

the world of Bostonia

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History

Bostonia Timeline

Date	Event
0	City of Boston formed.
1	Pelar and Eltherist join Bost in unifying the land. Pelar and Eltherist battle Dingore.
2	Bost attack Ilrace. Divine Light of the Father is found by Pelar.
3	First Zealots take the Divine Light of the Father. Ilrace and Dingore are defeated.
4	Khodrus join the unification effort. First battles against the Keevel.
6	Keevel are defeated and driven south across the sea. Keevel are enslaved by cobrat.
7	First battles against Ander.
8	Jherod wins the battle of Green Pass. Jherod names his sword First Blood.
9	Vens Ander and his wife Sophia use Grunderkin to kill Zephram and take control of the tribe. The Ander join the cause of unification.
10	Camille rises from the Dark Lake with the Sacred Falls of Aestra. The Azert join the cause of unification because of this miracle. War of Unification won and the nation of Bostonia formed.
13	Camille writes <i>The Mercies of the Mother</i> .
17	Dovid writes <i>The Passions</i> .
24	Keevel revolt and win their freedom. Keevel live as renegades in cobrat lands.
26	Brachas Keevel converts to the worship of the Great Turtle. His people follow and earn the respect of their cobrat neighbors. Keevel are named "Pirate Lords" and become free people in cobrat territory.
42	Elna writes <i>Portrait of the Visionary</i> .
62	At age 28, Michael writes <i>The Sins of Man</i> .
66	Erzan finds cave containing Lightbane rune.
67	Erzan returns to bind Lightbane.
72	Cult of Ulderghast found southeast of Greensgate. Erzan and his followers vow to destroy the cult. Cult of Ulderghast destroyed by Erzan. Erzan takes his loyal Zealots and brings them to Lightbane to bind it. Erzan and his followers start an inquisition in the region.
73	Erzan's Inquisition reaches its peak. Michael and his loyal Zealots march to stop Erzan. Erzan is killed and Michael and the remaining Zealots vow to never again use magic. The Hammer of Michael is created and strips their runes from them.
76	At age 42, Michael writes <i>Magesoul</i> in which he describes the proper conduct for devout mages and urges them to forsake their runes.
90	Pirate Lords make first raids in Bostonian waters.
93	Michael dies at age 69.
212	Arenna Bost, the last of the original Bost tribe, dies. The Bost line is ended.
350	Rialla Tharkas, a distant descendent of Jherod, takes the throne and starts the Tharkas Dynasty.
364	Boston-Salem road nearly destroyed in winter storms and subsequent spring floods. Trade is brought to a standstill. Boston suffers worst famine in its history.
365	Sir Lorne Vincent creates Association of Scholars and Engineers.
378	Midlands war pits several nobles against one another over mining rights in central Bostonia. King Damon Tharkas intervenes, defeats the nobles (including Vincent) and Barony Klein is created. Pela Ostheimer purchases Association of Scholars and Engineers, moves it to Boston and renames it the Guild of Engineers.
379	Boston Shipyards expanded by Guild of Engineers.
380	Road from Boston to Nob's Landing created.
385	Guild of Engineers finishes Temple of the Dark Springs in Sunsrest.
388	Sir Lorne Vincent creates second Association of Scholars and Engineers.
393	King Damon Tharkas takes over the Guild of Engineers and puts the Association out of business. The Vincent family is left destitute.
423	Fourteen-year-old Talen Tharkas takes the throne. Six months later, he is dead of a mysterious rotting disease leaving no heir to the throne. Civil war ensues as several nobles vie for the vacant throne.

425	Battle of Valice leaves Faust no choice but to surrender and support Baloric in his quest for the throne.
426	Battle of Armor. After fighting each other for 6 days, both Baloric and Falloren are defeated by an army of Templars and Aeltharze. Confederacy Pact is signed; the monarchy is dissolved; the office of Lord Mayor is created. General Greyland Pak is chosen as Boston's first Lord Mayor. Guild of Engineers is given a special charter to work as a Sponsored Independent Guild. Gavin Dorniker is made Guildmaster. Cobrat invade southern Bostonia, but their attack is stalled by a brutal winter.
427	Cobrat invasion is pushed back. Lord Mayor Pak is successful in his first military campaign.
485	The Traditions of Succession are written. The Bostonian monarchy is reformed under the Traditions and Rianna Azareth becomes Queen of Bostonia.
591	Grand Father Parsus Corin decreed that once each year, the Father's Church would pay a substantial tithe to the nearby temples in recognition of the holy services they provide.
792	The Shield Guild and Baron Relequin James found the town of Fort Talon to guard the passes through the Terrorbald Mountains.
773	The Church of the Southern Gate is built in Fort Talon.
783	Lord Mayor Eliza Warrandale is discovered hiding taxable goods from Lord James. She flees with a few of her loyal supporters.
784	The Warrandale Raiders make their first attack on a mining camp southeast of Fort Talon.
788	Fort Talon Mining Company founded. Bright Burning Flame refugees settle in Fort Talon.
791	After a successful run as a bandit, Eliza Warrandale's Raiders are stopped by the Shield Guild. Warrandale escapes south into goblin territory.
798	Teeta Alliance invades southern Bostonia.
799	Teeta Alliance is stopped by joint Bostonian/Cobrat forces. Invasion stalls, though some territory is still held. Templars fighting against the Teeta Alliance find an old, crystal encrusted human skeleton. Thinking the skeleton is an oddity, the templars return with it to Ismoth. However, an accident destroys most of the skeleton, and only a thighbone arrives safely. A Conference of Bishops determines that the bones belong to St. Olum.
800	Significant mineral and gold deposits found near Fort Talon. Large-scale mining operations begin. With funds from the new mineral wealth, Lord James builds a beautiful cathedral on the site of The Church of the Southern Gate, and petitions the Church to house St. Olum's remains there.
801	St. Olum's remains brought to Fort Talon. Church is renamed to The Church of St. Olum's Solitude.
802	Tatokh are allowed to reestablish embassy in Fort Talon.
804	Suggested campaign beginning for Bostonia. This is a Communion Year – Meaning every 20 years previous is also a Communion Year

The Lore of Bostonia

The following is the story of the genesis of the Bostonian people. It is the account of how the Bostonians were born from the race of mages known only as the Ancients.

The Ancients' Quest for Immortality

All people of Bostonia (and presumably of the entire world) are the children of a race of powerful wizards called Ancients. The Ancients were masters of elemental air, fire, water and earth as well as time and space. This power gave them an advanced magical "technology" that permitted the building of huge cities, flying machines, mystic gates and other wonders.

Throughout their growth, the Ancients had guidance from the Mother and Father. However, when the Ancients had vanquished all dangers from their world, they did not feel the need for the favor of the gods. The Ancients' churches and temples became the focus of scorn and derision instead of worship. People asked, "Why do we need blessings when we are warm, fed and safe from the wind?" When the church had all but been forgotten by the people, the priests tried to find some miracle to show the power of the gods. The priests knew the only miracle that eluded the Ancients magic was immortality. Regardless of their power or standing, old wizards still died in their sleep. The priests prayed to the Mother and Father. "Give them that which they could never attain themselves. Make them immortal and in doing so, reclaim the hearts of your children." The Mother and Father refused. Death was preordained -- a natural force in the cosmos. Immortality was not a "gift" that could be freely given. This was the final blow for the church. Everyday wizards took "natural forces" and twisted them for the benefit of the people. Nothing, not wind or fire, disease or injury resisted the power of ancient spells. Perhaps a wizard could discover the secret of immortality.

The Rise of the Deceiver

With the church weakened, the Ancients were ready to be persuaded by the Deceiver. This infernal creature began to whisper into the ears of many of the most powerful wizards. He told them that they could cheat death. To do so, a new cult would need to be created. A cult of primal gods, older than the Mother and Father, older than the Universe itself. Many of these immortality cults began to blossom across the lands. The Deceiver would empower the cult heads to perform powerful rites and rituals. These rituals seemed to heal the sick and make the aged young and vigorous. Instead, they bound the recipient to the Deceiver, creating a half-life -- certainly immune to aging and sickness, but not quite alive either. The Deceiver cult began to grow powerful at the expense of the Ancients. Though the loyal remnants of the true church fought the onslaught, the Ancients' lust for everlasting life was too strong, and hope was lost. To the loyal few, the Father spoke. He told his people to walk to the edge of the sea and submerge themselves in their Mother's embrace. Death was coming to the world.

*The church bells cut the silence.
No one listened.
The Faithful drowned.
The dead danced.
Only me
Watching the shooting stars,
Witness to the end of days.*

The Seeds of Fire

The few who were still devoted to Aestra and Stratus did as the Father told them to do. They travelled to the sea and entered it, submerging themselves in the waves. In doing so, they proved their faith in the Mother, and she saved them from what was to come. After his children were safe in the womb of Aestra, the Father forged 13 seeds using elemental fire. He then threw these seeds to the earth and caused them to blossom. The seeds tapped the power of Stratus and elemental fire and blossomed into huge plumes of flame. Only 12 seeds actually bloomed, but those were enough to destroy the Ancients and all their works. The earth was ravaged and would not know life for thousands of years.

With his cult gone, the Deceiver could not face Stratus. Stratus captured the Deceiver and placed him in a prison, a ring of elemental fire. Even in defeat, the Deceiver mocked Stratus. "Without a Church, even gods weaken. Without followers, even gods die."

The Tribal Period

Emergence

It took several thousand years, but the earth was healed by the hand of Aestra. The fire-torn lands began to sprout plants and then trees. Beasts crawled from the sea and saw the sun again. First insects, then snakes and then small mammals dwelt upon land. The land was changed, but had become whole. When all was ready, the Ancients that had been saved from destruction were stripped of their memories and allowed to walk the earth. The children of the Ancients emerged from the sea in several tribes. They knew nothing of their surroundings or their heritage. The Mother and Father came to these people and taught them. First, they taught them the wicked ways of their parents, then they taught them how to live. Some tribes were taught to catch fish, others how to work the land, still others were taught to gather what they needed from the woodlands around them.

The Time of the Tribes

Each tribe emerged at a different point in the land. Many tribes emerged along sheltered sections of coastland. Others emerged near small lakes, or cave complexes. Due to their isolation from each other and the more dangerous denizens of Bostonia, the tribes had time to develop and grow. Each learned different skills from the Mother and Father. Each tribe saw the gods in a unique manner. The farming tribes saw their Mother and Father as deities of agriculture -- water and sun being important for their livelihood. Tribes that wandered harsh terrain viewed the Mother and Father as protective deities. Lakeside tribes saw gods that provided bountiful harvests of fish.

In this manner, all facets of Aestra and Stratus were developed. For many years, the tribes grew in isolation from one another. When tribes began to encounter one another, most found they had common heritage, religion and language, and peaceful relations were established. However, as tribes grew and competed for resources, conflict became inevitable.

The Original Bostonian Tribes

Ander

Occupied the southernmost reaches of the Bostonian valley. This tribe developed mining as well as the rare technology of alchemy. In addition, several magically talented individuals were said to be early members of this tribe. The Ander were the first to discover runes and also the first to meet the dreaded Sardukaari. They have always been sworn enemies of the Unnatural Riders. The Anders rule the Seeker's Valley to this day.

Azart

Emerged in the far Northwest, near the current location of Sunsrest. The Azart developed the technology of mining, smelting and engineering. This was a small tribe that suffered many hardships, meeting many strange beasts in the mountains. They eventually developed several sophisticated cave and tunnel complexes in the Teeth Mountains and surrounding hills. These later developed into the town of Sunsrest and the Sunrest Archive.

Bost

Occupied the central coast near the current site of Boston. The Bost were favored by the gods and gifted with skillful warriors, metalworkers and fishermen. This tribe grew quickly and became the largest of the tribes. They sent scouts and emissaries to find and make contact with other humans. They met the Eltherist and Pelar tribes and were among the first to trade as a means of obtaining resources.

The Bost would grow to become the strongest tribe in the land. Because of this, they were chosen by the Mother and Father to unite the tribes of Bostonia.

Dingore

Occupied the northwest hills, near the current site of Salem. The Dingore was the smallest tribe to emerge, having only a dozen members to start. This tribe was gifted with knowledge of animals and plants and produced hunters and herbalists.

They grew slowly and remained isolated long after the other tribes had begun relations. Even after encounters with other Bostonians, the Dingore were mistrustful and xenophobic. The other tribes saw them as primitive and inbred and relations were rarely good.

Eltherist

After emerging from the sea, the Eltherist tribe migrated inland and settled in the rich hills of central Bostonia. They developed agriculture, brewing and winemaking. In addition, they were skilled in cultivating new strains of plants. This tribe grew large and prosperous on their farms. Their central location brought them into contact with several other tribes and so the skill of diplomacy was developed by Eltherist scouts.

Gemenir

Occupied south central Bostonia and developed the technologies of alchemy, medicine as well as agriculture. This tribe lived a quiet and peaceful existence, but got squeezed by the growth of the Eltherist and the migration of the Volus. They fought to keep their lands and became raiders and warriors. However, in the end they were not able to maintain their tribal identity and they effectively merged with the Eltherist and the Volus.

Ilrace

Occupied territory to the north of modern-day Salem. They developed skills of herbalism, woodcraft, carpentry and built the first roads to facilitate trade with their close neighbors, the Pelar.

Keevel

Emerged from the sea and occupied an island to the southeast of mainland Bostonia. They developed the technologies of fishing, net making, shipbuilding as well as uses for fish oil, scales and bones.

The Keevel were the first humans to meet the Cobrat -- at first in war, but peaceful relations were eventually formed. The Keevel brought many Cobrat technologies to humankind, including astronomy and astrology.

Khodrus

Occupied the southeast region of Bostonia, near current-day Ismoth. This tribe developed shipbuilding, sail making, navigation and excelled at the making of oil and dye.

Pelar

Occupied territory to the east of modern-day Salem. This tribe developed herding and agriculture. Some members of this tribe wandered with their herds and came into contact with the Borakki. From the Borakki, the Pelar brought knowledge of metalworking, new animals and breeding.

The Pelar also encountered the Dingore tribe. The two mistrusted one another immediately and several small skirmishes ensued. The Pelar, with the help of the Bost and Ilrace would destroy the Dingore many years later.

Tunderrim

Emerged from the southern sea and wandered into the forest south of Bostonia. They had little time to develop technologies or skills, as they were immediately set upon by goblins. They battled goblins for dozens of years and their numbers were slowly whittled away.

The survivors of this tribe fled north to the southern most borders of modern-day Bostonia. The survivors of these battles were great warriors, guerilla fighters and tacticians.

Volus

Occupied the Seeker's Valley in southwest Bostonia, this tribe developed herding and agriculture. They were rivals with the Ander tribe and fought several battles with that tribe until they migrated east, out of the valley. There they found several herds of horses, and were the first tribe in Bostonia to tame and use the strange beasts.

Tribal Wars

The tribes prospered and grew and this led to competition for scarce resources. Some tribes took to raiding their neighbors when trade failed. This led to skirmishes which gave way to larger battles and even full scale wars. Some of the notable conflicts are listed below.

Dingore vs. Pelar and Ilrace

The Dingore were a reclusive tribe who lived off the land, hunting and gathering. They avoided attempts by their neighbors to establish contact. This engendered mistrust among the tribes. When the Pelar and Ilrace began encroaching on the Dingore wilderness, the Dingore retaliated by raiding settlements. This began the first of a series of conflicts between these tribes.

The Dingore generally had fewer warriors and more primitive technology, and had to use their superior tactics and knowledge of the land to survive. These wars raged on and off for years and in fact, continued even after the Unification.

Tunderrim vs. Khodrus

As the Tunderrim were pushed north by the goblins, they came into contact with the established settlements of the Khodrus. At first, the tribes united against their inhuman enemy. However, after the goblins were pushed back into the woods, the tribes fought amongst themselves.

In these conflicts, the Tunderrim were superior -- hardened from years of battle with the goblins. The Khodrus were forced to give up much of their land to the ferocious Tunderrim.

Bost vs. Keevel

As the sailing technology of the tribes advanced, the Bost and Keevel ships could cover more distance and eventually came into contact. Both tribes coveted a series of coves and reefs that were rich in seaweed and fish.

During several poor fishing years, the Bost ships tried to deny access to the Keevel fishing vessels. The Keevel retaliated by attacking the Bost ships. This led to the first (and only) naval war of the tribal period.

For the most part, these battles were stalemates until the cobrat intervened on behalf of their trading partners and taught the Keevel how to create shipboard weaponry. This turned the tide in favor of the Keevel and they pushed the Bost out of the reefs.

Ander vs. Volus

The Ander and Volus both emerged in the Seeker's Valley. Both tribes grew and quickly contacted one another. They lived in peace until the Ander determined that it was their destiny to rule the valley. They began a concerted effort to force the Volus out. The Volus fought for their homes, but eventually grew weary and fled to the east.

Gemenir vs. Volus

When the Volus emigrated from the Seeker's Valley, they encountered the Gemenir. They were determined to find a place to settle and the Gemenir were determined to maintain their lands. This led to a series of terrible battles in which the Volus destroyed many Gemenir settlements. The Gemenir surrendered and gave the Volus much of their land.

The Taint of Paganism

The emerging Bostonians knew their gods and in fact reaped the benefits of their gifts. However, some Bostonians also came into contact with other cultures, other theologies as well as powerful elementals. Some tribes forgot the lessons of the Fireseeds and began to worship these new beings.

For instance, the Dingore worshipped their own version of Aestra. This goddess was an earth goddess, providing for and protecting her people. However, over the course of many years, the Dingore neglected their worship of the Father. In addition, the Dingore vision of the Earth Mother became twisted. As the Dingore faced assaults by the Pelar and Ilrace, she became a bestial druidic goddess, oriented more to war than nurturing and healing.

The Tunderrim was another tribe that suffered the taint of paganism. During their battles with the goblins of the south, the Tunderrim turned to the worship of a forgotten goblin war god to protect them. This god taught their warriors and made them fierce, but it turned them against the true faith and they were hated by the Faithful.

Other tribes that felt the taint were the Gemenir and the Ander. The Ander began their persecution of the Volus after Zephram Ander was granted visions from a powerful fire elemental. He took this fire elemental as a manifestation of Stratus and began to worship it. Many in his tribe followed him into this twisted cult.

These cults threatened to divide the tribes against one another. Worse, it threatened the purity of the cult of the Mother and Father.

The Unification Wars

Camille's Vision

Throughout the tribal period, the Bost tribe remained the most powerful tribe. They started with a large, strong population. They fought some battles and a naval war with the Keevel, but none of these significantly damaged their resources, or populace. As the tribes began to feud and paganism grew among the once faithful, Stratus and Aestra needed to unite the tribes. They chose the Bost tribe as their avatars.

Mistress Camille was a common fisherwoman. Aestra came to her in a dream. In this dream, she was sitting in her boat after a full day of fishing. There was no wind and the sun was setting and she was left with no way home. As she pondered her problem, a flock of crows landed on deck and began eating her fish.

As fewer fish remained, the crows began squawking and pecking at one another, bloodying each other. As the crows argued, a large hawk and a gull swooped down and screeched. Most of the crows quieted, but some continued to attack the others. The gull and hawk jumped upon these unruly crows, pecking them to death. The flock of birds, now acting as one pulled on the nets and rigging and towed the shore.

She found herself on a stretch of rocky coast by the mouth of a powerful river. The hawk, gull and remaining crows, piled the dead birds onto the shore. From their blood, a city of metal and stone began to rise.

Camille took news of her vision to the others in her village. Her visions were not unique. A young warrior named Dovid had also had a similar vision. The elders decided that these visions portended the rise of the Bost tribe to supremacy in the land. They chose the visionaries to spread the word to the other villages. Elders of the other villages were excited about the news and praised Camille and Dovid as messengers of the gods.

Within days, elders from all the Bost villages had gathered at the site of Camille's vision. The Bost tribe began planning its rise to power.

The Rise of the Bost Tribe

The War in the North

To unite the lands, the Bost needed allies. The Eltherist were friends and trading partners and had a corps of excellent scouts and diplomats. They could spread Camille and Dovid's message to the rest of the tribes. Some Bost elders imagined a bloodless conquest, but others knew -- the vision predicted war.

The Pelar joined immediately, eager to crush their pagan neighbors the Dingore and take control of their rich forests. The Ilrace were not so easily convinced and thought perhaps that the talk of visions was a ploy for Bost supremacy. Camille herself visited the leaders of the Ilrace, but she was turned away. Visions or no, the Ilrace balked at Bost leadership of the alliance.

The Azart were contacted by a group of Eltherist emissaries led by Dovid. The Azart also questioned the validity of the visions. They argued that their goddess of mercy and succor would never call a jihad, even against pagan tribes. The Azart suggested sending missionaries to the pagan tribes. After weeks of discussion, Dovid angered and left, declaring the Azart enemies to the unification. The Azart sent troops to stop Dovid from leaving, but he escaped and he and a small party of guards harried and harassed the Azart and slowly made their way back to friendly land.

The Pelar and Eltherist attacked the elusive Dingore. At first the attacks were amazingly successful and many Dingore warriors were killed and settlements destroyed. The Ilrace, seeing the ferocity of the battles, knew they would be attacked after the Dingore, and so joined their hated enemies in battle. This helped turn the tide. The Ilrace had weapons and armor obtained from pre-war trade with the Bost. The Dingore were master foresters and scouts. Together, they began to thwart the Pelar/Eltherist attacks.

During this time, a small group of Pelar tribal priests stumbled upon an Ancient site. This site contained the focus for a powerful Sun rune. The priests understood this rune as a gift from the Father. They bound the rune, and calling themselves the Zealots, gathered an army of the Faithful to finally crush the Dingore/Ilrace.

The Zealots marched into Dingore territory, meeting heavy resistance. After several weeks of battle, they were beaten and demoralized. At this point, Dovid returned from Azart territory, met with the Zealots and they rallied around him. In addition to this, the Bost had sent a troop of warriors into Ilrace territory from the east. The Ilrace could not stand between the two forces and withdrew their troops to face the Bost warriors. This left the Dingore alone facing Dovid and the Zealots.

Though the Zealots made progress through the Dingore forces, the Dingore knew the woods well and avoided a single decisive battle. Still, Dovid was persistent, hunting down the resistance. Eventually, the Dingore were defeated and either surrendered, or fled to the north, leaving their tribal lands. Once Dovid broke through from the west, his Zealots and the Bost warriors attacked the besieged Ilrace from both sides, crushing them. The first battles were won.

The Khodrus and the Keevel

The Bost then turned their attention to their southern neighbors. The Khodrus leadership initially refused to join the Bost unification. The Bost attacked and a few minor battles were fought. However, once the common populace heard of the miraculous visions of Camille and Dovid, support for resistance dissolved. The Khodrus surrendered to the Bost and joined the forces of unification.

The Keevel would be more difficult to turn. They were largely isolated from many of the other tribes and news of Camille and Dovid's miracles. They also remembered their battles with the Bost. It was unlikely they would be responsive to friendly contact.

The Keevel would protect their island with their considerable naval force. Their ships were fast and armed with cobrat weaponry. Even with the aid of the Khodrus, the Bost tribe could never effectively face the Keevel on the water.

Needing a way to strike at the Keevel island, the Bost disguised their boats, taking on the colors and superficial appearance of the Keevel fleet. This allowed the Bost to engage several Keevel ships hand-to-hand and capture them. These captured ships and their cobrat weaponry allowed the Bost to raid the port town of Dornvel. They captured this town and a beachhead on the Keevel homeland. The Khodrus followed this raid with dozens of ships and a large invasion force. Once a significant force landed on the island, the defeat of the Keevel was inevitable.

The War in the South

With the north secured, the forces of unification turned to the south. The Volus had heard tales of the battles raging north of them. The Volus had a strong religious tradition and greeted Dovid and his warriors with acceptance. Together they moved to face the formidable combination of the Tunderrim and the Ander -- both strong tribes and both under the sway of pagan gods.

The first battles took place near the town of Green Pass (near present-day Green's Gate). Led by Volus scouts, Dovid and his Zealots travelled into enemy territory. The Tunderrim warriors met him head on and a raging battle ensued. The Bost were weary from months of battle and were simply not ready for the ferocity of the enemy. They were defeated and retreated to the hills.

As Dovid and his warriors rested and regrouped in the hills and caves, a corps of Ander tribesmen worked their way through the mountains to cut the Bost off from their homeland. Their leader, Yaelin Ander, possessed a powerful sword called Grunderkin. The legend of this weapon dated back to the tribal period. It always struck true against the leader of the enemy group. As Dovid's men tried to escape, Yaelin charged Dovid, attacking him with the fabled weapon. Dovid was felled, but miraculously, he survived the blow and was saved by his men.

