

# Dragon Warriors Wiki Archive

## Volume 4: Lands of Legend



# Lands of Legend Archive Index & Introduction

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Very few pages from the wiki that went into producing this volume of the archive were directly tagged by contributing authors, so I have attempted to identify contributors from an incomplete metadata record I was able to salvage. So the attributions might be a bit hit and miss, for which I can only apologise to whomever I have failed to attribute or misattributed a contribution.

## Introduction

This volume of the Dragon Warriors Wiki Archive collects the pages related to the Lands of Legends – the countries, cultures, inhabitants, history, and folklore and legends.

As part of bringing this volume together, I have pruned out any “TBA” sections and refactored the articles to present the content for each country in roughly the same order:

- Overview
- History
- Society (covering details of the nation’s capital, government/governance, economy/trade, language, religion, myths, etc.)
- Geography (climate, regions, settlements and places of interest, etc.)
- Creatures and NPCs of note
- Trivia
- Approximation to real-world locations

This volume, more so than the other archive volumes, has been curated from across all sections of the original Dragon Warriors Wiki in an attempt to centralise content related to specific countries/regions within the Lands of Legend. There are, of course, still many gaps (not all countries had content related to them in the Wiki) and discrepancies in the amount of depth to which each country was explored by contributors to the Wiki – in other words, plenty of room for fan-published supplements to develop the Lands of Legend further!

## Copyright Attributions

There are very few copyright attributions in this volume as few of the articles followed the convention in the Wiki of putting the author’s name at the top of the page. The lack of attribution should not be interpreted as any article being my work (which it most definitely is not!) or that this content can be used outside of this collection without permission from the copyright holder. If anyone recognises their content in this document that has been collated here without attribution, I am happy to edit and reissue a new version with attribution.

## The Rathurbosk Bridge, A Special Mention

The wiki had a lot of information regarding the Rathurbosk Bridge that I have not included in this archive for the reason that Shaun Hatley has significantly improved and expanded the content on his Library of Hiabour website. Anyone looking for inspiration for how to use the Rathurbosk in their own games should look no further than Shaun’s excellent website:

<http://www.libraryofhiabuor.net/rathurboskintro.html>

# Albion

This is the nation approximate to England on the island continent of Ellesland. Citizens of Albion are referred to in the gamebooks as either the “Albiomen” or the “Albish”.

## history

Albion’s origins are not fully explored, albeit a hint from Dave Morris in Book 6 that, perhaps, particularly in the south, the peoples there are of the same origin as pre-Chaubrettan peoples who migrated from the Western Mainland. In the north, there is some cultural influence from those who retain speech of the Visic language in Glissom and Thuland.

Further, it is known that, at one stage, the Old Selentine Empire conquered and subdued much of Ellesland, Albion falling first or more comprehensively. Once the Crusades began in earnest, the crumbling Old Empire had to withdraw troops and leave Albion, and hence it bears some hallmarks of Selentine rule and culture (e.g., the well-built roads running north-south) but has retained, largely, its pre-conquest culture.

## Society

### Social Structure

*(David Lodge)*

Albion has a late Dark Ages/early Middle Ages type feudal social structure.

### Principles

The basic relationship in the structure is between the king and the freeman:

- The king ensures the protection of the freeman and his lands and provides arbitration of disputes between freemen.
- The freeman donates a tithe of his yearly income to support the king.

Every freeman owns a plot of land, known as a “hide”. There is no standard definition of the size of a hide – in some parts of Albion, it has been standardised, in others it is random. Usually, a freeman will live with his family, dependents, and non-freemen on the land.

Non-freemen exist in the systems, these can be of multiple types, depending on the area, though the most commonly found are villeins (tenant farmers who work the land owned by a freeman) and slaves.

## The Nobility

The nobility arose over hundreds of years – some of these were ex-monarchs of Albish districts that used to be separate kingdoms, and some were granted the status via gifts of land from the king or other nobles.

With the rise of the nobility, a complex hierarchy of land ownership developed. As the administration of the country grew more complex, the nobility took more control in the running of the lands and administration of a tithe. In essence acting as a layer between the freemen and the king. The nobles taking up ownership of lands and guaranteeing defence of the realm.

Currently, Albion has a two-tiered layer of nobility:

1. Directly under the king are seven dukes (also called earls) who administer a large area of lands. These lands usually follow the boundaries of the original Albish kingdoms and most current dukes can trace their ancestry back to the old monarchs.
2. The dukes have further devolved their lands into manageable sections overseen by a baron (also called ealdormen). These sections may be a large town, a city, or even a whole shire.

The inheritance of a title usually follows male familial lines, going to the eldest legal son of the current noble, followed by other sons, stepsons, and then bastard children. These can be overridden by a superior, e.g., the king, a duke, the king's reeve, or even the Church.

## Reeves and Justice

Part of a noble's duty is to oversee justice to the freemen under his responsibility. This is normally devolved to local reeves, who are chosen from the local freemen for an area and act on behalf of the noble.

As not every freeman within an area may be beholden to the local noble, the king will normally have a group of reeves (king's reeves or shire reeves, commonly known as sheriffs) to represent the king's interests. This can create a complex situation and it is quite common for the sheriff and the local noble to disagree and fight amongst themselves.

## Capital

Albion's capital is the southern city of Ongus, where King Hadric resides and rules over his nation.

## Government

Albion is a feudal country presided over by Hadric, its monarch. It is largely feudal in organisation, with the lords most distant from the capital in the north vying against each other for local supremacy.

## Language

Citizens of Albion speak Elleslandic, though in the north they might also speak Visic spoken by their northern neighbours in Thuland and hailing, to some extent, to the northern peoples' cultural origins.

## Religion

Albion is a True Faith country, with links to the larger True Faith Church on the mainland emanating out of the New Selentine Empire. It could be said that the state religion of Tamor is one remnant of that nation's former dominion over Albion. Nonetheless, the nation appears in the foreseeable future to be irreversibly tied to the True Faith. Curiously, despite this, the Albion weekdays retain the names of the old Pagan gods once worshipped by the nation's forebears.

## Legend of Leeya, the She-Wolf

(RJ Lambert)

The teenage companion of the “Lions of Clyster”, Torin, tells this story in the Hourla Hills, just north of Port Clyster.

Just when you begin to think you are being led too far to the west, a deep and greener valley opens out to your right, opening out to the northeast. *“I grazed my goats here, before wolves and orcs got to them,”* Torin says. The full moon begins to give its light to your way as the sun's rays fade away, then you hear the howling of a wolf.

*“Tha's Leeya,”* Torin says with a shiver, *“tha' she-wolf. She ken ar meetin' jus' nou on the Rise. 'ts a sacred place thar, as like a place where fallen heroes is sacred to their kin.”*

Torin then describes, as you walk along, the legend of Gunthir. It is said that in a more peaceful time, when there were more mines in the hills and no orcs, the adventurer Gunthir was alone seeking solace in the hills when he espied a beautiful woman seemingly naked in the fading light of the day (Torin's hormones, you suspect, cause him to pause his tale in reverie for a moment when recounting this bit). Gunthir followed her and watched amazed as the cloud cleared before the full moon and the woman transformed into a wolf. She went on to a clearing where other wolves were gathered to meet, but Gunthir was there sensed and attacked. Gunthir fought bravely and slayed all but the she-wolf, who ran away. The legend has it that Gunthir's Rise – where you just met – was the very spot where that battle occurred. It is also said that one afflicted with werewolfishness (as Torin calls it, lycanthropy to you) might on the ending of the new moon, standing at Gunthir's Rise facing west the setting sun, be relieved of the ailment.

Torin seems quite happy to talk, and early into his tale about how Gunthir became thereafter Gunthir Wolfsbane and had many other adventures to the north and was a friend of the dwarves in the Pagan Mountains, you realise after listening to his tales and lore of the area

that he is quite the talker, and it is quite late, and you need to decide whether to ride on in the full moonlit dark or rest.

# Geography

## Climate

In a footnote on page 22 of Book 6, Dave Morris explains that Albion has a mean annual range of -6°C in winter and 28°C in summer, though the former probably describes more so the northern parts of Albion and the latter the sunny southern shores about Ongus.

## Regions

Linked below are some of the significant cities and places in Albion (drawn from maps in Books 1 and 4, as well as Dave Morris' A Box of Old Bones freestanding adventure):

### *North*

- The Bleaks
- Fenring Forest
- Forest River
- Gallory River
- Gulig's Inn (in A Bag of Old Bones)
- Hesard's Ford (village)
- Horn River
- Igham (village)
- Jewelspider Wood
- Karickbridge (town)
- mysterious "standing stones"
- Norham (town)
- Norham Wood
- Osterlin Abbey
- Pagan Mountains
- Pillaton (town)
- Saxton (town)
- Scoruburn (town) in Fenring Forest
- Shriven Hills
- Trefell (village)
- Ulric's Tower

### *Northeast*

- Bannockburn (village)
- Candleford (large township)
- Lakstead (small city)
- Port Clyster (large city)

### *East*

- Aldred's Castle
- Hourla Hills (in the far northeast near Thuland the local part of these Hills are known as the Naetherglaen)
- Montombre's Castle
- Myrkyn's Castle

### *Southeast*

- Breylak (city)
- The town of Graveshead (town)
- Port Luth (town)

### *South*

- Downy Bay
- Limber Downs
- Ongus (city & capital)
- Vindar Hills

### *Southwest*

- Cantorbridge (city)



## *West*

- Coronach Marsh
- Dobby's Walk (old road through Coronach March)
- Grisail's Castle
- Helfax Wood
- Netherbridge (city)
- White River

## *Northwest*

- Ashmore (village)
- Axbridge (town)
- Braying Cross (village)
- Maiden's Vale (village)
- Scardic (city)
- Sigurdingham (Mercanian settlement)
- Torston (Mercanian settlement)

## *Centre*

- Hesard's Ford
- Pillaton (town)
- Tenebron Hall
- Wistren Wood

## *Famous/Infamous Inhabitants*

- Aethelric (PC)
- Baron Aldred, northern lord (NPC)
- Lord Grisaille, northern lord (NPC)
- Lord Montombre, northern lord (NPC)
- Lord Tenebron, undying lord (NPC)
- Myrkyn the Sorcerer (NPC)

# Axbridge

*(Bulya)*

Axbridge is a township in the northwest of Albion, situated around a bridge on the White River from which the township derives its name.

## Location

Axbridge's significance is as the gateway to the nation of Ereworn featuring the road to the frontier town of Ashmore to the northwest at the Erewornian border.

Aside from straddling the White River, slightly downstream to the south is the confluence with the Bogwater River and, just south of that, the beginning of the old road along the top of the raised dyke that forms Dobby's Walk, which enters the nation of Cornumbria via the Coronach Marsh.

## History

A manor house exists where the local knight responsible as steward for guarding the area reside. At one time/at present, the rogue-knight Beorn inhabits the manor.

Prior to that, Sir Hathnar presided as Lord of Axbridge until he was removed by Baron Aldred, who took direct rule over the village, in 992 AS.

## Geography

The land here is flat and well watered, allowing use for agriculture, featuring corn fields, vineyards, and apple orchards. To the northwest, foresters lop timber from Helfax Wood.

## Inhabitants

- Bretwald the Cleric (from Book 1 scenario, “King under the Forest”)
- Notker, bailiff for Baron Aldred in this region
- Odo, an aged cripple who sits under an apple tree in the village green.

## Significance

The first ever Dragon Warriors adventure, “King under the Forest” in Book 1, begins in Axbridge.

## Candleford

Candleford is a large township of approximately 1,000 souls. It is situated in northern Albion (in Ellesland) and is, within that nation, situated on the north side of the confluence of the northwest-to-east flowing Gallory River and the River Aevun, which flows up from the south. Here, strangely, is also the place where the two rivers are forded.

## The Ford

There is no bridge over the ford but rather a broad, shallow expanse at the rivers’ meeting point that is relatively stable and easily traversed by mounted travellers. Here, the icy, clear waters of the Gallory River (fed by ice from the Pagan Mountains) are met from the south by the golden-brown mythical waters of the River Aevun. The King’s Road – which ultimately runs all the way to Ongus to the south thanks to the engineering of the Selentine Empire when it once occupied Albion – runs from the south right up to the ford and then resumes on the north side, splitting beyond the northern limits of Candleford at a T-junction east to Port Clyster and northwest to Scrymgour. The ford is open 24 hours a day and is always attended by “fordmen” who, for a few copper pieces, will use their attendant steeds – or servants – to tow a boat or wagon carrying goods intended for transport across the ford. The 24-hour nature of the service there lends its name to the town, “Candleford”, as the location is an interesting sight of bubbling moonlit water and glowing lanterns moving about in the waters.

## History of the Ford

It is said amongst locals (particularly the fordsman, who love to tell the tale when assisting travellers across the ford) that a previous lord of these lands encountered an old pre-Albion tribe encamped by the confluence of the rivers and sought to make treaty with them. His main purpose was to secure safe river trade along the river. There was a misunderstanding and a battle ensued. The lord retreated in humiliation and then returned with a large retinue of men, whence they wiped out the tribe by driving them into the ford. The battle took longer

to conclude as the lord did not expect the confluence to be as tame and shallow as it was, and by this means, discovered the unnatural fordable nature of the two rivers at this convenient point. He then established a settlement at the ford and fortified it for its clear strategic value. Now, lying within Aldred's lands, safely protected from the front lines with the Cornumbrians and Thulanders, the stockade was allowed to deteriorate and was ultimately removed, allowing a normal township to flourish.

Yet the fordsman say – especially to children and young ladies as they take them across the ford – that on nights of the new moon by lanternlight, one can see the faces of these tribespeople amidst the tricks of light in the water.

### **The Township**

There is a large town square encircled by stables, inns, and smithies. A permanent gallows is established here to demonstrate that the King's law (or, more correctly, Baron Aldred's law) is obeyed here. Amongst the businesses around the square are the Tussled Furlock Tavern (more popular with the peasant class and offers dormitory-style accommodation) and the Royal Inn (more suited to the nobility and gentry, favoured by knights and their attendants, offering single rooms, including the Lord's Suite for the right price!).

### **Candleford Tourney**

Each spring (late in Ploh-monath), the largest tourney in Baron Aldred's lands occurs just south of Candleford. It does not rank as the largest tourney in Albion, with several larger tourneys occurring in southern Albion, and much larger tourneys occur on the mainland, such as in Chaubrette. All knights in Aldred's lands are, by default, invited to attend and technically the knights whose allegiance is to neighbouring rivals Montombre and Grisaille are unwelcome. However, in practice, their presence is tolerated and adds some spice to the contestation in the public galleries for, say, the joust when a 'local' is up against a knight unallied to Aldred. It is rumoured amongst knights that those who prevail for Aldred over famous knights allied to one of his rivals is privately rewarded at the tourney, or later.

### **Nearest Cities**

- Port Clyster, 35 miles (a day's journey on horseback) due east.
- Scrymgour, 30 miles due northwest.

## Port Clyster

(Bulya)



Port Clyster is one of the largest cities in Ellesland, serving as a major trading port.

It is a free city with its own charter from King Hadric in Ongus.

Clyster is one of the few places that has foundling merchants' guilds.

Adventurers might wish to visit the well-known drinking establishments:

- Hag & Compass
- Headless Orc



### Hag & Compass Inn

The Hag and Compass Inn (known as “the Hag” for short, or “the Witch” to the commoners) is an inn located in the southwestern part of Clyster in Albion (north-eastern Ellesland).

The inn is so named after an incident in 989 AS. A captain brought to Clyster a device he described as a ‘compass’, which he had captured from a pirate vessel in the far south. He said that his captives had, under interrogation, revealed that it was used for navigation purposes. This caused quite a stir in Clyster as the clergy and traditional seamen alike condemned what they considered ‘divining’ or ‘demonic’ practices for navigation.

The publican of the inn decided to cash in on the story and so arranged an exhibition of the ‘compass’ in his inn (then known somewhat ingloriously as the Soggy Shag Inn), declaring via hired children in the markets that the inn was ‘under new management’ and would demonstrate the compass. The demonstration was a fizzer, however, and instead of the inn being known as the New Compass Inn, people described it as the Hag and Compass as they supposed some witchcraft was involved. Still, the clientele of the inn has raised a notch with curiosity about the device – which has since been taken away by the captain concerned and, thus, the inn has no evidence or involvement with compasses anymore. The publican has retained the common name for the inn now after becoming exasperated at describing the inn as the New Compass Inn. Conversation over the bar would go something like: *“No, it’s the New Compass Inn.”* to which the inevitable reply was, *“Well, show us the compass then!”*

This inn is, in fact, one of the more ‘upmarket’ places for adventurers to meet. In RJ Lambert’s campaign, one group of adventurers meet in the far rougher Headless Orc Inn on the fringes of the north-eastern slums, for example. The Hag will often be populated by dock workers and sailors having a drink and the occasional professional woman plying her trade.

## Coronach Marsh

*(Bulya)*

The tales tell that a coronach is a song or hymn of mourning composed or performed as a memorial to a dead person, and this being so, the marsh is well named indeed.

The old causeway, now known as Dobby’s Walk, is raised high above the marsh, far higher than one might think the waters would rise. As the causeway approaches Cornumbria, the height of the walk dips and it is at this point that travellers report hearing the snatches of song and mourning in a strange and ancient tongue that give the fell marshland its name.

Of the stout and hale-hearted folk of the region, none are so foolish as to leave the walk and enter the sodden marshland in search of the source of these laments. At least those that do have not returned to speak of what they have found...

Attempts to reclaim the edges of the marsh as farmland appear doomed to failure as invariably the water returns to drown those crops that are planted and tilling the soil seems to turn up an inordinate number of yellowed bones and occasionally a rusted buckle, sword, or (rarely) a brooch or coin.

Any spellcaster attempting to raise the dead within or around the marsh will see three times the normal number of undead rise at his command, but despite his best efforts and most

powerful spells, the dead will turn at once and make their way into the marsh towards the centre of the swamp.

Somewhere near the centre of the swamp, drowned by the noisome waters, lies the hastily dug and partially collapsed barrow of a fallen queen, Boedicea. She rose from her deathbed almost immediately and spends her nights crouched upon the hill singing laments of loss and mourning the deaths of her people, who gaze adoringly up at her from empty sockets. Skyclad, her dead flesh is pearlescent and the woad that wraps her limbs is lit with barrow-flame as she sings. It is not known how she would react were one to disturb her coronach – probably not well...

Note: Boedicea rose long ago as a wight, but she was a warrior and a poet and had little time for magical studies. She does not possess any magical abilities beyond those native to her situation. She is surrounded by the intact skeletal remains of over 300 loyal followers; if she is attacked, 20 of these will manage to extricate themselves from the swamp each round and rush to their queen's aid. None of these undead can be controlled by any means while Boedicea 'lives'.

## Corvalin Castle

(Bulya)

Corvalin Castle is a military outpost in the nation of Albion, on the island of Ellesland in Legend's northwest.

### Size & Significance

Corvalin Castle is unlike other castles in Albion in that it has very few residences and certainly nothing resembling a settlement clustering nearby it. The large reason for this is that it is a castle that has seen many wars (principally with Albion's northern neighbour, Thuland) and is supported by supply from the south via the King's Road, rather than generating its own supplies from neighbouring areas. The frontier town of Lakstead (and, in turn, the coastal castle of Maunderlak) is supplied via a narrow supply road running up through the mountains into the Naetherglaen (a local term for the far northern, and steep, Hourla Hills).

In the DW Clyster PBEM campaign by RJ Lambert, the referee described Corvalin Castle (approached at sunset from the south) as follows:

*You ride hard up the slopes of the Hourla Hills along the King's Road and soon you see it, shaded pink in the eastern hillside by the rays of the setting sun. Corvalin Castle is an elegant monolith, with several high towers and an outer wall meeting the sides of the hill (at its north and south ends) in which the castle is nestled. Thin banners hang limply from the flagpoles atop the parapets. A ramp leads up to the gate, at which point there stands a heavy drawbridge. In the gap, a deep chasm falls several hundred feet to what, at this time of day, is only darkness below. From this higher vantage point, looking back to the setting sun, you see mottled greens of*

*Fenring Forest (presently shades of brown to orange in the sunset) stretching out beyond the King's Road. Certainly the serenity of the scene belies what some of you have heard of the treachery of Fenring.*

## Significant Neighbouring Settlements

- Scoruburn (city) lies approximately 10 miles to the west.
- Bannockburn (village) lies approximately 15 miles southeast (as the crow flies) but 22 miles by the King's Road.

## Local Geographical Features

The castle is nestled into the hillside overlooking the King's Road with ample vestige northwards along the rim of the Hourla Hills to Thuland. Fenring Forest lies to the west. However, it has been considerably cleared nearest to the castle and obtaining wood has been rendered problematic by mysterious disappearances of woodsmen and knights.

## Culture & Peculiarities

The castle is not inhabited by a lord, but rather run military-style by Captain Marshall who takes orders only from Ongus (i.e., King Hadric). He has no interest in the squabbles of the lords to his south (Baron Aldred, Earl Montombre, and Grisaille) and begrudges their squabbling and posturing when he believes it is he and his men who secure Albion's border against the bloodthirsty hordes of Thuland.

## Significant Residents

- Captain Aeron Marshall

## The Fief of Eastmarch

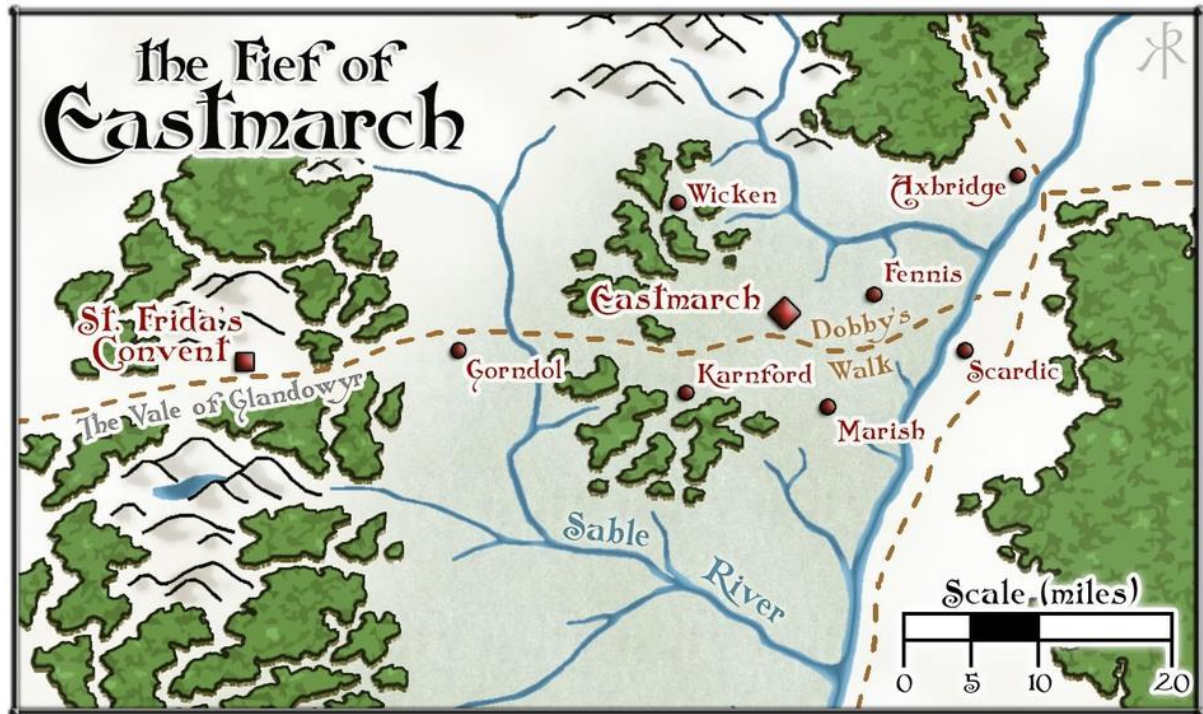
*(Ydars)*

The Coronach Marshes are a mysterious place of swirling mists and hidden isles. This reed-choked wilderness of trackless waterways and sodden turf was once the most sacred place in all of the land and was the centre of the Old Religion of the Druidic cult. From the secret island of Ynys Afal, did the druids rule the whole of Ellesland. Kings and thanes bowed their knees to these eldritch priests and made pilgrimages and sacrifices to their marshland gods.

Most ancient tribes also gave their dead to the waterways as the fens were thought to be a place where the veil between worlds was thin. Indeed, the north of the marshes was a place particularly associated with The Morrigan and the land of the dead, known as Anuwyn. The Isle of Ravens, Ynys Branna, was particularly sacred to the God of Death and the nearby Ring of Five Ravens was known as a gateway to her realm.



Yet the coming of the Legions swept this old world away and ended the power of the druids, though some say that a last remnant of this ancient faith still ekes out a lonely vigil, hidden in the murk of the great swamp, awaiting the day when the Old Ways can return.



*The fief of Eastmarch showing the border with Cornumbria. Map Copyright Krisian Richards*

Ynys Branna has changed in the years since the coming of the Legions, though it is still nigh the ancient walkway known as Dobby's Walk.

Many years later, after the coming of the True Faith to Cornumbria, the true nature of the isle was forgotten and a Dun (fortified town) built atop the mound. This town was known as Esgalen and was still a part of Cornumbria until forty years ago. Then Hadric's father, Eadulf, seized the fief and annexed it to Albion, dispossessing the native Cornumbrians in the process. Eadulf built a fortress atop the ruins of Ynys Branna to control trade along Dobby's Walk and prevent a Cornumbrian invasion. He renamed the fief Eastmarch and gave the walled fortress-town the same name.

This fastness now dominates the border between Albion and Cornumbria. The ruler of Eastmarch, the Marcher Lord Alek Brandwyn, holds the fief in his iron grip, even as he brutally oppresses the native Cornumbrians. These Esgaleni now so bitterly resent Albish rule that many of them have left their homes to live as rebels in the marshes. This ragged force of outlaws and the dispossessed is gathering strength and have recently begun to attack Albish merchants who dare to use the Walk. They have also rekindled the worship of the Old Gods and some are seeking out the power of the ancient ways.





*The town of Eastmarch and the Cawd of Rathlan. Also shown is the Ring of Five Ravens (11). Map Copyright Stephen Dove.*

The town and fief of Eastmarch are further detailed in Ordo Draconis issue 2, including the statistics of many important NPCs, the details of all the numbered locations in the town (each of which contains a mini adventure hook), and the outlines of a series of more developed adventure seeds. Lastly, OD 2 includes a guide to naming Cornumbrian and Albish NPCs and the use of the Welsh language to create evocative place names for locations in Northern Cornumbria.

## Fenring Forest

*(Bulya)*

A broad wood on hillsides rising to the Pagan Mountains in the north best described in two halves, the West and East sections. The total forest runs approximately 65 miles from west to east and, in the West, approximately 40 miles from north to south whilst, in the East, approximately 20 miles from north to south.

Fenring Forest is located in northern Albion on the northern border with Thuland. Further west of the West section lie the Shriven Hills and to the east of the East section, the Hourla Hills. The large rural settlement of Scoruburn lies in the south section of the East Forest, on an 'inlet' in the forest (existing due to clearing alongside the river and floating timber downstream to the mills of Bannockburn), along the King's Road, which runs alongside the Gallory River through the forest up into Thuland. On the east edge of the East section, the King's Road runs north into Thuland also.

Across the forest's whole southern fringe lie the towns of Saxton and Karickbridge, which sit on the main east-west road traversing the lands of Baron Aldred in northern Albion.

The Forest River flows out of Fenring fed by numerous small streams and also the mysterious Misten Fen, lying unnavigated somewhere in the centre of the forest. The forest derives its name from this fen, being the forest that forms a 'ring' around the fen. The groundwater that largely feeds the fen results in a considerable marsh on the southern fringes of the forest, more so the southern reaches of the East section – for instance, the area called Finster Moor.

The East section is characterised by coniferous trees germinating from the brave pines of the Pagan Mountains, with other trees such as birches and poplars more common in the south of the East. By contrast, in the West section, the wood is more deciduous and full of oaks, chestnuts, and ashes that thirstily drink up the groundwater and grow quite massive. Though the conifers of the East rise high and make for dark, boggy, bewildering places in the undergrowth, in the West the trees grow very large, and the dry soil permits all manner of tunnelling and bizarre creatures. On the fringes with the Shriven Hills on the far west side, root-concealed caves have been known to be found harbouring brigands, bears, and worse.

## Random Encounters

### *East Section*

Chance of encounter: 30%

Travel times:            On foot: 15 miles / day  
                                  On horseback: 20 miles / day

| Roll  | Encounter  | Quantity                       |
|-------|--|--------------------------------|
| 01-07 | Wolves   | 3-18                           |
| 08-12 | Wild Boar  | 1-2, 25% chance with 1-6 young |
| 13-16 | Bears  | 1-3                            |
| 17-21 | Stag   | 1                              |
| 22-24 | Deer Herd  | 2-20, with 1-3 stags           |
| 25-26 | Bats   | 4-24                           |
| 27-28 | Basilisk   | 1                              |
| 29-48 | Elven community (PC with highest PERCEPTION score must roll under PERCEPTION -4 on 2d10 to discover) | 3-30                           |
| 49-50 | Elven adventurers  | 1-6                            |
| 51-53 | Giant Spider   | 1                              |
| 54-55 | Gnome  | 1                              |
| 56-58 | Goblins  | 1-6                            |
| 59-61 | Hobgoblins   | 1-3                            |
| 62-63 | Human adventurers  | 2-8                            |
| 64-70 | Peasants (likely woodsmen or game hunters)   | 3-18                           |
| 71-73 | Outlaws  | 3-12                           |
| 74    | Friar  | 1                              |
| 75-76 | Ogre   | 1                              |
| 77-78 | Imp (see Book 4)   | 1                              |
| 79-80 | Boggart (see Book 4)   | 1                              |
| 81-84 | Halflings  | 1-8                            |
| 85-86 | Halfling village (PC with highest PERCEPTION score must roll under PERCEPTION -4 on 2d10 to find)    | 4-40 inhabitants               |
| 87    | Fungus Men   | 1-4                            |
| 88    | Spectre  | 1                              |
| 89-92 | Skeletons  | 2-12                           |
| 93    | Air Elemental  | 1                              |
| 94-95 | Gargoyles  | 1-3                            |
| 96    | Ghost  | 1                              |
| 97-99 | Barghests  | 1-2                            |
| 00    | Okeman   | 1                              |

## The Dragon Warriors Wiki Archive (Lands of Legend)

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### **West Section**

Chance of encounter: 40%

Travel times:            On foot: 10 miles / day  
                              On horseback: 15 miles / day

| Roll  | Encounter  | Quantity |
|-------|--|----------|
| 01-07 | Wolves   | 4-24     |
| 08-12 | Giant Rats   | 3-18     |
| 13-16 | Bears  | 2-4      |
| 17-21 | Stag   | 1        |
| 22-24 | Bats   | 4-24     |
| 25-26 | Basilisk   | 1        |
| 27-28 | Elven adventurers (1-6)  |          |
| 29-48 | Elven community (PC with highest PERCEPTION score must roll under PERCEPTION -4 on 2d10 to discover) | 2-20     |
| 49-50 | Dark Elves   | 1-4      |
| 51-53 | Giant Spider   | 1-3      |
| 54-55 | Gnome  | 1        |
| 56-58 | Goblins with 1 Hobgoblin leader  | 1-6      |
| 59-61 | Boggart  | 1        |
| 62-63 | Human adventurers  | 2-8      |
| 64-70 | Outlaws  | 2-8      |
| 71-73 | Madman   | 1        |
| 74    | Ogre   | 1        |
| 75-76 | Imp (see Book 4)   | 1        |
| 77-78 | Spriggans  | 1-4      |
| 79-80 | Air Elemental  | 1-2      |
| 81-84 | Halflings  | 1-4      |
| 85-86 | Death's Head   | 1        |
| 87    | Wraith   | 1        |
| 88    | Spectre  | 1        |
| 89-92 | Skeletons  | 2-12     |
| 93    | Earth Elemental  | 1        |
| 94-95 | Gargoyles  | 1-3      |
| 96    | Ghost  | 1        |
| 97-99 | Okemen   | 1-2      |
| 00    | Dragon   | 1        |

## The Town of Graveshead

*(Bulya)*

The Township of Graveshead is located on the south coast of Albion on the shores of Downy Bay (A large, island-choked estuary) and has a population of approximately 650 people, which swells by up to an extra 1,000-plus people during the herring season and feast-day periods.

The area consists of vast expanses of meandering waterways with large bays, channels, inlets, and sandy beaches.

To accommodate the seasonal fishers and workers from inland, Graveshead boasts a larger number of boarding houses and barrack-like accommodation than is usual outside the large cities.

Founded by Mattias Fulvi in the days of the Selentine occupation under Calvarius, it acquired its local moniker as it served as a waypoint for the bones of fallen officers whose families wished to bury them in their hereditary crypts.

The rugged nature and lack of agricultural land in the area gives it an abundance of wildlife, bird life, and magnificent spring wildflowers. Alas, it also means that the area is largely unexplored and occasionally something will come out of the wilds and into town.

Local legends point to the existence of centres of ancient moon-worship among the hills and islands and legends say that hundreds of years ago seven stars descended from the heavens and took on earthly forms before vanishing into the wilderness.

The places of moon worship were centred around the sinkholes known as knucker-holes, and it is said that the huge serpents glimpsed sometimes within them are sacred to the moon. Standing stones erected about the holes depict crude representations of the moon and a humanoid figure with serpentine head and limbs.

## The Islands

There are any islands in the bay some of which have a fell reputation:

- **Beech Island** is whispered to be the dwelling place of an ancient evil; fishermen to this day claim that the islands shores are overrun with spiders, some the size of a man's hand.
- **Landsend Spit** is a sandy spur covered in low brush; the sand here is waterlogged, and if the thin crust is broken through then there is naught but quicksand beneath.
- **Lankins Rip** – this deep tidal channel runs beside a small group of sand islands patched with stands of scrubby pine trees. The channel is inhabited by a large colony of sentinel crabs and camping on the islands will lead to a grisly demise.



The exposed jagged cliffs, sand dunes, long white beaches, and wild seas of the surrounding coastline contrast starkly with the sheltered tranquil waters of the Bay itself. Located 45 miles west of Port Luth, the area is sparsely populated, and though it has seen the tread of Mercanian, Selentine, Algardish, and Chaubrettan boots in the past, the area is still distinctly Albish.

## The Town



### 1. Sullivan's Smithy

A rugged old man with three lazy apprentices, Sullivan has been running the smithy here in Graveshead for 40+ years. His work is not outstanding, but it does the job and he doesn't charge much for it. (Prices are 2/3 of those stated in DWR).

#### Sullivan

*Str 17   Ref 8   Int 17   PT 14   Lks 15*

ATTACK 14

DEFENCE 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

Health Points 7

No armour (AF 0) / Hand (d3+1, 3)

EVASION 2

STEALTH 13

PERCEPTION 5

Movement 10m (20m)

## 2. Roth's Store

This establishment is full of the heady smells of smoked and salted meats, and he sources his meats from his cousin's farms further inland. Roth's family was once involved with a group of wreckers, and it is possible he knows of hidden sea caves along the coast... for the right money.

### Roth

*Str 12   Ref 10   Int 10   PT 9   Lks 11*

ATTACK 11

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

Health Points 8

No armour (AF 0)

Hand (d3, 2)

EVASION 3

STEALTH 11

PERCEPTION 4

Movement 10m (20m)

## 3. Ilka's Eating House

Ilka runs this small eating house and bar; it is normally frequented by freemen, captains, and those with enough coin to pay her prices. Ilka once made a name for herself on the streets of Kalugen Keep, but one day she cut the wrong purse and it took all of her ill-gotten gains to escape Krarth and make her way to Ellesland. She will be deeply worried if Krarthian or Magi-linked people come to the area.

### Ilka Rasteranivic

ATTACK 13

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

Health Points 11

Leather (AF 2)

Sword (d8+1, 4)

First-Rank Assassin<sup>1</sup>

EVASION 5

STEALTH 18

PERCEPTION 8

Movement 10m (20m)

## 4. The Kestrel

A run-down and squalid alehouse that serves the nearby fisherman's barracks. It is run by Red Olney, one of the ugliest men to ever reproduce and his equally homely daughters.

Red Olney will not admit it to anyone but there are rumours amongst the townsfolk that his great-grandfather was not a man but something "other". These rumours are false. Olney is simply extremely unattractive. Olney will not fight even to save his own life.

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<sup>1</sup> Was once fifth rank but her skills have dulled without use.

## 5. *The Co-operative*

The meeting place and ancient hall of the captains and their families. Within lie records and charts, maps, and ledgers dating back hundreds of years regarding fishing rights, dangerous shoals, and other darker mysteries.

There are hundreds of documents here and a large number of them refer to hidden or forgotten places in the region: lost villages, abandoned forts, etc.

## 6. *The Mayor's House*

Currently occupied by Elias Withrop, the former captain of 'Sally's Fool'. This well-furnished home and its humourless occupant also serve as local court and magistrate.

### **Elias Withrop (Retired 'Privateer' and Former Soldier)**

*Str 14   Ref 10   Int 14   PT 13   Lks 14*

ATTACK 20

EVASION 5

DEFENCE 11

STEALTH 14

MAGICAL DEFENCE 7

PERCEPTION 8

Health Points 17

Movement 10m (20m)

No armour (AF 0)

Cudgel (d3, 3)

## 7. *The Warehouse*

During the peak season, this massive building is piled high with salted herring.

## 8. *Shipton's Sundries*

This large warehouse-like building contains a strange assortment of odds and ends from fishing nets and barrels to tools, linen, and occasionally livestock.

### **Law Shipton**

*Str 17   Ref 8   Int 17   PT 14   Lks 15*

ATTACK 11

EVASION 3

DEFENCE 5

STEALTH 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

PERCEPTION 4

Health Points 6

Movement 10m (20m)

No armour (AF 0)

Hand (d3, 2)

## 9. *The Lock-up*

This is the town's drying-out and incarceration facility. It often contains half a dozen bruised and hungover fishermen and 4-6 members of the guard. Town guard members should be treated as normal humans armed with cudgels.



## **Town Guard**

ATTACK 11

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

Health Points 1d6 +2

Leather Coat & Piecemeal (AF 2)

Cudgel (d3, 3)

EVASION 3

STEALTH 12

PERCEPTION 4

Movement 10m (20m)

## ***10, 11 and 12: Fisher-Barracks***

During the season, these are home to hundreds of working men.

## ***13. Solly's Oils***

This reeking building contains barrel upon barrel of weatherproofing oil... it is often not manned.

## ***14. Rather's Rarities***

Part curio store and part junk pile, this store is stocked with things old Rather has found on his beachcombing excursions. The occasional rare treasure turns up here.

## **Rather**

Rather wears a rather large assortment of tokens, shells, knick-knacks, and flotsam attached to his person. Most of this is harmless junk but he has found:

- An abalone shell inscribed with strange characters. This acts as a charm that enables the wearer to breathe seawater as if it were air (Rather is unaware of this).
- Token of Ramus. A clay tablet bound in human hair on a thong. This item will protect the wearer from any harm from fire on 3 occasions (Rather has unknowingly used this twice already when he has been clumsy when heating his supper).

Rather has no combat skills and has 3 Health Points.

## ***15. The Slop-House***

During the high season, this barn-like room serves thousands of meals to hungry fishermen.

## ***16. Slop Warehouse***

The warehouse for the slop-house. It is piled high with mouldy vegetables, pickles, and preserved fish.

## ***17. Galney's Place***

This strange and slightly foreboding gentleman is a master of leech craft, herbalism, and surgery. A strongly built man, it is whispered that he served in the Crusades and learnt his craft upon the battlefield. Whatever the truth, he has saved a number of lives. Galney is in actuality Sir Golfrey – a former Knight of the Order of St Aponius. He refused to leave a dying enemy and his commander did not take kindly to his orders being ignored. Galney is a fourth-rank knight, and his battle-harness and weapons are stored in the rear of the shop.

## Galney

ATTACK 16  
DEFENCE 10  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 6

Health Points 15

Chain (AF 4)  
Sword (d8, 4)

Fourth-Rank Knight

EVASION 4  
STEALTH 14  
PERCEPTION 8

Movement 10m (20m)

## 18. The Sail Store

Kept away from the salt spray and moisture, this store house contains hundreds of square meters of sailcloth.

## 19. The Lumber Store

This warehouse contains many tons of cut timbers.

## 20. Kelly's

Some three dozen women with raw-boned fingers spend their days here making and repairing thousands of square metres of nets and rope during the season. There is a large dry storeroom for hemp and cord beneath the work area and, very occasionally, a woman comes bolting back up the rickety stairs scared out of her wits by something she saw below but cannot describe. Jack Kelly will usually shush the girl and give her a sit down and a talking to, describing it as nonsense. But still, it keeps happening... Sometimes, it is whispered, the older ones don't always come back up the stairs.

Kelly's cellar is linked via a secret passage to the limestone caves that honeycomb the region. Originally it may have been installed by smugglers working against the Selentines, but what uses the passages now is no smuggler...

## 21. Ludwig's House

Situated halfway up the rise that leads to the old Selentine ruins, this rambling home belongs to Ludwig Golmer, a strange old Kurlander who moved to the town with his large family some twenty years ago. They are seen as a strange and slightly distrusted part of the community, but Ludwig's ability to brew rich and heady ale has earned him a number of fast friends among the locals and the seasonal workers. Though some do wonder sometimes where he gets his supplies from; occasionally, an old black covered wagon pulls up to his home in the dead of night. A group of seasonal workers got too drunk once and tried to waylay it – they were never seen again...

## Ludwig

Str 13 Ref 12 Int 14 PT 10 Lks 12

ATTACK 12  
DEFENCE 5  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

Health Points 7

No armour (AF 0) / Hand (d3, 2)

EVASION 3  
STEALTH 12  
PERCEPTION 4

Movement 10m (20m)

### ***22. The Sealer's Hut***

This rotting skeleton of a building once housed the local skin and blubber works based on the seal colonies that haul out on the remoter islands of the estuary. It is whispered that one of the sealer's took a selkie's child and her curse fell upon him and his fellow hunters. The building now has a foul reputation and is said to be haunted.

There are three normal ghosts that haunt this building on certain days of the year; there seems no pattern to their appearances.

### ***23. Fortress***

On the top of the rise sits a stone fortress built upon an ancient hill fort. The fortress belonged to the Selentines, but the hill fort was ancient even before them. The interior of the fortress is paved with sandstone slabs and covered in weathered mosaics depicting scenes of the underworld and burial rites. The upper storey has collapsed, and the area is littered with pottery fragments. Below the sandstone slabs in one corner, a hidden staircase descends into catacombs that acted as something of a half-way house for remains. Some of those buried here do not rest peacefully. At one end of the catacombs, a breeze can be felt. If the wall is excavated, it reveals a continuing series of tunnels which permeate the limestone bedrock – some of them run downwards and waves can be heard crashing far in the depths, others snake back towards town towards Areas 20 and 21, and some strike off inland. Strange noises and rustlings echo through these cramped tunnels – explorers will soon discover they are not alone.

Several deep knucker-holes (water-filled sinkholes) exist in the area and the fearsome worms that are said to inhabit them may spend some time in the tunnels branching off from these watery abysses or perhaps even move between them in such a manner.

Two signal fires stand on either side of the entrance to the cove; they are always lit in winter.

## **Local Creatures and Beings**

### ***The Dunes and Inland***

Packs of wild dogs roam the dunes and outskirts of the town, along with rare human scavengers such as bandits or robber-knights.

Herds of deer, wild cattle (see bulls), and horses roam the dunes, grazing on the sparse vegetation. The males can be quite dangerous in the rutting season.

There have always been folk tales of trolls and goblins among the windswept dunes and lonely salt flats, but none have been seen in living memory.

### ***The Bay and Islands***

Large numbers of bull sharks cruise the shallow waters and will attack anyone or anything when hungry (treat as crocodile, ignoring land movement rates).

Very large spiders inhabit a number of the islands, with the largest found on Beech Island – some within the island's interior may be very large indeed. Similarly, the islands are infested with rats, some of a very large size indeed.

A number of boats have come to grief in the bay, despite the protected waters, and the ghosts of the lost crew may rise from the waters on the anniversary of their deaths to bedevil passing vessels. Similarly, one of these vessels may hold a clutch of barnacle men or the like.

Selkies are rumoured to inhabit some of the isolated islands, but men have not laid eyes on one of these fae creatures for more than a lifetime.

## Lakstead

*(Bulya)*

Lakstead is a small city (population approximately 4,000) situated in the north-east of Albion and lying on the south shore of Grundar-Lak, which comprises part of the disputed border with north-neighbouring Thuland.

The mood in Lakstead is perpetually grim, but cheerful when the ale is flowing. The reason for this is that it stands in, effectively, a militarised zone. War with the Thulanders coming across the Lak is always possible and has indeed occurred countless times over the years, leaving many souls to perish at the deep, unknown floor of the Lak. Battles have also been fought trying to re-secure the mountain-hugging – but broad – road from Lakstead to Maunderlak.

The routes to Lakstead comprise only:

- of the main road leading east to Maunderlak, which is supplied by Lakstead (via road and the River Tweed), e.g., for knights and barbarians, as it is otherwise isolated from southwards Port Clyster by the Hourla Hills; and
- the treacherous mountain pass (in the meeting place of the Hourla Hills and Pagan Mountains) from the southwestern Corvalin Castle, from which Lakstead itself is supplied by the rest of Albion.

None dare to venture directly north amongst the small, warlike Thulander settlements nor wish to irritate the legendary dwarfs of the Arbalak. Anyone wishing to journey north is politely advised to travel back to Corvalin Castle and then head north along the Selentine-paved road through the centre of Albion.

RJ Lambert in his DW-Clyster campaign wrote the following of Lakstead on 1 Oster-Monath 993 AS:

*Riding downwards, you pass small woodsman's and shepherd's cottages through the wooded hills and finally arrive at Lakstead. It is fast becoming a warm day that cheers away the memories of your sodden ride the day before.*

*Lakstead sits on the south shore of what the locals call Grundar-Lak or, as southern Albish like Captain Marshall would call it, Lake Grundar. The small city has no walls but the road (now much improved from the mountain track you have taken) has guardhouses manned by stern-looking men unaccustomed to seeing travellers. You*

*cannot help but notice the fine engineering of the bridges and other roads in the immediate vicinity of Lakstead.*

*This is a frontier town in, effectively, a militarised area. Knights moving military goods and primitive machines are plentiful, and there is little trading activity in the town square – except a few fishmongers plying wares, you surmise, from the “Lak”.*

*There are several inns about the town (all, it seems, having names relating to the Lak), and it is in these that you begin to ask about a Beor Hartmaer. None have heard of such a man, and you search further afield in the town square and even the guard houses. At lunch time, you stable your horses and take a hot meal at the Laksdepps Tavern, somewhat downcast at failing to find your quarry.*

### **The Mook-hel-lak Monster (“Mookae”)**

RJ Lambert wrote, in the same campaign, the following concerning a local legend of Lakstead:

*As visitors to Lakstead (of which non-military visitors are very rare), you hear several times over from local residents who pull you over and say in hushed tones the tale of Mook-hel-lak (or “Mookae” for short).*

*Some say that in some ancient battle – or argument – or division of spoils – the Dragon Mook-hel-lak lost out and had to settle for the Lak rather than one of the seas or other Lands of Legend as her domain. Others say that a mysterious force deep in the Lak (Laksdepp, they call it, giving the tavern you are in its present name) birthed Mook-hel-lak and she is unlike other dragons heard of in lore.*

*Mookae is variously described as brown, silver, green, and blue in colour, universally considered to have scales and a long, flexible neck.*

*The cityfolk speak of Mook-hel-lak as either the bane of the Thulanders, or their own bane as they try to survive eating fish from the Lak. Legends include Mookae intervening in wars across the Lak with the Thulanders to assisting the Thulander cause! Those adoring Mookae are usually not fishermen, whereas those not trusting Mookae tend to be fisherfolk who claim to have lost boats, big fish, or even limbs to Mook-hel-lak. They variously claim the monster can be seen on a full moon, or on a cloudless night, or in late afternoon sunning herself on the waters.*

*By the way, fishing is now one of the main food supplies for Lakstead – supply down the supply road you have just travelled is poor, and now with the loss of Maunderlak to Mercanians (eighteen days ago) it is not safe to bring goods up the river to Lakstead.*

*Anyhow, the cityfolk say Mookae is as old as Lakstead itself, older even than the Artsaen (artisans) who mysteriously assisted in the construction of the city’s infrastructure centuries ago. They recommend, if you fancy sightseeing, seeing the Spillway if you have the time.*

## Notes

RJ Lambert has interpreted Lak to be the Elleslandic equivalent of the Scottish “loch”. Thus Lakstead means, literally, the settlement at the loch’s stead – i.e., beside it. Likewise, Maunderlak on the coast represents the place ‘under the loch’. One could even go so far as to suggest the Lak is the equivalent of Loch Ness in Scotland.

Alternatively, one could consider Lak to be the name of the river flowing down from the Pagan Mountains.

RJ Lambert notes that the Mook-hel-lak monster is inspired – if you have not guessed – by the Loch Ness, and other reported loch monsters, in Scotland.

Resident.Deity suggested an alternative meaning of the name based on the Anglo-Saxon language, the closest approximation of which is “lac-stead” that means, literally, “play-house” (lac, from Lacan – to play, similar to Yorkshire laik, and stead from homestead).

## Ongus

(*Bulya*)<sup>2</sup>

Ongus is the capital city of the nation of Albion, on the island of Ellesland in Legend’s northwest.

## Size & Significance

Ongus is supposed to be the largest city on mainland Ellesland. King Hadric has his castle here and rules Albion from within. Due to the reference on page 18 of Book 6 that there are only a dozen or so cities in Albion with populations in the tens-of-thousands, it can be supposed that Ongus, as probably largest, would have a population of between 30,000 and 40,000. Where this places Ongus in the context of the mainland cities such as Tamor, capital of the New Selentine Empire, remains to be discussed.

## Local Geographical Features

The Umber Downs lie to the west across the as-yet-unnamed river that lies on Ongus’ western side.

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst not part of the wiki, I would be remiss in my role as editor if I did not refer readers to Shaun Hately’s magnificent work to add flesh to the bones of Albion’s capital – <http://www.libraryofhiabuor.net/ongus.html>. This is a magnificent resource and a singular jewel amongst the many fan-produced treasures to be found online.

## Culture & Peculiarities

Due to Ongus serving as the capital under Selentine rule, great roads were developed running northwards into the nation to facilitate the swift movement of troops and supplies to the frontiers. After Selentine rule, these roads remain and are kept in good repair.

On the same reasoning concerning the Selentine era, one might also assume that Ongus would be one of the few cities in Ellesland to have aqueducts and perhaps some form of public sanitation/sewer system.

## Significant Residents

- King Hadric

## Approximation

Ongus is approximated to be London in Great Britain, though it sits somewhat more southerly and west of where London sits in Britain.

## Osterlín Abbey

*(Bulya)*

The abbey sits in the southern parts of the part of northern Albion that is well described in the Dragon Warriors gamebooks. It is a True Faith abbey that received some more detailed description in Dave Morris' standalone adventure, "A Box of Old Bones".

The abbey, says Morris, is famed amongst adventurers familiar with the region for holding the Relic bones of St Giles. The abbey is also famed for its hospitality.

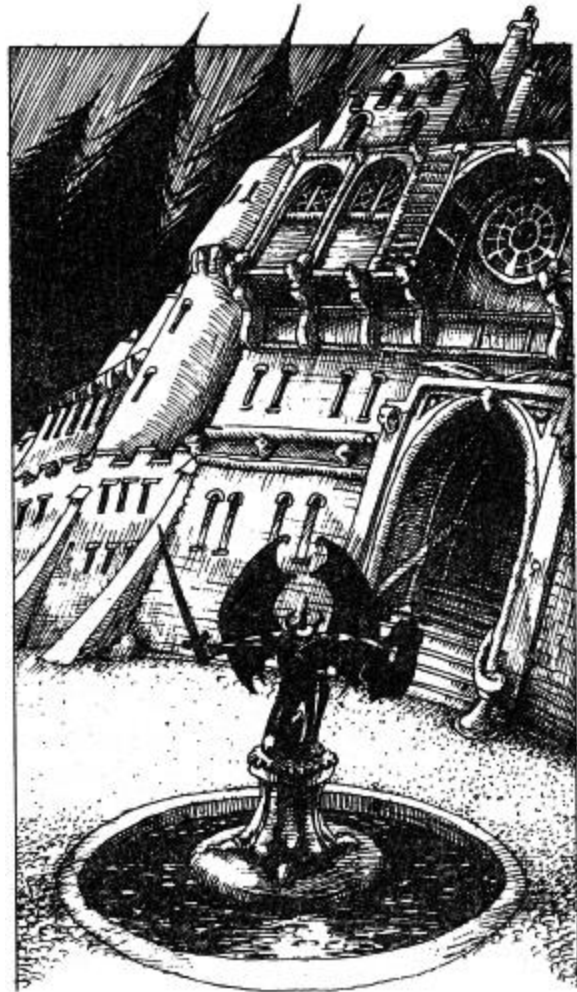
The abbot, according to Morris in A Box of Old Bones, is Father Eorwin.

Beyond that, it is best to let the adventure tell the remainder of the story.

## Tenebron hall

*(Golden Dragon)*

Deep within Wistren Wood lies Tenebron Hall, the long-forgotten ancestral seat of the House of Tenebron (GD1 s1, s80). Although lavishly furnished, it has been eerily cold and silent for many decades (GD1 s15, s154), save for the current presence of Father Harkas and the nefarious Vampire Lord Tenebron. Underneath the hall's forbidding gothic-styled edifice, a system of subterranean crypts extends far into the surrounding woodland.



## Wistren Wood

Wistren Wood lies in north-central Albion, southwest of the town of Hesard's Ford and Pillaton, and directly south of Igham and east of Scardic.

Somewhere hidden deep within the wood lies the mysterious Tenebron Hall and its evil master, Lord Tenebron. Beneath the wood, a network of subterranean chambers and passageways protects the lair of the vampire lord.

The wood comprised the opening scene of Dave Morris' first Golden Dragon gamebook, "Crypt of the Vampire". Little is said of the wood itself in the gamebook except that the mushrooms growing naturally in the wood are said to be invested with magical powers.



## Wulfhere's Abbey

*(David Lodge)*

Around twenty miles from the city of Eowforwic lies a rather squat and unimposing group of buildings surrounded by small copses, fields of wheat, and grasslands. These fields contain the once-famous Abbey of Saint Wulfhere.

The first indication a traveller notices when approaching the area is the drifting smell of freshly baked bread, for the abbey is well known for its round-the-clock baking, producing high quality bread that is sold in the local villages and delivered daily to Duke Athelric of Eowforwic. Next, the visitor will hear the bleating of the flocks of sheep that graze on the grasslands surrounding the abbey, sheep that provide the wool and milk that contribute to the abbey's successful trade regime.

If travelling around sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, or sunset, the traveller may hear the bells ringing and the chanting of the abbey's elaborate two-hour-long services held in the chapel.

### History

Many years ago, long before the local area was ruled from Ongus, a great force of evil harried the local area. It is said that the local area sustained a large amount of depopulation before Alfgar, the local ealdorman, organised an army to come up against the threat. Tied up with the army was a missionary, Wulfhere, who came from the south of Albion to attempt to spread the True Faith.

The armies clashed on a spring day in 532. For the first few hours, the two forces manoeuvred around each other with neither side gaining the upper hand. Then Alfgar's force made a push but were balked by the eldritch leader of the opposing forces: a large figure dressed in a black robe who felled any who came near it, seeming to grow in power as it slew and drained the life force from the melees around it.

As night was drawing in, a push by Alfgar and his bodyguard forced their way through to the enemy leader and they struck him down. This effort was not without its cost: Alfgar was mortally wounded and the majority of his bodyguard were slain, but this was a minor moment of victory – the enemy leader's body started to reform under the eyes of the very same people who had sacrificed so much to slay it.

It was at this point the young Wulfhere forced his way through the fighting to confront the enemy's leader. Holding forth a fishing net, he cast this over the enemy leader and held it tight while the remainder of Alfgar's forces slew the leader again and again, until finally there was a scream of terror and it did not rise.

After the battle, Wulfhere was honoured for his part and was granted two hides of land on the site of the battle where he founded an abbey with an elaborate set of rituals. The abbey was completed in 534 with Wulfhere as its first abbot. Upon Wulfhere's death in 567, he was canonised for his part in the battle.

As the years advanced, the abbey has been controlled by abbots with more financial sense than piety. During this period, it has changed from selling wool and cheese from its sheep flocks to becoming a successful trader in the local area. It is famed for the quality of bread, wool, milk, and cheese and is financially sound.

### Famous Residents/NPCs

- Abbot Hrothkin, the current abbot. A man in his seventh decade, who was the abbey's bursar before he became the abbot on the death of his predecessor. With his advanced age, Hrothkin is physically frail though his mind is intact.
- Athelstan, Abbot Hrothkin's personal assistant. Athelstan is a young monk who has been given the honour of helping Hrothkin and acting as a runner for him.

## Wrexham

*(RJ Lambert)*

Wrexham, like Bannockburn a half-day's journey on foot to the southeast, lies just northeast of the King's Highway. It is nestled in the hills with several bridges over a simple stream meandering through the town. The streets are tight and houses close together.

### Size & Significance

Approximately some 200 largely agrarian residents live here.

### Significant Neighbouring Settlements

Corvalin Castle, 30 miles by road to the north.

### Local Geographical Features

Small stream running through the town, joining the Gallory River just southwest of the King's Highway.

### Culture & Peculiarities

There is only one inn, the Curlfinger, strangely tucked away in a backstreet and taking a couple of enquiries to locate.

It has ten dormitory-style rooms (two bunk beds in each) for adventurers to stay in.

### Approximation

It is very loosely based, geographically, on the town of Hexham in Northumberland.

# Approximation

The whole of Albion is approximated to the nation of England in medieval history, though at its edges there is some debate. At the north near Clyster, there is a debate as to whether the northern fringes are more approximate to southern Scotland, or to northern England. Due to the somewhat Norse description of the inhabitants of Thuland, one school of thought is that northern Albion subsumes some of Scottish culture.

At the western edge with Cornumbria, it is possible that Wales is encompassed within Albion, whereas another school of thought is that Wales is comprised within Cornumbria. This inter-connects with the question of whether Cornumbria is Wales and Ereworn Ireland, or instead that Cornumbria is Ireland alone, or Ireland and Wales combined. The cultural description in Book 6 suggests that Cornumbria is predominantly Irish in character, leaving Wales to be a part of Albion.

# Algandy

Algandy is the westernmost nation on mainland Legend, sitting west-most on the large north-western peninsula of the mainland nearest to Ellesland. Algandy is known for its dense forests.

## history

Algandy's origins are scarcely described in Book 6, the only gamebook in which the nation is mentioned. It is supposed that, just as with neighbours Kurland and Chaubrette, Algandy has engaged in wars with Albion across the Glaive, if not with its neighbours also in the past. Algandy was not easily, if at all, subdued by Selentium in that empire's expansion, thanks to its belligerent warlords.

Despite wars of the past, Dave Morris describes Algandy as having a peaceful existence for some time that has made some knights restless. Tourneys and such have been devised and, arguably, the Crusades, to occupy restless knights in the kingdom.

## history and Culture of Algandy

*(Stephen Dove)*

### A Brief History

A vast tangled forest once clothed the whole of the land of Algandy like a monstrous green cloak. Massive oaks brooded across every horizon, as if a horde of emerald giants had sprung from the earth, raised their arms to the sky, and then fallen into uneasy slumber.

Yet this wild-wood was a haunted realm, for it was the home of many races of the malevolent fey, and of other mighty beasts whose names have since faded into legend. These fey stalked the lightless depths of the ancient wood. There they raised eldritch kingdoms in the tree-shadowed darkness, over a thousand years before the coming of men.

The fey dwelt in the hollow hills or amid the gnarled roots of beeches or under the mirror-smooth surfaces of willow-fringed lakes. Each of their realms was more beautiful and terrible than any mortal kingdom and filled with treasures beyond the dreams of avarice.

The fey warred with each other and with the now-forgotten races of the Old World, delighting in endless orgies of cruelty and slaughter, seemingly without purpose or end. They hunted the great spiders and dread wyverns of the Fey-wood and took their hides as trophies, forever vying with one another in grotesque parodies of sport and war.

But the age of the Old Gods was ending, and at last their power waned, even as the stars changed. Soon, most of the great fey lords had fallen into slumber after growing weary of the world and were never to re-awaken as the One God arose to drive out the many gods. He had not yet put the Saviour upon the earth but the tide had turned against the Old World. Soon, nothing remained of the greatest fey lords save for their deserted but unearthly realms, hidden deep in the wood and still guarding fabulous treasure-hoards. A few of their kind lingered in hidden places but they were forever diminished, though still potent to mortal eyes.

Yet the remnants of fey magic cobwebbed the twisted oaks like a shimmering net of moonlight, ready to ensnare any mortal unwary enough to tread the forest paths or to desecrate the golden realms. And so the first humans who came to the wood vanished into its gloomy depths, never to be seen again.

Mortals could not shun the forests forever though, and four centuries before the coming of the Saviour, a ragged tribe of men were driven under the eaves. These tribesmen were fleeing from the great wars of the past, unknowingly retreating from their mortal foes into an even greater peril. Many were devoured by the remnant magic of the fey, but a few, known as the Algars (who later gave their name to this land), found safety in the granite crags of the mountains, safe above the tree-line where the fey had never ventured.

There the Algars built lofty hill forts and fashioned blades of bronze with which to slay the “wood folk”, though few mortals had ever seen one. Their flocks of stunted goats were driven inside their walls each night, so that the spirits of the wood could not claim them.

Walls alone were not proof against the fey, though, and on dark nights, strange songs could be heard in the forests below, drawing sleep-walking mortals down into the wood, never to be seen again. These songs were not the only evil attributed to the fey as unattended children died or vanished, or were even replaced with unearthly looking babes who seldom cried but cast knowing stares at their ‘parents’ with eyes that already seemed wise.

Hunters also failed to return, goats began to disappear, and unexplained fires broke out, and always the most misfortune seemed heaped on those who lived lowest on the mountain and closer to the Forest, which thus became a place of dread.

It was not until the coming of iron that the Algars finally threw aside their fear of the woods and the fey. It began by chance when the tribesmen left offerings to the ‘spirits of the mountains’ out on the high windswept heights above their homes. These sacrifices were accepted and ingots of black metal left in their place, though none had seen who left them.

Arrow-heads were fashioned and the shadowy forms who menaced Algar hunters were brought down and patches of greenish blood seen, though none of the slain fey were ever recovered. In time, rocks veined with rusty ore were left by the unseen spirits of the mountain in exchange for mead. The great Algar smiths then had dreams of how to crush these rocks and smelt them to extract the black metal they called iron. Once this secret was known, the Algars quarried the rusty rocks until vast piles of it surrounded some of their hillforts.

When suddenly, the tricks and magics of the fey ceased where-ever these ore-hoards were placed, it was no great leap for the Algars to divine that the fey feared even the rocks bearing this metal. The hillmen responded by raising great carved pillars of iron-ore and surrounded their lands with them. After this, most of the evils of the fey ceased and for a time there was peace in the mountains.

The Algars then grew bold indeed and began setting fires in the forests to clear land for crops. The last of the fey fought back and much mortal blood was spilled, though the humans rarely even caught a glimpse of their foes. The mortals then raised more iron-stones to surround their new fields and these beautifully carved menhirs hedged the fey out. Yet the siren songs of the fey lured many sleeping Algars out of the safety of their lands and into the lightless depths of the Emerald Forest, there to be the playthings of the Mistlords or the other malevolent creatures of the Forest of Shadows.

A few of those who disappeared later returned to the mountains, mysteriously unharmed and with no memory of what had passed for them. Many of these women later bore strange children of unearthly beauty, some of whom slew their parents or secretly ravaged the lands of men, immune to the power of iron. A few of these half-fey set themselves up as lords and ensorcelled their human kindred, trafficking with the true fey to buy ever greater power. Most of the half-fey were slain, burnt in fires, or killed in war as the Algars rebelled against them, though likely a few survived. Indeed, more than a few noble families of Algandy show faint traces of elven or fey blood in their lineage even to this day and some of this dates to this time. Those half-fey who did not flee were killed, for they could not bear the sight of rowan berries, and so were revealed. Travellers to Algandy, even today, will see that sprigs of rowan fruit are still nailed above every doorway of peasant houses in Algandy and across the gateways of the old hill-towns for this very reason.

After the wars with the half-fey and once the clearances had begun, the Algars felt themselves masters for a time. This lasted only a decade or so and was ended when the Legions of Selentine finally reached the forests. They drove the Algars back into the mountains and stole their farms, but the Imperials were not wary of the wood, and many fell to fey magics even as the Algars had almost a thousand years before. It is whispered by storytellers today that the Algars struck a bargain with the powers of the wood, promising to burn no more of the forest in exchange for fey aid in their wars with the Empire.

These wars were brutal and deadly and raged for over a century, but in the end, the Empire prevailed by driving great roads through the forest and raising slender pillars of iron-ore to either hand, so that they could move their armies at great speed and could crush the Algar hill forts one by one. It is written that they fey also fought, though they never gave the legions fair battle, preferring sly ambushes to blunt their advance.

Gradually, the fey were driven further and further into the forest and dwindled, though the Empire lost many men to them and eventually gave up their campaign against these hated unseen powers. Instead, the legions burned huge swathes of trees and opened the valleys up for agriculture and began mining the hills and mountains for metals to feed the hungry forges of Selentium. They founded the great fortress cities of Mantilium (later Mantla) and

Carindis, latterly known as Carind, and these cities remained garrisoned with many legions for several centuries.

The Algars did not give up even then and there were dozens of petty revolts. Carindis was burned to the ground at least once and the Algars laid siege to Mantilium four times. The Algars later took to laying ambushes for the smaller bands of Imperial troops or for merchant caravans travelling through the forest, but they could not shift the Empire, who used ships to bring in more troops and supplies to the besieged cities of Carindis and Mantilium and eventually to ship goods in and out of Algandy rather than risking the roads through the forest.

