Pasos, the Sea Alliance is potentially the strongest naval power on the Slontan Coast. However other matters engage its attention, such as the struggle with the Vadeli over the Justelan Isles, the seemingly invincible Wolf Pirates and the landward battle against Seshnela.

All these events have prevented the Sea Alliance from taking advantage of the Pharaoh's demise to extend its hegemony over the Slontan Coast. The Sea Alliance confines itself to negotiating compacts of friendship with the cities of the Slontan Coast.

Heavy cogs regularly traverse the Mournsea bearing troops bound for

distant Heartland and bringing back Esrolian grain. Due to threats from the Wolf Pirates and Alatan, armed triremes bearing ship-mounted engines always escort the cogs.

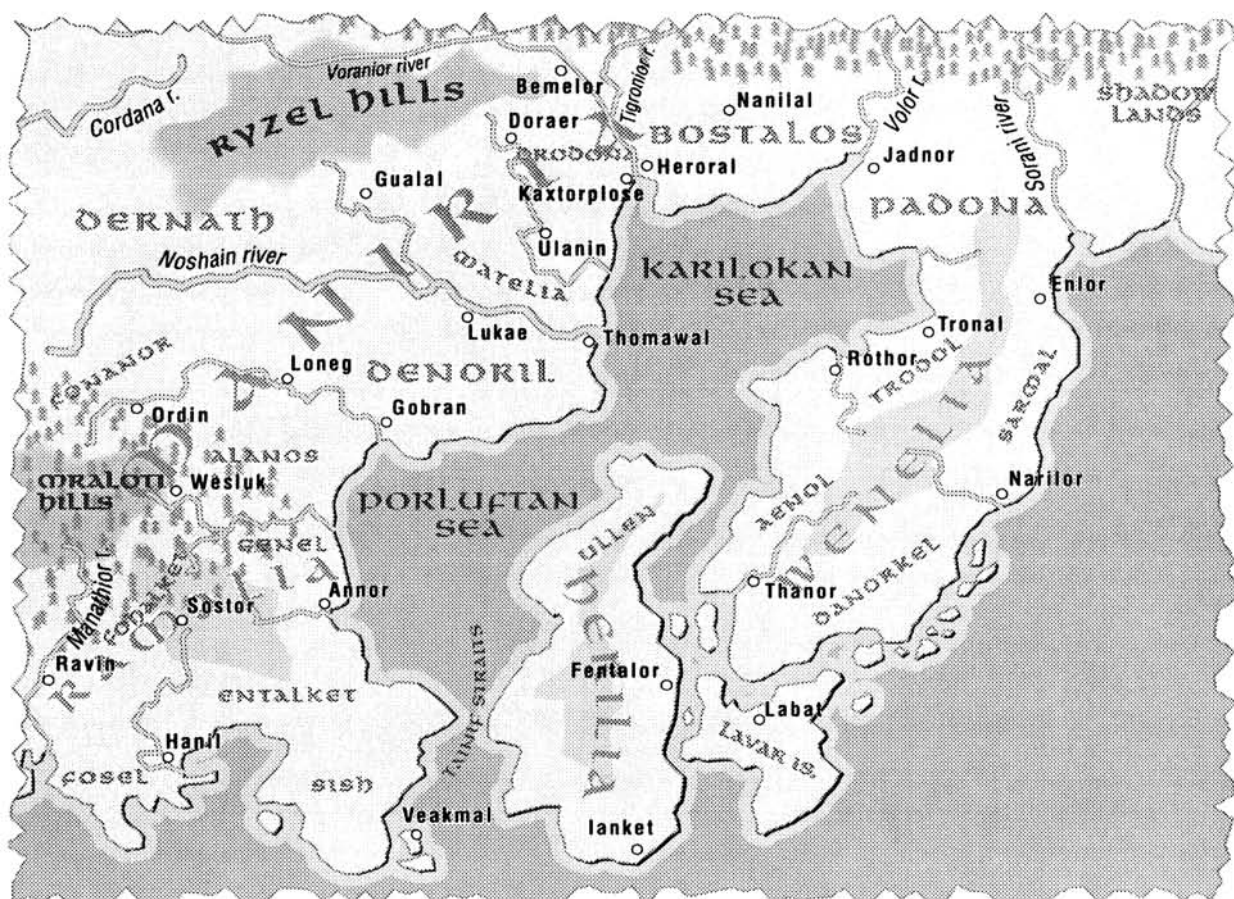
The Wolf Pirates

The Wolf Pirates are rapacious sea raiders who live by robbing merchants and plundering the sea coasts. Originally from the Ygg's Isles in Fronela, the Loskalmi expelled the wolf pirates and many settled here.

Their longships are feared for their living figureheads. These are usually carved in the shape of a Wolf although other types are known. As well as guarding the ship against magical attacks, they can known to demoralise the enemy with their howling, damage other ships with their biting or even breath fog, fire or some choking vapour.

At first they were at best a serious nuisance for the Pharaonic Fleet but now they are unchecked ever since Harrek led the Wolf Pirates to pillage the Rightarm Isles.

Nobody knows how many wolf pirates there are or how many ships. About two dozen wolf ships left Loskalmi waters, and although some have been sunk, others have been built too, so there are probably that many still. Furthermore, at least that many galleys and round ships have also joined the fleet. Thus there may be as many as thirty to sixty ships in all, though they range all along the southern coast and have never been in one place at the same time.



Slontos

by Greg Stafford

Slontos was a coastal region west of Kethaela. It was lightly settled in the Dawn Ages, and conquered by Nysalor's Empire.

It was liberated by Arkat and afterwards enjoyed a mild anarchy of multiple city states and tribes.

During the Imperial Age it was part of the Middle Sea Empire and home to many God Learner practices and sects. The nearby Orlanthi claim that one of those sects began a "college of tricksters" that eventually sank the entire land at the end of the Imperial Age.

Other sources give other reasons.

Most likely several good reasons all converged to send the land sinking beneath the waves.

Some islands are all that remain of this land in the modern age.

The kingdom of RAMALLIA

by Jamie "Ttrotsky" Revell



SOCIETY

Ramalian society is similar to that of the Malkioni on which it was based. There are four castes, each of which is purely hereditary, with absolutely no opportunity for changing from one to another.

The culture and religion of the farmer class, who are descended from the old Wenelian boar-hsunchen, is radically different from that of the other three castes, who were originally Slontan Malkioni. For the most part, traditional Malkioni social structures remain in place, such as monogamous marriage, although the rulers pay many of these no more than token lip service. Similarly, the calendar, naming conventions, clothing styles and the like are similar to those in Malkioni lands.

Peasants and Other Scum

The great bulk of the population are, of course, members of the farmer caste. In practice, less than half are literally farmers, for a great proportion are Pure Mraloti, still following their ancient hsunchen ways and living by hunting and pig herding. The remainder are Fallen Mraloti, farmers and occasional craftsmen living in crippling

poverty among the farms and towns of the kingdom. While the Fallen Mraloti naturally take the immediate brunt of their ruler's rapaciousness, their Pure cousins are constantly raided, and most are forced to pay tribute in exchange for their survival. Only in the most remote and densely forested parts of the realm can anyone escape the overlords for long, and even they must keep a low profile to prevent a large-scale crusade being launched against them.

The Fallen Mraloti practice a debased form of Malkionism, lead by female peasant liturgists known as "Mumbors". They worship the Earthmaker and her Helpers. Many of the helpers are recognisable as Mraloti spirits while the others have a variety of origins.

The overlords allow the peasants to continue with their old styles of worship because it is too much trouble to eradicate them. None the less, they keep a close eye on the Mumbors, as they do of all peasants, to ensure that they are not practicing magics which might challenge their authority.

For example, use of the Abiding Book is punishable by death, since it is believed to

be a tool of the evil God Learners, and its use drowned the rest of Slontos so many centuries ago. Likewise, the Fallen Mraloti lack any true sorcerers or grimoires, and have only relatively weak blessings, so that they have little chance of bettering their lot in life.

Warriors

Nearly two thirds of the overlords are members of the warrior caste, descended from the knights of ancient Slontos. All adult men from this caste are trained in the arts of war from the age of fourteen onwards. They owe absolute fealty to their rulers, but in return benefit greatly from the oppression of the peasant majority. For example, they can only marry with permission of their lords, and own very little property of their own, with the lord supposedly providing for all their needs.

Ramalian warriors do not follow the codes of chivalry so prevalent in other Western lands, although they do have their own crude code of honour, which emphasises obedience, bravery and physical fortitude as well as a total lack of respect for social inferiors. The great majority are

followers of the cult of Zorak Zoran, who they claim is a human, and as much an enemy of trolls as he is of other krjalki and demons.

Wizards

Unusually, the wizards form the smallest caste in Ramalia, being outnumbered two to one by the nobles. They do not marry, and can demand sexual favours from any female member of their caste. They provide magical support to the nobles, and can send curses and even demons against enemies of the land both within and beyond its borders. There are few true churches or temples within Ramalia, and most wizards live as honoured servitors in noble castles. Despite their official title, many wizards are more accurately described as independent sorcerers, for they deal with things that no Malkioni wizard ever would, while others are effectively theist priests.

Nobles

Only a small proportion of the noble caste are direct rulers of domains; the majority are referred to as "Axemen and Taxmen", and serve the true rulers. Axemen are military officers, each typically having five or six warriors under his personal command. They are selected from amongst the most brutal and violent members of the noble caste, and receive a similar amount of weapon training to the warriors. Those who do not show affinity for combat become "Taxmen", government officials with a wide range of duties away from the battlefield. Some are merchants, since all trade is restricted to their caste, while others handle the armouries and similar disbursement functions. Many, of course, are literally what their title suggests, being responsible for the (usually arbitrary) levying and assessment of taxes, and for administering the noble treasuries.

At the end of the Second Age, the rulers of Ramalia struck bargains with various unsavoury entities to preserve themselves and their land from the destruction that befell the rest of Slontos. Today, they continue to worship these beings as part of a religion that bears little resemblance to that of their Malkioni ancestors, and which strongly emphasises the tapping of the peasantry. As a result, Ramalian nobles never age, although their constant infighting ensures a certain turnover of the population, and many receive darker powers as well.

Women

Women are considered to belong to the caste of their parents, and are forbidden to marry beneath their caste.

Because few Ramalian overlords take their marriage vows seriously, illegitimate children are common; the sons are raised in the warrior caste while the daughters receive similar rank as ladies-in-waiting.

Interbreeding with the farmer class is seen as bestiality, since the peasants are not seen as being human (they are, after, all descended from pig hunchen). Any offspring from such a union is considered a peasant.

Although Slontan women are forbidden from bearing arms or assuming holy office, they can and do wield power in other ways. They match their men in cruelty although they express this with greater subtlety. They are schooled in the Black Arts and are feared as witches, enchantresses and poisoners. Although they are expected to obey their father or husband in all things, they can openly wield their authority even to the extent of ordering their father's or husband's men about.

GOVERNMENT

Ramalia is divided into nine counties; each of which is further subdivided into a number of feoffs. The typical feoff has a population of around 2,000 men, women and children, although this number varies greatly. Each feoff has a single Lord, who has near absolute power within his domain. In theory, he is the only court, and there is no appeal from his judgements, nor limitation on the punishments he may order. In practice, things are more complex, for the peasants often arbitrate minor disputes among themselves, being understandably wary of official authority. Similarly, wizards and minor nobles who find themselves on the wrong end of his judgements sometimes start fomenting rebellion in order to place somebody more amenable in power. Such in-fighting and political manoeuvring is a constant fact of life among the upper classes.

Above the Lords are the Counts, who have the right to demand military or financial resources at will from the feoffs under their command. They in turn answer to the King, an absolute monarch who alone has the power to execute the senior nobles.

MILITARY

The Ramalian military, such as it is, is dedicated almost entirely to the suppression of internal unrest and the enforcement of unpopular edicts. The borders are patrolled only sporadically, mainly to keep out elves and unsavoury creatures from the neighbouring marshlands. A series of forts along the coast watches out for shipwrecks, pirates and for the full-scale naval invasion that everyone fears will come any year now (a belief which has persisted for centuries, despite its repeated failure to be fulfilled).

The military structure is simple: each Lord maintains a small force of Axemen and warriors for his own purposes, and must supply them on demand to his own superiors. Members of the farmer class are absolutely forbidden to own weapons, leaving them to improvise with pitchforks, scythes and the like, should they need to fight off wild animals or face any other threat on their own. Thus, there is no equivalent of the militias found in some other Malkioni nations.

Equipment

A typical warrior would be equipped with a full hauberk of bronze chainmail and a bronze barrel-helm with mail aventail and visor. They carry a large wooden shield reinforced with

POPULATION FIGURES

TYPICAL FEOFF	RAMALIA TOTAL
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Lords	
1	100

Axemen & Taxmen	
8	1,100

Wizards	
4	450

Warriors	
27	2,250

Overlord women & children	
120	10,800

Fallen Mraloti	
1,000	72,000

"Wild" Mraloti *	
840	93,300

Total	
2,000	180,000

* many Pure Mraloti live in deep forests, or other remote areas outside the strict feoff structure.



bronze (total armour ^6), and a battleaxe ^3 or poleaxe ^4 as a main weapon. Most also possess a broadsword ^3, self-bow ^3 and a dagger ^1. Their highest skill is almost always Axe and Shield Fighting.

As officers, the Axemen are usually better armoured, with double mail or brigandine (^7), although their weapons are generally similar. Only the greatest of nobles will be likely to own iron equipment, since there is almost no trade with the outside world, and such items are treasured heirlooms. Both warriors and Axemen ride horses, which they train to trample recalcitrant peasants underfoot. They wear the heraldic designs of their Lord, for nobody of lesser rank is permitted to bear a design of their own.

RELIGION

The official religion among the overlords of Ramalia is the Church of the Damned. Although administered by wizards, and replete with Malkioni liturgy and symbolism, there its resemblance to Malkionism ends.

For the Ramalians now collaborate with powerful chaotic entities to protect them from both their mortal and supernatural foes. These entities are not the chaos horrors like Thed, Pochargo or Krjalk for the Ramalians shun the grosser forms of chaos. Instead their primary motivation for worshipping chaos is fear. They fear the cosmos and the horrific dooms that await them upon death for the Forbidden Secret is scarred in their souls and the souls of their children.

The Forbidden Secret was the greatest discovery of the God Learners and the cause of their even greater doom. Even now, merely thinking it can cause the cosmos to annihilate the thinker. The Secret lurks at the back of the minds of the Ramalians as a dreadful memory that they cannot, will not, must not recall. Only by immersing themselves in chaotic energies can they hope to survive for the chaos impedes its understanding. From time to time however, a Ramalian understands and is doomed.

Death brings no release to the Ramalians for at the moment of their dying, the Forbidden Secret leaps into the consciousness and dooms it. Destroying the soul through chaotic means has been tried many times ñ all attempts have failed for the Secret is a Cosmic Truth and impervious to any chaos. Thus the Ramalians seek to live forever so that one day, their curse will be lifted.

The head of their religion is the harsh and demanding Malkion the Guilty, who desires dead souls trapped in iron. Second in importance is Hastrafaj the Dessicated, a chaos foe of the sea gods not known elsewhere.

Other key beings in the Ramalian pantheon include Zorak Zoran, the patron of the warrior class, Urain, who delights in unbridled violence, Tyram the Sky Terror and Ikadz the torturer.

PROMINENT PERSONALITIES

KING PARUZAL THE IMPALER

King of Ramalia



King Paruzal's origins are shrouded in mystery. The pacts that protected his people from the Doom of the God Learners were made in his name. For this reason, he is thought to have been among the original Slontan refugees that seized control over Ramalia centuries ago. Despite this, nobody knows if he was King then or only became King much later.

Since his accession (whenever that may have been) he has maintained his rule through a combination of cunning and extreme paranoia, despite a number of attempts by junior nobles to overthrow him and seize the throne for themselves. Public impalement remains his preferred method of dealing with enemies, and he has been known to order the impalement of entire sounders, including women and children, if he suspects any of them of wrong-doing. His paranoia also means that he tries to ensure that none of his subordinates are too competent or popular, lest they be able to build an effective power base for themselves, and he constantly plays them off against each other.

Over the centuries, he has slid further and further into insanity and he is no longer the skilled military leader of ages past. His grasp on reality grows weaker decade by decade, and there are those who believe that a total breakdown will not be long in coming. Until then, no matter how poor a ruler he may be, the potent magical wards with which he surrounds himself protect him from assassins, and his paranoid edicts make it difficult for any organised resistance to form itself, even amongst the other nobles. There is no clear successor, and those nobles with the wit and good fortune to escape his attention would undoubtedly have to battle each other for the throne if he were eventually to die.



PRINCE VENURIN

Chancellor of Ramalia



The ruler of the eastern coastal regions of Ramalia, Lord Horumal was a powerful Axeman in his youth and has clawed his way to his current position through a combination of brutal murder, treachery and sheer intimidation of his opponents. His duties now include patrolling the eastern coasts for signs of shipwreck and ensuring that all goods from such wrecks are handed over to the king (at which is he is less than scrupulous). Furthermore, his warriors and Axemen seek out any survivors from such wrecks in order to arrest them and subject them to the ritual sacrifices to Hastrafaj the Dessicated, which are needed to ward off the demons of the sea.

He is famed for his violent temper, which often results in fits of ranting and physical violence which have claimed the lives of many servants (and sometimes even of more senior officials) down the years.

CARDINAL AKINSTER

Bishop of the Damned



The cadaverous chief wizard of Ramalia always dresses entirely in black, and rumours persist that he is really an immortal vampire. He has held the post ever since the death of the Church's founder, Baltanassar, at the hands of Handran assassins. In fact, he was already centuries old at that point, and had been exerting significant power behind the scenes in Ramalia for most of that time. He is cunning, magically powerful, and meticulous in his attention to detail and to Ramalian politics. He creates schemes to further his ends years ahead, and prepares numerous contingency plans to deal with any conceivable complication. At the present it suits him to have Paruzal in power, but unable to rule effectively and he is the one person who the King seems to trust implicitly, no matter how deep his psychoses become.

LORD HORUMAL

Count of the Eastern Coasts



TYPICAL EVENTS

COMMON EVENTS

- Coastal areas raided by Wolf Pirates or Smelchites
- Band of warriors seeking out troublemakers
- Hostile spirits reported; shaman or mumbo investigates
- Foreigners rumoured to be fomenting unrest; all strangers interrogated

UNCOMMON EVENTS

- Pralori raid from the north
- New taxes declared by local Lord
- Suspected peasant rebels arrested; public executions planned
- Warriors raiding lands of neighbouring Lords
- Wizards seeking out worshippers of dark saints
- Royal merchant caravan passing through area
- Warriors venture into the forests to suppress Pure Mraloti
- Pure Mraloti raiding nearby farms
- Royal warriors visiting to ensure loyalty among local lords
- Mumbors declare public ceremonies to propitiate angry spirits

RARE EVENTS

- Warrior, wizard or noble convicted of treason; public execution planned
- Legendary Mralotings (see Anaxialis Roster p70) reappear; great hunting opportunities
- Elves raid from Tarinwood
- Dinosaur from Trachodon Marsh wreaking havoc
- Peasant uprising brutally crushed
- Shipwreck on the coast; opportunity for salvage.
- Surviving mariners ritually executed.
- Ghosts of dead animals haunting the forest; shamans conduct exorcism

OZURIN

Champion of Ramalia



A huge brute of a man, Ozurin makes up in combat prowess for what he lacks in intelligence and cunning. He is one of a very small number of individuals who are entirely loyal to the king, who gives him the opportunity for bloodshed and mayhem that he craves, in expeditions against Pure Mraloti, elven or Pralori raiders and the occasional rampaging dinosaur. Lords or other Axemen have to take charge of tactical matters, but Ozurin is unconcerned so long as he gets to kill something. A worshipper of Urain, he has never been defeated in personal combat.

THIGRU WHITE-ACORNS

Pure Mraloti Shaman



This shaman, dwelling in the northern reaches of Ramalia near to the Tarinwood forest, is widely famed for her ability and the great number of spirits at her command. In recent times she has begun to dream prophesying the violent overthrow of the Slontan overlords of Ramalia at the hands of 'the

vengeful homeless', widely interpreted as being nature spirits or ghosts angered by their excesses. She now spends much of her time visiting the spirit plane, gathering spirit allies and exploring the damage wrought by the Slontans' godless magics.

NORKHOT SHARPTUSKS

Pure Mraloti Hero



Famous among the Pure Mraloti, but little known among the other inhabitants of Ramalia, this great hunter left his sounder to wander through much of the northern forests in search of Mraloting boars. He has wrested much powerful magic from the denizens of the spirit world and has successfully tamed two of the Mralotings, which he can call on at need. A special devotee of Slasher, the Mraloti spirit of combat, he obtained an enchanted stone-tipped spear on a Heroquest, which is said to shatter even solid rock when thrown.