Upon return to their homeland, the armies of the unification were demoralized. Their leader had been struck down and their force defeated. The Tunderrim, heady with their victory, were planning a counterattack into the north with the Ander and their foul weapon in tow.

At this time, a Pelar mage named Fermanel entered the Zealots' camp. He presented them with a weapon. It was a minor blade made with Borakki metals and had runes of skill and power. Into this, Fermanel had bound several minor spells. Still, the blade was far from powerful and certainly no match for Grunderkin. Furthermore, the powerful leader of the Bost armies was incapacitated.

A young warrior, Rehesse Jherod took up the sword and led Fermanel and a host of fresh Pelar troops to the south to meet the Tunderrim and Yaelin Ander. Before he left the northlands, an elder from the Bost church, Telerind took the sword and begged the Mother and Father to bless it, and its bearer in the coming battles.

When the two forces met, the battle raged for days. At one point, a group of Tunderrim, led by Yaelin overran a Pelar camp where Rehesse Jherod was resting. The two leaders met in battle. Yaelin strode forward, bearing Grunderkin. Jherod prayed to the Mother and Father that they would favor him. Yaelin attacked first and true to its legend, Grunderkin struck directly at the head of young Jherod. However, with the blessing of Aestra and Stratus, the magical blade provided by Fermanel moved to parry the death blow.

With that amazing parry, Jherod had the momentary upper hand and struck at Yaelin, killing him. The blessed blade was damaged, so Jherod picked up Grunderkin and seeing the lieutenant of the Tunderrim. He threw the blade at this leader and the foul blade flew through the air, piercing the chest of the enemy second in command.

With their leaders killed, the Tunderrim forces were in chaos and fled the field of battle. The forces of unification held the field. Grunderkin was lost in the chaos of the retreat, and it was retrieved by a young Ander lieutenant, Vens Ander. He hid the blade and returned to his homeland. Fermanel took the damaged blessed blade and repaired it, but the force of Grunderkin's blow destroyed the runes on the blade. However, it was considered very lucky by Jherod and his troops. To commemorate his battle with Yaelin Ander, he called the sword First Blood.

The Turning of the Ander

The Bost, Pelar and Volus marched south, defeating garrison forces and taking villages in the southland. The battles lasted several weeks. During this time, the Father shined upon the Bost and their allies, bringing the raiding Sardukaari out of the mountains to attack the towns in the western Seeker's Valley. The Ander had to send troops to protect their lands from their historical enemies. Still, Zephram Ander, the elder of the tribe was committed to defeating the Bost and feeding his elemental god.

Still, not all the Ander had descended into paganism. A small covert resistance plotted the overthrow of the tribal leadership. One of the leaders of this resistance was Vens Ander, a distant cousin of Zephram. He knew there was no way to get to Zephram with all of his elemental magical power and bodyguards. So, he sent his wife Sophia to Zephram's court. Zephram had always coveted the beautiful Sophia and it took little effort on her part to gain access to the leader's bed.

One night, as the members of the resistance closed upon the palace, Sophia hid Grunderkin under her robes and with it, killed her lover, Zephram. Vens and the rest of the resistance, on Sophia's signal, stormed the palace. With the element of surprise and the magic blade, they took control of the tribe, restored the worship of the Mother and Father and turned to fight the Sardukaari.

The Final Battle

With the Tunderrim and Ander defeated, the Azert were the only tribe refusing the unification. Dovid, with Jherod by his side, returned to lead the Zealots as they marched north to conquer this final foe. However, the Azert were well defended. Much of their lands were mountainous and many settlements had easy access to the tunnel complexes where the Azert people emerged.

The first several battles went poorly for the forces of unification. The Azert were well prepared to defend their homeland, and the Bost were not used to fighting in the rough terrain of the northwest. When a battle was won, most of the enemy soldiers escaped into caves or tunnels and could not be captured. The Bost struggled forward through heavy resistance, unable to bring about a decisive engagement.

When Dovid and his army finally arrived at the Azert homeland, he was faced with a powerful stronghold dug into the Teeth Mountains. Thinking it impossible to assault, he prepared his army for a long siege.

The Bost and their allies were weary of fighting and a long siege seemed to have little probability of success. Camille arrived at the scene with a small retinue of followers. She approached the Azert stronghold in peace to negotiate an end to the war.

The negotiations continued for 10 days with little progress. Camille realized that the problem was religious differences between the Azert and the Bost. Simply, the Azert did not believe that their lake goddess was the same Mother that the Bost worshipped. Hence, the Azert saw the vision of unifying the tribes as that of a hostile goddess ordering her people to conquer their neighbors.

Camille claimed she could prove that all tribes worshipped the same Mother. She went with the Azert leaders to the Dark Lake, a huge underground lake that provided water and food to the besieged Azert. Praying to the Mother to spare her as one of the faithful, Camille proceeded to walk into the lake, immersing herself in its cold waters. After several minutes of silence, the Azert were certain the diplomat had failed to call her miracle and had drowned in the lake.

At that moment, Camille rose from the lake. The water dripped down her back, burning the Mother's mark on her. The astounded Azert watched as Camille walked into the Azert city, among the people and with her new power, healed their injuries and sickness. The Azert were convinced with this miracle and joined their brothers as a unified people.

The Founding of the Church

After the War of Unification, the leaders of the tribes gathered at the site of Camille's vision. They agreed that a single king should be chosen for the whole of the land. The tribes that had remained faithful to the faith would maintain stewardship of their lands, but pay a tithe of men, resources and silver to the king. The tribesmen initially chose Dovid to be the king, but he declined. Dovid's vision of founding a new Church had not yet been fulfilled. Instead, he nominated his right hand, Jherod for the crown. The tribesmen agreed and Jherod became the first Bostonian king.

Dovid and Camille began the task of founding their new Church. They each chose 12 stewards from their followers and told them to travel the lands, destroy the old pagan shrines and churches and construct new temples to the Mother and Father. The soldiers and Zealots that remained after the war were sent with these stewards to assist. These 12 churches became the First Churches (which are now high holy sites) and the stewards became the First Bishops and Mother Superiors of the Bostonian Faith. The two visionaries stayed at the site of their original vision and built churches there. The city of Boston was built around these two holy sites.

Many of the new priests followed the example of the powerful Zealots and took magical runes to augment their power. The Zealot cult guarded the location of the Zealous Light of the Father, so these new mage-priests took whatever runes were available to them. Priests of this era had a wide variety of magical as well as religious power.

Priestesses, on the other hand, did not seek out runes. As priestesses gained rank within the Church, they followed the example of Camille at Dark Lake and begged the Mother to spare them as they drowned themselves in the sea. When they emerged, they had taken the water rune now called the Sacred Falls of Aestra. Equipped with this rune, the priestesses went about healing the people sick and injured from years of war.

The Modern Era

St. Michael, Erzan and the Zealots

For nearly 70 years after the War of Unification, the Zealots formed the backbone of the Bostonian Church. These mage-priests spread the word of Stratus, maintained order, and tracked down the last remnants of paganism in the land. The Zealots were a powerful symbol of the unity and strength of the new nation.

Two of the most prominent Zealots were Michael and Erzan. Both men had grandfathers who had fought in the Unification. Both men were respected scholars and priests and both had reached the highest circle in the Zealot's holy rune. Finally, both of these mage-priests had a keen interest in the nature of magic and its place in history. They often corresponded and debated this topic and their arguments became legendary among the ranks of the Zealots.

A consistent point of contention between the two Zealots was the question of whether magical runes had any inherent disposition. Michael held the view that some runes were inherently evil, dark and corrupting. In contrast, Erzan felt that all runes neutral symbols of power with no alignment other than that of their wielder.

Erzan considered himself a scholar of magic, and spent much of his free time away from the church, researching and seeking out rune sites. On one such trip, Erzan traveled to the mountains of the Seeker's Valley. There, he found a strange cave reeking of magical influence (y66). Inside, Erzan found the rune site for Lightbane, a rune of darkness and fear.

Erzan did not take the rune at that moment. Instead, he traveled to Boston to research and contemplate this rune. Though he found no specific record of the Lightbane, the symbolism of the rune was clear. It was pure darkness, fear; some would argue the absence of the Father's light. Erzan considered this a perfect test of his beliefs. Mastering this rune would prove that it is the will of the bearer that dictates the nature of the rune and that runes cannot corrupt. Erzan returned to the valley, and bound Lightbane (y67).

For years Erzan bore his rune without any sign of corruption. He took up residence in the plains outside of the Seeker's Valley and continued spreading the true faith. However, something within Erzan had changed.

During his campaign to rid the region of worship of Ulderghast (y72), a powerful air elemental, Erzan exhibited uncharacteristic cruelty. In his fortress, he would torture pagan captives, forcing them to convert before killing them. When the cult of Ulderghast was destroyed, Erzan gathered over a dozen Zealots and brought them to bind Lightbane. Then, he and his band began searching for new threats to the church. They found these threats in every village and hamlet in the countryside.

Erzan's Inquisition lasted for months. Erzan and his mage-priests traveled from town to town, rooting out what they perceived to be heresy and blasphemy. They held courts where they interrogated innocents and forced confessions from them. Entire towns were burned so as to "cleanse" them of their pagan taint. During this horror, any mages Erzan found were brought back to Lightbane and forced to bind it.

By y73, Erzan and his followers had terrorized a significant portion of the land to the east of Seeker's Valley (the valley itself had been sealed off by Nalen Ander to repel the renegade Zealots). As details of the gruesome crusade reached Boston, it was clear that Erzan's campaign was unjust. Michael rallied his own band of Zealots and marched southwest to confront the errant mage-priests.

Battles raged through the winter. Erzan's mage-priests used Lightbane to summon hordes of spiders formed of shadow. His powers brought darkness and confusion to the battlefield and twisted the minds of Michael's warriors, turning them upon each other. Though initially repelled, Michael and his followers found that Lightbane made its wielders unable to bear the rays of magical light. Using the divine light of Stratus, the renegades and their shadowy creations were broken.

Erzan fled into the hills. Michael caught his one-time friend, and in a final duel between light and darkness, defeated him. While Erzan lay dying, Michael bade him to reveal the location of the site of Lightbane so that its blackness could be destroyed. In a moment of clarity, Erzan began to tell Michael, but was silenced as the shadows inside him covered his body and spirited him away. Michael called to the Divine Father to curse the rune and make its possessors covetous, paranoid, and jealous of their rune – hopefully insuring that only one or two might take this power at one time. It is unknown whether the curse succeeded or not.

After their victory, the Zealots headed north into the hills and mountains surrounding Seeker's Valley, taking the body of Erzan with them. It is unknown why they did so, and none of the writings of Michael give insight into this question. However, it is known that they traveled for three days and came to a beautiful ridge overlooking the Porthas River.

At that site, Michael and his Zealots buried Erzan with honor. Afterward, Michael celebrated mass with his fellow mage-priests. During his sermon, he convinced them that Lightbane had corrupted Erzan's heart and that with every bound rune, there was a risk. Though it may be true that some runes were neutral and could be thought of as tools, others like Lightbane had ties to otherworldly, and possibly infernal powers. Still others might affect the binder's mind and make it more susceptible to impurity and temptation. Michael concluded that to be good priests, the Zealots would have to give up their runes.

The Zealots agreed. They constructed an altar and Michael placed his hammer upon it. The priests then prayed that the divine Father would grant them the strength to be free of their magic. Michael touched the hammer to himself, and his runes vanished. One-by-one, each of the mage-priests did the same.

From that day forward, no priest has taken a rune.

The Formation of The Engineers' Guild

For over 350 years, Bostonians continued to maintain and use the infrastructure from ancient and tribal times. While these roads, dams and bridges were adequate for light use, they required continuous maintenance and were prone to flooding and washing out.

In y364, a particularly harsh winter and sudden spring warming caused a large stretch of the Boston-Salem road to be unusable. Trade in the region was brought to a standstill. Many merchants and nobles suffered heavy financial losses and the city of Boston saw the worst famine in its history.

Seeking to avoid a similar catastrophe in the future, a group of nobles, headed by Sir Lorne Vincent, pooled their resources and formed the Association of Scholars and Engineers to study the architecture of the ancients and devise new and better ways of building. The Association succeeded in devising several useful engineering techniques and designs that would greatly improve travel in Bostonia.

Over the next 15 years, The Association rebuilt the Boston-Salem road, constructed a system of locks and dams that eased travel along the Sunsrest River, and generally improved the infrastructure in much of northern Bostonia. However, in y378, a baronial conflict, and a drought left the nobles in terrible financial shape. Pela Ostheimer, then the president of The Association, bought the licenses and equipment from the cash-strapped nobles, moved the group to Boston, and renamed it the Guild of Engineers.

The Guild soon began entertaining offers for work in and around Boston. In y379 the group repaired and expanded Boston's shipyards. In y380, the road from Boston to Nob's Landing was constructed. As news of their successful projects spread, so did the scope and locations of new contracts. By y385, the Guild was a profitable business and Guild Engineers were engaged constructing magnificent churches in Sunsrest, as well as roads in Seeker's Valley.

In y388, Lord Vincent had emerged from his financial difficulties, gathered a group of investors and attempted to form a second Association of Scholars and Engineers to compete with the Guild. He managed to gather a pool of engineering talent and began bidding against the Guild on several projects based in central Bostonia.

For the next, 5 years, the two companies battled for business. Vincent's Association used the noble's extensive connections to push the Guild of Engineers out of central and northern Bostonia. The Guild still retained contracts in and south of Boston, but was financially weakened from the struggle. In y393, Pela Ostheimer petitioned the king for assistance. King Damon Tharkas threw his considerable resources behind the Guild of Engineers and left Vincent's company bankrupt. However, Tharkas then proceeded to oust Ostheimer and take control of the Guild as an office of the Bostonian Crown.

The Guild remained an office of the Tharkas monarchy for 33 years when the monarchy was dissolved by the Confederacy Pact in y426. The first Lord Mayor took charge of the guilds of Bostonia and gave the Engineers a special charter to operate as a Sponsored Independent Guild. A young engineer named Gavin Dorniker was made guild master.

The Engineers' Guild continues in this form until the current day.

The Confederacy Pact

The Tharkas family ruled Bostonia for four generations prior to the year of 423. That time period was marked with improvement of infrastructure, centralization, and an increase in the power of the monarch. The Tharkas had systematically created laws that undermined the rights of the barons. By 420, the barons had lost the rights to mint coins, hold their own courts; there were harsh limits on the sizes of their militaries, and many of their sons and daughters were essentially held hostage at Boston University.

Of course, this led to a rising discontent among the nobility. On several occasions, there were uprisings and brief civil strife. Both the Azareth and the Ander baronies openly defied the crown at times. These baronies managed to keep some of their former power, and had formidable natural defenses to protect them from invasion. Few others dared challenge the might of the Tharkas and those that did were quickly and harshly put down.

In y423, Xavier Tharkas died, leaving his only child, fourteen-year-old Talen Tharkas as his heir. Several barons laid claim to the throne. However, it was up to the Church to decide the matter of succession, and to the dismay of the barons, Talen took the throne, appointing Cardinal Fowler as his advisor and minister. Six months later, young King Talen died of a mysterious wasting disease. Talen had no heir, leaving the throne vacant.

Three years of civil war followed as the barons tried to take possession of the throne. Baloric, Falloren, and Faust all battled for control of Boston. The other baronies were drawn into the war, each backing one of the three principals. The intense and widespread fighting left towns burned and armies in ruin.

In y425, the forces of Baron Bagwah Terzani (backing Baloric) crushed the Faustian army at Lake Valice. With that defeat, Baron Faust was forced to pledge his allegiance to Baloric. In the meantime, the cobrats had taken notice of the internal strife among the Bostonians. Several Cobrat states decided to take advantage of the chaos. They allied and began preparing for a massive invasion of southern Bostonia.

Fearing continued chaos and a Cobrat invasion, Grand Father Weyrand tried to negotiate a peace. He promised almost total autonomy to the baronies. To maintain order and repel invasions, each barony would pay a tax in men, money, and resources. A central authority in Boston would use the resources to build a standing army. To prevent the nobility from using this considerable force to take control, a commoner with a military background would be chosen to head it.

Though many of the nobles supported the deal, both Baloric and Falloren balked. Both felt they were close to defeating the other and uniting Bostonia under their banner. In y426, their armies squared off near the town of Armor. There they fought for six days, clashing numerous times. Neither force was able to capture the field. Finally, when both groups were weary, a swarm of Templars and Aeltharze descended upon them, routing them.

The attack by the soldiers of the Church ended the civil war. The Confederacy Pact was signed by all of the barons in y426. The captain of the Bostonian Guard, Greyland Pak became the first Lord Mayor of Boston.

His first official act was to collect the ragged troops remaining from the recent battles and march them south where the Cobrat armies had massed. Though early battles went poorly for the humans, a particularly harsh winter stalled the Cobrat attack. By spring of y427, Lord Mayor Pak had managed to push the snake men south into the forests.

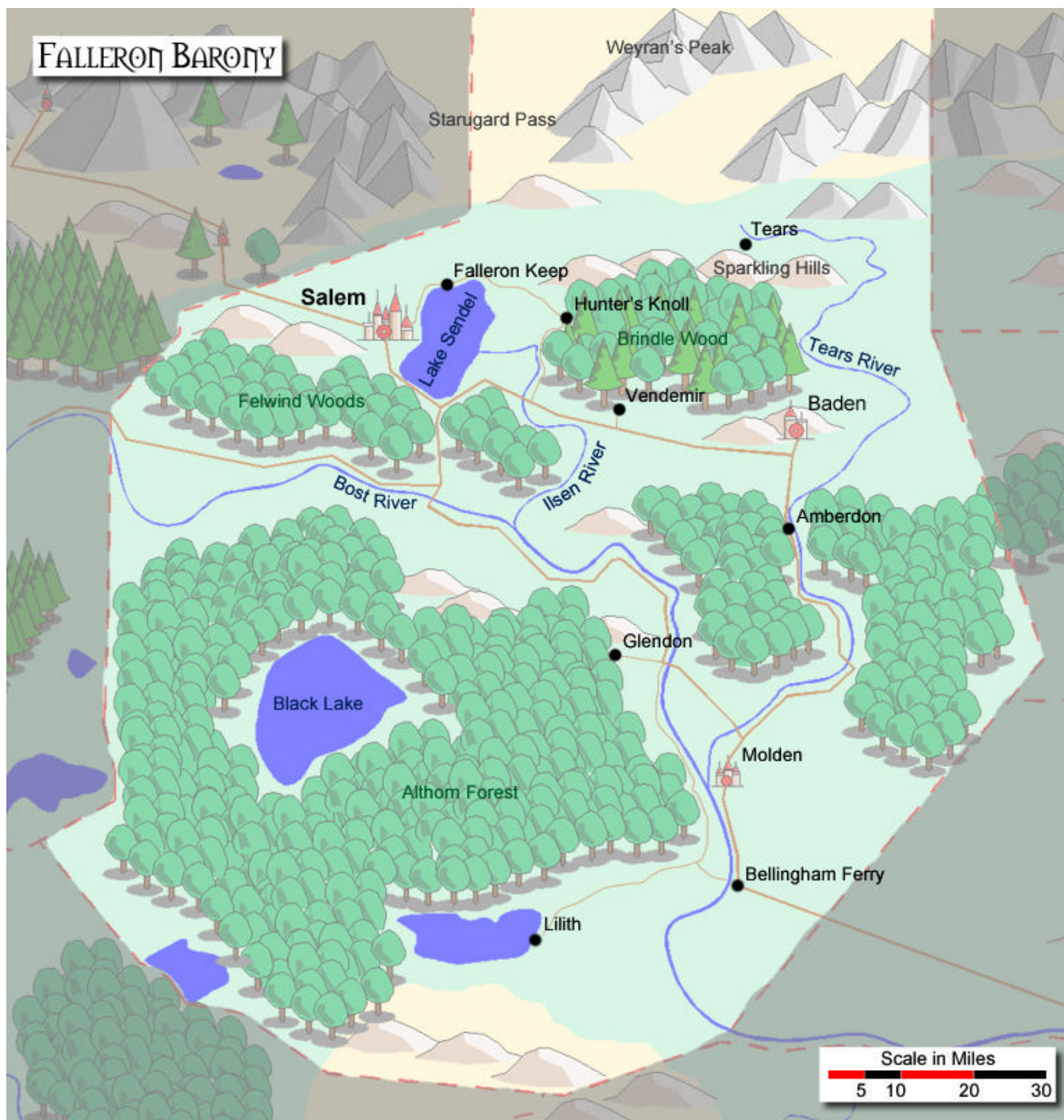
Over the course of the next 60 years, the office of Lord Mayor and the Church of Stratus became intertwined. The Lord Mayors of the time found themselves drawn into numerous arguments between barons. Having no noble ties meant that, although the Lord Mayors were impartial, they could rarely rely on diplomacy to solve these disputes and often had to resort to bullying the nobles to keep them in line. Since the nobles had grown strong in the years of the Confederacy, the Church had to back the Lord Mayor with threats of religious sanctions, or military action.

Finally in y485, a group of nobles led by Rianna Azareth petitioned the Grand Father to dissolve the office of Lord Mayor and recreate the monarchy. The Grand Father, Michael Richelau, realized that the Church had moved too far into the realm of secular politics. He wanted to relieve the Church of political concerns and focus on spiritual and theological matters.

After weeks of negotiation and private discussions with Rianna, Grand Father Richelau agreed that noble blood should rule the land. However, he also felt that bloody wars of succession should be avoided, and that the Church should have some role in determining who would rule. He penned the Traditions of Succession and the nobles adopted it.

Through the Traditions, Rianna Azareth was crowned the Queen of Bostonia in y485.

Geography



Falleron Barony

Timeline

Year	Falleron/Eltherist
12	Eltherist tribe given northern lands for their contribution in the Unification. Jinreh Eltherist becomes first baron of this land.
51	Jinreh dies and leaves control with his son Quan. Quan becomes baron of Eltherist.
179	Haruman becomes baron.

183	Eltherest first encounter borakki clansmen.
184	Borakki raid human villages.
187	Weyran Eltherist, firstborn of Haruman dies, leaving Lilith as the heir.
194	Haruman dies. Lilith becomes baroness.
202	Black Rains
210	Black Rains
211	Lilith dies and her sister Jennith takes over.
212	Jennith's rule is contested by her vassals.
213	A bloodless coup occurs with Thomas Falleron leading a coalition of nobles to overthrow Jennith. Eltherist rule is ended. Falloren Barony created with Thomas becoming baron.
219	Construction on Starugard fortifications begun.
222	Starugard fortifications complete. Borakki raiders turned back. Party of borakki clansmen slaughtered by Starugard border patrol.
223	Borakki clans defeat Starugard garrisons and invade Falleron.
224	Combined force of Falleron, Azareth, and King's Guard pushes borakki back through pass. Thomas Falleron makes peaceful contact with closest borakki clans.
247	Thomas dies. Thomas' son Timothy becomes baron.
248	Timothy cements peaceful relations with borakki. Falleron backs Childress family in their bid to take over Pelar.
274	Timothy Falleron dies. Timothy's son Edwin takes the throne. Edwin encourages Childress to end their war with Pelgrim and negotiate a peace.
275	War weary sides declare truce. The Church negotiates a lasting peace that sees the Pelar Barony divided into two states, Childress and Pelgrim.
423	Fourteen-year-old Talen Tharkas takes the throne. Six months later, he is dead of a mysterious rotting disease leaving no heir to the throne. Civil war ensues as several nobles vie for the vacant throne.
426	Battle of Armor. After fighting each other for 6 days, both Baloric and Falloren are defeated by an army of Templars and Aeltharze.
637	Lilith Eltherist is canonized.

General Information

Current Ruler	Roderick Falleron
Population	High
Military Might	Most Powerful of All the Baronies
Friends	Koren Barony, Richelau Barony, Shield Guild, Engineers' Guild
Enemies	Hierant Barony, White Ratlings, Vincent Barony, Olander Barony, Baloric Barony
Exports	Horses, Wood, Weapons, Finished Goods
Imports	Fine Weapons
Succession	First-Born Male

History

The lands now occupied by Falleron once belonged to the Eltherist tribe. After the Unification, King Jherod granted the Eltherist rule over their tribal lands, as well as much of the Dingore lands. The descendants of Eltherist ruled the lands for over 200 years.

In the year y179 Haruman Eltherist came to rule the land. Haruman was interested in exploration, and sent scouts to aggressively map the mountains to the north of his lands. When his scouts returned with news of a huge pass allowing easy access to unexplored territory, Haruman organized several expeditions to claim it. Haruman's oldest son, Weyran, led one of these expeditions.