An uneasy peace reigned for most of the next few centuries, but Algandy remained like tinder, with only the tiniest spark needed to ignite a fierce rebellion. Imperials had to remain very wary and never travelled the countryside except in large fortified caravans and could only walk free in the two Imperial cities. This is why every village and town in Algandy is heavily fortified and even to this day; most of them crown the lofty heights of hills or rocky crags and are well defended so that the Empire had to spend much blood to put the Algars down again and again. The rebellions and warfare finally ended only when the Algars were converted to the Truth Faith in 600 AS.

### **Saint Felix and the Coming of the True Faith**

The Algars originally worshipped the Old Gods, such as Wotan and Loge, like many other ancient peoples did and some do still. Their hatred of the Empire meant that they held onto the Old Ways long after most other lands had embraced the teachings of Gatanades.

It took the conversion of the most famous Algar orator and loremaster to convince the Algar chieftains to take notice: Feldis of Navard. Saint Felix, as he is now known, was once a prisoner and chattel of a race of fey known as the Mistlords when his name was Feldis of Navard.

The Mistlords dwelt in the lakes and rivers of Old Algandy, living in a kind of otherworld, where they delighted in tormenting mortals with their capricious cruelty. Feldis was a famed druid and loremaster and was one of the highest-ranking Algar priests when he was captured. Indeed, he enjoyed the ear of many of the Algar chieftains. The Empire was constantly trying to imprison him, such was his influence over the rebellious hill tribes. He was hiding from Imperial soldiers and was forced to take refuge in a fey forest when he was ensorcelled and brought before the Mistlord Cernas, one of the last of the fey lords.

Feldis spent ten long years as a slave to Cernas and endured every form of mockery and degradation. Yet Feldis never gave up hope of escape and learned the speech of the Mistlords and many of their secrets. Indeed, almost everything we know about the fey and their history came from what he later wrote and many are the mortal men who only walk free under the sun because of his lore.

Once Feldis discovered the nature of the Eldritch Laws that bound most fey, he was able to bargain his way out of captivity, even managing to place a geas upon his former master in the

process. He then escaped the fey realm. Feldis returned to the world of men but was captured by the Empire and taken to Selentium as a slave within a year. He was later freed by the Church and converted to the True Faith, whereupon he changed his name to Felix.

He soon returned to Algandy and began preaching the word and travelling the land, binding the fey with his arcane understanding of Eldritch Law. Eventually, he managed to convince the Algar chieftains of the virtues of the True Faith after securing the release of the High Chieftain's daughter, unharmed, from the clutches of the elves. He showed the Druid Council how the power of God made a man immune to the sorcery of the fey as long as they obeyed certain rules. The entire council was so impressed that they submitted to baptism within a week, though some die-hards did resist. The rest of Algandy followed in the next few years, though some Algars defiantly resisted and had to be put down. Indeed, the mountainous folk of certain parts of Algandy still maintain links with the Old Ways to this day, though they are now the exception rather than the rule.

Once most of Algar cheftains were converted, then Felix then set about establishing a holy order that was dedicated to binding the fey so that they could no longer harm his fellow men. Felix and his order secured a promise from the Algandan nobility that they would not seek to destroy any more of the fey forest and would no longer make war upon the fey in exchange for placing a series of geas upon the tribes of Faerie that would greatly limit their power over humans. This was not easily done, though Felix was so wise in the ways of the fey that he was often able to bargain with them simply by walking into a haunted glade and laying down his terms, whereupon a stag would wander into the glade and dip its head in agreement. Mostly, Felix worked through the elves, who were the least capricious of the faerie-folk and had acted as ambassadors between the fey lords for millennia.

Though he failed to convert all of the fey, Felix brought many of the most dangerous to heel and bound them with promises not to harm any more of the wild-wood, which was by this time fragmented and a shadow of the Great Forest of Old.

Once the True Faith united Algandy, the Algars and Imperials quickly became equals within Felix's lifetime. An Algandan King was crowned for the first time only a decade after Felix's death in 640AS: something that would have been unthinkable only twenty years before. His contributions to the Church and the Empire earned Felix sainthood barely five years later and a holy house was raised in the hills east of Carind shortly afterwards. This monastery is sited around his tomb and known as Felico Sanctis.

St Felix is widely acknowledged as the father of the nation of Algandy and the greatest loremaster and authority on the fey that has ever existed. Felico Santus is now a site of holy pilgrimage with many thousands making a yearly journey to his tomb to pray for deliverance from evil magic. Miracles often occur with those under fey curses freed after only a day of humble prayer at this holy place.

Algandy's troubles did not end with Felix, although he brokered a peace that lasted for a hundred years. Eventually, the new nobility began warring with each other, as Algars and Imperials sought to position themselves as the new élite. The lesser sons of landed nobles also grew restless and resentful that there was no place for them. Land was scarce because



much of Algandy was still deep forest and could not be cleared without igniting war with the fey: an unthinkable mistake that even these hot-bloods were not foolish enough to contemplate.

This led to a war with Ellesland in 850-901 AS, during which much blood was shed as the Algars tried to annex parts of Cornumbria, and even attempted to invade Glissom, but to no avail. The Pontiff put a stop to these raids by declaring that any man attempting such invasion would be excommunicated.

Soon after this declaration, penniless knights began roaming the forest roads of the kingdom in large gangs. They quickly became the famed robber knights who terrorized the valleys, at first charging “tolls” and then falling into outright looting and banditry. The Hildalgos: leaders of the hill-towns, appealed to the King for help. When none was forthcoming, they began arming themselves, forming societies, known as Hermandads, to protect their homes and their fields. This was fuelled by the Algar tradition of blood-feud and so violence was inevitable.

The old hill-towns were perfectly situated for defence, as they were established under the Empire in very unstable times, and every house was soon like a tower, with entrances raised to the first or second floor and open rooftops cleared for archers. Many robber knights were slain and the nobles became worried that the peasantry would soon grow bold and rebel with their new-found power. So intense did the fighting become that no-one was safe on the King’s high-roads as recently as thirty years ago.

This situation undoubtably led King Vergang to suggest a Holy Crusade to empty his land of robber knights. In the end, this tactic worked and most of these younger nobles were given a legitimate outlet for their energies, and they flooded south to confront the Ta’ashim. A few still remained, however, and several villages labour daily under the oppressive yoke of a cruel robber-baron who “taxes” them as he pleases and obeys no law of man or God.

### **Algandy Today**

Algandy today is still a forested realm, though the wild-wood is now splintered and many of the greatest trees are gone. The fey have now dwindled and though there are many stories, most people will have never seen one, save perhaps for the elves who trade with mortals at Moon-moots and act as go-betweens twixt fey and humans (see below).

The Algars still live in grim, white-washed hill-towns that dominate narrow river valleys, their terraced sides clothed in vines or other crops. These valleys are still hedged around within ancient boundary stones that mark the edge of the human domain and serve to keep at bay the fey. Each valley is like an island in a sea of trees, connected to the others only by ancient causeways flanked by pillars of iron-ore: a remnant of the days of the Empire and her fierce legions.

The people of the hill-towns and villages are a dour breed: morose and fatalistic after centuries of conflict. Their gates tend to be very solid, even if the paint is peeling. Their

walls are high, albeit crumbling in places, and the towns themselves crown sheer bluffs and rocky outcrops that even the most seasoned warriors would quail at assaulting.

The houses inside huddle together, forming narrow defensible alleyways and are always at least three stories high, with steps leading up to the entrance on the first floor. The people are suspicious folk who do not take to strangers easily. Indeed, the most common form of “welcome” for outsiders is to be greeted by the village priest, wielding his iron staff, tipped with a cross, and wound around with Rowan berries. They are then ushered across the dusty threshold of the tiny stucco church, the inside of which covered in faded frescos, and required to kneel before the altar whilst the priest intones the rite that forces fey back into their own shape and is another legacy of St Felix. They must then surrender any weapons into the care of the priest, a reminder of more recent times, with its robber knights. Only then are they allowed to sup in the local taverna and stable their horses. Even these poor beasts do not escape a blessing of holy water and sanctified grain, a testament to the times when fey spirits clothed themselves in animal forms to cheat their way across human gateways.

The Algars, as a people, are also very quick to anger, and much has been made of the vendettas and endless blood-feuds that have given them such a fierce reputation. In certain regions, particularly in Arago, families in the same hill-town often harbour murderous intent against some of their neighbours, with memories going back generations for some imagined slight, moved field-boundary or matrimonial irregularity. Indeed, only two generations ago, people would work together in the sun-drenched fields all day without rancour, go home and eat, and then creep up onto the tower-like heights of their houses to try and kill each other with arrows.

King Vergang clamped down on these vendettas with new laws, but in some villages and towns, the old ways die hard. Yet now most weapons are kept in the Church by law, though no Algar would ever be caught without his long-knife. Having said this, any who earn the Algar’s trust will find them steadfast friends and will never want for food or friendship, even in the greatest need. Once welcomed into an Algar family, drink and food will flow like a river and songs will be sung until long into the night.

### City Life

Life in the cities is a little different as most people living in Carind or Mantla are of Imperial blood, though many are now of mixed heritage. The cities are paved with white-stone and full of courtyards and plazas sited around beautifully carved fountains.

Both Algandan cities are relatively small, though both boast high walls and docks that are a remnant of Imperial days when the cities were often besieged. Carind is famed for its great steelworks and some of the finest swords and armour come from the forges of this ancient city. These forges are located outside the city walls in the plain surrounding the great metropolis by the river. Wood is ferried down along the river from forests planted by men in the time of the Empire. These feed the great foundries of Carind and the city is often covered in a foul smelling pall, though much of the time the prevailing wind carries the smoke along the river and out to the sea.

Carind is also famed for its alchemists and latterly for its artists, who have used their skill with stone, gained from mining ore, to produce beautiful sculptures. The new knowledge of alchemy has also boosted painting by producing vibrant new pigments the like of which the world has never seen before.

Mantla is the principal port of the great Algar merchant houses and still possesses an impressive harbour, dating from Imperial times. From there, the Algar fleets ply cargoes of all kinds along the sea-lanes to Ferromaine and the other Coradian ports. Grapes, wine, and olives spill out of the steep valleys of Algandy and across the seas to the Old Empire. Meanwhile, Mantla and its Algar merchant-kings grow fat on this profit and the city now sports concentric walls of white marble climbing up the sheer hill on which the city is sited: a very impressive spectacle from the river plain and the sea. The other great fame of Mantla is horses, and it is rumoured that the Algar traded with the fey for eldritch horses to act as brood stock. This may be fanciful nonsense, but the horse-traders of Algandy will regale you with such legends all day, or at least until they discover that you have no coin with which to buy...

The nobility of Algandy are of two main groups: the High Nobility is mainly composed of families of Imperial descent, and most of these have holdings on the coastal plains, safe from the forests and its fey denizens. They count princes, counts, ricohombres and callaberos amongst their ranks, as well as the King.

Nobles of this rank pride themselves on conversing in Angate, though all can also speak fluent Algandarve, albeit with a prissy accent. The High Nobility enjoy the arts of feasting and jousting in their great castles and palaces and there are rumours that they often join with elves in woodland pageants and hunts. Most of these nobles have won concessions of the fey that mean they can hunt in certain parts of the wood. Indeed, jongleurs and balladeers tell tales of noble knights who ride into the fey forest in gleaming armour to root out the famous Questing Beast or to slay a wyvern. Such beasts are rare in these days but still live in the deeper reaches of the wild-wood.

The fey rarely try to cheat the King or his dukes, preferring to reserve their crueller tricks for the hapless peasants who form the bulk of the country, for they know that to anger the King would mean war, and most are content now that humans no longer transgress against them. Indeed, it is whispered that the Fey Court and the Algandan King are so close that he is more likely to rule against his own subjects than against the fey, so beguiled by them has he become. There are even rumours of marriage between the nobler houses of the fey and those of the Algandan Court, and it is certainly true that Talia, the niece of the current King, has wedded the Elfin Earl, Montombre from Ellesland. This hints at a closer relationship than is perhaps prudent, and many Algar nobles are growing discontent with the rule of their overlords.

The lower nobility or *Hidalgos* and *Escuderos* are mainly of Algar descent and though cultured are more war-like than the High Nobility. They speak Algandarve and do so proudly and will only speak Angate if pressed. Many have taken up mercantile interests and now raise grapes for wine or else grow olives in great groves, shipping their produce around the Coradian in fleets. Indeed, some Algar *Hidalgos* are fantastically rich and have more money

than the Imperial families that are supposedly their betters. It is this, more than anything, that keeps the peace: the Hidalgos want no trouble on the King's roads to prevent commerce from filling their purses. Hence they ruthlessly put down any who transgress and many bandits have recently been forced into the wild-wood, to the delight of the fey, who are ever ready to enslave hapless mortals.

### The Fey

The Algar's relationship with the fey and the forest is still one of distrust and fear, for the laws of St Felix mean that all the lands of Algandy outside the boundary stones are subject to fey law and not to the laws of men. The fey, meanwhile are bound to human laws if they commit crimes within the boundary stones of the human kingdom, for here human writ runs. Indeed, there are even charms that the priests of St Felix know to summon up any fey spirit who transgresses against men, though mostly it is an elven intermediary who will appear. The response of the fey to this is the same as always: obey the letter of the law whilst attempting to twist it at every turn.

Fey, apart from elven-folk, are very rarely seen now, having withdrawn deep into the remaining forests and most shun human-kind. It is only the elves who come to the Moon-moots that happen on isolated hills on the first night of the full moon. Indeed, most valleys now have a beacon-hill just at the edge of the forest, topped with a huge pile of wood and lying outside the ring of boundary stones.

Sometimes, when the moon is full, the fire is lit and fey and human emerge from their domains into "neutral territory" there to bargain by firelight, under the stars. They might exchange stories, share news, or even settle disputes. Sometimes goods are traded as well, for the fey love mortal foods and wines and lust after mortal women.

Men are likewise over-eager for fey foodstuffs and eldritch blades, though some learn the error of their ways very soon: fey magic is not toyed with lightly. Yet despite this, a few mortal lords make it their business to trade with the fey, though such enterprises are always fraught with peril. In any case, it is usually the Hidalgo and his retinue who will go to such a moot: peasants are rarer in most places and only the very curious or foolish would dare. Any who do appear do so against the advice of their family and their village priest. Still, it is not unknown for groups of the unwed to creep out after dark, climbing out through windows and over the town-walls to hide in the bushes at the base of the hill, hoping to catch a glimpse of the elves. Yet even such "harmless" curiosity can be dangerous, and some of those who walk abroad at night disappear forever.

The Moon-moots arose out of a more serious need, for the beacon-fires used to be lit to call men or fey to account according to the laws of St Felix. He realised that unless they could meet to hammer out their differences, the peace he had brokered would not long outlive him. So he bound the elven-folk to act as intermediaries with mortals, carrying messages to and from the fey lords of the wild-wood. So any man or fey can light a beacon-fire on any night of the year, and both men and fey-folk are bound to come and hear the plea of the other, though such things are seldom done in these days.

Tales are told of how fey lords, through the elves, have charged that mortals have defiled the abandoned realms of the fey, seeking treasure. Mortals accused of such crimes have indeed been handed over to fey justice. There are other tales of villages that experience terrible winters for failing to pay the blood-price of stags lured into the valley and slaughtered without leave, for creatures of the forest are protected by the fey law and are jealously guarded. Such stories may be fanciful nonsense, but many valleys boast at least one set of ruins that may hint that some old tales have more truth in them than most might guess, for the fey are not lightly crossed, even in these days of peace.

The wise suspect that the fey originally agreed to the Moon-moots to corrupt mortals, even though the priests of St Felix attend most such gatherings and are ready at hand to undo the tricks of the elves and their fey masters. Yet familiarity breeds contempt and some suppose that such meetings might lull mortals into a false sense of security: more than one foolish maiden has fallen into fey hands after a stolen kiss at a Moon-moot. There are also stories of those who have imbibed fey wine at such gatherings and have fallen under their spell, leaving the safety of the hill and entering the fey realm under the trees. It is certainly true that travellers and strangers have been known to disappear at this time, though if they are abducting mortals, the fey are very sly and careful and take only those who will not be missed. Some fey even invite mortals into their realm to hunt, though usually only the Great Lords accept, their curiosity getting the better of their sense.

In truth not all fey are malevolent, though it must be said that even the friendliest often hide a cruel side behind honeyed words, as well as a capricious temper. Yet many a knight has glimpsed the ruins of old whilst charging through the wood as part of a wild-hunt in the company of elves. Some are foolishly tempted to creep back later and are never seen again. Others are lucky and emerge with their haversacks filled with treasure, though such riches are seldom bought without some later reckoning, and it often comes in surprising and unforeseen ways when the ancient magic on the treasure is awoken, to the ruin of all.

### **Eldritch Law**

Many fey are bound by an ill-defined and arbitrary system of Eldritch Law that has existed since they first appeared in the fabled Time of Mists and limits their powers. Originally, such laws were different for each fey and this is still true to some extent, with many fey being bound to obey special laws that pertain to them alone. Yet there are some rules that are more general, though none are universal, and these were called Eldritch Law by St Felix.

It is said that the Old Gods, jealous of their magics, tricked them into agreeing to be bound by Eldritch Law. Indeed, the legends suggest that it was Loge himself who foisted it upon the normally wary fey, using his most potent arts of deception. Later, the priests of St Felix bound the fey in Algandy with potent disputations and arguments, trapping the fell creatures in their own lies and forcing them to agree to the following strictures.

- 1) A fey may not ever tell a direct lie, although most are masters of deception through omission, riddles, implied tricks, and evasions. For example, an elf lord might say to a mortal, "Do you think the Lady Yvaine beautiful?" implying that a fey woman standing next him is the Lady Yvaine. He might later offer this same lady as a bride to the mortal

but warn him that his soul is forfeit if he does not keep the Lady Yvaine safe. He might then state that he himself will never harm the mortal's new wife nor allow her to be harmed in order to put the mortal off his guard. The trouble with the compact is that the lady the mortal is marrying is not called Yvaine: this is the name of a prisoner in the elf lord's dungeon. When the elf lord later slays the true Lady Yvaine as part of a wild hunt, he is then also able to claim the soul of the foolish mortal who dared to bargain with him: such are the vagaries of dealing with such creatures.

- 2) A fey may not refuse a challenge to bargain and must adhere to the exact wording of any bargain so struck, though most have ways of twisting meanings to cheat. Fey are masters of such haggling and often agree to whimsical bets against their better judgments, though they will often swindle to win, twisting the words as above. This is the most ancient geas and has existed since the very beginning.
- 3) Many fey cannot also harm any mortal who is baptized and so protected by the Ward of the Saviour, and this is the reason that young children are at risk before baptism. Indeed, many fey delight in stealing away humans children to use as pawns for later mayhem or revenge. Many fey cannot even touch a baptised human, though they will often try to tempt or trick a mortal into a transgression and so subject them to Seelie power.

Thus the Ward of the Saviour is negated if the mortal does any of the following:

- a) Any mortal who eats or drinks fey food or drink opens himself to fey influence. The one exception to this is food or drink lawfully paid for at a Moon-moot, though many wary Algars will not touch the foodstuffs of the faerie-folk even then.
- b) Any mortal who begins bargaining with a fey, lays aside the protection of God with respect to the conditions of the bargain and enters into an Eldritch Compact. Those who do so are bound by the words of their promise, so mortals should take care. If you promise a fey lord that you will marry his daughter or else suffer some condition, then if you fail to do so you are at the mercy of these consequences, though you are still protected from other fey and their attacks.
- c) Any mortal who attacks a fey lays aside the Ward of the Saviour. This means that any fey can attack or slay him, though an exception is when a human or fey answers a challenge or enters into violence as a result of an Eldritch Compact. Then only the fey concerned can attack or be attacked.
- d) Any mortal who transgresses against fey law is also not protected, for example trespassing into a fey realm or stealing from the hoard of a fey lord, even unknowingly, can subject a mortal to a geas or to a fey challenge. This is the most grey and ill-defined of all the strictures and in ancient times a common trick was to spread fey gold where mortals would find it, often at the bottom of streams, and then claim the mortal had stolen it when the joyful mortal gathered it up and fled back to town. The Order of St Felix has now tightened the wording of this geas but some of the older fey, who live in remoter areas, have not yet been bound and in some places this is still a problem.

## Waxing and Waning of Fey Power

Since the times of St Felix, it is well known that the phases of the moon and the changing of the seasons affect the power of many of the fey, for these creatures are tied to the earth in a way that mortals are not. For example, most fey are at their weakest during the full moon, when the stars are veiled. This was the reason that St Felix decreed that the ancient moots would fall upon nights of the full moon, to avoid the sorcerous blandishments of the fey, though many still have potent magics even at this nadir in their power.

It is also true that most fey are weakest during summer: indeed, a number of the fey races actually fall into a kind of slumber around the feast of Beltane (the first of Waed-Monath or Midsummer's eve) that lasts until Lughnasa (first of Arn-Monath, known as harvest festival to some). Indeed, in some vales in Algandy, the villagers light torches and a huge procession winds its way through the surrounding forests on Midsummer's eve; a festival dating back to before the coming of the Empire, often with villagers dressed as monsters. Such processions are not without danger, for the fey are not the only denizens of the forest and all remember the story of Casperalis, where the villagers entered the wood but never emerged, leaving behind an eerie ghost town.

It follows then that the fey are strongest on nights when the moon is dark and in the middle of winter. Indeed, Bael-Monath is famous for a day known as Samhain on the first, when the Old Powers are at their height and Midwinter's eve in Yeol-Monath is similarly ill-omened. On nights of the new or "dead" moon, even boundary stones cannot be trusted to keep the old powers at bay and indeed some fey are awake only on the nights when the moon is dead.

Some of these creatures are not subject to Eldritch Law and cannot be bargained with, hence those who live close to the hunting grounds of such creatures take great pains to avoid them. The hill-towns in the Vale of Castel experience great disturbances in years when Samhain falls on a night with no moon. Called the "Night of Dead Gods", no villager sleeps and everyone huddles in the church as invisible things stalk the streets outside, moaning and knocking on doors and windows, pleading to be let in. Houses are often damaged, and walls can even be knocked over, yet no-one has ever seen the creatures causing this mischief. Needless to say, the inhabitants of the vale are very happy indeed that a dead moon rarely coincides with Samhain.

These seemingly simple rules about winter and summer, dead moon and full moon cannot be always be relied upon everywhere since some fey show precisely the reverse behaviour; e.g., The Corn Lord, who stalks the Valley of Navard on the morning of Lughnasa, or the Red King, who delights in forest fires at the end of summer and is the reason most peasants burn off stubble after harvest, to appease him with an offering of smoke. Hence, most travellers consult with the local priest, who will warn them of any errant fey who wax and wane in an atypical manner that live nearby.

Some of the commonest fey are those that are not afraid of iron. Though most such spirits are relatively harmless, they can cross the boundary stones at will and some are neither friendly nor subject to the laws of St Felix or Eldritch Law. Often living at the bottom of wells, or at the edge of fields, or perhaps near a prominent local stone, such spirits are usually

no more than mischievous: though some can become dangerous if the spirit is not placated in the proper way. Thus offerings of milk or chicken blood can often be found left at tiny shrines that are adorned with crudely carved pagan idols.

# Society

## Capital

Algandy's capital is undescribed.

## Government

Algandy is a monarchy. It could be supposed that King Vergang described in a footnote to page 22 of Book 6 is the present king, but he could well be a predecessor to the current king.

Another royal mentioned in the gamebooks is Prince Estabulo (footnote 30, p49, Book 6), who once attacked Crescentium.

### *Trivia*

The niece of the king of Algandy, Talia, is married to 'the Elfin Earl', Earl Montombre of Albion.

## Language

The official language of Algandy is Algandarve.

## Culture

It is safe to assume that Algandians consider themselves to be more cultured and advanced than those peoples comprising Ellesland's nations. However, they are still nonetheless a feudal society.

Algandy is also a True Faith nation – it is said that King Vergang and the Pope devised the Crusades themselves.

More than other sister nations in the West, Algandy is said to be a mysterious place with its dense forests "infested" with elves (Book 6, p63) and other faerie and mysterious magic.

Unlike Kurland, Algandy has a 7-day week (Book 6, p100).



# Geography

## Regions

### *East*

- The Duchy of Radipon
- Parivan's Cross is an out-of-the-way location in the backwoods of Algandy. It's a place where the elves come out of the mulberry shade to trade moonwine and starskein with men, and a great place to pick up that love potion or engage the services of a sorcerer. Parivan's Cross is most famous for its annual fair:

The fair only occurs over the three days of Samanoce, when the weather cools into Autumn. For many years, men of the cloth (the True Faith) have been present without trouble, offering their own services in various capacities, as counsellors, augurs, or alchemists. Recently, the Duke of Radipon, lord of the nearby lands, has become extremely devout, however, and disapproves of the fair. His personal priest has launched tirades against the 'superstitious' activities. No concrete action has been taken, however, other than the imposition of a Fair Tax on visitors, which adds to the duke's coffers. (Jamarl).

### *Northwest*

- Carind

### *Southwest*

- Mantla

## The Duchy of Radipon

(Jamarl)

The Duchy of Radipon lies only a week's journey from the bustling Coradian port of Allereve, whence many Algandarve knights have fared forth on the Crusades, but it could be in another world entirely. Bounded on the west by the foothills of the Occalian Mountains and on the east by the deep woods of Chauncery, only the ancient north-south road known as Wend Way connects it to the rest of the kingdom. Apart from the building of this cobbled highway, the region was little-touched by the legions of Selentium, and as the tide of the Empire receded, the folk of the region still worshipped their ancient gods – the Twins Hev and Heva, Narion who takes the form of a giant mastiff, and grinning Ther, whose pot-bellied idols are still hidden in the hollows of trees. The latter are found ever more rarely, as the end of Selentium brought missionaries from Albion who spread the message of the True Faith.

With these missionaries, and the gradual peace that came after the chaos of the end of the Selentine Empire, Radipon settled down to become an unremarked patch of the north-western lands – a little more rustic than some places, perhaps, and with a particularly rich tradition of

village tale-telling. These tales include the story of doughty St Olaf, who slew seven pagan trolls with his staff, and the Lady of the Well, whose glade lies in a secret corner of the forest and who will answer the questions of allcomers. Choose your question wisely, however, for only one is granted in a single lifetime.

Though these folk-tales are the subject of exaggeration and laughter, there is no denying the deep, silent presence of that remnant of primeval forest known simply as the Wood, which presents a dark line of trees at the edge of many a field, the threshold of which is not lightly passed by the most prosaic oat-farmer. Elves do live there, and many things that are not human: best not spoken of, but impossible to deny.

On the edge of the Wood, and at the centre of Radipon's occult reputation, is the crossroads known as Parivan's Cross. Here, four rough roads meet by an enormous oak tree called the Sign Tree, and nearby four homely homesteads share a few fields. Hardly even a hamlet, yet once a year the large clearing to the east of the Sign Tree is thronged with visitors, and the Pomaderry family's barn is converted to an inn. The specialties of the fair are fortunes, herbs, potions, and most wondrous of all, certain goods brought by dainty figures flitting in by moonlight from the Wood. The wines and cloths of the elves are marvellous and command high prices. Woe betide those who attempt to bargain with them, however, and even more to over-eager merchants who might attempt to penetrate the Wood in order to procure larger quantities.

# Approximation

Algandy may be approximated in one of two ways:

- By modern geographical coincidence but also by a process of elimination comparing its counterparts Kurland to Germany and Chaubrette to France, as Spain.
- Alternately, looking at maps of the Middle Ages, Algandy may approximate better to Brittany.

# Analika

This kingdom was formed in the preceding centuries from the two old formerly warring states of Anar and Lika and there are still tensions between the remnants of the two duchies. Added to these are the cultural and geographical tensions between different members of the twelve tribes, whilst the current pressures from neighbouring countries and the New Selentine Empire are keeping the population focused, it is not inconceivable that if these outside pressures were lifted the country would once again split, possibly shattering back into individual tribal territories.

## history

Lika is the central mountainous region of Analika, roughly bound by the South Emphidian mountains from the south and the countries of Molasaria and Emphidor to the west and east, respectively. This region was settled in ancient times by a people driven from their homelands to the northeast, and over thousands of years, their culture and mythology spread down from the mountains and mixed with the coastal and central Anari beliefs.

Major towns include Gospic, Otokac, and Grahac, most of which are located in the karst fields of the Greki river along with the Splitvic Laketowns high in the mountains. Famous people born in Lika include the infamous sorcerer Nikola Tassla, Count Starkevic, and the artist Miroslav Kral.

The climate of Lika is alpine and very cold in winter when the dark mountains and darker pine forests echo with the howls of wolves. In summer and spring, cattle and goats graze, and grapes and other fruits and vegetables are grown on the alpine meadows and in cleared regions of the forests.

Settlers originally migrated from the east into Lika 300 years before the founding of the Old Selentine Empire. After the settlement, Lika became part of the Duchy of Likkora. Lika then became a part of the Kingdom of Analika 500 years later when Duke Tomislav became king of the joined Duchies. After the fall of the Selentines, and the numerous intrusions of Hudrastani into Analika, the nobility recognized King Kuloman of Hudrastania as their King; until the invaders were thrown out after the joining of the twelve tribes of combined Analika.

Among the twelve noble tribes a king was chosen. Of the twelve, the tribe Gusiki is the most powerful in Lika.

Anar is a region on the southern coast of the Coradian Sea, comprising over two thirds of the kingdom of Analika and spreading between Molasaria and Emphidor. The Analikan capital, Katanos, is situated on the northeast coast within the Bay of Kator. The hinterland ranges hundreds of kilometres inland until it reaches the heavily forested and mountainous region of Lika.

On the coast, the climate is warm and mild; further inland, it is moderate continental. In the southern part, winters are milder. During the centuries, many woods have been cut down and replaced with bush and brush. There is evergreen vegetation on the coast. The soil is generally poor, except on the plains where areas with natural grass, fertile soils, and warm summers provide an opportunity for tillage. Elsewhere, land cultivation is mostly unsuccessful because of the mountains, hot summers, and poor soil, although certain cultures, such as olives and grapes, flourish.

The largest coastal islands are Dugi Ojot, Ivac, Milos, Milat, and Stryc. The rivers are Zirmanja, Netabac, Jilac, and the wide Danic. The Coradian Sea's abundant fish stocks along with the immense number of coves, islands, and channels make Analika an attractive place for mercantile fleets, smugglers, and fishing in general. Anar also has a number of ancient ruins that are attractions for adventurous types: Paklenica River Ruins, Kornati islands, Krka Caves and Mljet Island.

Other large cities in Anar include Trugir, Ploke, Trilja, and Imotsi.

## The Selentines

Anar was a loose coalition of tribes with a rich a vibrant culture of temples and statuary when the Old Selentine Empire established its protectorate south of the River Netabac.

The historian Momas wrote in his book, *The Provinces of the Selentine Empire*, that all of Anar was fully civilised by the 4th century after the establishment of the Empire. Whilst it is true that the urban centres, both coastal and inland, were almost completely Selenised, the situation in the countryside was completely different. Despite the Anarans being subject to a strong process of acculturation, they continued to speak their native language, worship their own gods, and follow their own traditions and socio-political tribal organisation, which was adapted to Selentine administration and political structure only in some necessary areas.

The collapse of the Empire left the region to its own devices, subject to tribal rulers until the twelve tribes formed the united kingdom of Analika rulers.

As part of its military campaign to shore up the southern regions, the New Selentine Empire raised a military outpost on the north-western coast, which was in turn ravaged by an Analikan attack that destroyed its capital, Salina; an event that allowed for the settlement of the nearby abandoned Draksban Palace in Spala, Tomislav, and Ragusa by fleeing Salinitans. These cities and towns remained influential as they were well fortified and maintained their cultural and political connection with the New Selentine Empire. The two communities were somewhat hostile at first, but as the Analikans realised the benefits these contacts provided, this tension increasingly subsided. A degree of cultural mingling soon took place – in some enclaves stronger, in others weaker – as Selentine influence and culture was more accentuated in Ragusa, Spala, and Tomislav.

# Society

## Government

Analika is ruled over by King Milos, based in the capital of Katanos. He is granted the title of Lord Protector of Analika by the New Selentine Empire, though it is a title that does not sit well on his proud shoulders. Count Starkevic ‘assists’ with the administration of the Lika region, and indeed, the King seems happy for this state of affairs to continue.

## Religion and Myth

The early gods of the Anar are still reflected in ancient temple complexes and crumbling ruins:

- **Sabazis**, the ruler of the underworld, called the “Anaran Horseman” and was also god of the seas. He gained a widespread importance especially after the Selentine conquest. After the Holy Church’s teachings were adopted, his symbolism continued as representations of Saint Georgios slaying the Dragon, Vermis.
- **Thiurdos**, like Tor of the north, is said to be the wielder of lightning and thunderbolts. His main temple was utterly destroyed by a lightning strike, but shrines still abound to this day.
- **Derzelas** was a chthonic god of health and human spirit’s vitality. His temples have been converted into monasteries and hospitals, and his image is often used in place of the Saviour in rural areas.
- **Kotys**, a goddess worshipped with much revelry by the Anar tribes. A cult of Kotys even existed in ancient Emphidor. According to Emphidian sources, her priests were called baptes or “washers” because their pre-worship purification rites involved bathing. Her worship included midnight orgies and was therefore heavily persecuted by the church and were driven underground. Her temples lie abandoned, though strange sounds may be heard on moonlit nights. Her name is believed to have meant “war and slaughter”.
- **Bassareu**’s name derives from “bassaris” or “fox-skin”, which was worn by his cultists in their mysteries. His was, in many regards, a farming and harvest cult and still exists in small villages and the like.
- **Bendis** was a goddess of the moon and the hunt; she was worshipped by female priestesses on the bare hillsides and in open-roofed theatres. These places often serve as community gathering places in the current age.
- **Thanos**, the jealous sibling of Sabazis was born dead and then came to life, an incomplete being, neither male or female. The blue-skinned Thanos is a wicked being

who challenges Sabazis' right to rule the underworld and seeks to steal souls destined for solace and keep them for itself. In essence, Thanos is the creator of the vampires that plague this land and is worshipped in a propitiatory manner through blood sacrifice and garlands of garlic flowers. His temples are ancient hidden catacombs, riddled with the undead and their evil servants.

The peoples who settled Lika and the inland areas of Anar brought their own gods with them, and they have withstood the impacts of Empire and Church better than their Anari counterparts for the most part. The most common aspects of these gods were worshipped in sacred groves and caves rather than temples, and they appear in pairs or complementary twins/couples:

- **Pirun and Velas:** Pirun is a heavenly god of thunder and lightning, fiery and dry, who rules the living world from his citadel high above, located on the top of the highest branch of the World Tree. Velas is a chthonic god associated with waters, earthly and wet, lord of the underworld, who rules the realm of the dead from down in the roots of the World Tree. Pirun is a giver of rain to farmers, god of war and weapons, invoked by fighters. Velas is a god of cattle, protector of shepherds, associated with magic and commerce.
- **Jariloi and Morlana:** fertility and vegetation god, Jariloi, and his sister and wife, Morlana, goddess of nature and death. Jariloi is associated with the Moon and Morlana is considered a daughter of the Sun. Their interactions, quarrels, and reunions formed the basis of the seasons.
- **Svantivit and Trigluf:** these twin (and sometimes composite) deities were associated with soothsaying, divination, and horses. They were worshipped in strange secretive ceremonies.
- **Sedcha and Tavas:** these deities are associated with shamanic traditions, each represent an Inbetweener, a thing that should not exist but does. Both are children of Jariloi and Morlana and were born during the mythical Deep Winter Death, which the two gods experienced. Sedcha is an hermaphrodite, bearing both male and female parts and capable of reproducing with itself, and represents people who perform roles that go against their gender, such as female warriors and male housemakers. His followers are seen as good luck at celebrations and weddings, but often shunned the rest of the year. Tavas is a more sinister deity, often associated with Thanos these days. He was stillborn but came back to life. He was a great sorcerer and summoned the dead to do his bidding, as do his followers. Tavas is associated with evil fogs and autumnal decay.

### The True Faith in Analika

The words of the Saviour reached Analika when Saint Andreas, the Walking Apostle, and his followers arrived sixty years after the Saviour ascended into Heaven. Saint Andreas found the land filled with blasphemous heathens who worshipped violent gods of lightning and death and lorded it over the impoverished farmers who tilled the land. Within the dark

mountains of the land dwelt many evil creatures whose power was fuelled by the blood and worship of the fearful locals. Saint Andreas spoke against the false priests and monsters. At first, the people turned against him, but he resisted their blows and insults with dignity and humility and gained much respect. Saint Andreas then walked into the blood-stained temples and brought light to darkness and showed the people that their gods were foolish demons and instead placed upon the altars the symbols of the Saviour and converted many of the priests to the True Faith. Many of these first converts became saints in their own right. Saint Andreas then walked along the twisting mountains paths into the dark lairs of the vampires, wraiths, and other unholy creatures and brought the light of God amongst them. With his Sword of Purity and the cross of the Saviour, he sent the beasts back into the hell from which they came. When his work was done, he returned amongst the simple farmers and laid down to rest. As he slept, an angel of the Lord came down and took his soul to a better place. His remains were then taken by the Thirteen Most Holy, the first faithful to be converted, and divided amongst the chapels of the land, holy relics for those who seek to understand the great apostle himself.

The black-robed priests of the True Faith are a common sight amongst the rural towns and mountain villages, however their job is not an easy one, for they still fight against the legacy of the Old Gods and the fear of dark wings in the night. The True Faith, in time, has sought to replace the ancient deities of the land with appropriate saints: Saint Stavros the Provider, who made a meal from nothing, is popular amongst farmers; Saint Yamos is venerated by fishermen and is famed for fighting against a tentacled beast in the Coradian Sea; and Saint Georgios is much beloved of warriors and knights.

The Analiki interpretation of the doctrine of the Selentine Faith is often called into question by the Pontiff. It is seen as polluted with superstition and ancient rites of unholy demons. However, its bishops insist that it is a pure form of the teachings of the Saviour as shown to them by Saint Andreas. To outsiders, the followers of Saint Andreas appear dour and dark; they take their roles very seriously and preach against the dangers of spiritual pollution. However, they do exhibit practices unknown outside of Analika, such as the wearing of garlands of garlic flowers at baptisms and the placing of holy wafers upon the eyes of the dead whilst incanting prayers against the undead. The priests are often seen to protest against those that seek to follow the old ways, and they actively encourage the procession of holy relics and saintly triptychs through the villages on these days. Many claim that the proceedings at these holy rituals are markedly similar to practices that they seek to replace. Followers of Saint Andreas never ride – not even their bishops – and many claim that this is the reason for the sect’s slow conversion to modern practices and the provincialism of the priesthood.

The priesthood of Analika rejects the tenets of the Tamorian interpretation of the True Faith, deriving its teachings from the Selentine Church, and yet to outsiders, there are many similarities between the wayward followers of Saint Andreas and the Tamorians. The priests of Saint Andreas denounce in the pulpits the Molasarian Church on a weekly basis; if they had true political power, then their vehemence would lead to war. Instead, it simply generates mistrust amongst the peasants of the two regions. Unlike the proselytising Molasarians, the Analika priests are happy just to keep their own flock in line and do not seek to spread their thoughts beyond their land’s borders.

# Geography

## Regions

### *North*

- Coastal Islands
- Draksban Palace – though inhabited for generations, the undercity is sprawling and still mostly unexplored.

### *Northeast*

- Katanos (Capital)

### *East*

- River Danic
- Abandoned temple complex of Varpulis, an Anaran deity of storm winds and companion of the thunder god Pirun.

### *Southeast*

- Gospic

### *South*

- Grahac
- The mountains and mountain lakes
- River Ruins

### *Southwest*

- Ploke

### *West*

- Krka Caves
- Olive groves and rivers
- Trilja

### *Northwest*

- Ragusa
- Spala
- Tomislav

## Creatures of Analika

- Vampires – Very common, though many of these frightful beings were simple peasants before death, drained and left to freeze on the mountain sides, these damaged dead are of a more animalistic aspect than the dark lords and ladies who created them.
- Werewolves – Very common. Indeed, it is said, behind their backs, that the entire Tikac tribe are nowhere to be found in their villages on the nights of the full moon because every man, woman, and child is hunting the forests.
- Vila – Elves; beardless and graceful male elves are often thought female by the few humans who spy them.
- Khovan – Essentially, a grey gnome of a more domestic aspect; they respond well to flattery and bribes but are terrible when angered.
- Polyov – Field Spirit – fae being similar to a woodland gnome though more farm focused; they are equally happy to respond to bribes and flattery but will often simply leave if not happy.
- Pereles – White Lady
- Leshyi – Wadwos
- Blud – Shadow Walker



- Mara – Nightmare
- Chuhater – Ogre
- Potoplenysia – Drowned maiden; aquatic spectres
- Potoplenyk – ‘Water Wight’ – the drowned kings of the ancients – they are/were often venerated/placated with female sacrifice, which leads to many potoplenyk having a ‘harem’ of potoplenysia.
- Bolotianyk – Marsh Folk

# Asmulia

The nation calls itself “Asmulia”; however, peoples of the north of the Coradian Sea refer to it as Asmuly. A citizen of the nation is called an “Asmulian”.

This nation might be described as once-great in influence arising from its capital Selentium, but this has now diminished in the world order of Legend.

## history

It seems that Asmulia suffered much from the schism in the Old Selentine Empire that saw power shift away from Asmulia’s southern Empire to the northern Empire based in Tamor, where the new Emperor’s heirs now preside over the New Selentine Empire to the north.

Still, culturally, Asmulia retains significance as the home of the True Faith Church in Selentium. It is not clear whether the Saviour of the True Faith, Gatanades, ever came to Selentium or his teachings were simply rejected there and, indeed, whether Gatanades was there executed, or condemned to such by one of Selentium’s governors in the Saviour’s homeland.

Nonetheless, as the Old Empire crumbled, the Emperor Jostorux converted his empire from pagan worship to the True Faith, which remains to this day.

Selentium, and hence much of Asmulia, is protected now from the barbarian hordes that have sacked the great city several times, thanks to the New Selentine Empire’s frontier to the north.

One might infer from the absence of Asmulians from the seagoing vessel origins list in pages 176-177 of Book 6 that Asmulia has little, if no, navy, notwithstanding its northern coastline on the Coradian Sea: a matter that, perhaps, contributed to – or is a symptom of – the nation’s decline in international affairs.

## Society

### Capital

Asmulia’s capital is the famous city of Selentium, situated near the Coradian Sea in Asmulia’s north.

## Government

It is not clear whether there is now an Emperor who presides over Asmulia as historical successor to what was once the full and now Old Empire. Dave Morris says in Book 6 that the Pontiff of the True Faith does not reside in Selentium due to the raids of the past, so it may be that the Emperor, likewise, governs from afar – leaving the nation open to the influence and politicking of the local lords.

## Language

Curiously, the language of Asmulia is not Angate or an older form of that language that exists in the New Selentine Empire, but rather, it is Kurlish.

This suggests that perhaps in the Old Empire, Kurlish was the language throughout the Empire and, indeed, was adopted as the tongue of the subdued tribes that would later form the nation of Kurland. Kurlish might then have been preserved in the two lands whilst the schismatic northern Empire that became the New Selentine Empire adopted Angate as its own language in differentiation.

## Geography

In Book 6, we read that Asmulia is sparsely wooded (p162). Perhaps this is so due to the Old Empire's clearing for timber to support war efforts against oncoming barbarians. If so, it might be inferred that any remaining elves hold great animosity towards Asmulians.

It is also worth noting that, to the naked eye, the Holy City of Ibrahim would appear to be within, or just beyond, Asmulia's southern (and no doubt disputed) border with the Caliphate of Zhenir.

## Regions

### *North*

- Coradian Sea
- Selentium

### *East*

- Border with New Selentine Empire
- River Felda
- River Syr

### *South*

- The Sleetmarsh

### *West*

- South Emphidian Range

## Famous Inhabitants

Arguably, the Saviour of the True Faith, Gatanades.

# Approximation

The name alone is very suggestive of approximation with Italy (or Italia, in that nation's own tongue). However, there are some divergences with the historical experience of Italy:

- the shared tongue with the East Frankish peoples that comprise Germany;
- the loss of the seat of the Holy Roman Empire to the northern part of the Empire; and
- the absence of the Pontiff from the holy city of Selentium.

# Chaubrette

Chaubrette is a slender nation running north-south from the coast with the Mergeld Sea to the north, running between Algandy to the west and Kurland to the east, right down to the Coradian Sea in the south. It could readily be assumed the islands depicted on the south coast are within Chaubrette's dominion. The western border is also broken by the canonically undescribed Duchy of Lavasse.

Unlike the name 'Kurland', Chaubrette would appear to be the natives' own name for their nation.

We are not given a term for one who is from Chaubrette, perhaps they are 'Chaubrettoman' or 'Chaubretter'. Nonetheless, one or many or things with an origin in Chaubrette are referred to as 'Chaubrettan'.

## history

Chaubrette's origins are described in passing in Book 6, the only gamebook in which the nation is mentioned.

Chaubrette may well once have tasted its fair share of war, but the clear suggestion in Book 6 is that it is a country at peace. Perhaps by exploration or conquest, we find that the people of Albion have a strong Chaubrettan heritage.

Chaubrette has, in the past, warred with its neighbours, Algandy and the coastal principalities of Kurland. This, and the seagoing inference in the Culture section below, suggests that naval supremacy has been a hallmark of Chaubrettan military and pre-colonial expansion.

## Society

### Capital

Chaubrette's capital is undescribed.

### Government

Nothing is said about whether Chaubrette is a monarchy or otherwise, but given that its neighbours to the north, west, and east all have kings and its historical approximation (see below), it is fair to assume that Chaubrette also has a ruling monarch.

## Trade

By inference from the table on pages 176-177 of Book 6, it seems the Chaubrettans are second only to the Ferromaine League in sea-going proficiency. This places them strongly as probably traders and merchants with far-away lands, if not a navally strong nation.

## Language

The official language of Chaubrette is Beaulangue. It is spoken in no other nation, though one might infer that it is spoken in part, if not wholly, as the language of the Duchy of Lavasse.

## Culture

In Book 6 we are told on page 125 that the Chaubrettans have been ‘softened’ by years of peace, hence requiring tourneys to occupy themselves. This stands in contrast to the more warlike eastern neighbours of Kurland, and the description on page 22 of Book 6 of the ‘perfect gentle knight in an elegant castle’ suggests strongly a proud, high, and class-divided culture in Chaubrette.

Given its approximation (see below), one could readily infer the cultural nuances and differentiations from neighbours of the Chaubrettans.

Chaubrette is also a True Faith nation (named as such on page 43 of Book 6).

The Chaubrettan week consists of 7 days, in harmony with Ellesland and Algandy (but not Kurland, which has an 8-day week) (Book 6, pp100-101).

## Geography

Chaubrette is a somewhat open canvas geographically, though in Book 6 it is clear that it is, in places, heavily wooded, though perhaps not as much as Algandy and less so in the south approaching the Coradian Sea. It is also more mountainous than Ellesland.

## Regions

### *North*

- The Glaive
- The Gouge
- Meore

### *East*

- Vantery

### *South*

- Coradian Sea

### *West*

- Border adjoins the Duchy of Lavasse

### *Northwest*

- Quadrille

# Approximation

Chaubrette is approximated, by geographical coincidence, use of language, and by a process of elimination – comparing its counterparts Algandy to Spain and Kurland to Germany – as France.

In maps of the Middle Ages, it may be more correct to say that Chaubrette approximates with the West Frankish Kingdom.

# Cornumbria

This nation exists on the island of Ellesland, lying on the west coast bordered by Ereworn to the north, Thuland to the northeast, and Albion to the east and south.

## history

The proud and battle-hardy warriors of Cornumbria sit in their cold hill forts over the dark months, passing time with sword-feats, games of chess, drinking, and scheming. They emerge in spring to raid and war with their neighbours or, in times of peace, with the enemies of their neighbours in return for gold and livestock. The ferocity of their battle cries is legendary.

Cornumbria was first mentioned in Book 1 (Bretwald was a friar in Cornumbria, where he learned Lughwyd, the old script of Ellesland), but Book 6 first details the people and the place. Its people comprise the original inhabitants of Ellesland before various conquests, and as such retained some of its pagan traditions and religion until the arrival of the True Faith that then took hold in the nation.

Dave Morris' adventure, Wayland's Smithy, actually takes place – in part – in the country. From this we learn that those encountering a Cornumbrian will quickly be struck by the lilting, musical quality of his speech. We are also told that Cornumbria is known for the strong blue ore known as Cornumbrian Steel, or Fairy Steel.

## Society

### Capital

No capital is named in the gamebooks, though the appearance on maps of Criggen Varras on the west coast is suggestive that city is the largest and possibly, by inference, the capital.

### Government

Cornumbria has a High King elected by, and subject to, the vote of the chieftains of the various lands comprising Cornumbria.

### Religion

Paradoxically, despite their fierce and war-like reputation, the Monastic Church is a very real and respected authority in Cornumbria, and churchmen are treated with great deference. The



broadly-practised religion is the True Faith, though a form more isolated from the rest of the adherents to that Faith – somewhat more monastic and independent, having no centre of authority within even Cornumbria itself. Adherence therefore depends on the missionary efforts and theology of the nearest abbey to a given settlement.

## Legends

In RJ Lambert's PBEM campaign, Peter McDonnell (aka Haraigh) tells a tale from Cornumbria:

Haraigh smiles. *"Reminds me o' a place back home, Loch Argle. There is said to be a monster that lives in the loch that does not show itself much. Tales both good and bad are told about it. It is said to have helped Saint Brendin defeat a demon that almost had the better of him. It is also said that it ate a man that was better than most, but then the Lord moves in strange ways. Mayhap it be just a force o' nature, mayhap it be a thing o' evil. I dina know, but it be large by all tales, an' prestigious strong. It is said to have once crushed a twenty-foot boat just with its tale. I never heard o' it fightin' anybody except that demon, just crushing and eating."* Haraigh suddenly grins. *"But it might just be a trick o' the eyes after all, and the rest made up around the fire on cold boring nights. Another mead innkeeper!"*

## Geography

### Regions

#### North

- Pen yr Helgi-Du (Mountain of the Black Dog): this forbidding crag is reputedly haunted by a great black hound who guards whatever ancient remains lie within Carnedd y Filiast (Cairn of the She-Dog). Those who spill kinsman's blood on the mountain are killed, leading some to conjecture that the mound contains the remains of an ancient ancestral chieftain.
- Trefriw: Located on the side of Pen yr Helgi-Du, this sleepy sheep herding township recently lost almost all of its menfolk when Cadfan and Aneirin, the estranged sons of the chieftain, decided to cross swords over the grazing rights on the mountainside.
- Lodd: This tiny, fortified village (Cawd) is a stannary post and guards the Lodd Gorge. Lord Malachi is old and bitter but tries his best to keep the belligerent miners in check. Lodd is further detailed in Ordo Draconis issue 2.
- The Abbey of St Columba: perched high on the Morda Fell is this ancient monastery, caught in the feuds between the Tarlech and Mordalech.
- Turso is the town and seat of Lord Tarlech. He broods from his stronghold after the poisoning of his wife and plots against his rival, the Lord of Mordalech.
- Dun Mord is the fortified seat of the Lord of Mordalech. His son, Aedon, is held hostage in the house of Tarlech as a safeguard for the terms of a recent treaty, brokered by the Ard-Righ (High-King).

## *East*

- Shriven Hills
- Coronach Marsh

Once past Coronach Marsh the road winds over high hills and past cold, still lakes. Travellers will find themselves in the lands of King Manach.

Nestled amid the Coronach marshes is the Old Kingdom of Esgalen, known since its invasion as Eastmarch. This tiny fief was annexed by Hadric's father forty years ago and now labours under the oppressive rule of the Marcher Lord, Sir Alek Brandwyn.

- The fortress of Eastmarch guards the approach across Dobby's Walk. Though formally now a part of Albion, Eastmarch was once the ancient petty kingdom of Esgalen.
- Close to the border lie the lands of King Manach, whose hospitality is genuine, if unsophisticated. He has a son, Dionet, and a very pretty daughter, Taileh. Over the moors from the king's hall lies The Giant's Quarry, a great ringed earthwork. The Quarry, Manach's Hall, and the reception characters may find in both places, are detailed in the adventure Wayland's Smithy.

## *South*

- Balstaple (city)
- Darbon Barony
- River Tawny

## *West*

- Hadran Sea

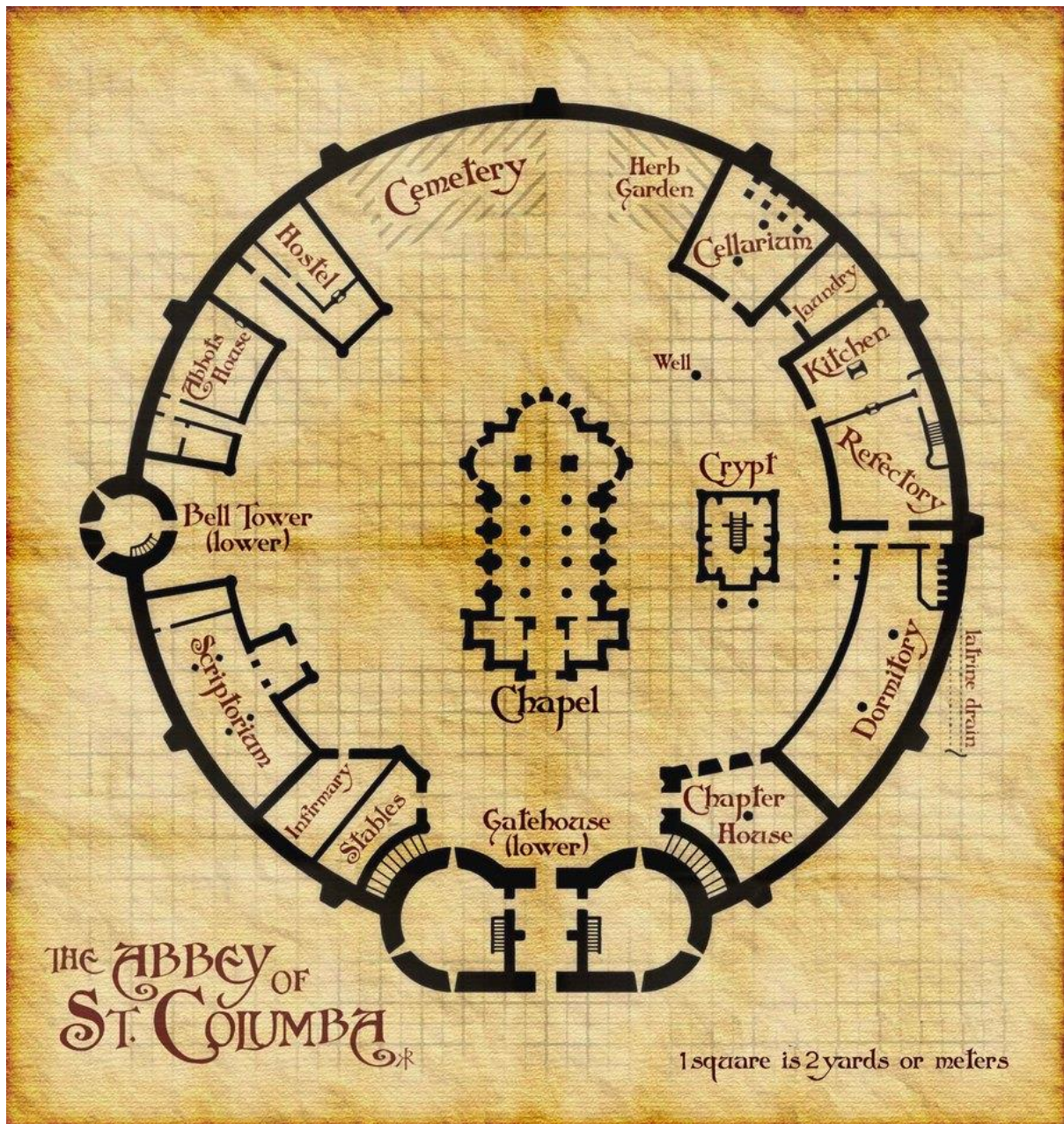
## *Northwest*

- Criggen Varras (city, possibly capital)

# Abbey of St Columba

*(Ydars)*

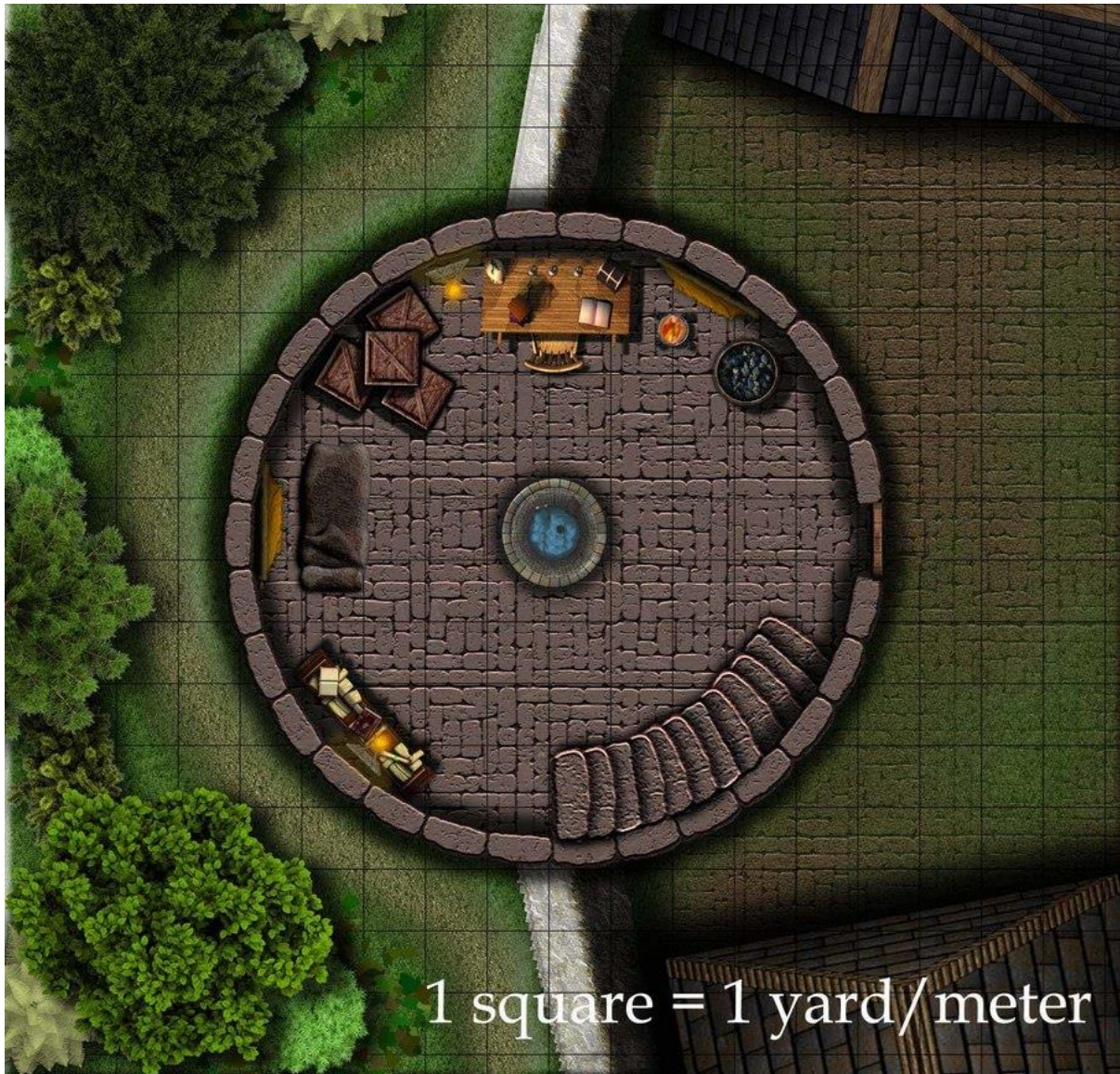
The Abbey of St Columba perches precariously atop the Morda Fel, a slab-like mountain that dominates this whole region of northern Cornumbria and can be seen for miles around. The abbey is home to twenty monks and is shown below. Most of the wealth of St Columba's comes from wool, and the abbey flocks are vast and roam the Morda Fell shepherded by the lay-brothers of the abbey. Life in the abbey and significant personalities are detailed in Ordo Draconis issue 2.



*The Abbey of St Columba. Map copyright Kristian Richards.*

The abbey is detailed extensively and used as a backdrop in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and hence there are many interior maps of the Abbey, with more to follow in *Ordo Draconis* issue 3, where a short follow-up adventure will venture into the catacombs beneath the Abbey.



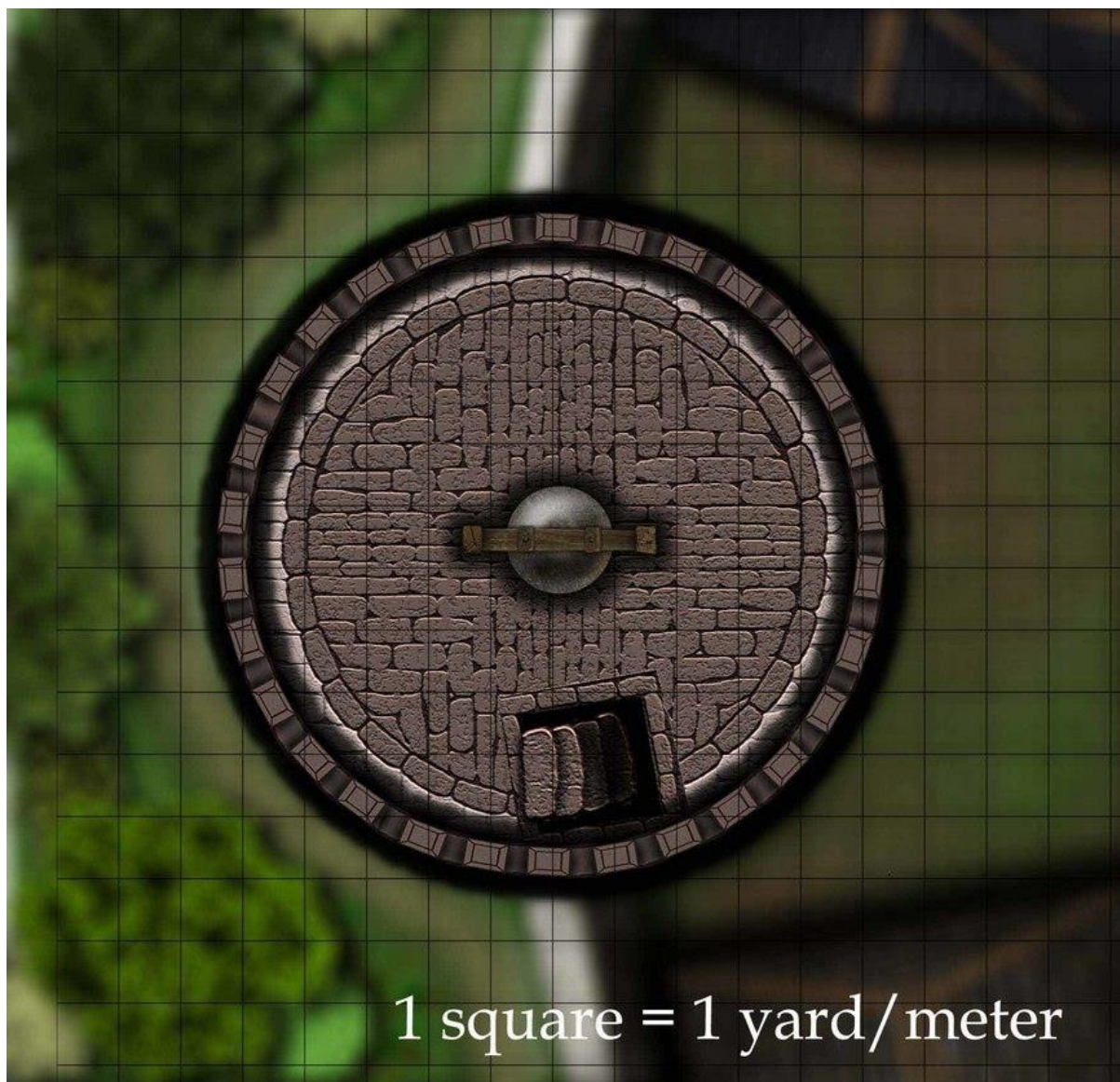


*The ground floor of the bell tower. Map copyright Stephen Dove.*

The bell tower is situated on the west side of the abbey and is three storeys high. It is used as a look-out post and also acts to defend the west side of the holy enclave. Arrow slits allow defenders to protect the approaches to the abbey from the Lodd Gorge.



