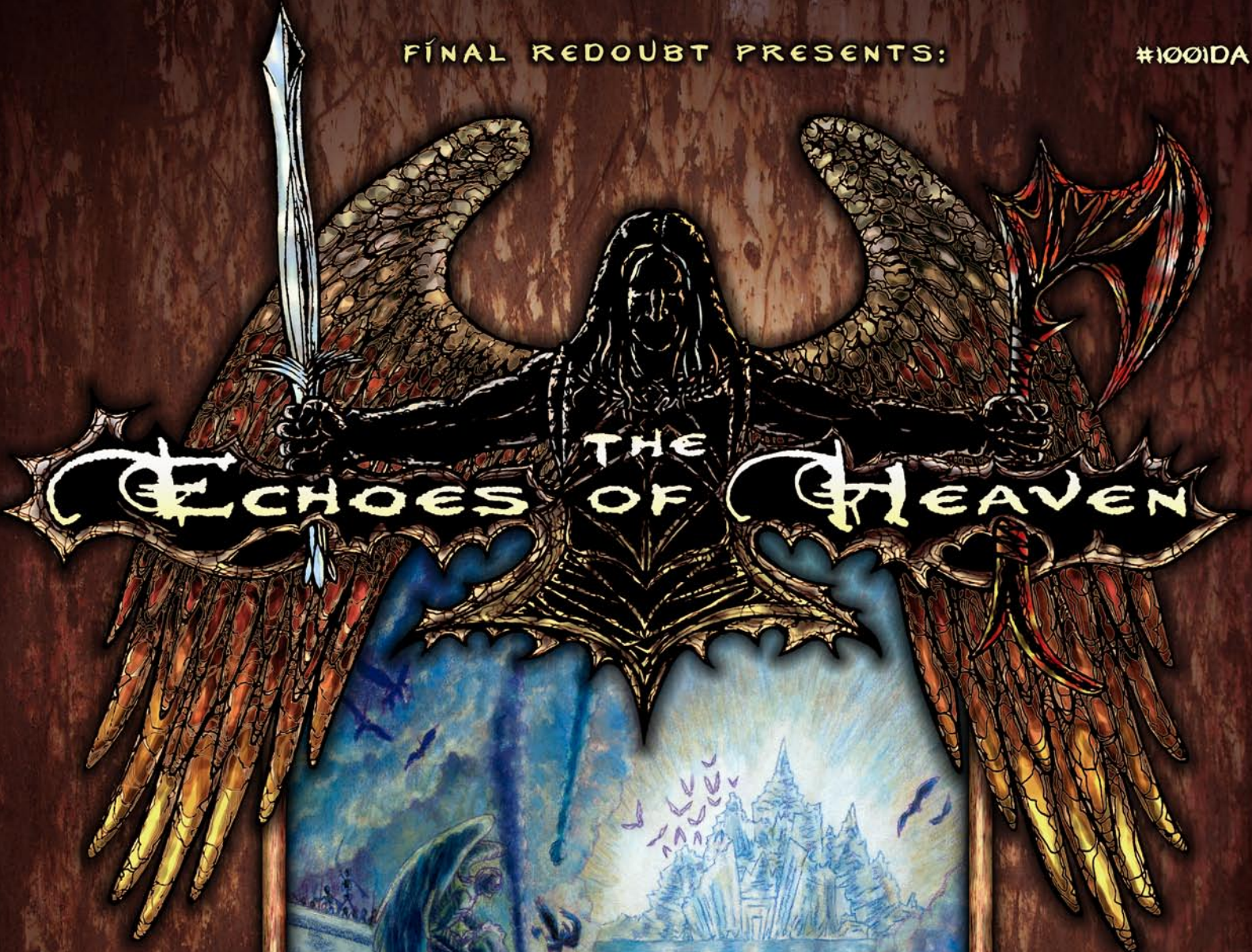


FINAL REDOUBT PRESENTS:

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Requires the use of the
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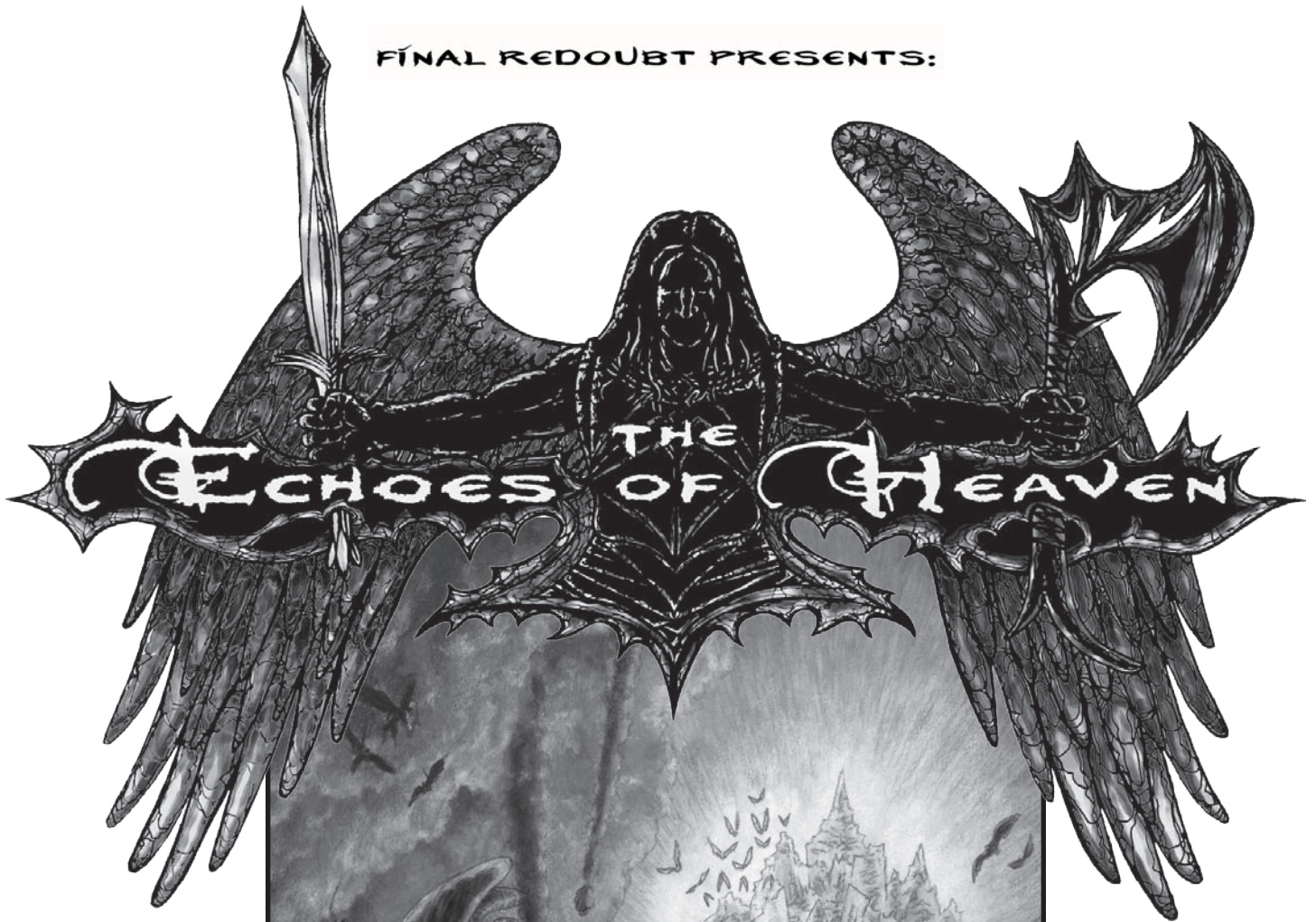
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For all levels of play.

The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting

by Robert J Defendi

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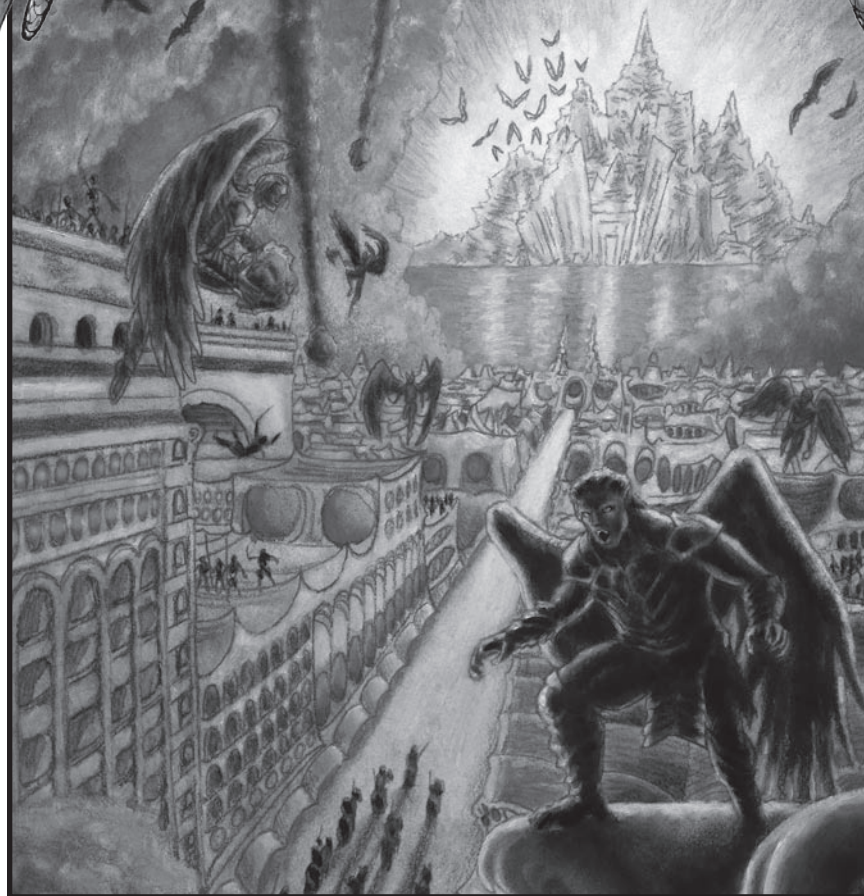
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The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting

by Robert J Defendi

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*And Lo! the battlements of Heaven still lay under the
eyes of Angels bearing fearsome armaments.
- Carsidius 5:19*

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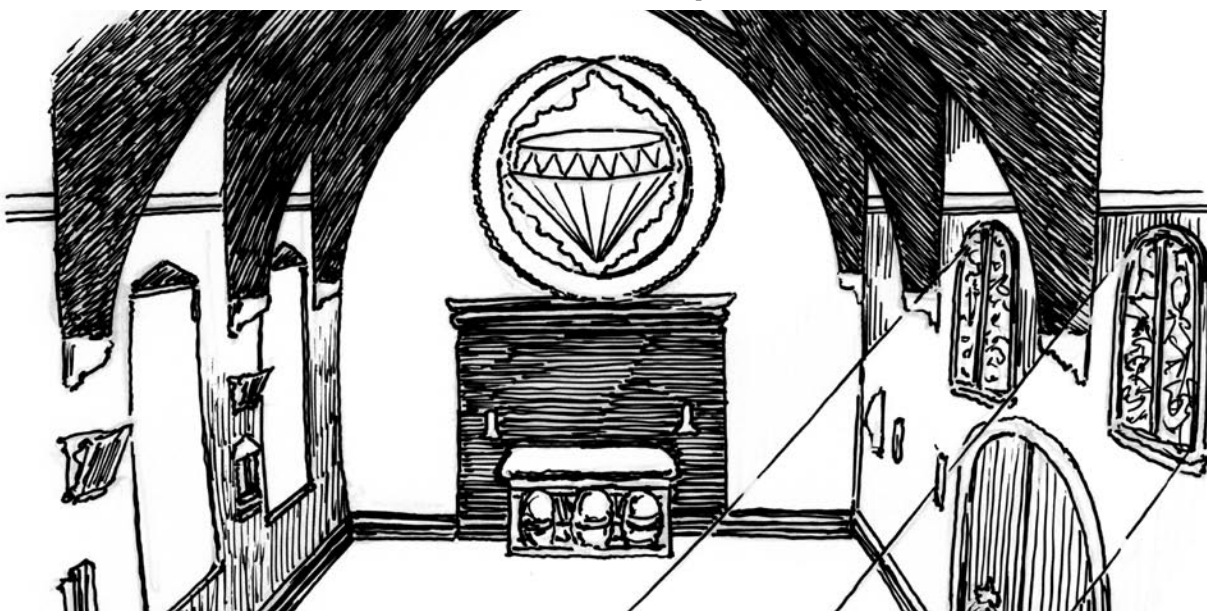
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Introduction

Areniel leaped off the parapets of Heaven. The stone battlements of the city fell away beneath him even as rolling lands stretched out on all sides. On his flanks the rest of the Host rose in unison, armor glistening in the reflected light of God. White wings beat almost in unison—the hand of God, propelled by His will.

As Areniel flew into the air, the lush fields of Heaven fell into the distance, a yellow-flecked expanse of grass stirring in the wind of a thousand angelic wings.

The Fallen Host flew above them, vicious weapons glittering in the light, their armor blackened in the absence of God's glory. Soon they'd glisten with blood.

The two armies drew together and Areniel soared toward his target, the leader. The Fallen Angel wore twisted steel and carried a serrated blade. His wing feathers labored under a layer of old blood, dried gore, and filth.

Bamon. The Fallen Prince.

Areniel bellowed and Bamon's gaze snapped to him, the blackened helmet strangely bright in the morning air, a beacon in the battle to come. A symbol. A warning.

Areniel's scream died as they drew together. One moment they seemed miles apart to his angelic eyes. The next they rushed together.

They crashed into each other, swords hacking armor, bodies vibrating with thunder. They grappled for a moment, clawing with hands and swords, wings vying for dominance.

And then they fell.

The wind rushed past as the perfect fields of Heaven rose to meet them. Their wings wrapped around each other. The ground spun and danced as it grew. Areniel tried to work his fingers into the slit of that helmet, to claw out the eyes of this terrible abomination of God's love.

Then the impact, shattering the earth and blowing out a depression of soil and gravel in the field, a hammer fall of the Divine and the Blasphemous. Areniel had barely recovered from the impact before the booming echoes bounced back from distant mountains.

He rose, his internal Angelic Spark only slightly reduced by the impact. Across the crater the Fallen one rose as well.

"Bamon," Areniel said.

"Is that what they call me now?" Bamon asked.

"God's name for you is a prayer on the lips of all who speak it," Areniel said. "You've turned that prayer into a blasphemy."

Bamon laughed and the sound echoed metallically inside his helmet. He swung his sword about him, one hand out in warding, his foul wings stretching in the light of the distant Holy See.

"How odd. I think the same thing about your name . . . Areniel."

"This ends today," Areniel said. Above him a third of the Host of Heaven clashed with the angels who remained true. Areniel could feel the power around him, above him . . . inside him. This was done. One thousand years of war was enough.

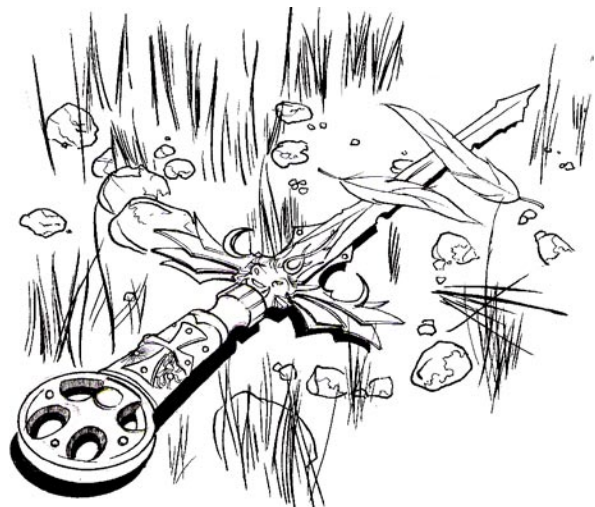
"You have no idea how right you are, Areniel, Chosen of God." The last came out as a curse.

Then a call rose on the winds, the sound of a thousand Angelic voices rising in horror and outrage. Areniel looked up to see the loyal Host had turned on itself. Angels hacked at Angels, a look of anger in their distant eyes, the smell of treachery on the wind. "No," Areniel whispered. "Oh please, no."

"Oh yes," Bamon said, with a sepulchral laugh. "Oh yes indeed."

A second third of the Host had fallen.

And Heaven would fall next. . . .



Introduction

Welcome

By opening these pages, you enter a new world, a world of danger and nobility, a world of shadow and light, a world of sorrow and love. Most of all, it is a world of hope.

The Mortal Realm desperately needs heroes. Will you answer the call?

A NOTE ON PRONOUNS

Whenever referring to a person of indeterminate gender in this book, the masculine pronoun is used. This should be taken to mean he/she, his/her, etc.

WHAT IS *THE ECHOES OF HEAVEN* CAMPAIGN SETTING?

The Echoes of Heaven is a game world of darkness and danger, where a monolithic church has split into dozens of quarreling factions and holy war looms like a shadow. Here, strength and brutality win the day and only those with the most faith, honor, and courage can stand against the terrible tyranny of those who would enslave everyone of a different belief, a different philosophy, a different race.

Worse, it is a world infected by the very fabric of Hell itself.

It's a world that once knew wonderful, perfect grace, where Mortals and Angels labored side by side and all spent their days basking in the light of God. There was no Mortal Realm. Hell was nothing more than a province of Heaven. All lived in Paradise and they knew what it was like to wander in Grace.

Then came the War.

The Fall of the first third of the Host of Angels nearly destroyed Heaven. The Fall of the second third came as a death knell. Only the foresight and planning of the Five Prophets saved everyone from languishing under the rule of the Fallen . . . but it came at a terrible, terrible price.

Enter Meridrin, the Mortal Realm, a world Sundered from Paradise, a world both familiar and strangely different. A world where *you* can make a difference.

The Echoes of Heaven is designed for use in four different games systems. They are the *d20 System* game (owned by Wizards of the Coast), *Rolemaster* (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), *HARP* (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), and *Hero System* (owned by Hero Games).

This Product contains stats for use in the *d20 System* game.



LINE ELEMENTS

The Echoes of Heaven contains two main elements. They are sourcebooks and adventures.

Sourcebooks

Some of the scheduled sourcebooks are as follows:

The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting—The book you currently read. *The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting* details the Mortal Realm and includes a bonus supplement detailing the Kingdom of Ludremon at no extra charge.

The Last Free City—This book details the city of Ferric's Redoubt, known as the City-State to most people. Sheltered in the lands of Ingrast but beyond the grasp of the Elves, this city has remarkable freedom . . . but with freedom comes danger.

The Lost Kingdom of the Dwarves—Centuries ago an Ulcer opened inside the Dwarven kingdom of Uzarâg. Now this land is more Hell than earth and it fills to overflowing with a multitude of dark and evil creatures, most notably the Cambionic Orcs

Introduction

and worse yet, the Great Fiend known as the Warlord.

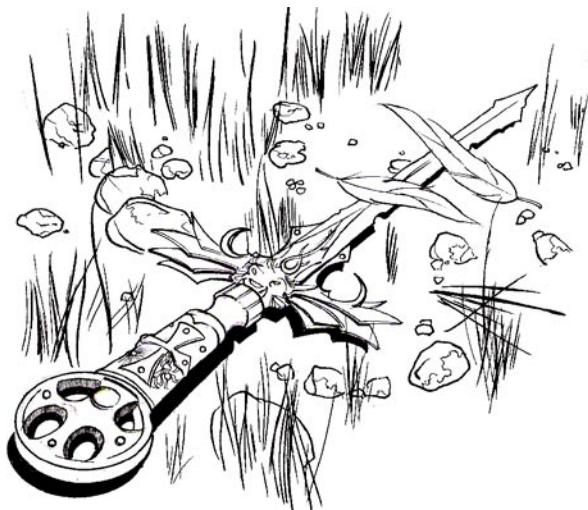
Adventures

Each sourcebook comes packaged with an adventure. Between these two works, your campaigns can explore an ever-widening world of intrigue and danger.

The Throne of God—The adventure packaged with this sourcebook. A story that spans 10,000 years, here the players learn the lay of the land in the Mortal Realm and fight to find an ancient relic—a diamond splinter said to come from the Throne of God Himself.

The Festering Earth—The characters travel to Felric's Redoubt, the City-State. There they must solve a series of murders before the serial killer brings the entire place to its knees.

On Corrupted Ground—Still reeling from their adventures in Felric's Redoubt, the characters must now delve into the heart of Hell on earth—Uzarâg. Inside the fallen kingdom, it will take all their skill, faith and mettle to survive.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Final Redoubt Press, we wish to bring high-quality products into the hands of gamers who need them. Starting with characters ignorant of the world around them, players can discover the Mortal Realm

even as the story unfolds. With each new adventure, player and character alike will discover a world rich in excitement and adventure, a world as intriguing as their GM can make it.

An Ongoing Campaign

We're aware that different games progress at many different rates. Some groups play almost every day and some fight to meet once a month. Therefore, we've tried to devise this world and this series for any rate of play.

Each adventure is designed for characters of a certain level. A GM needs only to adjust the rate of experience gain to meet the needs of his group. If a group can play an entire adventure in one weekend and that leaves three more until the next product releases, then the GM needs only to match the experience gain to move hand in hand with this pace. Meanwhile, he'll find Adventure Seeds in every product that will allow the characters to explore the world around them until they're ready for the next episode of the series.

For more on gauging experience given, see the accompanying adventure.

World Threads and Adventure Seeds

We've all been there. A GM tries to plan out his next adventure, and although he can find many things that seem intriguing inside the game world, he has no idea which will be explored in future sourcebooks. If he answers a mystery now, will he have continuity problems if the answer doesn't match a future work from the publisher?

There are two types of hooks in *The Echoes of Heaven*. World Threads are little intrigues about the world itself. Some of these will be explained to the GM, some will be withheld for future revelation. However, since these are world elements not marked as Adventure Seeds, the GM knows that they might be expanded in the future. He can still play with them and even change and reveal them, but he knows the risks of conflict with future supplements if he does.

The second type is Adventure Seeds. These are puzzles, hooks, and problems that we at Final Redoubt Press promise to never explore. If we state in

Introduction

an Adventure Seed that no King of Ludremon has ever lived longer than thirty years, a GM knows he can build adventures, intrigues, even entire campaigns around this puzzle, and we will never do anything to dispute the answers that arise at his table.

That is not to say that a GM can't touch World Threads, just that he should know the risk. Anything he does with a World Thread might invalidate future material.

Quad Statting

The Echoes of Heaven contains stats for four different games. We at Final Redoubt Press purposely chose these games for their compatibility. Each of these games has the same general levels of power and abilities for the major classes or professions. Mages in all four have similar spells and clerics in all four have similar divine powers.

This means that we can weave a story without worrying about whether a mage can cast a fireball in all three systems. We can provide a GM with everything he needs to run his game, and he can do that with his own house rules and his own style of game play. As much as possible, we intend to stay out of the way.

This isn't saying that we won't add optional abilities or even change the way that some things work. That's necessary in all game worlds. It just means that we won't stumble all over ourselves because a *d20 System* game bard can do a bit more with illusions than a *Rolemaster* bard. Each game group should play the game the way *they* like to play it.

Using This Product

This product provides everything that a gaming group needs to run a campaign in the Mortal Realm. Besides giving an overview of the world, it contains a more in-depth exploration of the country of Ludremon, a ready-made adventuring ground, rife with trouble and intrigues.

Future expansions will detail other areas of the game world, but with this product a GM has everything he needs to start a long and healthy campaign.

Mage Terminology

In these books when we refer to a mage, we aren't referring to any one class. Instead, this is a general term referring to any character that casts spells based on skill and knowledge, not their connection to a Divine source.

Priest Terminology

In these books when we refer to a priest or a druid, we also aren't referring to any one class. Instead, we mean any religious person that may or may not cast spells based on their connection to a Divine source.

Campaign Cartographer

The maps in this product were made using Campaign Cartographer Pro by Profantasy. Viewing and printing software can be found at: www.profantasy.com. There are two types of maps included, one for CC2 and one for CC3. Only CC2 maps can be viewed with the free viewer.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to Gregory Widen and Steven Brust. Widen's movie *The Prophecy* and Brust's book *To Rein in Hell* put images in my head that remain to this day. It was those images that sparked the idea for the teaser in *The Throne of Heaven*, and out of that arose this entire world.

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank our play testers: Amanda Peltier, Angela Daley, Bjorn Olsen, Brandon Leavitt, Brenda Llewelyn, Dan Willis, Gary Llewelyn, Jennie Mollerup, Josh Peltier, Kori Emerson, Mark Giffune, Mason Emerson, Mat Daley, Matthew Fitt, Scott Llewelyn, and Stephen Johnson. Without them, this product wouldn't be possible.

Chapter One

Chapter One: The Mortal Realm

Welcome to the Mortal Realm, a place of strife and terror, of nobility and corruption, of life and death. This world lies on the foundations of former glories, where the Mortal races fight to survive in the face of the insidious armies of Hell itself.

SETTING OVERVIEW

The Mortal Realm is a big place and the continent of Belkanâth is only a fraction of it. Still, Belkanâth is the known world, cut off by impassable lands to the north, deserts to the south, seas and barbarians to the west, and the dragons of the Enârôz to the east. Yet in these bounds civilization flourishes.

The Sundering

Twelve thousand years ago there was no Mortal Realm and Hell was nothing more than a province of Heaven. This was the golden age, when Mortal and Angel alike worked side by side to create a society of peace and progress. There was no hardship, no terror, and no war.

Then the angel Bamon, once beloved of God, fell from grace to the Deadly Sin of Pride. He led a third of the Host of Heaven against God. Angel fought Angel. The Mortal races threw in their lots on one side or the other, and for a millennium this war scarred the face of Heaven itself.

In the last days, it looked as if the Faithful had finally triumphed. The final battle seemed a desperate thrust from the Fallen, an attempt to take the Throne of God itself. It seemed doomed to fail.

And then a second third of the Host fell.

The forces of good crumbled. The Faithful died under savage weapons. Only the Five Prophets, one from each of the Mortal Races, saw this coming. Only they had a plan.

With a tremendous magical ritual, using the power of God himself, they Sundered Heaven. The Fallen Angels found themselves carried away to live in a wasteland of pain and horror called Hell. The Faith-

ful Host remained in Heaven, to bask in the light of God. The Mortals ended in the world between, the Mortal Realm of Meridrin. There, the history of history itself was written.

This is the Mortal Realm.

This is the battleground.

Ulcers

Hell has not sat idly by.

In the years after the Sundering, Bamon worked and toiled, continuing his war against Heaven. But now there was an intermediary land, and here the forces of Heaven and Hell would fight future battles.

Ulcers are infections in the fabric of the Mortal Realm where the laws of nature break down and all the horrors of the underworld seethe and grow. Every Ulcer is different. Some are built on the nature of the Demon who spawned them. Some are born out of the hearts of those who once loved the land.

Adventures inside Ulcers can be dungeon crawls, mysteries, puzzles, horror, and beyond. Since even the laws of the universe can break down inside, no adventure idea is too improbable. Anything is possible in an Ulcer.

An Ulcer in its early stages is easy to destroy . . . in theory. One must merely kill every bit of true evil inside. The problem is knowing what is truly evil and what is not. This is why the Church and most nations, when dealing with Ulcers, kill every single thing inside. Once an Ulcer forms completely, they are almost impossible to destroy.

The Church

The Church is monolithic, all-powerful. Not even the squabbling of its internal orders can diminish it. It's the source of all good and truth in the world, led by an infallible and prophetic master, the Faerarch.

Or so the Church would have us believe.

There are actually six churches, but the biggest is the Church of Angenus, or simply the Church. This is the Human faith, those who believe the Human Prophet Angenus (of the Five Prophets) was the leader of the Sundering and the Divine Savior of mankind.

Chapter One

Although each of the other Mortal Races believes that their Prophet was the Savior, and they have their own churches dedicated to this faith, the Church is the most powerful.

The Church protects and guides. It is the shepherd to the fold of mankind. The Church cares for mankind and hunts down evil and corruption wherever it is found, especially the corruption of magic. Let the Elves and the Gnomes practice their heathen arts;

the Church is there to protect the true followers of Angenus.

And they need protecting.

The Divine and the Taint

In the early days of the War in Heaven, the Dwarves were the first Mortals to step forward and offer to fight. Every Dwarf offered to take up the war and God gave them all the Divine Spark, a spiritual en-



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dowment that made them hardier and stronger than the original race of Dwarves. Humans and Elves stepped forward next, but not everyone in these races offered to fight. God gave only those few the Divine Spark, creating the races of High Elf and High Man, amplifying the attributes of each of these races.

The Divine Spark is a spiritual attribute, not a hereditary one. It's impossible to determine which Human and Elven children will bear the Divine Spark and which won't.

But Bamon has a gift as well, the Infernal Taint. He has given it to his most faithful, the Fallen Dwarves, the Fallen Elves, and everything with infernal blood. It's the opposite of the Divine Spark. As the Infernal Taint is possessed by entire races, it is passed to all pure-blooded children.

These are the battle lines in the Mortal Realm. It might be impossible to see inside a man's heart, but the Spark in his spirit can be obvious.

Evil and Good

The Mortal Realm is a place of intrigue and deceit. It is impossible to detect the quality of a person's soul. While magic to detect evil and good does exist, it only detects the Divine Spark and the Infernal Taint. While a person can lose either through their actions, this is still only a guess into the natures of their souls. In the end, only God is the true judge.

The Great Fiends

When the last great Empire of man fell, it left behind its mark on the world. There are five Great Fiends, the Chaos, the Warlord, the Lich King, the Demon Queen, and the Siren. Each of these—except the Chaos—controls a permanent Ulcer in the world, and the Chaos is, in itself, an Ulcer.

The Great Fiends are the closest things to gods in the Mortal Realm. Not even a Saint has been able to slay one. Still, they can be stopped. Hacking a Great Fiend to pieces slows it down as much as a Mortal. The effect just isn't permanent.

The Great Fiends are the biggest continual threat to Mortality. When they rage out of their Ulcers, even the greatest enemies ally to stop them.

The Nopheratus

No one knows what the Nopheratus is or from whence it came. All they know is that it appeared sometime during the War in Heaven, and with it came the power of necromancy.

The Nopheratus is Bamon's greatest ally. It wasn't an Angel, and that's all anyone knows for sure. It might be a force. It might be the essence of evil; it might be as powerful as God himself (though suggesting this is heresy). No one even knows for sure if the Nopheratus is intelligent.

The Nopheratus might well be the instigator of Bamon's fall. It's almost certainly the motive energy behind the formation of Ulcers. Even mortals can access it with fell necromantic magicks.

The Nopheratus is everywhere.

Cambions

When a Demon lies with a Mortal, any progeny is a Cambion. There are five races of Cambions, one for each race of Mortals. Hobgoblins are part Human. Orcs are part Dwarf. Beastmen are part Elf. Goblins are part Halfling. Kobolds are part Gnome.

Cambions carry infernal blood. They rampage, and destroy, and display the Deadly Sin most tempting to their Mortal half. If given their way, they will destroy civilization.

Nephilim

The second third of the Host fell to the Sin of Wantonness. They took wives of the Mortal Races and imitated the husbands of the married. The progeny of these unholy unions were the race of Nephilim.

The Nephilim are the races of giants: five mighty forces of death and destruction in the world. Whereas the Cambions exemplify the Five Deadly Sins, the Nephilim are the sins as an elemental force. There are five races of true giants, but other minor versions such as Ogres exist, corrupted out of the Nephilim by the power of Ulcers.

The Nephilim are the first races born evil, and when they die their souls become Demons. As long as they persist, the ranks of Hell will swell.

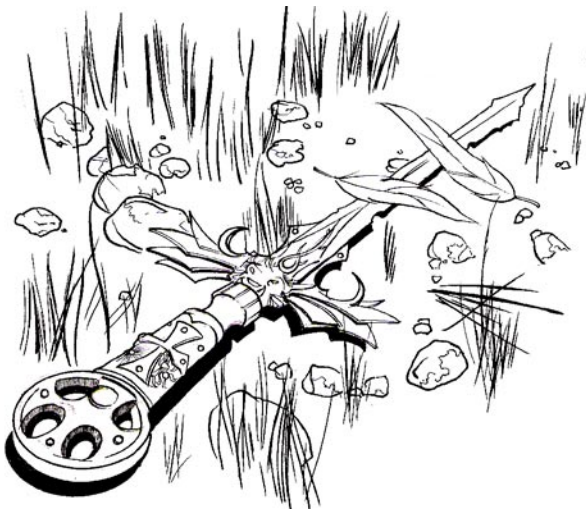
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THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE

In the beginning all creation centered around Heaven. Here all the mortals lived with God and his Angels. Only after the War in Heaven, after the Five Prophets Sundered the world, did the multiverse take its current shape.

In the center of the multiverse stretches the Mortal Realm, the home of all Mortals, the prime meridian of creation. Heaven and Hell spin on either side, forever in opposition. The six Elemental planes split into two triads during the Sundering. The first triad consists of Air, Earth, and Light, and it encircles Heaven. The second triad consists of Fire, Ice, and Water, and it encircles Hell.

The purest Elements can only be drawn from adjacent planes and the farther one moves away, the weaker they become, so while the Mortal Realm has strong connections to all six Elements, these aren't as strong as the connection Heaven and Hell have to the Elements directly encircling them. In addition, Heaven and Hell have only weak control over the Elements that encircle their opposite. This can be seen in the special abilities of Angel and Demon alike.



THE HEAVENS AND THE MORTAL REALM

The Mortal Realm has a single sun and a single moon. The moon and the sun appear to be the same size, though the sun is much brighter. The sun goes

around the world once a day, the moon almost once a day, so sometimes it comes up in the daytime and sometimes at night.

The moon has a changing face, almost as if it were turning to look between the Mortal Realm and the Heavens. One face is light, the other dark, so as it turns, once a month, it changes from full to new to full again.

There are six planets, or star wanderers, in the heavens as well. They name these Darodalt, Drolo, Xamallen, Strothea, Arior, and Koltisk.

There are 343 days in a year and seven days in a week. Twelve months of 28 days each fill most of the year, all named after Emperors. The last days form a one-week festival at the beginning of the year, starting on the first day of spring.

Standard Week

Day	Task
Airday	Work
Lightday	Work
Fireday	Work
Waterday	Work
Iceday	Work
Godsday	Worship (Clerics)
Earthday	Worship (Druids)

Months of the Year

Common	Elven	Dwarven
Festival of Death	Rebirth Ceremony	Festival of the Forge
Eurustace	Faladrel	Uzarbandul
Stanterius	Cilras	Andal
Eblius	Thírwén	Gûrud
Polvius	Unthor	Turân
Vatelion	Ivrelion	Izarâl
Terullius	Belebrathrel	Kirban
Pronus	Elrinen	Tund
Allonius	Athorgil	Sharal
Motius	Geledhril	Gurud
Gorrus	Meramarth	Birum
Quantius	Boriel	Uzurâl
Vastus	Aradnion	Karag

A person begins work on Airday and works every day through Iceday. A feast is traditional for each

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family at the end of the day's work on Iceday. Of course, for most families this means a larger portion or small treat, and many have to actually cut portions throughout the week to manage the "feast."

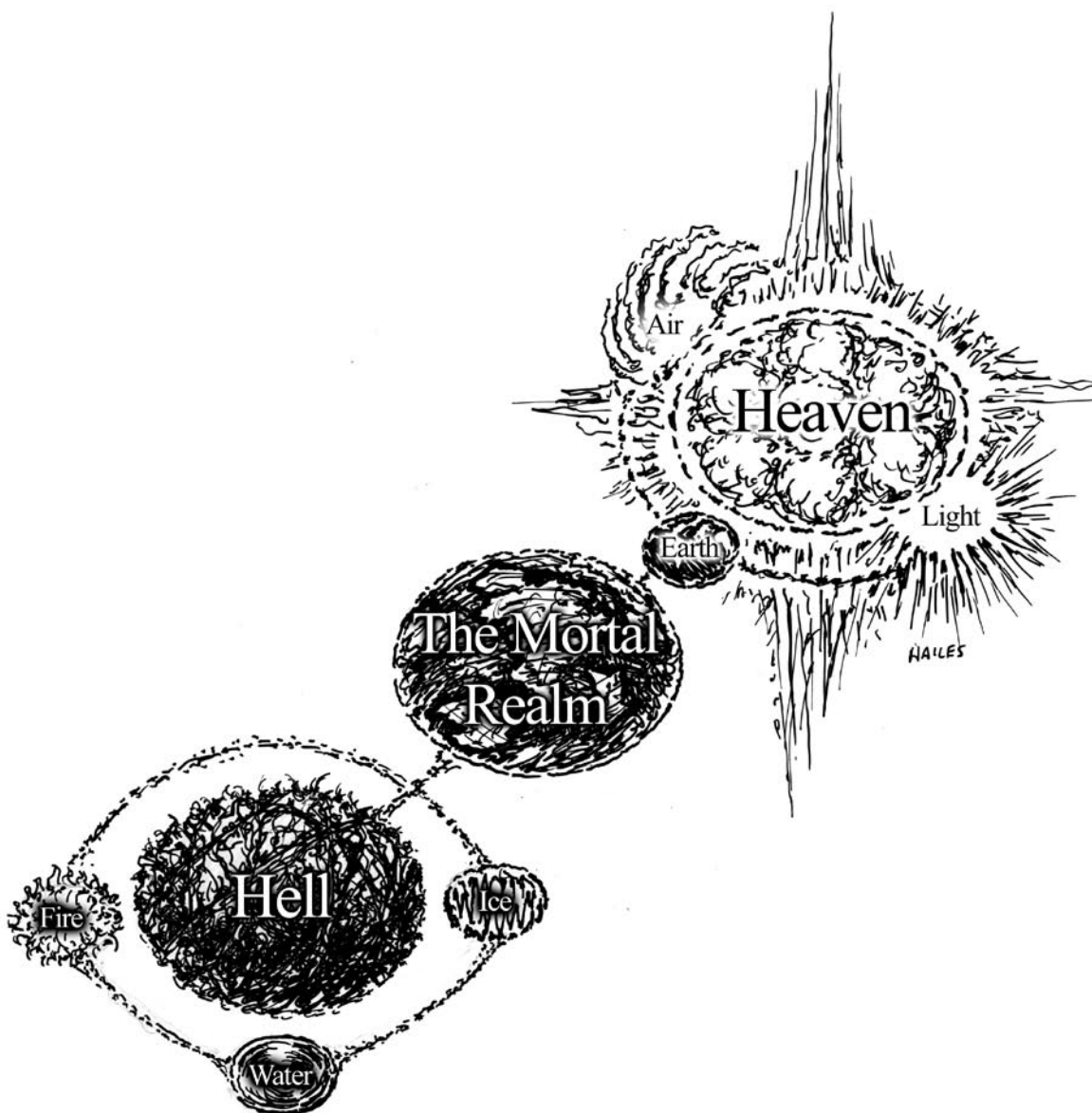
The moon is on a twenty-eight-day cycle. This means that it is full one Earthday every month, and this moves one week in the month every year.

The days of the week are named after the Atavistic take on the Elements. Some magical groups differentiate the Elements differently.

Climate and Seasons

The seasons of Belkanâth are typical. The further north one travels, the colder it gets. The further south one travels, the warmer it becomes until one reaches the tropical regions of southern Belkanâth.

The Festival opens the year at the beginning of spring. The first three months of the year are considered spring months. The next three are summer months; then comes the three autumn months. The year ends with three winter months.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Races of the Mortal Realm

Meridrin has many races, many different people. All normal player character races fall into the five major groups: Human, Elven, Dwarven, Gnomish, and Halfling.

THE FIVE DEADLY SINS

Because of their close proximity to the evil created when the first Angels fell, every race in the Mortal Realm bears the taint of sin. While this doesn't doom them to Hell from birth, it *does* mean the races have certain inherent weaknesses.

Any time a character confronts his deadly sin, he should roleplay the attraction. If the temptation is great enough (or magical enough) to warrant will save, then the character receives a -2 profane penalty.

THE DIVINE SPARK

When the original third of the Host fell, the Dwarves stood up and offered to fight. God smiled on this sacrifice and rewarded the Dwarves with the Divine Spark, a flame of Divinity carried within their hearts to aid them in battling evil. All Dwarves, regardless of sex and station, set aside their lives and took up arms whenever the Fallen threatened, and because of this Dwarves, are born with the Divine Spark, to this day. The only exceptions are the Fallen Dwarves, a race so tainted by sin their Divine Spark has vanished.

The Humans and Elves volunteered next, but only the bravest and noblest of these races volunteered.

Unlike the Dwarves, Humans and Elves didn't stop their entire society when the Fallen approached, and so only certain members of the races received the Spark. To this day, all High Men and High Elves carry the inner flame.

Bearers of the Divine Spark tend to be larger than other members of their race and their physical attributes are closer to the racial ideal. High Men are stronger than Common Men. High Elves are faster than other Elves. As all Dwarves carry the Divine Spark (or the evil counterpart), there is nothing with which to compare them within their own race, but it is assumed they are more *Dwarven* than Pre-Fall Dwarves.

Any attempt to detect goodness will, in *The Echoes of Heaven*, actually detect the presence of a Divine Spark or another powerful blessing. Though this doesn't actually tell the morals of the person detected. A person *can* lose his Divine Spark by committing enough evil acts.

When a person loses his Divine Spark, the body sinks, the traits wane. The presence of the Divine Spark might not prove anything, but its *loss* tells quite the story of sin.

Only the most heinous offenders, such as serial killers and demon worshipers, lose their Divine Spark.

For the most part, the Divine Spark has no other effect on play. However, there are certain effects, particularly inside Ulcers, which have a greater or lesser impact on those with a Divine Spark.

Of final note is the Infernal Taint. Whereas the Divine Spark is the same spiritual essence carried by an Angel (although toned down), the Infernal Taint is the essence of a Demon. Fallen races and Cambions all have Infernal Taint. Infernal Taint has similar physical effects as the Divine Spark. They detect as

House Rule Contest Winner Delay of Death Benjamin Nelson

"No matter how much damage you take, you'll be dropped to -9 hp instead of being killed outright. this gives the cleric a chance to try to save you and gives the lower hit-dice classes a higher chance of living."

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evil. They also increase or decrease the impact of some of the effects of Ulcers.

MAJOR RACES

There are five major races of Mortals. Most of them are divided into subraces.

Humans

There are many varieties of Humanity in Belkanâth, but only two races for game purposes. Both of these races are found in all Human lands.

Deadly Sin: Wantonness.

Common Man

Physicality: Common Men average about 5'10" for men and 5'4" for women. They tend to medium builds when compared with other races. They have a wide variety of coloration. Common Men live 50-80 years.

Cultural Trends: Common Men are the driving force of the world. Their church is the largest, their cultures are the most prevalent, and their birthrate is the most prodigious. Common Men tend toward extreme racism, but with all the nonHuman races out there, racism among Humans themselves is rare (although national bias and enmity can still be tremendous.)

Other Factors: Humans have no unusual factors.

Traits: Common Men have typical traits as outlined for Humans in the *Player's Handbook*.

High Man

Physicality: High Men are larger and bulkier than Common Men, with the men averaging 6'5" and women 5'10". High Men have much longer life spans as well, some living as long as 300 years.

Cultural Trends: High Men share the culture of their Common Man society.

Other Factors: High Men have the Divine Spark, but this has nothing to do with heredity. Any Human has a chance to produce a child with the Divine Spark, although two High Men parents do have a greater chance than two Common Men parents.

Traits:

- +2 Strength, -2 Dexterity.

- Medium: As Medium creatures, High Men have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- High Men base land speed is 30 feet.
- Automatic Language: Their native tongue. Bonus Languages: Any. See the Speak Language skill.
- Favored Class: Any. When determining whether a multiclass human takes an experience point penalty, his or her highest-level class does not count.

Dwarves

Dwarves in Meridrin are not broken up by subraces within the general line. Instead, Dwarven races are broken up by Divinity alone.

The Dwarven seed is sparse. In addition, males outnumber females three to one. This makes female Dwarves closely guarded.

Deadly Sin: Greed.

Mountain Dwarf

Physicality: Mountain Dwarves are stout and powerful creatures, with thick arms and legs. They run the gamut of coloration but only have pale to ruddy skin, as they don't see enough sun to warrant darker colorations. They have long beards, and the brightness of their eyes is more challenging than engaging. They average 4' tall for males, 3'10" for females. Mountain Dwarves live 200-400 years.

Cultural Trends: Mountain Dwarves dress in somber tones and shun decoration. They wear functional, rather than attractive, clothing, and their entire air is sensible. Their only nods to frivolity are their immaculately combed and brushed beards. They have a rigid clan system and each clan specializes in a field of study. While each clan has their own diversity to be self-sufficient when necessary, different Dwarven clans are known for different areas of excellence.

Other Factors: Mountain Dwarves are combat and craft oriented. They have few barbarian-types. They have little or no aptitude for traditional magic. All Mountain Dwarves bear the Divine Spark.

Traits: Mountain Dwarves have typical traits for Dwarves as outlined in *Player's Handbook*.

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Clan	Profession
Agate	Historians
Alabaster	Farmers
Amber	Tanners
Aquamarine	Jewelers
Bauxite	Stonemasons
Bloodstone	Warriors
Diamond	Royalty
Feldspar	Leather Workers
Flint	Glass Blowers
Granite	Weaponsmiths
Gypsum	Bowyers/Fletchers
Hematite	Healers
Hornfel	Blacksmiths
Jade	Locksmiths
Jasper	Miners
Jet	Diplomats
Limestone	Animal Trainers
Malachite	Clergy
Marble	Artisans
Mica	Siege Engineers
Obsidian	Armorers
Onyx	Smelters
Opal	Coopers
Quartz	Potters
Sandstone	Cobblers
Shale	Tailors
Schist	Brewers
Slate	Carpenters
Talc	Bakers
Topaz	Weavers
Turquoise	Cheesemakers
Variscite	Wainwrights
Zircon	Winemakers

Elves

The Elves of the Mortal Realm are an ancient and noble people. They have seen many trials and many triumphs.

They are the longest lived of all races, so they see the world with far eyes. They often lay plans centuries in advance, when other races are convinced they are ignoring a matter.

Deadly Sin: Pride.

Grey Elves

Physicality: The Grey Elves live in the most secluded and guarded woods—notably Athâra and Avilairë—building civilization that complements the forest, trying to let the wilderness dictate its shape. They are known as Grey Elves or sometimes fair Elves. They are the most noble looking Elves, with silver or golden hair and amber or violet eyes. They are frailer than Wood Elves and a bit taller, averaging 6’5” for males and 6’1” for females. They live more than 1,000 years.

Cultural Trends: Grey Elves are aloof, perhaps the most aloof of all civilized races. They scorn all contact with other races, preferring to seclude themselves, in glamoured woods. Grey Elves wear rich colors, especially purples or golds. They dress modestly and with great style.

Other Factors: Grey Elf barbarian types are unheard of. Most other classes are common.

Traits: Grey Elves have typical traits for Elves as outlined in *Player’s Handbook*.

Half-Elves

While there are legends of Humans and Elves giving birth to children, there is no historical evidence to support this. Players cannot make half-Elven characters.

High Elves

Physicality: High Elves are fair, attractive beings with dark hair and deep green eyes. They are slight of build and males average 6’7” tall and females average 6’3”. High Elves live at least 1,500 years.

Cultural Trends: High Elves share the culture of the nation into which they were born.

Other Factors: High Elves carry the Divine Spark. They are born of either Grey Elves or Wood Elves. The trait is not hereditary, so High Elves can be born of any couple, although they are a bit more common if both parents were High Elves.

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Traits:

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.



- Elf base land speed is 30 feet.
- Immunity to magic sleep effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.
- Low-Light Vision: An elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Weapon Proficiency: Elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the longsword, rapier, longbow (including composite longbow), and shortbow (including composite shortbow) as bonus feats.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. An elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for it.
- Automatic Languages: Elven and one Human language. Bonus Languages: Cambionic, the Divine Tongue, Draconic, Dwarvish, Gnomish, and Sylvan.
- Favored Class: Wizard. A multiclass elf's wizard class does not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.

Language Conversion Notes

In Player's Handbook, the languages various races begin knowing do not line up with the languages of Belkanâth. Use the chart below to determine the language a character knows.

If this conversion gives the character the same language twice, the player may choose another Human language to learn.

Player's Handbook	Belkanâth
Abyssal	Infernal
Common-speech	Human*
Draconic	Draconic
Dwarven	Dwarvish
Elven	Elvish
Giant	Nephilim
Gnoll	Cambionic
Gnome	Gnomish
Goblin	Cambionic
Orc	Cambionic
Sylvan	Sylvan
Terran	Sylvan
Undercommon	Elvish or Dwarvish

*This is the language of the character's native nation. If they were not born in a Human nation, the player can choose a Human language to put in its place, presumably one representing heritage or trade relations.

Wood Elves

Physicality: Wood Elves are the most rugged of all the Elven races. They have blonde and coppery red hair. Their eyes tend to be crystal blue. Males average 6'0" and females average 5'9". Wood Elves can live more than 1,000 years.

Cultural Trends: Except for the Elven-Dwarven Alliance, Wood Elves carve their homes out of primordial forests. They live inside and through the trees. They are the civilized Elves most in touch with nature.

Wood Elves prefer to dress only in earth tones. They seem to disappear into the woods at will and are careful to wear nothing that might give them away.

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Other Factors: None.

Traits: Wood Elves have typical traits for Elves as outlined in *Player's Handbook*.

Other Factors: See below.

Traits: Surface Gnomes have typical traits for Gnomes as outlined in *Player's Handbook*.

Gnomes

The Gnomes of the Mortal Realm are a peaceful underhill/sylvan race, akin to both Elves and Dwarves. They are idyllic and adept at illusions, given to wandering and becoming bards.

Deadly Sin: Deceit.

Halflings

There are three major races of halflings. These halflings appear throughout the Mortal Realm, in many different lands.

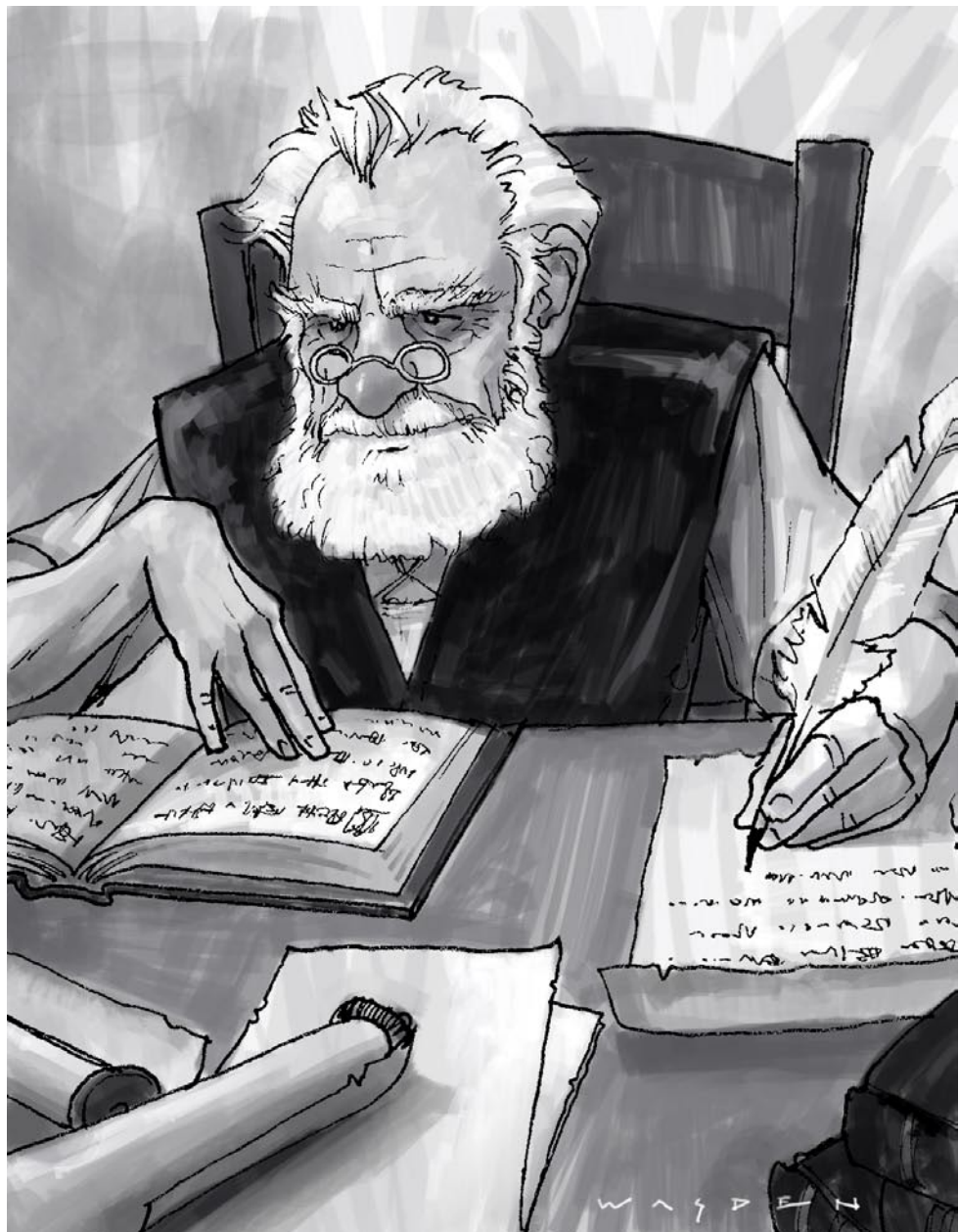
Deadly Sin: Gluttony.

Surface Gnomes

Physicality: Surface Gnomes tend to dark hair and eyes and ruddy colorations, although blonde hair and blue-eyed Surface Gnomes are not unknown. Males average 3'8", females, 3'6". They live 110 years.

Cultural Trends:

Surface Gnomes live in the rural areas of the Mortal Realm, although they all seek community. They tend to wild, flamboyant colors and outfits. They wear clothing decorated with intricate stitching and interwoven patterns. Surface Gnomes adore animals and gems. They love jokes (often of the practical kind) and interaction with other intelligent beings. They are also known to be inquisitive.



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Hairfoot Halfling

Physicality: A Hairfoot Halfling's skin is ruddy, his hair is black. He has brown or black eyes. The men often have sideburns, but rarely beards. Male Hairfeet average 3 feet tall, females 2'10". They live 90-110 years.

Cultural Trends: Hairfeet wear simple and practical clothes. They do not wear shoes, even in the harshest of weather. They are friendly and homey folk, loving a good pipe and a good hearth. Most of all, they love family and friend and a good, solid meal.

Other Factors: None.

Traits: Hairfeet Halflings have typical traits for Halflings as outlined *Player's Handbook*.

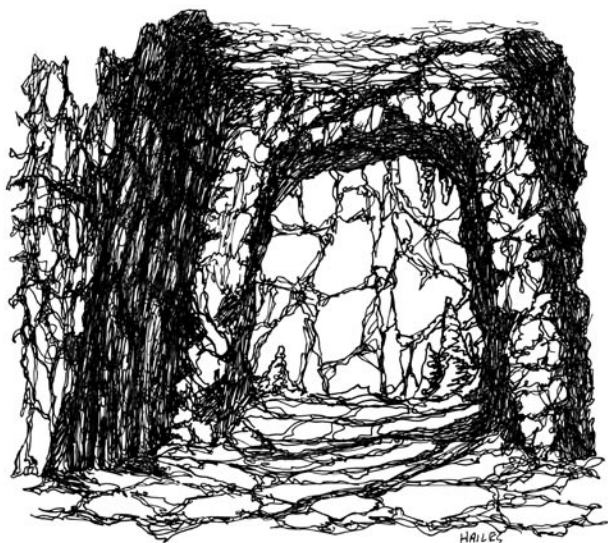
Tallfellow Halflings

Physicality: Tallfellows are taller and slimmer than Hairfeet. They have fair skin and hair, and are something of a rarity among halflings. Males average 4' tall, females 3'9". They live 90-110 years.

Cultural Trends: Tallfellows have a special affinity for Elves and often select Elven as a language. Otherwise, they are like hairfeet.

Other Factors: None.

Traits: Tallfellow Halflings have typical traits for Halflings as outlined *Player's Handbook*.



A Note on Common

There is no common tongue in Belkanâth, merely a common alphabet (and even that isn't universal). If a character wishes to speak to everyone, a good start would be to learn the Divine Tongue and Maroldo. The Divine Tongue is the language of the various churches and the language in which all academic works are written. Maroldo is the accepted trade language, and most merchants can speak it.

Stout Halflings

Physicality: Stout halflings are shorter and stockier than the Hairfeet. They have the same basic coloration, but stand only 2½' tall for both males and females.

Cultural Trends: Stout Halflings share a common culture with Hairfeet. Stout Halflings have an affinity for Dwarves, just as Tallfellows have an affinity for Elves. Many enjoy masonry and speak Dwarvish fluently.

Other Factors: None.

Traits: Stout Halflings have typical traits for Halflings as outlined *Player's Handbook*.

LANGUAGES

There are many languages in Belkanâth, most of them spoken by Human nations. Others, like Dwarven or Atavistic, are fairly stable and unchanging.

Below is a discussion of each of the major languages still of some use in Belkanâth. Many of these languages are no longer spoken but still found in ancient texts.



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The Fae Group		
Gnomish	Gill-Tirn, Mag-Morel, Tirem-Ag	Runic
Sylvan	Fae creatures	Elven
The Evenyian Group		
Ontan	Ontav	Evenyian
Yevgenian	Yevgenia	Evenyian
The Ciallic Group		
Ciallic	Ciall	Runic
Mab	Mab	Runic
Keireenish	Keireena	Runic
The Infernal Group		
Cambionic	Cambion	Infernal Script
Nephilim	Giants	Infernal Script
Infernal	Devils, Demons	Infernal
The Draconic Group		
Draconic	lizardfolk, dragons	Draconic Script
The Malmic Group		
Gaerynch	Gaerydd	Common
Malmic	Dead language, Malmic	Common
The Mondaed Group		
Mondaed	Dead Language, Mondaed	Common



Chapter Three

Chapter Three: History of the Mortal Realm

The Mortal Realm has a long and complex history. Some of it is legend, some of it fact. Like all worlds, the further back one studies, the less one finds fact and the more one finds scriptural parable.

BEFORE THE SUNDERING

The time before the Sundering is known only through scriptural accounts. While these are thought to be accurate, there are no existing records from that time. All information was recorded by prophets when the races awakened.

Before Time

“The universe was unformed and lacking purpose. It was to this that God came, seeking a canvas upon which to create. He saw the chaos and called it good.”

– The Holy Scripture

In the beginning, God came from beyond chaos. He created the stars and the Elemental planes. Then he took matter from the planes and used them to create Heaven.

The Birth of Life

“And God ached for children of His own. This ache became a pain, and the pain became a moan, and the moan became a scream, and the scream became a child.”

– The Holy Scripture

Then God created the Angels and all the plants and animals. The Angels took the plants and the animals and seeded them throughout Heaven, preparing the way.

When the flora and fauna flourished in Heaven, God created the five Mortal races. He built himself a fortress of diamond and called it the Holy See. Around it, the Holy City sprang up and it was the center of all peace and glory and civilization.

The War in Heaven

“And so God looked upon the battlefields of Heaven and wept. He wept at the waste and He wept at the destruction. He wept at the lost souls. He wept rivers of blood and pain, for He knew that nothing good could ever come of such a war. It was a terrible price to pay and no reward to gain.”

– The Holy Scripture

In the beginning of this age the archangel Laren-iel decided that he wanted to create a sixth Mortal race. What he created was an abomination and God forbade him from further attempts. Nevertheless, Laren-iel kept trying and clashed with God over his Pride. He rallied a third of the Host of Heaven and waged war on God’s faithful.

Mortals volunteered to fight in the War and God granted them a Divine Spark. The war lasted for a thousand years and devastated the civilization of Heaven.

But things became worse. In the final days, a force known only as the Nopheratus appeared and taught the Fallen Host the dark art of necromancy, but even with this horrible army couldn’t turn the tide.

Adventure Seeds

The creation of life is also an adventure seed, if a GM wishes to expand on it in one of his games. Perhaps a party could find a tome written in Angelic Script outlining details of this event. If they differed enough from the popular view, the characters could have entire churches out to silence them.

World Threads

There are no World Threads in the beginning of time. Geographical realities, such as the Holy See, become important at the end, but feel free to expand and expound on these elements at will.

Chapter Three

In the final battle, the Fallen Host tried a desperate attack on the Holy City. It seemed there was no way for them to win, but then at the last moment, a second third of the Host of Heaven betrayed the Faithful and the defenses of the Holy City collapsed.

All of Heaven would have fallen, if not for the Five Prophets of the Mortal races. They knew that Heaven would fall and they started an elaborate ritual. While the defenders of the Holy See fought a hopeless battle, the Five Prophets finished their spell, Sundering Heaven.

The world split into three parts, Heaven, Hell and the Mortal Realm. The Elemental planes split into two sets, one connected to Heaven and one Hell. All the creatures with the Angelic Spark ended up in Heaven. All the Fallen, corrupt creatures ended up in Hell. Everything else ended up in the Mortal Realm.

THE TIME OF LEGENDS

Portions of this period, especially the early portions, are gleaned from scriptural records. Middle periods



Adventure Seeds

The opening blows of the War in Heaven are an Adventure Seed as well. Perhaps a party might happen upon an Angel, grievously wounded and on the brink of death (as he has been for a millennium). The Angel's Spark is all but dead, which explains how he ended up in the Mortal Realm during the Sundering. Upon touching the Angel, they might connect to his desperate, searching mind and have to live out his experiences during the beginning of the War, and only by succeeding where he failed, find a way to revive him.

The Dwarves made their first terrestrial weapons during the Nephilim Wars. These weapons, while likely bronze, are equally likely to be very Holy if they survived to this day. Finding one of these weapons could be the goal of an adventure or the opening spark, with the ensuing fallout and backbiting being the main event. Perhaps an outcast Dwarf was to find one of these relics and use it to declare himself the chosen of God. Many Dwarves would have a hard time disbelieving in a person so obviously blessed with fortune, and such an event might cause another Dwarven civil war.

World Threads

The true nature and origin of the Nopheratus is a World Thread.

The details of the last days of the War in Heaven is a World Thread and is explored in the Teasers of the *Moving Shadow* campaign.

are known mostly through legend and oft-translated histories. Only the most recent ages have actual existing histories left for study, and those are very rare.

The Nephilim Wars

"Khal buried his pick in the stone then gathered the chips. He tasted them and found them sweeter than honey, for this was the true home of the Dwarves, granted to them by the hand of God."

— *The Dulandak (Dwarven Scripture)*

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The Dwarves were the first to awaken and their leader, Khal, led them to delve out the first great Dwarven kingdom, Durandûl. But the Fallen Host had already struck their blow. The second third, who fell to Wantonness, had taken on the forms of the husbands of the Dwarven wives and all the mothers of the Dwarves were with child.

They gave birth to the first generation of Nephilim, the giants, and started the first war of the Mortal Realm. The leader of the Nephilim was a giant named Ulaugg, and he tore into the Dwarves with tooth and nail.

For years, this war continued until Ulaugg tunneled into the rear of the Dwarven mines. The Nephilim rampaged through the Dwarven kingdom and Khal managed to taunt the giant leader into a rage. They fought through Durandûl, the halls collapsing behind them, but in the end, Ulaugg's rage was his own downfall and he and his army perished under a tremendous fall of rock.



The Years of Building

"The Hammer sang in his hands. As he lifted it to the heavens, he was certain that it was the weapon of Dwarven kings. It was suddenly clear that this was the form of Dwarven warfare for ages to come. Dumag wept at the beauty of it, and his heart broke, for he knew that he could never top this work, his greatest masterpiece."

— The Dulandak (Dwarven Scripture)

After the Nephilim wars, Khal died of old age and the Dwarven line of kings began. The future Saint Dumag was also born in this time, and he greatly advanced Dwarven metalworking, a craft that started from scratch in this new world with its nonheavenly metals.

Dumag became an unparalleled master, and the items he created were blessed with great power. His greatest creation was the Fell Hammer, which he gave to the line of kings. This item became a symbol of Dwarven might.

Meanwhile, Larenriel, now the Devil Bamon, managed to pierce the fabric of reality, allowing Hell to infect the world. This created the first Ulcer and he used it to mutate the great lizards of the world, creating the race of dragons. But the Archangel Areniel saw this plan and brought the breath of God to these eggs, giving the dragons the power to choose between good and evil. Still the dragon Belkunibâr is born and he used his great evil and power force the other dragons to pay him tribute.

Adventure Seeds

The gauntlet of Khal is a legendary Holy relic, one thought lost long ago. Anyone who found it would be the target of every Dwarven treasure hunter in the world. Literally.

The general enmity between Dwarves and giants began in this war. Many adventures could be built around Dwarves or Nephilim trying to settle this very grudge.

While the Fell Hammer is the greatest creation of Dumag, there are many others. The merest hint of an item of Dumag is enough to rally entire armies.

The shells of the eggs of the first dragons are Holy relics to draconian kind. While they likely have no power, a dragon would do anything to obtain one. A character who had a legitimate shell fragment, who could keep a dragon from magicking it away, could wield tremendous power. Perhaps one such person accomplishes this. A long-lived dragon might gladly follow a Human's orders for his short life time in the hope of taking the shell when the Human died. The dragon might see this as a small sacrifice when compared to the risk of damaging the shell by taking it through force.

World Threads

The creation of the first Ulcer and how this evil came to Bamon is a World Thread.

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The Rebirth of Surface World

"Perion wept at the truth of it . . . the beauty of it. He lay upon the very stones, sobbing in the light of God, and renounced his ways. God smiled down upon the greatest of Elven children and took him into his embrace and guidance."

— The Elindanthenel (Elven Scripture)

At the beginning of this age, the future Dragon Saint Zenabrûn called the first Enârôz, a meeting of dragons to stand against Belkunibâr.

Also in this time, the Elves reawoke and began to fight the Nephilim. Bamon decided that the Nephilim were too large to fight guerilla warfare in the forest and used the Ulcer to create the race of Ogres. He also sent one of the Ogre females to lay with a transformed dragon, bringing magic into the bloodline of the first of the evil nondragons.

Then the Elves and the Dwarves met for the first time since Heaven and the Dwarves, having long since decided that everything on the surface was Fallen, attacked. The first Elven-Dwarven war began.



The future Saint Perion of the Elves went to the Dwarves to forge a peace. He was taken prisoner and over the years, his conversations with the Dwarven priest led to his conversion from the Atavistic religion of Heaven. The Dwarves worshiped the Dwarven member of the Five Prophets as Savior. Perion's conversion carried this form of worship to the first Elves, although he decided that the Elven Prophet had actually been the Savior.

Perion was released from prison but at that time a Dwarf named Gharak led a rebellion against the Dwarven king. Perion fought Gharak, saved the Dwarven king's life, and ended the war between his people and the Dwarves. Gharak escaped and he and his followers become the Fallen Dwarves.

As the age progressed, the dragon Zenabrûn died and cleansed the evil dragons from the Dragon Peaks. Perion united his people into the Kingdom of the Elves.



The Gnomes Reawaken

"Orva smiled upon her children and encouraged them to choose a spouse. Thus, were the first Gnomish families brought out into the wide world."

— The True Word

At the beginning of this age the Gnomes awakened and began to expand throughout the world. They met the Elves and started diplomatic relations. Having lost all of their written knowledge, they began to learn magic from the Elves.

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During this time, the Fallen Dwarves reemerged. They made their first new attacks against the Mountain Dwarves, but missing their Divine Spark, they were greatly changed.

Fearing the future of their race under these renewed assaults, the Dwarves created a new kingdom. They struck out and delved Gabad-Dagûl.

Adventure Seeds

The Gnomes appeared without any written works. Gobach kept all his initial notes on relearning illusion and bardic magic in a series of scrolls, the oldest Gnomish writings on magic. These scrolls are long lost, but are considered racial treasures to the Gnomes. Made of Elven vellum, they might very well still exist to this day. Perhaps they resurface and are purchased by a rich collector. While not magical, these would be priceless artifacts, and the characters could be hired to design the defenses of the vault in which they were kept.

World Threads

The Rebirth of the Surface World and The Gnomes Reawaken are times of legend. There are no world threads during these periods.

The Halflings Reawaken

"These little folk . . . innocence and a love that surprises me. In a world populated by Dwarves and Nephilim, it's a wonder to meet such a . . . look forward to long relations."

– The readable passages of *The Writings of Beledhron* concerning the first post-Heaven contact between Elves and Halflings.

This age began with the awakening of the Halflings, who spread out and formed lasting relationships with the Elves. This was a tumultuous age, but luckily for the Halflings, most of the chaos beset the Dwarves.

During this time Khugraug attempted to take over the kingdom of Durandûl. The other Dwarves put

him and his followers down and they fled. In exile, he prayed to Bamon for help and the Lord of Hell sent him and his people Demon wives. Over the next years, they produced the first Cambions, the Orcs.

Meanwhile, the Fallen Dwarves assault Gabad-Dagûl, releasing a magical plague that affected the minds of the Dwarves causing their personalities to change radically. Gabad-Dagûl fell into civil war.

As Gabad-Dagûl collapsed into chaos, Khugraug and his Orcs assaulted Durandûl. Durandûl fell.

Meanwhile, in Gabad-Dagûl, the Dwarf Urnon took control by diplomacy and strength of will. Although he managed to reunite Gabad-Dagûl, he knew that when he passed, his son would lose control. On his deathbed, he prayed to God and as a reward for his great faith, the plague was wiped from

Adventure Seeds

The magical plague that beset the Dwarves might still exist (or at least the knowledge of how to create it might). An adventure could settle around stopping this plague from striking again. Maybe a villain decides to set it off in a monastery of Sepinus. Suddenly, the monks become wildly different in personalities and as the murders and chaos ensues, only the characters, who arrived after the plague has died off, can find a way to save everyone.

No one knows where the final battle with Belkuniabâr took place. Another adventure might involve finding the location and looting the Dwarven hero and ancient dragon lair (for the historical significance, of course).

The Fallen Elves and the Fallen Dwarves both control many large Warrens. Many adventures could center around these, many of which are likely Ulcers by now. Perhaps the characters need to trade with the Fallen Elves and they must brave this enemy's own lands to find the goods they need to save a village from a horrible curse.

World Threads

The Halflings Reawaken and The Humans Reawaken are times of legend. There are no world threads.

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the Dwarven lands. Durandûl might have fallen, but Dwarven-kind survived.

Toward the end of this age, the dragons caused so much trouble with Dwarven shipping that the Dwarves decided to take action. The Dwarven hero Gulâr set out to destroy the beast Belkunibâr and in the ensuing battle, they both died.

The Humans Reawaken

"I was leery of these brutal and savage people . . . these Humans. I know now, however, that there is as much good in them as evil. I will therefore agree to these talks of a truce. May our people grow and prosper together."

— from *The Writings of Beledhron*

At the beginning of this age, the Humans awoke and began to spread. Almost immediately they made their mark on the world as their future Saint Sinnius entered and destroyed the first Ulcer.

Meanwhile, the future Archdemon Assra was born and she had visions sent by the Lord of Hell, Murash. She managed to form a great nation of Devil-worshipping Elves and the other Elves of the world united against her. They marched on Assra and she was defeated, but she and her people escaped into the Warrens beneath the earth as the Fallen Elves.

While the Elves spread out and formed new nations, the future Archdemon Karil became the first Mortal to summon and ally with the Nopheratus, bringing Undead to the Mortal Realm for the first time.

The Dwarf-Human War

"With a burst of fury, Kharal charged Ezrian. The anger in his heart was so great that the room shook with his fury. Ezrian's guard raised their crossbows at once upon seeing this betrayal, and their bolts barely saved their king in time."