Weyran spent several years in the northern territory. In y183, his expedition had encounters with several aggressive borakki clans. Though the first meetings were peaceful, the clans saw an opportunity in exploiting the physically inferior humans and the next year saw the first borakki raids on northern villages. Weyran also mapped a considerable portion of the borakki lands, and made contact with dozens of clans. In y187 Weyran got caught up in borakki clan warfare and was killed. This left Haruman's oldest daughter Lilith as the Eltherist heir.

When Haruman died in y194, Lilith was reluctant to take the Eltherist throne. She had gone to school at the Temple of the Dark Lake in Sunsrest, and had just become a Learned Sister. Leaving the Temple to deal with political matters seemed wrong to her. However, her younger sister was only 5 years old and thus unsuited to rule.

Several loyal vassals traveled to Sunsrest and tried to convince Lilith to return to the barony. One night after talking with these noblemen, Lilith had a vivid dream in which the Black Rains poisoned her father's barony. Lilith walked through the land, surrounded by disease and famine, and wherever she stepped, the land was healed. Lilith interpreted her dream as a message from Aestra. She remained a priestess, but returned to Eltherist and took her father's throne.

Lilith was a kind and merciful baroness and she quickly earned the love of her subjects. As she predicted, Black Rains came to Bostonia. The first rain came in y202, totally wiping out the barony's harvest. Lilith rallied the physicians and priestesses of her land to care for the thousands of people sickened by the rains. Lilith also went among the people to heal them and just like her vision, anyone she touched and any land upon which she walked was healed. Another rain came in y210. Once again, Lilith's miraculous healing powers were in evidence. Unfortunately, before she could complete her work, Lilith contracted the sickness herself, and died in y211.

Jennith Eltherist took control of the barony after her sister's death. Unfortunately, Jennith had lived in the shadow of her sister for many years and had grown selfish and callous in that time. She allowed her ministers to rule the land while she indulged in extravagant feasts and parties for her friends. Her vassals could not stand for such behavior while the barony was still reeling from the effects of the rains. Led by Lord Thomas Falleron, the nobles of Eltherist united and forced Jennith to abdicate her throne in y213. Thomas became baron and immediately started work reclaiming the lands scarred by the rains.

In y219 continued borakki raids prompted Baron Falleron to build a series of fortifications in the Starugard Pass. In y222, the completion of the fortifications closed the pass to borakki raiding parties. Many raiders turned back when they encountered the fortifications. However, in y223 a large party made up of clansmen from the Macgruden, Kerkull, and Giniss clans clashed with border patrols. The borakki drove off the initial force of Bostonian soldiers. However, when the borakki continued through the pass, they were ambushed and slaughtered.

The borakki clans were outraged. In their culture, raiding between rival clans was an honored tradition. Few raids resulted in deaths. The clans gathered their allies and marched south to teach the humans a lesson. The borakki's initial attack drove Falleron's troops from Starugard. The clansmen poured into Bostonia and burned several northern villages.

Battles continued through y224. Falleron and his vassals attempted to push the borakki out of Bostonia, but the clansmen were powerful and would not be moved. Baron Falleron called on the king and the Azareth to help them repel the invaders. As the vengeful borakki terrorized northern Falleron, the Bostonians amassed their army.

When the Bostonian army was ready, they marched north and attacked the raiders. The overwhelming force of the Bostonian army was more than able to compensate for the physical prowess of the borakki. The raiders fall back to the Starugard Pass where they encountered several units of Azareth mountaineers and archers. Taking heavy losses, the borakki fled through the pass back to their homeland. After the war, Baron Falleron rebuilt the Starugard defenses. In addition, he made efforts to make peaceful contact with the closest borakki clans. His efforts were successful in y233 when he obtained a treaty keeping borakki raiders out of Bostonia. In y247, Baron Timothy Falleron would sign a treaty with the Gaerkan of the Nation of Bor's Children, insuring peace for many years to come.

Between the years of y350 and y423, the Tharkas Family put five monarchs on the throne. The Tharkas Monarchs were meddlers and powermongers who were universally despised by the barons of Bostonia. During their reign, the powers of the barons were eroded and more and more authority was centralized in Boston. Though several barons considered leading a rebellion against the smothering rule of the Tharkas, none could unite enough support to do so.

However, in y423, fourteen year old Talen Tharkas took the throne. When he did so, he was a healthy young man. Soon after his ascension, he contracted a mysterious rotting disease. Under the influence of the disease, King Talen's muscles withered into nothing. No physician, priestess, or mage could determine the cause of the disease, or find a cure. In six months Talen was dead, leaving no heir to continue Tharkas rule.

The king's death set the stage for Baron Stephen Falleron to step forward and make a bid for the throne. The barons Baloric and Faust also desired the throne, and opposed Falleron's claim. The three barons met in Boston for nearly a month after the death of the king. However, the three could not reach an agreement and war was imminent.

For the next three years, Falleron, Baloric, Faust and their supporters clashed. Armies marched across Bostonia, fighting, looting and pillaging. The Church cajoled and threatened the barons, but could not stop the war. In the first two years of the war, each side tested the other two, fighting many battles, but not committing their forces to a decisive engagement. For Baloric and Faust, these small battles escalated and finally in the fall of y425, Baloric trapped Baron Faust and his army. As Baloric positioned his forces for the final blow, Stephen Falleron marched his troops south in hopes of catching both of his enemies weakened.

Baloric had anticipated such a move and his northern guard harassed Falleron's army. Falleron and his generals could not out maneuver Baloric's troops and their march was delayed at XYZ. Heavy snows ended any hope of Falleron reaching the battle in time. In y425, Faust surrendered to Baloric and pledged support for Baloric's bid for the throne.

That winter, Church officials traveled across Bostonia to gather support for a plan to end the war. Many barons and nobles supported the Church and with that backing, archbishops met with each camp trying to negotiate peace. The Barons balked at the Church's plan, each feeling that they could defeat the other once spring came. Having failed at diplomacy, the Grand Father and his Cardinals planned to end the war by military means.

The next spring, the land thawed and Falleron marched south to confront Baloric. The two armies met at Armor. As the armies clashed, a force of Templars and Aeltharze descended upon them. In the ensuing chaos, the forces of the Church decimated the barons' armies. Both Falleron and Baloric were forced to surrender and abandon their quest for the throne. Under the guidance of the Grand Father, the Bostonian barons signed the Confederacy Pact, dissolving the monarchy for 60 years.

Since the defeat at Armor, no Falleron has ever bid for the throne under the Traditions of Succession.

Region Notes

Falleron is the "grand old general" of Bostonia. Falleron has the largest, and best-trained military of any barony. In addition to a powerful infantry, Falleron has the largest cavalry force in the land. They are a force with which to be reckoned and their neighbors respect or fear them.

Falleron is blessed with three of the remaining eight surviving horse bloodlines in Bostonia. They boast three stables, and all of their herds are prospering and growing free of disease. Falleron also has excellent horse trainers. The horses are used to supply the cavalry, equip scout units and messengers, and are sold to rich nobles.

Falleron has the responsibility of protecting the Starugard Pass from incursions. Many years ago, borakki clansmen used this pass to raid human villages. Now the borakki come to trade, but a threat still exists. In the past 150 years, raids by the white ratlings have become more common. Now, it is almost certain that when the mountain pass thaws in the spring, the ratlings will come. Falleron maintains several garrisons and guard towers in Starugard and patrols aggressively during the spring and summer months.

Politics and Relations

Ever since y426 when Guyven Childress supported Falleron's bid for the throne, the two lands have been allies, and their rulers trusted friends. That friendship has continued to the present day, and now Falleron supports Koren in its continual battles against Hierant.

Falleron also maintains a good relationship with Richelau. Falleron respects the considerable power held by Richelau, and sees a land with similar traditions and goals. In addition, both baronies see the land of Vincent as an enemy, and are concerned over recent developments there.

Since the borakki raids ended, Falleron has had a beneficial relationship with the borakki Nation of Bor's Children. Borakki tradesmen frequent Salem and the northern villages. In addition, the two groups have coordinated to hold in check the yearly incursions of ratlings.

Falleron is mistrustful of Vincent, but needs passage through their territory for trade with Boston. Relations are strained, and there are continuous negotiations dealing with road and river access and tolls. Falleron sees Vincent as a land run by scoundrels and cowards, but publicly, their diplomats maintain an air of respect and cooperation.

Locations

Salem

Salem is the capital of Falleron Barony. It is a sprawling city of over 30,000 people on the shores of Lake Sendel. It is the center of trade in northern Bostonia. Most goods that are traveling south stop in Salem, and are shipped via the Ilsen River. It is renown for its docks that service hundreds of river boats every day. It is also the home of the University of Salem which specializes in medicine, philosophy, history, and alchemical science.

Falleron Keep

Baron Falleron's keep is a huge concentric castle with powerful walls, a moat, and a host of siege engines for its defense. The castle is built directly beside Lake Sendel. The moat is in fact a huge trench filled into which the lake water was allowed to flow. In addition, the castle has its own docks to service the baron and his court. The castle is surrounded by a small fishing village that shares the dock with its noble patrons.

Starugard Pass

Falleron guards the huge pass separating Bostonia from the lands of the borakki and white ratlings. Starugard is a huge gap in the mountains, more a valley than a pass. Falleron has dozens of watchtowers and garrisons guarding the pass from white ratling raiders who come every spring to test their newest schemes and devices against the human defenders. In addition, patrols protect the many merchants that use the pass to travel to and from nearby borakki towns.

Plots and Adventures

Just Another Day In Starugard

PCs are members of a border garrison in Starugard. They are ordered by their commander to find a merchant caravan that has disappeared in the pass. Did they get lost in the recent late spring snowstorm, or were they taken by white ratling raiders? Of course, if the GM does not want PCs to be members of the garrison, then they could be hired by the garrison commander to find the missing caravan.

Convincing the Gaerkan

PCs are merchants, or agents for a local merchant. They are charged with bringing a caravan of trade goods through the Starugard Pass to the nearby borakki village of Uld Tannon, the home of the Forl Tannon Clan. The merchants have an excellent relationship with Gardok, the gaerkan of Forl Tannon, and so expect the trip to be a success.

However, when they arrive, they find that Gardok is dead, and another family has taken charge of the clan. This new leader, Oren, is less sympathetic to the human traders, and refuses to do business with them.

At this point, the PCs have the choice of either returning home with the goods, traveling further into borakki lands to find another clan with which to trade, parleying with Oren to get him to trade, or finding a way to replace Oren with someone more willing to deal. There are a number of twists that can be applied to this situation. Gardok could have died under suspicious circumstances, or the ascension of Oren might split the clan into two camps. Of course, the whole situation could be made more urgent if the goods carried by the caravan were perishable. In any case, if the PCs decide to remain and deal with the situation in Uld Tannon, they will have to use their subterfuge and conversation skills to succeed.

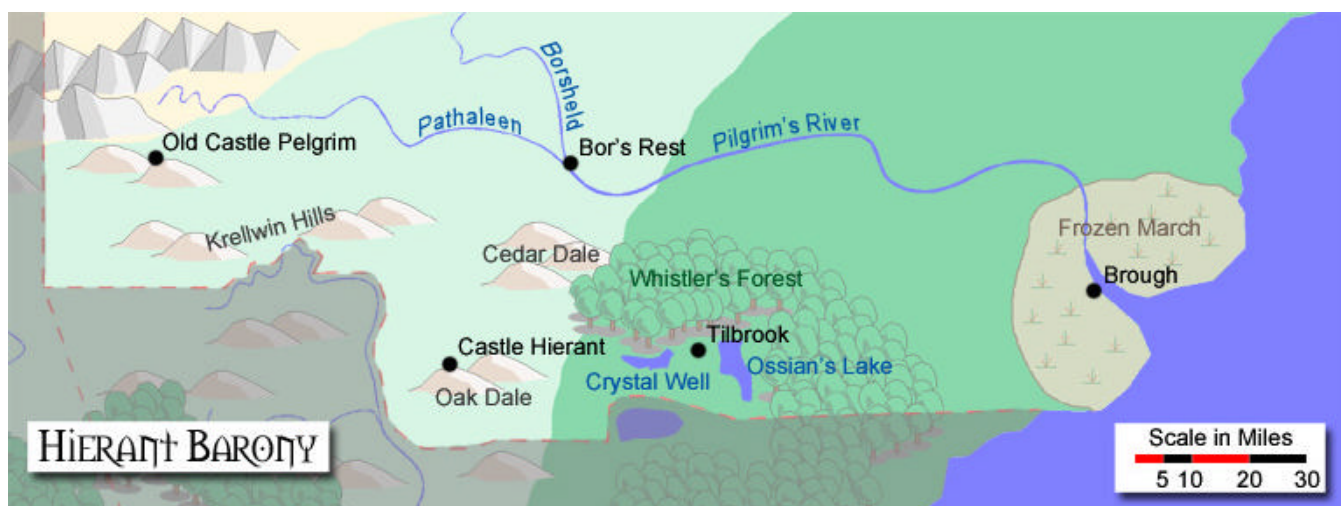
Something in the Lake

Boats have been disappearing on Lake Sendel for weeks now. Fishermen are claiming to have seen monstrous shadows speeding along the lake before they sink beneath the surface. Is it a monster, a freak natural occurrence, or evil magic that is the culprit?

White Ratling Plague

Residents of one of the northern villages have contracted a strange disease that causes them to suffer a terrible fever, fall into a coma, and then die. PCs could be passing through, or they could hear of the illness from reports in a nearby town. PCs with the physician skill, or divination magic can determine that the cause of the illness is not disease, but poison.

A nearby camp of white ratlings has poisoned the town's well and food supply. Why you ask? Well, the ratlings have learned that there is a powerful ancient site directly under this village and they need to clear the town before they excavate.



Hierant Barony

Timeline

Year	Hierant/Pelgrim
11	Pelar Barony formed and granted to Caldre Pelar and his tribe. The area of this barony (often called the Pelarem Region) is approximately what Hierant and Koren currently hold. Caldre Pelar becomes baron of Pelar Barony.
245	Vale Pelar takes throne of Pelar Barony.
269	Vale Pelar dies with no heir. The lines of succession are unclear. Pelar Barony undergoes a civil war as two distant branches of the family claim ownership of the land. Civil war rages for 6 years, involving neighboring barons backing their favored families.
275	War weary sides declare truce. The Church negotiates a lasting peace that sees the Pelar Barony divided into two states, Childress and Pelgrim. Northern Pelar becomes Pelgrim Barony. Disus Pelgrim becomes baron of Pelgrim Barony.
282	Border dispute over Krellwin River flares into combat between Childress and Pelgrim. Childress maintains control of the river.
298	Disus Pelgrim abdicates his barony to his son, Gerald. Gerald Pelgrim takes control of Pelgrim Barony.
324	Childress claims Lake Sotebar. Battle between forces of Childress and Pelgrim leaves Childress in control of the lake.
332	Gerald Pelgrim dies. Gerald's son Tilbrook takes control of Pelgrim Barony.
472	Henry takes control of Pelgrim Barony.
488	Henry Pelgrim attacks several Childress forts on the border in an attempt to secure the region. He then makes a bid to reclaim the Childress Barony for its own.
	Queen Rianna Azareth grants the land to the strongest vassal of the Childress clan, Samuel Koren. Pelgrim resent Koren for occupying their land.
493	Pelgrim and Koren battle over border dispute near Krellwin Hills.
511	Henry Pelgrim dies. Henry's son Christopher takes the Pelgrim throne.
516	Young nobles Val Pelgrim and Sara Koren meet at Baron Falleron's court and fall in love. Their parents do not approve of the couple.
517	Val and Sara continue to meet in secret and make arrangements for their marriage. Bandits attack the young lovers as they meet. Val Pelgrim survives the encounter, but Sara Koren is killed as she throws herself in front of a blow meant for her love. Both families blame the other for staging an assassination attempt.
522	Pelgrim attacks the Koren Barony. Val leads the attack, vowing revenge on Sara's Father.
524	War ends and the Pelgrim are defeated. When it is found that Val bolstered his troops with goblins and white ratlings, the Pelgrim are stripped of their lands. The barony is granted to Daphne Hierant, a distant relative to the Pelgrim clan. She promises normal relations with Koren, but disputes over post-war borders causes much strain.

531	Daphne leads a force to claim the hills of Oakdale for Hierant. She immediately starts building small fortifications along this section of the border.
536	Hierant Castle is constructed using borakki laborers. The Engineers' Guild complains about this violation of their monopoly, but Daphne Hierant refuses to deal with them.

General Information

Current Ruler	Valeria Hierant
Population	???
Military Might	???
Friends	Baloric Barony, Borakki, Spice Guild
Enemies	Koren Barony, Falleron Barony
Exports	Clay, Whale Meat, Whale Oil, Ice, Coal, Iron, Black Quartz
Imports	Borakki Goods, Wood, Finished Goods, Fruit, Food, Settlers, Labor
Succession	First-Born Child

History

The Hierant and Koren baronies started as part of the Pelar barony. King Jherod formed the Pelar barony in y11 to reward the Pelar tribe for their part in winning the War of Unification. The Pelar barons ruled their land with honor for over 250 years. However, early in the 200's, a contested inheritance split the family along two distinct branches, the Childress and the Pelgrim. The two branches of the family fought for years, first with words, then financially. Finally, after three generations of simmering hatred, the Pelar barony exploded into civil war.

In y269 Lord Disus Pelgrim supplemented his personal forces with mercenary companies and marched against Childress' strongholds. Battles raged across central Pelar and did not end until the Church negotiated a peace by splitting the barony between the two factions.

The settlement stopped the fighting for only a short time. The new barons Childress and Pelgrim hated one another and sought any opportunity for conflict. Disputes over territory and resources erupted into battle several times between y275 and y350, most notably in y282 and y324.

During the generations of conflict, the Childress family developed a strong relationship with Falloren. Falloren constantly backed Childress as they slowly claimed the resources of their rival. When Falloren made a bid for the throne in y426, Baron Guyven Childress mobilized to support him. The campaign climaxed in the Battle of Armor in which the armies of Falloren and Childress were destroyed by a force of Templars and Aeltharze. Baron Childress died at Armor along with his sons. Control of the barony passed to Morton Childress who had no heir. When Morton died childless at age 89, the Childress line ended.

With the fate of the Childress lands uncertain, Baron Henry Pelgrim used the confusion to destroy several Childress garrisons and claim key resources along the border. He then claimed the entire lands of Childress as his own. Many vassals of Childress and Barons Falloren and Olander refuted Pelgrim's claims. Queen Azareth held an assembly in the city of Jherod in which she listened to the claims. After three weeks of legal arguments, she decided to grant the land to Childress' most powerful vassal, Samuel Koren. The Pelgrim family stormed out of the assembly vowing to destroy Koren and reclaim their land.

Samuel Koren made several peace overtures to Pelgrim. These gestures were ignored and the relationship between the neighboring baronies remained strained. In y493 fighting started over access to the mineral-rich Krellwin Hills. Over the next generation, battles flared every 2 or 3 years and the border between the two lands shifted continuously. Finally in y515, Archbishop Ptolemy, under pressure from the Grand Father, called a summit between the two barons to bring a lasting peace to the region.

The barons met at Falleron's Keep and both brought a retinue of advisors and bodyguards with them. They also happened to bring their heirs to the summit, in hopes of teaching them the art of diplomacy. However, when the two young heirs met, they felt an inescapable attraction to one another. As the summit raged and their fathers argued, Val Pelgrim and Sara Koren arranged nightly meetings where they could talk in secret. By the time the summit adjourned, the two had fallen in love.

Val and Sara continued to arrange meetings whenever they could. The young lovers arranged "official" trips to Boston, Salem, and Ismoth, and though they tried to remain discreet. Word of the couple got back to their families. Though the recent negotiations had brought peace, neither family was willing to let go of their mutual hatred and the lovers were forbidden to see each other. This disapproval only strengthened Val and Sara's desire. They continued to meet, and even planned marriage.

One night, during a midnight meeting, the couple were set upon by bandits. An apt swordsman, Val attempted to confront the attackers, but they outnumbered him. Sara attempted to help, but as she did so, she was killed by a sword meant for her lover. Val eventually escaped and made his way back to Castle Pelgrim. Each family hurled accusations at the other. Val was certain that the "bandits" were actually assassins hired by Baron Koren to kill him. The angry young man tried to convince his father to mass an army to destroy Koren once and for all. However, the Pelgrim Barony was weak from the years of conflict. Revenge was not a possibility at this time.

Instead of rushing to war, Baron Pelgrim and his son met with Koren and offered a lasting peace. The fighting ended for five years, during which the Pelgrim hoarded their resource, built their military force, and planned their attack. As the time for attack drew near, Val realized that Pelgrim simply did not have the troops to crush Koren. To bolster his troops, he made contact with several goblin tribes and a group of white ratlings. He offered the non-humans silver and slaves for their support in the coming conflict.

In y522 Val Pelgrim led his army deep into Koren territory. Pelgrim used his non-human troops and the element of surprise to gain an initial advantage. However, Isram Koren called on support from Falloren and Richelau and defeated Pelgrim's army at Plithan. Then he marched to Castle Pelgrim and razed it, defeating the Pelgrim utterly. When it was learned that Val Pelgrim recruited white ratlings into his army, King XYZ stepped in and stripped the Pelgrim of their lands. He granted the lands to Daphne Hierant, a distant branch of the Pelgrim. These lands exist to this day.

Region Notes

Peasants and laborers across much of Bostonia generally pay attention to the feuds of nobles only when it directly affects them. After all, one ruler is as good as the next, and the day-to-day life of a peasant is unlikely to change when a new baron comes to rule. People of the Hierant Barony feel differently. Hierant has been at war with their neighbor for hundreds of years, and that long-standing conflict is deeply ingrained in all people here, regardless of their station. Hierant citizens take the conflict personally, and will go out of their way to make life difficult for anyone who they feel is sympathetic to Koren.

Hierant is plagued by poor infrastructure. Since the time of Diane, the Hierant family has consistently used borakki labor to perform public works. The Engineers' Guild disapproves of this practice and has boycotted Hierant. Though borakki labor is good and cheap, the Hierant lack trained civil engineers. Though there are roads throughout the barony, they are of poor design, have little drainage, and tend to pit and wash out. The Pilgrim's River is the only reliable means of fast travel in the land.

Baron Vincent has recently opened relations with Hierant. The Engineers also boycott Vincent, but he has compensated by starting his own private engineering corps. If relations between the two baronies continues to improve, it is likely that Vincent will start to aid Hierant improve its infrastructure.

Politics/Relations

The lands of the northern and southern Pelarem Region have a history of conflict. Ever since y269, when civil war divided the Pelar Barony, the descendants of Pelgrim and Childress have fought for control of this land. These battles have left Hierant politically isolated and surrounded by enemies.

Hierant and Koren hate each other, and oppose each other at every turn. Both baronies keep troops stationed at the border, and though no large-scale conflict has occurred in years, the patrols often "accidentally" cross into enemy territory and engage in skirmishes. There is no trade or cooperation between the two baronies, and Hierant actively lobbies against Koren in the King's Assembly.

Falleron has historically supported Childress and Koren, and for this reason, Hierant considers them an enemy. Falleron lent troops and money to Koren's war effort, and has even attacked directly to support Koren. Hierant does not have enough troops to patrol its western border, and certainly does not have enough power to act against Falleron. Hierant looks to the Church and King to keep Falleron's military machine from claiming large chunks of its western territory.

The people of Hierant and the borakki of Cragshold maintain a brisk trade and cooperate to fight the few goblin tribes that exist in the region. Cragshold borakki sail down the Borsheld River bringing hides, furs, brightsteel, weapons, and stone to Bor's Rest. Borakki long ships carry stoors and stoor honey to Brough.

In recent years, Vincent has opened negotiations with Hierant. If successful, these negotiations will see the two baronies trading (via a sea route) and cooperating on infrastructure, and defense. Koren and Falleron have done what they can to derail these talks, but plans for the trade route have already begun. It looks likely that Vincent and Hierant will soon become allies.

Interesting Places

Old Castle Pelgrim

During the last battles of the Pelgrim-Koren war, Isram Koren stormed Pelgrim's Keep, razing it. Over the course of the last 250 years, several minor nobles have tried to rebuild the keep, but none have succeeded. The keep lies in ruins to this day, and is now the home of a band of savage goblins led by a troll.

Krellwin Hills

The Krellwin Hills are dotted with coal and ore mines. The minerals are marched north to the Pathaleen River and then rafted to Brough. Krellwin is a prime target of the Koren, and thus is well defended by forts.