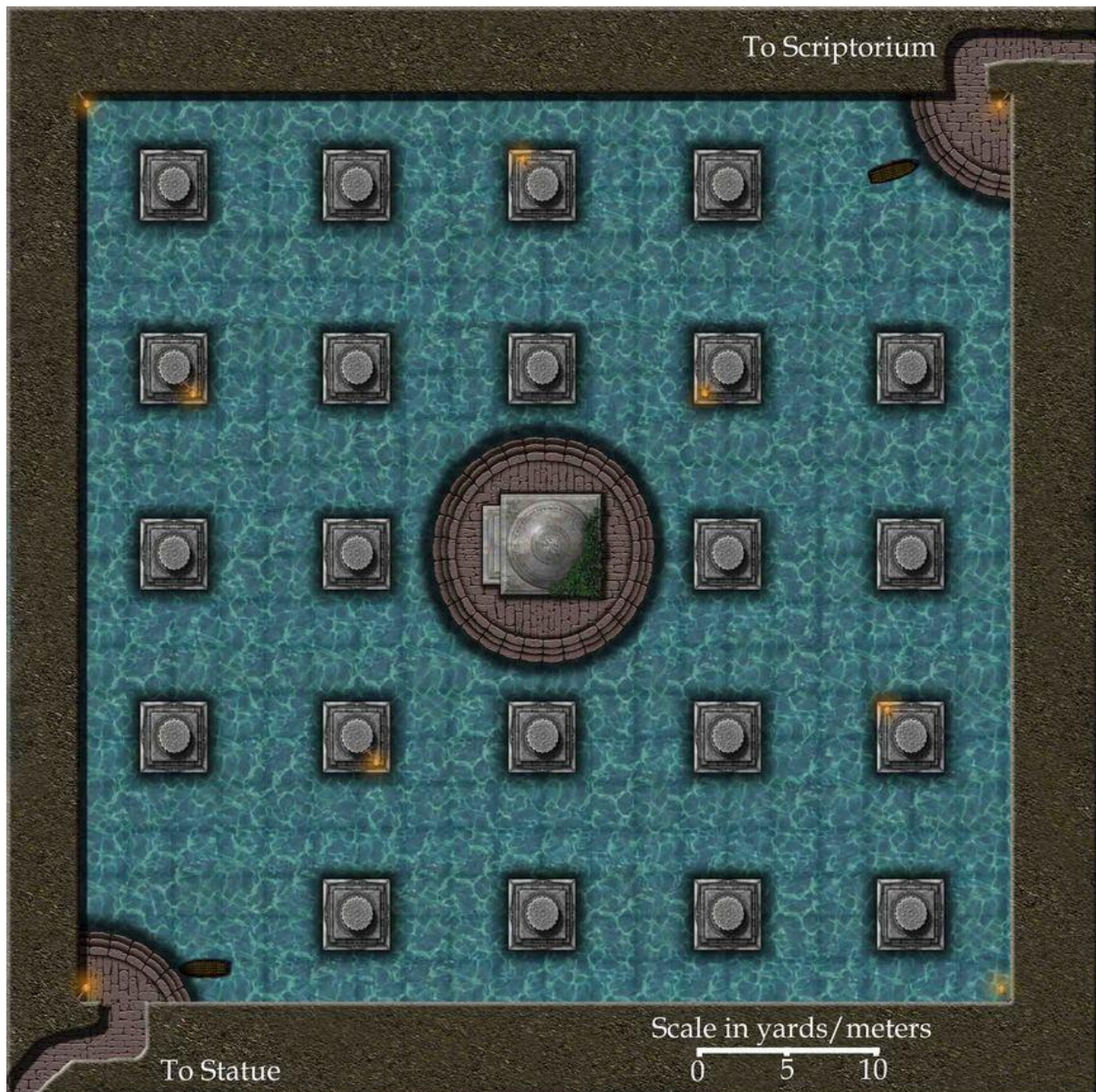
The first floor of the bell tower doubles as a guard room and is always manned, night and day, by one of the monks, who will ring the bell in times of trouble.



*The roof of the bell tower. Map copyright Stephen Dove.*

On the roof of the bell tower is a huge bronze bell fashioned in Criggen Varras over a century ago. The bell can be heard all the way to Lodd when rung and has often signalled a raid across the border from Ereworn.

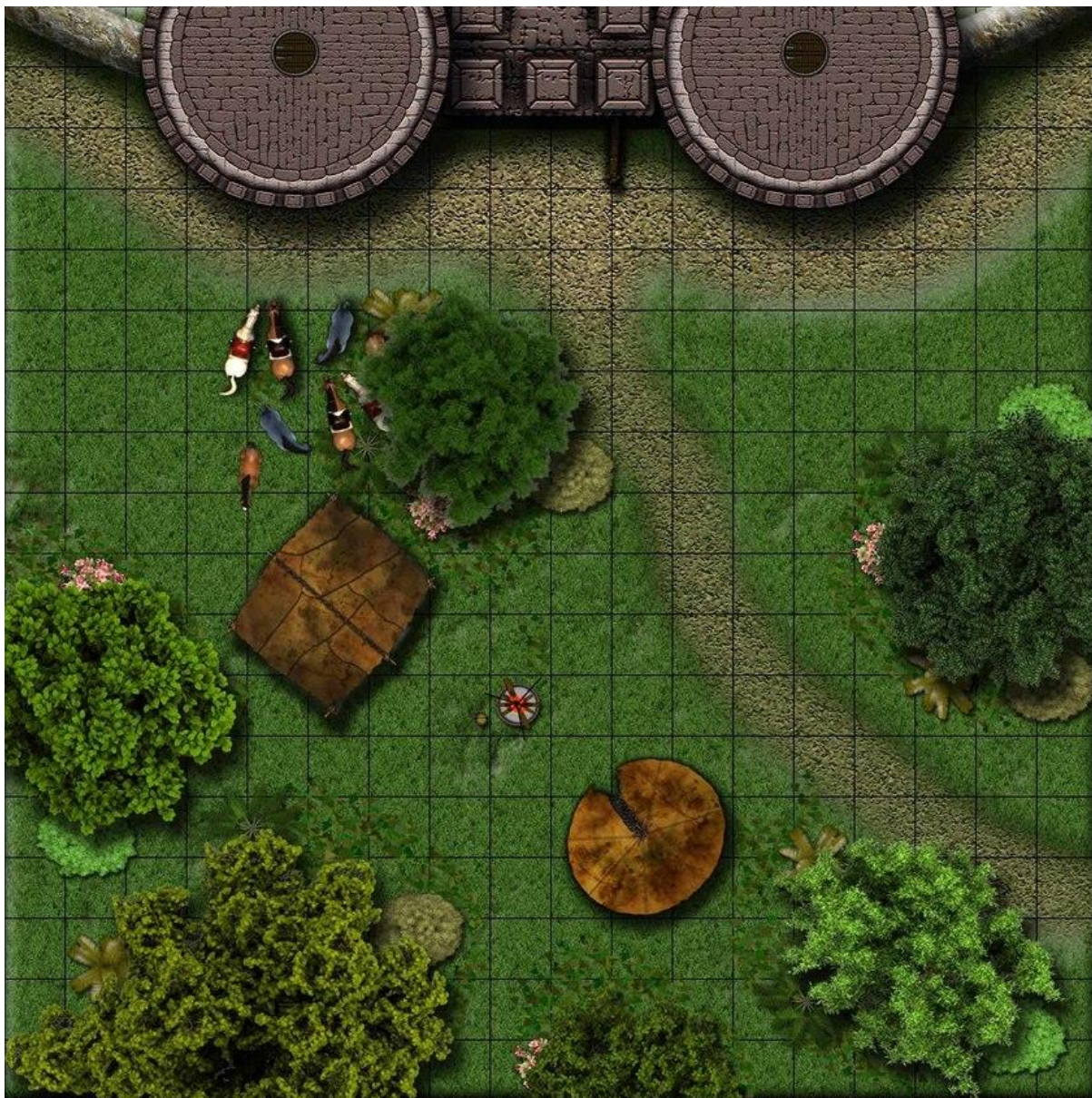




*The abbey cisterns showing the entrance to the labyrinth and the tunnels that lead out of the abbey. Map copyright Stephen Dove.*

The cisterns predate the abbey by over a thousand years and include the entrance to a trap-filled catacomb that the monks now use to hide their books and other valuables from raiders, and which also conceals a redoubt where the monks hide during times of trouble. Only the abbot and the librarian know the safe ways through the labyrinth and even they do not know all its secrets. There is also a tunnel that allows the monks to leave the abbey covertly in times of siege.





*The gatehouse of St Columba. Map copyright Stephen Dove.*

The abbey has been sacked twice in its history and hence now boasts stout 3-metre-high walls and a solid gatehouse. The instability of Northern Cornumbria, where cattle raids, blood-feuds, and border wars seem to be never-ending, means that the abbey must be constantly wary as it houses a great many treasures.





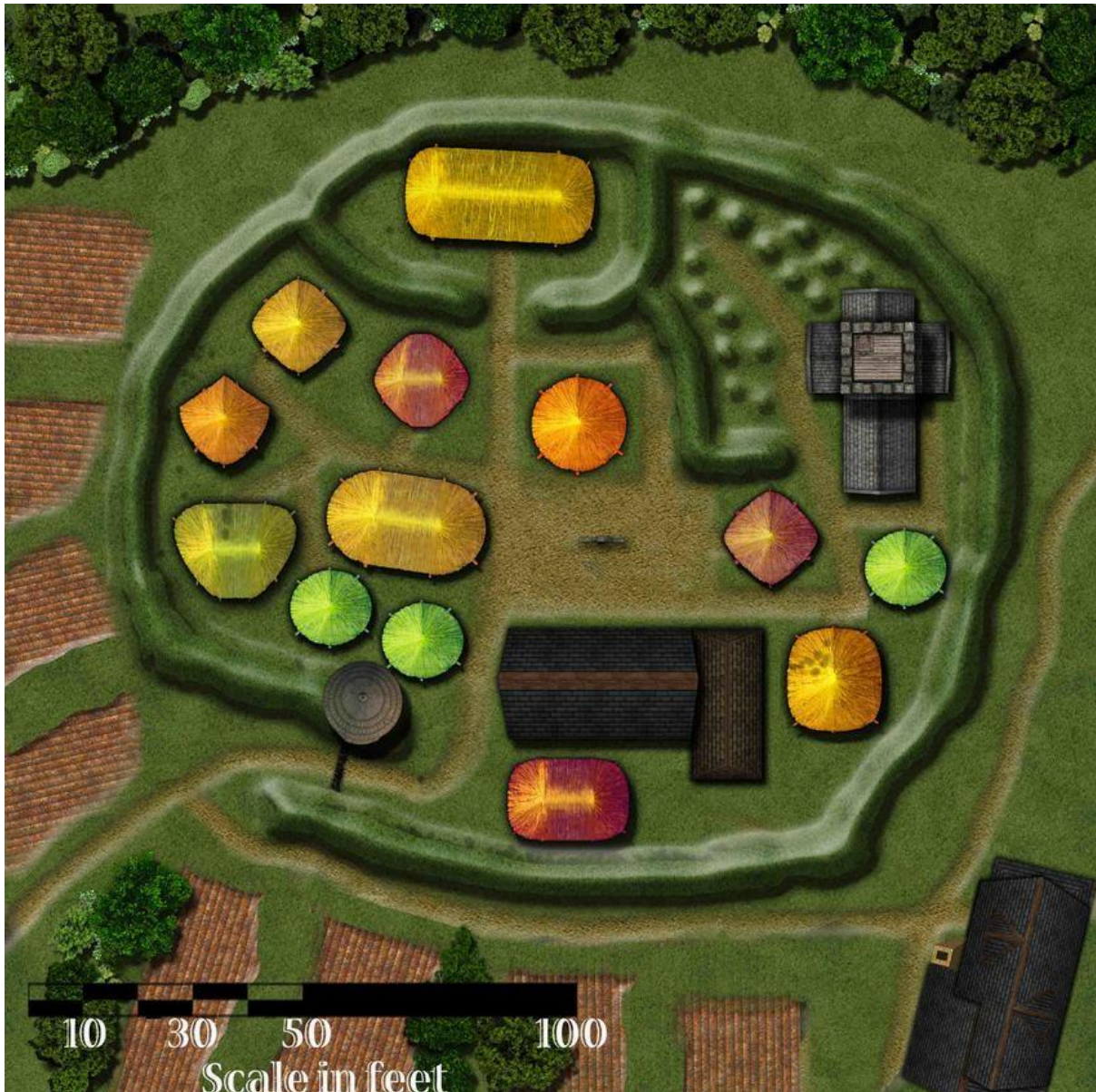
*The chapterhouse of St Columba's showing the east tower of the gatehouse and the walkway that defends the eastern approaches. Map copyright Stephen Dove.*

The chapterhouse is where the monks hold their daily meetings to discuss abbey business and to warm themselves in front of a roaring fire before braving the chill mountain weather. This is the preserve of Abbot Rhys, and it is from this room that he conducts most of the running of the abbey, aided by the Precentor, the Sacrist, and the Cellarer.



## The Cawd of Lodd

Close by the abbey, at the foot of Morda Fell, is the Cawd (fortified village) of Lodd. Lord Malachi of Lodd is fiercely loyal to Talidd Tarlech and hence has no love for the abbey or those who stay there. If the miners of the Lodd Gorge were less troublesome, then Lord Malachi would enjoy the leisure to steal sheep from the abbot or cause all kinds of other mischief. As it is, the dyspeptic ruler of Lodd has his hands full with the belligerent and unruly mountain folk who mine tin and slate in the nearby fells.



*The Cawd (fortified village) of Lodd. Map copyright Stephen Dove.*

Lord Malachi has to rule over the fierce miners, who are so violent that he must maintain a personal force of twenty Huscarles to contain them. Riots are common and it is difficult to enforce the law because the miners have so much power: the tin they produce creates enormous wealth for Lord Tarlech, at least when the miners pay their dues. Lord Malachi's

principle duty is to ensure that all tin is weighed and stamped and he therefore has no tolerance for tin smugglers.

### Darbon Barony

*(Bulya<sup>3</sup>)*

The Barony of Darbon is a tiny fiefdom lying on the south-west coast of Cornumbria close to the border of Albion and hemmed in from the north by the forbidding Coronach Marsh, which drains into the Tawny and Glasseel Rivers.

The wind-swept hills are grazed by sheep and cattle, both for dairy and beef, in large herds and the entire Barony is crisscrossed by hundreds of tiny and not-so-tiny trade roads, some dating back to Selentine times. The lowlands are dominated by heather and moorland, and much of the land is perpetually moist underfoot.

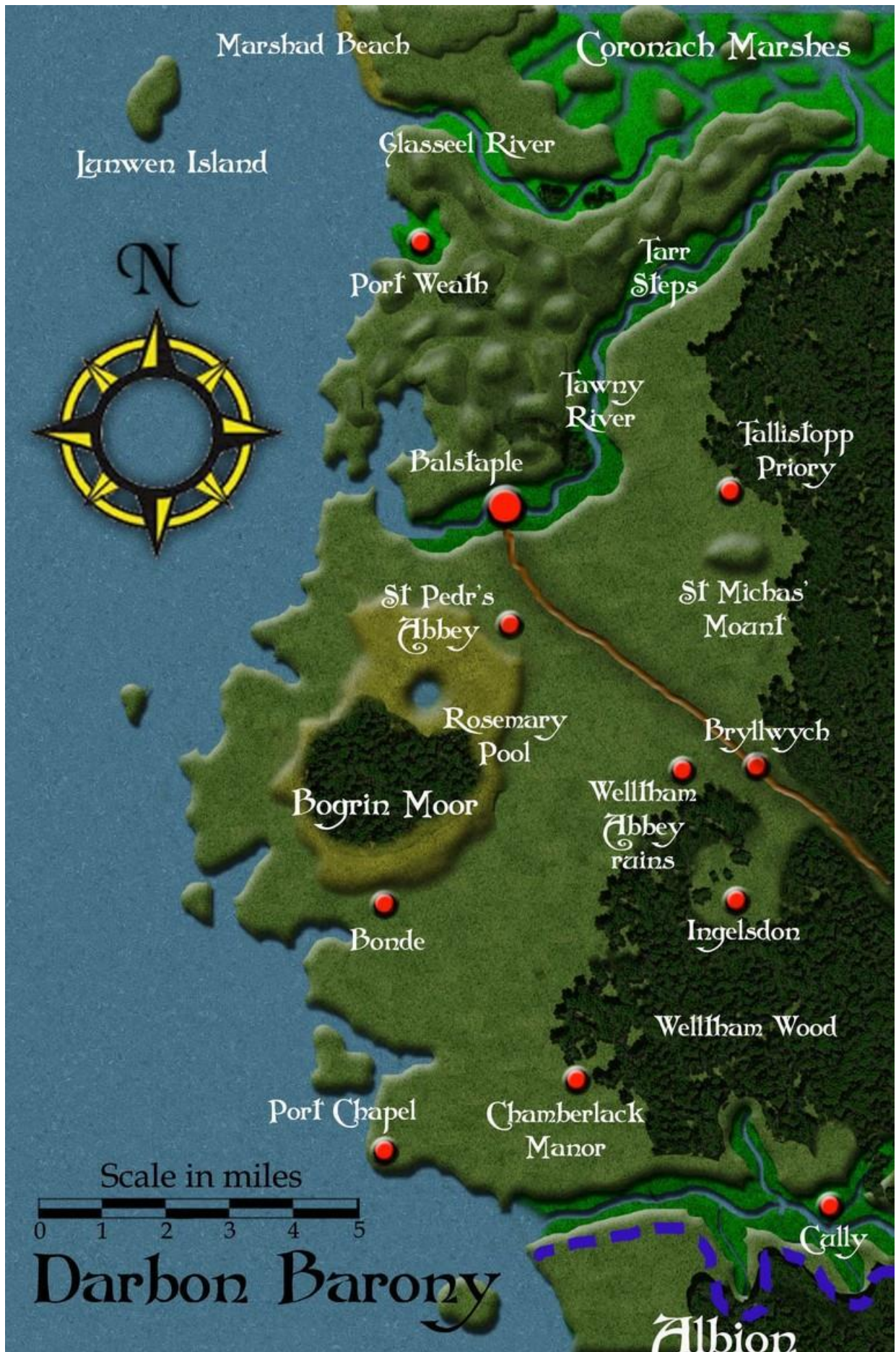
The Barony is famous for the small but hardy ponies, which work the farms and take the produce to market, and the woods throng with great numbers of deer, both red and fallow.

The Trade Road runs to the southeast from Balstaple through thick ancient forest to the Albish city of Netherford.

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<sup>3</sup> To call this all my own work would be churlish, there is a ton of real SE-English and Welsh places and history, a dash of pulp-culture, and a bunch of mucking about.





## Capital: Balstaple

Located on the storm- and rain-tossed coast of Darbon Barony, Balstaple has been an administrative, agricultural, and commercial centre for more than a thousand years.

Sitting beside the estuary of the River Tawny, Balstaple has become a prosperous port in the last few decades. A market town from its earliest years, it enjoys Borough status and has recently begun minting its own coins.

The mint operates within the walled district of Lwydford and supplies much of Ongus' currency, with heavily guarded caravans setting out on a weekly basis for the capital of neighbouring Albion; the particulars of why Hadric (or rather certain advisers) insists on the use of these 'foreign' coins in Ongus' marketplaces is best left to marketplace gossip.

The trade in coins with Albion by this most southern part of the kingdom is watched with some concern by those who hold power in the northern reaches, but as long as they continue to receive their tithe neither they, nor indeed the local baron, are inclined to interfere.

The mint is highly productive – its output can be estimated to be in excess of one million coins since its establishment – but recently its fortunes have declined sharply as its royal patron's fingers slowly slip from the reins of power.

The name of Balstaple derives from "Balds Stapol" meaning the post (trading post) of a man called Bald. The small trading post that grew up here in preceding centuries, on a ford of the river, gradually became more important than the original hilltop settlement that had grown out of an ancient hillfort in the dimly remembered past.

The town developed quickly as a market and commercial centre, with pottery, metalwork, and other industries that served the surrounding area.

## History of the Barony

Darbon was once the cornerstone of one of Cornumbria's most significant ancient western kingdoms, and its remnants – in the form of hilltop circles, burial mounds, and standing stones – from those far days are scattered throughout the hills and woodlands of the region.

Darbon's people are predominantly of original Elleslandic stock, with the ancient tongues of their forefathers being spoken well into living memory, and these ancient words remain in place names, rural dialects, customs, and culture.

Darbon is not in any way untouched by Albish and Thulandic hands, but it has remained always a place with deep roots in the earth. Indeed, it has suffered greatly from the predations of Thulandic and Mercanian reavers in past years, and some of those raiders established themselves in scattered villages along the coast.

The original name for the Darbish was Dyfnewens (meaning 'dwellers in the deep valleys' – a strange name to have at a time when the majority of the population clustered in hilltop forts on high ground).

Darbon was one of the last areas to be conquered by the Selentines and later invaders have had almost as much difficulty – the region was not formally claimed by the Kingdom of Cornumbria until early in the last century.

Even after this, Darbon's people were often referred to as Wealmen, an old Albish term meaning 'foreigner'.

### Settlements and Places of Interest

#### *Bonde*

Bonde is a town with a problem. Bonde's problem, in their own words, is witches... although no-one has ever seen one, and no-one has ever met one. The town's constant blaming of its – admittedly copious – woes on witches has made it a laughing stock throughout the barony. Though, if one ever stays overnight in Bonde, one soon stops laughing... and begins to believe.

#### *Cully Chapel*

Cully Chapel, situated in the tiny hamlet of Cully on the border with Albion, is reportedly the smallest church currently in use in the country. The more superstitious folk wonder what sort of flock this tiny, cramped stone building was built to accommodate, and why the priest has always been one of the fey Cralwen family, from far up the river valley.

#### *Inglesdon*

Inglesdon, in Ilsingwyth parish, is where the seat of the Baron of Darbon resides. The manor-house is quite expansive and set on a hill close by the woods, and it is known that the Baron is an avid hunter.

#### *The Priory of Saint Pedr*

One of the wealthiest religious houses in Darbon. Situated some twenty miles outside Balstaple, it was founded by Warel Wasten, Bishop of Balstaple. Since its construction, it has attracted support from a wide variety of prominent gentry of Darbon and their tenants. It is said that Baron Blaidd-Drwg took a personal interest in the construction and funding of Plympton Priory in the first few years after its foundation. Although the Priory has received a large number of exquisite and expensive gifts over the years, there does seem to be some concern over exactly where all of them have gone.

#### *Tallistopp Abbey*

Founded a few years before the rule of Baron Blaidd-Drwg on the order of the Cornumbrian Crown, the saints to whom the abbey is dedicated are of a decidedly local bent, and the monks who live there seem to be rough-hewn men with warrior's eyes. A large parcel of lands and privileges was afforded to the abbey, and the Crown has taken steps to protect the abbey and its inhabitants from interference in the future.

A large number of carved keystone masks of human faces are illustrated on the walls and naves of the main building and many of them seem to depict past rulers of Cornumbria. It is rumoured that they can whisper secrets of the past to those with wit to hear them...

## ***Tarr Steps***

Tarr Steps is an ancient clapper bridge, spanning the Tawny River. It has 12 arches and some chunks of stone weigh up to 5 tons. It has been swept away by floodwaters several times but has always been rebuilt... if not by the local crofters, then by others who walk by night. A local legend says that it was built in one night by the Devil after a local giant had challenged him to a strength contest. Whatever the truth, the bridge has never remained down for more than seven days, and the local people claim to have seen huge figures moving about the bridge at night, as if inspecting the workmanship on the latest repairs.

## ***Welltham Abbey Ruins***

Under the patronage of Belwin of Tefwe, Sheriff of Darbon, monks from an Algardish order established a monastery within the Welltham Wood at Bryllwyth, 10½ miles north of Inglesdon. After only five years, the community suddenly moved their monastery to Fyrdell in the west. The brothers have refused to discuss their reasons for the sudden change, but it is whispered amongst the charcoal burners that Belwin had hoped the holy order's presence within the woods would dispel a curse of some sort...

## **Notable Inhabitants**

### ***John Gyll***

A poet and storyteller in Balstaple. He has come to the notice of royalty for his subtle wit and stunning prose.

### ***Father Jack Randall***

Father Jack lives in Balstaple. He has gained quite a name for himself in the breeding and raising of ratting terriers, and the dogs are highly sought after in towns with rodent problems.

### ***The Silent Moor***

A man without hope, this once-great warrior was brought back as a prisoner from the Crusades. He was given to the owner of The Moor Hen by his drunken captor on a whim when he was struck by the whimsy of the term 'Moor' and the name of the alehouse. Nassur is a proud and honourable man that desperately wants to return home – although the innkeeper is kind, fetching and carrying grates on the nerves of a Sword-Son of Opalar – but without money, what is he to do?

### ***Char Kingsman***

An ex-priest and keen fisherman, he has recently been seen peering for hours into the waters of the estuary and his catch has dwindled to nothing. He claims, if asked, to be waiting for 'her'.

### ***Willam of Croyde***

Willam of Croyde is a huntsman and wanderer upon the moors. It is not known where he originated from, and he is not known to be a violent man. But on one particular occasion, he was said to have gone mad and slaughtered a dozen pelt-trappers who were working the Glasseel River.

When he was arrested and thrown into jail, the only words he would say were ‘T’was for my family’. He was released when the men were discovered to be poachers, but since that day he has searched the riverbanks day and night, growing wild and feral, whispering to himself that he must find ‘little Tarka’.

### Folk Tales and Legends

#### *Chamberlack Manor*

Said to be one of the most haunted dwellings in Ellesland and abandoned by its owners decades ago, the crumbling heap echoes with strange sounds and phantasmagoria. One popular explanation for the emanations is that they are of the Chamberlack daughters who were found murdered on a nearby hill. Their footsteps are heard walking along corridors, and a low moaning has been heard emanating from behind the walls. What truly lies within remains unknown...

#### *Earl of Ruin*

The Earl of Ruin is a strange and bewildering custom in North Darbon. Official church doctrine has it that the Earl of Tyrily was fleeing from Erewon after the land fell into darkness and subsequently became shipwrecked on Marshead Beach. Each year, the locals re-enact the story over a three-day celebration. On the final day, the masked earl rides backwards on a donkey and is led down to the beach, where he is thrown into the sea!

Though now a day of fun and merriment, the man riding backwards down to the sea to be cast in summons dark echoes of long ago pagan sacrifices to the sea demon Nuckelavee.

#### *Lunwen Isle*

Lunwen Isle, off the north of the coast, is reputed to be the entrance to the underworld – a place in pagan mythology where souls that had departed this world went to. It was said to be a world of delights and eternal youth, where disease was absent and food abundant.

Those who have visited the isle during daylight claim it is nothing but a lichen- and sedge-covered rock, but still on certain nights strange forms can be glimpsed capering upon the shores of Lunwen.

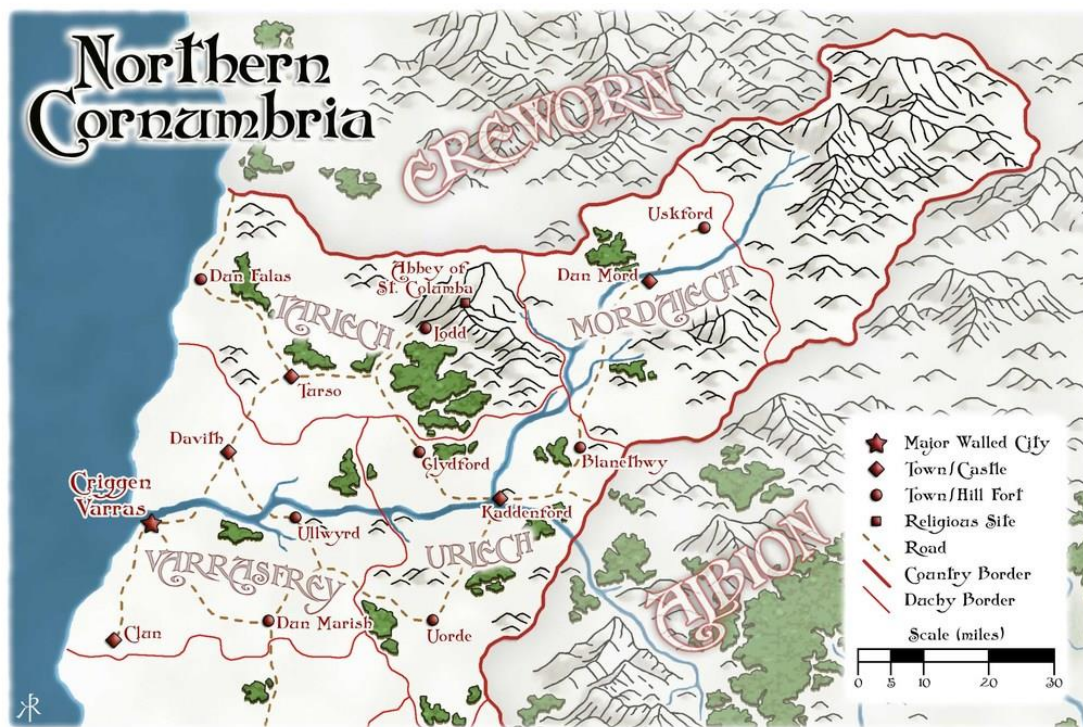
### Northern Cornumbria

(*Ydars*)

Northern Cornumbria is the focus of issue 2 of the fanzine *Ordo Draconis*. In this non-canon e-zine, Cornumbria is envisaged as two distinct cultural regions: the mountainous north, where the Mabinoi mountain tribes dwell in what was once the Kingdom of Cumri, and the marshy south that is still the preserve of the fierce Dani tribes who ruled the ancient Kingdom of Erain. These two peoples fused to become the modern nation of Cornumbria. From a designer’s point of view, the north of Cornumbria is characterised as Welsh in feel and language whilst the south is modelled with the flavour of medieval Ireland.

Cornumbria is ruled over by the High-King (or Ard-Righ) from his seat at Criggan Varras.





*Northern Cornumbria showing the border with Ereworn and Albion. Map Copyright Kristian Richards*

Straddling the central region of Northern Cornumbria are the two feuding petty kingdoms of Tarlech and Mordalech. Slap in the middle of this worn-torn land is the Abbey of St Columba and the fortified village (Cawd) of Lodd. This abbey and the surrounding land are the subject of an adventure entitled For Whom the Bell Tolls in issue 2 of Ordo Draconis.

## Approximation

Cornumbria could be assumed to be either approximated to partly Wales and Ireland, or perhaps also including elements of Scotland, or wholly Ireland. Peter MacDonnell, on DragWars, posited:

Cornumbria is a mountainous land, both Wales and Scotland are but Ireland isn't. Cornumbria has a clan setup which all three have. Cornumbria has an offshoot religion, which all three had but Ireland's was the strongest. It also has the book of Dathnon – this is an Irish thing, the book of Kells. Very gifted monks this is Scots and Irish. I think that Cornumbria is a mix of all three.

In addition to Wales and Ireland, the etymology of the word Cornumbria – when combined with the country's Celtic outlook – also supports the notion that Cornumbria includes non-Anglo-Saxon aspects of historic Cornwall.

In Ordo Draconis issue 2, Cornumbria is described as divided into two culturally distinct regions. The north is portrayed as Welsh in character whilst the south is equated with medieval Ireland. Where Cornumbria grades into Albion, in the south, its character becomes that of medieval Cornwall and Devon.

# County of Braeburg

This county is small, lying directly due north of Kurland and sitting on the coast of the Glaive. It is shown only on a map in Dave Morris' Book 6.

A provincial headquarters of the Knights Capellars is known to be located somewhere within Braeburg (Bk6 p226).

## Inhabitants

The Knight of the Worshipful Order of St Wythan, Runalf of Corvenna, Provincial Commander of the Knights Capellar in Braeburg, encountered in "Mungoda Gold" adventure in Book 6 in charge of The Deliverance crusader ship.

## Approximation

The County of Braeburg could be approximated to a number of places:

- The Frisians
- The Abodrites
- Lovaringia
- Perhaps the equivalent of modern-day Belgium

OR

Given its name and location, a good Middle Ages candidate for Braeburg is actually Burgundy, which was sandwiched between France and the Holy Roman Empire. In 1032AD, the Holy Roman Empire swallowed up Upper & Lower Burgundy, and the remaining County of Burgundy clung to the Holy Roman Empire before finally being absorbed into France in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Since 'Germany' is the accepted analogue for Kurland, Burgundy would be a logical analogue for Braeburg.

# Duchy of Lavasse

This ‘nation’ is barely described in the Dragon Warriors gamebooks, lying landlocked between Algandy and Chaubrette in the Western Mainland.

## Approximation

Two options currently exist for the real-world counterpart to the Duchy of Lavasse, as follows:

- 1) It is suggested that the Duchy represents, in European Dark Ages history, the kingdoms of upper and lower Burgundy combined.

OR

- 2) Given its geographical location and name, it is suggested that Lavasse is an analogue of the Middle Ages country of Navarre, which was sandwiched between France, Leon, and Barcelona (i.e., France and ‘Spain’).

## Comments

JumpingJimminy had this to add about the Duchy:

*Golden Dragon 3 is not set in Legend, right? Well, I was wondering; how coincidental is it that Golden Dragon 3 is set in “Lalassa” when Golden Dragon 2 and 4 are both connected to Achant, which is just a few hundred miles away from the mysterious “Duchy of Lavasse”? Considering how little is known about Lavasse, is it a nod-and-a-wink to Golden Dragon 3? Does anybody know what Oliver Johnson’s & Dave Morris’ views are on Golden Dragon 3. Could it be used as non-canon inspiration for Lavasse?*

# Elder Realm

*(Golden Dragon 4)*

The Elder Realm is the mysterious secluded home of a cadre of honourable warlocks and their countrymen (GD4 Introduction). Very little is known about this remote and tranquil land, although it is possible that the Elder Realm may be a former Old Selentine colony (GD4 Introduction, s81, s96). The inhabitants of the Elder Realm are known to call one star constellation by the name Thurifer, or Pious Acolyte (GD4 s274). The location of the Elder Realm is unknown.

The only warlock of the Elder Realm that is known to venture in other lands is the Warrior Mage (GD4 Introduction).

# Emirate of Marazid

Marazid is ruled by an Emir – currently Emir Sadalmelik. It is the least fundamentalist of the three Ta'ashim lands where the merchants and administrators enjoy a rich and comfortable life. They are less interested in obeying the Ta'ashim codex to the letter, but still obviously pay at least lip service to its concepts. It is the best chance Coradians have of trading with the Ta'ashim people without Crusader interference. The Emirate is home to a large number of Badawin tribes who have control over all the inland trade routes. Major cities include Hakbad (capital), Rida, and Kiri Umoor (port).

## Kiri Umoor

*(Bulya)*

Located in the Emirate of Marazid 240 miles southwest of Rida on the coast of the Gulf of Marazid, Kiri Umoor is the main port of Marazid. Kiri Umoor is famous for its hospitality and for the defences put up by the great and valorous Ta'ashim who call it home.

This city is situated at the foot of a high mountain, on a promontory of solid stone with high cliffs, from which it cannot be attacked. It has ancient style walls of small circuit, but is rich in water and flowing fountains everywhere. In the middle of the town, there is an open cavern at the end of which water flows out of the solid rock, as if from a cistern. It flows westwards out of the rock face below the town with so much water that it could turn a millstone. Indeed, this source of water is similar to the many other fountains of freshwater of which the town disposes. The inhabitants use it for cooking and for watering their horses and camels.

The city is strategically positioned from all sides; only from the north could it be attacked from a hill which is of the same height. But between the city and this place, there is a rather deep valley. The Coradian crusaders consider the city of Kiri Umoor to be formidably strong, only by siege could the ancient trading port be won over and even then the strong ties with cities further inland would make holding it almost impossible.

It is situated in an extremely fair site with strong and fitting winds. It abounds in grain, oil, and meat, not to mention the many other goods that make their way there from the south and the east.

The people are of many different backgrounds and cultures, and it is no surprise that many ships' crews call it home. Very relaxed in its religious outlook compared to the inland cities, there are shrines and temples to a hundred different deities scattered about the 'Foreign Quarter' (which is now threatening to encompass over half of the city).

Information, honour, and lives can be bought or sold within a moment...

# Emphidor

Emphidor is a True Faith country that occupies much of the southern shores of the Coradian Sea, dotted with small islands and fishing villages – and is itself self-occupied by its fallen past, known as its “Golden Age”.

## history

At its zenith (“the Golden Age”), Emphidian culture led the world in thought and technology. In some respects, it remains to be exceeded – for instance, the science used to create automatons described in Book 4 and the Onyx Prowler described in Book 6. In militaristic terms, the Emphidian empire was said to have brought the once-mighty Kaikuhuran Empire to its knees to the far south. Furthermore, at one stage in the latter part of its Golden Age, Emphidor controlled Selentium itself as a city-state.

Symptomatic of a nation now seriously in decline is the existence of “Emphidian Fire”, a sticky substance thrown in pots at opponents in sea battles – harking back to an era when Emphidor had a presence on the seas. However, on pages 176-177 of Book 6 one is not to expect to encounter an Emphidian ship at sea, suggesting their navy is now no more than fishing boats plying their trade about the southern islands of the Coradian Sea.

Nothing is said in Book 6 as to what brought the Emphidian Empire to ruin, but that ruin clearly left behind plentiful ruins and labyrinths for explorers to traverse. One can gather from other timeframes that the Emphidian Empire certainly predates Gatanades, who lived under a Selentine Empire (0 AS) and also given the Selentine Empire itself peaked at 100AS. Given the modern date is the late 10th century AS, the Emphidian Empire has certainly long been surpassed.

## Society

### Capital

Just two settlements are named in Book 6 in a map, and one suspects that Telios is the former capital, now considerably diminished in glory and appearance.

### Government

One suspects that local governance is as far as governance goes in Emphidor, with their security entrusted to the Selentine Empire once it had crushed Emphidor’s own soldiers.

Still, in the southern highlands, rugged men from ancient tribes liaise and even war with each other in petty battles irrelevant to broader conflicts.

The currency of the former empire, obols, are still traded by backward farming communities in the south.

## Language

Such was the influence of Emphidian culture in antiquity that it remains a classical language taught within the Selentine Empire and all respectable other places of learning. “Modern” Emphidian continues in largely the same form as centuries ago and is considered a complex language to learn. Ancient Emphidian, by contrast, is only spoken rarely within Emphidor and only beyond in the halls of learning of Tamor and other sagely places.

## Religion

In centuries past, Emphidor had a rich religion of mythology with a broad pantheon, elements of which were nearly carbon copied into early Selentine culture with different names. Emphidian faith included, for instance:

- the ferryman Keron on the Styx (the “River of Hate”), who takes the dead to the underworld, which in turn leads past the Asphodel Fields to Tartarus;
- the legendary man Ulixes and the demigods encountered in his journeys, such as Circe the enchantress who transformed Ulixes’ men into swine; and
- the Titans of the Gate of Time (Danak, Lurken and Vasgor), who are honoured by the naming of three peaks on the western side of the Harogarn Mountains. Nearby to these is reputed to be the Styx River which features heavily in Emphidian mythology.

Ever since the Selentine Empire adopted the True Faith, this faith has expanded into Selentine-controlled Emphidor – though in pockets, the old gods are worshipped still.

## Geography

Emphidor is bordered to the west by Asmuly and to the east by Analika, though it also borders at its north-western shore the Deorsk Ocean. On Emphidor’s southern fringes are Molasaria, the Principalities of the Crusades, and Hudristania.

In the north of Emphidor are grassy plains, small streams, and tiny villages tilling the soil around them with diligence but despondency at living in a land with little future but as a vassal-state of Tamor.

In its south, Emphidor features considerable mountain ranges once navigated through by ancient, now unmarked, paths used to conquer southern kingdoms in ages past. Now only shepherds and goatherds guide their flocks through these lonely slopes.



Emphidor is said to be poor in minerals and resources and, as such, represented little for military gain – hence the reason the original Emphidian Empire expanded to more fertile lands in an aeon past.

Amongst the islands in the Coradian Sea, the island of Kaxos is most famous amongst adventurers with its catacombs described in pp73-74 of Book 6.

## Regions

### *Northwest*

- Charoa
- Telios

### *West*

- The Island of Xathos.

## Approximation

Clearly the references to an empire long passed, fishing vilages on the Coradian Sea (approximate to the Mediterranean), the “Emphidian Tragedies”, and Ancient Emphidian mythological figures paints Emphidor as the Legend equivalent of 10th century Greece.

# Ereworn

The nation of Ereworn is described in Book 6 and illustrated in the scenarios of Book 3. It is a lawless place located in the mid-north-western section of the island continent of Ellesland, immediately south of Glissom.

## history

Ereworn would appear to have had a happier history than its present lawlessness suggests. Oliver Johnson in Book 3 describes that it was once ruled by the Elf-King Elvaron and protected by sorcerous barriers, bringing peace and prosperity. The nationhood under an elf is no small feat, and perhaps a matter Dave Morris preferred to overlook in recording Ereworn's history in Book 6. Be that as it may, the means of the nation's sorcerous barrier broke and with it an inversely powerful evil emerged in the land, bringing ruin to the small nation and ultimately the death of king and heir alike. Now lawlessness and the Black Death reigns as lords compete for the throne whilst the nation wars with Thuland, Albion, and Cornumbria alike. Curiously, there is no mention of war with Glissom, which might be explained between the lines in Book 5.

## Society

### Capital

No capital is named in the gamebooks, though one might assume that the location of Castle Ereworn in the Pagan Mountains was once, and perhaps remains nominally, the seat of the capital.

### Government

Ereworn is anarchic with no king, though perhaps were one to rise to the throne by force, some semblance of order (by diplomacy or iron fist) might arise.

### Clan of harbingers

Amongst the lawlessness of Ereworn has arisen a nasty business: assassination and subterfuge, the masters of which are the Clan of Harbingers. The assassin profession of Book 4 is linked to this Clan in Book 6, where it is suggested that a PC assassin might have originated from this clan. Elsewhere in Book 6, it is suggested that members of the Clan are equivalent to ninja of Japan.

# Geography

Ereworn is little described in the gamebooks and further confusion is brought by the seeming stand-off between Johnson and Morris as to Ereworn's true nature. One wonders if Glissom and Ereworn were left to Johnson as his sandbox to make scenarios in! Be that as it may, the significant feature is the Pagan Mountains in the eastern border stretching north to Glissom, and it may be safely inferred there are significant forests as per Book 3 – and to hide all those brigands lurking there! The coastal lands are a little harder to work out, though probably somewhat arable and probably normally supplied by rain striking the Pagan Mountains – when curses are not at work.

## Regions

### *North*

- Castle Ereworn
- Pagan Mountains
- The Village of Aodh

### *East*

- Grey Hills

### *South*

- Gullet Hollow
- Sulphur Bay
- Skull Island

### *West*

- Vale of Shadows

### *Central*

- Gallows Wood
- River Ereworn
- Village of Ereworn\*

## Aodh

(*Bulya*)

The village of Aodh on the borders of Ereworn and Thuland in the Pagan Mountains is tended by an ancient order of druids. The Druid of Aodh holds a sacred and unique position. He tends the naturally occurring eternal flame at the centre of village, which is believed to be a gift from Briar, a local nature goddess. The Druid is also wise in the ways of the world and advises the villagers on many matters. Only one of his apprentices will succeed his position on his death. To determine this succession, all the apprentices take on a new name and leave the village before the age of thirty for a period of at least ten years to travel to gain renown and knowledge. Those who return with the greater of the two as perceived by the Druid and the villagers, succeed the Druid on his death.

## Size & Significance

Apart from the sacred flame, Aodh would be a small mountain village of no real significance.

## Significant Residents

### *Journey (PC)*

Cadeyrn was born and raised in the village of Aodh on the borders of Ereworn and Thuland in the Pagan Mountains. He is an apprentice druid. Journey (as he is now called) began his search for “adventure” two years ago and is now on the island of Vagar. Journey (and his people) values experience and knowledge gained by living life. This means that he dislikes the flippant use of magic. He sees the potential of magic as in need of being tempered by wisdom to avoid it causing harm, much like a hot steel blade is tempered by the skill of a smith in a forge. Physically, Journey is a large man with a trimmed silver beard and imposing frame. He wears clothes made from animal skins and seems calm and confident in the wild. Around his neck, he wears a piece of polished black stone that the Druid used to stoke the sacred flame.

## Trívia

It is suggested that Ereworn is a close reversal of “Nowhere”, the term being one used for mythical places in imaginary tales elsewhere.

## Approximation

Looking at the map, one might think that Ereworn could adventurously be nominated as Northern Ireland’s equivalent, with the Clan of Harbingers an ancient equivalent to the IRA of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, a better theory exists: that it represents Wales, or some remnant of a Celtic people long past. The reference in Book 6 to druids is suggestive that the latter theory is stronger, as one might readily expect to find the Elleslandic equivalent of Stonehenge somewhere in Ereworn more than any other nation.

# The Ferromaine League

*(Jumping Jimminy)*

## history

### Ancient Times

According to ancient records, the first settlers in the Ferromaine region came from what are now the Principalities of the Crusade led by the prince of a mighty city defeated by the Emphidians. They came into contact with the Emphidians and other coastal groups on a number of occasions in the following centuries both in war and in peace.

They especially prospered through their trade in amber and were well-known for the quality of their horse stock. Over time, they began to adopt the dress and certain other customs of their neighbours and lost much of their more eastern culture.

### The Sellenic Period

The settlements that would become the Ferromaine League and some neighbouring tribes on their western border sided with the Selentines as they expanded. The local settlements even sent a contingent of soldiers to fight alongside the Empire's legions against their eastern enemies, and they were among those slaughtered at the Battle of Carthus.

Three Selentine Princes led three thousand families, mainly from the southern part of the empire but supplemented by native Ferromani, to found an imperial colony at the small port of Aqueia as a base to protect the territory of the Ferromani from the incursions of their hostile neighbours. From then on, Selentine influence over the area increased. More colonising families were sent from the Empire to Aqueia. Later, a great road was built connecting Aqueia to the heart of the Empire.

Gradually, the Selentines transformed their alliance with the Ferromani into a relationship of dominance.

After a brutal rebellion by their inhabitants, the cities of the Ferromani were granted partial rights of Selentine citizenship according to the Senate. Later, the Empire granted full citizenship to the Ferromani. The Via Cruxia was then completed, linking all the coastal trading cities of the Empire and continuing northwards to the rich grainlands of the Empire.

After the collapse of the Empire, the lands of the Ferromani ceased to be a province and the territory and for the first time the name Ferromania came to be applied to the region.

The small port of Aqueia had, over the years, expanded quickly and became a bustling capital.

### Current Age

In the following centuries, the Ferromani suffered the first invasion of the barbarians; in the following decades, members of the Twelve Tribes, Hubertians, Nomads from the east, and strange fey invaders from the northeast devastated the area.

Athani the Brazen laid siege to Aqueia and turned it into a ruin. Many of the mainland inhabitants sought protection in the nearby lagoons and coastal caves and shorelines. On the heels of the Athani came the Kurlish Orgethi, who not only invaded but also settled down in the region.

Aqueia was rebuilt as the magnificent city of Ferromaine, which is now one of the most powerful cities in Coradia. Ferromaine is a massive city of splendours and canals, and the riches of its merchant families are on display wherever one may look. Built on the ruins of Aqueia, there are many legends and stories within the great city (see Legends of Ferromaine, below).

Further inland, one can find echoes of the old ways before the coming of the great riches that have given birth to the Ferromaine Republic.

The New Selentine Empire still exercises influence over Ferromaine, but its exemption from taxes in concession to its recognition of imperial sanction has led to its powerful trading position and has allowed it to become an enormous economic force in Coradia and beyond.

## Legends of Ferromaine

*(Damian May)*

All of these legends are traditional tales of Venice and not my own work; I have only tweaked them so that they may function as tales of Ferromaine.

### The Legend of the Mother's heart

Set in front of the Scuola di San Marco, this is one of the six historic “Scuole Grandi” in Ferromaine; it was founded for religious and humanitarian purposes. The stories of the beggar and the levantine cross paths right in front of the historic portal.

Cesco Pizzigani was one of the most talented Ferromani stonecutters of his time. He participated in sculpting the facade of the Scuola di San Marco; his splendid hands created some of the precious perspective effects whose fame spread instantly throughout Coradia. A few years later, the artist's young wife, Florinda, suddenly fell ill. Cesco's patient and loving

nursing as he tried to save her life proved useless. She died leaving her husband in debt; he had sold everything including his shop to provide her with every possible cure.

Completely ruined, and totally overwhelmed by the loss of his beloved, for years Cesco found himself begging at the foot of the portal of the Scuola Grande that he himself had contributed to build. Every once in a while, he would secretly take an old nail and amuse himself at exercising his old profession on the sides of the portal, engraving the profiles of the ships which loaded and unloaded their wares on the great steps of the campo every day.

At that time, close by there, lived a woman who had had a son by a Zheniri, a Jezanti who had become a Zhenirian subject and, being an international merchant, enjoyed the rights bestowed upon foreign residents. Like his peers, he lived on the island of the Giudecca. Now the son – who lived with his father and like him dressed in Zhenir fashion – often came to visit his mother. But he used to beat her violently, taking out on her the inner conflict he felt being half Ferromani and half Zheniri. He was not well accepted by either community. The woman, who lived alone and had never been married – woefully accepted her son's violent outbursts, since she loved him more than her own self.

But one night the situation got out of hand. In a fit of rage such as he had never felt before, the young man stabbed his mother and literally tore her heart out of her chest. Blinded by his anger and terrified by what he had done, he dropped the knife and fled, holding the poor martyred heart in his hand. He ran towards the bridge in front of the Scuola, but tripped on the first step and fell, losing his grip on his mother's martyred heart. The heart rolled to the ground, stopped, and from it a voice cried: *"My son, did you hurt yourself?"*

The crazed son ran to the edge of the lagoon facing the cemetery, threw himself into the waters and let himself drown. You can still hear his gloomy moaning in the silence of the campo, as he searches for his mother's heart to feel the warmth of her love in the freezing winter nights. And Cesco? Cesco, like every night, had been asleep under the portal. He saw everything and decided to immortalize it in his own way, by scratching the scene into the marble. Today on the portal, beside the profiles of the ships, you can still see a human figure with a large turban on his head, holding a human heart in one hand. The heart of a mother.

Note: The ghost of the Zhenari youth is a great bother to those who would do their work in the dark of night, a smugglers guild or group of thieves. The greatly aged Cesco is still under the bridge, if asked he will admit that he took the heart and buried it in the nearby cemetery. The cemetery is roamed by a band of 6 ghouls at night and they will attack characters who seek to unearth the heart and put the ghost to rest.

## The Invisible Beasts

A story regarding the Arsenal of Ferromani was inevitable. For here was built, over the centuries, the invincible merchant and military fleet which would bring wealth and power to the Most Serene Republic. Its impressive portal is guarded by stone lions; the two largest ones – bearing runic inscriptions which are said to refer to a repression in Emphidor involving Mercanian mercenaries – were looted from Emphidor's capital.

Decades ago, after two days and nights of intense bad weather, the mangled bodies (or better, what was left of them) of two sailors, one Emphidian – a certain Spiropoulos – and one Asmulian, were found in the immediate vicinity of the great portal of the Arsenal. The two had sailed on different ships, with different ports of origin and different destinations, and nothing – according to the witnesses – could indicate that the two knew each other or were together at the moment of their death. The guards on duty at the Arsenal had not noticed anything suspicious. But the investigation's biggest mystery was the condition of the poor bodies, which seemed to have been torn apart by some wild beast. The authorities did their best to find out whether some wild animal had escaped from a circus, with negative results; the voice of the people whispered – halfway between the serious and the facetious – that the culprits were the Arsenal Lions, and that black magic was to blame.

Six days later, following another nocturnal storm, the body of a Ferromani\*, Jacopo Zanchi, was found; the young man lived hand to mouth, and the home which he shared with his young wife Giovanna – was close by. The cruelty of this latest crime touched off a wave of panic in the city. This latest assassination also appeared to be unconnected to the two previous ones (except for the *modus operandi*), and though surveillance was increased no result was obtained.

A young sea captain, Enrico Giustiniani, participated in the investigation because the crimes had been committed in an area subject to the jurisdiction of the Navy of the Republic. Two days after the last killing, as he was returning to the Arsenal, he heard shouting and screaming coming from a calle: in front of a small crowd, Zanchi's wife (whom everyone knew to be a woman of dubious morality, who occasionally worked as a prostitute) was yelling at someone behind the windows of a house on an upper floor, yelling "*Assassin*" at a certain "Fosco" or "Foscaro", an old merchant who lived there, and who, it was said, occasionally practised usury.

"*Assassin! Bastard!*" she screamed in a rage. The few who dared to intervene had been kicked at and spit upon, "*you'll pay once and for all for all the harm you've done!*" And just before Giovanna Zanchi could be taken away, the captain caught a glimpse of a window being opened: the man peered out, and with a look of absolute contempt almost hissed at the young woman: "*We'll see, woman, where your boldness will lead you when the next stormy night comes along!*" In his mind, the young sea captain was already nurturing suspicions, but he had no idea yet how to prove them, nor how – should he be right – the old man could possibly have reduced the three to such a state.

It seemed that he never left his home, so he decided, for the time being, to follow the woman's movements: since her husband's death, she had been driven by necessity to concede her favours more frequently, often accompanied by a girlfriend, to passing sailors or arsenal workers looking for company. Ten days later, another storm arose, and its fury lasted into the night. Leaving the arsenal shortly after dinner, Giustiniani hid inside a boat near the portal and surveyed the campo from this position.

Several hours went by. After one o'clock in the morning, in the driving rain, an arch of fire surged from the nearby houses and literally materialized the old man in front of the sitting lion. One word and the guards froze in the position they were in. The old man walked



around the sculpture, and running his bony finger along the ancient inscription, pronounced their meaning out loud: a sort of luminous globe formed on the tip of the portal, and a first bolt of lightning struck the large sitting Lion.

The captain was shocked: slowly, the large stone Lion was turning into a terrifying, giant flesh-and-blood animal. It was then that he heard voices, and Giovanna and her friend Jolanda turned the corner onto the canal's edge. While from the globe a second bolt of lightning struck the other great Lion, the first one had already stepped down from his pedestal and sunk his teeth into the first of the two women, while the second woman stood petrified and barely able to scream. The old man watched the scene impassively from a distance. Giustiniani gathered all the courage he could muster, and unsheathing his sword, he jumped out into the open just as a third lightning bolt was striking the third Lion, casting light on a horrendous scene: the first wild beast had already mauled Jolanda's body, which was bleeding profusely. The second was preparing to attack the other woman. The old man barely had a chance to turn around: the captain swiftly thrust his sword into his chest.

With a tremendous roar and a blinding bolt of lightning, everything suddenly fell silent, under the driving rain: the immobile Lions, the mangled body of the woman on the stones, the other woman petrified and muted, the blackened sword on the ground. No trace of the old man, except for a heart of stone near the sword; it was the stone heart in his chest that could change stone into flesh. The guards, awakened from their trance, rushed out to help the officer. The head of the third Lion was still alive, struggling and roaring to get out of the stone body that imprisoned it. Without thinking twice, Giustiniani picked up his sword and cut off the statue's head. Instead of falling, the head rose several meters up into the air, and with a final roar exploded into a black substance that covered everything below.

A blanket of silence was thrown over the entire matter: continuing investigations conducted in the old man's house showed that he was indeed a wizard, as well as a usurer. Young Zanchi had swindled him, and this was his terrible revenge. He had initially involved two innocent men to confuse the investigation in order not to leave Ferromaine. But he was not able to fool Zanchi's wife, whose suspicions and public scenes had forced him to come out into the open. Giovanna was never able to congratulate herself on the death of the sorcerer: reason deserted her and she spent the last few years of her life in an insane asylum. As for the third Lion, its head was quickly replaced by a different one, which you can easily verify today.

Note: The lions still exist at the gateway today... perhaps the power within them could be activated again?

## The Death Shawl

Sotoportego Zurlin is one of the many hidden and suggestive corners of Castello, one of Ferromaine's six sestieri (in other cities would be called neighbourhoods); from the canal it opens to, you can see the bell-tower of the church of San Pietro, formerly the Cathedral of Ferromaine until the title passed to San Marco. The passage that overlooks the canal was the scene, in the early days of Ferromaine, of one of most disturbing events in the history of this neighbourhood.

It was Autumn ten years after foundation, and to aggravate the situation of so many poor families from San Pietro di Castello, the weather had turned unseasonably cold. It was snowing that night, and Doctor Antonio Salvatici, the bishop's personal physician, was gliding down the canal in the Patriarch's covered gondola. The doctor, an eminent surgeon of the time, had left the diocese late in order to care for an elderly monsignor, and he had been given the gondola and its gondolier to return home.

*"Help, please, help me!"* When the gondola had reached the spot where the corte Zurlin opened onto the water, Salvatici heard the invocations, and gave order for the gondola to dock. On the bank, shivering and soaked by the snow whipping her face, holding her worn-out shawl tightly around her, was a thin little girl: *"Doctor, please, my mother is very ill. Please come and see her."*

Initially surprised that the girl had recognized him as a doctor, even though he did not know her, the physician quickly picked up his medical bag and followed the young girl into the court to one of the old houses that still stands there: up one flight of stairs they entered a cold apartment where he immediately recognised the sick woman as one of his former servants. The woman had pneumonia.

Salvatici did what he could to bring relief to the woman and complimented her on having such a loving daughter: *"Not everyone,"* he added, *"would brave such inclement weather to go out and search for a doctor. It would have been dangerous to wait even a few hours, until morning."*

At these words, the sick woman looked up at him in pained surprise and murmured: *"But my daughter died a month ago!"* The doctor did not believe her, but the woman was clearly convinced of what she was saying: *"I still keep her shoes and her shawl in this cupboard!"*

Salvatici went to check and found the shoes and the same little shawl that was covering the shoulders of the girl who had called him in the storm. It was folded and dry, and clearly no one had worn it out of the house on that snowy night. All subsequent searches proved vain: the little girl who had led him to the sick woman was never seen again.

Note: This legend may be related to those adventurers who have perhaps had a few too many negative encounters with ghosts.

## The Princess with no Empire

Both Ferromani and non-Ferromani know that the corte prima and seconda del Milion owe their name to the homes of the Niccolo family, where the famous traveller and merchant settled with the Vassilvio family after his return from the east. The entire area is called "Milione" in honour of the memoirs left by Niccolo in which he documented his travels to the Far East and the courts of the Khanates. For decades, the Ferromani have passed down a story that has never been officially chronicled. It begins in the Far East and ends tragically in the streets of Ferromaine. This is the story of the "Princess with no Empire".

Out of the more than twenty-five years he spent travelling, Niccolo spent seventeen years working for the Khan of the Oshkosa, Sitai, who nominated him his personal envoy and sent him on numerous missions throughout the Khanate. From the very first months of his stay, it did not take long for young Niccolo to fall in love with one of Sitai's youngest and prettiest daughters, Hao Dong. He requested the Khan's permission – which was joyfully granted – to make her his wife. And so the story began: as the Ferromani heard her singing and could not help but fall in love with her perfect voice and the melody which warmed his heart. And when he saw her, Niccolo could not help but decide that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her.

She was good-natured, reserved to the point of submission, and she repaid his love with her own for many years, patiently following his adventures and awaiting his return. Until the moment when the Khanate became unsafe for Niccolo and his men, and the time came to return to Coradia. The woman easily resolved to follow her husband, but her life in Ferromaine was in some way shameful for the city, and this is the reason the chronicles do not willingly record these events.

Greed and jealousy turned the family against her, and people pointed her out on the streets because – despite her unaltered beauty – she was so obviously different. The princess without an empire thus adjusted to remaining closed in her own home, to avoid creating problems both for herself and her husband, who in the meantime has been “placed under observation” by the Church for his irregular marriage to a non-Selentine woman. The only entertainment Hao Dong allowed herself during the long days of her voluntary imprisonment was singing. It was not infrequent, in passing by the bridge on a warm evening, to see people listening, enchanted by the beauty of the melancholy song in which the woman remembered the time when she was honoured by an entire people and lived happily with her husband in the distant lands of the East.

This situation dragged on for many months, until Niccolo was imprisoned by his enemies. When the news reached the Niccolo household, Lucia – one of the sisters – climbed the stairs of the tall palace to advise her sister-in-law: but to make it more painful, she announced that he had died. Hao Dong said nothing. But the same night, she set fire to her clothing and threw herself out of one of the high windows into the canal below, a tragic comet who chose death to end her brief and unhappy life in the city of islands.

Since then, on those lovely summer evenings when the sun lingers on to delay the sunset, a weak and unclear melody may be heard as you stand on the bridge; it is impossible to say where it is coming from or to escape the enchantment of its sweetness. It is Hao Dong singing her love for Niccolo in the knowledge that her love is returned. And sometimes (though the occasions are becoming rare), you can see a figure floating at night from the high windows of the palace, crossing the part of the sky which remains visible between the palaces lining the canal. Her hands are cupped together and reach for the sky; a small cold blue flame dances within them. The princess travels at night to join the rest of her family at the other end of the world.

Note: Within the foundations of the Niccolo house lie the bones of Niccolo and with them other human remains belonging to a young woman, buried with oriental-looking objects, and a precious tiara bearing an unmistakable symbol: the coat-of-arms of Sitai Khan.

### The Plague-Stricken who Searched for Peace

The Senate of the Most Serene Republic of Ferromaine decreed that a temple should be built and consecrated to the Madonna della Salute (the Virgin of Good Health), in thanks for the grace conceded in liberating Ferromaine from a great plague. A project of the 26-year-old Baldasare Longhena was chosen among eleven entries, and construction began immediately. On five years after Longhena's death, the temple was consecrated. At the expense, legend says, of the very people who died of the plague.

The grim look of the old man had been fixed on her for several minutes. But neither of the two moved from the small street that, from the convent of San Gregorio, leads to the hospice of the Trinita'. Elizabetta was terrified: the light that the moon cast through the small portico facing her left no doubts. The old man was a ghost, and she could see the bricks of the street wall through his fragile body.

*"Oh, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus..."* she repeated in terror, unable to find the strength to leave and despite the fact that the old man gave no sign of wanting to hurt her. *"He looks tired,"* she thought despite the fear that gripped her. The ghost wore an ordinary pair of breeches and a loose white shirt, as if he had left his home hastily. Finally, from the end of the street, a chorus of voices was heard. *"Help! Help!"* the woman cried, instinctively turning her head towards the source of the noise. And when she turned around again, the old man was gone.

Elisabetta was the wife of one of the master masons of the new Basilica of the Madonna della Salute. Despite the efforts of the government of the Most Serene Republic to keep the infestation a secret, from that moment on, the strange incidents increased in number, and almost all of them happened to people who in one way or another were involved in the construction.

Children would come close to the builders' children to play and would suddenly disappear, suffocated and gurgling voices in the night, growling black dogs who would disappear at the wave of a stick. This first series of incidents was soon replaced by a chain of more threatening phenomena: the clattering of windows, knocks at the door, incessant scratching of claws on the floors, and occasionally a growling noise that sounded like two dogs fighting. And even the sound of furniture being dragged and chains being shaken through the night.

In the end, people were attacked: their blankets would be pulled off them at night, and anyone who tried to object was immediately punished with a sharp slap proffered by an invisible hand. Someone, or something, pulled the women and children's hair in the dark. The situation became dramatic: even if the workers resigned from the building site, their families would continue to be persecuted, and so would the families of the newcomers. Soon the situation became so serious as to come to the attention of the Council of Ten. A first hypothesis was that these were the spirits of the dead that had already been transferred from the old cemetery of the hospice of the Trinita' and the annexed church, which was being

demolished to make room for Longhena's project. But this hypothesis was soon abandoned. Even a series of masses celebrated for these souls gave no results.

As the demolition rapidly proceeded, and the manifestations became more intense, a humming noise – at first indistinct, then more and more audible – began sounding over the building site: within a few days, it turned into an unmistakable murmur, which became clearer to anyone who listened as the days went by. The area was closed off. A large contingent of guardsmen was sent to guard the site under the command of an old and highly experienced commander, Girolamo Sartori.

As the third night fell, the murmur had become a strange-sounding voice – as if a man and a woman were speaking at the same time saying the same things. The soldier entered the old church of which only the perimeter walls remained standing, and hazarded a question: *“Who are you?”* Silence. Then, suddenly: *“I am spirit come from everywhere, Heaven, Hell, Earth. I was created millions of years ago; I can say no more.”* *“What do you want?”* insisted Sartori. No answer. But suddenly a shrill, blood-curling shriek, like that of a thousand voices, pierced the air, rivers of blood flowed from the walls, and the floor of the old building, and messages appeared as if by magic on the walls of the convent: *“Please, help us obtain light, masses, prayers.”*

The City Watch were terrified; they did not know what to do; they ran here and there but they resisted the temptation to run away. Some even shot their crossbows uselessly. Then suddenly, the pandemonium ended and not a single message or drop of blood remained on the ground. The old commander, despite the shock, did not wait till morning. He ordered his men to arm themselves with picks and shovels and set them to dig. In a few hours, by torchlight, a gory spectacle emerged: only the crosses and tombstones had been removed from the cemetery, but all the bodies were still in their places. The tombs in the church were overflowing with human remains: the bones of women, men, and children of all classes lay stacked one on top of the other in the funeral monuments created for the richer families. During the plague, certain formalities were often left unobserved: tombs and crypts were opened and used as mass graves, where dead bodies were thrown in quickly and randomly in an effort to contain the contagion. To save time, the constructors had preferred to simulate the exhumations, since the areas around the tombstones were not intended to be dug up. The dead had come to claim the peace in Heaven they had not experienced in the mortal realm.

The constructors were condemned to exile, whereas Longhena proved that he had not been involved in the story. The remains were gathered and taken away, and all spirit activity ceased. What happened to the bones of the dead from the Trinita' is pure conjecture: the chronicles narrate how – to sustain the weight of the new Basilica – a million wooden piles had been driven into the muddy terrain. Legend tells how, in an undefined area of the central floor of the Salute before the works were finished, a contingent of guardsmen had buried dozens and dozens of small wooden chests containing human remains. Commanding this group of men was an official with significant experience: Girolamo Sartori.

Note: An appropriate story for a stormy night or as basis for something similar in another city.

# The Gnawing Waste

This far north-eastern country of mountains and tundra is edged by dark conifer forests.

Great herds of reindeer roam the tundra, bears roam the mountains, huge tigers prey on man and beast, and at the edges of the herders' range on the endless wastes, sometimes great beasts are sighted: huge shaggy behemoths that tread the dandelions and sedges beneath plate like feet.

## history

For unknown thousands of years, the herders and hunters have followed the reindeer herds across the tundra. They avoid the shade of the dark trees that make up the forests of the Gnawing Waste and the notice of the things that dwell beneath them.

## Society

### Capital

The Gnawing Waste's inhabitants are nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes people, they have no need of cities.

### Tribes

*(Bulya)*

### Black Pavilion

Many tribes in the east fly the "Yoson Khar Tug" or the "Nine Black Banners" as their war banner, made of black horse tail hairs and flown on a single long pole. The nine banners are always flown together as the number nine brings luck to those associated with it. Those who fly them look to Black Pavilion, the people of war magic, the masters of demons, to bless their raids.

Black Pavilion is a Nomad Khanate where the rule of the black shamans is absolute; these men and women share their processes with the white, yellow, and lesser black shamans of the other peoples of the steppes. They draw their power from the lower worlds and summon powerful demonic and dead spirits to serve them. A large number of the Black Pavilion's black shamans are sorcerers – from their summoned demonic servants, they have learnt the

rites to steal and eat the souls of others and they use this power to heal, to hurt, and to start wars.

The yellow shamans are those known in other lands as warlocks – they are shamans of war and the horse and they are the chosen vanguard of the Khan.

The white shamans are those known in other lands as mystics – they devote themselves fully to the cult of Damdig and are blacksmiths of high repute.

The shamans who wear the black ribbons are regarded as more powerful than their white and yellow counterparts; they dress in bear skins over a dark blue dress. Their breastplates bear clan symbols and representations of patron spirits. They conduct their ceremonies at night with drums, staffs and minor assistant spirits in attendance and many of their rites include the sacrifice of black coated or feathered animals.