LOPUGG HAIRYTHIGHS

Charismatic Rebel Leader



Born to the Fallen Mraloti, Lopugg soon abandoned her life of drudgery to live among the Pure woodsmen. There she learned to fight, but soon found the life too backward, and so left for Wenenia, where she served as a mercenary for many years. Rumours that she met and fought alongside Kallyr Starbrow at this time seem to be unfounded, but whatever the truth, she eventually returned to her homeland with a mission to overthrow the Slontan overlords. A devotee of Arantha Gor, she lives in the deep forests, moving from place to place and using her survival skills to live off the land and evade her pursuers. Of brutish appearance and blunt and forthright rather than oratorical, she would never make a great leader among other peoples, but among the Mraloti she has the charisma and ability to persuade many her to grant her aid and to covertly resist their oppressive rulers in preparation for an eventual rebellion to sweep them from the land. Because of her background, she is more willing than many of her compatriots to hire foreigners to help out the cause, especially Orlanthi, but she will never fully trust them.

THE TRUFFLE-CHILD



A prophecy amongst the Fallen Mraloti says that a magical child will be born who will be able to 'gather the offspring of the Earth' and deliver the people from oppression while still at a tender age. Because she has great abilities, yet will appear unremarkable to mundane eyes, she is known as the 'Truffle-Child', because they too, are delicacies hidden from normal sight. Her powers are said to be those of protection and harmony rather than combat. Occasional rumours of her birth are greeted with concern and predictable crackdowns by the authorities, but none has yet been confirmed. None the less, many believe that her arrival is now imminent.

THE MRALOTI

by Jamie "TTrotsky" Revell

Introduction

The Mraloti boar-people are natives of western Wenelia, and the great majority now live within the borders of the kingdom of Ramalia. Two distinct, although related, cultures refer to themselves as Mraloti. The larger, with a total population of around 90,000, are the 'Pure' Mraloti, whose culture has remained relatively unchanged since at least the Dawn.

They subsist by hunting and by animal herding, but are prevented by religious taboos from tilling the soil. Second are the so-called 'Fallen' Mraloti, who number somewhat less than their Pure brethren.

They have abandoned their old religion in favour of Malkionism, and have taken up agriculture and a relatively close cooperation with their overlords.

Although they cannot be considered true Hsunchen any longer, they still retain elements of the old Mraloti culture in their social structures and mores.

Pure Mraloti live in 'sounders' of between 6-30 adults and a similar number of children. Sounders are matriarchal kin-groups, with the oldest healthy woman being the chieftain. They are founded by groups of sisters or (less commonly) other close female relatives whenever an existing community grows too large. Marriage is exogamous and matrilineal, and is also based around groups of sisters. A given man is married not just to a single woman but to all her sisters too, so long as no marriage-group contains more men than women (although the reverse is acceptable).

Each sounder owns a small village and a herd of pigs, which are the primary source of sustenance for the community. Traditionally, hunting by the men and foraging by the women supplement this diet with a wider range of foods. Fallen Mraloti also practice primitive agriculture and may herd a limited number of other animals, such as

goats, cows and chickens.

Pure Mraloti Shamans may be of either gender, and, as with most Hsunchen, are permitted to perform tasks that would normally be restricted to the other sex. Not all sounders have shamans, although the majority do. The shaman must spend much of their time dealing with spirits, so that the actual job of ruling is given to the chieftain. Shamans are not permitted to marry, but in order to remain close to the earth/fertility powers of Mraloti; they have no taboos against adultery. A married group nominated by the mother raises any children of female shamans.

Appearance

Mraloti are Wareran folk whose pale skin is sharply offset by black or dark brown hair. They have a stocky build, and are unusually hirsute compared with typical Wareran people of their sex. Eyes are usually brown or grey.

Pure Mraloti men wear short sleeved thigh length pigskin-leather tunics with wide belts and sandals. They usually wear their hair shoulder length and have short, bushy beards. Women wear long sleeved ankle length dresses, also of leather and with belts and sandals. They never cut their hair, which is braided at the side to keep the face free, but otherwise allowed to hang loose (although it may be tied into a ponytail when loose hair would be a hindrance). Male shamans also do not cut their hair, and normally have long and very bushy beards as a result.

The clothing of both sexes is rarely decorated, although talismans made of bone or ivory are common, and may be carved into runic or animal shapes. These talismans may be worn on thongs about the neck, sewn into belts or worn on straps both outside and underneath the main garment.

Fallen Mraloti are more likely to wear Western clothing of cloth or linen, or at least to imitate such styles with whatever materials come to hand. The wearing of talismans is much less common.



Artworks by Juha Harju

Mralot the boar spirit

Mythos and History

DASIOR, THE GREAT CLOVEN-FOOTED SPIRIT, bore many children. The strongest, toughest and most virtuous of these was Mralot, so naturally all his brothers and sisters looked to him for advice and leadership. For a long time everything was peaceful, and everyone lived in harmony with the earth, whether they had four feet or only two. But then Trickster brought evil things into the world, such as agriculture, war, gods and sorcery. Many people were weak and accepted one or more of these terrible gifts, thinking it would make them stronger. Among them was Dasior's brother, Fralar, who accepted the 'gift' of Murder.

One of the children of Fralar was named Telmor, and he is the father of all the wolves in the world today. Telmor was very fond of the new power of Murder, especially when he could use it to fill his belly. He attacked each of Dasior's children, and ate many of her grandchildren. Eventually he got greedy, and decided to eat one of Mralot's piglets, who were fat and juicy and looked much nicer than the fawns and calves he had been eating so far. So he crept into Mralot's den and jumped on one of the piglets, tore its throat out and prepared to eat it.

But before he could do so, Mralot woke up, and seeing Telmor standing over the corpse of one of his children, the great Boar became suffused a rage greater than any he had known before. With a great rush of air and a thundering of trotters, he charged forwards at his wicked foe. Telmor almost jumped out of his skin, he was so frightened, and just as Mralot reached him, he turned tail and fled, howling in terror. Mralot saw the Father of Wolves fleeing and knew his piglets were no longer in danger, but he thought to himself 'I will not stop, and I will not turn away and I will not compromise,' and he chased Telmor over the hills and mountains, and across the forests and the rivers.

But Telmor proved faster, for his fear gave him great speed, and eventually he slipped away out of sight. But Mralot was not worried, for he was virtuous and thought he knew other ways to bring the wolf to justice. He went to see Fralar, who he knew was Telmor's father, and who he believed could be made to behave justly and let him take his rightful revenge. But Fralar just grinned, showing all his teeth, which were very sharp. Mralot was not afraid, and stood his ground, demanding his right to vengeance. Fralar was impressed but tried not to show it, and told the Great Boar that he would hide his son, and all his other children would help him to do so, except for Lotara, who had tried to steal his tail and so was not in favour at the moment.

"So," he said, "you may as well go away, for you will gain nothing".

"No," said Mralot, "I will not stop, and I will not turn away and I will not compromise."

"Too bad," said Fralar, and he slunk away.

So Mralot began to look for Telmor on his own, intending to search across all Gloranthia if he had to. But before he had searched very far at all, Telmor ate the Sun, and everything was plunged into darkness and cold. "Now," he said, "my children will eat yours and nothing will ever be good for you again."

And it was so, for in the darkness and the cold, Fralar's



children prospered and ate as many of the other animals as they could. Monsters poured up from the ground, and ate not only the two-legged and four-legged children, but even began to eat the rocks as well. "Why don't you give up?" said Fralar, "you have already lost but you just don't realise it yet." But no matter how bad things got, Mralot stood firm and said "I will not stop, and I will not turn away and I will not compromise."

And because of this Telmor and the other evil beings of the world never succeeded in killing all of Mralot's children. Always some of them survived, protected by their mighty father, and by those to whom he had granted some of his magic and determination. In the end, driven by overwhelming despair and hunger, the children of Telmor turned on one another, and feasted on each other's flesh.

As the forces of evil faltered, destroyed by their own greed and anger, down in the depths of Hell, Spider Woman stirred. She spun her web, and trapped Fralar and those other evil spirits that survived within it, and ate them. Then she laid a clutch of eggs, which hatched to bring back many things from the world that had been lost. At last the Sun itself was reborn and all peoples across the world rejoiced that Fralar's dominion had at last been brought to an end.

Iconography

Mralot is depicted as a huge, black, male boar with tusks much larger than those of his living descendants. In the crude artwork of the Mraloti, he is usually shown charging or stomping on his foes.

Role in Society

The Mraloti are the most populous hsunchen race outside of Fronela or the Shan Shan, outnumbering even the more famous Telmori. Mralot is the principal god of the Pure Mraloti hsunchen, although a number of lesser spirits with more clearly circumscribed powers are also worshipped with him. Often persecuted by the Ramalian authorities, the worship of Mralot is in decline, although at present those Mraloti who practice at least some of his rituals significantly outnumber those who do not. However, many nominally Pure Mraloti have accepted some form of cooperation with their Slontan overlords and farming relatives.

Mraloti shamans are spiritual leaders only, with other leadership duties being the province of the female chieftains and the male Boar Warriors. Most sounders only have one shaman.

WHAT MY UNCLE TOLD ME

Who are you?

I am Gurek Hairym, son of Ungra Flatnose, a sister of the Green Acorns sounder whose ancestors once tamed the Pale Boar of Tig.

Who are we?

We are the Green Acorns sounder of the Pure Mraloti people.

What makes us great?

We are the best warriors there is because even when we do not win a fight at the beginning, we have the tenacity to keep on returning and fighting until our foe is dead. We do not back down, or run and flee as weaker peoples do. We do not bind ourselves with needless rules and separate ourselves from the true Otherworld.

We do not plough the soil as the foolish do, and instead keep the old ways, preserving the purity of the Earth that all life may live on it. We do not welcome enemies or strangers into our hearths, but instead fight them and show them our strength and our courage. We do not fail. We are strong of both mind and body, and we know what is right, and that is what makes us the greatest people of the world.

Where do we live?

The Green Acorns sounder lives here in this rich forest. We can take whatever we need from the forest, if we show it the right respect. But always remember that the Earth owns us, not the other way about. This forest does not belong to us; it is where we live, and we could live as easily somewhere else if we wished to.

How do we live?

We live in the sounder, here among these huts of wood and turf. We have many strong pigs, which live here around us, and also in the forest. The pigs belong to the sounder, so when we are hungry we will always have pork to eat, and when we need clothes we will have leather to wear. But we eat other animals too, when our hunters catch them. The women of the sounder gather nuts, berries and fungi for us to eat, and know which are good and which make you ill. They also spread the seeds in the forest, in the best places for them to grow, so that the cycles of life can continue and the spirits know we keep our compact with the Earth rather than stealing from it as foreign peoples do.

What is important in my life?

You were born in the week of the fallow deer rut so you are connected with that spirit, and when you are older you will find it easier to appease when you kill that

animal for food. The shaman marked you with the scent of wild boar so that everyone would know you were Mraloti and not some despicable outsider.

At the next autumnal equinox you will take the initiatory rites to become an adult. You will hunt, to show your skill at catching the animals of the woods without angering their spirits, and you must show that you can remember the right myths and that you have the determination to persevere even when you suffer pain that would make non-Mraloti shudder and flee. Once you have done this, the spirits will know you for an equal, and we will know you for a true man ready to guide his own fate.

One day, when everyone knows your worth, you may be selected by women from another sounder to marry them. Because they are women, and closer to Mother Earth than we are, they will know better than you will whether you will bear them strong children. That is why it is always the women who select their mates, and not the other way about. But none the less you must impress them with your skill

and your stamina in order that they will know to pick you and not some other person to share their hut.

Your wives will eventually bear children. Some foreign people claim that it is important to know which children you have fathered, but this only shows how foolish they are. Do you know which of your mother's husbands is your own father? Of course not, nor could you need to, because all of them help to raise you and provide pork and other food for you to eat. You must treat your own wives' children in the same way, for they are the bounty of Mother Earth that will ensure that life carries on for another generation.

What is the difference between men and women?

The main difference, of course, is physical. Once you are married, you will be able to take much joy in those physical differences but at the moment you are too young, so I will not speak further on that matter until you are an adult and old enough for a woman to take you as a husband.

Women are the nurturers, who carry children within the womb, and suckle babies, so that they are tied closely with the cycles of rebirth. This gives them a sacred bond with Mother Earth and her bounty, which is why they are always the leaders of the sounder. Spiritual things come instinctively to women and we must always obey them when they give advice on such matters.

But we are the hunters, who ensure that the sounder has more food than its own herds can provide. We also protect our families from their enemies, and must be skilled in the ways of fighting humans as well as animals. We can follow tracks through the forest, know what animals dwell there, where to find fresh water and how to shelter from the storm. So we have a bond with the Earth too and there are many things we know more of than women do.

Shamans are an exception to these rules. They may be either men or women and embody the soul of the other within themselves. They can see into the spirit world, so that even male shamans know more of that place than most women do. The male shaman maintains his ties to the Earth by sleeping with many women married to other men. Because the shaman stands outside the normal family, there is nothing wrong in this for those concerned. But you must never do such a thing, for you are no shaman, and the spirits would become angry and punish you for abusing the manly gifts they send you.

Who rules us?

Egiri Longtooth is our chieftain, for she is the oldest woman in the sounder, and therefore also the wisest. She has seen



many summers and winters, and there is little that she does not know how to deal with. But even so, she knows to seek the advice of the other elders, for many have special skills or experience that may be able to help. You must always respect the elders, for they carry the true knowledge of our people.

What makes someone great?

A great person is one who never gives up when things get difficult. They know what is right, and they never stop fighting for it so long as they draw breath. It is better to die than it is to surrender, for then you can continue fighting in the next life. All the greatest heroes are those who have found great adversity but have continued to struggle and to fight until they won through at the end even when everyone also thought all was lost.

But not everything is about fighting. The great man also knows how to maintain his bonds with Mother Earth by enjoying her bounties, and does not become a bloodthirsty killer with no love of the good things in life. You must always fight for a cause, such as protecting the sounder from enemies, and not fight for the sheer joy of it. Joy should instead be taken from good food, laughter, the retelling of exciting stories and from the love of your wives.

What is evil?

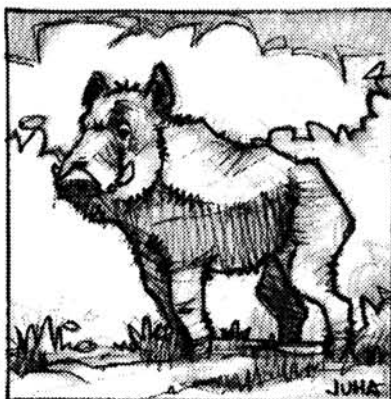
"Evil is that which Euralm does. He seeks to turn us from our ways and to break our bonds with Mralot and Nature. He works his mischief from the outside, even though his tricks are so cunning that it may not look that way. Cowardice is evil, and is brought by bad spirits or foreigners who try to persuade you that surrender or flight would be preferable to death. Breaking your taboos is evil, you only have to look at the Fallen to see what happens. Hunting foxes is evil for that is Euralm's beast. The outsiders are cursed by Euralm, and can never enjoy things as we can."

What is my lot in life?

One day you will be married, and with luck, your wives will have many children. Although you will have to move to a strange sounder to be with your wives, you will find it as enjoyable as the Green Acorns, for all Mraloti know how to live well. When you are not out hunting to feed your family and your new friends, there will be time to relax among your fellows in the sounder. There will be food and stories to enjoy, and many other things besides.

How do we deal with others?

"Wherever possible, we have nothing to do with outsiders for they are tainted by Euralm such that their lives are miserable enough already. If only they stayed where they are, we would be happy. We can



never trust them for Euralm's taint inside them seeks to corrupt us so that we become miserable like them.

Even though they know they are not wanted, the outsiders still come to take from us or even to take us. If they are few in number, then we chase them off. If they are many, we hide. We must show them no mercy and fight them to our last breath.

A good Mraloti never starts a fight. But he always knows how to finish one.

Who are our enemies?

Although no outsiders are to be trusted, some in particular are our enemies and never wish us anything but harm. Worst among them are the warriors of the south, who enslaved many of our brethren long ago. When they come among us, it is always to kill us, or else bind us with metal and try to force us to work for them.

Who are the great spirits of our people?

Mralot is the greatest spirit of our people, who showed us the best way to live and who sends us good boar to hunt and eat. Mother Earth is the greatest of the feminine spirits, for she creates all the things that adorn the land, and is the source of all the fertility of animals and humans. But there are many other great spirits who it also good to pray to, that they may teach your their special magic. Ugonro the Hunter teaches us how to approach prey, and how to appease their spirits when we have taken them for our food. Slasher teaches us how to fight our enemies, and how to make our spear-points sharper than the tusks of a boar. Gulrit the Wallower is the spirit of creeks, who brings us fresh water to drink and cool mud to clean ourselves, while Afka brings us fire to warm ourselves and to cook our food.

I have heard of other powers. What can you tell me about...

Fallen Mraloti?

"These people were once like us but Euralm has tricked them into betraying their

ancient ways into worship of the Earth. Now they spend their days in backbreaking labour, despoiling nature and cravenly handing over what little goods they do have to their masters. They are the clearest example of what happens if you forget our ways and taboos. Yet, pitiful as they are, some can come to free themselves, and because they were once our people, they can be welcomed again."

Orlanth?

The people of the northeast follow this god of wind and rain. They cannot be trusted, and are often known to raid our lands although they usually only attack the Fallen, knowing that their warriors are no match for our own. Orlanth is a violent god, and, like those rare storms that rip up trees in the forest, cares nothing for the world in which he lives.

Malkioni?

These people are the most tainted by Euralm. They work magic by ripping it from the world just as they make the Fallen rend the soil. They are wholly evil and raid us for fun. They enslaved our Fallen brethren and seek to do the same to us.

Pralori?

These are the people of the north, and they are distant cousins of ours, for their elk god is a weaker brother of Mralot. They have respect for the Earth, but do not tend as it we do and they make their totem into slaves by riding upon their backs. None the less, they are not our enemies, and it is possible to deal with them and even to exchange goods, provided one remembers that they can never be fully trusted.

Other Hsunchen?

Beyond the Pralori lands lie those of other peoples who have managed to keep at least part of their compact with the Earth. They are inferior to us, because they lack our strength and determination and they follow only weak totems such as the raccoon or the otter. This is why they are so few in number today, and why so many have been seduced by foreigners into giving up their ways. Although we cannot trust these people to be strong or honest, most at least are not so bad that we should avoid them altogether.

Aldrya?

Aldrya is greatest of the plant spirits. Her people are not human, and do not act as we do. They keep their own compact with Nature, which excludes us, and so we avoid their forests. If we ignore them, they will also ignore us, for they understand our common bond and our pledge to the wholeness of nature.

Who are you?

I am Gronki Truffle-Snout, daughter of Elga Snorts-Loudly of the Two Brooks sounder.

Who are we?

We are the Two Brooks sounder of the True Earth Mraloti, who the ignorant call 'Fallen'.

What makes us great?

We provide for the well being of our children and our relatives as best we can, and keep true to the virtues of our people. In return, the saints bless us, and the earth provides us with her bounty. Although it is true that we give a proportion of our crops to our overlords and that we are often unjustly treated by them, this does not mean we are not a great people. Unlike them, we keep to important virtues, and look out for one another. It is by your actions that the Earthmaker will judge you, not any military might or material wealth.

Where do we live?

This is our village, named for the sounder. All the fields around the village belong to us too, no matter what the overlords may say, as do the open woods to the east and west. To the north, there is dense forest where the Wild Mraloti live and so we do not venture there.

How do we live?

We live from the bounty of the Earth and with the blessings of the Earthmaker's helpers.

Everything we grow in our fields, and all the pigs that we herd in the woods belong to us and provide us with food. We also keep some chickens, and eat their eggs. If we are fortunate, and have food remaining after feeding ourselves and paying our taxes to Lord Kastrin, we travel to market in the town of Grudlop to the south and exchange what we have for useful goods that the people there can make.

What is important in my life?

When you were born the Mumbor blessed you, and marked you with the scent of the pig, to indicate that you are one of us so that the Spring Woman will know to protect you.

Next season you will take the adulthood rites, and be able to seek the guidance and blessings of the other saints. As part of the rites, you must be able to show that you know your ancestry, and that you know the ways of our people and the names and powers of the saints. Then the Mumbor will bless you as an adult and give you your second name, as the spirits

WHAT MY MOTHER TOLD ME



guide her.

Once you are an adult, you should chose a husband to share your work and your bed. Be sure to pick someone who will be useful on the farm, who is strong enough to plough the fields and wise enough to know how to help you out when you need him. With the blessing of the saints, you will have children to help you, and who can provide for you in your old age. But if you are wise, you will be sure not to have too many, for food is scarce and you will only be able to fill so many hungry bellies.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men are different from us in many ways, but the most obvious are that they are stronger, and less intelligent. For this reason, they carry out all the tasks on the farm that require physical strength, such as ploughing, building and carpentry. Some men can become very skilled at craftsmanship, so I suppose they are not all as stupid as they look, but it would be ridiculous for one to attempt running a farm!

Women have the intelligence, as well

as the life-giving powers of birth and nurturing. Therefore, it is we who manage the farm, ensuring that the barns are full and that we have enough food for everyone to eat. We also prepare the food and make clothing, and we barter with other villages for supplies that we cannot obtain here. Women make all the important decisions, because they could not be trusted to mere men.

Women also have a better understanding of the spirit world, which requires some learning. That is why only women can become Mumbors and intercede on our behalf with the saints, and drive off bad spirits.

There is no leader within our sounder, and all women are equal here. Mumbor Arlag is the wisest woman in the village, and many others go to her for advice as well as to seek her magical aid in driving off evil spirits or the like. But she is not our ruler, and anyone is free to ignore her if they wish, although it would certainly not be wise to do so!