Bor's Rest

Bor's Rest is a trade town of about 350 citizens. It is a way station for minerals traveling down the Pathaleen River, and for borakki coming down the Borsheld. This is a good place to trade, converse with, and hire borakki. In addition, the Borsheld River is navigable for many miles to the north. A ferry can take a traveler well into borakki lands.

Hierant Castle

Daphne Hierant built this fortification in y536. It is a strong castle with two concentric walls, a large garrison, and several catapults. The castle is build to withstand a prolonged siege, and to stop a Koren invasion.

Brough

This is a port of 800 citizens built on drained swampland. Its workers take goods from the Pilgrim River and transfers them to ships headed for Boston, Ismoth, and cobrat and borakki territory.

Frozen March

A dark and dank marsh surrounds the town of Brough. It is frozen all through the winter, but thaws in the early spring. When thawed, the marsh is filled with mosquitoes, and makes the land impassable. Ferryboats carry passengers and goods upriver, or down the coast a few miles where serviceable roads can be found.

Plots and Adventures

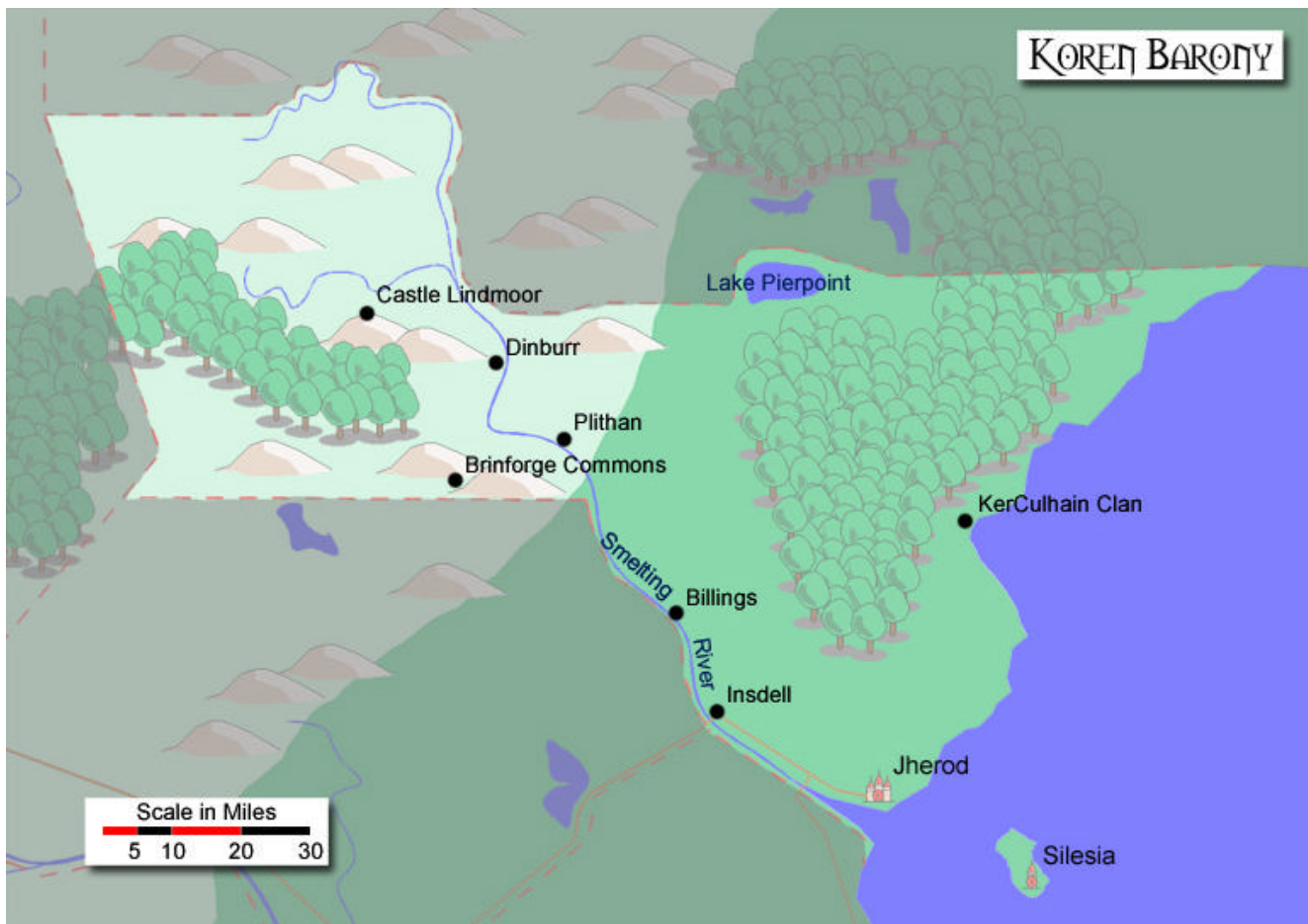
Reclaiming Castle Pelgrim

Lord Janasco has been granted a large plot of land in western Hierant. The land has been unused for many years and has grown wild and hostile. Janasco wants to use Castle Pelgrim as his base, but it is currently occupied by a troupe of goblins and trolls. PCs could be hired to scout the castle, or clear it out "dungeon crawl" style. Alternately, if the gaming group is interested in tactical miniatures battles, the PCs could be placed in charge of a small army and could face the humanoids in a mass battle. Once the castle is cleared, Lord Janasco could retain the PCs as advisors and sheriffs to help him tame the surrounding lands.

Finding Sara's Killer

For over 300 years, the Pelgrim and their successors, the Hierant have claimed that Val Pelgrim's war against the Koren was just. They claim that Sara Koren's own father hired the assassins that accidentally killed her. Now they feel they may have proof of this dastardly act. Vincent Pelgrim, a descendant of Val Pelgrim and a minor vassal of Hierant, has found a cache of letters written to Val by Sara Koren. In these letters Sara told Val that she stole documents detailing her father's plan to assassinate him. She warned Val to postpone a coming trip to Boston, and indicated that she was deciding what she would do with the incriminating plans.

The next week, Sara and Val hurriedly scheduled a meeting. While the two rode in carriage, they were set upon by bandits and Sara was killed. Vincent Pelgrim then shows the characters a second letter where she describes the concealed compartment in which she hid her private journal and Val's letters. Vincent believes that Sara may not have had time to deal with the assassination plans before her death. He believes that the young noblewoman's concealed compartment might still hold the incriminating document, or other evidence against her father. Vincent hires the PCs to find the young noblewoman's hidden compartment and discover what secrets lie within. Of course, the Koren family still lives in the castle and characters will have to use their social skills or stealth to gain access to the bedroom.



Koren Barony

Timeline

Year	Koren/Childress
11	Pelar Barony formed and granted to Caldre Pelar and his tribe. The area of this barony (often called the Pelarem Region) is approximately what Hierant and Koren currently hold. Caldre Pelar becomes baron of Pelar Barony.
245	Vale Pelar takes throne of Pelar Barony.
269	Vale Pelar dies with no heir. The lines of succession are unclear. Pelar Barony undergoes a civil war as two distant branches of the family claim ownership of the land. Civil war rages for 6 years, involving neighboring barons backing their favored families.
275	War weary sides declare truce. The Church negotiates a lasting peace that sees the Pelar Barony divided into two states, Childress and Pelgrim. Southern Pelar becomes Childress Barony. Elder Childress becomes baron of Pelgrim Barony.
282	Border dispute over Krellwin River flares into combat between Childress and Pelgrim. Childress maintains control of the river.
284	Elder Childress dies. Fialla Childress becomes Baroness.
324	Childress claims Lake Sotebar. Battle between forces of Childress and Pelgrim leaves Childress in control of the lake.
340	Fialla Childress dies. Aldora Childress becomes Baroness.
426	Battle of Armor. After fighting each other for 6 days, both Baloric and Falloren are defeated by an army of Templars and Aeltharze.

	Childress backs Falloren in his bid for the throne. Guyven Childress, and his sons Mazran and Argent fight in the battle of Armor. All three are killed. Childress Barony passes to Morton Childress.
488	Morton Childress dies childless at age 89. The Childress family, weakened from their losses at Armor, finally dies out. Henry Pelgrim attacks several Childress forts on the border in an attempt to secure the region. He then makes a bid to reclaim the Childress Barony for its own.
	Queen Rianna Azareth grants the land to the strongest vassal of the Childress clan, Samuel Koren. Pelgrim resent Koren for occupying their land.
493	Pelgrim and Koren battle over border dispute near Krellwin Hills.
516	Young nobles Val Pelgrim and Sara Koren meet at Baron Falleron's court and fall in love. Their parents do not approve of the couple.
517	Val and Sara continue to meet in secret and make arrangements for their marriage. Bandits attack the young lovers as they meet. Val Pelgrim survives the encounter, but Sara Koren is killed as she throws herself in front of a blow meant for her love. Both families blame the other for staging an assassination attempt.
522	Pelgrim attacks the Koren Barony. Val leads the attack, vowing revenge on Sara's Father.
524	War ends and the Pelgrim are defeated. When it is found that Val bolstered his troops with goblins and white ratlings, the Pelgrim are stripped of their lands.
525	A weary Samuel Koren turns the throne over to his son Dovid. Dovid takes the Koren throne.
531	Daphne leads a force to claim the hills of Oakdale for Hierant. She immediately starts building small fortifications along this section of the border.
608	Brinforge Commons founded.

General Information

Current Ruler	Samuel Koren V
Population	Low
Military Might	Moderate
Friends	Falleron Barony
Enemies	Hierant Barony, Vincent Barony, Olander Barony
Exports	Fine Weapons
Imports	High Grade Iron and Steel
Succession	First-Born Child

History

The Hierant and Koren baronies started as part of the Pelar barony. King Jherod formed the Pelar barony in y11 to reward the Pelar tribe for their part in winning the War of Unification. The Pelar barons ruled their land with honor for over 250 years. However, early in the 200's, a contested inheritance split the family along two distinct branches, the Childress and the Pelgrim. The two branches of the family fought for years, first with words, then financially. Finally, after three generations of simmering hatred, the Pelar barony exploded into civil war.

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The settlement stopped the fighting for only a short time. The new barons Childress and Pelgrim hated one another and sought any opportunity for conflict. Disputes over territory and resources erupted into battle several times between y275 and y350, most notably in y282 and y324.

During the generations of conflict, the Childress family developed a strong relationship with Falloren. Falloren constantly backed Childress as they slowly claimed the resources of their rival. When Falloren made a bid for the throne in y426, Baron Guyven Childress mobilized to support him. The campaign climaxed in the Battle of Armor in which the armies of Falloren and Childress were destroyed by a force of Templars and Aeltharze. Baron Childress died at Armor along with his sons. Control of the barony passed to Morton Childress who had no heir. When Morton died childless at age 89, the Childress line ended.

With the fate of the Childress lands uncertain, Baron Henry Pelgrim used the confusion to destroy several Childress garrisons and claim key resources along the border. He then claimed the entire lands of Childress as his own. Many vassals of Childress and Barons Falloren and Olander refuted Pelgrim's claims. Queen Azareth held an assembly in the city of Jherod in which she listened to the claims. After three weeks of legal arguments, she decided to grant the land to Childress' most powerful vassal, Samuel Koren. The Pelgrim family stormed out of the assembly vowing to destroy Koren and reclaim their land.

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In y522 Val Pelgrim led his army deep into Koren territory. Pelgrim used his non-human troops and the element of surprise to gain an initial advantage. However, Isram Koren called on support from Falloren and Richelau and defeated Pelgrim's army at Plithan. Then he marched to Castle Pelgrim and razed it, defeating the Pelgrim utterly. When it was learned that Val Pelgrim recruited white ratlings into his army, Queen Azareth stepped in and stripped the Pelgrim of their lands. He granted the lands to Daphne Hierant, a distant branch of the Pelgrim. These lands exist to this day.

Region Notes

Peasants and laborers across much of Bostonia generally pay attention to the feuds of nobles only when it directly affects them. After all, one ruler is as good as the next, and the day-to-day life of a peasant is unlikely to change when a new baron comes to rule. People of the Koren Barony feel differently. Koren has been at war with their neighbor for hundreds of years, and that long-standing conflict is deeply ingrained in all people here, regardless of their station. Koren citizens take the conflict personally, and will go out of their way to make life difficult for anyone who they feel is sympathetic to Hierant.

Politics and Relations

As is obvious from the history above, Koren and Hierant are continuously at odds. The ruling families of these two lands hate each other, and will do everything in their power to defeat their rival. Both baronies have garrisons stationed along their border. Small border conflicts are common, and these occasionally expand into more lethal campaigns. Koren and Hierant do not trade, or cooperate, and actively oppose each other whenever possible. This long conflict has left Koren economically weak.

However, Koren has support from one of the most powerful baronies in the land. Ever since Guyven Childress battled alongside Falleron troops at Armor, the two baronies have become staunch allies. For nearly 400 years, Falleron has traded with Koren, and supported it militarily and economically.

On the other hand, Vincent and Olander have been courting Hierant recently. The three baronies look as though they are very close to signing a deal that would essentially make Hierant, Vincent, and Olander trade and military partners. Whereas the balance of power in the northeast is currently in Koren and Falloren's favor, this agreement would certainly tip it back in favor of Hierant and its allies. Both Falloren and Koren are nervous about this turn of events, but aside from drastic measures, it seems there is little they can do.

Koren has an excellent relationship with the nearby borakki – perhaps the best of any Bostonian barony. Several of the clans allied with the Ker Culhain (see below) before their disgrace are grateful to Koren for giving land to the exiled borakki. These allied clans cannot associate with the Ker Culhain, but they have established relationships with Koren. Koren trades with seven borakki clans, and borakki workers are welcome in the barony. Many borakki work at the Jherod Shipyards, and Brinforge Commons.

More recently, the borakki have been sharing maps and shipbuilding techniques with Koren. With the help of the borakki, Koren has sent several exploratory parties to the land of Belfern, and has even started two small colonies there.

Interesting Places

Brinforge Commons

It is said that almost 200 years ago, a group of miners excavated an ancient anvil from the rocks deep beneath the Brin Hills. They gave the anvil to a nearby village smith, Halley Roth, who provided tools for the mine. Miraculously, the quality of Roth's tools increased fivefold. They were lighter, sharper, and resisted rusting and breaking. Other nearby smiths traveled to Roth's shop to see this wonderful forge.

After news spread of the anvil's power, Baron Koren commissioned Roth to produce a cache of weapons. The weapons pleased the baron and he immediately sent a group of workers and soldiers to the village to construct a new forge for Roth. This place was named Brinforge Commons and it is used to produce weapons and tools for the baron and his men.

Ker Culhain Home

In y736 a clan of borakki, crowded into their fleet of longboats, arrived in Jherod. The leader of the refugees, Marduc Ker Culhain requested an audience with Baron Koren. He explained to the baron that his clan had been exiled for the crimes of its seer. They needed a place to live and work, and an opportunity to rebuild their clan and its honor. After consulting with the Archbishop, Harmon Koren decided to allow the borakki to remain on his land. He made Marduc Ker Culhain his vassal, and granted him a small plot of land on the coast of Koren.

Jherod

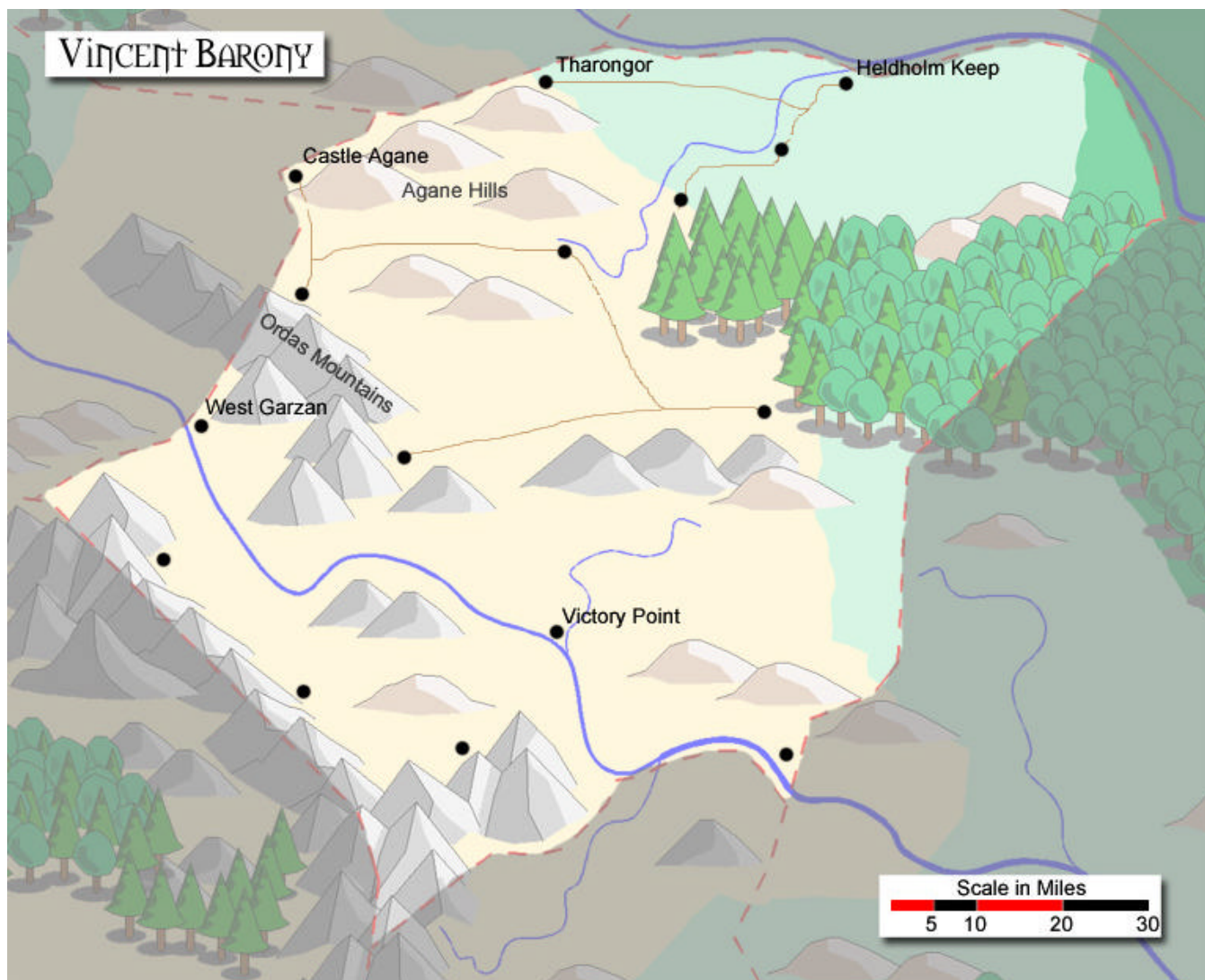
Jherod is the capital of Koren Barony. It is a city of 15,000 people with approximately four times that living in the surrounding towns and villages. It is the center of trade and government for Koren. It also acts as a base of operations for borakki ship captains entering Bostonia. It boasts a busy port and a shipyard with several skilled shipwrights, including a borakki shipwright.

Castle Lindmoor

Irenstole

In y789, relying on maps provided by borakki shipbuilders, a fleet of four small ships traveled northeast past the borakki lands and to a land called Belfern. Belfern is a land of icy peaks, windblown plains, and sprawling crystal caverns. The winters are long and dismal, with chill winds, and 12-inch snowfalls being normal. Summer brings only a few weeks of relief. However, some of the lowest valleys bloom into beautiful seas of flowers, herbs, and bushes for those weeks.

The outpost of Irenstole lies on the southern coast of Belfern approximately 1000 miles northeast of Boston. About 300 people live here, scouting the land, prospecting for useful mineral deposits, and scratching out a living by hunting the local wildlife.



Vincent Barony

Timeline

Year	Vincent/Klein
212	Arenna Bost, the last of the original Bost tribe, dies. The Bost line is ended. Succession to the Bost lands is debated. Many think the lands should be split between Bost's vassals. Many nobles, including Ashe Vincent make claims to their land.
213	King Balin Ernst is asked to resolve the dispute over the Bost lands. Under serious pressure from Cardinal Richelau, he names Lord Cameron Richelau to be the new steward of the barony.
218	Several nobles in Richelau revolt and try to oust Cameron. Cameron crushes this revolt with the aid of the king's troops. Ashe Vincent stays out of the direct conflict, but covertly supports the rebellion with supplies and money.
365	Sir Lorne Vincent creates Association of Scholars and Engineers.
378	Midlands war pits several nobles against one another over mining rights in central Bostonia. King Damon Tharkas intervenes, defeats the nobles (including Vincent) and Barony Klein is created. Rimwort Klein is named baron. Pela Ostheimer purchases Association of Scholars and Engineers, moves it to Boston and renames it the Guild of Engineers.
388	Sir Lorne Vincent creates second Association of Scholars and Engineers.
393	King Damon Tharkas takes over the Guild of Engineers and puts the Association out of business. The Vincent family is left destitute.

399	Rimwort Klein dies and his son Palin takes command. Palin Klein becomes baron.
421	Vincent family inherits a small sum of money from distant relatives. After some shrewd investments, the Vincent clan is once again accepted at court.
424	Cedric Vincent convinces several mercenary companies to join him in overthrowing the Klein Barony. The new baron immediately proclaims his support for Baloric's bid to the throne. In return, Baloric recognizes Vincent as the true rulers of Klein.
426	Battle of Armor. After fighting each other for 6 days, both Baloric and Falloren are defeated by an army of Templars and Aeltharze. Vincent and his army are delayed by bad weather and miss the Battle of Armor. By the time he arrives, the battle has turned against Baloric. Vincent returns to Klein and prepares to fortify his newly claimed lands.
428	The Lord Mayor, knowing that he will be unable to dislodge Vincent, and pressured by Baloric, recognize Cedric Vincent as the leader of central Bostonia. Klein Barony is renamed to suit its new master. Cedric becomes baron of new Vincent Barony.
433	Cedric Vincent founds Victory Point to commemorate the acknowledgement of Vincent as the true ruler of the midlands.
511	Cedric Vincent dies at the amazing age of 110. Cedric outlived all of his children and siblings. His nephew, Palin takes the throne at age 72.
519	Palin Vincent dies. Gharmon Vincent takes the throne.
567	Falleron places territorial claims on northwest region of Vincent Barony. The claims cover most of the Agane Hills and Ordas Mountains.
568	Falleron's claims to the Agane and Ordas regions of Vincent are refuted, but Gharmon Vincent refuses to have the case heard by the King. Falleron gathers troops and pushes into and around the Agane hills.
569	Gharmon Vincent dies. Felina Vincent becomes baroness of Vincent Barony. Felina pushes Falleron's troops out of Agane and petitions the King to hear claims on the region. Falleron accuses Vincent of sabotaging the evidence of their claim, but withdraws the claim.
571	Felina Vincent forms the Third Association of Scholars and Engineers.
572	Felina Vincent commissions the Third Association of Scholars and Engineers to build a line of fortifications along the northwest border.
575	Castle Agane built.
587	Fortifications complete. Felina Vincent dies. Nero Vincent becomes Baron.
696	Xavier Udong is expelled from the Sandalfeet and barely escapes with his life.
701	Xavier unites dozens of bandit groups and outlaw mercenaries into a small, but effective fighting force. He raids the surrounding territory and is called "The Bandit Lord" by the local populace.
702	Lord Grod Helmund defeats the Bandit Lord Xavier. Helmund is granted the bandit keep and the surrounding lands as a reward. The keep is renamed Helmhold.
	Gadras Vincent takes command of the barony.
789	Gadras Vincent dies. Ordis Vincent takes command of the barony.
793	Vincent begins courting Olander, pouring money and manpower at their failing infrastructure.
799	Mining camps in northern Agane established.
802	Vincent begins investing in Hierant Barony. Trade and military agreements between the two lands are negotiated.
804	Tharongor discovered.

General Information

Current Ruler	Ordis Vincent
Population	
Military Might	Low-Moderate, but with interesting Siege Engines, and War Machines
Friends	Hierant, Olander, Mathematicians' Guild
Enemies	Falleron, Koren, Engineers' Guild
Exports	
Imports	
Succession	Oldest Child

History

The land that is now the Vincent Barony used to be called the Midlands Region. The Midlands are a rocky, mineral-rich region with excellent mineral deposits. Several baronies claimed these lands, but none owned the troops or infrastructure to truly control them. Instead, the barons, and their dozens of vassals built small fortifications and staked their claim, much like gold rush prospectors would. The region's borders shifted continuously with new mining companies starting, and nobles coming and going as their fortunes changed.