The Black Pavilion is materially the poorest of the nomad tribes, but they wield a great deal of power in unifying the disparate tribes to a common purpose. The Black Pavilion houses the most powerful female shamans of the steppes, and the males are equally powerful. Because of the supernatural forces wielded by their leaders, the warriors of Black Pavilion are unafraid of death and are therefore some of the most dangerous horse nomads to face in battle.

To the other Nomad Khanates, black shamans are dangerous folk for they have the power to harm or even kill others by calling down curses on them. On the other hand, they are believed to have the power to neutralize the curses of other shamans and banish the demons that cause serious illnesses, so they are both sought out and feared.

The shaman's costume is regarded as a suit of armour that protects its wearer from the attacks of harmful spirits and his clothing and staff are covered with miniature weapons of iron forged in ceremonies to Damdig, the patron deity of blacksmiths and armourer of shamans.

The power of a shaman of the Black Pavilion is expressed by the number of weapon talismans on their costume. Those who have been practising for many years have far more elaborate costumes. As stronger and more experienced shamans encounter stronger spirits and demons, they construct more and more protective talismans. The demons the talismans are aimed at are not those summoned by the shaman themselves, but the evil spirits or various kinds of demons that accompany and try to follow the invoked ones, or those the shaman tries to expel from a body, place, or item.

The shaman's helmet bears two antlers on either side; the number of the prongs indicate the rank of the circle the shaman has achieved.

The black shamans of Black Pavilion can construct many different types of talismans – as sorcerers can create different items as they advance in rank so do the shamans create their talismans; the most simple act as potions and are drained after one use. As a shaman grows more powerful, he creates more and more and more powerful items to assist him.

Yellow shamans weave their talismans into the construction of weapons and armour; they can create powerful effects that make their ceremonial staff and costume the equivalent of the items crafted by warlocks of other lands.

White shamans can weave power into the weapons and armour they forge more easily than yellow and black shamans, but they are less adaptable in the types of talismans and items they can create.

The warriors of the Black Pavilion are experts at the art of mounted archery; they rain death from afar and sweep in on their sturdy Takhi horses to free souls for their shaman warlords to capture.

### Gunguska

The Gunguska are a loosely organized failing tribal confederation that occupies a vast, sprawling territory in the steppes, stretching from south of the Hazrans Gap, westward to the territory of the Black Pavillion. Some tribes of the Gunguska confederation originated near the borders of Khitai and, after having moved into western parts of the steppes abutting the Gnawing Waste, migrated further west into the Eastern Steppes abutting the Harogarn Ranges and then, more recently, to the steppe area north of the Swamps of the Jinn.

The Gunguska are nomadic pastoralists and warriors who live in yurts (movable tents). Of late, they have become involved in various conflicts with the forces of Sitai Khan, eastern outposts of the Selentine Empire, Harogarn Tribes, northern Zheniri tribes, and the stocky, strange beings known locally as the Mountain Kings or Maggot Folk, allying themselves with one or the other side at different times.

The Gungushka are currently holding onto mastership of the steppe north of the Swamp of the Jinn but they face a number of mounting pressures. During the first forays into East Selentine by the Oshkosa, the Gungushka sided at different times with both the invading Khan and with the attacked Selentine princes. In vengeance, the Oshkosa penetrated for a second time into Gungushka territory and killed Bochimán, the Khan of the eastern Gunguska tribes. The Gungushka confederation was greatly weakened and many of its eastern lands and people were incorporated into the Black Pavilion, the westernmost division of the fledgling empire of Khan Sitai.

Many of the western Gungushka tribes fled to Eastern Selentine, and some of their warriors became mercenaries for the Coradian crusaders and the Selentines. Defeated Gungushka warriors also became a major source of slaves for parts of the Ta'ashim world. Gungushka slaves—called Maml'k—serving in the Zheniri armies have a growing martial role and their fame has spread as far as Opalar.



# Geography

## Regions

### *North*

- Lost Mercanian settlements and burial mounds.
- Rymchaeld Mountains
- Shores of the Rymchaeld Sea

### *East*

- Svartgard Forest – A dark and eldritch place of ancient magics and fearsome creatures. The denizens include night elves, strange undead creatures, huge tigers, and other more fearsome terrors. The fabled Boneyard of the Mammut is also said to lie within, along with countless burial mounds.

### *South*

- Lost Citadels of the Steppes Nomads
- Northern Steppes – Marsh and tundra meet as the steppes flow down into the lower plains of the Wastes.

### *West*

- Shipwrecks
- Shores of the Mistral Sea

# Approximation

Siberia

# Kaikhuru

It is supposed that the ancient civilization of Kaikhuru lies buried beneath the desert sands of the Southern Lands, formerly situated alongside the River Isis with its capital Siout (now Amsa'im). The Kaikhuran Empire was once quite broad. Certainly Dave Morris indicated that there was some link to the Kaikhuru across the sea to the west in the Mungoda Continent in the scenario in Book 6.

## Approximation

The use of the phrase “Pharaoh” for Kaikhuru’s rulers clearly indicates that it approximates with ancient Egypt – though, interestingly, not co-located in the Mungoda Continent, the equivalent of Africa – but rather on the Southern Lands aspect of ‘mainland’ Legend.

# Khitai

*(Bulya)*

Legend's analogy of China, supposedly lying to the east of the Nomad Khanates.

## history

### Scroll I – The Ancient Dynasties

#### Introduction

For a lack of better alternative, I am going to assume Khitai uses a system similar to Chinese. It should lie to the east of the Nomad Khanates, separated from the rest of the world by natural barriers – harsh deserts, impenetrable mountains, and thick jungles. In the latter ages of Khitai, they become master mariners and sailors, and their junks travel to the far corners of the world (for example, the junk fleet in Mungoda Gold).

#### Etymology

Just as China gets its name from the first dynasty of Qin, by looking at the Selentine version of the country name, Khitai, leads me to infer that the first defining hegemony of the land has the name of Khi, or perhaps, Qi. There is a Kingdom of Qi vying for supremacy during the Spring and Autumn period with Qin for the domination of China, and perhaps it is fitting to base the culture and norms of Khitai on the Kingdom of Qi instead of Qin.

#### Khitai's First Dynasty – Khi (Qi?)

There we begin our imaginary discussion of the Dynasty of Qi. Its rise to supremacy is not through just military force, but also by social and political reforms. Ancient Khitai was a feudal system, with the small states given to loyal officers and the nobility. The first Sage-King, according to legends, supervised the division of the lands and made all the feudal lords, or dukes, answerable to the Son of Heaven, the Emperor. The exact names of the lines of Sage-Kings and the dynasty perhaps should be left for another time.

Eventually, the central authority lost its influence as bickering dukes attacked each other, formed alliances, and become power blocs. Qi was one of those to form a league with the nearby states, and under the legendary statemanship of Yao Tian Yi (“He who Changes the Order of Heaven”) form a powerful kingdom known as Qi. Eventually, eighteen kingdoms were formed and, over years of strife and warfare, which paralleled that of Emphidor, reduced the number of feudal kingdoms down to a mere seven.

Qi's rise to power was a result of a number of reforms. It was the first to have a central authority, have civil examinations for aspiring politicians and leaders, and award opportunities and merits to one regardless of social caste (nobility, artisans, scholars, and peasants). For its warfare purpose, it adopted a state monopoly of salt and iron mines, ensuring that the production of weapons was efficient. The famed "The Discourse of War and Nations", written by the Strategist-Sage, came from Qi (though the Strategist-Sage was once a native of the League of Wu, but disgruntled by their decadence, offered his services to Qi).

However, this was all politics and set the grand picture of Qi's domination. It was the soldiers and the working class that won the war.

### The Clash of the Philosopher-Kings

While the kings and lords set strategy and made reforms, winning the hearts of men were the philosophers. According to the History of the Zuo<sup>4</sup>, compiled over generations, there were sixty-four schools of thought on life and death, duty and fidelity, proper conduct, and morals, which is the number of the I Ching<sup>5</sup>. The thinker of those schools sought to influence the lords and kings of the feudal landscape of Khitai – and whether their schools thrived or died depended on the fortunes of the patron lord they chose.

The State of Qin, wishing to rise from its obscure status to become a power to reckon with, adopted the Legalist School. It sought to put all things under one authority, under one law – deviation means punishment while resistance's penalty was death! The philosophy of the Tao<sup>6</sup> appealed to the common, poor peasants and some of the scholars, but most lords rejected it as it meant a life of reflection, lack of worldly desires, and lack of ambition. Another, which talks of "All-Encompassing Love", found little appeal with the lords, though followers of this school of thought were excellent siege engineers and masters of building fortifications, for the founder of the sect was an excellent engineer.

Qi adopted a relatively non-radical school of thought, the Way of Orderliness, and to appease the peasants, recognised the teachings of the Great Humanist. (However, these two schools of thought led to conflicts in values that eventually formed a social weakness of the Khitai nation). The Way of Orderliness says that the nation is an entity and all contribute to it. A nation consists of smaller units, and the smallest unit of all is the family (not the self). The husband is the head of the family<sup>7</sup> and the rest are subordinates to him. The family itself is ultimately subordinate to a larger entity (usually the town's mayor), eventually all the way to

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<sup>4</sup> The family of Zuo was chosen by the Sage-Kings of old to be archivists and scribes.

<sup>5</sup> The I Ching is actually a base-8 system, used to impart certain principles and to foretell the future

<sup>6</sup> Ask any Khitain mystic today and he will insist that the Way of the Mystic originated from the teachings of the Tao, though some Emphidian sages may disagree bitterly.

<sup>7</sup> There were some historical records that Khitian society was more matriarchal than patriarchal and that it was changed by the supremacy of Qi, and eventually, the widespread adoption of the Orderliness philosophy. Elders were respected at all times, so even a matriarch of a family was given due deference, much more so of noble families. Other philosophers had a more balanced view of male and female roles. According to one, "the lot of the male is work outside and wage war and die; the role of the female is to tend to the family so that the men may fight; hence both are equals, not in abilities but in status."

the king. If the family is orderly, the town is orderly. If the town is orderly, so would be the province. If all the provinces are orderly, so would the nation be.

The Great Humanist introduced the ideas that all men are born kind-hearted and with the desire to do good but become corrupted eventually. It teaches that a ruler should be benevolent so that the people would have peace. When the people have peace, jealousy and strife are reduced. How is this peace achieved, then? The sages of Qi preached it as orderliness, keeping the laws of the nation and maintaining the harmony of family, town, province, and finally, the state. The Great Humanist, however, did not explicitly suggest that. The Way of Orderliness and the Great Humanist, however, both agreed on one thing – the observance of rituals and rites that bind people together and showing deference for the elderly and of a superior station.

Being accepted into service changed one's social status, though in truth, the lineages of nobility and scholars advanced much faster and would always be respected more. And because of their background, there were more opportunities for them to be better educated and become servants of the court through the civil examinations. Most peasants who were bestowed titles were heroes of the time – those who earned it through valour on the field of slaughter, a timely advice to the king and so forth.

It is mentioned that the kingdom of Qi accepted all into their ranks regardless of social caste. However, besides merit alone, observing the teachings of the Great Humanist and Orderliness was a crucial factor. This eventually led to mass acts of hypocrisy, which caused the downfall of the Qi Dynasty (though the dynasty itself lasted for hundreds of years, before splitting into five kingdoms).

## Scroll II – The Decline of Qi

Qi Fan was the seventeenth Emperor of the Dynasty, and was the last too. While Qi had the authority over the entire lands of Khitai, it was one enforced by alliance and politics. The kings of each of old kingdom were vassals to Qi and the statesmen of Qi had to be careful in dealings with the interest of each of those allied states.

The northern and western states were constantly raided by the roaming nomads<sup>8</sup>. The states along the coastline were the target of pirates coming from the Seas Beyond the Mountains. To the east, there dwelt mysterious tribes within the thick jungles that made expansion there nigh impossible. Qi, occupying the central plains, had to appease the needs of the kings of those states.

However, Qi Fan had a different view. Though styled Emperor, he did not have authority over all other states. The culture and teaching of Qi prevailed, but other philosophy lingered. Qi Fan wished to be the Grand Emperor<sup>9</sup>, the only sole king and ruler of the entire land.

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<sup>8</sup> Those roaming nomads were eventually to become the Nomad Khanates.

<sup>9</sup> Though the King of Qi was Emperor, he only held absolute authority over his own realm. Each of the other kings of the remaining six states had their own military power, and this made all Qi Emperors anxious.

Mystics and sorcerers were reclusive by nature. Usually, their magic had trappings of philosophy and religions and they were taught not to meddle with the affairs of mortal men. Yet from the Flowing Heavens Sect, a few mystics defied their masters and ascended down the Jade Forest Mountain to aid Qi Fan. Soon, other sorcerers joined the small coven and this gave Qi Fan a terrifying weapon in war.

Qi Fan's priority was to remove all potential mystical opponents – and it became the Purging of the Celestial Orders (each of those sects were called a Celestial Order, for it was believed through the cultivation of the mind and practising of magic, one could obtain immortality and ascend to the rank of deity-hood). The coven of sorcerers and mystics, backed by government troops, stormed the various mystical sects, causing them to scatter in fear.

The second task undertaken by Qi Fan was to crush his physical opponents. For a while, the scattered bands of mystics from the purge formed a resistance, giving aid to the individual lords of each of the vassal states, but eventually all fell one by one. The few remaining mystics gathered whoever they could rescue and fled over the sea<sup>10</sup>.

The third task was to ensure that Qi remained the entire state of Khitai – he purged the noble lines of all other states, enforce a standard language, system of writing, religion, and philosophy. Anyone who deviated would be killed. All artefacts of other states were utterly destroyed. This was the gist of Legalist teaching, and now many historians believed that the Coven that aided Qi Fan was actually Legalists who survived the war between Qi and Qin.

The fourth task, as suggested, was to rule forever. He commanded his coven to find a way that he could be immortal. They did come up with an Elixir, but Nu Wa<sup>11</sup>, she who formed the first men from clay, knew immediately this would incur the wrath of Heaven and cause Khitai to be destroyed, influenced the final sorcery such that the Emperor became a spirit being instead of remaining a mortal man. However, this was the extent that she was allowed to tamper with mortal affairs – the job was finished by a band of brave xia (knights errant or heroes, or adventurers) who entombed the spirit of Qi Fan within the tomb of his ancestors.

The death of Qi Fan created a power vacuum, both spiritually<sup>12</sup> (for many secrets of magic and of the mystic ways were lost) and politically. The remaining states regrouped into five kingdoms and vied with each other for supremacy again. Yet Nu Wa this time had pity on the mortal world and gifted an individual to unite the shattered Khitai. He styled himself the Conqueror from the West, and his name was Chi Yu. However, Nu Wa and the Heavenly Court were surprised when it was a lowly peasant who finally formed the Zheng dynasty.

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<sup>10</sup> Those refugees mingled with the natives of their new home and eventually become Yamato

<sup>11</sup> Book 6, DWR and SG use many of the god names from our Earth so I think it is suitable to re-use them here. So like Wotan, Loki and such, Nu Wa appears too.

<sup>12</sup> This vacuum allows spirituality to be influenced by the teaching of Absolute Emptiness and magic to be influenced by Emphidian thoughts and probably the Persian analogue of Legend. That would be the ancient kingdoms that the Ta'ashim\* people now occupy.

## Scroll III – Yan Dynasty, Three Kingdoms and the Later Yan Dynasty

...to be continued...

## Scroll IV – Six Kingdoms and Five Dynasties, Rule by the Nomads

....to be continued....

## Scroll V – End of Nomad Rules, Founding of Zheng Dynasty

....to be continued....

# Society

## Capital

Yufengmen (“Gate of Jade Wind”), formerly known as Chanxia (“Long Summer”)

## Government

The current Zheng Dynasty divides the great realm of Khitai into several “circuits”, which superseded the traditional provincial system. A circuit cuts through at least two – and up to five – provinces, and reports to an Imperial Superintendent. As provinces have trappings of the ancient kingdoms and states they originally were from, the circuit system prevents a province from gaining enough independence to form an uprising.

# Approximation

Taking the “Khi” from Khitai, which sounds like Qi, led to the speculation of an alternate ancient China where the State of Qi won out during the Warring States period, instead of Qin. Qin was the first real dynasty where a single ruler reigned and hence, to mirror that, the last Emperor of Qi was somewhat similar to Qin Shihuang of Earth, who burned banned books, killed scholars following other schools of thought that he disapproved of, and most famously, sought immortality. The rest of the history would follow the contention of Liu Bang and Xiang Yu, a unified dynasty and invasion by the Nomads.

By the time of Mungoda Gold, Khitai seems to be what could be the Golden Age of China's Ming Dynasty, then Admiral Zheng. He travelled with a fleet of junks to various parts of southeast Asia and Asia and China's maritime prowess was daunting. It could also mean that Khitai would have knowledge of gun-powder, advanced mathematics, astronomy, and mechanics.



# The Kingdom of Wyrd

*(Bulya)*

During the months of winter, the Kingdom of Wyrd is surrounded by pack-ice, which covers all of the northern Mistral Sea. If one is to make the trek to Wyrd during winter, it is best to start out from the coast north of Dourhaven and make the three-day trek across the ice. Whilst encounters with creatures are unlikely, surviving in the twisted, wind scoured expanse of cold and ice can test even the mightiest hero.

One might ask why the inhabitants of Wyrd do not use this route to escape the dream-torment of the Witch-King. One reason lies in the coastal waters, an immense beast known as the Eislaken.

## Society

Wyrd society is strangely regimented into distinct castes: the Armigers, the Solons, the peasants, and the Seers.

- Armigers are the soldier caste. Though they have not had a war in which to test their skills since the Witch-King took his throne.
- The Solons are the administrators and arbitrators. Directing the law and intricate social customs and ceremonies of the populace.
- The peasants of Wyrd number 1-2 million in number, they are probably the most poor and wretched peasants in Legend, even worse off than those in Krarth. Labour is hard, and the land only grows crops grudgingly.
- The Seers are considered to be outside society they are wanderers, prophets, and bards and their actions are often aimed at disrupting the Witch-King's power. Perhaps they are beyond his power or does he allow them to exist for some other reason?

## The Ruler

Wyrd is ruled by the Witch-King from his Palace of Eternal Dusk. He has ruled the land for hundreds of years, some sources state 600 years. His sorceries allow him to enter the dreams of his subjects and thus learn of plots against him; it is whispered he can even send nightmares to kill people in their sleep. It is whispered that this power will only work on those born on the island itself... though none are sure.

## Village Life

A typical village consists of a single huge hall constructed of wood with a sloped thatched roof and surrounded by a half dozen or so stone huts used for winter storage. The entire

village and their livestock overwinter in the great halls warmed by blazing fires... and the body heat of man and beef.

# Geography

The land is cut with deep valleys and fir forests carpet the southern part of the island. Northwards lies the Forest of Thorns with its fey elven inhabitants, who are, if tales are to be believed, even colder and aloof than their southern brethren. Other dangers roam the forest: the Witch-King's frost hounds hunt down any strangers who enter the tangled briars.

Beyond the forest is a desolate snow-swept moor and, beyond that, a wide black lake surrounded by strange, stunted mountains. In the centre of the lake is an island, and on this island lies the Palace of Eternal Dusk. It is joined to the mainland by three covered bridges, the gates of each of which hold a glyph: Confusion, Carnage, and Fear. The shore of the lake is patrolled by Gristun; a huge guardian beast with aspects of both giant and dragon. When slain, it arises unharmed again within minutes.

## The Palace of Eternal Dusk

The Palace of Eternal Dusk, seat of the Witch-King of the Kingdom of Wyrð, is situated on an island in a large lake in the northern part of Wyrð. It is reached by three great covered bridges warded by three gated archways that are guarded by a great beast.

## The Bridges

### *The Gate of Carnage*

This long bridge is rumoured to be filled with traps and pits and guarded by fierce Mercanian bondsmen and elementals of the air.

### *The Gate of Confusion*

It is said that there are parts of this structure that are made from the air itself, guarded by crystalline skulls and it is stalked by the fearsome Ellesgaunt of the Forests of the Gnawing Waste.

### *The Gate of Fear*

Rumours of poisonous serpents and elite warriors guard this bridge. It is said that a demon watches over it and that something lairs beneath the bridge. This beast is a large and aged hydra – it lairs in the void between the supporting superstructure of the bridge; lazy and old, it may tire of fish and seek warmer meat – perhaps when an adventuring party is attempting to cross?

All three bridges terminate at a reputedly haunted gatehouse and one can enter from there into the palace itself.

### The Palace

Within the antechambers of the palace lie great halls roamed by undead fiends, discarded playthings, and retainers of the Witch-King, perhaps. It is said that the dead worship in a great cathedral of bone and that a shrine to Umborus the Shadow, a great demon of the ancient darkness lies nearby.

As one moves further into the palace, one moves further into the dream-web that the Witch-King holds over Wyrd, and the building and chambers become like smoke and mirrors until one arrives within the arena of the Witch-King.

Strange insectoid beings throng in the stadium watching the show. These beings are seen nowhere else in Legend and they may well be simply figments of the Witch-King's imagination.

The Witch-King will raise scores of skeletons from the arena floor, the remains of all those who have challenged him. A party will soon be overcome and torn to pieces unless they have means of calling on aid.

It is said that Wyrd and the Witch-King are linked in some way, and it is said that the malaise that grips the land could be cured by means of the King... Whether this would mean slaying him, breaking his connection to the land, or aiding in his recovery is unknown.

# Krarth

## Society

### Capital

The fortress of Spyte could perhaps be described as at least once serving as the capital, being the place at which the Magi would meet once every seven years for their evil spiritual ceremonies. However, Spyte is now in ruins and power is now decentralised – and fought over – by the Magi lineages.

Kalugen Keep now houses the Great Hall of the Magi, and the assembly of Magi that gathers for the Battlepits is the closest the Magi get to co-operative governance.

### Government

Though once centrally governed from Spyte, Krarth is now ruled by the Magi (or more correctly, the pale apprentices of the lost powerful Magi) scattered throughout the nation. In Bloodsword 1's lexicon, Krarth is described as having several dozen states ruled by individual Magi. The Magi have lineages or dynasties, such as the Byl, Lim, and Tor lines. The 'nobles' of these lineages are only noble by name, and as such tend to sire various offspring each with claims to power, as well as plentiful opponents for the same.

Krarth is not an insular state, in that it seeks trade through the Rathurbosk with the southern nations. It is fair to say that the Kingdom of Wyrð was once a vassal state to Krarth's powerful Magi, but since their disappearance, has seceded and has thus achieved tolerated autonomy under the rule of the Witch-King (referred to in the Bloodsword gamebooks – especially Bloodsword 2 – as the "Warlock King"). Similarly, the Yggdras Isle is a vassal-state of Krarth; however, it offers little for Krarth and hence its power is rarely seen or exercised here.

For all its foibles and infighting, when marshalled for war, the Krarthian army is an ominous foe.

### The Magi

The Magi are a unique political and sorcerous feature intertwined with the history and present power-structures of the northern land of Krarth.

The fate of the Magi is described in considerable detail in the Bloodsword gamebooks, but also in some ways in Book 6.

There are, in a sense, two sets of the Magi:

1. The original Magi, who are expected to return on the turn of the Millenium (999AS).
2. The ‘replacement’ Magi, their former underlings who have taken their place – for now. Of these, there are said to be several dozen ruling the many states of Krarth.

The known Magi of the latter kind are:

- Magus Balhazar (scarlet pennant livery)
- Magus Horg (red)
- Magus Kalugen, of Kalugen Keep, also known as “The Jailer” (olive green)
- Magus Laglor
- Magus Uru
- Magus Venzor
- Magus Vyl, a vampire (black & purple)
- Magus Lim, a vampire
- Magus Byl
- Magus Tor
- Fata (feminine for Magus) Uru

The known Magi of the former kind, alive, dead, or awaiting return:

- Magus Tor, also known as the “Principle of Unreality” (household god: Vactris)
- Magus Zyn, former ally of Skrymir the Frost Giant, enemy of the other Magi
- Magus Uru

The Spirits of the Magi are five stars said to appear as heralds of the end of the millennium and the return of the true Magi. These are:

- Red Death
- White Light (said to be the transmogrified Magus Uru in Bloodsword 2)
- Gift Star
- Plague Star, having some association with living Magus Kalugen
- Blue Moon (said to be the transmogrified Magus Tor in Bloodsword 3)

## Language

The universal language within Krarth and indeed the Kingdom of Wyrd is Cabbandari, with various local dialects described as ‘Lower’ Cabbandari by scholars. High Cabbandari is the ceremonial and diplomatic language of the Magi, and is the only form capable of rendering into writing in the indigenous majestic script – and even then, a language that is weird in its written representation.

## Religion

Given the description on page 25 of Book 6 that the Magi derived their power from demon-worship, it is fair to assume much of the nation is similarly inclined and Krarth, unlike a number of its nearest neighbours, is not only a geographical wasteland but also a wilderness for the brave missionaries of the True Faith, if not also the Ta'ashim.

### Demon Gods of Krarth

(Bulya)

Below is a list of those entities – god, demon, and those who stride some strange mid-ground between the two – worshipped by the debased Magi of Krarth (taken from the Blood Sword series).

#### *Chernabog*

God of the Unliving, he is not native to Krarth and is indeed still worshipped in a number of southern Coradian countries by secretive cults. One of his greatest servants on the earthly plain is Thanatos, the death-touched guardian giant of the Palace of Eternal Dusk.

#### *Echidna*

The titanic Emphidian being who is Mother of Hydrae, The Ophidian Lady, Mistress of the Inescapable Coils, Lamia of the Veneficial Kiss, Queen of Gorgons, and who gave birth to, among many others, Stheno, greatest of gorgons. She currently abides beneath Kalugen Keep in the Battlepits, transported there from her ancient homeland by lost magics in ages past. A handsome female face with a jade cast and writhing serpentine tresses supported on a mass of writhing serpentine coils is how she has been described.

#### *Larisha*

The Gift Giver, a demoness worshipped in ancient Krarth, she too has made her bower in the depths of the ancient city beneath Kalugen Keep. She appears as a beautiful young woman dressed in a silken toga, her fingers, wrists, and neck encrusted with dozens of powerful magical items she enjoys parcelling out to those Humans she encounters for reasons unknown to anyone except herself. She usually communicates through telepathy, and her voice is much like that of any young woman; it is only when she physically speaks that the cold ancient words that echo between her lips bespeak of her soulless eternity.

#### *Nebularon*

A lesser Demon-God of Krarth of unknown but possibly southern origins, Nebularon is immune to magic and surrounded by a zone that utterly destroys any magic spell, enchantment, or item that approaches him. His temple-hall lies beneath Kalugen Keep, and he can appear there as a huge four-armed man formed of shadow with blue glowing slits for eyes and wielding four black-metal scimitars.

#### *Onaka*

Lord of the Timeless Wastes, The One who Burns, is a chitinous towering cloven-hooved thing dressed in a hooded cloak with four arms and a fang-filled face with glowing eyes. He

is telepathic and can read minds; he has powerful attacking magics, can spit acid, and fights well with his four insectile limbs.

### ***Smeaborg the Fleshless***

Ancient in the days before Spyte was even dreamed of, Smeaborg was once the patron god of the nomadic herders who roamed Krarth with their herds of reindeer. When the Magi came, they offered him worship and he turned his face from his people, committing them to lives lived in service of the Magi. The herds were slaughtered to feed the work crews that built the walls of Spyte, and their bones littered the tundra for hundreds of miles. As they lost their flesh and his people lost their heart, so did their God.

### *Appearance*

When seen in his true form, it is that of a 4m tall skeletal man with the horned skull of a reindeer stag. He is clad in azure armour; the Magi's gift to him. Within the skull's sockets roll mad green eyes and he carries a great wooden halberd that he wields easily.

### *Realm*

The realm of Smeaborg was once an idyllic tundra; great herds of reindeer roamed and fed on the lichen that blanketed it. Today the realm of Smeaborg is an eternally fog-bound mire of sticky mud scattered with the bones of his subjects, both human and reindeer.

### *Attributes*

Smeaborg is, though much reduced in stature, a god and can only be slain permanently by another of his kind. That said, Magi Kalugen's habit of sending those who have displeased him to entertain his patron may see heroes with a need to best the dead god.

Destroying him, if only until he rises again, will release them from his realm but doing so is difficult.

Smeaborg has the statistics of a tenth-rank knight and wields a +2 halberd. Each round he does not attack with his weapon, he can remove 6 HP from every character facing him unless they resist a MAGICAL ATTACK of 18.

PCs will most often encounter Smeaborg if they displease Magi Kalugen in some way, but there are others who still worship the ancient demon – those of his tribes who survived the work camps became enamoured with the death all about them and these death fetishists infest the undercity of Kalugen Keep, surrounding countryside, and it is said some have even found their way into the Battlepits.

### ***Tirikelu***

A demon lord of immense power, it appears as a huge floating golden theatre mask surrounded by five tendrils that grip powerful jade wands. It has sovereignty over imagination and sorcery, and it is said any spellcaster who faces it will be unable to access their sorcerous powers.



## *Umborus*

Umborus the Dark is worshipped in the Kingdom of Wyrð, a former Krarthian dependant state. The centre of its worship is a shadow-filled subterranean cathedral within the crumbling Palace of Eternal Dusk. Its icy fingers can consume body and soul at but a touch. It appears as a massive shapeless looming shadow with eyes like a distant storm and ragged icy claws.

## *Vactris*

The ravenous Household God of Magus Tor. The Demon-God delights in objects that cause harm and hardship. His altars are gore-soaked monstrosities.

# Geography

## Climate

In Book 6 (page 22), Dave Morris says in a footnote that Krarth (and neighbouring Mercania, for that matter) lies at the same latitude as Ellesland but does not have the benefit of the warm ocean currents passing by Ellesland. He describes it as a flat country with winter temperatures as low as minus 30 degrees Celsius in winter up to 15 degrees Celsius in summer.

## Regions

### *North*

- Flint Knives – Jagged rocky peaks through which chilly north polar winds terrorise the continent.
- Kalugen Keep – Quasi-capital
- Ruins of Spyte
- Rymchaeld Sea – Icy winter-impassable sea shielded from Krarth in most respects by Mercania, except in the northeast where it lies between Krarth and its rogue state, the Kingdom of Wyrð.

### *East*

- Citadel of Magus Tor
- Dourhaven – Coastal port
- Mistral Sea
- Port Quanongu – Coastal port

### *Southeast*

- Citadel of Magus Uru

## *South*

- Citadel of Magus Byl
- Drakken Peaks – Conifer-wooded peaks forming a natural defensible border against the more southerly nations.
- Rathurbosk Bridge

## *West*

- Border with Mercania
- Citadel of Magus Lim

## Dourhaven

*(Bulya)*

Situated on the coast of the Mistral Sea to the north of Port Quanongu and Port Lukvess, Dourhaven is the northernmost trading port on the eastern coast of Krarth.

## Significance

Those bound for the Kingdom of Wyrð will often resupply in Dourhaven before attempting the three-day hike across the ice to the frozen land. Its narrow cobblestoned streets carry shipments of oil and furs, and its towering black basalt walls keep the dangers of the wilds at bay. Longshoremen, merchants, and fisherman work the docks at all hours – a row of stores selling supplies of all sorts leads away from the docks, at the end of which is situated the well-known Fimbulwinter Inn.

## Significant Neighbouring Settlements

### *Port Lukvess*

The major whaling port. The stink of blood and rot and rendering oil and fat cloaks this dismal walled citadel... The beasts drawn by the reek make stepping beyond the walls a true danger.

## Local Geographical Features

Ships take anchor at the wharves in Dourhaven Sound, surrounded by a ring of black snow-capped mountains.

## Culture & Peculiarities

### *The Fimbulwinter Inn*

Run by a short dark-bearded Mercanian, the inn has a large common room with a roaring fire and also possesses private rooms for more well-heeled guests. The inn serves spiced ale and turnip cakes and is famous for Mercanian black pudding – the owner's mother's recipe. The landlord has, over the years, played host to a number of expeditions making their way over the ice, and he will advise them of the best route.

## Kalugen Keep

*(Bulya)*

Smoke columns rise up, visible from miles away on the flat plains of Krarth. Wind gusts across the dry, sere grass of the marshes. The harsh monotonous landscape only broken by muddy pools and meres.

In this land, Kalugen Keep is a monolithic black citadel rising up from the plains to blot out the sun. In spring, the marsh waters rise, drowning the land and causways, isolating the citadel. Only at midsummer can crops be planted, growing quickly, and harvested before the next sub-freezing winter.

The entrance is dominated by a massive gate and portcullis, the grey streets are festooned with the symbols and flags of the Magi and street criers proclaim their lord or lady's greatness.

The central square is where contestants employed by the Magi are registered for the Battlepits but serves as the marketplace for the rest of the year.

### Inhabitants

The Keep is ruled by Magus Kalugen, "the Jailer", from his home, the House of the Fivefold Torments. He is fond of games of chance and will often challenge visitors to a game... He is not a good loser... But even when he wins, he is cruel. Kalugen's patron, of whom he is an avid worshipper, is the dead tundra god Smeaborg the Fleshless.

Kalugen's soldiers dress in the olive-green livery of his pennant and are infamous for their cruelty. His elite bodyguards are the infamous Battalion of the Emerald Hydra. He is also Lord of the Tomb-Rangers of the Battalion of Torments, formed of those men who have displeased him in some way and are sent into the undercity on missions for years at a time. Those who return with their minds intact may retake their place in his regular forces.

The House of Fivefold Torments is a gated palace, a massive fire-blackened mansion-house with heavy barred windows and a high ordure-stained tower at one corner. The courtyard is crowded with petitioning peasants. Inside, a dark hall with high ceiling features a throne at one end.

All the other Magi retain residences in Kalugen Keep, for accommodation during the Battlepit trials if nothing else. Magus Balhazar's home lies at the end of a long avenue flanked by cedar trees and decorated with gaily covered lanterns and embroidered banners on poles. A white marble portico is the main entrance. The house has a huge and extensive ballroom often used for lavish masquerade balls.

The vampire Magus Vyl resides within the Blue Tower. The tower lies on the man-made River Delicticand and is approached through back alleys and across a narrow bridge. A

trough filled with the ashes of drained victims lies beside the doorway. Vyl does not entertain visitors and indeed employs a cadre of assassins to keep his privacy.

## History

Kalugen Keep was raised over the ancient ruins of an earlier city that now lies beneath the plains and forms the arena for the Battlepits.

## Features

The Battlepits and the Great Hall of the Magi are the main features of the Keep, along with the estates and towers of the various Magi.

Though the entrance to the Battlepits lies some way from the Keep, the expansive caverns and passageways extend underneath the entire plain, including the Keep itself. Indeed, the Keep's location directly over an enormous vent of magma keeps the city quite liveable year round despite the normal -30 degree temperatures of winter. It is known by the citizens that the Magi's magic keeps their city warm but what is unknown is that the ancient Magi placed a spell of containment on the magma vent... If this spell were ever broken, the Battlepits, the Keep, and a great deal of the plains would be destroyed over the coming months as a vast new volcano rose from the plains.

Contained within the Battlepits are a number of ancient Demon-Gods brought from their ancient homes and bound by the lost arts of the Magi. Amongst them are the Krarthian soul-eater, the Prince of Desolation; Nebularon, The Drinker of Souls, Swallower of Sorcery; The southern Demoness Larisha the Gift Giver; and Echidna, the ancient Emphidian, Mother of Hydras, Queen of Gorgons.

As well as these ancient horrors, there are housed within the Battlepits creatures brought there by the powers of the Magi. These include Dirge, Skiapys and Night Elves.

## Port Quanongu

*(Bulya)*

Also known as Port Quag, Port Quanongu is a trading and whaling port on the eastern coast of Krarth. Across the waters from the port lies Yggdras Isle. The Drakken Forest and Drakken Peaks lie to the south and a trade route leads west towards Kalugen Keep.

## History

Once a small port, the rich whaling in the Mistral Sea has supported the growth of the town, along with trade to the more northern cities of Dourhaven and Port Lukvess.

## Features

The bored gate-guards man the portals of the walled town whose narrow streets reek of asphalt and dead sealife. Harbour Lane runs east towards the docks and notable inns include Ulrick's Bones.

Strange groups of priests in odd flesh-coloured masks roam the bars and taverns, fur traders and trappers ply their wares, and rough sailors and whalers brawl on the waterfront.

## Spyte

### The Blasting of Spyte

Delving too deep in occult magic, the original Magi awoke ancient evil spirits who smote Spyte from the earth and set a great chasm about it that, it is rumoured, has canyons leading down to Hell itself. These canyons are referred to by locals as "the Cauldron".

## Trivia

Dave Morris credits Leo Hartas on page 10 of Book 6 as inspiring Krarth.

The rare magician rolling for a historical background can land Krarth as an option, likely with a convoluted backstory.

## Approximation

At first glance, the icy, inhospitable nation of Krarth would appear to have some approximation equivalent to the Scandinavian nations (e.g., Finnish), or perhaps Russia, of Earth. However, Mercania and its clear Viking parallels accounts to some significant extent for the common heritage of Earth's Norse/Scandinavian peoples, leaving perhaps the peoples comprising north Russia as the best approximation.

Wodenkrait, in the discussion page for Krarth, rejected Russia as an approximation for Krarth, saying as follows:

I don't think Krarth properly approximates to any real-world nation, except in its geographical position. The history of mediaeval Russia is so greatly at variance with that of Krarth that I think it would be a great struggle to draw any meaningful similarities between them. Krarth is a truly original creation.

# Kurland

*(Wodenkrait)*

Kurland is bordered by the Gouge and Krarth to its north, the New Selentine Empire to its east, the Coradian Sea to its south, and Chaubrette to the west. It is the largest nation in the Western Mainland and, relative to its Western Mainland neighbours, the better described of the main three (the others being Algandy and Chaubrette).

It is possible that “Kurland” is the Elleslandic name for the nation that might call itself something different. Witness for instance the difference between the English calling Germany “Germany” but Germans referring to themselves in their own tongue as Deutschland (and see the Approximation section below).

Nonetheless, one who is from Kurland is referred to by others as being Kurlish. Again, this might not be the phrase the Kurlish use to describe themselves.

## history

Kurland’s origins are described in passing in Book 6, the only gamebook in which the nation is mentioned. However, the city of Achtan (in southern Kurland) is referenced extensively in Golden Dragon 2 and Golden Dragon 4. The ruined Old Selentine city of Thalios (in south-western Kurland) is described in great detail in Golden Dragon 4.

Although Achtan is referred to as the capital of the country of Palados, this can be accounted for as follows: Palados was a region of the Old Selentine empire that was governed by Thalios. It encompassed the coastal south-western area of Kurland, from the Chaubrette border to the Baumer Forest. After the fall of the Old Selentine Empire, Palados briefly existed as a sovereign state, before being absorbed into greater Kurland.

In the description of the Crown of Kings, Dave Morris tells us that the charismatic Guillaume II was the King of Kurland who unified divided Kurland (Bk6 pp61-62). This could mean he was intended to represent Legend’s version of Charlegmagne. Perhaps the County of Braeburg resisted this unification at this time and remains therefore independent to this day (alternatively, maybe it achieved independence at some later stage).

As opposed to western neighbours Algandy and Chaubrette, Kurland’s wars have more likely been with their Selentine neighbours than across the Glaive or against Albion. However, on pages 121-122 of Book 6, Dave Morris explains that Kurland’s coastal principalities (perhaps the County of Braeburg and the region of Palados) were regularly at war with Algandy and Chaubrette.

Kurland, from the sheer size of its territory and a mention in a footnote on page 41 of Book 6, and other clues in Book 6, that it was once a mighty empire (witness the former prevalence of Old Kurlish for instance) and perhaps remains a competitor with the New Selentine Empire for supremacy in their region.

# Society

## Capital

Kurland's capital is undescribed.

## Government

Kurland is a monarchy. It could be supposed that King Vorlest described on page 37 of Book 6 is the present king, but he could well be a predecessor to the current king. Undoubtedly, the present King is either heir or heir of the deposer of King Guillarme II of antiquity, described briefly above.

## Trade

The piece on the Nomad Khanates in Book 6 suggests the Kurlish are proficient at trade via caravan, if not the masters at it. By contrast and inference from the table on pages 176-177 of Book 6, it seems the Chaubrettans and Kurland's cousins in the Ferromaine League are more proficient sea-goers. Indeed, the Albish are more likely to be encountered at sea than the Kurlish.

It may indeed be that the Kurlish trade with those in the Ferromaine League to take their goods to sea, and in return, the Ferromainers rely upon the Kurlish to transport goods deep inland.

On page 168 of Book 6, Kurland is described as being famed for its salt and silver.

## Language

The official language of Kurland is Kurlish. An older dialect, known as Old Kurlish, once existed but is swiftly passing into antiquity. Given that it is by far the most readily known of the 'lost' languages on page 157, one might infer its use and hence the influence of Kurland was once widespread.

Curiously, Kurlish is the language of Asmulia also, which in approximation with medieval European nations seems odd. Still, it perhaps suggests in part the cultural differentiation between the Asmulian nation and the remainder of the New Selentine Empire with which, one would think, Asmul had some synergy.

## Culture

In Book 6 we are told on page 125 that the Kurlish in Tourney would not look down upon opponents of low social rank, as opposed to say their Chaubrettan or Algandian western neighbours, as they have not had peace to 'soften' them. This suggests that Kurland remains not only warlike and at war (probably with disputes with the New Selentine Empire) but also a rugged, gritty people. Certainly, Paladosians still seem to cling to the patriotic notion of Palados as a powerful country, rather than as a region of Kurland (GD2 Background). This strongly developed sense of regional identity must create tensions with the other regions, such as the County of Braeburg.

Kurland is also a True Faith nation (named as such on page 43 of Book 6).

The central headquarters of the Knights Capellars is known to be located on Sandraust Island (Bk6 p75). Dave Morris seems to imply that this location lies within Kurland (Bk6 pp157-158). The formal title of the Knights Capellars is the Worshipful Order of Saint Wythan, who are symbolised by a purple cross with eight points (Bk6 p225). The cross could be a variation on a 'cross fourchee' or 'Maltese cross'. The Order is divided into many provinces, with each possessing a provincial headquarters; examples include Crescentium and the County of Braeburg.

The Dragon Knights of Palados and the Academy of Light and Truth are both known to be based in Achtan (GD2 Background and GD4 Background). Unlike Algandy and Albion, Kurland has an 8-day week (Bk6 p100).

## Geography

Kurland is somewhat an open canvas geographically, though in Book 6 it is clear that it is in places heavily wooded, though perhaps not as much so as Algandy and less so in the south, approaching the Coradian Sea and Asmuly.

## Regions

### *North*

- The Gouge

### *East*

- Baumersheim
- Wissenstein
- Wissenstein Abbey
- Wotanmere – A great crater lake surrounded by a blasted moor, where once stood ancient forest. It is told the forest was levelled and burned in a battle between Donar and a massive worm that laired there.



## *Southeast*

- Skagsfeld

## *South*

- Achtan
- Coradian Sea
- Heldentor
- Temples & Altars:
  - An ancient stone altar near Köln is dedicated to the goddess Vagda, who is a nature goddess linked with trees or woods.
  - Another ancient stone altar has also been found on Hengstberg (Stallion-hill). It has the following inscription: “Heliste”.
  - In the now-flooded sites of Donburg and Belte, on the East Scheldte Estuary, there are the remains of temples each dedicated to a deity called Nehalennia. Over 160 carved stone votives with her image have been dredged up at those sites, and several inscriptions in Old Kurlish thank her for safe passage on the seas.
  - In Empel, there is the remains of a temple to Hercules Magusanus. This was the Selentine name for the supreme god of the Kurlanders, Donar. Stone votives and broken weapons – placed as symbolic offerings – are found at the location.

## *Southwest*

- Thalios

## *West*

- Border adjoins the County of Braeburg\*
- River Arokose

## *Central*

- Baumer Forest

## Achtan

The powerful city of Achtan resides in Kurland on the western bank of the river Arokose. It is the first city of Palados – a former region of the Old Selentine Empire (GD2 Background). Palados encompasses the coastal south-western area of Kurland, from the Chaubrette border to the Baumer Forest.

Following the catastrophic destruction of Thalios over 1,000 years ago, Achtan replaced it as the capital of Palados. Subsequently, after the fall of the Old Selentine Empire, Palados briefly existed as a sovereign state, before being absorbed into greater Kurland. Paladosians still cling to the patriotic notion that Palados is a country rather than a region of Kurland (GD2 Background). This strongly developed sense of regional identity can create tensions with other regions in greater Kurland.

Within the walls of Achantan can be found a number of significant institutions and locations, including the following:

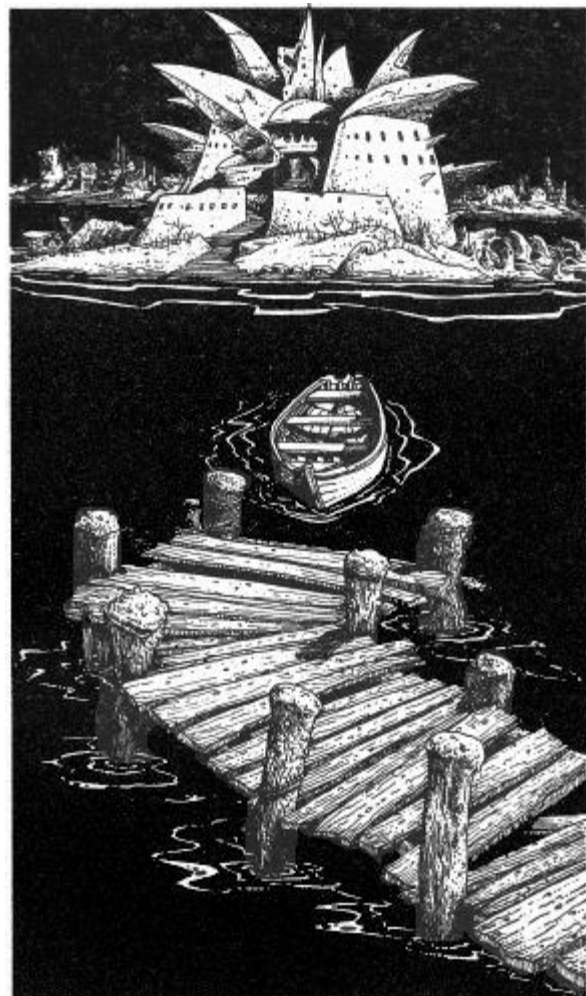
- Achantan is perhaps best known as the home of the noble Knights of Palados, which includes the Dragon Knight of Palados (GD2 Background).
- Also located in Achantan is the Academy of Light and Truth (GD3 Background). The Academy is a scholastic institution that is dedicated to intellectual endeavours. It is governed by the High Council of Master Scholars, which includes Master Scholar Cottulio and Master Scholar Giru (GD4 Background, s310).
- Originally established during the Old Selentine Empire, the Archives is an extensive repository of Old Selentine and Paladosian knowledge (GD2 Background).
- Famed throughout Palados, the Ornamental Gardens of Achantan are a tranquil escape from city life (GD2 s44).

## Thalios

The deserted remains of Thalios are located on the northern shoreline of the Coradian Sea, approximately 40 miles west of the city of Achantan (GD4 s1). Thalios was the powerful first city of the Old Selentine region of Palados and was famed for its sophisticated culture, majestic waterways, and thrilling chariot races (GD4 s12, s170, s284, s300).

Protected behind thick stone walls, Thalios was constructed from classical marble and bronze architecture on a monumental scale (DG4 s12, s120, s180, s284). The heart of city government resided within the massive curved towers of the Consul's Palace (GD4 s62, s128, s284). Entertainment played a vital role in city life, and the glorious arena hosted spectacular chariot races under the protection of a giant animated wyvern statue (GD4 s12, s40).

An extensive collection of artistry and wondrous magical items were stored in the halls of the Amber Pantechnicon (GD4 s144, s170, s192). Unfortunately, it is unknown what purpose the mysterious magical tests and traps inside the Citadel of Conundrums served (GD4 s96, s225, s288).



A huge statue of the Old Selentine God of Warriors was venerated in the Temple of Swords (GD4 s36). The Warrior God resembled a silver-armoured four-armed knight (GD4 s36). Tributes were also paid to the greatest leaders of Thalios in the magnificent Vault of Heroes (GD4 s180).

Thalios was the secret hiding place of the Eye of the Dragon – an enchanted jewel of phenomenal sorcerous energy (GD4 s180, s134, s310).

Many dangers lay beneath the city, where dark catacombs formed the infamous lair of a monstrous kraken (GD4 s24). Moreover, the people of Thalios faced constant skirmishes with the cruel and nefarious Kappa. To counter this threat, the citizens of Thalios were protected by sorcerous statues – the Sphinxes (GD4 s205).

In approximately 100 PD, Thalios suffered a terrifying cataclysm (GD4 Background). Devasted by overwhelming tremors and swamped beneath tsunami, the low-lying Thalios and its environs subsided under the Coradian Sea (GD4 Background). The doomed inhabitants of Thalios perished beneath the irresistible maelstrom (GD4 Background). The cause of this catastrophe is unknown.

Today, Thalios is an inhospitable semi-aquatic mausoleum, surrounded by eight miles of treacherous reefs, water, mud, shingle, and barren tidal wetlands (GD4 Background, s1, s20, s68, s72, s108, s156, s220). Half of the city – occupying approximately one square kilometre of land – remains just above sea level (GD4 Background, s108, s20, s72). A typical maritime environment, Thalios is a forbiddingly damp, cool, and windy location (GD4 s1, s20, s128, s240).

The Eye of the Dragon still exists somewhere within Thalios (GD4 Background). Should the Kappa ever acquire the sorcerous jewel, then its power would constitute a grave threat to humans.

The layout of modern Thalios and its surviving monuments is detailed in Golden Dragon 4 (GD4 Map).

## Skagsfeld

The small hamlet of Skagsfeld sits on the edge of ancient forest and surrounded on two sides by small fields and pastures. It lies well off the main trade routes.

Father Kalder is the village priest.

Spring festivities involve groups of the younger girls going around the village carrying green branches and bunches of flowers. They travel from home to home, reciting songs, and blessing each household. The leader of the procession carries a wreath of holly and ties a scarlet ribbon to the eaves of the houses that have been blessed.

The old god of the village was Beowa, a fertility god linked with bears and corn, but they are slowly coming around to the True Faith.

The local woods are the haunt of an entity known as the Erl-King, and it is whispered that an ancient pact was made between the villagers and this creature to protect them against a primal threat within the earth.

## Approximation

Kurland is approximated, by geographical coincidence but also by a process of elimination comparing its counterparts Algandy to Spain and Chaubrette to France, as Germany. However, the shared tongue with Asmuly and former significance as an Empire suggests Kurland might be an amalgam of different historical empires, nations, or peoples.

It may be more correct to say, referring to maps of the Middle Ages, that Kurland approximates best to the East Frankish Kingdom of the equivalent European era.

# Mercanía

*(Bulya)*

Not exactly a nation, Mercanía is a cold, windswept part of the northern mainland. Its people are tribal and fiercely independent, clinging to their dour crags and snowy fjords as much as their restlessness drives them to the sea.

## history

Beginning as various tribes unaffiliated with each other, and after numerous wars with each other, the Mercanian tribes turned their attentions to seafaring and the plunder available, in particular, across the Mergeld Sea in Ellesland. There, as their shipcraft and seafaring improved, they were able to plunder beyond the Albish eastern shores of Ellesland over to the northern and island shores of Thuland and even the western



shores of Cornumbria and Ereworn. Raids across the Gouge to Chaubrette were not altogether unheard of, either. Legendary raids include southern mainland ports and even as far south as the Mungoda Continent.

Due perhaps to some distant kinship or dislike for tundra wastes, Mercanians have, by and large, not bothered the inland peoples of Krarth around which their 'nation' surrounds to Krarth's north and west.

The general sea-raiding activity (or in Earth terms, Viking-like behaviour) of the Mercanians has diminished in more recent years as they have settled amongst the nations they have assailed or made treaty with rulers of the nations involved. Centuries of raiding, taking female hostages and the like has seen considerable inter-breeding between Mercanians and Elleslanders, in particular the northern peoples. The southern Albish, accordingly, consider themselves 'pure blood' Albiomen when, in truth, they themselves arose from the mainland peoples now comprising Chaubrette and Kurland.

It should be noted that there are two Mercanian settlements in Ellesland, being Torston and Sigurdingham in north-western Albion (Book 6, page 30).

The Mercanian influence on Ellesland is best illustrated by the Elleslandic calendar, in which the days of the week still carry the names of the old Mercanian gods – Halig, Syf, Tyr, Wotan, Tor, Freya and Boldur.

# Society

## Capital

Having no central government or any other manner of centralisation, it is inaccurate to expect or describe Mercania as having a capital. Each tribe has its own strongholds to which it rallies in the cold winters and from which the chieftains order their fearless men to war.

The nearest thing to a capital-structure on land or governance is the Thing to Decide on Joint Ventures and Matters of Mutual Interest, frequently so described but to scholars outside and the elderly referred to as simply the Althing. This 5-yearly council rarely occurs due to infighting but is, in theory, a gathering at one place for Althing.

## Government

Each tribe is ruled by a chieftain or jarl, sometimes by birthright but at other times through alliances, deals, or conquest. Among Mercanian peasants, the jarl's word is law, and is obeyed to the letter. Inter-tribal relations involve ad hoc delegations to discuss border issues or mutual concerns, such as the desirability of allying to fight a common intra-national or international enemy.

## Trade

Like Albion, Mercania is rich in iron and has a thriving fishing industry.

## Language

The common language throughout the Mercanian lands is called Latter Mercanian and is one of the simplest languages to learn. In their days abandoning raiding for trading, it is a common trade tongue and has been simplified for that purpose, importing in particular terms common to the Elleslandic language. Latter Mercanian can be recorded in the Nikkar Runic script.

The former version, Old Mercanian, is more complex and idiosyncratic, spoken only by the very aged and for rare ceremonial purposes, such as the calling together and opening of the Althing. Old Mercanian is also recorded using the Nikkar Runic script common to Thuland and Mercania on manuscripts and items of ancient lore.

## Religion

Mercanians largely hold to the ancestor worship and spirit worship approximate to the Nordic pantheon in Earth culture, including the readily transferrable Mercanian gods Halig, Syf, Tyr, Wotan, Tor, Freya and Boldur, approximating to Norse gods like Thor, Woden, Frig and Balder.

Mercanians have to some small extent – and at times by chieftains for strategic value – adopted the True Faith. Of course, at the peasant level, adherence to adopted faiths ranges from syncretism to outright continuation of pagan practices. For this reason, elementalists, mystics, and shamans have a higher chance of emerging from Mercania due to continued links to the ancestral spirits.

## Geography

### Climate

Dave Morris records in Book 6 that, like inland Krarth, Mercania can record overnight lows in winter as low as -30 degrees Celsius and only ever summer highs of 15 degrees Celsius in midsummer. However, the coastal nature of Mercania moderates these a little as opposed to the chill winds that gather cold though the Flint Knives rushing down on the Krarthian unfortunates.

### Regions

#### *East*

- Border with inland Krarth

#### *West*

- Mergeld Sea

#### *North*

- The Flint Knives – A cold, inhospitable jagged rocky mountain range forming a natural border against inland Krarth.
- Rymchaeld Sea

#### *South*

- The Gouge

## Approximation

As discussed in the introduction, Mercania is best approximated in Earth-terms to the concept of Scandinavia, rather than a particular nation. Thuland bears elements of, say, Danish culture, whilst Krarth also has some Nordic elements. However, the tribes of Mercania are probably best approximated to the precursors to what have today become Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland – and perhaps even Latvia.

# Molasaria

## history

The territory of Molasaria has been inhabited since time immemorial as the dust-choked ruins at Balava, Sarvi, and Enisa demonstrate. In the ancient past, Hamangia, Boian and Karanovo cultures inhabited the region; these ancient peoples were tribal bronze-skinned people and herders, and their descendants still herd goats among the hills of the region. At the rise of Emphidian civilisation, under the influence of tribes and cultures driven from the north, the brutal fey-touched Gunița reavers appeared in the region and ravaged the existing peoples. Hundreds of years later, populations migrating from the north of the Coradian Sea, of the bloody and war-like Kurga culture, mixed with the Gunita population, creating the savage Cerna kingdoms. The Cerna had rudimentary commercial contacts with the Emphidian Empire as the ancient Emphidian sword-grave ruins beneath Midia prove.

Emphidian colonists from Miletus founded the first colony in the region – Hisi in the 7th and 6th centuries before the death of the Saviour. More Emphidian colonies were founded on the coast in the following years, including Calla, Tomi, Membria, Dionysolis, Paropolis, Aodisias, and Enia. In the 5th century BC, these colonies were under the influence of the Despian Alliance, passing in this period from oligarchy to democracy.

In the same century, King Dari of Peras (now Crescentium) subdued the Cerna living in the region during his expedition against the Anari to the north.

In later years, one of the Cerna kings, Athos, fought against the southern Anari cities. King Athos was defeated by the Emphidians under King Philos, who afterwards extended his rule over all Molasaria.

Decades later, the Emphidian colonies led by Catis, supported by local Cerna rulers, revolted against Emphidian rule. The revolts were suppressed by Limachus, the local Emphidian governor, who also began a military expedition against Dromites, the ruler of the Anari to the north.

In the same century, proto-Algish people from across the ocean settled in the north of the region. Later, the Perasi king Zoltes invaded the province several times, but was defeated by the Emphidian General Rhexos, who became the protector of the Emphidian colonies for many decades until the rise of the Selentine Empire.

During the Third Southern War, these colonies were occupied by the Selentine Proconsul of Emphidor, Marcus Terentius. A treaty was signed between the Emphidian colonies and the Empire, but soon the colonies revolted. General Gaius Antonius intervened but was defeated by the rebel colonies and the Cerna peoples near Hiria.



A wily Cerna ruler from southern Molasaria, Rholi, supported the Proconsul of Selentine Emphidor, Marcus Licinius, in his action against the rebellious cities to the north. Declared Socius et amicus Populi Selentini by Emperor Octavian, Rholi helped Crassus in conquering the states of Dapox (in central Molasaria) and Zaxes (in the north of the region). Molasaria and the cities on the coast came under direct rule of the Imperial Governor of Emphidor.

Five years later, the Selentine province of Molasaria was created. The dispossessed Cerna invaded the region several times, but each time were driven further from the civilised lands into the mountains. In the same period, the base of the Selentine fleet was moved to Novum at the mouth of the Ravali River and great shipyards were constructed.

The Perasi King Deces led a coalition of Perasi, Zhenari, steppes barbarians, and Azurian mercenaries in an attack against southern Molasaria. The invading army was defeated by the Selentine legions under Emperor Trajan on the Yara river and again near Adisi, in the southern part of Molasaria. The latter victory was commemorated by a monument and the founding of the city of Tropa.

The province was generally stable and prosperous until the crisis of the 3rd century, which led to the weakening of defences and numerous barbarian invasions. During the reign of Tritan Decius, the province suffered greatly from the attack of Kurlish tribes under King Conar. Barbarian attacks followed each year and a fleet of allied Kurlish, bloodthirsty Cerna, and rebel Anari attacked the cities on the coast. In the following decade, the Selentine Emperor defeated the rebels north of the Ravali and settled a part of them near Calla. The same Emperor put an end to the crisis in the Selentine Empire, thus helping the reconstruction of the province.

Under the Emperors Licius, Juli the Apostate, and Valuss, the cities of the region were repaired or rebuilt and the great port city of Olac was established.

After the division of the Selentine Empire, Molasaria became part of the Tamorian Empire.

With the defeat of the New Empire in Analika, a large mass of Likari crossed the border, settling in the north of Molasaria and absorbing the last civilised remnants of the Cerna, though throughout the hills, Cerna settlements continued in isolation until they vanished from living memory: the villages abandoned where they stood.

The Empire's presence in Molasaria lost weight under the pressure of the repeated attacks on the Empire's eastern borders by steppes barbarians. In the crumbling coastal fortifications of Molasaria are said to be lost Selentine treasure hordes.

Molasarian victory over Imperial forces in the Battle of Onla established the Molasarian Empire. Tsar Ipor created great cities, a great wall from river to the sea, and the city of Megov and populated the lands of Karuna. The region was embraced by a large net of earthen and wooden strongholds and ramparts. Around the end of his reign, wide building of new stone fortresses and defensive walls began. Some of the ruined Selentine fortresses were reconstructed as well. During the following three centuries, Selentines still controlled some of the coast and the mouths of the Delta and, for short periods, even some cities.

At the beginning of the 8th century, Emperor Justinian visited Molasaria to ask Tsar Terva for military help. Tsar Omur built a palace and city, Plessa, on the Delta and erected a mound in the middle of the distance between Megov and his new building; on it was built the first True Faith cathedral in Molasaria: Four Hundred Martyrs Church. Around it was established the city of Silis, which became an important Molasarian ecclesiastical centre. The adoption of the True Faith in the north loosened the hold of the pagan Tsars, spelling the end of the native religions, and slowly the Empire crumbled back into its constituent parts.

Molasaria has suffered a number of invasions from crusaders, barbarians, and the like over the last 100 years and has broken down into separate warring kingdoms who squabble over the land even as invaders pick at their flanks.

The hills are riddled with crumbling ruins of lost empires and older catacombs that predate the coming of the Emphidians, some hill folk say that the Cerna never left this land, that they now dwell within it, and that they have been building up their numbers. They call them Uryk, 'the hidden'.

# Society

## Capital

### Megov

The name of Megov is clearly of Likan origin; apparently, it was initially founded and functioned as a Likan settlement until its fortification at the beginning of the 9th century. The proximity to the then provincial capital of Plessa led to the fast development and expansion of Megov during the reign of Tsar Ipor and Tsar Omur. By the time of the coronation of Tsar Brego in 852, Megov had turned into an important strategic military centre and was the seat of the noble council. A number of churches were built in the city after the conversion of the majority of Molasarians to the True Faith; this led to conflict with the Tsars, who still followed the ancient religion.

The revolt of the now True Faith nobility led by 'King' Faldmir in 892 was decisive for the future destiny of the city. In 893, Vladimir was dethroned and the new ruler, Silos, decided to move the capital of the state from the still somewhat pagan Plessa to Megov. In the following 80 years, the city developed rapidly, turning into a centre not only of Molasarian politics and diplomacy, but also of culture, literature, and the fine arts. A chronicler mentioned that it took Silos 28 years to establish and build up his new capital.

In view of the impressive town planning, the vital economy, and the grandeur of buildings like the Orb Church and the Royal Palace, Megov was a true rival of the largest and most important city centres in the Coradia. Culturally, it was the centre of a great literary collection that was founded in Plessa in 886 and moved to Megov along with the rest of the court in 893.

It was probably around this collection that the famous illuminated manuscripts of Molasaria developed in the middle of the 10th century. The city also has large ceramic workshops which produced art ceramics, glazed tiles, as well as ceramic icons and iconostases. The city is currently occupied by Prince Svislav, who currently claims rulership of Molasaria; though his claim extends only as far as the reach of his troops.

## Government

Molasaria has been a tribal alliance, an oligarchy, a short-lived democracy, an imperial republic, a short-lived sultanate, and an empire. It is currently a loose collection of kingdoms, nominally allied around Prince Svislav against the Tamorian Empire and the threats of Hudristania and the crusaders to the east and south.

## Language

Klav, which is written in Classic Script throughout Molasaria, though Emphidian Script is used in a number of regions alongside Classic. In the south are large minorities who speak Nascerine and write Jezant.

## Culture

Molasaria is a land of many faiths. The northern areas are of the True Faith, mostly of the Tamorian branch of the religion and some even more divergent local variants.

The south has long been dominated by the Ta'ashim Faith, originally introduced by Perasi invaders, though it is likely that the imams of Zhenir would find many local differences in the Faith's practice. In the north, small villages still honour Anari and Likan gods introduced by northern invaders and settlers.

The mountains of the country hold the last bastions of the country's native religions, based around the dualistic worship of draconic forces of fire and water, embodying the male and female divine in the form of great worms. In some areas, particularly isolated coastal villages, there is still ongoing, though quite divergent, worship of the lost gods of Emphidor, though many of them have been reduced to local folkloric beings in the minds of their worshippers.

The people of Molasaria are a people divided; their ancestors hail from Anari, Likan, Emphidian, Ta'ashim, and many other peoples. But they are also a people united by a common heritage and the struggle to survive in the shadow of darkness that has long troubled their lands. Molasaria's rich folk traditions have been nourished by many sources, many of which predate the Selentine or even the Emphidian occupation. Traditional arts include wood carving, ceramics, weaving and embroidery of costumes, household decorations, dance, and richly varied folk music.

Wood is the main construction material, and heavily ornamented wooden objects are common in houses. In many cities, wood is used to create impressive structures, such as

churches or gates. In the south, windmills were made of wood, and in mountainous regions hardwood is used even for covering the roof. Linen is the most common material for clothing, combined with wool during the winter or colder periods. These are embroidered with traditional motifs that vary from region to region. Black is the most common colour used, but red and blue are predominant in western areas. Men wear a white shirt and pants with a wide leather belt, usually over the shirt, and a vest sometimes made of leather and embroidered. They wear either hard boots or a simple shoe made of leather and tied around the foot, and they usually wear a cap or hat that differs in design from region to region. Women wear a white skirt and a shirt with a vest. They wear an apron that is also embroidered and a headscarf. On special occasions they wore more elaborate outfits.

Music and dance represent a lively part of the Molasarian folklore and is invaluable in lifting the spirits or drowning out the howls of wolves and less wholesome beings. Party music is very lively and shows both Emphidian and Analikan influences. Sentimental music, however, is the most valued, and Molasarians consider their songs unique in the world.

Molasarians have had, from time immemorial, a myriad of customs, tales, and poems about love, faith, kings, princesses, the undead, dragons, and hags. Customs related to certain times of year are: Midwinter chants, the burning of effigies of the past on the turn of the year or the Martis, marriage festival, custom marking the first day of spring. Other customs are of pre-Selentine origin, like the Paparuda rain enchanting custom in the summer, or the masked folk theatre or the Two Dragons War pantomimes and rituals in winter. Two such customs are outlined below.

### **The Nestvo**

A ritual performed in several villages in the Strazha (South Emphidian) Mountains close to the coast in the very southwest of Molasaria. It involves a barefooted dance on smouldering embers. It is usually performed in the square of the village in front of the whole population on the day of St Vagda or the day of the village's patron saint. The ritual is a unique mixture of True Faith beliefs and older pagan traditions from the Strazha Mountains.