— *The Book of Times*

It was now more than three thousand years since the first Mortals awoke in the Mortal Realm. By this time, Humans had taken to the pastime of adventur-

ing and they set out to rid the world of evil and its excess treasures.

They struck their first blow when a group sought out Karil and slew him, killing the world's first lich. Then, as the Dwarves migrated into Belkanâth, Humans set out to adventure in the fallen Dwarven kingdom of Durandûl. Inside, they found the lost Fell Hammer of the Dwarves, the symbol of the royal line.

The Human who'd retrieved the Hammer, a man named Madron, used its power to form the Human kingdom of Malmic. As the Humans ascended, Dwarves sent an expedition into Durandûl, finding out that the Fell Hammer was missing.

The Dwarves discovered the truth and waged a war on Malmic that lasted more than two decades. It didn't end until the Human king, mad with Ham-

Adventure Seeds

The Karil's tomb was never completely sacked. It is still out there, somewhere, and no one knows what terrible evils have grown over the millennium.

Durandûl is still out there, and a party in Belkanâth could find a gate to this distant Dwarven tomb. The largest Dwarven nation ever built, entire campaigns could play out examining its depths. The possibilities within are too numerous to list.

Malmic had many outposts even as far west as Belkanâth. The characters might be hired to seek out one of these outposts, to delve inside and find a magical fountain of Malmic healing to save the ailing daughter of an ancient sage.

The end of the Dwarven-Human war is a powerful symbol among Dwarves and Humans. Characters might be selected to carry a hammer to a Dwarven kingdom and ritually reenact the last scene of the war, only to find that they are ambushed and find out that the true events are more like the *start* of the war.

World Threads

The Dwarf-Human War was a time of legend. There are no world threads.

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mer-induced visions and the guilt of all the Dwarves he'd killed, left and traveled to Gabad-Dagûl. He turned the hammer over and sued for peace, ending the war.

The Age of Chaos

*"What damage was caused by the Vortices?
What great horrors were meted upon the world?
What terror? What agony? This is the legacy
of Dwarven magic, and it must never happen
again."*

— The Book of Lore

As the Dwarf-Human War ended, the Dwarves decided it was time to expand their knowledge. They studied magic with the Elves and the Dwarf Gûl rose to great power as a mage. He decided to rid the world of its greatest evil.

The Nopheratus.

Gûl created an elaborate ritual that was supposed to lock off the Mortal Realm from the Nopheratus for all time. The ritual went horribly wrong and instead of blocking off the Nopheratus, it tore the fabric of reality.

Vortices appeared randomly throughout the world. They spirited people away, causing two-thirds of the world's population to die or vanish to other continents. Civilization teetered on the verge of complete collapse.

As members of all races were carried off to lands unknown, a group of mages gathered in secret to seal the vortices. While they cast the spell, a group

of other mages attacked, afraid that any more tampering could only make matters worse. The battle clashed and many men died on either side, but when the smoke and blood cleared, the spell was cast. The vortices closed. The world had sealed.

In the chaos of the vortices, the entire royal line of Gabad-Dagûl had vanished. Seeing them weakened, the Orcs attacked, destroying the kingdom. The Fell Hammer was lost again.

At the end of this age, the mage Analin decided to cloak the entire world in darkness. She succeeded and a group of crusaders lead by the knight Lonnuso, assaulted her in her lair. No one knows their fates, but in the end, Analin died and the darkness ended. The Order of the Knights Lonnuso was formed to honor this fallen knight.

The Rise and Fall of Vampire Lord

"The horror that is Lurnuran must be remembered. It is through such atrocities that new horrors and plagues are unleashed upon the world. Once this is done, it can never be undone."

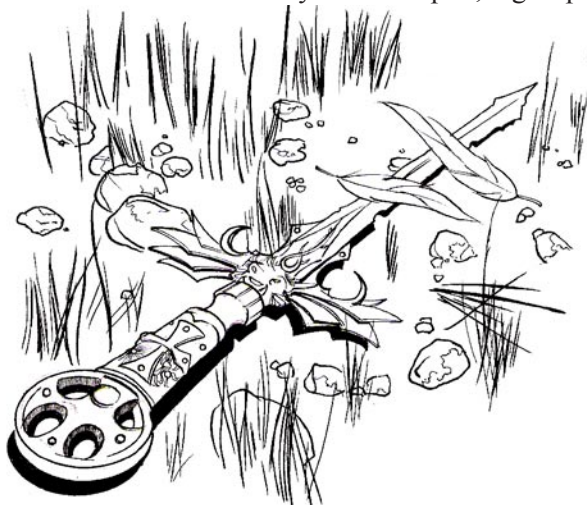
— On the Nature of the Nopheratus

Lurnuran was a young noble who rose to power in the military of a nation named of Mondaed. When he was properly positioned, his father died under mysterious circumstances. This left a power vacuum at the top of the military. Lurnuran seized control.

Over the next years he solidified his control of the military, promoting the most loyal and making certain the least loyal ended up on the most deadly missions. Finally, he told the army the king had ordered them on a suicide mission into the Dragon Peaks. With the army in a righteous uproar, he led them on the capital.

The coup was mostly bloodless, but the atrocities Lurnuran committed on the royal family are legendary. After he had control of Mondaed, he conquered his nearest neighbor. He butchered this royal family and displayed their bodies.

It took longer to consolidate his power-base before moving on his next target. He conquered this nation as well and kept the royal family members for dark blood rites.



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Enemy priests decided it was time to act. They tracked down Lurnuran's grandfather and restored his health. He tracked down his grandson and they fought. In the end, the old man won.

But the Nopheratus had other ideas.

He sent Lurnuran back and the boy seized upon his grandfather's throat, sucking the blood there, feeding and growing in power. In the end, they both died, but Lurnuran rose again, the first vampire.

Over the next years, Lurnuran grew in power and might, until he controlled the entire continent of Belkanâth and beyond. Non-Human races withdrew. The church waned in power. In the end, Lurnuran lost interest in even these Mortal trappings.

In the end, Lurnuran's realm fell to a band of the assassins. It is unknown what happened to Lurnuran in the end, but his home and all the assassins were destroyed when the battle was done. Lurnuran was never heard from again.



The Almian Protector State

"Our greatest age. Our most momentous achievement. The Protector State displayed our greatest good. It married the two halves of our people, the Humans and the Elves, and proved that love could overcome any obstacle. It also shows us that evil will stop at nothing to destroy all that is good in the world."

— A Shining Moment

In the wake of the fall of Mondaed, a Human son and an Elven daughter fell in love. Their kingdoms had much animosity between them and their churches

Adventure Seeds

The vortices wreaked havoc through the world, and although most people they took ended up in a deadly place (like in solid rock or high in the air) enough ended up in the other lands of The Mortal Realm to seed them with life. Perhaps the characters manage to open a gate to another land on a far-away continent. The various cultures and peoples found in other lands could lead to a campaign full of adventure locals.

Analín's lair was lost to history. Characters might be hired to find it before a cult or Fallen Elves reach it, bent on plumbing its secrets and bringing darkness back to the surface world.

The atrocities in the royal palace of Mondaed were enough to psychically scar anyone and anything involved. One item was the dagger that Lurnuran stole from the king and used to slaughter the entire family. This dagger was highly magical and each person it killed managed to imprint themselves on the magic of the blade. Over the years, the dagger gained in power and finally these horrors managed to manifest in a curse. Now, any character carrying the blade risks possession, and those possessed want to do only one thing . . . kill.

World Threads

The fate of the royal line of Gabad-Dagûl is a World Thread.

The Rise and Fall of the Vampire Lord was an time of legend. It contains no World Threads.

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had branded each other heretics. It seemed that the lovers would be thwarted.

But eventually the heads of both churches reversed their position. They married and their families each granted them adjoining lands. They formed the nation of Almia and named the royal line half-elven, despite the fact that Elves and Humans could never produce children. In reality each spouse kept concubines or consorts and they married their children together to form the next royal couple.

Almia formed strong bonds with the churches and began to look toward other nations with a generous eye. They renamed themselves the Protector State and began sending troops and aid to those who need it.

Then a nation needed more help than the charity of Almia could provide. They begged Almia to join the Protector State and Almia agreed. Soon, more nations joined and Almia grew.

Almia decided it was time to begin funding the pursuit of knowledge. With the help of the churches, they funded magical research. As knowledge of magic increased, they researched a series of Great Roads to connect their nations via magic.

As Almia grew to cover the entire known world, the churches pushed the king to tackle the great remaining evils of the world. The Lord Protector succumbed to this pressure and waged war on the Cambions and Nephilim.

But as the war progressed, the Lord Protector decided that he'd gone beyond holy war and moved onto genocide. He stopped the war and offered the Cambion and Nephilim kingdoms membership to the Protector State. The heads of both churches threatened to excommunicate him and his wife but the Lord Protector stood firm. In the end, the churches bent, showing that for the first time in history, there was a good nation more powerful than the church.

But Almia wasn't done crusading. As the Great Roads were completed, Almia began a series of knightly orders to make the world a better place. They started with the Order of Dragonslayers.

Meanwhile, the Fallen Elves and Dwarves decided that it was time to stop Almia. They began a war against Almia and its knights. In the end, even

after the Fallen Dwarves had dropped out, the Fallen Elves continued. They launched a mighty ritual to destroy Almia, involving the sacrifice of ten thousand Fallen Elves including the Fallen Elven Queen's own consort.

It is rumored that even then this ritual would have failed if not for help from within Almia. It's not known if this is true, or if so, who helped, but the Church of Angenus claims the Church of Eldinar betrayed them in revenge for the Lord Protector's earlier defiance. The Church of Eldinar claims the same thing about the Church of Angenus.

The Great Ulcer

"I do not understand how the world survived the Ulcer. I do not know how we worked together to save ourselves. I only know that this must never happen again. The Fallen must be destroyed, and destroyed for good."

— Healing a World

The ritual that destroyed Almia caused a massive tear between the Mortal Realm and Hell. Demons tore out into the world. The dead poured forth as fast as the Nopheratus could *imagine* them. Worse yet, the effects of the tear rippled outward, destabilizing the world. Even outside the Great Ulcer hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters plagued every nation in the world. The sun blacked out. Tame animals turned feral. It seemed that all the Mortal Realm would fall.

The dead rose elsewhere as well, and Belkanâth received some of the worst of it. Only Holy ground was safe and even that began to fade in the light of corruption.

Then the corruption flowed out through the earth and the quakes began.

They ringed the world as every fault gave way at once. They passed in a wake of devastation, shaking apart mountains, moving landmarks. The face of the world changed in the passing of the quakes.

The sun did not return quickly and the winter worsened. It plunged the world into horror and pain. All the plants died off and many of the animals. The Atavists saved every species they could, moving them into areas where they could maintain

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a magical temperature and light. Still, many species are thought to have been lost. Many of the animals that didn't make it *changed* instead, corrupted by the Ulcer's distant energies.

It took months for the praying of priests around the world to slow the wash of darkness. The tides of Undead lessened, the forces of the light beat them back. Eventually, all the evils were put down or beaten back into the Great Ulcer.

In the wake of the long winter, an alliance formed. Across Belkanâth, churches and mages allied. It didn't matter whether they shared belief systems. They bonded together and used their magic to create food and water where there was none. It's thought the Alliance of Life is the only thing that kept intelligent surface creatures alive through this period.

Things began progressing as normal. Life prospered. The wastelands receded. People began to think of politics and art again, and not just survival.

Adventure Seeds

The Almian Protector State was a nearly world-spanning organization that used magic freely. To this day, hundreds of sites are scattered through Belkanâth alone. The mere rumor of one will bring treasure hunters from hundreds of leagues. Perhaps one of these sites is found near the characters' home. They must plumb its depths even as other groups lay traps for them and inquisitors of the church try to shake everyone down for the "evil" magic they find inside.

The death of so many creatures during the time of the Great Ulcer left the world a different place. The discovery of a sheltered mountain valley containing strange and ancient creatures might be an ideal adventure site. But a valley like that would probably take magic to protect, and it wouldn't be long before the characters attracted the attention of the lord.

World Threads

The secret of the Great Roads, and therefore the Emperor's road, is a world thread.

The age of the Great Ulcer was a time of legend. It contains no World Threads.

The Dark Ages

"Little is known of the dark ages. Most of the information that we do have comes from the Dwarves or the Elves. It was a time of rebuilding and repopulating, in a wasteland of pain and want. It was a time of cherishing what little we had. It was not a time of such frivolities such as keeping records."

— Exploring the Dark Ages

The Dark Ages were a time of regrowth. The Dwarves, hit the least by the tragedy of the Great Ulcer, helped the other races to recover. The Elves recovered first, and then they too helped the other races.

The Archdemon Lymalar lived his Mortal life during this age as well. When he died, his body released the Gray Death, a plague that defied all magical healing and swept the world before it died out, for a time at least.

The final noteworthy event of this age was the life of Saint Dolonus. Dolonus discovered the Great Ulcer had expanded and knew that it would devour the world. He journeyed into it single-handedly. No one knows the details of what happened inside, but the Ulcer vanished and Dolonus vanished as well. Many think that he had to be willing to go to Hell, giving up his own reward in paradise to save the world. If this is the case, he was later redeemed and made a saint, and many say this was done by Angelus.



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The Age of War

"There comes a time when the strong rule and the weak tremble. Sometimes this is a time of tyranny. Sometimes it's a time of war."

– A History

In the wake of the dark ages Mortals had learned to survive brutal hardships. They'd also learned to work with one another and the other races. During this time, they built alliances and diplomatic ties across the continent.

Therefore, when a king received his son's head in a basket, things became complicated. Soon most of the Human nations of the world had been pulled in on one side or another, attacking anyone who allied with the other side. The Halflings entered the war, then the Gnomes, the Elves, and the Dwarves.

The wars lasted for four-hundred years, marked by another outbreak of the Gray Death before they ground to a halt. They ended in exhaustion, not in any kind of lasting peace.

But before the peace broke out, the Elven and Dwarven kings had met on the field of battle. The Elven lord saluted the Dwarven king's combat ability and the Elven archers took this as a sign to attack. The Dwarf king fell, riddled with arrows.

This death corrupted the peace, and when the new Dwarven king died, his son invited the Elven royal family to dinner and poisoned the entire table with the toxin used in fermenting Dwarven ale. War broke out again.

This war lasted for two more centuries and again engulfed the entire known world. Finally it ground to a halt, but then rumors arose that a Human king wielded the Fell Hammer. The Dwarves marched on the Humans slaughtering king after king looking for the Hammer.

This war finally petered out when the Dwarven king decided he wanted to pass on a world of peace to his son. This peace lasted only a short time.

Then the Elven king of Ingrast came to the conclusion that all the wars of the world seemed sparked by Dwarves. He decided the Mountain Dwarves were allied with the Fallen Dwarves. He took his people to war, and again the world burned.

Adventure Seeds

The age of war left the world covered in battlefields. To this day, the fabric or reality is weak in these locations. Perhaps the characters stumble on one of these battlefields on a day where the stars line up in exactly the way they had on the day it was created. This tears a rift in reality that becomes an Ulcer. Now the characters must stand against a growing horde of undead, and only by destroying them all and performing last rites on the land can they close the Ulcer.

World Threads

The Dark Ages were a time of legend. They contain no World Threads.

The Age of War was a time of legend. It contains no World Threads.

The Rise of the Wizard-King

"There are times when the world gains a glimpse of enlightenment, when petty moralities and ethics are set aside and the mind broadens in an attempt to discover something . . . more."

– The Life of the Wizard-King (Banned text)

The last conflict of the Age of Wars lasted for more than two centuries. It didn't end until the rise of the Wizard-King.

Hegarion was a mage of great power. When the Church ruled suddenly that all nonclerical magic was witchcraft, and the king ruled that all witches were to be put to death, Hegarion fought his way into the king's chambers and killed him. After driving away two other kings, Hegarion allowed a third to take power. The Church relaxed its position on witchcraft.

Hegarion gave the new king dictates throughout his life and when the man died Hegarion took over, renaming the nation the Kingdom of Sorcery.

Under his rule, the Kingdom of Sorcery grew. Neighboring nations could expect a friendly relationship with Hegarion if they did not anger him. One misstep, however, and their kings were killed. If their families resisted, they were killed as well.

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Then Hegarion would absorb their lands into his own.

But despite the brutality against his enemies, life under Hegarion was good. He did not tout moral or ethical ideals, but stressed personal freedoms, and he did not mistreat those he ruled.

He did not consider privacy a right, but he did consider freedom of thought a right. If an allegation was brought against a person, he (or later one of his agents) would scour the minds of both the accused and the accuser. Any crimes found were then punished, but there were no crimes of thought. Hegarion didn't care a whit if you wanted to rape or kill or commit treason. He only cared about whether you planned on going through with it. Even then, many people would be let free because the examiner did not think they had the conviction to carry out their plans.

People so examined never had their secrets revealed, and before long, they grew to trust these examiners. Later the group was renamed the Confessors, and they were feared only by those who planned criminal acts. Their order was absorbed into the Church and Hegarion didn't raise a complaint. With this, the Church's stance against magic dissolved.

Hegarion sustained himself with strange and little understood magicks. He became more and more interested in his research and less in politics. Some say that his physical existence became more difficult to maintain. Others say that he merely became tired of the frantic pace of Humanity.

It was because of this, and the great distance between him and Hegarion, the future Archdemon Aldron went unchecked for as long as he did. For years, rumors came west of the atrocities of Aldron. It wasn't until Aldron had reached the age of 137 that Hegarion decided to act.

The battle drained Hegarion. It is said he wasn't seen for years after that battle, and that it took that long for him to heal and regain his strength.

Perhaps this is why he did so little in the years to come. As time passed, satellite countries declared their independence, and the Wizard-King did nothing to stop them.

Adventure Seeds

The Wizard-King is said to have created or commissioned many powerful magical items. While none of these are cursed, exactly, it is said that his mind imprinted on many of them. Perhaps a thief, a man of great evil, steals one of these items and the characters are hired to retrieve it. As the thief falls under the item's influence, he becomes a more just person and while not exactly good, he does develop enough of a sense of honor that he begins to make repayment for his past crimes. If the characters figure out in time what is going on, they must decide whether to take the item back, restoring the thief to his wicked ways or leave the item stolen. If they decide to let him keep it, the thief will eventually have to make up for *that* crime, and that means returning it to its former owner.

World Threads

The final fate of Hegarion is a World Thread.

One day, Hegarion vanished, his possessions and labs packed. With his loss, the Kingdom of Sorcery collapsed. It had been teetering for some time, and Hegarion had been the linchpin holding it together. With his disappearance, every nation declared their independence.

THE IMPERIAL ERA

The modern calendar begins with the birth of the Empire and its existence has shaped everything that's happened since. There are many histories from this period onward and they are thought to be as accurate as any history can, meaning they were written by the victor.

Birth of an Empire

"What greatness, what horror to be created by one man. The power of the Empire, the brutality and the love and the mercy and the cruelty are testaments to the varied nature of Man. How great an accomplishment. How vile a deed."

*— In the Footsteps of
Eurustace*

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Then came Eurustace.

Eurustace was born to a military commander who had served in the Kingdom of Sorcery. It is thought his father must have taught him much of the art of war, because legend says that Eurustace was an adept soldier and general at an early age.

He set himself up as a prophet and a savior, insinuating even that he was the long-awaited Herald of God, and men flocked to his banner. He was charismatic and riveting. It is said that he could turn men's hearts with a word.

He gathered an army and took his first nation, renaming the capital Durelius.

From there, his army moved outward, conquering all that stood before him. Slowly, over the next fourteen years, he took more and more countries, uniting them under his yoke.

The dragons of the Dragon Peaks tried to stop him. For years they succeeded, destroying any troops that tried to cross a mountain range into Belkanâth, and it looked like he would have to settle for half the world.



Then he discovered the secret of using the Almi-an Great Roads. He renamed them the Emperor's Roads, and the Dragons were no longer an obstacle. This brought Belkanâth and the other corners of the known world into his reach.

With the aid of the Emperor's Roads, Eurustace was unbeatable. He captured every Human, Gnomish, and Halfling nation within five years.

Next came the Elves. It took seven years to conquer the Elves. When it was done, he turned his eye on his only foe, the Dwarves.

With the aid of the Emperor's Roads, he entered the Dwarven kingdoms behind their defenses. For millennia, the Emperor's Roads had been disused. Few in the Dwarven kingdoms even believed they still existed.

The Dwarven kingdoms fell in a single day.

With the lands conquered, Eurustace looked on his Empire in sorrow. With regret, he set about ruling what he had taken.

His Empire in hand, Eurustace settled down in Durelius and made it the capital of the first Empire. He named the Empire Vurtus and began gathering his power.

He declared this the first year of rule, Ano Imperii. He declared all years previous before the Emperor, Pre Imperetor.

The first job of any ruler is to produce an heir, and so Eurustace took a wife from the daughters of one of the kings he'd conquered. In the year 2, she gave birth to his first son, Stanterius.

The known world languished under the rule of Eurustace for twenty-one years, until he was assassinated by unknown parties. His son, Stanterius, took control of the Empire.

Stanterius was a good man. He honored his mother's moral code and took the responsibility of ruling the known world very seriously. He even considered dissolving the Empire, but knew that this would only result in chaos.

In the year 23, Stanterius implemented a comprehensive legal system. He felt that his father's method of judging by whim was unfair to his people. Once he'd written the legal code, he had them taken to each corner of the world and carried out by the judges there.

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In the year 50, he created a Senate of elected officials to represent the will of the people. He gave them ability to legislate laws for the Empire, subject to Imperial veto. They were even granted the ability to remove the Emperor with a unanimous vote of no confidence.

In the year 53, Stanterius died of a heart attack. He left his son Gavinus to rule in his place.

Stanterius' rule was considered a golden age for the Empire, full of joy and promise. It showed that even the most horrible beginnings could be redeemed through compassion and honor.

Gavinus decided there needed to be a series of mundane roads throughout the Empire. Something for the citizens to use. And so he began construction in the year 60.

Gavinus wanted these roads built and well maintained, but he knew that if that was left solely in the hands of the government, this would not be the case. So he implemented a series of tax breaks to any landowner who maintained a section of road. This ensured the roads were well maintained for centuries to come.

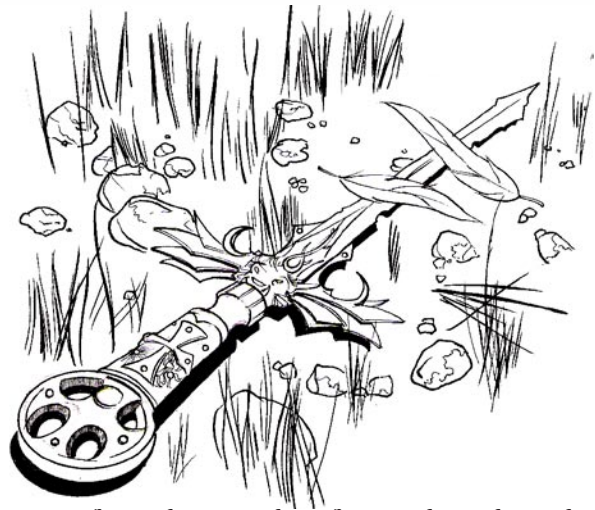
In 152 the roads project was finished. The Empire was now joined by a network of roads.

In 161 the Emperor commissioned the Imperial University. The Imperial University was to be the greatest institute of learning in the world. It was finished in 170 and quickly gained renown.

To continue this atmosphere of learning and intellectual pursuit, the Emperor commissioned the Academy of Warfare in 197. It was finished 14 years later. All officers in the Imperial Army began moving through the Academy. The Academy strove for a level of excellence unmatched by any other school of learning.

In 268 the Emperor commissioned the building of the Center of Mysteries. This was designed to be the foremost school of magical study in the world. Not long after it was completed 21 years later, it succeeded.

In 385 the guilds of the Empire, uncertain about their power among the entrenched might of the Emperor, held the first gathering of the guilds. This was a conclave designed to discuss and protect the in-



terests of merchants and craftsmen throughout the Empire.

They practiced fixing prices and controlling trade throughout the Empire. They found they could exert much power when they acted together, even more than the guilds did on their own.

A year later, they met again. This time, the Emperor sent troops to seize them. The troops surrounded their compound and refused to let anyone enter or leave.

The Emperor entered the compound to meet with the merchants. He expressed his displeasure at their attempts to take power away from his throne and announced that he was going to fire the compound.

The merchants were desperate, but being the finest negotiators in the world, they kept their heads. They brokered a deal with the Emperor, a deal which granted the Emperor himself a percentage of all profits, a deal that circumvented the normal channels of tax revenues and directly profited the Emperor.

As time went on, the Emperor's taxes became more and more excessive. The people began to despise the Emperor and sought an end to taxation.

A man named Kanil organized the disenfranchised people of the Empire and attempted to rise up. He marched against the Emperor, wearing a crown of thorns to match the Emperor's crown of gold.

For five years, Kanil took cities on the way to the capital. He managed to raise more troops than the Emperor, and Kanil rampaged for five years while

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the Imperial legions used the Emperor's Roads to outmaneuver him.

At the end of the five years, Kanil marched on Durelius. The harassment of the Imperial legions had greatly reduced the number of Kanil's troops, and he was defeated. His head was placed over the gate of Durelius and his limbs sent to the four corners of the world.

The Thorn Rebellion had ended.

But the sentiments had not. Emperor Trelus was slain by an assassin the next year.

His son, Aulus, took the throne and began a holy war against assassins. Every assassin in the Empire ran scared as the towns and cities were scoured. Those suspected of being hired killers had their flesh slowly carved away by torturers until they died.

In 472, the remaining assassins gathered together for survival. They formed a secret guild of their own, the Assassins' Guild. From there, they worked as a single man, protecting each other from the Emperor's legions.

In 480, having solidified their holdings, the Assassins' Guild decided that it was time to announce their presence to the world.

On the last day of the year, an hour before midnight, they struck. In every city throughout the Empire, they slew the lord. They then carved the symbol of the Guild, a coiled garotte, on the forehead of every victim.

The next morning, war was declared on the Assassins' Guild.

For almost five years, the Emperor's troops sought the Assassins' Guild. Those assassins they found were tortured and killed.

Finally, they discovered the location of the headquarters of the Assassins' Guild. Troops were gathered and the headquarters razed.

The guild was thrown into chaos. Members scattered to the four winds. It took a year for them to reunite.

In 486, the Assassins' Guild struck back. Over the next five years they began a reign of terror. Dozens of Emperors were slain. Some of them sat of the throne less than an hour.

The Assassins' Guild had infiltrated every level of the Imperial Palace. By the end of five years, the

Emperors were terrified to rule. They could do nothing but cower and wait.

In 491, the assassins finally called an end to the war. It had been years since the Emperor had called off the war on his end, and they finally decided that enough was enough.

In 502, after the smoke had time to clear, the Assassins' Guild sent an agent to Emperor's bedchamber in the middle of the night. Several other meetings followed.

Later that year, the Emperor and the Assassins' Guild signed a secret pact. Known as the Killing Accord, this pact gave the Assassins' Guild legitimacy within the Empire.

In 565, the Thieves' Guild approached the Emperor, emboldened by rumors of the Killing Accord. After several meetings, the Stealing Accord was signed, legitimizing the existence of the Guild.

This trend was continued in 581, when the Church of Bamon and various Demon cults presented themselves to the Emperor. They swayed the Emperor to their will, and that same year, the Emperor announced that all people were free to follow any religion in the Empire. The evil religions were now able to flourish.

This opening of religions led to an increased corruption of the other churches, as traitors who secretly followed Bamon were protected by law when revealed.

In 590, this trend continued to worsen. The Emperor declared the worship of the now Archdemon Eurustace was publicly approved, not merely allowed.

A day of holiday was declared and celebrations held throughout the Empire. Statues were unveiled in the capital, all depicting Eurustace, the Butcher.

In 605, the trend played out as the Emperor declared the worship of Eurustace the official religion of the Empire. People could still worship whom they wished in their free time, but services to Eurustace were compulsory.

In the ensuing century, things became worse. The followers of Eurustace grew in power. The freedoms of those who followed other religions dwindled. The priesthood knew incredible prestige and power. The common man knew despair.

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In 747, the Emperor declared that in the footsteps of the Confessors, Inquisitors of the Emperor had the right to delve into the minds of the accused to discover the true natures of their crimes. These Abolishment of Privacy Acts sang the death knell for the freedom on the people. There was only one step further to fall.

In 771, the Emperor instituted the Crime of Thought Laws. This meant that now, even the wish to commit a crime was considered illegal.

The only source of light in the dim final days of the Empire was the fall of the Assassins' Guild. In 803, the Thieves' Guild and Assassins' Guild went to war. Unfortunately for the Assassins' Guild, they were not told ahead of time.

In the dark of the night, the Assassins' Guild was assaulted by the Thieves' Guild. Thieves outnumbered the assassins one-hundred to one, and the assassins never stood a chance.

It is rumored the war had something to do with a woman.



The Fall of the Empire

"From the cradle of cruelty, from the lap of horror itself rose hope and light. It came in the form of a man, sword in hand, ready to right the wrongs of the world. It wasn't through skill or guile that he toppled a tyrant, though he had those traits apleanty. No, the world was saved by heart, courage, will and above all . . . faith."

— The Birth of a New Age

In 820 AI, Saint Kûlan was born. His was the first in a series of births that would bring about the end of an Empire.

His birth went largely unheralded, except in the usual Dwarven manner. He studied in the art of warfare like many Dwarves, and before long excelled as a leader and a warrior.

When he was 80, he left the Dwarven halls to find his fortune. What he found was a level of tyranny beyond anything he'd imagined. The hand of the Empire was lighter inside the Dwarven kingdoms. He was not prepared for what awaited him in the outside world.

As Kûlan searched the world for hope, the other players in the last days were born. Saint Nonet grew up and studied running an inn under his father. Saint Alric became a man and attended the Academy of Warfare.

In 956, Prince Octarus was born and began learning the rule of the Empire from his father Acius. He learned the proper forms of diplomacy and tactics. He also learned torture and other forms of brutality.

In 958, the Herald Valonius gave birth to the new Savior. The exact circumstances are lost to time, but the year of his birth is deduced from statements about his age made later in his life.

Adventure Seeds

The true story of the assassination of Eurustace is an Adventure Seed. Perhaps the characters might find a record of the killing. Unfortunately this scroll is "haunted" by the Archdemon himself. With the Archdemon's attention, the forces of evil suddenly descend upon the characters, trying to kill them and take the scroll, to return it to their dark lord.

Most everything to do with the main body of the Imperial history is and Adventure Seed. This includes such things as the magical artifacts of the Imperial line and the secrets of the war between the Emperors and the assassins.

World Threads

Thorn Rebellion and the secrets of the Emperor's Roads are World Threads.

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In 969, Ephestus was born. He joined the guard when he came of age and worked his way through the Imperial army until he was assigned to the palace.

When Octarus was 18, his father died. Rumor maintained that Octarus was responsible. Octarus took the throne.

The Herald, on the other hand, set out on the roads of the Empire at age 18. He studied under every great spiritual leader of good in the known world, including the Atavists.

In 988, the Herald revealed himself to the world. He preached to the masses, telling them they'd strayed from the true path. Unfortunately, most of his teachings are now lost.

He converted them by the hundreds, by the thousands. The Herald's flock swelled with believers. He was so effective the Empire itself took notice of him.

The generals of the army called to them the Empire's favorite son, the Centurion Alric. They gave Alric the task of taking the Herald into custody and bringing him for judgment before the throne.

Alric and his hundred men came before the Pulpit of the Herald in the lost city of Carumius. There he ordered the Herald to surrender. The Herald's followers created a wall of bodies before him, but the Herald ordered them part and let the warrior through.

Alric ordered the Herald to give himself up. The Herald refused. Alric approached and raised his sword to strike, but he could not bring himself to cleave the true messenger of God. He instead struck him with a mailed fist.

Alric's heart suddenly swelled with guilt and remorse. He knew then that he had struck the chosen Savior of the world, Angenus returned.

Alric fell to his knees, weeping in horror at what he'd done. He begged the Herald to allow him to throw himself on his own sword, then attempted to do so anyway when the Herald refused, but the Herald's followers stopped him.

Then the Herald spoke the words carved over every shrine of the Marshal. He said, "Thou knowest what thou must do next."

Alric rose from his knees and gathered his men upon him. He strode from the city and set about overthrowing his Emperor.

The early days of the rebellion did not go well for Alric. Though the world was ready to join him, and recruits flocked to him in droves, the Imperial army could take the Emperor's Roads and attack anywhere, harrying Alric wherever his men gathered.

Things looked bleak. The Imperial Army harassed him everywhere he went. They'd learned from the Thorn Rebellion, learned the best time to strike was while the army still formed.

While Alric fled from the armies of the Emperor, he happened upon Nonet's Inn on a little known road in the middle of nowhere. He bivouacked his men at the Inn, starving and cold, and tried to figure out a way to pay for food.

Nonet refused to accept payment. He fed the troops and offered his inn as a safe haven for his troops. He hid the troops in the countryside behind the inn and only told those he trusted most of the army's presence.

Alric puzzled over what to do for years. He'd taken the Emperor's Roads before, but he had never been of high enough rank to gain the secret of using them.

It was at this time that Kûlan found Alric. Here was the man Kûlan needed. The man who would save the world. Kûlan signed on immediately, and became Alric's most trusted military adviser.

Meanwhile, Alric and his most trusted mage, Vamasius, studied the roads, trying to find a method of opening them. After over a year of research, they succeeded.

Alric burst onto the world scene at this point. He had the mobility to match the Emperor and the ability to gather men from throughout the Empire.

He grew in strength like a juggernaut. He struck seemingly at random, but with great purpose. Alric became an unstoppable force, liberating cities throughout the Empire, then moving before Octarus had time to react.

Meanwhile, Nonet protected and fed the troops until Alric was able to get his logistics under control. Nonet fed the entire army from his tiny larders before he died from malnutrition.

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The Marshal Alric kept moving, and soon Octarus fought a defensive battle. By the year 997, Octarus knew he needed to take drastic action.

Until this time, he'd placed more of his energy trying to stop Alric than the Herald. No one knows why such a competent diplomat and strategist would make such a glaring mistake, but the churches of the world claim it was divine will.

Finally, Octarus moved on the man converting the masses and producing the troops Alric harvested. Finally he moved on the Herald.

The legions captured the Herald and brought him to Durelius. News reached Alric of the Herald's capture, and he knew that he had to take the capital quickly.

And so he took his entire army into the Emperor's Roads.

But Octarus knew that this would be the case, and so he sent his army into the Roads as well. Alric won, but all connection between the Emperor's Roads and Durelius broke.

Now Alric had a much harder task ahead of him. He had to march on the capital and take it by siege. The Imperial Wizards would make certain that with the Roads severed, Alric could find no magical way into the capital.

Octarus placed the Herald in a cell in the Imperial dungeons. Though Octarus ordered that he be kept in good health, he never checked in on the Herald, and the head of the dungeons neglected the man.

Ephestus was the guard in charge of the Herald. Not knowing the Emperor's orders, he watched helplessly as the Herald dwindled and died.

Ephestus converted during his conversations with the Herald. He knew from what the Herald said the Savior needed to be martyred to complete his job on Belkanâth.

Meanwhile, the Marshal laid siege to Durelius. It was a close battle. If Octarus had not left the Herald unchecked as long as he did, Alric would never have enough men to take the capital, defended by more experienced Imperial troops.

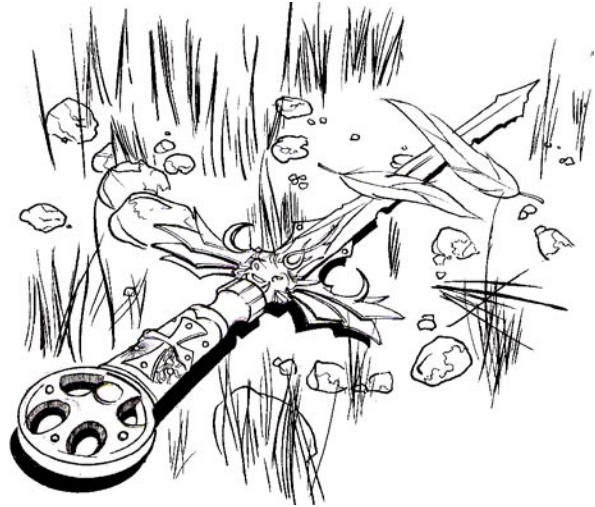
In 998, Alric achieved the capital. For some reason, Octarus had postponed killing the Herald. While the capital fell, he ordered the Herald tortured to death in the town square.

But the Herald was too weak to move. Ephestus knew that he would die on the way to the square, and he knew that it was necessary the Herald's death be public. He laid hands on the Herald and prayed to God for aid.

The prayer was answered. God granted the Herald enough strength to walk to his execution.

Troops poured through the city. Guards placed the Herald on the blocks where the torturer had prepared his tools. In a city the size of Durelius, he would have about twenty excruciating minutes to work his art on the Savior.

But Octarus had one moment of compassion. He looked on God's messenger and ordered the torturer to stand back. He took up the executioner's ax and in front of the assembled crowd, ended the Herald's life quickly.



Shortly thereafter, several mages, inspired by the courage the Herald had shown in death, opened gates to allow the crowd to escape, thus the Herald's martyrdom, and his ability to inspire compassion even in the cruelest of men, was carried to the world.

Now troops fought a running battle in the streets. Alric led his men through the remaining resistance in an attempt to catch the Emperor. The chase brought them to the Palace, where Octarus released his final revenge.

In the bowels of the palace his Lord High Wizard Reyn had built a magical device with the power to destroy the world. Octarus gathered his most trusted

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advisers to him and together, they detonated the device.

It released a blast of chaos that roared outward from the palace. Alric saw this moving toward him, and his mage Vamasius opened a gate. Alric's men rushed through and the Marshal stood on the brink of the gate, when he heard the voice of the Herald in his ears. The voice told him that he witnessed the end of the world, and only the greatest faith and the greatest sacrifice could even slow it.

Adventure Seeds

The Lost City of Carumius is an adventure seed. It exists somewhere, likely in Belkanâth. What the Herald preached at the time is a World Thread, and a big one since it involves the ways in which the modern Church has strayed, but many adventures, items, and Holy sites could be found in the city itself.

Nonet's Inn is an adventure seed. It has been lost to the world, just as it was lost to the Emperor (though many think they know its true location). Perhaps the characters become lost in the wilderness and they find a group of pilgrims lost as well. They wander for days and their food runs out. In addition, Cambions find their trail and begin to harry them. Then, they find an abandoned inn. Inside, they find all the food and drink they need, and a defensible location. As they fight, little clues will reveal the truth to them, and when they leave, the inn will disappear, never to be discovered again.

World Threads

Whether the Herald was actually the returned Angenus, or if this was a racist assumption on Alric's part, is a World Thread.

Everything that happened from the moment that Alric converted to the end of this age is a world thread, *especially* the motivations of Octarus, the Herald, and Alric and the nature of the Chaos Gate are World Threads. It is out there, in the east, and it grows up to a mile a year to this day, but its location and current status are a World Thread as well, though one that isn't secret, merely too long for this work.

And so Alric refused escape. Instead, he threw himself into the oncoming wave of chaos, applying his great faith and his great discipline to the chaos.

The chaos slowed and soon stopped. The world had been saved, for now.

The Empire was dead.

The Years of Darkness

"The years after the fall of the Empire were marked by pain, death, horror, and hardship. Only the years after the Great Ulcer were marked by worse. Man preyed upon man, brother upon brother. Food ran short, warlords arose, and brutality ruled. In the wake of might came weakness and in the wake of order came chaos."

— In the Shadow of Empire

The fall of the Empire left the world in chaos. The remains of Octarus' rule would plague the world to the present day.

Octarus had five advisors. First, was his Lord High Marshal, Halrian. Halrian was in charge of all Octarus' armies. Halrian's most trusted advisor was a Half-Orc named Losius.

Octarus' second advisor was his Lord High Wizard Reyn. Reyn was in charge of advice on all things magical. Reyn's apprentice was the wizard Berendel.

Octarus' third advisor was the Lord High Inquisitor Mundus. Mundus was in charge of Octarus' intelligence network. Mundus' right-hand man was his primary agent, Tartius.

Octarus' fourth advisor was the Lord High Clerist Ammalena. Ammalena was a devotee of Eurustace and Octarus' primary spiritual advisor. Ammalena's personal assistant was a woman named Carania.

Octarus' final advisor was the bard Liniel. Liniel was not only Octarus' balladeer and chronicler but also his advisor on Human nature and psychology. Liniel's right-hand person was her apprentice Andrel.

Octarus and his five advisors detonated the Chaos Gate. By doing so, they destroyed themselves utterly. The advisors' aides, however, escaped, and they scattered to the four winds.

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Of all the aids, the only one who disappeared without incident was Tartius. Tartius vanished, as only an accomplished spy can vanish, never to be seen again.

The rest scattered. Andrel settled on an island in the ocean somewhere. She became the Siren, tempting sailors to destroy themselves on her rocks. After the Chaos, she became the second Great Fiend.

The other three traveled west, settling in Belkanâth. They plague those lands to this day.

Of those who survived the war, the two other most prominent people were the Dwarf Kûlan and the mage Vamasius. With the passing of Alric, Vamasius dedicated the rest of his life to supporting Kûlan on his quest to protect the world.

Kûlan took up the mantle Alric wore. Alric's job had been left unfinished, the world still needed saving.

Kûlan was left with a world plunged into anarchy. He began by gathering his remaining forces and solidifying his military power. He then set about the world, bringing order wherever he went.

Kûlan is notable for the law he brought throughout Belkanâth, but he is most famous for his work against the Great Fiends.

About this time, the Chaos still grew. To fight this problem, a group of men in the east formed the Knights of Holy Discipline.

Little did Kûlan know that the Great Fiends even now entered Belkanâth. The Siren was of little concern to him, in spite of the implications of what was to come.



But Losius, Berendel, and Carania gathered forces and renamed themselves the Warlord, the Lich King and the Demon Queen.

The Warlord gathered the Orcs of the Empire into an army. The Lich King joined the Nopheratus and built an undead army. The Demon Queen researched the nature of gates and the hierarchy of Hell.

In 1000 AI, the Demon Queen moved into Dien-tor and opened the Great Gates. Demons and even the occasional Devil poured through and that nation fell to their rampage in a matter of weeks, becoming an Ulcer.

A year later, they poured north. Kûlan was able to intercept them with the use of the Emperor's Roads. He counterstruck almost as soon as the Demons arrived.

During the ensuing fight, Kûlan prevailed, but only just. He gathered men as quickly as he could. He was not as charismatic as Alric, but he got the job done.

He rested for the winter, but rest was not in the cards for Kûlan. As he consolidated his power, the Warlord raised an army of Demons and seized Kûlan's own nation of Uzarâg. The Warlord butchered every Dwarf that didn't flee in terror and only a small portion flowed into the Elven kingdom to the east. The Elves there granted the Dwarves succor and thus formed the Alliance of Elves and Dwarves.

Then, as the spring came, an army of Demons raged out of Uzarâg. Kûlan received word of the attack and moved his army. He reached the battle and started a year-long fight against the Orcs. This battle went better, for fighting Orcs is something that every Dwarf understands.

Kûlan drove the Warlord back inside the fallen Dwarven kingdom, which was even then becoming an Ulcer. Weeping, Kûlan decided he didn't have the resources to finish the job.

But in the spring, a new foe appeared, and the last of the Great Fiends attacked. The Lich King moved out of the north with an army of Undead.

Kûlan moved again, using the Emperor's Roads to block the Lich King's next moves. This battle was finished within a year as well, but at a terrible

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cost. Vamasius attempted to meet the Lich King in a mage duel and was destroyed.

It was only at this time that Mortals first tried to cross over the mountains into the East. They were stopped by the Enârôz, the wyrms of the Dragon Peaks, intent on making certain that no Mortal race ever created a world-spanning Empire again.

Little information survives about the following years. Churches declared magic witchcraft after seeing the power of the Great Fiends. They managed to ban any magic not from the established religions of the world and Erilian formed the Shadow Order of mages in response. This would become the most influential order of mages the world had ever known.

The Years of Darkness are said to have ended that very same year with the death of Kûlan. He was standing on the walls of Felric's Redoubt during an attack of the Warlord's Orcs. While wiping sweat from under his helmet a stray arrow caught him in the head. He died instantly.

With the passing of Kûlan, so passed knowledge of the Emperor's Roads. The world would have to fend for itself from then on, but Kûlan had worked his good.

The main trends toward brutality and evil had been blunted. The world could now go about recovering on its own.

... to the Present

"The Guardian's legacy was the opportunity to realize his dream. He saved us from the Great Fiends and created the environment which allowed the current nations to form. He brought strength and goodness wherever he went, putting down despots and tyrants and allowing people to form their own nations."

— In the Footsteps of the Guardian

Kûlan left the world behind, but he left it with the ability to fend for itself, bringing law to the lawless. Of the early years after his death, little is known.

Nations like Maroldo and Marnele solidified into their current shape. Shipping and trade began to flourish.

Grudges took a back seat to practicality. A century-old feud did not mean that captured enemy kings were executed. Ransoms were too appealing.

Good and evil became less obvious in the world. Nations now fell onto a sliding scale of shades of gray. The churches became even more powerful.

The nonhuman nations grew more and more withdrawn. They'd had enough of Human interaction. While they did not close off relations with Humanity, they took an increasingly small hand in it.

The best example of this is the nation of Athâra. They sealed their borders with a magical Glamor, shutting out nonelves and keeping away uninvited guests.

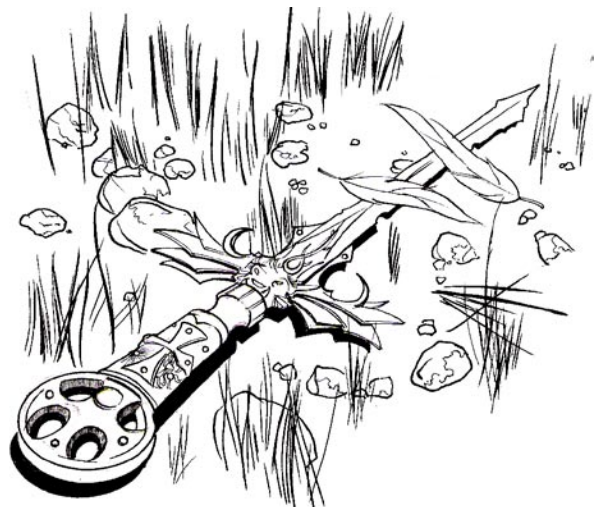
This brings the world to the present age. Wars still happen, quests are still fulfilled, but in comparison to former ages, life is peaceful.

The Chaos still encroaches and will destroy the world. The Great Fiends are out there, but they are at bay. The Ulcers are everyone's greatest worry. There are three permanent Ulcers in Belkanâth now, and the legions of Hell push for more. This might just be the greatest threat out there.

Many are waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Adventure Seeds and World Threads

For the Adventure Seeds and World Threads of the current age, see Chapter 4.



Chapter Four

Chapter Four: Gazetteer of Belkanâth

This chapter details the various nations and people of Belkanâth. This includes all known lands, including the Great Fiends.

You will *not* find the following in this section.

- Small barbarian tribes that aren't big enough or don't interact enough with society to note. This includes raiders in the far northwest. This also includes many secluded bands of Cambions, Nephilim and other creatures.
- Nation-spanning guilds or organizations, such as the Church. You will find these groups detailed in Chapter Five.
- Any political organizations of the Warrens. Rumors say the Fallen Elves or Fallen Dwarves, for instance, have rather large empires. These empires exist beyond the knowledge of most people.
- Unknown political organizations, such as secret societies.

REALMS OF BELKANÂTH

The name at the top of each section is the short name or nickname of the country. Many people do not refer to the Kingdom of Ludremon by the full name, but simply call it Ludremon. For convenience, this shorter name is used in section headings.

Name: This is the name of the country, as used on all official documents and diplomatic relations. The shorter version of the name, used in everyday conversation, is the name of the country's entry in this chapter.

Ruler: The current ruler of the country, with proper title.

Government: This section details the government of the nation. Whether a Prince, King, or Duke rules the country doesn't matter.

Capital: The center of the nation's government. The city from which the leader rules.

Some nations have season capitals. This means the royal household moves from holding to holding throughout the year, collecting the local taxes and eating much of the foodstuffs during their stay. Most smaller powers find it more economical to move the household to the taxes rather than the other way around.

In these nations, the analogy between nobility and locusts is more than just poetic.

Major Towns: You will find the most notable cities, towns, and villages in this section, their population in parentheses behind their name. These are typically notable as a base of provincial rule. There may be other towns and villages not shown, these are simply

Adventure Seeds

Most everything in this chapter is an Adventure Seed. The exceptions are the ruling families, who we might reference in future works, and anything noted at the end of the national descriptions.

World Threads

Ruling families, as noted above, are World Threads. See also the last section of each national description.

the ones most important.

Resources/Trade: All nations are assumed to be self-sufficient. Nations which have goods for export have them listed here. If the nations export no resources, but produces materials in quantities of note, you will find them listed here as well.

Population: This section details the population of the nation.

Languages: People in the nation speak the languages listed here, in descending order of frequency. These are the most common languages spoken. Languages of allies and enemies are usually well represented by some portion of the population as well.

Overview: This is a national overview.

Church: The state religion.

Allies: States and organizations the nation typically favors. These affiliations are usually long-standing friendships or mutually favorable.

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Enemies: Long-standing feuds and hostilities are listed here. Such hatreds explode every few decades into warfare.

History: The history of the nation. This typically goes back to its founding and contains major events in the nation's past.

World Threads: Here we list all the world threads of the nation.

Æld

Name: The Triarchy of Æld.

Ruler: Eowald of Maléod, Fréawine of Elcwin and Æthelwold of Bredwold.

Government: Æld is an alliance of three kingdoms of Ældic racial stock. The three kingdoms are technically autonomous, but the threat from the three raiding nations to the west has united them to the point where they almost always act in concert.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Alce (10,581), Minald (3,248), Theord (2,259).

Resources/Trade: Æld is a poor nation that profits from its location more than anything else. Its primary production and export is iron from its eastern mines. It trades this ore and finished steel crafts to Maroldan merchants for gold. Add this to the product of raids into the west and the rare items from Athâra, and the triarchy comes out ahead most years. If it can manage to stymie most of the raids into its lands, that is.

Population: 482,490. Almost all people in Æld are Human, except for the few Elven merchants and emissaries and Dwarves down from the north.

Languages: Ældic, The Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Dwarven.

Overview: Æld is a united front of three loose Kingdoms.

The Kingdom of Maléod controls the lands from Alce to the center of the triarchy. The border then moves up to the southeastern corner of Athâra. It is the largest and most powerful of the three kingdoms. It also takes the lion's share of the attacks from raiders. Troops from Theord are often seen inside Maléod, supplementing their forces.

The Kingdom of Elcwin controls everything south of Maléod. And up to the highlands of the eastern

part of the nation. Minald, its largest town, is poor, but this doesn't give it a pass from raids and the nation is militaristic.

The Kingdom of Bredwold is the third nation. It controls everything else in Æld. This includes mostly the eastern and least-fertile lands of the triarchy.

Æld is a beset collection of peoples. In the past they raided much like the people to their west. With the conversion of each of the three kingdoms to the Church, the Æld have changed their warlike ways.

Somewhat.

Now, they earn the ire of those peoples of the west by raiding *them*. The Ældic fleet patrols the ocean, spotting returning longboats and following them home, attacking them in acts of piracy. They carry the spoils of these attacks back to Æld where they are added to the coffers or ransomed back to their home nations (for a fee small enough not to evoke hostility).

Ældic people get along well with Dwarves and there are many Dwarven craftsmen working inside their borders, producing goods for their clans up north and selling them directly to Maroldan merchants. Æld is happy to collect the tax revenues from these transactions.

The final element in the success of this nation is its relations to the kingdom of Athâra. Claiming a bloodline that goes all the way back to the Half-Elven throne, Æld has managed minor connections to Athâra. While Ældic peoples are killed just as quickly as anyone else on entry into the Elven wood, Elven emissaries do come out. While in Æld, they finance their stay by selling Elven crafts to Maroldan merchants. Æld takes a tax on all these transactions as well.

Æld rules and deliberates through great assemblies, harkening back to their barbaric gatherings in their past. The rulers consult these assemblies, in which all classes except slaves are represented, on all issues of war and peace. For all their barbaric beginnings, their innate sense of freedom has kept them from the feudal model and money flows up and down the chain with much more freedom than the more "civilized" nations to the east.

Church: Æld follows the Church. All Human saints are revered within its borders, but the Knights Eque-

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nis are particularly prevalent (for so disparate an Order), because of the nation's heroic tradition.

Allies: Maroldo, Mannan, Keireena, Athâra (perhaps)

Enemies: Hofgrin, Starg, Malveig.

History: Æld claims its origins in the wake of the fall of Almia. Its royal lines, it says, descend from the Human line of the Half-Elven Throne.

Whether this is true, its more recent history is one of barbarism. It shares blood with all three of its enemy nations, and it coalesced into the triarchy in 1578. At this time it began raiding outward with a renewed vigor and its longships were seen as far away as Maroldo. The Æld raided everywhere but Sulvican City, though academics debate whether the exemption was because of respect or superstition to this day.

For more than four-hundred years this continued, and no nation in the world could hold off these most successful of raiders. The answer finally came from the only place that Æld did not try to raid.

The Faerarch finally decided that it was time to save his people. He gathered his most successful missionary, a man named Ithric, and sent him to Æld.

The Æld were a pagan people at the time, but they were not ones for religious intolerance. Ithric managed to move freely among the Æld, talking and debating and ministering to everyone who would listen. Slowly, he gained a following and when it was powerful enough, he moved to each of the three kings and in one year, converted them. The rest of the nation followed, if slowly.

By 1998, the entire triarchy had converted. Then the nation of Æld sent emissaries to Sulvican City. They knelt before the Faerarch and pledged never to raid into the lands of the Faithful again. Instead, they turned their attention to the heathens and Atavists of the west.

World Threads: There are no extra World Threads for this nation.

Aphimi

Name: The Maritime Empire of Aphimi.

Ruler: Emperor Ymnis the Wise and Benevolent.

Government: Aphimi is an empire consisting of a half dozen city-states organized under the rule of an elected Emperor.

Capital: Harelco.

Major Towns: Agbolo (2,244), Hannromubo



(3,092), Harelco (8,266).

Resources/Trade: Aphimi is an empire of poor resources and poorer farming. While they have gold and silver mines of some ancient note, these have mostly played out and the nation moved onto the sea to earn its money. Beginning with a brilliant red dye that holds color better than any other in Belkanâth, the Aphimi have spread out to build a maritime trade organization that rivals the Maroldans.

Population: 342,760. Aphimians are Human except for a few foreign traders and craftsmen.

Languages: Aphimian, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Aphimi is a dying nation, supported now only by its trade. Overgrazing and thousands of years of hard use left the land barely fertile, the metals plundered and the peoples wary.

However, the Aphimians can afford to import. Nobles and merchants alike covet their red dye. Their ships travel to every corner of Belkanâth.

The Aphimians are some of the best sailors in the world, second only to the Marnench. Their pirates are more deadly and their ships better defended. Barring all-out war and acts of God, little can slow down or damage the Aphimian maritime might.

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The Aphimians hold the lands with ancient continuous ownership. There are several ancient Atavistic sites in their realm. In addition, they are no longer Atavistic, but pagan. This makes them ripe for conquest by crusade.

But these people are brutal and powerful in their own right. So far, they've managed to keep their land under continuous ownership for about five thousand years. That seems unlikely to change any time soon.

The Aphimians have, in the last generations, tried to remake themselves into a nation of architects. They have more than succeeded. Now, even the Nolinans, once renowned for their architects, import Aphimians to build and repair their wonders.

Church: Pagan. The Aphimians worship the land spirits they feel have abandoned their people. They sacrifice animals and wealth in attempts to control the weather and bring favorable winds. It is rumored that they engage in Human sacrifice. Religious leaders encourage magic and witchcraft.

Allies: Hairan, Naili.

Enemies: Maroldo, Lilano, Gelaert, Kulland, Sulvican City.

History: Aphimi was founded in 3045 PI when the first Emperor, Sannir the XXXIV, united the nearby city-states to fend off the last of the Undead caused by the Great Ulcer.

They strengthened through the dark ages, nurturing their lands back to health and forming a unified culture. This left them ready for the Age of War.

They were ready when the various Human kingdoms began fighting and many of their greatest heroes arose during this time. When the Dwarves began searching for the Fell Hammer, the Aphimians had the wisdom to surrender immediately, and while they technically became a subject state of the Dwarves, this had little effect on their daily lives.

They submitted willingly to the Wizard-King and during his rule they gained the mystical bent that turned them to paganism later. When the Wizard-King disappeared, they continued without a pause.

Eurustace conquered them without more than a token fight and they immediately demoted their Emperor to High King. Under the Empire itself, they flourished.

Theireastern lands turned to deserts in the years after the fall of the Empire. In 1002 AI they began producing the dye that would save their nation's economy.

In 1246 the Aphimians converted to paganism.

In 1368 the Church ordered the first crusade against Aphimi. The Aphimians lost

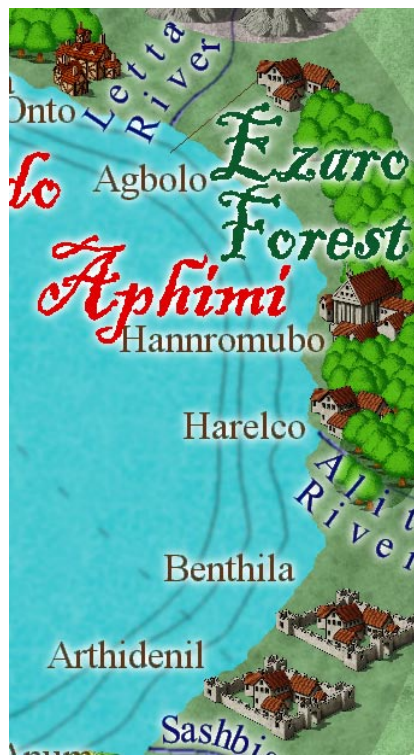
their western cities but managed to prevail in a prolonged desert war.

In 1786 the Church launched a second crusade, by sea, foolishly enough. The Aphimians sank it out of sight of land.

In 1946 the Church launched a third crusade. This one almost succeeded and all the six great city-states burned at least partially to the ground.

In the intervening years, things became more sedate. For now, the Church bides its time and conducts normal business with the Aphimians. No one knows how long this will last.

World Threads: There are no extra World Threads for this nation.



Athâra

Name: The Hidden Kingdom of Athâra.

Ruler: King Šoruš

Government: Athâra is a pure monarchy, with Šoruš as its king and several dukes, earls, and an assortment of Barons leading the various regions of the deep wood. The government is free, where

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the commonest Elf can own land and its small taxes flow upward, free of feudal entanglements.

Capital: Eluraisal

Major Towns: Aghûnâz (6,075), Ellusân (2,300), Eluraisal (12,692), Ossosân (1,783), Rallûmâ (3,320), Sosebellâm (4,970).

Resources/Trade: Athâra is self-sufficient and seeks no major trade with any nation. They do trade in the most minor way, but only because of the need of owning foreign money. Its ambassadors in Æld ship minor works of art out of the nation and trade them for local coins to support their embassies. This gives most people outside Athâra the sense that Athâran delegates are merchants too greedy to hold themselves within their own lands. In Athâra money comes in the form of a scrip that (theoretically) represents one Elf-hour of labor. Practically, it's as varied in buying power as any currency.

Population: 827,050 Elves.

Languages: Elvish, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: Athâra is the most reclusive of all nations. King Šoruš, never a fan of the Human race, decided to close off the borders during the time after the fall of the Empire. Therefore, all knowledge of the nation comes from books hundreds of years old. The only thing known about the current kingdom is the name of the king, which doesn't seem to have changed in the intervening years.

The reason for all this mystery is the Glamour, a magical force surrounding the entire wood. The Glamour seals the Elven kingdom from all outsiders, including other Elves who Athârans think are hopelessly corrupted by interacting with the Humans. Those entering the wood first find themselves lost and turned around, emerging back into the world after only a few dozen paces. Those who persist find themselves beset by illusion that torments the mind and sickens the soul. Any who persist after that are killed, but no one knows whether the Glamour does this or if it's the act of border patrols.

Inside the wood, the Elves guard their secrets. It's thought the most powerful order of the church is the Knights of Tulentil, perhaps more powerful than the priesthood itself. In fact, there are rumors the king heads this order as well—that it was their anti-Human teachings that led him to complete xenophobia.

And yet not everything is right inside Athâra. Elves around the world have searched the last centuries for the headquarters of the church of the Archdemon Assra the Unseen. They've begun to believe that this order operates from within Athâra, that they have a Warren whose entrances circumvent the Glamour. Some even whisper that it is the Archdemon's influence that caused Athâra to close its borders in the first place.

Athâra has a large Elven university built in the capital. Here all the young noble Elves of the country come to study.

Church: Athârans are staunch members of the Church of Eldinar. It's thought there are still remnants of the Atavistic Church within its borders, but if there are, they are likely small and rare.

Allies: Æld (perhaps)

Enemies: All foreign nations except Æld.

History: Athâra was founded in 5180 PI by the Elven prince Arthadan. At the time, the Elves found the surrounding barbarian people quaint. Even when the raids began, the Elves found the Humans curious at best. It wasn't until the barbarian raiders forced liberties on Elven women that things came to a head.

The Elves struck out with sudden force, slaughtering every Human within one hundred miles of its borders. This buffer zone lasted only a few years



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before the Humans encroached again. Again, the Elves struck out, slaughtering those around them.

This pattern continued for some years until the Elves had conditioned the proper amount of fear into the souls of the Humans.

Athâra weathered the Age of Chaos without much notice. The Vampire Lord passed as well. Already they withdrew, the anti-Human sentiments growing. When Almia rose to power, they held out a long time, finally becoming the last Elves to join.

During the Great Ulcer, the Elves suffered many tragedies and insults, the wood suffered more, receding in a mass die-off that reduced its once great borders to something like their current size and shape.

The Age of War found Athâra again beset by hordes of barbarians. Worse yet, no fewer than three Human kingdoms launched organized assaults at Athâra, thinking the Elves weakened by raids. The Elves repelled them, but the Elven hatred of the Humans grew and they spent the reign of Hegarion hiding within their forests.

Eurustace ended all of that.

With the slaughtering growth of Eurustace, Athâra found itself facing its worst nightmare, a Human with an army that could wipe all Elven blood from the face of the earth. Ironically, this is the one time the Athârans decided not to fight, instead surrendering at the first opportunity. The Humans had fulfilled all their expectations and the Athârans dreaded the tyranny that was to come. Still, they were long lived and longer sighted.

After the fall of the Empire, they decided they finally had enough. Almost on the day of the fall, they began secret work on the Glamour, only completing it centuries later. Now Athâra stands as a mystery, a death trap and a testimony to the folly of hatred and war.

World Threads: The connection between the King and the Church of Eldinar is a World Thread.

Avilairë

Name: The Grand Elven Sovereignty of Avilairë.

Ruler: King Arquar

Government: Avilairë is a monarchy. There is no peasantry among these Elves. All commoners are

free and most own some kind of land, although the idea of landownership is not as strict as it is among Human nations.

Capital: Cestalin

Major Towns: Arcáno (1,830), Cestalin (13,203), Fíviénar (6,609), Fuilicar (3,594), Sinarómë (3,594), Úlanwë (5,056).

Resources/Trade: The primary resources of Avilairë are the rare woods of their forests. In this matter only is the government brutal. The government only allows small amounts of these woods to be harvested during a year. Among Elves, this isn't difficult to enforce, they worry about deforesting the precious trees as much as their leaders, but other races often try unlawful lumbering. Those that do are either butchered on sight or publicly executed, depending on the mood of the Elf catching him. If the Elves butcher the person on the spot, they typically display his body as a gruesome warning. Because of the high value of these woods—most of them are used in creating magical items throughout the world—Avilairë can buy all the precious metals necessary to mint their own coins.

Population: 657,900 Elves.

Languages: Elvish, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: Avilairë hates all other races.

This hatred is unconcealed and they don't apologize. Other races, especially Humans, are barely tolerated inside the Avilairë borders. Still, the borders are not closed. Anyone can enter or leave as long as they're willing to follow the rules.

The rules are strict. Every non-Elf within the lands must first secure papers for their stay. These papers can be expensive, costing as much as a sword at the low end or the finest warhorse if the bureaucrat finds the person distasteful.

Foreigners must carry their papers always. They may not own land. Technically, they can't even own property, but the government knows that they can't enforce this law with merchants (and almost no other people enter the Elven lands). The Elves are wise, however. They don't violate the property of foreigners, no matter what the offense, but they often remind anyone who listens that they *could*.

The law is harsh against foreigners. There are only two punishments: execution with a fine and banish-

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ment with a fine. The amount of the fine depends on the crime and the wealth of the criminal, but convicted foreigners rarely leave the nation with much more than the clothes on their backs. Banishment comes hand in hand with a permanent branding to show other Elves the foreigner has lost his privileges.

But the laws are fair (if stern) and evenly administered. The Elves don't discriminate while passing judgment, they don't like foreigners enough to abuse one more than another and they have to be fair if they want trade to continue.

The Elves of Avilairë don't like to leave their nation. Those that do aren't typically merchants but misfits who leave to see the world. Trade with Avilairë happens because merchants come to Avilairë, not the other way around. A foreign merchant can find a good life within these borders, provided they are social hermits who don't crave interaction with their neighbors.

Avilairë controls a major university in its capital. Only Elves are welcome inside, and foreign Elves only barely.

Church: Avilairë follows the Church of Eldinar. It holds the headquarters of the Eldinar priesthood in Cestalin and the Knights of Auredë in Fulicar.

Allies: Ingrast

Enemies: Dientor

History: Avilairë was founded in 5180 PI by the Elven prince Turinel. They distrusted the Humans around them instantly, but they did not at first take any action against them. However, Humans migrating away from their more brutal western Elven cousins brought the word of horrors and slaughter. The Humans distrusted Avilairë as well.

They managed to ignore most of the major Human activities until the foundation of Almia. They thought that perhaps they'd judged Humans unfairly and they were one of the early Elven nations to join the Protector State.

In the wake of the fall, Avilairë withdrew into its own borders, scrambling to protect their sacred wood. It took all of their magic to do it, but they managed to hold off the taint of darkness.

During the age of war Avilairë found an outlet for all the hostility they'd managed to build up during



the previous years. They struck out at the Humans with great zeal and bitterness, ending the slaughter only when they could fight no more.

Then came Eurustace.

Avilairë fought the encroaching Empire with all its might, but in the end, they were doomed to fail. Outnumbered if not outmatched, the Imperial armies burned their way through the wood. In the end, the Elves were forced to surrender or face the possibility of ruling a nation of ash.

Their relationship with surrounding countries has improved slowly since the fall of the Empire, but it was hastened by the formation of the Ulcer of Dientor. Looking down the maw of a Demon horde is not the best way to live and they've let merchants into their lands mainly to build financial relationships that will prove useful if the threat ever becomes too much.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Belther

Name: The Commonwealth of Belther.

Ruler: High Lord Melin.

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Government: Belther is an oligarchy. Each of the eight districts elects a single leader, or lord. The eight lords meet once per season in Ontrel to deal with the issues of the nation. At these meetings they vote on every issue that could wait until the session. The High Lord, elected by his peers, runs this meeting unless charges have been brought against him. The High Lord has complete control to deal with any emergencies that arise between sessions, as well as the day-to-day national tasks. Typically, if the High Lord is brought up on charges, it's because one of the other lords believes that he declared something an emergency that wasn't. The most common punishment is the removal of title of High Lord.

Capital: Ontrel.

Major Towns: Doress (6,787), Gleedra (1,755), Kenessa (14,266), Nambreth (9,677), Nissa (2,370), Ontrel (20,117), Prash (4,947), Sendra (3,627).

Resources/Trade: Belther has many resources, the most important of which is its agriculture. The land is fabulously fertile and if it's sparsely populated this has more to do with Halfling settlement patterns than anything else. They export grains and fruit from their orchards to Ontav, Doszke, and Yevgenia. They also mine minerals and topaz from the foothills in the southeast. The final trade strength of Belther is its positioning, connecting the lands to the south to all the lands touching the Sea of Aleroch.

Population: 1,350,400, mostly Halflings, but all other races, especially in Ontrel and Kenessa.

Languages: Halfling, Elvish, Dwarvish, Yevgenian, Ontan, Maroldo, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: Belther is the most cosmopolitan of all Halfling nations. Positioned as it is on the Aleroch Sea, it serves as a gateway between the north and the south. The Belthians know this and make great efforts to make other races feel at home in their lands.

The cities of Ontrel and Kenessa are the most obvious examples. Unlike other Halfling settlements, most of these cities are above ground. The buildings, streets, and gates are all proportioned for Humans and Elves. Shops and restaurants (a Halfling innovation) serve all races and as many foreigners can be spotted on the streets as Halflings.

Belther is the richest of the Halfling nations. They dominate the Sea of Aleroch and their trade reaches all bays and inlets. They make great fortunes gathering the goods flowing out of the south and shipping them across the sea.

This wealth gives them problems, though. Both Yevgenia and Ontav invade Belther every few years to try to seize the foodstuffs they don't feel like buying. Worse, the Warlord raids out of Uzarâg almost once a year (usually after the autumn harvest) to resupply his dwindling stores.

Few Humans or Elves would care to admit it, but this makes the Belthians some of the greatest soldiers in the area. These Halflings have a mighty warrior tradition and pride themselves on cunning



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tactics and subtle traps. It is a rare battle where the Halflings don't beat twice their number. Three times their number by sea.

Church: Belther follows the Church of Nikdin. The Nikdin priesthood bases out of Nambreth. The Norin Wanderers base out of Kenessa.

Allies: Jermolyn, Osal, Ingrast, Zûram.

Enemies: Yevgenia, Ontav, Doszke, Uzarâg. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: Belther formed out of the shattered victims of the Warlord assault in the year 1555. Formerly mixed lands dominated by Humans, the Halflings of this region suffered withering assault after withering assault. In the end, a core competency of brutal Halfling infantry survived. The other races hung bleeding and shattered. Only the little folk were able to carry the war to all corners of Belther.

By the end of the season, the Halflings not only controlled the entire region, but they were now the most populous race. As the other races died or fled, Belther formed.

The Halflings erected a series of warning towers throughout their lands. They learned the secrets of sailing and built trade around the sea. Soon, Halfling war bands guarded merchant caravans coming out of the south. Legends of the Belthian war prowess spread throughout the region.

As the years progressed, Human kingdoms of the region raided into Belther and the warning towers expanded to cover attack from the northeast and from the sea as well. Their army and navy solidified into the most disciplined forces in the region. Now, no invader can hold ground in Belther for long.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

The Chaos

Name: The Chaos.

Ruler: None.

Government: None.

Capital: None.

Major Towns: None.

Resources/Trade: None.

Population: None.

Languages: None.

Overview: This is the way the world ends.

No one knows what the Chaos Gate was supposed to do. Many historians believe that it couldn't possibly have been designed to create the Chaos, that Octarus couldn't have been mad enough to try to destroy the world.

More likely its purpose had more to do with creating an Ulcer that would devour the Mortal Realm. Whether its current form was an accident or a last minute change in plan by Octarus is unknown.

The Chaos lies to the east of the Dragon Peaks, modern maps are sketchy and contradictory. It consumed the old capital and is believed to have a radius of almost one hundred and fifty miles.

It grows every year and nothing anyone has tried can stop its growth. So far, the only thing that has had any effect is sacrifice. Every year, the Knights of Holy Discipline select their most disciplined member. This member throws himself into the Chaos, slowing its growth. As of yet, they haven't become desperate enough to sacrifice more than one member. They believe that a less disciplined person might cause it to grow faster. The Knights of Holy Discipline has no other purpose but to create this most disciplined person.