Up until y377, the various factions coexisted peacefully. However, prospectors representing the Midlands Mining Company found a particularly rich silver deposit that year. At the time they found the vein, they did not have the equipment to start digging. A group of prospectors stayed behind to guard the claim, while others traveled to gather more men and equipment.

While the prospectors waited, another group representing Lord Karl Estavo stumbled upon them. When Estvo's men realized how rich the silver deposit was, they concocted a plan to drive the prospectors from their claim. They had with them a large amount of alchemical reagents used to test ore samples. They poured the reagents into the small stream from which the prospectors got their water. The tainted water made the Midland prospectors ill and they were forced to leave. When the mining companies miners arrived, they found Estavo's men working their claim.

The Midland Company miners were furious and decided to repay Estavo's men for stealing their claim. They setup camp a couple of miles from Estavo's camp. One night, they snuck into the mine and sabotaged several machines, hoping to bring work to a standstill. Unfortunately, the machines collapsed when they failed, killing three of Estavo's men.

The next day, Estavo's men traveled to the Midlands Mining camp and attacked, killing 11 men and wounding several others. The Midland miners retaliated that night, but as they made their way to Estavo's camp, they mistakenly attacked a supply train owned by Lord Pritchard, drawing them into the violence.

Over the next several weeks, violence broke out among several of the factions in the region. Lord Vincent saw a possibility in the chaos. He hired a group of mercenaries and marched them into the midst of the fighting. His trained warriors easily defeated the miner rabble. Once he drove the other factions out of the area, he moved his own workers into the mines and took control under the pretence of maintaining order.

Vincent's gamble put him in control of several of Midlands' most profitable mines. However, it also escalated the violence. Other nobles followed Vincent's example and gathered their own troops to protect their holdings or to attack the holdings of others. For many months, the region was consumed in battles.

Dismayed at the failure of order, King Damon Tharkas decided to act. He gathered his men and marched into the Midlands, defeating one noble after another. Within seven months, King Tharkas controlled the region. To punish the factions, Tharkas drove them out of the region, and set up a new barony with Rupert Klein in command. The nobles were outraged at the loss of their land, but they had been weakened from months of fighting in the mountains. None of the nobles alone could seriously challenge the King's decree, and the lingering resentment between the factions kept them from allying.

The Kleins ruled their barony from y378 to y424. However, when the barons battled for the throne upon the death of Talen Tharkas, Vincent saw his opportunity. Under the cover of the political chaos sweeping the land, Vincent raised an army of mercenary troops and overthrew Klein in a bloody battle. Once his control of Klein Barony was established, Vincent immediately backed Baloric in his bid for the Bostonian throne. In return, Baloric promised to recognize Vincent's claim to the Midlands region.

The final battle of the Bostonian Succession War occurred at Armor. There, the armies of Baloric and Falleron clashed and while they were engaged, the forces of the Church ambushed them. All of the armies involved took terrible losses, and found their will to fight depleted. The two barons reluctantly signed the Confederacy Pact, ending the war. Vincent had promised that his troops would support Baloric at Armor. However, logistical problems and "bad weather" delayed his forces. By the time Vincent arrived at Armor, the battle had ended.

The fortuitous delay meant that while many of Bostonia's most capable armies lay in tatters, Vincent's forces remained strong and combat-ready. When the Confederacy Pact was signed, Vincent's victory was complete. The new Lord Mayor did not have the authority to dislodge a seated baron. Baloric lobbied the Church to allow Vincent to remain in power. After much debate, Vincent kept his throne.

Region Notes

The Vincent family has always resented the Engineers' Guild ever since they were forced to sell it in y378. The Guild is not permitted to operate inside the barony, and the baron and his supporters do what they can to oppose the Engineers. All public works projects in the barony are handled by The Third Association of Scholars and Engineers, an organization founded by Felina Vincent in y571. The Third Association is a group of skilled and well-trained architects and engineers. They do an excellent job of building and maintaining the mines, roads, bridges, and dams of the barony. Their craftsmanship is widely praised, and some even say their work is superior to that of the Engineers. This group is supported by Baron Vincent, as well as the Mathematicians' Guild.

The last three barons of Vincent have been considered mechanical geniuses and inventors of the highest repute. The mines of the Vincent Barony are equipped with devices that improve the safety and efficiency of the miners. Similar marvels can be found at building sites, smelters, and state-run smithies. Vincent keeps the plans of these devices a well-guarded secret. Many outside organizations would like to get a close look at these devices, or steal the plans for them. So far, they have not been successful in doing so.

Politics and Relations

Vincent is the "scoundrel" of Bostonia. The history of the region has been one of revolution, violence, and treachery. Because of this, and the shady dealings of its rulers, people in other baronies cast a wary eye toward Vincent. However, Vincent's strategic position makes it a powerful barony, and its power and wealth make it a desirable ally.

Recently, Vincent has opened relations with its northeast neighbor, Olander. For years, Bostonian noble circles have whispered of mental illness in the Olander clan. Rumors abound of a degenerative condition, afflicting each generation with a more crippling form of insanity. The existence of this illness has never been proven, but the evidence is compelling. For years, the Olander clan had ignored the condition of the barony. Roads degraded, farmland lay fallow, and disease was allowed to run rampant among the livestock. Many peasants starved, or fled to other lands.

Vincent has poured money, men, and expertise into the Olander Barony, repairing the failing infrastructure, and providing relief to the suffering peasantry. The young baron, Callus Olander, is spending a great deal of time in Vincent's court and now accompanies Baron Vincent as he travels. The two barons have become political allies and are reportedly becoming close friends.

Hierant is another barony in which Vincent is investing. Hierant has suffered from its long-standing feud with Koren and Falleron. Vincent sees befriending Hierant as a way of creating a powerful axis in northeastern Bostonia. To this end, Vincent is negotiating trade, construction, and military agreements with Hierant.

Vincent finds an unlikely ally in the Mathematicians' Guild. Both the Guild and the Vincent family have historical disputes with the Engineers and that is certainly a major reason for their cooperation. However, the leadership of the Mathematicians is impressed with the mechanical designs produced by the Vincent family.

Locations

Castle Agane

In y567, Falleron announced that it had credible claims to the Agane Hills. Falleron petitioned the king to hear these claims. Of course, Gharmon Vincent refuted the claims. Vincent's advisors had many contacts in Boston and managed to keep the case bogged in bureaucratic formalities for nearly a year. Falleron became impatient with the delay and moved troops into the region. Gharmon tried to counterattack, but Falleron's men would not be moved.

Falleron held the hills for several months. In the early months of y569, Felina Vincent used alchemical "bombs" to shatter the Falleron defenses. She then surrounded the invading troops and forced them to surrender. Falleron's men regrouped and prepared for a second assault on Agane. Before the attack could come, the Shield Guild intervened on behalf of the king. After over a year of dispute, the king would hear the claims on Agane.

As the hearing progressed, it became clear that Falleron's claim was not strong enough to allow them to take control of Agane. The Falleron delegation accused Vincent's agents of destroying their evidence, but could prove nothing. Falleron withdrew his claim on Agane and he and his advisors left Boston in shame.

In y572, Felina commissioned the Association of Scholars and Engineers to build a line of fortresses along the northwest border to serve as a warning to Falleron. The powerful Castle Agane is the keystone of that line. It was completed in y575.

Heldholm Keep

In y696, a Salem Sandalfeet boss named Xavier Udong was expelled from the Feet for assassinating his rival bosses. Xavier fled Salem and hid in the wilderness to the south. A couple of years later, he reemerged as the leader of a band of ruffians prowling northeastern Vincent. His band made many successful raids in Vincent and Koren.

By y701, Xavier was a notorious bandit leader and he succeeded at recruiting several rival groups as well as one or two outlawed mercenary companies into his army. With his small, but effective, fighting force, he raided the region and earned the name "The Bandit Lord" from the local populace.

In y702, several attempts were made to capture or kill the elusive Bandit Lord, but none were successful. Finally, a minor nobleman named Grod Helmund discovered the location of the bandits' hidden keep while he was on a hunting expedition. Lord Helmund petitioned Baron Vincent for enough troops to storm Xavier's fortress. The Baron granted Helmund's petition, and the nobleman proceeded to trap the bandits in their fortress and starve them out.

Baron Vincent granted Helmund the bandits' keep and a small amount of the surrounding land as a reward. Heldholm Keep is a moderately sized wooden fort protecting a small manor that serves as the home of the Helmund family. The keep is said to have several secret tunnels and passages underneath it, and there are many rumors of Xavier's hidden treasure being buried somewhere on the grounds.

Tharongor

In y799 several new mining camps were established in the northern Agane Hills. Thousands of miners started clearing the land and digging new mines in hopes of finding new coal, slate, and iron deposits. However, in y804, one of the mining camps made an even more fascinating discovery. While clearing a dense copse of trees, they found the ruins of a small, ancient city.

The Baron quickly moved troops to protect the region from outsiders, as well as from whatever might emerge from such an ancient place. Several small wooden forts and dozens of foot patrols watch the region, but are careful to give the city a wide berth. Currently, the area is off-limits while the Baron decides the best course of action.

Victory Point

Victory Point is the home of the Vincent family and the capital of the barony. The powerful walls of Lorne Castle oversee the town of about 5000 inhabitants.

West Garzan

West Garzan is a town of 350 people. The most important feature of this place is the tollgate designed to stop all river traffic. 100 guards and several ballistae protect the gate. All river boats are stopped and then taxed based on the nature of the goods they carry. A ferry of passengers might be taxed only 2 bits/person. A barge carrying trade goods will be charged a percentage of their value.

Plots and Adventures

Reconciliation

Vincent is the most industrialized barony in Bostonia, and the Engineers have been forbidden to operate there for over 400 years. In an attempt to mend their differences and tap the huge market that Vincent represents, the Engineers would like to set up a meeting with Baron Vincent. The Guild is sending a skilled diplomat to represent them at this meeting. The PCs are hired to escort this diplomat.

When they arrive at Vincent's court, the diplomat tells the party a secret. To aid the meeting's success, he has brought a set of Candles of Tranquility. The question is: how to get them into the meeting room and ensure they are lit?

Spies

The Engineers' Guild is tired of hearing about Vincent's grand machines. They hire the PCs to enter the Vincent Barony and acquire the plans to a mechanical drill used to dig mining tunnels. PCs with engineering skills could draw plans if they could get a long, close look at the machine. PCs without such skills will have to find an existing set of plans, steal them, and then return to Boston.

Klein's Revenge

Since being overthrown by Vincent, the Kleins have faded and become a minor vassal to Baron James. However, they have never forgotten Vincent's treachery. Recently, the Klein family has come into a significant sum of money, and they are looking to use it to damage their longtime nemesis, Vincent.

The nature of this revenge depends on the players and the characters in your campaign. A group inclined to stealth may be asked to sneak into Baron Vincent's keep and drop a nearly undetectable poison into his food. A group inclined to diplomacy might head a delegation sent to undermine the talks between Vincent and Hierant. If you have a tactically inclined group, and want to make a long-term campaign of it, the group could be hired to gather troops and lead them against Vincent.

Exploring Tharongor

The word of the ancient ruin in the hills of Agane spread across the land quickly. There are hundreds of scholars, tomb raiders, wizards, and adventurers that would love to explore Tharongor Ruins. Unfortunately, Vincent's troops turn everyone away, no doubt so that the greedy Baron can pillage the ruins himself.

PCs could be hired by any number of adventurous souls who want to plunder Tharongor. However, they will have to get past Vincent's army to do so. Worse yet, when they emerge from the ruin -- battered, bloody, and clutching some ancient treasures, they will have to somehow evade the patrols again.

Places

The City of Boston

Boston is the capital of the land of Bostonia as well as the headquarters of many of its most important institutions. The city itself houses about 55,000 people. About four times that many live in the region surrounding the city with the highest density existing along the coast to the north of Boston.

Boston is bordered by the Bost River to the north and the Guardian River to the south. The hills to the west become particularly rugged in the few miles as you approach the city and thus form a wonderful defense. Boston has historically been very difficult to attack.

However, the nearby terrain also hinders land travel into and out of the city. The only roads leading to Boston come from the coastal regions to the north. The hills and swamps that border the city in other directions make the construction of roads difficult. Bostonians often arrive in their capital by one of many ferryboats that service the city.

Boston is a cramped city. People are packed tightly in the narrow streets. Buildings extend upwards several stories, giving alleys the appearances of tunnels at times. During the day, streets and markets are choked with merchants and citizens going about their noisy routine. Traffic jams are frequent. The crowds, coupled with the tall buildings (and thus the lack of easily visible landmarks) can make getting around in Boston painful for foreigners.

Boston is a center for trade. Merchants from all over the known world flock here to sell their goods. Anything but the rarest of goods should be available here. Taxes are high however, as are the merchants' markups. Prices will often be 2x what they would be elsewhere in the land.

Port Town

Along the eastern edge of the city, the Dark Sea brings trade from the Cobrat and Borakki. In addition, the harsh approaches to Boston make sea trade a desirable alternative. Ships come and go almost daily, making Boston the largest port city in the land. All of these captains, ships' crews, scoundrels and traders need a decent place to eat, sleep and spend their coin. Port Town is that place.

Port Town consists of the docks, shipyards and the surrounding homes and businesses. Nearly all the shops here cater to the hundreds of travelers that frequent the area. There are plenty of inns, taverns, brothels and gambling houses in Port Town. This is Boston's red light district and all manner of pleasure can be purchased.

In addition to serving as a watering hole for weary sailors, Port Town provides many services to traders and ship captains. Many trading houses and wealthy captains own warehouses to store goods pending their sale. Traders not so wealthy can often rent space for a price. The Mathematician's Guild runs a measuring house here to set the value of goods, confirm the purity of metals and convert currency.

Harbor Master's Section

This is a small complex of docks, warehouses and other buildings all catering to the shipping trade of Boston. There is an auction house here as well as offices for several trading houses and brokers. In addition, the only shipyard in the entire northern coast is here.

_____ This place is continuously active with sailors and traders. The auctions might be a good place to pick up specialty items that could otherwise not be found. Captains often look for good crew here and so characters may be convinced to take a sea journey.

The various captains and traders all have their own agendas. Goods may be in jeopardy of being stolen and need guarded. A trader on the losing end of an auction may hire mercenaries to abscond with the important goods.

Warehouse Row

This is a long row of warehouses, built close together near the loading docks. In the daytime, this place is buzzing with sailors and dockworkers loading cargo on and off trading ships. However, the Dockworkers' Guild prohibits work after parting bell. After hours, the row becomes quiet with only a few tavern goers and warehouse guards walking the docks.

Warehouse Row is isolated, quiet with lots of shadows and hiding places. A breach of curfew is often ignored (or bribed from the memory of) the bored guards. This makes the row an perfect place for the darker elements of Bostonian society. The quiet attracts all types of thieves, muggers, secret meetings and shady deals. Cargo that needs to be moved discreetly is loaded quietly in the dark of night and there are several unused warehouses that can act as impromptu meeting places for the Sandalfeet or a pagan cult.

Campaign Use: *Warehouse Row is a perfect place for the PCs to skulk while investigating an evil plot. The abandoned warehouses are great hideouts for the bad guys and when PCs crash the party, no one will hear a small battle.*

Halderstot's

At the cityside end of Warehouse Row, is a converted warehouse. Unlike the others, this warehouse is noisy and populated around the clock. Warm light and music spill out of the shuttered windows. A dozen or so inebriated and happy tavern-goers mill about the front of the place, laughing and chatting. The front doors are generally propped open during warmer months. A professionally painted wooden sign is chained over the front window. It reads "Halderstot's Hole... Sure Beats Seawater."

The first floor of Halderstot's is a large common room, with round tables and chairs meticulously lined up in rows. Everything is arranged around a set of wooden tables and shelves that make up the bar. The place is quite efficient and seems designed to pack as many patrons into as small a space as is comfortably possible. There is no room for dancing and no place for entertainers to ply their trade. Lining the right hand side of the room, there is a large pile of crates, stacked almost to the ceiling. Behind this wall, there are several large cooking pits and a makeshift kitchen. The smoke and smells of cooked meat pervade the entire place.

A couple ladders lead to the upstairs. Two long hallways lead past a series of rooms. These rooms are rented to those who are too drunk to get home, or have nowhere better to bunk for the night. They are not ideal for sleeping. The walls here are thin and not of the sturdiest construction and the noise and smells from the downstairs are here as well. The place is clean however, and preferred by sailors who want to be close to the action... and work the next morning.

Horatio Halderstot was a merchant and speculator. He made a fair bit of money purchasing goods and hiring merchant sea captains to sell the cargo at borakki and cobrat ports. Unfortunately, he made a couple bad trades and then fell in with a shady dealer named Leopold Pentaris. Leopold cheated Horatio out of a large portion of his funds. With the remainder, Horatio retired from trading.

Horatio used his connections to finance the purchase of this warehouse. He then had it converted to a cozy tavern, catering to sailors and capitalizing on its proximity to the docks.

The Dinkle and Bunk Inn

This is a four-story inn nestled between two warehouses in the Harbor Master's Section of Port Town. It is run by Tannor Dinkle, a retired guardsman and Shield Guild member.

The first floor is a large common room and drinking area. It has a straw-covered, wooden floor. The straw has soaked up many spills and thus has a smell of stale alcohol. There are small wooden tables and chairs all about, as well as 4 stone fireplaces distributed throughout.

A large bar dominates the northeast corner of the place. Here Byron Aldon provides ale and strong rum to the patrons. Prices are slightly inflated since the Inn caters to sailors and soldiers who often have money to spend and like the atmosphere. Members of the Shield Guild drink for half price. Food is also available, but only during the dinner hour.

If an entertainer arrives at the inn, several hay bales are available to create an impromptu "stage" area. Sea songs and war ballads are the most popular, and entertainer or not, it is likely that a sing-a-long will commence at some point any given evening. Gambling is permitted, but frowned upon as it tends to stir up hostilities and Dinkle has had his place wrecked more than once.

The common room is available for bunking after all the drinking patrons leave. This is usually a couple hours after the Final bell.

Campaign Use: *The Dinkle and Bunk Inn is a good place for seafaring characters to enter the city of Boston. Here they can meet the regular characters: sailors, sea captains, smugglers and the like. This is the place for a good bar-brawl, or to hear rumors from a gnarled sea captain.*

In addition, this is the place to book passage on a ship, or meet with characters from other species. Cobrat and Borrakki can often be found here. Much news from the far reaches of Bostonia enters the city through this tavern. Be careful of the occasional press gang though.

The Deh Shelst

This is a small tavern, a few blocks away from the main docks. It sits on the Bost River where it empties into the Dark Sea. The place is a stout, one-story building with one wing sitting on supports over the river. There are several smoky chimneys pouring thick smoke into the air. The place has an odd smell about it; a mix of honey and burned leaves.

The Deh Shelst (meaning the Shelst House) is an authentic cobrat tavern run by Seelaa Err, a retired high cobrat sea captain. She runs this place with the help of a retinue of 5 lows and a few human workers. The DS caters to cobrat and tries to recreate an authentic experience for cobrat crews far from their homes.

The Deh Shelst has a number of fireplaces continuously boiling large pots of water. This creates a warm, humid atmosphere, mimicking many of the cobrat islands. Much of the inn is a dirt floor, covered with large palm fronds. Rocks and treestumps act as tables and chairs for the low cobrat that form the bulk of the ships' crews. Another section has a set of finely carved wooden tables and chairs. Each table has a hookah and a full tobacco bowl on it. Finally, one wing sits over the river. Several trap doors permit access to platforms sunken into the water. This allows cobrat to bask in the water as they drink and chat.

The DS serves some standard human fare, but the cobrat prefer mice, rabbits, dogs and other live food. The beverages cobrat prefer tend to either be excessively sweet, like the chel frond wine many highs drink, or powerful like the shelst for which the tavern is named.

High Hill

The northwestern part of Bostonia is set in the foothills of the Arnost Mountains. The ancients supposedly carved the mountain into a set of plateaus suitable for settlement. These plateaus still remain and many Bostonians have settled in this district that is called High Hill.

High Hill is a rich district. Many of Boston's wealthiest residents live in this isolated community. Its view and relative quiet draw those who can afford to have a beast or servant carry them up the steep ascent to the village.

The homes of High Hill are large, many having more than two or more stories. They are all of fine construction and architecture. Some are copies of ancient designs kept by the Engineer's Guild while others are actual hybrids, ancient structures patched with Bostonian workmanship and material.

High Hill's main road leads from the Garner District, winds through the Arnost Hills and finally through a narrow channel where the earth is cut between two steep rock faces. Several of the more paranoid citizens paid to have a tall iron gate built here. The gate is open in the day, but locked in the night and guarded by private guardsmen who are instructed to not let any strangers pass.

The Church of the Eternal Sunrise

This church of Stratus, The Father sits at the highest point in the city, towering above the district of High Hill. Because it is on the east face of the hill, the priests there have an excellent view of the sunrise for their morning prayers. The building has a tower with a stained glass dome to catch and reflect the morning sun for a wonderful display.

This is by far, the richest and most majestic church in the land. It is frequented by the most influential people in the city. In addition, many of the Church's special functions are held here, including the Communion ceremony.

The church consists of two main parts, the chapel and the tower. The chapel is a gothic styled building archways and columns made of dark gray stone. Gargoyles sit in the many corners and alcoves. The stained glass here is well-crafted and depicts the actions of many of Bostonia's saints. St. Dovid, St. Camille, St. Michael, St. Sebastian and St. Sorthan are all depicted here. The altar has a 20' diameter sun carving hanging above it.

Campaign Use: *The Church is a big part of many Bostonian's lives. This particular church is a huge symbol towering over the city. When people think of church, this is the place they picture in their mind, even though many Bostonian citizens will never enter this place. It is a large, gothic chapel and it is both majestic and eerie at the same time.*

As stated before, many church ceremonies and holy days are celebrated here. Devout characters and priests may have reason to attend such celebrations, especially if they have ties to the church. If the characters need to see a high-ranking priest, perhaps the meeting will occur here.

Watchpoint

Even though the Sunrise Church towers over Boston, it is not the highest point in the city. During tribal times, the Bost built a small stone hut to watch over the river and plains to the north. This peak is the highest point in the area and became known as Watchpoint.

People stopped using the guard post after the unification of the tribes and after a nasty rockslide killed several citizens, the rocky path to the hut was gated by the church. No one makes the climb to Watchpoint anymore, and some say it is haunted by those killed in the rockslide.

Campaign Use: *In contrast to the church just below it, this is a place of shadows. The chill wind, the treacherous climb and the fear of angry ghosts keep most people away. However, people still come here on occasion. They rarely have a good motive. Bodies have been found here and it has been rumored that the Thieves' Guild uses this place as a meeting place and hideout.*

The Dregs

In sharp contrast to the spacious homes of High Hill, the southwestern part of Bostonia is home to a maze of rickety, wooden structures that surround narrow streets and garbage-filled alleyways. This region is called The Dregs and it is Boston's red-light district.

Though the Dregs is not the poorest section of the city (Grunjtown certainly has that dubious honor), it is the most dangerous. The city guard tends to turn a blind eye to all but the most serious offenses here, and so banditry is common. Unlike many neighborhoods, there is little community awareness. Everyone watches out for themselves and perhaps their families and that is all. This is not a place for the weak or naive.

Thieves, prostitutes, smugglers and slavers all use the Dregs as their preferred place of business. Shady deals of all sorts are made here and anything can be bought. Sex, illicit herbs, components for dark magics, poisons, people...

Three Hid Away

In the back of one particularly cluttered alleyway is a burned out husk of a building. A stone stairway is the only thing that remains. It leads to a door about 8 feet underground. A sign on the door reads "3 Hid Away"

The door here is generally locked and only a special "coded" knock will get the attention of the occupant. This knock can be learned by those familiar with the Dregs, or with those willing to part with enough coin.

The proprietor of Three Hid Away is an old, gnarl-skinned goblin named Bo Gannog. He greets potential patrons, strangers and repeat business alike, with a grunt and snort. Bo Gannog will then turn and lead his visitors into the main shop.

The main shop smells of bitter herbs and incense. The place is packed with shelves, which in turn are filled with small jars, vials, pouches, parts of animals, ornamental gems, alchemical reagents and tons of other trinkets that may or may not be useful to a practitioner of magic. Much of the stuff is junk, but looks quite interesting. Some of the items here have serious use in magical spells or potions. This is a place where a GM can place a hard to find spell reagent, or herb.

The store is small, cramped and reeks with a mix of sweet herb, incense, sour sweat and dead things. Curtains and tapestries hung about the place, as well as the maze-like arrangement of shelves give the store a claustrophobic feel.