Traditionally, the right to perform the ritual is hereditary and the head dancer may be succeeded only by his or her son or daughter, and only when he or she is too old or ill to continue performing it. The head dancer's house is sacred because it houses the stolna, a small chapel where icons of several saints are arranged, as well as a sacred drum used specifically for the ritual and believed to cure the drummer if he is ill.

On the day of the ritual, the villagers would go to the stolna, led by the head dancer and the local priest, where they would watch him thurify the icons and the other dancers, symbolically transferring them the spiritual power and inspiration. The people would then head to a local holy spring carrying the name of the saint, where they would eat an offering of mutton. After sunset, the crowd would build up a large fire and would dance a traditional jeer-filled round dance until the fire dies and only embers remain. The barefoot dance on embers that follows as the climax of the night is accompanied by the beat of the sacred drum and the sound of a bagpipe. It is popularly thought that some of the dancers reach a religious

state of trance while dancing, explaining why their feet don't burn and they allegedly don't feel pain.

The origins of this custom stretches back to those villages who honoured the cthonic worm draconic principle over the fire-drake draconic principle. In other parts of Molasaria, a similar but inverted ritual is practised where burning oil is poured over a votive representation. Their offerings at the spring and the dance over embers symbolises both their allegiance to the water and earth and their rejection of (and triumph over) fire. In more recent times, with the loss of old traditions and the retreat of the dragons into legend, the rituals have become focused around the saints of the True Faith, though canny and long-lived observers will note that little has actually changed – in some cases, the local saint is even called by the same name as the old object of veneration.

### The Kukeri

A traditional Molasarian ritual to scare away evil spirits and undead performed at Winters End, with a costumed man performing the ritual. The costumes cover most of the body and include decorated wooden masks of an animal, usually a goat, and large bells attached to the belt. Around mid-winter, the kukeri walk and dance through the villages to scare evil spirits away with the costumes and the sound of the bells, as well as to provide a good harvest, health, and happiness to the village during the year.

The kukeri traditionally visit the peoples' houses at night so that "the sun would not catch them on the road." After going around the village, they gather at the square to dance wildly and amuse the people. The ritual varies by region, but its essence remains largely the same.

The ritual is attributed to ancient Cerna origins. Similar rituals can be also found in Emphidor and Lika. The masked goat-type figure is known as Kukri; its horns are adorned with girls' beads and kerchiefs, ribbons, multi-coloured tassels, mirrors, ivy, basil, natural or artificial flowers, etc. The Capra's body may be made of different materials depending on local tradition, such as carpet or red cloth, with adornments sewn on: traditional colourful cloth, embroidered handkerchiefs, beaded ornate women's textile girdles, reeds, seed heads, goat pelts, and fabric ribbons.

Whilst the ceremony today is seen as a ritual of protection, despite church mutterings about Devil worship and the image of The Enemy, there are disturbing hints as to its original function:

When the predations of the night became too great, the Cerna would bind up their war-prisoners' and old house-slaves' arms and dress them in horned goat pelts drenched in blood. To the horns would be attached fluttering streamers, noise-makers, and shiny things that would attract attention. The 'scape-goats' were then driven out of town during an elaborate ritual of drumming and chanting, which attracted the attentions of all nearby predators... When the screams had died down in the early hours of the morning, the Cerna would rise and go to war to fetch more offerings, safe in the knowledge that – at least for the moment – the ancient hungers were appeased...

# Geography

With the exception of the Ravali Delta, a marshy region located in its north-western corner, Molasaria is hilly, with an average altitude of about 200–300 metres. The highest point is the Greki Peak in the Farzali Mountains, having a height of 467 m. Lake Siltghul is one of the most important lakes in Northern Molasaria.

Molasaria lies in a temperate climatic zone; the local climate is determined by the influx of oceanic air from the northwest and southwest and continental air from the southern desert regions.

Molasaria's relatively level terrain and its bare location facilitate the influx of humid, warm air in the spring, summer, and autumn from the northwest, as well as that of northern and north-eastern polar air in the winter. The Deorsk Ocean also exerts an influence over the region's climate, particularly within 40–60 kilometres from the coast. The average annual temperatures range from 11 °C inland and along the Ravali River to 11.8 °C on the coast and less than 10 °C in the higher parts of the hills.

The coastal region of Southern Molasaria is the most arid part, with an annual precipitation of 450 millimetres.

Molasaria is a windy region known for its windmills. About 85–90% of all days experience some kind of wind, which usually comes from the north or northeast. The average wind speed is about two times higher than the average in the region.

Due to the limited precipitation and the proximity to the sea, rivers in Molasaria are usually short and with low discharge. However, the region has a number of shallow seaside lakes with brackish water.

## Regions

### *North*

- Megov
- Plessa

### *West*

- Olac

# Creatures of Molasaria

## *Dragons of Molasaria*

Molasaria has always been known as a land of dragons, the ancients worshipped the great beasts and venerated them above all others. The Khala, a chthonic goddess of water, earth, and darkness was venerated by the leaving of offerings at shrines erected outside the lairs of worms and The Zmej, an opposing male god of fire, lightning, and thunder was venerated by leaving offerings at the lairs of ‘firedrakes’.

The most famous earthly dragon is Veri Çelen (Вѣри Чѣлен; i.e., “fire snake”) (Veri Celen in Albish), which is said to be capable of assuming human form and visiting unprotected women at night to have sexual intercourse with them and to produce progeny; indeed, many Molasarian sorcerers claim to be descended from such a child. Veri Celen is reported to be truly enormous and to be so old that its flames have eaten through its armour in places, making it appear to burn from within.

Arçuri, a local wood demon from the southeast, is described as a great snake-like beast (perhaps a worm) who guards his woods and the ancient ruins within them jealously.

The Perasi dragon, Ajdaha (Açtaxa), is also mentioned from time to time. It was once said to lair in the mountains on the border between the current Principalities and Molasaria.

According to one legend, when the Selentines came to found the town of Biläri, they discovered a worm living in the area. When they decided to kill it, the creature surprised them by speaking the local tongue and begging for peace. When the legionnaires attacked regardless, she called on the Ta’ashim god to give her wings. Huge wings burst from her back and the beast flew away from Biläri towards the south.

Another great dragon was said to live in a pagan tower temple at Alabu. Although the Molasarians adopted both the Ta’ashim and Coradian faiths, the beast allegedly survived and was worshipped by locals until the current age when it was driven into the hills by the warlord Tepes.

Ibn Fadlan of Opalar, who visited Molasaria during a particularly hot summer, referred to numerous snakes, especially on trees. Once he saw a big fallen tree, which was longer than 40m. Ibn Fadlan wrote that he’d seen a big snake at the trunk that had been almost as large as the tree itself. The locals allayed his fears, assuring him that the snake was not dangerous. Whether the beasts referred to in his notes are the – now rare – local pythons or perhaps young worms is unknown.

## *The Djadadjii*

The djadadjii are a specific kind of undead hunter native to Molasaria who dispose of the restless dead by “bottling” them. The hunter would first bait a blessed and prepared bottle with human blood. He would then use a picture of a saint or the Saviour or another relic as an icon and would drive the creature from its hiding place and straight into the bottle. The hunter then corked the bottle and disposed of the spirit by throwing it, bottle and all, into a

fire. The djadajii are a kind of ‘lucky charm’ for local villagers who believe that the hunters are plucky lads ready to defend them from the undead who stalk the night. In truth, if one wishes to become a djadajii then one should have hefty sorcerous, blessed, or demonic power to back up their ‘bottling’ or they will find themselves joining the lists of the dead like those before them.

### ***Karakoncolos:***

A forest-dwelling variety of ire goblin from northern Molasaria.

### ***The Ustrel***

The Ustrel is a vampiric beast believed to rise from the grave of a child born on a holy day but not baptised before death. Nine days after burial, the ustrel claws its way out of its grave. It then finds a herd of cattle to satisfy its thirst for blood. It then returns to its grave. But on the next day it returns to the herd and never returns to its grave. It then resides in the horns of a bull or the hind legs of a milk cow. It feeds first on the fattest cattle and then works its way down as the poor animals wither and die.

To get rid of an ustrel, a vampire hunter – called Vampirdzija – must perform the ritual of the need fire. On a morning, all the fires in the community are extinguished. Then two bone fires are created at a crossroads. The cattle are then led between the two fires. The ustrel drops onto the crossroads from the animal whose horns or hind legs it had inhabited when that animal passes between the two fires. The Ustrel cannot leave the crossroad and is eventually devoured by wolves.

The belief in the ustrel is probably a way of explaining wasting diseases in herds of cattle, though outsiders who have witnessed the ritual have reported seeing a wailing, naked child left behind after the herd passes.

### ***Balaur***

A hydra-like beast with draconic rather than human heads atop its necks. Legend says the first was born from the mating of the dragon Zmeu with a mysterious Emphidian hag.

### ***Capcaun***

Ogre

### ***Iele***

Powerful and fey elves of the mountain forests.

### ***Moroi***

A term for vampiric or life-draining undead.

### ***Pricolici***

Lycanthrope (werewolf)



# Mungoda Continent

Whilst not divided into countries, Morris & Johnson (the authors of Dragon Warriors) probably left it this way to represent the diverse tribal structures of pre-colonial Africa. The only description in the gamebooks is on pages 51-53 of Book 6, though pages 238-242.

It should be noted that one significant difference to Africa is that there is no equivalent to Egypt on this continent. Egypt's equivalent, Kaikuhuru, has been transposed to the mainland. That being said, and without giving much of the Book 6 scenario away, there are remnants of exiled Kaikuhuran princes' wealth here in what was an expansive ancient empire. RJ Lambert surmises that Mungoda represents at least the mid-to-southern aspects of Africa. However, temples and ancient ruins similar to those found in the jungles of South America are known to exist within the Anku region.

| Region    | Description / Places of Interest                  | Cities / Settlements   | Peoples  |
|-----------|---|------------------------|--|
| North     | Thanagost Peaks, Desert of Songs, The Azure Coast | Banar                  |  |
| Northeast | Thanagost Peaks, The Azure Coast                  | Gatina, Mariana        |  |
| East      | Cosh Goyope                                       |                        |  |
| Centre    | Mungoda Basin, River Anku                         | Paru, Temple of Katak  | Akmatli (spider-worshippers)                       |
| South     | Voluceth lands                                    | Dzimba Woye            |  |
| Southwest | Forest of Storms                                  |                        |  |
| West      | Wagadou Empire, Kania Kingdom, Lingwe Kingdom     | Tumbutu, Tullo, Kuombi | Songha, Luare, Pulani, Monde, Wagadou Empire, Loso |
| Northwest |   | Mariana                | Kluntok and Kuntuku peoples                        |

## Anku

*(Golden Dragon 2)*

The river Anku snakes through the northern rainforest of the Mungoda Basin on the Mungoda Continent. The Anku region is notable for its dense, impenetrable jungle and deadly quicksands (GD2 s1, s18). Precipitation usually takes the form of torrential rainstorms (GD2 s216, s250). The only sign of civilisation along the entire river Anku is the Crystal Spire – an enormous obelisk – that mysteriously towers into the sky from the murky waters of the upper Anku (GD2 Background).

Over 2,500 years ago, this remote jungle became the domain of the great Priest-Kings of the Anku Empire. For sixteen generations – from approximately 1,500 PD to 1,100 PD – the cruel Priest-Kings collected priceless treasures and inflicted their sadistic gods on the peoples of the Anku. In approximately 1,100 PD, an unknown cataclysm brought the Anku Empire to a sudden end, leaving its buildings and culture abandoned, seemingly overnight. The nature of this extraordinary event is unknown. Secluded within the Mungoda Basin, any knowledge pertaining to the insular Anku Empire was quickly forgotten by the outside world.

Today, somewhere in the heart of Anku land, the Temple of Katak, the Flame God, can still be found.

Together with tropical wildlife, Anku is now inhabited by a savage tribe of headhunting natives that wield spears, daggers and blowpipes (GD2 s40, s44, s253). The natives also set gruesome forest traps to catch their prey (GD2 s23, s44, s95).

The most deadly of the natives is an old witchdoctor – a dark-skinned native shaman with a large bone nose-piercing and dressed in animal skins and bones (GD2 s40). It is evident that he is a practitioner of sorcerous voodoo magic (GD2 s276). The witchdoctor possesses a bone wand and medicine pouch, the contents of which can transform a person into a savage beast or beautiful forest bird (GD2 s83, s121, s233). Somehow, he has also managed to acquire a highly explosive powder (GD2 s90).



## Temple of Katak

Within the uncharted northern depths of the Anku region of the Mungoda Basin lies the Temple of Katak – the Flame God. The temple is a Mesoamerican-style flat-topped pyramid constructed of black basalt (GD2 s80, s200, s216, s250). Protected by treacherous jungle and quicksands, the ancient, ruined monument has lain undisturbed for two millenia (GD2 s80).

The powerful Priest-Kings of the Anku Empire constructed the temple in approximately 1,500 PD to protect the sacred Golden Idol of Katak, a priceless magical effigy of the Flame God (GD2 s300). The Priests of Katak conducted horrific sacrificial ceremonies to appease the Flame God's thirst for blood (GD2 s36, s277). On their death, the Priest-Kings were mummified and entombed in the catacombs beneath the temple, together with their treasure (GD2 s130, s153). Within the catacombs, horrific traps, deadly monsters, and evil demons were set in place to kill any intruder.



The catastrophic demise of the Anku Empire over twenty centuries ago consigned Katak to oblivion. Despite this, however, Katak remains a powerful sorcerous force inside his temple, waiting in silence for new worshippers (GD2 s34, s300).

Outside of Anku, the only known record of the temple is an old manuscript that exists within the Achtan records. The parchment describes a huge crystal obelisk that stands in the waters of the river Anku, less than one day's journey from the temple (GD2 Background). However, any adventurer brave enough to seek the temple will first have to face the perils of the Anku jungle.

The temple is still sealed, and any dangers contained within will not be encountered in the surrounding rainforest.

## Dzimba Woye

*(Bulya & Muriwo)*

Found on the very edge of the Mungoda portion of the map beyond the forests.

## Size & Significance

Among the abandoned volucreth mines of the inland plains south of the rivers of the Mungoda Basin, there is a fortress built of stones of marvellous size, and there appears to be no mortar joining them. This edifice is almost surrounded by hills, upon which are others resembling it in the fashioning of stone and the absence of mortar, and one of them is a tower more than 12 fathoms [22 m] high. The natives of the country call these edifices Symbaoe, which according to their language signifies court.

## Significant Neighbouring Settlements

Only scattered settlements dot the landscape of the plains. Though the Bird Kings do not like to venture out from their jungle homes, the volucreth are a significant threat in the region. Most of the native villages are subsistence farmers or hunter-gatherers; further to the north there are herding peoples.

However, some days' walk to the east of the Symbaoe ruins, the ground rises through gentle foothills to a striking range of mountains some hundred leagues from the sea. The natural raintrap and fertile soil mean that the foothills can produce tree crops in abundance while being easily defensible. Some generations past, it is said that a group of warriors from central Mungoda fled the volucreth and set up camp here. Subduing – and then intermarrying with – the local tribes, it appears that their arrival coincided with the introduction of many varieties of tree-fruit in this part of the continent – perhaps brought by adventurous traders from the Thousand Islands.

Whatever the reason, the Mambo of Vumba now rules over a burgeoning and confident population. Given their recent immigrant background, they do not share the excessive fear the plainsmen show towards the ancient ruins and have now begun to imitate the building techniques, producing mortarless mansions and city walls of stone – though nothing yet to rival the great palaces of Symbaoe (which word, incidentally, has been co-opted into their language as 'houses of stone').

Furthermore, they have discovered that some of the abandoned mines conceal seams of gold and iron that, even with simple tools, can still be worked. Every year, the youngest warriors from each town join together on a mission to the west to recover as much gold as they can from the ruins. Not all return, but those who do are feted and may keep some of the wealth they bring back to take a bride and set up their own household. The most adventurous traders from Marazid, Batubatan, and the Thousand Islands will occasionally make landfall on the eastern shore and make the dangerous trek up one of the river valleys to the high pass that marks Vumba's eastern frontier – there to trade their spices and manufactures for the pure bright gold. However, these journeys are far from regular, as the rough terrain that sweeps down from the mountains to the sea is filled with many great beasts.

The current Mambo's advisers have begun to suggest that he send out a group of soliders to clear a permanent route east – such an undertaking would not be for the fainthearted.

## Local Geographical Features

The hills surrounding the ruins carry smaller ruins of their own. Many of these ruins have subterranean areas once used for storage and shelter but are now abandoned to more unhealthy occupants. The cave complexes that run through the limestone hillsides, at times, connect with these manmade mines and cellars. A great wide lake sits at the centre of these ruins beneath the tower.

## Culture & Peculiarities

The ruins of mighty palisades and crumbled finely carved pillars harken back to a great empire now lost forever. Within the ruins are finely worked artifacts of bronze and iron and it is said that some of the original inhabitants sleep none to peacefully in the grip of death. Many of the cellars have become dens of lions, leopards, and stranger beasts.

## Significant Residents

Nyaminyami: A great serpent with a fish-like head is said to inhabit this lake by the local tribespeople. Indeed, at times, a great shape can be seen moving within the waters and there are carvings reminiscent of such a beast on the ruins.

## Summation

A sprawling complex of ruins and caverns covering almost fifty square kilometres, centred on a lake containing an enormous god-beast.

## Encounter Table for Dzimba Woye

### Night

| D100  | Encounter  | #    |
|-------|--|------|
| 1-5   | Were-Hyena (as Lycanthrope)  | 1-6  |
| 6-12  | Giant Scorpion   | 1    |
| 13-20 | Crocodiles   | 1d4  |
| 21-26 | Impundulu (Lightning Bird)   | 1    |
| 27-35 | White Rhino  | 1-2  |
| 36-45 | Abatwa (Ant-Riding Imps)   | 1-10 |
| 46-50 | Asabonsam  | 1    |
| 51-57 | Tribesmen  | 1-6  |
| 58    | Emela-ntouka (Aquatic Rhino)   | 1-2  |
| 59-65 | Hippo (as White Rhino)   | 1d10 |
| 66-68 | Were-Lion (as Were-Tiger)  | 1    |
| 69-70 | Buffalo (as Bull)  | 3d10 |
| 71-75 | Lion (as Tiger)  | 1d6  |
| D100  | Encounter  | #    |
| 76-80 | Hyena (as Wolf)  | 2d6  |
| 81-85 | Leopard (as Wolf)  | 1    |
| 86-88 | Python   | 1    |
| 89-90 | Giant Viper  | 1    |
| 91-92 | Spectre  | 1    |
| 93    | Ghouls   | 2d6  |
| 94    | Adze   | 1    |
| 95    | Ghost  | 1    |
| 96    | Wraith   | 1    |
| 97    | Spectre  | 1    |
| 98    | Zombie/Skeleton  | 1d6  |
| 99    | Voluceth   | 1d10 |
| 100   | Nyaminyami: The god-serpent will ignore any prey smaller than a hippo and is essentially impervious to attack. |      |

## Day

| d100  | Encounter   | #   |
|-------|-------------|-----|
| 1-8   | Crocodiles  | 1   |
| 9-14  | White Rhino | 1-2 |
| 15-20 | Tribesmen   | 2d6 |
| 21-30 | Buffalo     | 4d6 |
| 31-38 | Lion        | 1d6 |
| 39-48 | Giant Viper | 1   |

| d100  | Encounter | #    |
|-------|-----------|------|
| 49-60 | Leopard   | 1    |
| 61-81 | Hyena     | 2d6  |
| 82-89 | Python    | 1    |
| 90-98 | Hippo     | 1-2  |
| 99    | Impundulu | 1    |
| 100   | Abatwa    | 1-10 |

## Kuntuku

*(RJ Lambert)*

### Location

The Kuntuku people live on the northwest of the Mungoda Continent just off the map in the chartered parts of Legend. Their village is situated on the edge of rainforest that ends at grasslands alongside the nearby river, which flows some 5-6 miles out to sea through swamps in which these predominantly fisher-people find their staple fish and crustaceans. The Kuntuku are dark-skinned people that someone from our world would identify as African.

### Diet

The Kuntuku are fisher-people by-and-large, fishing along the river alongside which their village is situated, but at times will hunt for larger and more dangerous game such as the tuntuku (wild boar), mazuti (jungle-elk) and twasima (large jungle-cat) in the jungle.

### Religion

Due to the hazards of hunting in the jungle, they worship the black spider monkey indigenous to these parts, as they believe that the monkeys will alert them to danger from their vantage points high above them in the rainforest canopy. Their animist religion has them believe that upon death their spirits leave the village to climb the trees and join the monkeys in the canopy, conversing with the gods who walk upon the canopy. The young are warned not to seek to climb the trees and are all told of tales – some true – of others who tried and fell to untimely deaths commanded by the gods.

The Kuntuku also teach that one might find their spirit-tree in the jungle, being the tree to which they will ascend into the canopy. For this reason, the Kuntuku whisper to the trees when hunting (and chatter to them when the need for stealth is diminished) to try to identify their spirit-tree. Once found, the Kuntuku will tend the tree and its surrounds to ensure it survives until his or her death. Funerals, therefore, involve a ceremony with the dead body before the communal fire, followed by a turning of backs to allow the spirit the privacy to depart the body, and then a solemn trip to the spirit-tree to try to observe the spirit's ascent to

the canopy. Those said to espy the climbing monkey-spirit of their dead ancestor are said to be blessed.

### Customs

The men of the Kuntuku grow beards upon reaching puberty and very rarely cut them, except for ceremonial occasions. As such the men have prolific, long beards.

The women dress modestly and covered, despite the jungle heat, as is their tribal custom. The women all live together with the children and separate from the men, and only attend the men's huts on feast nights for the usual festivities and debauchery.

Marriage is practised, with a somewhat loose concept of monogamy.

Canoes for fishing are made from a small woodlot near the village maintained specifically for the purpose using trees identified for their flotation properties. It is considered evil to use a rainforest tree – a potential spirit-tree at worst or an ancestor-tree at best – for a canoe.

Weapons are traditionally spears, and flint is used for knives. There is no metalworking known to these people.

### Combat Abilities

The Kuntuku male has an ATTACK of 12 and DEFENCE of 6 with a spear but otherwise a human-standard ATTACK 11 DEFENCE 5. They are also able to throw spears standing in their canoes, even whilst in motion, which even a seasoned barbarian familiar with spears would be hard-pressed to do without a missile weapon penalty. The Kuntuku are strong people with Health Points of d6+5, but otherwise have all the same attributes as humans described in Book 1. Women, if attacked (shame on you!) have ATTACK 10 DEFENCE 4 and HP d6+3.

### Shamans

The witchdoctors of the Kuntuku rarely number more than three for the whole tribe, and when an appropriate acolyte is identified, the eldest of the shamans will often disappear into the rainforest, never to return. It is said that they, too, ascend to the canopy – but alive in this case – and become the white (albino) monkeys that are seen on rare occasions. For this reason, the witchdoctors (all men, incidentally) paint themselves in white ash to symbolise their special spiritual destiny.

### Miscellaneous

In RJ Lambert's DW-Clyster campaign, the adventuring group encounter the Kuntuku in some disarray. They have taken to worshipping new gods, strange craven humanoid beings with large talons who demand female human sacrifice. These beings come from a cave in the nearby mountains across the river. After their first encounter, the people did not sacrifice to these 'gods' and were brutally attacked, so in fear they pay homage to their new gods. The

older men and shamans grumble about the change, but the sacrifices continue – until the group are invited to the sacrificial ceremony involving a particularly beautiful girl and must decide whether they will ignore her screams or make war with the gods...

## Mariana

*(HE Blackarm)*

Mariana is a river-port by the sea directly west along the coastline from Gatina (which appears on the last set of maps in the original Book 6).

### Name

The small outpost town derives its name from the Blessed Virgin's name in the True Faith. It was so named to impress upon local pagans the male/female god-archetypes of the True Faith for syncretism of their beliefs, but also in honour of the Blessed Virgin. There was no 'indigenous' name for the place as the Mungodans feared the sea and would not settle near it.

### Description

Mariana is a primitive settlement but features a few buildings with designs imported from the mainland of Legend. Otherwise, it is simply a holding and shipping port for goods traded along the unnamed river. Exotic herbs, spices, and animal species are shipped to speculators in the east.

There are few seagoing vessels that visit here, and those that do take goods along the coastline to Gatina where they are then shipped across the ocean to the east. Were it not for the Desert of Songs, at which Mariana lies on the western fringe, a land-caravan would be a preferable route to shipping goods east to Gatina.

### NPCs in Mariana

One sea captain that visits Mariana regularly is the eccentric and womanising Algandarve sailor Pierre Cadiz, through whom player-characters might find opportunity to leave Gatina and visit Mariana and thus find passage up the river to the strange lands inland. He speaks only Beaulangue and the local Mungodan dialects.

Another NPC the player-characters might encounter is native-born Father Icham Isfai, an elderly frail priest attending the simple chapel of the Our Lady of the River Church. Though he bears the priestly garb and title, being so far from the centre of the Church, his views are a little divergent from canonical thinking.



## Tumbutu

(Bulya)

Tumbutu is a city in the Hakula Region in the small west-Mungodan nation of Ilamat. It was made prosperous by Masa Mulan, a great and powerful exile from the Brass Tower who settled there and established a stronghold. It is home to the enormous Saraka Fortress and other walled enclaves. It has become an intellectual and spiritual capital and centre for the propagation of belief in the Ta'ashim religion throughout western Mungoda. For all its grandeur, the bulk of Tumbutu's structures are primarily made of mud, much like the original homes that stood there before the arrival of Masa.

Tumbutu is mostly populated by Songha, Luare, Pulani, and Mondé people, and is about fifteen kilometres north of the Snakesblood or Oigemwe River. It is also at the intersection of an ancient north-south trade route that runs all the way up to the northern coast. It is an important entrepot for rock-salt and emeralds mined from the nearby hills.

Its geographical setting made it a natural meeting point for nearby west-Mungodan populations and those from the north. It has a long history as a trading outpost that links western Mungoda with Ta'ashim traders throughout the northern coast and thereby indirectly with traders from Coradia. This has given it a fabled status, and in the near-west, it has become a metaphor for exotic, distant lands: "from here to Tumbutu".

Tumbutu's longest-lasting contribution to Ta'ashim and world civilization will be scholarship. Masa Mulan has built one of the largest libraries in the world. Locally trained scholars and collectors boast an impressive collection of ancient Emphidian texts and Kaikurhan scrolls.

### Origins

Tumbutu was first established by the nomadic Luare people as a central gathering and trading centre over a thousand years ago. It has been transformed by the arrival of Masa Mulan into a labyrinthine city.

### Tumbutu Tales

*"The sorcerer king of Tumbutu hath many plates and sceptres of gold, some whereof weigh 1300 pounds. ... He hath always 3000 horsemen ... (and) a great store of doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men, that are bountifully maintained at the king's expense. At the time of our visit, grass was abundant, providing plentiful milk and butter in the local cuisine, though there were neither gardens nor orchards surrounding the city."*

- Leonus the Aged

*"On the east side of the city of Tumbutu, there is a large forest, in which are a great many elephants. The timber here is very large. The trees on the outside of the forest are remarkable... they are of such a size that the largest cannot be girded by two men. They bear*

*a kind of berry about the size of a walnut, in clusters consisting of from ten to twenty berries.  
My guides could not say what is the extent of this forest, but it is very large."*

- Shabeni the Merchant

Of Interest to those of an Adventuring Persuasion

- Masa Mulan will often contract independents for exploration and escorting duties.
- The nearby forest contains a number of ancient ruins of unknown origin, the flooded complexes now home to dracomen and darker things.
- There are a large number of very valuable items and objects within the Library that are of interest to other 'private collectors', though thieves have not yet lived to tell of their successes, if any.

## Wagado

*(Bulya)*

The Wagadou Empire is located in the western lands of the Mungoda Continent between Tumbutu and the coast, and north of the south-western Forest of Storms. It first rose five centuries past, when a dramatic shift in the economy of the area allowed more centralized states to form.

The introduction of the camel, which preceded the later Ta'ashim and Azurite traders by several centuries, brought about a gradual revolution in trade, and for the first time, the extensive gold, ivory, and salt resources of the region could be sent north and east to trading ports on the Azure Coast and to other nascent Mungodan kingdoms. The Empire grew rich from the northern trade in gold and salt. This trade produced an increasing surplus, allowing for larger urban centres. It also encouraged territorial expansion to gain control over the lucrative trade routes.

The volucreth invaded the kingdom in the early years, but then retreated back to their forest homelands.

The first written mention of the kingdom in the northern lands comes soon after it was contacted by Azurite traders; they relate detailed accounts of a centralized monarchy that dominated the states in the region. The scholar al-Bakri collected stories from a number of travellers to the region and gave a detailed description of the kingdom: he alleged that the Waga could field an army of some 200,000 soldiers and camel cavalry.

Upon the death of a Waga, he was succeeded by his sister's son. The deceased Waga are buried in large dome-roofed tombs, filled with gold and treasures for the afterlife. The religion of the kingdom involves emperor worship of the Waga and worship of the Bida'a, a mythical water serpent of the Gina River that bears an uncanny resemblance to the beast once worshipped in the lost city of Dzimba Woye.

## Etymology

The Empire is known to its own citizens as Wagadou. The “dou” in the Empire’s name is a term for “land” and is prevalent in place names throughout western Mungoda. The “waga” in the name roughly translates to “bull”, and the emperor is also known by this term. Thus, Wagadou translates to “Land of the Bull”. The Empire became known in Coradia and Ta’ashim lands as the Golden Empire by the dint of its most famous export.

## Origin

Some Ta’ashim scholars think that the ancestors of the Wagadou are among the first people on the continent to produce stone settlement civilizations. These were built on the rocky promontories of the Walati and Tagantu cliffs, where the ruins of hundreds of stone masonry settlements, with clear street layouts, have been found. These ruins are now infested with ghouls and grave gaunts.

## Capital

The Empire’s capital was built at Koumbi on the edge of the northern deserts. The capital was originally two cities six miles apart separated by a six-mile road. But settlements between the cities became so dense due to the influx of people coming to trade that it merged into one. Most of the houses were built of wood and clay, but wealthy and important residents lived in homes of wood and stone. This large metropolis of over 30,000 people remained divided after its merger forming two distinct areas within the city:-

### *Ghaba Section*

The major part of the city is called Ghaba. It is protected by a stone wall and functions as the royal and spiritual capital of the Empire. It contains a sacred grove of trees used for religious rites. It also contains the king’s palace, the grandest structure in the city. There is also one mosque for visiting Azurite and Ta’ashim officials.

### *Merchant Section*

This is the centre of trade and functions as a sort of business district of the capital. It is inhabited almost entirely by Azurite and a smattering of Ta’ashim merchants. Because the majority of these merchants were followers of the Illuminate, this part of the city contained more than a dozen mosques.

## Economy

The Empire owes much of its prosperity to trans-desert trade and a strategic location near the gold and salt mines. Both gold and salt are the dominant sources of revenue, followed by ivory. These products are exchanged for various products such as textiles, ornaments, and cloth, among other materials.

Many of the hand-crafted leather goods found in the coastal cities of the north also have their origins in the Empire. The main centre of trade was the capital, Koumbi. The taxation

system imposed by the Waga required that both importers and exporters pay a percentage fee, not in currency, but in the product itself. Tax was also extended to the goldmines.

In addition to the exerted influence of the Waga onto local regions, tribute was also received from various tributary states and chiefdoms on the Empire's periphery. The introduction of the camel played a key role in the Empire's success as well, allowing products and goods to be transported much more efficiently across the deserts. These contributing factors all help the Empire remain powerful, providing a rich and stable economy that has lasted over the centuries.

### Government

Much testimony on Wagadou depends on how well disposed the emperor was to the foreign travellers in question, from which the majority of information on the empire available in the north comes.

Ta'ashim writers often comment on the social-political stability of the empire based on the seemingly just actions and grandeur of the Waga. An Azurite nobleman by the name of Al-Hamra questioned merchants who visited the empire and wrote that the emperor:

“Gives an audience to his people, in order to listen to their complaints and set them right ... he sits in a pavilion around which stand 10 horses with gold embodied trappings. Behind the king stand 10 pages holding shields and gold-mounted swords; on his right are the sons or princes of his empire, splendidly clad and with gold plaited in their hair. Before him sits the high priest, and behind the high priest sit the other priests ... The door of the pavilion is guarded by dogs of an excellent breed who almost never leave the king's presence and who wear collars of gold and silver studded with bells of the same material.”

### Tensions

The rapid rise of Tumbutu has put a powerful citystate on the borders of the Empire and it remains to be seen how the Waga will respond to this new competitor for the lucrative salt market.

In the south, volucreth attacks have again been reported and the great beasts of the Forest of Storms have been sighted beyond their forest borders.

Pirate activity along the coast also threatens some of the minor trade routes. Recently, the rabidly anti-Ta'ashim Loso people of the smaller Kania kingdom captured much of the Empire's outlying southwestern districts. They took control of the regional capital, Tullo. The Loso king's son, Soumaoro, now forces the people to pay him tribute. The Loso also managed to annex the neighbouring state of Lingwe to the south, where the important goldfields of Bure were located.

# Gods of Mungoda

## Northern Mungoda

In the north of Mungoda, in those places where the Ta'ashim faith has not been taken up, the people still practise the solar-lunar worship of their ancestors. The moon is called Azur in the majority of the coastal and desert tongues, a name shared with the ancient Moon God.

Animal and occasional human sacrifice is not uncommon in the worship of both sun and moon, as reflected in the following Emphidian record:

*They begin with the ear of the victim, which they cut off and throw over their house; this done, they kill the animal by twisting the neck. They sacrifice to the Sun and Moon, but not to any other God. This worship is common to all the peoples.*

The sun was given the name Manem as well as the name Amen, which seems to have meant "Lord". In many of the local languages, the name Aman is believed to have the meaning of "God".

In the western parts of the Azure Coast and the inland deserts, the tribes and peoples still worship fragmented deities of the ancient Kaikuhuran pantheon left behind when their empire fell. The crumbled ruins of ancient Kaikuhuran trading outposts and their associated settlements are scattered in the coastal regions of the northern desert. To the west, along the coast, are scattered ancient sand-choked Emphidian and Selentine temples, and it is not unusual to find a local tribe venerating some ancient titan long forgotten in its own faded homeland.

## Western Mungoda

In the northwest there is a general belief in a single creator deity who often has a wife and perhaps two to five children, who may act as minor gods. This monotheism is indigenous and preceded contact with the Ta'ashim faith; nonetheless, it does mean that the conversion to the Ta'ashim religion has been exceedingly fast in these areas.

Further south, the various tribal groups believe in a number of different gods, sometimes a very large number, though again there is a shadow of monotheism. This 'Great God', however, is usually seen as distant and not approachable by humans so the worship of the 'lesser deities' makes up the bulk of the religious activities. Often, gods are related to everyday life, a Goddess of Yams, God of the Forge, a Forest God and often these gods have many minor spirits who act as functionaries. Deceased kings, chieftains, and emperors are also deified and worshipped in many parts of the west.

One constant in the west, even in those places which are essentially monotheistic, is the presence of a powerful Trickster God in the form of a spider or who possesses spider-like attributes. This being is present in almost all of the western pantheons and even seems to be infiltrating the versions of the Ta'ashim religion that are filtering down from the north. What

this being may be, where it comes from, and how its worship and tales have become so endemic is unknown. An example of a western pantheon is outlined below:

### The Yemohe Gods

- Aga – Patron God of Hunters and the Wilderness (plus the animals within it).
- Avri – God of Fishermen.
- Aya and Lok – Sister Goddesses of Hearth and Farming.
- Gleti – Moon Goddess.
- Gu – Son of Maw and Lis, Gu is the God of War and patron deity of smiths and craftsmen. He was sent to earth to make it a nice place for people to live, and he has not yet finished this task.
- Maw and Lis – The creator couple; Sky and Earth.
- Okan – God of Dreams.
- Sakpa – God of Smallpox.
- Nsu and Nsi – Semi-divine twin magicians; secretive Gods of Sorcery.
- Fa – God of Wisdom and Knowledge.
- Nan – Goddess of Fertility and Creativity.
- Egbe – Deity of Prosperity and Protection, also for seers and clairvoyance.
- Sogbe- The Thunderer; son of Maw, he and his attendant thunder-spirits are boisterous and loud.

### Central Mungoda

The gods of the people of the Thanagost foothills, savanna south of the mountains, and the thinning forests to the ranges southeast are, on the whole, monotheistic peoples. Many believe in a creator Sky God and the veneration of the moon is also important. Some notable exceptions do occur among a number of groups:

The Makwai are southern herders of cattle and undertake many esoteric and strange rites involving the veneration and sacrifice of their herds to the Creator God who blesses the tribe with them. There are rumours – no doubt spurious – that some of these rites involve strange unnatural couplings and surely there is no truth to the rumours of bull-men arising from these.

A number of tribes conceptualise their gods as serpents and snakes and veneration of these creatures as holy is quite common amongst scattered groups – rumours abound of sacred caverns where truly immense sacred serpents lair.

## Eastern Mungoda

### Anku (Antiquity)

Ancient Anku theology is recorded in Golden Dragon 2. Similar to ancient Mesoamerican Aztecs, the Anku belief system venerated several gods via blood sacrifice. The most powerful gods in Anku theology are in the following table (GD2 s180).

The greatest of all Anku deities was Katak. During the reign of the Anku Empire, the Flame God was known to have had sixteen Celestial Emissaries, called Priest Kings, who ruled in his name (GD2 s200). The focus of worship for the Priest-Kings was the

| Anku God  | Title            | Heiroglyph  |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| Ictec     | Netherworld God  | Skull       |
| Katak     | Flame God        | Flame       |
| Tonu      | Sun God          | Sun         |
| Tlal      | Thunder God      | Zigzag Line |
| <unknown> | Art & Crafts God | Spiral      |

sacred Golden Idol of Katak, which was protected within the Temple of Katak (GD2 Background, s300). Concealed within the Mungoda Basin, the Anku religion did not spread to neighbouring lands. Around 1,100 PD, a catastrophe befell the Anku civilisation, and their gods were suddenly abandoned.

Today, the tribes of the Mungodan Forests and Cosh Goyopë are many and varied – their practices and mythology are myriad. The majority of the tribal groups (though by no means all) are polytheistic and undertake veneration of many deified natural phenomenon and animals. Four examples are outlined below:

#### ***Shonga***

The Creator God of the river-dwelling Shonga is Bomazi, a golden skinned Sky-God who vomited up the world then married an old couple's daughters to create the Shonga tribes.

#### ***Gbara***

The god of the inland Gbara, Abao, had both benevolent and malignant aspects; he was the Creator God and often appeared as an emaciated human. He was depicted as a very tall and ivory coloured man with only one half of a body, missing one eye, one leg, etc. His offspring were the Anzi.

The Anzi were nature spirits who inhabited sacred trees, springs, and other sacred wild areas. At night, they followed people and protected them from danger as long as they did not look over their shoulder to ensure that Adroanzi was following. If the person did so, the Anzi promptly killed them.

#### ***Buti***

The most important god of the Buti pantheon is the God of the Hunt, Kor, who wields a bow made from two rainbow serpents. He occasionally contacts mortals through Gor, the Elephant God of Thunder, or a sacred lizard messenger.

Bati is the Moon God.

Ret is a god of the jungles who supplies animals to hunters. Ret appears as a leopard in the initiation rites. When the ancestors of the Buti stole fire from him, he decreed that humans would also die, and he thus became the Death God as well.

### *Anku (Modern)*

The jungle spirits that are currently worshipped by a savage tribe of natives in the Anku region are unknown.

## Southern Mungoda

Southern mythology is extremely varied, ranging from monotheistic sky-gods, to animistic animal ancestors, through to veneration of a mythic serpent or other fantastic creature. What remains constant among these myths is the references to great wars fought by these gods against scaled and feathered gods from further south. Many of the creators first had to slay or drive off a great eagle or steal an egg from a heavenly bird in order to make the land safe for their chosen peoples. It is not without coincidence that the Bird Kings or Volucreth of the southern jungles are still seen as a great threat and sacrifices and ceremonies are held constantly to ward off their attentions.

## Environmental Features

One should note that journeying within the Mungoda Basin brings the problem of adventuring in a humid tropical climate. Dave Morris set out in pp238-242 of Book 6 the difficulties PCs will face in journeying there.

## Approximation

Almost certainly inspired by the continent of Africa pre-colonisation.



# New Selentine Empire

The New Selentine Empire has historical links with the Old Empire, from which it seceded, and its remnant, the nation of Asmulia, in modern-day Legend.

## history

Centuries before the modern day in Legend, the centurion commander called Madrox Cosmogoran declared himself Imperator in the north, thus forming the New Selentine Empire when – fortuitously – the Imperator of the ‘old’ Selentine Empire was unable to respond to the partial coup due to raids from southern barbarians (who would later adopt the Ta’ashim faith and form the Caliphate of Zhenir). Those raids ultimately led to the fall of the southern part of the Empire and hence it is called the ‘old’ Selentine Empire.

The Empire’s more recent local problems have been, to the east, the barbarians of the Eastern Steppes passing through or over the Harogarn Mountains and, to the west, the continuously rebellious and warlike peoples of Kurland.

By far the largest conflict in which the Empire is engaged is its ongoing, pseudo-religious war with the Ta’ashim peoples of the Sultanate of Opalar and the Caliphate of Zhenir in the south, including battles to recover or defend the Holy City of Ibrahim from Zhenir, assisted by the efforts of crusaders from the Principalities of the Crusade and, behind them, the rich lords and kings across the seas in Albion, Algandy, Cornumbria, and Chaubrette.

## Society

### Language

The language of the Empire is Angate, shared with the Ferromaine League within the nation’s western shore with the Coradian Sea.

### Religion

Within the New Selentine Empire is one of the two main denominations of the True Faith Church, the ‘heterodox’ Tamorian Church. The Tamorian Church, based in the capital Tamor, teaches that the Saviour of the True Faith became like one of the gods like the imperators of old, rather than being the Son of God. This places it at considerable odds with the other main denomination, the Selentine Church, with its seat in Selentium, which is the more broadly accepted of the two denominations. This theological difference of opinion

might play out only amongst the religious scholars or otherwise later in history if the True Faith forces can conquer or subdue the Ta'ashim forces, the common enemy in the south.

# Geography

## Regions

### *North*

- Drakken Peaks (mountain range) forming border with Krarth
- Trackless Ooze (marsh) and beyond it the Mistral Sea
- River Liederkehrn
- Tamor (capital city)

### *East*

- Harogarn Mountains, featuring Hazran's Gap, a valley permitting a trade route through to the Eastern Steppes
- River Felda
- The Sleetmarsh

### *South*

- Kaikuhuran Desert

### *Southwest*

- Feldalium

### *West*

- Border with the Ferromaine League
- Coradian Sea

# Approximation

It is clear that the Old Selentine Empire and New Selentine Empire represent, in their totality, an amalgam of the Byzantine and Roman Empires. However, beyond that, approximation gets somewhat more difficult:

- Selentium is: THEORY A: Byzantium/Constantinople; THEORY B: some other city closer to Rome; or THEORY C: Rome itself
- Tamor is: THEORY A & B: Rome; THEORY C: Byzantium

For completeness' sake, Ibrahim represents Jerusalem (in all likelihood) with Crescentium representing a Crusader city such as Acre.

The schism between Byzantium and Rome in ancient Earth history is matched somewhat by the schism that arose in the Selentine Schism.

# Additional Note

*(Gary Johnson)*

The name of the city that was the capital of the Old Selentine Empire is Selentium, not Selentine – see the map on page 264 of Book 6. Also, I don't agree with some of the analogues, or that the analogues are that ambiguous.

Selentium is Rome – it's the original capital of the Roman Empire equivalent ("the Old Selentine Empire") and it's the location of the Pope-equivalent ("the Pontiff").

Tamor is Constantinople – it's the capital of the successor state to the Roman Empire equivalent, the Byzantine empire equivalent ("the New Selentine Empire"), but it isn't subject to the religious authority of the Pontiff of Selentium, and thus isn't equivalent to the Holy Roman Empire of western Europe.

Ibrahim is Jerusalem – it's the birthplace of the Jesus equivalent ("the Saviour")

Crescentium is a crusader city.

Also, I think it's a stretch to say that the Crusades are a successor state to the Selentine Empire, even if some of the crusader barons hold their territories in vassalage to the Pontiff himself (book six page 49). In the real world, many rulers in western Europe swore homage to the Pope (such as King John of England) – however, that didn't make those rulers part of the Holy Roman Empire, or give the Pope military control over their territories. In my opinion, the crusaders in Legend swear vassalage to acknowledge the religious authority of the Pontiff of Selentium, just as rulers did in western Europe.

# Principalities of the Crusades

*(Bulya)*

It would be a misnomer to refer to this gathering of principalities as a 'nation'. They are, rather, the combined product of the staking of territory by various northern kings and lords in lands at the frontier in the war with those of the Ta'ashim Faith. Collectively, they are referred to as the Outremer (pronounced oo-tre mair) in the Bloodsword gamebooks.

## history

The concept of the Crusades was conceived by the Pontiff and King of Algandy in concert. Though a Holy War endorsed, venerated, and rewarded by the True Faith Church, it has other political and economical perspectives.

Those who have embarked upon the Crusades are seen nowadays in Legend as troublemakers in their own lands, greedy, and perhaps not having the noble motives of defending the True Faith that might once have been the case. As such, the Crusades serve as a useful dispatch to get rid of such types.

The Crusades have also served as an economical means to access and move exotic Ta'ashim goods to the north.

As the New Selentine Empire maintains a relatively stable border with the Ta'ashim peoples, chivalry has taken root in some of the originating lands of Crusaders, leading to lesser interest amongst the nobility and gentry for sallying forth but, rather, an interest in the war games in their local lands.

The number of those who have engaged in the Crusades as either knights or pilgrims is said to number in the thousands.

The initial Crusades were aided by infighting amongst the Ta'ashim that enabled a foothold to be gained within their former territories, a matter that remains to this day forming, largely, the present Principalities.

# Society

## Capital

Crescentium could be described as the most powerful stronghold of the Crusades, but few would venture so far as to say it is the ‘capital’ of all the Principalities.

## Government

Each Principality is autonomous, and power is constantly shifting as either by death, conquest, suit, or purchase, lands exchange hands amongst the kings and lords fighting in the Crusades.

It is highly unlikely that the indigenous peoples who are the predominant peoples of these lands have any representation or say in their governance.

## Language

Despite the many cultural origins of the Crusaders, the generally accepted language for barter and politics is Angate, the language of the New Selentine Empire and Ferromaine League. Of course, the native Ta’ashim believers speak Nascérine, their native tongue.

## Culture

There are clearly two cultures in conflict in the Principalities – the majority Ta’ashim culture and the minority culture of the Crusades.

The crusaders, perhaps, have brought the worst of their vices to the Principalities, with vice and drunkenness common to wash away the perils and fears of living in a very dangerous land. In the ports of Crescentium and other cities, all vices are available as some compensation for the pious journey by pilgrim and knight alike in casket-sized lodgings in crusader ships (some large enough to hold 1,000 men!) from the north.

By contrast, the subdued Ta’ashim people demonstrate their rich culture and live in obedience to their oppressors, still religiously adhering to the prayer and other requirements of their faith.

Within this exist several groups that deserve their own sections for description:

- Marijah Assassins – Ta’ashim assassins deployed by their own and the ‘northerners’ for devious purposes.
- Knights Capellar – Holy knights deployed by the Selentine Church for protection of the Holy Land (and its many economic benefits).

- Knights Templar – Deployed by the Tamorian Church for similar purposes to the Capellars. Together with the Capellars, they are responsible for law enforcement in the Principalities.

Amongst this culture, we hear tales of the Immortal God-King described in pages 68-70 of Book 6.

## Geography

### Regions

#### *North*

- South Emphidian mountain range

#### *East*

- Disputed border with the Caliphate of Zhenir
- Holy city of Ibrahim (city, disputed with Caliphate of Zhenir)
- Sea of Lament

#### *South*

- The Grey Rock (island in the Sea of Lament)
- Gulf of Marazid
- Sea of Lament

#### *West*

- Crescentium (city)
- Deorsk Ocean
- Gulf of Marazid

### Crescentium

Crescentium is a crucial shipping port on the Gulf of Marazid in the former Ta'ashim southern Lands of Legend.

### History

We are told in Bloodsword 3 that Crescentium was the first city taken by the Crusaders surging forth in pursuit of their goal, the Holy City of Ibrahim. A footnote to Book 6 (p49) suggests that Prince Estabulo of Algandy commanded the first wave of attacks and was first to set his eyes on the city.

Crescentium is itself one Principality of the Crusades, which tend to be segmented into very small regions due to squabbling over land rights.

### Features

Crescentium lies on the coast of the Gulf of Marazid surrounded by low hills that roll down into gentle cliffs by the sea. The city stands out with its towering minarets rising above a mess of plain, mud-brick multi-layered residences. The aroma of spices and hashish float for miles from the city.

Crescentium is a maze of disorganised streets, market squares, bazaars, and alleyways caked with dust from the unpaved streets. Disease, flies, and poverty are rife. Also prevalent is the strong underworld fed by all sorts of rogues from far and near looking to make a dishonest fortune in the busiest trading port in Legend.

On arrival, one must register their arrival at the Hall of Records near the Palatine Area (the governing buildings).

The indigenous residents of Crescentium are predominantly of the Ta'ashim faith (approximately 80% of the population). Yet they are ruled by their northern overlords. Among those Ta'ashim prevalent in the city are the Ba'adin traders (from northern Zhenir) and the Badawin. The Ta'ashim answer the ritual prayers called upon by the Muezzin (priests) calling from the towering minarets of their temples.

The city sees constant arrivals of new pilgrims and crusaders from the north seeking expiation of their sins or time in purgatory for some righteous act in the Holy Lands.

One market is known as the Amarin Mosque, taking the form of a sacked mosque converted into a market with a number of the mosque's former relics and structures still in place and in use for the market.

Crescentium is also home to the Knights Capellars' sphere of influence in the Principalities. Their headquarters are known as the Temple of the Roc from which Tobias de Vantery presently governs the Principality. The Capellars also control the Citadel, a dull-grey keep on a high hill overlooking Crescentium where prisoners are kept – or sometimes left for good.

Being at times including the present, more secure than other Principalities of the Crusades, to 'keep their eye in' local knights have been known to arrange tourneys or jousts for sport, or to settle grudges.

Strong in influence in Crescentium also are the Coradian traders who mediate, to some extent, between the iron will of the Capellars and the Ta'ashim.

A 'Crescentium Steel' sword is so-called for its distinctive flexible blade which, it is said, can be worn around the waist like a belt, making it a concealable weapon of choice for assassins such as the Marijahs indigenous to this area.

A reputable lodging house is the Tower of the Throne of Purple. Less reputable is the peculiarly named inn, "The Sorcerous Coconut" and the "Heart of Sunrise" (featuring its main suite, the "Azure Chamber").

### **Famous Residents / NPCs**

- Sir Tobias de Vantery, Provincial Commander of the Knights Capellars.
- Emeritus of Quadrille the sage, living in the street of the silversmiths.
- Lagrestin the spice-trader.
- Psyche the Sorceress who lives in a villa on the outskirts of Crescentium.

- Jablo the Knife, assassin – said to be the deadliest hired killer in the Outremer and master of disguise.

## Approximations

There was some debate in the DragWars forum over what Crescentium represents. As a mid-range holding in the Holy Lands, the best approximation was Tyre, or Acre, though some suggested Byzantium. The Badawin nomads referred to herein are presumably approximate to the Bedouin nomads of Arabia.

## Ibrahim

Ibrahim is the most well-known city (at least, to northerners) in the Ta'ashim southern Lands of Legend. It is the focal point of the long-running Crusades between devotees of the True Faith and the Ta'ashim Faith.

## History

At the turn of the last millennium, the Saviour Gatanades is said to have been born in Ibrahim. This is what makes it the focal point of the Crusades. As a Principality of the Crusade, it is presently held by the Mercanian warlord Fengor Svarsten on behalf of the Pontiff.

## Features

The residents of Ibrahim are predominantly of the Ta'ashim Faith. Yet they are ruled by their northern overlords. The city sees constant arrivals of new pilgrims and Crusaders from the north seeking expiation of their sins or time in purgatory for some righteous act in the Holy Lands.

The city can be roughly divided into the Old City and the New City, which has sprung up around the merchants' quarters and the docks.

### *The New City*

- **The Docklands** – On the docks themselves lie great planks of ebony harvested from the forests of Mungoda, piles of salted herring and sardines are picked over by fussing fishmongers as spice merchants haggle with traders over the price of obscure powders and herbs from further south. Along the wooden expanse stand groups of men and women, some like the polished and tabarded Crusaders stare about them with undisguised distrust, which is returned in kind by a great many of the more well-to-do locals. The working class – as everywhere – do not concern themselves overly with such things as they are unlikely to put a meal on the table.
- **The Merchants' Quarter** – Honeycombed with souks and caravan compounds, this quarter is alive with sounds and smells at all times and is the best place in the city to find cheap lodgings, one such place is the rather plainly named Souk Hayy run by Si-



Amak; where one can find a room, food, drink, repairs, a bath, and a massage for only a few coins if the portly owner takes a shine to you.

### *The Old City*

The white marbled walls of the Old City surround it completely and are pierced at the cardinal compass points by great gates. Passing through the ancient gates one finds oneself swapping the flat-roofed smooth walls of the modern buildings for intricately carved frescoes and improbably delicate columns and buttresses built from rose-coloured stone. Over everything looms the great domed Brass Tower, supposedly forged in one piece by the Ifriti in the days of yore, its shadow bringing cool shade to the white sand streets of the old town.

- **The Administrative/Coradian Quarter** – The old administrative quarter has been thoroughly colonised by the Capellan and other Coradian companies during the occupation. The half-finished temple, the Church of the Host, sits at the forefront of the district and is occupied by the bishop, visiting dignitaries, and the constantly busy work-crews. At its base can be noted the blue-hued stone of the ancient mosque that had once graced the site; its old stones woven intricately into the towers and walls of the new edifice. More and more Coradian faces appear on the streets as one moves down the rows of buildings once dedicated to managing the treasuries of sheiks and merchant-princes.

The Allied Companies are based in a low stone-fronted compound of newly enlarged barracks; at the gates is a single young soldier dressed in loose half-plate. Within the main compound are drill units of fresh-faced recruits and battle-hardened veterans supervising their charges. Other smaller private compounds and attendant buildings surround the main courtyard within these dwell the company commanders and their households.

At the home compound of Sir Godfrey, two bearded knights stand at the entry to the compound. Within, the white stone walls of the estate are pierced by a single entry gate that leads within. If one has business there, one will be escorted in to see his bondsman, Thato, The Old Dragon, whose office lies behind a stout oaken door. Thato sits in a wide upholstered chair on the other side of a cluttered desk; he is dressed in a shining white tabard over long grey robes. He does not suffer fools.

- **The Tower Quarter** – Most notable in the cityscape of the Old City is the Brass Tower of Ibrahim.

### *The Brass Tower of Ibrahim*

The Brass Tower – in the Old City section of Ibrahim – glowers over the Libraries of the Sages and the eldritch halls of the learned and powerful scholars and sorcerers who dwell within. Through the crowded streets cutting through one souk after another until they arrived at the white marbled walls of the old town.

Passing through the ancient gates, visitors find themselves swapping the flat-roofed smooth walls of the modern buildings for intricately carved stone and improbably delicate columns and buttresses built from rose-coloured stone. Over everything looms the great domed Brass

Tower, supposedly forged in one piece by the Ifriti in the days of yore, its shadow bringing cool shade to the white sand streets of the old town.

Visitors can make their way to the Ivy Gate and their minds can begin to recall tales of what happens in the halls of this enormous complex: the wonders and the terrors. At the vine-strewn portal, there are two guards dressed from head to foot in indigo robes, wide leather belts heavy with metal rings carry trophies and secondary weapons. They cross their heavy sculpted polearms and hold supplicants at the gate for some seconds without speaking before they either nod admittance or send the unfortunate away; whispers say that their eldritch masters speak to them in their minds as to whether the visitor is acceptable or not. Stepping into the shadowy moist hollow of the entry garden, sorcerers and the like are stymied as they feel the ancient magics begin their work on them.

If one is granted an audience with a sage, then they may continue inwards to meet with their benefactor, one of those who has granted the most audiences is the sage Lady Ashera, other notables include Hassim Ba Fakir, Jafar Ma'af, and the Prince of Rainbows. Below is part of a visitor's, Lord Galleo Forenz, recollections:

*The two of us continued along the corridor as the mossy, ivy draped walls gave way stone hung with rich drapes. The red light diffused down from above and my learned friend noted with a slight smile that the illumination was not magical but rather some sort of tinted glass lining a mirrored tunnel. We passed a number of strangely carved statues of basalt resembling roughly hewn men as we entered a large circular room hung about with silk and velvet.*

*A figure moving like an elderly man shuffled forward out of the shadows, his body wrapped from head to toe in scarlet robes and a strong scent of sandalwood and myrrh about his bent frame. His arm beckoned us forward to sit upon low upholstered benches.*

*As we sat, the low oil lamps in the room flared into life revealing a languid shape reclining upon the cushions before them, as our eyes adjusted a very female figure raised herself up on shapely arms and regarded us with a hunter's eye.*

*Sheer saffron wrapped her body, highlighting more than it concealed, and I dare say neither my learned companion nor myself recalled exactly what our quest was for quite some moments...*

Below the Brass Tower and away from the private chambers sits the Great Library within which is contained knowledge of all things which form the world and a great deal of that which lies beyond.

*We followed the robed servant as he moved stiffly along the passageway, both of us more than a little disquieted by the old man's lack of speech and strange shuffling gait.*

*The long passageway ended at a great set of cedar doors, carved with the likenesses of pazuzu. The doors opened easily at the servant's touch and then we were ushered through into the cavernous hall beyond.*



*As my companion read the labels on each set of ebony wooden doors – Astronomy, Warfare, Religion, and so forth, each level of the library corresponded to an age of the world in ascending order. It appeared that each set of doors led into a hall where scrolls and manuscripts were stored... but how to access the doors between the images of the library's founders if we needed to? And where to start...?*

He continues...

*We spent the next two hours hunched over ancient scrolls and bound manuscripts; my companion was extremely impressed – every ancient scroll and parchment had been translated into four modern languages in an accompanying manuscript. I could see it made things much easier, though he remarked he rather missed the feel of old parchment under his fingertips.*

*In the Treatise of Al'Faraq, we found references to three gods that were not worshipped, but offerings were made to avoid their attentions.*

*In the Chronicles of Galad Duhm, there was a passage concerning the destruction of a cult of sorcerers who offered The Yazir their names in exchange for sorcerous training.*

*The Writings of the Prophet mentioned their names but only in a list of The Ten Thousand Evils Which Plague the Devout.*

*Kal'him the Holy wrote in his, unfortunately water-damaged, studies of those who had not followed the Prophet, '... there was a great stack of black stone upon which they laid the offerings to the unholy ... the harbour was deep and black, and the bodies of the dead choked the waters below the three temples ... the sails of our ship were torn and only two of those who sailed with us ... The Destroyer fell upon them ... Save us ...'*

*In the familiar-looking, to my companion at least, writings by the mad prince Sussurien on the religions of the Ta'ashim before the coming of the Prophet: the three Abhorred Deities are Azidahaka the Destroyer, the thrice-crowned serpent; Nasu the Pestilent, mother of flies; and The Yazir, master of trickery, deception, and sorcery also called the withered branch...*

*It was enough to move on with...*

Beneath the library, the tower, and the residences lie the private vaults of the sages to which outsiders are rarely granted an audience.

*The stairs were dark and lit only by a flickering firelight somewhere below. As we descended the coiled stone steps, we felt the air become closer and a dry, warmth like a desert wind whipped about us as the firelight played on the polished walls.*

*We emerged into a great low hall, its walls made up of panels of beaten bronze and brass. The Lady Ashera stood before a great pit within which burned an intense fire, the heat of which stole the breath from our lungs. We watched her pour scented oil from a small flask into the pit and the flames died down to reveal a figure at their centre.*

*An enormous man with polished black skin and arms like knotted cables glowered at us through the flames. His eyes swept over us both with an air of casual dismissal, but there was a hint of deference in his manner towards the Lady – grudging though it may have been.*

*She whispered something to the figure, and he bowed low, his eyes never leaving ours.*

*“As you wish, my queen,” he intoned.*

*She turned and smiled at our expressions. “May I present my honoured guest, Prince Kul, Who Stands At The Abyss’ Edge And Howls The Doom Of The Shayātīn. May we pass, Honoured First Born of Ifrit?”*

*The man’s eyes narrowed venomously but he moved aside to allow our party to pass his pit and enter into the chamber. He glowered at the us unceasingly but smiled at the Lady Ashera; a wide smile which never reached his eyes.*

*Once past the fiery chasm we made our way through the chamber. Picking her way effortlessly through the darkness, Lady Ashera reached into caskets and ancient lockers pulling forth treasures that had not known the touch of a human hand for years, perhaps decades, perhaps centuries. As she moved silently through the burnished tomb, we glimpsed in the shadows half-formed shapes that slipped across the walls or whispered in the darkness. At one stage, an enormous yellow eye, slitted and hungry, opened in the depths of the room but closed again as the Lady passed.*

*She placed ancient items reverently in the hands of myself and my companion. In the flickering half-light, we identified weapons, cases, and I braced myself as she hoisted a strangely glimmering suit of armour down from its mount only to find it weighed no more than a tunic of light linen in my hands.*

*“We must leave now,” she whispered to us. “It is not wise to test the hospitality of the djinn; especially such an old friend.”*

*The three of us made our way carefully back past the smouldering fire-pit and ascended the stairs making our way back up to the Lady’s chamber where we were again greeted by the silent servant.*

*She waved us over to some low cushions and sat herself delicately at the edge of a carved wooden stool.*

*“Wait now while I tell you of their ancient power and dangers...”*

### **Notable Mercenary Bands and City Guard Units**

#### ***The Scarlet Blades***

Liveried in scarlet and ivory robes and iron-shod camel-hide boots, they hold the contract for the Docklands district and are 50 strong. Their captain, Agul, is a massive bearded veteran from the Azure Coast.

#### ***Merchant Quarter Guard***

The traditional guard of the Merchants' Quarter, they are dressed in fawn robes with leather armour and carry staffs and short swords. They are not mercenaries but traditionally recruit from local residents.

#### ***Razhuls Eagles***

Dressed in sable and gold, the Eagles are girded in mail and are known for their merciless attitude to thieves and vagabonds. They hold the Warehouse District contract.

### **Famous Residents / NPCs**

Fengor Svarsten\*, aforementioned.

- Ashera, Lady of the Brass Tower and Member of the Council of Sages. A powerful sorceress.
- Thato, Elderly Bondsman of Sir Godfrey of the Allied Companies, he administers his lord's interests in Ibrahim.
- Council of the Allied Companies – Bishop Phonicius, Sir Godfrey of Junwin, General Ludwig Drakkenwold, General Marquis LeModaine, and Commander Knut Nilsson.
- Compus Arrani, a rather dishevelled looking but experienced Captain in the Allied Companies, he has battle tokens woven into his long hair and campaign medals riveted to his breastplate. He has a fondness for the Ta'ashim culture that his superiors do not trust.

### **Approximation**

The consensus in the DragWars forum is that Ibrahim approximates to Jerusalem, even though the reference to the Saviour's birthplace would otherwise suggest Bethlehem. One wonders if there might be in Legend a faith approximate to Judaism. If so, Ibrahim would also be the seat of that faith.

# Approximation

No land exists today that approximates with the Principalities, and it may be supposed that in European history, the city-states of places such as Acre and Tyre that arose as key shipping ports for pilgrims and crusaders would be the perfect approximation.

# The Thousand Islands

*(Bulya)*

The sun- and rain-soaked Thousand Islands extend out from a peninsula located south of Khitai. The Bahasa Empire, which stretches through the archipelago, is centred on the Island of Garuda, and Garuda is the name by which traders from Minj call the islands as a whole. Of course, each island is individual and many of them fiercely resist with both word and deed the Bahasan hegemony.

## history

The people who form the majority of today's population migrated to the archipelago from lands south of Khitai and first arrived around 2,000 years ago, pushing an existing scattered population of indigenous peoples to the far regions as they expanded. Ideal agricultural conditions and the mastering of wet-field rice cultivation as early as 1,000 years ago allowed villages, towns, and eventually small kingdoms to flourish, laying the seeds for the empire to come.

The region established trade between both Minj and Khitai several centuries before the Saviour's death. Fostered by the islands' strategic sea-lane position, trade continued to be one of the most important influences on the archipelago's history.

It was upon this trade, and the Minjian and Khitain religions that were brought with it, that the now ruined Lemek kingdom flourished. It became a powerful naval state, growing wealthy on the international trade it controlled through the region until its decline due to a mysterious plague that boiled out of the jungle.

Within the Lemek kingdom, the agriculturally based Khitain-influenced Sailendra and Minjian-influenced Mataram dynasties thrived and declined in the north, building grand religious monuments such as the great stone temple of Borobudur and the spires of Prambanan.

The Bahasa kingdom, later to become the Bahasan Empire, was founded in East Garuda 200 years ago, and under the precepts laid down by its legendary military commander, Gajah Mada, its influence has now stretched over much of the archipelago.

Within this Empire, they adapted – like the Lemekans before them – the cultural values of both the Khitain and Minjian civilizations. Their respective religious epics are widely used in tradition as well as art.

The rise of Minjian mythology gained large support from the courtesans and nobles as well as those acclimated indigenous people and they grew to treat the stories as windows into their

own life. Gradually, the stories depicted in the foreign epics combined with those surviving indigenous beliefs turned into the Garudan's version of mythology and folklore.

## Society

### Capital

The capital of the Bahasa Empire, located on Garuda, is known as the Golden Court or Gajahkata.

### Government

The Empire is ruled by a series of noble families with the figurehead emperor always selected from the descendants of Gajah Mada.

Individual Islands range from tribal through to feudal societies.

## Professions

### *Dukun (Sorcerers)*

A Dukun is a shaman and also traditional healer, curer, spirit medium, custom and tradition expert, and on occasion, sorcerer and master of black magic.

### *Pendekar (Knight)*

A Pendekar is a master of silat and sword play, dressed in brass-ringed mail or rhino- or buffalo-hide plate armour, they often ride the deadly war buffalo<sup>13</sup> of Sumara.