Still, the Chaos grows. Eventually, it will destroy everything and no one can stop it.

Church: None.

Allies: None.

Enemies: The Knights of Holy Discipline. The entire Mortal Realm.

History: The Chaos was formed in 998 AI with the destruction of the Empire. The sacrifice of Alric slowed the immediate threat.

Since then the Chaos has grown about eight hundred feet a year, at least according to sketchy reports. The Knights of Holy Discipline sacrifice to it once a year.

World Threads: Everything about the Chaos is a World Thread, but you could build Adventure Seeds around plots that left the Chaos unchanged at the end, as long as you didn't commit to revelations about its nature, you wouldn't run the risk of clashing with future material.

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The Ciall

Name: The Tribes of Ciall.

Ruler: No single ruler. The Most powerful chief is Seonag of Earcuil.

Government: Ciall is a loose collection of barbaric tribes with a unifying culture. Each tribe is usually a dictatorship, although tribal elders have much power over the chief. For the most part, the chief's position is hereditary, but the succession of leadership is rarely so cut-and-dried, with the tribal elders wielding so much power.

Capital: Each region is ruled from the settlement where the chief lives, usually the largest. Earcuil is the largest town and one of the few settlements with fortifications.

Major Towns: Calig (2,531), Earcuil (6,977).

Resources/Trade: Ciall engages in little trade outside their own borders. The tribes have enough miners and craftsmen to extract precious metals and craft metals from the mountains and convert them into weapons and armor (the height of their armor crafting is chain mail.) They have a basic agrarian society and subsist on a diet that includes large amounts of meat from cattle.

Population: 213,360, almost entirely Human.

Languages: Ciallic, The Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Ciall is a nation based on farming, herding, and smiting their enemies. They have a rich culture with legends and mythical traditions that go back thousands of years, although the nation as it stands is young.

This nation is composed of land-based barbarians. They strike out against their neighbors, typically in response to grudges centuries old.

The people of Ciall tend toward something closer to a democracy than most of the more civilized nations. Whereas they are controlled by a chieftain, many matters are settled by a council of warriors (more a loose meeting than a formal affair.) The chief runs these meetings and has the last word, although going against the will of his people is rarely a wise move.

The Silent Hand, although a far-reaching organization, bases itself in Ciall. They find the barbaric nature of the nation a good cover for their covert ac-



tivities. Few people suspect that a nation this “barbaric” could hide a world-spanning conspiracy.

Church: Ciall follows the Atavistic Church although there are many traditions, mainly involving festivals and celebrations, that even the Atavists would consider pagan. Still, these traditions are benign and have more to do with flavor and fairy tale than worship.

The followers of the Archdemon Glograg are secretly based out of Ciall. They keep their worship low-key in Ciall itself to avoid attention.

Allies: Mannan, Keireena (many tribes consider these enemies).

Enemies: Mannan, Keireena (many tribes consider these allies).

History: Ciall formed into the current shape of cultures and groups about one-hundred years ago. Since then there have been years of rivalry and in fighting, although their cultural roots go back centuries at least.

Ciall might only go back one-hundred years, but their rivalries and feuds stretch back much further, probably one-thousand years.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

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Dientor

Name: The Ulcer of Dientor.

Ruler: The Demon Queen.

Government: Dientor is an absolute tyranny ruled by the Demon Queen. This is a land of Demons and Cambions, where any Mortals are instantly enslaved and put to work for Infernal masters.

Capital: The City of Menace.

Major Towns: Atrichel (5,882), Bizenth (3,778), Cierice (1,921), Dirine (2,400), Ganelle (2,812), Gerniel (13,840), Liline (10,418), Lirnis (10,418), Menace (22,920), Niston (7,555), Myrtal (12,070), Rielle (16,285), Saverose (4,870).

Resources/Trade: Dientor was once a prosperous nation. Now they engage in little mining and no trade. Besides food resources, which slaves raise, most resources are either gathered from the nation's many ruins or raided out of neighboring nations. Slaves conduct some small amount mining.

Population: 1,937,880, Cambions, Nephilim, Demons, and Mortal slaves. Almost half the nation's population is slave labor.

Languages: Cambionic, Nephilim, Infernal, Elvish, various Human tongues.

Overview: The second most dangerous Ulcer in the west, the Demon Queen rules from her throne of bone in Menace. From here, she rules her Cambions, Nephilim, and Demons—rampaging hordes that she barely controls with her might.

The forces of Dientor are mainly Hobgoblin in nature, although Cambions from every race are represented (because every Mortal race has

a slave contingent in this nation). Her Nephilim are the second most populous of her forces. The Demons come in last.

On the whole, her army is far more powerful, on an individual by individual level, than any other nation in the Mortal Realm. Fortunately for those around it, it's also the most undisciplined. Whereas the Warlord might have a less mighty army, it's controlled by the Warlord.

As a final note, the Sowers of Seeds love the innate chaos of Dientor. They have their largest chapter and at least theoretical headquarters here. However, these Sowers are not all slaves and therefore they hide their numbers from the Demon masters as much as the rest of the world.

Church: The Church of the Demon Queen dominates Dientor. Several smaller Demon cults thrive as well, although these are hunted by the Demon Queen's faithful. Most of the slaves worship their original faiths in secrecy.

Allies: None.



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Enemies: Avilairë, Sulvican City, Marnele, Izona, all other nations.

History: After the fall of the Empire, the Demon Queen fled to Dientor. Here, she allied with the leader of this once-Human nation. He bought into her lies and her tales of glory and power. He wasn't prepared for what came next.

She opened a gate in the central square of the capital, flooding the city with hordes of Demons. The city fell within hours. The rest of the nation fell in days, and soon the entire land became an Ulcer.

The Humans of the nation became slave labor for the Demons and breeding stock for Cambions. Nephilim from around Belkanâth moved into the nation as well, attracted to this new and corrupt homeland.

Since then her raids have struck out into all neighboring nations, but the attacks are random and poorly devised. While these attacks are a definite threat to all those around them, so far, they have yet to destroy a country. Unlike the Warlord.

World Threads: The nature of the Demon Queen is a World Thread.

Doszke

Name: The Kingdom of Doszke

Ruler: Krastvy VII.

Government: Doszke is a Monarchy with a long and well-documented line, unbroken since the country's founding after the fall of the Empire. However, it's not the feudal monarchy of so many other countries. There is no imposed serfdom on the lower classes of Doszke, and so while the nobility forms a generally feudal structure, the peasants can own land and control their own fates. This makes for a bit better life than in other Human nations as the lords can't treat the peasantry with the same unthinking brutality as they do elsewhere.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Bevas (7,586), Istvad (14,129), Kenta (5,619), Kloszta (25,538), Ledia (9,144), Lirvande (3,901), Mirta (2,642), Olus (1,840).

Resources/Trade: Doszke is chiefly an agrarian society. Their lands are not rich in most metals and gems. There are two exceptions, and they are notable. The first is copper, which Doszke has in incred-

ible abundance. The other is the strange Elven Ore, which is notable for its spherical shapes imbedded in the rock. While the Elven Ore is incredibly common, the Elves of Ingrast seem to have little of it in their own lands and they buy their supply from Doszke. Unfortunately, Doszke profits little from this exchange because of the ready sources of this ore in other lands. The rarity of Elven Steel comes from the effort in smelting and shaping it, not in the difficulty finding it.

Population: 2,363,410, Humans, a few Elves, bands of Nephilim and Orcs.

Languages: Doszkan, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Doszke is a nation that is just one step removed from true horror. With Ontav between them and the Warlord, one would think that his nation would know peace and prosperity. This is not the case.

There are a few reasons for this. First, they have a great history of being conquered, and although things have stabilized of late, Yevgenia still poses a constant threat to the north. Add to that the relative poverty of the nation general and a tendency for "bad luck" in its national history and the result is a people of dark humor and pessimism.

While many might think that they inherited this trait somehow from Yevgenia, Doszke outdoes their northern neighbor on the "darkness" front, and while some of the words in the two languages might sound similar to an untrained ear, there is little in common between them. Certainly not their history or cultures. Linguists have a hard time even guessing at the roots of Doszkan, although it shows some likenesses to raider tongues.

Occasionally, they try to make peace with the Halflings of Belther, but that rarely pans out. The Halflings have a long and bitter view of the Humans of the Sea of Aleroch and occasionally Doszke *does* find it necessary to invade the little folk to steal crops after a bad harvest. They don't seem to see how the Halflings can't laugh that off later as a Doszkan would.

There is one sign of wealth in Doszke, and this has more to do with history than prosperity. The Premane War College found in Doszke is older, in

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fact than the nation that owns it. Even the Halflings of Belther send prospective students to study in its halls.

Finally, despite the terrible land, the Doszkans pull an incredible volume of food out of their farms. They have a population density that rivals some of the more prosperous nations and this just goes to show that they might be the finest farmers in the world.

Church: Doszke follow the Church of Angenus. The Knights Paeso headquarter in Doszke.

Allies: Ontav.

Enemies: Belther, Uzarâg, Yevgenia. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: Doszke stood as a Duchy of the Empire for years after the fall. In 1149 AI Doszke's Duke turned from the country's now vestigial Imperial roots and declared himself monarch.

This did not sit well with the predecessors of modern Yevgenia, who'd long assumed they'd absorb Doszke and begin forming a new empire. Coupled with early assaults from the Warlord and other surrounding peoples, this has led to a country whose national pride has more to do with failure than success. Almost every Doszkan tale ends with failure by the national heroes, but each involves supreme and clever effort before the end.

With the birth of Belther things have become more stable. The Warlord rarely attacks this far north and there are much richer targets in the area. Doszke now fights when the Warlord marches but otherwise it stays out of matters.

No one looks back on the bad old days with fondness.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

The Elven-Dwarven Alliance

Name: The Great and Noble Alliance of Elves and Dwarves.

Ruler: Pyrian and Felâd.

Government: The Alliance of Elves and Dwarves is a Constitutional Duoarchy. The two kings come from each of the national races. King Pyrian is only the second in his line since the fall of Uzarâg. The Dwarves, on the other hand, are better ensconced in their succession, with plenty of precedents to guide them when questions arise. The Alliance's Constitution has clear instruction on how to deal with the division of powers and the two kings have veto power over each other. Laws are passed not by the king, but by two houses, the House of Clans and the House of Stars. The first consists of all the clan leaders of the Dwarves whereas the second contains the most revered elders of the Elves. Succession within the two Houses is handled by the House, but when one king or another succeeds, there is a bit more pomp and circumstance. The details vary from king to king but one thing is consistent, every Dwarf is given his hammer of kingship by an Elf and every Elf is



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crowned by a Dwarf. This represents the bestowing of the Fell Hammer on Uralâd by Saint Perion.

Capital: Nenian.

Major Towns: Aelin (1,745), Brairin (5,154), Elaoron (2,690), Gaeson (3,501), Nenian (14,879).

Resources/Trade: The Elven-Dwarven Alliance could be one of the biggest trade powerhouses in the world if they wanted to be. As it is, they can harvest most any good they need from their lands, the hills being rich with both gems and precious metals and the Elves being masters of cultivating food out of forests. In fact, the only real shortages they have come in the form of certain magical and craft metals for the Dwarven forges. They solve this problem by sending out “force mining” teams consisting of miners and a small army of Dwarves to clear their target area and hold the perimeter. These force mining teams attack into Uzarâg, hitting mines and digging for all they are worth. In doing so they are able to harvest several metals that aren’t available in the mountains outside the Ulcer (this isn’t a side effect of the Ulcer itself, just a testimony to how well the Dwarves initially chose the site for Uzarâg.)

Population: 1,182,000, Dwarves, Elves, a few Cambion and Nephilim bands, and a delighted contingent of Maroldan merchants.

Languages: Dwarven, Elven, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Many would hold the Elven-Dwarven Alliance as the greatest modern achievement of peace in the known world. Here, all past grudges and feuds have been laid aside (though some new ones have risen). Two different races live in peace.

This isn’t easy. Although they live on the land in different and often mutually exclusive ways, both races must be constantly vigilant about the cares of others. It would be easy for Dwarves to poison the water table or for Elves to build over Dwarven

vents. Despite the different lifestyles they spend much time together, especially in the cities.

In fact, both races are more considerate and forgiving when dealing with each other than with internal matters. There hasn’t been a major continuing feud between Elves and Dwarves in more than two centuries, but there are many clan feuds between the Dwarves and the Elves have internal rivalries that predate the Empire.

In fact, visitors often call the Elven-Dwarven Al-



liance “the Nation of Courtesy” because the interracial relations are so incredibly *polite*. A citizen of the Alliance can become ostracized by his own people for rudeness to another race much more easily than for any internal crime.

Still, all this comradeship is necessary. The Warlord attacks the Elven-Dwarven Alliance more often

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than any other country. The north of the nation is surrounded by wild bands of Cambion and Nephilim alike. It's not just a miracle these people can work together as well as they do, it's a miracle they have survived long enough to try.

The Elven-Dwarven Alliance has one of the best universities in the world, if one isn't too concerned about how many years the classes last. Found in Nenian, the greatest Dwarven and Elven scholars teach to both races.

Church: Two churches are prevalent in the Alliance, the Church of Eldinar and the Church of Ziruk-Nurak. Ironically, this is the *least* cause for conflict between the two races. Everyone in the Alliance knows that no amount of work will convert their neighbors. They both look on each other fondly as "heathens." Because of this, foreigners in the Alliance will be amazed at how much understanding, they find for their own religious beliefs. The Culandil Shapers are based out of the Alliance.

The one church in the area that *doesn't* receive open acceptance is the worship of the Archdemon Ulaugg the Strong, the lord of Ogres. This religion finds its strongest enclave in the mountains to the east of the Alliance. If the Demon cult could have a headquarters, it would be here.

Allies: Gaerydd, Maroldo.

Enemies: Uzarâg, Köhler.

History: In 997 AI, the Dwarves of Uzarâg and the Elves of the Brine Lake were two of the bitterest enemies in Belkanâth. Diplomats on both sides accepted there would never be any peace between them.

In 998 AI the Great Fiends scattered west, most of them settling in Belkanâth. Little did any of the Elves of the Brine Lake or the neighboring Dwarves realize, but this act would do more to shape their nation than any other moment in history.

In 999, the Dwarven general Kûlan returned to his home in Uzarâg, visited only for days, and then set out again. He knew the entire world had descended into chaos. He traveled first to the Brine Lake, arriving just in time to find a horde of Humans pouring up the pass from Köhler.

In the first days of the battle, the Elven General and all of his most trusted advisers fell in battle.

In the heat of combat, when all the Elven defenses seemed teetering to fall, Kûlan took charge and the Elven defenders were just desperate enough to listen. By the end of the day, the Elves regrouped. By the end of the week, the nation was secure again.

Kûlan stayed for one more month, handpicking the next Elven general and solidifying defense plans. Then he headed out, moving to save the world.

In 1003 AI, the Warlord finished gathering an army of Cambions. He attacked Uzarâg, shattering the defenses and seizing the Dwarven nation. The Elves discovered this too late to stop it, but they remembered the generosity of Kûlan and sent a defensive force into Uzarâg. This force was the only thing that allowed the fleeing Dwarves to escape. Both races fought a bitter battle back to the Brine Lake under the withering attacks of Cambion troops and Nephilim boulders.

Over the next year, the Dwarves and the Elves fought a holding action against the Warlord. In 1004 AI, they formed a formal military alliance. By the end of the year, this Alliance had become the way of life around the Brine Lake. The Elven-Dwarven Alliance was a fact, and it was all because of the thoughtless heroism of Saint Kûlan.

Since then they've formed into a cohesive nation, possibly the strongest in the Mortal Realm. Combining Dwarven infantry and Elven archery has devastated every assault on their homeland. It is said that only an act of God could destroy the Alliance now.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

The Enârôz

Name: The Enârôz.

Ruler: None.

Government: The Enârôz is nothing *but* a government. They're an alliance of good dragons who meet to discuss the issues of the world. They mostly restrict movement over the Dragon Peaks, guaranteeing that no one nation will ever rule the world again. Members of the Enârôz change from year to year . . . no dragon *wants* to attend, but they know that if they don't the Enârôz will disband. They choose their number by magical lot, and each dragon magically knows whether or not he's a member of the

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council at any given time. All good dragons can feel the call of the Enârôz.

Capital: None.

Major Towns: None.

Resources/Trade: None.

Population: Unknown, even to the dragons.

Languages: Draconic.

Overview: The Council of Dragons.

The Enârôz was once mainly a defensive organization. Then, it protected the dragons from a single charismatic draconian leader. There hasn't been one of those in millennia.

They tried to stop Eurustace, but the Emperor's roads balked them. In time, the Enârôz began to worry. If the Empire hadn't fallen on its own, the Enârôz might have finally taken a hand in Mortal affairs.

But they need never have come. The Empire fell and the Enârôz watched this horrible age of chaos surge across the land. Before, all the follies of Mortals had died on their own. This time, they'd created the Great Fiends and likely forged the doom of the world (by the Chaos).

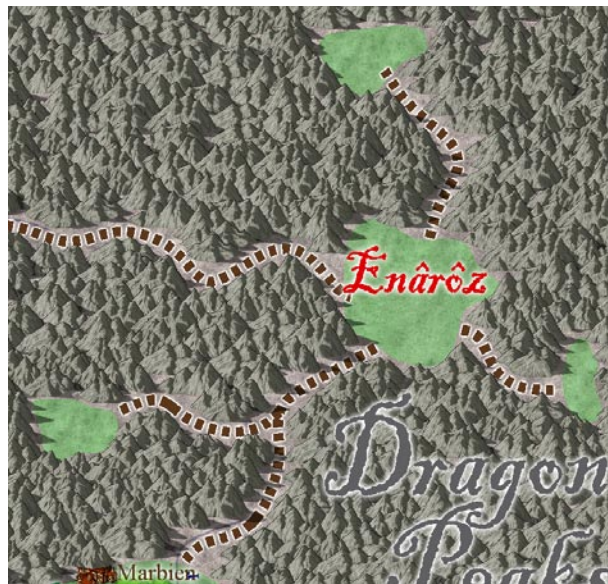
The Enârôz decided that it was finally time to take action.

The Emperor's Roads had been lost. Now, any nation that intended to cover the world had to cross the Dragon Peaks. The Enârôz decided to close that road.

Now any traveler that wished to cross these mountains that spine the world must subject himself to the examination by a dragon. The dragon uses powerful draconian magicks to delve the person's mind. This isn't a precise process, even for ancient draconian magicks, but if they find any threat to the world carried there, or if the dragon cannot pierce the traveler's defenses, they may not pass. If the traveler tries anyway, the dragon will stop them. If they look to succeed, the dragon will call up reinforcements.

There is still trade across the mountains, carried out by honest merchants (or at least those able to trick the dragons), but it's sparse. Few people wish to meet a member of the Enârôz. Fewer still can pass the test if they do. Once, the Savior and the Four Prophets Sundered Heaven.

Now, the Enârôz has sundered the world.



Church: The Enârôz reveres Saint Zenabrûn the True. The evil dragons within the Dragon Peaks pay homage to the Archdemon Belkunibâr the Vile.

Allies: None.

Enemies: Evil Dragons.

History: The Enârôz formed in the mists of the past to fight the alliance of evil dragons created by Belkunibâr. After the fall of the evil dragons, the Enârôz withdrew to take care of itself. Dragons don't like company and the Enârôz continued only in the most skeletal of forms for millennia. They tried to stop Eurustace, but failed.

In 1006 AI the Enârôz decided to take a hand in world affairs again. They severed the Mortal Realm in two and declared that no free travel would ever cross from the east to west again. No force has ever seriously challenged this dominion.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Felric's Redoubt

Name: The Free City of Felric's Redoubt.

Ruler: The Lord Mayor Eadic Illéoding.

Government: Felric's Redoubt is essentially an oligarchy. Membership on its Council is automatic for guild masters of major guilds and lords, but the Council has the right to invite new members. Thus, others can buy their way in with a large bribe. The

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populace fills ten reserved spots with a general election.

The Council handles most of the wide, sweeping policy for the city, but for more important and time-sensitive tasks there's the High Council. The High Council consists of ten members and the Mayor. The Council elects the High Council and the High Council elects the Mayor. One member of the High Council *has* to be from the general election, but much of the infighting in the Council comes from the swing of High Council seats between lords and the guild masters.

Capital: Felric's Redoubt.

Major Towns: Felric's Redoubt (54,682).

Resources/Trade: Felric's Redoubt is a trade powerhouse. From their position on the Gulf of Orbean, they collect and distribute goods from all over Belkanâth. In fact, it's a mark of prosperity for Maroldan merchant houses to have summer homes in or around Felric's Redoubt. Felric's Redoubt also benefits from its cosmopolitan nature. Every race can be found inside its walls. Dwarven crafts, Elven art, Gnomish knowledge, and Halfling cooking are all readily available.

Population: 263,880, mostly Humans but with a healthy sampling of all Mortal races.

Languages: Ludremonian, Maroldo, Ældic, The Divine Tongue, many others.

Overview: Felric's Redoubt is a tightly packed, ancient city. The buildings have long since grown into one another and when one falls someone raises a new one right on top of it. Some houses in Felric's redoubt have five or more sets of foundations and if one were to tear down the rear wall of most buildings in the slums he'd find rotting walls of former buildings packed behind. Termites are a problem.

Felric's Redoubt is one of the few cities in Belkanâth with extensive sewers. Dwarves built these sewers during the time of the Empire by Dwarves. They are palatial, able to hide entire underground organizations (which they do). The Ratcatchers' Guild, for instance, headquarters inside the sewers.

Felric's Redoubt is also the site of a major institute of learning, Leondic University. This ancient school teaches almost every purely academic subject. One used to be to learn magic there as well,



but those sections of the University have shut down, though there are rumors that certain criminal magic elements still use them at night.

Felric's Redoubt is known as the last free city by the narcissistic people of central of Belkanâth. Still, if one only considers the feudal lands in the area, Felric's Redoubt does have a remarkable lack of kings pushing its populace around. This is mainly because they live within the control of the Elven Kingdom of Ingrast, which has no wish to rule a chiefly Human population.

The Sons of Almia (see chapter six) feel closely connected to Felric's Redoubt, which shares the same heritage as Æld. They base themselves secretly in the city (it's an open secret, as the Church doesn't condone the order, but the citizens do).

Church: The city chiefly follows Church of Angelus, but the churches of all the Saviors are represented, as is the Atavistic church (the Atavists have their own section of town.) Only the pagan churches are forbidden inside the city limits, but even they often have small shrines outside the walls.

Allies: Ingrast, Mab, Ludremon, Marnele.

Enemies: Uzarâg.

History: In 521 AI the Empire built the fortress of Kerius on the site of Felric's Redoubt. At the time, the Empire was worried about the Elves of Ingrast, who'd caught rumors of the Killing Accord and seemed likely to revolt. In Kerius the Emperor placed a legion of his finest troops who ranged around Ingrast and took prisoner any Elf who moved farther than a bowshot from the forest's borders.

After the declaration of the Cult of Eurustace as the state religion, these orders progressed to the

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murder of any Elves that left the borders. A settlement formed to service the legion.

The Elves of Ingrast didn't act at first. They could typically slip by the gauntlet and weren't ready to move against the Emperor, not with most of their brethren withdrawing deeper and deeper into their own woods. The Elves bided their time and waited.

Then the Marshal began his war with the Emperor, and it seemed like the Empire might revolt. Ingrast prepared to launch an attack against Kerius, but they were forced to leave a defensive force on their entrance to the Emperor's Roads. They attacked but the legion beat them back.

Then, when all seemed lost, a body of knights assaulted Kerius from the sea. The knights were Humans dressed as legionnaires and they tricked the legion into believing they were reinforcements.

They seized the fortress and the town through trickery, wiped out the legion, and built a bastion against the Emperor in the west. The name of the leader was Felric, and the knights were the Order of the Knights-Errant from the Sons of Almia.

During the rest of the war, Felric held the city with a contingent of archers from Ingrast. Renamed Felric's Redoubt, from here he launched attack after attack at the Emperor's legions. With the Emperor's Roads, he should have lost, but the Marshal took most of the Emperor's attention. Felric's Redoubt held.

After the fall of the Empire, Felric's Redoubt allied with Saint Kûlan, drudging the depths of the Sons of Almia to supply troops for battle against the Great Fiends. From here they launched reinforcements that held back the Demon Queen. From here they sent out expeditions that held the Lich King beyond Shieldwall. From here they fought the Warlord, and it was on the walls of Felric's Redoubt, at a shrine now marked as holy by the Dwarves, that Kûlan took his fatal arrow.

Since then Felric's Redoubt has been a monument to Human achievement in the west. It's a financial monolith, a defensive bastion, and the only free city in "civilized" lands.

World Threads: For World Threads and more Adventure Seeds for this settlement, see the upcoming supplement *The Last Free City*.

Gaerydd

Name: The Theocracy of Gaerydd.

Ruler: The Scion Gwyr.

Government: Gaerydd is a theocracy ruled by the Scion Gwyr, a Human close to one-thousand-years old. He rules with an iron hand, but he doesn't spare the velvet glove and few in his nation realize how he controls everything. Below him, he manages the nation through the hierarchy of the Church, allowing cardinals, bishops and local clergy to handle the day-to-day administration of the land. The relationship between him and the Church is delicate at best.

Capital: Niolwen.

Major Towns: Agdion (2,592), Eiler (5,381), Gilwin (7,847), Gwyneth (1,836), Niolwen (17,131), Nylynn (3,307).

Resources/Trade: Gaerydd is poor in metals but rich in gemstones, especially emeralds. They have a polite and profitable trade arrangement with the nations around them. Their biggest trade comes from Izona. Since they control almost all the logging in the deciduous portion of Dorthgyn Forest and Izona handles most of the logging of evergreens, they have a profitable and long-standing exchange with the other nation where lumber is concerned.

Population: 1,066,320, mostly Humans but with some displaced Dwarves.

Languages: Gaerynch, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Dwarven.

Overview: Gaerydd is a unique nation. It's a heretical theocracy the Church tolerates.

After the fall of the Empire, the Scion Gwyr rose in Gaerydd and seized control in a bloodless coup. He declared himself the son of the Herald (and therefore, by implication, the Savior). He gathered his nation to him and held off several attacks from out of Uzarâg.

The Church did not know how to deal with this declaration, but before the Faerarch could excommunicate Gwyr, the Scion turned over the entire infrastructure of the nation to the Church.

Now, the Faerarch turns a blind eye to the Gwyr Heresy. The Church has more power in Gaerydd than anywhere but Sulvican City. It probably doesn't hurt that by dissolving the nation's aristocracy, Gwyr has

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created a nation that produces more money for the Church than any other in Belkanâth.

Niolwen also contains one of the six wonders of the world. The Monument of Air stands in the center of the town, a three-story construct of surging Elemental winds. Most of this time, the Monument of Air is invisible, but Gaerydd introduces colored smokes during festivals so viewers can see the intricate interactions of the hundreds of airflows.

Church: The Church of Angenus. This nation is a theocracy with the Scion standing at the head of all the Cardinals, who pay equal deference to him and to the Faerarch. The fact that he's more than one-thousand-years old adds weight to his claims.

In the mountains north of the nation, the Archdemon Khugraug the Dwarf Slayer enjoys his most powerful concentration of followers. These Orcs plague Gaerydd almost every season.

Allies: Izona, the Elven-Dwarven Alliance, Sulvic City (barely).

Enemies: Uzarâg, all other Faithful nations.

History: In 1154 PI Gaerydd formed, toward the end of the Age of War. The nation managed to weather the remaining battles of that age and moved whole into the age of the Wizard-King.

During the time of the Wizard-King, Gaerydd joined the mage willingly. It matured and strengthened in culture and history until the disappearance of Hegarion.

In his wake, Gaerydd continued its policy of going along to get along. They joined the Empire with only a token resistance, and the King of Gaerydd managed to keep his hereditary line throughout Imperial history.

During the last years, the Herald is said to have spent much time here, even taking a wife if one is to listen to Gwyr's story. When the Empire fell, Gwyr had already been born. He is thought to have been eight years old in 998 AI.



In 1012 Gwyr began preaching in Gaerydd and in 1015 he'd consolidated enough power to stage his coup. Since then, he's managed to stand outside the ire of the Church, both by rigidly enforcing the teachings and by flooding the Church with wealth and power. It's a delicate balance, but he's had one-thousand years to perfect it.

World Threads: Everything to do with Gwyr is a World Thread.

Gelaert

Name: The Grand Duchy of Gelaert.

Ruler: Grand Duke Liem IX.

Government: Gelaert is a feudal monarchy, but its recent attempts to become a trade empire have forced an increase of freedoms. Now any peasant can buy their franchise, become a freeman, and join a city. In fact the freedoms of the poorest peasants are increasing as well and now they demand rights. Their lords have begun to listen.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Brina (2,515), Gras (10,313), Marbien (3,834), Miens (2,007).

Resources/Trade: Gelaert is unremarkable where resources are concerned. They can mine enough metals and farm enough food to get by. They make excellent cloth, however and their linens are exqui-

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site. They've recently (in the last one-hundred years or so) begun to master shipbuilding in a drive to build a trade empire like Maroldo (spearheaded by the Duke of Heike). While they are *far* from reaching that country's might, they have built a massive engine of trade, and they're now rated in the top four nations when it comes to nautical expertises (Marnele, Ludremon, and Aphimi being the most commonly named contenders).

Population: 635,740, mostly Humans.

Languages: Gelaerch, Maroldo, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: Gelaert is a nation in ascendance. At the hand of the current Grand Duke and his last several antecedents, Gelaert has built itself into a fine nautical nation. Their ships are fast and nimble. They prefer to ride high in the water, as if dipping their keel like a dainty toe into the seas of the world.

The Maroldans might have pioneered the modern economy, but the Gelaerch are the best pupils. They ply their trade, roam the world, and carry goods to every corner. In fact, despite the religious stigma they have imported several Atavist families to run their money-lending. Usury might be against the law of the Faithful but the Gelaerch have no problem employing moneylenders (for a fee).

For the moment, Gelaerch has managed to push off the threat of war with its more hostile neighbors. It has done this by lending increasingly high levels of cash, especially to the Lilano crown. Still, this is a double-edged sword because as the debt gap between the two nations increases, Lilano has become increasingly desperate for a way out. It seems that war is in the immediate future.

Church: The Church of Angenus dominates Gelaert culture. The Ladies of Alaria base themselves in Gelaert.

The Atavist Church gains power in Gelaert. As their moneylenders increase, more Atavists move into the nation.

The tensions between these two people mount as the numbers swell.

Allies: Köhler, Kulland, Kraun.

Enemies: Aphimi, Lilano, Maroldo.

History: In 1459 AI, the people of Gelaert rebelled against their former crown of the nation of Marger (now defunct). The revolution showed incredible brutality in response to atrocities meted out on them in the years before.

The revolution lasted for ten years, although Gelaert formed in the first two months. Still, the bitterness and pain of the people drove them forward, hunting the former aristocracy in every nook and cranny of their lands. The lucky were merely hanged.

In the years since then, the nation has known revolution after revolution. Most have been put down. Some resulted in the smooth change to a new royal line. The latest revolution is trade and the search for increased freedoms for the poor.

It seems this new revolution has progressed a pace and, as long as the current king doesn't resist too strongly, it will remain bloodless. If it continues, however, the nation will likely convert to a constitutional monarchy within the decade.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Gill-Tirn

Name: The Underkingdom of Gill-Tirn.



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Ruler: Underking Laun III

Government: Gill-Tirn is absolute monarchy. They have nobility and this nobility is equivalent enough to Human feudal titles to allow a direct translation. This is not a feudal government, however. Instead of feudal grants and feudal taxes the government processes a more direct form of taxation where some taxes transfer directly to the Underking and the local lord earns his money off rents.

Capital: Sedcap.

Major Towns: Gwrankechthein (1,765), Sedcap (7,216).

Resources/Trade: The hills of Gill-Tirn are rich with gems and precious metals, but poor in the more practical metals necessary to run a civilization. They once kept a flourishing trade going to Irukhâl but have since broken relations with that country. Now they get all of their deficit materials from Zûram and Yevgenia.

Population: 281,340 Gnomes.

Languages: Gnomish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Gill-Tirn is a nasty and warlike group of Gnomes. They've gone to war with almost everyone in their immediate region and have only barely kept relations with Yevgenia and Zûram. Considering how much they need foreign imports for the construction of weapons, many in the area consider them slightly mad.

The populace of Gill-Tirn live much more of their lives underground than some Gnomish peoples. Their surface fields are well hidden and their doors to the underhill cities cleverly constructed and sometimes fortified with illusions. This makes them hard to find.

There are legends throughout Human lands of Gnomes stealing babies from their cribs and replacing them with Demons. While Gill-Tirn hasn't been around long enough to be blamed for these legends, there have been Gnomes in this area for millennia, and it's not a

large reach to attach these legends to antecedents of Gill-Tirn.

Church: The primary religion of Gill-Tirn is the Church of Gyllmoulin. There is a large element of Atavistic Gnomes here as well. Despite the outward appearance of brutality there are remarkably few dark cults working within their numbers. They're xenophobic and antisocial, but not evil.

The Order of Logpesker is based out of Gill-Tirn, as are the Fedcaun Builders.

Allies: Yevgenia, Zûram.

Enemies: Irukhâl, Tirem-Ag, Mag-Morel, Jermolyn and Osal.

History: Gill-Tirn was founded in 1891 AI after a devastating war with Yevgenia crushed the former Gnomish civilization. At first things were hard going, but soon they opened successful trade with Irukhâl and the little nation flourished.

It wasn't long before they built up enough weapons to go to war themselves and they marched east through other Gnomish lands to attack Jermolyn and Osal to the east. Throughout the beginning of the next century they waged brutal war against the Halflings that only ended when the Halflings signed peace treaties with Mag-Morel and that nation stopped allowing foreign troops through their lands.

So Gill-Tirn attacked Mag-Morel instead.

More recently, Gill-Tirn decided that Irukhâl had lands too rich to be in the hands of Dwarves. They attacked the Dwarves out of greed, severing their good relations. The Dwarves have not yet retaliated, but some think it is only a matter of time.



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World Threads: The final response of Irukhâl on Gill-Tirn is a World Thread, but there is plenty of room for Adventure Seeds in the build-up to that final response.

Hairan

Name: The Empire of Hairan

Ruler: Emperor Ashulassur-Ahbe

Government: Hairan is an Empire consisting of six lesser kingdoms. The Emperor rules with absolute power, but more practically he stays out of the affairs of the member-kingdoms.

Capital: Shashamshi.

Major Towns: Adaishur (8,110), Han (2,872), Shashamshi (17,818), Sullay-Maeonius (4,269), Yensour (6,054), Zebba (1,919).

Resources/Trade: Hairan has a decent array of resources, able to mine its own metals and gemstones and quarry its own stone. The greatest resources of Hairan are its diamond mines in the southern part of Senabi (off the bottom of the map). These diamond mines supply half the diamonds used throughout Belkanâth.

Population: 2,068,200 Humans.

Languages: Samsi, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Hairan consists of six kingdoms: Abalaku (Zebba), Assurtashtanat (Han), Odanuis (Yensour), Senabi (Sullay-Maeonius), Shishirari (Shashamshi), Yansammu (Adaishur). Each of these is ruled by a king who has no technical power to overrule the Emperor but practically can do what he likes.

Hairan is the beating heart of the Atavistic religion. This ancient nation has managed to preserve its culture and bloodlines through countless years. They're proud of this heritage

and rarely breed out of their culture, even to other Atavists.

Hairan is technically one of the “desert kingdoms,” controlling a section of the vast desert south of Belkanâth (off map). It also creeps around to the east and pokes onto the map in Aphimi. This desert is controlled by Odanuis (at least here it is) but it is little used and infested with Hobgoblin Cambions.

There are many Holy sites inside the Hairan Empire. These sites are noteworthy for a long series of Atavistic prophets. They have little import to non-Atavistic nations which are more interested in the Holy sites of Aphimi.

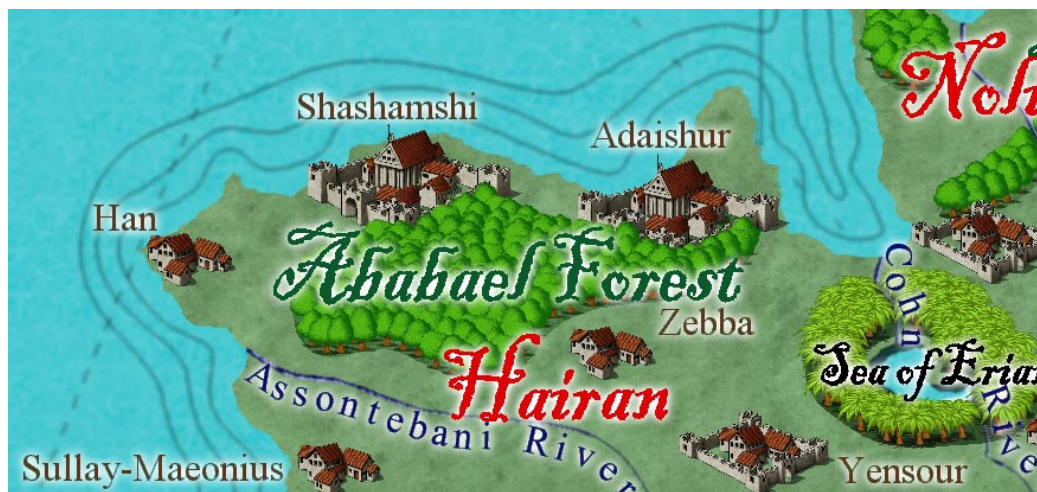
Church: The Atavistic Church dominates Hairan culture although there are some remnants of pagan splinter cults as well. Most of these worship Atavistic prophets in the same manor as the Savior Churches worship their Savior.

Allies: Aphimi.

Enemies: Nolinis, Aphimi, Naili, Lilano.

History: Hairan was founded in 2501 PI. Its early time was marked by a brief ascendance as the king of Shishirari conquered all the lands around it. As the Age of War continued, Hairan pushed out more slowly, conquering the desert peoples of the south, all of Nolinis and much of Naili.

Then it was absorbed by the Wizard-King, but it managed to hold onto its lands through this time. With the rise of the Empire Vurtus the Empire of Hairan shattered and the Empire Vurtus absorbed all of its kingdoms.



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With the fall of the Empire, the six kingdoms banded together. They'd held their culture and their shared history throughout Imperial rule and now they re-formed their empire, much smaller, containing just their shared society.

However, the lands to the east of them still bear ancient hatreds for this weak and faded Empire. They hold no allies in the area and many enemies, some because of old grudges, some just for religious reasons. Hairan needs continued might to stay whole.

World Threads:

There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Hofgrin

Name: The Barbarian Hordes of Hofgrin

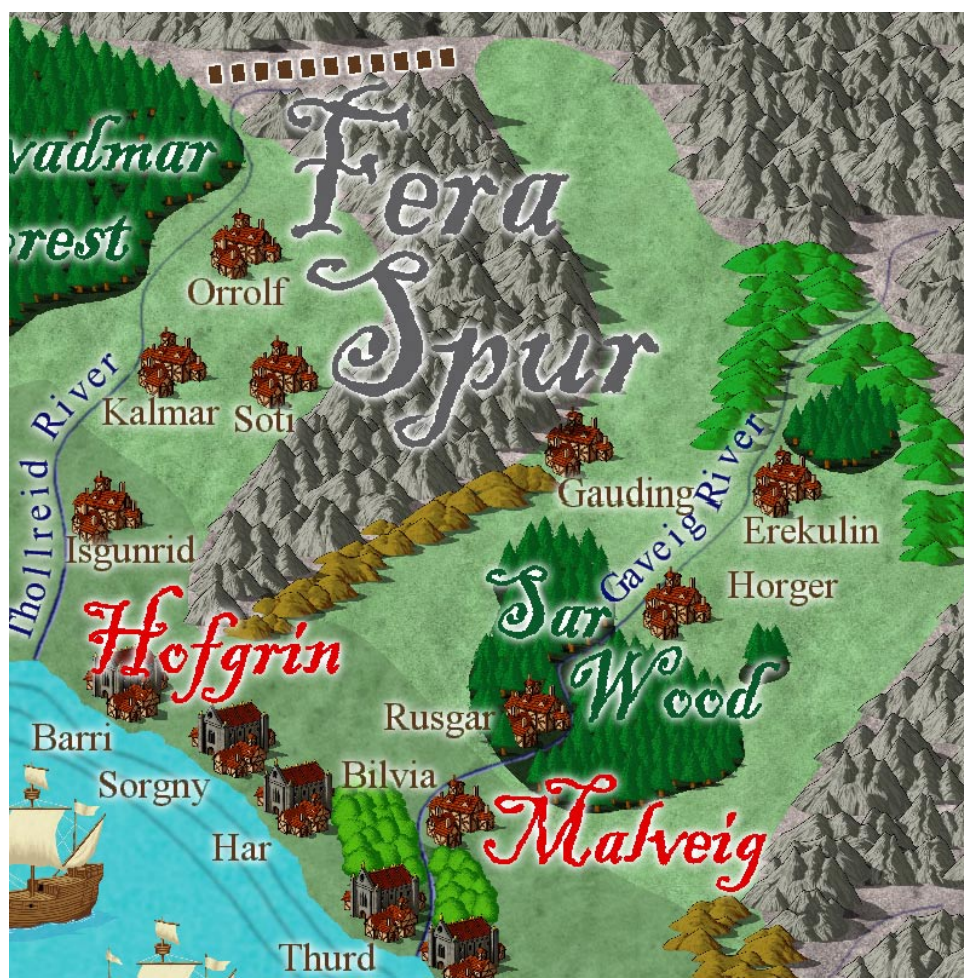
Ruler: Each clan has its own chief. The major chiefs are: Akar Svafknyrisson (Thjodling), Fild Steirmidsson (Darbjof), Hafknarri Hognisson (Etil), Hermaer Hragmirsson (Svari), Hrind Leirnarsson (Bera), Innbjar Gritildsson (Knorri), Netrid Tofningsson (Soti), Nir Alvarsson (Idning), Nurd Aransson (Mesin), and Thaen Hrolingsson (Sveir).

Government: The Hofgrin have a clan system with a single chief who runs the clan and a battle chief who runs the clan's warfare. The Clan Chief is technically a hereditary title although often a weak son will be rejected by the men of the clan, in which case, they'll elect someone else, preferably someone of the same blood. The Battle Chief is a position of merit appointed by the Clan Chief.

Capital: None.

Major Towns: Barri (14,840), Gauding (2,402), Har (10,667), Isgunrid (3,815), Kalmar (3,218), Orrolf (7,148), Rusgar (5,460), Soti (1,975), Sorgny (24,266), Thurd (12,670).

Resources/Trade: The Hofgrin aren't big on trade. They are big on "gifts." They are even bigger on "involuntary gifts." In their ships they raid up and down along the coast, bringing terror and pillage to all the more civilized nations.



Population: 2,313,840 Humans.

Languages: Hofgring, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: There are many clans in Hofgrin. The major ones are: Bera (Barri), Darbjof (Isgunrid), Etil (Gauding), Idning (Sorgny), Knorri (Soti), Me-

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sin (Orrolf), Soti (Rusgar), Sviri (Kalmar), Sveir (Har), and Thjodling (Thurd).

The Hofgrin brutally raid up and down the coast. They are opportunists who'll raid other Hofgrin if they find them weak.

The Hofgrin live for combat, for glory, and for looting. Their entire culture revolves around this thirst for combat. Even their recreation tends to run to brutal games of physical prowess.

The Hofgrin excel at sailing and can fight on the deck of a ship better than on land. They can navigate anywhere in Belkanâth by smell and landmarks.

Church: The Hofgrin are a pagan people who worship a pantheon of gods which are likely Archdemons (even the Hofgrin have an idea this is the case). Missionaries are welcomed, fed the best food and ale, and otherwise ignored.

The cult of the Archdemon Frierea the Changed headquarters in Hofgrin, although this is not a part of their official pantheon.

Allies: None.

Enemies: Everyone, especially Æld.

History: Historians mark 1754 AI as the beginning of the current incarnation of the Hofgrin people. There have been barbarian peoples in this land since the Empire fell. They have even raided during other periods of history.

But in 1754 the Hofgrin converted to their current religion and began their last two-hundred-and-ninety years of active raiding. Since then they've drunk and celebrated and looted their way across the continent.

Several countries have tried to counterattack the Hofgrin but this has little effect. Except for their few big cities, they have little in the way of large settlements. Attacks against them meet with brutal resistance but affect the people little as a whole. Adding to this the cold of the north and few armies can sustain themselves long enough to do much good. If all else fails, the Hofgrin just pull back into the highlands.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Ingrast

Name: The Elven High Kingdom of Ingrast

Ruler: High King Arandel.

Government: The High Kingdom is an absolute monarchy, though a benign one. The High King rules with complete but gentle control while the duchies of his land each command with delegated authority. Not a feudal culture, a set percentage of all taxes passes up the line to the High King for the maintenance of standing armies.

Capital: Dorwainen.

Major Towns: Boronarion (10,645), Darolbeth (6,318), Dorwainen (18,687), Gilbor (2,801), Gilmir (8,171), Iathorn (5,455), Irthadan (9,422), Ivardir (7,244), Maerian (4,045), Neinor (2,145), Níndal (12,370), Oronarth (3,356), Tharthinir (4,741), Thingil (14,389).

Resources/Trade: Ingrast's "open" borders are motivated by the trade situation. Because the country has been around for roughly 8,500 years, and because it wasn't mineral rich to begin with, Ingrast has to rely on imports. Common and useful minerals are still available (except for those useful in making Elven Steel) but most of the rarer and more precious materials are mined out. Ingrast heavily trades with everyone, but much of this trade filters through Felric's Redoubt, which acts as a distribution and collection center for goods going in and out of Ingrast. There is still trade that moves directly into Ingrast ports, but open for Elves is still fairly closed and only certain merchants are allowed to trade within the borders. Obviously these "Elven friends" can't handle all the trade necessary so goods go to Felric's Redoubt. They don't need the same volume of Elven Steel and only a few Halfling merchants are necessary to handle the entire country's needs.

Population: 1,119,240 Elves.

Languages: Elven, the Divine Tongue, Ældic.

Overview: Ingrast is known as the "open" Elven kingdom. This means that while only Elven friends are allowed free access inside the kingdom, it's much easier to prove oneself an Elven friend than it is anywhere else in Belkanâth. Typically, all that it takes is living within the borders for a few years and being a person in good standing.

Those who aren't Elf friends still have plenty they can do. They can wander around inside the borders as long as they aren't declared enemies of the woods

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(such as known arsonists, who aren't allowed over the borders to begin with). They are also allowed free movement inside the foreign quarters in any settlement large enough have one.

The Elves guard their borders thoroughly, and the guards are so difficult for most people to spot that only the most alert woodsman can get through with anything other than dumb luck. Those who are stopped by the patrols are held under overwatch by Elven Archers while they answer questions. If they can answer them to the Elves' satisfaction, they may enter without any further supervision.

At the cities, gates or roads are set aside for foreigners, leading them straight into the approved areas. Inside is everything that a traveler might need. Once the city declares them Elf friend (which is signified with a special brooch), they pass into any part of the city (with normal limits such as staying out of the palace and off private property).

Ingrast keeps a large standing army of archers and they send it to any activity by the Warlord. They will help anyone in fact, under threat of one of the Great Fiends. The Warlord is the Great Fiend most likely to cause trouble within their response range.

Ingrast is well liked by every country in the region. Being the only Elven country with a free trade philosophy (except for Elven Steel, of course), all the nations who want Elven goods do their best to stay on Ingrast's good side.

Ingrast has a large university in the capital of Dorwainen. This university is famous (or infamous) around the world for its magical studies.

Church: Ingrast follows the Church of Eldinar. There is also a group of Elven Atavists operating within its borders. The people tolerate other faiths in resident foreigners and one can find many churches in the foreign quarter.

The Order of Hollenwë bases itself in Ingrast. There are also rumors the Archdemon Zinril of the Shadow has a significant underground following in Ingrast. Some think there is a Warren underneath the country and this cult headquarters there.

Allies: Ludremon, Avilairë, Belther, Felric's Redoubt.

Enemies: Marnele, Uzarâg. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: In 5181 PI Arangail journeyed out of the Kingdom of the Elves, leading his people across the lands and to the west. He found the forest of Ingrast and here his people settled.

They have lived here since then, seen many ages of man come and go. During the time of Chaos



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they shored up their borders using powerful magic. While it didn't stop the vortices, it seems that they occurred less than in other lands.

Ingrast held out during the time of the Vampire Lord. They resisted for a while against the Almian Protector State, but finally joined because they decided it was the best thing for the world as a whole.

Then came the Great Ulcer and Ingrast rallied. Between their Atavists and mages the Elves made great strides toward saving the world. When the Ulcer finally collapsed, they remained, exhausted but alive.

During the Age or War Ingrast was one of the first to march. They fought the Humans and the Dwarves most commonly, but during this age they fought every race at least once. They became known as the most vicious and brutal of warriors, and many legends of the atrocities of Elves probably arose during this time.

During the time of the Wizard-King, Ingrast submitted, although unwillingly, to the Kingdom of Sorcery. Though centuries had passed, they hadn't regained enough of their numbers to defend themselves successfully.

During the formation of the Empire, they fought brutally against the Eurustace and only fell after a bitter fight. Later, they were instrumental in many of the early movements to make the Empire more benign.

Since the fall of the Empire, Ingrast has concerned itself with trade and the attacks of the Warlord. This has become something of a full-time job.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Irukhâl

Name: The Kingdom of Irukhâl.

Ruler: King Arakhâl.

Government: Irukhâl is an absolute monarchy ruled through the clan system. Each of the clans has a Clan Lord who advises the king and handles the clan's administration. Clans handle their own taxation which they pass on to their king. Each clan can be self-sufficient if necessary, but they also have specialties that they sell to the other clans.

Capital: Undûl.

Major Towns: Khulin (2,279), Thalad (3,139), Undûl (5,667).

Resources/Trade: The Dwarves select their location for fortresses carefully (and often with clerical guidance). So Irukhâl lacks no major resource. They have all the normal craft metals as well as precious metals and Rune Steel. They also have valuable jewels. They harvest and refine and craft these materials into the finest Dwarven goods. These they distribute through the world by Maroldan merchants. In return, they import a good deal of foodstuffs to supplement their own satisfactory but uninteresting fare. The only thing they are missing is a good mine full of Rune Silver and Rune Gold, but this they get through trade with Zûram.

Population: 68,974 Dwarves.

Languages: Dwarvish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Irukhâl is an ancient and well-established nation. They do not concentrate on trade as much as their neighbor to the east. They spend more of their attention worrying about Shieldwall to the north.

Whereas Yevgenia is in charge of defending the eastern pass of Shieldwall, Irukhâl defends the west. They maintain the fortifications on either pass, just as Yevgenia helps flesh out the Dwarven defense of the west with their archers.

Irukhâl rarely associates with nations other than its immediate neighbors. It almost never sends troops to support attacks from one of the other Great Fiends. The Dwarves of Irukhâl feel that they are fighting an almost solo war against the threat to the north. Often, they are correct.

Church: Irukhâl follows the Church of Ziruk-Nurak. There are no Atavists inside this kingdom. It is thought that they hold a secret cult to Archdemon Gharak the Proud, perhaps the biggest in the world.

Allies: Yevgenia, Mag-Morel, Tirem-Ag.

Enemies: Gill-Tirn.

History: Irukhâl was founded in 4821 PI and has managed to avoid much of the confusion since. They spent their early years building and had barely managed to settle themselves during the Age of Chaos, and while several vortices took Dwarves during this

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time, they managed to hold together as a community throughout.

With the end of the Age of Chaos, the Dwarves of Irukhâl drew inward, licking their wounds and continuing their general construction of their infrastructure. They passed unconsidered by the Vampire Lord.

They lifted their stricture on outside contact for the Almian Protector State and were proud members. Many Dwarves joined the various Almian Orders and served with honor.

During the time of the Great Ulcer, and the proceeding Dark Age, the Dwarves pulled back. When the Age of War came, they dug in even deeper, fortifying their gates and while they weathered several sieges, they didn't budge from their kingdom.

This seclusionist outlook left them ripe for a take over by the Wizard-King. When the magical attack by Hegarion came, they were unprepared, didn't even know the threat was out there. They fell at once.

They lasted longer against Eurustace, but fell when he opened the Empire Roads. Suddenly, Irukhâl was part of a third continent-spanning nation.

With the fall of the Empire, Irukhâl rushed to supply troops to Kûlan as the Great Fiends Ravaged the world. In particular, they rose as a people, as in the days in Heaven, to seal Shieldwall from the rest of the world.

More recently, they went to war with one of their only full trade partners, Gill-Tirn. Since then they've begun to pull back from the world again, trading only with Yevgenia and the Maroldan foreign nationals inside their kingdom. They don't turn away visitors, but they don't go out of their way to make them welcome either.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Izona

Name: The Kingdom of Izona.

Ruler: King Stalontius.

Government: Izona is an absolute monarchy, however each major clan of the Izonan people has a chief, and if these chiefs band together they can cause the King great trouble. Because of this, the



kings of Izona are alert to the moods of the clans. Because of this clan structure, there is no real feudalism in Izona.

Capital: Tereslena.

Major Towns: Ilfrek (2,901), Tereslena (13,162), Zbinrian (2,199), Zonoslaw (3,755).

Resources/Trade: Izona has ample farmland and frequent bumper crops. The mountains on the edge of Uzarâg are rich in most metals as well. Orc bands tend to raze any mining, but the Izonans are a hardy lot with a proud military tradition. It isn't hard for them to protect themselves.

Population: 677,670 Humans.

Languages: Izonish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Marnench, Gaerynch.

Overview: Izona is a proud, if beset nation. With Dientor to the southwest and Uzarâg to the northeast and Avilairë more or less south, Izona hurts for allies. They make up for this lack, however, with intense training and excellent troops.

In fact, the reputation of Izonan troops has spread across the world and many nobles have suggested to the king that he start his own war college. Still, Izona is far too small to support any university and they make due with on-the-job training, which is plentiful.

Demons scream out of Dientor and Orcs out of Uzarâg. While the two Great Fiends do not cooperate with one another, they are both opportunists. If one gets word the other has attacked, they will attack immediately.

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So Izone has become a master of military deception. It's not unusual for them to move their entire military from one border to another with no sign, making certain that every watchtower and fortress still *appears* fully manned, even if those on watch are amputees with fake limbs pulling eighteen-hour shifts.

One final note. The Confessors headquarter themselves in Tereslena and they reach out secretly from here, searching for signs of evil among the Faithful. They have given up on normal forms of justice, believing that Izone's plight warrants harsher actions. They've even spread out to other nations. For more information on the Confessors, see Chapter Five.

Church: Izone follows the Church of Angenus, and follows it faithfully. Some perpetrators of the Gwyr Heresy have taken up residence here, but they don't cause much trouble. There is also a small but steady sampling of Atavists practicing within the borders.

Allies: Marnele, Gaerydd

Enemies: Dientor, Uzarâg.

History: Before 1410 AI, bands of tribal leaders roamed the planes of Izone. Since the fall of the Empire and the rise of the Great Fiends, there had been no permanent civilization in these lands. The people were mostly nomadic, running and hiding from the Great Fiends on either side. Avilairë, between them and the Demon Queen, did almost nothing to protect them.



By 1410 AI the clans had grown to the point where they needed to put down roots and farm. The chiefs of the clans met and at the end of this first meeting had declared a grand chief, who later became king.

Since then they have known nothing but war and hardship. What started as a collection of settlements guarded by wooden palisades has turned into a nation of note in the world, with traditions and honors and glories all its own.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Jermolyn

Name: The Commonwealth of Jermolyn

Ruler: Chairman Lasko of Kellelar.

Government: Jermolyn is essentially an oligarchy, with the mayors and governors of various regions meeting every few months, when the seasons allow, and laying down the policies for the months to come. The Council elects a leader from its ranks every five years, and whatever city he's from becomes the new capital.

Capital: Kellelar.

Major Towns: Abrogis (3,234), Alesk (14,580), Benguin (2,315), Kellelar (4,699).

Resources/Trade: Jermolyn has rich agriculture and enough mineral resources. They rarely use the latter, though, preferring to trade food with the Dwarves of Zûram for their mineral wealth.

Population: 1,250,850 Halflings.

Languages: Halfling, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Yevgenian.

Overview: Except for the occasional war with the "mad Gnomes of Gill-Tirn," Jermolyn has a peaceful, even idyllic existence. There are too many nations between them and the Warlord for danger to come from that direction and most nations have to attack them by sea.

So they spend their time cooking and laughing and telling stories. It's said the finest chefs in the world come from Jermolyn and their other craftsmen are without peer (except for maybe among Dwarves.) They spurn difficult labor—though they don't think farming qualifies—preferring to let the Dwarves make big rocks into little rocks.

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Many people think that life in Jermolyn has gone without major incident for too long. They are waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Church: Jermolyn follows the Church of the Nikdin. Because of their relative seclusion from other races, the Knights of Munder and the Nonet Hearth Priests both find this nation a pleasant headquarters.

Allies: Belther, Osal, Zûram.

Enemies: Gill-Tirn.

History: Jermolyn began in 1416 AI when bands of middle class Halflings overthrew their former monarchy. For a time, they existed as free city-states, but nations on either side of them absorbed their lands under these conditions.

So in 1456 AI, Jermolyn formed their council and became an oligarchy. Since then they've had enough political cohesion to hold their nation together and, except for attacks from Gill-Tirn, they've lived in relative peace. The only wars they've known were fought on foreign soil, mostly when Belther was attacked by the Warlord.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Keireena

Name: The Free Kingdom of Keireena.

Ruler: Noble King Geoffrey McBrood (the Drunken).

Government: Keireena is an absolute monarchy with a feudal structure. Feudalism isn't the natural state of the Keireena culture, which organizes along clan lines, but past occupation by Ludremon managed to enforce a form of feudalism that didn't conflict with existing clans, making dukes and barons out of former chiefs. With the escape from Ludremonian control, this government stuck, and they use it to this day.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Aineen (11,203), Artoronne (17,281), Deneen (6,078), Ena (4,206), Fion (10,050), Neleen (3,393), Sheilis (8,755), Winan (2,319).

Resources/Trade: Keireena is a nation rich in fertile soil but poor in minerals. They can scrape together enough iron to guard their borders but they can't mine their own precious metals or gems. These they usually trade for their fuel peat, of which they have plenty.

Population: 1,425,515 Humans.

Languages: Ludremonian, Keireenish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Ciallic.

Overview: Keireena has a long and painful history of warfare. Having recently thrown off the harsh rule of Ludremon, Keireena is just learning to find its way as an independent nation.

The nation owes its racial roots to the same tree that spawned Ciall and Mab. Keireena has a long continuous history to their culture. This makes



them proud of their ancient songs and more ancient grudges. They do not fight among themselves as much as the Mab, preferring to put their hatred on Ludremon.

Keireena has good farmlands and fertile earth. The land itself is known as "The Green Veldt" by its people. It is also a land of peat bogs and it burns peat fuel more than any other source to heat its homes and cook its meals.

Life in Keireena is still hard, with fewer industrial advances, such as mills, than most countries. Because of this the Keireenish tend to celebrate with vibrant gusto. Most people think the Keireenish

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drink like Dwarves. The Dwarves would disagree. Dwarves come up for air.

Church: Keireena mainly follows the Church of Angenus although there is still a stalwart core of Atavists within these lands. Because of the years of war and hardship, the Knights of Ephestus have grown in this nation until this became their largest base and headquarters.

Allies: Æld, Ciall.

Enemies: Ludremon, Mab, Ciall.

History: The culture and “nation” of Keireena, as it now stands, owes its origins to the Great Moot in 888 AI, where the various clans and peoples of this region formed together and petitioned the Empire for the right to install their own governor. Somehow this request passed and Keireena became a willing and eager nation, subject to the Emperor.



When the Empire fought its final wars, Keireena was one of the nations to fight on the loyalist side. In fact, they are the only people who still exist who fought against the Marshal.

After the fall of the Empire, Keireena continued as a strong and thriving nation, doing better than its neighbors in Ciall. At this time they and Mab each controlled roughly half of modern Ludremon. Then in 1281 AI Marnele invaded, forming the Protectorate of Ludremon.

In 1504 AI, Ludremon, now a kingdom, invaded Keireena and conquered it, making it a province of their nation. For centuries they languished under Ludremonian rule.

Then in 1997 AI, Keireena finally overthrew their Ludremonian rulers, slaughtered the aristocracy, and put their own people in these places. Since then they have known relative peace and prosperity, but they hate Ludremon to this day.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Köhler

Name: The Grand Duchy of Köhler.

Ruler: Grand Duke Heiker XII.

Government: Köhler is technically a Grand Duchy although this is, in essence, no different from a kingdom. It is an absolute monarchy with a long feudal tradition going back to the time of the Empire. Beneath the Grand Duke are his dukes (grafs in the Kraun tongue) and below them the standard complement of aristocracy. Many people in the country believe the Grand Duke should take the name of king, but the royal line is too proud of Grand Duke Solgar I, who fought alongside the Marshal against the Empire, to change the title.

Capital: Elune.

Major Towns: Barene (6,678), Elgen (3,132), Elune (17,464), Pedanete (4,387), Rolob (1,958).

Resources/Trade: Köhler is known for its dairy and sugar beets. They have a decent mineral wealth in their mountains to the north and they can survive well without trade (although they still trade, of course). The most famous way of gathering in foreign money is the Bastian War College, which is based in Elune.

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Population: 1,299,060 Humans.

Languages: Kraun, Gelaerch, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Gaerynch.

Overview: Köhler is a nation with a proud military tradition and stronger family values. They honor their ancestors and are straitlaced and proper.

Köhler is known for its pomp and ceremonies. Parades and festivals are commonplace. During these ceremonies, the Grand Duke throws tourneys, and gives poultry and largesse to the commoners. People from neighboring nations travel to these festivals just to sample the ale, which is exquisite.

Köhler has a long-standing hatred of the Elves to the north which has expanded to include the Dwarves of that Alliance. Armed parties guard either end of the pass that links the two countries and often parties from either side sneak in, waging guerilla war on their enemies.

Sometimes this escalates to the point where both nations send troops into the pass simultaneously and the skirmishes mount until full on war threatens. At these times no merchant can travel the pass without serious risk to life and limb.

As a final note, although they share a language with Kraun, they are bitter enemies with this country. In the last few decades relations have faltered and both countries have realized how easy it would be to rule a nation that shared the same language and culture.

Church: Köhler follows the Church of Angenus. There are few Atavists in Köhler and those that live there are not welcome. In addition, the Archdemon Orblobh the Cruel has a strong following in the mountains to the north. Many think that this cult headquarters there. The most likely location of Nonet's inn is probably found outside Rolob.

Allies: Gelaert.

Enemies: The Elven-Dwarven Alliance, Kraun, Uzarâg.

History: In 776, after a major coup, the Emperor stripped

the Grand Duke of Old Kraun of all his power. He gave his lands and titles to Grand Duke Austredulf, the far ancestor of the current head of Köhler. At that time, the Grand Duchy covered all the territory from Köhler to Kraun.

When the Marshal rose against the Empire, Köhler wasn't the first to rally to his banner, but they got there eventually. Unfortunately, this caused tension among much of the aristocracy and by the end of the war, the Grand Duke only controlled the general area of modern day Köhler.

After the fall of the Empire, Köhler was much concerned with the actions of the Great Fiends and attacking the Elves of the Elven-Dwarven Alliance. They didn't invade the lands they once controlled, the forces there were just too strong.

In 1080 they reconquered the area of Kraun and held it for many years, but in 1144, Kraun rose and threw off Köhler again. They took the name of the old Grand Duchy of Kraun, as a snub to those who had supplanted it.

Since then relations with both Gelaert and Kraun improved steadily until the last few decades, when tensions with Kraun heated up again. Now old rivalries have reignited. Köhler and Kraun seem on the verge of war.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.



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Kraun

Name: The Grand Duchy of Kraun.

Ruler: Grand Duke Sielger IV.

Government: Kraun is an absolute monarchy built on a feudal model. They follow the same structure as most countries with their dukes (grafs) answering to the Grand Duke and so on down the line.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Emke (5,668), Niep (1,950).

Resources/Trade: Kraun has poor fertility but decent mineral resources. They make their shortfall of food up by trade with Maroldan merchants. Kraun has no great export. So far, they've survived through plundering their own mines for gold to buy imports. Right now the mines are playing out and they haven't found new veins to make up the difference. This is the main reason they are looking to attack Köhler. Unfortunately, they don't have the manpower to make this practical.

Population: 172,360 Humans.

Languages: Kraun, Gelaerch, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Kullanch.

Overview: Kraun is a nation on the verge of crises. With unfertile lands and an unfavorable ratio of imports to exports, the nation has been on borrowed time for all nine centuries of its existence.

And now the gold mines are playing out and the silver hasn't worked at full expectations for years. Their terrible soil is another problem on their horizon. They have to come up with a solution soon, or their people will starve.

Unfortunately, they are also the least populated nation in the region. Köhler outnumbers them. Gelaert is their ally. Kulland's neutrality is protected by the Church.

So they will either need to attack Lilano by sea or Gelaert by land. Or risk revolution. Only time will tell what Sielger will decide.

Church: Kraun follows the Church of Angenus. The Order of the Knights Equenis headquarters in Emke.

Allies: Gelaert.

Enemies: Köhler.

History: In 1144, Kraun overthrew their Köhler oppressors and declared themselves an independent kingdom. They took the ancient name of their land.



They began struggling immediately. They had wealth but for years they'd counted on food shipments from Köhler to support themselves. Now they had to support themselves.

For years they supplemented their food by exporting their mineral wealth. This has supported them for nine centuries.

In that time, relations with Köhler and Gelaert steadily improved, but with the recent crises escalating, old hatreds against Köhler reemerged. Now the tensions mount and something will have to give.

World Threads: How Kraun finally solves their resource problem is a World Thread, but not one that affects many games. As long as the actions at your table don't *solve* the problem, use this as an Adventure Seed as often as you like.

Kulland

Name: The Holy Kingdom of Kulland.

Ruler: Holy King Meiner the Pious, Defender of the Faith.

Government: Kulland is an absolute monarchy with a feudal structure that borders on theocracy. They, as a nation, are entrusted with guarding the faith of the Church and this makes them off-limits to Faithful nations. The King of Kulland takes this relationship seriously.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Alre (2,003), Arnst (9,003).

Resources/Trade: Kulland has rich farmlands and acceptable mineral wealth, although most of this is material more useful than valuable. They can out-

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fit armies and raise their cavalry, but paying them is another matter, and this leads to the biggest export of Kulland: Church law enforcement. Whereas Sulvican City sets the law for the Church, Kulland enforces it, collecting funds in seized land and properties.

Population: 316,965 Humans (+transient mercenary armies).

Languages: Kullanch, the Divine Tongue, Kraun, Maroldo.

Overview: Whereas Gaerydd is a theocracy of the Church, Kulland is the true power behind the Faerarch, the Pontiff of Sulvican. When a king, in jest, asks how many cavalry the Faerarch can field, the Lord High Inquisitor shows him reports on Kulland.

Kulland is the informal army of Sulvican City. Positioned far enough away that they can respond to attacks from the Great Fiends without fearing attacks themselves, they are more practically used to enforce the Church's will inside the kingdoms of the Faithful.

When a noble defies the Church, it is Kullandish troops that seize his lands. When a noble scoffs at excommunication, it's Kulland, who politely reminds them of the implications of no longer being a member of the Faithful. When the Church goes to war against a king, Kullandish banners fly over the field.

Kulland is also the great neutral country of the world. Decreed inviolate by Sulvican Law, Kulland is only at risk from pagans and Atavists. Kulland is often used to mediate treaties and to handle the transfer of ransoms.

The Kulland Accords are a set of Church laws that govern the actions of nobility and the rules of warfare among the Faithful. Every country of the Faithful has signed the Kulland Accord. The most important elements are as follows:

- When a noble in good Church standing asks for quarter, it *must* be granted.

- All Faithful of noble birth must be offered back to their nations for a reasonable ransom.
- The Church has final say on what ransoms are reasonable.
- Any Faithful noble must be imprisoned in a style of luxury proper for his rank.
- No member of the Church may be enslaved.
- No one may use a crossbow on a member of the Church.
- No commoner may kill a Faithful noble under any circumstances.
- No member of the Church may commit the crime of usury.

These rules are one of the primary reasons many nobles fear excommunication. Atavist and pagan kings can be slaughtered, tortured, or imprisoned in dungeons. No one wants to lose the basic protections of the Church.

Still, certain laws of the Kulland Accord are not enforced or unenforceable. The Church only invokes the law against crossbows when the perpetrator has drawn their ire. The Church almost never invokes the law against commoners killing nobles when volleys of arrows are involved.

But most countries follow the rest of Kulland Accords very closely. They live and die by them because they protect the nobles on all sides of a conflict. The Faerarch *will* excommunicate. There is nothing empty in the threat.

Few nations of the Faithful keep slaves because of the Accords. The reason is that all a person needs to do to earn his freedom is convert to the Church. However, some of the more treacherous nobles have discovered that if they have a Church official in their



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pocket, they can find a way to show their slave “unworthy” of conversion or excommunicate the slave shortly after.

Kulland is a nation of zealots. They take their religion seriously and they take their warfare *more* seriously. As a nation with less than 400,000 citizens, they rely heavily on mercenary armies to keep up their presence in the world.

Kulland gets to keep half of the money and properties seized when bringing heretics to justice. While half of this goes to the Church, the other half funds a nation that would only eke by without seized funds.

Arnst is also the home of one of the Six Elemental Wonders, the Monument of Light. This is a two-story sculpture of the original Holy See of God, in pure light. It glows year-round with pure radiance that can be seen miles away and lights up the city night and day. It’s invulnerable to any attack, which is good because every so often someone decides it’s dark magic. This magical artifact was built by Hegarion in ancient times. While many people think that it was made with magic, the Church claims that only the magic of God was used.

There is a fortified manor somewhere in the Kulland countryside, a manor so old that no one knows who originally issued the permission to crenelate. In this manor it is said the Illuminated meet, spinning their plans for world domination. For more on the Illuminated, see Chapter Five.

Church: Kulland is an arm of the Church of Angelus. Not only is the Church the official national religion, but outsiders are not welcome. Arnst has a foreign quarter, which is considered foreign soil, where outsiders can live while doing business with the nation. This is where one can find all the Dwarven and Atavistic moneylenders.

Allies: Sulvican City, Gelaert.

Enemies: Aphimi.

History: In 1242 AI Kulland formed out of the remnants of a former county of the Empire. For the first years they lived as Atavists, beset on all sides by Faithful nations.

In 1330 AI the king of Kulland converted to the Church. In the years to come, the citizens of the nation converted in droves, and in the years after that,

non-Faithful left one by one to live in less-hostile nations.

In 1489 AI Kulland sent troops to Sulvican City when the King—who was at war nearby—heard the Holy City was about to fall to the Demon Queen. The troops rescued the Faerarch just in time and managed to hold the city for the next year of attacks. At the end of the year, the Faerarch named the King *Defender of the Faith*. Kullandish troops have guarded Sulvican City since then.

In 1678 AI, Kulland sent for the kings of all the Faithful nations. They met in Arnst and wrote the Kulland Accords. Rulers of every nation signed it and since then the rulers of new nations have added their signature to the parchment. In fact, invitation to sign is the signal most people use to prove the Church recognizes a new country.

In 1701 AI, Aphimi sent diplomats to Kulland, asking the Holy King to revise the Accords and allow the non-Faithful to sign. The Holy King of Kulland replied with a counteroffer, suggesting that Aphimi change its name so the nations of the eastern Gulf of Aldeore would be in alphabetical order.