Lord Kastrin rules us all, from his castle south beyond Grudlop.

He sends his warriors to us to steal our food and goods when he wants more of these things for himself. He also employs evil wizards who can work great magics against us if they wish. Although they are evil, it is no use opposing them as you will only get killed.

"Instead our Mumbors can call upon many of Earthmaker's Helpers to protect us from Lord Kastrin and his men".

What makes someone great?

A woman is known by her virtue and by her ability to look after her family. If you can keep your family well fed, and especially if you are able to increase your fields or livestock, then everyone will know that you are a sensible and skilled woman, and you will find it easier to attract suitable new husbands to work for you. But it is not just by these things that greatness is measured, and this is what our overlords forget. In addition, you must be virtuous, keeping to your word, not harming others who have done you no harm themselves, and standing by the other members of the sounder as best you can, no matter how hard the adversity. It is also good to keep your ties to the Earth, so that the saints will bless you with good fortune and full harvests. Besides prayers and harvest offerings, you also keep your ties to the Earth by not mistreating your pigs and through physical love with your husbands.

What is evil?

Evil comes from Eurmál the Devil, who persuades weak people to place themselves above the other members of their sounder, or to place their sounder

above those of their fellows.

Evil people steal food which is not theirs, or hoard goods for themselves and away from the rest of the community. They may even abandon the proper way of life altogether, failing to pray to the saints and worshipping false gods. Sleeping with people other than your husband is also evil, as is committing violence against others of the people. Most evil may be forgiven when the person realises the error of their ways, and makes restitution to the earth and the people that she has harmed.

But some things are so evil that the person must be cast out, and cursed by the Mumbor so that she cannot continue to do harm.

Evil people often become ghosts when they die, and continue to bring bad luck to others, especially their relatives, out of spite at their failure to attain Solace. If wicked ghosts plague you or your family, you must call the Mumbor so that she may banish them.

Eurmal the Devil dwells in a sunken temple to the East, where he has enslaved many people to do his will, and drowned all those who were virtuous enough to resist him. Nothing good ever comes from the sea. All who travel on it are evil, no matter how they may look, for they all have forged pacts with the Devil. Every time they launch their ships they must murder an innocent person, and sprinkle the planks with his lifeblood, or their craft will be destroyed as soon as it leaves harbour. Every time they land they must engage in an orgy of brutal rape and foul torture to give thanks to the Devil for their survival, and to satisfy the inhuman lusts that are raised by the presence of salt water. If you ever meet a person who has travelled by sea, never forget that he has had to do all these things many times over in his career, and that God will never forgive us if we allow him to live.

What is my lot in life?

Once you are fully-grown, you will share in the running of the farm. Eventually, I will pass on and then the farm will belong to you and your sister. You must look after it well, and with the good will of the saints, you will prosper, and have diligent daughters of your own to pass it on to.

How do we deal with others?

Strangers from other sounders can still be trusted to some extent, for all follow the same ways as we do. But it is best not to let your guard down entirely when dealing with them, for there are some secrets that are best kept amongst ourselves. Our overlords must be obeyed without hesitation, even if they are not Lord Kastarin's men.

Failure to do so can lead to terrible punishments, which will bring nothing but harm on your family while gaining you

nothing. Foreigners are not be trusted at all, and must prove themselves friendly before you can share even the most basic things with them. Never allow them into your home unless they have proved themselves by word and deed to be your friends, and even then, do not trust them entirely, for if they were truly virtuous they would follow our own saints - and foreigners never do so.

Anyone who travels by sea must be killed in the proper manner and their body burnt, for they deserve nothing better, and only through fire can we be sure their ghosts will not prosper and return to harm us.

Who are our enemies?

We have no true enemies, although the swamp-people to the north and the Aldryami to the northeast would doubtless harm us if they could. Instead, Lord Kastarin's warriors protect us from them, although only because it suits his own interests to do so. Lord Kastarin himself is also our enemy but he will not destroy us for he would starve if he did so." He and his warriors are often wicked or greedy, and we must oppose them without seeming to do so, lest we suffer for it.

Who are our gods?

"We worship the Earthmaker who made the Earth to bless and protect us."

Earthmaker lives so far away from us that only the most crazed madmen and most devout holy people can call upon him for aid. Instead we worship his boon companions, the helpers that help him make the earth.

The most important of the helpers is Mralota, who looks after the sows, and blesses us all with fertility and strong children. Others include the Spring Woman, who protects young children, the Red Woman who blesses the family, the White Woman who protects us from ill health, the Green Woman who blesses the fields, and the Enduring Man who looks over the menfolk. There are many other helpers besides, but these are only known well by the Mumbors, who can intercede with them on our behalf.

I have heard of other powers. What can you tell me about...

Wild Mraloti?

Our cousins in the forest have forgotten the True Earth. They live squalid lives without the benefit of crops or the assistance of Earthmaker's helpers."

They must hunt their food down or pick berries off bushes in order to survive, and because they lack the plough, they do

not have the close contact with the Earth that we do. They speak to wild spirits and ghosts, who can often lead them astray and so are rarely able to enter Earthmaker's paradise on their death."

Indeed, many ghosts are the spirits of dead Wild Mraloti.

Orlanth?

This is a false god, worshipped by the barbarians of the eastern highlands. He is a god of storm and thunder, and so brings mostly harm to those about him. The barbarians are ignorant of the Earthmaker, and lack the knowledge to pray properly.

Ramaliens?

Our overlords worship the Earthmaker but Eurmal has cursed them. They do not worship Earthmaker's helpers but dark demons of bloodshed and oppression. They are tortured souls and would be worthy of our pity if they did not hurt us so much.

Monotheists?

The people of Handra and Khorst are kin to our overlords although Eurmal has not wholly blinded them. They practice strange magics or worship strange gods, saying that this is how the Earthmaker meant them to live. But their strange ways and twisted magics are but signs of Eurmal's curse, damning them to a senseless death.

Pralori?

To the north live the elk-folk, who are similar in some ways to our Wild cousins. They too, worship ghosts and spirits, failing to acknowledge God or the saints. Sometimes, Ramalian warriors deal with them when they travel in that direction, but they are of little concern to us.

Other Hsunchen?

Further north live other peoples, worshipping yet different ghosts and spirits. All of them are inferior, and live pitiable lives scraping a living from the wilderness without having any connection to the Earth. They are so similar to beasts that they even take on their shapes sometimes, but they are too ignorant to see this as the warning and curse that it is.

Aldryami?

Beyond the forests of the Wild Mraloti live these inhuman beings that the Devil has beguiled into worshipping the trees and plants themselves instead of the true saints who allow them to grow. They are demons, who jealously destroy any farmland near their forests and bring woe upon humans. Their lands are haunted, and not to be visited. Pray that you never have to meet one

MRALOTI CHARACTERS

by Jamie "TTrotsky" Revell

PURE MRALOTI CULTURAL KEYWORD

Pure Mraloti

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Keen Smell, Tough.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Distrust Outsiders, Know Local Forests, Pure Mraloti Customs, Spirit Combat, Tradition of Mralot.

PERSONALITY: Stubborn.

RELATIONSHIPS: To family; To sounder.

MAGIC: All adult Pure Mraloti have integrated the following spirits as part of their initiation rites: Grow Tusks, Enhance Sense of Smell, Ignore Pain. They may integrate further spirits or gain fetishes with the assistance of a shaman. Once they have at least three integrated spirits with a rating of at least 1w, they may learn the Shapechange to Wild Pig ability at a starting rating of 12.

OCCUPATIONAL KEYWORDS

Hunter

RESTRICTIONS: Must be male.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Close Combat (small axe), Close Combat (spear), Hide in Cover, Ranged Combat (bow).

MENTAL ABILITIES: Ambush, Butcher Animal, Know Forest Animals, Prepare Shelter, Repair Bow, Tracking.

LIVING STANDARD: Common

EQUIPMENT: Stone axe, stone-tipped spear, self-bow and stone-tipped arrows, various animal skins and furs.

MAGIC: May integrate any integrable spirits from the Mralot tradition. Access to Fire, Hunter or Killing spirits.

Pig Herder

RESTRICTIONS: Must be female.

Physical Abilities: Close Combat (stone knife), Stay Alert.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Cook Food, Find Potable Water, Herd Pigs, Know Forest Plants, Leatherworking, Stone Knapping, Treat Wounds, Woodland Foraging.

LIVING STANDARD: Common

EQUIPMENT: Stone knife and other tools, herd of wild pigs, leathers and sinew, hut.



MAGIC: May integrate any integrable spirits from the Mralot tradition. Access to Fire, or Stream spirits.

Shaman

RESTRICTIONS: Must be Pure Mraloti, with an awakened fetch.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Chant, Craft Fetish, Dance, Draw Summoning Circle.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Eyes of the Boar Spirit (equivalent to Spirit Sight), Find Herbs, Lead Ceremony, Mralot Tradition Knowledge, Shamanic Escape, Spirit Combat, Spirit World Travel.

LIVING STANDARD: Common

EQUIPMENT: Special herbs, stone and bone personal adornments, hut.

MAGIC: May integrate any integrable spirits from the Mralot tradition. Access to all spirits of the Mralot tradition.

MAGIC KEYWORDS

Mralot Tradition

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: Must be born or adopted into the sounder.

INTEGRABLE SPIRITS:

bBoar Spirits: Boar's Bravery, Boar's Strength, Charge Like Pig, Grow Tusks, Ignore Pain, Intimidate, Size of a Boar, Stomping Trotters, Thick Skin, Throw Off Exhaustion, Virility.

bSow Spirits: Enhance Sense of Smell, Pig Friend, Resist Persuasion, Scent Predators, Talk With Pigs.

OTHER TRADITIONAL SPIRITS:

eEarth Spirits: (typical spirits include Fight Evil Spirits, Healing, Immoveable, Pacify Forest Beast and Recover Quickly).

Spirit Allies: Porcine spirits of all kinds.

FETCH: Wild boar spirit.

FETISHES: Mraloti shamans make fetishes from bone and wood, and medicine bundles from pig hide.

SECRET: Shapechange to Pig (must have at least three Boar or Sow Spirit powers at 1w or above to learn this power).

OTHER SIDE: Mralot dwells in the Great Oak Forest in the Spirit World. Here, the spirits of wild pigs and human Mraloti are as one and can take on either form as it suits them, and rapacious carnivores and wicked outsiders only threaten at the very fringes of the realm.

Great Spirits of the Mralot Tradition

The Mralot tradition includes a number of great spirits; the most important of which are listed below.

Afka the Spark

When this spirit helped show Mralot the way to follow his enemy during the Darkness, the Great Boar brought it back to his people and gave it a home, where it now helps all two-legged Mraloti.

Entry Requirements: None special

Available Spirits:

Fire Spirits (typical spirits include Appear Fire, Direct Flame, Ignite Wood, Increase Heat of Fire, Light the Way and Shoot Burning Sparks).
Disadvantages: Followers must not drink to excess.

Gulrit the Wallower

Gulrit is Mralot's most powerful daughter. She loves the mud, and rolls in it whenever possible, as well as bending the spirits of fresh woodland streams to her will.

Entry Requirements: Must be female or a shaman.

Available Spirits:

Stream Spirits (typical spirits include Bring Object to the Surface, Cleanse Tainted Water, Extinguish Fire, Flood, Sensuous Mud and Smother Parasites).

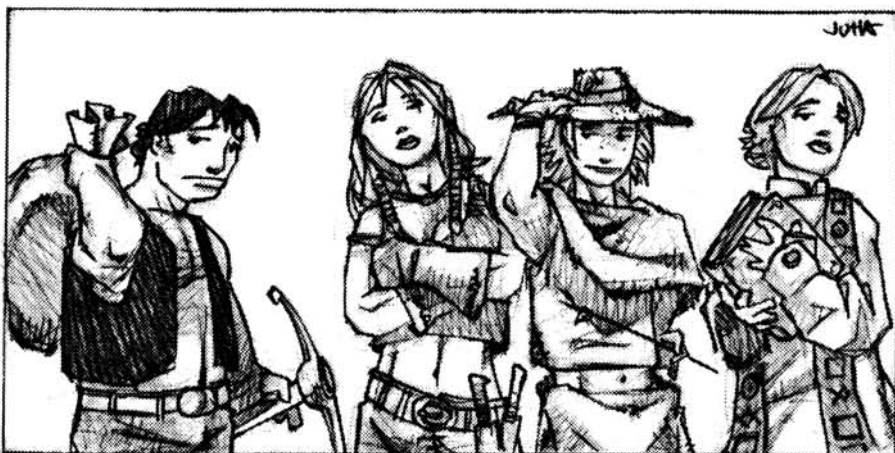
Disadvantages: Followers must wash themselves in a fresh stream at least once per week.

Slasher the Warrior

Slasher is Mralot's strongest son, a great fighter who teaches others how to kill evil humans and the deadliest of beasts.

Entry Requirements: Must be male or a shaman.

Available Spirits:



FALLEN MRALOTI CULTURAL KEYWORD

Fallen Mraloti

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Keen Sense of Smell, Tough.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Hide Wealth, Know Local Area, Ramalian Peasant Customs, Ramalian Superstitions.

PERSONALITY: Distrust Foreigners, Fear Sea, Stubborn.

RELATIONSHIPS: To family; To community; Member of Ramalian Church.

MAGIC: Fallen Mraloti can either use sorcerous blessings or access animist spirits, although no individual can do both. Although the choice of blessings or spirits tends to run in families, and even whole communities, they are seen as part of the same religion, and are fairly tolerant towards one another, despite occasional misunderstandings.

OCCUPATIONAL KEYWORDS

Craftsman

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Carry Heavy Loads, Close Combat (brawling), Craft (wood, bronze or stone), Make Simple Tools.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Gauge Value, Haggle, Scrounge For Supplies.

LIVING STANDARD: Minimal

EQUIPMENT: Hovel with workshop, a few trade goods, raw materials.

MAGIC: Through the numbors, either have access to the blessings in The Book of Entra and The Book of the First Helpers OR access to the Fire or Stream spirits of the Pure Mraloti tradition.

Farmer

RESTRICTIONS: Must be male.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Close Combat (brawling), Close Combat (farm implements), Go Without Food, Plough Fields, Toil All Day.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Herd Pigs, Know Crops, Make Repairs, Predict Weather.

LIVING STANDARD: Minimal

EQUIPMENT: Hand-drawn plough, basic tools.

MAGIC: Through the numbors, either have access to the blessings in The Book of Entra and The Book of the First Helpers OR access to the Sow or Stream spirits of the Pure Mraloti tradition.

Swineherd

RESTRICTIONS: Must be female.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Go Without Food, Toil All Day.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Bargain, Care for Animals, Cook Food, Grow Herbs, Herd Pigs, Manage Stores, Repair Clothing.

LIVING STANDARD: Minimal

EQUIPMENT: Small farm, herd of domestic pigs, a few goats or scrawny cows, flock of chickens.

MAGIC: Through the numbors, either have access to the blessings in The Book of Entra and The Book of the First Helpers OR access to the Sow or Stream spirits of the Pure Mraloti tradition.

Mumbor

RESTRICTIONS: Must be female.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES: Dodge Attack.

MENTAL ABILITIES: Comfort Parishioners, Escape Spirit World, Fight Spirits, Good Memory, Lead Prayer, Know Spirits, Read Old Slontan, Spirit Sight, Spirit World Travel.

LIVING STANDARD: Minimal

EQUIPMENT: Hovel, battered prayer books, patched and faded vestments.

MAGIC: May cast and gain the benefits of any blessings from The Book of Entra, The Book of the First Helpers, The Book of the Second Helpers and The Path of the Hidden Hand.

MAGIC KEYWORDS

Followers of the Earthmaker

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: Must be born or adopted into a Fallen Mraloti community.

BLESSINGS:

THE BOOK OF ENTRA: Mralota, the pig mother, is seen as the founder of Fallen Mraloti society, having lead them away from false animist worship, and into a true communion with the

Earthmaker. Her brother, Mralot, is a false god who is too stupid to understand the harm he does. The blessings available from the book are:

BLESS BOAR, BLESS PIGLET, BLESS SOW, CALM SWINE, FATTEN PIG, FIND STRAY PIG, PRESERVE PORK, TOUGHEN LEATHER.

eTHE BOOK OF THE FIRST HELPERS: This book deals collectively with the Red Woman, White Woman, Green Woman, Spring Woman and Enduring Man. The stories are highly allegorical, even by comparison with those in most Malkioni hagiographies. The blessings available from the book are:

bless hearthfire, bless plough, preserve clothing, bless rye, ease childhood disease, ease pain, fight disease, preserve rye, thick skin, work without food.

S THE BOOK OF THE SECOND HELPERS: This book deals with the special helpers who grant powers to the Mumbors, and with the secrets of the spirit world that they must fight and conquer. The helpers described are Burning Man, the Far Traveller, the Grey Woman, the Blue Woman and the Dust Woman. Other Malkioni generally consider these to be false spirit beings, and not genuine saints. The blessings available from the book are:

banish ghost, bless grave, bless womb, ease childbirth, exorcise possessing spirit, extinguish flame, increase flame, purify water (has no effect on 'evil' brackish water), rule of the Earthmaker (helps reduce alien world modifier), sense animist magic, talk to spirit.

eThe Path of the Hidden Hand: This is not an actual written book, but rather a set of oral traditions secretly passed down by the Mumbors. All blessings from this Path are actively forbidden by the Ramalian Church (and all Malkioni) as dangerous to both society and the salvation of the individual's soul. The three shadowy helpers known to practitioners of the Path are the Hag, the Bloody Daughter and the Plague Woman. The blessings and curses available from the path are:

bind disease spirit, bless tool as weapon, curse with migraine, curse with sickness, ferret out secret, hide wealth, protect secret, raise courage, resist lawful authority.

SPIRIT POWERS

zThe Blue Woman: Stream Spirits of the Pure Mraloti tradition.

fThe Burning Man: Fire Spirits of the Pure Mraloti tradition.

Bentra: Sow Spirits of the Pure Mraloti tradition.

SECRET: *Carry On* (gain an additional final action in any non-combat contest in which you are striving to continue against difficult odds, and have used the powers of Mralota or any of the first or second helpers, even if you would not normally be permitted a final action).

OTHER SIDE: The Fallen Mraloti typically contact only one Node on the Adept Plane. This realm consists of farmland interspersed with open woodland, and pig-essences roam freely there. However, everything there appears less than perfect; conditions are either depressingly dank or unpleasantly arid; grass is yellowed, weeds clog

the fields and poisonous moulds infest the trees. The sky is perpetually overcast, and the winds unpredictable; all of this is blamed on the evil of the Ramalian overlords with the Node suffering from the spiritual malaise inflicted on the physical countryside.

The borders of the Node are especially hostile; poisonous demon-infested seas crash against cliffs to the south and east, a desert blasted by lightning storms and rains of fire and acid encroaches from the west and the all-but impenetrable Dolorous Forest lies to the north. The powerful, brave and foolhardy can find narrow twisting paths through the Forest, which eventually lead to the nodes of other Helpers. Most will just find deadly plants, bestial essences, and traps that send the victim plummeting through to the Spirit World.

The Fallen Mraloti almost never contact the Saint Plane, about which they generally know little.



tKilling Spirits (typical spirits include *Rage, Scent Enemies, Sharpen Spear, Sharpen Tusks, and Strengthen Bow*).

Disadvantages: Must participate in a successful hunt against superior prey (e.g. magical boars), or kill a dangerous carnivore, at least once per year.

Ugonro the Hunter

During the Darkness, Ugonro defeated some of Telmor's wicked spirits, and then ate them. Now he allows humans to learn the powers that will enable them to catch and kill animals for food, just as Telmor's creatures do.