### *Pahlawan (Barbarian)*

A warrior of the forest- and jungle-dwelling indigenous peoples often armed with a heavy spear or axe and wearing minimal armour.

### *Bobohizans (Elementalist)*

Are also shamanistic and traditional healers. They also act as a medium to communicate with elemental



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<sup>13</sup> War Buffalo - Like the Minji God Yama, the war cavalry of the Garudans ride to battle on the backs of great swamp buffalo. The riders stand with their feet and lower legs placed into great protective shields locked over the bull's neck. From their perch, they can fight their foes with both blade and javelin, twisting in any direction to engage their foes.



spirits and play an important role in the rituals involved during Harvest Festivals. They are mainly restricted to Kalimantan.

### ***Selik (Assassin)***

These highly disciplined martial artists utilise both magic and nature to achieve perfection of form and function.

### ***Guranan (Mystic)***

These elite guardians and foresters are warrior-monks; they form the royal guard of Bahasa and are tasked with guarding all who live within the Empire.

### ***Ksatriya (Warlock)***

Receiving their training from spirits, jin, or dieties these eldritch warriors are the champions of the downtrodden and slayers of evil.

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The horns of the bulls are tipped with iron spikes and their thick hides are hung with rattan barding. Buffalo races and fights between champion bulls are a popular form of entertainment throughout the Empire, and many great warriors got their start as a young rider. War buffalo replaces the Ride Warhorse skill for knights from the Thousand Islands. Barbarians may replace the skill with another appropriate one or trade two skills for Ride War Elephant. These shields originally developed from the oxbow yokes worn by single buffalo when ploughing the rice fields and are heavy affairs of wood and metal. They are often heavily decorated with clan symbols, fierce demonic faces, or unit colours.

## Armour

Wearing Armour in the Thousand Islands is governed by the same restrictions as wearing armour in the Mungodan Jungle (as detailed in SG) as the climate in the Thousand Islands is hot and humid year-round.

It must be noted that, even for the Pendekar and the Ksatriya, who train extensively in the use of their armour, it was often not donned right up until the moment the battle was due to begin in order to avoid most of the deleterious effects.

For this reason, most of the regular armies and warriors of the Thousand Islands forgo armour altogether, instead relying on sturdy wooden and rattan shields.

The rattan and seedpod armour illustrated is equivalent to AF 2.



## Weapons

### *Arbir*

A halberd approximately five feet (1.5 m) long and topped with a curved blade. The plane of the blade has a shallow groove running along it that allows the user to determine exactly where the cutting edge is at all times. Stats are as halberd.

### *Karambit*

A bladed weapon found among all the cultures of the Thousand Islands. In all of these cultures, it is used as an agricultural tool as well as a weapon. It is said that the shape of the karambit is related to beliefs about the power of tigers, and thus the karambit is in the shape of a tiger's claw. The karambit is characterised by a sharply curved, usually double-edged, blade that, when the weapon is properly held, extends from the bottom of the hand with the point of the blade facing forward. Karambits are encountered with varying blade lengths and both with and without a retention ring for the index finger on the end of the handle opposite the blade. However, in addition to being held blade facing forward and extending down from

the fist, it may also be held blade to front, extending from the top of the hand. The weapon is capable of inflicting horrific disembowelling wounds. Stats are as dagger for a small karambit and as shortsword for a larger karambit.

### ***Klewang***

A single-edged machete-style sword from the Thousand Islands. In size, weight, and shape it is halfway between the golok and the kampilan. The style of the klewang differs between the various cultures of the archipelago; there are straight-bladed types, but most are curved. Stats are as sword.

### ***Mandau***

The traditional weapon for the people of Kalimantan. Associated with headhunting ceremonies, where people gather to attack other tribes, and gather heads to be used in various ceremonies, the Mandau is both a work of art in itself and a formidable weapon. The blade is mostly made of tempered metals, with exquisite vineworks and inlaid brass. The hilt is made from animal horns, such as deer, although some variations with human bones and fragrant wood also exist. Both the hilt and scabbard are elaborately carved and plumed. Details of carvings vary from tribe to tribe but mostly depict creatures or, if human bones were used, anthropomorphic deities. Stats are as axe.

### ***Rencong***

A traditional weapon from the western outlying islands. It is slightly similar in appearance to a kris and is of the same dark reputation. The rencong is worn during ceremonies and wartime. A rencong's blade can vary in length from ten to fifty centimetres. The blade can be cranked like a kris but sometimes it is straight. It is put in a scabbard that is made of wood, ivory, horn, or sometimes even silver or gold. The rencong is worn in one's belt on the stomach. Stats are as dagger.

*Note: Anweh province is also known as "The Land of Rencong" (Tanah Rencong).*

### ***Golok***

A range of large, heavy bladed shortswords originating from the Thousand Islands. Stats are as shortsword.

### ***Sibat***

A stout bamboo spear used for both fighting and hunting. Stats are as spear.

### ***Buntan Pagi***

Also called a Sting Ray Tail, it is a type of whip-like weapon. It is a famous weapon in fighting and warding off demons and the like. In combat, a buntot pagi is often used with a short knife or sword. Stats are as flail.

## Tales and Legends of the Thousand Islands

*Note: These are all 'Legendised' versions of folklore of Malaysia and Indonesia.*

## A Tale of Garuda Island

Jonggrang was a daughter of a King called Ratu Baka (King of Death), and she had a proposal from a young noble, Bandawasa. He was handsome, wealthy, and powerful, but Jonggrang didn't want to marry him. Ratu Baka gave a task to Bandawasa. He was asked to build 1,000 temples in one night to prepare his marriage to Jonggrang. Bandawasa used his uncle's magical crown to summon a supernatural force of Jinn, and they made the temples at unbelievable speed.

Worried, Jonggrang used a trick her father had taught her; she ordered her servants to the kitchens and made such a ruckus and din and called out 'Breakfast is ready'; the sound of 'cooking' was heard by the Jinn. Bound only until the morning came; the Jinn downed tools and vanished. Bandawasa was so angry with her. He had already finished 999 temples and when he built the 1,000<sup>th</sup>, he cursed Jonggrang so that she was buried within it.

The largest temple in the abandoned Pranan complex is the temple to the Minji God of Destruction, Shiva, and inside the temple, at the centre of the temple, there is a Durga (Goddess of Darkness, wife of Shiva, God of Destruction) statue believed to be the body of Jonggrang.

Ratu Baka incensed at the ensorcelling of his daughter, bequeathed to her his lordship over death and she was made immortal as he was made mortal. Ratu Baka abandoned his kingdom, took his wives, a great portion of the treasury, and disappeared beneath the mountains.

It is rumoured that if one could find a way to release Jonggrang, the Princess would reward the heroes with the treasures of her father's kingdom... of course, it is said that many of Bandawasa's descendants make up a goodly number of the noble families... who may not appreciate an immortal queen from the past, armed with ancient treasures, reappearing in their midst with a score to settle.

## A Tale of Singhara Island

There was once a King of Singhara, Udi Mawati, who was the most handsome and proud of all the people of the island. No one could compare to him in battle, art, or politics, and he grew haughty and arrogant, always seeking praise. He could not bear it if others got praised for clever antics or acts of bravery, and his jealousy would grow into hatred. In fact, he would actually kill those who drew attention away from him.

He did so when the Queen of the Southern Seas sent a daughter to wait at his court. The girl was blessed with a most exceptional voice, and her singing charmed the court and all the people of the island. The King saw this and grew incensed, he would have no one steal his limelight. He arranged for the girl to be murdered and the death to look as if she had slipped and fallen... but one does not fool a Goddess with such tricks.

The next day, an enormous shoal of huge Garfish came to the shores of Singhara and began leaping up onto the beaches and attacking the people on the beaches and tearing apart

fishermen at sea. The Garfish were as strong and large as dogs, with long hard snouts and razor sharp teeth, which they pierced right through the bodies of the people with ceaseless violence. When the King heard this news, he knew that his trickery had not worked. Enraged, he got up on his war elephant, and taking his army to the beach, saw the many bodies of his people strewn across the sandy white beaches now stained red with blood.

The King immediately ordered his men to kneel and form a line on the beach, creating a wall against the Garfish, but this didn't stop the huge fish from attacking. In fact, one of the Garfish leapt so high up in the air that its snout tore the perfumed sleeve of the King. Seeing so many of his men being killed by the ferocious fish had not unnerved the king, but at the attack on his person he immediately ordered the men to retreat and declared that all his subjects were to stay away from the coastline.

Meanwhile, he gathered all his advisers and tried to figure out a way to deal with the problem; as Singhara was dependent on its fishing and seas for trade. At this time, a young village boy, unknown to the court that he was a mortal son that the Singha, Lord of the Forest, had fathered on a dumb and blind woman, asked for the audience of the King.

*"Your Highness, I may have a solution to the garfish. Why don't we line the beaches with banana stems, so when the garfish attack them, they will become stuck and cannot get back to the water and we can kill them at our own leisure?"*

The King, having no other solution, executed the plan and ordered his men to cut banana stems and firmly plant them along the beach at low tide. Soon the tide came up and the schools of Garfish approached. The King, his men, and the little boy watched as the Garfish began attacking the line of banana stems and getting their snouts stuck in the thick stems. When the last Garfish got itself stuck, the men began to slay each and every one of the vicious fish, ending the menace.

A shout of joy rang out throughout the kingdom and the people began to praise the boy for his cleverness, calling him a genius and a blessing from the Gods. The King's heart again began to fill with jealousy and rage. That night, the King ordered his loyal lieutenants to kill the boy.

The boy lived with his mother on a small hill in the southern part of the island, but his mother could not sleep that night and left the boy asleep in their hut to take a walk. The lieutenants walked up the hill, and pulling out their kris, began to stab the boy. At first, the boy began to scream in pain and cry; his mattress filled with blood. When the men stopped stabbing the boy, they noticed something was amiss. The blood did not stop flowing and became a fountain of blood. Scared, the lieutenants fled from the hut. The fountain of blood oozed down the hill, covering it. The next morning, the people of Singhara gathered around the hill, wondering why it was red. After searching the hill, they found the boy's body and became sad, never knowing that it was their own King who plotted the boy's death.

The King himself went missing the very next week when on a hunting trip with his favoured lieutenants... their butchered corpses were found stacked atop the Red Hill.

### The Hill of Gold

A great jungle-cloaked hill stands at the mouth of Terganu River, said to be home to a powerful group of Orang Bunian. Villagers visit the ‘princess’ of the Orang Bunian and may ask to borrow her gold and silver plates and pots in order to hold engagement and marriage feasts or kenduri.

The hill’s caverns are actually home to a group of seven female Orang Bunian. These same elfin princesses are summoned by the local villagers in the haunting ceremony known locally as Mayang. Believed to possess immense supernatural powers, their assistance against evil was constantly sought after by the locals. Locals maintain that upon reaching the top, you can inhale the lingering sweet scent of the princesses.

The hills name is Bukit Puteri to the locals, it is simply called ‘hill-home’ by the Orang Bunian. It is unknown what would occur if the villagers were ever to not return the gold and silver, but it would certainly be the job of a ready band of heroes to hunt down those who stole the objects before the local villages, deprived of their protectors, are subject to the predations of evil.

### A Tale of Mount Ledang

The Mount Ledang Temple carries a carved legend; the tale of the vain King Mansur of Malka Island, who wished to marry a woman superior to the wives of any other Prince in the world. Obsessed with this notion, the King decided to ask for the hand of the Orang Bunian Princess of Mount Ledang.

The Princess of Mount Ledang was a stunningly beautiful being with the graceful movements that accentuated every curve of her body. Adorned with silk and gold, she resided, with her people, in a cave at the summit of Mount Ledang.

The Guardian of Mount Ledang, the princess’s aunt Raya Rani, was not happy with the King’s proposal. In order to dissuade the Sultan, she set impossible stipulations as a dowry. The Sultan was given the task of acquiring a betrothal gift of seven trays of mosquito hearts; seven trays of hearts of mites; a vat of water from dried areca nuts; a vat of tears from virgin maidens; a bridge made of gold from Malka to the peak of Mount Ledang; and a bowl of his young Prince’s blood.

The cruel and impulsive Sultan agreed to the dowry and severely oppressed his people for his own pursuit. Not even the sacred relationship between father and his only heir could stop his madness. He was willing to kill his only son in order to fulfil his selfish desires.

Just as he was to plunge the blade of his kris into his child, the Orang Bunian ‘betrothed’ appeared out of the shadows. She swore that she would never marry a man who was so cruel and capable of murdering his own son. The King went mad with rage and attacked her. The servants were never able to get the rose stain of his blood out of the white marble ceiling and columns... She eventually did wed a mortal, though she was warned against it by her aunt,

whose eyes could often pierce the clouds of the future. She married Nakhoda, a renowned seafarer and mighty warrior for the downtrodden.

Unfortunately, that joyful union would end in tragedy. One day, as the Princess was sewing a magical vest to protect her love from any harm, her husband surprised her by tickling her ribs. Startled, she accidentally stabbed him with the ensorcelled needle, the energies unleashed killing him immediately. Heart-broken, she made a solemn decision to return to Mount Ledang and vowed never to set eyes on another man again.

The Temple on the mountain is said to be built from the remains of the bridge linking Malca and Mount Ledang. The Temple staff do not enter the crystalline caverns beneath the building, and it is said that sobbing is still heard on a certain day in the wet season.

Rumours persist that the impenetrable vest is kept somewhere within the caverns... It is only a matter of time before some ruler's greed sends men to their deaths...

### **Kota Kelanggi**

A great cavern city of the Orang Bunian, which was cursed many years ago – the inhabitants were all turned to stone by the magics of one of their own Dukun, who was corrupted by an ancient evil. Huge insects and other such creatures are said to roam the caves and there are ancient chambers still concealing the mysteries of the Orang Bunian.

If some noble souls could be found to venture deep into the now wild and haunted caverns and slay the ancient thing that laid the curse, they would prove themselves friends to the Orang Bunian throughout The Thousand Islands.

## Geography

### Climate and Weather

The climate in the Thousand Islands is tropical and the mean temperature is approximately 31°C for most of the year. There are two major seasons, usually split into a series of smaller sub-seasons whose names and times vary depending on the region.

The two main seasons are the Wet Season (Monsoon Season) and the Dry Season.

During the Wet Season, it is not unusual for it to rain continuously for days on end, varying from light showers through to cyclonic conditions.

### Regions

#### *North*

The islands of the north include the enormous Kalimantan, whose unexplored interior of ancient rainforest basins, Orang Bunian settlements, and lost Lemek ruins has swallowed

many expeditions. Also in the northern region are Khitain trade ports and the occasional settlement of even stranger pedigree.

- Banjarsin – A riverbound city, and the northern-most reach of the Garudan Empire.
- Borobadur – An ancient lost city.
- Kalimantan – According to ancient Khitain, Minji, and Garudan manuscripts, western coastal cities of Kalimantan have been trading ports – and part of their trade routes – since the first millennium. In Khitain manuscripts, gold, camphor, tortoise shells, hornbill ivory, rhino horn, crane crest, beeswax, lakkawood<sup>14</sup>, dragon's\* blood<sup>15</sup>, rattan, edible bird's nests and various spices are listed as the most valuable items from Kalimantan.

The Minji named Kalimantan as Suvabhumi (the land of gold) and also Karadvipa (the Camphor Island), which includes the western part of the island shared with Cantingna island. The Garudans often call Kalimantan, the Diamond Island.

- Kota Kelangi – An ancient cavern city under a terrible curse.
- Prambadan – Sister city to Borobadur; evil walks here.
- Sarak Chambers – On the south coast of Kalimantan are enormous yawning limestone caverns and chambers that descend deep into the earth. Ancient rumours talk of titanic men from a lost island who descended into these caves thousands of years ago. Those who have descended speak of vast open spaces deep within the earth and strange carvings on the cave walls. Further still have been found enormous footprints, and in the wet season, during the worst monsoons, when the waters are highest, entire villages are sometimes found decimated, the inhabitants vanished except for their smashed and burnt buildings. Hunters coming across such a scene after the storm have noted huge man-like tracks leading away, back towards the caverns...
- Xi Lao – Almost a Khitain city in miniature, this bustling seaport trades as far as Yamato.

### *East*

The islands of the east are the last bastions of some of the indigenous peoples of the region; the jungles and mountains swarm with enormous reptiles, headhunters, and stranger beasts.

- Bukit Puteri – The fabled Hill of Gold.
- Koda Island – Rumoured to be inhabited by enormous dragons and serpents.
- Mount Ledang – The mountain-top temple holds an ancient sorrow.
- Pat Masbi – A far-flung trading post where one can hear strange tales of lands even further to the south.

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<sup>14</sup> Lakkawood is a heavily scented liana, which is a major component in many Khitain potion formulae, especially those that affect a person's mental state.

<sup>15</sup> Dragon's Blood (often used in the construction of enchanted weapons in Khitai to quench the blade) is drawn from captured or trapped huge reptiles that are found in the island's interior. Often, Garudan hunters will be ambushed by Orang Bunian or native peoples, such as the Ngaju, Danum, and Dusun. Whilst there are many more such beasts on the more easterly Koda Island, no one except foolhardy adventurers would set foot on its cursed shores.



### *South*

The southern islands are the playground of rich Garudans and scattered remnants of indigenous populations; the inhabitants are fearless sailors venturing far out into the Silent Sea in search of fish.

- The Jade Temple of Dewi Shri
- Kuta – The pleasure city; anything and anyone is available here... at a price.
- The Serpent Queen's Throne – This city, sacred to the Queen of the Southern Seas, is said to lie somewhere beneath the waves to the south of Kuta.

### *West*

The west is composed of the heart of the Garudan Empire and Minjian and scattered Opalan trading ports; it also comprises a peninsula of southern Khitai dominated by enormous jungle-dwelling tigers and oliphant and is scattered with mysterious golden temple complexes.

- Garuda
- The Golden Court – An immense complex of delicate spires and worked stone, it is said the lights of the temple fires can be seen a hundred miles out to sea.
- Kamulan – The annual festival to Dewi Shri is held here.
- Pranatan temple Complex – A series of a hundred temples, apparently built in one night.
- Singhara Island – The strongest of the independent kingdoms.
- Soera – Lies on the northern-eastern coast of Garuda at the mouth of the Wan River. It is known as the City of Heroes because it once stood against a ferocious assault by Khitain pirates. Actually, the ships were a part of the Seven River Fleet sent by the Yellow Sun Emperor to try and force the Garudans into trade concessions. When this failed, the Emperor's envoy to the Golden Court delivered a vast 'gift' of gold and iron in exchange for the Garudan's acceptance that the attacks were made by pirates and any notion that they were crewed by Khitain navy was a falsehood. The natives of Soera worship two powerful spirits: the White Shark and the White Crocodile (it is said that the spirits empower the native's warrior prowess). Soera is the fourth largest city on Garuda and is the home of the Imperial fleet and the naval barracks. It is an important producer of seafood, vegetables, and pearls.
- Stone Tiger Temple – Said to be studded with a vast fortune in rubies, this ruined temple complex has fearsome guardians.
- Surakah Temple Ruins – A temple complex hidden within the jungles surrounded by villages.

## Banjarsin

Banjarsin is the capital of the Kingdom of Nan Serun in southern Kalimantan. The city's population is 57,000.

From the beginning of time, the ancient kingdom has been here. From the earliest temples to forgotten gods, to the Minji-influenced kingdom Negara Dipa, and today the Kingdom of

Nan Serun, the rivers of southern Kalimantan were always the favourite spot of both the Orang Bunian and the native mortal peoples.

In a chaotic time of civil war between the rightful heir of Negara Dipa, Samudera, and his uncle, Samudera was forced to flee for his life. At this time, Banjarsin received him warmly, stopped paying taxes to his uncle, and supported Samudera's fight to get his throne back. When his uncle finally surrendered, Pangeran Samudera decided to make Banjarsin his new capital and began his rule over the new Kingdom of Nan Serun. The kingdom flourished, its power enveloping almost all of the area of southern Kalimantan.

This growing power provoked warfare with the expanding Garudan Empire and the Orang Bunian and sparked the fierce three-way Banjar War, which produced a lot of highly revered local heroes, such as Antasari. The Orang Bunian succeeded in pushing both the Garudans and Seruni out of their lands and Banjarsin was forced to make concessions to the Garudan Empire after the total destruction of the outer palace grounds and the capture of the Crown Princess Zalha.

Reminders of its previous glory dot the city and occasionally a hero will rise up agitating for the ejection of the Garudans, but for the most part, Banjarsin silently keeps her own council and the embers of rebellion wait for the right spark.

### Travel to Banjarsin

- **Overland** – The trade routes through Kalimantan are in bad condition, only trodden by the tribal peoples, weathered merchants, or stranger travellers, but if one is brave and patient, one can traverse the entire landmass of Kalimantan along the eastern and northern trade roads.
- **By Sea** – An alternative way to get to Banjarmasin is by ship from various places in the Thousand Islands to Banjarsin's main harbour, Trisaki.
- **By Boat** – Travel from the neighbouring provinces is often by river; there are a lot of mercantile boats plying their way through the dark waters of the rivers of Kalimantan. This could be an adventurous or boring ride depending on your luck, as the dangers of the jungle cannot be underestimated.

### Sights

- **Floating Markets** – Strange and exotic items and foods find their way to the floating markets of the city and one hears many stories of a chance find in the markets leading to fame and glory... and gruesome death.
- **The Buildings** – The people of the city have a unique way of building their houses and other structures in harmony with nature; it is said they learnt their building skills from the Orang Bunian. There are a number of types of traditional Banjarese houses, which still make up the bulk of the city's housing, though the more squat and square Garudan houses have accompanied the new settlers.
- **The Palace and Great Temple** – The palace grounds have been partially rebuilt along with the Great Temple and royal Tomb of Nasera. Built during Samudera's

rule, the Temple is dedicated to a number of Minji and local gods and contains the royal burial site.

- **Waja Berat** – This was an old military holding and has been taken as the residence by the Garudan governor and his troops.
- **Sarang Ular** – The oldest temple in Kalimantan that is still in use; it is 800+ years old and is dedicated to the worship of a local river god.
- **Cakar Elang** – A gigantic gilt temple built by the Garudans to their principal gods.

## Rivers

The area is criss-crossed with wide and mighty rivers. The rivers have always been a part of people's way of life. Every morning there are floating markets in which farmers and traders bring their goods to trade on boats. There has always been a farmer's market here, which is the main place to catch up on local gossip.

The rivers are also important venues for boat races, festivals, and other celebrations. During the boat races, the boats are decorated with fearsome dragon heads to honour the guardian god of the river.

A large number of the older waterlogged suburbs are traversed by canals, and much of the city's commerce takes place on water.

## Outskirts

- **Flower Island** – A Khitain-style temple sits on this island; the grounds are overrun by large aggressive macaques that answer only to the elderly monks who run it... some claim that the monks have tails themselves!
- **Shadow Island** – An ancient statue to a forgotten god stands on this island; it is said to be unsafe to visit after nightfall.

## Trading

A large number of precious and semi-precious stones are traded through the city, but the origins of the supplies are a closely guarded secret.

## Eating

Local foods that are available throughout the year – and are very popular with the locals – include:

- **Soto Banjar** – “Soto” is a type of Garudan soup. Soto banjar is a unique variant of soto and is popular in other places throughout the Empire. Soto banjar is served with lontong, while Garudan soto is served with rice, for the same meal.
- **Apam** – The apam here has its own twist. It is sweet and warm, accompanied with tea.

- **Bingka** – A speciality of the region, it comes in many flavours. The pride of the local people, it is very sweet and creamy.
- **Klepon Buntut** – Similar to klepon, a palm-sugar-filled snack coated with grated coconut found across the Thousand Islands, this one has a smoother texture and the filling is more liquid.

During religious festivals there is a bustling emergence of many “Pasar Wadai” (Cake Markets) all over the city, with treats such as:

- **Amparan Tatak** – Banana pudding.
- **Bingka Barandam** – Although named “bingka”, tastes nothing like it. It is a small cake soaked in sweet syrup.

### Drinking

One should try the local tea, which is somewhat different with the teas found elsewhere in the Thousand Islands. Juices of fruits like durian, avocado, keledang, some different kinds of Kalimantan local mango, and coconut are readily available, too.

### Secrets

- There are a large number of extremely secretive resistance groups operating in the city; they are mostly just talk but a number of powerful Selak-Masters have begun to unify them into a formidable guerrilla force.
- The huge God-Serpent that sleeps beneath the riverbed near Sarang Ular has begun to stir in its sleep as offerings have dwindled with the coming of the Garudans. This being is reminiscent in some ways of a black dragon but is far larger and more serpentine in form.
- There is a type of fish found only in the most isolated stretches of the river that are capable of curing the most loathsome diseases by literally eating the sickness out of a person. This treatment is extremely painful and grotesque to watch, but the tribal people claim it is always effective.
- A number of tribal people have been raiding outlying parts of the city and taking heads as trophies. It is feared that recent Garudan attempts to ‘civilise’ them will provoke further killings.
- The large reptiles of the interior have been sighted occasionally on the outskirts of the farmland – what is bringing the huge beasts so close to civilisation?

### Dewi Shri

Dewi Shri is the Goddess of Rice on the southern islands of the archipelago and is a predominant diety on Garuda Island. It is said she has power over the underworld and the Moon. She controls the foodstuffs of the Earth and is mistress over natural death. She has the power of the earth and all that grow upon it. She is the mother of life because she symbolises rice (the primary food of the Garudan Empire).

Dewi Shri is often depicted as a serene motherly female, she carries a bowl of rice, her legs are looped about by rice-snakes, and her shrines are open to the moonlight.

Highly revered, especially by the people of Garuda, there are a lot of versions of her legend in the Empire; most of them involve Dewi Shri and her brother Sedana, set either in the past minor kingdom of Kamulan or in the heavens (involving gods such as Batara), or both. In all the versions in which Sedana appears along with Dewi Sri, they end up separated from each other, through either death, wandering, or a refusal to be married. Whilst Kamulan is now merely a subject state of the Empire, the local nobles set a lot of stock by their divine ancestors and the annual festival to honour the goddess is of great importance, and many careers are begun and ended depending on the offerings made and alliances fostered.

Some versions make a stronger correlation between Shri and the large rice-snakes of the rice fields and Sedana with the swallows which flit over the fields. The farming communities among the Garudan peoples in particular have a special place in their house dedicated for Dewi Shri, decorated with intricate carvings of rice snakes, so that she will give prosperity for them. Sedana is honoured by leaving swallow nests alone and with the carving of swallow images above the doorway.

Among the agricultural Garudans, a rice snake that enters a house will not be chased away as it is a sign for a success in harvest, and they will give it offerings instead. This can sometimes be extremely lucky for the families as it is not unknown for a number of gemstones from deep within the earth to be left behind by such a snake at a particularly well-cared-for shrine.

## The Golden Court

The central royal compound is surrounded by a thick, high wall of golden- and ochre-hued bricks. Nearby is a fortified guard post manned by elite guards and led by Guranan (mystic) captains.

The main gate into the palace complex is located in the north wall and is entered through huge doors of decorated iron. Outside the north gate is a long building where courtiers from the ruling families meet once a year in public, a bustling marketplace, and a sacred crossroads.

It is said that sometimes the Emperor will attend the market dressed as a commoner in order to better know the mood of his people, but this is unlikely given the amount of security usually devoted to him (for although he is but a figurehead for the ruling families, it would not be wise for the people to know this).

Just inside the north gate is a courtyard containing religious buildings, including those dedicated to visiting dignitaries' gods, such as the deities of Minj, Khitai, and there even exists a small mosque.

On the western side of this courtyard are pavilions surrounded by canals where people bathe; bathing is seen as crucially important in order to purify oneself to face the day – Coradian visitors should bear this in mind.

At the south end, a gate leads to rows of houses set on terraces in which palace servants live; life as a palace servant is hard and thankless but the rewards in terms of both familial prestige and contacts are such that there are thousands of petitioners each year.

Another gate leads to a third massive courtyard crowded with the compounds of the ruling noble families (too crowded, to be honest, but no one family wants to be first to relocate and thus lose the influence that comes from proximity to the halls of power) and a great hall for those waiting to be admitted into the ruler's presence.

The Emperor's own quarters, which lay to the east of this courtyard, have pavilions on decorated ochre brick bases, ornately carved wooden pillars, and a roof decorated with clay and golden ornaments.

Outside the palace are quarters for priests and other members of the nobility.

Further away, and separated from the palace by open fields, are more royal compounds, including those of the chief ministers who oversee and implement the policies of the ruling families among the populace.

Ruling family compounds within the palace complex are always clean and well kept. They are enclosed within a brick wall more than ten metres high and have a double gate. The houses inside are built on pillars and were ten to thirteen metres high, with wooden floors covered with fine mats on which people sit and dine. Roofs are made from wooden shingles whilst the dwellings of the servants are roofed with straw.

The building of compounds within enclosed walls also typifies the other inland and coastal cities of Garuda described by Ta'ashim and Minji visitors.

### Important Sites within the City

**Perhi Krutak** is a ritual bathing pool; this complex of red brick takes the form of a sunken rectangular basin, into which a flight of steps descends on the northern side. The principal structure, which projects from the southern wall of the basin, was apparently modelled on a legendary sacred mountain. It consists of terraced foundations, upon which rest a concentric arrangement of 'turrets' surrounding the highest peak of the building.

Not far from the pool in the Keraton district stands the gateway of **Borang Ratu**, an elegant yellow-brick gate. The form of the structure is tall and slender, rising to a height of 16½ metres and displaying intricate relief decoration, especially on the roof section. Borang Ratu means 'dwarf monarch'. Folk tradition links the gate with Jaya Negara, the second emperor, successor to the founder of the Empire. According to tradition, Jaya fell from the gate as a child, causing defects to his body. The name probably also means 'little monarch', as Jaya ascended to the throne at a young age.

**Wringin Lawang** is located a short distance south of the main road. The words mean ‘The Banyan Tree Gate’. The grand gate portals are made from gold and yellow brick, with a base of 13×11 metres and a height of 15½ metres, and date from four centuries past. The gate is of the ‘Candi Bentar’ or split gateway type, a structure that may have appeared during the Lemek era. This structure is the gate of one of the most important compounds in the capital. It was once the residence of Gajah Mada, and no other will dwell there to this day.

**Candi Brahu** is the name for a structure formed by a linked cluster of mortuary buildings. It is here that the cremation ceremonies for the first four Garudan rulers were carried out. The buildings now serve as a royal mortuary shrine.

**Segaran Pool** is a large rectangular pool 800×500 metres in size. Surrounding the water basin is a rectangular wall made of red and gold brick, thus making the form of the pool. Segaran Pool has a variety of functions: Segaran Pool functions as a recreational pool and fishing pond, as the city’s reservoir, the source of fresh water essential for the high-density urban area, especially during dry season. It is also rarely used as the bathplace and swimming pool to train Majapahit troops, and also as a recreational pool for nobles to entertain their envoys and guests.

Near the northeast edge of the city lies **Candi Menak Jingga**. The structure is made from a carved andesite stone outer layer with red brick inner layer. The most exciting feature of this structure is the roof ornament depicting a Khitain beast identified as Q'lin. It is said that within this structure, the beast, a gift from the Khitain Emperor, has lived and prophesied for centuries; though its soothsaying is only witnessed by a very select few.

At **Umpak**, huge stones form the base for carved wooden pillars dedicated to the veneration and appeasement of forest gods.

### Industry

The capital contains a sizeable population of goldsmiths and an equally large contingent of bronze-smiths and potters. Rice paddies surround the capital on all sides and there is a large aquaculture industry that makes use of the paddy fields to farm fish and shrimp.

### Armed Forces

The soldiery of the capital, who are almost 15,000 strong, are supplemented by small elite units of Guranan royal guards, heavily armoured pendekar, 400 cavalry elephants, 2,000 war-buffalo, and lightly armoured scouts and irregulars supplemented with selik and occasionally ksatriya heroes.

## The Queen of the Southern Seas

Also called The Queen of the Silent Sea and Nyai Loro Kidul, she is a powerful goddess of the Garudan people. In depictions and statuary, Nyai Loro Kidul is often illustrated as an imperious but stunning woman with the powerful lower part of the body of a snake.

Because of these depictions, Nyai Loro Kidul is sometimes referred to as Queen of the Naga. This idea may have been derived from some variant myths concerning her once having been a Princess of Pajaran who suffered from leprosy. The skin disease was thought to have led to her shedding her skin like a snake and becoming a spirit. Whatever the truth of it, her image or one very like it has been glimpsed by those foolhardy adventurers who have braved the caves and temples of the serpentine River-Folk.

Within the Empire, Nyai Loro Kidul is worshipped as a powerful Garudan Spirit-Queen and it is said her favour is tied to the beauty of Garudan princesses. She is noted for her ability to control the seas, shape the weather, and change shape several times a day.

Nyai Loro Kidul is in control of the waves of the Silent Sea from her dwelling place in the heart of the ocean. It is said to be possible to descend to her Throne and petition her favour directly if one knows the ancient charms to survive beneath the waves. For those seeking to petition her in person, her court's literal position is considered to be at a point corresponding to the position of the Fallen Leaf constellation during the beginning of the monsoon season. Sacred to her is the colour green, which it is forbidden to wear along the south coast of Garuda.

### Her Origin

The supposed origins of the Goddess are many and varied and no one knows for sure which tale, if any, holds the truth. One folktale is about Kadita of the Pajaran Kingdom, in western Garuda, who desperately sought the wisdom of the spirits within the Southern Sea after black magic had been used upon her. She jumped into the ocean where the spirits and demons crowned the girl as the legendary spirit-queen of the South Sea. Another folktale claimed Bening of Sununda became Queen of the Kelona Kingdom and, suffering from leprosy, travelled to the south where she was taken up by a huge wave to disappear into the ocean.

Another folktale is about the Ajar Cemar on the mountain of Kumbang in the west. She was a female seer who was actually the beautiful great aunt of Susuruh, Princess of the Lemak People. She was told in a vision to go to the east of Garuda, find the place where a maja tree had just one fruit and found the Majahit kingdom. Many years after, she transmigrated into the "spirit-queen of the south who shall reign over the spirits, demons and all dark creatures".

### Ceremonies

The main celebration of Nyai Loro Kidul happens in a cave near Kuta, known locally as Karang Balang, and when these are ended, specially prepared offerings are placed in an alcove upon what is known as the "State Bed of Nyai Loro Kidul". This relic is hung with beautiful silk batik kains, and a toilet mirror is placed against the jade-coloured ancient pillows of the bed.

Nyai Loro Kidul is the patron goddess of the bird-nest gatherers of Southern Garuda. The gatherers descend the sheer cliff-face on coconut-fibre ropes to an overhang some thirty feet above the water, where a rickety bamboo platform has been built. From here, they must await their wave, drop into it, and be swept beneath the overhang into the cave. Here, they



grope around in total darkness filling their bags with bird nests. Going back needs very precise timing not to misjudge the tides and drown in the waves.

Pelabuhan Ratu, a small fishing city in western Garuda, celebrates an annual holiday in her honour. A memorial day for the locals, who offer a great many ceremonial gifts to the goddess.

### Surakah Temple Ruins

The Surakah Temple is located on the western slope of Mount Laru in deep jungle hundreds of miles west of The Golden Court. Hundreds of years before the Garudan Empire, it was a site of worship for the Lemeki Empire.

The temple was, judging from the friezes and statues adorning it, dedicated to life, fertility, and reproduction. Its main structure is a simple 50m tall pyramid with reliefs and statues in front of it, including three tortoises with flattened shells and a male human figure grasping his penis. A giant 6m high statue of lingga (phallus) with four balls, representing penile incisions stands some way off in the encroaching jungle.

The temple was founded in the early days of expansion in the lost empire. It was believed that the slope of the mountain was a sacred place for worshipping the ancestors, nature spirits, and the observance of the fertility rites. The monument was built around thirty-seven years after the foundation of the Lemak civilisation, as written on a chronogram date on the western gate. An overgrown relief of yoni–lingga comprises the floor of the temple's entrance. Unlike later meticulous designs and reliefs, the temple has a simple truncated pyramid as its main monument, surrounded by monoliths and life-sized figures. Temple architecture and decoration depict many scenes of spiritual liberation and physical acts.

On the wall of the main monument, there is a relief portraying two men forging a weapon in a smithy with a large dancing figure having a human body and the head of an elephant. Two other nearby friezes show the same scene but depict the forging of the sun and the moon. In the beliefs of the Lemaki and the later Garudans, the smith is thought to possess not only the skill to alter metals, but also the key to spiritual transcendence. Smiths could draw on their powers to forge an enchanted kris or, rarely, another type of weapon from the blessings of the God of Fire, and a smithy was considered a holy shrine. Rulership is legitimated and empowered by the possession of an ancestral kris.

The elephant-headed figure with a crown in the smithy relief depicts what is believed to be Ganesha, the God of Obstacles, in the Minji pantheon. This figure, however, differs completely with other usual depictions. Instead of sitting, the Ganesha figure in the relief is shown dancing and it has distinctive features including the exposed genitals, the demonic physiognomy, the strangely awkward dancing posture, the rosary bones on its neck, and holding a large rat. The figure's pose recalls a barely remembered rite still practised by some isolated villages in which the dead are called upon to bestow fruitfulness on the living.

The huge lingga statue has a dedicated inscription carved from top to bottom representing a vein followed by a chronogram date. The inscription translates "Consecration of the Holy

Ganga sudhi in ... the sign of masculinity is the essence of the world.” Reliefs of a kris blade, an eight-pointed sun, and a crescent moon decorate the statue. Young married women will sneak out to the jungle and plant a kiss on the statue in order to be blessed with a child – very occasionally one will not return.

Other statues in the temple grounds include a life-sized male human figure with his hand grasping his own penis and three flattened shells of tortoises. Two large tortoise statues guard the pyramid entrance and the third one lies at some distance in front of the monument. All of their heads point to the west and their flattened shells once served as altars for purification rituals and ancestor worship.

The temple was a very powerful centre for the worship not of Ganesha but of the ancient Jungle-God Ralwang. The huge God-Beast lies in repose beneath the temple, surrounded by a horde of enormous rats who maintain its sleep and occasionally devour anyone who seems too curious about the temple. The statue of the lingam lies directly over his resting place, and it does indeed grant fertility to those who kiss it; however, the child is his child and not the husband's. After hundreds of years of this activity, almost every village in the area is populated with his children. Occasionally, one will be born with physical aspects of the demon, but the child is usually exposed and left to die. Those who live, often those with more hidden or subtle characteristics, often rise to positions of power in the villages. If directly attacked, the newly awoken Ralwang will call out to the minds of these 'chosen' chieftains to bring their warriors to aid him.

The entrance to the underworld beneath the temple will only open when a sacred kris, a gold eight-pointed sun symbol, and a silver crescent moon are placed one each on the turtle altars. If those who do so are not worshippers of Ralwang or 'chosen', the three turtle statues will animate and attack. The turtles are identical to moon dogs in stats except having +2 AF and are nowhere near as slow as their forms may suggest.

The statue of the man will sink into the ground, revealing a set of stone steps leading into darkness. Below ground, a maze of tunnels is revealed. Within them are a number of rooms lined with rich fabrics and hung with silk. Braziers and incense burners hang from the ceilings. The walls are thick with ferns and mosses, growing without need for sunlight in the fecund aura of the God-Beast. The giant rats live in hundreds of tiny tunnels and bolt holes and there is no sign of their presence within the complex itself.

A number of hard-wood statues (six in total) of slightly larger-than-life-size, shapely, naked nymphs are present around the tunnel complex. Any close inspection will note that the statues are hollow. If broken open, the statue will split like a seed pod to reveal a young woman encased in a honey-scented resin. These are the brides of the god who were encased by ancient priests in their semblances to await the god's reawakening and their subsequent impregnation; they do not speak any modern languages and will be confused at not meeting their god, possibly to the point of panic.

A number of traps exist in the complex. Although the giant rats (forty strong) will attack anyone who enters the god's chamber, Ralwang himself is not violently disposed to those who enter and will call off the rats after he rouses (three turns), unless he is attacked himself.

He does not speak any of the current tongues, though he will learn them if he speaks with anyone for more than five minutes.

Ralwang is an ancient remnant of a lost age, and he is inquisitive about what has occurred in his absence. He is, however, a primal being and is enslaved to his passions; any male who makes physical contact with him will father a child at his next sexual encounter; any female who does so will fall pregnant immediately.

Any children born will be 'chosen' – roll once on Hellion tables or referee's choice.

If the PCs attack Ralwang, his stats are identical to Garambar's from SG, except he uses huge, hooked talons instead of an axe (same stats). Once every three rounds, he can dance. This has the effect of the Burden spell with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 20; the effect is not an increase in gravity but those affected are overcome by overpowering sensations of pleasure, birth pains, or childish glee and are unable to freely act.

Killing Ralwang gives access to about 3,000 florins in gold sacred objects arrayed about his chamber, it also drains the power from the lingam statue and prevents the local villages from accessing its power. Eventually, without the god-blood, the villages' inhabitants will be overcome by the diseases they are no longer immune to and the area will fall back completely into the jungle.

# Indigenous Creatures

## *Humanoids*

- Orang Bunian

## *Creatures*

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Abath (see Rhino)           | • Were-Crocodile (Lycanthrope)   |
| • Bats                        | • Orang Pendak (Apeman)          |
| • Bears (Moon/Sun)            | • Buta Kala (Ogre)               |
| • Bull (Buffalo/Banteng/Gaur) | • Python                         |
| • Crocodiles                  | • Tiger                          |
| • Giant Eagles                | • Wild Boar                      |
| • Giant Rat                   | • Rakshah                        |
| • Giant Spider/Scorpion       | • Phoenix (Garuda)               |
| • Were-Tiger (Lycanthrope)    | • Undead of the Thousand Islands |

# Approximation

The Thousand Islands is somewhat approximate to the islands that compose Indonesia and Malaysia.

# Thuland

*(Jumping Jimminy)*

This is the nation located in the north-eastern section of the island continent of Ellesland, including isles to the north-east of Thuland.

No definition for “Thuland” is given in the gamebooks, though it could be assumed ‘land’ has the same meaning in English as in Visic or Elleslandic. An individual citizen is referred to as a “Thulander” (see Book 6 p16, p150), although confusingly, a ship of those from Thuland may also be described as “Thulan” (Book6 p176).

## history

Thuland’s history is difficult to gauge, though it appears that its original inhabitants were of similar stock to those of Northern Albion and Cornumbria. Through raids from Mercania, it seems that some Mercanian blood got amongst this nation, such that its religion and culture represent more so that of Mercania than their southern cousins in Albion. It is questionable to consider Thuland a True Faith country.

Thuland has a history of war with its southern cousins, as well as Ereworn and Glissom to its west and Cornumbria to the southwest. This is despite the Pagan Mountains to the west and south presenting a formidable obstacle to warfare in those directions.

## Society

### Capital

Thuland’s capital is Katorheim on the isles – or at least the King holds court here. The fierce sea and fiercer personalities of his lieges on the mainland mean that his control of anything but capital island itself, is tenuous at best.

### Government

In ages past, mainland Thuland was dominated by clans, each ruling over a glen or fjord and often squabbling with its neighbours over the next ridge. In recent centuries, Mercanian-descended lords (often known as jarls) have established larger territories under the nominal suzerainty of Katorheim. These arrangements work well enough when the jarl needs to raise men at time of war – but at other times, most jarls know to let their liege-thanes well enough alone. Thanes will often jostle for position with their neighbours, such that duels and border skirmishes are commonplace – though all-out battles are rare.

In the mountains, any of these thanes are direct descendants of the old clan chieftains and still “first among equals” to their men. Whereas in the lowland areas they are likely to be of Mercanian blood and treat their serfs as nothing more than chattels.

## Language

The predominant language in Thuland is Visic. It might be possible in the island parts to the northeast that Latter Mercanian is spoken in places.

## Geography

It would appear that Thuland’s south and west are defined by the high peaks of the Pagan Mountains, with the land sloping down to the Mergeld Sea in the north and east. It would therefore be expected that the lands about the peninsula ending in Cape Calogon are the most fertile foodbowl for Thuland.

## Regions

### *North*

Thulandic Isles – The Lyften Islands catch the tail of the warm current that brings the milder winters to the rest of Ellesland; scrubby elms and ash trees dot the craggy peaks that form the Lyften Wall extending out as an arm from the northeast corner of Thuland into the dark northern seas. Settlements in the islands seldom number more than 200-400 people, the majority being in their later years or women and children as many young men have grown tired of the hard life fishing for cod to be turned into stockfish or farming/scratch-mining the unforgiving terrain and have ventured south to where tales of gold and adventure are filtering back from the mainland’s efforts in the Crusades. The islands are many and the smaller ones and rocky outcrops are nameless or the names change with each generation but of the larger isles there are:

- Austvågøy; good berth and welcoming women.
- Gimsøya; an ill-favoured place but there’s good hunting.
- Vestvågøy; biggest fishing fleet in Lyften – they are rich and they know it.
- Flakstadøya, a strange and old place with quiet folk.
- Moskenesøya, a beautiful place in summer but it takes the brunt of the northern cold in winter.
- Hinnøya, where we have the spring festival.
- Vågar, which has suffered under a mounting curse in the past year.

### *Northeast*

- Katorheim (city)

### *East*

- Brymstone (city)

- Thulandic Isles

### *South*

- Pagan Mountains
- Athelsham – a relatively prosperous, independent-minded village.
- Bryndle – a rather dejected place, famous mainly for its popular inn.

### *West*

- Pagan Mountains
- The Village of Aobh

### *Central*

- Cape Calogon
- Beltayn (city)

## Athelsham

*(muriwo)*

Athelsham is a fair-sized village about half-way (as the crow flies) between the town of Brymstone to the southeast, and the eastern foothills of the Pagan Mountains. It lies on a small river that flows southeast from the mountains, later on passing through Bryndle before it reaches Brymstone. The village can be reached by turning west at an old inn on the main highway between Brymstone and Beltayn, then journeying for about a day on an old cart track. Visitors will note that the whole village is surrounded by a well-maintained stockade some eight feet in height. The Thane's Hall has a lower storey of stone with a smaller level constructed of logs above. The monastery (see below) is entirely built of stone. All other buildings are of sturdily constructed pine and raised several feet above ground level to cope with the occasional spring floods.

The village is centred on the thane's house at one end and the monastery at the other. Its inhabitants are farmers who herd cattle and goats in the lands around, while their wives and children take advantage of the relatively rich soils of the floodplain to plant oats, barley, and root vegetables. Fields are separated by bushes that, in a warm year, will bear a variety of edible berries. Chickens and the occasional pig run between the houses, feeding on the scraps and leftovers.

The village has perhaps 200 inhabitants – twenty in the thane's household, another forty in the monastery, while the rest belong to about a dozen families who have lived here for generations. The villagers are well-armed and fiercely independent of their lifestyle – their thane is certainly more a first among equals than an outright leader. If a fight develops, as well as the thane's men (see below), they will turn out d4 first-rank barbarians armed with leather armour, shields, and swords, plus 2d6 sturdy villagers (normal humans armed with axe and shield). All of the above will also be armed with a bow or sling.

## History

According to the elders of the village, they are descended from a clan of Thuland's original (pre-Mercanian) warrior-herders who had always lived in the Pagan Mountains. However, in the time of the current thane's "great-great-great-great-great-grandfather" (the exact number of "greats" depends on the amount of alcohol imbibed by the speaker), they suffered "seven years of snow" and were forced to seek pastures new. Descending to the plains, they fought off several attempts by Mercanian brigands to enslave them, not to mention attacks from all manner of beasts. Finally, they chanced upon the monastery, and finding its peaceful inhabitants beset by a band of fell creatures (again, these may be goblins, the living dead, or intelligent bears, depending on who is telling the tale), intervened to save them. As a reward, the monastery gifted them the fertile land around it and thus the village was born.

In fact, the older monks might tell a rather different tale if it could ever be pried out of them (see below).

During recent decades, for all its much-vaunted independence, the village has begun to profit by trading the hides of its livestock with Brymstone – apparently its animals are exceptionally healthy and their skins much sought-after down in that city. However, in the last few years, the lawlessness brought on by the ageing and death of Jarl Helder of the southlands, has meant that only the bravest trader makes his way to Athelsham – and the villagers are grumbling at the thane to "do something" about the goblins and bandits that now plague the road.

## Inhabitants

### *Thane Snurkel*

Snurkel is a largish man now easing into his middle years. He has learned to fight more by dint of his office than anything else – his real passion is cattle. He has stats as a third-rank barbarian. He is always attended by at least two of his four retainers, each of whom have stats and equipment of a first-rank barbarian. In a pinch, he will be aided by 1d6 lesser henchmen (stats as normal humans with hard leather armour, axe, and shield).

### *Abbot Ederic*

Leader of St Grimna's and perhaps equally as important as the thane in village affairs, he is a man of middling height, solidly built and with a generally cheery bien. The more observant will notice that his nose has been broken several times, one ear is ragged, and his hands are like paws. In fact, Ederic, though brought up as a holy man, has a fiery nature, which he has never quite suppressed. He is often seen practicing throws, fisticuffs, or staff-fighting with his adepts and any villagers who likes a rough-and-tumble. He fights as a second-rank mystic with an additional +1 to ATTACK and DEFENCE when using his staff or unarmed. He is not averse to using his mystical powers to aid him in combat if necessary.

## St Grimna's Monastery

This is a small monastery by Elleslandic standards, and its members spend a lot more of their time with their hands dirty in the garden than praying to the Lord Above. Then again, in a village like Athelsham, they would be hard put to make a living out of bonded labour as do their brothers in the True Faith down in Albion. Their version of the story is that Grimna brought up the son of a baron near Ongus, had a vision of bringing peace between “the golden and the dark”, and after many travails made his way to Thuland, where he waged a peace of sorts between warring groups of Mercanian invaders and the hardy Thulandic natives. As a reward, the local leaders granted him the land and labour to build the monastery where “Saint” Grimna (as he at some point became) lived out the rest of his days.

At first, the monastery tried to convert the villagers to the True Faith but really only managed to establish a “modus vivendi” whereby the villagers invite the monks to preside over their pagan festivities to say a few words before things carry on as they always have. Nevertheless, the villagers basically accept the monastery and not a few of their sons have opted for a little schooling and joined the ranks of its acolytes. Several of the monks have common-law marriages with village women, to which the abbot sensibly turns a blind eye. In addition, grown men fleeing from justice or powerful enemies will occasionally appear at the monastery seeking sanctuary and a new lease at life. The abbot will always accept, as long as they don the robes, dig the garden, and generally behave themselves.

In a fight, the monastery, apart from the abbot, can muster a couple of adepts (first-rank mystics), another couple of former brigands who have not forgotten their fighting skills (treat as first-rank knights), and another d6 acolytes (treat as normal humans). All are armed with staff and sling. In a matter that they feel unjust (such as a lynching) they may well intervene to restore order to the situation alongside the thane's men. However, if the village itself is threatened, they will unquestioningly defend it along with the other inhabitants.

## Bryndle

(*muriwo*)

Bryndle is a smallish village about a day's travel to the northwest of Brymstone, on the main road north to Beltayn. The road curves sharply north just after the village. Bryndle lies just on the north shore of the Brechin River at the point where it is joined by a fast-flowing burn that comes down from the Pagan Mountains past Athelsham. The village is a rather eclectic collection of houses centred on a large inn, which is a convenient stopping point for all those travelling north. The inn is well-constructed and has several outbuildings as well as animal pens, which let onto its own fields. As well as this, there are a good few households of woodcutters, and on the outskirts, many huts belonging to their poorer cousins, the charcoal-burners. The ground is relatively rocky here, so farmers focus on herding and few of them live in the village itself. The village is under the nominal authority of the Thane of the Southlands, but in practice, folk defer to the innkeeper, whose family have been there for generations.



The village has perhaps 140 inhabitants – thirty or so being attached to the inn in some way or another. The current innkeeper's son is a sturdy fellow (see below) and the inn normally employs a couple toughs to keep unruly customers (and employees) in order – stats as for first-rank barbarians, but equipped only with shortswords and hard leather armour. Within the villagers, there are perhaps 2-3 really hard men (stats as for a first-rank forester), who would be supported by d6 villagers (normal humans armed with spears and slings) in a fight. However, due perhaps to its proximity to Bryndle and the inn's obvious neutrality in any political dispute, the village has rarely had to fight as a whole and does not appear to garner a strong sense of loyalty among its inhabitants.

### History

The village is at a natural stopping point between the two natural harbours of Beltayn and Brymstone, and no-one can remember a time when there was not an inn there. A story that some old inhabitants tell is that the first inn was built by an elderly woodsman who lost his arm saving one of the forest folk (see below) from a storm. In gratitude, the forest folk provided him and his descendants the right to as much wood as he needed to construct another means of making a living. Whatever the truth of the story, the current innkeeper is the great-grandson of an Albish adventurer who settled down with a Mercanian lass after many years in the service of the thane. Apparently, he bought the inn from the previous after a disastrous fire reduced it to ruins – and rebuilt it with his savings. No-one is quite sure what happened to the previous owner after that, and perhaps if the adventurers talk to the village grandpas when no-one else is listening, they might say that at the time foul play was suspected. In any case, the rebuilt inn is a goodly structure for such a small village – a lower floor entirely of good stone, and an upper floor of sturdy timber, with the walls daubed and gaily painted in the manner of a town house.

### Notable Inhabitants

#### *Hrylgar Retiksson*

Hrylgar is the current innkeeper. He is a surly man but manages the inn competently enough. What a few villagers suspect – but only his closest family know – is the reason for his bad temper. He was born his father's second son and his sharp intelligence was soon recognized. His adolescence coincided with a prosperous period for the inn and Bryndle, and his father sent him down to Ongus to become a learned man. While there, and unbeknownst to his family, he not only grew accustomed to city life but discovered a natural talent for magic – and when Thuland fell on hard times and his father could no longer send subsidies, Hrylgar found a living as a sorcerer's apprentice. Unfortunately, a few years later, his elder brother was killed falling from his horse, and Hrylgar, the dutiful son, headed north once more to support his aged father and look after the family business. He has done well enough at the trade but has never forgiven life for cutting him off from his studies when he was in his prime. Mindful of the local people's superstitions, he has practised hard to hide his natural left-handedness and only keeps up his sorcerous studies very occasionally. Nevertheless, he has acquired some skill and should be treated as a second-rank sorcerer.

**Hrylgar Retiksson**

Second-Rank Sorcerer

*Str 13 Ref 11 Int 16 PT 14 Lks 7*

ATTACK 12

EVASION 3

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL ATTACK 18

MAGICAL DEFENCE 8

Health Points 10

Movement 10m (20m)

Magic Points 8

Hrylgar suspects (rightly) that the wise woman of the woods (see below) is also a sorcerer and, for fear of being discovered by a potentially more powerful rival, will under no circumstances enter the forest where she dwells – though he will contrive to engage anyone who does visit her in surprisingly amiable conversation to try to learn what he can of her powers.

***Retik Hrylgarsson***

Retik is the burly son of Hrylgar. He has a sunny temperament, almost the opposite of his father, but is fierce when roused to anger. Naturally athletic, he grew up hunting with the woodsmen and brawling with the inn's guards. He carries a staff with him at all times and is also handy with a bow.

**Retik Hrylgarsson**

Rank Equivalent 1

*Str 17 Ref 13 Int 11 PT 10 Lks 12*

ATTACK 14

EVASION 5

DEFENCE 8

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

Health Points 11

Movement 10m (20m)

***Alun Aliksson***

The most respected forester in the village. He knows the woods round about and it is said that more than once he has hunted a man into the forest at dead of night – and come out the next morning all alone. He is a taciturn man but polite enough to outsiders. He is not particularly interested in money but might be convinced to help adventurers if he could see that it was of benefit to the local area. However, under no circumstances would he help anyone threaten the interests of the inn or the forest in any way. He carries a sword, dagger, bow, and sling whenever he is about. He wears hard leather armour (AF2) but in fact has a suit of ringmail he keeps at home if he really has to get tough with someone.

**Alun Aliksson**

Rank Equivalent 3

*Str 14 Ref 14 Int 15 PT 12 Lks 9*

ATTACK 16

EVASION 5

DEFENCE 9

STEALTH 14

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5

PERCEPTION 8

Health Points 14

Movement 10m (20m)

## Local Folklore and Features

***Brechin Wood***

Known to the locals simply as “t’forest”, this is a very ancient expanse of trees perhaps half-a-day’s journey to the northwest of the village. Its southern edge abuts the burn flowing down from Athelsham, while its eastern edge follows along the road north to Brymstone for several miles. The local woodsmen take a goodly sum of wood from there but talk about the place in respectful tones – and it is well known that those outsiders foolish enough to cut a tree from it, are rarely seen again.

In fact, the forest is inhabited by gnomes and is the remnant of a much larger forest that centuries ago stretched as far as the jarl’s castle. They are fiercely protective of their home but have realized over the last generations that it is in their interests to have amicable relations with the humans living nearby. Very few locals have seen a gnome face-to-face, but a few of the foresters have learnt to speak their swishing scratching language, and so communication is possible, based on mutual respect. Anyone non-local venturing into the forest should behave themselves or is likely to get “lost” very quickly.

In recent generations, a “witch” or “wise-woman” (depending on who you talk to) appears to have taken up residence in the forest, with the acceptance of the gnomes. Although most inhabitants of Bryndle nominally profess the True Faith, they will regularly visit the wise woman with gifts in order to have illnesses healed, idiot children put right, and for herbs to ease the pains of pregnancy. For this reason, the local thane is wise enough to feign ignorance of her presence, lest he be forced to “do something about her”.

In fact, the woman (who Alun Aliksson could tell you is in fact called “Olga”) is a sixth-rank sorceress who has retired to relative anonymity to escape certain enemies from her past. She is quite happy with the current state of affairs and would be loath to get openly involved in any schemes unless they involved a direct threat to her safety or livelihood. Were anyone to be so foolish as to attack the other inhabitants of the forest, she would use her not-inconsiderable powers to aid the gnomes.

## Torvik

*(David Lodge)*

Torvik is a small town in the south of Thuland, quite close of the border with Albion. It is physically sited near the Svartan River and close to a natural gap in the Pagan mountains known locally as Jotun's Pass.

Though the town is small, consisting of only eight longhouses containing around one hundred and fifty inhabitants, it is the location of the local jarl, Leif Slackbritches, and performs administrative and religious duties for the many farmsteads in the local area.

### History

There has always been a settlement near Jotun's Pass and the Svartan for hundreds of years. Leif's grandfather, Harald, occupied the settlement after returning from overseas with many riches. Harald originally hailed from Mercania, where he was given leave to venture out into the world. He served as a mercenary in the Principalities of the Crusades for many years before retiring.



It was during this period that Harald got into a disagreement with a fellow Mercanian – blood was shed, family honour was disgraced, and treasures were disputed. Due to this, Harald deemed it not safe to return to Mercania and chose to settle in Thuland. When he reached Thuland, he settled in Torvik, supplanting the previous jarl.

Many years of forging bonds with the local nobles and population have passed and Leif is in a strong position.

## Features

As a small settlement, Torvik is quite devoid of features. Several should be noted:

1. The Main Longhouse. This is the house of Jarl Leif Slackbritches and his retainers. Unless there is a party, this is occupied only by Leif and twelve servants. During festival time, or if there are visitors, they will be held in the Longhouse.
2. Frey's Tree. As a religious centre for the local community, various festivals take place here. The tree is dedicated to the god/goddess Frey and is the focal point, especially for the gruesome annual Freysblot festival.
3. Stockade. A generation ago, this was used to hold the nine human sacrifices for the final day of the Freysblot. Nowadays, the humans are not sacrificed, and it is mainly used for placing any occupants who get too drunk and cause trouble.



## Famous Residents/NPCs

*Jarl Leif Slackbritches*  
(Sixth-Rank Barbarian)

Leif is a typical Thulander: he is large of build and terrible to behold in battle. He has a high sense of honour, fate and luck, and believes firmly in the old gods. In terms of personality, Leif is fatalistic and cynical, with a very snide sense of humour.

Leif has already earned a name for himself; when he was a mere lad of eighteen years he was awoken from a tryst with a local maiden: one of his enemies had set fire to the house he was in. Leif picked up a sword, and without waiting to dress, he charged out and drove off his enemies. For this deed he has been given the name "Slackbritches".

He is currently in his twenty-fifth year, having taken over the Jarlship when his parents were killed five years ago. So far, he has resisted taking a wife, though it is suspected that he has several illegitimate children around the area. He has no siblings.

## Tresce

*(David Lodge)*

The town of Tresce lies in the north of Albion near the border to Thuland. It is placed in the centre of the Vale of Eowforwic, a natural valley between foothills of the Pagan Mountains. The valley is rich with fluvial and glacial deposits leading to an agriculturally rich land with fine prospect for growing both crops and farming animals (especially in the more hilly areas). The name itself comes from the Old Mercanian Tre-esk, or “stream through the meadow”.

The town is a smallish settlement of around 1,000 people situated where the Wharfe River joins the Swale. This gives it excellent transport links for the import and export of goods. As typical with agricultural lands, it is ringed with small villages and hamlets where the local farmers live and manage their hides.

Due to the closeness of Thuland, the area is at constant risk from attack and pillage by raiders and has traditionally had a strong levy.

## History

It is unknown when the town was founded, though it presumably grew as a transport and administrative hub. Due to the constant raids from Thuland, a basic mott & bailey castle and palisade was built to protect the inhabitants of the town. This was occupied by the baron of the area.

The golden age for Tresce was under Baron Bardulf. He was a keen leader of men and believed in a strong defensive infrastructure to protect the riches of the land. During this period, the Thulanders were in control and the richness of area grew accordingly. In Bardulf's 65<sup>th</sup> year, he was killed during a skirmish with a group of raiders.

The barony passed down to Bardulf's eldest son, Garrick. Garrick had been schooled in warcraft from an early age and was the most akin to his father's temperament. Unfortunately, eight years after inheriting the barony, he fell from a horse whilst hunting and broke his neck.

Succession then went to Garrick's brother, Edward. As the second son, Edward had initially taken vows at a nearby monastery, just outside the village of Boltby. Upon the death of Garrick, he was required to give up his holy lifestyle and take over the running of the barony. Under his rule, he concentrated more on spiritual matters than political, economic, or defence. From his inception, he made it his ambition to build the largest and richest minster in the centre of Tresce. This was constructed to the detriment of everything else around the area. The standing army fell to a mere shadow of itself, barely comprising of thirty warriors. The levy was abolished and taxes were rarely collected. After five years, the minister was finished and will be known as “Edward's Folly” for many years to come.

Recently, there was a strange set of circumstances around the town: reports came in of a massing of undead and a horde of Thulanders. During these troubles, both Edward and the local bishop, Leofric, were slain, resulting in Bardulf's last son, Alfred, to take over the

barony. Alfred, though no warrior, has at least turned the town's fortunes around by investing in the militia and the local infrastructure. He has caused controversy by marrying Godiva, Edward's widow. Though this was performed legally, it has caused problems with the local archbishop and general disdain from local church leaders.

### Culture & Peculiarities

Due to its position near Thuland, aspects of Thulandic culture have entered into region. This is reflected in the local dialect, to a point where it is hard for a visitor from Ongus to understand a local, especially after a tankard or three of the local ale.

The locals are known for their stubbornness (*"We is just sticking to us opinions"*), outspokenness (*"Ah woodn't rob me lik 'at, ah'd stab tha furst"*), tightness with money (*"'owsabout I get harf off?"*), and fondness for the local ale (*"Southern ale ain't a patch on oor stuff. Try this, it'll put 'airs on tha chest"*).

### Famous Residents/NPCs

- Alfred, Baron of Tresce
- Godiva, Alfred's wife, widow of Edward, the previous baron.
- Alfgar, bastard infant son of Alfred and Godiva. Was born on the day that Edward was killed. Currently being fostered out of the town. His existence is a guarded secret.
- Swanhild, widow of Garrick, one of the previous barons.
- Aiken, Swanhild's fifteen-year-old bastard son from before she married Garrick.
- Tostig, head of the militia.

### Significant Neighbouring Settlements

Tresce is within a day's ride of the market towns of Thuby and Malton. Also a day's ride away is Eowforwic, the administrative centre of the shire and seat of the local duke.

The large village of Tower, with its famous sorcery research centre, is about half a day's ride away.

### Approximation

The town's location and map is based upon the Yorkshire town of Thirsk. Everything else has no resemblance.





into stockfish or farming/scratch-mining the unforgiving terrain and have ventured south to where tales of gold and adventure are filtering back from the mainland's efforts in the Crusades.

### ***Håkon Grjotgardsson***

Jarl of Vågar. Håkon has been jarl since his father died some fifteen winters ago. Currently in mourning due to the tragic loss of his two sons.

### ***Pia Håkonsdottir***

Current acting jarl as her father has stepped aside during his time of mourning.

### ***Røyskatt Tvillingøks***

An almost legendary local jarl who, in the time before Håkon's grandfathers, singlehandedly, it is said, held off three-score attackers from a neighbouring isle before falling beneath their blows. His sacrifice gave the local people time to rally a defence and the settlements were saved. His opponents were buried with him as an honour guard – his tomb has been lost for generations.

### ***Snorri Red Hand***

Snorri is a squat, ugly, scarred, and threatening housecarl of Håkon Grjotgardsson, Jarl of Vågar, and represents the settlement in defeating the beast-things' raids, hoping to gain the notice of Håkon's daughter, Pia. He dresses in furs over mail, has leather bracers protecting his forearms, and bears a round, unadorned shield and a rusty, evilly spiked morning star to put fear into his opponents. When in battle, a simple helm obscures his badly reset nose and much of his ugly and scarred face. Not the smartest of men, Snorri nevertheless demonstrates a ruthless cunning when it comes to furthering his own interests. That said, he is brave and ferocious in battle, always watches a shield-brother's flanks, and never shirks from getting stuck in when there's bloody work to be done or some fear to inflict.

### ***Hrothgar Blood Beard***

By the time he was twelve summers old, Hrothgar was as tall and strong as most of the men of his tribe. A bastard by blow of Gottir the Eolderman of Thane, he was soon invited to take his place amongst the Eolderman's household troops, his Hearthweru. In the years that followed, he earned respect amongst the men of the shieldwall in many skirmishes against Mercanian and Thuland enemies. A combination of his sheer size, strong ale, youthful recklessness, and a very large axe earned him the name Shieldbreaker. Always the first to charge, Hrothgar broke shieldwall after shieldwall. Although he never acknowledges him as his son, Gottir was a generous giftgiver to his warriors and Hrothgar's loyalty to Gottir and his legitimate heir Siward was never in question.