Since then, Kulland has stood as mediator and police of the entire world. Few nations have ever contested the fact, and those have met with tragedy.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Lilano

Name: The Grand Kingdom of Lilano

Ruler: Grand King Onedario VII.

Government: Lilano is a “Grand Kingdom,” an absolute monarchy that took its current name to avoid being an empire. They have an ancient structure with centuries of complex feudal entanglements.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Artuses (9,878), Celebario (2,158), Esterelio (3,064).

Resources/Trade: Chiefly an agrarian society, Lilano has a great wealth of iron in the mountains to the east and they use it to create Artusian Steel, one of the finest mundane alloys available to Mortals. They sell it to Maroldan merchants to trade around the world.

Population: 627,665 Humans.

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Languages: Lilanish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Kullanch.

Overview: Lilano is a “Grand Kingdom” wherein the Grand King rules three lesser kings, who, in turn, rule the standard selection of nobility. The Grand Kingdom has a rigid and ancient system of politics and customs built around this hierarchy. Their customs of protocol are more rigid than any other nation in Belkanâth.

The primary motivating force for the Grand Kingdom is the production of their Artusian Steel. They have Kulland on one border and Maroldo on the other. This gives them a comfortable existence, ruling out attack from any direction but the sea.

They have therefore developed a strong navy, buying Maroldan shipping advances to outfit their ocean defenses. If Kraun ever does come after them, they will be ready.

Church: Lilano follows the Church of Angenus so rigidly that members of other faiths, while allowed in the country, are not welcome. There are few Atavist or Dwarven moneylenders here, and those that do live inside the borders have thick skin. Interest rates are high in Lilano.

Besides the normal offices of the Church, the Monastic Order of Sepinus headquarters in a mountain monastery in the eastern part of the country.

Allies: None.

Enemies: Aphimi, Gelaert, Hairan.

History: In 317 AI, the Empire invested three kings with the power to rule Jecaro, Engrario, and Sosmecar. Throughout the rule of the Empire, these three kingdoms survived in relative peace.

In 578 AI craftsmen began making Artusian Steel, a strong but flexible alloy. While nobles around the world bought weapons of this metal, the Emperor never supplied his generals with the material.

When Alric moved against the Empire, he made contacts with the weaponsmiths of Artuses. Several of these supplied him with free arms, and he spread these weapons through his command. Some even made it down to the noncommissioned officers of his army. The Artusians assert, to this day, that this was the major tipping event in the success of the Marshal.



During the last days of the war, the kings of Engrario and Sosmecar made the king of Jecaro their battle chief. In the years after the fall of the Empire, he was promoted to the position of Grand King, because they found the title of Emperor too distasteful.

Since then, Lilano has developed itself into a nation of craftsmen. With no direct enemies on their borders, the secret of making their steel has spread to all three kingdoms and now the steel is all but their only export. Naturally, the secret is guarded harshly.

World Threads: There are no more World Threads for this nation.

Ludremon

Name: The Kingdom of Ludremon.

Ruler: Regent Stian Scolyn for Prince Karimon the XXXI (13 years old).

Government: Ludremon is an absolute monarchy currently ruled by a standing Regent. It has an ancient feudal structure and its frequent regents and short-lived kings give it an empire-building outlook.

Capital: Belm.

Major Towns: Belm (38,881), Dirune (6,868), Erton (19,785), Gassell (10,696), Germma (4,016), Godean (22,395), Keil (17,030), Lark (11,905), Louchester (26,019), Menissa (12,525), Ninald

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(2,963), Perlian (5,001), Rian (14,821), Sason (9,228), Venet (2,379), Wolchester (29,215).

Resources/Trade: Ludremon is rich in farmland but poor in minerals, gaining most of its raw materials from foreign trade. Ludremon's greatest exports are textiles, particularly wool. There is something about the soil or the climate of Ludremon that produces the best wool in the world, and no one has been able to reproduce this in foreign countries, not even from Ludremonian stock.

Population: 4,583,775 Humans, many Dwarves, Elves, Half-lings, and Gnomes.

Languages: Ludremonian, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Keireenish, Mab, Dwarvish, Half-ling, Gnomish, Elvish.

Overview: Ludremon is a country with a strong moral undertone and a high chivalric tradition. In fact it's known for the fact that its knights hold more to the ideals of knighthood than orders in other nations. Knights in Ludremon rarely abuse the peasantry.

Ludremon's biggest defining factor is the so-called "Curse of Ludremon." No one knows if this curse is real or a vastly unlikely coincidence, but no king of Ludremon has ever lived longer than the age of thirty. Be-

cause of this, Ludremon is known for the desperate attempts of regents and kings alike to make their mark in the little time they have.

This has pushed Ludremon to empire building in the past, conquering its neighbors of Keireena and Mab, and while Ludremon has no member nations



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at the moment, many think it's only a matter of time before their armies bring their particular brand of civilization to other nations again. While this is well intentioned and almost always sparked by tales of abuses in the target nations, it's understandably frowned on by other nations.

Ludremon has a University in Belm. Here, people come from around the world to study in the halls of academia.

One of the most notable features of Ludremon is the Elemental Wonder of Water, found in the capital city of Belm. This three-story-high magical fountain spews water three more stories into the air landing on chimes and causing a musical sound that can be heard for blocks and a spray that can be felt for hundreds of feet.

Church: Ludremon follows the Church of Angelus, but all churches are welcomed inside because of their cosmopolitan nature. The Orders of Naeponis and Albolatian find their headquarters within this country.

Allies: Ingrast, Felric's Redoubt.

Enemies: Keireena, Mab, Marnele.

History: In 1281 AI, an invasion force from Marnele assaulted the lands of Mab and Keireena, carving a large section out of both of these countries. The area was then declared a protectorate of Marnele and for years, the nobles of the regions suffered under foreign rule and foreign taxes.

In 1467 the nobles of Ludremon butchered the last governor and installed their own king, who died the next year at the age of thirty.

In 1504 Ludremon conquered Keireena creating their empire. In 1555 they followed it up by conquering Mab. In 1578 they tried and failed to take Felric's Redoubt.

In 1954 Mab overthrew Ludremonian rule and in 1997 Keireena followed suit. Since then, the nation has taken a break from empire building, but most people think that it's only a matter of time before they start again.

World Threads: There are no World Threads for this nation. For more information on Ludremon, see Appendix 1.

Mab

Name: The Free Kingdom of Mab.

Ruler: King Geor VI.

Government: Mab is an absolute monarchy, but the lords of the various clans hold a great deal of military power and Geor must be careful to keep them happy. They do not use the feudal system, preferring the clan system and although most of their identifiers involve clan tartans on kilts, they have heraldic crests as well, picked up during Ludremonian rule.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Bew (19,702), Cued (16,122), Doncan (32,413), Dorethucy (7,129), Dustean (9,105), Ebenzer (1,762), Ert (13,787), Fline (5,491), Frane (22,469), Hunniel (2,991), Kiarge (6,248), Nezer (4,722), Niel (2,371), Panet (10,232), Ran (25,635), Sart (11,750), Savline (8,049).

Resources/Trade: Mab is an incredibly poor nation, with bad mineral wealth. While they can scrape together enough iron to arm their people, they don't have enough for armor and tend to fight practically nude. Their steel is so poor that many rely on two-handed claymores for the weight and leverage created in a swing.

Population: 4,506,895 Humans.

Languages: Ludremonian, Mab, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Mab is a clan-based society that lives with feuds thousands of years old and wars that spark nearly every year. About the only thing the Mabs seem to relish is warfare. That and whiskey. This might have something to do with the poverty of their nation.

Mabs pride themselves on heritage and family. They live by traditions, alliances, and hostilities that date back centuries. They are a proud people with an intense sense of liberties and rights. In Mab, the difference between a king and a commoner is smaller than in any other nation in the world.

Mab favors infantry over cavalry, probably more through necessity than genuine preference. Still, they mastered the destruction of cavalry in their war with Ludremon, and it's thought that the respect the Ludremonian knights feel for them is the primary cause that their southern neighbor hasn't tried to conquer them again.

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Church: Mab ostensibly follows the Church of Angenus, but there are nearly as many Atavists in the nation as the Faithful. The Church also suspects that the biggest branch of the cult of the Archdemon Karil the Lich headquarters here. This may be the headquarters for the entire cult.

Allies: Felric's Redoubt.

Enemies: Ludremonian, Keireena, Marnele.

History: The clans formed together and endowed their first king in 997 PI, during the last days of the Age of War. This was primarily a means of ending foreign assault, and so they joined Hegarion fairly

readily, just relishing the peace that ensued under his reign.

When Eurustace conquered the world, the Mabs fought brutally but fell with everyone else. They never sat well under the rule of the Emperor, and when Alric rose in rebellion, the Mabs rose up with him.

In 1281 AI they were partially conquered again, the southern part of their lands all but enslaved by Marnele. Unfortunately for the Mab, their southern brothers took well to this civilizing. In 1555 Ludremon conquered Mab.

Rebellions and dissent followed under the rule

of Ludremon. Finally, Mab rose en toto in 1954, led by the great leader Angus MacMar of the chief of clan Cabeth. He defeated the Ludremonians and won his country's freedom, becoming the first of the current line of kings.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Mag-Morel

Name: The Kingdom of Mag-Morel.

Ruler: King Marchti V.

Government: Mag-Morel is an absolute monarchy based on a loose guild structure. Guild administrators handle all the governmental delegation and serve as the traditional aristocracy, with major guild masters act-



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ing as dukes, underlings acting as barons and counts, etc.

Capital: Pichthein.

Major Towns: Lort (2,344), Pichthein (10,761), Salker (3,467).

Resources/Trade: Mag-Morel has poor farmlands and few metals for mining. They have several good mines for extracting jewels, and they use this as their primary export. They import most everything from food to textiles to metals.

Population: 628,800 Gnomes.

Languages: Gnomish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Halfling, Yevgenian.

Overview: Mag-Morel is a gnomish society based largely underground with a minimum of surface farms. These farms are hidden in valleys and fields within the protective influence of their cities. A Mag-Morel city is an underhill affair where entire houses and clan structures are buried similar to Dwarven settlements. Due to the heavy guards at the borders of these farms, it is actually easier for a foreigner to get into one of the cities than it is for them to break the pickets and achieve access to the fields. Still, the gnomes love to spend time above ground and often stroll in the farms as if they were fragrant gardens. No foreigners are allowed there.

The reason is simple. While other nations may consider the jeweled wealth of the Gnomes the most valuable thing in the country, the Gnomes know how close they are at any moment to starvation. They would rather lose their mines than their farmlands.

Guild power is the most potent force in Mag-Morel politics. The guilds hold not just the financial wealth but they also control custom, morals, and building codes. Meetings with guild masters have all the pomp and circumstance of heads of state.

Church: Mag-Morel follows the Church of Gyllmoulin. There is a strong Atavistic following in the country as well, and the two churches exist in relative peace. The Knights of Selkie headquarter in Mag-Morel. It's also rumored that

Archdemon Analin the Dark has an underground cult located in Mag-Morel, probably the biggest in the world.

Allies: Osal, Tirem-Ag, Irukhâl

Enemies: Gill-Tirn, Yevgenia.

History: Founded in 4851 PI, Mag-Morel has based its entire history on slipping through the politics of the world without notice. They weathered the Vampire Lord with little more than an occasional payment of tribute. They joined the Almian Protector State early and they hunkered down during the Great Ulcer. They managed to avoid many of the conflicts of the Age of War, and when the Eurustace conquered the world they saw it coming and surrendered immediately.

Since then they've had to deal with aggression from Gill-Tirn on one hand and Yevgenia on the other. They've learned to defend their above ground fields and rebuilt all their entryways to gnomish height to inhibit Human invaders. The biggest threat they face is from the Lich King, since so many of the undead he can field are of Gnomish height.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Malveig

Name: The Raiders of Malveig

Ruler: Each clan has its own chief. The major chiefs are: Emisottil Ungvarsson (Mosper), Henas Darndtsson (Astin), Idit Hastrinsson (Nilla), Joakil Margsson (Gitta), Sorter Ingerdsson (Birtrin).



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Government: The Malveig have a clan system similar to the Hofgrin. See that entry for more details.

Capital: None.

Major Towns: Bilvia (2,488), Erba (16,530), Erekulin (4,276), Frotta (6,375), Horger (1,758).

Resources/Trade: Malveig performs little trade. They raid up and down the coastline of Belkanâth, slaughtering and demanding tribute in their great long ships.

Population: 1,607,025 Humans.

Languages: Malveigian, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: There are many clans in Malveig. The major ones are: Astin (Horger), Birtrin (Bilvia), Gitta (Erba), Mosper (Erekulin), Nilla (Frotta).

Malveig is one of the three “raider” nations. From their location in the northwest, their ships reach across Belkanâth.

The Malveig attack, raid, and pillage. The Malveigians relish combat, live to put their lives in their own hands, relish the counting of the loot, the smell of the fires. Many would consider them evil, and probably be right, but the Malveig live hard and die harder.

Otherwise, life in Malveig is difficult, with fertile soil but a wretched climate. They’re a hardy and rough people. They treat their wounded well, but if an injury is mortal, they abandon the warrior to die alone.

Church: The Malveig are a pagan people who worship a pantheon of Demon-gods including all the Archdemons from Chapter Six. They execute missionaries on sight. The religion of Malveig is actually the biggest difference between them and the other raider cultures. They openly practice Human sacrifice and often perform these rites during a raid.

The Archdemon Aldron the Loathing is the most popular religion in this land. This is also the primary center of his worship.

Allies: None.

Enemies: Everyone, especially Æld.

History: In 1889 AI the Malveig began their current reign of terror. In one summer they hit population centers in almost every nation in Belkanâth. The coordination of these attacks staggered the imagination, and many think something Infernal directed this assault.

During this first raid they sacrificed over two thousand souls to the altars of their Demon princes. The slaughter is renowned to this day.



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The nations of the world retaliated, but before they arrived, the worst early winter in history hit, shattering ships and sinking entire fleets. Men died of exposure by the hundreds. In the end, the retaliation ended in failure.

Since then, no one has launched a major invasion against Malveig. Smaller retaliatory strikes have hit, and those have met with some success, but only at certain clans, in responses to that clan's actions. The nation as a whole remains untouched.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Mannan

Name: The True Kingdom of Mannan

Ruler: True King Iolval Ham Hands

Government: Chiefs rule the tribes of the Mannan and battle chiefs lead them in war. The battle chiefs are positions of merit but the chief positions are hereditary.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Albeirin (4,930), Cainte (2,295), Crurethne (2,928), Esna (7,046), Maolannain (16,378), Molan (3,637), Terna (8,073).

Resources/Trade: Mannan doesn't lack in food or other necessities, but their middle class doesn't have the taste for luxuries of other nations. They primarily trade in iron works, creating fine weapons and mail for exports to other nations. Mannan iron crafts are prized almost as much as Dwarven, Elven, and Artusian goods.

Population: 1,821,000 Humans.

Languages: Mannan, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: The people of Mannan share an ancient culture rich in songs and stories and legends. Mannan's civilization goes back some three thousand

years and shares common roots with Æld, Keireena, Ciall, and Mab. Those in Mannan claim that they have stayed true to the ancient belief's where others have strayed.

Once a raider culture, the Mannan has settled down to a peaceful agrarian lifestyle. Now they're craftsmen and warrior poets, but they still have a strong tradition of heroic ballads.

The Shadowed Legion operates out of Mannan. For more information on the Shadowed Legion, see Chapter Five.

Church: Mannan follows the Atavist faith. They welcome outsiders and missionaries, but there are few conversions among their people. The people of Mannan believe in a universe filled with Demons, where their true faith is the only thing that protects the world from destruction.

Allies: Ciall, Æld.

Enemies: Ciall.

History: In 997 PI Mannan united as a people, forming an oligarchy of chiefs to make decisions on the part of their people. This left them strong and uni-



fied when the Wizard-King rose. They joined under his rule without much fuss, his rise to power playing well with their own culture of individual heroism.

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Eurustace was another matter, and they fought bitterly against the Butcher. It was only through bitter conquest that Eurustace finally beat them.

They flocked to Alric's banner during the final wars of the Empire. Still, after its fall, when the Great Fiends fled into Belkanâth, Mannan decided that it needed a more powerful force in charge and they crowned their first true king.

Since then they have defended their culture and slowly built up their craft tradition. Now their warrior tradition is mostly symbolic but there is still some bite left in their armies and they usually throw off invasions from raiders.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Marnele

Name: The Kingdom of Marnele

Ruler: King Roranelle IX

Government: Marnele is an absolute monarchy with a feudal structure. The various dukes of Marnele are a strong bunch who stand behind their king and lend him an air of strength he might not be able to project on his own.

Capital: Serard.

Major Towns: Abriel (27,629), Aulbie (4,185), Brimelie (35,627), Celuelle (24,611), Dornile (14,778), Endre (60,433), Ernese (16,708), Fasette (20,093), Ges (2,235), Ginanique (5,119), Laelvieve (78,457), Lene (45,525), Lurmane (11,718), Madrelie (53,610), Paurick (30,863), Selian (6,154), Serard (7,719), Sterice (9,734), Verien (3,510).

Resources/Trade: Marnele is perhaps the richest country in Belkanâth. Their land is fertile and farmed to an amazing extent. The mountains hide good mineral wealth and their gemstone mines produce more than any other nation but Mag-Morel. They are also renowned for their furniture makers, and Marnele sell goods to nobility around the world.

Population: 5,030,760 Humans.

Languages: Marnench, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Ludremonian, Elvish, Izonish.

Overview: Marnele is known as the most civilized nation in the world. They pride themselves on their culture, they've farmed their land to the point where

even their forests are cultivated and they have more huge cities than most nations *have* cities.

Marnele also has a strong chivalric tradition, maybe the strongest in the world. The ideal of courtly love originated in Marnele, and they theoretically use their knights to protect the weak, but more practically, knights look down on the lower classes and are as likely to abuse a peasant as protect one.

Marnele suffers from the positioning of the Ulcer of Dientor. With the fall of that country to the Demon Queen, their most important river, the Manoit, flows through a dangerous land. This has cut the capital and the other settlements on this river from their trade lifeline.

Once Serard was the most populated city in Belkanâth. Now it's a wasteland where entire quarters of rotting buildings slowly collapse one after another. The rat and criminal elements flourish in these places, but life there is dangerous. Even the streets have begun to collapse into the sewers.

Serard is the home of one of the six Elemental Wonders, however. The Wonder of Fire sits outside the palace, a three-story-high sculpture of the Savior and the Four Prophets in living Elemental Fire. This sculpture is highly magical, but the Church claims it was crafted using God's magic. The Knights Lonnuso often destroy witches by casting them into the flames.

Serard is also the home of the least-attended University in the world. The Serard University is more than a thousand years old and at one time the Emperor's sons attended here. With the collapse of Dientor and the loss of the river trade, fewer and fewer students come to attend every year. Now it's seen as a university for the poorest nobility, and the rest of academia looks down upon the graduates.

Church: Marnele primarily follows the Church of Angenus. They do not have many Atavists within their borders due to a hostile attitude shared by much of their populace, but there are many Dwarven money lenders within their borders.

The Knights Lonnuso headquarter in one of the deserted districts of Serard. The Holy Wives of Monique headquarter in Lene.

Allies: Izona, Felric's Redoubt.

Enemies: Ingrast, Dientor, Ludremon, Mab.

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History: In 750 PI, a bloody coup overthrew the royal family of the former nation of Lartharal. This new king shook up the aristocracy and renamed the country, becoming the first king of Marnele.

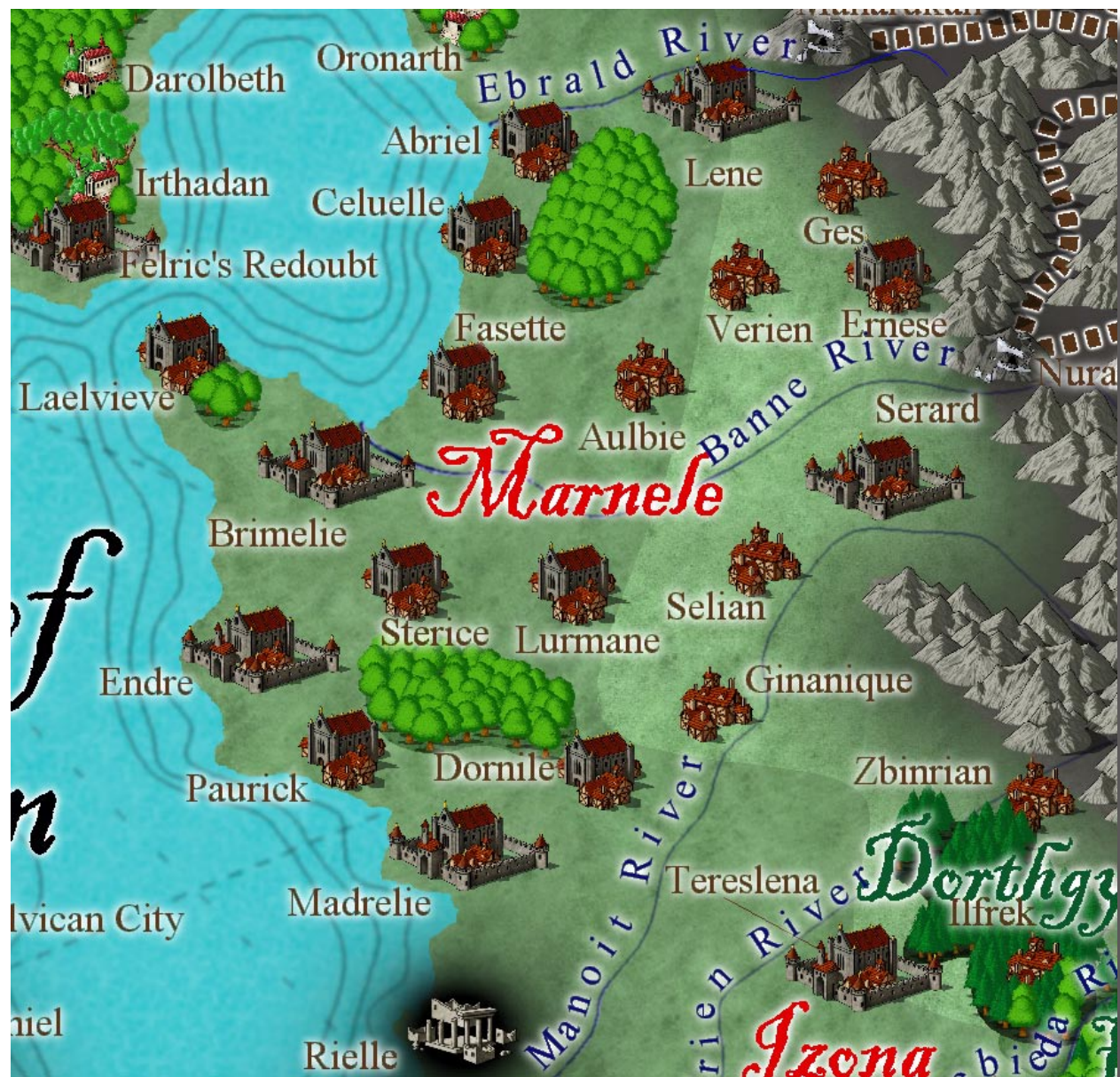
They fought against the Wizard-King vigorously, until one day the king completely changed his stance and joined Hegarion. Historians believe the Wizard-King charmed the sovereign, but whatever the cause, a time of peace ensued.

After the fall of the Wizard-King, Marnele fought the Butcher with fire and spirit, but fell quickly

nonetheless. The Emperor removed the king and butchered the royal family, installing his own military governor to rule the nation for him.

Throughout the history of the Empire, Marnele never calmed down into easy rule. Dissidents and underground movements plagued Marnele for the entire near-millennium occupation.

Still, when the Marshal rose, Marnele didn't follow. While the underground troops increased their insurgency, the normal citizens of Marnele were



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comfortable with the occupation, and the result was nothing more than increased unrest.

When the Demon Queen opened the gate inside Dientor, Marnele almost fell. They'd been without unified rule since the fall of the Empire and now a lesser Baron named Gelienne rose up and seized command.

He organized and rallied and strategized, and with the aid of Kûlan, Marnele stood. Gelienne had claims to ancient royal blood—as did almost everyone in the aristocracy—and when the smoke settled, Gelienne held the crown firmly.

Since then the new royal line has led the nation into a time of great prosperity, even empire building at times. Though currently Marnele controls nothing more than its own lands, it still harbors the enmities it's fostered over the years and a war between Marnele and Ludremon could break out again at any moment.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Maroldo

Name: The Merchant Empire of Maroldo

Ruler: Lornirlomo IV

Government: Ostensibly an empire, Maroldo is a collection of city-states dominated by massively wealthy merchant houses whose trade reaches across the world. There's no practice of feudalism in Maroldo and the aristocracy is only as powerful as their personal merchant success. Many barons in

Maroldo practically hold more sway than their ducal or royal superiors.

Capital: Danolino.

Major Towns: Danolino (12,096), Elando (2,200), Onto (3,429), Pedena (2,897).

Resources/Trade: Maroldan lands are poor in fertility as well as mineral wealth. The one resource they have cultivated is lumber for building ships. They use these ships to maintain a continent-spanning merchant empire.

Population: 514,415 Humans.

Languages: Maroldo, the Divine Tongue, Lilanish, Aphimian.

Overview: Maroldan ships and Maroldan merchant houses reach into almost every nation in the world. Maroldan trade is so ubiquitous that Maroldo is spoken by every major merchant in the world. While there's no common tongue in Belkanâth, between the Divine Tongue and Maroldo, most people can get by.

Money is power in Maroldo. Merchant lords hold as much if not more power than dukes. In fact, the aristocracy has most of their holdings in merchant interests and many of them rose to title through building up their mercantile interests.

The religious beliefs in Maroldo, as well as every other thing, are for sale. Because of this, the Shadow Order is headquartered in Maroldo, their bribes and influence buying them safety in this otherwise pious place.

Church: Maroldans are devout Faithful, except where this interferes with their financial interests.

In fact, Maroldo is living proof that a person's Deadly Sin is not their only weakness.

Allies: The Elven-Dwarven Alliance.

Enemies: Aphimi, Gelaert.

History: In 42 AI Maroldo petitioned the Empire for rights as member state. The city-states of the region all banded together under a single governor and began their mercantile actions across the continent. Throughout Imperial rule, they gained in wealth and power.

The Empire taxed Maroldo heavily and Maroldo never complained about



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this taxation (much). They knew that as long as they were a source of wealth for the Empire they were safe from external interference.

With the fall of the Empire, each city-state declared themselves a kingdom and the governor, who by then ruled the most powerful merchant house, declared himself Emperor over these new kings. This is how matters stand to this day.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Naili

Name: The Kingdom of Naili

Ruler: King Abeshi XXXVII

Government: Naili is an ancient absolute monarchy. It's not a true feudal state . . . instead, the regional aristocracy acts as little more than wards for their king. They have only as much power and wealth as Abeshi grants them at any given moment.

Capital: Anum.

Major Towns: Anum (25,680), Arthidenil (12,629), Banim (9,236), Benthila (14,638), Bessula (16,545), Boda (3,936), Naid (1,797), Nezur (3,079), Nugad (4,886), Sabid (2,399), Sennaneli (6,460), Suil (19,318).

Resources/Trade: Naili has overfarmed and overgrazed lands, as well as played-out mines. Formerly of great glory, Naili now makes most of its trade off selling ancient cultural artifacts to antiquity collectors.

Population: 1,355,940 Humans.

Languages: Nailish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Nolinan, Aphimian.

Overview: Naili is one of the oldest nations in Belkanâth. Bordering the Bhhendail desert, the failing lands slowly yield to this wasteland.

Naili is known for its ancient legal system, the oldest codified Human legal system still in use. The precedents are so extensive that legal experts come in two types, those that handle

the practice of law and those that do nothing more than research millennia of precedents.

Naili is also known for its brilliant colors. The cities are covered in glazed pottery tiles and the clothing, brilliant dyes. They also favor elaborate head-dresses and make-up.

In Anum stands the Monument of Earth, one of the six Elemental Wonders. This massive four-story mountain of glittering gemstone catches the light and sprays a prismatic display for miles. It's considered one of the most beautiful objects in the world and is completely impervious to attack or tool.

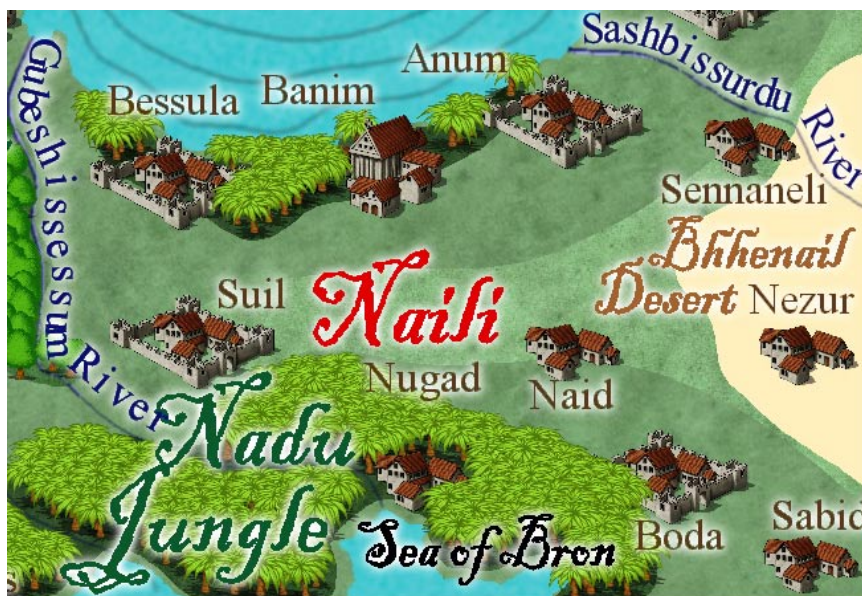
In the deep deserts to the east of this nation, it is rumored that the Assassins' Guild makes it home. While the existence of this guild is denied in every civilized land, the rumors refuse to die.

Church: Naili is a pagan nation that worships a pantheon of Elemental gods (thought to be Demons by the Church). Ironically, they are also the Headquarters of the Society of Sinnius, who base themselves here to hide from prying eyes.

Allies: Aphimi, Nolinos.

Enemies: Hairan.

History: Naili began in 3501 PI during the time of the Almian Protector State when their former government collapsed and the state fell into anarchy. Almia stepped in and restored order and established the royal lines and noble houses that exist in one form or another to this day.



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They weathered the fall of Almia and all the ensuing madness and somehow managed to hold their national identity through all the wars that followed. They resisted the Wizard-King and Eurustace, but fell to both of them.

Since then they've managed to stay out of the politics and events of the subsequent centuries. Now they are a faded remnant of their former culture, a washed-up nation selling its heritage bit by bit to the highest bidder.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Nolinos

Name: The City-States of Nolinos

Ruler: Elystanis Nisenatos (Thallionos), Georlios Thondakis (Mikis), Dionotos Litriopoulus (Stanos), Emon Mikisidis (Nitros), Thandrontine Tephnotides (Asso), Ioannis Collinellis (Solon).

Government: Nolinos is actually a series of governments, each of them contained in a single city-state. The city-states are democracies (for those under 5,000 citizens) or republics (for the rest). Each city-state controls a large section of land around it, usually as far as a man on a fast horse can travel in a day.

Capital: Each city-state is its own capital.

Major Towns: Asso (2,782), Mikis (7,811), Nitros (4,276), Solon (2,009), Stanos (5,589), Thallionos (25,168).

Resources/Trade: Nolinos has rich farmlands and a nice variety of mineral wealth (although it varies from city-state to city-state). They trade a great deal amongst themselves, and then wider through Maroldan merchants.

Population: 2,784,600 Humans.

Languages: Nolinan, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Nailish, Hairan.

Overview: There are six major city-states. They all excel in thinking, art, and warfare, but certain city-states are known as masters of certain arts and trades. Do not take the descriptions below as an endorsement to depicting these cities as two-dimensional. They each have a rich and vibrant culture, here we merely discuss the most obvious points.

Asso: This city-state excels in the sculpting arts. Three of the greatest sculptors in the world live here and sell their works throughout Nolinos and beyond.

Mikis: Mikis is a major philosophical center. From here great thinkers refine and debate the teachings of their predecessors.

Nitros: Nitros is the most important sea port in Nolinos. This city acts as a clearing house for all the Nolinan goods it can gather. From here the Maroldan merchant houses distribute them throughout the world.

Solon: This city-state is known for its paintings and woodworks. Furniture and paintings from Solon are valued throughout eastern Belkanâth.

Stanos: Stanos is a great, warlike city-state. Once a place of conquerors, now Stanan mercenaries sell



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their swords throughout Nolinos and beyond. They prefer leather armor but have also mastered heavier mails for when they fight in the cooler north.

Thallionos: Thallionos is the great cultural and intellectual throne of Nolinos. It's a cosmopolitan city where citizens pursue the sciences and argue theories of government. Here the most learned men in the east gather to live amongst their like.

Church: Religion in Nolinos varies from city-state to city-state:

Asso: Asso is an Atavistic culture.

Mikis: Mikis converted to the Church about a millennium ago. Now most of the citizens follow this faith. The Knights of Ephestus are based in Mikis.

Nitros: Nitros follows a pantheon of pagan gods.

Stanos: Stanos follows a pantheon of pagan gods, but the wide travel of their mercenaries have brought many religions back to the city, including the Church, the Atavistic religion, and pagan beliefs from other lands.

Thallionos: Thallionos used to be Atavistic, but they converted to the Church about a century ago. There are still strong communities of Atavists within the city.

Allies: Naili.

Enemies: Hairan.

History: Nolinos has not had a cohesive government for more than a few centuries at a time, but the culture is old. The first recorded proof of the Nolinan culture places its birth around 5007 PI, with the writing of the first Nolinan ballad.

Their culture seems to have developed into a series of tribal bands by the Age of Chaos, but the vortices devastated these tribes, shattering their structures and leaving them all but gone from the earth. Some historians maintain that the culture *was* destroyed during this period, and that the Nolinan culture can't be said to be seven thousand years old.

They had just begun to build themselves up in time for the Vampire Lord, who conquered them utterly. This had a beneficial effect on the culture because under the rule of the Vampire Lord, they learned the notions of unified government and permanent fortified cities.

The Almian Protector State had great effect on their development again, and during this time the Nolinos made its first experiments with democracy. These early experiments failed, and in the end the city-states took a monarchical structure, but it was significant as the first experiment in recorded history.

The culture almost perished again during the time of the Great Ulcer. They slowly rebuilt during the Dark Ages, and during the Age of War Stanos built its mighty military traditions.

The scholarship of the Nolinan culture made them a good fit under the Wizard-King and this time passed in peace. During Hegarion's rule, the city-states also solidified into something like their current forms, barring government and matters of religious conversion.

Nolinos fought tooth and nail against Eurustace. Finally, they fell and under subsequent Emperors they were able to return to something like their former government. This ended in the later periods of the Empire with harsher and harsher restrictions on member states.

Stanos fought with the Marshal but the rest of the city-states sat out the final wars. In the days after the fall, they quickly rebuilt to their ideals, creating government and artistic cultures the likes of which they'd had in better times. They've had more peace than war ever since.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Ontav

Name: The Holy Empire of Ontav

Ruler: Emperor Advik VI

Government: Ontav is an empire and an absolute monarchy. It is not based on a feudal structure. Instead, the aristocracy own their own lands and owes regular taxes to the crown.

Capital: Seasonal.

Major Towns: Ivona (4,682), Lerid (3,331), Vielav (2,363), Virezslav (14,465)

Resources/Trade: Ontav has passable amounts of arable land, nowhere near the bounty of Belther, but it's enough to get the job done. They have decent mineral and gemstone wealth as well, although they

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are a relatively poor nation and expend much of their effort preparing for the next assault from the Warlord.

Population: 1,202,500

Languages: Ontan, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, halfling, Doszkan.

Overview: Ontav has the misfortune of bordering Uzarâg. This means that every few years the Warlord comes raging across their lands at the head of an army. He typically takes one, maybe two principalities before anyone can slow him down. Often, he holds the entire nation for months until the armies of the area manage to put him back into his box.

Ontav doesn't have time to harbor enmities. Their national resources are all exclusively directed against defense. They take this seriously.

Ontav has one of the largest standing armies in the world. Due to mandatory military service, about 5 percent of the nation is in that army at any given time. Another 5 percent can rise fairly quickly.

Other than that, Ontav concentrates on honor and military prowess. Their knights take their vows seriously and carefully guard the interests of the down-trodden. In fact, an Ontan knight is more likely to try to rescue a peasant than a landed noble. The landed noble is assumed to be able to take care of himself.

Church: Ontav follows the Church of Angenus. The Archdemon Eurustace the Butcher's faith secretly headquarters here.

Allies: Doszke.

Enemies: Belther, Uzarâg. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: In 1503 the Warlord managed to seize the entire region of modern Ontav. He put the royal line to the sword and butchered much of the aristocracy. For a year,

he withstood the sieges of the neighboring nations. They had responded too sluggishly.

In 1504, members of the Knights Equis infiltrated the advisors of the Warlord. He didn't notice the switch until too late and the Knights managed to swarm him and throw him from a third-story window. The landing was enough to stun the Warlord for a few seconds and in that time, more Knights leapt forward and hacked him over and over again.

They couldn't kill him, of course, but the Warlord was barely able to flee, his limbs hacked to pieces and throat slit. In the wake of his loss, the rest of the nation fell quickly and the local who'd helped orchestrate the attack was crowned Emperor by the Church.

Since then they've devoted great efforts to making sure the Warlord never conquers them again. Ontav cities are rife with secret tunnels, the entrances of which they change whenever the Warlord has held a city for a time. There are shelters and food and weapon stores and key members of the lower classes that know the secrets. With these tools, they are able to overthrow the Warlord quickly when necessary, with reduced losses when time isn't of the essence. It's through these tricks that Ontav has survived some 540 years.



World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

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Osal

Name: The Principality of Osal

Ruler: Prince Joberom the Pious

Government: The Principality is a theocracy with a working aristocracy. The church has near complete control and no prince rises to power without being clerically invested and in the pocket of the clergy. The nobles own their own lands, but only at the sufferance of the priests.

Capital: Pelorn

Major Towns: Molidar (3,114), Pelorn (10,559).

Resources/Trade: Osal is a poor country, relying on trade to supplement all nonagricultural resources. The land is mostly arable, but not fertile and their settlements tend to cluster in groups around the good farmlands.

Population: 514,740

Languages: Halfling, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Yevgenian.

Overview: Osal is the only place in the world where it's difficult to find a fat Halfling. Osal is essentially a fundamentalist nation and the Halflings here tend to eschew large meals and gourmet foods. In fact the Halflings here eat almost as badly as Humans.

Osal stands on the border of Yevgenia, which isn't the best place in the world to try to live, but they defend themselves by being painfully broke. This is their number one defense against Gill-Tirn as well.

Mostly, their enemies attack every ten years or so and carry off every bit of portable wealth and then withdraw, giving the nation time to rebuild. This on

the whole is about as profitable as trying to hold and rule the nation, but without the hassle.

The Halflings of Osal are extremely pious. Most of them attend three or more masses a week and they try to resist all five Deadly Sins, not just Gluttony.

Church: Osal follows the Church of Nikdin, and it does so zealously. Atavists and foreigners are not welcome, although they won't be expelled from the country. This country holds the headquarters of the Malguin Crafters in Pelorn and they produce some of the nation's only real wealth.

Archdemon Lymalar the Plague-Bearer has a strong underground following in Osal. They headquarter in Pelorn as well.

Allies: Jermolyn, Belther, Zûram, Mag-Morel.

Enemies: Yevgenia, Gill-Tirn. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: There have been Halflings in Osal for as long as any history can tell. In 1556 AI the decadence of the Halfling royalty in Osal hit such a high point that the people overthrew their lords and put the church in charge instead.

The church immediately instated a new royal line (calling this one a prince to show their renewed humility) and an aristocracy, but one that the clergy could control. Since then, the country has been firmly under the control of the church.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.



Shieldwall (and the Lich King)

Name: The Shieldwall

Ruler: General Gandusharâg the Axe-Heavy (in the west) and Marshal Litviandon Theondrovich (in the east).

Government: Shieldwall is essentially a military organization (or more to the point, two). While technically it's a military dictatorship, in prac-

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tice it's not as sinister as that sounds. It's merely a long-post military division.

Capital: None.

Major Towns: None.

Resources/Trade: None. Shieldwall requires complete supply by its sponsoring countries.

Population: 50,000 troops. Estimates of the population of the Lich King put the forces at over 1,000,000 undead.

Languages: Dwarven, Yevgenian, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Shieldwall has one purpose and one purpose only, and that is to contain the Lich King. They've made the Lich King the second-least-effective of all the Great Fiends.

It's not known whether the Lich King is completely contained as no one knows the current state of the lands north of the Lich King. It could be that they have made the prospect of moving south much less profitable than another direction.

People serve a year and more on the Shieldwall and the fortifications here are the most formidable in the world. It's said that a man on the wall of the Shield is worth one hundred standing below and Divine enchantments help to negate the more deadly abilities of the powerful undead. Magic weapons handle incorporeal undead.

The Lich King's forces are composed of a mixed force of small- and medium-sized undead. The hordes coming from inside this nation seem endless, and despite other considerations, the Lich King doesn't abandon his assaults south completely.

Church: The Church of Angenus and the Church of Ziruk-Nurak. The Knights of Living Vengeance are based in the Shieldwall.

Allies: Everyone but the Lich King.

Enemies: The Lich King.

History: In 1005 AI the Lich King finished destroying the living in the land above Shieldwall, a reclusive country of a cosmopolitan racial mix. The structures in this nation were underhill in nature and the people didn't favor contact with Belkanâth, because

of this, it was little more than a swarming hive of undead before anyone in the south noticed.

He launched his first assault in that same year, utterly destroying the Gnomish nation that used to inhabit the Em-Ag forest. A second attack rolled into the lands of Yevgenia before anyone could react.

But Kûlan had learned enough about the Great Fiends by this point to guess their number and even their nature. He'd been looking for this assault, and his army made it to the plagued lands in little more than a month. It was too late for the Gnomes, but he was able save many of the peoples that inhabited the region of current Yevgenia. Unfortunately, he was not able to save that nation.

With the people of that land and his standing armies, he was able to smash the undead armies and mile by mile, drive them back into their walls. In the end the Humans of the region and the Dwarves of Irukhâl united in holding the two main passes out of the Lich King's land.

The Dwarves are not ones to create separate orders for their religion, but Kûlan knew the Humans were. He petitioned the Church to take steps to stop this threat and put out a call to paladins and Church knights everywhere. In the end, these adventurers gathered and formed the Knights of Living Vengeance, to protect Belkanâth against this horde of Undead.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Siren, The

Name: The Siren's Sound.

Ruler: The Siren.

Government: The Siren has no known subjects. If she does have subjects, they are likely thralls.



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Capital: Unknown.

Major Towns: Unknown.

Resources/Trade: Unknown.

Population: Unknown.

Languages: Unknown.

Overview: Little is known of the Siren. Even the full name of her country contains supposition, as no one knows if the Siren actually lives near a sound. Still, the name has a certain evocative nature and so it's stuck.

The Siren is one of the Great Fiends and she lives somewhere to the southwest of Belkanâth. No one knows the exact location of the Siren and certain accounts indicate that she moves her lair. Either that or her sphere of influence is large beyond reason.

What is known about the Siren is that sailors who travel into the southwest almost never come back. Those that do often return with tales of a song of singular beauty in the distance. Those that turn around immediately might escape but only if the sounds are broken on the winds. In all recorded history there is no incident of a sailor hearing the Siren's song intact and resisting its lure.

The Siren's motivations are unknown. She never attacks out of her realm, she just sits back and collects ships. What she does with these captives is anybody's guess.

Church: Unknown.

Allies: None.

Enemies: All sailors.

History: The Siren fled to the sea when the other Great fiends fled the capital. Since then she has collected sailors. Nothing else is known of her history.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Starg

Name: The Bloody Hordes of Starg.

Ruler: Each clan has its own chief. The major chiefs are: Agnulf Harildsson (Kagfinn), Hestren Darildsson (Ire), Lirgrid Stinnsson (Nika), Nille Aldersson (Eling), Odar Orjorgsson (Kren), Oddver Kaleneson (Gren), Oren Tansson (Asbjorn), Tonkuri Edison (Ura), Toven Pengvensson (Jorolf).

Government: the Malveig have a clan system similar to the Hofgrin. See that entry for more details.

Capital: None.

Major Towns: Bete (8,259), Even (3,068), Frandi (1,871), Freir (5,677), Held (2,359), Igven (19,547), Ivora (4,087), Kalfrid (12,612), Vivi (7,159).

Resources/Trade: The Starg do not trade. To ask them, they do not raid either. What they do is collect their "tithes." They collect these tithes in their "missionary parties" which raid up and down the coast in their ships or (more frequently) across the countryside in land assaults. The word tithe means 10 percent, but the Starg are not good at math. They take everything, just to be sure.

Population: 1,285,860 Humans.

Languages: Starg, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: There are many clans in Starg. The major ones are: Asbjorn (Freir), Eling (Igven), Gren (Bete), Ire (Vivi), Jorolf (Even), Kagfinn (Ivora), Kren (Kalfrid), Nika (Frandi), and Ura (Held).

The Starg are the last of the three "Raider Cultures." They're, in many ways, the worst of the three, in the view of the Faithful across the land. This is because about two hundred years ago, they themselves became Faithful.

The Starg claim that they are the most Faithful of all members of the Church. They believe that God has chosen them to set his flocks in order. They take this conviction onto their ships and their land raids and attack everywhere in the world . . . except Sulvican City.

When they find a pagan nation, they slaughter wantonly while preaching scripture that speaks of the hellish fate of unbelievers. They then ravage everything and take money and valuables as the divine right of the true faith.

When they find an Atavist nation, they slaughter with more restraint, quoting scripture about the plight of the Atavist and the cold prison in Hell kept for their particular band of heresy. Then they ravage everything and take money and valuables as payment for all the souls lost to Atavistic lies.

When they find the Faithful they slaughter almost politely, often apologizing as they quote scripture about the special place in Hell for those who have heard the True Word and turned away from the faith, giving in to sin. They then ravage *most* things and

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take money and valuables as a tithe to fund their further spreading of His word.

The Starg have longships and they are adequate sailors, but they don't have the passion for the sea raid of their kin. They prefer instead to land and launch extended overland raids, reaching areas their brethren usually miss.

Church: Starg follows the Church of Angenus.

Several cults flourish in this religiously oppressive place as well, but the biggest are actually among the Orcs that live in the country's mountains, the Archdemons Dzoulg the Betrayer and Ercùll the Vengeful both headquarter in Starg.

Allies: None.

Enemies: Everyone, Especially Æld.

History: In 1846 AI, Starg was a pagan race. Then, in the space of four years the entire country converted to the Faithful.

At the time, it was seen as a great boon. The greatest of all Church missionaries, a man named Ulaine O'Werty, went to Starg and survived long enough to preach the word of God. At first, it seemed that he would be one more martyr to his faith but the tribe chieftain converted, and the rest of the tribe followed within the next 24 hours. Ulaine was released. The process had begun.

In Sulvican City, this success was celebrated. Everyone felt that with this process creeping across Starg, soon an entire nation of raiders would cease their attacks. This turned out to be painfully optimistic.

In 1850 AI the conversion process completed and in the spring of that year each of the tribes of Starg launched the biggest raid in history. Entire nations trembled.

Since then the Starg have continued raiding and if their raids aren't as large, that's merely because

the raids of the individual tribes are more staggered. The Starg now consider raiding more than just a method of gathering wealth. They consider it a holy duty.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.



Sulvican City

Name: The Holy City of Sulvican, the Seat of the Great and All-Reaching Church.

Ruler: Faerarch Emelix the Innocent

Government: Sulvican City is a theocracy, completely controlled by the Church. While the local parishes are technically ruled by the local priests, the place is small enough for Emelix to control it completely.

Capital: Sulvican City.

Major Towns: Sulvican City (2,497).

Resources/Trade: Sulvican City has little in the way of exports. They have more than enough farmland to support their population. They have no mines

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or other resources, however, and they gather most of their resources through trade and tithe.

However, they do not keep all their wealth on the island. With the proximity of Dientor, they long since decided that Sulvican City was not the place to store the wealth of the Church. Instead, they concentrate on works of art in the city, keeping the coffers just full enough to ensure wealth. The vast riches of the Church are stored in the local treasuries of the clerical heads of the various countries. Therefore all the wealth of tithes from Ludremon is stored in the vaults of the Cardinal of Belm (as opposed to the Lord High Priest, which is more of a political position).

Population: 22,440.

Languages: The Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Kullanch.

Overview: The Holy City is the beating heart of the Church of Angenus in Belkanâth. It is the home of the Faerarch and the administrative center of the Church's vast bureaucracy. It's the home of the Chapel of Angenus, the greatest building in the world (since the Faerarch preaches there and not a bishop, it's technically not a Cathedral.) It is also the home of the Holy See, the home and office of the Faerarch.

Sulvican City was built based on ancient drawings of the Holy City of Heaven. Much smaller in its scale and glory, there is a passing justice in this comparison.

The city is large enough by most standards, though not as large as the great metropolises like Felric's Redoubt or much of Marnele. It is built on seven hills, like the original Holy City. On the largest and central hill rises the Holy See, a palace of solid quartz created by the greatest ancient alchemists of the Church. A constant light shines from the center of this building, illuminating the entire city.

Most of the city is dedicated to the administration of the Church. The rest is dedicated to residences and museums. The streets of Sulvican City twist between buildings of granite and marble.

Since the fall of Dientor, the Faerarchs have constantly upgraded the defenses of the city with powerful Holy magicks. Now wards guard the walls. Structures of invisible Holy force dome the city.

It's only through these forces that they hold the Demons of Dientor at bay.

The city itself is actually much larger than necessary for its population. During Demon assaults, the population of the entire island, which is only thirty miles long at its longest axis, can retreat inside the defenses of the city. Even this wouldn't be enough if it wasn't for the divining stone.

The divining stone is a large, irregular block of black marble, laced with gold veins. It sits in front of the Holy See and ten guards stand around it at all times. Three days before any assault of Demons, the stone begins sweating blood. The day before, it begins *weeping* blood. This gives the Church time to pull the people into safety when disaster is about to strike.

Sulvican City is protected by the holy Sulvican Guard. Mostly Kullanch of nationality, these are the most devout and honorable soldiers in the world. Of these, the elites are the Demon Watch. These are only the most pious of men, many of them Paladins, who have the dual task of guarding the Faerarch and protecting the city from the most dangerous of Demons. When the Demon Queen comes herself, it is the Demon Watch who draws the line in the sand.

Church: Sulvican City is the seat of the Church in the world and the headquarters of the Angenus Priesthood. There are few members of other churches within the walls. The most common are a handful of Dwarven craftsmen and money lenders that handle the city's special needs.

Allies: All the nations of the Faithful, especially Kulland, Gaerydd (barely).

Enemies: Dientor, Aphimi.

History: In 487 PI, the Wizard-King Hegarion ordered the construction of the greatest of holy cities. Called Sulvican City, he modeled it after the best pieces of art depicting the Holy City of Heaven. In the center, Hegarion used the mightiest Church magicks to create a new Holy See as a seat for the Faerarch.



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The Church moved its administration here over the next several years. Troops from Dientor defended the city and that nation considered it an honor to guard and support the seat of God's Hand on Earth.

In the days of the Wizard-King, Sulvican City knew peace and prosperity. No one knows why the Divining Stone appeared, but many believe that Hegarion managed to somehow pierce the veil of time and see clearly into the future, that he foresaw the fall of Dientor as well as his own fall. They believe he made the stone and sent it to the city via magic to protect the Holy Church in the centuries to come. Of course, considering the Church's current view on magic, this is a heretical belief.

Sulvican City was never conquered by the Empire, but joined it willingly when the rest of the world had fallen. For years, it held an honored place in the Imperial culture, but with the installment of the worship of Eurustace as the state religion, Sulvican City had to convert. Still, it kept its faith in secret, worshipping in underground meetings while paying lip service to the Butcher.

With the fall of the Empire, Sulvican City threw off its oppressive worship and began to restore the Church in the World, or at least in Belkanâth. Looking at the Three Great Disasters, they proclaimed magic evil.

They almost fell as the Demon Queen opened the gate inside Dientor. Sulvican City itself would have fallen if not for Kûlan. It is because of Kûlan's actions here that Dwarves are still welcomed in the city to this day, their worshipping tolerated when no other church may practice within these walls.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Tirem-Ag

Name: The Hidden Kingdom of Tirem-Ag

Ruler: King Glal I

Government: Tirem-Ag is an absolute monarchy. It is not based on a feudal structure allowing the nobility to own their own land and owe constant taxes.

Capital: Mendanniss.

Major Towns: Glastig (2,202), Mendanniss (7,775).

Resources/Trade: Tirem-Ag is completely self-sufficient. What trade it does conduct is with certain select Gnomish merchants from Mag-Morel. Their primary exports are small baubles that project a permanent illusion, sold to nobility around the world (illicitly, of course).

Population: 350,550 Gnomes.

Languages: Gnomish, the Divine Tongue.

Overview: Tirem-Ag has more or less given up on the rest of Belkanâth, in particular the kingdoms of Man. They have set up illusion after illusion on their lands, turning away all but the initiated.

For the most part, outsiders will never find Tirem-Ag. As they approach, subtle illusions direct them away. If a foreigner made it through anyway, they would find halls of Gnomes, all illusionary, filled with illusionary people. Gnomish enchanters would then put the visitor to sleep, fill their minds with dreams of feasts and parties, and set them back outside of Gnomish lands.

It's not that Tirem-Ag hates foreigners, they are simply done with the world. It is whispered that they are attempting to discover a way to leave the world, perhaps by creating the opposite of an Ulcer and whisking their entire nation away to Heaven.

Church: Tirem-Ag follows the Church of the Gnomish Savior. Both the Order of Gobach and the Gyllmoulin Priesthood are headquartered here.

Allies: Irukhâl, Mag-Morel.

Enemies: Gill-Tirn.

History: In 251 PI a group of Gnomes decided to settle in the region of Tirem-Ag and study certain aspects of magic made evident by the achievements of Hegarion.

They settled in these lands and began to build and study. They were still studying Hegarion's innovations when the Wizard-King left the world.

They hid from Eurustace until they decided that everyone would fall before him. Then they sent an



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emissary to the Emperor and surrendered. During the slow decline of the Empire, they built their illusions and their misdirections. By the time the Empire fell, almost no one in the world could find their way into the country without permission.

They almost fell to the Lich King as the undead were not fooled by their tricks and lies. Still, Kûlan managed to save them, if unknowingly, and Tirem-Ag decided that they would not reemerge into the world.

Since then they have pulled back further and further from worldly affairs. Now even the Gnomes of Mag-Morel do not know the true nature of these people. They only know the illusions Tirem-Ag shows them.

World Threads: Since the disappearance of an entire country would have continent-spanning repercussions, whether or not Tirem-Ag manages to create their anti-Ulcer is a World Thread. Many Adventure Seeds could spring up around preliminary attempts, however.

Uzarâg

Name: The Lost Kingdom of Uzarâg.

Ruler: The Warlord.

Government: Uzarâg is a military dictatorship, so absolute that the Warlord has control of the winds and the land itself. Below the Warlord, his generals and military advisors rule the nation, then his commanders, division commanders, and captains. Inside these lands the civilian populations live in constant fear of the brutality and ruthlessness of their military lords. There are no courts to check them. No recourse to take when the leaders go wrong.

Capital: Khalanbur.

Major Towns: Azdin (4,800), Bilan (36,546), Feledîm (2,918), Gabal (10,201), Giled (15,321), Izigandabil (30,602), Kazan (6,371), Khalanbur (48,241), Khazdîn (23,420), Maharukan (2,345), Nurak (1,841), Shand (3,752), Tamanal (8,102), Zaraglûl (17,687).

Resources/Trade: Uzarâg is pretty well set when it comes to resources. Apart from owning the richest mines in Belkanâth, complete with magical metals used in Dwarven crafts, Uzarâg has some good farmlands. In fact, the Dwarves settled each of the

holdings with an eye for secluded farm valleys or mushroom caverns rather than mineral wealth. The Dwarves who built the place knew they could fortify a mine in the middle of nowhere. One can't fortify an underground city without food and water supplies . . . or rather one can, but it is a futile act.

In the days of old Uzarâg traded extensively with most everyone but the Elves of the Brine Lake. The Warlord trades with no one but pillages extensively.

Population: 1,060, 735 Orcs and Goblin slaves.

Languages: Cambionic, Infernal.

Overview: Uzarâg.

Of all the Ulcers, this is the one that breeds the most fear into the Mortals of the world. The Demon Queen certainly terrifies. The Lich King commands loyal hordes. The Siren kills or enslaves without effort, but the Warlord has only been contained by the willing cooperation of over half the world.

And most every military lore master thinks that it's only a matter of time. Eventually, the Warlord will take a nation and hold it long enough to take a second one. When that happens, how long until he takes a third, or a fourth? How long until he conquers all of Belkanâth? Can even the Enârôz contain him then?

Uzarâg is a nation of mountains and passes. The various holdings are essentially massive underground cities, complete with access to vast alpine farms and underground mushroom caves, mines, marketplaces and industry. These cities teem with Orcs, but each could hold many times their number if under attack.

Most of the major settlements tend to center in the western parts of the range, with fortresses guarding the eastern passes, originally from the Elves but now from the Elven-Dwarven Alliance.

There are two types of roads in Uzarâg, the surface roads through the passes of the range and the Dwarven Roads, long tunnels connecting the settlements underground. Neither road is safe, the above ground because of Orc patrols and the belowground because of the Howling.

The Warlord is absolutely evil, absolutely cruel, but not wantonly so. He is possibly the best tactician in the world, with a millennium of conquest and

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logistics under his belt. He doesn't act needlessly. If someone is a threat to him, they die, if not, they might still die, but he does have a soldier's honor. If someone aids him and they pose no further threat, he might let them live. The problem that gets the arrogant killed is that the Warlord is brilliant at deducing threat. Many people think they are no danger to the Warlord but the Great Fiend knows better. They die as quickly as the rest. He has no pity, no mercy, and no sentimentality.

The Changing is an insidious corruption of the land which slowly infuses people with the Infernal Taint. Over time these people will transform into their Cambion equivalent. The only ones immune to this are those with the Divine Spark.

The Dreaming insinuates horrible nightmares into the minds of those without a Divine Spark or Infernal Taint. Over time, a person's sleep gets worse and worse until they go mad . . . or die.

The Howling is a great wind that attacks people the Warlord would generally perceive as dangerous (not necessarily to himself). This wind will smash

people against the Dwarven walls and throw them off mountain tops. The Howling makes the Dwarven Roads impassible to those who aren't Cambions.

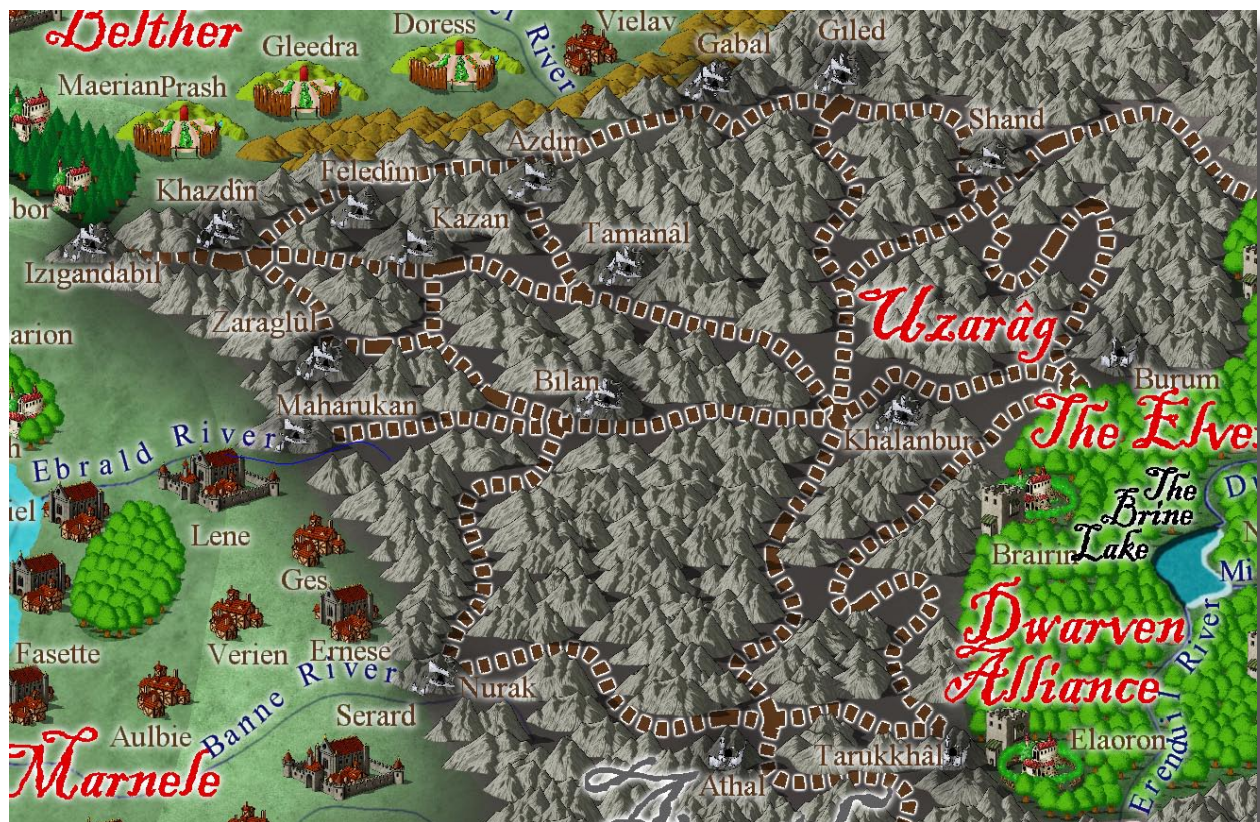
The Raging is the insidious force of the Warlord's hate. Those inside the Warlord's influence feel this great rage flowing through them, those with the Divine Spark worse than others. Those with an Infernal Taint actually feel bolstered but this anger.

All of the effects of Uzarâg are worse underground than on the surface.

Church: Those inside Uzarâg worship the Warlord. It's not known what he thinks of this worship but it's a testimonial to the awesome power of his will on the land that he has no need to stamp out other religions. No Orc lives in Uzarâg long without coming to the conclusion that the Warlord is the only god they will ever need again.

Allies: None.

Enemies: Everyone, especially Belther, Doszke, the Elven-Dwarven Alliance, Felric's Redoubt, Gaerydd, Ingrast, Izone, Kohler, Ontav.



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History: In 4821 PI, Dwarves cut the first chip of stone from the nation of Uzarâg. They had already found vast mineral wealth in the mountains of the range and the right kinds of secluded alpine glades. They knew even then that this would be the mightiest Dwarven kingdom in Belkanâth. Some whispered that it might, with a few millennia of tender care, even rival the fallen Durandûl.

They weren't disappointed.

In 4723 PI, the first magical Rune Metals were discovered in mines. By the turn of the century, they'd discovered the other two types, making this the most profitable of possible locales. Even if nothing else was found, this would give the Dwarves a legacy in Belkanâth.

The Age of Chaos almost destroyed Uzarâg, but somehow the royal line survived and this was enough to rebuild. In a generation or two, the nation recovered.

They ignored the Vampire Lord entirely. He tried to conquer Uzarâg once but was so thoroughly defeated that he never attempted it again. The Dwarves closed their borders and weathered the Vampire's rule.

The Dwarves ignored Almia too, until the Protector State controlled most of the world. Only then did they join provisionally, and more to perpetuate the good the country did than to reap its benefits. Also, during this time they sent Dwarves out to found Zurag-Zathûr.

They closed their borders and guarded their stocks during the time of the Great Ulcer. They stayed sealed throughout much of the Dark Ages and didn't fully rejoin the world until the Age of War. Their involvement in that age is detailed in Chapter Three.

They ignored the Wizard-King and resisted Eurustace. Eventually they fell, becoming members of the Empire. They had their revenge, though, producing the greatest Dwarven general of all time.

Kûlan.

Kûlan joined the Marshal and helped to bring about the fall of the Empire. In the end, he was the only one left to clean up the aftermath, and the aftermath was terrible.

Kûlan left Uzarâg and saved the Elves of the Brine Lake from Köhler invaders. He moved on, already

suspecting something from the Councilors' apprentices, the Great Fiends.

When the gate opened in Dientor, he was too late to save that nation, but not too late to save Sulvican City and to contain the evil. His army was weak, many of the men deserting, believing he kept them on needlessly. Now they flocked to his banner again in Sulvican City.

And because of this, Uzarâg was vulnerable to the Warlord.

Kûlan always believed that it was his fault. He had time to return and the Warlord might not have been killable, but he was certainly beatable. It's possible that if Kûlan had been there, leading the defense, the greatest kingdom in Belkanâth wouldn't have fallen.

But it did.

The Warlord gathered the largest army of Orcs ever known, slipping over the Dragon Peaks before the Enârôz closed the passes. He descended on Uzarâg and took the nation in twenty-seven days. It's rumored that he wielded the Fell Hammer as he destroyed the armies of Uzarâg. If so, he's never taken it out of the kingdom since.

The Dwarves of Uzarâg, when they knew they had lost, tried to flee, but it was obvious they would be destroyed. Then their greatest enemies, Elves of the Brine Lake, appeared and they knew that they were lost. But when the Elves loosed their arrows, they loosed them on the Orcs.

The Great Fiends weren't understood at the time. The Elves didn't save the Dwarves because they knew everyone had to band together against the Warlord. They saved the Dwarves because Kûlan had saved them, and these were his people.

They fought their way into Elven lands and Kûlan appeared in time to contain the Warlord. Finally, the Warlord stopped fighting and fortified his holdings.

The Warlord made several assaults out of Uzarâg in the years to come, and while he was never able to defeat Kûlan, he did bring about his death, waging the siege that sent an arrow into the Dwarven saint. Still, he'd already had the greatest revenge he could ever hope for. He'd stolen the Dwarf's home.

The Dwarves of the world haven't forgotten Kûlan's Lament. They might be scattered now, but

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groups of them periodically delve into Uzarâg in an attempt to strike a blow against the Warlord. It's called the Great Revenge and every Dwarf holds it dear to his heart.

The Warlord continues to wage his wars. It was his destruction of Belther's predecessor nation that created that Halfling country. He has seized Ontav. He has survived assassination attempts and assaults on his lands.

The only reason why he hasn't taken the world is that the nations can band together and field more than ten times his number. He has not yet been able to hold land outside of Uzarâg long enough for the Ulcer to grow. The nations of the world are vigilant and although it takes a force of five to ten times the Warlord's number to beat him on an open field, it isn't a problem for them to rally this many men. Still, they're Mortal, and therefore fallible.

The Warlord is patient.

World Threads: For more on the World Threads and Adventure Seeds of Uzarâg, see our upcoming product *The Lost Kingdom of the Dwarves*.

Yevgenia

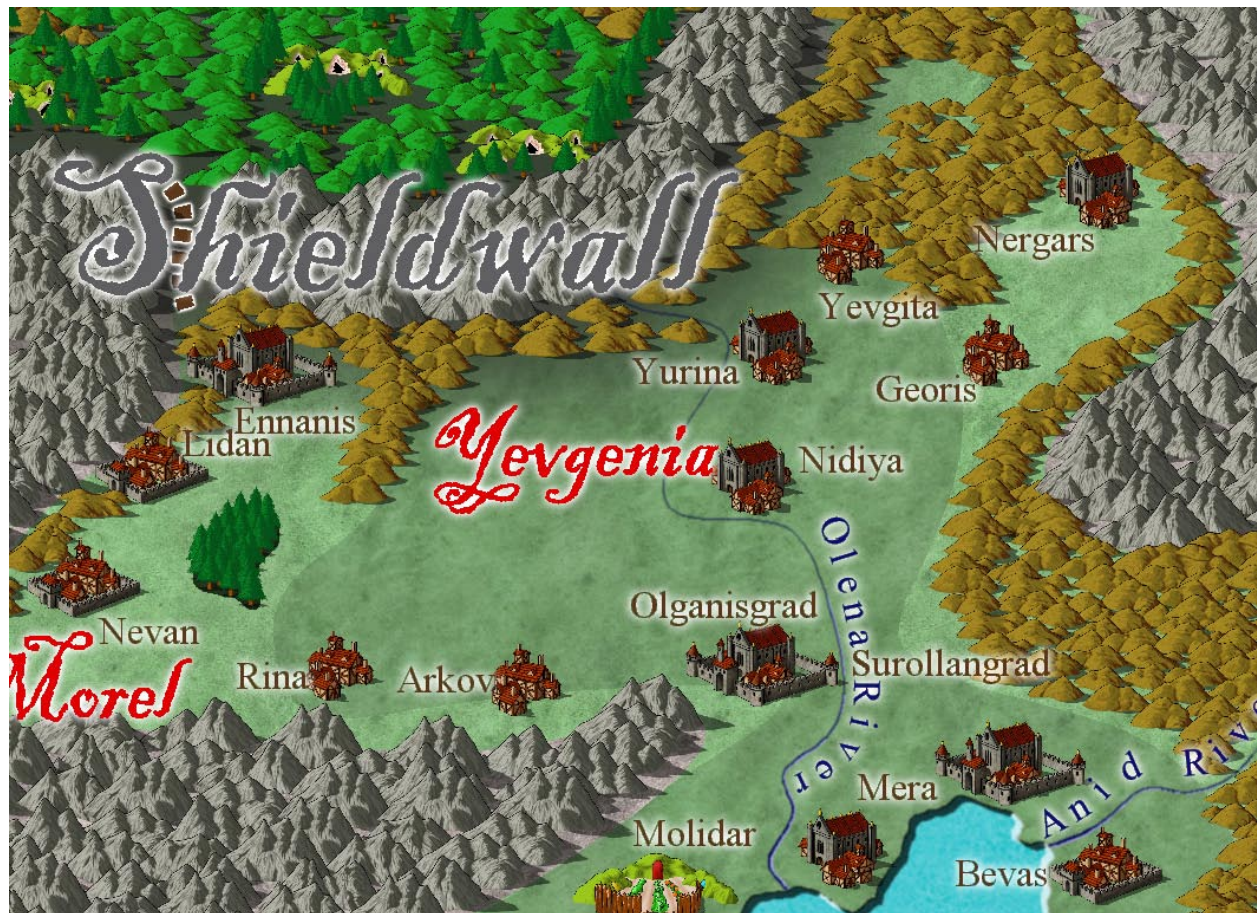
Name: The Kingdom of Yevgenia.

Ruler: Oksiddei III.

Government: Yevgenia is an absolute monarchy with a well-established aristocracy that owns their own land and can have nearly as much power as the king. Many of these great houses have as much or more claim to the throne as their monarch and this means for intense politics and many assassination attempts among the High Court.

Capital: Olganisgrad.

Major Towns: Arkov (2,278), Ennanis (29,934), Georis (3,883), Lidan (2,724), Mera (10,543), Nergars (8,913), Nevan (5,726), Nidiya (13,282), Olganisgrad (41,112), Rina (3,469), Surollangrad (24,982), Yevgita (6,930), Yurina (17,746).



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Resources/Trade: Yevgenia is a strong nation with good mineral mines, minus gemstones. Their farmlands are poor, but plentiful, so the peasantry can leave fields fallow longer. They trade readily via the Sea of Aleroch.

Population: 3,755,785

Languages: Yevgenian, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo, Ontan, Halfling.