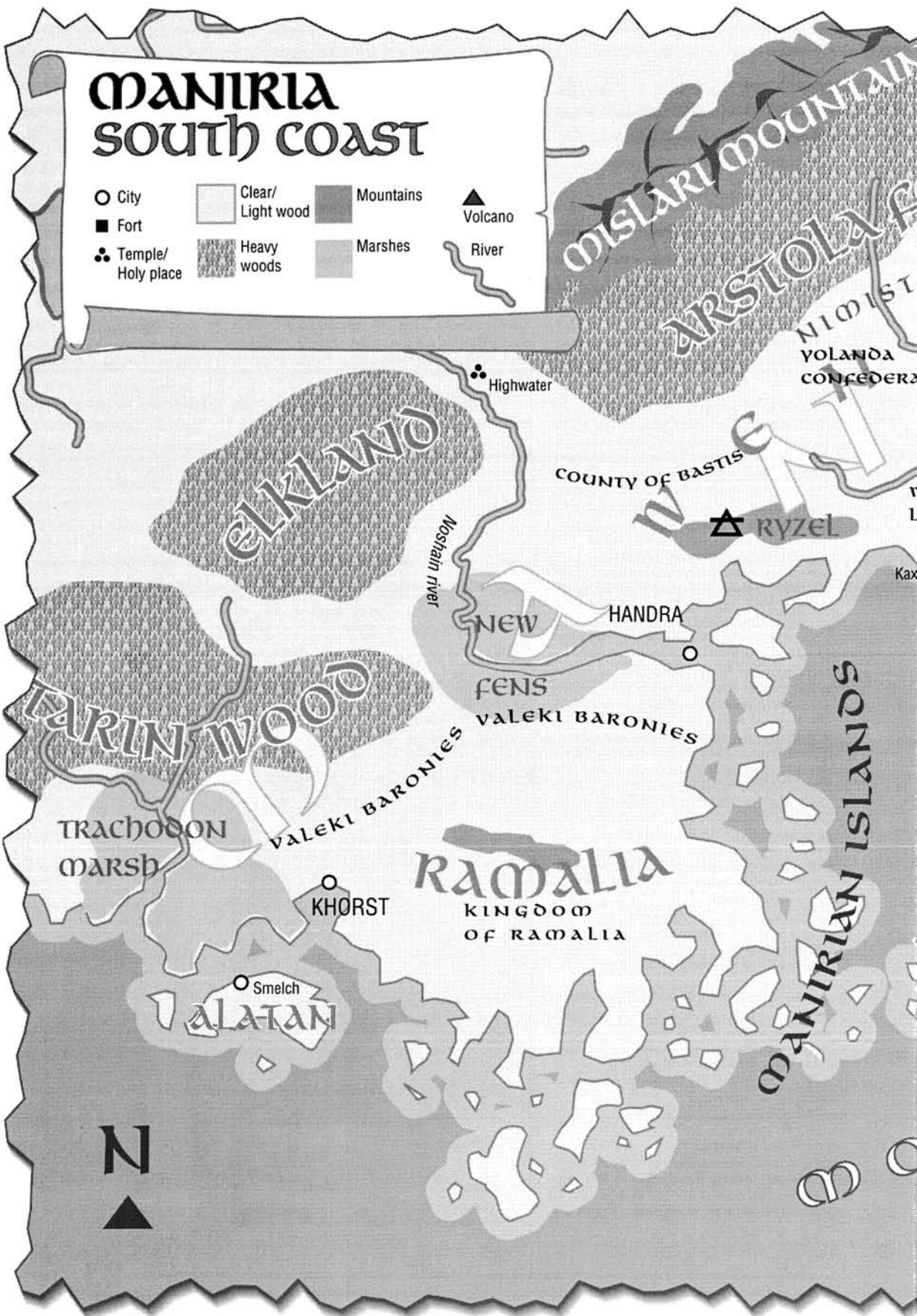
Entry Requirements: Must be male or a shaman.

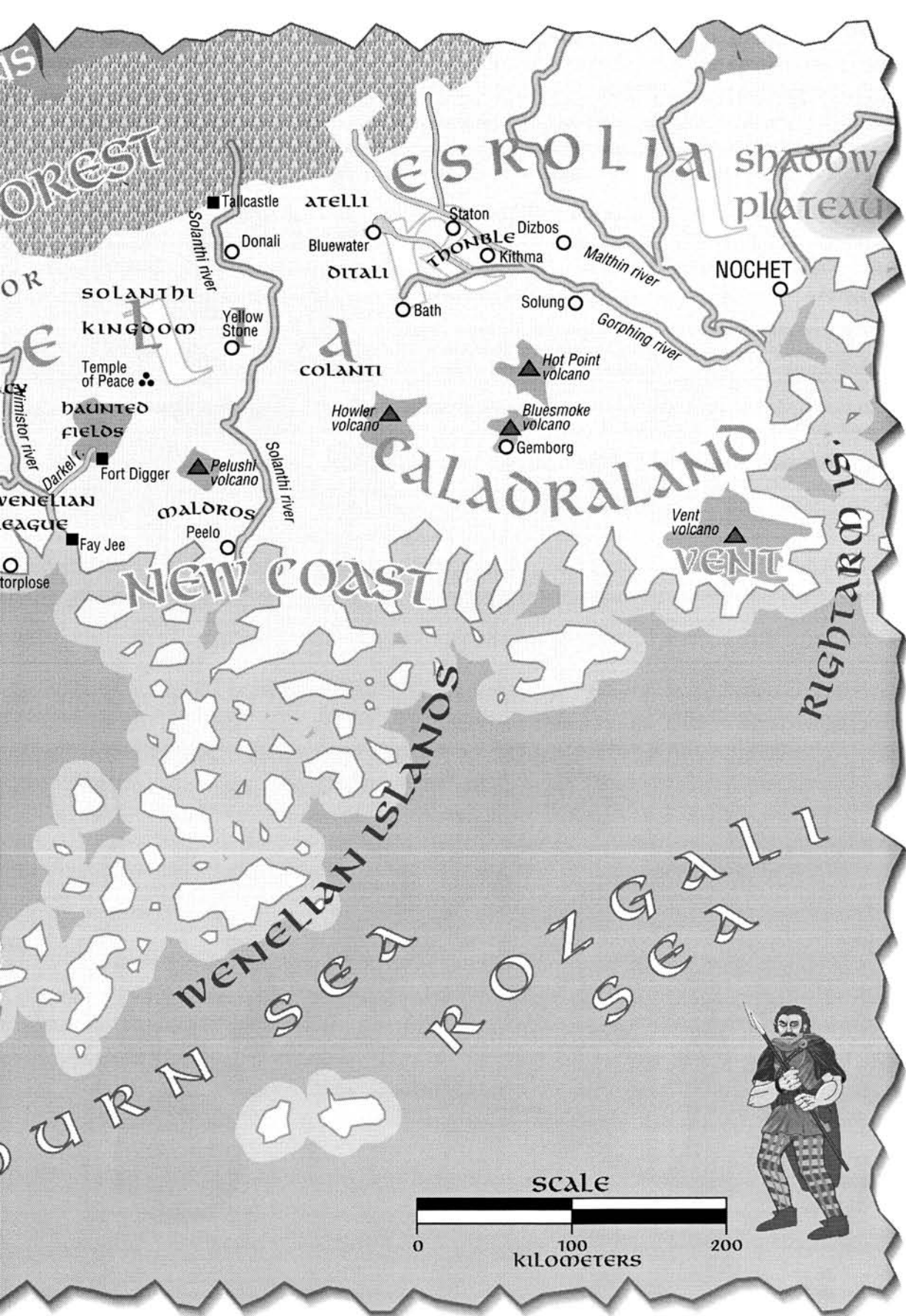
Available Spirits:

gHunting Spirits (typical spirits include *Calm Deer, Calm Wild Sheep, Disguise Scent, Slay Beast, and Stay Silent*).

MANIRIA south coast

- City
- Fort
- ⦿ Temple/
Holy place
- Clear/
Light wood
- ▨ Heavy
woods
- ▩ Mountains
- ▧ Marshes
- ▲ Volcano
- ~ River

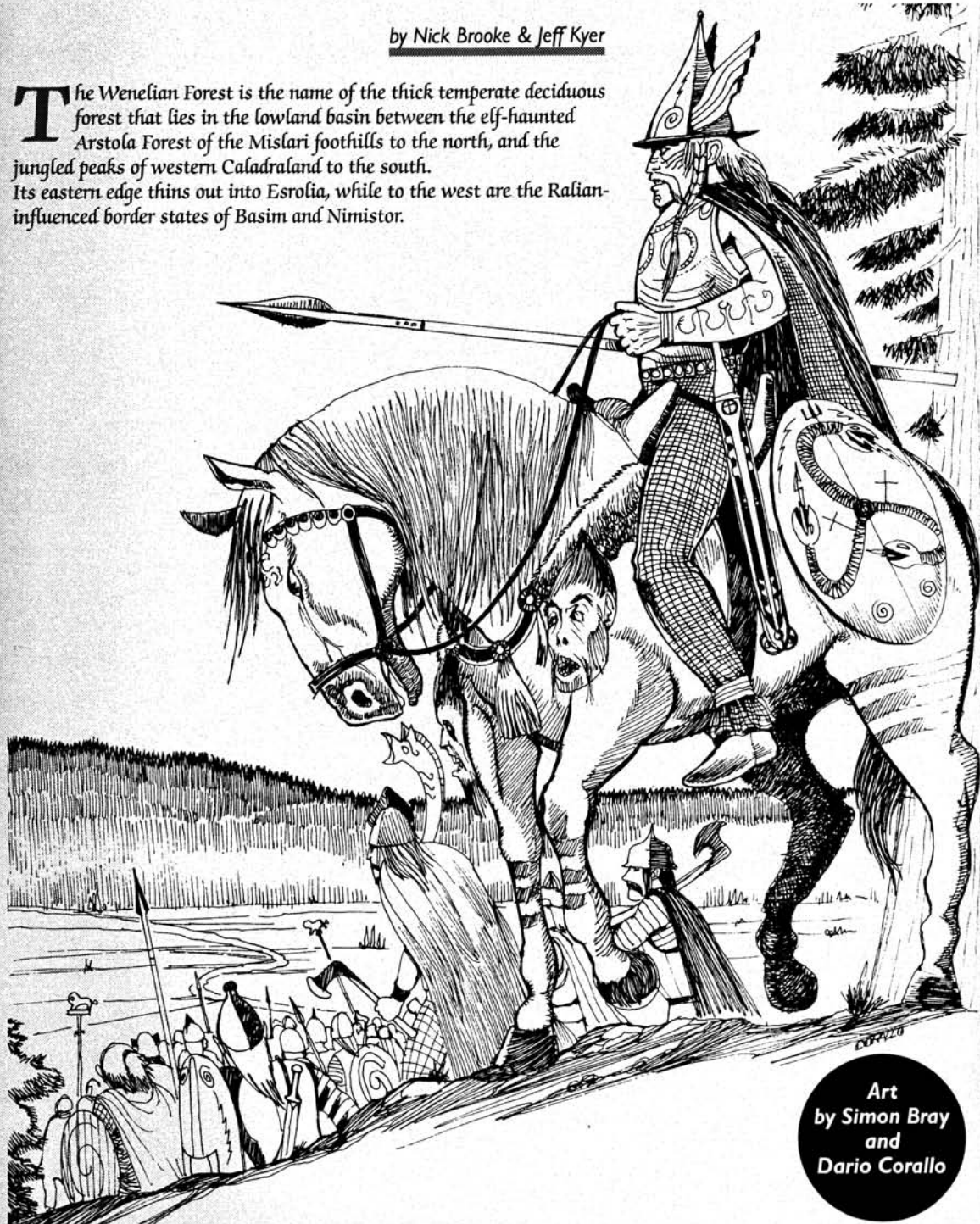




WENELIA

by Nick Brooke & Jeff Kyer

The Wenelian Forest is the name of the thick temperate deciduous forest that lies in the lowland basin between the elf-haunted Arstola Forest of the Mislari foothills to the north, and the jungled peaks of western Caladraland to the south. Its eastern edge thins out into Esrolia, while to the west are the Ralian-influenced border states of Basim and Nimistor.



Art
by Simon Bray
and
Dario Corallo

Inhabitants: The native Wenelians are mainly Entruli: former hsunchen humans though many can trace their descent to other Orlanthi peoples such as Harandings or Helerings as well as other pre-dawn peoples. Also living in Wenelia are a small number of Malkioni settlers, refugees from Slontos, the famous Trader Princes of Ralios, and occasional elves from the Arstola forest.

Culture: Polyphyletic clan/tribe structure (exogamous, intermarrying clans). "Tribes" are regional – Ditali, Solanthi, Nimistor, and Maldros. Traditionally, each tribe consists of twelve sacred clans. These clans are usually considered to be the Fox, Badger, Bear, Elk, Stag, Beaver, Boar, Lion, Otter, Bull, Wolf, and Stallion. Some tribes have more clans and others less as war and disaster take their toll. Clans are often re-established by those who bear its totem later. All clans are patrilineal and trace their descent from a masculine beast-ancestor which is the clan's primary totem.

Language: Three Manirian Theyalan dialects: Ditali, Solanthi and Nimistor, all of which are mutually intelligible. Differing dialects are mutually understandable though funny accents and minor misunderstandings may burden the speakers. Speakers of other Manirian or Theyalan tongues (inc. Sartarite, Esrolite, Caladran, etc.) will have comprehension problems at Narrator's discretion (Hero Wars: Assume an improvisation penalty of -3 to -10 to the ability used).

Government: Tribal. Leaders are warlords (especially Greymane and his sons), hereditary nobles from ruling clans, and chieftains and leaders of families. Most tribal rulers depend prestige or power and many tribes fall apart on the death or disgrace of their founders. While tribal kings are not chosen by heredity, having a strong bloodline may mean the difference between success and failure for a claimant. Tribal laws are both traditional and oral, based on precedents memorized by law-speakers and handed down as custom. Penalties for crimes such as blood feud, tricksters and adultery would be familiar to most Orlanthi.

Other Wenelian Factions:

- Arstola Forest Aldryami (Wenelians are essentially hostile to them, but the Council of Trees as mediators between the elves and humans);

- Esrolites (Wenelians under Greymane were responsible for destruction of the Holy Country. Now they must decide whether to continue raiding and pillaging or attempt a lasting conquest and occupation; Ditali once again the front-men);

- Trader Princes (Wenelians are starting to exert pressure on them. As they become more organised and assertive, the tribes have begun to expand and threaten the Trader Prince's now defunct trade monopolies).



Military (all clans): Specialists in some clans (Lion, Boar, and Stallion) and the axe-cult of Hew (a local anti-Aldryami Orlanth subcult). Few clans can afford many mounted warriors. They form the noble core of many warbands.

Religion: Ancestral totem-animals (Entruli); Wenel; Vorlan; Urna-Alda-Dana; Mani. Cosmology: (the World Tree). Hew the Axe, Entru the Boar.

All Wenelians are born associated with an animal-totem. Originally, each clan was associated with a particular animal but intermarriage has led to the clans being composed of a mixture of many totems. The gods of the tribe are not the Animal Gods (who are their ancestors), but the gods of Storm and Wood who rule the land. This is NOT a sophisticated religion!

Outside society are shamans ("speakers to the dead") and the wood-witches of the Council of Trees. Tricksters are always outcasts.

Food: Most of the clans live in ways similar to the Heortlings though they are more reliant on hunting. Clans living in valleys are more likely to plant barley and herd cattle while those on the heights herd sheep and hunt wild game.

People of Note

Greymane: This aging chieftain from the Lion clan of the Solanthi tribe is the most famous raider among the western Manirians and plundered Esrolia several times. Lord Greymane is now (1620) an old man who rules from his favorite wife's farm. His sons, Hardral and Varstarl, are both capable leaders and magicians.

Esra and Entru

I once saw the Puppeteer Troupe perform a skit which they claimed was based on the innermost rites of the Esrola Temple.

It was about Esra and Entru, the First Woman and First Man. Before they learned to propagate the way we do nowadays, each used a variety of other partners.

Entru was a hairy man, who ran wild in the forest and lurked with the other wild beasts. He had his earliest children by them: they are the animal-like ancestors of the beastly Wenelian barbarians.

•As for Esra – well, there were some bawdy allusions to serpents and ears of corn, but I can't pretend to have understood them all.

Many of her children engendered by these means are the ancient temple guardians found throughout Esrolia (as indeed are their parents).

Then Esra sought out and trapped Entru. She shaved him, making him civilised.

She dressed him in garments, taming him by teaching him speech and manners and love. Their children were not hairy like their father but smooth, and they are the ancestors of all of us today.

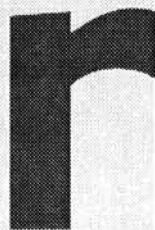
Esra and Entru lived happily together until they were parted in the Gods War, when the possessive jealousy and anger of the male gods destroyed the world. Now Entru must remain in the silent caverns of Ty Kora Tek, so that Ketha, Goddess of Springtime, can return to the world with every turning year.

Notes for God Learners

- for 'Esra' read 'Asrelia, as the Earth Mother'
- for 'Entru' read 'Genert, as the First Father'
- for 'Ketha' read 'Voria, as Spring/Grain Goddess'
- for 'Ty Kora Tek' read 'Ty Kora Tek'

This myth shows the ancient Earth Pantheon of Esrolia following the model of the Four Corners of the Earth (rather than the later Six Daughters of Earth). More recent deities such as Maran Gor and Babeester Gor are found in the current form of the Esrolite religion, but these four figures are found in the original and oldest myths.

"Entru" is an ancient figure from Manirian mythology, interpreted differently by various local peoples. Some see him as the First Male, or First Father; others treat him purely as an ancestral figure, or sometimes a Godtime saviour. The First Age Entruli of the Manirian coast claimed descent from Entru; these are the ancestors of the Ramalians and Wenelians of today.



History

Note: Many of these events were presented in greater detail in the RuneQuest Companion, Trade Talk #5 and #6 or in Genertela, Crucible of the Hero Wars and have been repeated here briefly.

First Age

The World Council of Friends sent many missionaries and peoples out into the world to free them from the fear and ignorance that spread throughout the world during the Darkness. Parties from Kethaela set off westward into the lands of the Weneli, Mraloti, Entruli and Pralori with mixed success. These peoples were famed for their hatred and warfare, and it was only when King Lalmor reached Slontos in 115 that the Lightbringers' knowledge was firmly entrenched into the culture of that region.

Later, the Bright Empire was opposed by the Waertagi, loyal allies of the Only Old One, and the Empire was forced to march overland through Maniria: great caravans and armies trekked westward from Kethaela to bring Nysalor's bright word to Slontos and beyond. Slontos fell to the army of Arkat Chaosfoe; Waertagi raiding increased; Arkat and his main army came by sea to liberate Kethaela, opposed by Palangio the Iron Vrok and the dwarfs of Gemborg.

Second Age

Arkat reinstated the Only Old One as ruler of the Shadowlands. While Slontos became instrumental in the rise of the Middle Sea Empire, the interior remained relatively untouched save for occasional reprisal raids and requests for tribute. Wenelia was a land of squabbling barbarian tribes nominally under the control of the Dark Empire until it was destroyed by the Justreli.

During the disintegration of the EWF and the Middle Sea Empire, the Shadowlands grew stronger as the Only Old One played upon their weaknesses and needs. He extended his protection far to the north and west of Kethaela. Along the coast, his frightening armada of pitch-black ships cowed the populace, devastated by the sinking of Slontos. During this time, most of Wenelia paid tribute to the Shadowlands.

When the terrible curse of the Closing swept upon the ocean, it destroyed the Black Fleet. The Manirians called upon Lightbringer worshippers to free them from the Shadowlands. It was in this time that the Lightbringer cults were firmly established among the Wenelians.

Third Age

With both the seas and Dragon Pass closed to travel, Kethaela was surrounded by hungry neighbors who raided the Shadowlands incessantly. Though much of the former richness was gone with the absence of trade, much of the remainder was carried off during these years. Then, in 1313, Belintar swam ashore, and began the overthrow of the Only Old One.

By 1318, Belintar ascended to his throne in the City of Wonders to reign as Pharaoh of

Kethaela. The newly renamed Holy Country prospered internally, and cowed all who might think to invade it. It sent messengers and merchants outward to the west, through Nimistor to Ralios and beyond.

The Wenelians were able to retain their independence, content to consolidate and recover from the disasters that accompanied the Closing. With plenty of room to grow, they enjoyed peace broken only by inevitable Orlanthei inter-clan squabbles and fighting with the hsunchen who lurked in the deeper forests. Only when settlers pushed too far up the river valleys towards the Arstolian Forest was there trouble, for this would inevitably bring aldryami retaliation.

Although the seas had closed, bold explorers from Ralios were able to establish trade between Kethaela and their homelands. These self-styled "Trader Princes" built a road that stretched from Bastis in Ralios to Rigos, on the shore of Mirrorsea Bay. A series of castles guarded by knights and arcane magicians oversaw the caravans and pilgrims who traveled the route, making the families that held them very wealthy indeed.

Recent History

In 1580, Dormal the Sailor sailed westward from Kethaela to perform the Opening of the Seas, sidestepping the 650-year ban on oceanic sailing. His voyages eventually led to the revitalizing of trade along the New Coast. After some initial reverses, the Holy Country and the city states of the New Coast were able to open safe passage along the coast of the Mournsea. This was a devastating blow to the Trader Princes. Caravans and tribute along the Old Road vanished overnight. Many of the once proud castles lie abandoned or taken over by rapacious neighbors.

In 1609 the Ditali tribe, urged on by Lunar agitators, began raiding and plundering the Holy Country. Counter-invasions plundered their lands in 1610-11, and an intermittent war continued between the Holy Country and the Ditali tribe, fomented and encouraged by Lunar agents. A renowned Solanthi warlord, Greymane, led his first raid into Esrolia in 1614, plundering the border cities of the Holy Country. Soon other Wenelian tribes joined with Greymane to share in plundering the defenseless Holy Country.

1616 was disastrous for the Holy Country. Their armies were defeated in Ditali by the Solanthi warlord Greymane in a battle known as the "Lion King's Feast". Worse, the Holy Country's fleet was sunk by Wolf Pirates, and the Pharaoh himself mysteriously disappeared, leaving Kethaela leaderless and vulnerable in its hour of greatest need. Greymane returned to devastate Esrolia again in his Great Raid of 1618, leading a massive barbarian army deep into the Holy Country, taking great plunder, and avoiding any decisive battle. Since that time, Wenelia has been more concerned with developments along the New Coast and the resurgence of Ramalia, Pralori and other hsunchen peoples.

Places of Note

*Note: Many of these were detailed in **RuneQuest Companion** or **Genertela**, **Crucible of the Hero Wars** and have been repeated here briefly.*

Arstola Forest: The thick deciduous woods that cover the land between the Mislari Mountains and Wenelia are one of the Six Great Forests of the elves. The Arstola Forest is the only major centre of elf population in Maniria, and is primarily a brown elf forest. Elves are only occasionally found outside the upper regions of this widespread forest.