Bo Gannog (Goblin)

Strength	8	Hit Points	33	
Agility	6	Initiative		
Dexterity	10	Move		
Speed	11	Attack	12	
Toughness	13	Defense		
Intelligence	12	Damage		
Willpower	16	Armor	Loc	AV
Charisma	3		1	0
Spirit	15		2-4	0
Perception	13		5-7	0
			8-9	0
			10-12	0
Skills and Abilities				
Alchemy				18
Ancient Knowledge				13
Herbalist				19
Medical				17
Physician				15
Ritual Spell: Grow				16
Ritual Spell: Ritual of Tendrils				15
Trading				18

Bo Gannog is a wiry goblin with thin, twisted limbs and tufts of gray hair sticking out of his head. He is old and crouched and has the demeanor of a grumpy and sore old man. He stares at everyone entering his shop, always appearing right behind a patron, or peering over a shelf or just around the corner. While most people mistake this as a desire to ferret out shoplifters, Gannog generally is more interested in determining the interests of the patrons, and their potential ability to help him acquire more rare items.

Gannog often trades goods for services. People that cannot pay in coin, or goods can go on a quest for rare herbs and alchemical reagents. He uses the time patrons spend in the shop to evaluate their needs and abilities. If he feels they could be useful, he will offer them a trade instead of charging cash.

Gannog was a shamanic student in his goblin tribe. He learned quite well and was almost certain to take over when his shaman died. When it was time for Gannog to take his rune, he could not bring himself to finish the ritual (which involves eating the former owner of the rune).

One of Gannog's rivals was not so timid and he took the rune and banished Gannog from the tribe. Gannog was an outcast in goblin society and had many enemies in his tribe. He fled north to the humanlands and used his knowledge and training to start his current business endeavor.

Round-A-Bout Traders

In a particularly nasty-smelling section of the Dregs is a tiny warehouse and lot with several run-down wagons. This is the warehouse and office of Round-A-Bout Trading Company, the smallest trading company in all of Boston.

Round-A-Bout deals in all kinds of goods, but specializes in Borakki goods. Furs, foodstuffs and some weapons and armor are all available, as are metal tools, rugs, tapestries and some pottery. True to its reputation, most of the items are of low quality. These goods are sold in the storefront right next to the warehouse. Some of the higher quality stuff is sold to other shopkeepers in more upscale areas of town.

Round-A-Bout survives because they are willing to resort to almost any tactic to make money. Round-A-Bout has been accused of theft, banditry and extortion. They are reviled by their competition for being rogues and little better than the Sandalfeet.

The truth is indeed more sinister. Round-A-Bout traders is a front for a small slaving operation. Agents of RAB prowls the streets of the Dregs as well as the surrounding villages looking for potential victims. Vagabonds, wanderers and those without friends or family are targets. Those they subdue are shipped to a small port several miles up the coast from Boston. From there they are taken south to the Cobrat lands, or north to Borakki territory. There they are sold to various contacts evil enough to deal in human slaves.

The Sandalfleet of both Boston and Salem would like to see RAB eradicated. However, neither guild has acted against the slavers. There are many rumors as to why this is the case. One of the most sinister is that Round-A-Bout has captured and is holding hostage someone close to either Brendon Bethany or The Chief.

Round-A-Bout Slaver

Combat: Sword +1
 Combat: Net
 Combat: Unarmed +1
 Kn: Bostonian Underworld
 Kn: The Dregs +2
 Craft: Slaver
 Craft: Wagon Driver
 Stealth
 Disarm Trap
 Fast Talk
 +32 Buy Points

Description

These unscrupulous men roam the streets of the Dregs looking for some unfortunate to "bag". If a suitable target is found, then several of these men will arrive to stalk the victim until he is alone. Then they will strike, immobilizing their prey with nets and clubs.

Suggested Attributes:

Suggested Limitations:

Guild Street

In the middle of the eastern side of the city, between the docks and the central marketplaces, lies Guild Street. This wide, well-engineered and well-maintained road is a major thoroughfare through the city's trade district. Thousands of people come here daily to buy and sell goods, seek employment or carry out other business with the Boston guilds.

In addition to the mundane crafts guilds such as the bakers' guild, basket weavers' guild and candlestick makers' guild, Guild Street is home to the various major guild houses. The Mathematician's Guild, Engineer's Guild, Shield Guild and Spice Guild all have houses here.

Lamplighters' Guild

The Lamplighters' Guild is a small group of individuals that serve a vital purpose in Boston. Namely, they venture out just before sunset, traveling their designated routes filling and lighting the street lamps that illuminate the main roads in the city.

Not really adventuring types, Lamplighters are often drawn from the local citizenry. Members of the guild are generally fit, have excellent knowledge of their neighborhood, streetwise and have decent climbing skills. Many of them are used to walking in the cold and rainy Boston nights. Several of them are said to walk their routes barefoot to aid in climbing the lampposts.

Lamplighters are not adventuring types on average. However, it is said that many of them moonlight as lookouts, scouts and informants for the local thieves' guild. Characters who are on the take may have extra contacts, an extra knowledge or two and perhaps have thief skills as well.

Clean Lamplighter

Climbing +1
 Streetwise
 Combat: Knife
 Kn: Neighborhood Streets +2
 Kn: Boston +1
 +43 Buy Points

Description:

This is a package for a character who is a member of the Lamplighters, but is not working for the thieves' guild. Generally, these characters do not make good adventurers, but it is possible that a character had this job before getting into more dangerous pursuits.

Suggested Attributes:

Suggested Limitations:

Thieving Lamplighter

Climbing +1
 Streetwise +1
 Combat: Knife+1
 Kn: Neighborhood Streets +2
 Kn: Boston +1
 Kn: Sandalfleet
 Kn: City Patrol
 Fast Talk
 Stealth
 +31 Buy Points

Description:

This character is a normal lamplighter who works as a lookout or scout for a thieving guild. A character like this will have a few more skills than his mundane counterpart.

Suggested Attributes:

Suggested Limitations:

Sandalfeet

While not a guild per-se, The Sandalfeet have ties to many of the merchants on Guild Street and elsewhere in Boston. The current Head Man in Boston is named Brendon Bethany. He is a young, good-looking scholarly man who took control of the guild five years ago when the previous leader died on a mission. Bethany was a successful lieutenant at the time and had enough support to quietly take the reins of power without bloodshed -- rare for a guild of thieves.

Brendon Bethany

Strength	11	Hit Points	31	
Agility	16	Initiative		
Dexterity	16	Move		
Speed	13	Attack	15	
Toughness	11	Defense		
Intelligence	15	Damage	2d6	
Willpower	12	Armor	Loc	AV
Charisma	18		1	0
Spirit	10		2-4	2
Perception	20		5-7	3
		8-9	2	
			10-12	2
Skills and Abilities				
Concealment				12
Conversation				17
Detect Trap				13
Disarm Trap				15
Stealth				16
Streetwise				15
Swim				14

Grunjtown

Boston, like many other large Bostonian cities has a significant grunj population. These creatures live in squalid ghettos on the outskirts of the city. These grunjtowns are often dirty and crowded with shacks and wooden lean-tos lining the muddy and often impassible streets.

Boston's grunjtown is just outside the city, in the marsh that borders the southern side of town. The road to this place consists of wooden planking that leads from Boston and then abruptly stops about 100 yards from the large knot of huts. These huts are built on slats and in trees to keep them safe from sinking into the marshy ground.

The town itself consists of about 400 wooden and thatch huts and shacks that look as if they are about to fall into the swamp. In addition, there are about a dozen or so ruined buildings with hints of ancient architecture. However, these places are in terrible condition and their inhabitants have patched the many holes with crude wood and thatch construction.

In several places, the grunj have constructed little islands of dirt, rocks and mortar. On average, these islands are ten feet or so in diameter. They serve as marketplaces, meeting places and communal centers. When the grunj get together to discuss news or listen to one of their elders speak, they will often do so at the largest of these islands. If the matter is of great import, or the weather is inclement, then one of the ancient buildings will be used as a meeting hall.

The ruined buildings are indeed ancient dwellings that have crumbled throughout the years. They are used now as apartment buildings for several grunj families. Walls constructed of paper and thin wooden planks are used to divide the house into one or two room dwellings.

The two most intact of these buildings are used as a meeting hall and a dwelling for the elders of the village. These places are well maintained and spotless.

As in most grunjtowns, the people dwelling here are poor. Many make a living by taking low-paying jobs in the city, but most live off the land, either by planting gardens and keeping animals, or scrounging through the surrounding marsh for edible plants and herbs. A few with craft skills sell trinkets and pieces of art on the Boston streets. Others with herbalism skills sell potions and salves of varying effect.

Boston grunj have to deal with terrible living conditions. Many residents of the south side of Boston have begun depositing their garbage on the outskirts of grunjtown. This coupled with the damp conditions and mosquito population means that disease is common here. A small church of the Mother, The Divine Waters of Mercy, has been built here to help combat the poverty and sickness, but it is difficult work.

The Divine Waters of Mercy

In the year 477 a priestess named Ilmader Pria Donodan visited the city of Boston. During her visit, she expressed an interest in the Bloodpools, the set of battlefields where Jherod defended the newly founded city from the goblin hordes. A trip to these historic battlefields was planned for the mother. However, on the way, the expedition passed by the grunjtown south of Boston.

Ilmader Donodan was distraught at the suffering she witnessed. The grunj were impoverished, underfed and suffering from mosquito-borne diseases. A handful of sisters tended to the mob of grunj, but could not even begin to ease their pain. Pria called a halt to the trip and immediately began tending to the sick. Still, one more set of hands was not nearly enough.

The Ilmader's visit passed without incident, but as she later wrote, she could not forget her experience in the grunj village. She had seen grunj before, and thought them quaint and simple creatures. However, she never realized the squalor in which many were forced to live.

She returned to Boston two months later having had a vision in which she returned to the grunjtown to minister to them. Upon her arrival to the swamp community, Ilmader Donodan prayed to Aestra for a sign that her work in the grunj village would be blessed. In answer to her prayers, a small natural spring broke through the ground at her feet.

The water was clear and pure. Ilmader commissioned the Engineers' Guild to build a pool and fountain on the site. Several sisters from Boston and the surrounding villages heard of the miracle and arrived to aid in the building of a church. The Temple of the Divine Waters was founded.

The Divine Waters of Mercy is a small temple of Aestra. Currently, six sisters tend to the temple and fountain there. A statue of Ilmader Donodan (died year 483) watches over the door to the small stone building. The temple and its sisters are devoted to healing and ministering the grunj of Boston.

The fountain build by Pria Donodan spouts cool, clean water. The grunj are permitted to use the water for cooking, cleaning and bathing. Out of respect the grunj carry the water to their homes before using it and never dump the used water. Instead, they carry the wastewater to the sea to return it to the Mother, saying a prayer of thanks as they go.

The Bloodpools

The Goblin Wars were one of the young Bostonian nation's most difficult struggles. While internal strife occupied a large portion of the Bostonian fighting force, a horde of goblins marched from the south, threatening the city of Boston.

Jherod took his loyal warriors (whose descendants would later become the Shield Guild founders) and met this goblin army in the marshes to the south of Boston. The battle there was hard fought, but the goblin hordes were nearly eliminated. Because of the scope of the carnage, the battlefield was called the Bloodpools.

Today, there is a monument and a statue dedicated to the battle. In addition, the human dead were buried in a nearby cemetery. The goblin dead were buried in mass graves.

Religion

The Church of Stratus

Stratus is the Sun God of Bostonia and the Father of All Things. He represents all masculine aspects of mankind and the world in general. He is a stern god, intent on increasing his worship, maintaining order and seeing justice done. When the ancients strayed from the Church and began following the Deceiver's Cult of Immortality, Stratus destroyed the world, killing all but a handful of faithful followers who were saved by Aestra. Stratus favors noblemen, diplomats, judges and warriors. He dislikes illusions, mages, and thieves and despises the undead.

Ceremonies

Marriage

Shared ceremony between the Father's and Mother's church. Both priests and priestesses take part, symbolizing the symbiosis between man and woman, Father and Mother, and the two churches. Participants exchange bracelets of a metal fitting their classes. (If the lower class participant is a woman, then the man's family will pay the woman's family a dowry. If the man's family is of a lower class, there is generally no payment – though there can be. Sometimes, the in-laws are given jobs to improve their station. In most lower/middle-class marriages, this custom is ignored and there is no payment or consideration.)

Ordination

Priests are ordained after a long period of theological, administrative and political training. A Bishop, Archbishop or the Grand Father performs the actual ceremony. It consists of a week of private readings, fasting and prayers lasting nearly 20 hours each day. At the end of the week, a public mass led by the celebrant blesses and ordains the new priests.

Dawn's Greeting

Each morning priests lead the devout in prayers to greet the Father as he rises above the horizon.

Dusk's Farewell

Each evening priests privately bid the Father farewell and pray for the souls of their parishioners as night approaches.

Petition of the New Moon

The moon is considered a mirror through which Stratus watches the night and protects humanity from the dangers that lurk in the shadows. For this reason, nights with a new moon are considered very dangerous for Bostonians. On nights of the new moon, demons and devils tempt mortals and send minions to collect old debts. On evenings before a new moon, public ceremonies are held. People pray for the Father's protection, strength and guidance through the coming night.

Confession

The teachings of Stratus require sinners to show remorse for their transgressions. Part of this contrition is confessing the sins to a priest. In addition, it is believed that the humiliation of discussing revealing one's sins will discourage future sinning. Confession is customarily heard about once every month.

Mass

Mass is held once a week. The Father is praised and the celebrant gives readings and a sermon.

Communion

Once every twenty years, the Archbishops and selected Bishops gather in Boston for a special ceremony. During this ceremony, Stratus enlightens his priests with his divine wisdom.

Coming of Age

When children reach age 12-16, they are considered adults. A priest and priestess bless the child. In some rural communities, many children celebrate this event at the same time. Some villages stage rituals that include tests of bravery, strength, and teamwork. Upper-class children come of age individually and their parents throw them elaborate parties. Children of merchant-class and urban poor families usually do not celebrate coming of age.

Baptism

When a child is born, both Father and Mother welcome him into this world. A priestess sprinkles holy water over a child while a priest passes a holy flame about his head.

Naming

Churches are named after their unique features. These names can change due to extraordinary events. The naming ceremony is presided over by a Bishop or Archbishop. Depending on the circumstances of the naming, the ceremony is accompanied by either a feast, or a session of fasting and prayer.

Churches

The size, architecture and layout of Stratus' churches vary with the location of the church and its wealth. Urban churches are large structures with gothic architecture. They feature arches, spires and ornate carvings. Many urban churches have beautiful stained glass windows depicting saints or scenes depicted in holy writings. The wealthiest of churches have domes or skylights that catch the sunlight and illuminate the interior with shimmering colors.

Rural churches place an emphasis on efficiency and function. Generally speaking, they are simple, one or two room buildings with humble furnishings and few ornate trappings. There is no money for sculptures or stained glass.

Bostonian tradition dictates that every church is named for some unique feature. New churches are often named after geographic or nearby physical features. Churches associated with some historical event, or a notable individual, have names based on that association. The name of a church can change due to events. Changing the name of a church is a fairly serious matter, accompanied by a special ceremony.

Holidays

Longest Night

December 22nd is the longest night. Bostonians believe that this is the day Stratus destroyed the ancients for their sins. This is a day of atonement fasting and somber introspection. The devout do not speak all day and cities and towns are cloaked in an eerie silence. When the new moon falls on the 22nd, it is called Endless Night.

Endless Night

A day of mourning the dead and contemplating transgressions against the gods. Undead and demons are particularly strong this night and people do not dare go out after dark. In rural communities, people gather in barns, inns, storehouses and other communal buildings hoping that their numbers will protect them.

Sunsong

June 24th is the longest day of the year. Church services are attended at dawn and the rest of the day is filled with feasts and dancing. It is customary for rich merchants and noblemen to provide food and drink for their servants. It is a common day for wedding proposals.

Day of Forgiving

March 2nd is considered the coming of spring. Bostonians thank the Father for returning life to the world. This is a day for considering your sins and begging forgiveness. It is traditionally a day where parties resolve grudges and feuds. It is a fast day. Confessions and services take a better part of the day.

Withedusting

Traditionally, the day of the first snow is called Withedusting and it marks the beginning of the winter season. Priests hold a special mass the eve after the first snow. Here, they pray for the well being of the land and ask the Father to return springtime when he is ready. Some rural communities hold Withedusting Festivals and harvest celebrations. These are generally scheduled between September 20 and October 7.

St. Michael's Day

February 19th is the birthday of St. Michael. Devout mages do not practice magic on this day. The Mathematician's Guild is shut down for the day and even the priestesses do not cast spells in honor of the saint.

St. Sebastian's Day

August 3^d is when Sebastian started his journey to find other humans across the Teeth Mountains. This is a feast day. Traditionally, great hospitality is given to travelers on this day. Rural villagers sometimes engage in "pilgrimages" where the members of one village travel en masse to a nearby village where they are treated to a great feast, dancing and drinking. In the cities, taverns and inns often give some kind of free food or service for the day.

St. Dovid's Day

August 14th, St. Dovid's Day, is celebrated with a special mass. Many devout nobles seek the council of their priests on this day, hoping to gain the benefit of Stratus' wisdom. This is a feast day.

St. Gidus' Day

September 1st is a celebration in the regions around Salem. Prayers and offerings are left at the Gidun Monastery and thanks are given for the many orchards and vineyards in the region. Wine, cider and pies are often made on this day.

Holy Writings

There are several important holy documents that form the foundation for the beliefs of the Church of Stratus. The most important of these is called The Illuminations of The Father. This document was originally a set of scrolls based on the writings of seven tribal priests who were visited by Stratus several hundred years before the War of Unification. It was compiled and translated by the holy men of the Bost, Eltherist, and Pelar tribes and formed the basis of a common religion between these peoples.

The Illuminations is divided into four parts called Seasons. In order, these are:

- The Fall of the Ancients (Fall Season)
- The Wrath of the Father (Winter Season)
- The Emergence (Spring Season)
- The Way of the Light (Summer Season)

The first three Seasons are a detailed history of the fall of the ancients, their destruction, the sparing of the faithful, and their subsequent emergence from the sea.

The final season is the most read and quoted. It outlines the obligations of man to the church, to the gods and to each other. It is considered a faithful translation of the will of Stratus, detailing what he expects from his priests and his followers.

Another book that shapes the Church of Stratus is The Passions of Dovid. Dovid wrote The Passions several years after the War of Unification (y17). Dovid was inspired by his intense study of The Illuminations and his desire to see the leaders of the new Bostonian nation held accountable to an idealistic religious law. This book describes the relationship between the church and the state. It speaks of the Father's expectations for behavior of the kings, barons and lords of the land. It outlines a set of laws that detail the rights of noblemen, as well as their obligations to their subjects and the church. In addition, it creates a set of courts to enforce these laws and establishes the Light of Justice.

After Michael defeated the rogue mage priests and convinced his followers to abandon their magic runes, he wrote Magesoul (y76). This book borrows heavily from The Fall of the Ancients to argue the point that magic is inherently perilous to the souls of its practitioners. It forms the basis for the Church's stand on magic and mages. Magesoul describes a rigorous code of conduct for devout mages, and finally urges them to abandon their runes.

Recruitment/Training

Acolytes generally start the seminary between ages 15-18. The largest seminary colleges are in Boston and Salem, but smaller schools exist in other regions. Training lasts from 4-6 years, depending on the acolyte's previous education. Acolytes receive training in theology, history, politics and administration. If a student shows particular aptitude for a certain course of study, then he may be recruited into one of the specialized branches of the Church, such as the Purifiers, Sunbringers or the Light of Justice.

Role in Society

The Church of Stratus serves two main purposes. First, the Church provides a single vision of morality and virtue for the people of Bostonia. This spiritual ideal, elucidated in The Way of Light, and brought to the people by the preaching of the Ilpaders, guides all devout Bostonians in their everyday dealings.

In addition, the Church acts as a unifying force politically. It wields incredible power in the form of the Light of Justice, the Templar orders, and the Sanctioners. That power is used as a stabilizing force, insuring that baronies do not engage in destructive civil wars and that Bostonian nobles follow the laws laid out in The Passions of Dovid.

Structure

The Grandfather rules the Church from his Sun Throne in Boston. He is responsible for interpreting the words of Stratus, his saints and disciples and from them, creating Church law. He is the final word on Church policy and he has tremendous influence and power both in a spiritual and secular sense. At a word, he can mobilize the mighty Templar Orders, conduct an investigation, order a sanction, or declare and entire community guilty of heresy. The Grandfather is chosen by the Counsel of Cardinals and serves until death.

Reporting directly to the Grandfather is the Counsel of Cardinals. This is a group of five wise and holy men who advise the Grandfather on matters of religion and politics. Technically, no one reports directly to the Cardinals. However, in practice, the Cardinals act as the Grandfather's link to the Archbishops. Information and requests flow through them and therefore, they can control the agenda. The Cardinals are chosen by the Grandfather and can be replaced by him at any time. Most are chosen from the ranks of Bishops and Archbishops, but this does not have to be the case.

There are 12 Archbishops in Bostonia. Each is responsible for the stewardship of a single Barony. Archbishops are charged with overseeing the spiritual and political path of their baronies. Archbishops act as liaisons between Boston and the various baronies. They report to the Grandfather, and the Counsel of Cardinals.

In times of peace, Archbishops work with the barons and the bishops to ensure that the tenets of the Church and the needs of the people are met. In times of internal conflict, archbishops try to bring about a peaceful resolution as negotiators and judges. If peace cannot be obtained, then the archbishops report to Boston. The Grandfather might allow the nobles to continue to battle; he might order the Templars to settle the conflict; or he might call for a sanction.

There are about 50 Bishops in Bostonia. Each bishop has the responsibility for a diocese. Baronies have from 26 diocese based on population. Bishops appoint and oversee priests. They travel from parish to parish, presiding over ceremonies and taking confession. Their duties focus on the spiritual and religious training of their parishioners. When a vacancy arises in a diocese, the priests in a diocese convene and nominate candidates to become the new Bishop. From these candidates, the Archbishop chooses the new Bishop. Bishops generally serve for life, but under extreme circumstances, the Archbishop or the Grandfather may demote them.

At the bottom of the formal church hierarchy are the parish priests, called Ilpaders ("small father"). They conduct the operations of a single church. They minister to the people, preside over ceremonies and teach their parishioners the ways of the Father. Priests of large churches have many administrative and financial duties in addition to their religious ones. In smaller, more rural parishes, the priests are tied closely to the community and share many of the day-to-day tasks with their flock.

Lay ministers exist below the church structure. They technically have the same rank as parish priests, but lack the respect that formal training brings. Though they are becoming fewer, Bostonia still has several remote rural parishes that have difficulties attracting priests. Few priests volunteer for such duty and often, Bishops are loathe to appoint them in these places for political reasons. When this happens, the community may send its wisest and most learned member to become a lay minister.

The nominee travels to the nearest parish to be tested by the priests there. The test is three days long and covers topics of theology, doctrine and history. If the nominee passes the exam, he becomes a lay minister and can preside over ceremonies and preach to his community. After seven years of service, a lay minister may test again to become an ordained priest.

The Purifiers are a small select group of priests that operates out of Boston and Salem. They are trained in the history and practices of the ancients. In addition, they are experts at reading runes and understanding the operation of magical artifacts. When a dangerous artifact is discovered, the Purifiers respond quickly, analyzing and neutralizing it before any harm can be done. The item is then taken back to the Purifiers' headquarters where it can be studied, destroyed, or safely stored. The Purifiers report to the Grandfather, as well as the Cardinals and the Archbishop of Salem.

The Sunbringers are another special order of priests, specializing in battling the undead. They are based in a small temple in the middle of the Bloodpools, a swamp where the dead often rise. There, they hone their combat skills, as well as their undead turning ability. While the majority of Sunbringers remain in the Bloodpools to check the spread on undead there, experienced Sunbringers are sent to locations that require their specific skills. Most notably, Seeker's Watch houses a small garrison of Sunbringers. Sunbringers report to the Bishops.

The Light of Justice is a group of priests trained in law and investigation. They are well-respected judges that travel the land hearing cases and settling disputes. In addition, they investigate crimes that interest the church, or that local authorities cannot solve. Justices transcend the church hierarchy. They answer only to the Grandfather and his Cardinals and can investigate almost anyone, including Barons and Archbishops.

The Sanctioners are a secret arm of the church. There is no mention or record of them in any of the church's histories or records – they do not exist. No one knows where they train, or how they recruit new members. Most Sanctioners operate on their own, appearing where their services are required, and then disappearing just as quickly. Sanctioners have theological training, but are not ordained priests. Instead, they are highly trained assassins, hunting heretics, rogue mages and other perceived threats to the church. Sanctions occur suddenly and without witnesses; victims just disappear without a trace.