Gottir was over ambitious, though, and styled himself Thulandwalda, ruler of all Thuland. Outraged, many tribes gathered to face him at the battle of Maldonford. Gottir had the enemy at a disadvantage – he controlled the heights overlooking the only fordable part of the River Mal. The enemy, led that day by Jarl Wulfwyn, refused to cross the ford knowing they would be slaughtered in the river. It looked like there would be a standoff and no battle until Gottir ordered Hrothgar to offer the enemy safe conduct to cross in peace so that battle could commence. Many of his Thegns and his son Siward thought Gottir mad. They argued

bitterly with him over his foolish ideas of nobility. When Gottir accused them of cowardice, Siward cursed his father and withdrew from the field of battle, taking many Thegns and most of the Frydmen with him. All that remained were Gottir's loyal Hearthweru.

Hrothgar crossed the river and delivered his message. When Jarl Wulfwyn and his host was across the river and saw how few Gottir's men were, he offered terms. Gottir refused terms, claiming that as he had lost his son and heir today, he would gladly lose his life. He offered his remaining Herthweru the chance to leave with their honour intact. It was an offer they refused to a man. They were few, but they were brave and fierce. It took seven charges before Wulfwyn and his host broke Gottir's shieldwall. In the slaughter that followed, each Hearthweru fought to the death for their lord, sending many an enemy to across the Sword Bridge before them. Even when Gottir was struck down, they fought on, refusing to abandon their lord in death.

In the end, there was only Hrothgar, his once blond beard now red with the blood of his enemies, his arms burning with exhaustion, barely able to wield his axe, surrounded by the dead, standing over his fallen father, urging the enemy to face him and die like the whoresons they surely were. But the enemy did not come again. Instead, they withdrew, saluting Hrothgar as they left the field of slaughter. As they went, they sang of the nobility of his father Gottir and the bravery of his 'true' son, Hrothgar Blood Beard. It was a shrewd move by Jarl Wulfwyn – not only had he broken the power of Gottir, but he had shamed Siward his legitimate heir and left his position weakened as the legend of Hrothgar Blood Beard spread.

Siward immediately declared Hrothgar a 'Nething', an outlaw wolfshead and banished him from Thane. At first, Hrothgar roamed across Thuland seeking a leader worthy of his axe, but the longer he roamed the more cynical he became. Now all he fights for is coin to buy more ale so that he may forget all ideas of nobility and heroism.

## Local Folklore and Features

### *Old Graynose*

A local pod of orca led by this ageing matriarch has taken up residence around the Isles, principally in the strait between Hinnøya and Vagar. The 'toll' accidentally started almost a generation ago when an adolescent Graynose stopped a small boat dead in its tracks out of play and the frightened fisherman threw his haul of fish overboard to try to appease the seawolf who had seized his boat. Pleased with the breakfast, Graynose continued the tradition and has taught her daughters and sons how to seize a boat's tiller gently until food appears. The locals treat her with a grudging friendliness as oft times the remains of the great whales killed for their tongues by the pod will wash up on their shores affording meat for a full season – this is considered ample repayment for a few fish, an occasional goat, and the rare unlucky dog. Only one fisherman is known to have refused to pay his 'toll', striking out at the seawolf with a boathook... the timbers of his vessel were found on the beach the next morning.

### *The Trow*

A tribe of trow live in the eastern part of the island – their home (or trowie) is located on the leeward side of a spur ridge. The barrow-like mound is inhabited by a mixture of wild and ‘domestic’ trow. This unusual combination is maintained because of the leadership of Bestemor, a rather sedentary and grotesquely fat hag. The trow are not as rich as many of their kind but they have found a large number of gold and silver items and knick-knacks in the meltwater streams of the nearby valley.

### *The Tomb*

The tomb of Røyskatt Tvillingøks lies at the base of the same spur within the valley itself, though it is well hidden from normal view, though a spellcaster may notice a hint of its presence.

### *Jotunheim*

The great peaks that make up the eastern shore of the island are, in fact, the weathered remnants of the great mountain fortress of the Jotun, Jotunheim, where once ruled Skrymir before his death at the hands of the Magi. Within this fortress are ancient treasures, dusty bones, and the faded remnants of a once great people. At its peak lives the ancient Jotun Mimir who it is said witnessed the birth of the world...

## Famous Thulanders

Thorsten Grundheim (Heroic PC, play-by-email game)

## Approximation

The question of Thuland’s corresponding nation in the Lands of Legend has been the subject of some debate. If Ellesland compares well to the United Kingdom, the natural assumption is that Thuland is Scotland. However, the religion described by Morris in Book 6 suggests a stronger Scandinavian culture than one would otherwise expect at this time in Scottish history. It may be that Morris opted for a nation more subdued and influenced by raids across the Mergeld Sea than English history permitted.

Another viable argument is that Thulandic culture is dominated by that which emanates from Katorheim on the isles (perhaps equivalent to Copenhagen in Denmark) and that mainland Thuland does indeed represent Scotland in subservience to its isle-based Scandinavian-equivalent masters.

It is fully feasible that Thuland could approximate to the north-eastern coast of Scotland and surrounding islands (e.g., Orkney and the Shetlands) around 1000 CE+; which was mostly under Norse control (as detailed in Orkneyjar).

# Appendix I: People of Legend

For this compilation, I have dispensed with the distinction between heroic, villainous, and neutral characters. All are just characters presented here to inspire and to use how you fit – their predilections, alignment, or intentions are now yours to control.

Note also that not all of them have game characteristics (and, even where they do, they are sometimes incomplete) – where attributes and key game information was provided, it has been brought across to this archive as-is.

## Aethelric

*(Damian May)*

| Aethelric   |                   | First-Rank Sorcerer   |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Strength 9  | ATTACK 10         | EVASION 3             |
| Reflexes 11   | DEFENCE 5         | STEALTH 13            |
| Intelligence 13   | MAGICAL ATTACK 17 | PERCEPTION 6 (normal) |
| Psychic Talent 16   | MAGICAL DEFENCE 7 |                       |
| Looks 12  |                   |                       |
| Health Points: 8  | Magic Points: 4   |                       |
| No armour (AF 0)  |                   |                       |
| Shortsword (d8, 3) and staff (d6, 3 points)                         |                   |                       |
| Lantern, flint & tinder, backpack, 2 potions of healing, 20 florins |                   |                       |

Aethelric is in his early 20s. He has long dark hair, which he carefully plaits each morning. He dresses as a woman, but though he is slightly built and pretty-ish, he is certainly not 100% convincing as a girl. His most prominent possession amidst the adventuring gear is a tall staff hung with trinkets and shiny things. Superstitious peasants whisper that it has power, but its real magic lies in the power of a 6-foot length of oak wielded with great determination.

## Background

Aethelric grew up in Tillesbigh, a one-horse village in Cornumbria. He never really got on with his family except for an older sister, Eldrun, who ran off to find adventures and stuff some years ago and has not been heard of since. He was always a lazy, workshy little devil and was never popular with the other villagers, who always thought there was something a bit

off and spooky about him. When he was still a child, the local wise old woman/sheep doctor, Muttering Silny, took him as an apprentice. His family were not exactly heartbroken at this development.

Over the next decade, Aethelric saw enough of sick sheep to last him a lifetime. His reputation as being more than a bit ‘witchy’ was settled in this time, not least because he took to dressing as a girl. Nobody was ever quite sure whether this was because he liked it, Muttering Silny was too mad or poor to give him other clothes, or whether it was some bizarre occult showmanship. Regardless, the cross-dressing stuck.

Two summers past, a heavily cloaked (rumours persist she was elven) woman – Aescwyn – passed through Tillesbigh. She claimed to have discerned some ‘talent’ in Aethelric and promised to show him “powerful things” if he would become her apprentice. Aethelric declined at first but after the simmering distrust of the villagers boiled over into a torch- and pitchfork-wielding mob, he changed his mind in a hurry and left town with Aescwyn. Cynics might see the timing of this event as suspiciously fortuitous for Aescwyn’s purposes.

The passing of time finds Aethelric, now a travelling sorcerer, in Aldred’s barony.

# Alexandros “Al” the Monk

(*Damian May*)

| Alexandros “Al” the Monk   |                   | First-Rank Barbarian  |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Strength 9   | ATTACK 14         | EVASION 6             |
| Reflexes 13  | DEFENCE 7         | STEALTH 13 (-4        |
| Intelligence 12  | MAGICAL DEFENCE 2 | Chainmail)            |
| Psychic Talent 7   |                   | PERCEPTION 5 (normal) |
| Looks 15   |                   |                       |
| Health Points 14   |                   |                       |
| Chainmail armour (AF 4)  |                   |                       |
| Two-handed sword (d10, 5) and dagger (d4, 3)   |                   |                       |
| Lantern, flint and tinder, backpack, 11 florins  |                   |                       |
| Origin: Southern Emphidor  |                   |                       |
| Languages & Literacy: Modern Emphidian (Fluent), Ancient Emphidian (Fluent), Unno (Intermediate), Nascerine (Intermediate), Emphidian Script |                   |                       |

Al is a handsome man in his early twenties with brown hair, matching eyes, a square jaw, a stubble of a beard, and a killer smile.

## Background

For an orphan kid born in the middle of nowhere, Emphidor, Alexandros was doing fine: taken in by a mountain monastery. With a good set of brains and a knack for languages, he was well on his way to become a scholar.

Until one day, studying late at the monastery's library, he felt someone putting an arm around his neck. He turned and saw the most beautiful girl in the world. At least, it was the most beautiful girl in the monastery. Well, it was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. He could have sworn she was holding a knife in her hand, but all attempts to fight or cry for help died when she suddenly kissed him, square in the lips. Dormant teenager instincts kicked in and... some vows were broken. Also, priceless tomes were stolen from the library that night, for not-quite-unrelated reasons.

Before he knew it, Al was booted out of the monastery where he had lived most of his life. It could have been worse, though: two other monks were found with their throats slit. Still, that didn't sit well with the young ex-monk.

He tried making a living as a scribe, but it didn't quite work out, as pretty much no one cared about reading or writing in the zone, except the monks; and so he took up the life of a travelling mercenary, as the ne'er-do-wells of Legend are wont to do. He is now at the docks of Ibrahim some months later, right after buying a shiny Crusader-style two-hander, and a bit hungry.

## Epitath

After joining forces with Culatori and Zaki to bring down the possessed Justavious of the Knights Capellars and cleansing the Pancrators Fist of evil, Alexandros sailed with them under the auspices of the Brass Tower and the Coradian Crusaders to find the source of the evil spawned by the Reviled Three. After safely negotiating the Hound of Sa'aknathur and a Kappa raid, Alexandros was tragically cut down by cultists of the three when the ship berthed in Kiri Umoor.

## Baron Aldred

Perhaps the best-known of NPCs in the Dragon Warriors gamebooks, purely because through Dave Morris' Books 1, 2, and 4 he is a recurring character, initially as a PC superior to the PCs involved in the adventure but, ultimately, an NPC with whom the more experienced PCs interact in Book 4's adventures.

## homeland

Northern Albion, Ellesland – his fiefdom is known as “Gorburn”. His castle is apparently named “Aldred's Castle”.

## Family

Only Aldred's son, Almeric, is mentioned in the gamebooks, in Book 4 – he was slain on a hunting expedition prior to the adventure “Sins of the Fathers”. As Almeric is described as Aldred's “eldest” son, we may presume that he has at least one other.

## History

Nothing is said in the gamebooks of how Aldred rose to become lord of his fiefdom in northern Albion. It is apparent, however, that his power is strong amongst the northern lords, as it appears a plot to kill him has been tried once – if not several times – by the lords of lands to the south and west of him, principally Lords Grisaille and Montombre.

In the adventures of Book 4, the PCs grow closer to Aldred and earn his trust, so are drawn into these political manoeuvrings to greater extent. This presents, one would think, fertile ground for further and more elaborate adventure scenarios, which may have been Dave Morris' intent.

# Bhattu the Enchanter

*(RJ Lambert)*

Characters lost at sea who might – by referee design or by chance on the random encounter table in Book 6 – come across this magician sailing alone on the high seas.

Bhattu is of Minjian descent and is, in fact, an exile from his own country. Adventurers will encounter him either alone or with numerous enchanted crewmen aboard his ship. He has the ability – in addition to the standard enchanter abilities – to draw his ship alongside another completely undetected by the senses or magic (other than one ranked higher than himself).

Bhattu is a neutral NPC in that he is tragically trapped by the magic of the kappa beneath him. Having infringed upon their territory, the kappa have told him that he is their captive, and should he ever leave, he will be slain mercilessly. Hence Bhattu is sailing the waters trying to build up a crew competent enough to help him escape the kappa's terror and either return home in hope of reconciliation or continue his sea voyages (at the referee's discretion).

Bhattu speaks only the tongue of Minj, and therefore considerable translation difficulties arise for PCs who encounter him. Sign gestures or words learned over the inevitable days or weeks spent at sea with Bhattu will have to suffice.

## Rope

Bhattu's companion for his lonely time at sea is the animated rope, which the PCs come to call Rope. Bhattu calls it something else unpronounceable. Rope is supernaturally able to extend its length to incredible distances. Rope is, for instance, capable of fishing for food

beneath the boat and can lash out at Bhattu's direction to coil around an opponent, holding it long enough to be attacked by others. Bhattu is often found meditating sitting atop of Rope, metres up in the air, sometimes poised above the sea at the bow of the Wet Prison (see below).

## The Wet Prison

Due to his circumstances, Bhattu has come to call his ship the Wet Prison. The ship has no crew and Bhattu is its captain. It can sail in any weather – wind or storm, or none at all – and in the direction of Bhattu's choosing. Which is, of course, pointless when he is imprisoned within the kappa territory – hence he has renamed it the Wet Prison (as best the PCs can translate the sign language/Minjian tongue).

Note: Bhattu was RJ Lambert's creation to gametest his enchanter profession. Though he did not last long in gametime, it was clear the enchanter was a good NPC but would be problematic as a low-ranking PC, having few combat abilities. He was limited, largely, to using his pink smoke to attack the characters repeatedly to bring them under his spell – and of course, attack the PCs using others previously enchanted by Bhattu.

# Boar of the Lonely Wilderness

*(Jumping Jiminy)*

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Boar of the Lonely Wilderness</b>                    | Third-Rank Knight |
| ATTRIBUTES NOT SPECIFIED                                |                   |
| Chainmail armour (AF 4)                                 |                   |
| Dagger (d4, 3)  |                   |
| No equipment, apart from five heavily armed bodyguards. |                   |

A former knight, Boar of the Lonely Wilderness, is now an adventurer who earns a living recounting his experiences of surviving extreme environments to lazy aristocrats.

Born the son of a merchant from Chaubrette, Boar entered a Knightly Order at an early age. He commanded an elite unit before a back injury brought about a premature end to his career. Since leaving his Order several years ago, Boar has sought the patronage of wealthy city nobles. On their behalf, he embarks on daring solo expeditions into dangerous wilderness locations, equipped with only a knife and without any provisions. On returning to 'civilisation', he spins tales of incredible daring-do.



## Appearance

Lean and handsome features accentuate Boar's affable, kind-hearted charisma. When questing, Boar dresses in his old – though well maintained – chainmail armour (which he, of course, conveniently 'forgets' to mention when he reports to his patrons).

## Personality

Boar constantly recounts tall tales of his desperate solo wilderness survival against all odds – armed with just a dagger and no food or water – while curiously neglecting to mention the small band of personal bodyguards that accompany him on his epic quests. His most cherished ripping yarns include:

- Single-handedly sailing around Ellesland (aboard a ship with a crew of 12... that he never mentions).
- Paddling a canoe across the mouth of the Mungoda River (which was actually towed behind his ship... which he never mentions).
- Climbing to the bottom of the Gouge and back (with the aid of a Flying Carpet... that he never mentions).

## Famous Sayings

When at court:

- *"...and there was not a single soul for miles around to help me in my perilous predicament."*
- *"...and all I had was my knife and a stick that I had found..."*
- *"...and I had to drink my own urine or die of thirst."*

When on an expedition:

- *"Ugh! It looks revolting!"*
- *"Help! Help! Get it off me! Kill it!"*
- *"It's a jolly good job you chaps brought lots of water – otherwise I'd have to drink my own urine!"*

Note: Any similarity to a certain wilderness-survival TV personality is entirely unintentional.

# Chess Master

(*Golden Dragon 1*)<sup>16</sup>

An old, bald man with a long, flowing white beard, the 'Chess Master' is dressed in black beneath a white cloak (GD1 s130). He abides within the crypt of Lord Tenebron, silently challenging passers-by to join him in a highly sorcerous 'game' of chess. His sorcerous 'chess-pieces' include the mighty Black Queen. If the challenger wins the game, they receive a magical award (GD1 s42), but if they lose, they suffer a skill penalty. The Chess Master remains silent during the whole encounter.

Clearly, the Chess Master is an entity of some considerable power – either a sorcerer or a disguised god. Perhaps he created the holy tomb of Ganelon the Paladin? Referees might find the Chess Master useful for enigmatic cameo encounters throughout Albion.

Note: The name 'Chess Master' is an invention; his real name is unknown.



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<sup>16</sup> Image is © Leo Hartas, who gave permission for the image to be used on the wiki.

# Corinn Daewall

(Damian May)

## Corinn Daewall

First-Rank Barbarian

Strength 12

ATTACK 15

EVASION 7

Reflexes 16

DEFENCE 8

STEALTH 14

Intelligence 11

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

PERCEPTION 5 (normal)

Psychic Talent 9

Looks 8

Health Points 12

Hardened leather armour (AF 2)

Sword (d8, 4), dagger (d4, 3), bow (d6, 4), and shield

Riding horse, quiver with 36 arrows, 210 florins, lantern, and backpack

## Background

Corinn was probably supposed to spend his life on a mountainside in Cornumbria, tending sheep, and seeing off the occasional fox or badger, but fate had other plans.

Corinn, like the other young men of his village, was swept up in the troubles when Cadfan and Aneirin decided to cross swords over the grazing rights up on Pen yr Helgi-Du. Corinn was one of the few survivors of the brief and bloody skirmish, and when the battleground was cleared, he saw he'd best move on. As he travelled down the mountainside, he caught sight of the victorious Cadfan putting his foemen to the sword atop Carnedd y Filiast. Corinn gasped as the Black Hound for which both cairn and mountain were named appeared out of the mists and slew the victors to the man. It turned its baleful green eyes on Corinn, but in that instant, he remembered his old gran's advice when dealing with the Old Gods and he was allowed to pass as the beast accepted his offering.



Corinn ran down that mountainside and hasn't stopped running since... he sold his grandfather's sword and his father's armour, and he learned to steal and hide from the shiremen. Finally, when he came to Parivans Cross, he decided it was time to stop running...

Corinn is a true believer in the old ways just like his old gran taught him; he looks on the True Faith with a mixture of bemusement and fear, but he has learnt to keep his mouth closed around believers. His oath to the Black Hound notwithstanding, he is a brave warrior when he has to be, and there are a number of unmarked graves off the roadsides where would-be highwaymen and bandits who tried to accost him now rest.

In exchange for his life, Corinn has pledged to the Black Hound to prevent the True Faith from destroying the last sacred places of the Old Gods. He tends to keep this news to himself, though he'd be willing to share it with like-minded individuals.

# Culatori

(Damian May)

|  |                   |                         |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Culatori</b>                                      | First-rank knight |                         |
| Strength 14  | ATTACK 14         | EVASION 4               |
| Reflexes 12  | DEFENCE 7         | STEALTH 13 (7 in plate) |
| Intelligence 14                                      | MAGICAL DEFENCE 2 | PERCEPTION 5 (normal)   |
| Psychic Talent 6                                     |                   |                         |
| Looks 9  |                   |                         |
| Health Points 12                                     |                   |                         |
| Plate armour (AF 5)                                  |                   |                         |
| Sword (d8, 4)  |                   |                         |
| Standard equipment, as per book1, plus 25 florins.   |                   |                         |
| Languages: Angate (fluent), Nascerine (intermediate) |                   |                         |

**Height:** 5'8   **Weight:** 180lbs   **Eyes:** Brown   **Hair:** Light brown & close cropped

## Background

Culatori's father was a blacksmith working for the Tamorian Cataphracts, but he was always more interested in swords than horseshoes. As his elder brother stood to inherit the business, he was expected to make my own way in life and chose to become a squire to the Cataphracts.

His master badly injured his back during jousting training and required the intervention of some quite expensive physicians and healing mages. He is expected to recover, in some

months, but in the meantime has given his young squire leave to explore the countryside. This may have something to do with the leanness of his purse! Culatori has largely completed his training but has yet to be knighted due to his master's incapacity.

Culatori never received his knighthood though his bravery in defence of the innocent and his companions, Zaki and Alexandros, would surely have guaranteed it. His honourable conduct in the salvaging of the Pancrator's Fist and his subsequent undertaking of the quest to find the source of the evil that infected it led to his untimely death in the back alleys of Kiri Umoor.

# Damontir

*(Golden Dragon 2)*<sup>17</sup>

Damontir the Mad is a sadistic, psychotic sorcerer whose heart is cold and evil. A sinister, flamboyant, middle-aged man with white hair, his most obvious feature is a pentagram that is tattooed around his left eye (GD2 s120). He delights in setting magical traps for his enemies using his nefarious sorcerous powers (GD2 s131, s191). Damontir's weapon of choice is a Ring of Red Ruin, though he also possesses a Mirror of the Moon, and a black enchanted sword (GD2 s30, s120, s224, s242, s283).

Driven by his lust for power, Damontir roams the world searching for powerful magical artefacts and killing anything that stands in his way (GD2 Background, s242, s283).

## Background

Damontir gleefully consigned the noble Dragon Knight of Palados to death on an expedition years ago and escaped with an entombed king's crown (GD2 Background, s242, s283). The next item on this lunatic's shopping list is the sacred Golden Idol of Katak, located in the Temple of Katak.



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<sup>17</sup> Image is © Leo Hartas, who gave permission for the image to be used on the wiki.

## Associates

Damontir is always accompanied by his own small private army of thugs, who he eagerly unleashes on any enemy. His minions are comprised of the following:

- A towering, silent, enslaved zombie knight by the name of Salsa Doom that possesses deadly fighting skill (GD2 s120, s160). Dressed solely in black, he wears plate armour beneath a cloak and wields two falchions in the main gauche style.
- Several evil demon-spawned assassins – called Nightmare Guard (GD2 s136, s190).

When undertaking a dangerous expedition, Damontir will also buy the services of expendable mercenaries (GD2 s102, s164).

## Dietmar

(*Damian May*)

|   |                    |           |
|---|--------------------|-----------|
| <b>Dietmar</b>  | Second-Rank Knight |           |
| Strength 14   | ATTACK 16          | EVASION 6 |
| Reflexes 17   | DEFENCE 10         |           |
| Intelligence 12   | MAGICAL DEFENCE 3  |           |
| Psychic Talent 6  |                    |           |
| Looks 14  |                    |           |
| Health Points 12  |                    |           |
| Plate armour (AF 5)   |                    |           |
| Sword (d8, 4), dagger (d4, 3), and shield   |                    |           |
| Lantern, flint-and-tinder, backpack, bedroll, water skin, flask of oil, 10 florins, djinn-work chainmail (+1; AF 5), and The Baptist (relic). |                    |           |

Dietmar was a former compatriot of some of the Kurlish men-at-arms that were sent to accompany Zaki and his former companions (Culatori and Alexandros). When they were attacked while he reminisced with them during a chance encounter on the docks of Kiri Umoor, he leapt to their defence earning the respect and admiration of Ottar, their captain, and others.

Joining the company, he accompanied Zaki and Marcus to the ocean-girthed rock tower and saw off a number of mighty opponents in their quest to destroy the Demon-Gods.

# Sir Dirk Bigsword

(Sir Kern Tralek)

|   |                      |  |
|---|----------------------|--|
| <b>Sir Dirk Bigsword</b>  |                      | First-Rank Knight (of righteous justice) |
| Strength 17   | ATTACK 16            | EVASION 6                                |
| Reflexes 16   | DEFENCE 10           | STEALTH 13                               |
| Intelligence 9  | MAGICAL DEFENCE 3    | PERCEPTION 4                             |
| Psychic Talent 5  |                      |  |
| Looks 15  |                      |  |
| Health Points 12 (5)  | Experience Points 21 |  |
| Plate armour (AF 5)   |                      |  |
| Sword (d8, 4), dagger (d4, 3), and shield   |                      |  |
| Lantern, flint & tinder, backpack, 25 florins, fancy mirrored helm, and sword of some dead king |                      |  |

Arrogant, self-assured and a firm believer in (his) manifest destiny, Sir Dirk Bigsword (Knight of Righteous Justice, apparently) is loud and forthright in his opinions. He never misses an opportunity to patronise foreigners by speaking loudly and slowly in order to make himself understood. The partnership between him and Lonan might best be described as akin to that of oil and water.

He fancies himself the natural leader of the rag-tag group of adventurers that recently returned from the Tomb of Vallandar more or less intact, although others may disagree.

## Famous Sayings & Memorable Moments

- [Just after Bretwald is decapitated by the axe trap in King under the Forest] *“Aside from Bertram, how’s everyone else? Oh, and watch out for flagstones that activate traps, eh?”*
- [When facing the living statue in King under the Forest] *“Die foul yet decorative demonic bastard of doom!”*
- When the Gorgon trapped him with a *Tangleroots* spell, his companions are shouting such helpful nuggets of advice as: *“Have you slain it yet, Bigsword?”* Dirk, attempting to free his entangled limbs, replied with: *“Not... Gnn... Yet... Working... On it... Bloody stupid... System... Of... Serfdom... Stupid... Gnnnn... COW!”*
- Then, to the Medusa preparing to cast a second spell: *“Uh... Be... Gnnn... Right with you!”* Yeah, he thought, I \*would\* you know, after a few pints.

## Personality Quirks

- Patronising foreigners by shouting slowly at them, while ignoring anything of substance they have to say, then suggesting it was his idea all along.
- A chronic inability to remember the names of NPCs.

# Dragon Knight

*(Golden Dragon 2)*

The Dragon Knight of Palados is a member of the Knights of Palados, whose stronghold is located in Achtan (GD2 s102). This noble knight seeks fame and fortune in the pursuit of great treasures and noble quests. The Dragon Knight wears a suit of plate armour, a cloak, and a heavy broadsword (GD2 Background, s144, s193). He travels with a retainer who maintains his equipment, but journeys alone into dangerous locations (GD2 Background).

The Dragon Knight witnessed the death of Salsa Doom at the Tower of Victory (GD2 s120). After narrowly surviving a murder attempt in the tomb of a dead king several years ago, the Dragon Knight is now the sworn enemy of Damontir the Mad (GD2 Background). The Dragon Knight is currently questing for the Golden Idol of Katak, located in the Temple of Katak.

Referees might find the Dragon Knight useful as a noble ally within the city of Achtan, or as a cameo encounter in any other major quest location.

Note: This character is the named player/hero in Golden Dragon 2.



# Master Scholar Giru

(*Golden Dragon 4*)<sup>18</sup>

This senior member of the Academy of Light and Truth – based in Achtan – is a respected authority on Old Selentine antiquity (GD4 Background). He is a stocky, balding, white-haired old man dressed in the embroidered apparel of the High Council of the Academy (GD4 s228). Giru's extensive research enables him to operate mechanically activated magical devices, despite his lack of any magical ability (GD4 s198). The Master Scholar conveys a peaceful disposition but will not hesitate to wield his mace if threatened (GD4 s180).

Giru is currently surveying the lost city of Thalios in order to locate the Eye of the Dragon. He is being aided in this task by the Warrior Mage of the Elder Realm.

As befits a Master Scholar, Giru is usually accompanied by a junior research assistant (GD4 Background).

Giru also possesses a pet genie – named Sinistrum – within the ring on his right hand (GD4 s228).



For enhanced protection in dangerous lands, Giru is also accompanied by Academy guards, who wear elegant suits of plate armour and are armed with swords (GD4 s1).

Referees could use Giru as a source of PC support or cameo encounters, especially in southern Kurland.

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<sup>18</sup> Image © Russ Nicholson, who gave permission to use the image on the wiki.

# Fergel Sheepdriver

(*Sir Kern Tralek*)<sup>19</sup>

Fergel Sheepdriver stands just shy of the average height for a halfling, although his densely curled mop of hair adds some four or five inches to his height. He is clad in simple homespun garb that shows some signs of heavy wear through the layers of dirt and grime that appears in places to be all that holds it together. A grubby green threadbare cloak, closed at the neck by a cheap silver clasp, completes his attire. Unusually for a halfling, he sports a full beard, of which he is immensely proud.

Fergel carries a shortsword and sling as well as a well-stocked food satchel.



## Notes

Fergel retired from adventuring and returned to tending sheep on a smallholding that he rents from Baron Kern Torsleigh, a former adventuring companion of his.

At the time of his retirement, Fergel was a third-rank assassin.

One of his famous sayings is *"I don't know about you, monster masher, but if I wanted to throttle my arch-enemy, I'd not be best pleased if you came up to me one day and said, 'good news, I've done it for you!' That's not what vengeance is about."*

# King Hadric

(*Jumping Jiminy*)

Hadric is the King of Albion, seated in his palace in Ongus in Albion's south. He has reigned ten years and is still young at heart, 26 years of age to be precise, taking the crown upon the death of his father, Caedric the Noble.

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<sup>19</sup> Image © John Caliber, who gave permission to use the image on the Wiki.

## Personal Characteristics

Part of Hadric's struggle in wielding his authority throughout Albion and exerting it across the Glaive is his youth. His father, Caedric, died in 988AS and is survived by his wife, Queen Agatha.

Hadric is handsome, blue-eyed, tall, and swift with the sword and the tongue. He will, one day, make a good king – if given the chance. However, naïveté, good temper, and lack of travel (and hence allegiances) make him too presumptuous and easily led by his counsellors.

Insofar as his appearance goes, the farther one gets from Ongus, the more varied accounts of his appearance become. Some say he is tall, long-haired, and strong like the Mercanians; others say he is unappealing, slightly overweight, and quite dull in conversation. These misconceptions are fertilised by Hadric's habits of avoiding public ceremonies and other royal indulgences in the interests of trying to rule as his father did with equal balance of guile and wisdom.

## Personal history

The truth of the matter is that Hadric's ascent to the throne came earlier than Caedric had anticipated. Aged just 44 on his death, Caedric died of an undeclared illness after recently returning from a diplomatic journey to Tamor. Agatha (aged 40, birthing Hadric at just 14) is an attractive, brunette, long-haired queen who is good at heart and, by virtue of escorting her husband overseas (often to Chaubrette, from which she hails), more alert to the ways of Albion's enemies than Hadric himself. Hadric, however, deigns not to heed her counsel and prefers the counsel of his Court, of which more will be said in a moment.

Hadric was training in the ways of war and knighthood and became quite skilled with the sword and bow. Indeed, he had hoped to spend time in the Crusades long before he might have need to take the throne. His father's untimely death denied him that opportunity, over which he has sulked and to some extent still does when hearing news of the Crusades from his generals.

Hadric has also not had the benefit of romance and has no end of ladies from the southern nobility offered to him, as well as daughters offered – just as his own mother was – by regents across the Glaive in the interest of securing an alliance or other gain.

## The King's Court

Not to be confused with the judicial body at which the regent himself sits to arbitrate disputes (and, at that, very rarely so, even in southern Albion), the Court is the small group of officers of state all inheriting their positions from Caedric's granting, and Hadric has not – as yet – seen fit to dissolve. These offices are in no small part influenced by what Caedric saw implemented in the courts of Chaubrette, but as such are relatively recent offices in Albion's history. These are:

- The Count of the Palace – Who examines and, in many cases, determines suits brought before the King.
- The Arch-Bishop – Ruling over ecclesiastical affairs and liaising with his mainland religious compatriots on a regular basis.
- Lord of the Bedchamber – Contrary to the name, this is, in effect, the Treasurer charged with management of treasury funds.
- The Count of the Stables – Not only controlling the stables, but the King's men-at-arms in Ongus and enforcing order within that city.
- The War Council – These are three trusted knights of Caedric's who report regularly on affairs of war and defence. Hadric pays, perhaps, undue attention to their counsel in hope he might somehow ride against a foe easy to defeat so as to raise his prestige amongst nobility and peasantry alike, rather than the pomp and ceremony trusted more by his father.

### Relations with the Northern Lords

Mentioned only due to its relevance to the Dragon Warriors gamebooks, increasingly so as they progress but in particular in Book 4, Hadric has not had much dealing with Baron Aldred, Montombre, or Grisaille.

Aldred has met Hadric only once, on a journey he made to Ongus for the purpose of passing on his condolences on Caedric's passing (in truth, he had planned the journey to meet Caedric before the regent's death, then decided to continue as he had other matters worthy of attending to on the journey). Aldred spent only a brief couple hours' audience with Hadric, which left him little impressed. To him, it seemed, Hadric cowed too much to Caedric's advisers whom, in particular the Count of the Palace, had aggrieved Aldred in the past and now grew in influence.

Montombre and Grisaille have ignored any summons to Ongus and Hadric has paid little heed to their disdain, being concerned with more pressing matters (to his mind) in the south and across the Glaive. Still, they send emissaries south to meet with disloyal nobles and others securing allies for whatever nefarious plans they have for the future.

Further demonstration of Hadric's neglect of northern affairs is the matter of Port Clyster, which operates as a free city in the north, and continues to be so by continuation of Caedric's charter given in 982AS. Hadric has not yet revised or even considered that charter, such is the enormity of the task of ruling that he has yet to grasp.

# Thane Hadrik

(*muriwo*)

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Thane Hadrik</b>   | Third-Rank Barbarian |
| ATTACK 18   | EVASION 6            |
| DEFENCE 10  |                      |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 4   |                      |
| Health Points 16  |                      |
| Chainmail armour (AF 4)   |                      |
| Two-handed sword (d10, 5), spear (2d4, 4), battleaxe (d8, 6), bow (d6, 4), and shield |                      |

Hadrik is a tall and well-built man approaching his middle years. He moves with a limber ease that belies his size. His nose and several fingers have all clearly been broken at some time or other and looking closely at his face one will see, under his beard, a scar running just past one eye and down under his chin. In general, Hadrik has a rather grim expression, but on the few occasions he relaxes, he has been known to smile at a joke cracked by one of his men.

## Background

Hadrik was ever a bold warrior, unafraid to follow his liege's commands even where they meant extreme personal danger. Thus it was that, in the last years of the jarl's life, when the poor man had been driven to distraction by his son's untimely death, that Hadrik took up the burden of keeping the Jarldom free from the depredations of bandits, wolves, and goblins that assailed them with ever more daring. Unfortunately, Hadrik was on the road so much that he neglected his own home village – and one night it fell to an attack by raiders. Most of the inhabitants were killed, including Hadrik's family. The people of the other settlements under his ward panicked and fled – some to Brymstone, others into the forest itself.

Hadrik, arriving days later at the burnt-out shell of his village, spent a month there in mourning, unable to comprehend his loss. Then he put on his armour once more and took his remaining men back on the trail. Now he patrols his former domain more stealthily, mercilessly hunting down any who live by brigandry.

## Domain

Hadrik is the Thane of the Southlands of Thuland, a tract of land running north and a little west of the city of Brymstone.

## Special Abilities and Equipment

Hadrik wears a good suit of chainmail armour and carries a shield slung across his back. His main weapon is a two-handed sword. However, on campaign, he will also carry a spear, two-handed axe, and bow at his saddle.

He is equally accomplished riding a horse or tracking through rough woodland.

When Hadrik is fighting anyone he believes to be a violent thief (such as a highwayman, bandit, or just a thug who takes things that do not belong to him), he gets +1 to ATTACK and damage caused by his weapon. In addition, his MAGICAL DEFENCE is increased by 2 when he is in such a fight. The downside of this fervour is that he is prone to attack and kill people he believes fall into this category even if there are more pressing matters at hand, or the odds are against him.

## Associates

Hadrik is normally accompanied by:

- a couple of horsemen (treat as first-rank knights), wearing chainmail (AF 4) and carrying swords (d8, 4), shields, spears (2d4, 4), and crossbows (d10, 4); and
- four footmen (treat as normal humans with +1 to ATTACK, DEFENCE, and Health Points), wearing hardened leather armour (AF 2) and carrying spears (2d4, 4), shields, and bows (d6, 4).

# Father Harkas

(*Golden Dragon 1*)<sup>20</sup>

Father Harkas is a portly man who wears a monk's robes (GD1 s29). He lives in Tenebron Hall – behind the protection of his holy crucifixes – and keeps watch over the sinister crypts that lie beneath. The evil history of Lord Tenebron is well known to Father Harkas and he selflessly gives aid to any unfortunate travellers that may encounter the hall.

The monk provides a lantern and also offers a choice of either a crucifix or a potion of iron will, which he can create himself (GD1 s215). A referee might make use of him as an NPC in the area of north-western and central Albion.



# henrick

(*Damian May*)

## Henrik

First-Rank Sorcerer

Strength 16

ATTACK 13

EVASION 4

Reflexes 14

DEFENCE 7

Intelligence 9

MAGICAL ATTACK 15

Psychic Talent 11

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5

Looks 8

Health Points 9

Magic Points 4

Padded armour (AF 1)

Shortsword (d8+1, 4), dagger (d4+1, 4), and sling (d6+1, 4)

Lantern, flint-and-tinder, backpack, potion of healing, potion of replenishment, 20 slingshots, and 1 florin.

Languages: Visic (Fluent), Elleslandic (Intermediate), Arcane (Fluent)

<sup>20</sup> Image © Leo Hartas, who gave permission to use the image on the wiki.

Henrick is a big man, broad shouldered and well-muscled. His head is shaven, and he sports no beard. His back, if you could see it, is lined with scars from overzealous thrashings. He wears a thick fur cloak over his armour in the Thulandic style. Although his real talents lie with the sorcerous arts, he is not afraid of throwing his bulk around. Like many men oft beaten, his upbringing has given him a sullen and cynical edge.

## Background

Henrick's father was slave to one of the lesser Lords of Thuland near the border with Albion. One day, when Henrick was still just a small boy, his father saved his Lord's life after a bandit attack. The lord offered his father his freedom in return; he refused, but instead asked that his son be apprenticed to the court sorcerer. The lord agreed and thus Henrick went from being a slave's son to the lowliest apprentice of a sorcerer.

His master was a cruel man, fond of beatings and belittling his students, but true to his word, he taught Henrick all he needed to know to make his own way in the world as a sorcerer. His master swears blind he has never taught such a thick-headed pupil.

# Sir Hugh the Pretender

*(Damian May)*

|  |                   |                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Sir Hugh the Pretender</b>                              |                   | First-Rank Knight |
| Strength 17  | ATTACK 15         | EVASION 4         |
| Reflexes 11  | DEFENCE 8         |                   |
| Intelligence 11  | MAGICAL DEFENCE 3 |                   |
| Psychic Talent 12  |                   |                   |
| Looks 11   |                   |                   |
| Health Points 11   |                   |                   |
| Plate armour (AF 5)  |                   |                   |
| Morning star (d6, 5), dagger (d4, 3), and shield           |                   |                   |
| Lantern, flint-and-tinder, backpack, and 25 silver florins |                   |                   |

## Background

Hugh was just a peasant lad working the land in Albion when his lord marched to war against another and drafted his serfs as soldiers. Hugh barely survived his first battle and fled as soon as possible. In a glade not far from the battlefield, he came across a dead knight, dangling with his feet caught up in the stirrups of his warhorse. Crafty Hugh began stripping him of his arms, intending to sell them at the nearest market-fair, when he was suddenly struck by the fact that the dead man was of about his size and build. Feeling an odd thrill,



Hugh gave the sword a few practice swings, tried the helmet on his head... and rode away from the clearing wearing the armour and colours of an unknown knight.

Hugh knew that he would be instantly put to death if his imposture ever came to light, and he also knew that the risk of running into someone who knew the dead man he claimed to be increased every day he remained in Albion. He took ship for Thuland, there hoping to earn wealth and land with his stolen arms and name, ever conscious that perhaps someday he will run into a friend or enemy of the knight whose arms he bears.

## Sir Kern Torsleigh

(*Sir Kern Tralek*)<sup>21</sup>

|   |                    |                       |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Sir Kern Torsleigh</b>   |                    | Tenth-Rank Knight     |
| Strength 18   | ATTACK 25          | EVASION 8             |
| Reflexes 16   | DEFENCE 19         | STEALTH 16            |
| Intelligence 10   | MAGICAL DEFENCE 11 | PERCEPTION 9 (normal) |
| Psychic Talent 8  |                    |                       |
| Looks 14  |                    |                       |
| Health Points 20  |                    | Experience Points 983 |
| Plate armour (AF 5)   |                    |                       |
| Sword +2 (d8+3, 7), morning star +3 (d6+4, 9), dagger (d4+1, 4), and shield +1  |                    |                       |
| Potion of night vision, healing potion, elixir vitae, love philtre, blue scarab amulet, the eye of foreboding, warhorse, riding horse, 4 crowns, 207 florins, and 30 pennies          |                    |                       |
| Track, armour expert, ride warhorse, disarm technique, swordmaster, weaponskill (sword).  |                    |                       |
| Elleslandic (Fluent), Latter Mercanian (Intermediate), some few phrases of Cabbandari. Literate in Bacchile (Intermediate), Old Mercanian (Intermediate), Old Kurlish (Intermediate). |                    |                       |

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<sup>21</sup> Both images © 2006 John Caliber, who gave permission for them to be used on the Wiki.

## Background

Lord of the small barony of Torsleigh, Sir Kern Torsleigh spent his youth delving the underworlds of Legend, seeking out and defeating evil wherever he encountered it. He retired from adventuring to administer his father's lands and castle (situated approximately 20 miles northwest of Netherford on the border of Cornumbria), some eighteen years ago, in A.S. 975.

Now 42, Sir Kern lives with his wife, Aerika, whom he met on his final adventure in the northern reaches of Mercania, and their three children: Aelfred, Harald, and Johanna. He is a kindly lord to the serfs and freemen abiding on his land.

Each Heorfest-monath, on the last Freyasdae and Boldursdae, Sir Kern throws a feast and celebration for his serfs and freemen. The culmination of the festivities is a Tourney. The Tourney takes place on the Boldursdae.

## Treasury & Arms

His lands are worth an estimated 75,000 florins.

The Torsleigh arms are a human heart, pierced by a sword on a plain field of white. The heart represents charity and sincerity, the sword equates to justice and military honour, and the field blanc, purity and peace (virtues of both knightly chivalry and of the purity of Gatanades, the Saviour).

Sir Kern endeavours to be the living embodiment of all these aspects of the Arms of Torsleigh.



# Kloena Di-blaid

*(Sir Kern Tralek)*

Still heavily muscled despite his advancing years, Kloena continues to wear the distinctive topknot of his tribe. His face is covered in blue-inked tattoos. He wears no facial hair.

His torso bears the scars of many battles, speaking to his prowess as a warrior.

## Background

Kloena took the surname Di-blaid after his habit of wielding two swords which became something of a trademark of his, eschewing shields as the province of “nancy-boys and knights”.

Kloena Di-blaid is a barbarian adventurer (of twelfth rank of ability), now retired and living in the Barony of Torsleigh close to his friend and fellow adventurer, Sir Kern Torsleigh.

## Famous Sayings

- “Aw, boabs! Forget it!”
- “C”mere you! Taste my swords if yer hungry!”

Kloena is otherwise a man of few words.

# Ligea

*(Golden Dragon 4)*<sup>22</sup>

Ligea is also known as the Demi-Goddess of Despair. She appears as a tall, beautiful lady of sublime grace. Ligea wanders the land, wailing sorcerous melodies of misery and woe. Any human that hears her melancholic voice suffers a completely debilitating mental breakdown, which is permanent unless dispelled (GD4 s240).



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<sup>22</sup> Image © Russ Nicholson, who gave permission to use the image on the wiki.

# The Lions who hunt in Summer

(Damian May)

This famous mercenary band roams the plains and jungles of western Mungoda, hiring themselves out to those few who can afford their services. They have served in conflicts ranging from border disputes to intra-clan squabbles.

## Bandwe Emojun

Sixth-Rank Knight

Strength 12

ATTACK 20

EVASION 6

Reflexes 13

DEFENCE 14

STEALTH 14

Intelligence 16

MAGICAL DEFENCE 9

PERCEPTION 8 (normal)

Psychic Talent 12

Looks 14

Health Points 15

No armour (AF 2)

War axe (d6, 5) and boiled rhino-hide shield

Onyx necklace (+2 AF)

A striking-looking man in his early fifties with an enormous mane of feathered dreadlocks and numerous scarifications, he was once a man of the Engole people, but he gave up his position when his family was killed to take up the mantle of mercenary. He is a veteran of many hundreds of battles and is looked up to by the younger members of the band.



Bandwe is a brilliant strategist and will often win a battle with little bloodshed as he separates the enemy commanders and either kills them or holds them to ransom. Bandwe feels great responsibility for the others in his band and he will never abandon them.

He carries an onyx necklace that was found on the body of a defeated witch, it gives him +2 Armour Factor.

## **Tulo Mapani, the Tear-Bringer**

Fifth-Rank Assassin

Strength 15  
Reflexes 16  
Intelligence 10  
Psychic Talent 9  
Looks 12

ATTACK 19  
DEFENCE 11  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 7

EVASION 6  
STEALTH 22  
PERCEPTION 12 (normal)

Health Points 11

Hardened leather armour (AF 2)  
Iron Spiked Cudgel (d6, 5)

Climb, track, and inner sense

Tulo is a slim, gaunt, but very wiry man of advancing years; he made his name by executing an entire family in one evening and ending a centuries-long blood feud. He dresses in a loose leather smock threaded through and studded with large numbers of iron beads.

Tulo is eminently practical. Raised among the Punyi of the mountains, he was trained as one of the Spider Witches who enforce the ancestral laws when darkness falls. He was betrayed by his brother priests and rather than disappear on their terms he decided to disappear on his own.

He has travelled with Bandwe for many years, and although he does not respect Bandwe's code of honour, he certainly respects the man himself.



## **Mot Benawi**

Second-Rank Knight

Strength 11  
Reflexes 9  
Intelligence 12  
Psychic Talent 11  
Looks 15

ATTACK 14  
DEFENCE 8  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

EVASION 4  
STEALTH 13  
PERCEPTION 5 (normal)

Health Points 10

Padded armour (AF 1)  
Shortspear (d8, 3) and shield



A young warrior of generous manner and a quick smile, he commands the company's two dozen footmen.

He is a slight man, but he has a loud and commanding voice, and the men like him. He has a slight case of hero worship for Bandwe, but so far it has helped more than hindered his performance.

**Dulu Magye**

Third-Rank Knight

Strength 17

ATTACK 17

Reflexes 11

DEFENCE 10

Intelligence 14

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5

Psychic Talent 11

EVASION 4

Looks 12

STEALTH 13

PERCEPTION 5 (normal)

Health Points 14

Hardened leather armour (AF 2)

Machete (d8+1, 5)



Dulu is about 5'11" tall and heavily muscled. He is in his mid-40s and his tightly curled hair is dyed red with a mixture of blood and berry juice. He wears a gnu hide as a robe and carries an iron machete. He also wears a buffalo hide skirt and iron bands on his forearms.

He commands three-dozen men armed in a similar manner. Dulu is the chief negotiator for the band and his bulk is almost matched by his quick wits.



## **Asanu Melipitki**

Third-Rank Sorcerer

Strength 12  
Reflexes 10  
Intelligence 16  
Psychic Talent 17  
Looks 16

ATTACK 12  
DEFENCE 6  
MAGICAL ATTACK 19  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9

EVASION 3  
STEALTH 11  
PERCEPTION 8 (normal)

Health Points 10

Magic Points 15

No armour (AF 0)

Dagger (d4, 3)

### *Spells*

1. Spirit Assegi (Dragonbreath), Summon Fireflies (Moonglow), Image, Spirits' Breath (Lesser Healing), Ghost Touch (Weaken).
2. Ghost Eyes (Detect Aura), Ancestor Ward (Hold off Dead), Ghost Claws (Inflict Wound), Spirit Sight (Peer), Hands of the Dead (Tangleroots), Ghost Shield (Warding).
3. Blood Feast (Banquet), Spirit Fire (Beacon), Ancestor's Voice (Command), Spirits' Sweat (Greater Healing), Illusion, Call the Rainmaker (Wolfcall: summons hyena).

Asanu was a Witch who learned her art at the feet of an insane old Adze (Mungodan Vampire) in the foothills south of the mountains. She about 5'5" and is always seen in white clay with a death motif decorating and highlighting her body, she wears a lion skin robe for warmth and colourful scarves about her head.

She commands fear and respect wherever she walks, and she will brook no disrespect to her station.



# Lonan

(Sir Kern Tralek)

|   |                   |  |
|---|-------------------|--|
| <b>Lonan</b>                              |                   | First-Rank Barbarian<br>(known as “rank one” by the party) |
| Strength 18                               | ATTACK 16         | EVASION 6  |
| Reflexes 9                                | DEFENCE 7         | STEALTH 15   |
| Intelligence 11                           | MAGICAL DEFENCE 3 | PERCEPTION 5 (normal)                                      |
| Psychic Talent 8                          |                   |  |
| Looks 12                                  |                   |  |
| Health Points 13                          |                   | Experience Points 18                                       |
| Chainmail armour (AF 4)                   |                   |  |
| Battleaxe (d8, 6) and dagger (d4, 3)      |                   |  |
| Lantern, flint-and-tinder, and 17 florins |                   |  |

## Background

Abandoned by his family, Lonan was raised in the wild by a family of Carcajou (wolverine) in the Ereworn province. When he grew old enough to fend for himself, he made his way in life by fighting for whatever cause paid best. He found himself in Albion, in the fiefdom of Baron Aldred, following the promise of employment.

He is incredibly sarcastic and unafraid to mock his comrades when he feels they are being too hesitant. Or just plain stupid.

## Famous Sayings & Memorable Moments

- *“I used to play with the bones of our prey when I was a youngster. Sometimes, I had to gnaw the rotting flesh from the bones before I could play with them, but that was a bonus really.”*
- [Once, in combat, he addressed Sir Dirk Bigsword’s unorthodox combat technique of missing the target every time with the helpful nugget] *“Stop mincing about, you great ponce!”*
- *“Wasn’t he payin’ attention? I can see it’s a mirror and it’s standard medusa-fightin’ gear. What I’m suggestin’ is that he goes to twat the medusa cos he’s the only one not gonna get turned t’stone if it looks at him – assumin’ it doesn’t just fall about laughin’ when it sees him...”*
- Lonan looked up to see the others departing. He put down the piece of wood he had been whittling (a handsome barbarian ravaging twin elven maids on the still warm



body of a slain dragon) and looked around, searching the skies for predators as he had been taught by his adoptive father, Tikka-tik-ah.

## Personality Quirks

### *Uncouth*

Sir Dirk Bigsword looked over at the Barbarian, “*You going to wash any time soon, mate?*”

Lonan looked the pompous knight up and down. He leaned in towards him and sniffed deeply, wrinkling his nose at the mix of rank body odour and stale beer that assaulted his senses. Lonan hitched up the front of his Chainmail, pulled out his <censored> and urinated noisily on Bigsword’s feet. “*Now who stinks?*” he growled.

### *Tactful*

He looked over his shoulder at the two knights and growled, “*Are ye two jessies gunna stand there all day?*”

### *Ever Willing to Learn*

[On finding an empty bag in King under the Forest] Lonan peered in the bag with a puzzled look on his face. He turned it inside out and looked inside again. He nudged Smaw (the mystic, who had gone into a trance) with his foot, “*Hoy, sleepy! Wake up an’ tell me what the hell’s goin’ on!*”

### *Brave*

“*Right, Tin-man’s helmet here would indicate that there’s a medusa hangin’ around. So, why don’t we wait here while he goes t’ find it?*”

# Sir Marcus De Montfort

(Damian May)

|   |                   |                    |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Sir Marcus De Montfort</b>                                 |                   | Second-Rank Knight |
| Strength 16   | ATTACK 16         | EVASION 4          |
| Reflexes 10   | DEFENCE 9         |                    |
| Intelligence 10   | MAGICAL DEFENCE 5 |                    |
| Psychic Talent 15   |                   |                    |
| Looks 13  |                   |                    |
| Health Points 14  |                   |                    |
| Plate armour (AF 5)   |                   |                    |
| Sword (d8+1, 5), dagger (d4+1, 4), and shield                 |                   |                    |
| Lantern, flint-and-tinder, a backpack, and 25 silver florins. |                   |                    |

## Background

Sir Marcus is descended from a knightly family, the De Montfords of Algandy. A younger son of that family, newly knighted and seeing little chance of advancement in the country of his birth and also impelled by his devout faith, went on the Crusades and carved out a little realm of his own, raising the status of his children and grandchildren. Sir Marcus' father holds the title of Baron De Montfort. Despite this, relatives behind disapprove of this branch of the family for, with the passage of years and the necessity to come to accommodation with neighbours not of the True Faith, they have become more tolerant of those other faiths, to the point that they can coexist, albeit with either stiff-necked disapproval or the sympathy felt towards people who are misguided in their beliefs. Sir Marcus, himself a younger son, has as little prospects at home as his grandfather did. He's out to explore the world and, if he can find a realm of his own, all the better.

Witnessing the murder of Culatori in Kiri Umoor, Marcus made a pledge to the dying man to complete his quest and avenge his death. He is now somewhere in the middle of the ocean with Zaki and Dietmar and made good use of the Brass Tower's resources to slaughter a vast number of the unholy cultists.

# Earl Montombre, the Elfin Earl

*(Jumping Jiminy)*

Little is said about Montombre's appearance in the gamebooks, and though his character can be assumed to be ambitious, proud, and scheming, only in Book 4 are we told that he cannot tolerate failure (Book 4, p158). If indeed he is the "Elfin Earl", then he may be wholly, if not partially, of elvish blood and hence appearance.

## Domain

Montombre's fief lies to the south of Axbridge (Book 1, p156) and indeed Baron Aldred's lands. He is described as Aldred's "bitter foe" (Book 4, p147). He plots to take the throne and has killed a couple of 'lesser lords' in enacting his plot. In Book 4 p201, his lands are described as an 'eerie domain'.

In Book 6, we are told on page 30 that Montombre's fief includes two Mercanian settlements – the legacy of Mercanian raids resulting in that race settling there, albeit a full sea journey around the top of the island continent of Ellesland. Sigurdingham and Torston are two such settlements, which bear only in name resemblance to the Mercanian settlements in their homeland. These men of Mercanian origin are said to serve in Montombre's army.

## Political activities

Montombre is mentioned on p129 of Book 2 as a co-conspirator with the rogue knights Alcuin and Beorn and neighbouring lord Grisaille in taking the life of the ‘old wolf’, Baron Aldred. It is appropriate to mention here that his wife, Lady Talia, is the daughter of the King of Algandy. This speaks perhaps more of political alliance than love and suggests that forces in Algandy are also allied to Montombre’s cause in deposing Baron Aldred.

## Associates

In the first scenario of Book 4 (“The One Eyed God”), he has sent his ‘lickspittle’ or assassin Ulfalder to assassinate Aldred – a poisoning attempt that narrowly fails. Ulfalder’s fate depends, of course, on whether PCs in a given campaign have completed this scenario, if at all, and if so, the outcome thereto. Montombre was assisted in this plot by his sorcerer, Cynewulf Magister.

Though not an actual associate, the mindset of the rogue knight Grafven is explained to the referee – he intends to secure the castle of Myrkyn the Sorcerer and then ally with Montombre in what Grafven anticipated to be the coming war between Montombre and Aldred.

It is unclear whether Ulric the Sorcerer (owner of the tower somewhere between Aldred and Montombre’s border) was or remains an ally, or was merely a potential ally whom Beorn the Rogue Knight was considering co-opting into their anti-Aldred alliance.

## Nuckelavee

(*Golden Dragon 4*)<sup>23</sup>

Nuckelavee is also known as the Demon Lord of the Ocean and Lord of the Waves (GD4 s50). He appears as a gruesome, horrific amalgam of a huge, totally skinless horse and man with fetid breath (Bk4 p204 & GD4 s204). The powerful Nuckelavee gallops over the coastal landscape, killing unwary creatures and spreading disease and fear (Bk4 p204). He is surrounded by a sorcerous aura that dispels any nearby magic (GD4 s97). Nuckelavee’s key physical weakness is freshwater (GD4 s97).



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<sup>23</sup> Image © Russ Nicholson, who gave permission for the image to be used on the Wiki.

# Sir Pierre du Valois

(Sir Kern Tralek)

## Background

As the third son of Baron du Valois, this young Chaubrettan knight (of first rank) saw little option but to seek his fortune as an adventurer. He has therefore journeyed across the sea to the land of Albion, ending up in the fief of Baron Aldred. Pierre sees himself as a natural leader. His enthusiasm seems to know no bounds (but his courage, it seems, does).

## Famous Sayings & Memorable Moments

- *“Oui, monsieur. We are ready to go. I ‘ave poli et repassé my epee. I am readee to ‘ack and dice mon ennemi until zey are a la mort. Zis is tres bon. ‘urry up monsieur Grand Epee, you will miss all ze bataille.”*
- *“Ah oui, mes grande amis. You can go first, and I shall be placed carefully at ze rear of the group. I will cover the backside in case we get embuscade. You would not like any one to ‘ave ze free access to your rear, eet ees basic militaire procedure, non?!”*
- *“Zat ees d’problem with le unmort. Zey never stay mort!”*
- *“Je ne mange pas de fromage remise singe!”* (I ain’t no cheese-eating surrender monkey! [very loosely translated...])
- *“Did he say Gorgo.....”* and with that the knight stood deathly still.... *“Hahaha! Fooled you. Mes amis I crack myself up!”* said the knight after standing still for a couple of minutes.
- *“Monsieur Grande Epee, can I move now? I protected you. Your rear hasn’t been penetrated, non?”*
- His strike, instead of soft flesh, met the hard bark of a tree and the blade of his sword lodged itself firmly in the wood. *“Merde!”* he exclaimed.
- *“I am sure that le pont is a petite, ‘ow you say ‘rickity?’, and may collapse eef too many people stand on eet, non?”* He made a motion to show slow steps across the bridge. *“You all go feerst, I weel follow at le derriere.”* He motioned for the others to go across the bridge.

## Personality Quirks

- “Leading from behind.”
- Token comedy Chaubrettan.
- Twirls his moustache.
- Eye for “ze laydeez” (or so he claims).

# Saami of Lan-de-Brit

*(RJ Lambert)*

## Background

Saami of Lan-de-Brit ('Saami' to his friends; also known as Richard Brightland in Albion, or Ricard du Lan-de-Brit in Chaubrette).

Born of the union of a Thulander ale-wench and fallen imperialist Chaubrettan gentryman, Saami generally resides in Chaubrette but is frequently also seen in southern parts of Albion. He tends to operate alone and relies upon his allies and contacts to gather support for his missions.

Saami's parents came together in consequence of a repelled Thulander sea-raid on the Chaubrettan coast, which saw the Chaubrettans (including his father, Keifer du Lan-de-Brit) make a rare retaliatory sea raid back into Thulander territory. His mother, Haana, was one of the 'spoils of war' brought back to Chaubrette.

Saami was given the best possible education but saw little of his father, who was a drunkard and preoccupied with his own self-importance and frustration at lost honour with his lord. As such, his mother, Haana, devoted much to his upbringing and shared with him many of the cultures and sayings of Thuland.

His love affair with Albion began, at first, from raiding its coastline and observing the rugged yet dogged nature of the knights he fought against. Ultimately, he came to surreptitiously explore southern Albion in the guise of a Chaubrettan merchant and fell for its countryside and small hamlets. He chose the way of adventuring rather than warring and became a lordless wanderer throughout this region of Legend.

A sense of calling and several dreams and visions beckoned Saami return to Chaubrette and enter the scruples of the nobility. He retains his appearance of the lordless wanderer but has devoted his time forming allegiances and contacts with those he deems necessary to enable him to fulfil his calling, which he does not yet fully understand. Hence, he departs the courts from time to time to return to his love of adventure and wandering, gleaning what he can and forming allegiances where possible for whatever future his calling requires.

His preferred weapon is a sword and shield, and he dislikes archery and other missile combat, preferring close melee and fighting from horseback.

Saami is unmarried and childless.

Saami is a seventh-rank knight fluent in Beaulangue and Elleslandic, as well as having an intermediate knowledge of Visic (thanks to his mother) and Emphidian (from his education). He is tall and dark skinned with dark wavy hair, and always wears plate armour without heraldry or other markings.

## Famous Sayings

- “*Sacre bleu!*”
- “*Il bastard!*”

## Personality Quirks

- Honourable behaviour, even to his own detriment.
- Risking his life for good, but seemingly pointless, causes.
- Smooth talk with the ladies, especially of Albion – finds considerable opposition in Chaubrette!

# Salador Craine

*(Sir Kern Tralek)*

Craine can best be described as shifty looking, since absolutely nothing in the man’s mannerisms or face inspires trust. Some say his eyes are too closely-set, others that his skin is too swarthy to be entirely Elleslandic, never mind Albish. His short, greasy hair sits in dark brown – almost black – clumps upon his head, atop a forehead and hazel-coloured eyes that speak of keen intelligence, if not instant trust.

He dresses finely and habitually in black, from his hat to the toes of his boots. He rides a black thoroughbred horse on his rounds of the barony.

## Background

Salador Craine is a native of Ongus, the capital of Albion. In his youth, he delved the underworlds in the company of Baron Kern Torsleigh (then Sir Kern Torsleigh) and others. His skills, gained through the school of hard knocks as a foundling on the streets of Ongus, served the group well in their adventures. His skill set is similar to the trained assassins of the east, although he has never admitted such to any of his erstwhile companions.

His ready skill with a knife or sword in striking from concealment seemed to confirm that Salador was a man best left unchallenged. The young Kern Torsleigh felt it best to follow the maxim, “keep your friends close and your enemies closer” in relation to Salador Craine. Although Sir Kern has never discussed it, there are rumours in the halls of Torsleigh that Salador betrayed his companions, possibly on more than one occasion.

It does seem strange then, that the baron, upon inheriting his title and the fief that went with it, should entrust one such as Salador with the post of tax collector, but it seems, from all the baron and his staff can determine, that Craine is actually fair and honest in his duties.

## Domain

The barony of Torsleigh in southwest Albion. He holds no lands of his own, residing instead in a humble dwelling on the outskirts of Appleford, near Castle Torsleigh.

# Stephen

*(Damian May)*

|   |                   |           |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>Stephen</b>  | First-Rank Mystic |           |
| Strength 9  | ATTACK 11         | EVASION 3 |
| Reflexes 10   | DEFENCE 6         |           |
| Intelligence 8  | MAGICAL ATTACK 14 |           |
| Psychic Talent 11   | MAGICAL DEFENCE 4 |           |
| Looks 12  |                   |           |
| Health Points 6   |                   |           |
| Ringmail armour (AF 3)  |                   |           |
| Staff (d6, 3), bow (d6, 4), and dagger (d4, 3)                                    |                   |           |
| Lantern, flint-and-tinder, backpack, quiver containing six arrows, and 18 florins |                   |           |

## Background

Stephen was a promising young monk at one of Algandy's remote monasteries. He was a pious worshipper, a hardworking (though not brilliant) student, and he even possessed the ability to perform minor miracles – a sure sign of God's favour. These qualities led him to be selected to debate with a leading theologian of a heretical branch of the True Faith – one that held that the Saviour, although created first of all created beings, was himself a created being and was not co-eternal with God. To his immense shock and dismay, Stephen found himself unable to answer his opponent's arguments. As a result, he felt compelled to leave his monastery and join the heretical community, known as the Menothians after their most famous spokesman, Menoth.

Since then, Stephen has wandered Algandy, sometimes alone, sometimes in company with his fellow Menothians. He administers services, takes confessions, and performs weddings and funerals for lay members of his sect throughout the villages and towns he passes through (sometimes publicly, sometimes secretly, depending on how vigilant the local lord is about persecuting heresy).

He came to Parivan's Cross because he has heard the Duke of Radipon, a staunch member of the orthodox True Faith, condemn the practise of the Fair as superstition and against the True

Faith's precepts. Stephen wishes to ascertain whether this is true for himself and has begun recruiting adventurous sorts to ascertain the veracity of the duke's beliefs...

## Sven the Berserker

(Wayne Imlach)

On the Dragwars forum in 1998, Wayne Imlach told the following amazing tale of Sven the Berserker:

A Mercanian barbarian named Sven had become detached from the group after an abortive raid on the castle of Duke Grisaille, whom they had discovered to be the mastermind behind the kidnapping of the daughter of a powerful southern lord. He had been the only one to escape from the castle unharmed and believed his comrades slain. In despair, he had become drunk at an inn some distance away and became embroiled in a fight with a travelling knight and his retainer, recently returned from the crusades. In the ensuing brawl, the knight, who was weak with a foreign illness picked up on his return journey, was slain by Sven after the berserker fury took hold (in my games, barbarians with this skill must often check to NOT go berserk in times of great stress). Believing the knight merely wounded, Sven quickly departed from the scene, not realising the gravity of his actions – the knight had been a lifelong friend of Baron Aldred, whom Sven was currently employed by.

Note: My original intention had been for Sven to join the knight on the return journey to Aldred's castle – but I generally let the story take its own path, as in this case.

Eventually, Sven is rejoined by his companions, who had managed to escape the castle and evade the soldiers of Grisaille, though with less ease than Sven. They return to Aldred's castle, to apprise the baron of their failure, although now with solid proof that the girl is being held by Grisaille. Once there, Sven is quickly recognised by the slain knight's retainer and arrested for the murder. Although a loyal employee of the baron, Sven has killed one of his dearest friends, and he has no choice but to decree the barbarian be executed for his crime. At the hearing, Sven demands trial by combat, but Aldred refuses, as the right extends to those of the True Faith only. Realising that Sven's death at the hands of an executioner will bar his entrance to Valhalla, one of his companions, Hermothe, offers to stand in as the baron's champion and fight Sven. As they are both of the old faith, he persuades the baron that a similar custom exists within their society and that their own Gods will decide the victor in the same manner as the baron's God. Understanding something of the barbarian way, the baron grants the trial by combat.

So the two warriors and friends (both player characters, and both of similar ability), who have adventured together for many months, and saved each other's lives on numerous occasions, square up for a battle from which there can be only one victor.

Needless to say, the build up to the fight was particularly emotional, as they knew by the end of the day, that one of the player characters would be no more. This was one fight where I let fate and the dice decide the outcome. And what a fight it was!