Bastis: Country of a Malkioni Trader Prince who rules over the local Orlanthi.

Bath: A number of hot springs rise from beneath the volcanoes of Caladraland. Here, on the Warm River in the southern Ditali lands, the God Learners built a spa resort (when Wenelia was an outlying region of the Archduchy of Slontos). In the Third Age, many of the ruined buildings have been rebuilt by Kethaelan entrepreneurs. It is a fairly large city being near the end of the old Trade Road.

Bluesmoke Volcano: the south side of this volcano is the site of the dwarf city of Gemborg. This volcano one of the few the region not controlled by Vestkarten worshippers. Its powers are under the control of a special Silver dwarfs.

Blewater: The deep pool here gives the community its name. In the Darkness, human sacrifices to the water spirits protected the clan who lived here. They perished with the coming of the Lightbringers. It is an important city to the Aeteli tribe.

Darkel River: Flows from the troll held Ice and Troll mountains.

Ditali Lands: Powerful barbarian kingdom of Wenelia, occasionally troublesome for Kethaela. The inhabitants are Orlanthi in culture and organization, but with a Malkioni aristocracy. It is a lush, heavily forested area which supports many clans in its wilds, and which sits upon the east-west trade routes to the Solanthi and beyond.

Dizbos: a western Terminus of the Trade Road. Held by the prominent Goldgotti family. Their holdings are partially abandoned as the family retrenches in Dragon Pass and Esrolia.

Donali: A town in the Solanthi lands, it was once known as Ferry Town for the massive ox-driven ferries that connect the two halves of the walled town. They have managed to stand aloof of the Trader Princes, playing the Yellowstone and Jara Princes as well as the Solanthi warlords off against each other.

Entrulia: Ancient name for Wenelia.

Fay Jee: Once a prosperous city at the mouth of the Darkel River, it was devastated by the Wolf Pirates as an example to the other coastal cities. The inhabitants were slain, enslaved or driven away. It is being rebuilt by the duDerysi Trader Prince family.

Fort Digger: a recent stockade of New Coast entrepreneurs from Fay Jee, mining the slopes of Ice Mountain for crystals and lead.

They do so with troll permission, in exchange for delicacies brought from the sea.

Gemborg: The dwarfs of Gemborg were the first dissenters from the World Council of Friends. A sizeable population of dwarfs inhabits the depths of the Bluesmoke Volcano. The city, whose surface portions can be found on the south face of the volcano, is known as Gemborg, named after the fabulous gems it produces.

Gorphing River: The Ditali Tribe used to occupy all of this river, but have retreated upstream beneath the eaves of the Wenelian Forest in the face of Esrolite population pressure.

Holy Country: old name for the lands of Kethaela, when they were united under the rule of the Pharaoh (from 1318 to 1616). The Sixths of the Holy Country were Caladraland, Esrolia, God Forgot, Heortland, the Islands, and the Shadow Plateau.

Hot Point: A dormant volcano on the northeast border of Caladraland. The natives there are equally quiescent.

Howler Volcano: Haunted volcano. Its slopes are peopled with ashen statues and fleeing, burning ghosts.

Ice Mountain: The icy summit of this mountain is unique among the southern Manirian mountains (most of which are volcanic). The Wenelians are upset by this, as their Cosmology has the hot (Caladraland volcanic) mountains to the south and cold (Mislari) mountains to the north. An icy mountain in the south is clearly diseased and an affront to the natural order. The trolls claim their ancestors came up from the Underworld here, and it has nothing to do with Vestkarten or his progeny. Trolls foray to the summit to retrieve perfect, living crystals of ice.

Kethaela: Kethaela is the most ancient name for the region around the Mirrorsea Bay. The land was named for the goddess Ketha, the wife of Entru and mother of the Entruli, who came from this area. For much of the First and Second Ages, the area was known as the Shadowlands and ruled by the Only Old One, son of Esrola and Argan Argar, from his Palace of Black Glass, the obsidian fortress atop the Shadow Plateau. And for most of the Third Age Kethaela was united in the Pharaoh's "Holy Country".

Kithma: Capital of Thonble, a small buffer state between the Ditali and Estrolia. Recent history has been devastating and they pay the Lion's Tribute.

Maldros: A tribal land described elsewhere in Trade Talk #10. The natives rely on the Pelushi volcano to protect them from Wenelian and Ditali incursions but the capital, Peelo, is vulnerable to the sea.

Mislari Mountains: An elusive pass is known to cross over the Mislari, but is continually lost. The last successful crossing was by Ethilrist, then merely a heroic mercenary captain over a century ago.

Nimistor: Region drained by the Nimistor river and its tributaries. The peoples

Regional Activity Table

Common Events

- *Raid against neighboring clans is planned.*
- *Blood feud erupts into open warfare between clans; travel endangered, mercenaries sought.*
- *Priests of Orlanth seized with prophetic visions of a Holy War to begin in Dragon Pass.*

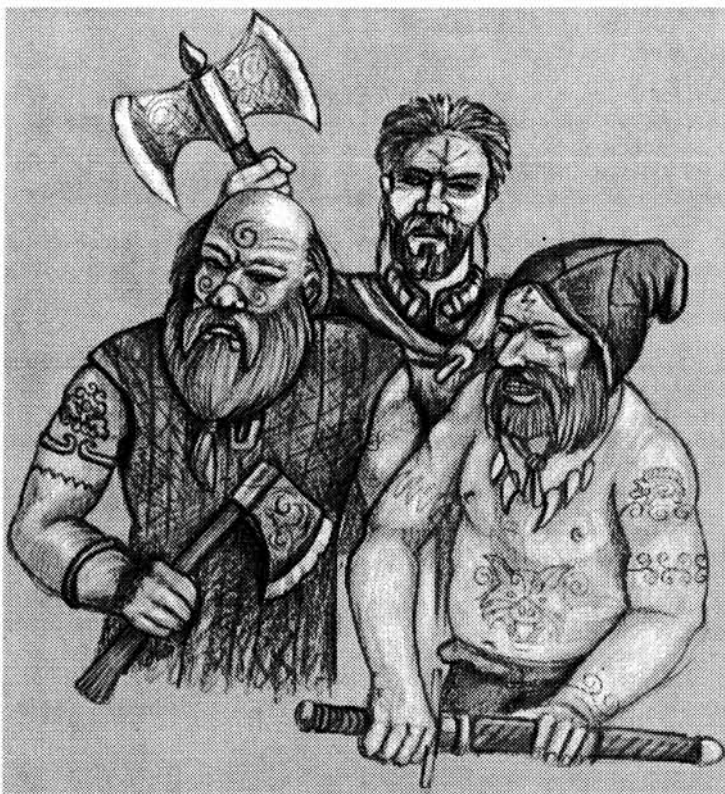
Uncommon Events

- *Raiders from Esrolia plunder countryside.*
- *Dragonewts nearby hunting humans; Orlanthi priests prepare propitiatory sacrifices.*
- *Raiding party gathering, led by a son of Greymane, to attack Esrolia.*

Rare Events

- *Dragonewts inquiring about trade for unusual items.*
- *Legendary pigs of Mralot (the boar-god) reappear, epic hunting possibilities.*
- *Elves raid from Arstola Forest.*





How to Tell the Barbarians Apart

	DITALI	SOLANTHI	NIMISTOR
Weapons	Sword	Axe	Sword
	Hand Axe	Dagger	Shortsword
Shield	Kite	Target	Target
Missile	Self Bow	Self Bow	Comp.Bow
Clothing	Cloaks	Cloaks	Trews
	Jerkins	Shirts	Hoods
Colours	B,Y,W	G,Y,W	P,G,R
Music	Pipes, Harp	Pipes, Horn	Horn, Harp
Skill	Tracking	Riding	Boating
Famous	Singing	Poetry	Sagas
	Tracking	Sagas	Woodcraft
	Gluttony	Greed	Drinking
	Talking	Whistling	Taciturn

Each Wenelian receives an affinity based on his totem beast or clan. They also receive several abilities as a part of their cultural keyword from this.

D20	Clan	Ability
1	Lion	Ambush, Strong, Fearless
2	Bear	Wrestle, Fierce
3	Bull	Strong, Stubborn
4	Boar	Tough, Savage
5	Stallion	Ride, Proud
6	Hound	Track, Loyal
7-10	Elk or Stag	Sense Danger, Dignified
11-12	Wolf	Tireless, Fierce
13-14	Fox	Clever, Sneaky
15	Otter	Swim, Curious
16-18	Badger	Craft (material), Grumpy
19-20	Beaver	Carpenter, Industrious

are Orlanthi clansmen united by a haphazard kingship.

Temple of Peace: an old First Council holy place, where the races of Maniria met peacefully. By the Third Age, it has become a ritual site where the Solanthi tribe meet to settle disputes. There is a famous hospital here. In the past, Trader Princes used the temple's properties to safeguard their caravans and markets from depredation.

Peelo: Small town, capital of Maldros. Their volcano does not protect them from raiding Wolf Pirates.

Pelushi Volcano: Volcano used by the Maldrans to guard their country from land-ward raiders.

Ryzel: This is a dragonewt land, complete with its own version of the Inhuman King. Though dragonewt hunting parties range through all Slontolia they hunt and kill intelligent life only in the area centred on this range of hills which borders the Mournsea.

Shadowlands: Old name for Kethaela.

Slontolia: Before the Closing, Wenelia was an outer province of the Archduchy of Slontos, a part of the Jrusteli Empire. Like other parts of that empire, Slontos suffered terribly at the God Learners' Doom. The Closing of the Seas in 930 threw Slontos into disorder; natural and unnatural disasters struck the land; then in 1050 the goddess of Slontos rolled over. The land was shaken and sank beneath the waves, leaving only mountaintops as the Wenelian and Manirian Islands.

Solanthi River: The upper reaches of this river, in the Solanthi Valley, are placid and pleasant, though too shallow to be navigable by any large vessels. And

as it speeds through the "jungled" hills of Caladraland to reach the coast, the Solanthi River shoots through ravines, over falls, down rapids, etc.

Solanthi Valley: Area drained by the Solanthi river. Recently the skills and fame of Warlord Greymane have enriched the land tremendously. Under his leadership all surrounding lands have been raided or paid tribute. The Solanthi, with their allies the Ditali, have even robbed and pillaged Esrolia. No punishments have been meted out to Greymane's people – the Esrolite vengeance fell on the Ditali. The Trade Road passed through this land along the river through Yellowstone.

Solung: One of the last stops along the Trade Road, caravans gathered here to set out on the long trek west. Now the canvasari stand empty and the people are desperate.

Staton: small town; part of Thonble (see Kithma). Raids by the Ditali have left the town devastated.

Tallcastle: North of the Solanthi lands, this small Trader Prince castle (pop 700) is one of the closest to the aldryami

Thonble: centered on the city of Kithma, Caladraland has a thin population in comparison with the lowlands, and so the hill barbarians to the west often prefer to raid this hilly area which is similar to their own territory. Years of this have resulted in the seizure of the state called Thonble, which has remained a troubled region, but now all fighting occurs there instead of within Caladraland proper.

Troll Mountain: a troll stronghold. The black hued rock is riddled with lead mines

Voilor/Volior River: Alternate name for the Solanthi River.

Wenelia: sometimes considered to be all the lands between the Mislari and New Coast including the lands of the Ditali, Solanthi, Maldros. More properly those tribes who were unified by Wenel during the Darkness.

Western Allies: The western end of the volcano chain maintains its own small tribes centered around their own



volcanoes. The rulers of this area have never been subject to the rulers of Caladraland or Kethaela. These folk are called the Western Allies.

Yellowstone: Trader Prince stronghold was formerly held by the Philalam family. Greymane ended their feud with the Joraz family by taking their castle by force.

The New Coast

THE NEW COAST is the name of the coastal region of Maniria, from Caladraland to Ryzel. The coast is generally rugged and rocky, but the drowned river mouths all provide peaceful entries.

For six and a half centuries, the Closing of the Oceans prevented all sea trade between Kethaela and the West. Handra, formerly a town of upper Slontos, was now a wreck, half awash amid the New Fens, and eking out a fragile living from marsh goods and a sporadic pilgrim trade. Caravans passed through the interior of the Wenelian forest, between the closely-guarded strongholds of the Trader Princes.

That all changed when Dormal brought the Opening. Handra was his first destination, and was the first city to benefit from his teachings. An attempt by the Pharaonic fleet to control trade on the Mournsea failed when pirates from Alatan ravaged their vessels. The Holy Country made a treaty with Pasos, another beneficiary of Dormal's, and a joint naval campaign against piracy made the New Coast into a free-for-all. Treasure-seekers rushed from all parts of Kethaela and the West, to carve out their personal fortune from the boom towns and new ports of the Mournsea coast, at the expense of the inland Trader Princes. In turn, many of these new towns were seized by those Trader Princes clever enough to take advantage of the new situation.

The Wolf Pirates' seizure of the Three Step Isles in 1606 was an unpleasant development for the New Coast. Following the defeat of the Pharaoh's navy in 1615, its ports are finding their resources stretched to the limit to protect trade and repel piracy.

The large city of Handra, in the New Fens, was reborn from its centuries of decline, and is now an important trading port, the traditional halfway stop between the Holy Country and Nolos. It is also the outlet for Ralian trade goods. The city is ruled by a surprisingly democratic council of guilds, and has prospered since the Opening of the Oceans.

The several ports of the New Coast were all founded after 1585. They are "boom towns", with settlers from Handra (Ralian/Western), Nolos and Pasos (Seshnegi/Western), and Kethaela (mostly urban and Insular, rather than from the distinctive Sixths – this is more "Holy Country settlers" than, say, "Esrolite" or "Caladran" or whatever), all jumbled together.

The local leaders are usually self-made men, and universally reject rule from the lords of the interior, both Trader Princes and Wenelian warlords. (pop: 50,000). There was a great time between the Pharaoh's anti-pirate naval treaty with Pasos (1585) and the arrival of the Wolf Pirates (1606+) when new settlements sprung up every year. Now, of course, with the Wolf Pirates running rampant along the New Coast – and the Holy Country navy mostly at Full Fathom Five since 1616 – there are sackings, and burnings, and pillagings, and people wishing they hadn't moved out to the exciting new opportunities opened up by Dormal's venture...

But the previously "missing" component of this is the virulent Wenelian tribes in between the two influences (Trader Princes and New Coast). Many Trader Princes actively encourage their Wenelian contacts to swoop down on bothersome coastal settlements and plunder them. In turn, the Trader Princes offer them "protection" from the cruel natives.

Over the years they founded several strongholds to secure their interests. Over time they have come to terms with their neighbors, either through treaty, conquest, absorption or assimilation. Now a series of merchant and chivalrous families, called the Trader Princes, hold a chain of forts, settlements and castles stretching from Bastis to Esrolia. Their farmers retain their worship of Orlanth and Esrolia without rancor towards the overlords.

Notes for Travellers:

- Welenians recognize the traditional Orlanthi or Lightbringer greetings;
- Lunar agitators – no missionaries, yet;
- Issaries/Etyries/Western traders are present;
- Western parties travel through (many of these are pilgrims to First and Second Age sites);
- Esrolites and Caladralanders seek aid for their struggles;
- local trade customs often involve ritual trade in which the two parties never actually meet;
- attitude to guests/greeting rituals/hospitality;
- special threats include: warlords, the Boar clan, Aldryami, woodfolk (shamans/witches), the restless dead and marauding Ramalians or dragonnewts

The Trader Princes

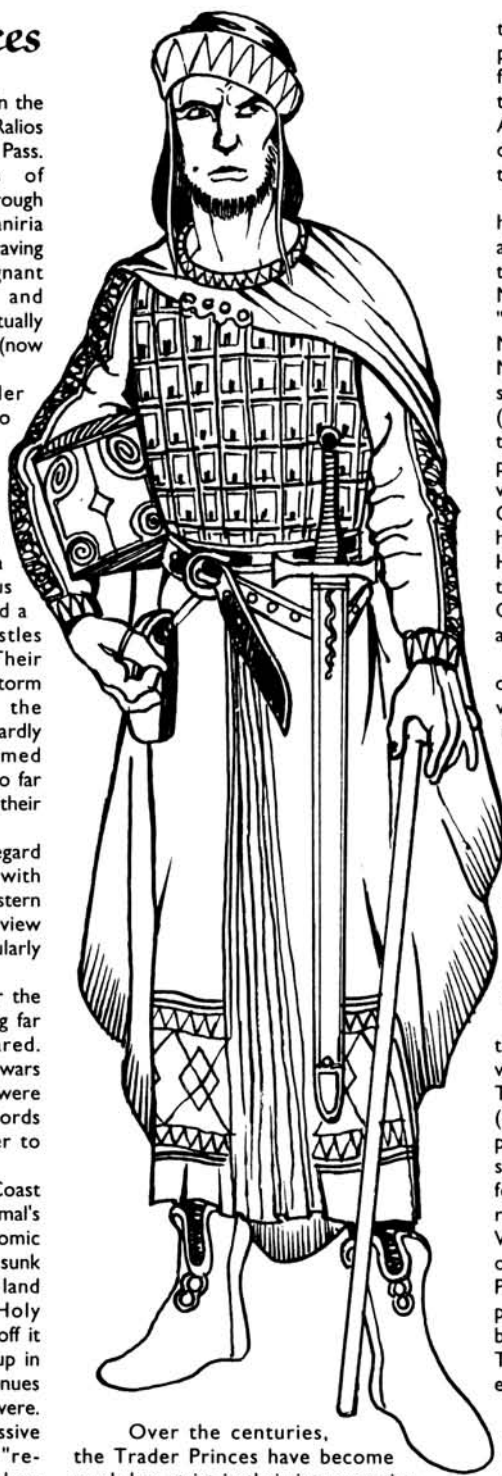
ALTHOUGH the seas had closed in the 12th century, the merchants of Ralios still desired goods from Dragon Pass. Bold knights and "Companies of Adventurers" set out from Ralios, through Pralorela, and eastward through Maniria toward the fabled land of Kethaela. Braving hostile natives, raging rivers, malignant forests and marauding trolls and dragonnests, these brave souls eventually succeeded in opening the Trade Road (now often called the Old Wenelian Road).

Over the years these "Trader Princes" founded several strongholds to secure their interests. The newcomers have come to terms with their neighbors, either through treaty, conquest, absorption or assimilation. Impartiality made as many allies as their arcane magics defeated. Now a series of old merchant and chivalrous families, called the Trader Princes, hold a chain of forts, settlements and castles stretching from Bastis to Esrolia. Their farmers retain their worship of the Storm Tribe without rancor towards the overlords. Many of the families are hardly friends and exist in a state of armed neutrality. Several families have gone so far as to raid caravans as they pass along their rival's stretch of the Trade Road.

The Wenelians of the forest regard the subjects of the Trader Princes with contempt, as "pet animals" of the Western Lords. Some of the Trader Princes view the natives with equal disdain, particularly the Joraz family of Joraz Castle.

The Opening was a disaster for the Trader Princes! With sea travel being far cheaper and faster, trade disappeared. Worse, with the Wenelian inter-tribal wars and raids on the Holy Country, they were being pressured to support the warlords with their dwindling wealth in order to survive.

The Trader Princes and New Coast are distinct and separate groups. Dormal's Opening of the Oceans was an economic disaster for the Trader Princes, who'd sunk so much effort into developing the land route ("the only way from the Holy Country to the West"), had profited off it for centuries, and then saw it all go up in smoke in 1580. Since then, their revenues have slowed to shadow of what they were. With these troubles has come a massive rise in cut-throat competition, "re-positioning" and the like as everyone along the old "Trade Road" in the north fight for dwindling resources. Recently, some Trader Princes have been raided by Greymane and other warlords, and are forced to supply weapons as tribute, which the Wenelians then use against Esrolia and the port cities of the New Coast...



Over the centuries, the Trader Princes have become much less strict in their interpretation of Makion's Word. They are really an adaptable batch of entrepreneurs who initially came from the west through Pralorela, with knights and castles. Initially they followed St. Ussary, a man who came from the East long ago. Those first Trader Princes were walking the Saint's original

trade route in reverse and gained much power thereby. Many of the Trader Prince families are Hetrodox (SP!) and some of them venerate some very strange variations. At least one Trader Prince castle has a chapel to St. Ussary The Dark, clearly a trollish innovation.

Since that time, many Trader Princes have variously adopted whatever cults allowed them to become trade lords among the local tribes. Also, some of the local Manirian Orlanthi have adapted to become "Trader Princes" often replacing the Malkioni along that part of the Trade Road. Many of the original settlements gradually slid down the slippery slope to genuine ("barbarian-style") worship of Issaries and the relegation of the Invisible God to perfunctory sacrifice in a disused chapel within the keep. Hence, some are now Orlanthi, some are Malkioni, and some may have become something else entirely. However, they look and act similarly to those who meet them and, until the Opening, were united in maintaining the ancient Trade Road.

Their initial castles lay along the edge of the tribal and the elvish territories. These were places the Wenelians would not normally choose to live in, but the Traders were able to bargain with the Aldryami. To this day, many Trader Princes maintain ritual trading with the elves. At the time, the tribes at that time (ie- the Closing) were very weak and decentralised. All the tribes, however, pretty much ran north-south along the rivers (and still do). Since the Opening, most of them have had some urbanisation, but not a lot. They are loose tribes, looser than any of the Orlanthi peoples further east.