Overview: Yevgenia is an old country with a long heritage. They were founded by raider stock, probably the predecessors of Starg,

The Yevgenians are a fairly warlike people, with long military traditions. They are a stoic people as well, preferring to drown their sorrows in whiskey rather than confront their problems.

Yevgenia is a nation built on tradition and duty and honor. Men there regularly spend their entire lives doing jobs they hate rather than let their families down in any way.

Yevgenians are a pessimistic people, expecting fate to deal out the worst to them at any moment. While the nobility is more driven than this, the commoners expect the worse at all times.

One of the six Elemental Wonders, the Monument of Ice, sits in Olganisgrad. This two-story ice structure grows and changes slowly like a high-speed glacier. Spars grow, arches shrink and artists try to capture it at the most beautiful times in its existence. Paintings and sketches and sculptures of the Monument of Ice are common in Yevgenia, and few look alike.

Church: Yevgenia follows the Church of Angenus but there are large communities of Atavists there as well.

Allies: Irukhâl, Gill-Tirn.

Enemies: Belther, the Lich King, Doszke, Mag-Morel. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: Yevgenia was founded in 1254 AI out of the formulation of disparate and fragmented people left behind after the initial attack of the Lich King. For the years after the Lich King's assault, Yevgenia had formed into sixteen minor holdings run by local warlords.

These warlords each donated men to Shieldwall and initially they banded together to monitor and

regulate these troop donations. Over time this oligarchy became more powerful until the leader of the council seized control and declared Yevgenia a monarchy.

Since then they've waged war on most everyone in the region, expanding lands at times, shrinking at others. Their conquests rarely last long as they have to strip troops whenever one of the two nearby Great Fiends assaults the local lands. They might be warlike, but they also take their responsibility as the biggest Human nation in the region seriously.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.

Zûram

Name: The Kingdom of Zûram.

Ruler: King Ishmandûl.

Government: Zûram is an absolute monarchy ruled through the clan system. Each of the clans has a Clan Lord who advises the king and handles the clan's administration. Clans handle their own taxation which they pass on to their king. Each clan can be self-sufficient if necessary, but they also have specialties that they sell to the other clans.

Capital: Khâl.

Major Towns: Felbazan (11,598), Galun (9,838), Gamin (7,838), Khâl (23,638), Muzin (6,465), Ragan (15,879), Sharâg (4,441), Siglâd (2,648), Urumazdan (2,003), Zagûm (3,355).

Resources/Trade: The Dwarves select their location for fortresses carefully. They have all the normal craft metals, as well as Rune Silver and Rune Gold. They also have valuable jewels available in various mines. They harvest, refine, and craft these materials into the finest Dwarven goods. These they distribute through the world by means of Maroldan merchants. In return, they import a good deal of foodstuffs to supplement their own adequate but uninteresting fare.

Population: 438,515 Dwarves.

Languages: Dwarvish, the Divine Tongue, Maroldo.

Overview: Zûram is the biggest living Dwarven nation left in Belkanâth. They work hard to cultivate trade connections of their own in addition to their Maroldan connections.

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Zûram has a massive military force and they've been known to send them out to help allies in the world. When a Great Fiend attacks, they always send troops, even if it's likely they will show up too late.

Zûram works hard at being the Dwarven ambassadors to the world. They send diplomats to every major nation in Belkanâth, friend or enemy, promoting the Dwarven agenda. These ambassadors are renowned for their charm and their persuasiveness. Other diplomats say that it helps when you have hundreds of years to practice.

Church: Zûram follows the Church of Ziruk-Nurak. There are also some Atavists Dwarves in the kingdom, but they aren't a large sampling. The Church of Ziruk-Nurak is based here.

Allies: Belther, Gill-Tirn, Jermolyn.

Enemies: Osal. All hostilities, hatred, and prejudices are forgotten instantly when the Warlord stirs.

History: Zûram was founded in 4821 PI and since then they have tried to make their mark on the world. They built industriously during the early days and almost failed due to the Age of Chaos. However, they struggled through, and managed to begin building their underground road system about the time the Vampire Lord rose to power.

They fought the Vampire Lord desperately, and while they weren't able to defeat him, both sides fought their way to a stand still, and he never took Zûram. By the end of the age, they'd built much of their modern infrastructure.

During the Protector State they joined early and willingly, providing muscle for the various orders. They served with great honor.

They shut their doors during the time of the Great Ulcer. Their farms suffered during this time, but otherwise they weathered the disaster.

They negotiated their way around Hegarion, allying with the Wizard-King. This was a profitable time for the Dwarves, selling Rune Metals to him for great profit. This is the only historic account of Zûram selling Rune Metals.

They held out for a long time against Eurustace, but fell when he opened the Emperor's Roads.

They supplied a large number of troops to the Marshal, all-the-while their diplomats worked on the Court, convincing the Emperor that the Dwarves of Belkanâth weren't involved.

Since then they've been the world's most ready troops fighting the Great Evils of the world. They aren't positioned perfectly for it, but everyone knows that if they fall, Zûram will come to rescue them.

World Threads: There are no additional World Threads for this nation.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five: Power Groups

There are several groups of note that affect the nature and history of Belkanâth. Some of these are extranational, some are just important enough to warrant their own treatment. All of them shape the world in some way.

THE ASSASSINS' GUILD

The Assassins' Guild officially formed in the year 472 AI in retaliation to Imperial persecution. In reality, they have existed, in one form or another, since the first men decided to kill their brothers. It was only in 472 that they achieved a continental scope.

The official history of the Assassins' Guild is brief. A union with the Emperor sealed their protection from official harassment, but that did not stop them from running afoul of the Thieves' Guild (then a national organization as well). The Thieves' Guild slaughtered them.

According to the official history, the Assassins' Guild ended there.

But assassins still lived and the Guild never died. Within fifty years, the assassins rebuilt their network.

They could have moved en masse, but this time, they decided that it would be more prudent to keep a low profile. They allowed the world to believe there was no network, that assassins only communicated locally.

This was the state of things for many years. The Assassins' Guild kept their heads down, and it wasn't until one of their members rose to power that the Guild's star went back into ascendance.

This man's name was Mundus, and through treachery and assassination, he rose to become Lord High Inquisitor. Once in this position, the Assassins' Guild stopped hiding. They did not announce their presence as they had in the past, but now if someone asked them to kill a person on the other side of the world, they would do it.

With Mundus at his height of power, the Assassins' Guild gained protection. However, Mundus refused to lead the Guild. Instead, he placed his right-hand man, Tartius, at its head.

Tartius found time to both lead the Guild and act as Mundus' agent. From his position at the head of the Guild, a vast amount of information flowed up the chain. In addition, whenever a rival became a

threat to the throne, Tartius would make sure that they disappeared.

After the fall of the Empire, Tartius continued to run the guild. His name became a title, taken on by all following guild masters, to keep the anonymity of the position.

When a guild master feels he can no longer fill his position, he chooses those he thinks are most capable of replacing him.

He then orders them to kill him. Some believe when the smoke has cleared, the head position sometimes changes hands five or six times.

The Assassins' Guild is an organization of singular power. They reach everywhere in Belkanâth and possibly into the east as well.

Contracts range from 50 GP to tens of thousands of gold. Once they've accepted a contract, there is no way to revoke it.

The Assassins' Guild thoroughly checks out every person who intends to hire them. If the person works for the authorities, the Guild kills them at once. If it turns out later that they were a spy, or the Guild sold protection to the victim, the client will wind up dead as well.

Adventure Seeds

The nature of the Assassins' Guild's most secret dealings is an Adventure Seed. Perhaps they are trafficking in Demons. Perhaps they are merely perpetuating this as a myth to increase their perceived threat. Maybe there are Demons as members of the Guild. Whatever the truth, investigating it is rife with adventure opportunities.

World Threads

The identity of Tartius and past Tartius', as well as the means of succession, is a World Thread.

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The Guild is far reaching. It has branches in every major city in Belkanâth. It is rumored they headquarter in one of the desert kingdoms.

There are also rumors that something is going on high up in the Guild. No one is certain exactly what, but there are rumors the head of the Guild might be trucking with Demons.

BASTRIN WAR COLLEGE

To stand on a wall. To fight the never-ending hordes of Orcs in Uzarâg. For some, these are the heights of warfare.

But defenses fail and armies inevitably take the field. When this happens, only the most talented officers and generals can stand against the Warlord.

The history of the struggles against Uzarâg is one of attacks and feints. No patrols or defenses can hold the Great Fiend inside his Ulcer and eventually someone must put him back in his box.

While bordering cities squat behind their defensive walls, armies range across the land: armies whose sole goal is to destroy the Orcish marauders.

Thus, was Bastrin War College established.

Over the years, the singular purpose has blurred. Now it has become a school of general warfare, with an emphasis on fighting Demons. Still, this is one of the premiere strategy and tactics schools in the world. The cost is enormous (1,000 GP a term), but many nobles send their sons here to learn the ways of war.

Bastrin War College has a friendly rivalry with the Premane War College. Every few years the two schools conduct a series of war games to increase their enrollment and put the fire of competition under the students.

Most students attend the school only to pick up some tactical, strategic, and logistical skills. Not many students have the wherewithal to dedicate

their lives to the school, with its cost and its competitive studies.

Those who do learn the advanced skills and wisdom to lead entire armies in battle. The world's next crop of generals will come from these ranks. And rightly so.

THE COALITION

There are beings in the world whose goal is to bring about the downfall of all that is Holy. These beings have worked in the shadows for years, and their impact has marked the world many times over.

It's unknown whether this group is the direct descendant of the one that created the Great Ulcer, but it is known that they consider themselves the spiri-

tual descendants, and that they take this heritage very seriously.

The Coalition is undoubtedly the most evil and insidious force in Belkanâth. This cannot be stated strongly enough. They might be the most powerful as well.

The Coalition is a collection of masterminds and agents of all shapes,

sizes, and abilities. It takes real talent to attract the attention of Coalition recruiters. It takes discipline and vision. Random destroyers are not welcome.

This does not mean the Coalition doesn't use random killers, simply that the killers do not *know* they are being used. They influence and direct raiders and barbarians. They can buy mercenaries anonymously and whisper in the ears of lords.

The Coalition wields vast, subtle, and widespread power. It's thought that they even subtly manipulate the Great Fiends.

A recruit to the Coalition must display uncommon cunning, wit, and ruthlessness. The longer it takes the agents to decide the recruit is evil, the better. If the subject appears promising enough, recruiters will invite him into a shell organization.

These shell organizations have no obvious connection to the Coalition. There, recruits are evalu-

Adventure Seeds

The Coalition is rife with Adventure Seeds. Every action they take could be the subject of the adventure. A long-running campaign could even revolve around trying to infiltrate the organization, although this would likely become a mature-themed campaign.

World Threads

The nature of the Masters, even their number, is a World Thread.

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ated more fully, sent on many missions to test them. These missions will require unspeakable acts. Meanwhile, the existence of the Coalition will be kept secret, but not *too* secret.

This is another test. The subject must realize there are bigger forces at play here. If they figure out the organization is just a front, than they will be recruited into the central organization.

There are four divisions to the Coalition.

First are the Shields. Shields are the combat troops of the Coalition. They are not cannon fodder, but trusted guards, protectors, and enforcers. A Shield is expected to fight and die for his charge without a thought.

Second are the Eyes. The Eyes gather all the Coalition's intelligence. They come in many forms, from the royal guard to the wandering minstrel. They gather all the data for the Coalition, serving as the frontline spies and gossipmongers.

After a person has shown notable achievements as an Eye or a Shield, they may be promoted to the Hands. The Hands are the agents of the Coalition. These are the workhorses, laying plans, poisoning ears, and making things happen. This is an active job, as the Hands do *everything* the Coalition needs done.

The final level of the Coalition are the Masters. Scholars guess little about these beings, though they assume Masters recruit from the Hands. The Masters lay all the plans of the Coalition. It is they who know the group's true ends and how all the little insidious plans figure into the big picture. The Coalition takes great pains to make sure no one can trace them back up the ranks.



No one knows much about what fate the Coalition intends for the world. Few even believe the organization exists, thinking it a paranoid conspiracy theory. This is just what the Coalition wants.

THE CONFESSORS

In the golden age of the Kingdom of Sorcery, examiners wandered the world, probing the minds of accused and accusing alike. These Confessors meted fair punishment on all those they found guilty of crimes.

These Confessors were models of law and justice. They held to a higher standard than all they tested.

Those days are gone.

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In recent years, a band of judges and law enforcement officials decided that enough was enough. Too many criminals escaped their grasp through guile or political power. They formed the Confessors, building a group to carry out their Star-Chamber agendas.

The Confessors are a group of radical zealots with unbelievable conviction. Using forbidden magicks, they rape the minds of any they suspect of crimes, punishing any offenders they find. They do not care for mitigating circumstances (though self-defense is a valid defense). The only sentence is death.

If they find a like-minded vigilante, they will bring them into the fold.

The confessors use magic, whether learned or contained in a magic item. They are not above torture, but only to get a strong-willed subject to drop his defenses. All evidence must come from the person's own mind.

The Confessors are a brutal lot, but at their hearts, they are not evil. They are much more Machiavellian than anything else.

The magic of the old Confessors is lost. Many people believe these new Confessors are learning nothing but dreams and fantasies, executing people for their idle thoughts, not crimes.

THE CORINI

The Corini are a migrant Human people. They're wanderers, explorers, and entertainers. Many believe them flagrant pagans who traffic in dark arts. They are said to be thieves, villains, harlots, and

murderers. While these rumors are right about certain people in the culture, the reality is much more complex.

The Corini are strongly united and prize family over all else. They tend to tan or olive skin and dark hair and eyes. They wear drab clothes most of the time, but as most people only notice them during performances, they think the Corini dress in wild colors. This is helpful too as people only recognize them when they're in costume.

Corini carnivals include dancing and singing, fire eating, tumbling, and fortune-telling, but these are all performance arts. While many think that some of these acts, especially the tumbling and fortune-telling, are magical arts, they are scams and tricks, not real magic.

Most Corini are of the Faithful, but they tend to make more money by playing up the pagan stereotype, so they do this when they aren't in lands where pagans are likely to be lynched.

It's said the Corini have a deeper purpose, that they have a quest or a destiny for which they

search. If so, they've given up whatever home and life they once had, just to seek this out.

THE ILLUMINATED

There are shadows in the world. Some are deep and endless, like the Coalition. Others are more obvious, like the Shadowed Legion. Some are random, more a nuisance than a hindrance, like the Sowers of Seeds. However, all shadows need a light to exist.

Adventure Seeds

There are many Adventure Seeds built into the fact the Confessors perform their own form of justice. They might hire the party to capture a suspected murderer, or perhaps the party would discover that some person has been magically framed, the evidence placed in their own minds to be found by the Confessors.

The Corini are a downtrodden people and a bighearted party could have many adventures based around the Corini. Perhaps the local law enforcement is harassing a Corini caravan or a young Corini woman is accused of charming a man away from his wife.

One could also build adventures around the Illuminated and their attempts to keep the world on a solid course. One could build a whole campaign around the characters subtly being brought into one Illuminated scheme after another.

World Threads

The secret motivation of the Corini's movements is a World Thread.

The upper echelons of the Illuminated and their identities are also World Threads.

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For years, conspiracy theorists have denied the existence of the Coalition. Almost no one speaks of the rumors of the Illuminated, yet this ultra powerful organization is one of the most influential on the planet.

The Illuminated are a band of thinkers and strategists, high-minded and noble, who stand behind the world and help keep it whole. They are the primary opposition of the Coalition, though it's not certain even the Coalition knows they exist.

The Illuminated hold no armies and control few agents. They do not have the strict organization of the Coalition. They act through diplomacy, rarely through direct force.

The only way to join the Illuminated is to be selected by one of its members. That member then presents the applicant to a high-ranking Illuminated (though the applicant probably has no idea anything is going on). The high-ranking member, if they see promise in the applicant, will devise a test for him.

The nature of this test will depend on the applicant. A brilliant cripple won't face combat, whereas a scrappy fighter with a heart of gold will probably not be given mind-bending logic puzzles.

But they *will* be tested, for whatever capacity the Illuminated think they are able to fill. There will always be tests of cleverness, all Illuminated must have sharp minds, but this can be a test of mechanical aptitude or detecting the truth of a person's character. The order does not accept dullards.

The test will also include a powerful moral element. Not all people will always agree on the right thing to do, but the person's character should become readily obvious.

The Illuminated stay behind the scenes. Most of their agents are diplomats, and they reveal themselves to all good kings, the heads of churches, and other powerful good personalities. Typically, these people do the Illuminated's bidding without need for payment.

The Illuminated are a savvy group. They rarely need to reveal themselves directly, preferring to nudge those around them into doing what's right.

However, they are not without their defenses, and sometimes they go to war. War with the Coalition.

PREMANE WAR COLLEGE

The Premane War College is much like the Bastrin War College. The two schools share similar curriculums and tuitions.

The Premane College, however, concentrates more on fighting powerful mythical creatures. These lessons have more of a tactical bent than a personal one, but if you need a man capable of deploying a unit of archers against a dragon or a Demon, a graduate of this school is a good place to start.

THE SHADOW ORDER

By far, the most powerful magical organization in the world, the Shadow Order was founded in 1035 AI with the purpose of advancing magical knowl-



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edge in the world. They have been 100 percent successful.

To join the Shadow Order, one must be able to cast the highest orders of spells (9th level). They must also be able to display a mind-bending grasp of advanced magic (GM's discretion, but a high Spellcraft and Knowledge (Arcana) would be a good start). Then they must write and present something that furthers the cause of magic (a powerful spell might do. A spell book or a treatise on magic would be better).

If the Order accepts the member, they forever fall under the rules and strictures of the Order.

The Order grants great advantages to members. Apart from hidden labs and libraries in most major areas, members of the Order can learn any spell in *Player's Handbook* for no monetary cost (more exotic ones must be bought or traded). In return, the member must report any spells he finds or invents (which may be copied if they are new or unique).

Other than that, any member of the Order must serve at the Order's pleasure. This usually does not mean much more than offering hospitality when an Order mage comes calling, but there are times when more extreme aid is needed.

All members of the Order must uphold the Order's laws. Anyone violating these laws must be killed immediately (if a mage reveals the Order's presence to the Church, for instance) or turned over to the Order for punishment (the Order understands that not everyone has a stomach for killing.)

The Shadow Order is neutral in all things. They accept any mage of the proper level of skill, with no consideration for ethics (as long as Order's laws are obeyed). They protect their own (meaning both members and interests) and do not care about anything else.

THE SHADOWED LEGION

It is one of the great ironies of life that the Shadowed Legion has no idea the Coalition exists. They have chalked the rumors up to paranoia and misinterpretation of Legion operations. They've found no evidence to examine further.

The Shadowed Legion handles many of the same types of operations as the Coalition, they simply aren't as good at it. Don't let that fool you, however. They are still skilled.

The Shadowed Legion acts throughout the world, sowing evil and destruction wherever they can. They bring down kings, sabotage great works, and otherwise try to promote the cause of darkness.

There are five branches to the Shadowed Legion.

First, there are the Fists. The Fists contain most of the Legion's muscle. Anyone who spends more energy on combat than other pursuits belongs in this branch first and foremost.

Then there are the Whispers. The Whispers are composed of anyone who places guile and stealth above strength.

There is also the Word. The Word is composed of the foul priests who lead the order. This group is in charge of setting policy and doctrine. They are the lawmakers and the judges of the order.

Casting other spells is chiefly left to the Blood. These bards are the spell casters and thinkers of the order. They help plot the strategies and lay the plans of the Legion.

Finally, there is the Will. The Will is the biggest branch and the most active. The Will is comprised of mixed units of agents that complete the lion's share of the Legion's missions.

Members are brought into the Legion by sponsorship. They must undergo rigorous testing to make sure they have properly black and loyal hearts. Rising through the ranks is often equally brutal.

The Shadowed Legion, for all their inferiority to the Coalition, are a terrifying and powerful force in

Adventure Seeds

One could build the same types of adventures around the Shadowed Legion just as easily as the Coalition, with much the same types of adventures.

World Threads

The identities of the uppermost members of the Shadowed Legion are World Threads.

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the world. Little do they know that they are often doing the Coalition's work for them, but the Coalition needs scapegoats and distractions, and they allow them to exist.

THE SONS OF ALMIA

The people remember. They remember the terrible times. They remember the great times. Most of all, they remember the glories of ages past.

Thousands of years after the destruction of the Almian Protector State, the people still remember. They honor this memory.

The Sons of Almia is a continent-wide coalition of champions and do-gooders trying to keep the dream alive. They keep many of the trappings of a secret society, but they do so more openly.

There are several orders of the Sons of Almia:

The Order of the Dragon Slayers

Probably the most prestigious order. The Order of the Dragon Slayers is a small and tight-knit group that recruits from the other Orders (but mostly from the Knights-Er-rant). Members are usually sponsored into the ranks, but slaying a dragon is a surefire inroad (most of the Order haven't managed it).

The Order of the Holy Saints

This Order specializes in fighting the creatures of the Warrens. Deep caverns will do in a pinch, but members of this Order are only alive fighting Fallen Elves or some other creature of the deep. Members are usually sponsored into this Order (mostly from the Knights-Errant), but a good battle against a Warren creature is a great inroad.

The Order of the Knights-Errant

The Knights-Errant wander the world, righting wrongs. They are the general troubleshooters and

catchall group of the Sons. They are known for their courage and their might. They will take on any challenge and ask for no reward in return (though they will often accept one, they have to eat too). Members are typically apprenticed into this Order by another knight, though field deputizations are not unheard of in cases of extreme brand continuing threats.

The Order of Relief

This is an Order of wandering priests and doctors. Their primary goal is the healing of the sick and the succor of the wounded. Members typically apprentice into this order.

The Civil Defense Union

This is a group of lawyers and barristers. They travel the world finding the legally slighted to champion in front of the lords and kings of the land. They are well respected by the people, but often dreaded by the legal authorities. Members are usually recruited out of existing legal scholars.

Adventure Seeds

The Sons of Almia do little *but* adventure.

Everything about the Sowers of Seeds is an Adventure Seed.

World Threads

The identity of the highest members of the Sons of Almia are World Threads. It isn't a big secret, but we will almost certainly produce materials about them at some time.

THE SOWERS OF SEEDS

Perhaps the most annoying power group in Belkanâth, the Sowers do not seek to cause evil or good, they do not promote noble causes or dastardly plans. They crave only one thing:

Chaos.

The Sowers wander the world, causing what Anarchy they can, trying vainly to topple governments. Occasionally, they are even successful.

The Sowers are a huge group, with chapters in every City. Unfortunately, they make no moves that put them obviously outside the law. Officially, they are annoyances who wreak havoc in social situations. When one gets caught, he is always stated to have "gone too far."

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Chapter Six: Religion

Six of the religions in the Mortal Realm find some degree of acceptance among civilized people. There is a church that reveres each of the Five Prophets as a Savior and the Atavistic Church.

Besides these, people of the world follow various pagan faiths, none of which are accepted by the primary six religions. In fact, the insistence that these pagan faiths worship a pantheon of Demons is likely correct, though there may be some exceptions.

This is not to say the primary six religions are accepting of one another. Most people in the world consider all other religions heresies. However, the more objective lore masters of the world consider these six religions to be the most legitimate.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

There are several major religious practices that are common to more than one of the major religions. They are as follows:

Baptism

All the major religions except Atavism practice some form of baptism. In these rites the priest sprinkles the crown or chest of the supplicant with Holy water. This is meant to cleanse the supplicant of the hold of the Deadly Sins.

Baptism is not a cleansing of sin, but the baptism rite is almost always done when a person is brought into a religion. Since a person receives absolution of all past sins when joining the religion, this absolution is connected to baptism in the mind of the uneducated.

Holy Oil

All six religions use Holy oils. These blessed oils are used in anointing the head or the wounds of a sick or injured during a blessing of healing. This is the most common method of healing for a priest without magical abilities, as it's believed that those who are blessed will recover more readily and more completely than those who are not.

Note: A GM might wish to double the healing rate for a character with a blessing of healing.

Holy Water

Priests use Holy water to cleanse a person from the hold of sin. While this doesn't help with past sins, it's supposed to make it easier for the person to resist sin in the future. Since the existence of the Nopheratus is sinful, as is its connection to the Undead, Holy water will cause damage to Undead creatures.

Holy Wafers

Holy wafers in the Mortal Realm have nothing to do with transubstantiation. Holy wafers are infused with Divine energy and therefore are nourishment for the soul. While the body needs nourishment three times a day, the soul needs it only once a week. Without

REAL WORLD CHURCHES

A reader may see some of the details of these churches and feel the urge to relate them to real-world religions. This is not intended. These are not real-world churches and their depiction should not be taken as a statement on anyone's religion, either now or in history. The reality is that religion has had a great impact on culture, so great that they invade our myths and our legends, especially our monsters. Holy wafers are used against vampires even in worlds without a Last Supper and Holy water damages Undead without Leviticus to inspire. In other words, it's the European cultural impact of these traditions that have made their way into RPGs and not the religious significance. In addition, many of these features, such as ritual eating during a service, are common in religions throughout history and not tied to any one church. So we've tried to draw the details differently enough so as not to make anyone feel we trivialize their beliefs. We are trying to create an evocative setting, not making a statement.

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taking this spiritual nourishment once a week, the soul is thought to weaken and all manner of sins and Demons will be visited upon the supplicant.

Churching

When a woman has a baby, it's believed by all six faiths that she touches the hand of God as the Almighty breathes the first breath into the babe. Because of this connection to the Divine and because of the physical hardships of labor, a woman is expected to do no work and it's unnecessary for her to attend any religious services for forty days after delivery. A new mother is expected to stay in bed and nurse the baby for this period.

After forty days, the woman returns to her normal lifestyle. On the next Godsdays, she returns to the church where the priest sprinkles her with Holy water as she steps over the threshold. She is then welcomed back into the congregation.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The following beliefs are important enough to bear mentioning outside the respective faiths:

The Case Against Magic

Three times in history, the use of magic has brought the Mortal Realm, the *entire* Mortal Realm, to the brink of destruction. These are known in the Church as the three Great Disasters. They are the Vortices, the Great Ulcer, and the Chaos Gate.

In the days after the fall of the Empire, with the near destruction of the world and the creation of the Great Fiends, Faerarch Paur the Visionary made a new decree. He stated that while magic might have once been a pure art, it has since been hopelessly corrupted by Bamon and the Nopheratus. All one had to do was look at the world. It teetered on the edge of destruction. The dead walked the earth with startling regularity and magic had just created abominations that rivaled even Bamon in power. Obviously, magic was no longer holy.

Paur then decreed that only magic of directly Divine origin, that is those cast by the Church, were still divine. While the Mortal Realm was Divine in origin, it was no longer Divine in practice, and its

corruption, its worldliness, and its insidious evil had distorted the magicks attached to it.

Thus were the Witch-Hunters born.

The Gwyr Heresy

Gwyr, the Scion, claims that he's the blood descendent of the Herald. He's never mentioned how remote, but the Herald was likely thirty-two-years old when he was born, which would make him the Herald's son, if true.

Since the Herald is believed by each of the five Savior-based churches to be the rebirth of their Prophet, this makes him the direct descendent of the Savior. This is a great heresy among the Church. It's an even greater heresy among the other races, as it makes a case the Savior was Human (although certain theologians believe the Herald comes as different races, to show all Mortals are the children of God.)

The Witch-Hunters, those outside Gaerydd at any rate, have itched to burn Gwyr at the stake for as long as anyone can remember. The problem is that Gwyr seems so earnest, is so popular, and produces so much money from the Church that no Faerarch has dared moved against him.

But the Gwyr heresy is a sore spot across the world and many nations loathe helping Gwyr, even when the Warlord himself attacks.

Revelations

All the churches of the world have revelations about the end of times. The lists of the signs and the events of the end of the world are many and varied, but some of the relevant details (from the Church's version) are as follows:

In the final days the seed of evil shall infest the earth.

The moon shall weep and the seas drift like unto the dunes of the desert.

The dead and the living shall cry as one.

The jewel of Heaven and Hell will rest in the hand of the Lord.

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The trees will wither and the land will bleed.

The laments of the dying will spread like unto a plague.

The breath of God will be reviled by the Faithful.

The churches of the world will be like unto a nursery.

The Fallen will speak true and the Faithful will speak false.

The Savior will stop guarding the fold.

Theologians have debated the implications of these passages and many others long and hard, but it seems likely the dead will rise throughout the Mortal Realm and this leads theologians to believe the

world will end in an Ulcer. Many think that with the creation of the Chaos Gate, this has already begun.

RANKS IN THE CHURCH

The churches of the world have many similar titles and ranks. These are close enough they are translatable between the languages of the world, so while it might not be accurate to say the Elves have “bishops” they have a rank that is close enough to a Church bishop for translation.

The churches that follow a Savior have a hierarchy to their priesthood, in descending order of importance, as follows:

Faerarch (and others.): The head of the Church is called the Faerarch. Each of the other Savior-based churches has a head pontiff as well. One addresses the Faerarch as “Your Holiness.” The other heads are named the Barakkhâl (Dwarven),



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the Néliéril (Elven), the Ordi (Gnomish), and the Nomon (Halfling).

Patriarch: Large, autonomous sections of the Church are ruled by a patriarch. Gwyr, for instance, is the Patriarch of the Theocracy of Gaerydd. One addresses a patriarch as “Your Beatitude.”

Cardinal: A Cardinal is essentially a bishop (or more likely a major archbishop) with an honorific. Cardinals are bishops who either run an office of the Church or an important see. The College of Cardinals elects the new Faerarch when the old one dies. One addresses a cardinal as “Your Eminence” or “Cardinal Hand.”

Metropolitan: An archbishop that rules several dioceses from a metropolitan see. One addresses a metropolitan as “Your Grace.”

Major Archbishop: An archbishop with an important autonomous diocese. One addresses a major archbishop as “Your Grace” or “Archbishop <Name>.”

Archbishop: The bishop of an archdiocese or a bishop with an important role, such as a bishop that acts as a diplomat to a nation. One addresses an archbishop as “Your Grace” or “Archbishop <Name>.”

Bishop: The head of a diocese, also certain assistant bishop positions—or a retired head of a diocese. One addresses a bishop as “Your Excellency” or “Bishop <Name>.”

Monsignor: An honorific added to a priest, often because he is working in a role for the Faerarch, either in his household or in special duty. One addresses a Monsignor as “Monsignor” or “Monsignor <Name>.”

Priest: A full clergy member, the priest often runs services or serves some academic role for the Church. One addresses a priest as “Father,” or “Father <Name>.”

Brother: A member of a monastic order, often ordained. One addresses a brother as “Brother <Name>.” Orders other than the priesthood tend to have their own, shallow structure.

Deacon: A deacon is either a person in seminary or an ordained minister that has not been granted the title of priest. Often a deacon is a person who married before earning his ordainment (in the Church

of Angenus) and is thus relegated to aiding a priest or bishop for the rest of his clerical career. One addresses a deacon as “Deacon <Name>.”

The Atavistic Church has other titles. As Atavists are not nearly as many as the ubiquitous Church, they have a less robust structure. They are as follows:

Heirophant: The head of the Atavistic church is the Heirophant. One addresses the Heirophant as “Your Holiness.”

Confidant: A grand druid who has been granted special office by the Heirophant is a confidant. The confidants elect the Heirophant. One addresses a confidant as “Your Eminence.”

Grand Druid: A grand druid is a great druid who rules multiple territories. One addresses a grand druid as “Your Grace.”

Great Druid: A great druid rules over a territory. One addresses a great druid as “Your Excellency.”

Master: A master is a druid who has achieved a honorific, either through scholarship or deeds. One address a master as “Master” or “Master <Name>.”

Druid: An ordained minister of the Atavistic Church. One addresses a druid as “Ati,” an ancient title of respect.

The pagan churches have too many differing hierarchies to list here.

MARRIAGE

Most churches have no issues with their clergy marrying. However, the Church of Angenus is so powerful and controls so many lands that a priest who produces an heir creates difficulties of inheritance.

So while it is not forbidden for a priest of the Church to marry, this is a surefire way to stop any advancement in the ranks of the clergy. A clergyman who marries before ordination becomes a deacon for the rest of his career. Priests will never advance above priests. A bishop or higher will create problems for the Church and the powers that be will exert tremendous force to keep such people from marrying.

Illegitimate children do not cause this problem.

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HOLY SYMBOLS

Each of the primary religions has a holy symbol, but the Demon cults do not. They prefer not to advertise their allegiance to Demon gods since they might as well just report to the Witch-Hunters directly. There are many symbols they might use to mark their presence when they cause particular trouble, glyphs and graffiti and the like, but these are local phenomena, they aren't worldwide.

MECHANICS

Most of this chapter deals with source material, but there are also times when one needs to know how all this information translates into game mechanics.

Avatars

Saints do not take a material form often, and then they do, they don't engage in activities that would need statting. Generally they appear as visions, bystanders, or itinerants. When a saint appears, it is to test or to guide, not to fight.

Archdemons do not typically fight either, and there is much debate over whether they even can. There might even be an unspoken deal between Saints and the Archdemons that neither of them dare violate (this is the most likely answer).

The Orders

Below, each of the Orders is outlined. While much of this involves key beliefs and the Order's history and position in the world, there are important game stats as well. They are as follows:

Common Classes: This entry tells the classes most common for the members of this Order.

Domains: A cleric of this order may choose between these Domains.

As a final note, in many settings different religious Orders have different preferred weapons. There are no such guidelines in *The Echoes of Heaven*. Priests use whatever weapons they like.

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAVIOR

These are the most widespread churches in the world. Each of them follows one of the Five Prophets, worshipping them as a Savior.

The Church of Angenus

Name: The Church of Angenus or simply the Church.

Members are Called: The Faithful or occasionally Angians.

Overview: The Church is the most powerful single organization in the world. With a stranglehold in most Human nations of Belkanâth, the Church is powerful.

The Church performs services every Godsdays, with extra services on midnight of every night. These are conducted in a Church or Cathedral, in front of an altar raised above a congregation which stands or sits (depending on the portion of the sermon) on the stone floor. During the services, which are conducted in the Divine Tongue, the priest begins with a reading from scripture and ancient invocations. Then they give a sermon in the vernacular. Finally, they perform the Sacrament of Service, where each member of the congregation takes a Holy wafer to nourish the soul and is sprinkled in Holy water, symbolizing their weekly rebirth.

The Church teaches honesty, honor, respect, and chastity outside marriage. They do not condone those outside the clergy interpreting scripture. They preach that anyone who can lead a rather sinless life can return to Heaven and live for the rest of eternity with God.

It would be too much of a generalization to say the Church is corrupt, but there is certainly corruption in its ranks. The last Faerarch to try cleansing the Church reversed his position suddenly thirty-one days after he began. Conspiracy theorists take great stock in that fact.

Angenus Priesthood

The Angenus Priesthood is in charge of the Church. They minister and set policy and do everything necessary to keep a large religious organization running.

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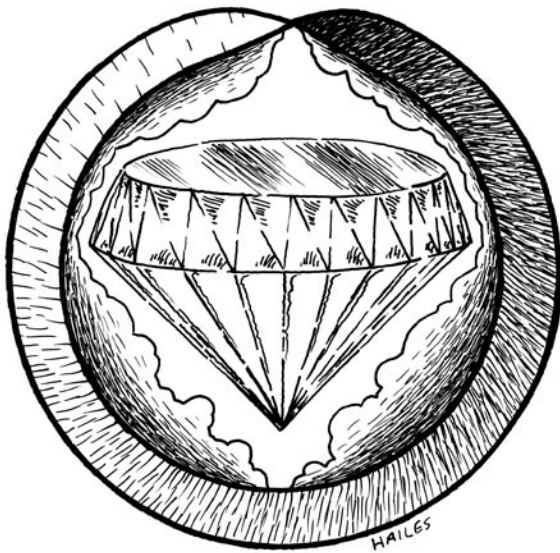
Little is known about the history of the Order now except supposition and legend. There are several early scriptures dealing with the life of Angenus but even so, they were all written after the fact. In the end, the history of this Order is the history of the Church.

Angenus was one of the Five Prophets and is worshipped in the Church as the Savior of Mortality. The Church believes that it was he that orchestrated the Sundering and he that led the ritual. They also believe that he is the Herald.

This Order headquarters in Sulvican City.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Cleric, Heirphant, Loremaster, Thaumateurgist.

Domains: Good, Healing, Knowledge, Sun.



Knights Lonnuso (Witch-Hunters)

The Knights Lonnuso is the most feared and hated Order of the Church. Carrying the authority of the Faerarch, they scour the world looking for heretics to slaughter or put to the fire. Technically, they are in charge of hunting down Undead, Demons, Witches, and Wizards, but in practice the Witch-Hunters police doctrine.

Lonnuso was the head of a small monastery dedicated to the preservation and copying of books. One day, his monastery was attacked by a group of drunken bandits. Despite the formidable clerical powers of one or two members of the group, the

bandits managed to take Lonnuso. They burned him alive using the books he cherished as fuel.

During the drunken pillage that followed three of the bandits tried to enter Lonnuso's private library. They instantly burst into flames. As they died agonizing deaths, they called out the names of their friends. As each man's name was called, he too burst into flames. Soon, the monastery was saved. Not a single extra book had been burned.

The Knights Lonnuso headquarters in Marnele.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Warrior, Fighter, Paladin.

Domains: N/A.

Knights Ephesus

The Knights Ephesus are not knights in the traditional sense. Their Order is dedicated to the healing of the sick, especially the poor. The Knights Ephesus have set monasteries around the world, but many of the Order also wander from place to place, healing the sick.

Saint Ephesus was a pagan. He was a simple guard in the dungeons of Emperor Octarus. When the Herald was captured and brought to Emperor Octarus for his martyrdom, he was placed in Ephesus' care. Ephesus spent many hours talking with the Savior though the bars of his cell, and in the end, his heart turned and he saw the light.

He understood the Herald needed to be martyred publicly for his message to be spread, but when it was time to take the man to his execution, the Herald was too weak to move.

The captain of the guard ordered him slain in his cell, but Ephesus rushed to his side. Laying hands on the man, he begged God to give his Herald the strength to stand. A great light shone forth from his hands, and the Herald rose strong to face his execution.

It is unknown how he escaped, but after the fall of Octarus, Ephesus went out into the world, and found his healing powers never left him. He preached the words of the Herald, and through his teachings, the Scriptures know of the Herald's final days.

Ephesus taught love and compassion. He taught that everyone should help their fellow man and that a life dedicated to service is a life well spent. He

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was a military man, and so he did not teach pacifism, but he does teach that violence should only be used for defense, and always at a bare minimum.

The Knights Ephestus headquarters in Nolinos.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Warrior, Cleric, Fighter, Paladin.

Domains: Good, Healing, Protection.

Knights Paeso

The Knights Paeso is a military Order that travels the world ridding civilization of evil beasts. They are a questing Order with much liberty in their movements and actions.

Saint Paeso was a simple farmer. He had no real combat training, yet when his village stood in the way of a horde of Beastmen, Paeso challenged the Pack Leader to single combat. The battle was one-sided. The Pack Leader sliced him to pieces, but slowly, toying with him for almost an hour.

Paeso never bowed, never gave any hint of the agony he experienced. He simply kept trying, kept fighting. When the fight was done, Paeso died of his many wounds. The Pack Leader was so moved by Paeso's courage that he spared the village the sacking experienced by others in his path. Since Beastmen know little or no compassion, this is considered his first miracle.

The Knights Paeso headquarters in Doszke.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Warrior, Fighter, Paladin.

Domains: N/A.

Knights of Living Vengeance

The Knights of Living Vengeance mainly man the Shieldwall and guard against the Lich King. However, certain members of their Order are stationed around the world, ready to respond to other threats from Undead. When Ulcers involving Undead form, sometimes only the Knights of Living Vengeance have the skills to deal with the problem.

Saint Alric the Marshal was the warlord who organized the Rebellion against Emperor Octarus. He brought together the disparate people of the world and trained them into a cohesive fighting force. It was his goal to defeat the Emperor and rescue the

Herald before his martyrdom. He carried out only the first goal.

In the end, when the Emperor released the power of the Chaos Gate, it was only Alric's sacrifice that saved the world. Alric threw himself into the gate and applied his will to the chaos, blunting its destructive force. This was his last great miracle.

Over every altar of the Knights of Living Vengeance is carved the last words to the Herald said to Alric, "Thou knowest what thou must do next."

The Knights of Living Vengeance are stationed in Shieldwall.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Warrior, Cleric, Fighter, Paladin.

Domains: Destruction, Protection, War.

Knights Equenis

The Knights Equenis is a questing Order. Their members scour the world, looking for evil and trouble to overthrow. They fight and they seek and they persevere. Of all the Orders, theirs grants the most freedom to individual members, although there still is hierarchy in place. Every member of every Order in the Church must still take commands from someone.

This Order owes its origins to Saint Dolonus, the questing knight who saved the world by destroying the Great Ulcer. He sacrificed his life, but with his example and the example of the Order of the Knights-Errant, this Order formed.

The Knights Equenis headquarters in Kraun.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Warrior, Fighter, Paladin.

Domains: N/A.

The Order of Naeponis

The Order of Naeponis is a monastic Order that keeps all the records of the Church. They are a dour and humorless lot. They believe the smallest personal happiness is a sin.

Naeponis was lore master of the Church who kept all of his records in a personal shorthand. His entire life, the Church elders told him that he needed to teach someone else his method of writing, but he kept so busy with his work that he never found time. When he died, his code died with him. The Church

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elders went through his books, and they couldn't find a single note in plain language, but that night one of them had a dream and returned to Naeponis' quarters. Rechecking the books, he found that every one had been miraculously translated into normal script. Also, they found details there that included records lost to history. Naeponis' work was a complete history of the Church, miraculously created in life and miraculously transmuted in death.

This Order headquarters in Ludremon.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Cleric, Heirphant, Loremaster.

Domains: Knowledge, Law

The Order of Albolatian

The Order of Albolatian is the counterpart Order to Naeponis. Whereas Naeponis deals in fact, Albolatian deals in supposition. This monastic Order examines scripture and ancient texts looking for hidden truths and meanings. They often anger both the Order of Naeponis and the Witch-Hunters with their questions, which can border on heresy.

Saint Albolatian was a Church historian in the Order of Naeponis. He became obsessed with the first head of the Naeponian Order (after Naeponis of course), examining the man's miracle. He soon discovered evidence that this saint had faked all of his miracles. When he took this information to the head of the Order, he was renounced. When he tried to go to the Priesthood, he was captured by members of his own Order. They burned him alive.

And all his proofs appeared magically that night in the Faerarch's bedchamber.

This Order is based in Ludremon.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Expert, Cleric, Heirphant, Loremaster.

Domains: Chaos, Knowledge, Magic.

The Monastic Order of Sepinus

This monastic Order is dedicated to meditation and silence. Therefore, many people join this Order later in life, when they flee some great tragedy or sin. In this Order, a man has no past.

Sepinus, was a country priest who led a large flock which was taken into slavery by a long-forgotten tyrant. He continued ministering to his flock,

long after their enslavement, and when the tyrant demanded that his men perform a ritual sacrifice each day, Sepinus volunteered himself as the first. He was tortured and sacrificed.

The next morning, he rose from the dead. The tyrant, incensed, sacrificed him again. He rose the next day. For 100 days, the tyrant sacrificed Sepinus, furious the man was denying him the satisfaction of killing, yet too proud to move on to another victim.

At the end of one-hundred days, the slaves, moved by the horrible suffering of their priest, rose and destroyed the tyrant and his troops. They then destroyed every record of his name.

Sepinus teaches sacrifice for one's fellow man. He teaches that one should always suffer one's self rather than watch a fellow being suffer.

Sepinus taught many things in life, most of which were treatises on how to find a path through the trials of living. For more information on these teachings, see *The Throne of God*.

The Order of Sepinus headquarters in Lilano.

Common Classes: All who seek solace from their former lives.

Domains: Healing, Knowledge, Law.

The Society of Sinnius

The Society of Sinnius is whispered about in the Church, but no one admits to their existence. This is the Church's secret police, acting without any oversight; they seek out corruption and deal with it quickly and quietly. This always involves assassination. It's the only thing the Society does. While it might seem that this overlaps with the Witch-Hunters, the Witch-Hunters work in the open. The Society reaches everywhere the Witch-Hunters can't.

Sinnius was born in Heaven, before the Sundering. According to legend, he was an assassin who hunted Fallen Angels deep behind enemy lines. When the Humans awoke after the Sundering, Sinnius awoke with them. He sought out the First Ulcer and destroyed it. Afterward, there are several reported miracles involving him aiding those who stood up against corruption in the Church, earning him his sainthood.

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The Society of Sinnius hides its headquarters among the heathens in Naili.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Assassin, Commoner, Expert, Warrior, Cleric, Fighter, Paladin, Rogue, Heirophant, Loremaster.

Domains: Destruction, Fire, Trickery.

The Holy Wives Monique

The Holy Wives Monique is an Order of women dedicated to chastity and prayer. They also specialize in ministering to women and are known as the best midwives in the world.

Saint Monique came to the world during a dark time of midwifery. Little was known about delivering babies, and rarely did a woman survive four pregnancies.

Saint Monique did not fight any great and glorious battles. She did not crusade or even die a martyr. What she did do was perfect the art of delivering babies. It is because of her that midwives have the skill they have today. It is because of her that priests know how to properly apply healing magic to ensure the safe conclusion of a risky birth.

Monique's teachings are straightforward. She teaches a love of birth and the birthing process and the beauty of creating a new child. She teaches that this process is sacred and therefore partaking in it outside marriage is a sin.

The Order of Monique headquarters in Marnele.

Common Classes: Cleric, Commoner, Expert.

Domains: Healing, Knowledge, Sun.

The Ladies of Alaria

The Ladies of Alaria is an Order dedicated to healing, but more importantly they are devoted to easing the last moments of those who cannot be healed. They are an earnest Order, filled with boundless love and charity. They are willing to do one of the most unpleasant jobs in the world.

Saint Alaria was a simple healer. She took great interest in the plagues that destroyed the people of the world, especially those that defied clerical healing. She dedicated many years to trying to find a cure for the incurable.

One day, she received a vision from God. In this vision she came to understand there would never be

a cure for these afflictions, that some afflictions man was meant to endure, not overcome.

She then built a monastery in the Dragon Peaks. She cast her helpers and her acolytes across the world, collecting every soul she could find who was afflicted by an incurable disease. Before long, the dragons themselves helped, bringing all the suffering of the world to her doorstep.

She cared for them through their dying days, easing what suffering she could. In the end, despite her magic, she succumbed to the Gray Death and suffered a long, agonizing end. She was surrounded by her acolytes throughout her final days and died among friends.

Saint Alaria is now the Guardian of Souls. She guides the dead to their proper place and eases the



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terror of transition. She also defends the gates of Heaven, with the aid of Saint Kûlan.

The Order of Alaria is headquarters in Gelaert.

Common Classes: Expert, Cleric, Heirophant, Loremaster.

Domains: Healing, Protection, Trickery.

The Saint Without an Order

Saint Tieria is another saint who is not renowned for major, earth-shattering undertakings. She was a simple priest whose teachings were simple: “Love one another.”

It may not seem like a revolutionary notion, but while she was embodied, this message needed to be spread. These were in the dark days after the fall of Octarus. The death of Kûlan left the world without a guardian. Men fell to squabbling over land and ideology when they needed to direct their attention to the five Great Fiends. Saint Tieria saw that their squabbling would leave them open and vulnerable to conquest.

She preached to the leaders of the various Kingdoms, softening their hearts with her words. In the end, she sowed enough trust the nations could provide a united front against the Great Fiends.

Teiria’s teachings are still straightforward. Find something to love in every creature you meet and nurture that love until it fills your heart. Never raise your voice or your hand in anger.

Tiera has no Order, but medals depicting her are often carried or worn by young lovers.

The Church of Eldinar

Name: The Church of Eldinar or the Church of the Elves.

Members are Called: The Eldinarins

Overview: The Church of Eldinar dominates Elven culture. The dominant church in every Elven nation, they define the culture and beliefs of an entire people. They are the Savior-based church that has the best relationship with the Atavists.

The church performs services every Godsdays with added services at every dawn. These are conducted in a church or cathedral with an open roof, so the sky is visible always. It rarely rains on these meetings. During the ceremony, the priest stands

in the middle of a congregation that stands around him, facing outward toward the edges of the world. The service begins with a reading of scripture in the Divine Tongue and then a sermon in Elvish. The service ends with a taking of Holy Wafers and an open-air rite called the Baptism of Winds on the front steps.

The Church of Eldinar teaches honesty and goodness, love of nature and one another, and fidelity. Chastity before marriage is recommended but not as large an issue as in some churches. They endorse seeking inspiration in the wilderness. They preach that anyone who can become one with nature can make it into Heaven after death. They frown on magic use outside the clergy, but they don’t forbid it.

The Church of the Eldinar is as corrupt as any Church, but few Elves worry about this fact. They are more than willing to take their worship into the wilderness should a particular priest get out of hand.

Eldinar Priesthood

The Eldinar Priesthood runs the church. They minister, set policy, and interpret the scriptures.

Not much is known about the life of Eldinar. Several early scriptures deal with his life, but they were all written after his death. In the end, the history of this Order is the history of this church.



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Eldinar was one of the Five Prophets and is worshiped by the Eldinarins as the Savior of Mortality. This church believes that it was he who orchestrated the Sundering and led the ritual. They also believe he is the Herald.

This Order headquarters in Avilairë.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Commoner, Expert, Cleric, Druid, Heirophant, Loremaster, Thaumaturgist.

Domains: Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Sun.

Knights of Tulentil

The Knights of Tulentil hate Humans passionately. They patrol the borders of their woods and guard against invasion by Human travelers. If Humans are allowed, they question them vigorously. If not, the Elves force them to leave or kill them.

Saint Tulentil was an Elf that lived during the days of Eurustace's conquest. Tulentil fought the Butcher at every opportunity, but in the end, the legions of Eurustace brought down the Elf. Tulentil's final act was to fire an arrow which miraculously split into a multitude of arrows, killing the entire legion.

The Order headquarters in Athâra.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Commoner, Expert, Warrior, Fighter, Paladin, Ranger.

Domains: N/A.

Knights of Aurendë

The Knights of Aurendë guard the forests against the deprivations of other Mortal races and Cambions. They are a wide-ranging and self-sufficient, used to spending days or weeks without seeing another intelligent creature.

Aurendë was a ranger who lived in the forests her entire life. She dedicated herself to fighting Beastmen (and sometimes Humans) who'd defile her beloved woodlands. In her war, she often tried to trap her foes rather than harm them.

She died, burned alive by a band of Beastmen. After her death, the entire forest rose. Insects attacked, bears went on rampage, and the water turned foul. After two terrifying days of vengeance, not a single Beastman remained.

Aurendë teaches love of the forest and the wilderness. She teaches to respect and protect nature. She

teaches to honor all life, especially that which you must take (whether in defense or to sustain one's self).

The Order of Aurendë headquarters in Avilairë.

Common Classes: Warrior, Druid, Fighter, Ranger, Rogue.

Domains: N/A.

Order of Hollenwë

The Order of Hollenwë dedicates itself to the more mystical aspects of magic. They study everything from divining to illusions to summoning. It is because of this Order and deep racial trends that magic is still accepted in the Elven kingdoms.

Hollenwë was a great seer who was born about the time of the awakening of the Humans and didn't die until the time of Almia. During his life he experienced so many visions that he surpassed the abilities of any other seer in history. To this day the Elves of this Order still study and analyze his predictions, especially those about the end of the world.

This Order is based in Ingrast.

Common Classes: Expert, Bard, Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard, Heirophant, Loremaster, Thaumaturgist.

Domains: Chaos, Knowledge, Trickery.

Culandil Shapers

The Culandil Shapers handle all the crafting and creating of magic items for the Church. They spend their days creating magic items, forging all the things that will protect the Elven way of life.

Saint Culandil was born shortly after the reawakening of Elves in the Mortal Realm. During his time he created item after item, all of them intensely magical, all without studying the slightest bit of magic.

This Order is based in the Elven-Dwarven Alliance.

Common Classes: Expert, Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard, Heirophant, Loremaster, Thaumaturgist.

Domains: Healing, Magic, Trickery.

Elven Saints Without Orders

There are two Elven saints that do not have Orders. They are as follows:

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Saint Perion the Elf Lord

Saint Perion organized the Elven people into a unified nation. This was no mean task, and it took just under a millennium.

It was he who tamed the wildness of the Elven people. To this day, an empty seat is reserved for him in every Elven council, and it is said that it is his influence that keeps the Elves together as a unified whole.

Perion teaches peace and cooperation, both of the Elven people as a whole and in their relations with other races. He teaches unity and diplomacy, and love for one another. His teachings also stress honoring one's Elven heritage.

Saint Erantelia the Peacemaker

Erantelia was a mediator throughout her life. She dedicated herself to the peaceful resolution of conflict and generally doing anything possible to end evil and oppression without raising her hand against another creature.

Erantelia was a strict pacifist. While she recognized that some eras needed their Saint Alrics, she held that violence was only necessary against the Great Fiends, and never against a Mortal, sapient creature.

The Church of Ziruk-Nurak

Name: The Church of Ziruk-Nurak or the Church of the Dwarves.

Members are Called: Zirukans.

Overview: The Church of Ziruk-Nurak is the cornerstone of Dwarven culture and Dwarven life. This church dominates Dwarven culture. Few Dwarves still follow the Atavistic path.

The Church holds services every Godsdays and whenever the nation opens a new mine, starts a new delving, or begins a new war. The ceremonies take place in the chapel, which doubles as the war room when this is needed. Here a Dwarven Priest stands in front of the congregation at an anvil altar,

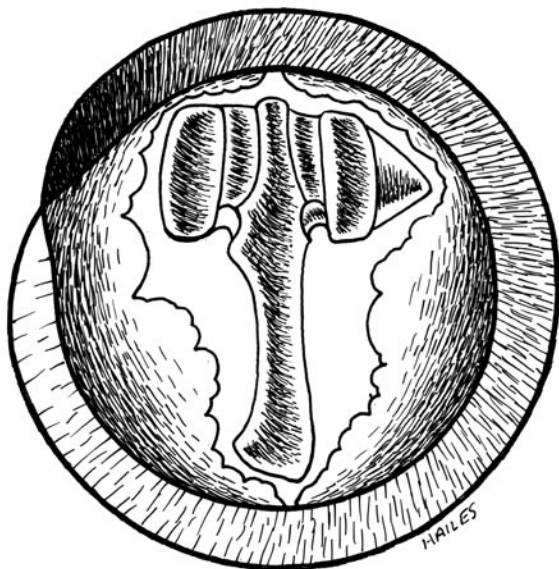
carrying a golden hammer. During the service the priest quotes scripture in the Divine Tongue while ringing the altar with the hammer. Then they perform the Wafer Sacrament. Each member of the congregation takes a Holy wafer while the priest raps them ceremonially on the head with the hammer. Finally, the priest gives his sermon.

The Church of Ziruk-Nurak teaches honor, honesty, and valor. They preach chastity before marriage (except for test marriages, see *The Lost Kingdom of the Dwarves*) and the love of craft and the Divinity of the act of shaping. They teach that any Dwarf who is true to his heritage can make it into Heaven. The Church of Ziruk-Nurak allows usury.

The Church of Ziruk-Nurak is less corrupt than most churches. They take dishonor seriously, and they root out any violations of honor with great zeal.



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Ziruk-Nurak Runic Priesthood

This is the only Order in the Church of Ziruk-Nurak. This is the priesthood and controls every aspect of the church and its ministrations.

Not much is known about the life of Ziruk-Nurak. Several early scriptures deal with his life, but they were all written after his death. In the end, the history of this Order is the history of this church.

Ziruk-Nurak was one of the Five Prophets and is worshiped by the church as the Savior of Mortality. Zirukans believe that it was he who orchestrated the Sundering and led the ritual. They also believe he is the Herald.

This Order headquarters in Zûram.

Common Classes: Expert, Cleric, Paladin, Dwarven Defender.

Domains: Earth, Healing, Knowledge, Sun.

A Note on Dwarven Magic: *Dwarves practice a form of rune magic. More complete rules on rune magic can be found in The Lost Kingdom of the Dwarves. If you don't have that book, treat Dwarven Magic as divine magic, but describe Dwarven priests as tracing runes in the air during casting.*

Dwarven Saints

There are no Dwarven Orders other than the main priesthood. There are Dwarven saints, and these are revered.

Saint Dumag the Mountain Lord

Saint Dumag was a miner and a smith. He created weapons and armor so perfect that they took on enchantments without any magic. It was this steady stream of miraculous items that earned him his sainthood.

Dumag teaches of the beauty in making and in the might of the ancient bones of the earth. He teaches to honor the mountains and to love their bounty of metals and gems. He teaches the proper way to come closer to the God is through creation.

Saint Khal the Dwarf King

The first Dwarven king, Khal, is the longest standing saint in the pantheon. Khal perfected the art of digging in stone. It is because of him the Dwarven kingdoms were forged and laid down in the Mortal Realm.

The acts of Khal are more legend than history. He was said to have taunted a dragon to tears, to have shamed Bamon, and to have invented the process for drafting Darlan Gok, Dwarven ale. How much of this is fact is unknown because the writings of Khal are amended, retranslated and revised every millennium or so.

Khal teaches of the unity of the Dwarven spirit and the honor of the Dwarven people. He teaches that all Dwarves should honor and respect one another and cherish their heritage.

Saint Kûlan the Guardian

Saint Kûlan rose to power after the fall of Octarus, in the chaos that resulted in the vacuum left by the Emperor's death. He had been a follower of Alric, and took up the mantle left behind when the Marshal was martyred.

Kûlan fought a lifetime crusade of defense. He moved from location to location, organizing guards and militias to hold against the hordes of bandits and Cambions that roamed the land and, most importantly, the Great Fiends themselves.

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Saint Kûlan quickly became the patron saint of law and order. He taught the world how to defend itself when the Imperial legions were no longer there to do it for them. He never asked for payment, living solely off the spoils of his enemies.

Kûlan teaches to protect everyone who can't defend themselves. He teaches standing on a wall and holding a breach, no matter what the cost. He teaches that one should dedicate their lives to standing as a shield of honor between would-be oppressors and their victims.

The Church of Nikdin

Name: The Church of Nikdin or the Halfling Church.

Members are Called: Nikdinites.

Overview: The Church of Nikdin doesn't dominate the Halfling way of life. Rather the Halfling way of life dominates the Church of Nikdin. Many Halflings still follow the Atavistic path, but they shape that religion to their lifestyle as well.

The Church of Nikdin holds services on every Godsdays. They do not hold extra services exactly, but the priest holds a great potluck dinner every day. At this dinner he conducts a brief service.

During a normal service they begin with the sacrament of the Holy Wafer in the Divine Tongue, then the rites of service in the Divine Tongue. Finally, they end with a sermon in the vernacular.

The Church of Nikdin teaches respect for elders and love of family, as well as honesty and family values, including chastity before marriage. They technically teach to abstain from gluttony, but this isn't taken seriously.

The Church of Nikdin has about as much corruption as the other churches.

Nikdin Priesthood

The primary Order of the Church of Nikdin is the priesthood, the hand that guides the church. When a Halfling thinks about the church, he's probably thinking about the Nikdin Priesthood.

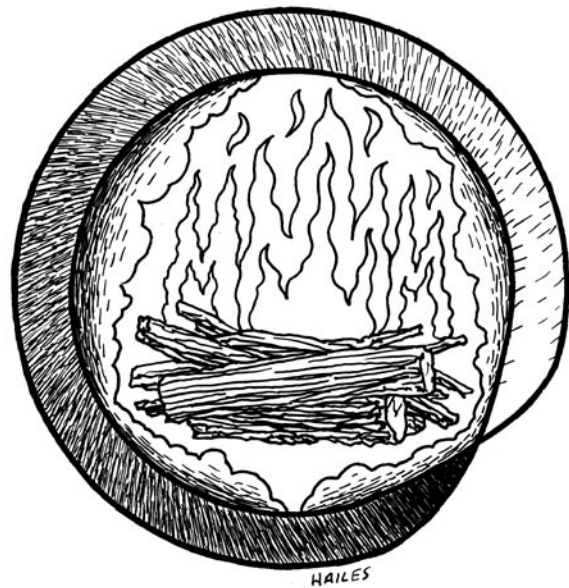
Not much is known about the life of Nikdin. While there are early scriptures written about his life, they were all written after his death. In the end, the history of this priesthood is the history of this church.

Nikdin was one of the Five Prophets and is worshiped by the church as the Savior of Mortality. Nikdinites believe that it was he who orchestrated the Sundering and led the ritual. They also believe he's the Herald.

This Order headquarters in Belther.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Commoner, Expert, Druid, Heiropant, Loremaster, Thaumateurgist.

Domains: N/A.



Knights of Munder

The Knights of Munder is the most militant of the Halfling Orders. They patrol the Halfling lands for heretics and interlopers. However, they don't necessarily repel these interlopers. The Halfling hospitality makes them more likely to allow them into the Halfling lands with a close watch.

Munder was a Halfling who lived during Eurustace's time. He tried to hold out and protect the Halfling lands from the Butcher, but in the end Imperial legions overwhelmed his position. In the final battle, he ordered a retreat and then stood alone in a narrow pass. Though he fell almost instantly, his spirit rose again, taking up the fight and holding off the legions long enough for the Halflings to escape and merge back into the now surrendering nation.

This Order is based in Jermolyn.

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Common Professions: Fighter, Rogue, Outrider, Thief, Layman, Sage, Ranger, Mythic, Priest (Arms).

Additional Base Lists: N/A.

Norin Wanderers

The Norin Wanderers is the closest thing the Halflings have to a monastic Order. Strangely, they are all but the opposite of that type of organization. They avoid the standard Halfling sedentary life of eating and homemaking, instead wandering the world and trying to forge a connection to themselves. Many Wanderers are also merchants, using this to fund their Orders.

Norin was a Halfling that set out to see the entire world. He visited every Halfling village in the first decades of his life, and soon his visits became legendary events. These were the early decades of the Empire and the Halflings of the world came to look forward to his visits, to the goods and the news he brought. He became so wrapped up in bringing these lifelines to the Halfling peoples that he abandoned his personal goal of seeing the world, but after he died of old age, he was spotted again and again in the next decade, young now, fulfilling his dream.

This Order is based in Jermolyn.

Common Classes: Warrior, Bard, Fighter, Ranger, Rogue, Assassin.

Domains: N/A.

Nonet Hearth Priests

The Nonet Hearth Priests is a secondary priesthood dedicated more directly to the home and family. They move throughout Halfling settlements, counseling families and feeding the hungry. They are the Order most dedicated to preserving and cherishing motherhood as well. Their primary tenant is generosity, and it's this generosity that drives their actions.

Saint Nonet was a simple Halfling with a roadside inn during Alric's campaign against Octarus. When the army camped on his doorstep, hungry and cold, Nonet offered to feed the troops free of charge.

Initially the units were small, and feeding them was easy, but as the army rallied, it became increasingly difficult to keep the troops fed. After three

days, Nonet started sacrificing his food to make it stretch further (he kept just enough food to feed his children). Somehow, he made the food stretch.

Nonet died of malnutrition. Until the end, he kept cooking, and he never so much as sampled the food he prepared.

After his death, Nonet's wife told Alric the larder had been bare every time she'd entered it, but Nonet would go in and, somehow, emerge with food. It's said that it was his own sacrifice, refusing to take any food himself, that fueled the miracle of the bounteous larder.

Nonet teaches sacrifice and service. To serve one's fellow man is the greatest task one can undertake. No sacrifice is too big. Ever.

The Norin Wanderers are based (as much as they can be based) in Belther.

Common Classes: Commoner, Expert, Bard, Druid, Ranger, Rogue, Heiropant, Loremaster.

Domains: N/A.

Malguin Crafters

The Malguin Crafters is an Order of magical alchemists and smiths that make all the various items the church needs for its priests and guardians. This isn't a large Order, instead concentrating on a small supply of Holy items to the most important members of the Clergy.

Saint Malguin was born in ancient times and made creations for the legendary figures that walked the depths of the Mortal Realm's past. He was a magical crafter, creating Holy items for the use of his leaders and heroes. There are many stories about him, most probably apocryphal, but it's known that in his last days we made a sword for his king. The priests and healers of the time worried about his health but he ignored them and continued working diligently, stating that if he was to die, he'd finish first. He is said to have died the moment he pulled the sword out of the tempering bath, and the weapon created, called Malguin's Tooth, spoke with his voice and knowledge from the moment of his death.

This Order is based in Osal.

Common Classes: Expert, Druid, Heiropant, Loremaster.

Domains: N/A.

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The Church of Gyllmoulin

Name: The Church of Gyllmoulin or the Gnomish Church.

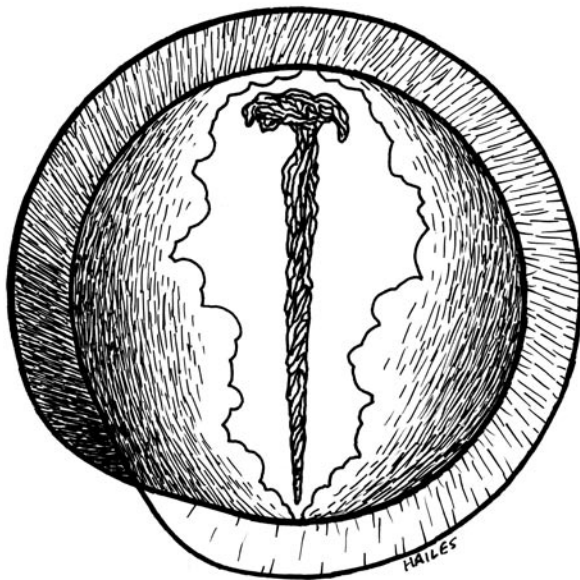
Members are Called: Gyllites.

Overview: The Church of Gyllmoulin merges seamlessly with the Gnomish lifestyle. While many Gnomes follow the Atavistic path, only the Church of Gyllmoulin was shaped hand in hand with Gnomish culture to blend with Gnomish lifestyle and Gnomish magic.

The Church of Gyllmoulin holds a service on every Godsdag. They hold another service every dawn, to herald the coming of the morning light. They prefer to conduct services in a secluded bowl among the hills of their settlement so they can see the sky. They begin with rites in the Divine Tongue and then the sacrament of the Holy Wafer. They end with a service in the vernacular, if possible with illusions (though only the largest settlements have likely access to illusionists).

The Church of Gyllmoulin teaches honesty and kindness. They aren't stern on chastity before marriage and even the clergy often lie.

Corruption in The Church of Gyllmoulin tends toward deceit and treachery among the clergy and doesn't touch those in the congregation often.



Gyllmoulin Priesthood

This is the primary Order of the Church of Gyllmoulin, the priesthood and the motive force behind

the church. They affect every aspect of church conduct and every aspect of Gnomish life.

Not much is known about the life of Gyllmoulin, but the Gnomes have many stories and legends, almost none of them true. Even the scripture written about him are rife with inconsistencies because of the Gnomish tendency to put the lesson of the story above the facts.

Gyllmoulin was one of the Five Prophets and is worshipped by the church as the Savior of Mortality. Gnomes of the church believe that it was he who orchestrated the Sundering and led the ritual. They also believe he's the Herald.

This Order is headquartered in Tirem-Ag.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Commoner, Expert, Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard, Archmage, Heiropant, Loremaster, Thaumateurgist.

Domains: N/A.

Knights of Selkie

The Knights of Selkie concentrate on protecting the Gnomish people and the Gnomish way of life. They are careful about foreigners and if they catch one secretly, they are likely to interrogate them vigorously without anyone outside the Order knowing.

Selkie was a Gnome who stood before Erustace's conquest. When Eurustace's captain finally conquered Selkie's lands, the Gnome stood alone in front of him. The captain laughed, and Selkie cast an illusion that created an army of images of him. When the captain attacked, he found that every illusion had become real. It was only after the battle, when the captain was dead; the remaining men realized that they'd killed Selkie early in the battle. Not only were his illusions far more powerful than any he could create normally, but they fought on after his death.

The Knights Selkie headquarters in Mag-Morel.

Common Classes: Commoner, Expert, Warrior, Bard, Fighter, Ranger, Rogue, Eldritch Knight.

Domains: N/A.

The Order of Logpesker

The Order of Logpesker is dedicated to their fear and hatred on other races. They infiltrate countries around the world, spying and studying and prepar-

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ing for the day when these races will try to commit genocide on the Gnomish people. They seem to believe that since *they* would commit genocide if they could, all other people must feel the same way.

Logpesker was a Gnome who lived during Eurustace's time. After the fall of Selkie, Logpesker took this obviously assumed name (no one knows what he was called before that) and infiltrated the Empire. For years he sent information back to the Gnomes of his homeland, until finally he was captured and tortured by the Imperial legions. They tried to find out the names of all his contacts in the Empire, but he wouldn't tell them. Finally, they tortured him and plied him with magic until he spoke. He died the moment after he revealed his secrets. Still, the torturer found that Logpesker had laid a final curse on him. The torturer spoke in tongues. He wrote in gibberish and even his tries to gesture became bizarre and foreign to those who watched. The man finally died of loneliness.

The Order of Logpesker is based in Gill -Tirn.

Common Classes: Commoner, Expert, Bard, Ranger, Rogue, Sorcerer, Wizard, Arcane Trickster, Archmage, Assassin, Eldritch Knight, Heiropphant, Loremaster, Thaumateurgist.

Domains: N/A.

Order of Gobach

Saint Gobach is said to be the first Gnome to ever practice magic, although since there were Gnomes in Heaven this is untrue. Little is known of him other than legend and supposition, as he lived thousands of years before Octarus. Legend has it that no Gnome was able to use magic before Gobach (which is also untrue), and he passed on to the Gnomish people the ability to cast spells as his dying miracle.

Gobach teaches that illusions are the height of Gnomish magic. All Gnomes should study its aspects, at least in passing.

The Order of Gobach is headquartered in Tirem-Ag.

Common Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard, Arcane Trickster, Archmage, Loremaster.

Domains: N/A.

Fedcaun Builders

The Fedcaun Builders are craftsmen and alchemists who build all the magical items for the church and the other Gnomish people. They do this primarily for the love of creating and have been known to donate items free of charge to villages and organizations that need them.

While it's necessary for a saint to perform at least one miracle in life (or at the moment of death) no one actually knows what Fedcaun's miracle was. Some assume that it must have had something to do with an item he crafted, but even the items attributed to him are legend more than history. Whatever the case, he's been revered as a Saint for more than 8,000 years.

The Fedcaun Builders are headquartered in Gill-Tirn.

Common Classes: Bard, Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard, Archmage, Heiropphant, Loremaster.

Domains: N/A.

The Saint Without an Order

Saint Lebeth was a scribe for the church's courts. He dedicated his life to accurately recording everything that happened in the courtroom. He is said to have never made an error.

One day Lebeth was ordered to lie on a transcript by a corrupt church superior. He refused and was executed shortly afterwards for trumped-up charges. The transcripts were altered for the case in question, and everyone thought matters were settled.

Then, during a review of the case, they found all the transcripts returned to their original state. In addition, there were records of every word the corrupt official had spoken to Lebeth. The official was subsequently executed for murder.

Lebeth teaches that truth is the most important thing in the world. He teaches never to lie, and to always record and report information accurately.

THE ATAVISTIC CHURCH

Name: The Atavistic Church or the Druids or the Primitive Church (usually by detractors).

Members are Called: Atavists.

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Overview: The Atavistic Church is so-called because it claims to practice a form of religious atavism, a reinstatement of the church and religion as practiced in Heaven. While it's said that Perion was an Atavist before his conversion, many scholars believe that the current Atavistic church doesn't form a continuous line of teachings back to Heaven, that it was restored at least once and possibly multiple times. Atavistic scholars, of course, disagree.