Vision/Mission

The Church of Stratus has the following goals:

- Uphold the teachings of Stratus.
- Convert the unknowing pagans and destroy those who knowingly ignore the Father's light.
- Maintain order among the former tribes and promote a unified vision for all of humanity to uphold.
- Ensure that the nobility follow the teachings of Dovid and understand their responsibility to the Church and to the common people.
- Destroy undead, demons, witches, necromancers, heretics and other enemies of the Father and the Church wherever they are found.
- Discourage the tainted practice of taking runes. Monitor those who bear runes and control the artifacts of the ancients so they can do no harm.

The Temple of Aestra

Aestra is the Bostonian Sea Mother. When Stratus chose to punish the ancients for their quest for immortality, Aestra called to the handful of faithful, beckoning them to the sea. She bid the faithful to walk into the sea and into her embrace as the fireseeds crashed into the earth, destroying all life. Those that heeded her call were saved.

Aestra represents the feminine ideal: she is strong and self-reliant, yet possesses an infinite capacity for compassion and forgiveness. She is the patron of mothers, children, sailors and those in need of healing. She controls the sea and weather and provides mercy, charity and healing to the sick. Schools dedicated to the teachings of this goddess exist all over Bostonia.

Ceremonies

Marriage

Priestesses as well as priests perform the ceremony of marriage. For details about this ceremony, consult the text for priests.

Coming of Age

Priestesses as well as priests perform the coming of age ceremony. For details about this ceremony, consult the text for priests.

Baptism

Priestesses as well as priests perform baptisms. For details about this ceremony, consult the text for priests.

Naming

Temples of Aestra are named in a similar fashion as churches. For details about the naming ceremony, consult the text for priests.

Morning Ritual

Each morning, Learned Sisters immerse themselves in water, mirroring their full induction into the faith. The contact with water powers their magic rune and allows them to regain lost skill levels.

Rite of Our Mother the Savior

The Sisters know of a number of underground rivers and lakes, the location of which they keep secret. When young women complete their training and are ready to join the ranks of Learned Sisters, they are taken to one of these secret sites (or to the Dark Lake in Sunsrest). At the stroke of midnight, the head priestess in attendance begins ringing a bell and the lay sisters walk immerse themselves in the water, drowning themselves like their ancestors did years ago, and like St. Camille did at the Dark Lake. Aestra saves the sisters and they emerge unharmed and with the Sacred Falls of Aestra rolling down their backs.

Rite of the Second Moon

The night of a second full moon in a single month is a special occasion for Aestra's temples. This night occurs once on a different date each year. Prayers are offered as the moon rises in the sky. People of all types, professions, and classes attend the ceremony, light candles, and ask the Mother for special favors.

Sailor's Prayer

Sailors will often come to temples and ask for this special ceremony to be performed. The Sisters say a special prayer over a set of tin medallions. Each sailor is then given one of the blessed medallions to wear on his journey. The Mother's blessing aids the sailor in the case of storms, and insures that if he were to drown, the Mother would take his soul to rest. Many sailors in Bostonia can be seen wearing their blessed medallions.

Rites of the Tides

The priestesses consider the moon to be a symbol of the holy union between the Mother and Father and often refer to the moon as a Divine Bracelet (as in a marriage bracelet). They also understand the link between the moon's phases and the tides; the most extreme tides occur during full and new moons. During nights of the full and new moon, the priestesses gather quietly around bodies of water, say prayers to the Mother and Father, and cut themselves on the forearm, or the calf, letting their blood flow into the water.

It is interesting to note that the Aeltharze do not participate in these ceremonies on nights of the new moon. On these particularly dark nights, they say prayers and man their posts all night as though waiting for an enemy to come.

Fertility Rite

Women having trouble conceiving often come to the Mother's Temple to participate in this ceremony. The petitioner brings her closest female friends and relatives with her and they are hidden away for a day of prayers, incense, and fasting. When evening comes, the priestesses join the women; the petitioner is stripped and laid on a table. The women dance around her and sprinkle her with holy water and various fertility concoctions from oldwives tales.

Vigil for the Sick

This ceremony is held for those that are sick beyond help. It is a last plea to the Mother to save the life of a loved one, or to at least provide comfort to one who is soon dying. The petitioners gather outside the temples, light candles and hold vigil. A single priestess presides over the prayers and meditation. It is said that the longer the vigil, the more likely it is to be effective.

Churches

As Aestra is a sea goddess, Her temples are always built near a body of water. Her temples are simple, and often consist of multiple buildings. All temples have a dormitory for the priestesses, and a main temple for public services. Some temples have infirmaries, and isolated chambers for ceremonies that are carried out in secret.

Aestra's temple compounds feature open space, quiet courtyards, orchards, gardens, and fountains. Typically, the main temple area is an open structure flanked by rows of columns.

Temples are named for their unique features much like the churches of the Father.

Holidays

Ice Vigil

On January 1st, Learned Sisters celebrate the Ice Vigil. During this holiday, able-bodied Sisters trek out into the cold and meditate for hours. This grueling test cleanses the Sisters' minds and souls, and sometimes leads to visions and revelations. No one is accepted at the temples, though the remaining lay sisters treat those already in the infirmary.

Winter's Breaking

On January 21st, Bostonians celebrate the inevitable coming of spring. The winter stores are inventoried and a generous feast is held, featuring canned fruits and vegetables, smoked meat, and jerky.

Day of the Hunt

May 14th is Hunting Day. All priestesses who are capable with a bow take to the wilderness and hunt all varieties of game. Animals that are brought back are butchered and cooked, and then a huge feast is held for the temple's parishioners. In regions where no temple is present, it is common for the local nobility to open their hunting grounds to everyone for the day. At the feast, there are games and archery contests and priestesses teach local children how to shoot.

St. Weirgrub's Day

June 6th is St. Weirgrub's Day. It is a day to honor the dead and remember loved ones. Flowers are laid near places significant to the dead person being honored – for instance, a favorite chair, their workplace, or the spot of their death. An extra meal is often cooked and served for the dead on this day.

Emergence

July 21st is believed to be the day that the faithful emerged from the sea. This holiday is celebrated with a special mass held in the morning followed by a string of baptisms. Because it is considered a special honor to be baptized on the Day of Emergence, many families wait until this day to have their newborns baptized.

St. Antel's Day

Though not widely celebrated, physicians, healers and herbalists often tithe to the Mother's church on July 27th. The most devout of them offer their services to the poor for free, or at a greatly reduced rate.

Day of Tithes

The priestesses of Aestra minister to the sick and poor of Bostonia and they never require payment for their services. The Church of Stratus is well-funded by taxes and generous donations from the nobility, but Aestra's temples rarely collect levies, and often escape the notice of noblemen.

On August 31st of y591, Grand Father Parsus Corin decreed that once each year, the Father's Church would pay a substantial tithe to the nearby temples in recognition of the holy services they provide. This tithe generally consists of some percentage of the church's income, but could be paid in goods or services.

Over the years, the tradition has grown such that almost all citizens present a tithe. This can be almost any gift given sincerely and freely. The poor usually offer a day's work; craftsmen provide some gift of their handiwork; the rich give gold, fine goods or art with which to decorate the temples.

Harvest Celebration

On September 30th, rural Bostonians celebrate the harvest. A feast is held and priestesses are asked to bless the fields and animals to insure that the next year is bountiful.

St. Camille's Day

St. Camille's Day is October 12th. It is the holiest day for the Temple of Aestra. Priestesses spend the day in quiet meditation. Many of the poor honor the Mother by bathing in a nearby body of water. Festivals are held where wealthy citizens and nobility hold feasts for the less fortunate. It is traditional to eat gull, duck or some other water bird on this day.

St. Alice's Day

November 3^d is St. Alice's Day. St. Alice's Day is not widely celebrated. However, it is a time where the chronically ill are said to be particularly blessed by the Mother. People with chronic illnesses often pray for relief on this day.

Holy Writings

There are several works considered holy to the Temple of Aestra. The most prominent of these is The Mercies of the Mother, which is a companion work to The Illuminations. Camille wrote this book in y13 after a weeklong vigil where she was visited by visions sent from Aestra. The Mercies establishes the Temple and its priestesses, describes their mission and code of behavior, and describes the miracle of the Sacred Falls.

Another important work is Portrait of the Visionary written by Elna, shield maiden and companion of Camille, in y42. This book describes Camille's life, both before and after Unification. Elna focuses on the changes in Camille after being given the gift of the Sacred Falls, and the saint's quest to establish the Temple and its traditions. It is not only considered an important historical work, but Elna captured dozens of conversations between Camille and her students, apostles and servants. The wisdom contained in those conversations is considered part of the holy writings of the Temple.

Recruitment/Training

The Temple of Aestra does not maintain a network of formal schools. Acolytes are recruited into the temple between the ages of 11-14. After 2-3 years of training in theology and healing, the young women become lay sisters and are sent to a distant temple to begin their work. Lay sisters minister to the poor, heal the sick, and observe the ceremonies of Aestra. In addition, they may take additional training in the healing sciences, or in the sword and bow. Finally, after 3-5 years of working and training, a lay sister may petition her Mother Superior to become a Learned Sister.

Role in Society

The Temple of Aestra exists to heal the bodies, and the souls of the people. The priestesses walk among the commoners of Bostonia, helping them, healing them, and ministering to them. Through their daily actions and words, they represent the glory of the Mother. They see themselves working with the people, as opposed to lording over them. Temples of Aestra are community centers, having activity throughout the day. Even though the priestesses do not hold regular sermons, or masses, people flock to the temples to seek advice or aid, to bring a small gift, or to pray.

Aestra's priestesses rarely get involved with the complicated politics of the Bostonian nobility. They leave that to the Church of Stratus. However, they do wield the power of the Aeltharze, and can mobilize the templar orders when required. In crisis situations, they will support the Church with their swords and healing expertise.

Structure

The Grand Mother leads the priestesses of Aestra's Temple from the Temple of the Emergence Boston. She receives visions from Aestra, which she interprets and uses to guide her followers spiritual and moral path. When required, the Grand Mother can wield terrible power. She can mobilize the templar orders, or call the Aeltharze to battle. In addition, her magical powers are formidable, and she commands hundreds of priestesses with similar runic skills. Most importantly, the Bostonians love her, and her words can sway the hearts and minds of the commoners.

Reporting to the Grand Mother are the various Mother Superiors of the temples across Bostonia. Most temples that house over 30 priestesses have a Mother Superior, and there are about 120 such temples. A Mother Superior is the leader of her temple. She has the power to run the temple's daily and is responsible for the welfare and spiritual development of the priestesses under her charge. She decides where the priestesses travel and work, whom they heal; she can even commit her priestesses to battle if there is need.

A Mother Superior must report to the Grand Mother every six months. This report is usually a written letter, but could be a visit to Boston. Because of the volume and length of these reports, the Temple of the Emergence has a large staff dedicated to reading and transcribing them. Reports sent via a personal visit, special messenger, or those marked secret, or urgent in some way are given directly to the Grand Mother.

In theory, each Mother Superior is equal in rank. However, a de facto hierarchy has developed with the Mother Superiors from the largest temples on top. Mother Superiors from Sunsrest, Salem, Boston, Ismoth, and Seeker's Watch are granted a great deal more respect and deference than their peers. When a Grand Mother dies, her successor is almost always chosen from the ranks of these five.

Temples with less than 30 priestesses usually have no Mother Superior. The priestesses choose their leader from the eldest and wisest of their number. This "Eldest Sister" does not report to the Grand Mother unless there is a need. However, by tradition, she will send a periodic report to the nearest Mother Superior. The Mother Superiors of the larger temples will address the needs of these small temples, and informally coordinate resources to keep all of the nearby temples operating smoothly.

Under the Mother Superiors, and Eldest Sisters are the priestesses of the temples. Learned Sisters rank above lay sisters, but there is little practical distinction. The two groups work side by side with no thought of subtle differences in rank.

Vision/Mission

The Temple of Aestra has the following goals:

- Uphold the teachings of Aestra.
- Protect the weak, the sick, and those unable to defend themselves.
- To promote the healing of the world and humanity from the scars of ancient magic and the fireseeds.
- To destroy the magic that caused the ancients to turn from the true Church.
- To come to a greater communion with the Mother through her gift of the Sacred Falls.
- Show the unknowing pagans the glory of Aestra.
- Maintain order among the former tribes and promote a unified vision for all of humanity to uphold.

The Saints of Aestra and Stratus

Certain individuals are revered for their piousness, their service to the churches, or because of some miraculous occurrence. Bostonians believe that when these special people die, they are called to serve the Father and Mother as saints. Saints are immortal beings who serve the gods by acting as messengers and go-betweens to the mortal world. There are dozens of saints revered by the churches. Below is a sample list.

Alice (Nov 3)

Born to a poor peasant family, Alice was bedridden with leprosy while still very young. She lost the use of her arms and legs, and then lost the limbs themselves. She became known for her holiness and devotion to Aestra. When a temple to the Mother was built next to her home, she had a window cut into the wall so that she could attend services with the priestesses. She later trained to be a priestess, but never attained the rank of Learned Sister. Nonetheless, it is said her touch could heal. Before her death, she was cured of her disease by the grace of the Mother.

Antel Gemenir (Jul 27)

A member of the Gemenir tribe, Antel was said to have been contacted by Aestra and taught the healing arts. He became the first physician. Said to have had supernatural powers to mend bone and torn flesh.

Camille (Oct 12)

The founder of the Temple of Aestra. Mistress Camille was a common fisherwoman. Aestra came to her in a dream. In this dream, she was sitting in her boat after a full day of fishing. There was no wind and the sun was setting and she was left with no way home. As she pondered her problem, a flock of crows landed on deck and began eating her fish.

As fewer fish remained, the crows began squawking and pecking at one another, bloodying each other. As the crows argued, a large hawk and a gull swooped down and screeched. Most of the crows quieted, but some continued to attack the others. The gull and hawk jumped upon these unruly crows, pecking them to death. The flock of birds, now acting as one pulled on the nets and rigging and towed the shore.

She found herself on a stretch of rocky coast by the mouth of a powerful river. The hawk, gull and remaining crows, piled the dead birds onto the shore. From their blood, a city of metal and stone began to rise.

Camille took news of her vision to the others in her village. Her visions were not unique. A young warrior named Dovid had also had a similar vision. The elders decided that these visions portended the rise of the Bost tribe to supremacy in the land. They chose the visionaries to spread the word to the other villages. Elders of the other villages were excited about the news and praised Camille and Dovid as messengers of the gods.

Camille was also the first to gain The Sacred Falls of Aestra. She convinced the Azert tribe to join the Unification by drowning herself in the Dark Lake. When she rose from the lake, water dripped down her back, burning the Mother's mark on her. This mark gave her amazing powers to heal the sick and injured. Seeing this miracle, the Azert had no choice but to join the new Bostonian nation.

Dovid (Aug 14)

The original founder of the Church of Stratus. He shared Camille's visions. Dovid was a farmer and later a warrior who led the Bosts in uniting all the tribes in the valley. After founding the church, Dovid wrote many works that became the basis for much of Bostonian law and tradition.

Elbrand (Oct 9)

After the founding of the Church, Elbrand traveled the Seeker's Valley converting the pagan tribes that still practiced there. He was captured by a hostile tribe and beheaded. Legends say that after he was beheaded, Elbrand stood and carried his still preaching head in his hands. The pagans scattered and filled with fear, many of them converted to the Father.

Gidus (Sep 1)

Born a wealthy noble in Salem. When his parents died, he used his fortune to help the poor. He was so generous that his philanthropy left him impoverished. He left the city and became a hermit in the nearby hills. Legend says that Aestra, touched by his gentle nature, sent animals to him and blessed him with the ability to make apple trees and grapevines grow at a touch.

One day, Baron Celus and his hunting party chased one of the animals to Gidus' dwelling and a stray arrow injured Gidus' leg. The Baron was horrified at the accident and had Gidus brought to a nearby village to be treated. While there, the villagers were stunned as all the animals flocked to him and a beautiful orchard grew around his dwelling. Upon hearing the story, the Bishop of Salem built a monastery at the site and made Gidus the abbot.

Michael (Feb 19)

Led his followers against a group of rogue mage priests that were using their positions for personal gain. Michael destroyed the rebel mage priests and then determined that the influence of magic could only be contrary to the influence of god. He and his followers gave up their runes and priests have not taken runes ever since.

Olum (Dec 2)

St. Olum was a young nobleman who lived from during the years 459 and 516. In y484, Olum was moved by Grand Father Michael Richelau's call for a focus on spiritual and religious concerns. He renounced politics and war, and joined the monastery at Avenol.

After several years as a monk, Olum sought a more personal relationship with Stratus and Aestra. Olum became a hermit, but when his father heard of his new calling, he tried to get his son to reconsider. Olum's father became more and more insistent until Olum worried his father would force him from his solitude. Olum fled south, deep into goblin territory.

Olum the hermit lived alone for a dozen years until a nomadic goblin tribe, the Brigg Dah, happened upon his home. The goblins captured the human, and were about to kill him, when Olum found he could speak the goblin tongue so long as he was reciting scripture. These goblins had not had much contact with humans and so tales of the new gods fascinated them. Olum was spared and set about converting the pagan goblins.

Olum died after a month-long theological argument with a thugraa of The Wretched One. Olum convinced the goblin to give up his hideous rune and convert. However, in doing so, he contracted a wasting disease, and died shortly thereafter in y516.

Parsus (Nov 1)

Traveled south and became a missionary in cobrat lands. He learned cobrat and lived as much like a cobrat as possible, trying to prove that belief in the Father and Mother did not interfere with cobrat traditions. When the cobrat king expelled all foreign missionaries and made it illegal to preach anything but belief in the Great Turtle, Parsus did not flee. Instead, he went into hiding so that he could minister to his converts. Years later, he was discovered and killed.

Sebastian (Aug 3)

A great believer in converting enemies instead of fighting them, Sebastian spent years ministering to the Borakki and the Cobrat. In his travels, Sebastian theorized that other enclaves of humans must have survived the Fireseeds. Sebastian traveled across the Teeth Mountains to find these enclaves and teach them the ways of the Mother and Father.

Weirgrub (June 6)

The daughter of a Seeker's Valley nobleman, she was schooled at the Temple at the Falling Water in Seeker's Watch. Her studies brought her close to the Mother, and she became a Learned Sister. She remained at Falling Water and became head of the orphanage there, tending to the city's forgotten children for many years. She was known not only for her kind spirit, but also the hours she spent in meditation and contemplation of the Mother's ways.

Late in her life, Weirgrub received a vision in which she was granted the ability to raise the dead through the power of the Sacred Falls of Aestra. The next day, an earthquake struck Seeker's Watch, leveling her beloved orphanage. All of the children were killed. Weirgrub walked from child to child, touching each of them and bringing them back to life. Soon after, she died.

Demons: The Five and their Minions

In Bostonia, I wanted to avoid the typical representation of demons you see in other fantasy games. That is the pointy head, bat-winged, clawed fighting machine that may or may not answer to some lower power. Sure, these are fearsome opponents, but really are just another monster when you think about it. Bostonia already has some fearsome monsters and I wanted demons to be interesting and special in their own right.

Intro

In the world of Bostonia, there are 5 true demons. These creatures are thought to be ancient lackeys of the Deceiver. They were the first converts to his Church of Immortality, his most devout followers and his evangelists. They brought the Church of Immortality to the people of the ancient world and collected souls for the Deceiver, knowing full well they were damning the world in doing so.

When Father Stratus unleashed his fireseeds upon the world, the Five (as they are commonly called) escaped destruction by using powerful magic to exile themselves from this world. In doing so, they saved themselves from the Father's wrath. However, they also sealed their own fate. The limbo they entered (and in fact took a good chunk of their world with them) had no escape; no portal back to Earth. They had exiled themselves in a prison.

Over the course of thousands of years, the Five slowly learned how to weaken their prison so that they could observe the world and subsequently, how they could affect it. They watched humanity crawl out of the sea, form tribes and develop into the society of Bostonia. Now, they have enough power and knowledge to influence that society-- to twist and warp it in hopes of increasing their power and somehow escaping their millennia-long exile.

How Bostonians View Demons

Bostonians view the world as a battleground of virtue and vice; fortitude and temptation. As children of the ancients, they are fully capable of both great deeds and great hubris. The laws of the Father as interpreted by the Church exist to protect people from themselves and their inherent weakness.

The lust for magic is one such weakness. The ancients were masters of magic and thus masters of their environment. They controlled such power that nearly anything was possible. However, they were not satisfied with the great power they had. They lusted after secrets mankind was not meant to have and in doing so, turned from the true faith.

After the Emergence, men again turned to runes to help them unite the Bostonian tribes. However, once again, the magic corrupted the men and turned holy priests into power mongering murderers. For these reasons, the Father and His Church frown upon the use of magic. People are taught that magic is a corrupting force and that all magic, no matter how benign, has the potential to taint a soul. Still, there are those who risk their lives, their sanity and their souls to possess magic. Why? The same reason people commit adultery, steal and oppress the masses. Demons.

Not to say that Bostonians don't believe in free will. They do. However, they see free will as the playing field between good and evil. The Father and Mother espousing virtue on one side and the Five spewing bile on the other.

Who are The Five?

The Five represent things for which people commit murder. These are the most grievous taints (sins) in the Bostonian mind.

- Tomax of 1000 Runes: Lust for magic
- Aphadae: Lust for flesh
- Guilder: Lust for money
- Makav: Lust for power
- Entropy: Insanity

Though insanity is not considered a sin, it is considered a taint that allows a person to be possessed by demons. Insane people are not treated, but are put to death instead.

Each of The Five has other more minor spheres of influence. Tomax for instance, is a horrible glutton. Aphadae is vain. Guilder is the patron of dishonesty and illusion. Makav can read minds.

Where are The Five?

The Five exiled themselves by transporting a large portion of their city into an extra dimensional space just before the fireseeds destroyed the Earth. This demon city is called Tertentathador (ter - ten - tuh - THAD - er). The Five rule this city, tormenting the souls there, creating minions and otherwise plotting to escape into the world.

Entropy is the exception to this rule. He somehow survived the fireseeds and escaped the Father's notice. However, he was rendered dormant by the blast (much like the Deceiver was) and was later found by tribesmen who were then instructed by Stratus and Aestra on how to imprison the body of Entropy. Entropy still lies somewhere beneath the Earth in a dormant state.

What Can The Five Do?

The Five are limited in their actions because of their exile. None of The Five (but for Entropy) can appear in the world. They can see the world and can affect it in a multitude of ways. For instance the demons can:

- Appear in dreams, including daydreams or fantasies.

- Appear to the intoxicated.
- Grant boons of information or even power to a mortal.
- Occasionally send their minions to the world.
- Possess a mortal.

Generally, the demons appear to mortals to offer advice, give information, cajole, persuade, argue and twist. They rarely appear as themselves, but are there as trusted friends, women of statuesque beauty or that voice in your head. They are the slick lawyers of Bostonia; the devil on the shoulder telling you that you deserve that necklace more than the noblewoman who owns it; the loneliness of a soldier away from home; the force that drives you to bind the rune regardless of its price on your soul.

Though it costs them dearly, the demons can also grant power to mortals they favor. Tomax is known for giving mages access to powerful runes in exchange for their souls. Aphadae may grant beauty or agelessness to a vain victim. Guilder often appears to those in serious debt, offering a "quick way out... just sign here."

The gifts are beneficial at first, but tend to encourage dependence on the demon for continued boons. And of course, at an ever-increasing cost. Once you have willingly agreed to forfeit your soul, or the soul of an unborn child, or you have killed someone with or because of your gift (the souls of those killed by the demons and the mortals they court go to Tertentathador for eternity), you belong to The Five.

Once this happens your body can be possessed by them for whatever nefarious purpose they have in mind. Even someone so owned can only be possessed when they are drunk, otherwise intoxicated or sleeping. The demons use the body as often as they feel the need. The person in question gets very little rest, and physically deteriorates the more he is possessed.

Since the demons rarely have access to the world, they often sate their substantial lusts when they have this chance. However, there are times when they have a more specific agenda in mind -- something to accomplish while they are here. This could be meeting someone in person to collect on old debts, appearing to one of the secret demon cults that exist, or spreading demonic seed across the land...

What is a Spawn?