Established in their northern route, the Trader Princes moved downstream with influence and commerce, not armies. Their military might is for self-defence (against natives and each other), for protection of caravans passing along their stretch of road (in exchange for tolls), and for occasional offensives, either punitive raids on native raiders (who may be Wenelian barbarians, Aldryami, Tusk Riders or worse) or else assaults on other Trader Princes who've crossed them (caravans not paying for protection, family feuds or business-motivated "hostile takeovers"). They are not interested in territorial expansion: they know that Money is Power.

Many Trader Princes have Western-style castles and knights in shining armour (albeit most of these are heirlooms). They still hire Western mercenaries to defend their castles and caravans, and to prosecute their wars. In the past, it was a nice, scheming, cut-throat business environment. With the fall of the Trade Road from prominence, the infighting has become even more vicious as they scabble for what business opportunities that remain.

The Cult of Wenel

Entru

Father of Animals

Entru is the Father of Animals. His children fill the forest, and our forefathers were once dumb beasts like them. Then Wenel gave us fire, and tools, and laws, and forever after we have been different. (Most of the Wenelians are descended from Entruli, the Boar people, and this term has become common for referring to the Animal Ancestors as a whole).

Esrolites depict Entru as a hairy man with engorged genitals, often loping on all fours, and this is how he is known in the East. Among the Wenelians, he is portrayed as a human figure possessing animal attributes drawn from among the sacred clans of the Entruli: tusks, antlers, horns, mane, claws, tail and so forth, though in no agreed combination.

While the Entruli ancestors of the Wenelians may once have been true beasts or hsunchen peoples, they no longer live in the single-species groups in which most surviving hsunchen tribes are found elsewhere. Indeed, inter-marriage between the totemic clans is required by Wenel's laws: intercourse within the clan is incest, punishable by death. Marriages are patrilocal, and children are born to their father's clan.

All Wenelians are born into their father's Entruli clan, which is named for its ancestral totemic beast. The traditional clans are the Stag, Otter, Lion, Badger, Boar, Fox, Bull, Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Stallion and Hound. Note that all of these are named for the male ancestral beast: the Wenelians are patriarchal and patrilineal, and while women of the clans may be referred to as does or ewes, sows or vixens, cows or bitches, this is never reflected in the clan name.

Wenelian initiation rituals are always accompanied by the young man or woman searching out the Ancestor he or she is descended from. While this may be a matter of blood, inclination or divine choice, the end result is the new adult becoming associated with one of the Totemic beasts.

Formal "initiation" is rare, as Entruli initiates cannot also join the cult of Wenel. It is not unknown, however, as full Entruli can gain the ability to transform bodily into their totem animals. Those who become Entruli are often regarded as throwbacks by their more enlightened kin. Many run away and join the beast-folk who still lurk in the forests. (Hero Wars: Entruli are Wenelians who are born with animist souls. Normal Wenelians receive an affinity based on their totem - see chart below).



Alda

The Oak Woman

First rose Urna, the icy mountains of the north, the fiery mountains of the south. Then grew Alda, the first forests growing around the mountains, and strange, not a fit country for us. Last flowed Dana, running swiftly through the strange-lands, slowing to enjoy the beauties of our country.

Vorlan dwelt afar off. When he saw Dana running inland from the Great Sea, he followed in pursuit. Grandmother Urna

tried to ward him off, but he brandished his weapons and bellowed and she gave way. Into Alda's realm, he cast about looking for her daughter, who had concealed herself beneath her mother's trees. Vorlan lashed out with his lightning-spear, striking Alda - who burnt, but was not consumed. From the conflagration was born their son, Wenel, child of Storm-Father and Oak Woman.

Wenel

Child of the Blazing Tree

Wenel taught myths to men. "Before me, you were beasts. Before me, you knew nothing. I, Wenel, raised you up to walk on two legs. When the Tree toppled, when the Sky fell, I saved you. Against the People of the Night, I gave you fire. Against the People of the Woods, I gave you axes. Against the People of the Dead, I gave you laws. To appease the devouring gods, I taught you to make sacrifice."

Wenel is the Master of All Skills. Wenel brought the lore of the gods to humans. Wenel taught fires, and metals, and laws. Wenel made the first Axe, Hew. Wenel taught the Entruli beast-folk to live together, and made the tribes of the Three Valleys. Wenel spoke to the living and the dead, the animals and the spirits. When Vorlan used Hew to chop down the World Tree, it was Wenel his son who brought new life from the stump. Men sheltered round his fires till the darkness was past.

What the Wizard Says: Wenel was a sorcerer, a son of Worlath. In the Ice Age, he used his arts to turn animals into men, to make them his servants. He is still worshipped by their ignorant descendants.

Urna	Crone	highland/stone/barren
Alda	Mother	forest
Dana	Maiden	meadow/river/pasture
Kora	Ghost	ghost-goddess of Evil Dead
Mani	veg.roots.forage	inc. mushrooms and truffles

Wenelian Keywords

By Jeff Kyer (with the assistance of Greg Stafford)

A note about the Church of Ussary

The source of St. Castelain's power is the book of Ussary, more properly known as the "Account of Gainful Exchange." According to Malkioni doctrine, saints gain their powers through the proper worship of the Invisible God. These powers are bequeathed to those who revere the saint as an exemplar of their way of life. This wisdom is passed down as the saintly "Rules" and as grimoires. In the eyes of the Trader Princes, St. Castelain found the way to the Invisible God through the tales and clues contained in the Book of Ussary. In truth, the Book of Ussary is an oft reworked, many times removed re-telling of the Lightbringer's Quest, left behind by Issaries when he passed through Ralios long ago. The obscure book gained further credence when the missionaries of the First Council approached Ralios after the Dawn. St. Castelain's journey has made it, appended with his story, into the holy book of the Ussarian Church.



Many of the professions and lifestyles in Wenelia are very similar to those presented in Hero Wars, Thunder Rebels and Storm Tribe. Several occupations, while not unique to Wenelia, are important enough discussed at length here. Presented are a few of the keywords planned for "Trader Princes."

Rivermen

From the earliest times, boatmen have traveled the rivers of Maniria, carrying goods between the scattered settlements. Some ply the waters in stout boats under the command of the Trader Princes while others guide great rafts of logs downstream to the burgeoning towns along the coast. Many different types of people turn to this hard life: wanderers, fugitives from justice or people simply trying to earn coin to support their families and communities. In addition to boat-skills, rivermen often portage heavy loads around rapids or falls or are forced to defend their cargoes against rapacious tribesmen.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Rivermen often leave their profession to seek adventure and a more rewarding pastime than dragging a boat up and down the river.

Skills: Agile, Boating, Carry Heavy Load, Close Combat (Improvised Weapon), Endure Weather, Hold Drink, Know <River>, Sing, Swim, Tireless

Relationships: to Crew; to Captain, or Trader Prince.

Followers: None, in general. Maybe an old buddy sticks around to help his more successful friend.

Personality Traits: Boisterous, Patient, Sullen, Superstitious

Magic: River Sprit, Trader God, Travel Saint.

Living Standard: Poor.

Typical Equipment: Appropriate weapons, leather armor, their paddle, alcohol, possibly a boat and/or small cottage or place at a larger stead.

Culture: While many Rivermen are

Wenelian Orlanthi, most are Malkioni/Wenelian half-breeds that live around the various Trader Prince settlements

Trader Prince

Since their founding, the Trader Princes have become more nobles than merchants. Now born to privilege, they often feel that sense, justice and honor step aside for them. Each Trader Prince family (or House) is unique, with its own history, family vendettas and treaty obligations. Most of them are members of the Ussary Church but on the whole the Trader Princes are a pragmatic lot and worship whatever is most useful to the needs of their House.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Social climbers and younger sons and daughters are great candidates for heroes. Such Trader Princes are drawn from the ranks of the Trader Prince families themselves or from the rich and powerful merchants arising with the Opening. Young Trader Princes often seek out adventure and intrigue, traveling foreign lands, undertaking dangerous ventures, in their pursuit of status and power for themselves. The Opening ruined many Trader Prince families. Scions of these Houses are often willing to take desperate gambles to recoup their fortunes.

Skills: Casual Authority, Close Combat (Dueling), Identify Social Status, Know Value, Order Inferiors About, Negotiate, Politics, Ride, Some Refined Activity such as Sing, Dance or Seduction.

Relationships: to Family, Court Contacts. Trader Princes seldom have overlords

Followers: A Trader Prince without a body servant and a bodyguard is almost unheard of.

Personality Traits: Any, though Ambitious, Clever, Eloquent, Greedy, and Snobbish are common.

Magic: Most of the Trader Princes venerate Saint Castelain the Traveler and are members of the Church of Ussary. However, many families also have their own tutelary saints, gods and spirits.

Living Standard: Rich or Very Rich. Younger scions off to seek their fortunes will have less access to the Wealth and Resources of their House and will be Prosperous at best. Many Trader Prince Houses have fallen into disrepute and be less prosperous as a result.

Typical Equipment: A horse, weapons, fine clothes. A hero Trader Prince may receive an annual stipend or hold property but a well-established House will have an entire community at their beck and call.

Disadvantages: Many Houses have fallen upon hard times recently, and they scabble to regain their lost wealth and power.

Saint Castelain the Traveler

"Long ago, when everything was falling apart a man, Ussary, came to us from the East. We thought he was a man but we were wrong. He brought the warring people together and made peace and we learned his ways. He taught us of Exchange and of Harmony. Things were better for a time. He left us and went on his way, seeking the Gates of Sunset." - From the Book of Ussary

WHEN THE CLOSING CAME UPON RALIOS, it devastated trade and travel. Without it, many things were lost. Old bargains were shattered and forces of destruction unleashed. Without trade, Castelain's people were hard pressed to survive for they had sworn tribute to the Iron Stag. Each year they were to bring him a falangian diamond but without the Sea there was no trade. Without trade, there were no diamonds. To save his people, the saint took up the Book of Ussary and was inspired by God. Armed with this wisdom, he traveled East, retracing the Way of God. He walked the Trade Path in reverse, braving terrors, challenges and dangers. He established new bargains and renewed old friendships. He freed the Temple of Peace and made the Trolls honor the Black Stones. Eventually he arrived in the Holy Country to trade. Returning, he saved his people from the rapacious Iron Stag. Today, St. Castelain is revered as the founder of the Trader Princes and serves as an exemplar for their ways.

To those seeking more philosophical answers to the mysteries of existence, the liturgists point out that the saint gained his powers through the grace of St. Ussary, the Stranger, Mask of the Invisible God. They acknowledge the other Malkioni Churches but on the whole consider them to be too impractical for the needs of the Trader Princes. Those who still seek more exalted teachings, answers to deep philosophical questions or a sharper edge to their magic are encouraged to join to either the Aeolean or Henotheistic Churches. Many of these people take service in the High Orders and provide much-needed magical might for their Houses.

Worshippers: Trader Princes, merchants, traders and peddlers throughout Maniria. Social climbers and younger sons and daughters of rich families. Many of the half bloods from Trader Prince communities make St. Castelain's most audacious followers.

Membership Requirements: None, other than to be a Malkioni in good standing. St. Castelain accepts men and women both.

Skills: Dodge, Evaluate Goods, Rule of St. Castelain, Negotiate

Virtues: Curious, Fair, Wanderlust

Magic: St. Castelain is a Low Order and does not provide spells to his followers.

Book of Ussary (The Account of Gainful Exchange): Bless Bargain, Bless Goods, Bless Mule, Bless Path, Curse Thief, Know Worth, Prayer of Perseverance.

The Abiding Book: Standard Blessings and Curses available to liturgists

Otherside: St. Castelain has a node on the Saint Plane, which is isolated from others save for that of Ussary, the Invisible God and Man, on the Adept Plane. Ussary's node is connected only to Solace. In both nodes, strangers are frequently encountered, arriving from the Wilds.

Other Connections: Members are usually members of the Ussary Church though many belong to other Churches. Some offer sacrifice to the saint and gain strange powers as a result.

Disadvantages: Veneration of St. Castelain and his god Ussary the Stranger, is misapplied worship of Issaries. The Ussarian Church is often considered a heresy by more organized Western Malkioni Churches such as the Rokari. Indeed, the Sect's banking and trading practices have been declared a sin by many churches; such practices are only allowed to the despised Vadel.

Rivers of Maniria

«A Wenelian is someone who knows
how to make love in a canoe»

Sir Burton, Trader Prince

MANIRA IS A YOUNG LAND with ranges of hills and vast forests stretching from the Mislari mountains to the sea. Rushing and flowing through these lands are rivers and streams of all sorts. Snaking through the forests, they are the only roads available to tribesman, elf and Trader Princes alike. Unlike the wide Janube of Fronela or the mighty Oslir that drains the Pelorian basin, the rivers of Maniria are young and all too frequently tumble over rapids or thunder through gorges. Crueler than rocks are the rapacious tribesmen that lie in wait for unwary travellers on the water-road.

Since the Opening, trade has reverted to its ancient north-south patterns, following rivers. Trade is carried in boats for the most part, the merchants, goods and their escorts moving more swiftly and cheaply than by cart, wagon or foot. For the most part, the east-west Trade Road has been abandoned save for where it runs from one river-valley to another, making land travel the only option. Impassable rapids or thundering cataracts can also bar the way, forcing any travellers to move overland. At these places, boats and their cargoes are carried around the obstacle on portages. A portage can be as simple as a path around a rock ridge, or as arduous as the High Road that winds alongside the Arole Gorge. There the Volior River charges over the unconquered rapids as it churns between rock walls for over fifteen miles. Boats carrying goods between Yellowstone and Peelo are hauled over rough hewn logs by their crews with backbreaking toil.

Most of these great rapids have dire sounding names, given to them by respectful locals or fearful travellers. Titles such as Boatgulper and Hullslicer warn those on the water to steer clear, either by walking their craft down through the rough water or portaging them around the hazard. Hostile spirits and other supernatural beings in these rough waters and most of them have never been tamed. The natives living near these places often charge travellers dearly for passage as they either know the secrets of these beings or control the portages. Those who refuse to pay toll are often waylaid or destroyed. Some tribesmen and non-humans view these places of roaring water as sacred places to be preserved or as perfect places to ambush foolish strangers. Merchants must hire mercenaries and travel in convoy if they wish to force passage.

Canoes

The sturdy workhorse on the rivers of Maniria, the canoe ranges in size from a swift, two-man canoes to sturdy freighters requiring a dozen paddlers. Perfected by the Wenelian natives, they are frail but versatile craft. Canoes provided St. Castelain and his men with transportation, shelter at night and the first trade he made on his journey. Fashioned from birch bark and easily maintained, they are amazingly light and can be carried by two men on portage. In the water, they are swift and manoeuvrable, easily outdistancing land travellers. The largest

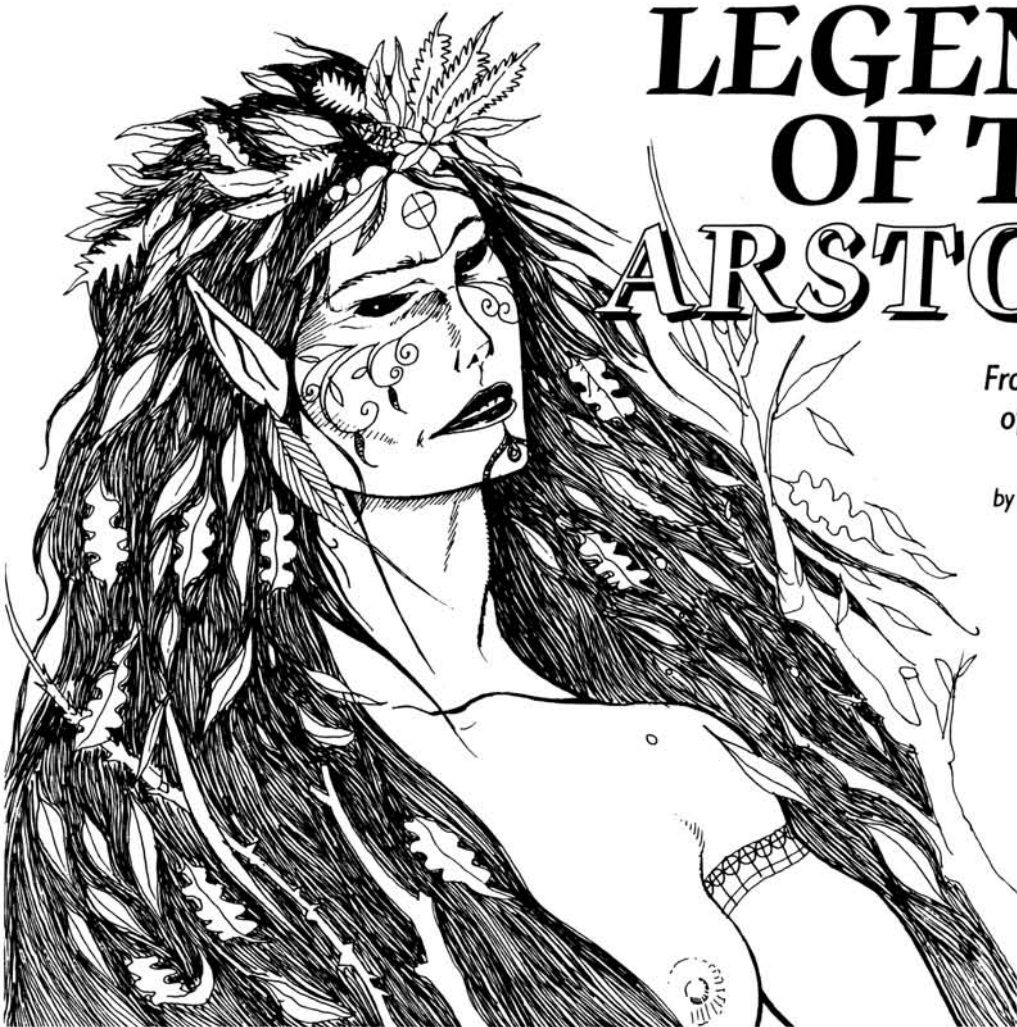


freight canoes are almost forty feet long and five feet across and carry over four tons of goods when fully laden. The largest of canoes, they require a crew of a dozen sturdy paddlers. Despite their versatility, canoes are so fragile that crews do not dare change position while paddling and the canoes are never dragged up on shore. Instead, the crewmen leap out and nimbly lift the canoe aloft. Worse, unskilled handling or unexpected winds can capsize the craft, dumping crew and goods into the water.

Jhoral Boats

On more travelled routes, Trader Princes and other merchants often use Jhoral boats, so called as they were first introduced by the House of Jhoral. Based on ancient Justreli designs, they are flat-bottomed craft with clinker-built hulls (the boards overlap each other, making them very resilient). The stout craft can carry thrice the cargo of even the heaviest freight canoe. They are able to run most rapids and are far more stable in rough lake-crossings. Even the spring ice can be resisted by these sturdy craft. A typical Jhoral boat is about twenty-five to thirty feet long with raised bow and stern post, often fancifully carved - these posts are often inhabited by the ship's guardian. With their shallow draft, they are easily back-watered off of the sandbars and gravel shoals that infest the rivers. Unlike canoes, the boats must be dragged or rolled over portages on pre-cut sets of logs, often with heartbreaking labour.

Crews of these craft require more muscle than skill compared to those of the canoe. Six to eight oarsmen man twenty-foot sweeps while the bowsman fends off rocks and the steersman guides the craft. The single, square-rigged sail aids the rowers but the river-winds are notoriously for fickleness - or worse, being under the control of a scheming shaman. Only on the long lakes do the rivermen rely on the wind. However, the sail often serves the crew and cargo as a tent when camp is made at night.



LEGENDS OF THE ARSTOLA

From the Chronicles
of Fethela Fodronu

by Shannon Appelcline

THE SONG OF THE ALDRYAMI is infinite. It is like a river, full of swirls and eddies which separate from the main body of water, then rejoin it. It is like a snake which eats its own tail and comes back upon itself. It is like a spirit that fills the universe, expanding into every nook until there is nothing but itself.

In this chronicle I claim to share with you that song, but that it truly a dream which can never be accomplished. I can show you but a few chords here, perhaps only a single note there, maybe an entire measure on a rare occasion. But the entire song of Aldryami, that can only be understood by Aldrya, who is We.

So, for those to whom I write this chronicle, honorable storm warriors, unified Pharaoh worshippers, and civilized Lunar nobles alike, I can but ask that you humor me, that you try and make sense of the individual notes which I relate to you.

I have spent two full entries on the lands of the Wastes, and that could not be even the prologue of a prologue of the song that lies upon the land. But now, I feel I must move on, that I must offer another discordant melody, for it is

only by offering widely spread pieces of the song of the Aldryami that you might possibly come to understand some portion of some portion of the whole.

I have decided next to write of the Arstola Forest, the trees hidden below the Mislari mountains. They form an important forest, what the humans call one of the six Great Forests, though they do not understand what that means. The Arstola has a loud singer, that much is true, one who can be heard far and wide, who remembers the cadences sung in the time before Time.

The women of Esrolia call Arstola The Old Woods, but that only reflects what has been lost, what they have Taken. I will instead tell you of what was once gained.

The Arstola is an important forest not just because of its Greatness, but also because of a fable told by the elders to the saplings. It is a story of the cycle, of what must be lost so that the lost may be found. It is a story of Our philosophy, of the Aldryami mythos, and that is perhaps the greatest lesson that may be learned from Arstola.