The Atavistic Church practices a form of nature worship. They believe that the Five Prophets had nothing to do with the Sundering of Heaven, that if they *were* performing a ritual in the final moments of the war, it was unrelated at best. They believe that God created Heaven and caused the Sundering, and therefore all natural things in the Mortal Realm are Divine by nature. By studying nature and the Heavens, the Atavists believe that they can better understand God.

The Atavists are druids, first and foremost. They perform a service every Earthday and on any special natural event, such as solstice and equinox or the release of a rarely vented geyser. Atavistic ceremonies are always conducted in the open, no matter what the weather. They are usually performed in stone circles, although many outside scholars believe that the Atavists did not originally build most of these circles.

The services usually involve ancient liturgies in the Divine Tongue and often ritual harvesting. Sometimes they perform minor sacrifices, though never people. There are no sermons during Atavistic services. They perform a sacrament of eating but it involves berries, not wafers.

The Atavistic Church teaches respect of life and honesty in all dealings. They have no taboos of chastity before marriage, although fidelity in marriage is required. They believe that any plant or animal must be granted respect and ceremony before it can be eaten, and their version of saying grace is something akin to last rights on the creatures they are eating.

There is as much corruption in the Atavistic Church as any other.

Common Classes: Aristocrat, Commoner, Expert, Druid, Ranger, Heirophant, Loremaster, Thaumaturgist.

Domains: N/A.



THE DRACONIAN CHURCHES

There are two draconian churches. One of them serves the Enârôz. The other evil dragons. It's worth noting that "churches" is a loose term where dragons are concerned. For the most part, these spiritual beings are revered directly by the individual, not worshiped in a formal mass.

Archdemon Belkunibâr the Vile

Belkunibâr is said to have been the first evil dragon born to the world. While he allowed the evil dragons to live their own lives, he demanded worship and tribute. In return, any dragon in the world could come to him for guidance and aid.

After his death, evil dragons continued to revere him, not only as an excuse to revere no other, but because of an unspoken respect.

Belkunibâr teaches independence and greed. All dragons are the most powerful beings in the world. They must be honored and respected.

The Church of Belkunibâr is headquartered far to the east, beyond the Dragon Peaks.

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Common Classes: Any.

Domains: Destruction, Fire, Strength, War.

Saint Zenabrûn the True

Zenabrûn the True is the patron saint of the Enârôz. Zenabrûn formed the first conclave of dragons and lead them in their campaign to cleanse the Dragon Peaks of evil wyrms.

He is also the patron Saint of cooperation. While the Elf Lord united a disparate people, the dragons were complete hermits, and met only because of the tremendous charisma, diplomacy and sometimes outright bullying of this magnificent creature.

Zenabrûn teaches that all good dragons must stay united. It is his influence that keeps the Council going to this day.

The Church of Zenabrûn headquarters in the Dragon Peaks.

Common Classes: Any.

Domain: Protection, Fire, Strength, War.

THE PANTHEON OF DEMONS

The pantheon of Demons promotes all that is wrong and unwholesome in the world. Its Archdemons rule Hell and its acts horrify and terrorize the world.

Archdemon Aldron the Loathing

Aldron was a brutal, spiteful man. He hated everybody, be it for reasons of race, profession, sex, or his own self-delusion. Bamon saw this hate and fed it.

Aldron found that the more he acted upon his hate, the more powerful he felt. He became stronger, and eventually was able to use this strength to enact vile miracles.

Aldron was a man a great political power. By his last days, he'd slain, tortured, humiliated, or banished thousands of people.

Aldron teaches that all people are worthy of the most vile loathing. Only by upholding a constant level of hatred can one truly advance oneself.

The Cult of Aldron is headquartered in Malveig.

Common Classes: Expert, Warrior, Barbarian, Cleric, Fighter, Rogue, Sorcerer, Wizard, Assassin, Blackguard, Eldritch Knight.

Domains: Death, Destruction, Evil.

Archdemon Analin the Dark (Gnome)

Analin was a Gnomish illusionist and an evil creature, and as time went by, her evil was focused on the most common aspect attributed to goodness: the light.

Analin hated the light, and as she grew in power and years, this became an insanity. Finally, she decided to shield her lands, and all those around her, from the hated sun.

She succeeded, and the entire western half of the world was plunged into darkness. If it hadn't been for the actions of a handful of intrepid heroes, the world might have perished.

Analin teaches to hate the light. The light lies, and only in darkness are all disguises dropped.

The Cult of Analin is headquartered somewhere in Mag-Morel.

Common Classes: Archmage, Bard, Loremaster, Sorcerer, Thaumateurgist, Wizard.

Domains: N/A.

Archdemon Assra the Unseen (Fallen Elf)

Assra was an Elven queen in the east. She was a very vain woman and in spite of her great beauty, she wished to be even more beautiful.

Her desire was sensed by Bamon. The Dark Prince whispered to Assra in her dreams, slowly corrupting her and before long she sold her soul to this Devil.

Her dreams were answered beyond her expectations. Her beauty became so great that all that gazed upon her were mesmerized and enslaved by her beauty. Soon, it was not only she that was following the depraved rituals of Bamon, but her people as well.

Those with the foresight and strength of will to escape Assra fled to other Elven kingdoms. Soon, the Elven nations united to make war against the depredations of Assra.

After fifty years of war, Assra and her people lost. Perion then banished Assra and her people from the world.

Bamon intercepted these people and returned them to the bowels of the world. To the Warrens.

Assra teaches to hate the surface dwellers and all they represent. The people to be *most* hated are the loathsome Elves.

The Cult of Assra is headquartered in Athâra.

Common Classes: Archmage, Aristocrat, Cleric, Expert, Loremaster, Sorcerer, Wizard.

Domains: Death, Destruction, Evil.

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Archdemon Dzoulg the Betrayer (Orc)

Dzoulg lived his life as one of the only Orcish soldiers in the army of King Maranoc the Just. He slowly worked his way through the ranks of the King's men, until finally, he became a member of the king's royal guard.

What no one knew was that Dzoulg was on a mission of vengeance. He was evil to the core and his only goal was the destruction of King Maranoc for his extermination of the Orcs in his kingdom. It was only Dzoulg's great faith in Khugraug the Dwarfslayer that allowed him to pass examinations and tests.

Finally, one day, Dzoulg was taken into a private meeting with the king. Instead of giving the King council, Dzoulg slew him with his bare hands. Though he was butchered shortly after that, he was heralded as a martyr by Orcs around the world and is worshiped to this day.

Dzoulg teaches that the best way to defeat one's enemies is to earn their trust. Play a charade that you are their cherished friend, and then betray them.

The Cult of Dzoulg is headquartered in Starg.

Common Classes: Assassin, Barbarian, Blackguard, Cleric, Eldritch Knight, Expert, Fighter, Rogue, Sorcerer, Wizard.

Domains: Death, Destruction, Evil, Trickery.

Archdemon Ercûll the Vengeful (Orc)

Ercûll was a hateful being, bent on vengeance. If someone wronged Ercûll, either in truth or in his mind, he would exact terrible, bitter revenge.

It was not long before Bamon took notice of this great and delicious evil. He began to fuel his vengeance, making slights seem more exaggerated, betrayals more poignant.

By the time he died, the powers granted to him by Bamon were so great that he could lay terrible curses on people at a distance, if his need for revenge was great enough.

Ercûll teaches that no wrong should go unanswered. Revenge should be as elaborate and complete as possible.

The Cult of Ercûll is headquartered in Starg.

Common Classes: Assassin, Barbarian, Blackguard, Cleric, Expert, Fighter, Rogue, Sorcerer, Warrior, Wizard.

Domains: Destruction, Strength, War.

Archdemon Eurustace the Butcher

Eurustace was a mighty warlord. It was he who united the entire known world under the heel of the Empire, and though his son was a righteous and honorable man, Eurustace was a butcher and a tyrant.

Though not known for any major miracles, Eurustace is the only man ever to accomplish worldwide conquest. He was a brutal, heartless slayer of men.

Eurustace teaches that the world should belong to those strong enough to keep it. The bloodier the conquest the better. Examples must be made.

The Cult of Eurustace is headquartered in Ontav.

Common Classes: Barbarian, Cleric, Fighter.

Domains: Law, Strength, War.

Archdemon Frierea the Changed

Frierea was a barbarian who roamed the cold wastes. She was a shape shifter, like many of her people. She would wear the skins of wolves and become a wolf. She would run through the glaciers all night.

She began to spend more time in wolf form. Hunting, stalking, killing. She enjoyed it more. Then she drifted from the spiritual purity of the act and gloried in the bloodshed.

Then one day, she threw off the trappings of magic, and turned into a wolf under her own power. She had become the first werewolf, because she had given herself over completely to the killing.

Frierea teaches that the hunt is life. The more intelligent and capable the prey, the better. Your own race makes the best prey, because you think alike, and they have a better chance of outsmarting you.

The Cult of Frierea is headquartered in Hofgrin.

Common Classes: Barbarian, Druid, Fighter.

Domains: Animal, Destruction, Strength.

Archdemon Gharak the Proud (Fallen Dwarf)

Gharak was a Dwarven cleric of some note. He hated the surface dwellers and preached against any interaction. Eventually, disgusted, he led his followers deep into the earth.

He and his people were not heard of for years. When they finally emerged again, it was as the evil

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Fallen Dwarves. No one is certain what happened to bring them to this state, but it is known that they worship Gharak as a god.

Gharak teaches that the Fallen Dwarves are the true race, and that the Mountain Dwarves have strayed from the true paths, becoming hopelessly corrupted by the surface dwellers.

The Cult of Gharak is headquartered in Irukhl.

Common Classes: Cleric, Expert, Fighter, Sorcerer, Warrior, Wizard.

Domains: Evil, Strength, War.

Archdemon Glograg of the Iron Hand (Ogre)

Glograg was a brutal ruler. He controlled every aspect of his people's lives. He relished power and control.

As his life went on, he became more domineering, more controlling. Bamon saw this great evil and fed it. He granted Glograg knowledge of the slightest failing on the part of his people. This limited omniscience allowed him to terrorize those he ruled.

Glograg was slain by his own people. However, his omniscience allowed him to set up a proper defense against the rebellion, and both sides were wiped out.

Glograg teaches that all inferiors are just that. They are not intelligent enough to run their own lives and must be controlled ruthlessly.

The Cult of Glograg is headquartered in Ciall.

Common Classes: Barbarian, Druid, Fighter.

Domains: Destruction, Law, Strength.

Archdemon Isaacron the Slayer

Isaacron was a mass murderer of epic proportions. For years, authorities and paladins searched this man out, trying to stop his reign of terror. All they found was corpse after ritually-disemboweled corpse.

Unfortunately, Bamon had taken notice of the young man. He granted him the miracle of nondetection. No matter what the tracking paladins and authorities did, they could not discover his location by magical means.

All told, Isaacron slew over 700 women and children before he was captured and executed.

Isaacron teaches that one reaches perfection in the perfect murder. People are cattle, potential victims needing to be harvested.

The Cult of Isaacron has no headquarters and little organization. Devotees apprentice under a more accomplished murderer.

Common Classes: Assassin, Cleric, Expert, Fighter, Rogue, Warrior.

Domains: Death, Destruction, Trickery.

Archdemon Karil the Lich

Karil is an ancient and little understood personality. It is known that he was the first mage ever to raise the dead into Undead form, in the Mortal Realm, at least. This man, the first necromancer, pioneered the science of animating dead flesh and trafficking with the Nopheratus.

It is said that at the end of his life, he crossed the threshold himself and became a lich. He has no known slayer, but he couldn't have become an Archdemon without eventually dying.

Karil teaches that the dead are there to be manipulated and used. The personal rewards of the afterlife should be denied to the good and be spared the evil.

The Cult of Karil is headquartered in Mab.

Common Classes: Archmage, Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard.

Domains: Evil, Death, Magic.

Archdemon Khugraug the Dwarf Slayer (Orc)

Khugraug was a Dwarven warlord of great note. He had defended the Dwarven kingdom for years. When the Dwarven king died, he decided that the heir was unfit to rule. He attempted to take over the government.

But loyalist forces moved to stop him. What resulted was a tremendous civil war. The war lasted for almost one-hundred years. It seemed it would never be resolved to anyone's satisfaction.

During this time Khugraug became bitter and hateful. He prayed to Bamon for aid. His prayer was answered.

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Bamon sent Khugraug's forces a host of Demon wives. By lying with them, they produced the race of Orcs. Khugraug himself mutated overnight.

In his final days, Khugraug became increasingly insane. By the end, he had changed from a disciplined general into a wild tyrant, as is stereotypical of Orcs today.

Khugraug teaches that Orcs are the true race, a perfected form of an originally flawed race. Dwarves are the ultimate enemy, and Elves aren't so great either. Honor your Orcish heritage.

The Cult of Khugraug is headquartered in Gaerydd.

Common Classes: Barbarian, Druid, Fighter, Heirophant.

Domains: Chaos, Trickery, War.

Archdemon Lymalar the Plague-Bearer (Halfling)

Lymalar was an extremely jealous Halfling. He despised the people of his village, because many of them possessed more than he. One day, he came into a dispute with a neighbor. The village ruled against him, so he took a plague-ridden rat and dropped it into the village's water supply. Then he murdered the village cleric. They were all dead before another cleric could arrive.

Lymalar found this intoxicating. He roamed the countryside, finding more prosperous villages and infecting their water. Before long, Bamon took notice and granted him the ability to spread plague with a touch.

A lynch mob finally ran him down. When they killed him, his body swelled and ruptured, giving birth to the Gray Death.

Lymalar teaches that disease is the great, cleansing fire. It consumes and wreaks wonderful destruction and should be honored and venerated.

The Cult of Lymalar is headquartered in Osal.

Common Classes: Cleric, Expert, Rogue.

Domains: Chaos, Death, Destruction.

Archdemon Orblough the Cruel (Orc)

Orblough was extremely disciplined for an Orc. He dedicated his life to learning everything possible

about pain and torture, subjecting his victims to depredations. He raised torture to a science.

He is not known for any miracles, but he so exemplified the embodiment of pain that he was exalted after his death. He is worshiped to this day.

Orblough teaches that pain is the ultimate tool, and that inflicting pain is the ultimate pleasure. Pain should be inflicted as often as possible, for it feeds Orblough in the other world.

The Cult of Orblough is headquartered in Köhler.

Common Classes: Barbarian, Blackguard, Cleric, Druid, Fighter, Heirophant, Sorcerer, Wizard.

Domains: Destruction, Evil, Healing.

Archdemon Ulaugg the Strong (Nephilim)

Ulaugg was a Nephilim of great strength. He united Nephilim clans in the distant past and started the first Nephilim tribes. Because of how long ago he lived, not much is known about his life.

Ulaugg teaches that might makes right. He teaches that the Nephilim are the perfect race. He teaches that they will one day rise up and rule the world.

The Cult of Ulaugg is headquartered in mountains surrounding the Elven-Dwarven Alliance.

Common Classes: Barbarian, Blackguard, Cleric, Druid, Expert, Fighter, Heirophant, Sorcerer, Wizard.

Domains: Destruction, Evil, Strength.

Archdemon Zinril of the Shadow (Fallen Elf)

Zinril, Aspect of Terror, was a male Fallen Elf of some note. He was reputedly the first Fallen Elf to take to the surface after their banishment. He waged a silent war on surface Elves, breeding terror and fear wherever he went.

Though a rogue and assassin, he was said to be able to step into any shadow and magically step out of any other shadow. This is his only known miracle . . . if it wasn't just magic.

Zinril teaches that terrorism is the highest form of warfare. The foes of the Fallen Elves must pay the price for their insolence, and that price is everlasting terror.

The Cult of Zinril is headquartered in a Warren beneath Ingrast.

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Common Classes: Arcane Trickster, Cleric, Expert, Rogue, Sorcerer, Wizard.

Domains: Death, Evil, Trickery.

PAGAN RELIGIONS

There are many other pagan religions in the world. Some of them worship the Archdemons, either wittingly or unwittingly. Others worship Elementals or other powerful beings. Some worship completely nonexistent beings.

There are so many pagan religions in the Mortal Realm that it's impossible to detail them all here. Future sourcebooks will detail any pagan religions in the area they cover.

OTHER WORSHIPED BEINGS

There are other spiritual beings of note and some not-so-spiritual. These beings are all worshiped to one extent or another.

The Herald

The Herald is God's hand in the world. He comes to the world every millennium or two to preach to the people and forward the force of good. He is invariably a peaceful man, though legend has it that his vengeance is swift and terrible.

The last Herald walked the Mortal Realm during Octarus' time. He was captured by Imperial soldiers, imprisoned and eventually martyred. It was his freedom that Alric sought, and it was his sacrifice that led to the downfall of the Empire. It is said that he softened even the Emperor's heart in the end.

The Savior-based religions of the world believe the Herald to be the Savior, come again.

The Harbinger

The Harbinger is a bringer of death and evil, Bamon's hand in the world. It is rumored that the Harbinger was the man who planted the seeds of the Empire. It is also said that he walked the Mortal Realm during the darkness after the Empire's fall.

Sometimes the Harbinger announces his presence to the world. Sometimes he does not. But wherever he goes, darkness follows.

If the Harbinger has any significance in his origin, such as the connection between the Savior and the Herald, it's unknown.

Gwyr

Gwyr is the self-proclaimed scion of the Herald. If this is true, then that would make him the descendant (probably the child) of the Savior.

Gwyr is known to have tremendous powers, powers usually associated with magicians of ancient renown. Some have even called him the Sorcerer-King, in memory of the Wizard-King of the past. Of course, this is usually not in fond memory as it comes from those who think he's a heretic and a witch.

Nopheratus

The Nopheratus is the motive force behind all undead in the world. Few worship it directly. Little is known of its actual nature. For more information see Chapter One.

The Great Fiends

There are five Great Fiends, each created the moment that the Chaos Gate opened. No one knows if this was the effect Octarus intended. Whatever the truth, they are here, and the people of the world can't escape that.

The only thing the Great Fiends hate more than Mortality is one another.

The Chaos

The Chaos is the great Ulcer of the East, doomed to devour the world. For more information on the Chaos, see Chapter Four.

The Chaos is the embodiment of evil destruction.

The Demon Queen

The Demon Queen was once Carania, the right-hand woman of Octarus' Lady High Clerist, Ammalena. Now she is the Demon Queen and she rules Dien-tor.

The Demon Queen has the power of gates and the power of summoning. She can weaken the fabric of the Mortal Realm to make it easy for the beasts

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and Demons of Hell to push through the veil. She opened the Demon Gate in the capital of Dientor and now she is content to build her forces for her next push outward with her Demon armies.

The Demon Queen seems to be connected to her land, able to spot interlopers and open gates to deal with them. She doesn't seem to have perfect control, however. She can usually summon enough Demons to do the job, but she also misses some stealthy intrusions and sometimes her gates don't attract enough Demon muscle to get the job done.

The Demon Queen is wild and capricious. She is prone to sudden fits of anger or compassion, making her difficult to predict. She only honors deals as long as she forgets to break them. If any of the Great Fiends is completely insane, it is the Demon Queen.

The Demon Queen is the embodiment of evil will.

For more information on the Demon Queen and her lands, see Chapter Four.

The Lich King

The Lich King was once Berendel, the apprentice of Reyn, the Lord High Wizard of Octarus. Somehow he was corrupted into a Lich of great power, and now he controls the Ulcer beyond Shieldwall.

The Lich King has the power of the Nopheratus. He can cause any body in his lands to rise from the dead and can command any Undead creature without any checks. In fact, one of his agendas is to trick powerful Undead creatures to come to his lands, thinking they can weather the place in the hopes of some great reward. Then, he instantly snares them.

The forces of the Lich King are legion. Despite the fact that he's held beyond Shieldwall, many people are more afraid that he will conquer everything to the north of Belkanâth, coming back into the continent by an indirect route.

The Lich King is patient and calculating. He drives his lands, but with a purpose, and few can second guess him. Often, he attacks the Shieldwall with inferior forces, doomed to die. Yet few think these attacks are capricious. The Lich King forms plans within plans within plans.

The Lich King is the embodiment of evil intellect.

For more information on the Lich King and his lands, see Chapter Four.

The Siren

The Siren was once Andrel, the assistant of Liniel, Octarus' balladeer and chronicler. Now she has the power of domination and controls the seas to the southwest of Belkanâth.

The Siren is driven by loneliness. The Chaos Gate gave her great power, but it also made her monstrous in the eyes of Mortality (though not monstrous *looking*). Now she sits on her rocks, calling sailors to her to do her will. She is capricious like the sea, but like the sea, she can be managed by those minions she allows some free will. Above all, she wants to know the genuine love she felt once in mundane life.

The Siren is the embodiment of evil compulsion.

The Siren's powers and nature are only suspected. See Chapter Four for more details.

The Warlord

The Warlord was once the Half-Orc Losius, the right-hand man of Octarus' Lord High Marshal, Halrian. Now he controls armies of Orcs and Goblins and he rules Uzarâg.

The Warlord's connection to his land is less conscious than many of the other Great Fiends. His powers and effects rage whether he wants them or not, unless he is actually on location to stop them. The land reflects the Warlord's deep mind. He does not control it remotely.

The Warlord is worshiped by his armies, and he's a good ruler. He beats them and tortures them, but only the bare minimum to get the proper respect from his Cambionic armies. He is a creature of intense honor and great strategy and cunning. He never acts without purpose, and doesn't kill wantonly. The Warlord makes every action while looking twelve moves into the future.

The Warlord is the embodiment of evil force.

See Chapter Four for more details.

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven: Life in Belkanâth

There are many nations and cultures and races in Belkanâth, too many to give them each a full treatment in this book. However, most people in the world are Human, and many of those Humans live a feudal lifestyle.

FEUDAL LIFE

Not every country in Belkanâth is feudal in nature. In fact, many of them aren't, but the feudal existence is enough of a reality in Belkanâth that it deserves special treatment.

The Nature of Feudalism

Feudalism is a form of government most useful in poor countries, where gold is rare. In the Feudal structure, a lord owns all or most of the land. He then grants lands that have incomes to others, called vassals. The vassal, in return, must serve military duty for the lord (and supply his own equipment). In this manner the country is defended despite the lack of wealth.

Lord

The lord is the top of the feudal structure. He owns the land which he has lent to his vassals. He's responsible for defending the land and sometimes maintaining it.

Vassal

The vassal controls the land granted by the lord, but does not own it. The vassal owes the lord several things, including *homage*, *fealty*, *aid*, *relief*, *counsel*, and sometimes *tallage*.

Fiefs

A fief, or "knight's fee," is a patch of land or other revenue-producing grant that a vassal receives in return for military service.

Homage

Homage is an oath of respect, even reverence for the lord. Since lords directly under the king were vassals as well as lords, a particular vassal may have more than one level of lord above them. If this is the case the oath of homage also includes an oath to the king. Homage includes defending the lord as well as respecting and obeying him.

Fealty

Fealty is a lesser form of homage, although a vassal swears both. Fealty is an oath to obey their lord.

Aid

The most basic form of aid is military service. This involves the vassal and probably more knights (depending on the size of the fief). The time of service is forty days, which can make extended warfare difficult. Some vassals replace this form of aid with scutage.

A second form of aid, not as widely accepted, is a requirement to go on crusade. Naturally, this involves service longer than forty days.

The rest of the aid comes in the form of taxes. They are paid at certain points in a king's life: the marriage of his first daughter, the knighting of his first son, and the ransom of the king himself. The value of these aids is equal to 5 percent of the holding's worth.

Relief

A lord owes relief when he takes possession of his fief whether from a grant of lands or inheritance.

Real World Feudalism

Feudalism has come to mean so many different things in the real world the term has lost any real meaning. There have been many forms of feudalism over the years, and GMs who know enough to depict feudalism in all its different forms are welcome to. However, we have attempted to keep things simpler in this book.

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This runs from a 1,000 GP for a knight to 100,000 GP for a powerful holding.

Counsel

A vassal must, in times of need, provide counsel to his lord. It's not uncommon for a lord to send for vassals for counsel before decisions such as arranging marriages and going to war.

Tallage

Essentially, a tax. In poor nations the tallage is only levied in times of emergency. In other nations it's voluntary and given once every few years. In larger and richer nations the tallage is paid as a portion of all the vassal's income.

Scutage

Most nations allow a vassal to pay scutage instead of serving their military service. The scutage is a payment large enough to hire the vassal's obligation in knights for forty days. Most lords prefer a scutage as it can be spent on other things during a time of peace.

Alienation

Alienation is the sale of a feudal land from one vassal to another. Technically this is illegal, but most lords look the other way as long as aid and relief still comes. The lord's primary concern is that his name is included in the document of sale so his rights to the land don't weaken.

In a Village

A feudal village consists of one or more roads, lined with all the houses and cottages of the village. All the fields surround the village and there are no private farmsteads.

The village is ruled by the lord, usually living in a manor at one end or another. Many lords have more than one village under their control and therefore the chance of a lord sitting in residence is

low. The lord's manor and lands are run by his bailiff in his absence.

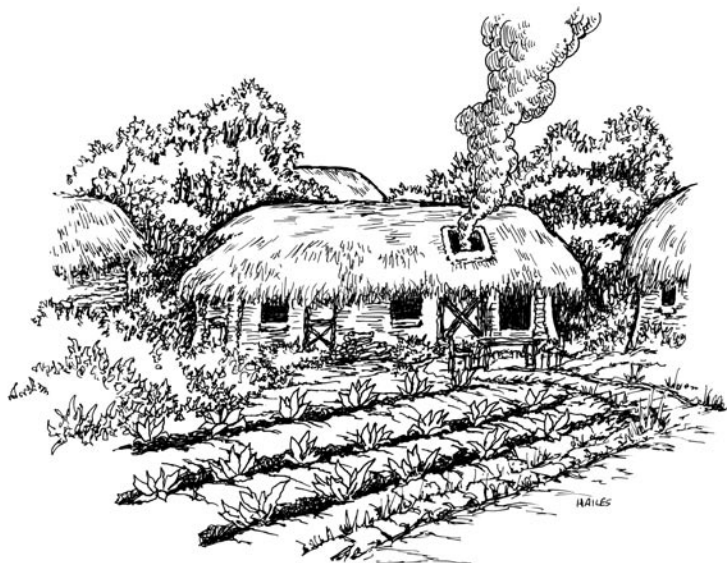
There are few exclusive specialists in a village. Everyone must pull their weight, although often the lord is rich enough to hire a blacksmith for his personal use and he might let the villagers hire the smith in the man's spare time. There is rarely an inn and the word tavern refers to whatever house is selling ale to the villagers that evening.

Livestock are expensive and their manure valued. Because of this all sheep are kept in the lord's pen at night by law. The beadle or hayward (the law in the village) is in charge of making certain the sheep are penned properly.

The reeve is the head of the village, usually a villager of some wealth. The lord allows the reeve to handle matters as he sees fit.

Most law in a village is conducted by the villagers with a jury of their peers (which means other commoners). The lord is only called to judge during sensitive issues.

While there is a priest in most villages, formal marriage ceremonies are uncommon among villagers. Often a marriage is nothing more than a whispered promise, which can make for great confusion and back pedaling later. It's shocking to city dwellers, but villagers are a bit more practical about premarital sex than the higher classes, mainly because of the need to produce a line of children to help as



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free labor. Many marriages aren't considered official until the bride becomes pregnant with the first child. Because of this, most marriages are nothing more than a promise until the first child, and a father might order a daughter to start courting a more fertile man if things go on too long.

Life in a village is dominated by poverty and taxes. One can typically only grind grain in the lord's mill at the cost of the multure—one 14th of the grain ground. There are also tolls on using bridges and a dozen other little aspects of the villager's life, including a yearly tallage. This likely adds up to about half a villager's earnings.

In a City

A city is a different creature from a village, and that is all because of the city charter. The city charter allows the city to exist without all the feudal entanglements of the village. The lord still requires taxes, but people in the city own land and conduct business. They're not tied to the fields like folk in villages. Above all, they're freemen.

This might seem disadvantageous to the lord that lost all these near-slaves from his service, but lords *love* cities and the reason is simple: A city is a moneymaking machine.

Between all the merchants and any fairs the lord is able to

produce, cash veritably pours into the city. This is good because it takes four peasants producing food to support a single city dweller.

The status of a person is typically determined by where they are born. Many peasant women will try to have their children in a city if possible, because any children born there will be free. However, they'd often need to get permission from their lord to do this.



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The city is about commerce. Most city dwellers engage in commerce of some sort. Shop owners live about their shops. There are no sidewalks and people do not enter most shops to make a purchase. Instead, the shops have a long window with two horizontal shutters with supports to prop them open. Opening and propping up the bottom shutter forms a countertop protruding into the street where the merchant can display their goods. Propping open the top shutter forms an awning. Business is conducted right there in the street.

The fairs are the biggest events of the year. Merchants and peasants come from miles around for a fair, the merchants with their goods on mule or donkey because wagons mire in the mud. All manner of goods and celebrations take place during a fair. Almost the entire purpose of some cities is to support fairs.

Guilds are powerful in the cities. However despite the power of the guilds their purpose is not just to control the prices in a city, but the quality as well. The guild structure is built around producing craftsmen of adequate skill so as not to damage their market.

There is usually an elected official of some kind controlling the day-to-day activities in the city, but there's nobility as well. Besides the lord who controls the city as part of his fief, many other nobles will prefer to own city houses to have more ready access to other nobles. But life in the city is cramped for a noble and they will have their county holdings as well.

In a Castle

A castle is an offensive structure, not a defensive one. Because of this a lord needs a license to crenellate . . . to build without one is an act of war.

In its most basic form, a castle consists of some sort of defensive wall and a great hall. Everything takes place in this hall, including audiences, meals, and sleeping.

As castles grow, new rooms or buildings are added to the first, usually a buttery and a pantry are the most important new rooms. After that a lesser hall allows them to cook without heating the great hall during the summer. The next room added is usually

a solar for the lord and lady to sleep (called a solar because it's usually closer to the sun).

Castles grow organically. They are rarely large, complex single structures with a neat wall around them. Buildings are added. New walls make new baileys and the general, sprawling structure's shape is determined more by the land than any designer's wish. It doesn't matter how the architect would like the wall to look, the contours of the location decide the best shape for a proper defense.

Literacy

Only educated people are literate and few peasants are educated. Many city dwellers are illiterate as well.

This doesn't equate to ignorance. A peasant in a legal proceeding, for instance, is eloquent, knowledgeable. They care about the world around them and learn as much as possible. They just don't have a formal education.

In *The Echoes of Heaven*, a character must come from a higher class to begin with literacy. All characters not of the high middle class or the nobility begin the game illiterate, barring GM exceptions.

Further Reading

There are many books on historical medieval society that could be used to add flavor to a game. The important thing is to make sure that any historical element brought into a game makes it more fun, not less.

Gies, Frances and Joseph Gies. *Life in a Medieval Village*. Harper Perennial, 1990.

Gies, Joseph and Frances Gies. *Life in a Medieval City*. Harper Perennial, 1969.

Gies, Joseph and Frances Gies. *Life in a Medieval Castle*. Perennial Library, 1974.

DEMOGRAPHICS

It is often important to know just how talented or powerful a nonplayer character the PCs can find. This is especially true for spell users, whom the players often seek to hire for knowledge, spells, and wisdom. We've tried to include enough information, where possible, for a GM to figure out the level of

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the greatest characters of note in an area. However, for most of the world, this level of detail is beyond the scope of a campaign guide.

When these kinds of demographics are needed, use the following guidelines. The chart below shows how many people need to be in an area to produce a single character of a given level. The difference in the columns reflects the fact that certain groups are rarer or more common than others.

Determine the rough population of the sample area, usually the area in which the characters search. Compare this population to the chart to decide the highest level character on the proper column. If the sample area is a city, multiply the population by five to include the villages and farmlands that directly support it. The number for each tier on the chart is the *minimum* population necessary to produce a character of that rough level.

If you reach the top of the chart, divide the population of the sample by the population of the last entry. This is the number of ultrahigh level characters living in that area. If you need to know the number of people of lower level in the area, each tier on the table has twice the number of people as the tier below it, as a rule of thumb.

One final note. These numbers are merely guidelines. If a country would have three ultrahigh level characters of a certain type (say clergy), then those three people have to live somewhere. Comparing the population of their city or village of residence wouldn't produce anyone even remotely near their level. Because of this, a GM is encouraged to play with these numbers to suit his game. The most powerful mage in a country might live in a remote location, especially if his profession is banned by the local church. Just because he can make the skies weep blood doesn't mean he can't live in a village.

Example One: *Mat wishes to find a Cleric for a party member who lost a limb. His GM, Josh, looks up the regeneration spell and finds out the cleric needs to be 13th level to regrow the limb. Mat heads for the city of Belm, which has a population of 38,881 people. Because this*

is a city, Josh multiplies its population by five (194,405). Mat's only searching Belm, but it takes four farmers to support each citizen in the city and this is his real population sample.

Josh compares this population to the column for church spell users. A population of 64,000 produces a church spell user of 13th-14th level. It takes 128,000 to produce one of the next tier up, 256,000 for the tier after that. This means the highest level Church caster in the city is 15th-16th level. There are two casters of the level Mat needs. Now he just has to decide what the Church will want in return.

However, Belm is the capital of Ludremon. Josh could reasonably declare there are many more spell casters here. In fact, the most powerful Ludremonian member of each Order of the Church is likely to be here at some point during the year. Most of them likely own a residence within the city, so if Josh wanted to fudge these numbers to allow for much more powerful characters, it would be logical.

Example Two: *Later, Josh needs to find out the effects of a deadly plague on a small town. This isn't the Gray Death and the plague can be healed, but Josh wants an idea of what kind of magic might be brought to bear to heal or contain the plague.*

The town in question has a population of roughly 2,000 people. Since this is an urban area, Josh multiplies this by five, resulting in 10,000 total. The Church is in power here, so non-Church magic is not condoned.

Consulting the chart, Josh sees that this area probably contains one Church spell user of 7th-8th level and two Church spell users of a level below that (1st-6th). There is only one banned spell user in the area, likely between 1st and 6th levels (the lowest tier on this column of the chart is 5th-6th, but since nothing can be below it, this includes everything up to 6th level.)

The plague will tear through this area with little or nothing to slow it.

Demographics

Level	Peasants	Craftsmen	Artisans/ Academics	Other	Soldiers	Nobles	Normal Clergy/ Priests	Other Church Orders	Knights	Church Spell Users	Banned Spell Users	Condoned Spell users
1-2	1	5	7	7	—	—	40	10	—	—	—	—
3-4	2	10	15	15	—	—	80	20	—	—	—	—
5-6	4	20	30	30	150*	150*	160	40	300*	4000*	10000*	4000*
7-8	8	40	50	50	300	300	320	80	700	8,000	20,000	8,000
9-10	15	80	100	100	600	600	640	150	1,300	16,000	40,000	16,000
11-12	30	150	200	200	1,200	1,200	1,280	300	2,600	32,000	80,000	32,000
13-14	65	300	400	400	2,400	2,400	2,520	650	5,100	64,000	160,000	64,000
15-16	125	650	800	800	4,800	4,800	5,000	1,250	10,000	128,000	320,000	128,000
17-18	250	1,250	1,600	1,600	9,450	9,450	10,000	2,500	20,000	256,000	640,000	256,000
19-20	500	2,500	3,200	3,200	18,750	18,750	20,000	5,000	40,000	500,000	1,250,000	500,000
21-22	1,000	5,000	6,300	6,300	37,500	37,500	40,000	10,000	90,000	1,000,000	2,500,000	1,000,000
23-24	2,000	10,000	12,500	12,500	75,000	75,000	80,000	20,000	170,000	2,000,000	5,000,000	2,000,000
25-26	4,000	20,000	25,000	25,000	150,000	150,000	160,000	40,000	350,000	4,000,000	10,000,000	4,000,000
27-28	8,000	40,000	50,000	50,000	300,000	300,000	320,000	80,000	700,000	8,000,000	20,000,000	8,000,000
29-30	15,000	80,000	100,000	100,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	150,000	1,500,000	16,000,000	40,000,000	16,000,000
31-32	30,000	150,000	200,000	200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	300,000	2,750,000	32,000,000	80,000,000	32,000,000
33-34	65,000	300,000	450,000	450,000	2,250,000	2,250,000	2,600,000	650,000	5,500,000	64,000,000	160,000,000	64,000,000
35+	125,000	650,000	900,000	900,000	4,875,000	4,875,000	5,200,000	1,250,000	11,000,000	132,000,000	325,000,000	132,000,000

*These types of characters tend to be higher level than most, whether because of pressure to excel and study from parents and superiors or just because the world is unforgiving to low-level characters of this type. Assume the bottom tier of these types of characters includes everyone from 1st-6th level.

Banned spell users are only relevant if the local church forbids certain types of magic. In areas where the magic needed is condoned (or at least ignored) by the church, use the Condoned Spell User's column.

The information used in producing these population figures come, in part, from S. John Ross and his article Medieval Demographics Made Easy (<http://www.io.com/~sjohn/demog.htm>). We would like to thank him for all of his excellent research.

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Chapter Eight: Miscellaneous

There are many topics which haven't fit easily into one of the chapters. These include things like magical items, materials, and the Infernal orders.

METALS

There are many unique metals in the world, good for creating nonmagical or magical items of note. Other special metals from *d20 System* game are still available in The Echoes of Heaven at the GM's discretion.

Artusian Steel

This watered steel is made with layers of high carbon and low carbon content and comes chiefly from Lilano, though some foreign smiths have learned the trick (or one that achieves the same effect). This makes for a perfect balance between hardness and flexibility. Use of Artusian steel is one way to make masterwork weapons.

Elven Steel

This metal is duller in appearance than steel, with more of a gray sheen. It's also lighter and slightly weaker, but Elves make items from this metal about half again as thick as steel and still gain a great decrease in weight. Elven steel is not suitable for weapons unless enchanted, but makes for fine armor even when mundane.

The secret to Elven Steel is in the making. The ore is common, but it takes large amounts of Elven Magic to smelt it. Elven smiths closely guard the secret but it's known to involve large amounts of Elemental Light.

Elven Steel is used to create *Elven Chain*. See *DMG* for more details.

Rune Silver

The first of the Dwarven metals, non-Dwarves sometimes call Rune Silver "true silver." Rune Silver is difficult to smelt and can only be refined or

worked in Dwarven Rune Forges. Other races could work it with the proper item creation feats.

Unenchanted Rune Silver is usually used in making armor. Armor created with Rune Silver has a Max Dex Bonus of two higher than normal and an arcane spell failure of 10% less. The cost multiplier, if one can convince a Dwarf to sell it to them, is 1,000.

Rune Silver is known for its reflective nature, when polished.

Rune Gold

The second of the Dwarven metals, non-Dwarves sometimes call Rune Gold "true gold." Rune gold is even more difficult to smelt and can only be refined or worked in Dwarven Rune Forges. Other races could work it with the proper item creation feats.

Unenchanted Rune Gold is usually used in making armor. Armor created with Rune Gold has a Max Dex Bonus of three higher than normal and an arcane spell failure of 15% less. The cost multiplier, if one can convince a Dwarf to sell it to them, is 5,000.

When polished, Rune Gold seems to glow with a golden inner light.

Rune Steel

The final of the Dwarven metals, non-Dwarves sometimes call Rune Steel "true steel." Rune Steel is most difficult of all metals to smelt and can only be refined or worked in Dwarven Rune Forges. Other races could work it with the proper item creation feats.

Unenchanted Rune Steel is most typically used to create armor. Armor made from Rune Steel grants a DR of 2/-. The cost multiplier, if one can convince a Dwarf to sell it to them, is 10,000.

When polished, Rune Steel has a dull, harder appearance like normal steel, but the air moans quietly in the passage of a Rune Steel edge.

God's Lodestone

This metal acts as a sink for magic of a non-Divine origin. This white metal can sap a spell user of his strength, leaving him magically dead and unable

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to cast spells. For every ounce of God's Lodestone worked into a set of manacles, collar or other restraints, the metal will absorb one spell slot/round from an arcane caster, starting with the highest level. Once these slots are gone, they can only be recovered once the restraints are removed, and then only by normal rest and preparation. God's Lodestone costs 50,000 GP an ounce.

Bamon's Lodestone

This metal acts as a sink for magic of a Divine origin. This black metal can sap a spell user of his strength, leaving him magically dead and unable to cast spells. For every ounce of Bamon's Lodestone worked into a set of manacles, collar or other restraints, the metal will absorb one spell slot/round from a divine caster, starting with the highest level. Once these slots are gone, they can only be recovered once the restraints are removed, and then only by normal rest and preparation. Bamon's Lodestone costs 50,000 GP an ounce.

THE EMPEROR'S ROADS

Originally the Great Roads, the Emperor's Roads are a web of magical conduits that link gateways around the world. These roads were once used to unite the world and later to oppress it, but the secret of using the roads was lost with the death of Kûlan.

The gates are large, stone buildings and they are still found in ruins around the world, untouched and whole after all these centuries, held aloft by the powerful ancient magicks of Almia. One can enter

these buildings but no one knows how to cause the rear wall to open onto the roads.

The roads used to accommodate entire armies, allowing them to cross the largest distances in less than a day, sometimes a matter of hours. The secret to opening these doors seemed to be easy enough to allow almost anyone inside, but whatever it was, it could be set up to allow units to pass through without the commanders knowing the key. Many

think the gates could be opened from a distance using a powerful magical artifact, and that only Alric and later Kûlan knew how to use this item. If that's the case, it was lost with Kûlan's death.

Since the roads have been so long without traffic, most authorities accept it as a given they've become a sixth permanent Ulcer in the world. The Ulcers of the world are only kept in check by constant patrol and action by Mortals. If they have sat disused for one thousand years, it only stands to reason that some Demon or another would have taken control of them. Others would point out they stood disused for longer than that after the fall of Almia,

but still everyone assumes they are an Ulcer.

Adventure Seeds

The Emperor's Roads are a fine adventure seed. While the secret to opening them is a World Thread as is the true nature of the Ulcer inside, many adventures could be had by a party that somehow managed to open them.

Perhaps there are other items that can open the gates, ones that don't utilize the original secret. With such an item, the characters could manage to fight their way in, only to find the roads swarming with the party's own nightmares, deep traumas that the party must navigate successfully to escape.

The Emperor's Roads are very dangerous, but a party that had a great need could use them to get from one place to another. They'd just have to be willing to risk losing their minds.

Of course, there are no maps to the Emperor's Roads.

World Threads

The secret to opening the Emperor's Roads and the true nature of the Ulcer inside are World Threads.

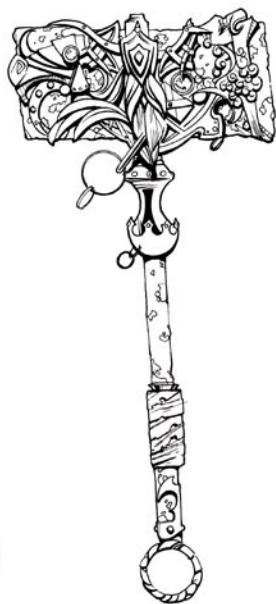
LEGENDARY ITEMS

There are some artifacts so powerful their locations, as well as their true powers, are nothing more than legend. Some of the more powerful follow.

Chapter Eight

Dulanbur, the Fell Hammer

The Fell Hammer is the symbol of Dwarven might. This hammer was the scepter of rulership for Dwarven kings for many centuries, but it has been lost for some time.



No one knows the exact abilities of the Fell Hammer, but it's reported to be a Holy item of Slaying (though exactly what it slays is a matter of debate.) It is also reported to be able to command the stone itself and it's said to have taken the shape of vari-

ous weapons.

No one is certain of the true location of the Fell Hammer, but many believe that the Warlord wielded it when he took Uzarâg. That would make the fallen Dwarven kingdom the most likely resting place. Whether true or not, the Warlord has not been known to wield it since.

Kibad-Durag

In ancient times, Kibad-Durag, the Bond of Brothers, was the sword gifted to Saint Perion by the King of the Dwarves. For years the monarch of the Kingdom of the Elves carried it, until it was lost to history. No one is even sure when exactly it disappeared.

Kibad-Durag is said to be a Holy sword of tremendous power. Besides Slaying Demons, it granted the wielder tremendous powers of leadership and

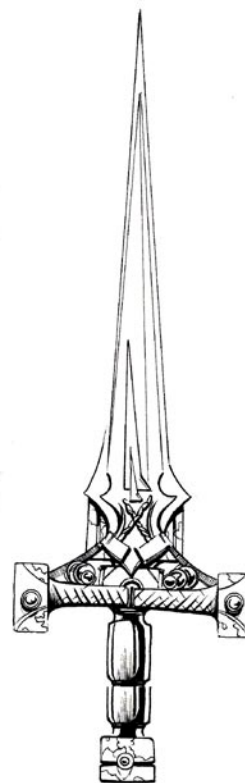
charm. Legends say Kibad-Durag can sway the will of thousands.

The location of Kibad-Durag is unknown. Even the legends are unclear.

God's Breath

The Archangel Areniel carried the Breath of God from Heaven to the Mortal Realm in this crystal vessel. What happened to God's Breath after this is unknown.

God's Breath holds the



Adventure Seeds

The location and exact powers of all the items accepted for the Fell Hammer and Kibad-Durag are adventure seeds. It would probably be best to make these items scalable, as briefly outlined in this section.

World Threads

The powers and locations of the Fell Hammer and Kibad-Durag are world threads.

power of life itself. Anyone drinking from it will heal any wound. Some

even whisper the owner of God's Breath can sustain their lives indefinitely.

Both Hegarion and Gwyr have been rumored to possess God's Breath. If it's true that Gwyr holds the vessel, it's never been found, despite the actions of countless thieves over the centuries.

Malguin's Tooth

Malguin's Tooth, an item of great power and renown among the Halflings, is said to be the last item created by Saint Malguin. For years the head of the Halfling church carried it, until he fell fighting the Warlord in Belther.

Various stories say Malguin's Tooth is a short sword and others a long dirk. Not only could it destroy evil, but stories say it carries all the wisdom and knowledge of Saint Malguin himself.

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While it was lost in Belther, that nation has been well scoured for the artifact. If it survives, it has probably long-since moved to another location.

Karil's Bands

While Kibad-Durag has great power over the minds of the masses, this was a power of persuasion. Karil the Lich had the power to control the minds of others, making thralls out of the strongest-willed victims.

Karil's Bands were thick bracelets that gave him power over his slaves. These bracelets only worked in a pair and they could cause anything from sleep to perfect domination of their victims.

Karil's Bands vanished with his death. They have arisen from time to time since, but each time the bearer went mad with power. For some reason, the power of the bands failed them in their last hours and many think they bear the curse of Karil himself.

Zinril's Garrote

The garrote was the preferred weapon of the Archdemon Zinril before his death. They are a simple length of wire secured to ebony grips on either end.

Zinril's Garrote had the ability to instantly snuff the life of anyone it strangled. It granted the bearer great powers of stealth and subtlety. Someone who has mastered this item is almost unstoppable.

Zinril's Garrote was thought to have been held by the head of all assassins, but some evidence supports the idea that it's been passed from freelancer to freelancer. Who bears it now is unknown, but most people think that it never goes long without a bearer, that when lost, it finds someone new.

The Blood Blade

The Vampire Lord carried this wicked broadsword throughout much of his unlife. With it, he extended his vampiric powers even when armored and on the field of battle.

This blade drinks the blood of its victims. Most sages believe that it can imbue its wielder with great strength and speed in combat, and the more it drinks,

the mightier the wielder becomes. These abilities are temporary however, and fade with time.

No one knows where the Blood Blade went after the fall of the Vampire Lord.

Bonded Items

There are items in the Mortal Realm that bond with their bearer. These items begin at a lesser level of power and increase in might hand in hand with the bearer.

Bonded Items are ideal for long campaigns because they allow a character to identify with a weapon for long periods of their career. A Bonded Item begins play with little power, but as the character rises in strength and unlocks new powers, the item increases with him hand in hand.

Bonded Items and full rules on their use will be included in future adventures, but a GM can create one right now, using these general guidelines.

Begin by assigning all the powers of the item. Treat each bonus separately, in +1 increments. In other words a +5 item has five powers each granting a cumulative +1 to their bonus. After you've detailed all the powers of the item, you must assign them a point value. If you have a game like Hero System, this can be used to assign relative point values.

After the powers and the points are assigned, layer the powers in tiers by point cost. Make sure that incremental powers, such as bonuses to attack and damage are spread out across the tiers, regardless of their value. This guarantees that a character doesn't unlock all the bonuses first and improves scaling. Make sure the item has at least one base power (it's damage for a weapon, for instance) that can be used unbonded.

When you are done, you should have a list of tiers and a list of powers in each tier. The potential power of the item is determined by the power of the character. The character can unlock three points of powers a level. In other words, a tenth level character can unlock up to thirty points in powers.

The item must have no wielder or be separated from the wielder for some time before a new character can use it. Killing the former wielder qualifies. Merely taking it from him allows the character to

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try to bond the item. Every day they successfully bond it after that, they remove one point from the enemy's control of the item. When the enemy has control of nothing but the item's most basic, unbonded abilities, the link is broken. A character can only make one of these checks a day, no matter how often the item is used.

When a character uses the item, he may make a passive use magic device check (which in this one case can be attempted untrained, DC 10). If successful, the character unlocks a power of the item. Compare the maximum number of tiers the character could theoretically unlock. For instance, if he has 20 points available to bond in the item and there are 1 point, 5 point, 15 point and 25 point tiers, the character could only unlock powers on the first three. Randomly determine the tier unlocked. Then randomly determine the power gained from those listed in that tier. Then add the point value to the value of the item. The difference between how many points the item is worth and how many points the character is worth determines the maximum tier the character can unlock on its next use.

It's complicated, but it's also up to you to determine the details. See the example below for some ideas about how the guidelines might be implemented.

Example: Bjorn wants to create a bonded sword for one of his players to find in the next game. He starts with the basics, outlining powers. The sword has a +5 bonus, in five increments of +1. Bjorn decides the sword grants a +5 bonus to will and reflex saves, also in five increments of +1. The sword grants low-light vision as well and can conjure an Earth Elemental once a day, and take multiple forms, and is Holy. He assigns point values to these powers and produces the following:

+1 to hit and damage (x5), 1 Point.

+1 to will saves (x5), 1 Point.

+1 to reflex saves (x5), 1 Point.

Low-light vision, 2 points.

Conjure Earth Elemental, 1/Day, 18 points.

Take the form of a mace at will, 4 points.

Holy, 6 points.

With that done, Bjorn assigns them to tiers. He starts by creating tiers based on cost and placing one of each of the incremental abilities in the first tier and each of the other powers in the tiers that match their point values. Then he assigns each of the remaining increments to one of the higher tiers to spread them out. The tiers, when done, look like this:

Base cost of item 0 Points

Tier 1 (1 Point):

+1 to Hit and damage 1 Point

+1 to will saves 1 Point

+1 to reflex saves 1 Point

Tier 2 (2 Points):

+1 to Hit and damage 1 Point

+1 to will saves 1 Point

+1 to reflex saves 1 Point

Low-light vision 2 Point

Tier 3 (4 Points)

+1 to Hit and damage 1 Point

+1 to will saves 1 Point

+1 to reflex saves 1 Point

Take the form of a mace at will 4 Points

Tier 4 (6 Points)

+1 to Hit and damage 1 Point

+1 to will saves 1 Point

+1 to reflex saves 1 Point

Holy 6 Points

Tier 5 (18 Points)

+1 to Hit and damage 1 Point

+1 to will saves 1 Point

+1 to reflex saves 1 Point

Conjure Earth Elemental, 1/Day 18 Points

Note that Bjorn was careful to create enough tiers to spread out his incremental bonuses.

Finally, Bjorn sketches out some tables to use in rolling which tier is activated. He makes cer-

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tain that the higher tiers are less likely to come up. Then he takes the weapon to the session.

Angie is playing the party's tank character. She is 7th level when she finds the sword. She kills the former wielder and therefore the sword is unbonded when it comes into her possession.

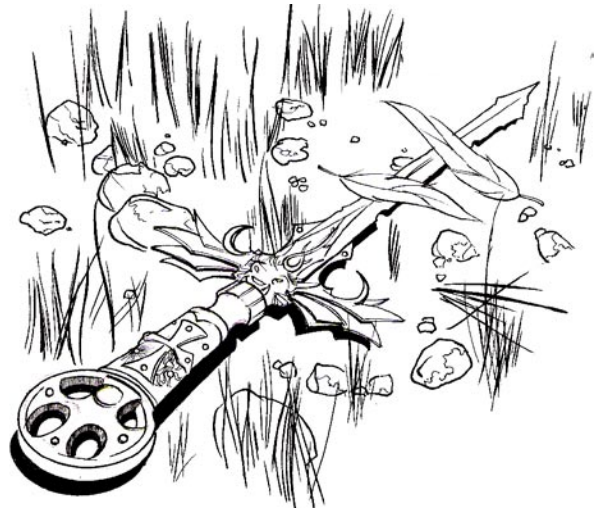
Angie uses the sword throughout the next battle. Every time she rolls a hit (Bjorn considers the test for whether she used the item) she makes a passive use magical device check. She hits five times in the first battle, but she doesn't have the use magical device skill, so she only activates two powers. On the first power, she has the points (21) to activate any tier. She rolls a 2nd tier power. Rolling randomly, she unlocks the first power: a +1 to hit and damage. This costs one point. Now the item is worth 1 point to her and she has 20 left. This means that on the second roll she can still unlock all five tiers. On the second roll she unlocks a 1st Tier power: a +1 to will saves. That costs one point as well. She still has 19 points left, so this might be her last chance to unlock a fifth tier power (without advancing level).

In the next fight she unlocks three powers. The first one is a first tier power: a +1 to Hit and damage. Next she rolls a second tier power: the +1 to will saves. Now she can only unlock four of the tiers because she only has 17 points left. Finally, she unlocks another tier two power, the low-light vision.

So at the end of the second battle, the sword is +2 to Hit and damage (2 Points), +2 to will saves (2 Points) and low-light vision (2 Points). This leaves her with 15 points left to unlock.

She'll likely unlock the lesser powers first and eventually she will end up with fewer points than the cost of the lowest tier she has left to unlock. She needs to have the cost of the tier to unlock something, even if she only rolls a 1 point power, so eventually, she will have to have 18 free points to unlock each of those last tier powers. This means that on average, if the charts are weighted to the lower tiers, a character will progress more or less straight up the charts. Still, there is the chance for a fantastic

power to unlock early, should Angie have the points.



THE GRAY DEATH

The Gray Death is perhaps the second most dangerous thing in the world, after the threat of the Ulcers. This plague is passed through the air and is immune to all forms of magical healing. Only a direct miracle of God can cure someone of the Gray Death.

The Gray Death begins as headaches and pain in the joints. Then on the third day of the disease, the skin takes on a gray tone. On the fifth day, boils begin to form on the skin, especially on the tenderest parts. These boils fill with gray pus. On the seventh day the lungs begin to fill with pus as well.

Characters resist the Gray Death as a fortitude save (DC 15). People who contract the Grey Death die about half the time. The time for recovery from the disease, if the character survives it, begins on the seventh day, with the filling of the lungs, and takes two weeks, minus one day per point of save over 15.

The Gray Death is the terror of the world. A person can see an Ulcer. A person can fight an Ulcer. Most people may think the cure for an Ulcer is extreme, but they understand it. No one knows how to effectively fight the Gray Death.

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ULCERS

Ulcers are the greatest threat to the Mortal Realm. The Gray Death is but a plague on Mortality. Ulcers are a plague on the world itself.

The Nature of Ulcers

Ulcers are perhaps the most important element of play in *The Echoes of Heaven*. If the party is a crusading group, Ulcers will likely be their first and primary targets. Many adventures will likely involve one in some way.

When the Savior and the Four Prophets Sundered the world into Heaven, Hell, and the Mortal Realm, it left the universe in a tiered pattern. Heaven, at the highest, is the home of God, and God does not come to Mortals, all Mortals must come first unto God. Only when they invite Him into their hearts can he show them the way up. Always up.

But the depths of Hell strive to move up as well. The Devils, the Archdemons, the Dukes, and the common Demons all conspire against Mortality. They strive and they plot and they tempt, and when one is successful, he manages to open a wound in the fabric of the Mortal Realm. He creates Hell on earth.

An Ulcer.

An Ulcer is an infection in the fabric of Meridrin. It's a blight on the land and the people, a vortex of sin and evil among sinners. In an Ulcer Mortals languish and die. The Nopheratus raises the dead and Demons walk the earth. An Ulcer is a center of hate and evil, a nexus of two planes, where the fabric of reality thins and twists. An Ulcer is the beginning of the end. It is a wound on the face of creation.

And if it isn't healed fast, it becomes a fatal wound.

Inside Ulcers, reality breaks down. The Ulcer takes aspects out of the dreams of the former inhabitants, the Demon who created it, or even those who enter. An Ulcer can be wild and unpredictable, if that's its nature, but more often the changes are subtle and one doesn't realize where they are until it's too late.

The Formation of Ulcers

No one is positive how a Devil or Demon creates an Ulcer, but it is known they are connected to sin. Ulcers feed on evil and, once formed, tend to flood with Cambions or the dead. They fester and boil with foul life and a normal Mortal turns from domination of the land into prey.

Ulcers begin subtly. Nothing seems untoward about the region at first. Then there is some hint. The dead rise. The animals turn feral. The sun dims.

It is in these early days that it's easiest to cleanse an Ulcer. Conversely, it's also in these early days the inhabitants are least likely to admit something is wrong. Some of this is denial, some superstition about naming evil. Most of it is the understandable fear of what an outsider might do when they're found out. This fear is justified.

As an Ulcer develops and enters its growth stage, the effects become more pronounced. Often there are magical quirks. Sometimes the Ulcer cloaks itself in illusion. Strange formations might grow. The Demon or being who has attached himself to the thing typically takes up residence, though he often uses disguises. The land shapes to the minds of the lord, the inhabitants, or both.

If not stopped when it finishes its initial growth spurt, an Ulcer fully develops. At this point it becomes "permanent." Fully developed Ulcers are only rarely, if ever, destroyed. Entire branches of the Church seek Ulcers, cleansing them before they ever get this far.

One final note. Fully formed Ulcers *do* continue to grow. The growth stage of an Ulcer refers to its increase in power inside a fixed space. Once they fully form, they spread, taking in land, and corrupting the areas around. Entire nations have fallen to Ulcers. It seems inevitable that one of these will eventually devour the Mortal Realm.

There is no set time line for the development of an Ulcer, although a week for its birth and a few months for its growth is typical.

Ulcers in Game Play

An Ulcer is the ultimate adventure site because inside a growing Ulcer there is little that *can't* happen. That's not to say that anything can happen in a

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single given Ulcer. Ulcers each have a logic and an atmosphere of their own, and once it is set, they do not vary. They aren't bereft of natural laws. It's just that any law can *become* natural in the early days.

This allows a GM much latitude. Many types of classic RPG adventures are hard to rationalize in a realistic game. However, an Ulcer's reality is the reality of Hell. If a GM wants to build an adventure around magical traps that are too elaborate to build one at a time, he can put a Demon with a love of the things at the center, and let them form from his will and imagination. To build an adventure around an unlikely amount of riddles, make the Ulcer inside the mansion of a man who studied riddles as his life's passion. Any type of adventure is possible inside an Ulcer: typical roleplaying adventures, romances, tragedies, comedies, hack and slay, horror. The sky's the limit.



Destroying an Ulcer

Destroying an Ulcer is known as "cleansing." As long as the Ulcer hasn't fully formed, the method of destroying one is simple: kill everything evil inside.

Unfortunately, this can be trickier than it looks.

Since there is no simple way to detect evil in *The Echoes of Heaven*, the easiest way to destroy an Ulcer is to simply kill every living thing. Unfortunately, most people choose this path. It's the method the Church condones among the questing Orders. This is not a matter to take lightly, after all. While it's possible to surgically remove the evil from an

Ulcer, that evil is tricky and those willing to dedicate their lives to the hunt are relatively few. Those who wipe out entire villages rather than seeking out the core of evil tend to lead much longer lives.

Hopefully, the player characters will be made of nobler stuff than that.

Practically, it takes a great evil to perpetuate an Ulcer. Most of the day-to-day evils of Mortal life won't do it. Evil lords and grasping moneylenders only rarely help anchor an Ulcer, but sometimes there *is* another great evil inside. It's possible to destroy all the Cambions and Undead in a place, only to discover later that a serial killer or a Demon worshipper has lived there undetected for years.

Destroying a fully formed Ulcer is trickier. At this point, killing everything evil inside is only the first part, and the second is always unique to the Ulcer. Perhaps there is an object inside that needs to be destroyed. Perhaps there is ground that needs to be blessed or a grave that needs to be dug up and its contents burned. Every Ulcer is different and tied intimately to its nature and history. If this is a fallen monastery of the Church, the answer might be in the teachings of the monastery's patron Saint. If this is the manor of a lord, it might involve the lord's dead brother. If it's a city, it might involve the founder, or the mayor, or the person who was most charitable in the city's history. Every Ulcer is different. Only investigation and empathy can find the answer.

Once they have reached or surpassed the growth stage, destroyed Ulcers disappear violently. Typically, this consists of a rapid decrease of the Ulcer's radius with tremors and occasionally a strange magical effect. People who destroy a growth Ulcer are typically near the heart when this happens. Anyone too deep in the Ulcer during the collapse will stay there. This means they will end up following the Ulcer back to Hell. The amount of distance they must travel to get out depends on the Ulcer, but halfway to two thirds of the way to the original edge is a good rule of thumb. Beyond that, they can successfully dive out if they see the wall of the Ulcer approaching (or just run out if they can't). Destroyed Ulcers collapse quickly and spectacularly. There's rarely time to loot and a dead run is the best pace for escape.

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Magic and Ulcers

Again, everything can change from Ulcer to Ulcer, but for the most part, they don't affect magic, except in the fact they are more closely aligned to Hell the further they develop. A fully formed Ulcer is half Hell and half Mortal Realm. Whether this affects a spell has more to do with the nature of the spell and the rules at the GM's table than any hard/fast setting traits. For most GMs, it's probably easiest to ignore this aspect in 90% of all Ulcers.

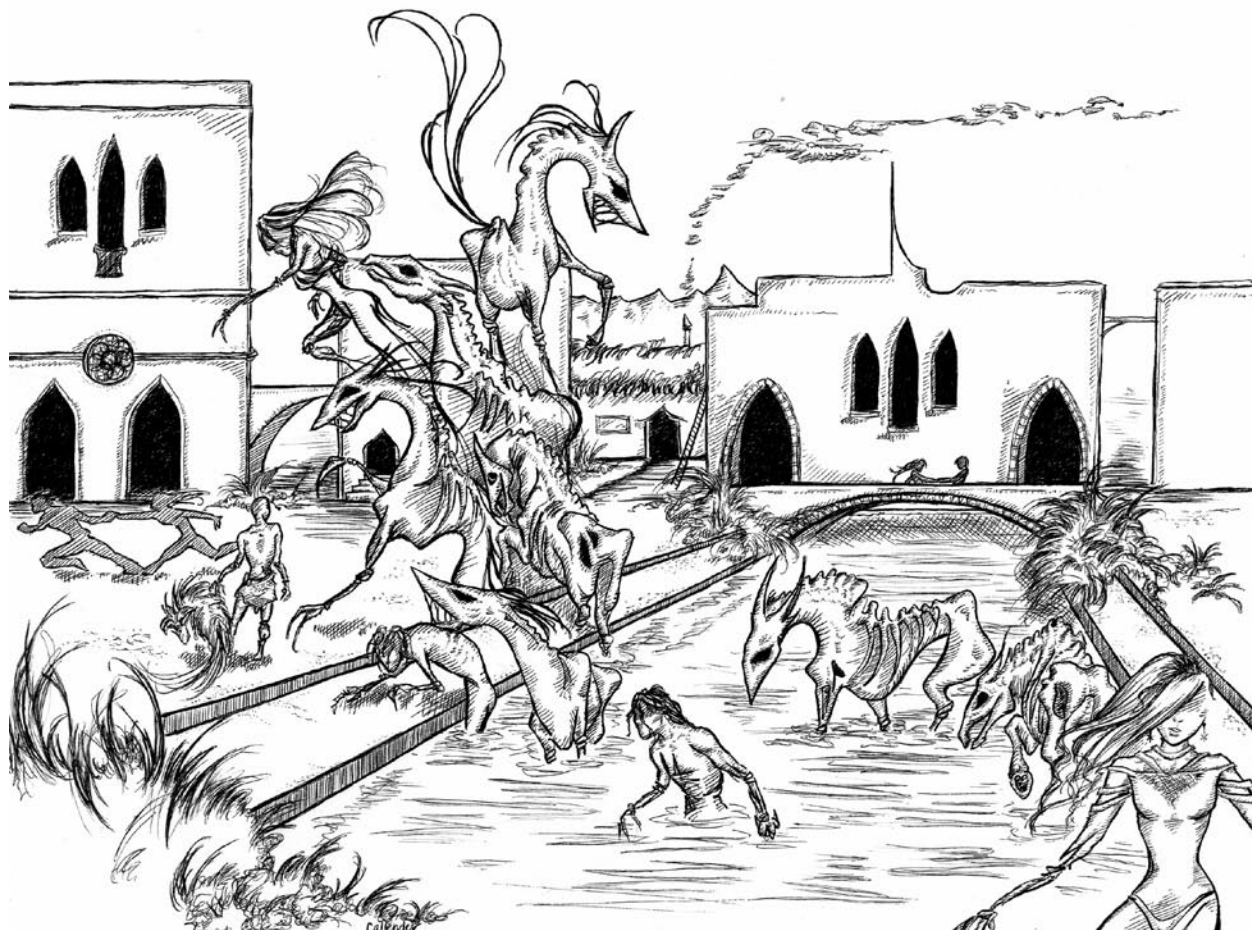
One thing that *is* consistent, is that all Ulcers are magical. Anyone with the ability to see magic can tell just by looking. At their beginnings, there might be one tiny locus for the Ulcer. When it enters its growth phase, every surface inside the Ulcer will read as magical. Also, Ulcers are corrupt. Any spell that detects corruption (detect evil, for instance) will spot the effect of the Ulcer's magical field if any part of it is in range.

A last note: Ulcers wreak havoc on divination of any kind. The simplest divinations fail where they're involved. Almost nothing can see inside (or through a magical surface in an Ulcer). Generic divinations sometimes work, but the dampening effects of the Ulcer can even reach outside. If a madman is sabotaging an army because he's been corrupted by the Demon inside an Ulcer, no direct divinations on the madman will likely work, even if the sabotage happened outside.

Ulcers in the Warrens

Ulcers develop in the Warrens as well as on the surface. There are only two things that have kept this from destroying the world.

First of all, Ulcers are spherical at best. More likely they are wider than they are tall. Practically, it means that Ulcers that form in a Warren don't reach the surface. What happens belowground stays be-



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lowground. For the most part, at least. If the Ulcer reaches the surface, then entrances to the Warren do as well. People don't have to deal with Ulcers they can't physically reach.

The second important factor is the Fallen races don't like Ulcers any more than those on the surface. In an Ulcer, Hell rules, and while most Fallen races are allied with Hell, they aren't in a hurry to get there.

THE ORDERS OF THE INFERNAL

Almost all the creatures of the Infernal share a common heritage, owing their origin back to Bamon's first moment of defiance. Here are the orders of Infernal creatures and their relationships.

Fallen Angels

God created the Angels, but Bamon created the Infernal by corrupting the plan of God. He caused the Falls of Angels, claiming two thirds of the Host of Heaven by the end of the War. No one knows if the Nopheratus has any connection to this Fall, but by the end, the deed was done.

Devils

There are a finite number of Devils because there were a finite number of Angels. Every Fallen Angel that survived the War in Heaven ended in Hell after the Sundering. These are now the Devils of Hell and many of them are powerful—the Dukes and Duchesses of Hell. They rule under the brutal tyranny of Bamon, the Dark Prince.

The Nephilim

The Sin of Wantonness caused the second Fall of Angels. These Angels laid with the daughters of Mortality and begot children by them—the races of giants, the Nephilim.

In creating the Nephilim, Bamon accomplished his greatest achievement. The Fallen Angels would only dwindle in numbers from that time forward, because God created no new Demons. But the Nephilim could marry one-another and produce young. It was a race that could perpetuate itself.

The true importance of this achievement wasn't clear until the first Nephilim died. Its soul went to

Hell and became the first Demon. Suddenly, not only did a race of evil walk the Mortal Realm, but they swelled the ranks of the Infernal in Hell as well. Within a few generations, Demons outnumbered Devils.

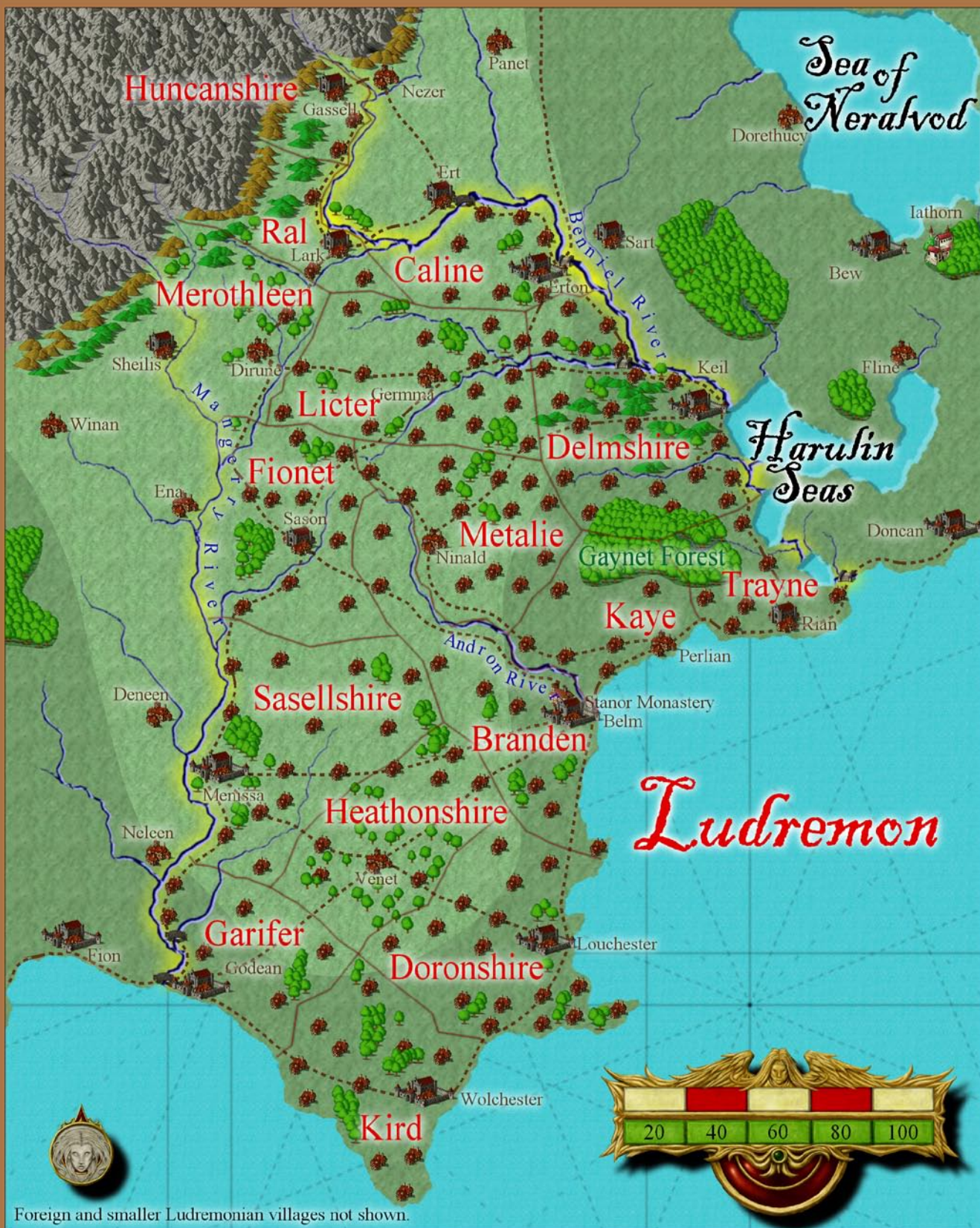
Demons

But not all Demons are the souls of dead Nephilim. Some Demons, the Demons of Damnation, are not necessarily of Infernal birth. These are the souls of dead Mortals or Cambions who achieved such a greatness of evil in their lives that Bamon rewards them in death. They are infused with Infernal energies through some unknown process, becoming full Demons. Some of them become so powerful and are worshipped so widely they become the Infernal equivalent of Saints . . . the Archdemons.