Quite simply, a demon-spawn is the child of a demon. It is part mortal and part demon. Whenever someone conceives a child while their body is possessed by a demon, they conceive spawn. Lore has it that spawn are always conceived as twins. Giving birth to twins is considered a bad omen for the family and in some remote areas, twins are decapitated, or drowned in holy water soon after birth. Spawn can be born as single babies, though this is rare. The assumption is that one twin killed and ate the other in the womb so as to remain undetected.

Spawn look and act much like humans. They do have some demonic power however. Spawn generally don't need to sleep and can see in even pitch darkness. These powers often do not appear until sometime in early adolescence. It is possible that they have other powers based on their parentage.

Spawn are more susceptible to insanity and demonic influence. Their souls are forfeit and their demonic parent can contact them when they like. They are forsaken by Father Stratus and Mother Aestra and can never receive a blessing or healing from the agents of the Church.

Spawn that kill other spawn/demons gain their powers. This makes the single-born spawn very powerful and these spawn are often highly intelligent and can develop terrible powers. Think babies talking when they are months old; think parents having freak accidents; think Damien in The Omen!!!

What about the Demons in the Bestiary?

Those are called Minions and they really aren't demons. They are created by The Five and infused with demonic power. However, they are the mere foot soldiers for the real demons. Imps and eyes are used as the main line troops. The Unkillable are shock troops and the Enforcers are secret police and assassins. Because these beings are constructs and not true demons, they can leave Tertentathador and travel to the real world, though sending them to Earth takes a great deal of power on the part of The Five, so they don't do it often. They are used to kill, torment, give messages to and otherwise deal with mortals when The Five cannot.

Culture

Who Rules The Land

Bostonia is a tight federation of feudal baronies bound together under a relatively weak king and the awesome power of the Church of Stratus. What follows is a description of the most powerful political entities in the World of Bostonia.

The Church of Stratus

The Church is the single most powerful organization in the land. Through tithes, donations, and obligations, the Church has significant financial resources. Through its Templars, Sunbringers, and the various fighting monastic orders, the Church wields great military might as well. The Church influences the actions of the nobility through teachings of St. Dovid, and through the Traditions of Succession, has a voice in who will be king.

The Father's Church takes an active role in the affairs of the land. The Archbishops continuously monitor the baronies, making sure the Barons follow Church law and seeing that rivalries do not get out of hand and endanger the safety of the people or the state. Justices travel from barony to barony, dispensing advice and hearing cases. Almost every village and town has a chapel and supports an Ilpader through tithes.

The Powers of the Church of Stratus

- Collect Tithes and Obligations – It is common people of Bostonia are taught that regardless of personal wealth, supporting the Church is a responsibility. Commoners are expected to tithe to the Church at least twice a year. Tithes are supposed to consist of 1/20th of a family's wealth, but few priests actually keep a close watch on how much a given villager contributes, as long as some effort is made to contribute.
- Write Holy Law – The Grand Father has the ability to write new laws in the Divine Book. These laws bind every citizen of Bostonia (and theoretically, every intelligent being in the world) to a code of conduct that follows the teachings of Stratus and Aestra.
- Traditions of Succession – The Church administers the process in which a new monarch is chosen. According to The Traditions, nobles that have a legitimate claim to the throne present their claim before a panel of Cardinals and the Grand Father. In theory, The Traditions describes a formula for choosing the new king, based on his lineage, wealth, military might, faith, and service to the land. However, in practice, many of these criteria are subjective, and the panel has a large say in the outcome of the formula.
- Identify Heresy – The Grand Father can declare an individual, a group, a city, or even a whole barony "In Opposition" to the teachings of the Church. In doing so, he is excommunicating them from the faith, and essentially removing them from the nation of Bostonia.
- Make War – The Church has the power to make war on heretics, and pagans without the sanction of any other organization. Between the Templars, Sunbringers, and fighting monks, the Church's army exceeds that of most baronies.
- Hear Cases – Justices travel from court to court hearing cases that involve crimes against the Church. Barons cannot refuse a Justice entry into their lands, or stop them from trying religious cases. Barons do have jurisdiction over secular cases, but because Justices are trained judges and investigators, most baronies allow them to hear cases involving major, secular crimes as well. Finally, Justices are often called upon to act as arbitrators in disputes between barons, or other powerful nobles.
- Influence Over the People – Bostonians believe that the Church is their means of salvation. Priests are well-respected individuals and their words carry weight. Peasants and nobles alike consider the attitude of the Church before making any major decisions.
- Influence Over the King – In a peaceful succession, the Church chooses the king. After he is chose, the king serves for life, and cannot be dethroned by any action short of war, or excommunication. Still, the king and Church usually act as one
- Gifts – The Church makes a regular practice of giving gifts to nobles that it favors. These gifts can be monetary, but often take the form of artwork, trade goods, animals, and even land.
- Sanction – People that act in open defiance of the Church, commit heinous crimes, or promote heresy sometimes just disappear in the night. Those that study Church history, or are in certain noble circles circulate rumors of a cult of assassins who enforce the teachings of the Father with a dark zeal.

The Temple of Aestra

The Temple of Aestra is less interested in political matters than its male counterpart. Sisters rarely take part in the day-to-day politics of Bostonia. Instead, they prefer to keep to their traditional role as healers, charity givers, and ministers to the poor.

This is not to say that the Temple lacks influence. The Sisters of Aestra are the caretakers of the people. They are well loved and can easily sway public opinion to their cause. In addition, the Sail of St. Gilla and the Aeltharze Order provide the Temple with protection and a military presence in case of a conflict.

The Powers of the Temple of Aestra

- Day of Tithes – In y591, Grand Father Parsus Corin decreed that each year, the Church of Stratus would pay a substantial tithe to the Temple of Aestra for the services they provide. Now, the Day of Tithes has become a tradition throughout the land. Citizens with local temples present gifts to the priestesses that minister to them.
- Make War – The Temple does not have the same mandate as the Father's Church to make war. However, they have command of the most powerful archery units in Bostonia, the Aeltharze. In addition, the Sword of Sorthan and the Sail of St. Gilla are pledged to protect the Sisters and their places of worship.
- Sisters of the Sea – Because the Mother is a sea goddess, sailors hold the Sisters in high esteem. Sailors will never harm a Sister, and will do their best to keep them from harm. Even pirates (if they believe in the Mother's Temple) will not harm a Sister willingly.
- Influence Over the People – The Sisters minister to the people, heal them, and care for them. Everyone is welcome at their temples. Because of this, the common people of Bostonia love them. Crimes against priestesses are not tolerated, and anyone moving against the Temple politically would find many people united to stop them.

The Mathematicians' Guild

The Mathematicians maintain the integrity of Bostonian trade. They produce the finest measuring devices in the land, and set the standards for Bostonian weights and measures. The Mathematicians are charged with setting standards for many industries and then enforcing those standards. Some things the guild regulates include the weight and metal composition of coins, the purity of mined ores, and the amount of liquid in a "full" barrel of ale. The Mathematicians have a presence in the markets of Bostonia. However, they are strongest in Boston, Ismoth, Jherod, and Salem. Their influence is much weaker in the western lands, and in rural areas.

The Powers of the Mathematicians' Guild

- Measurement Standards – The Mathematicians set the standards for all measurement in the realm. They produce standard weights and pan balances which merchants then purchase to insure that their dealings are fair. They produce other standards for length, volume, metal purity, and other measurements. The work of the Guild insures that trade is equitable across the land.

- Enforcement – The Mathematicians are permitted to certify merchants who use their standards. A Guild Certificate tells traders and consumers that the holder uses standard measurements, and does not cheat by shaving coins, under filling casks, or watering down his wine. Though most common merchants and tradesmen do not own a Guild Certificate, many larger companies do.
- Blackballing – Though the Mathematicians are recognized as the authority on measurement standards and fair trade, they have no real enforcement authority. However, in markets where the Guild is established, their word is powerful. If the Mathematicians announce that an establishment is cheating, they will find it hard to continue to do business in that market.
- Magic – The Mathematicians have mastery over time and space through the power of the First Equation. Though magic is generally disdained by the Church, the Guild is so well established and performs such an important service, that they are permitted to continue their studies unhindered.
- Assemble – Each guild has an embassy in Boston to keep their leadership informed of events in the capital.

The Shield Guild

The Shield Guild is a quasi-mercenary organization with garrisons all across Bostonia. In times of peace, the Shield Guild sells its services to the baron, supplementing their forces with trained, professional soldiers. Guildsmen are often found defending towns from goblin attack, patrolling for ratling raiders, or hunting dangerous creatures. If an outside force attacks Bostonia, the Shield Guild is honor-bound to mobilize and congregate in Boston to await the king's orders.

Though the Guild is a powerful force, it relies on the patronage of many of the Bostonian noble families for its survival. Thus, it tries to keep itself out of Bostonian politics, and remains neutral in baronial rivalries.

The Powers of the Shield Guild

- Act as a Professional Mercenary Organization – When Bostonia is not threatened by an external enemy, the Shield Guild acts as a group of mercenary companies. Regional garrison commanders run these companies.
- Maintain Garrisons – The Guild maintains dozens of garrisons across Bostonia that act as their regional headquarters. The forts and the land they occupy have been provided by the king and are owned entirely by the Guild.
- Assemble – Each guild has an embassy in Boston to keep their leadership informed of events in the capital.

The Engineers' Guild

The Engineers' Guild is a group of architects, civil engineers, construction workers, and teamsters. They are charged with maintaining the many roads, bridges, and dams in Bostonia. In addition, they hire their services to most of the barons, providing them with the expertise required to build fortifications, and public works projects.

The Powers of the Engineers' Guild

- **Build for Pay** – The Engineers' Guild has a monopoly on large construction projects in Bostonia. They provide services to the Crown at cost, and sell their expertise to the barons at a significant profit. They operate in all of the baronies except for Azereth, Vincent, and Hierant.
- **Certify Their Own Measurements** – The Engineers' Guild uses its own system of measurement that is different from the one regulated by the Mathematicians' Guild. They are not required to have any of their measurements, or equipment checked by the Mathematicians' Guild.
- **Assemble** – Each guild has an embassy in Boston to keep their leadership informed of events in the capital.

The Barons

The first barons were tribal leaders who fought with Dovid and Camille in the Unification. In exchange for their support, they were allowed to rule their lands, so long as they remained subordinate to the church and the crown. Though the tribes are gone, the barons retain control of their lands, and have even more power than 800 years ago.

Essentially, each barony is a miniature hereditary monarchy. The baron is the king and can rule his land as he sees fit, so long as he meets his obligations and follows the Church's law as written in The Passions of St. Dovid.

The Powers of the Barons

- **Levy Taxes** – Barons are permitted to levy taxes in their lands.
- **Mint Coins** – Barons can mint coins that conform to the standards set by the Mathematicians' Guild.
- **Raise Armies** – Barons are permitted to raise and maintain standing armies and supplement this force with mercenary companies.
- **Write Laws** – Barons may write laws into the Mortal and Coin books of their land. Though the laws are similar throughout Bostonia, there are differences between baronies. The king monitors these differences to insure that legal discrepancies do not endanger the stability of the nation as a whole.

- **Make War** – The barons of Bostonia have a right to make war on other barons or lesser nobles. The ability of the barons to exercise this right is limited by the watchful eye of the king and the Church.
- **Create Courts** – Barons have the right to create courts, appoint judges, and try secular cases.
- **Grant Land** – Baronies are run like tiny feudal monarchies. The Barons can grant land to noble families in exchange for some obligation. Generally, this obligation is in the form of military service and a portion of the bounty from the land.
- **Assemble** – Each baron has an embassy in Boston to keep him informed of events in the capital.

The King

Bostonian kings are chosen in a rigorous process called The Traditions of Succession. The Traditions is a holy document written by Grand Father Michael Richelau in y483. It details the method by which a new king is crowned.

The king is chosen from the ranks of the sitting barons, and he is considered "First Among Equals." Kings rule for life. The king is charged with protecting the land from external attack, and promoting peace within its borders. He maintains control of his own lands and also takes command of the King's Guard, and the Shield Guild.

The Powers of the King

- **Defend Bostonia** – The main power and duty of the Crown is to defend Bostonia from outside forces. Each baron pledges some portion of his military might to defend the Crown. If Bostonia is threatened, the barons must answer the king's call and send their forces to Boston.
- **Collect Obligations** – Based on the original agreement signed by Dovid and the tribal leaders, the barons pay for their right to rule their land. Each barony is required to pay an obligation of money, goods, services, or natural resources. Every 10 years, the king meets with the barons and revises their obligations.
- **Tax** – The king can tax goods that travel by sea, ships, mercenary companies, and the guilds.
- **Write Laws** – The king can write laws into the Crown Book. These laws immediately effect every citizen in Bostonia.
- **King's Land** – Bostonian law states that the king can reclaim undeveloped, or underdeveloped land. So, if a baron owns a mountain chain rich in minerals, and never mines that chain, then the land can be claimed for Bostonia by the king. Most often, ownership of the reclaimed land is then transferred to an aspiring noble, or a neighboring baron.

- **Moderate Disputes** – The king has the right to intercede in battles between baronies if the conflict endangers the stability of Bostonia as a whole. Generally, the king uses his influence to negotiate a peace. However, if need be, the king can use military force to settle the dispute.
- **King's Barony** – When the king is crowned, he moves to Boston with his most trusted advisers, and a personal guard. Though he remains a baron, and continues to own his lands, there is no way he can effectively rule them. The laws dealing with this situation vary from barony to barony. Some barons keep their title and lands, and appoint a steward (often the heir) to run things. Others simply abdicate the title of baron, and allow their heir to take over immediately.
- **King's Treasury** – The king has full control over the Bostonian treasury. He is permitted to keep 10% of the obligations and taxes collected each year. Some portion of this wealth is sent to the king's home barony. The king keeps the rest and uses it to enrich himself, or further his political ends.

The Bostonian Calendar

The Bostonian calendar is exactly like our own modern-day calendar with respect to the divisions of days, weeks, and months. Years are counted from the Year 0, which is marked by the founding of Boston.

Years are often shown with the notation *y* preceding the number of the year. Thus *y*120 is the year 120.

Holidays

The church ordains most of the holidays celebrated in Bostonia. Church holidays are celebrated throughout the entire land. In addition to these widely celebrated days, many regions and towns have their own local holidays, usually to mark an important event, or person in the area's history.

An abbreviated list of holidays follows. More detail about each holiday can be found in the religion section.

Holiday	Date
Ice Vigil	Jan. 1
Winter's Breaking	Jan. 21
St. Michael's Day	Feb. 19
Day of Forgiving	Mar. 2
Day of the Hunt	May 14
St. Weirgrub's Day	Jun. 6
Sunsong	Jun. 21
Emergence	Jul. 24
St. Antel's Day	Jul. 27
St. Sebastian's Day	Aug. 3
St. Dovid's Day	Aug. 14
Day of Tithes	Aug. 31
Harvest Celebration	Sep. 30
St. Camille's Day	Oct. 30

St. Alice's Day	Nov. 3
Longest Night	Dec. 22

Marking the Hours

Time is kept in many Bostonian cities by means of "bells." There are six bells each day. A bell keeper keeps time and rings the bells at the appropriate hour. It is not an exact system, but works for most purposes. In large cities, bell keepers are paid by the city government. In small towns, and villages, local priests act as bell keepers.

The **Greeting** bell rings just before sunrise and calls the priests and the other faithful to wake to greet Stratus in morning prayer. It is also the beginning of many Bostonians' day.

The **Working** bell is rung about two hours later and signifies the beginning of the workday. Many businesses time their opening to coincide with this bell.

The **Sunsheight** bell rings at approximately noontime. Many of Bostonia's wealthier citizens will take a lunch at this time. The poorer laborers and farm workers generally do not have this luxury.

The **Parting** bell rings just before sunset and marks the end of the workday and the time for the evening prayers.

The **Closing** bell rings about 3-4 hours after the **Parting** bell. It signifies the closing of the city gates.

The **Final** bell rings about midnight and starts the curfew. It is custom that no well-intentioned people should be out in the streets between **Final** and **Greeting**.

Economics

Coinage and Barter in Bostonia

The standard currency in Bostonia is the silver penny or coin. In addition, copper Bits are minted and are valued at 1/10 of a coin. Gold crowns are worth 20 pennies. For very large purchases, precious metal ingots can be valued and traded.

Since the dissolution of the Bostonian Monarchy, the Barons have had the power to mint their own coins. The King and the Mathematician's Guild regulate the coins' purity and composition. This means that in general, coins from every barony have exactly the same value. This sometimes is not the case however, and occasionally, coins will have different value based on where you spend them.

Coin tampering and counterfeiting are common crimes. Some less scrupulous shopkeepers may shave coins, taking a small bit of precious metal from each coin, hoping to melt it into ingots later. Many shaved coins show file marks or nicks and all are slightly under legal weight, but that is hard to tell unless you carefully measure each coin.

In general, a laborer working in a city can expect to earn about 2p each day. Likewise, his food, clothing and housing will probably cost him about that much. Most laborers in Bostonia live day to day and save very little money.

On the other hand, skilled workers can make considerably more than a simple laborer. Many tradesmen earn 35 pennies a day. Those with specialty skills (armor or weapon smith, alchemist, sage, etc.) can earn even more than this, many specialty jobs costing 10 or more pennies each day.

In rural communities, coinage has much less value. Barter is often the major means of trade. Food and services are traded between families. Coinage is only useful if there is a considerable community nearby in which to spend it. Many rural families will keep a small savings and use this to purchase hard to find supplies.

Justice in Bostonia

The Bostonian justice system is heavily influenced by the teachings of the Church and St. Michael in particular. In his book, The Sins of Man (y62), Michael describes and explains the sins offensive to the Mother and Father and how sinners might be dealt with by the virtuous. Today, the Barons have power in their lands and can make or break laws through official Decrees. However, throughout all the different lands, you will find there are certain common elements dictated by the King, the Church and the Bostonian culture.

Crimes in Bostonia are divided into Books. A Book is a legal document defining a crime and the standards of punishment. The Books are generally the same in each barony. However, Barons have the right to add to the Mortal and Coin (and some of Crown) Books by writing Decrees, changing the laws to suit their tastes and the economy of their holdings. The priests in the baronies have the responsibility of monitoring the Books, recording the changes and reporting to the Bishops. Gross deviations are not tolerated.

Divine Book	Mortal Book
Heresy	Murder
Religious Obligations	Assault
Tithes	Theft
Adultery	Slavery
Practice of Necromancy	Kidnapping
Practice of Witchcraft	Rape
Cursing	Arson
Crown Book	Coin Book
Taxation	Taxation
Obligations of Nobles	Counterfeiting
Obligations of Servants	Coin Shaving
Rights of Nobility	Fraud
Ownership of Weapons	Laws of Trade
Rights of Succession	Inheritance

The definitions of these crimes are pretty straightforward. However, the punishments vary a great deal with the region, the circumstances of the crime and the social standing of the defendant and the victim. One important point to realize, Bostonians have a cultural stigma against imprisonment. Jails in Bostonia are often small and used as holding pens for accused criminals until justice can be served. Only severe crimes for which no other appropriate punishment can be found will be punished with imprisonment.

To give some examples, the Divine Book deals with moral and religious matters. The crimes here are considered crimes against the Father and Mother as well as society at large and so are often dealt with publicly. The punishment for heresy, necromancy and other witchcraft is usually death. For peasants, missing tithes or other obligations usually results in a small pittance (fine) paid to the church in question as well as a few extra prayers at the next mass. A noble who fails to meet obligations is denying the authority of the Church and setting a bad example for the people. Thus, he can come under strict sanctions from the Church. These could be large fines, or the loss of land, or in extreme cases, the leader could be deposed by a Church-led force. Adultery is punished with public humiliation (usually flogging) of the guilty.

The Crown Book deals with issues affecting the nobles and how they behave toward one another and their subjects. Generally, disputes between nobles are settled by the nobles in question, or by the King and the Church. As such there is no body of laws and punishments in this book. Instead, the rights and obligations of the nobility are detailed here.

The Mortal Book is the "Book of Crimes" as it details the majority of personal and property crimes in Bostonia. Crimes ranging from petty theft and vandalism to rape and murder are detailed here. In general, the most serious crimes (such as rape and murder) can bring death to the guilty. However, the punishment is often altered based on the relative standing and worth of the guilty and the victim. For instance, if an influential person kills a peasant, then the penalty might take the form of restitution to the victim and his or her family. A nobleman killing a peasant is not likely to get death. However, if a peasant were to kill a nobleman, he would hang. In the case of a commoner killing another commoner, circumstances would dictate the punishment. A crime of passion may bring forced labor to help support the victim's family. However, a premeditated killing could bring exile, or even death.

One last note: In rural areas, where every person represents a valuable source of labor, there are few crimes that will lead to the death of the guilty party. Unless the criminal is deemed to be a menace to the community, he will be spared to work the fields. In an urban setting, where people are more plentiful than gainful employment, the death penalty is more common.

Bostonian Games

Keshat

Keshat (meaning big fish) is a dice game that originated in the cobrat lands and was brought to Bostonia by sailors. The game has grown in popularity and now is the most popular game in Bostonian taverns.

Keshat is played with seven six-sided dice. The dice are rolled and any or all of the dice can be re-rolled up to two more times. The goal is to make a match of three (the fish) and then two matches of two.

Rolls are scored by adding the total of matched dice and subtracting the total of all the unmatched dice. A zero is scored if the fish is not made. The lowest total that can be scored in a roll is zero. A match of all seven dice is a Keshat and scored 60 points.

As an example a roll of 5,5,5,4,4,3,2 scores $3 \times 5 + 2 \times 4 = 23 - 5 = 18$. A roll of 5,5,4,3,2,2,1 scores nothing since there is no match of three.

Keshat is often played with each player taking three rounds. The player with the most points after three rolls wins and the losers pay the winners the difference in their point totals. In this type of game, a Keshat on the final round of play scores 100 points.

Five Square

Five Square is a game of strategy played in northern and eastern Bostonia. The game has recently become popular among borakki traders that frequent Bostonian towns and mining camps. Among the borakki, the game is called Rune Squares.

Five Square is played on a slate table called "The Gray". One player (the "drawer") begins the game by drawing a 5x5 board on the gray with chalk. He then puts numbers from 1-24 randomly in the squares, leaving the center square as a blank, "free" square. The other player (the "first square") takes the first turn.

A player takes his first turn by placing 4 dice in a cup and rolling them. The player can take any combination of those dice (generating a number from 1-24) and place his mark on the like numbered square. Any dice used to mark a square are placed back in the cup. Any dice not used are left on the board.

On his second and subsequent turns, the player can choose to roll any dice he has left on the board from last turn, or he may leave them, using their value to mark squares. As before, once a die has been used, it is placed back into the cup to be re-rolled next turn.

The player to get a line of five squares horizontally, vertically, or diagonally is the winner.

If no player can make a line of five squares, then the game is a stalemate. At this point, the game can be considered a draw, or the players can continue with an additional rule. Which of these two things happens is discussed before the game begins.

When the game is stalemated, and the players choose to continue, they can use their dice to remove their opponent's mark from a square, or they can place their own mark. They cannot do both in the same turn.

This game is sometimes played as a gambling game. An initial wager is placed on the table and the "first square" is given a doubling cube. At any time in the game, the player with the doubling cube can choose to double the wager. If his opponent agrees, then the wager is doubled, the game continues, and the doubling cube is passed to the opponent. If the opponent does not wish to double, he forfeits the game.

Mathematicians' Dice

Mathematicians' Dice is a game played in the universities of Bostonia. It is a favorite pastime of students, physicians, and of course, members of the Mathematicians' Guild.

Mathematicians' Dice is played with a set of dice, consisting of a d4, d6, d8, d10, and d12. In addition, a tiny egg timer (with anywhere from 30 seconds to a minute of sand) is required.

One player, called the "caster" tosses the dice behind a screen and turns the egg timer. The caster must take the numbers on the dice and, by mentally placing operators (+, -, *, /, and =) between their values, create an equation. This equation is read left to right, with no parenthesis, and without paying attention to the order of operations. He orders the dice from left to right as they would read in his mental equation, lifts the screen, and flips the timer.

For example, if the caster threw a 2, 5, 8, 4, and 9 on his dice. He might come up with this equation:

$$2-5+8=9-4$$

He would thus line the dice up in the order 2, 5, 8, 9, 4.

Once the caster flips the timer and raises the screen, the second player (the "reader") has to come up with his own equation that matches the pattern of the dice. He must make his equation before the flipped timer runs out of sand (in other words in less time than it took the caster).

If the caster cannot come up with an equation before the timer runs out, the reader gets a point. If the caster makes an equation, and the reader creates one in time, the reader gets a point. If the caster succeeds in making an equation, but the reader fails, then the caster gets a point.

Then the players switch roles and continue until one player gets a predetermined (usually 5) number of points