Clear Credits

There is a notable dearth of information on the elven forest of Arstola. This article was thus built on some very scant notes found in the old Elder Races box and the recent book Glorantha: Introduction to the Hero Wars. I'm a bit embarrassed to say that my biggest source for this article was actually "Kingdom of Night", the four-part history of that land which I wrote and which ran in Tradetalk #4-6. Hopefully I knew what I was talking about then.

THE LEGEND OF ARSTOLA: A HISTORY

As writ by Fethela Fodronu

IN RECOUNTING THE HISTORY of Arstola we find the same tragedy that lies heavy upon every forest in Glorantha. We lived, we died, we lived again. I could recount the specifics, tell of every hero who walked the paths of Arstola, of every treasure that was lost, of every promise that was betrayed, but in doing so I would repeat much of what I already wrote on Westwood, in theme if not in specific detail.

Let me offer this knowledge, which we Aldryami know and you do not: everything is a cycle, in time and space alike, with differences in key matched only by similarities in note. And thus, let me offer but a quick overview of the story of Arstola.

Once there was but a single forest which crept from dome to dome.

And then, there was not.

In those days after the great loss, when the one became many, some of the Aldryami sang louder than the others, and their memories of the one song which was gone were better, and they sang it more truly. And thus were born the forests of Glorantha, as the quieter Aldryami crowded around the singers, clinging to the song. And one of these forests was Arstola.

When the bad times came, when oblivion seeped across the cosmos, turning forests to mold and runners to dust and the meat things to shit, the Aldryami of Arstola did something unheard of; they turned to a Taker and named him their prince. His name was Ezkenkekko and he tried to sing a new song, the Song of Life, but his voice was too rough, too filled with gravel from the things he ate, and thus it eventually failed.

The oblivion creatures overran Arstola and the Aldryami had only one option. They buried themselves beneath the ground, and sang a song of hope and rebirth, and died.

This was the darkness before the Dawn.

It was with great surprise that the Aldryami of Arstola awoke again, given new life by their brethren from the north. The northern Aldryami had fought against oblivion for longer than anyone else, had never died, had been the last trees alive in the entire world, and now they came to bring their brothers back into the Song.

The green elves of the north, for that is what you name them, ended their journey of awakening in Arstola, for at last they could see Eron in the distance. They stopped, for they knew their task was at last done, and the brown elves of Arstola, for that is what you name them, asked the green elves to rule over them, to lead their songs, to help them grow life from death.

This was the First Age of Glorantha, and it was in this time

that the great God Project to restore the half-eaten Halamalao began. The Arstolans participated in this project alongside the taker Ezkenkekko, despite the fears of those green brothers who had Awakened them.

There was discord in the song during the time of the God, and eventually there had to be a reckoning, the song had to be tuned. I will not speak much of that here, of how the browns struck down the greens, for ones much wiser than this vine have already sung of it in "The Tale of the Two Trees".

Suffice to say, the ways of the Aldryami have been little understood by the rest of the peoples of Life. One of my contemporaries, the Taker chronicler Throkblotten Leadhead, in writing a history of the Kingdom of Night, said only: "it was (then that) Arstola Forest temporarily withdrew from the council to fight an internal war that we do not understand. It was typical elf foolishness".

Thus was the First Age ended for Arstola.

If anything the other peoples of Life understood even less what happened later, in the Second Age. With the so-called "Sorrow of Aldrya" over, and the green elves all buried deep in the Earth, Arstola Forest once more emerged as a participant in the happenings of Maniria. But, against all expectations, the Aldryami began to attack the forces of the Kingdom of Night, rising up against Ezkenkekko for almost fifty years.

How could the Aldryami who had once supported Ezkenkekko now war against him, after they had buried the greens who once spoke out against the Taker and his Council? "More typical elf foolishness", Throkblotten would probably say. In truth the browns had learned from the greens, just as they had offered a lesson in return. And loyalty to the Taker was no longer an option.

With that one war against the Taker done, the elves of Arstola retreated into their forest, the balance rewrighted. They had offered the Taker peace and they had offered the Taker war and that was as it should be.

Another Age passed.

Now the Third Age of Glorantha draws to a close, and the Aldryami of Arstola rest, peacefully. They claim that they are waiting for seeds, long sheltered in the best compost, to rise again.

Though they are reclusive, the Aldryami of Arstola are not nearly as reclusive as some of their other brethren, such as my own peoples, in the Stinking Forest. They are not one of the sixths of the Pharaoh's kingdom, and indeed seem to find the god-king totally irrelevant. But they do still trade with the Esrolians and the Calandrans alike. They allow humans into their forests and do not slay them for mere cutting of tree of slaying of runner. It is all part of the cycle, they know, perhaps better than any other

Aldryami still within this world.

To those who would abuse their hospitality, who would Take more than is needed, who would never Give, however, they offer retribution. Those Takers should walk in fear within Arstola Forest, for there is a great force within, sleeping.



THE TALE OF THE TWO TREES: A FABLE

*As told by Arstin Hazelnut of the Arstola Forest
to a young sapling*

ONCE THERE WERE many different peoples in this wood. I do not mean only the Hazelnuts and the sorrowful Willows and the fragrant Apples and those others we still see today. I mean that there were entirely different manners of people. Besides we who slept, there were also those we waked. Besides we who died before the Dawn, there were also those who lived and fought.

Once there were two different types of people in this wood, and one day the leaders of each of these peoples came together in this very glade. They came upon each other by chance alone.

Now the one, the representative of all who had lived here and died, his name was Brown. Though, in truth, I think he was a Hazelnut. The other, the representative of all who had lived in the north and killed, his name was Green. Though, in truth, I think he was a Pineneedle.

Now Brown and Green, they each came to this place seeking the wisdom of the wind and the calming rays of the sun and the fortitude of the earth. They had each seen that there was a great chasm between them and the other people of the wood. They had come to this place to escape, to decide upon what should be done. Instead, each found the other here, each at the edge of the glade, preparing to enter by one of the two paths.

It was Green who took action first, for that was his way. There was no accommodation in what he did, for Taking was the only thing he knew. He took out his axe, the weapon of the enemy, and used it to quickly cleave down three trees, blocking one of the two paths into the glade, and so denying Brown entrance.

it was his way.

Brown was very surprised by this action. He was forced to walk around half the woods before he found the path which Green had used to enter the glade. It took him many days, and by the time he arrived the first blooms of Spring had aged and begun to wither.

When Brown finally entered the glade he found Green sitting at its center, deep in thought. Green had not noticed Brown, had perhaps forgotten about him entirely. And so Brown was able to take action of his own. There was no accommodation in what he did, for Giving was the only thing he knew.

Brown kneeled down before Green, as his people had done for hundreds of years, and said, "I see you have thought about our problems long and hard. What would you have us do?"

Green's eyes began to focus, and he saw Brown there, finally. This time he did not strike out, for he had begun to understand the issue better. He still took action though, for that was his way, but this time he learned to Give.

"We hold differences between us because of our different experiences," Green said. "There is only one way in which we may come together, so that we may sing again as one. Think upon it."

Brown puzzled over Green's words for very long, until the withering blooms had blown away and their seeds had been covered by snow. He puzzled long, then he finally understood. Brown waited for a moment, for that was his way, but then he finally did what had been requested, for this time he learned to Take.

He Took up Green's axe and cut him down and then buried him deep in this glade.

THE COMING RAINS: A PROPHECY

As Told by Sarin Spiritsinger of the Arstola Forest

This prophecy dates back to before the Dawn and has been handed down as song by the Aldryami of Arstola since. Its precise origin is unknown.

*There shall come a time,
When the balance is lost,
When the dome is awry,
When the sky is too dim.*

*Brothers shall look at each other,
With envy and fear,
And there shall be no understanding,
No hope.*

*In that time we must become
What we are not.*

*The Takers shall be Given,
For that is not their way.
The Givers shall be Taking,
For that is not their way.*

*We must plant what is gone,
And we must wait.*

*The cycles turn,
The seasons pass,
And at last,
The rain will come.*

*A dribble at first,
And then a torrent,
A river from the sky,
For twenty days.*

*The weak shall be swept away,
Their soil lost,
But the strong will remain,
Stronger now.*

*And from the loam,
The soil of our roots,
There shall rise,
That which was gone.*

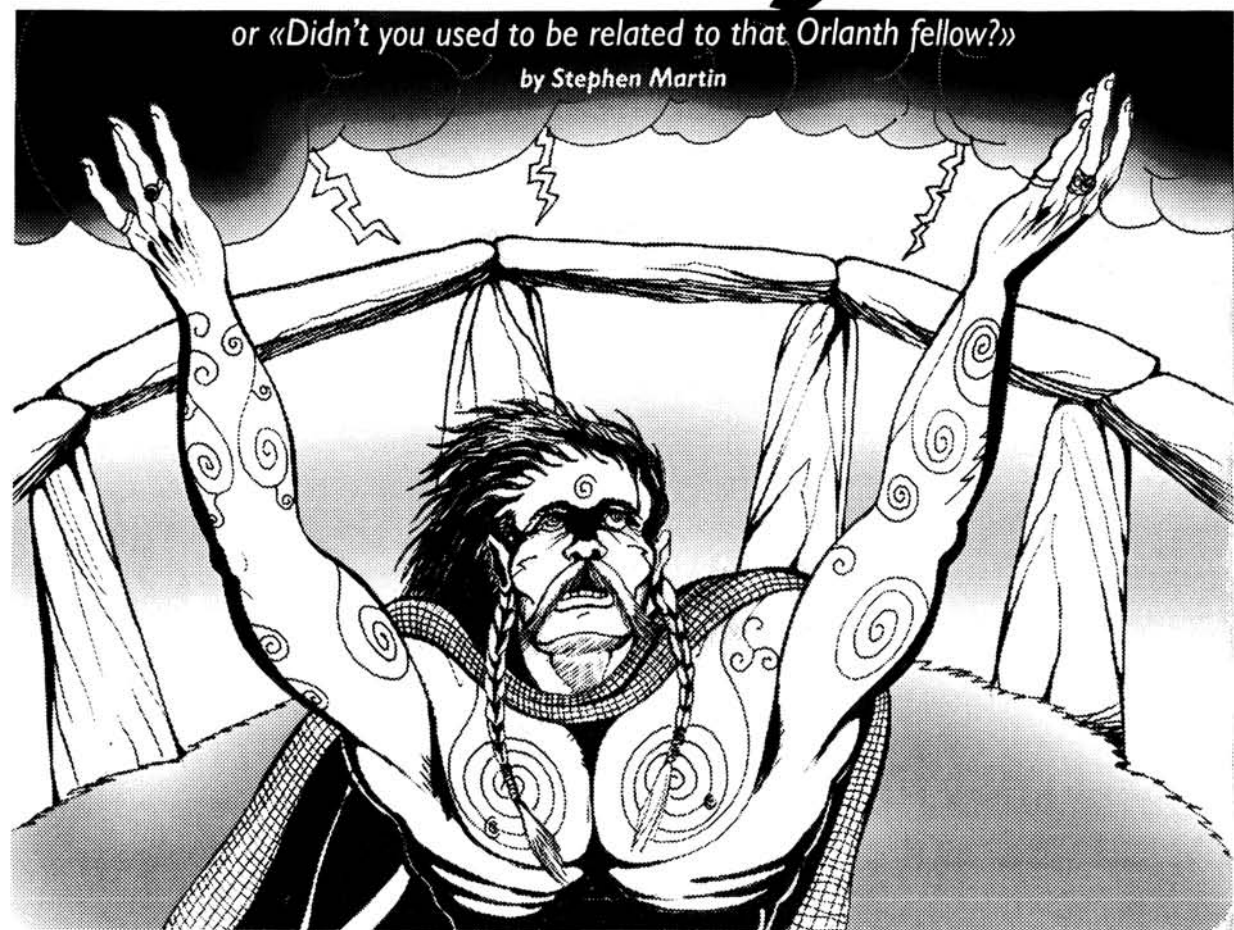
*The Takers shall arise again,
Taken.
And Given.
Complete once more.*

*And they shall now know,
More than we know,
And they shall teach us,
As we once taught them.*

Ritual Magic Part II

or «Didn't you used to be related to that Orlanth fellow?»

by Stephen Martin



RITUAL IS AT THE HEART of any religion. It may be of great importance to the worshipers, or merely serve as the background for interaction with the deity, but it is present at all times. Rituals can be divided into three very broad categories: congregational (those that involve the congregation as a whole), individual (those concerned with or performed by individual worshipers), and devotional (those performed by the priests as part of their duties to the deity).

Most rituals in RuneQuest are focused by a specific spell, most often a Divine Magic spell. Some "rituals" have a well-defined purpose in game terms, and are covered by ritual Summon and Enchant spells; despite their practical benefits, these highly specialized spells have little religious significance, and it is the ritual Ceremony

spells which are most relevant to this discussion.

Rituals involving the congregation as a whole are generally covered by Worship <Deity>. Almost any gathering of the congregation as a whole is going to be to glorify the deity, and this ritual represents the ability of the priest, acolyte, or shaman to channel this energy to the god. Many of these worshipers will be lay members, who either do not meet the requirements to be initiated into the mysteries of the god; or who worship another deity as an initiate, but still wish to show reverence to the god. In the course of channeling this worship to the deity, the leader of the service absorbs some of the energy; this is the source of the regular POW gains of officiating priests and shamans given in RuneQuest.

Other group rituals are known, including the ritual dances of the trolls and

the battle spells of many war gods. These rituals are not based on Worship <Deity>, but on specific spells known to the caster (such as Tambour or Morale). They are still essentially a means of worshipping a spirit or deity, and so count as Congregational rituals.

Individual rituals, by contrast, deal specifically with individual worshipers. Entire congregations may be involved (such as with marriage or initiation rituals), but they serve only as witnesses or interested observers: they can watch the proceedings, but they do not experience them in the same way as the bride and groom or soon-to-be adults. Many of these rituals have similar forms (especially initiation and Sacred Time rituals), and often involve similar procedures. By and large, however, they vary greatly, depending on the focus of the ritual and nature of the deity. Many

specific heroquest paths have individual rituals as their source; the quest is simply an extension of the ritual onto the Hero or God Plane.

Finally, there are the devotional rituals performed by ordained worshipers, which serve a dual purpose. First, they reinforce the link between priest and deity, allowing him to participate in the energy flow of the deity, and aiding the deity in its tasks. Second, they help recycle the magical energy of the world. Thus, the rituals performed by Orlanth's priests help to keep the winds of the world moving in the proper circles, and maintain the power of Orlanth in the cosmos; Scorpion Queens increase the power of their race and Ancestress when they perform the Ritual of Devouring; Sacred Time rituals help in the regeneration of the world; etc. Whole congregations are often involved in these rituals (especially during Sacred Time), and they do experience some of the divine power. However, even the initiates are essentially observers or even mere power conduits: they do not comprehend the higher functions served, and they cannot experience the full depth of the ritual as the priests do. Note that even many lesser entities have devotional rituals performed for them by their priests or shamans; while the effects of such rituals are usually small in the grand scheme of things, they are essential to the spirit or deity.

One thing that must be remembered is that all ritual spells are just that: rituals. As such, their magical or practical effects are secondary to their religious meaning. When a High Healer resurrects a follower she is celebrating the gifts given by Chalana Arroy and participating in the resurrection of Orlanth during the Lifebringers' Quest, not just adding to the coffers of her temple. When an initiate of Humakt severs all relations to his kin, becoming a man without family, he is becoming more like his god and not just escaping the generations-old blood feud. Every ritual spell involves a deep religious experience, and should be treated in an appropriate manner.

Provided below are six specific rituals: two congregational, two individual, and two devotional. Three are modifications of spells taken from Gods of Glorantha, and are my interpretation of the significance of these spells to their casters in a religious sense. The others are new rituals which illustrate the principles mentioned above. Unless otherwise specified, all of these spells should be available to priests or priestesses of the appropriate cults as common spells, or through a common subcult.

Welcome Light is a congregational ritual of the Xiola Umbar cult. It reminds the worshipers that Xiola Umbar has overcome the fear and pain caused by light. It thus brings reassurance and comfort to

the participants, and enables them to face the coming day, so that when it is past they can once again welcome the return of darkness.

The **Morale** ritual of the Humakt cult (and similar rituals in other warrior religions) is a congregational ritual that involves a number of worshipers praying to their god for aid in battle. They are asking, as a group, for the aid of their god in strengthening themselves to further his cause in the world.

In the Humakt **Severance** ritual, the individual worshiper emulates his deity by ritually severing connections with an aspect of his past. He thus becomes more like his god (who severed himself from his kin in the Darkness), and experiences a oneness not achievable by most initiates.

In the Triolina **Meld Form** ritual, the caster gains a greater understanding of the creatures in her realm, and of the oneness of all life. This understanding allows her to take the form of any creature she has shared the ritual with, by means of the Proteus Divine spell (also available through worship of Triolina). This is another example of an individual ritual.

When a priestess or acolyte of Uleria worships with another person, she is reinforcing the supremacy of love. Both the priestess and her co-worshiper are transported (by means of the **Erotocomatose Lucidity** congregational ritual) to the realm of the Goddess of Love, and experience a joining impossible in normal intercourse or communication between a man and woman. This is an example of a devotional ritual.

In the Umath **Summon Storm** ritual, the weather patterns of the area are strengthened and directed by the casting priest, proving once again the superiority of Storm over Sun. The storm so summoned has practical benefits, but the main function of this devotional ritual is to reinforce the ancient victory of Orlanth over Yelm; in areas near the Lunar Empire, it is occasionally used to show the superiority of Orlanth's storms to the light of the Red Goddess. This ritual is available from Umath (the Primal Aer) through his sons, usually Orlanth or Valind.

Welcome Light

2 points

ritual Ceremony spell, nonstackable, reusable

This ritual takes one hour to perform, and may only be cast by a Chief or High Priestess of Xiola Umbar. It must be timed so that it is completed while light is visible in the east, but before Dawn. During the ritual the casting priestess sings the story of how Xiola Umbar overcame her fear and pain in the blasted Underworld, and gave comfort to the dead Sun God. All of the participants look into the soul of their goddess, and find a piece of her calm

darkness inside themselves.

If the ritual succeeds, each participant is affected by the cult's Solace spell until the next Dusk. Additionally, the normal fear and pain caused by light is removed as well, so that eyes are not blinded and trollkin are not Demoralized by daylight. No resistance to magic or heat is provided by this spell, so the trolls might still suffer pain from sunburn and exhaustion from the heat of the day. This ritual is often used before a battle, to enable the trolls to better face an enemy who cannot be held off until nightfall; or just after a battle, to seek out wounded comrades even under the light of the Enemy.

Morale

This spell is as described in Gods of Glorantha. All of the men of the century participate in the ritual, requesting Humakt's aid for the coming battle. An aspect of the Lord of Battles imbues all of the participants with a portion of his skill and might. The unit's standard (or its commander, if there is no standard) is the focus of the spell. If it is taken by the enemy (or if the commander is slain) the spell will end; cases of a type of backlash, where the bonus to Attack became a negative, have been known, lasting until the loss of the focus has been avenged.

Any man who participates in the ritual, who then runs from even one of the enemy, will experience this backlash due to Humakt's hatred of cowardice. This effect can last for years, and such cowards have been known to bring failure in battles even years in the future.

If the ritual fails, all of the men involved have 25% subtracted from their Battle skill when rolling results for that battle; anyone who runs has 50% subtracted from their Battle skill for this battle, and 25% for all subsequent battles until he has proven himself again to Humakt. See Different Worlds 28 or Tales of the Reaching Moon 5 for an explanation of the Battle skill.

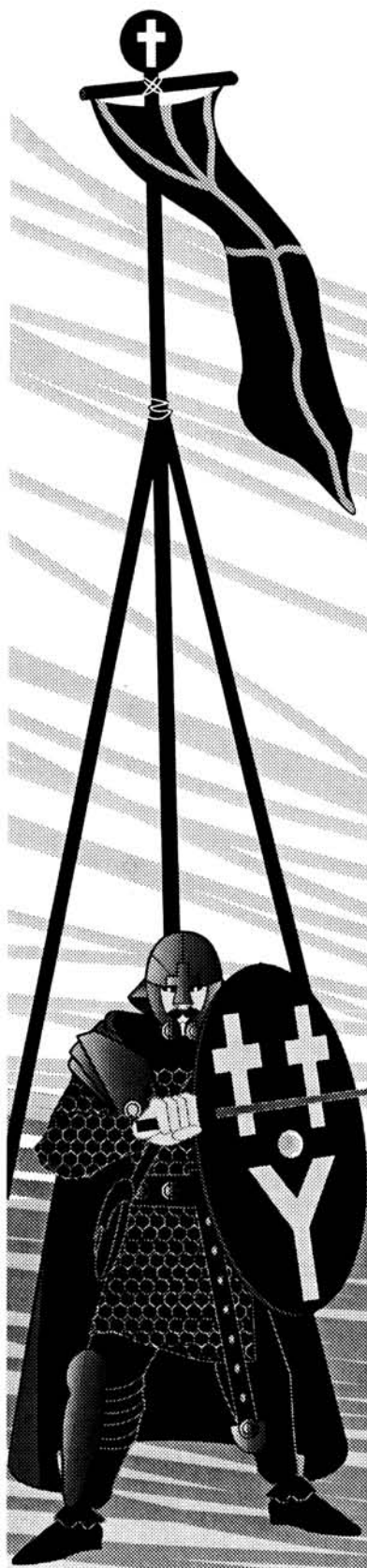
This spell is most often cast at dawn or dusk, to maximize the length of the effect. Variations on the ritual have been known to be successful for other effects, notably to increase Parry skills when in a defensive siege position. The Yanafil Ta'arnils cult of the Lunar Empire is rumored to have developed a version of this ritual called the Moon Prayer, with varied effects depending on which of the Seven Mothers is invoked.