Cambions

When a Demon lies with a Mortal, the resulting child is a Cambion, a creature half Mortal and half Demon. Cambions are the final level of the Infernal. The Cambions can mate with one another and reproduce, creating their own young. This makes them not only the final rank of Infernal, but the one most numerous in the Mortal Realm.





Foreign and smaller Ludremonian villages not shown.

Appendix One

Appendix 1:

Ludremon

While you should have everything you need in the earlier sections to play in the Mortal Realm, the information there is more general in nature. This section exists to give GMs a more detailed play area.

This appendix is a bonus sourcebook, giving you a taste of things to come in future *The Echoes of Heaven* products. It gives you everything you need to base a campaign in the Kingdom of Ludremon.

INTRODUCTION

Land of honor. Failed empire. Home of chivalry. Festering field of war. All these phrases describe the Kingdom of Ludremon.

Ludremon is a country with a strong moral undertone and a high chivalric tradition. In fact, it's known because its knights hold more to the ideals of knighthood than orders in other nations. Knights in Ludremon rarely abuse the peasantry.

This has pushed Ludremon to empire building in the past, conquering its neighbors, Keireena and Mab. While Ludremon has no member nations at the moment, many think it's only a matter of time before they gather their swords and bring their particular brand of civilization to other nations of the world. While this is well-intentioned and almost always sparked by tales of abuses in the target nations, it's the source of much dispute.

Ludremon borders the ocean on the east and south and mountains on the northwest. This leads to a great deal of variable weather. To the east is the great mediating effect of the ocean. To the west and north, the cold reaches of the mountains. Prevailing winds can take the land from moderate to chilling winds.

The land is dominated by grasslands. Trees and clumps of wood dot the countryside, all of them long since replanted until dominated by oak and a sprinkling of yew. This gives them everything they need to build the nations ships and longbows.

Small streams cover Ludremon, many of them runoff from the mountains. This makes them cold, and bathing in running water is not a favored pastime.

Ludremon considers itself a pillar of virtue in a world of chaos and treachery. While this is an exaggeration, they take these claims seriously, and while goodness might be a stretch at times, honor isn't.

On top of this, they consider their allies of lesser moral fiber than the Ludremonian. The Elves of Ingrast are obvious heathens and the citizens of Felric's Redoubt concern themselves more with money than honor.

The Ludremonian government prides itself on its honor. The royal heir trains as a knight.

The Ludremonian would prefer to take a crusader stance to the other nations of the world, but there's just no time. Raids from Keireena and Mab swarm the country and keep the Ludremonian military fighting a mostly defensive battle. Add into this attacks by sea from the raider nations and they can barely find the surplus to build troops for the causes that matter, such as sending reinforcements to nations besieged by a Great Fiend.

Then there are raids from the Hobgoblins in the mountains to the northwest. These are a minor annoyance, but they drain resources and force the government to station troops at all mines.

Overall, the Ludremonians are a happy people. They thrive under misfortune. They usually win, and winning in the face of adversity gives them a sense of purpose.

The Regent helps perpetuate this feeling. He makes certain the citizens have a proper feeling of community. Every blacksmith and horse breeder knows he contributes to the defense of the weak. Every baker and farmer knows they feed an army that defends the nobility of spirit.

At least that's what they believe, and the Regent honestly believes it too.

The Ludremonians are not the richest people, but they are content. They live simple lives and take simple pleasures.

It goes without saying that many cities, towns, and villages in Ludremon are walled. Fortifications are a skill Ludremonian architects long since mastered.

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It's worth noting that while Ludremonians consider themselves a righteous and honorable country, this leads them a far cry from what most people would consider truly "good." They're not above ruthless acts that keep their country safe and their Church whole, as long as these acts remain honorable.

HISTORY

The lands and peoples of Ludremon have a long and complicated history. However, most histories begin with the fall of the Empire.

Power Vacuum

Ludremon lies between Keireena and Mab. Though these two peoples share a common ancestry, they have been historical enemies. This hatred culminated toward the end of the Empire, and when Alric rose, Mab fought on the side of the rebels and Keireena on the side of the loyalists.

When the Empire collapsed, the entire region fell into chaos. Mab and Kiereena's armies lay positioned across a hostile border and the end of the Empire didn't mean an end of conflict.

The resulting wars continued on and off for most of the next three centuries. Mab took land from Keireena and Keireena counterattacked, taking land from Mab. The blood that drenched the earth during this period has colored the land, and Ulcers of the walking dead seem more common in Ludremon than many other nations.

Marnele, across the Gulf, sent several diplomatic warnings to the two countries, stating that their conflicts must stop for the good of the people. Neither country listened, and while Marnele probably had hidden motives, they used this excuse for a reason to invade.

The Marnele Occupation

In 1281 AI, an invasion force from Marnele assaulted the lands of Mab and Keireena, carving a large section out of both. They found a land exhausted from war and ripe for conquest. In addition, both native peoples fought in little or no armor and had

nothing in the way of knights. The assault from Marnele found little resistance.

They declared the area a protectorate of Marnele. In the years to followed, Ludremon was instrumental in the stability of the Gulf of Orbean. Their ships guarded the waters, and they helped protect Sulvic City in times of trouble. All under Marnench control.

While the depredations of the Marnench are legendary, they're exaggerated. Marnele kept the peace for years and this buffer between the two warring people cooled heads throughout the region. Over the next years, there was enough intermarrying the Ludremonians formed their own racial group out of the three bloodlines.

At the beginning, the Marnench did a great deal to ease the tension between the conquered and the conquerors. While they imposed the feudal system on the land, they selected clan chiefs and raised them to minor nobility. The Marnench nobles ruled but the peasants had good lives.

But over the years the Marnench became complacent and the trouble began to form. For years, the nobles of the regions suffered under foreign rule and foreign taxes. The Marnench knights terrorized the peasantry, pillaged at a whim, and made the land a living Hell.

Tension built within the country. The native nobility were marginalized by the imported Marnele aristocracy. The occupiers levied huge taxes and stifled the people to the point of breaking them.

Matters stewed for years. The King of Ludremon declared all tournaments illegal, fearing they were little more than training for rebellion. He outlawed archery among the

Class Abbreviations

Class	Abbreviation
Aristocrat	ari
Assassin	asn
Barbarian	bbn
Bard	brd
Cleric	clr
Commoner	com
Druid	drd
Expert	exp
Fighter	frt
Paladin	pal
Ranger	rgt
Rogue	rog
Sorcerer	sor
Warrior	war
Wizard	wiz

Appendix One

peasants as well. This just guaranteed that illicit archery practice and tourneys flourished and every time the government broke up one of these meetings, resentment festered even more.

The end was unavoidable. The King imposed increasingly harsh taxes and penalties in a try to stifle the rebellion, but this just made matters worse. Finally, it all came to a boil.

The Feather Rebellion

The pieces were in place. A disgruntled peasantry armed themselves with thousands of longbows and countless arrows. The downtrodden nobility donned in the best armor they could afford and trained their arms in tourney after tourney. Finally, they could take no more and they felt they had the power and entitlement to do something about it.

In 1465 the country revolted. The peasants rose, killing the Marnench lords and joining the “Ludremonian” lords. Overnight, the countryside belonged to the rebels and the cities belonged to the Marnench.

The knights took the field. The Marnench fielded a mixed force of knights and peasants. The peasants were untrained, but the knights were far superior. Plus, loyalist knights outnumbered rebel knights ten to one. By historical standards, the battle was lost before it began.

But the rebels didn’t falter. They lost the first three battles, the loyalist knights hacking them to pieces and then barreling through the peasants. Despite the determination of the rebels, it seemed hopeless.

Then at the battle of Wolchester, everything changed. The peasants disobeyed the orders of their commanding officers and pelted the loyalist knights immediately. By the time the two forces of knights met, the loyalist forces reeled, most of them unhorsed, their command in shambles.

Lord Eronandon, the noble in charge of the rebel army, ordered all the peasants put to death for treason. Everything seemed lost for the peasants, then the head of the rebellion, Stuar the Earl of Stepher, arrived and asked what had happened. Eronandon explained how the peasants had disobeyed orders, stealing the glory from the knights. The Earl of Stepher listened sagely and then ordered all the peasants

pardoned. He stayed up with their file leaders all night, asking what they’d done to win the fight. Only at dawn did he finally convince himself of the truth.

It was common knowledge that peasants couldn’t win battles, only knights could. Stepher, through the impassioned explanations of the peasants, realized that this wasn’t true. The truth was that peasants weren’t *allowed* to win battles. He had two choices. He could let his knights try to win and fail, or he could allow his peasants to try to win and succeed. The Earl of Stepher was just open-minded enough to swallow his pride and accept the truth. If he wanted to sit on the throne of Ludremon, he’d have to give power to the common man.

Decrees rode out to all his armies. Lords argued and he was forced to put seven to death or face further rebellion. Finally he had his house in order, his lords in line. He rode forth on Louchester and Venet. Meanwhile, his lords took the other great cities of the kingdom.

At the end his army held Belm at siege. He managed, after a year, to successfully picket the harbor. Finally, in 1467, he’d starved the city to the point of



Prince Karimon the XXXI

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collapse. The knights ate their horses. Their ships sank. The Gray Death ravaged the city—no one knows how it got inside.

No one fired an arrow at the end of the siege. There was no majestic charge, no final fight. In the end, the King of Ludremon sent the Earl of Stepher a one-word message.

“Please.”

In the days that followed, they cleaned Belm of the remaining pockets of resistance, the last few lords who refused to surrender. The King surrendered but the governor of the city didn’t, and the Earl of Stepher struck him down.

Stepher named it the Feather Rebellion and many of the lords argued it was because of the plume he wore on his helm, but that wasn’t the case. The archers had one this war, and he named it after the fletchings that kept their arrows true.

The Curse of Ludremon

The King Stuar (formerly the Earl of Stepher) died one year after taking control of Ludremon. The country barely survived the resulting turmoil, and Stuar’s most trusted friend, the new Duke Nidlian, took over as Regent, raising Stuar’s son and protecting the nation.

The new king took the throne years later and continued the postwar rebuilding started by his father and continued by the Regent. His rule knew peace and prosperity. He died at the age of thirty, the same age as his father.

His son was young and Duke Nidlian took over for the next twelve years as Regent. When the new king took over, Duke Nidlian moved into semi-retirement, allowing his lands to stay in the control of his son.

Then the next king died at the age of twenty-two.

All of these deaths were of natural causes. Duke Nidlian came out of retirement to begin the regency of this new king, but he was an elderly man now and knew he wouldn’t rule for long.

So he declared his son his successor as Regent. The lords of the land supported this declaration and it became akin to law.

As the years progressed, king after king died an untimely death, none of them surviving the age of

thirty. The new Duke Nidlian served as Regent for all of these kings, and before he died, he declared his son Regent.

Thus, have things progressed since the beginning of the line. The royal and regency bloodlines survive to this day, although a passage through two daughters has changed the regency bloodline to Scolyn. Over the years, it’s become clear that something is happening with the royal line of Ludremon, which has passed through three foster sons in an attempt to shed the problem. There is a curse on the crown of Ludremon, and no one knows what has caused it, or why.



Regent Stian, Duke of Scolyn

The Age of Empire

Because of the efficiency of the regency line, the Kingdom of Ludremon flourished. The progress of rebuilding started slow, but soon the entire kingdom had moved past rebuilding and on to prosperity. Mines opened. Treasures were discovered. Civilization flourished.

Without any major invasions, the Kingdom of Ludremon became a solid force on the Bay of Or-

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bean. When the first troubles brewed, they were ready.

They'd never lost their military ability, not with the Great Fiends out there, so when the first attacks of the clans from Keireena and Mab began, they were ready. They weathered these bloody raids, perpetrated by clans whose lands they now controlled. Ludremon wasn't about to hand over territory that had belonged to them for more than fifty years.

By now five kings had come and gone and the new king decided that enough was enough. Mab and Keireena were barbarian nations. It was time to bring them civilization.

In the spring of 1504, Ludremon launched an attack into Keireena, the more brutal of the offenders. For the entire season their knights and peasant archers moved through the nation, draining the coffers of the king and straining the feudal relationship, which only allowed for forty days of military service. At the end of the year the crown hurt for money and the King had spent much of his political capital, but Keireena was his.

While Ludremon was an absolute monarchy, there was a strong tradition of revolt among the people. The King tried to move against Mab but he immediately received word of a blossoming of tourneys around the land. He immediately backed off his plan.

For a time Mab quieted down, having seen the trouble Keireena brought on itself, but as king after king died of natural causes and freak accidents, Mab became emboldened. Various clan chiefs decided that Ludremon couldn't hold Keireena and fight Mab at the same time. In 1550 they attacked Ludremon with gusto.

In 1555 enough was enough. During that winter the King died of an isolated case of the Gray Death. The Regent took over and beat the war drum among the lords of the land. By spring they had enough troops and mercenaries to launch an assault into Mab.

The battles raged well into the winter, but by the year's end, Mab had fallen. The Regent allowed the troops to return home as soon as he established lords in Mab and collected their relief to fill the coffers. During that first year, it seemed Mab would fall but

the Regent had chosen his lords well and they didn't abuse their newfound power.

Over the next years the Regent tried several new conquests. He attacked Marnele several times and even tried to take Dientor from the Demon Queen. All of these attempts failed and the King put a stop to them when he was old enough.

But after the King died, the Regent tried one last conquest, launching an assault on Felric's Redoubt. No one knows why he thought he could win. Most academics believe he counted on the Elves not wishing to take sides in a Human conflict. But regardless of his ideas, he found Felric's Redoubt ready, filled to brimming with Elven archers and mages. The year was 1578, and this marked the end of Ludremon's attempts at expansion.

The End of Empire

In the beginning, the Ludremonian Empire ruled with a good and even hand, but as time passed, this changed. Ludremon lost its connection with its own past and atrocities committed in member states passed with less punishment than those in Ludremon itself.

Cruel Lords asked for lands in Mab or Keireena. Every time the King granted a lord a new fief, the lord owed him relief. The money flowed into the crown and the cruelty flowed out. Ludremon had always had difficulty with money because many Kings didn't live to see their daughters married and their sons knighted. They needed this cash and turned a blind eye to what happened next.

By 1950, things had come to a head. The clans of Mab were stewing in their own hate and Keireena had lost its will to fight. The King of that time didn't do anything to precipitate the coming trouble, but he didn't do anything to stop it either. Ludremon had become the Marnele of their legends. They should have known better.

In 1951 the clans of Mab began their first active assaults against Ludremonian property. By 1952 they'd begun winning. In 1953, the King decided it was time to take action.

But the Mab clans were ready. With horses of their own and improvised breastplates, they managed to meet these knights in kind. Add to that the proper

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use of pike walls and the Ludremonian counterattack ended.

In 1954 Mab made its final push against Ludremonian forces. By the end of the year the troops were shattered, the lords dead or fleeing. Mab had earned its sovereignty.

The next kings feared a similar retribution from Keireena, and in their fear they brought about a self-fulfilling prophecy. Keireena had broken, but the success of Mab had put a bit of strength in their backs. Still, they were content.

But the King, in 1995, decided that he needed to give the clans increased rights. He passed laws against the abuses of lords. He moved to answer the needs of the clans.

But he didn't do it fast enough.

All he accomplished was to give Keireena a taste of what they were missing. Combined with the confidence bred of Mab's success forty years earlier it created a recipe for rebellion. In 1997 Keireena rose as well. This time, the battles were brief; the King had weakened his power in his tries to stymie rebellion. The nation was free by the end of the year.

The Empire of Ludremon was no more.

The Recent Years

There has been something of a renaissance of thought among the Ludremonians since. With the rebellions of Mab and Keireena, many in the country have reevaluated the plight of the peasant. While they've done nothing to free the peasant from feudal bonds, the peasants in Ludremon have more respect and latitude than peasants in any other feudal country.

The Feather Rebellion showed the power of the peasant, and now the Regent takes steps to make sure his peasantry is ready for the next invasion. This means that rebellion is a real problem in Ludremon. Many lords have been deposed in the last twenty years, only to have the peasants return to their jobs afterward and await a new lord. So far, few of these rebellions have been punished and the nobility doesn't know whether to fear the peasants or the Regent's permissiveness more.

The nobles in charge of Ludremon might not have learned their lessons, but the knights have. After

seeing the revolution of Mab and Keireena, and the renewed stories of peasant archers of the past and present, the knights renewed their vows to protect the weak. The succeeding generations of knights haven't lost the faith. Now, despite the corruption of lords and dukes, a single knight will often stand against unstoppable odds to protect the helpless. This is the complexity of Ludremon, and it baffles foreign powers.

VISITING LUDREMON

While casual travel isn't common in the Mortal Realm, there are still reasons a person might visit Ludremon. Merchant caravans and cargo ships come and go daily. Members of the Church move about on clerical business. Diplomats travel and errant knights wander the countryside, looking for someone to buy their talents.

Roads and Trade Routes

In the days of the Empire, the government spent much time building roads. While more than a thousand years have passed since the roads fell into disrepair that doesn't mean the roads have vanished. They might not be cobbled anymore. They might have ruts so deep you could lose a wagon in them and turn into mud during the rain, but the roads have never gone out of use.

The roads in Ludremon are clear and well beaten, but otherwise terrible. During rainstorms most merchants walk the shoulders. An army can turn the roads into swamps. At times they are ten feet wide and imbedded with plenty of small stones, giving them strength and resistance to weather. At others they are covered in tall grass cut by two ruts.

There are few cross-country roads in Ludremon good enough to make wagon travel practical. Many people use wagons anyway, but over a long enough distance (more than a day or two of travel) a wagon becomes slower than a man on foot. A more practical solution involves pack mules and horses, as several of those can carry a large quantity of goods and they don't mire in mud puddles. A fast horse is, of course, the best form of travel if a person can afford one.

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There are two major trade routes heading north out of Ludremon. One goes through Erton and crosses Mab, on its way to Zûram. The other goes out through Rian and follows the coast through Doncan on the way to Felric's Redoubt.

Out of the west there is only one major trade route, and it hugs the coast through Keireena and into Ciall. Most merchants consider the lands to the west increasingly unprofitable (not to mention dangerous) and only desperate merchants travel in that direction.

Ports

Much of Ludremon's trade and travel is conducted by the sea. While every settlement on the water has some form of dock, there are five major ports in Ludremon. Through these five cities, 90 percent of the sea trade flows.

Rian, Belm, Louchester, Wolchester, and Godean are the major port cities. Each of these has good harbors and large docks. They all have deepwater nearshore where one can careen a ship. The success of these five cities has more to do with the qualities of their harbor than anything else.

The Echoes of Heaven has neither gunpowder nor common battle magic. This or something like it is necessary to evolve full Age-of-Sail-style ships. It's absolutely crucial in defending them. Because of this, the ships in *The Echoes of Heaven* are of medieval design. Which means that they are only more advanced than Greek-style ships in their construction techniques, and even there the difference isn't great. The ships are long with one or more masts. They have square-rigged sails with poor ability to beat into the wind. Lateen sails are unheard of. The rigging of these ships is necessarily simple because of the lack of the freeing influence of cannon.

Ships rely heavily on oars because of the fickleness of the wind. They have command structures more like the Greeks than the Age of Sail . . . in fact, *The Echoes of Heaven* uses mostly Greek terms such as

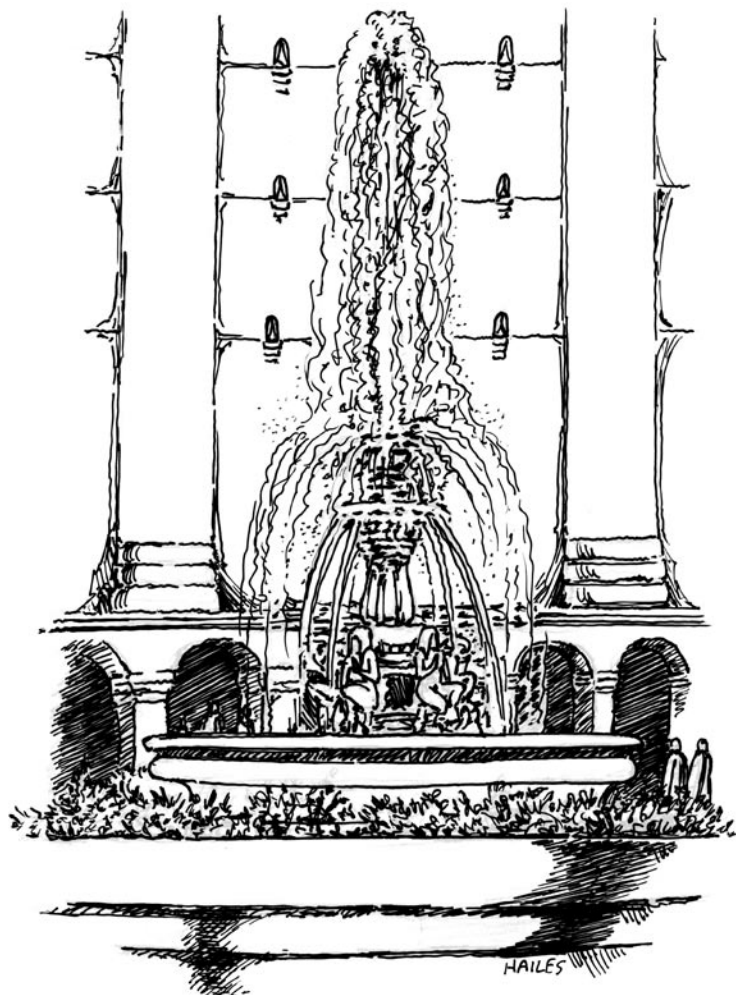
keleustes or kubernetes when referring to ship officers.

Battles between ships involve arrows and rams. Greek fire is unknown. Catapults are used sometimes, but they are more practical from land than sea. Still, the riggings of these ships are sparse enough for small siege weapons, when needed.

Fire is a great weapon against ships, but ships are wet and this makes catching them on fire much harder than one might initially think. The most straightforward method of beating an enemy ship is always the good, old-fashioned boarding action.

Merchants

Merchants in Ludremon make most of their money through foreign trade. While Maroldan merchants



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bring the most goods and business into the country, local merchants still buy these goods and sell them to the populace. In addition, Ludremonian merchants make money trading with Felric's Redoubt, which almost acts as a clearing house for this entire region.

Merchants in town tend to be savvy businessmen with expanding trade empires. While individual craftsmen tend to sell their own goods, general merchants deal in foreign and city-to-city trade. The successful make fabulous amounts of money doing this.

Most merchants join trade guilds. At their most rudimentary levels, these guilds protect the horses and goods in a caravan. More elaborate trade guilds can have bigger perks (and costs) such as telling members of possible opportunities and providing the protections of a craft guild to the merchant's family (see below).

LUDREMONIAN CULTURE

The Ludremonian culture is typical for the world as a whole. They are a feudal culture with all the burdens of caste that implies. In addition, they love tales of heroism and adventure, but they don't have the heroic tradition of Æld, so they are unlikely to have ever met actual heroes.

People

Ludremonians are a friendly people who love to talk and laugh and tell stories. They tend toward fierce patriotism and they love their Regent almost as much as their prince. Even centuries after the beginning of the Curse, it's still a major matter for discussion in taverns around the country.

Ludremonians are a pious people, loving the Church and defending and honoring their members. Abuse a priest in the streets of Ludremon and one is likely to end fighting a mob. Atavists are not loved, but respected for their beliefs. Ludremonians have a muddled enough past to share a cosmopolitan outlook.

A druid might not have a mob save him if he's jumped in the streets, but the attacker will certainly be harried by *Hey now's* and *What's all this then's*. The people won't turn a blind eye and they'll call a guard if that seems safe.

Ludremonians love foreigners (except for the Mab, the Keireenish, and the Marnench). They find Maroldan merchants interesting and exciting and



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even a pagan would likely be met by more interest than hatred, although he'd have to withstand a barrage of missionary efforts.

Ludremonians are hard to impress but they love people who try. A good story, especially one that seems to be firsthand and true, will likely find many drink offers in a bar. A nice trick will find more. And then competition. If the visitor doesn't buy drinks for other suitable stories or tricks, the offers will dry up after a night or two, but he won't meet hostility or wear out his welcome. He'll just become known as "that damned miser." The Ludremonians will say it with a smile if that's the person's only offense.

Ludremonians have a greater than normal sense of self-entitlement. Old women in villages aren't afraid to tell off a noble. They might even thump him with their canes just a little. They love their aristocracy and they don't have aspirations of class-climbing. Still, they aren't above telling a lord he "doesn't know his arse from a pile of good winter seed." Unless he does, in which case they might start talking down to their "farmer lord."

It can't be stressed enough, though. Ludremonians respect their nobility. A village won't storm a lord's manor just because there's something suspicious going on there, even if it seems wrong. They might even present a united front against outsiders provided the lord isn't sacrificing virgins or some other wicked act.

It's probably this love for the aristocracy that makes their rebellions, when they come, so terrible. They are peasants and the lord is the lord. If either side violates his duties, the affront to Ludremonian propriety will know no bounds. A lord who acts like some pathetic *merchant*, or worse, like he's a bad Angian, is on borrowed time. A lord that doesn't defend his people or brings them direct harm is done.

Above all, Ludremonians are scrappers. If someone invades a village, they will find harsh resistance. People who try to take candy from Ludremonian children will receive a savage kicking. An old man who finds his pocket picked is likely to punch the culprit in the throat.

Regent Scolyn is said (possibly apocryphally) to have visited Marnele once while that king preened for war. He showed the Regent his finest royal guard,

resplendent in polished breastplates and beautiful uniforms. The King showed the Regent the men at drill and their marvelous skills on horse and in tourney. He turned to the Regent and said, "These are the finest two-hundred knights in the world. Do you think you can find any five hundred of your countrymen who could best them?"

"Maybe not," the Regent said, "but I'd bet any fifty would try."

Demographics

Ludremon has 4,583,775 people, by the King's Book of Reckoning (the tax lists of Ludremon). Of these people, fewer than 1 percent are Elves and Half-Cambions. Some 2 percent are Gnomes. Another 2 percent are Halflings. Three percent are Dwarves, mostly crafters and moneylenders. The remaining 92 percent or so are Humans, almost all of them of Ludremonian stock.

Ludremonians are nearly all fair skinned, with hair ranging from dark to blond and everything between, with dark hair the most common. Green and hazel eyes are most common with brown next and blue or gray the least likely. They are not tremendous men, but they aren't short either.

Perhaps 1 percent of the population are High Men.

Names

Ludremonian names are a great melting pot. Most names fall along certain trends, and some examples are as follows:

Male: Amiren, Ark, Athew, Can, Chaver, Dan, Dassell, Dusson, Elomosan, Frathon, Geiffrey, Grannebin, Halone, Hiverley, Iam, Ian, Jatin, Jine, Jolcan, Jorgel, Juren, Kaneil, Keld, Kidan, Kirl, Krayss, Kriam, Laur, Lette, Lichard, Limin, Line, Nider, Nincan, Nisean, Nithlian, Olan, Olotte, Pedriss, Racy, Say, Sergarry, Sirossean, Soson, Stanet, Ster, Stergoson, Stian, Stine, Susulan, Tedd, Vinciryn, Viraig, Wayne, Wenicky, Wineal.

Females: Arlin, Datin, Deanet, Dudebra, Elanor, Famenet, Helette, Inthe, Jaley, Jannine, Jassodie, Jean, Jeanne, Jonia, Jurylen, Karry, Kerah, Lesanor, Louise, Lunina, Matinone, Melotte, Menesta, Milin, Minda, Nesta, Nilone, Ninet, Nissa, Nona, Penor,

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Pouise, Rayne, Rine, Rinor, Rodie, Rona, Shanone, Sunet, Tonesta, Velette, Velin, Winor.

We consider Ludremonian the “base language” of *The Echoes of Heaven*. In other words, we don’t intend to invent Ludremonian words, we just use English. Because of this, certain Ludremonian last names will sound like English last names.

Most Ludremonian last names come from one of several places. They are patronymics (Jorgelson), occupations (Smith, Thatcher, Priest), descriptors (Brown, White, Tallman, Allred), origin villages (Feoring, Termach), locations (Atwell, West), and distortions from any of these terms (Priestly, Alred, Smyth) and Mab and Keireena clans (Endret, Mabeth, Crott, Ager). Name the characters as feels right to you, and many characters will want more exotic names. That’s fine, as the village naming system can sound sufficiently “fantasy-like.” But having old mister Smith get in trouble with the Beadle again will add much flavor to the game, and make English-speaking gamers feel like they are in a familiar place.

Languages

The most common language spoken in Ludremon is, of course, Ludremonian. This is the national tongue of the nation (although Marnench is still technically the legal language of the country from the times of the occupation). Ludremonian is a young, quickly mutating language that has borrowed from just about every tongue in its region. It has poor language rules with many exceptions and this makes it difficult for foreigners to learn.

The second most common language is the Divine Tongue. The language of God, this is the original tongue, the language spoken by all residents of Heaven. It is close to Elvish, Dwarvish, and Atavistic, all of which have drifted only a short way from this primal language. This is the language of magic. It’s the language used in all Church services (except for the portions done in the vernacular) and it’s also the language of academia. All learned men speak the Divine Tongue.

The next most common language is Maroldo. It is a direct descendent of Imperial, and speakers can usually work out the gist of spoken or written

Imperial. Because of this nation’s vast trade, most merchants speak Maroldo, and so this is a perfect language to speak with foreigners.

Keireenish is next, spoken by Keireenish families living inside the borders. It is similar to Ciallic, from which it evolved. Speakers of the Ciallic, Keireenish, and Mab can communicate basic thoughts.

Which brings us to the next language . . . Mab. This lilting language is spoken with a strong burr. It has splintered off of Ciallic. Basic thoughts can be conveyed to speakers of Keireenish and Ciallic.

Since the largest population sample of another race is Dwarven, that brings us to the next language. One of the oldest languages on Meridrin, Dwarvish is a complex tongue has been rigidly preserved, and has changed little through time.

Halfling is the next tongue. Because Halflings are often a beset people. They allow their language, the one thing they’ve always had to themselves, little change.

Gnomish is next. It has a written form, borrowed from the Dwarves.

Finally, we come to Elvish. Another ancient tongue, this melodious language has remained more or less unchanged for millennia.

Most people in Ludremon speak only Ludremonian, with a sprinkling of the Divine Tongue (from prayers, mostly).

The Spoken Word

There are many customs in any culture, but the three behaviors listed below are some of the most obvious traits of Ludremonians, because they’re spoken aloud. They are the traits discussed most often by foreigners and held the most dear to the people.

Swearing

Ludremonians swear with great gusto. They swear on God’s name and on all the saints and prophets. They swear on bodily functions and unpleasant imagery. They swear for the sake of swearing.

There are few taboos against swearing in Ludremon, except for religious curses, and even those aren’t taken seriously. The vilest curses are reserved for close friends and siblings. In fact *not* cursing your loved ones is a sign of emotional distance.

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Swearing is so prevalent in fact that many streets and alleys in Belm are named after curses.

Vows

Ludremonians might swear on their lives or the lives of their families. They might also swear on the graves of loved ones or on God's name or on the saints. The most common vow though, and the one used in formal occasions, is to swear on the Holy relics.

The easiest way is to swear on the relics in absentia. A guild member swearing into a guild often just raises his hand and says, "I swear on the relics that. . . ." For more formal occasions, such as a coronation or at treaties, the people involved will swear holding an actual Holy relic. Ludremonians believe that breaking a vow made on a Holy relic will lead inevitably to Hell.

Flyting

The most unique habit of Ludremonians is called flyting. In flyting, two people, often friends, engage in a public and brutal insult contest. The more creative the insults the better, and the crowd cheers and jeers the entire time.

While it's unwise to insult a person of high rank or a knight, even that's okay if the person of higher station starts it and flyting is obviously their purpose. Everyone in Ludremon enjoys a good argument.

Flyting might seem like nothing more than a cruel pastime, but it serves an important purpose in Ludremonian society. For a people so interested in matters of honor, any insult or slight can turn into a duel to the death. Ludremonians save themselves from this fate with flyting. On the one hand, it makes insults acceptable, but more importantly, it's a form of dueling. Ludremonians flyte for recreation, but that's just to hone their skills. More importantly, a quick

flyte solves brewing disputes between two people quickly and efficiently. They have come into conflict, they've dueled with words, and honor is satisfied.

Guilds and Organizations

Many guilds and organizations work out of Ludremon. The most obvious are the various craft guilds. Each major type of craft has their own guild, although these rarely reach outside their cities.

Craft Guilds

Guilds are vital to the functioning of a city economy and they provide several services to members and to citizens as well. Guild dues range from a few coins a year to much of the member's income, depending on the guild. Most guilds have set dues and while a poor craftsman might pay 25 percent of his income in dues and fines (especially if he pushes the rules for more profit) a rich craftsman might pay less than 1 percent a year.

Guilds are powerful in most cities. In fact, many cities owe their foundation to trade guilds requesting a charter. While guilds do not technically equate to government, in most cities the leadership of both intertwine so much the distinction becomes meaningless.

Guild members are called confraternities, because they consider one another brothers.

Guilds regulate quality. Most of them require every product be inspected before sale. They forbid work at night because of poor lighting. They protect against bad practices by guild members. They forbid metal plating (to hide the actual metal of the object). They forbid advertising to keep competition friendly. They set prices. They forbid the sale of foreign crafts in the city. They set the number of masters based on the market. They stop members

Swearing in Game

We do not mean to suggest that because Ludremonians curse your game should turn into a Quentin Tarantino movie. Instead, we encourage players and GMs who wish to incorporate this trait into their game to swear *creatively*. Many clean curses can make a game interesting and fun. "Blast it!" and "Gut me," are inoffensive phrases that invoke the type of imagery that swearing is based upon. You can also just say, "The character curses a blue streak." and leave it at that. Essentially, use this to make the game more interesting, never to make people at your table uncomfortable.

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from buying an entire supply of any commodity. Sometimes they guard their guild's closest secrets. Often with the help of the Assassins' Guild.

The guilds aren't all-powerful, however. The city's government can intervene during interguild disputes, as well as dictate when the guild needs to change work hours, prices, and the like.

For all the limits that guilds place on confraternities, they provide services as well. They provide funeral expenses for poor members and aid their surviving families. They often pay dowries if the member is too poor to pay for himself. They provide for aid to the sick. They also build churches, give art to existing churches, and watch over the spiritual well-being of their confraternities.

They contribute to the cities as well, taking turns patrolling the streets and erecting defenses. This makes them well viewed by the populace.

There are three levels of expertise in a guild. The first is the apprentice, whose father probably pays for his training while the apprentice lives in the master's attic. The apprentice performs all the scut work while learning the trade. Apprentices can be of any age eight and up, but twelve is the most common. Apprentices learn for 2-7 years, depending on the difficulty of the craft.

When the apprentice graduates to the next level, he moves to the third floor of the master's house and takes the name "journeyman." Although journeymen of old traveled about, learning their trade, the modern journeyman studies under one master. While the journeyman makes a wage, it's not a large wage and because of this, advancing out of this level is hard.

To do so, a journeyman must craft a masterpiece (or master's piece) to prove his skill. He can only craft this on his own time, and since he has no time during daylight on most days, this means he can only work on Godsdays (or Earthdays if he's in an Atavistic culture). He also has to provide his own materials and tools, which are likely beyond his easy means. Finally, the item must pass the muster of the guild's board, and for them to pass the new master, they must feel the city can *support* another master.

Once a craftsman becomes a master he is a full craftsman and member of the guild.

Organizations

There are many other organizations working inside Ludremon. Some of the more powerful are detailed below.

The Assassins' Guild

The Assassins' Guild is fully operational inside Ludremon, even if this isn't their best market. Every major city has at least one contact to the Guild. The Guild can complete simple jobs inside the week. Longer jobs take a month or more to set up, depending on the quality of the assassin needed and his distance from Ludremon.

The Belm Book Club

The Belm Book Club was founded twenty-three years ago. It initially formed as a group of students going to university. As students are rarely rich enough to buy books, most of them buy blanks and copy the books they need line by line. The Belm Book Club was a group of students that got together every night to scribe in comradery.

While most of the Book Club disbanded when they finished their education, a core of the students remained. They continued to meet, though once a month now, and as they made their fortunes, they began to buy new books. These they would pass around the Club and those rich enough hired scribes to copy them.

Now the Belm Book Club contains four of the most talented Academics in the country, as well as six of the richest merchants, two dukes, five barons and several less successful members. It's rumored the Regent himself is a member of the Book Club, by self-appointment.

If this is true, then the Belm Book Club is the most powerful core of people in the country. The Regent wouldn't have joined this group casually, and many think that these are the advisers that shape the policy of the nation.

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The Caralean Association

This top secret organization furthers the interests of magic in Ludremon. They meet covertly in the magically hidden cellar of a house in Belm. The cellar has been sealed off from the house above and the mages sneak in through an underground tunnel accessed by an alley grate five blocks away.

The Association's records state that in the distant past, only the most honorable and good mages were allowed into the ranks. In these days of hostility toward magic, the Association isn't nearly as picky. Mages, illusionists, and foul necromancers: they all join the Association. The Association's only requirement now is secrecy.

The Caralean Association has connections throughout Ludremon, and their membership includes many of the most powerful banned spell users in the nation. So far, they haven't been rooted out, though rumors persist. If anyone were to threaten them, though, they could bring tremendous might against their foes.

The Caralean Association is only concerned with the preservation of their knowledge. While they will reach out and look for new works, mainly they exist to keep their grimoires safe. There is little trading among the Association, but one member will often go to the home of another for a week or a month of copying.

The Coalition

The Coalition does little work inside Ludremon. They do, however, have a Warren inside the borders. The exit to this Warren is outside Gassell, in a hidden valley about three miles into the mountains.

Still, no countries lie outside the influence of the Coalition. Some think the Curse of Ludremon is caused by the Fallen Elves in these mountains.

The Confessors

There are one or two Confessors inside Ludremon. None of them are part of the Caralean Association.

The Corini

The Corini have as much of a presence in Ludremon as anywhere. The Ludremonians are a bit more accepting of them than other nations because of their



cosmopolitan nature, but the Corini in Ludremon still meet with prejudice and anger.

The Feasting Club

This group chose their humble name to throw any suspicion off their paths. While they *do* meet at each other's homes to dine, they use these feasts as strategy meetings.

The Feasting Club is dedicated to scouring the nation for signs of Ulcers. They have spread until they have branches in every city now and they search and look and *watch*.

The members of the Feasting Club are powerful merchants and avid Church members. They use their trade and spies as clues to spot the slightest hint of an Ulcer. When they find one, they send their mercenaries.

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The Church is ruthless in destroying Ulcers. The Feasting Club exceeds ruthlessness, often wiping out neighboring settlements, just to be sure.

The Illuminated

The Illuminated have plans in Ludremon like any other country. The locals meet often in Belm, inside the palace itself. It's rumored the conquest of Keireena and Mab was orchestrated by the Illuminated, as were the rebellions of those two countries. It's also rumored the Illuminated are behind the Curse of Ludremon.

The Shadow Order

The Shadow Order has a branch in Belm, recruiting out of the Caralean Association. It's rumored they are responsible for the Curse of Ludremon.

The Shadowed Legion

The Shadowed Legion has cells in every major city in Ludremon. It's rumored they are responsible for the Curse of Ludremon.

The Son's of Almia

The Son's of Almia recruit heavily in Ludremon. While they aren't exactly open, they are a poorly kept secret. The Regent keeps an eye on them, but he has yet to act in one way or another.

The Sowers of Seeds

The Sowers of Seeds plague Ludremon like most countries. It's rumored they are responsible for the Curse of Ludremon, but most people hearing this rumor laugh.

The Trade Guilds

There are many trade guilds in Ludremon. See page 175 for more details.

The True Believers

The True Believers are a group of religious zealots that plague the church and citizens of Ludremon. Though they are all Faithful, they teach the Herald peached religious tolerance and that all other religions and cultures should be accepted and studied.

While the Herald *did* preach this, few churches are interested in advertising the matter. On top of that, the True Believers are exceedingly annoying. They shout in marketplaces and hire criers. Priests often have to beat them off the stairs of churches with a broom. They have even been known to stand on city walls, after climbing to inaccessible points, and shout at all the visitors to the city while guards try to figure out how to get them down.

The True Believers mean well. They are trying to do good work but are simply too annoying to get their point across.

It's rumored that the True Believers are responsible for the Curse of Ludremon, mainly because people want a reason to hate them.

Fences and Smugglers

Smuggling is something of a problem in Ludremon. Illegal herbs are smuggled in all the time, many of them with mildly euphoric effects. Smugglers also deal in proscribed texts and items, as well as goods banned for sale inside the cities by the guilds.

These are the high-profile smuggling rings, the types that get all the rumors and exciting stories. The truth is that most smuggling isn't nearly this glamorous.

The real purpose of smuggling is to move goods into a town without paying taxes. Many smugglers arrive with ships full of high-volume/low-cost goods, the type that merchant ships use to grind away at making their payrolls every month. Meanwhile, the ship also carries a small set of, valuable goods, the type that can fit in a single large chest.

The large amounts of goods are for customs and inspections. They give the ship a reason to be there. Meanwhile the smuggler puts off ship secretly carrying the valuable goods, usually objects so expensive that few merchants could afford to buy more than a chest's worth in a single trip. The smuggler pays taxes on all the low costs goods and sells the valuable stuff in town on the sly.

There are many variations on this method of smuggling and many other methods as well, including false holds, swallowed jewels, and most every other angle the smugglers can produce to get ahead of the law.

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Thieves

Every city has trouble with thieves. The bigger ones, such as Belm, have active thieves' guilds as well. These guilds tend to work the same way as craftsman's guilds, except they don't patrol the streets. Not officially, at least.

Members of thieves' guilds owe 10 percent of their earnings to the guild, and these guilds are thorough at collecting their dues. There are also taboo locations, areas safe from the guild. Churches are almost always on this list.

While few thieves' guilds have ventured into protections rackets, the guild in Belm has entered genuine protection. For a nominal fee (usually a florin to a sovereign a month, depending on wealth), a person can have their home added to the list of taboo targets. Unfortunately, not everyone is accepted onto this list. The richer a citizen is, the less likely the guild is to take their money . . . for protection.

Thieves' guilds don't like competition. Freelancers are hunted and punished for their crimes. First offenders are beaten and then invited into the guild. Repeat offenders are maimed or killed to make a point.



Cardinal Gleann

Academics

There are academics everywhere, in theory, but few people make their livings as academics unless they teach. Therefore the only real place to find a good body of academics in Ludremon is at the University of Belm.

Who's Who

There are many important people in the guilds and organizations of Ludremon. Some of the most important are as follows:

Conales Taylor

Head of the tailor's guild of Belm, Taylor is perhaps the most influential guild master in the country. Though not of the nobility, Taylor has his fingers in many pies. Not only does he control the most influential guild in the city, he also operates as the personal tailor to both the Prince and the Regent and more importantly, the Regent's wife and the Dowager Queens.

This means that he has access to the most powerful ears in the county for hours every month. In addition he is on the City Council and he acts as the tailor for the mayor and many other councilors. A charismatic and persuasive man, he can subtly influence almost any decision in the country.

Taylor is a short man, round and jiggling with mirth. He has thick, greasy black hair and wide brown eyes. Almost fifty years old, he looks no older than thirty.

Diel Black

Black is the most notorious smuggler in Ludremon. Working out of every port, he smuggles the most wicked of items, even Unholy relics and evil texts. He's smuggled slaves in and out of Ludremon and provided innocents for Human sacrifices. Black will commit any act for money.

Black is a handsome man with flowing blond hair and blue eyes. He dresses in dashing white clothing and is twenty-five years old.

Kethlen Wedgwood

The head of the Belm Thieves' Guild, Wedgwood is a friendly, outgoing man. Under his cover as a mer-

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chant he is also the titular head of the Alin Trade Alliance. No one in Alin knows about his double life.

Wedgwood is as honest as a thief can be. He's trying to legitimize thievery and turn it into a respectable profession with traditions and honor and respect. He's also trying to hone in on the business of the Assassins' Guild. Mainly, this is just to enforce his own agendas, but he's looking to take on murder as a whole and turn the Guild into some kind of syndicate that handles and controls all crime. Protection is just the beginning.

Wedgwood is a charming fifty-year-old man, horrifically ugly, with a big smile and a bigger generosity. He pays double tithe to the Church, organizes alms, and takes in urchins and reforms them into honest children (so they won't be recruited by his guild). He loves dogs and takes in strays. He occasionally kidnaps vagrants and hunts them for sport.

Russon Gillamin

Russon Gillamin is the head of the Belm Book Club and the best friend of the Regent. From his position in Belm, he pulls the strings of some of the most important organizations in the city. He is a daunting man who frightens with a look but he has a long vision that allows him to plan years ahead of time.

Gillamin is also the high priest of Archdemon Isaaron the Slayer. He attends the Church of Angelus every Godsdays and sits up front. He is the contact for the Assassins' Guild in Belm. He organizes the watch schedule for the guilds and he's trying to stamp out the Belm Thieves' Guild. He likes dirty tavern songs and writes off-color poetry as a hobby.

Gillamin is bald with riveting eyes, an aquiline nose, good bone structure, and terrible teeth.



Aline, the Marchioness Ran

His bad breath precedes him by four feet. He dresses in simple clothing and often carries a book.

Hudley Sart

The head of the Caralean Association, Sart is a tired, overworked mage who has long since lost his ability to study magic under the pressures of his need to govern. He spends all his time looking after his mercantile interests and furthering the guild.

He owns several grimoires that teach magic so dark that he shudders to think anyone would ever use them. Despite the Association's rules, he collects and hides these texts from the more evil members of the Association, but they are his greatest temptation in the world. At night, they call to him. Literally.

Sart is a tall, fat man with good hair and skin but homely bone structure. His hair is dark and his eyes are blue. He wears fine clothing.

He's best friends with Cardinal Gleann of Belm. The Cardinal knows his secret profession.

Sirsty Chandler

They say that no Mortals are completely good or completely evil. Chandler is the exception that proves the rule. The head of the Shoemaker's guild, Chandler wields his power with brutality, terrorizing his underlings and blackmailing half the officials in the city. He preys on innocence and exploits weakness.

Chandler is a young man for a guild master, no more than thirty. He is good looking and completely bald, except for a fringe which he shaves. He chews on a gold coin when distracted.

Orlan Milner

Orlan Milner is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Belm. Although Lord Ramy is the Chancellor, this is a titular position. Milner actually does all the day-to-day work of running the University.

Milner is a practicing mage and a member of the Shadow Order. He has recently decided the Regent is too efficient at stopping the practice of magic within Ludremon. He's planning to assassinate the man.

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Milner is a fit white-haired old man, but his face makes him look seventy or eighty, when he's actually only fifty-four.

Recreation

There are many forms of recreation in Ludremon. Most of them are based on location and caste.

In the Village

Villagers tend to congregate in the village tavern every night, which is a floating affair that is nothing more than a house converted for the selling of liquor. Drinking is the primary pastime, but tale-telling and singing are popular as well. Tavern games such as bones and tossing games are also popular.

In the Cities

Recreation in the cities begins with many of the same elements as a village. The exception is that cities can afford permanent taverns. As things get richer, taverns sometimes have bards for entertainment and merchants hold feasts, sometimes with entertainers. For the nobility, these feasts become more lavish and such sports as falconry and hunting emerge, if there's a good enough woods nearby.

In a Castle

In castles everything takes place in the great hall, including eating and often sleeping and procreating. All of the tavern entertainments are pursued in the castle as well. The lords of almost every castle engage in frequent hunts and falconry is more than a pastime, it's a way of life.

The Church

The Church isn't all about services. They also perform theater, the only type of actual theater in Ludremon. There are two types of plays, mysteries and miracles. Mysteries tell stories of the great moments in the life of the Savior. A miracle is about, well, a miracle, usually the life of saints.

Most plays these days are performed in the vernacular. The introduction and moral are still told in the Divine Tongue, though.

Tourneys

Tourneys are great affairs for every level of society. The knights fight for fame and glory (not to mention the ransom they get from the horse and armor of their vanquished opponent). This is the main event, but dancers, tumblers, archery tournaments, and foot lists (melees) are apart of most tournaments as well. The lord hosting the tournament usually gives out chickens and largesse as well.

Tourneys are only legal under license and every knight participating must pay 100 GP to enter. Foot lists require 10 GP and the archery contest 1 SP. These fees are paid to the Prince, the lord must supply any prizes out of his own pocket. Holding a tournament without license is an act of treason and presumed to be a practice for rebellion.

Fairs

Fairs are lavish occasions held outside of cities. They attract people from near and far to come see the sights and spend their coin. Fairs are primarily trade concerns where merchants from all over the country come to buy and sell, but the lord of the city hosting the fair makes certain that there's so much more. Gifts and largess, puppet shows, dancers, and tumblers are only the beginning. The Corini are always present and, for once, welcomed.

Arts

The arts are important in the lives of any people. The types of art appreciated and created depend a great deal on the caste of the person.

Architecture

Most architecture is straightforward. Peasants use wattle and daub to create their houses. City dwellers use heavy beam affairs. Only manor houses of the nobles and the churches and cathedrals are the only structures that attempt to show real art in their architecture . . . in fact, the greatest achievement in the modern world is the cathedral.

Peasant

Peasants practice mostly ephemeral forms of art. They dance, sing, and they tell stories. Many peasants write long poems (or rather create them in their

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heads since few peasants can write). Flower collecting and weaving as well as rock patterns and gravel designs are prominent features of peasant homes.

Middle Class

The middle class can afford to read and write, although poetry is the only real written art form. They still love singing and dancing, and they can often afford entertainments. The middle class can often afford statuary, stained glass artwork, and tapestries.

Nobility

The nobility hire the finest entertainers and buy the best statues and stained glass. They too can afford statues, often full-sized ones. The pastime of most noble women is the creation of tapestries for their homes.

Legends

Every county has its own legends. Some of the most common Ludremonian legends are as follows. These legends are not proven.

The Dead Kings

The dead kings of Ludremon are angry. For generations they've been struck down by the Curse. Now, the Curse is irrelevant, as the dead kings hunger for the death of the next and the next and the next. Whatever causes the Curse could be eliminated right now and it wouldn't matter. The dead would continue to claim their own.

The Ulcer of Belm

There is a great, undiscovered Ulcer beneath Belm. No one knows what caused it or what its effects are, but it's long since become permanent. This Ulcer is insidious, undetectable, and it effects every decision made by king or Regent. Ludremon's descent from glory has been caused by poor decisions prompted by this Ulcer.

The Hidden Hobgoblin

There is an assassin who has killed Ludremonians for the last hundred or more years. This Hobgoblin always appears to be another race when he approaches his victim. One can only tell it's him by the

strong smell of cinnamon that follows him wherever he goes. At the last moment his face changes into his true, hideous visage. Then he strikes. No one has ever survived to tell the tale.

The Phantom Ship

King Pessell III was at sea when the Curse of Ludremon beset him. A great wave rose out of the ocean and claimed his ship on the way to war with Marnele. Now the ship still prowls the waters, crewed by the souls of the damned. Whenever it falls on a ship from Marnele, it attacks and few survivors live to tell the tale.

The Lost Mine

The merchant prince Taft was an evil and greedy man. He murdered and pillaged for money. He destroyed countless lives and ruined so many families that the land itself rebelled. One day, Taft entered his richest gold mine. The workers left that night and Taft never returned. The next day the workers could no longer find the entrance of the mine, and neither it nor Taft were ever seen again. Now whenever a man reaches a level of greed so terrible that the land itself notices, one day he will find a deserted gold mine. . . .

THE GOVERNMENT

The government of Ludremon is an absolute monarchy in theory. The practice, however, is anything but, with the Regent depending on the goodwill of the peerage to keep his power. While the current Regent is secure, he can still be unseated by a coup from the aristocracy. This is so much easier on him than for a King that he needs to keep a much more political head than most monarchs.

Ludremon's biggest defining factor is, of course, the so-called "Curse of Ludremon." No one knows if this curse is real or a vastly unlikely coincidence, but no king of Ludremon has ever lived past the age of thirty. Because of this Ludremon is known for its frequent regency periods and the desperate drive of kings to make their marks in the little time they have.

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Ruler

Prince Karimon the XXXI is the titular head of the kingdom, but until he comes of age at sixteen, he can't wield any real power. In the meantime all the real power lies on Regent Stian, Duke of Scolyn (a now-defunct political province).

Scolyn concerns himself with many matters. In addition to ruling the country, appeasing the peerage, and protecting the country, he must also take care of the Regent's most crucial job . . . securing an heir. The Regent must make sure the king marries well by the age of fourteen. If he doesn't produce multiple heirs by the age of twenty, the royal line will be in jeopardy.

Many believe that the short-lived kings and longer-lasting Regents make for an impatient but long-term view to the throne. The kings want to achieve great things before they die and the Regents want them to last. In other words, Ludremon wants to build a timeless empire and it wants to do it *now*.

The High Offices

There are technically only three high offices, the Lord High Priest, the Lord High Inquisitor, and the Lord High Marshal. The Dowager Queens have so much influence, however, they are included here as well.

Lord High Priest

The King or Regent selects a Lord High Priest when the former one dies. The ruler selects this man out of the cardinals of Ludremon and this person conducts mass for the royal and regency families. He advises the ruler on all matters religious. The Lord High Priest is currently Sanneth, an elderly man with a flat nose and riveting eyes.

Sanneth takes his role seriously, demanding the Prince take one hour of religious study per day. He has the Prince's ear and many whisper that he is responsible for the death of the last king. What his motivation might be, no one knows.

Lord High Inquisitor

The next of the high stations of the kingdom is the Lord High Inquisitor. The Lord High Inquisitor is the spy master and political expert of the realm. It's

his job to advise the ruler on all political matters and keep constant reports from spies both within the country and in foreign powers.

The current Lord High Inquisitor is Deonsday, Duke of Windsay, a soft-spoken forty-year-old man. He has short blond hair and blotchy skin. He speaks with a quiet voice and the quieter he gets, the angrier his is.

Windsay hates the Prince because the Prince has been carrying on some form of liaison with Windsay's daughter, Mierre. Since Mierre doesn't have enough of a bloodline to warrant marriage, she is ruined if anything inappropriate comes of it, and he suspects propriety has already been violated. Windsay has yet to let the Prince or Regent know he's aware.

Lord High Marshal

The final high office of Ludremon is the Lord High Marshal. The Lord High Marshal commands all the armies of Ludremon and is the chief architect of war. The Lord High Marshal is never a noble of his own lands and sometimes comes from middle class birth. More commonly, though, he's a second or third son that earned his position through military prowess.

The current Lord High Marshal is Berren, Duke of Belm (the duchy granted to all Lord High Marshals on appointment). He rules the city and commands the royal guard. Lord Belm loves his Prince but hates the Regent, because he thinks he is a prime candidate for replacing the man should he fall from office.

The Dowager Queens

There are actually two dowager queens, the Prince's mother and his grand-



Herthew, Duke of Branden

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mother. The Queen does not rule in Ludremon, except in her husband's stead during brief periods (when he's off at war, for instance).

The younger dowagerqueen is Adriette, thirty-eight. She is a striking woman who, unfortunately, inherited her father's nose. She is an assertive but charming woman with the gravitas that comes from years of

rule. She secretly orchestrated the Prince's liaison with Mierre. Her dead husband had an illegitimate child no one but she knows about. Her motives are unclear, but it seems likely the illegitimate son has something to do with her actions.

The elder dowager queen Karine is 57 and beginning to go senile. She dotes on the Prince and believes him too young to marry (she thinks he's eight years old on most days). Despite her failing mind, she is still a master politician and she's trying to block the Prince's marriage at every turn.

Laws

The law in Ludremon is stern but fair. All acts of murder, rape, and treason are punishable by death. All acts of thievery are punishable by branding. Other acts are punishable with fines.

Trials in Ludremon are judged by a jury of seven peers of the accused (this means that commoners must be judged by commoners and nobles by nobles). A judge mediates, and a defender and persecutor (not prosecutor) handle the arguments. All officials of the court must wear at least symbolic mail and carry arms.



Endsan, Duke of Doronshire

Older laws exist that allow the accused to demand trial by combat or trial by ordeal. Only the defendant may demand these types of trials, and the judge may deny the plea if he feels, for instance, that they can't find a champion good enough to allow God's will a chance to manifest.

The Court

While the high offices might seem to be filled by the most influential people in the kingdom, they rarely exert their actual influence. The current group is more wrapped up with their own plots and duties.

More influential are the top layer of landed nobility that spend much of their time at court. Since the current matter of interest is the marriage of the Prince, the following are the nobles most wrapped up in the hot bed of politics.

Prince Karimon XXXI

Prince Karimon, thirteen years old, is the heir apparent of Ludremon. He is a sharp-minded child, just discovering the love of women. He dreads the upcoming inevitable marriage, despite the fact that Ludremonian kings are renowned for their extramarital activities. The boy is a romantic at heart and while he has no trouble with sowing a few oats before marriage, he dreams of loving and being faithful to his wife.

Karimon is filled with idealistic youth. He dreams of being a great warrior king and leading his armies against the Demon Queen or the Warlord during the next crisis. He tends to have fits of temper, however. He's been spoiled for too long.

He is young-looking with perceptive eyes and short hair often tousled from hats and crowns and helms. He dresses like a lesser noble, not a king, preferring to project a more vital air.

Regent Stian, Duke of Scolyn

Scolyn is an aging but still-virile man with vigorous energy and no less than three lovers. He loves his wife and shows her great devotion, but she no longer allows him to get close to her due to health problems. These issues have eluded the best magical healers. They are most likely caused by simple old age.

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Scolyn's entire life is the Regency. He rules, plots and schemes. He has two assassins on permanent retainer, but he rarely uses them. He has his own network of spies that cover just the nobility and keep him apprised of plots and meetings. He knows about the prince's liaison and he's happy for the boy, though he doesn't know about the illegitimate brother. He just doesn't want the Prince to marry without ever knowing love.

What Scolyn won't tell anyone is that he had an affair with Adriette some fourteen years back. The former king took a delicate wound before marriage. The wound healed, but the King didn't produce an heir until the Prince. It was the Queen herself who initiated the relationship with Scolyn.

Scolyn has hawk eyes and dresses like a king. He bears himself with a regal air and no one who meets him doubts for a moment that he holds the reins of the nation.

Cardinal Gleann

While the Lord High Priest is technically the most powerful clergyman in the country, Cardinal Gleann, Bishop of Belm, is *practically* the most powerful. He holds the most powerful archdiocese in the country, and his fellow clergy and the Faerarch both trust him.

Gleann concerns himself with his church and his duties, but he's also concerned about the succession. He is aligned with Meline and intends for her to become the next queen.

Gleann is a good and honest man, trusted by everyone he meets. He's a scholar and a master orator. He holds his power lightly, but wields it with great expertise. He's highly prejudiced against other religions, and he overcompensates by lavishing members of other churches with praise and courtesy when around them.

He is balding and tall, beginning to plump.

Aline, the Marchioness Ran

Aline is the second and trailing contender for the next queen. The Marquis died without an heir and his estates and rents would be her dowry. It seems that the rumors she killed her husband to become a suitor for the Prince are unfounded.

Aline is actually quite earnest in her desire to do good as the new queen. She's gotten past the desire for a maiden queen with her good works and by calling in favors. Her widowhood still looks likely to do her in. If she doesn't manage to secure her betrothal, she'll have spent most of her political capital.

Aline has destroyed a few lives on her rise to the top, but she feels genuine remorse. She's trying to act in the manner of a queen with honest dealings for all her peers.

She's an exquisitely beautiful woman with dark eyes and a coy look. Still, when she riles in anger, she presents a formidable image.

Herthew, Duke of Branden

Herthew, Duke of Branden is a primary advisor of the Regent. He would be crowned king if the Prince were to die without an heir, but since he's already in his thirties, he'd likely turn the honor down. Every man over thirty crowned king has died within a month.

Lord Branden is the most powerful champion of Meline as the next queen, but this is all lip service. He's really trying to earn the future queen's debt so that he can have control of Belm, the richest city in the Kingdom, put back into his control. Whether or not this would make him the Lord High Marshal is irrelevant to him. He has debts inherited from his father and he needs the increased income. Belm lies within his demesne.

Lord Branden is the number one candidate for infidelity among the women of court, but he genuinely loves his wife. He doesn't know his wife only married him for the station. She is a fine actress and needs him to keep a powerful voice for her father, the Baron Chiviless, who's been waning in power ever since he insulted the Regent during a hunt.

Lord Branden is a dashing man of large build. He's just a bit large around the middle of late, but he hasn't had to get into his full armor for some time so it hasn't mattered.

Endsan, Duke of Doronshire

The father of Meline, the Duke of Doronshire is an aging knight and a wise man. He reminisces a bit

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much about the old days, but if the histories are true, he earned it.

The Duke of Doronshire is a good man who prizes his honor above all else. Unfortunately, he prizes it above his faith and the Lord High Priest had the Faerarch excommunicate him for divorce years ago. The Duke of Doronshire doesn't seem to mind and that drives the clergy mad.

The Duke of Doronshire has presented Meline as a bride for the Prince and his persuasive arguments (read: dowry) have placed her at the head of the list. In his defense, he feels this is a good match. He doesn't know that his daughter is a shameless social climber.

The Duke of Doronshire is a middle-aged man in poor health. He can barely walk without the aid of a cane.

Meline

Meline is the primary contender for the bride of the Prince. She is charming, if a touch awkward and shy, and her manner is appealing in its innocence.

Meline is actually the most ruthless of all candidates. She wants to be queen and she's willing to do anything to achieve it. Her skills of manipulation will make her a powerful queen, but she knows that's only the beginning of her power. As dowager queen she will be able to wield massive power over her son and later grandson.

She cares nothing for the kingdom and less for the people. All she wants is power. A convent education has done nothing to blunt her ambition.

Meline is sixteen years old and has a look of wide-eyed innocence that only comes from years of practice. She never drops her facade, not even while alone.

Granneth, Earl of Waters

Lord Waters is an old man, so befuddled and frail looking that most people fear he'll drop dead at the slightest breeze. This is all an act.

Lord Waters is actually one of the most powerful men in the kingdom. As the Earl of Waters he commanded the navy and held demesne over all the islands of Ludremon. Those who know him (or have been caught by his schemes) know that he's actu-

ally a brilliant strategist. He has the ear of both the Prince and the Regent.

Lord Waters is actually the undecided peer at court and both sides think that his support will swing the Regent's decision over to their bride. Lord Waters has carefully kept himself neutral in the whole matter as he gathers information. He leans toward Meline but he has yet to come to a final decision.

Lord Waters is old and has a perpetual look of confusion on his face. His eyes tend to water and he drools occasionally.

Den, Viscount of Heathonshire

Lord Heathonshire is a clever, scheming man. He is one of the only peers at court who has no care for who marries the Prince. This isn't the same as being undecided. He doesn't care and everyone knows it. They've written him off the list of possible supporters.

Lord Heathonshire actually has another plan. He intends to befriend both brides and wait for one of them to marry the Prince. Then he will pull out blackmail material he's gathered on both of them. At that point, he figures, he'll hold the ear of the most powerful woman in the country. He believes he can control either of them. Although he doesn't understand how formidable either woman is, he might be clever enough to pull it off.

Lord Heathonshire is a bald man with a hawk-like gaze. He dresses immaculately and carries himself like a dancer, his years of military service granting him an easy grace.

RESOURCES AND TRADE

Ludremon is rich in farmland but poor in minerals, gaining most of its raw materials from foreign trade. Ludremon's greatest exports are textile—particularly wool, weapons and armor. There is something about the soil or the climate of Ludremon that produces the best wool in the world, and no one has been able to reproduce this in foreign countries, not even from Ludremonian stock.

Ludremon pulls a great deal of its resources from the ocean, mainly fish and oil. What mineral wealth

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it does have are mainly gold, silver, and gems, but these have poor supplies.

Money

Ludremon mints its own coins, but a great deal of the cash circulating in the country are foreign currencies. Maroldan coins are the most common, with Marnele and Gelaert tied for second.

Banking

There are three types of bankers in Ludremon. They are pawnbrokers, moneychangers and deposit bankers, and merchant bankers.

Pawnbrokers are the bottom rung of the ladder since their blatant charge of interest violates the Church's usury laws. Many pawnbrokers are Dwarves and Atavists. Ludremonians are more comfortable using these pawnbrokers because the brokers aren't violating tenets of their religion.

Moneychangers and deposit bankers are almost respectable. They provide an honest service for their fees, and while they make extra money from long distance exchanges, most people are willing to turn a blind eye.

Merchant bankers are a newer development. They hold a person's money and give them "bonuses" in exchange for investing the money in their own enterprises. Merchant bankers also handle written monetary exchanges from one banker to another, transferring the real funds later during their normal caravan travel.



Lady Meline

Taxes

Ludremon maintains a moderate level of taxes. A peasant or a serf can expect to spend over a third

of his money on taxes. Free men have a bit better time of it.

The standard tax rate is 15 percent of assessed value on normal income and property. This is the rate most city dwellers (burghers) pay. Tax on property is only owed when the property is purchased, although practically citizens are charged every year.

A tax collector investigates the holdings of the person and estimates their yearly income. The citizen then pays 15 percent of that estimate.

Found money (treasure) is assessed at a slightly higher rate. Adventurers and opportunists entering any Ludremonian city have all cash weighed for value. If it appears the person is transporting money and not just traveling with funds to live on, they are then charged a 20 percent fee. The person is then given an itemized list of all remaining treasure and a note granting them exemption from further taxation on those goods. This page includes certain words and phrases that are set for the month or the week. This makes the documents difficult to forge without knowledge of the current passwords.

Finally, outgoing goods are charged an export fee. This fee is 10 percent of the value.

Trade Guilds

There are trade guilds throughout Ludremon. They exist to protect the interests of their merchant members.

The Alin Trade Guild

This guild operates out of Belm and concentrates on shore and sea travel up and down the coast. The head of the guild is a high-placed member of the Belm City Council, giving him power over customs and port authorities.

The Chrayn Guild

Based in Erton, the Chrayn guild is based around trade north into Mab and into Zûram. They specialize in bringing Dwarven goods back into Ludremon and carry a special exemption for selling foreign goods.

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The Thenone Trade Guild

Based out of Belm, this guild is composed mainly of foreign merchants that have settled in Belm. These are mostly Dwarves from Zûram and Elves from Ingrast. They set up a pavilion outside of Belm once a month for selling their craft goods (the raw goods they sell in town).



Den, Viscount of Heathonshire

Adinor Trade Union

This guild is based out of Godean. They concentrate on trade into and through Keireena.

Who's Who

There are several merchants and traders of notes within Ludremon. Three of them are the most notable.

Sir Shadin Wellings

The Exchequer of Ludremon, Sir Shadin controls the purse strings for the royal demesne. He also commands the nation's formidable legion of tax collectors.

Sir Shadin may be little more than a glorified bailiff, but if that's true, he's the most unique of creatures: an *honest* bailiff. Sir Shadin takes his responsibilities seriously, never cooking a book or pocketing a coin. In fact, he combs his hair for gold dust before leaving work each day, so not even that gets carried with him.

Sir Shadin has come to the conclusion lately that the level of theft among his tax collectors has hit an all time high. He's begun an investigation with advice from the Lord High Inquisitor. So far there have only been two assassination attempts.

Sir Shadin is a good-looking, balding man with thin brown hair and blue eyes. He stutters when he can't account for money.

Aren Bacon

Bacon is the actual head of the Alin Trade Guild, ruling for Wedgwood. A savvy merchant, he earned his way to the top of the guild with respect and planning rather than bribery and politicking. It was this decision on the part of the guild that's made them the most powerful financial force in the country.

Bacon cares about only one thing, money. He doesn't care about keeping it, he couldn't care less about spending it. What he loves is *acquiring* it. He isn't a miser. It's the joy of conquest that captures him. He isn't even greedy. If he'd entered another profession, he likely would have pursued it with the same level of purpose.

Bacon has recently discovered that there is *too much* money in his guild coffers. He is trying to investigate to discover why, but he's taking it slowly, fearing more than a tallying error.

Bacon is a short man, scrawny, with an unfortunately off-center receding hairline. His eyes and hair are both brown tinged with grey.

Borian Callings

Callings is the richest merchant banker in Ludremon. He is a part of no trade guilds, and he ships his massive caravans to the far corners of the world. He's rich enough that he's essentially a guild all to himself.

Callings fashions himself more a poet than a merchant. Unfortunately, he is a *bad* poet and when he couldn't make a living as a bard he ended up falling into business, where he excelled. He writes poetry to this day and is known for sending apologetic pieces to those he's ruined. He never gives the money back, though.

Callings has a dark secret. His first wife was actually a cultist of Eurustace. While he didn't discover this until after she died, he's afraid that someone will find out and use the information to ruin his reputation, or worse, his daughters'.

Callings is a wide man with legs seemingly too small for his body. He has bright green eyes and red

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hair so thick that it seems to grow weeds. He has a habit of touching people when he talks to them, far more than most people find comfortable.

THE MILITARY

The most important arm of any nation is the military. The military in a feudal country isn't exactly a ready-response force. While the nation is practically lousy with knights, most of them defend individual fiefs at any given time. Those that aren't errant, at least. In times of peace, many, if not most, knights wander without lords.

Of the standing army in Ludremon, perhaps 12 percent are at the call of the king at any given time. Given a month, he can call up the full army for forty days. Given another month, the king can flesh out the army to 10 percent of the national population using conscripts and mercenaries.

Knights

By the best estimates, there are about 15,250 knights in Ludremon. Most of these are second, third, and fourth sons of nobility who didn't go to the church. While some of these knights are employed in times of peace, more are unemployed. At this point in Ludremonian history, perhaps 30 percent of knights are gainfully employed. The rest earn their money at tourneys when they can, through banditry when they can't. At the moment the banditry problem is becoming bad enough the Regent is seriously wondering if he should start a war. Wars mean relief, and that requires vassals to hire knights and pay scutage, which the Regent could use to hire the remaining knights. A good month or so would redistribute the wealth from the vassals to the crown and into the hands of the knights.

Most knights have horse and armor. Although they lose their horse and armor when they lose at tourney, they can ransom them back. Since few knights actually have enough money to pay the real value, usually the victor accepts whatever the vanquished can pay. To do otherwise would be unchivalric.

The fortune of a knight changes greatly. Sometimes they swim in money and honor. Other times they're destitute, hunting for food and praying for

gainful employment. One thing knights in Ludremon have going for them is the good will of the Ludremonian people. A knight that is truly down on his luck might well be "honored" by local innkeepers with food and shelter.

Peasants

Peasants in Ludremon are well-trained warriors. They are expert in the longbow . . . less so with the spear. Weapons are expensive, melee weapons generally too expensive for any peasant to own. However, every peasant in Ludremon must, by law, have a longbow as tall as he. Since peasants can make longbows themselves, this isn't a financial problem.

It is another law in Ludremon that every peasant must practice with the bow every Godsdag. While exceptions are made for illness and infirmity, the peasant must be *very* infirm. Otherwise, he's likely to be thumped out of bed by the village beadle.

About half of all peasants train with the staff and this translates somewhat to use with a spear. This allows for a lord to outfit himself with men at arms in a time of need. Permanent men at arms train regularly with the spear, of course.

Ludremonian peasants say that to train a longbowman, one must start by training his great-grandfather. A typical Ludremonian longbowman can hit a war target (a circle of canvas on the ground) at more than one-hundred yards.

Feudal Service

Every vassal owes his lord his service and the service of a certain number of troops for forty days every year. Technically, this is the only obligation for troops, but vassals make allowances in times of war. A lord could hold his troops for more than forty days in such an emergency, but if he tries, desertion is likely to spike, less so if the knights have been without pay for a long time.

Mercenaries

There are two types of mercenaries, errant knights and professional warriors. Under most circumstances, a lord can hire as many knights as he needs and

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he often has the scutage of vassals to pay them. Under more extreme circumstance he must hire professional units. There are probably five thousand professional mercenaries in Ludremon, but some foreign powers such as Maroldo have many, many more.

Army

Ludremon has a standing army of 15,250 knights. There are an equal number of men at arms (these are actually employed). They can arrive with one month notice. In a time of emergency, with two months notice, the Regent could conscript or hire an army of about 45,000 total troops without much effort.

Navy

Most of the Ludremonian Navy is mothballed in times of peace, the officers on half pay. During a time of war the Regent could put the entire navy to sea in one month.

Total Fleet: 750 ships

Peace Fleet: 75 ships.

Who's Who

There are a few military people who stand out as eminent in the Ludremonian military. This is by no means all the notable people.

Granneth, Earl of Waters

Lord Waters is the commander of the navy. For more information, see Page 174.

Berah, Earl of the Lance

Lord Lance is the foremost knight in the realm, the man in charge of all the knights and all the stables in the king's military. The Earl of the Lance is an appointed, not hereditary, position typically given to a knight-errant.

Lord Lance values his position and owes his allegiance to the Regent, not the Prince (though he's sworn to the crown). He would do anything the Regent said, and he's the number-one reason Scolyn has the security he does. If the peerage tried to oppose him he would have the force of all the knights behind him.

Lord Lance is an imposing man, graying, with piercing blue eyes. He's all but lame due to a poorly-healed injury but he still sits a horse like a young man. Because of this, he hasn't sought out a healer powerful enough to cure his limp. Lesser clerical magicks haven't helped.

Maron, Earl of the March

Lord March is in charge of all the men-at-arms under the King's command. The Earl of the March is an appointed title, given to the best general in the army. Lord March happens to be a knight with small holdings in addition to this title. His heir currently runs his fief.

Lord March was appointed by the Prince's father and owes his allegiance to the royal line, not the regency line. If the peerage were to depose the Regent and if he were to rebel, Lord March would control as many men as Lord Lance, but he'd be under-equipped and without cavalry. Fortunately, Lord March is a much better general than Lord Lance.

Lord March is a medium-size man with a grizzled appearance and hair patchy from scars. He limps when he isn't fighting but this isn't a serious infirmity. He primarily plays it up because of Lord Lance's injury.

Sir Rune (No Last Name)

No one is certain of Rune's real name or his nationality. He has dark hair and his skin is duskier than a typical Ludremonian. He speaks without an accent, but he speaks at least three other languages without an accent as well. He is tall and built almost like a Dwarf in proportion. He smiles all the time, and most people find it disconcerting. He has no scars at all.

Sir Rune is the royal Champion. He saved the former King when they were both at war (Sir Rune couldn't have been more than thirteen at the time). The King saved his life in the same battle, and Rune refused to leave his side after that. At first this annoyed the King but Rune continued to follow him, refusing to take other employment. Eventually, the King made him a personal guard.

Over the years Sir Rune has bested every other knight in the guard. He has personally foiled three

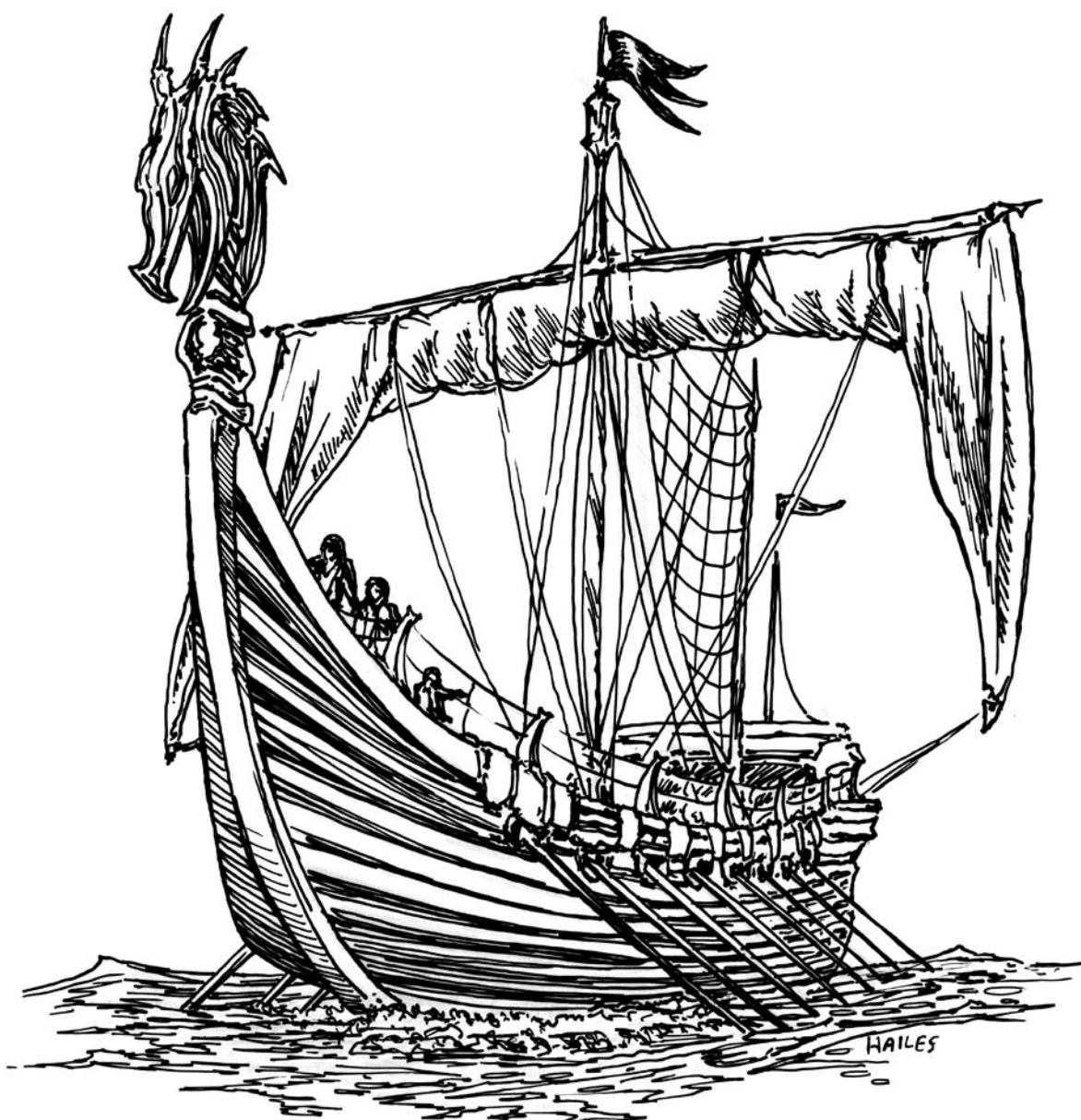
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assassination attempts against the former King and the Prince. He is now the unspoken champion of the court and the Prince's most trusted advisor. He only speaks to the Prince, in fact, and communicates mostly with snaps and hand signs to others. He seems to be completely mute, except where the Prince is concerned. He never spoke to the former King either. The first time anyone heard him say more than a wordless bellow was when he sang to the Prince as a baby. He apparently has some form of

hysterical muteness, but not even the Prince knows what caused it.

GAZETTEER

The lands of Ludremon are wide and varied. It's divided into sixteen large demesnes of various qualities, from baronies to duchies.



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The Fief Folio

Each of the fiefs below follow then same format. The key to the information is as follows:

Name

Under the name of the fief is the fief's ruler. The format is: Name [sex race classLEVEL].

A brief description of the fief follows.

Biggest City Name (Population)

The troops of the city follow, in this format: Type of Troop number (Highest Level Member). Next come the conscriptable troops. They are seperated by those inside the city and those in the surrounding area.

Authority Figures: The listing of the most important authority figures follows. The format is: Name [sex race classLEVEL] (Special Notes).

Important Characters: The listing of other important characters follows. The format is: Name [sex race classLEVEL] (Special Notes).

Others: Other demographics follow in this format: Demographic number (Highest Level Member).

Notes: Finally a description of the city in depth.

Note: The class listed is the class that most defines the character as a person. The level is the total character level, not the level in that class. Characters

may be multiclassed, if the GM feels that would



Granneth, Earl of Waters

make them a better-rounded individual (or if the primary class is a prestige class.

The Duchy of Branden

Herthew, Duke of Branden [male Human ftr28].

Branden is the center of the kingdom, in spirit and economy if not in geography. It is from here that the Regent rules all of Ludremon and holds court.

Branden is the largest producer of food in the Kingdom. This is fortunate, because it is also the largest consumer of food (almost none is exported). The people of Branden are fishers and farmers, and proud of it.

It is also from here that all trade is controlled. The influx of metals from around the Gulf and the production of textiles in Branden itself makes Ludremon one of the strongest producers of wool.

Belm (38,881)

Royal Guard 107 (30); Town Guard 259 (25); Conscriptable Individuals 3,888 (in city), 15,553 (surrounding area)

Authority Figures: Prince Karimon the XXXI [male Human ftr5]; Regent Stian, Duke of Scolyn [male Human ftr30]; Steward Jayl Geary [male Human ari25]; Dean Hacolm, [male Human exp30] (Shipwright); Orlan Noham [male Human wiz22] (Vice-Chancellor of the University); Captain of the Guard Dougal Grant [male Human ftr25]; Sir Adrone Hulian [male Human ftr30] (Captain of the Royal Guard).

Important Characters: Etanne Ermain, [male Human ari16](Ambassador of Marnele); Par MacHer [male Human ari15] (Ambassador of Mab); Neired O'Morns [male Human ari16] (Ambassador from Keireena); Hjard Bjornsson [male Human ari14] (Local Ship Captain); Barenas Jomanson [male Human exp16] (Court Minstrel); Englas Geron Neil [male Human exp16] (Local Star); Irance Mandolin [male Human exp16] (Local Star); Annigne Tanner [female Human exp16] (Local Star); Lawnor Carington [male Human exp16] (Local Star); Sanneth [male Human clr22] (Lord High Priest); Ran Lean [male Human drd17] (Head Atavist); Lord High Marshal Berren, Duke of Belm [male Human ftr22]; High Abbot Belan [male Human exp25] (Head of

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the Order of Naeponis); High Abbot Grander [male Human exp30] (Head of the Monastic Order of Albolatian); High Commander Mianus [male Human pal25] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); High Commander Nisanas [male Human pal24] (High Commander of the Knights Equenis); Ances Dark [male Human rgr25] (Royal Tracker); High Commander Larlence [male Human rgr24] (High Commander of the Knights of Paeso); High Abbot Eremy [female Human clr30] (High Abbot of the Knights Ephestus); Krayl Laireson [male Human exp14] (representative of the Monastic Order of Sepinus); High Enforcer Keneil Wright [male Human asn28] (High Enforcer of the Society of Sinnius); High Mother Junet [female Human clr24] (High Mother of the Holy Wives Monique); High Mother Lesley [female Human clr30] (High Mother of the Ladies of Alaria); Lord High Inquisitor Deonsday, Duke of Windsay [male Human rog24]; Kethlen Wedgwood [male Human rog18] (Thieves' Guild Master); Ralm Joronson [male Human rog14] (Head of Palace Security); Cardinal Gleann [male Human clr20], Aline, Marchioness Ran [female Human ari8], Herthew, Duke of Branden [male Human ftr9], Endsan, Duke of Doronshire [male Human ari19], Meline [female Human ari9] (Prospective Queen), Granneth, Earl of Waters [male Human ftr17], Den, Viscount of Heathonshire [male Human ftr25], Berah, Earl of the Lance [male Human ftr15], Maron, Earl of the March [male Human ftr25], Sir Rune [male Human ftr29] (Royal Champion), Malallan Smith [male Human exp22] (Smith); Ancan Stenet [male Human exp20] (Leather Worker); Balius Fletcher [male Human exp19] (Bowyer/Fletcher) Gilinant Weaver [male Human exp21].

Others: Noble Households 194 (25); Normal Clergy 972 (25); Normal Priests 36 (16); Members of Other Church Orders 3,888 (29); Craftsmen 1,555 (26); Artisans/Academics 1,023 (25); Other Merchants 1,023 (25); Knights 130 (23); Church Spellcasters 10 (15); Banned Spellcasters 4 (13).

Notes: Belm is a huge city, crammed with 38,881 people inside its walls. It's, not surprisingly, a hotbed of politics.

First of all, there is the Regent and all of his nobles. Even though the Regent is a hereditary posi-

tion, he can be deposed, and each of the families is always maneuvering to get to the top of the list of possible successors.

Fortunately for the Regent, he has them all firmly in check. For the moment, at least.

The second major faction is the League of Guilds. They are a powerful economic force, led by Gilinant Weaver, guild master of the cloth makers' guild. They know they have the power to bring the entire kingdom to its knees, and they aren't above doing so. Luckily, it's in everyone's best interests to keep the city healthy.

The third faction is the Shippers' Guild. Not a member of the other League of Guilds, which contains mainly craftsmen and service-providers, the Shippers' Guild wields a great amount of power. This makes them the conduit through which over half of the nation's foreign funds flow.

Finally, there is the Church. The clergy of Ludremon are powerful, but do not share the crusader attitude of the crown. They are closer to the standoffish Shippers' Guild in policy, and often resent the demands of the Regent.

At the moment, the Regent has all these factions in check, but discontent and even open warfare is never more than a careless word away.

Though they do export other goods, most of the money taken in by Ludremon comes from the textile trade. If the business for wools were to dry up, the entire Ludremonian economy would collapse.

One of the most notable features of Ludremon is the Elemental Wonder of Water, located in the capital city of Belm. This three-story high magical fountain spews water some three additional stories into the air and lands on chimes, causing a musical sound that can be heard for blocks and a spray that can be felt for hundreds of feet.

There is a dark force moving in Belm. Fallen Elves from the Warrens have infiltrated the city and have begun to dominate the nobles there. One by one, the power base of Belm, and therefore the kingdom, is falling prey to Coalition control.

The Royal Palace of Belm

The Prince, the Regent, and the Royal Guard quarter in the Royal Palace. They are as self-sufficient as

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possible, with food, material, and craftsmen necessary to withstand months of siege.

The Commander of the Royal Guard suspects that something is going on in Belm. He thinks there is an infiltration of shape shifters into the palace staff, but he's yet to prove anything.

The Holy See of Naeponis

The Holy See of Naeponis is the headquarters of the Order. From here, all policy for the Order is set, and they store copies of all records of the Church in this building.

This monastery is outside the city walls, but tunnels connect the maze-like vaults of records to the city. Vault doors allow the monks to close the records off from either side.

The Head of the Order, Belan Stone, has been plotting of late. He is hatching a plan to burn the Holy See of Albolatian to the ground.

The Holy See of Albolatian

The Holy See of Albolatian is the center of the Order and the heart of their researches into the secrets of scripture. Here, along with setting policy for the Order, learned men study the deepest nuances of scriptures and the bounds of the Divine Tongue.

The Holy See is outside the city walls, in a building magically fortified against fire (few people know this fact). Their secret vaults contain some of the most obscure texts in the world. But these aren't the only copies the Order keeps.

Recently, the Head of the Order, Grandeur Sun-corn, found a particularly obscure text. The more he reads it, the more fascinated he becomes with it. He's locked himself in his quarters and has stopped taking food and drink. His assistants have become worried.

The Duchy of Caline

Lanalant, Duke of Caline [male Human ari14].

Caline is a vast agricultural area. The lands are dedicated to farmlands. A large portion of the food of the Kingdom is produced here.

Erton (19,785)

City Guard 132 (23); Conscriptable Individuals 1,979 (in city), 7,913 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Lanalant, Duke of Caline [male Human ari14]; Captain of the Guard Ard Webber [male Human ftr23].

Important Characters: Jaleins Waggoner [female Human exp9] (Court Minstrel); Great Druid Avin [male Human drd12]; Hulin, Earl of Fadren [male Human ftr23] (Landed Noble); Herains Blackfoot [male Human rog21] (Local Thief); Baliustans Wakefield [male Human exp13] (Merchant); Bon Smith [male Human exp16] (Armorer).

Others: Noble Households 99 (23); Normal Clergy 495 (23); Normal Priests 18 (13); Members of Other Church Orders 1,979 (27); Craftsmen 791 (23); Artisans/Academics 521 (23); Other Merchants 521 (24); Knights 66 (22); Church Spellcasters 5 (13); Banned Spellcasters 2 (11).

Notes: Erton, for a town its size, is a remarkably backward place. It is a farm community first and foremost. Even the caravans stay at inns outside the city walls. It is the center of trade in the area, and most of the food comes through there, but visitors are politely guided into the city's outside foreign quarter.

Recently, a band of farmers has gotten it into their heads that it is time to overthrow the Duke. This rebellion would be laughable at best, but one of the farmers seems to have a strange ability to control monsters, including Cambions. They have been gathering their forces, and are almost ready to move.

The Duchy of Delmshire

Alimynthon, Duke of Delmshire [male Human ftr17]

The Duchy of Delmshire mines its hills for some of the last good sources of iron known in the country. They are the primary supplier of steel in the Kingdom, and it's through them that arms and armor are supplied to the Ludremonian military.

With the exception of the capital, the finest weapon- and armorsmiths in Ludremon are located in this Duchy. The iron mines produce a moderate amount of ore, which is then smelted and moved

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to the smiths of Keil, where it is hammered into the symbols of war.

Keil (17,030)

City Guards 114 (24); Conscriptable Individuals 1,703 (in city), 6,812 (surrounding area)

Authority Figures: Alimynthon, Duke of Delmshire [male Human ftr17]; Bishop Glirl [male Human exp13]; Captain of the Guard Jogar Hafagal [male Halfling ftr12].

Important Characters: Froa Hagrindotter [female Human bbn10] (Guide); Rengjolf Feyrsson [male Human bbn9] (Cambion-Hunter); Menergaer [male Elf brd8] (Court Minstrel); Kat Tierre [male Human exp10] (Local Performer); High Mother Ramy [female Human clr11] (High Mother of Holy Wives of Monique); Great Druid Gan [male Human drd10]; Sir Gan Throwing [male Human ftr12] (Knight Commander); Ilon Casting [male Human ftr11] (Mine Garrison Commander); Sodlin Craft [male Human ftr9] (Duke's Sparring Partner); High Commander Bavian [male Human pal8] (High Commander Knights Lonnuso); High Commander Irlan [male Human pal8] (High Commander Knights Equis); Clewdern Farriderson [male Human ftr7] (Scout); Lorthir [male Elf rgr7] (Tracker); Lorraine Westhorpe [female Human rog10] (Thieves' Guild Master); Brullus Fivefingers [male Human rog11] (Freelance Thief); Cingan Snook [male Human ari8] (Seneschal); Larloier Barker [male Human exp17] (Head of the Council of Guilds); Gralan Smith [male Human exp15] (Blacksmith Guild Master).

Others: Noble Households 85 (23); Normal Clergy 426 (23); Normal Priests 16 (13); Members of Other Church Orders 1703 (27); Craftsmen 681 (24); Artisans/Academics 448 (23); Other Merchants 448 (24); Knights 57 (21); Church Spellcasters 4 (14); Banned Spellcasters 2 (12).

Notes: Keil has two major power bases. On the one hand, you have the Duke, who is the hereditary ruler of the town. On the other hand there is Glirl, who represents the Church in the city. He holds all the earned power in the city. Fortunately, these two rarely come into serious conflict.

Glirl has recently begun experimenting with new ways to kill Undead. He believes that he has found

a spell that does it much more effectively than anything the Church has used before, but little does he know that this spell merely releases the spirits of the Undead, making them much more powerful.

Duchy of Doronshire

Krinthony, Duke of Doronshire [male Human ftr19]

The Duchy of Doronshire is as beset upon by raiders as any coastal area. However, patrols to the west do their job and provide the protection necessary for Louchester to function.

This is good, because Louchester's entire economy is based on the sea. Louchester is the hub of whaling in Ludremon. Louchester produces much of the oil used by nations in the area.

Louchester (26,019)

City Guards 173 (24); Conscriptable Individuals 2,602 (in city), 10,408 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Krinthony, Duke of Doronshire [male Human ftr19]; Captain of the Guard Bonian Gray [male Human ftr11]; Eluškad [?dragon?].

Important Characters: Fain Grip [male Human rog8] (Thug/Extortionist); Gawergan Wary [male Human exp12] (Local Star); Darrin Court [male Human exp8] (Court Minstrel); High Mother Mirlan [female Human clr11] (High Mother of the Ladies Alaria); Bishop Mebesin [male Human clr11]; Great Druid Alanna [female Human drd11]; Carris, Baron Nallance [male Human ftr14] (Landed Noble); Brusius Wyclif [male Human ftr10] (Bodyguard for Hire); High Commander Aernius [male Human pal9] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Onwin Forrester [male Human rgr9] (Atavist Guard); Mededen Shale [male Human ftr9] (Court Tracker); Helegond [male Elf rog13] (Thieves' Guild Master); Callelius Cooper [male Human rog12] (Freelance Thief); Maerwash the Magnificent [male Halfling wiz8] (Notorious Mage); Merrains, Baroness Keimer [female Human ari10] (Matron); Gydralus, Baron Darric [male Human ari10] (Patron); Captain Onan Storm [male Human exp17] (Whaler); Dominick Shore [male Human exp13] (Shipwright).

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Others: Noble Households 130 (23); Normal Clergy 650 (23); Normal Priests 24 (13); Members of Other Church Orders 2602 (27); Craftsmen 1041 (25); Artisans/Academics 685 (23); Other Merchants 685 (23); Knights 87 (21); Church Spellcasters 7 (15); Banned Spellcasters 3 (13).

Notes: Louchester relatively peaceful a quiet whaling town. It has a decent population and all the nobility of the seat of a Duchy, but these people have peace and quiet and they like it.

There is a bit of a war between the Duke and the guilds. This is thought to be typical of all major cities, but rumors have begun to rise of a powerful being calling the shots with the guilds. The name Eluškad has been whispered, but many who have said it too loudly have disappeared abruptly.

The Barony of Fionet

Clant, Baron of Fionet [male Human ftr17].

Fionet is a smaller fief. Consisting mostly of fishers and river tradesmen, the only large settlement is Sason.

Lord Clant learned his fighting skills defending the river from Hobgoblin raids, and still has the concentrate-on-the-problem-until-it's-dead approach to politics. He is a good man, though, and well liked by his people.

Sason (9,228)

City Guards 62 (21); Conscriptable Individuals 923 (in city), 3,691 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Clant, Baron of Fionet [male Human ftr17]; Captain of the Guard Gincan Patch [male Human ftr21].

Important Characters: Broi Cap [male Human rog11] (Local Ruffian); Araglas [male Elf exp10] (Court Minstrel); High Abbot Estant [male Human clr11] (High Abbot of the Knights Epehstus); Great Druid Danes [male Human exp11]; Jolo Hamhands [male Human ftr9] (Local Bandit); Nallus Barrage [male Human ftr12] (Knight Equenis); Edwent Gulf Human ftr12] (Local Tracker); Anaine Cutler [female Human rog6] (Local Thief); Varmere Beteridge [male Human sor10] (Underground Mage); Hardin, Baron Ondain [male Human ari2] (Landed Noble); Nuldumo Callian [male Halfling com8]

(Token Halfling Farmer); Bertant Smith [male Human exp16] (Blacksmith);

Others: Noble Households 46 (21); Normal Clergy 231 (21); Normal Priests 9 (11); Members of Other Church Orders 923 (25); Craftsmen 369 (21); Artisans/Academics 243 (22); Other Merchants 243 (21); Knights 31 (19); Church Spellcasters 2 (11); Banned Spellcasters 1 (10).

Notes: Sason's only claim to fame is the fact it's the provincial seat. Pickings are slim here, and Lord Clant believes in working with the people he's got. Because of this, the place is much lower key than many fiefs.

Lord Clant is well loved. He does not look down on his people, and this has earned him popularity.

Sason sits atop a cave. This cavern houses the local thieves. Recently, farming and building has begun to bring down sections. Conflict is inevitable.

The Duchy of Garifer

Nuneurin, Duke of Garifer [male Human ftr15].

The Province of Garifer is one of the most mercantile in the Kingdom. Run by the Duke of Garifer, it is also the Regent's strongest foe.

The Duke of Garifer is a master politician and an expert manipulator. He has taken this to such an extreme as to manage to gain the Regent's confidence. Few suspect that much of the turmoil in the kingdom is caused by this man.

The Duke of Garifer has yet to move openly, or even arrange for the Prince's death, though this must ultimately be his goal. He is still waiting and gathering his power.

Godean (22,395)

City Guards 149 (24); Conscriptable Individuals 2,240 (in city), 8,958 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Nuneurin, Duke of Garifer [male Human ftr15]; Enains Furrier [female Human ari19] (Nuneurin's Concubine); Girâl Bloodstone [male Dwarf ftr15] (Champion); Captain of the Guard Zibun Bloodstone [male Dwarf ftr24].

Important Characters: Frissa Jorsdotter [female Human bbn12]; (Leader of Local Expatriate Raider Community); Malph Falin [male Halfling exp11] (Local star); Beviance Carpenter [female Human

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exp13] (Competing Star); Heralin Bath [male Human exp11] (Court Minstrel); High Mother Eniane [female Human clr16] (High Mother of the Ladies of Alaria); Bishop Aellius [male Human clr15]; Father Ellant Book [male Human exp13] (Local Priest); Great Druid Petyr [male Halfling drd15]; Bralant, Baron Carise [male Human ftr14] (Landed Noble); High Commander Ondran [male Human pal11] (High Commander of Knights Lonnuso); High Commander Isaid [male Human ftr28] (High Commander of the Knights Equis); Hader Hadrin [male Halfling ftr16] (Court Tracker); Telian Grass [female Human ftr14] (Head Atavist Guard); Llirnes Falconer [female Human rog15] (Head of Court Security); Hiris Cane [male Human rog14] (Thieves' Guild Master); Kain [male Human rog14] (Free-lance Thief); Schalian Inman [male Human sor11] (Underground Mage); Star, Baron Gagenes [male Human ari11] (Landed Noble); Nedas, Baron Valan [male Human ari11] (Patron); Gatrane, Baron Hage [male Human ari11] (Landed Noble); Norge Jorina [male Halfling exp17] (Carpenter); Bellene Marks [female Human exp12] (Lady Academic); Anans Smith [male Human exp24] (Smith).

Others: Noble Households 112 (23); Normal Clergy 560 (23); Normal Priests 21 (13); Members of Other Church Orders 2240 (28); Craftsmen 896 (25); Artisans/Academics 589 (23); Other Merchants 589 (24); Knights 75 (22); Church Spellcasters 6 (16); Banned Spellcasters 2 (11).

Godean is a hotbed of intrigue and competing factions. Most of it is lighthearted and good natured, but that doesn't make in any less competitive.

First of all, there is the Duke of Garifer. He appears to be a good-natured but strict lord. Few guess that he is a truly malevolent character. The city is spared by the fact that he cares only for national politics and spends less time than he should on his Duchy.

Then there is the league of guilds, headed Enains Furrier, of the Tailors' Guild (and the Duke's concubine). The league is constantly fighting the Duke of Garifer's laws and taxes (though they are basically fair).

Finally, you have the Knights Lonnuso. They have decided that they should be in charge of the defense of the city, and are trying to supplant the guard.

Within this, there is scheming on many more levels. The nobles try to position themselves to take over the Duchy, should something happen to the Duke. The Guilds scheme to supplant Enains. The Knights Lonnuso are each positioning themselves to fill the void of the next high-placed casualty.

Amer is rife with parties and dance, mainly because these are the battlegrounds for intrigue. A minstrel can make good money in this city, both as a performer and a spy.

The Viscounty of Heathonshire

Baindes, Viscount of Heathonshire [male Human pal17].

Heathonshire is essentially a theocracy, ruled by a former Knight Equis who returned home to take his Duchy when all his brothers died of food poisoning.

Heathonshire is not a rich province. Primarily based in agriculture, their lands are filled with scrub and are hard to work. Though they produce enough food to export, they are far from prosperous.

Venet (2,379)

City Guards 16 (18); Conscriptable individuals 238 (in city), 952 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Baindes, Viscount of Heathonshire [male Human pal17]; Beadle Aldan Ravenscroft [male Human com11].

Important Characters: Eidir Kreigsson [male Human bbn8] (Barbarian Personality); Stang Brewer [male Human exp9] (Court Minstrel); Bishop Biamour [male Human clr9]; Great Druid Alaine Buckler [female Human exp10]; Undan Bleacher [male Human ftr5] (Local Tough); Annant Spice [male Human rog16] (Local Ringleader); Frant Walpole [female Human exp8] (Merchant); Beriant Sayer [male Human exp17] (Blacksmith).

Others: Noble Households 12 (17); Normal Clergy 59 (17); Normal Priests 2 (7); Members of Other Church Orders 238 (22); Craftsmen 95 (17); Artisans/Academics 63 (17); Other Merchants 63 (17);

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Knights 8 (16); Church Spellcasters 1 (9); Banned Spellcasters 0 (n/a).

Notes: Venet is the largest settlement in Heathonshire. This isn't saying much, as Heathonshire isn't a large province.

Certain members of the ducal family have recently been corrupted by Demon worshipers. They're sure to be discovered, and will soon have to move if they wish to usurp the lord.

The Barony of Huncanshire

Inis, Baron Huncanshire [male Human ari20].

Huncanshire is a small but rich barony. It's the largest producer of gold in the kingdom, and much of its resources go to defending the dwindling gold mines from Hobgoblins.

The Barony of Huncanshire is unique in the fact that the ruling house aren't just Faithful, they are fundamentalist Faithful. The Baron himself disavows all vices, and this colors much of what happens in the Barony.

The Baron's beliefs are strongly modeled in the community. For instance, alcohol is strongly discouraged. The number of bars and inns serving alcohol is greatly reduced.

Gassell (10,696)

City Guards 71 (22); Conscriptable Individuals 1,070 (in city), 4,278 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Inis, Baron Huncanshire [male Human ari20]; Golain, Baron Jeld [male Human ftr14] (Landed Noble); Captain of the Guard Kellebres Ragg [male Human ftr15].

Important Characters: Bramal Svrodsson [male Human bbn8] (Local Barbarian Personality); Kari Kind [female Human exp12] (Court Minstrel); Loguman Saddler [male Human exp12] (Local Star); Bishop Gadain [male Human clr14]; Great Druid Encian [male Human drd9]; High Commander Inar [male Human pal8] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Tiannus Lock [male Human ftr8] (Court Tracker); Dalgor [male Elf rgr8] (Head of the Atavist Guard); Badanis Mercer [male Human rog12] (Thieves' Guild Master); Landelz Neandonson [male Human sor9] (Underground Mage); Krolph, Baron Ilcolm [male Human ari15]

(Landed Noble); Fellis, Baron Lecan [male Human ari8] (Landed Noble); Curiman Hutton [male Human exp16] (Head Guild Master, Tailors Guild); Escalla Best [female Human exp16] (Jeweler).

Others: Noble Households 53 (22); Normal Clergy 267 (21); Normal Priests 10 (11); Members of Other Church Orders 1070 (25); Craftsmen 428 (23); Artisans/Academics 281 (21); Other Merchants 281 (22); Knights 36 (19); Church Spellcasters 3 (14); Banned Spellcasters 1 (9).

Notes: Lord Inis and Lord Golain are the two primary warring factions of this town. Lord Golain feels he should have taken over when Inis' father died, but he didn't. Now he plugs away at the Baron behind his back.

Gassell makes good money off the gold trade. They export large amounts of the stuff, both for minting and in the form of finished goods.

Little does anyone know, but Lord Golain has begun to hatch a plot with the Orcs of the surrounding mountains. Secretly, they have started a cult to Archdemon Khugraug. This cult has begun to take hold among the gold miners. It's only a matter of time before this cult moves, and the full extent of their plans has yet to be seen.

The Marquesatte of Kaye

Laserth Marquis of Kaye [male Human ftr17].

The Marquesatte of Kaye is not the richest of areas. Though it produces more food than it consumes, this is eaten by the rest of the kingdom, and food is not terribly expensive (especially when the price is regulated by the throne).

Lord Laserth is the willing minion of the Duke of Garifer. The Regent suspects that Laserth may be more than he seems.

Perlian (5,001)

City Guards 33 (19); Conscriptable Individuals 500 (in city), 2,001 (surrounding area)

Authority Figures: Laserth Marquis of Kaye [male Human ftr17], Captain of the Guard Vanant Inseanson [male Human ftr14].

Important Characters: Imsilod Ragnarsson [male Human bbn3] (Local Ruffian); Mausteran Glass [male Human exp10] (Court Minstrel); Bish-

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op Adon [male Human exp6]; Great Druid Bravian [male Human exp4]; Casson, Baron Gurulin [male Human ftr5] (Landed Noble); High Commander Dradan [male Human ftr10] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Mailes Glove [male Human ftr13] (Court Tracker); Phirsty, Baroness Morenant [female Human exp3] (Landed Noble).

Others: Noble Households 25 (19); Normal Clergy 125 (20); Normal Priests 5 (9); Members of Other Church Orders 500 (24); Craftsmen 200 (21); Artisans/Academics 132 (19); Other Merchant 132 (19); Knights 17 (17); Church Spellcasters 1 (9); Banned Spellcasters 1 (9).

Notes: Perlian is on the smaller side for a Ludremonian city, with little of note. Its people are backward, and it doesn't take a lot of skill to stand out among your fellow man.

As the center of the province, this is where all excess food is gathered and sold. This is a grand excuse for a fair, though most of the purchasing is done via letter and courier.

Recently, the local merchants have been hoarding food. They have managed to hide this fact for the moment, but there is less food to go around, and the kingdom is feeling a bit of a pinch because of it.

The Duchy of Kird

Erius, Duke of Kird [male Human pal19].

The Duchy of Kird is not particularly large, but it serves its purpose. It is more or less self-sufficient, and even produces a little excess to help the rest of the kingdom.

Kird mainly produces an excess of fish, which it eats, freeing up the longer-lasting food for sale around the kingdom. It also produces excess lumber, which it ships north to the center of the kingdom.

Wolchester (29,215)

City Guards 195 (23); Conscriptable Individuals 2,922 (in city), 11,686 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Erius, Duke of Kird [male Human pal19]; Asin Woodsman [male Human exp16] (Furniture Maker, Head of the Guild Council); Captain of the Guard Mundarathûr Granite [male Dwarf ftr23].

Important Characters: Launas Vertson [male Human exp12] (Court Minstrel); Marlen Shoemaker [female Human exp10]; Cardinal Anant [male Human clr13]; Grand Druid Grent [male Human drd11]; Chrison, Baron Mogras [male Human ftr13] (Landed Noble); High Commander Eldan [male Human pal13] (High Commander of the Knights Equis); Olene Foot [female Human ftr9]; Orres Law [male Human rgr7] (Atavist Guard); Otrin Oldcastle [male Human rog12] (Thieves' Guild Master); Ginia, Baroness Penanna [female Human ari10] (Matron); Kharâl Slate [male Dwarf com18] (Head Lumberjack).

The Barbarian Band: Gild Fridicksson [male Human bbn9] (Captain of the Barbarian Band); Hurrod Garicksson [male Human bbn5] (Lieutenant); bbn3 (x2); bbn2 (x5); bbn1 (x16).

Others: Noble Households 146 (23); Normal Clergy 730 (24); Normal Priests 27 (15); Members of Other Church Orders 2922 (27); Craftsmen 1169 (26); Artisans/Academics 769 (24); Other Merchants 769 (23); Knights 97 (22); Church Spellcasters 7 (15); Banned Spellcasters 3 (14).

Notes: A lot of intrigue is centered around the City of Wolchester. First of all, there are the lumberjacks of the wood. They are at odds with a large band of Atavists that are in the woods as well. These two groups are having a shadow war, with each subtly sabotaging the other's work.

In the city, you have the Duke, who is a former Knight Lonnuso and still leads the local branch, at odds with the Town Council, who has a slightly looser view of morality. They are constantly arguing over what acts are "acceptable."

The final group of players are the coalition of Guilds. This group pays little attention to law or honor, though they do respect contracts. No one likes the guilds, but all fear them.

It should be noted that this is the home base for the mercenary company known as the Barbarian Band. They have moderate renown throughout the region.

What no one knows is that the Church has been secretly aiding the lumberjacks. They do not support the Atavists and think their interests are best met by keeping the economy strong.

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The Barony of Licter

Edilia, Baroness Licter [female Human exp18].

Licter is a farming fief. It is a good, fertile area. It produces much more food than it needs and helps pick up the slack for the rest of the country.

Germma (4,016)

The Warrior's Guild 27 (19); Conscriptable Individuals 402 (in city), 1,606 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Edilia, Baroness Licter [female Human exp18].

Important Characters: Raki Vernigsson [male Human bbn1] (Local Barbarian); Bint Weston [male Human exp3] (Court Minstrel); Bishop Maiales [male Human exp7]; Great Druid Clerene [female exp5]; High Commander Schadius [male Human ftr6] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Ostana Tripp [female Human rog4] (Ringleader); Bralias Mercer [male Human exp6] (Merchant); Iscelius Smith [male Human exp3] (Blacksmith); Anell Sandford [female Human ftr4] (Local Farmer).

Others: Noble Households 20 (19), Normal Clergy 100 (19), Normal Priests 4 (9), Members of Other Church Orders 402 (23), Craftsmen 161 (19), Artisans/Academics 106 (20), Other Merchants 106 (19), Knights 13 (18), Church Spellcasters 1 (9), Banned Spellcasters 0 (n/a).

Notes: Germma is the home of one of the strangest organizations in Ludremon, the Warrior's Guild. This organization does nothing but train private soldiers, an odd enough creature in this feudal country. In fact many nobles have trained at this school if their fathers thought them too wild for private tutoring.

Of late, the Warrior's Guild has been taking jobs that are beyond their normal scope. These jobs are becoming increasingly shady in nature, and although the guild puts on a good face, it has a dark side as well.

The County of Merothleen

Anel, Countess of Merothleen [female Human exp12].

Merothleen is an agricultural fief. Being mostly plains and scrub land, it is not the most fertile of places. It does manage to produce enough food to feed itself, and even manages to contribute food to the nation as a whole.

Dirune (6,868)

City Guards 46 (19); Conscriptable Individuals 687 (in city), 2,747 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Anel, Countess of Merothleen [female Human exp12]; Beadle Calian Starkson [male Human rog13].

Important Characters: Lasalles Beacher [male Human exp3] (Court Minstrel); Bishop Classon [male Human exp11]; Great Druid Arlian [male Human exp5]; High Commander Cenenan [male Human ftr9] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Annans Nash [male Human ftr7] (Poacher); Candradan Knoll [male Human rog4] (Local Thief); Maint Mason [female Human exp5] (Merchant); Giamnus Tanner [male Human exp8] (Tanner).

Others: Noble Households 34 (20); Normal Clergy 172 (20); Normal Priests 6 (11); Members of Other Church Orders 687 (24); Craftsmen 275 (21); Artisans/Academics 181 (19); Other Merchants 181 (19); Knights 23 (17); Church Spellcasters 2 (12); Banned Spellcasters 1 (9).

Notes: Dirune is a simple city supporting an agrarian fief. Giamus produces fine leathers for the area, but not in qualities or quantities necessary for export.

Dirune has recently become the headquarters of a major smuggling ring. This ring has begun smuggling poisons and illegal items into Ludremon from Keireena.

The County of Metalie

Clent, Earl of Metalie [male Human ftr15].

The County of Metalie is known for its extensive mines. Once a minor fief, with the playing out of so many mines in the mountains, Metalie has become one of the more profitable areas. Metalie produces most of the gems mined in the Kingdom.

Lord Metalie is a good man, well respected by his people. Though he must spend most of his resources

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protecting the mines, he has never shirked on donating troops to the Regent in times of need.

Because the county contains some wild and unsettled hills and is a source of great wealth, there is often trouble with the local Hobgoblins. The Earl's Hobgoblin hunting units are efficient and proactive, and they manage to keep the Hobgoblin populations under control.

Ninald (2,963)

City Guards 20 (17); Conscriptable Individuals 293 (in city), 1,189 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Clent, Earl of Metalie [male Human ftr15]; Captain of the Guard Brelz Sordan-son [male Human ftr13].

Important Characters: Linian Dove [male Human exp3] (Court Minstrel); Bishop Krendor [male Human exp9]; Great Druid Arus [male Human drd9]; High Commander Marges [male Human ftr17] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Ellis Ball [male Human ftr5] (Court Tracker); Lience Cobbler [male Human rog4] (Local Thief); Kisson, Baron Brisin [male Human ari3] (Landed Noble); Lencian Booth [male Human exp8] (Merchant); Gain Field [male Human exp9] (Jeweler).

Others: Noble Households 15 (17); Normal Clergy 74 (17); Normal Priests 3 (9); Members of Other Church Orders 296 (21); Craftsmen 119 (20); Artisans/Academics 78 (18); Other Merchants 78 (17); Knights 10 (15); Church Spellcasters 1 (9); Banned Spellcasters 0 (n/a).

Notes: Ninald has the feel of a border town. It is beset upon by Hobgoblins in the hills. It has the atmosphere of a town under siege.

This does not stop it from being profitable. Some of the most precious gems in the country (those that aren't imported, at least) come from this town. Accordingly, things are prosperous.

Spirits are high in Ninald. The people approve of the rule of the Earl and are basically content. Life is considered good, despite the high security.

However, spies from the various other kingdoms have taken up residence in Ninald over the years. One or more groups plan *something*, and it likely involves the mines.

The Marquesatte of Ral

Prindarin, Marquis Ral [male Human ftr17].

Ral is a prosperous Marquesatte with the last truly profitable jewel mine in the Ludremonian mountains. The Marquis's mines produce some of the most valuable gems in the Kingdom.

The Marquis tries to keep things on an even keel. He has opposition from Lord Arlin. Lord Arlin wishes to make his house the rulers of Ral. Luckily, he is too undisciplined to be good at long term politics.

Lark (11,905)

City Guards 79 (21); Conscriptable Individuals 1,191 (in city), 4,762 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Prindarin, Marquis Ral [male Human ftr17]; Andson, Baron Stermes [male Human ari8]; Captain of the Guard Encent Jellicose [male Human ftr12].

Important Characters: Maunas Carver [male Human exp9] (Court Minstrel); Engolodh [male Elf exp7] (Local Star); Bishop Penias [male Human clr13]; High Abbot Urdan [male Human exp11] (High Abbot of the Knights Ephesus); Great Druid Giriance [male Human exp10]; Ian, Baron Ancius [male Human ftr18] (Landed Noble); High Commander Kren [male Human pal9] (High Commander of Knights Lonnuso); Kaires Musgrove [female Human rgr9] (Head of Atavist Guard); Enine Quartermain [female Human rog8] (Thieves' Guild Master); Innans Steward [male Human exp15] (Head Guild Master); Blens Gayson [male Human exp15] (Merchant); Sorius Waghorn [male Human exp14] (Jeweler); Miriansant Westwood [male Human exp12] (Cobbler); Ineran [male Gnome brd24].

Others: Noble Households 60 (21); Normal Clergy 298 (22); Normal Priests 11 (11); Members of Other Church Orders 1191 (25); Craftsmen 476 (23); Artisans/Academics 313 (21); Other Merchants 313 (21); Knights 40 (19); Church Spellcasters 3 (13); Banned Spellcasters 1 (9).

Notes: Prindarin is the Marquis Ral. He has a comfortable seat of power and puts the wealth of this province to good use. He does not find the time to crusade that he used to, but there is still good to be done.

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Lord Stermes, a noble of some note, is Lord Ral's primary opposition. Lord Stermes thinks the wealth of the Marquesatte would sit better in his pockets, but he is a good person at heart and would never actually raise a hand against the Marquis.

This city also houses Ineran, the Gnomish bard. Ineran has been working hard at cracking the secret location of local Shadow Order members and is near a breakthrough. The Shadow Order has just recently taken notice of him.

The Duchy of Sasellshire

Galian, Duke of Sasellshire [male Human ari24]. Sasellshire is a major hub of commerce in Ludremon. As a major crossroads, many raw materials are brought into this Duchy and refined and crafted into other items.

Sasellshire is also a logging province. Lumber is harvested in large quantities to be shipped throughout the kingdom. A great deal remains in Sasellshire, as well, for the master furniture makers of the great guilds.

Menissa (12,525)

City Guards 84 (21); Conscriptable Individuals 1,253 (in city), 5010 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Galian, Duke of Sasellshire [male Human ari24]; Councilman Eband Farison [male Human exp18]; Orînaigoš Dragon; Captain of the Guard Mather Whitgift [male Human ftr14].

Important Characters: Fjar Bjornsson [male Human bbn12] (Local Barbarian Personality); Ansius Tester [male Human exp12] (Court Minstrel); Dularan Leandonson [male Human exp10] (Local Star); Adaine Shearer [female Human exp12] (Local Star); Bishop Egrin [male Human clr13]; Great Druid Pesianon [male Human drd14]; Melac Grayson [male Human ftr16] (The Duke's Body Guard); High Commander Arag [male Human ftr18] (High Commander of the Knights Lonnuso); Lleres Trampling [male Human ftr11] (Duke's Tracker); Evnade Ennahson [female Human rgr10] (Head of Atavist Guard); Iradan [male Elf rog13] (Thieves' Guild Master); Leenet, Baron Frovian [male Human ari12] (Landed Noble); Olenet, Baroness Maranian [female Human ari12] (Landed Noble); Mathlin,

Baron Kaleins [male Human ari11] (Patron); Joloret Harian [male Halfling exp19] (Baker); Onglin Sailer [male Human exp19] (Furniture Maker); Umlius Smith [male Human exp18] (Weaponsmith); Mailes Smith [male Human exp14] (Armorer).

Others: Noble Households 63 (21); Normal Clergy 313 (21); Normal Priests 12 (12); Members of Other Church Orders 1253 (26); Craftsmen 501 (23); Artisans/Academics 330 (21); Other Merchants 330 (21); Knights 42 (19); Church Spellcasters 3 (13); Banned Spellcasters 1 (9).

Notes: Many years ago, the Duke lost control of Menissa. This was not through political intrigue or bloody coup, but the tremendous mercantile power of the guilds.

The Head Guild Master at the time convinced the Duke to cede his power to him, and the King, knowing the Guild Master to be a better man than the former Duke, gave his approval.

Now, there are four main forces of power in the city. The ebb and flow of these people controls all that happens in the city.

The first is Duke Sasellshire, a furniture maker and the hereditary head of his guild. The Duke is constantly at odds with Lord Frovian and hates the man with a passion. Battles between the Duke and the Baron are legendary in Menissa. The Duke supports the Council's right to power despite their obviously flawed ethics.

Lord Frovian is a power in his own right. He hates Duke Sasellshire and tries to thwart him at every turn. He is on good terms with the Council and knows there is a powerful good force working behind the scenes. He mistakenly thinks this is a Church agent.

The Town Council, led by Councilman Farison, is the next major force in Menissa and throughout the Duchy. This is a group of guild masters and the holders of most of the monetary power in the Duchy. They distrust the Duke, thinking that his good nature would preclude him from supporting them the way he says. They distrust Lord Frovian as well. They know that there is a force working behind the scenes as well, but don't know what it is.

The final player is the dragon Orînaigoš. Orînaigoš has allied himself with the Duke in an attempt to

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help stabilize the area. He knows there is at least one evil dragon in the kingdom, and constantly seeks to discover his identity. He hates both the Council and Lord Forvian and can't see why the Duke supports the Council's power.

Of lesser note in the city is the Bishop. This man supports the lawful rule of the Duchy, but would like to see the heads of the Council deposed in favor of more moral people. He is not active in politics, however. He merely advises.

Menissa is an economic hub. It has some of the finest craftsman in the Kingdom, and its goods are sought throughout the kingdom.

The Duchy of Trayne

Belvan, Duke of Trayne [male Human ari12].

The Province of Trayne concentrates shipping and defense. Being the northernmost and easternmost costal city of the Kingdom, they are the most obvious target for invasion from both Marnele and Mab. Because of this, their standing guard is well-trained and mobile.

Trayne doesn't contribute much to the Ludremonian economy. Their biggest task is to *not* serve as a sinkhole for the resources of the Kingdom.

Rian (14,821)

City Guards 99 (21); Conscriptable Individuals 1,482 (in city), 5,929 (surrounding area).

Authority Figures: Belvan, Duke of Trayne [male Human ari12]; Dalador Kerdonson [male Human exp22] (fisherman's guild master); Launt Thick [male Human sor9] (evil mage); Captain of the Guard Perguran Smith [male Human ftr16].

Important Characters: Haddvidi Sjornsson [male Human bbn13] (Military Advisor); Hjour Gransson [male Human bbn12] (Pirate); Khag [male Half-Orc bbn11] (Mercenary Guild Master); Relm Harralfad [male Halfling exp14] (Court Minstrel); Hendon Harralfad [male Halfling exp14] (Minstrel Guild Master); Lent Walcott [male Human exp11] (Local Star); Bishop Tianour [male Human clr13]; High Abbot Braiddon [male Human clr11] (High Abbot of the Knights Ephestus); High Abbot Menan [male Human exp13] (High Abbot of the Order of Albolatian); Great Druid Lallogon

[male Human drd11]; High Commander Cadgan [male Human ftr25] (High Commander of the Knight Lonnuso); Gurân Bloodstone [male Dwarf ftr11] (Foreign Warrior); Onene Yeoman [male Human ftr16] (Head Tracker); Frilian Wagstaff [male Human rog17] (Thieves' Guild Master); Conglilas Surehands [male Human exp18] (Shipwright).

Others: Noble Households 74 (21); Normal Clergy 371 (21); Normal Priests 14 (13); Members of Other Church Orders 1482 (25); Craftsmen 593 (23); Artisans/Academics 390 (21); Other Merchants 390 (21); Knights 49 (20); Church Spellcasters 4 (13); Banned Spellcasters 1 (9).

Notes: Rian houses the primary shipyards of the kingdom. These are well defended, and produce some of the finest combat ships in the Gulf.

Ships from Rian patrol the Gulf, looking for Raiders and enemies. Though many Raiders get by, the brunt of the raids into Ludremon are stopped here.

Rian has three primary power bases. First of all there's the aristocracy and his Grace. They are basically good people and mean well. Second, you have the great guilds, led by the Fishermen's Guild. The merchant guilds are led by Dalador of the Fishermen's Guild. Though they come at odds with the Duke every day, they are basically good people as well, and all of the fighting and squabbling stays in the courts and the guildhalls.

There is a third force as well. He is a mage named Launt, an evil man of some power in the city. He stays behind the scenes, and though people know he lives there, they think him a rich aristocrat and have no idea he is building a power base behind the scenes. His plans are, as yet, unclear.

While Rian controls the largest forest in Ludremon, most logging is restricted. The wood there is meant for ships and the trees are carefully tended.

THE CHURCH

Ludremonians tend to be Faithful. They follow the Church strictly and it colors most aspects of their daily lives. The Church is powerful inside Ludremon and controls one third of all fiefs. It's countries like Ludremon that make the issue of marrying priests touchy, as most of the Church lands are controlled by a member of the Angenus Priesthood.

Appendix One

Most Orders are represented in every city, although the Knight Equenis often have nothing more than a clerk holding down a desk in an office. This clerk can collect any rumors and reports that come to him for the next Knight Equenis that comes through.

The two most notable Orders, from a nationalistic standpoint, are of course Naeponis and Albolatian. These Orders hold their headquarters in Ludremon, both at Belm.

Because of the cosmopolitan nature of Ludremonians in general, other religions are almost welcomed within their walls. Members of other churches might be barraged with missionary efforts, but they probably won't be harassed. Other races are less likely to find fanatical conversion attempts than Human Atavists and pagans. Most Ludremonians figure they can't convince an Elf that Angenus was the Savior. They'll still try, however.

Angenus Priesthood

The Angenus Priesthood is the most powerful single force in Ludremon. They have a collection of holdings, under the Lord High Priest, that devastate even the most powerful Dukes. Only the Prince holds more land, and he only technically.

In addition to this they take tithes from almost every citizen in the country. While many don't tithe the proper amount, enough do that this shows just how much money pours out of the lands and up to the Cardinal.

The Angenus priesthood controls everything Church-owned in the country, even when it is another Order in possession of the lands. For instance, the Knights Lonnuso has holdings in every city in Ludremon, but there is always a member of the Angenus Priesthood who has titular control of the land. This is because Knight Lonnuso can marry and so they can't control any Church property that might fall prey to inheritance.

Knights Lonnuso

After the Priesthood, the Knights Lonnuso is the most ubiquitous Order in the country. They might not be the most numerous, but they are *everywhere* searching for witches and Ulcers.

The Knights Lonnuso might be the most feared Order in the country, at least among those who don't believe in the Society of Sinnius.

Knights Ephestus

The Knights Ephestus is a beloved and well-spread Order. They have relief houses in most cities and mendicant healers wander the country looking for sickness and injury. The vast majority of people in this Order wield no magical power. Still, they are schooled in the healing arts and they spread their attentions to noble and peasant alike.

Knights of Paeso

The Knights Paeso is something of a questing Order, but they spend most of their time training and waiting for something to do. They have quarters in every city and from there they wait for the next news or rumors of dangerous creatures to arise. When they do, the Order sends out parties of hunters to deal with the problem. Then they return and wait for the next trouble, training and preparing.

Knights of Living Vengeance

The Knights of Living Vengeance has only a few experts in Ludremon, waiting for serious Undead trouble to arise. They keep agents in the cities, ready to put out the call if something arises beyond the scope of the local authorities.

Knights Equenis

The Knights Equenis wander from place to place, looking for wrongs to right. They are an Order of wanderers, the most proactive of all Orders, fighting and searching and doing.

The Knights Equenis have clerks in the cities, collecting information and rumors. When a Knight comes into town, he checks in with this clerk, looking to get wind of the next trouble, his next quest. Then he's off. When he solves the trouble, he'll report to the clerk, to make certain that no Knights waste their time looking for trouble already solved.

Appendix One

The Order of Naeponis

The Order of Naeponis keeps all the records of the Church. They have monasteries all over the country, recording and copying old books into newer volumes. They are headquartered in Ludremon. See page 182 for more information.

The Order of Albolatian

The Order of Albolatian is headquartered in Ludremon as well. To the outside observer, they look much like the Order of Naeponis, but the records and books Albolatian deal in push the bounds of heresy. See page 182 for more information.

The Monastic Order of Sepinus

The Order of Sepinus is an Order that dedicates itself to contemplation and spiritual purification. Many members are old sinners trying to find redemption.

The Monastic Order of Sepinus has an old rivalry with the Angenus Priesthood. Because of the Priesthood's past interference with the Order, no member of another Church Order can set foot on Sepinus grounds. See *The Throne of God* for more information.

The Society of Sinnius

The Society of Sinnius has no quarters in Ludremon, only the occasional agent. While it's rumored that certain key members of the Church know how to contact them, no one but the Society knows where they actually are. If a member of another Order means to contact the Society, and they are one of the rare people brought into the know (this doesn't necessarily coincide with rank) they drop a message containing everything the Society needs to know at a certain tavern or shop. A Society agent will find the message and decide what to do on his own.

The Holy Wives Monique

The Holy Wives have abbeys throughout the country. The women of this Order have birthing homes throughout the country and sometimes send midwives to villages for births that look dangerous to the health of the mother or child. Unfortunately,

most deaths during childbirth aren't easy to forecast.

The Ladies of Alaria

The Ladies of Alaria have relief houses and wandering members just like the Knights Ephestus. They are more sedentary, however.

Saint Tieria

Shrines to Saint Tieria exist throughout Ludremon. Most of them sit in the back of churches dedicated to other saints.

POLITICS

The internal politics of Ludremon was covered earlier in this appendix, but there's still the matter of foreign politics. Ludremon has two major allies and three major enemies. Other countries are neutral to Ludremon.

Felric's Redoubt

Felric's Redoubt is a major trade partner of Ludremon. Ludremon supplies the city's entire shortfall of food and Felric's Redoubt supplies large amounts of finished goods, many of them luxury items. There are two ways that Ludremon can import from Marnele without heavy taxes from the Marnele government. One of them is through Maroldan merchants and the other is here, through Felric's Redoubt.

Ingrast

Ingrast and Ludremon have a long-standing relationship of goodwill and commerce. They have helped to defend each other's interests for centuries, and the nations propagate a healthy trade between them. Ludremonian wools fetch fine coin from Ingrast, which can be used to buy Elven luxury items, especially art.

Keireena

The long enmity between Keireena and Ludremon mostly smolders under the surface. Trade still flows between the two nations, but merchant caravans and border settlements meet more raids than normal.

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Mab

The conflicts between Mab and Ludremon are more hostile. Clashes across the border happen all the time and many think the two nations build toward war. Trade has suffered but not yet failed. If it does, Ludremon will lose its trade in raw materials from the Dwarves to the north.

Marnele

The oldest and most bitter rivalry in this region is between Marnele and Ludremon. The relations between these countries fade and improve from time to time. Right now, they are terrible and getting worse. War between these two nations seems inevitable as well, but this is often curtailed by the actions of the Warlord and the Demon Queen.

Maroldo

Merchants from Maroldo have a marvelous presence in Ludremon. They bring in so much trade that some Ludremonian merchants fear they will become obsolete. In fact, many merchants in Belm have begun subtle manipulations to hinder Maroldan trade.

GEOGRAPHY

Ludremon is known for gentle, rolling hills and green, lush fields. This land is covered with farms and villages, crawling with plows and shepherds, a vast population that can be raised in a time of war.

Coasts

The coasts of the west and the north of Ludremon tend to long, sandy beaches so narrow they disappear into the tides every day. These areas are broken by places of crumbling erosion where the earth and mud slowly disappear into the sea.

Near Louchester and Wolchester things become more magnificent. Great granite cliffs rise anywhere from a few feet to one hundred above the sea. These two cities are located at the low points of the cliffs, but farther along, it would take an alpine assault specialist to achieve a beach hold.

Hills and Mountains

Ludremon begins with relative low lands near the shore, wide and gently sloping near beaches, hilly and rugged near the cliffs. The central lands become hillier for a time, smoothing out as one crosses toward the mountains.

In the final uplift toward the mountains, violent, jagged highlands and rocky spars mark Ludremon. These hills are filled with deep, maze-like canyons.

The Karune Mountains begin low and mild near Ludremon, though they are still plenty rugged. The areas bordering Ludremon are filled with tunnels and abandoned mines, ten thousand years of played out mines. It's thought that the Hobgoblin population of these mines likely reaches into the tens of thousands.

Vegetation

Plains and scrub lands cover most of Ludremon. While the nation was once heavily forested, millennia of logging and farming have cut back these woods to carefully tended woodlands.

Ludremon is fertile with resilient land. Leaving the land fallow in alternating fields is enough for the land to bounce back and continue to produce good crops.

Gaynet Forest is the biggest wood left in Ludremon. It's heavily guarded from logging and poaching. Gaynet Forest has slowly converted to oaks over the centuries as Ludremonians replanted trees for future growth. They need the oak for ships. Still, the forest has plenty of diversity and clear, open floors. It teams with wildlife, all of it the sole hunting privilege of local nobility.

Smaller woods dot the countryside. Ludremonians protect and replant these woods, having learned through times of wanting that they need their lumber and must protect it. Logging is heavily regulated everywhere in the country and most of these woods are little more than bandit-ridden parklands.

Water

Ludremon is covered in streams and creaks. Two major rivers border the country but the rest of the nation is dotted with smaller waterways. These

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smaller rivers are deep enough for barges and other shallow-draft traffic but not bigger ships.

The Mangerry River is a large, wide river that defines the western border of the nation. Its vein-work of tributaries scrawl across the landscape. The river is deep, slow, and runs from the mountains to the sea.

The Benniel River is just as deep but much swifter than the Mangerry and it turns into periodic rapids upriver of Lark, requiring frequent portaging. This water is fed by glacier and is bitterly cold.

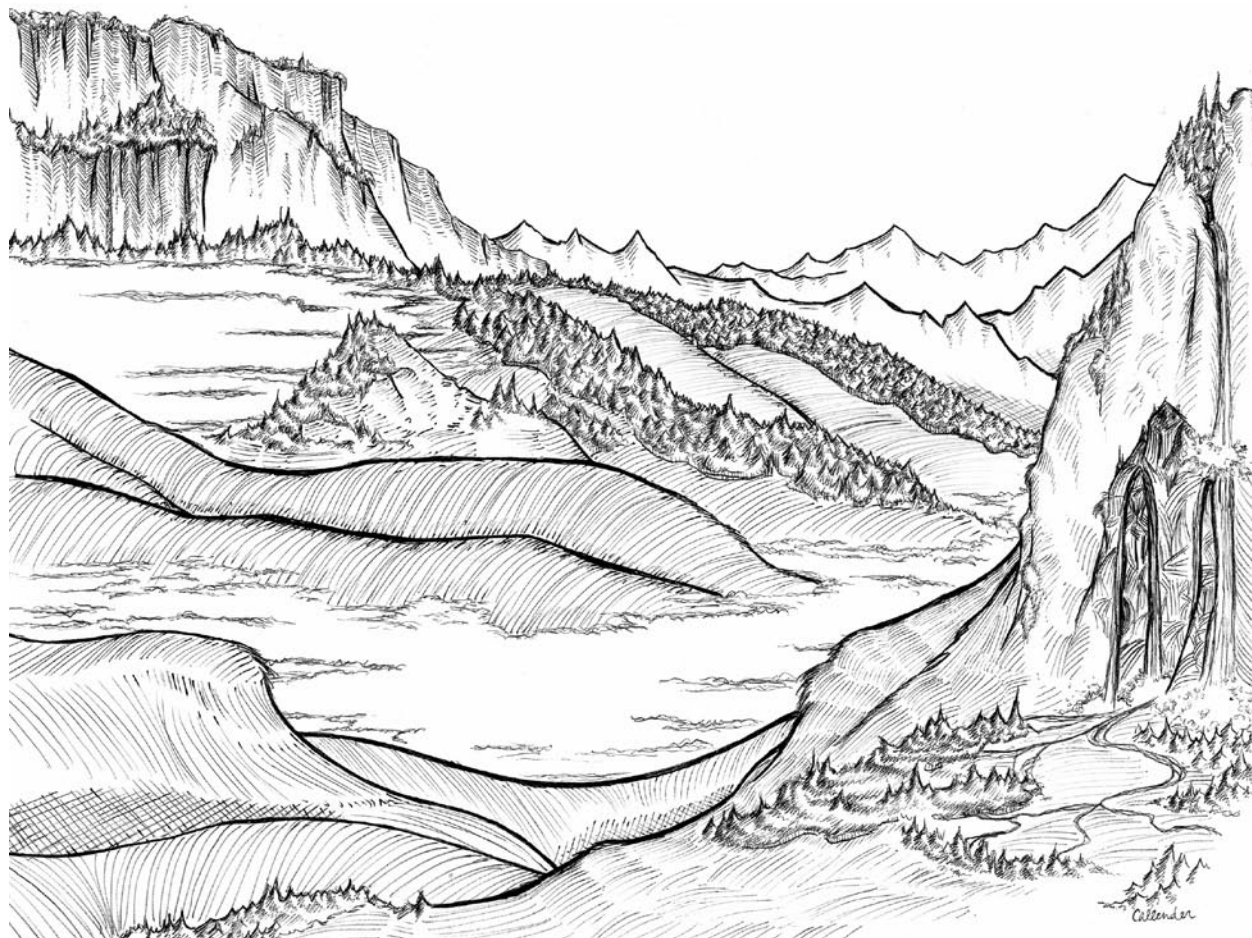
The Harulin Seas are three saltwater bodies clustered at the end of the Benniel River. These seas are each so deep that no soundings have ever found the bottom near the centers. They are alive with commerce, but the number of ships that disappear on their waters is more than the law of averages support.

ADVENTURE SEEDS AND WORLD THREADS

This appendix is essentially one large Adventure Seed. With one exception, a GM should play and expand on the material here to fill his table with intriguing adventure ideas.

In addition to this, Ludremon is ripe for Ulcer development. The wars between Ludremon, Mab, and Keireena have left the land soaked in blood and rife with ancient battlefields. Areas like this are more likely to develop Ulcers, and the Knights Lonnuso patrols the known areas regularly.

The one World Thread in this Appendix is the development and future acts of Cardinal Gleann. As he prominently features in future adventures, it would be best not to do anything too radical with him (such as disgrace, promote, demote, or kill him).



Appendix Two

Appendix 2: Rules and Systems

While there have been rules previously in this book, this section covers all the other details of using the *d20 System* game to play in *The Echoes of Heaven*.

The information here is chiefly aimed at the GM. Players are urged to read this as well.

CLASSES

Some classes do not fit into *The Echoes of Heaven*. Others fit but need some special discussion.

Appropriate Classes

Arcane Trickster
Arcane Archer
Archmage
Aristocrat
Assassin
Barbarian
Bard
Blackguard
Cleric
Commoner
Druid
Dwarven Defender
Eldritch Knight
Expert
Fighter
Heirophant
Loremaster
Paladin
Ranger
Rogue
Shadowdancer
Sorcerer
Thaumateurgist
Warrior
Wizard

Inappropriate Classes

Adept
Monk
Dragon disciple
Duelist
Horizon Walker
Mystic Theurge

Spell Casters

Spell Casters: Spell casters can be a bit of a problem in *The Echoes of Heaven*. While there's nothing wrong with the classes in theory, there's one thing a caster can do that is not allowed in the Mortal Realm: they can learn a person's true purposes. No magic in the modern Mortal Realm can find out the nature of the Human soul and divination magic cannot be used to determine accurately a target's motivations. One way to handle this is to disallow those spells that can do any but the most cursory examination of a person's mind. The other is to make certain that all information gained from these spells is inaccurate or misleading. This is the real flaw behind the Confessors. While the mages of old knew the trick of seeing man's true thoughts, something (probably the influence of Bamon) has changed things.

DIVINATIONS

When dealing with any divinations that aren't covered elsewhere, remember two cardinal rules. Divinations can never reveal a person's true nature. Divinations can never penetrate a surface of an Ulcer. If you keep this in mind, you won't go far wrong.

Divinations can push these rules if they're presented in an abstract way, such as with dreams and auguries. The trick here is to make certain you never cross the line from images that allow multiple interpretations to mere truth that is hard to understand. If a person can use auguries to find out if a person is evil, even with a little work, they will do nothing but. There has to be enough doubt that characters can't act with certainty. Divinations guide and hint; they do not lay out a course of action.

Unless you need one to, of course. Divinations are fickle, but that doesn't mean they can't be right.

Appendix Two

MARTIAL ARTS AND MONKS

Martial Arts, in the Asian sense, are not suitable for *The Echoes of Heaven*. While there are likely Asian-style cultures out there somewhere in the Mortal Realm, they have no contact with Belkanâth.

There are monks in the world, but they are the kind who study religion and copy books.

MAGICAL SCHOOLS

There are many different classes and spells in the *d20 System* game. The people of the Mortal realm lump them into four distinct groups.

Necromancers

These types of casters concentrate on raising the dead. They traffic with the Nopheratus. Few would deny they are evil.

Common Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard, Arcane Trickster, Archmage, Loremaster.

Illusionists

These types of casters concentrate on creating illusions. Many people, the Gnomes for instance, consider this a respectable vocation.

Common Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard, Arcane Trickster, Archmage, Loremaster.

Warlocks/Witches

These casters spend more effort on the mystical aspects of magic, especially curses and divination. Warlocks and Witches are frowned on by all but pagan societies. They tend to think dealing with Demons is an acceptable idea.

Common Classes: Bard, Sorcerer.

Mages

The final group of casters, these follow the more traditional paths of roleplaying magic. Many people,

the Elves for instance, find this a respectable profession.

Common Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard, Arcane Trickster, Archmage, Loremaster, Thaumateurgist.

RACES

Some races are more fitting than others. Some are not fitting at all.

Appropriate Races

Human
Dwarf
Gnome
Grey Elf
Halfling
High Elf
High Man
Wood Elf

Inappropriate Races

Half Elf

Questionable Races

Orcs: Orcs are a Cambion race and corrupted with the Infernal Taint. While they can be redeemed and players could play one, it probably isn't a good idea for most games.

Half Orc: Cambion races can only breed with the Mortal Race that sired them. Therefore a Half Orc is also Half Dwarf. While there's no logical reason not to play one, the experience would probably not be enjoyable to most players. Allow them only if you are sure.

TREASURE

Treasure in *The Echoes of Heaven* is rarer than the tables in the *DMG* would indicate. GM's should at least halve all treasure generated randomly and place chosen treasure with great purpose.

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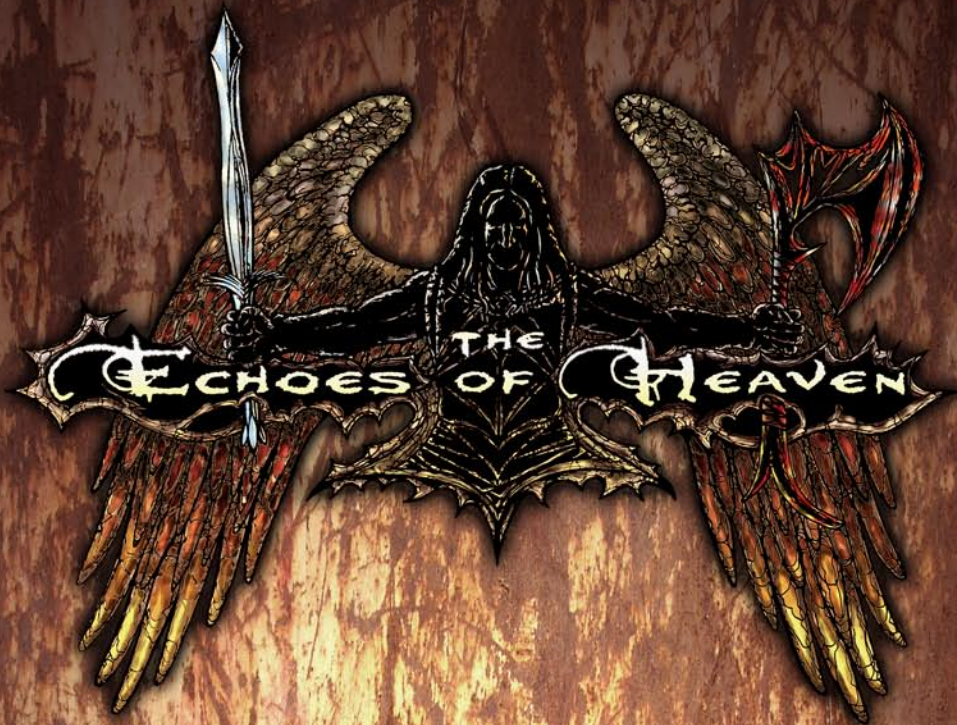
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Areniel leaped off the parapets of Heaven. The stone battlements of the city fell away beneath him even as rolling lands stretched out on all sides. On his flanks the rest of the Host rose in unison, armor glistening in the reflected light of God. White wings beat almost in unison—the hand of God, propelled by His will. As Areniel flew into the air, the lush fields of Heaven fell into the distance, a yellow-flecked expanse of grass stirring in the wind of a thousand angelic wings. The Fallen Host flew above them, vicious weapons glittering in the light, their armor blackened in the absence of God's glory. Soon they'd glisten with blood. . . .

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