Severance

4 points

ritual Sword Attack spell, nonstackable, one-use

After Orlanth stole the Sword of Death from Humakt, Humakt was outraged that kinship could excuse the shame of theft and deception. He used his powers as the God of Endings to separate himself from his kin. Afterwards, he no longer had access to any of the airy powers which were his birthright, and thereafter he relied only upon those skills which



he had developed himself. Humakt teaches his worshipers how to sever themselves from any ties that hold them back from full emulation of the Lord of Battles.

Unlike most one-use spells, this spell can be used by initiates, and in fact is rare among Swords. It irrevocably severs the caster's ties to one organization or association. Thus, the caster could sever all ties with his family (as Humakt did in the Godtime), his city, even another cult. All spells, skills, and spirits (including Spirits of Reprisal) will register only the new relationship, never the old. For instance, if he severs all ties with his family, he will never be able to use any Summon Ancestor spell, and ancestral spirits will not recognize him as kin. If he severs ties with another cult, spirits of reprisal for that cult will never recognize him, whether encountered on the Spirit Plane or elsewhere; of course, any Divine spells sacrificed for are lost. This spell may only be used successfully once in a Humakt's life, and will only affect a single relationship in that casting.

The worshiper must enter a Battle Circle alone, carrying only his sword. He is faced with a foe who represents the relationship he wishes to sever: a person dressed exactly like him to represent his kin, a person dressed in his (old) cult dress, etc. The officiating Sword will invoke Humakt's blessing on the circle, and the worshiper then casts the spell on himself and attacks the representative. If he rolls under his Sword Attack skill with the weapon he is using, he has severed the link which the spell has made visible, thus severing the relationship.

Occasionally, actual members of the family, cult, or other organization will participate in the ritual, actively trying to prevent the individual's severance. Such hostile representatives may attempt to Parry the character's actions, causing a continued exchange until the individual succeeds in the ritual or one of the participants is dead.

Failure of the skill roll (and thus of the ritual) is evidence that Humakt does not approve of the severance. The spell is lost, since it was one-use, but the candidate may sacrifice for it again at a later date, with the permission of his commanding Sword (though he may never attempt the same Severance again).

If the candidate fumbles the skill roll he must roll on the fumble table normally, with any results applied to himself alone. The ritual has failed, and he will be allowed to leave peacefully if he still lives.

Success makes the caster a better worshiper by cutting him off from a relationship which is incompatible with his current beliefs. Use of the spell cannot separate a person from something as abstract as his past, or from a specific action he took in the past, nor can it deal with a future condition. The ritual is also rarely recognized legally (though tribes with a strong Humakt presence will always respect it), and so the caster may still be liable for crimes or offenses committed.

This ritual is most often used by a person who wishes to become a Humakti, but whose nature or situation will not allow him to. In these cases, it is used as part of the initiation ceremony for that individual. The ritual is sometimes used when a relative or associate of a Sword has performed a dishonorable action, or involved the Sword unknowingly in such an act, and he wishes to divorce himself from the relationship; this is considered the highest possible use of the ritual.

Meld Form

1 point

ritual Animal Lore spell, nonstackable, reusable

Note: This spell is greatly changed from Gods of Glorantha so a complete spell description has been provided. In particular, the creature used in the ritual is not killed in its casting.

This ritual must be undergone one or more times to make the spell of Proteus effectual. A living creature of the type desired by the supplicant must be provided. The caster must obtain the permission of the creature involved; alternately, she may use an appropriate Command spell to ensure its cooperation.

The priestess and the other creature are affected by the spell for a total of six hours. During this time they are transported into the Womb of the Mother, and while there explore their past lives and take on each other's forms and attributes. They attain a knowledge and understanding of each other as identical children of the Mother of Life, and this knowledge remains with them after the ritual has ended. The priestess can now take on the form of the other creature through use of the Proteus spell; if the other being is intelligent and worships Triolina, it can assume the priestess's form through its own use of the Proteus spell.

This ritual may be used to merge with any creature descended from Triolina; this includes all sea plants (including blue elves), all sea beasts, all mermen (both cetoi and piscoi), undines, and sea nymphs. Any worshiper of Triolina has been ritually adopted by the Goddess of the Deepes, and so can be affected by the spell, regardless of their original ancestry. A creature without POW is not truly alive, and so cannot participate in the ritual, but all other incomplete creatures can be merged with.

When the other creature's form is assumed, the priestess gains any innate physical abilities it has, but not any magical ones. Thus, she may not use a nymph's ability (for instance) to travel to the Spirit Plane or command local sea creatures, but could transform herself into a undine while under the effect of the Proteus spell.

Erotocomatose Lucidity

ritual Craft/Courtesan spell, nonstackable, reusable

This spell is as described in *Gods of Glorantha*, except that it is based upon the Craft/Courtesan skill rather than Ceremony (which is irrelevant to the process of love). The ritual lasts a number of minutes equal to the total magic points expended; these MPs may be provided by either or both of the participants. If the skill roll fails, the two participants will experience the normal pleasure and joining of sex, but will not experience the extreme ecstasy and Oneness of unity provided by the ritual. Fumble of the ritual causes dissatisfaction in the joining of the two worshippers.

For the duration of the ritual, the worshipers are transported to the realm of the Goddess of Love. They become one with the invisible Life Force that permeates all of existence; in effect, they become a living part of Uleria's Net, which is Love. This experience greatly increases the feelings of physical and emotional pleasure experienced by the worshipers. In turn, their heightened experience increases the energy levels of the universe, channeled through the love of the goddess. The memory of the experience is slow to fade, and for days or even weeks later they will remember the feeling, allowing them to sustain and be sustained by the Life Force of the universe.

Summon Storm

2 points

ritual Summon spell, stackable, reusable

This spell must be stacked with one or more points of Cloud Call and Increase Wind. It must also be stacked with one or more use of a spell that causes precipitation, such as Rain or Snow (or some other appropriate spell, as determined by the gamemaster, based upon the caster's cult). The storm takes one hour to summon per point of Divine spells used (including the Summon Storm spell), and will not be fully effective until the end of the ritual. The storm normally lasts for one hour, plus one hour per point of Extension stacked with the spell, and forms anywhere within 10km.

All stacked spells have full effect within the area of effect of the largest spell used. Thus, if a Rain spell of 100m radius and an Increase Wind spell of 300m radius are used in the ritual, the storm will have a radius of 300m. Additional Summon Storm spells stacked increase the radius of effect by 100m or the distance at which the storm can be formed by 10km.

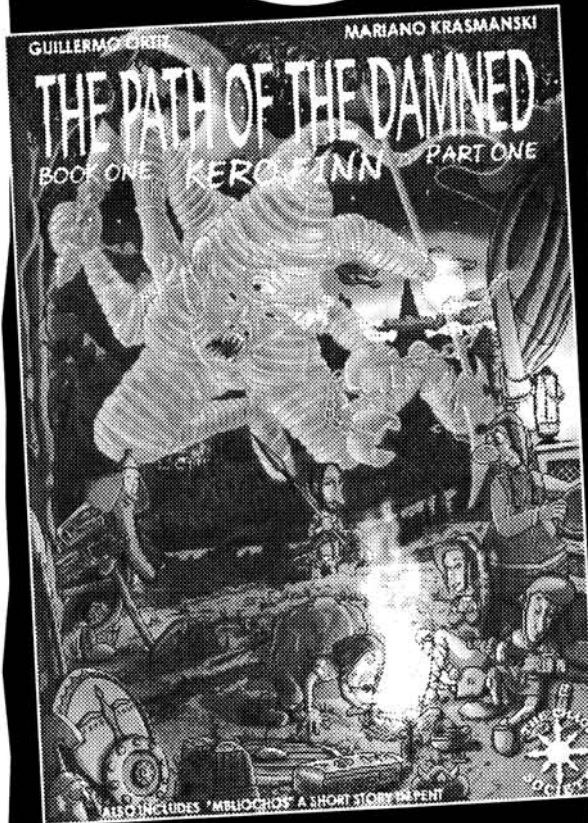
The storm is unaffected by Cloud Clear, and Decrease Wind has only local effect. Certain rituals known to Sun-worshipers and the Kalikos Icebreaker cult can be used to disperse the storm, but once it has formed, Dispel Magic and similar spells have no effect on it. Once the ritual has begun, any skill or spell which senses changes in the weather will register the storm, if not its source or magical nature.

Any storm-related offensive spell (such as Thunderbolt) cast within the storm may be used anywhere within its area, thus extending its range. This is true regardless of who casts the spell. Such spells must still be targeted visually, which may be difficult due to decreased visibility.

This spell is one of the greatest available to Storm-worshipers. It allows them to impose the ancient victory of their god over the Sun upon the world once more. As stated previously, the practical nature of dropping a storm on the local Sun Dome Temple is secondary to its mystical function. Every drop of rain which falls on the world, every wisp of cloud in the air, every least breeze which blows, strengthens the Primal Aer. The storms available through this ritual are much stronger than natural ones, and so contribute that much more power to the worshiper's god and, through him, to Umath himself.

This spell is available to children and grandchildren of Umah as an associate spell. Generally, only the cults of Orlanth and Valind are strong enough (and have the requisite spells) to perform the ritual. Orlanth provides Cloud Call and Increase Wind, and receives Rain from Heler. Valind provides Cloud Call, Increase Wind, and Snow; when used by his cult. Worshipers of Urox can learn the spell, but do not have access to any precipitation spell, and so cannot normally make use of the ritual. Most other storm deities are too small and crude to make use of the ritual, although the potential exists if the appropriate spells are available.

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MORE ADVENTURES IN THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

by Shannon Appelcline



THE ALTAR OF BLOOD

"Upon the rock was a building, a great castle all colored scarlet. And the scarlet rippled as if water had somehow been molded into a permanent shape. A familiar, salty smell came from the scarlet castle".

DESCRIPTION OF DUKE TEER'S CASTLE, THE KING OF THE SWORDS, BOOK 2, CHAPTER 2

IN THE WILDERNESS of Ilmorla, amidst the grasslands that are still untamed by the young nation, there is an ancient altar to chaos which was once worshiped at by a people that are now long dead. It has been abandoned for

ages, but very recently, new cultists have been drawn to it.

The altar is a shrine to Duke Teer, the Lord of Blood. It is approximately rectangular in shape, five feet long, two feet wide and two and half feet high. The entire altar is composed of blood. It is fluid, constantly rippling, yet it is set into its current form. Occasionally, shapes can be seen in the rippling surface: sculptures made of blood. The altar is not fully solid, but there is increasing resistance if anyone tries to reach into it.

The stench of blood can be smelled for hundreds of feet around. Carrion eaters constantly circle the altar, but seem unwilling to actually touch it.

• In Tradetalk #6, I presented «Adventures in Bakshaan», the first of a series of articles offering story ideas and vignettes for the Young Kingdoms of Elric! and Stormbringer. This article continues that series, presenting magical and mythical places set in the wilderness of the Young Kingdoms, rather than the cities.

• **Shannon Appelcline** is a long-time game designer who has written professionally for RuneQuest, Call of Cthulhu, Nephilim, Ars Magica, and Pendragon. He was a developer for Hero Wars, a co-author of The Broken Council LARP, and the original editor of the Chaosium Digest. Currently he is working at Skotos Tech, an on-line game company (www.skotos.net), and planning an Aldryami book for Hero Wars.

Duke Teer has been banished from the Young Kingdoms for long ages, but now that Old Ollen, the first of Teer's new cultists, has rediscovered the altar, he is reawakening the worship of Duke Teer. He has over a dozen cultists who have joined in his worship, and he is preparing to spread the cult of Duke Teer further.

SPELLS OF BLOOD

Followers of Duke Teer may learn certain spells of Chaos unique to the Lord of Blood. To do so, they must worship at the Altar of Blood for a week, and then succeed at an INTx1 roll. Below are the two spells available in this way.

Shape Blood (1 POW + varies) - Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell allows the caster to shape a quantity of blood into some solid form. One magic point must be expended when casting this spell for every SIZ point worth of blood that is shaped. All such items created are sacred to Duke Teer. Teer's followers believe that it is their duty to one day cover the entire world in blood.

Stop Blood (3) - This spell disrupts the flow of blood within a victim, causing them considerable pain. If the caster succeeds in overcoming the victim in a MP:MP roll, the victim immediately takes 1D3 damage. In addition, the victim will be unable to act in the next round unless he succeeds at a CONx3 roll.

THE CULTISTS

Below are stats for Old Ollen, the current high priest of Duke Teer. Statistics for cultists should be created as appropriate. They should be moderate warriors, who are utterly amoral. A few will know Duke Teer's special spells.

Old Ollen, High Priest of Duke Teer
Chaos 62, Balance 18, Law 2

STR 9 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 17
POW 18 DEX 16 APP 6
HP 12 Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: Blood Dagger 75%, damage 1D4+2

Armor: none

Spells: Affliction (Bronze Grimoire), Hell's Razor, Shape Blood, Stop Blood

Demons & Enchantments: see Blood Monsters below

Skills: Craft (Blood) 93%, Disguise 51%, Dodge 78%, Fast Talk 49%, Hide 83%, Insight 75%, Oratory 97%, Own Language 85%, Search 67%, Young Kingdoms 34%

Old Ollen has totally accepted the ways of Duke Teer, and is committed to bringing them to all of the Young Kingdoms. He sees humans merely as vessels. Some, he allows to be tools to spread the ways of his lord to all.



BLOOD MONSTERS

Duke Teer has gifted his greatest worshiper in the Young Kingdoms with creatures composed entirely of blood, to protect him, and help him to spread the word of Teer.

All creatures of blood have the following characteristics:

- impaling weapons do no damage
- edged weapons do half damage
- blunt weapons do normal damage
- when they are slain, they explode, sending blood in all directions

One example of a Blood Monster is given below. Old Ollen should have several more at his disposal. Simply adapt demons as necessary for these.

Blood Monster

STR 24 CON 20 SIZ 25 INT 5
POW 10 DEX 12 APP 3
HP 23 Damage Bonus: +2D6

Abilities: Absorb Missile at 90%, Vomit Acidic Blood at 50%, POT 1D10, 5 yard range

Weapons: Claws 90%, damage 2D6+db
Bite 60%, damage 3D8+dbp

Armor: none, but see special notes above-

Skills: Act Threateningly 99%, Climb 50%, Dodge 30%, Wrestle 60%

APPENDIX: ADVENTURES IN GLORANTHAN KINGDOMS

Since these plot seeds both deal with gods, it should be very easy to incorporate them into Glorantha. The altar of blood could be a religious site for any god of chaos, perhaps even a new one named Teer; alternatively it might show a new, fearsome side of the Red Goddess. The Glade of Theril might be associated with any god of Glorantha, as they all could offer true dreams of those things they know; however, it might be most appropriate to associate it with a god of knowledge, such as Lhankor Mhy.



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ADVENTURE IDEAS:

- The players can be drawn to the area of the altar when the followers of Duke Teer begin kidnapping local people to drain their blood in rituals to Duke Teer. They will likely end up in conflict with Old Ollen, many cultists and creatures of blood.

- Even if Ollen is defeated, players will need to decide what to do with the Altar of Blood. It cannot be destroyed by normal, mundane means.

- If the players are unable to stop the followers of Teer now, the Cult will slowly spread across the Young Kingdoms, and become an important force in the future.

THE GLADE OF THERIL

Today, the Young Kingdoms slowly slip into the unbreakable grasp of Chaos. But, it was not always that way. Once, balance ruled in the Young Kingdoms. Those were times when even the Lords of Laws were able to walk freely in the Kingdoms. And sometimes, the places they visited bore their imprint forever after.

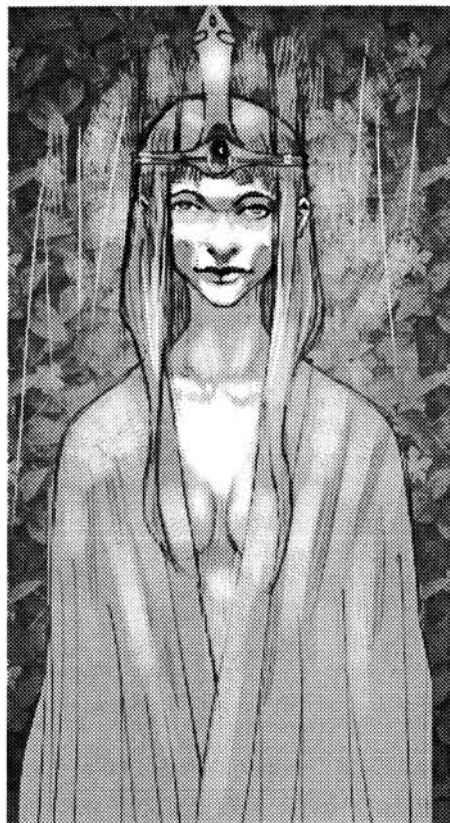
It was long ago that Theril, a Lady of Law, came to the Glade now named after her. When her perfection shone upon the place, it became one with order as well: flowers turned to crystal and leaves to gold. Now, though aeons have passed since Theril left the Glade, still it bears her mark.

The Glade of Theril is located within a totally normal wood. Adventurers will see no hint that the Glade lies nearby until they turn a corner, and find themselves within it.

Three tall, unnaturally straight trees mark out the glade, forming a perfect triangle. The bark of the trees is smooth, like leather, while the leaves seem to be of the finest silk. An even growth of short grass lies across the entire glade; like the leaves, it is silky, and unnaturally resilient. A variety of flowers grow within the glade as well. They seem to be made of colored glass, or crystal, and are extremely beautiful. Many small woodland animals live about the glade. They are quite docile, and totally unafraid of men. Some strange creatures, regular and orderly, are found nowhere else in the Young Kingdoms but the Glade of Theril.

THE MUSIC OF LAW

Though all of the physical details of the glade should be eerily orderly, they are nothing compared to the music of the glade. At first, adventurers will not notice it, but after they have been in the glade for a few moments, it will slowly begin to break through the edges of their perceptions. It is totally unearthly, but also very beautiful.



Art (any musical instrument) and Art (song) can both be learned within the glade, simply by sitting and listening to the haunting music. For each full week that someone sits within the glade, concentrating upon the music, they gain 5% in their chosen Art (to a maximum of 100%) and 1 point in Law Allegiance (to a maximum of 10 points above the next highest allegiance).

In addition, the spell Will of Theril (Bronze Grimoire, pg. 40) will be learned if a character sits within the glade for a week when they have an appropriate Art of 50% or higher (this is in addition to the normal benefits gained from meditating within the glade).

TRUE DREAMS

Whenever a player sleeps within the glade, he will have a True Dream if he rolls under POWx1, provided that his Chaos allegiance is not greater than his Law or Balance allegiance. If several characters all sleep within the glade, all who make their POWx1 roll will have the same Dream. These Dreams will always be of the past (many say that the Lords of Law live forever within the past). They may show ancient battles, long-destroyed cities or dead people. These dreams will always be of special significance to the Lords of Law. They may show items the Lords wish retrieved, families they wish destroyed, or cities they wish rebuilt. Typically,

once someone has seen a True Dream within the Glade of Theril, he will continue seeing it whenever he sleeps (in the glade, or elsewhere), until he has done something to advance the particular goal hinted at by the dream.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- If the players are servants of Law, they may quest for the glade, hoping to find a place that will bring them closer to their gods. Servants of the balance may also want to find the glade, hoping to use its power to slow the growth of Chaos within the Young Kingdoms.

- The forces of chaos would work to destroy the glade if they knew of it. When the armies of chaos begin to move, the players could find themselves sudden war leaders, needed to bring together an army of law to protect the glade. Often, foulness is hidden by fairness, and the players would thus have to deal with traitors within their army, determined to bide their time, and sully the glade by acts of chaos when attention is turned elsewhere.

- Unknowing characters might sleep in the bizarre glade, and suddenly find themselves

plagued with the same dream. Such unfortunates would have to seek out seers and soothsayers in an attempt to discover the meaning of their dreams, and then would have to do the work of the Lords of Law to free themselves from them. Alternatively, they might throw themselves fully towards Chaos, hoping to find magic to banish the words of Law.

- A new cult, The True Seers, could spring up around the Glade of Theril. Each member of the Cult is initiated when he sleeps alone within the Glade. He is then tasked to find the meaning of his vision, and accomplish the desires of the Lords of Law. True Seers could be found throughout the Young Kingdoms, each one a questing traveller.

- There is always the underlying question of Why Theril once walked the Young Kingdoms here. Do other things nearby show her mark? Is something valuable (or inimical) to the Lords of Law nearby? It would probably be easiest for Theril to return to the Young Kingdoms in the Glade. Great prophecies could foretell her return. And finally, perhaps it is easier for other things to come to the Young Kingdoms, here, in the Glade, as well?

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