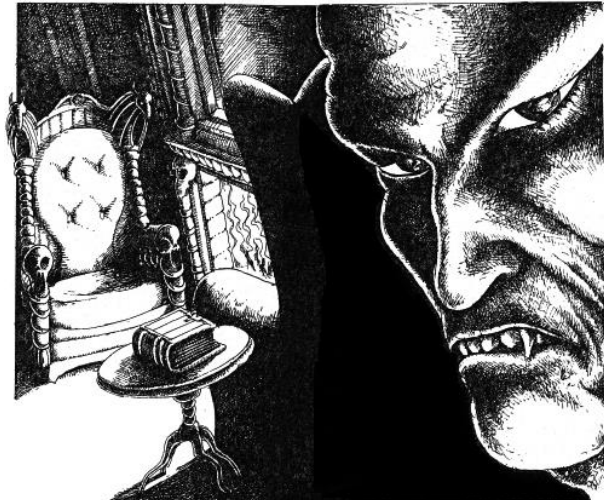


# Tenebron

(*Golden Dragon 1*)<sup>24</sup>

## Appearance

Lord Tenebron is the thirteenth bearer of that title and has the appearance of a tall, dark-haired aristocrat bearing a cruel and malevolent countenance (GD1 s210, s283). Born over two centuries ago, Tenebron was tainted with pure evil and sought immortality from the Prince of Darkness – Balor (GD1 s215). As a result of this unholy bargain, Tenebron was transformed into a powerful vampire. Tenebron possesses all the physical and supernatural abilities of an evil lord of the night, including an overwhelmingly strong hypnotic power (GD1 s127, s184).



## Domain

The undying lord is master of Tenebron Hall, hidden deep within Wistren Wood. Although the crypts beneath the hall contain many horrific fiends and diabolical traps, they also contain the holy tomb of Ganelon the Paladin and a mysterious ‘Chess Master’. During daylight hours, Lord Tenebron dwells in his subterranean lair, while the hall serves to lure passing travellers to their doom as permanent ‘guests’. When night falls, the undead lord stalks the land for human prey (GD1 s140).

## Activities

Over time, the once powerful and wealthy House of Tenebron has fallen, with each subsequent generation becoming increasingly cruel and depraved. The name of Tenebron is now little more than a forgotten footnote in history, known only to church scholars. Although it is not known whether Lord Tenebron harbours any political ambitions, it is possible that he may exert control over some influential figures in the settlements surrounding Wistren Wood, particularly the town of Pillaton (GD1 s290).

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<sup>24</sup> Both images in this section © Leo Hartas, who has given permission for the images to be used on the Wiki.

## Associates

Tenebron's minions are not permitted to enter Tenebron Hall. Instead, his servants inhabit the passageways and chambers beneath Wistren Wood. However, referees might reasonably allow the following above-ground encounters within the confines of the wood:

The vampire-lord's most powerful servant is an old witch (a hag) who wields formidable occult powers (GD1 s94, s163). The witch is of archetypal appearance, with large nose and chin, wide-brimmed pointed black hat, and robes covering a thin, hunchbacked frame (GD1 s200). She is constantly accompanied by her malevolent familiar; a large black crow, who she presumably uses to spy on the surrounding lands.

Tenebron's faithful 'pet' guard dog is a ferocious fire-breathing Greater Hellhound, which he presumably takes for an occasional 'walk' through the wood (GD1 s50).

An ugly, bald hobgoblin occupies the crypts for some nefarious purpose (GD1 s60).

The undead lord has enthralled a drunken, murderous, axe-wielding barbarian into his service (GD1 s237).

An adventuring elf is the latest of the undying lord's psychotic, hypnotised servants (GD1 s190).

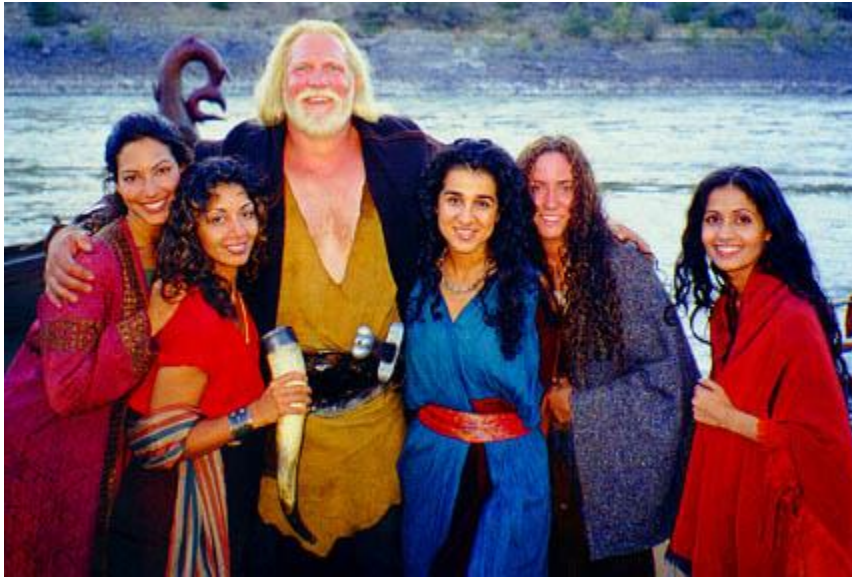


## Thorston Grundheim

*(Peter Lee)*

Those who have played the Dragon Warriors Play-By-Email campaigns of Nirmalan "Nim" de Silva are familiar with Peter Lee's legendary character, the Thulander Thorsten Grundheim. Peter Lee can expand this section, but the opportunity exists for others to add their memorabilia:

## Appearance



Thorsten (a.k.a. Asbjørn Riis) with some admirers keen to wrap their fingers around his horn...

## Profession and Last Known Rank

Barbarian

## Famous Sayings

- To emphasise a point: “... *or my name’s not Thorsten Grundheim.*”
- “*Loge’s beard!*”

## Famous Attributes

- Drinking
- Body odour

## Memorable Performances

- Diving under the slaver’s ship to escape in the MYPOST campaign and attack the ship by climbing up its other side.
- “...*With my very eyes I saw the ‘Slayer’ decapitate one of the enemy! A most ruthless foe trained in the skills of the murderous Ta’ashim assassin sent to infiltrate us!*”

# Warrior Mage

*(Golden Dragon 4)*

The Warrior Mage is a skilful warlock from the Elder Realm. He wears ornately decorated blue and gold apparel with an Orb of Illumination and black crystal sword (GD4 Equipment, Background, s227). Little is known of the Warrior Mage's background except that he left the Elder Realm to seek adventure in other lands (GD4 Introduction). The Warrior Mage always travels alone.

The Warrior Mage has been contracted by the Academy of Light and Truth, based in Achtan, to retrieve the Eye of the Dragon from Thalios (GD4 Background).

Referees might find the Warrior Mage useful for cameo encounters throughout the Lands of Legend.

*Note: This character is the named player/hero in Golden Dragon 4.*

# Zakí bin Đerďām bin Fārūq

*(Damian May)*

|  |                   |                          |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Zaki bin Đerďām bin Fārūq  |                   | Second-Rank Warlock      |
| Strength 8   | ATTACK 12         | EVASION 3                |
| Reflexes 11  | DEFENCE 8         | STEALTH 13 (-4 in chain) |
| Intelligence 15  | MAGICAL ATTACK 15 | PERCEPTION 5 (normal)    |
| Psychic Talent 13  | MAGICAL DEFENCE 6 |                          |
| Looks 12   |                   |                          |
| Health Points 12   | Magic Points 4    |                          |
| Chainmail armour (AF 4)  |                   |                          |
| Sword (d8, 4), bow (d6, 4), dagger (d4, 3), and shield   |                   |                          |
| Lantern, flint-and-tinder, backpack, quiver with 6 arrows, rope (10m), 7 florins, the five scrolls of the magister, the rose crown, and Beshaba's kiss |                   |                          |
| Languages: Nescarine (Fluent, Literate), Bacchile (Intermediate, Literate), Jezzant Script, Classical Script.  |                   |                          |

## Background

Father: Townsfolk (Crafter, Other)

Origin: Ta'ashim from Ibrahim in the Principalities of the Crusade

Zaki is the son of Derḍām the sign painter. At an early age he came to the notice of Great Sorcerer Abdu-l-Karīm bin Munīr bin Haitham who had come to his father's shop to purchase a sign. Sensing a spark in the young Zaki, he took him as a servant. It was hard for Derḍām to lose his son, but it was a great honour for him to serve the Great Sorcerer.

Rather than train Zaki as a sorcerer, the Great Sorcerer, feeling that, with his advancing years, he could more use a bodyguard, decided to teach Zaki the way of the warlock. Zaki proved to have a natural aptitude, as the Great Sorcerer had foreseen.

But Zaki's training was cut short at the age of fourteen when the Great Sorcerer was assassinated. Left to fend for himself on the streets of Ibrahim, he acquired a reputation as something of a rogue, quick with a blade or a spell and amenable to most forms of employment, so long as it was not something that would shame him too much in the eyes of God. He would like to avenge the Great Sorcerer, but he knows that he is no match for someone who could have killed his master and has no idea how he would even go about finding the killer and the person who hired the killer. And so, he finds himself adrift in life...

Zaki, along with Culatori and Alexandros, destroyed the evil that had infected the Crusader ship Pancrator's Fist and rescued Justavius from its clutches. At the request of the Brass Tower, Zaki accompanied Culatori and Alexandros on their Capeller-sponsored quest to find the source of the evil. The gifts of the Brass Tower stood him in good stead against attackers from the sea but, in Kiri Umoor, his heart was broken when his two companions were cruelly murdered by agents of The Reviled Three.

With revenge in his heart and accompanied by new companions, Marcus and Dietmar, Zaki lead the Knights Capeller's forces and ship's crew out into the open ocean and there they located, at long last, the seat of evil. The three companions led the way into the forbidding sea-rock tower, fighting hordes of the undead, cultists, branch-spawn, giant flies, and demons...

## Party Equipment

An ebony cask containing six healing potions in glass flasks.

An oakwood cask containing six magical potions in clay jars. The potions are labelled in Nascerine and include a potion of occult acuity, a potion of night vision, and an evaporating potion.

# Appendix III: Beyond the Western Ocean

(Bulya & GreyArea13)

Before the rediscovery of the Invaders & Ancients manuscript by Dave Morris (DWR p.12), the Dragwars group discussed what might lie across the western ocean. DWR suggested that a campaign could be set in the Age of Discovery – presumably a future version of Legend – with daring nautical adventures on the high-seas (DWR p.149). On Dragwars, GreyArea13 had this advice:

If you go this route, a good option is to use Dave Morris' two Virtual Reality gamebooks (set in a similar milieu) as source material:

## Pirates of the New World

*Down Among the Dead Men* (VR2), is a pirate adventure set in the New World, across the Hesperidian Ocean from the Old World. The New World is split into a series of colonies on the islands of the Carab Sea. The colonies are split into those belonging to Glorianne (Furcam, Ivorshen, Tarbay, Manterfield, Leshand, and Tudor) or Sidon (Galantina, Veluto, Harmatian, Morgello, Stamboul, San Maximon, and Scorado. The last three colony-ports are all on the hinted mainland called the Sidonian Main). There are also the independent ports of Selenice and Schrel, and other locations such as St Clorentin's Isle, Snapper Isle, Tortoise Isle, and Isla di Lagarto. Lastly, between the Old World and the New World lie a small archipelago called the Smoking Isles (Pandanus Island, Grimoire Island, Firepeak Island, and Redskull Island).

It's set during a time loosely corresponding to the Age of Discovery mentioned above but would not take much adapting to a more modern Legend. Glorianne (ruled by Queen Titania, her admiral Lord Calidor, and the court wizard Mirabilis) could be an analogue of Chaubrette or Albion, while Sidon is clearly Algandy. There's also plenty of in-book mythology drawn from Emphidian (i.e., Greek) sources. There are two maps, both by Leo Hartas, who also does the illustrations. Well worth tracking down a copy if you want to point Dragon Warriors/Legend in this direction.

# Aztecs & Death

*Necklace of Skulls* (VR4) is a Central American-themed adventure set during Mayan times, in a fictitious realm called The One World. It features a series of Aztec- and Mayan-style city-states (Koba, Balak, Yashuna, Oshmal, Nachan, Hunapa, Ashaka, Kakashtla, Tahil, Shakalla, and the Great City), the Western Deserts, jungles, fens, and (my favourite) the Island of the Iguana. A considerable portion of the adventure is set in a Mayan underworld that parallels Sheol of Legend in Bloodsword 4.

Map by Leo Hartas, illustrations by Russ Nicholson, and yet another head-only monster (the Nightcrawler) to go with the Death's Head, the Chonchon, and the Obsidiak. Although set at a different time to VR2 and Legend, it may be fairly easy to slot into a synthesis of the three as a mainland area to accompany the maps from VR2.

*Note: Both of the above-mentioned Virtual Reality are very good gamebooks in their own right, not just as inspiration for DW!*

## Ophis

The continent of Ophis lies far to the west, across the western ocean. It is known to be detailed in the *Invaders & Ancients* book, which was thought to be lost forever (DWR p.12). However, in 2010 the *Invaders & Ancients* manuscript was rediscovered by Dave Morris and tantalising glimpses of this intricately detailed world can be seen on his Fabled Lands blog.

## Approximation

It is likely that Ophis may be somewhat analogous to the Americas in geographic location, though it would appear to have a somewhat different historical context.

# Appendix III: The Environment

## Climate

*(Shaun Hately)*

This page is part of the Lands of Legend Environment section. For additional rules covering wilderness survival, see the Surviving Extreme Environments section.

### Climatic Zone

Legend can be assumed to be divided into five climatic zones: Tropical, Subtropical, Temperate, Cold, and Polar. A few notes are below in order to help the referee determine which zone a given section of Legend falls into.

#### ***Tropical***

The tropical regions are those located close to the equator. They typically have an average annual and monthly temperature of around of over 20°C (68°F). They also have a tendency to have wet summers and drier winters as you get towards their boundaries. On Earth, the tropical region may be considered to be approximately 12° north and south of the equator. Most of Mungoda is tropical.

#### ***Subtropical***

The subtropics typically have anywhere from 4-11 months with temperatures of over 20°C (68°F) with the balance of the year having temperatures of between 10-20°C (50-68°F). It extends roughly between latitudes 12-25°. Emphidor and Molasaria may both be assumed to fall into this area.

#### ***Temperate***

The temperate regions are anywhere which has 4-12 months with temperatures between 10-20°C (50-68°F) and the rest of the year is colder. For convenience, they can be considered to lie between latitudes of 25-45°. Albion, Chaubrette, Algandy, Kurland, and the New Selentine Empire are all located in the temperate zone.

#### ***Cold***

A cold region has 1-4 months with a temperature of between 10-20°C (50-68°F) with the rest of the year being colder. It can be considered to fall between 45-65° latitude. Mercania, Thuland, Glissom, and Ereworn are all cold areas.



### ***Polar***

The polar regions have a year round average temperature of less than 10°C (50°F). They lie above latitudes of 65°. The Gnawing Waste, north-eastern Krarth, the Kingdom of Wyr, and most of the Isle of Yggdras are in this region. In addition, the tundra of northern Glissom may be considered Polar. For more details on climatic zones in Legend, see maps on pages 164-167 of Book 6.

*Note: The above is a guide for game purposes only and is not absolutely accurate, geographically speaking. It must also be remembered that other factors, such as elevation above sea level, the location of rain shadows, ocean currents, etc., also affect climate. Also, I have limited the number of climatic zones to the ones above, and there are many others. These climatic zones were originally defined for the Herb Encyclopaedia.*

# Landscape

(Shaun Hately)

This page is part of the Lands of Legend Environment section. For additional rules covering wilderness survival, see the Surviving Extreme Environments section.

## Locale

A specific type of landscape can be termed a Locale. A brief description of what I mean by each locale is outlined below in order to help you determine into which locale each area of your Legend fits. The maps contained on pages 164-167 and pages 260-263 of Book 6 are also useful for this purpose.

### ***Coastal***

These are the regions that lie near the sea, oceans, or possibly near large inland salt-water lakes. As a rule of thumb, I assume that the coastal regions can extend up to five miles inland, although this may vary from place to place.

### ***Desert***

Most deserts are very hot, but there are also cool deserts. A desert is normally defined as any area that receives, on average, less than 10 inches of rain a year, but for game purposes may be assumed to be any area that is very dry, without recourse to such official formulae.

Northern Mungodas' Desert of Songs, and the Kaikahuran Desert are the most prominent deserts in Legend, but there are others.

### ***Forest***

A forest is any area that is heavily covered with trees. There are both large forests, which may cover vast areas, or small forests. In medieval times, forests covered a much larger area of the world than they do today.

## ***Grassland***

These areas, while mostly untouched by agriculture contain very few large trees. Instead, they are mostly covered with grass, hence their name.

## ***Hills***

A hill is a relatively small raised area of land. They are often found at the foot of mountains but may exist in their own right, separate from the surrounding landscape.

## ***Jungle***

Similar to a forest, but normally thicker in nature, and found in more tropical environments. The Amazon is a perfect example of a jungle environment.

## ***Mountains***

Very large raised areas of land, often found at the borders of continental shelves. A notable feature of mountains is that they are, due to their height, often much colder than the surrounding land. Another feature is the rain shadow phenomenon. It may rain very heavily on one side of a mountain, but not at all on the other.

## ***Rivers***

A river is a flowing stream of (normally) fresh water that runs to the sea. Rivers can be large or very small, local creeks.

## ***Rural***

This describes farmland, land that has been turned over to agriculture but is only sparsely settled.

## ***Swamp***

Areas of very moist soil. The Cosh Goyopë of Mungoda is a good example.

## ***Underworld***

By underworld, I refer to large underground complexes.

## ***Urban***

Any area that is widely settled, such as towns, villages, or cities.

## ***Volcanoes***

TBA

## ***Wasteland***

This is the hardest area to describe. A wasteland may have once been any type of land, but has now been rendered totally inhospitable perhaps by some great disaster. Much of Krarth will fit this description.

*Note: The above locales were originally defined for the Herb Encyclopaedia.*

# Weather

(RJ Lambert)

RJ Lambert created a random weather generator for his campaign in Clyster. The concept is fairly simple: roll d20 to find out what the weather will be based on a predetermined chart, which has roll modifiers depending on geographical location and season.

| d20 | Weather  |
|-----|--|
| -1  | Heavy Snow   |
| 0   | Snow   |
| 1   | Snow   |
| 2   | Frigid extended rain                               |
| 3   | Heavy extended rain                                |
| 4   | Heavy extended rain                                |
| 5   | Light extended rain                                |
| 6   | Scattered showers                                  |
| 7   | Frosty   |
| 8   | Chilly   |
| 9   | Nippy  |
| 10  | Breezy   |
| 11  | Hailstorm (roll d6, occurs on 1-3, otherwise fine) |
| 12  | Pleasant   |
| 13  | Warm   |
| 14  | Warm   |
| 15  | Balmy  |
| 16  | Humid heat   |
| 17  | Dry heat   |
| 18  | Searing heat                                       |
| 19  | Scorching heat                                     |
| 20  | Tropical downpour                                  |
| 21  | Heatwave   |
| 22  | Heatwave   |

The modifiers for seasons, location, and the previous day's weather:

| Circumstance          | Modifier |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Clyster <sup>25</sup> | -3       |
| Spring <sup>26</sup>  | +2       |
| Spring                | +2       |
| Autumn                | -2       |
| Winter                | -4       |
| Previous day > 19     | +2       |
| Previous day > 11     | +1       |
| Previous day < 9      | -1       |
| Previous day < 2      | -2       |

It must be remembered that these are for general referee inspiration and not hard and fast. The Previous Day modifier I introduced to prevent wild swings in weather variation. Again, the referee can tinker but it would be unbelievable, for instance, to go from snow (1) to tropical downpour (20) in one day, a -2 for the extreme weather on the previous day would pull that back to searing heat, but after all, it was a 20. Deep in winter, such swings to considerable heat would be nigh on impossible.

Who knows, perhaps I have worked out the way of predicting real weather?! (In any case, more predictable than the weathermen!)

<sup>25</sup> Colder geographical locations tend towards the colder end of the scale. For your own campaign base you could have a different global modifier.

<sup>26</sup> You could tinker with the seasonal modifiers to suit the geographical location, or even mess about within the season so early Spring is 0, mid-Spring +1 and third month of Spring +2, morphing to Summer month 1 +3, etc.

# Appendix IV: Planet Legend

*(Jumping Jimminy)*

Assuming that Legend is a sphere, the following orthographic projection attempts to illustrate the proportion that has been officially mapped, so far (marked in red). A scaled Earth is used for comparison, with Ongus set to 0 degrees longitude (i.e., London). This projection was performed on NASA GProjector software, utilising latitude, distance, and compass data from the Geographic Map of Legend (Bk6 p164-167).

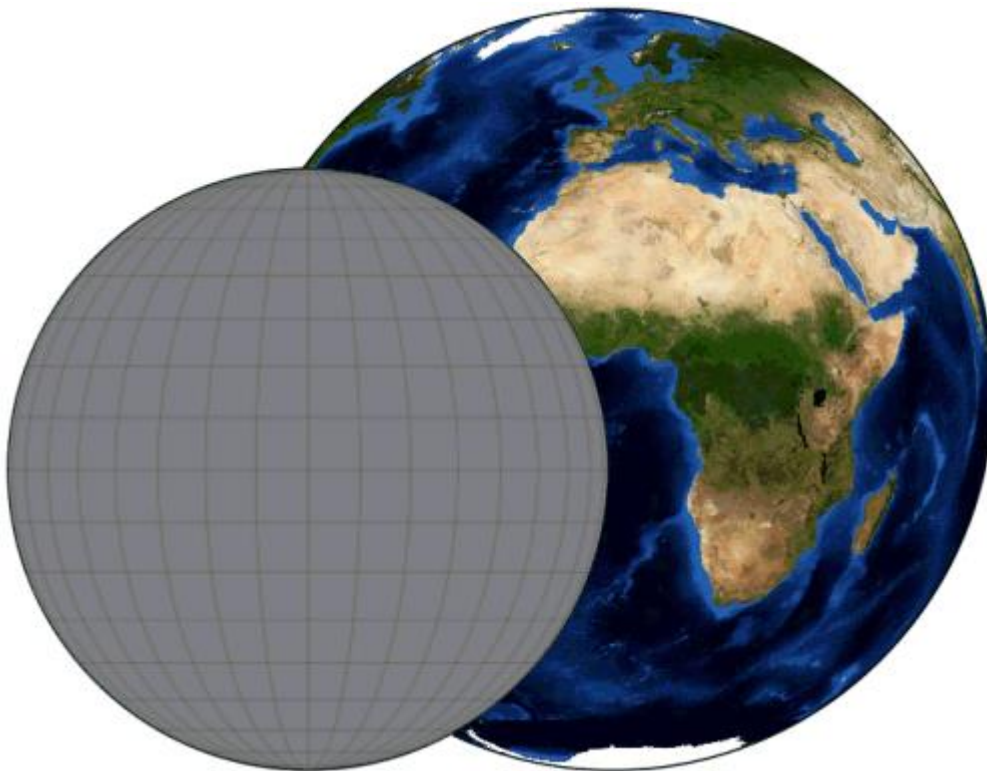


# Physical Size

By combining distance and latitudinal data, it is possible to extrapolate the approximate physical size of Legend, as follows:

| Planet                         | Legend   | Earth <sup>27</sup>   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Circumference (polar)</b>   | 31,600.00 km<br>(19,750.00 miles)                                      | 40,008.00 km<br>(24,859.82 miles)                                   |
| <b>Diameter (mean)</b>         | 10,058.59 km<br>(6,286.62 miles)                                       | 12,756.32 km<br>(7,926.41 miles)                                    |
| <b>Surface Area (approx..)</b> | 317,851,519.95 km <sup>2</sup><br>(124,160,749.98 miles <sup>2</sup> ) | 510,072,000 km <sup>2</sup><br>(196,718,899.80 miles <sup>2</sup> ) |

The above figures indicate that Legend is smaller than the Earth, at approximately 0.79 times its size. Utilising these measurements, the following diagram illustrates the relative size differential between Legend (shown in grey) and the Earth.



<sup>27</sup> Source: NASA

# Appendix V: Torsleigh (Barony of)

*(Sir Kern Tralek)*

The ancestral lands of Sir Kern Torsleigh, Baron of Torsleigh.

## Size & Significance

The Barony of Torsleigh covers approximately 50 square miles of countryside to the southwest of the city of Netherford, near the border with Cornumbria. The barony lies amongst rolling foothills; marshy fenland; dark, forbidding forests; and misty glens where scattered tenant farmers eke out their living, raising sheep, cows, and horses.

Such arable farmland as there is usually bestows bounteous harvests on the populace, meaning the vassals and serfs of Torsleigh are well-fed by the surplus. The population of the barony is somewhere in the region of 2,000 to 3,000 souls. Apple orchards produce plentiful sweet cider, exported to the neighbouring lands by merchants. Sheep, oxen, pigs, goats, and chickens are raised and kept by the rustic population.

There is one good dirt road, running through the barony, which leads roughly northeast to the city of Netherford and south to the city of Cantorbridge. The hamlets and villages are connected by a network of farm paths and cart trails, dusty in high summer and muddy morasses in the rains of autumn and spring. A ferry connects the town of Appleford, in the centre of the barony, with the small village of Miston, at the mouth of the Apple River.

## Significant Settlements

The largest town in the area, Appleford, is home to some 900 souls and is overlooked by Castle Torsleigh, where the Baron and his family live.

Other settlements include the villages of Blaedwenn (the name of which is a translation of the ancient Albish for “Leafwort” – pop. 178), Haembridge (pop. 163), Lesser Dunple (pop. 201), Moyson (pop. 203), Fraedun (pop. 166), and Miston (pop. 230). Several small hamlets also dot the area, among them are Rumbleford (pop. 29), Upper Yarro (pop. 59), Lower Frumk (pop. 35), Stivinstoune (pop. 30), Erevine (pop. 70), Saltcoet (pop. 62), and Drawssin (pop. 58).



## Appleford

Home to some 900-odd souls<sup>28</sup> (though considerably more on market days), Appleford is the largest town in the Barony of Torsleigh. Dominated by the motte and bailey castle that is Castle Torsleigh, the settlement has sprung up around the ford in the Apple River that lent the town its name. Chiefly famed in the local region for its apple orchards; the town is the producer of the finest cider for many miles around.

Appleford is, like many Albish towns, a fast-growing bastion of the merchant class and guildsmen and a lure for disaffected villeins from the surrounding countryside. Visitors to the town will see the full spectrum of Albish life spread out before them, from the wondrously magnificent houses of merchants and the fine hall of the guild to the stinking, flea-ridden slums of the poor.

## History

The ancient town of Appleford – or Rhydafal (Ford of Apples) – has stood astride the Apple River for over a thousand years. The story goes that, in ancient times, sacred apple-seeds were brought here from the fabled Cornumbrian Isle of Apples (Ynys Afal), the centre of the

Druidic Old Religion. The seeds were scattered upon the fertile soil of the riverbanks and grew into the apple trees that eventually became the cultivated orchards of the area. Indeed, the burgh of Rhydafal was once an important stop-over on the sacred way to Ynys Afal and many a king of old tarried here and made a



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<sup>28</sup> The actual population is currently 935 persons.

sacrifice before passing northwards to the marshes and onwards to the sacred Isle. Selentine writings dating from shortly after the invasion of Albion corroborate the fact that a burgh still stood on this spot when the legions arrived in the area finding “fertile land surrounding a settlement gifted with apple trees in great abundance.”

In the early days of the True Faith, missionaries arrived in Albion, tasked by the Church with spreading the light of The True Faith to the pagan savages of the area. A monastery was built near the site of the ford to offer shelter, succour, and instruction in the word of God and His Son, Gatanades The Saviour, to travellers, wayfarers, and the Albishmen and Cornumbrians that populated the area. It was no coincidence that the monastery was built across the hallowed ground of the drudic compound, effectively ‘acquiring’ a place of pilgrimage from the Old Religion for the True Faith.

In the summer of the year 656 A.S., Mercanian reavers raided the area, hoping to sack and loot the monastery, which was rumoured to contain great wealth. Reaching the mouth of the Apple, the raiders rowed their dragon-prowed longships up the river as far as the ford that lent its name to the town. The Mercanians razed many of the wooden buildings to the ground, killing indiscriminately, whilst carrying off captives and livestock.

Many of the citizens sought refuge behind the walls of the monastery and were granted access to the fortified sanctuary. The monks themselves were in unmanned by the horrors perpetrated by the raiders, and after admitting the first group of refugees, barred and locked the gates of the monastery, leaving the rest of the locals, including many children, to the beastly ravages of the Mercanians.

One monk, a brother of the order known as Hanric, spoke up in defiance of the abbot and his brother monks, and when his pleas fell upon deaf ears, he himself opened the gates and strode forth, armed only with a wooden crucifix, ushering the local people inside the walls. The Mercanians, closely pursuing the locals and being possessed by a great battle rage, were killing indiscriminately.

Hanric, undeterred and with no thought for his own safety, stalked towards the oncoming Mercanian raiders, saying defiantly, *"Ye shal leve this plas to whens ye cam from. For the Saviour is the protector of the blessed childe. Ye shal notte pas unto this plas, for I do so avow it is forbade unto ye by God himselfe!"*

With those bellicose words, he planted the crucifix into the very earth and stood, steadfast against the oncoming barbarians. The Mercanians’ only answer was to loose a hail of arrows at Brother Hanric, so that his flesh was pierced in many places and he was mortally wounded. And yet Hanric was heard to invoke God’s Holy Wrath to protect his flock, despite the fact that his life’s blood was leeching away into the ground even as he did so.

Manuscripts from the time chronicle what happened next, stating that “there cam forth from the skie ‘pon ye britest and faireste of sumer’s days, a grate storm of fire whic struck inne at thee savagys, smytinge them wher they stood and burninge ther shyps whiche laye at ancor in thee River Afal.”



Other accounts suggest that the only “fire-storm” occurred when the Mercanians fell to arguing over the spoils and ended up firing their own ship in the ensuing chaos, and were trapped against the river by the burning town and overcome by smoke.

Whatever the source of the fire, it is recorded that only when the Mercanians were utterly destroyed, did Hanric fall to the ground, saying with his last utterance, “*Oh Father, grant that I shall forego thy Kingdom and may keep these gude people safe, until they shall be delivered from the terror of these ungodly barbarians.*” He then lapsed into a deep coma that lasted for more than the normal span of a mortal man, his body continuing to bleed all the while, from the many wounds he had sustained that day. Hanric was cared for by his brother monks and yet was fated never to regain consciousness.

Mercanian raids along the coastline of Albion continued, but the land surrounding the Apple River was seldom threatened by the reavers in the days after Hanric’s selfless deed.

Monastery rolls finally record that brother Hanric succumbed to death in the year 794 A.S., putting his age to be somewhere in the region of one hundred and seventy years, although his still form never aged one day after the fateful events of the raid.

Local legends abound of Mercanian longships lured onto the rocks and wrecked by strange currents and sudden storms and of Mercanian raiding parties led astray inland, to become lost in Faerie Wood or mired in the marshland of the southeast of the present-day Barony of Torsleigh. At each telling, the ghostly figure of a monk was said to be the one leading the reavers to their doom. The last documented Mercanian raid took place in the spring of 793 A.S.

The story soon spread the length and breadth of Albion and Cornumbria and eventually came to the attention of the Selentine Church, who dispatched a party of specialist priests to investigate these apparent miracles. After long years searching through the records of the time, the investigators concluded that Brother Hanric had indeed acted as a direct instrument of God’s will upon the earth on that summer’s day. The Selentine Church decreed that he be Beatified and continued investigating his purported longevity and also the other miracles attributed to his life.

His blood was fastidiously collected by his brother monks, stored in jars that are now to be found throughout all the nations of the True Faith and are revered as Holy Relics. This “blood of Hanric” allegedly never coagulated and had miraculous powers of healing, particularly versus childhood diseases. Indeed, many children’s lives have been saved by this blood-relic, including the celebrated case of the third son of a Selentine Emperor, who was famously cured of a respiratory condition. Given the various sources, including the sworn testimony of the Emperor, the decision was taken to Canonise Hanric over fifty years ago.

The current Baron Torsleigh’s grandfather commissioned the building of Appminster Cathedral to house St Hanric’s remains and the last of his holy blood; rumours suggest this was in atonement for some misdeed of said baron.

The barony’s position on the Cantorbridge to Nethelford road, ensures it does receive a steady stream of visitors in the form of merchants, travellers, and pilgrims either making a visit to

the cathedral to visit the tomb of St Hanric, or further afield to Netherford, Cantorbridge, or even Ongus and beyond.

In the last few years, Baron Kern's liege lord has faced a huge tax demand from the court of King Hadric in Ongus, resulting in Sir Kern being asked for ever increasing monies to aid his lord. So far, the extra silver has been met from Sir Kern's own coffers, using treasures gained during his days as an adventurer. However, this year sees the beginnings of increased taxation and higher rents for the citizenry of Torsleigh Barony.

A dark shadow of another kind has also recently fallen across the Barony, as Hadric has gifted an adjacent fief to a cabal of his favourites, including the spoiled sons of several infamous robber-knights. Sir Kern is now mightily troubled for the future of his people and is sharpening his weapons and drilling the Fyrd in readiness for the coming storm.

### The Town

Appleford's first impression on the traveller usually depends upon which way the wind blows on that particular day. Like so many Albish towns, the lack of sewerage is apparent to the nose from a goodly distance away. Downstream of the town, the River Apple runs thick with the detritus of the town's residents, human waste, and animal carcasses of all kinds are left to drift in the current, growing more fetid the longer they are left to decompose in the waters.

Coming within sight of the town, one is struck by its impressive embankment walls, palisades raised from the earth to a height of twelve feet. The embankments are buttressed on the outside by stout logs, which are sharpened to resist scaling, and are patrolled both by men of the fyrd and by watchmen (although the watchmen usually express that this is preferable to walking the streets knee-deep in excrement). Watchmen have spotted many a thief and ne'er-do-well from their vantage point upon the walls.

The streets of the town are littered with human and animal faeces discarded either from residences or dropped by the livestock kept by the townsfolk. Rotting middens of food waste lie randomly scattered in the town's highways and alleyways. This is not a place for the weak of stomach... Beggars, hawkers, whores, and tradespersons vie for the attention of travellers.

The northside is dominated by the imposing silhouette of Castle Torsleigh, the seat of the baron and his family and garrison of the fyrd. The castle itself is a motte & bailey construction, the river forms a natural moat and the elevated hill it sits upon offers commanding views of the surrounding terrain.

Entering Appleford via the Netherford Road from the north brings the traveller to the prosperous district of town. The finest inn in the town, the Appleford Arms, lies immediately to the right of the Northgate, while on the left lie some of the larger homes in town. Following the road south brings the traveller to the Netherbridge, a stoutly constructed wooden structure affording pedestrian, cart, and horse access to the marketplace at the centre of the town.

The impressive sight of Appminster Cathedral sits at the eastern end of the market square and is Baron Torsleigh's pet project, commissioned to house the sacred remains of St Hanric (it is rumoured that the construction is also a means of buying favour from the Church).

### Features



1. **Castle Torsleigh** – a motte & bailey castle and home to Baron Kern Torsleigh, his family, and his household.
2. **Barracks** – The men-at-arms of Torsleigh's fyrd are quartered here.
3. **The Appleford Arms Inn**
4. **Appminster Cathedral** – An impressive stone structure that houses the holy relics of Saint Hanric.
5. **Livestock Market** – Trade in sheep, pigs, poultry, cattle, and horses takes place within this enclosure.
6. **The house of the Reeve**
7. **Salador Craine's home** – Torsleigh's tax collector lives in this somewhat more-than-modest house.
8. **Market-licensing offices**

9. **The Guildhall** – The guildsmen of Appleford meet here and keep offices to ensure that tradesmen operating in the borough do so within the auspices of the organisation.
10. **Watchhouse** – The town's watchmen have their headquarters here.
11. **The Dock** – This is the embarkation and alighting point for the Appleford to Miston ferry.
12. **River Freight Yard** – This is where goods await loading onto the ferry or other transport to the market or further afield.
13. **The Merchant's Warehouse** – For a fee, merchants may store goods within this building's walls.
14. **The Warrenbridge Tavern** – The establishment of choice for those for whom choice is not an option.
15. **The Saviour's Chapel** – The poorer classes of Appleford worship here.
16. **Adelard Mason's Residence** – This imposing stone building is a fitting home for the head of the Guild of Stonemasons.
17. <TBA>
18. <TBA>
19. <TBA>
20. **The Holy Church of The Blessed Martyr** – The middle classes worship here. The grounds also house the main graveyard for the town.
21. **Warrenbridge** – The stone span affords entry and egress to and from the Warrens district of Appleford.
22. **Netherbridge** – This stone bridge spans the Apple River across the Netherford Road.
23. **Westgate** – This gate guards the entrance to the town and collects the tolls from travellers and merchants entering from the west of Torsleigh.
24. **Cantorgate** – This gate guards the entrance to the town and collects the tolls from travellers and merchants entering via the Cantorbridge Road.
25. **Nethergate** – This gate guards the entrance to the town and collects the tolls from travellers and merchants entering via the Netherford Road

### Famous Residents/NPCs

- Roger Appelton, a jolly, bearded bear of a man; he runs the Appleford Arms inn.
- Adelard Mason. This fellow is the head of the Guild of Stonemasons and is currently endeavouring to persuade Baron Kern to invest in stone walls for the outer bailey of Castle Torsleigh.
- Cardinal Owyn Hwys – the premier priest of Tosleigh area.
- Robin Afal – the Reeve of Appleford, supervises the work on the baron's property. He is the senior officer of the barony.
- Loke Ferryman – pilots the twice-daily ferry between Appleford and Miston.
- Renald of Appleford – A cloth merchant who has his shop and home near the market square.
- Black Olaf – a Mercanian wanderer who has settled in the town. He is the instrument of Baron Kern's Justice, acting as the headsman.

## Local Customs, Practices and Superstitions

Many of the residents of Appleford still honour the pagan spirits of the land, despite this custom being officially frowned upon by the priests of the True Faith. Offerings are left to The Apple Tree Man in the early spring and in autumn, following the gathering of the harvest. Local legend has it that the Apple Tree Man is the spirit of the oldest of the apple trees in the orchards surrounding the town and, as such, he is the one responsible for the continued fertility of the trees.

## Credits

Thanks to Stephen Dove (Ydars) for suggestions, constructive criticism, the name "Appminster", the use of the term "Ynys Afal", and finally for the brilliant mapping.

## Lesser Dunple

Nestled in the shade of the ash, oak, yew, and hawthorn trees of Faerie Wood, Lesser Dunple is unusual in the barony in that all of its buildings are constructed from stone scavenged by the inhabitants and their forebears from an old Selentine hillfort, the ruins of which stand on the crest of a hill to the west of the village.

Most of the village's buildings are single-storey structures, squat and stout. The one exception is the small inn, which has living quarters above the taproom and kitchens. The inhabitants of Torsleigh's other settlements often refer to the residents of Lesser Dunple as "Lesser Kin" as a derogatory term – it is meant to be an allusion to their stone homes, which the rest of the Torsleins say give the "Lesser Kin" airs and graces and "hoity-toity ideas".

The village is home to approximately two hundred villeins and tenant farmers.

## Miston

Named for the almost-habitual sea-fog, formed when the moist river air is cooled by hitting the cooler sea air. Offshore winds then drive the fog over the village of Miston, which lies at the mouth of the Apple River. The village is particularly affected by the fog in the spring and summer months. However, sea fogs are common year-round due to the saltiness of the sea air and the profusion of kelp beds that lie just offshore and are exposed at low tide.

The villagers are nothing if not stoical about this phenomenon. They are, however, somewhat mocked by outsiders for the climatic conditions of their home, giving rise to the phrase in the rest of the barony. The insult, "*you're about as clear-sighted as one o' them Mistoners,*" is often heard in the alehouses and inns of the barony, often in response to the phrase, "*I seen it wi' me own eyes, I did!*"

## Size & Significance

The village itself is home to some 230 persons, living in a variety of longhouses, hovels, and thatched dwellings. There is a small inn in Miston granted a licence to sell ale by Baron Kern's grandfather. The village also has a small smithy that caters for the agrarian population's needs – for the shoeing of horses and the repairing of farm implements.

## The Kelp Bed Inn

The Kelp Bed Inn is the main attraction in the village, selling the local Ale, “Apple Ale” at a modest price. The golden liquid appears weaker than that sold in Appleford up the river. You can also buy Abbey Cider, here but it is normally shunned by locals. The Kelp, as it is known, is frequented by the fishermen of the village and some visitors who arrive in the village before taking the twice-daily ferry to Appleford.

The inn is also locally known for its seafood platters it lays out at nightfall, with crustaceans, shellfish, and cuts of fish seasoned in unusual spices imported from outside the barony. The inn itself has a large vegetable and herb garden on the side by the kitchen that adds to the daily food presented. The seafood is provided by the fishermen who let the inn have small and unwanted catches at a minimal cost, letting the cook work wonders with what they have caught. Locals and fishermen get a discount on all the food in the Kelp, as most have at one point supplied wares to the inn.

The innkeeper is a portly, bearded man called Wolfsan, who is assisted by his 15-year-old son, Galer. However, his wife, Angelique, a foreign lady from warmer climes (Chaubrette) who cooks and gardens all day long, seems to be the brains of the business.

The inn itself is a warm smoky place. The inn is warmed by the forge, which is attached to its rear. The forge is run by Wolfsan's younger brother, Cael, another barrel-chested, bearded man. Cael is a fair blacksmith, providing horseshoes, tacks, and other simple items. He cannot, however, repair armour or weapons of any kind apart from perhaps a hammer head, pick, or something similar. The forge has no formal name, the locals call it the “Forge at the Kelp”, or just “the Forge”.

### *Alcohol at the Kelp*

- Apple Ale – Brewed up in Appleford and is the preferred choice of locals.
- Abbey Cider – Brewed in the abbey at Saltcoet and is shunned by most locals. However, it is a strong and potent brew, preferred by visitors to the Barony.
- Kelp Wine – Made by some locals and is a potent and strong drink that has a brownish green hue and salty smell. Its cheap cost makes it the drink of the local drunks.
- Wildman Whisky – A strong drink imported by ship into the village. It is costly and there is only one half empty bottle behind the bar at any time.

## The Smugglers of Miston

The Smugglers are a collection of fishermen who bribe the local harbour master and tax collector, Alexander. Running illicit goods, mainly some alcohol and superior wool from a neighbouring barony.

Alexander is a thin, wiry man with a pencil moustache who runs everything in and out of Miston. It is suspected, by the innkeeper and his brother, that he was on the take, but they have never really been able to prove anything.

The smugglers themselves are made up the crews of four fishing vessels, led by a man called Calveson, who has contacts in some of the neighbouring baronies. Once every month, the four boats meet a larger vessel out at sea and take off strong alcohol and wool. The wool they obtain is of a much better quality fibre than that which is produced locally. The alcohol is made from potatoes and is of the purest quality. Calveson and his four captains land after nightfall, unloading on the quietest Miston dock. The contraband is hidden amongst the fish and the shellfish that comes in.

Calveson himself is a nondescript man of average height and weight, his face is covered in a white beard, and his hair is greying to white. Two of the boats are captained by his sons, Merthil and Martyn, both in their late teens and of the same height and build as their father, the only difference being their dark-brown hair worn longer.

## Local Geographical Features

The Apple River runs by the village into the Hadran Sea. The village is close to the hamlet of Saltcoet and its Abbey. Mystville lies some two miles or so from Shee Hill in Faerie Wood.

## Culture & Peculiarities

The villagers make a good living off the sea, harvesting several types of edible kelp, mussels, whelks, and crab from the rocks and pools at low tide. They also operate several small fishing boats, and another staple of their diet is mackerel (fresh or smoked). They also farm their own, as well as the baron's, fields.

## Significant Residents

- Wolfsan, the short, portly, and bearded innkeeper.
- Galer, Wolfsan's 15-year-old son
- Angelique, Wolfsan's Chaubrettan wife.
- Cael, Wolfan's brother and the local blacksmith. He is heavily muscled and broad across the shoulders. Like his brother, he also wears a full beard.

## Saltcoet

The hamlet of Saltcoet is the smallest and least-frequently visited of the settlements in the Barony of Torsleigh. This is because this walled hamlet is home to a colony of lepers cared for by the brother monks of Saltcoet Abbey, an order dedicated to charitable works for unfortunate sinners.

The Brothers founded Saltcoet Abbey 120 years ago. The few houses that sprang up around the abbey have attracted lepers for the past forty years, gradually changing the focus of the Brother's worship from one of quiet contemplation of the mysteries of The Saviour, to one of charitable works.

The hamlet comprises one dirt-tracked street, dusty in the summer months and a muddy quagmire in winter. The street is lined with hovels, typical of Albion. The smallholdings, or longhouses, line the road to their front. At the rear is situated the strip fields typical of any medieval hamlet. Here the lepers eke out what existence they can from the land of Torsleigh Barony.

Although, traditionally, a hamlet is classified as a village too small to hold its own church, the abbey is not actually within the boundaries of Saltcoat, standing as it does on a hill overlooking the hovels and road some half mile outside the walls.

Since Baron Kern, on the advice of his spiritual adviser, has forbidden lepers to draw water from streams, lakes, or ponds, the residents draw fresh water from a common well situated in the centre of the settlement. The taint of sin that accompanies leprosy is one that, while the baron is content to allow the settlement of lepers within Saltcoet's walls, he does not wish to see spread to his people (which would have a detrimental effect upon his tax revenue).

The mill is the newest building in Saltcoet and is run by a family called Miller. They have lived here for at least 4 generations. The miller, Arthur, is around 40 years old, and has taken a second wife a couple of years back. His son, Mark, runs the day- to-day business of the mill.

The mill is powered by a fast-running stream at the far western edge of the village. The Millers are often doing building work and upgrades to the mill. Employing local farmers' labourers for the work.

## Significant Residents

### *Abbot Denis de Sclumphett*

A painfully thin man in his early sixties whose tonsure now resembles a horseshoe, rather than a halo. The abbot has a kindly face and has dedicated his life to the care of the accursed lepers and other sinners who make up the residents of Saltcoet. A truly kind and trusting man, he is now beginning to suffer the effects of his advancing years.



### ***Brother Allynn***

By contrast to the abbot, Brother Allynn is fat, bearded, and coarse in nature and humour. He does, however, have something of a dark secret. He is enriching himself by directing the efforts of a small band of brigands, taking 50% of their loot in order to fatten his own coffers. He allows them to hide out in the leper colony, which serves as the perfect sanctuary for the brigands, led by Godric (see below). He has bought their silence over his part in the brigandage by threat of excommunication, claiming that The Saviour spoke to him and directed him to employ the brigands. It is therefore all part of God's Holy Plan. He knows that he will succeed Abbot Denis to leadership of the order upon the older man's death but wishes the old fool would hurry it up a bit.

### ***Al Karim Fharad***

An old healer captured from a holy land leper colony. He was converted to the True Faith and travelled with the monks back to Albion. He wears a full robe to protect himself from what he calls "the wet and damp of this green country." He talks to himself and is considered a mad man by all but the monks, who treat him like a gift from God; his help is invaluable in the abbey in treating the lepers.

### ***Two Fingers***

A leper. Illiterate and tongueless, he is known by his affliction since the disease has damaged the nerves and blood vessels in his other eight fingers so much that he is left only with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand. Brother Allen attributes this as evidence of Two Fingers' continued denial of the True Faith and his sinfully pagan ways.

### ***Scabby Nell***

A prostitute. Condemned as a sinner by the Church Court, she was banished from decent towns and has settled in Saltcoet. It is rumoured that she makes a few paltry coins renting out her "talents" to the afflicted of Saltcoet.

### ***Osric the Old***

Osric is an old man disfigured by leprosy. He is also thought to be a man of power and wealth, a knight, who caught it while on a Crusade. He came back and his brother had usurped his lands, leaving him penniless. He then fell in with the brothers over ten years ago but is somehow surviving. He is known to be full of tales of adventure and can read and write, assisting in transcribing the abbey's holy scriptures.

### ***Arthur Miller***

The miller of Saltcoet, is known for making the finest flour in the valley. He is, however, the only miller for fifteen miles or so. He is also innovative, amending the mill to improve production, adding storage, etc.

### ***Saendra Millers***

Arthur's second wife. Cassandra is 20 years old and is currently 6 months pregnant.

### ***Mark Miller***

The son of the Arthur. A 17-year-old known as the quickest man in the valley. He has competed at all the local fairs. In fact, the Millers are one of the few people allowed to travel

outside the Saltcoet with freedom, as they are the only mill for fifteen miles. Every couple of days, a wagon arrives laden with wheat to make flour.

### ***Baldilocks***

A former sergeant in the baron's guard, the big man is sometimes seen with his horse and cart delivering supplies to the abbey from the capital. He started out doing it as penance for some past transgression but has since chosen to stick with it, despite the tarnished reputation he had garnered from the rest of the Baron's guard.

Once known as Goldilocks because of his shoulder-length golden curls, he deliberately shaved off all the hair on his head and body, believing it would help him stave off leprosy. He did it a few years ago, someone coined the name Baldilocks, and it stuck.

A big man, broad across the shoulders and now running to fat over muscle, he has huge hands and immense strength; he is known for participating in tug-o-war with the guard during summer festivals and is unbeaten in the wrestling pit.

### ***Beadurinc***

Erstwhile leader of an outlaw band, Beadurinc is a loud oaf who is thought of as being rather crude in his methods. He is as broad as he is tall. He runs a little smithy from the back of his longhouse.

### ***Godric***

A wiry thin man with a full, short, red beard. The planner and the strategic brain of the group, who lets his best friend Beadurinc take all the credit and maybe some of the blame.

### ***Woden***

The son of Godric, at 17 years old is the youngest raider. But is known for being brave and daring and a highly accomplished archer.

The outlaw gang tend to use bows and spears and carry round wooden shields

## **Stivinstoune**

Consisting of a mere twelve hovels, Stivinstoune is small even by the standards of the barony. This hamlet's residents are half-jokingly referred to by the rest of the barony as "nowhere men" due to the hamlet's lack of proximity to the town of Appleford, the main road, or anything of real significance.

### **Significant Neighbouring Settlements**

The village of Blaedwenn lies approximately two miles to the southeast. Stivinstoune is around twelve or thirteen miles from Appleford as the crow flies, making journeys to the markets a major endeavour. The distance by road is approximately sixteen or seventeen miles.

## The Standing Stones of Stivinstoune

The name Stivinstoune comes from the ancient stones that stand half a mile to the north of the village. The Stones of Stivin are carved from rock that is not found in the area – the nearest quarries known to be a source of such stone are almost 100 miles away in Cornumbria. No-one is sure who created or built the stones, but people have been coming to them at Solstice and mid-winter for generations.

Ancient Selentine records cite epic verse from the area that hints somewhat at their extreme antiquity and their purpose in pagan religious rites. “Priscus annum... centum ante diluculo recordatio, ibi vixi victum extraneus gens populi... druidii”

The stones are rumoured to have some strange properties – sick people are “cured” after visiting the stones. Some of the older people in Silvinstone have been accused of practicing “witchcraft”.

*“There’s nought queerer than Stivin,”* as they say in Appleford.

The hamlet itself is situated around the freshwater spring that serves the community with drinking water. The twelve-or-so families that live here eke out a meagre living in farming the poor land that surrounds the community<sup>29</sup>. Other than livestock, such as goats and sheep and fowl, meagre crops of vegetables are all that survive in such poor-quality land.

## Culture & Peculiarities

The residents of Stivinstoune are mistrustful of strangers, having been the victim of rumour once too often. In the last two years, four of their number have been accused, tried, and convicted of practising witchcraft.

The stones themselves feature in local mythology. One tale goes that, on misty nights in midwinter, when no one is abroad, a giant race of dwarves gathers to dance an unholy reel around the tryptychs. Anyone seeing this ceremony, legend has it, will be spirited away and never seen again by the eyes of mortal men.

## Significant Residents

### *Magnus*

A person of note in the hamlet. He is an elderly man who acts as community leader. Magnus is noted solely for having once been the squire of a knight of some influence. The knight died in the Holy Land on the Crusade. His squire, Magnus, eventually returning penniless after some ten years overseas. Magnus now farms the largest stead here; his goats produce the only item of note, Stoune Cheese, from their milk.

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<sup>29</sup> Unusually for Torsleigh, the land about Stivinstoune is much less fertile than that elsewhere.

### ***Bleidd the Bastard***

Baron Kern's eldest son, Aelfred, is the father of this illegitimate boy. At five years old, the boy lives with his mother in one of the hovels. She had a dalliance with the son of the baron one Heorfest night. The boy does not know who his true father is but strongly resembles the Torsleighs in both features and demeanour. Since Aelfred is off adventuring at the moment, Baron Kern, who is aware of the existence of his illegitimate grandson, has visited in disguise on occasion and seems to be somewhat fond of the boy.

### ***Soapy Rhonda***

This widow is a washerwoman and seamstress. Her hands are bright red from the hot water and scrubbing and she has the beginnings of a stoop and is developing poor eyesight – the result of squinting at needle and thread over a tallow flame. She repairs and cleans garments for the single men of the hamlet in exchange for a few meagre vegetables or a coin or two. Her chief purpose, though, is the spreading of gossip and news throughout the hamlet and its surrounds.

### ***Drefan***

A youth of fourteen summers. He fancies himself the fastest man in the barony and is determined to prove it by beating Mark the Miller's son (of Saltcoet) in the annual footrace. He is a young man whose deeds may, in fact, have gone far beyond mere mischief, since he is the chief source of the rumours of witchcraft in the hamlet. It seems the true meaning of his name – trouble – may have been more prophetic than his father perhaps thought.

### ***Rolfe***

He is the strongest man in Stivinstoune. Mean-tempered and surly, the man is naught but a bully who has suffered several fines in the Manor Court for public drunkenness among other charges. He is cruel at the slightest excuse and delights in competing at Appleford's annual wrestling match where he has beaten all challengers bloody for the last three years.

### ***Rawlins***

This young man, at nineteen, is a chip off the old block. He is the middle son of Rolfe, with a temper and strength that may one day rival even his father's. He regularly beats his peers and, on more than one occasion, has come close to being clapped in irons for being surly and disrespectful to the baron's tax collector, Salador Craine. Only the other's superior wit has so far kept confrontations between the two from becoming physical. Rawlins' greatest ambition is to one day beat his father to a pulp in repayment for the numerous cruel beatings he has suffered at the man's hands.

# Local Geographical Features



Special thanks, credit, and a big chunk of kudos to Ydars (Stephen Dove) for mapping out Torsleigh Barony from only a (very) rough sketch.

### ***Faerie Wood***

Situated within the Barony of Tralaek, Faerie Wood, as the locals know it, is all that remains in the barony of a once massive ancient forest that may have covered the majority of Albion. It is a place that seems to play on the superstitions of the simple peasantry of the barony. Many tales are told around a roaring fire on winter's nights, of the Faerie Folk that still inhabit the wood, spiriting off children from their beds in the night, or from the woods when they are foolish enough to stray too far.

In the centre of the wood rises Shee Hill (a.k.a. the Sidhe Tor or Elfin King's Hump), which is reputed to be a faerie mound, where the faerie court may stop to spend a season or even a night.

### ***Shee Hill***

Elfin King's Hump (a.k.a. Shee Hill or Sidhe Tor) is notorious among the superstitious peasantry of Tralaek Barony for being an occasional site for the revels of the Faerie Court. Lying deep within Faerie Wood, the Tor rises above the tallest trees. It does, in fact, serve at various times of the year as a meeting place in the mortal realm for members of the faerie races.

The hill contains several concealed, although treacherous, entrances into the Fae Lands, where unwary travellers can find much to vex their return to the mortal realm of Legend. Not least of these is the apparent disparity between the passage of time within the mortal world and the realm of the Fae. Tales abound in legends and myths, of the unwary, or the bold (some might say foolish) traveller who had spent one day asleep in the faerie lands, only to return to mortal realms and discover that one, ten, or even one hundred years had passed while they had slumbered for mere hours.

## Culture & Peculiarities

A number of superstitions and beliefs are held as gospel throughout the barony. Whether they are mere old wives' tales, or essential lessons learned through bitter experience is a matter of some debate.

The Fae are both feared and respected by the people of Torsleigh because of the deeply rooted belief that these malevolent spirits are ever-present, though few folk can truly claim to have ever seen one. This is illustrated by many local place names (Faerie Wood, Elven King's Hump) that hark back to a hundred local stories and legends. The truth of many of these superstitions is doubtful. Nevertheless, many a goodwife of the barony will be observed adhering to a series of rituals designed to appease or confound the faerie folk.

A widely held belief holds that faeries like nothing better than to spirit away new-born children, often replacing said infants with a changeling before the poor child can be protected

from fae influence by baptism. A number of hedge-charms and folk-magics are employed to ward off these fae and protect the unbaptised and these include:

- Placing a wreath of oak and ivy on the door serves to keep faeries from the house.
- Iron (or even iron filings) or salt placed across the doorstep will serve the same purpose.
- Placing the father's shirt across the crib will prevent the child's abduction by faerie folk.

Elves, pixies, and others of the faerie are acknowledged masters of concealment. However, the good folk of the barony believe that there are many means to circumvent this ability:

- Rubbing marigold water around the eyes will give mortals the ability to spot faerie folk (helpful if in pursuit of the lost child).
- Sitting in a forest grove of ash, oak, and hawthorn in the light of a full moon will cause the wee folk to appear.

The peasants of Torsleigh also have customs relating to the land, many of which originated in pagan times, before the adoption of the True Faith:

- Bonfires are built in village greens or squares on Midsummer's Eve. A custom known as "setting the watch"; the fires are thought to drive off and keep evil spirits from the settlement. Many farmers also light a fire on their land, for the same reason. People bearing torches move from bonfire to bonfire. Many peasants also believe that jumping over a bonfire will guarantee good fortune until the next midsummer's celebration.

## Common Slang Terms

"Lesser Kin" – pronounced "Lessakin", used to refer to folks from Lesser Dunple, considered by those "in the know" to be the stuck up and lofty cousins of the rest of the barony.

"Fog Heads" – pronounced "Fogeads", a derogatory term to describe a person hailing from Miston.

"Mud Foot" (sing.) or "Mud Feet" (plur.) – Used when referring to someone from Haembridge, at the edge of the swamp.

"Nowhere Man" – Term to describe a person from Stivinstoune (because it is in the middle of nowhere [at least as the inhabitants of Torsleigh reckon it]).

"Feytouched" – When referring to anyone from Erevine, Lesser Dunple, or Upper Yarro. A reference to those settlements' location within the boundaries of Faerie Wood. Anyone from these settlements is generally considered to be a little bit strange due solely to the influence of the wood.

# Significant Residents

- Baron Kern Torsleigh
- Lady Aerika Torsleigh
- Aelfred Torsleigh, the Baron's eldest son and heir.
- Harald Torsleigh, Baron Kern's second son; an adventurer and delver of underworlds, after the way his father took in his youth.
- Johanna Torsleigh, Kern's daughter.
- Kloena Di-blaid. An old friend, trusted counsellor, and former adventuring companion.
- Salador Craine. The baron's head of tax collectors. Formerly an adventuring companion of Sir Kern and Kloena.
- Hoester Mynt. Castle Torsleigh's ageing Master at Arms.
- Murdo Horesfaice. The Master of Horses for the barony.
- Lliam Iffans. Castle Torsleigh's steward.
- Ruaridh Allynton. Master of Hounds
- Jon A'Hawkes. Keeper of the estate's birds of prey, after his father before him and his father before him.
- Young Walter Mylltyr. Master of Game.
- Old Lyssa. The household's head cook.
- Holto. A stableboy.
- Fergel Sheepdriver. Another former adventurer, now retired to the barony. He farms a small freeholding purchased from the baron for a modest sum.
- Ferro Blackhelm. A one-time companion of the baron. He is the chief weaponsmith of Torsleigh Castle and is, unusually for these lands, a dwarf.

## Additional Note

Wimlach added in the notes:

*I like the detail of the Barony, but am put off by the fantasy names – while I understand there may be some personal attachment to the various characters and places from your own game, would you be willing to consider anglicising or gaelicising some of the names for the wiki, so it fits in with the established 'English' or 'Gaelic' feel of Albion? For example, Tralek is a Hungarian name, and 'Tralaek' contains syllables that have no meaning in English (indeed, the 'ae' vowel pair is not common in English spelling at all). I have some web links for examples of medieval names if they would help.*

*As a suggestion, Tralek/Tralaek could be substituted with 'Torsleix', (pronounced Tors-Leesh) which means 'hollow in the hill', which ties in nicely with possible legends of 'Sidhe Hill'.*



# Lands of Legend Supplemental

There are a couple of wiki articles that did not provide information on the countries to which they were relevant within either the wiki information taxonomy or the text of the article themselves. So they are presented in this supplemental section for people to place within their own Lands of Legend as they feel suits their campaign

## Aranstan

*(Mark Schibeci)*

Aranstan is a settlement of about 80 people on the northwest edge of the Barony of Kelmanion. The population of this settlement numbers about eighty, of which fifty live in farms within a 10-mile radius of the village centre. The rest run the shops and businesses in the village, which consists of about a dozen buildings located on the main street. The lands surrounding the village are fertile, and as a result, local farmers produce surplus crops of wheat, barley, and corn that they sell to Relta. Most farmers also produce fruit trees or livestock to supplement their diets and pockets. The surplus is sold by Relta to Castle Kelmanion and other villages for a considerable profit. Farmers are therefore able to afford small luxuries and live in relative comfort thanks to Relta. The village's prosperity is not without a price. The lands that provide the farmers with wealth is very close to the Aluan Forest and the evil creatures within that frequently raid farms and even the village itself. The result is destroyed crops, loss of life, and prayers thanking Helka for protection of family and farm. Such conditions have produced a determined, hardy, and deeply faithful people. Most are suspicious of strangers and very superstitious, depending on many wards and symbols of protection.

## Sights of Significance

Aranstan proper is a muddy street with ten stone buildings housing shops and their keepers. They are made from whitestone from the north and have timber roofs.

The first building the travellers will see as they enter Aranstan is the Green Eaves Inn. It is a popular establishment with villagers on the way home from the shrine and to avoid spending the night alone. Each night is a boisterous, noisy affair, and one can expect to meet most of the populace. The Green Eaves Inn is run by a dour, grey-haired man called Arick al Settar, who runs his business in a brisk, ordered fashion. He is a retired knight of Castle Kelmanion

sent here by the baron to observe the area and make regular reports. He lives here with a young stable boy, Beddin, and two barmaids, Selille and Feilika al Tyrem.

Next door to the inn is the brewery where the half-dwarf Chettin al Stant (he has adopted the human naming traditions) lives with his four children, three daughters and one son. Chettin brews beers and distils a variety of spirits that he sells to Arick and Relta. He is a tall (for a dwarf) man with long dark hair and handsome features. The friendly dwarf is also ready for a drink with friends and constantly telling others of his wonderful children (he never tires of it).

The unmarried Myrel tak Erindok lives next to Chettin working with leather goods as well as working as a fletcher. She is a stubborn young woman who left her house to avoid marrying her promised one in order to avoid having to wait on him for the rest of his life.

A large and extravagant building is located next to Myrel where the rich and seedy merchant Relta tak Amache lives. He buys the villagers' produce that he sells and runs a small store of luxury items. Relta is also the elected person responsible for resolving disputes. The merchant is thin, beanpole of a man eager to accumulate wealth. He likes to know what is going on in the village and he usually does. The villagers tolerate him for the wealth he has brought and the well-paid jobs he offers.

Finally, on the north side of the main street is the tailor Tessa al K'thik. She lives with her farmer husband and comes here each morning to tailor and prepare goods for the villagers. Tessa loves company whilst she works on clothes and other tailored items.

Ironically, opposite the inn is the Shrine of Helka, run by the Abbot Erristastek and his two novices. This building is large and well-funded by donations from the villagers as well as funds from the Temple of Helka at the Castle Kelmanion. As a result, it is a beautiful building that is visited regularly by farmers wishing to affirm their faith to Helka and pray for a good harvest. Erristastek runs communal prayers each month as well as other days of seasonal importance (for example the solstices and the first day of Autumn).

Next to the shrine is an empty building that once belonged Yarris the Blind until she moved to the outer fringes of the village. The village smith, a loud-mouthed woman called Irek al Thorntai, works and lives next door and is considering expanding into this abandoned building. She is responsible for smithing agricultural implements as well as the metal parts required by Chettin and others. However, Irek is quite willing to smith armour and metals for a considerable sum (add 75% to prices).

Finally, the woodworker Jelki al Orloi manufactures goods made from the cut timber that some of the farmers who dare go near the forest sell to him. As a result, wooden items are in high demand and attract a considerable sum.

On the village outskirts live the village's two most unusual characters, Yarris the Blind and Mad Okka. Yarris is a retired mage who refuses to discuss her loss of sight and spends her time engaged in the study of herbalism. She is very knowledgeable about history and forest lore. Mad Okka is rumoured to have been a great fighter who surrendered his sanity in order

to defeat a powerful lich lord. He tends to ramble across the plains muttering gibberish and saying dark prophecies.

*Note: This material was first published on the Wanderer's Rest. The precise location of Aranstan and the Barony of Kelmanion within Legend is unknown.*

## The Rock of the Three

(Damian May)

An ancient outpost of the beings known as kappa, this hollowed-out tower of sea-rock is surrounded by reefs of tearing stone and deep cold grottoes. Decades ago, an insane servant of Prince Susserien stole ancient artifacts dedicated to The Reviled Three and fled his master's household; guided by whispering voices in his head the man stole a boat and rowed out into the open ocean.

Many years later, others who had stumbled upon artefacts of The Three had found their way to the lonely island. At first, they were unaware of the beings that roamed beneath the waves, but eventually there came a time when the Kappa grew aware of the humans roaming above.

The kappa attacked in darkness; there were only a handful of humans and though there were traces of magical power above they would stand against the sea lords. But the inhuman minds of the Kappa had not reckoned on one thing; the insane lengths to which followers of equally insane gods would go to fulfil their masters' plans. As the coralline forms of the kappa ranks stalked out of the oceans, three of the cult members: Hespateus Ruinne, Fatima Keruq, and Ba'al Maquim called upon their lords and lady and were consumed by the sacred objects they held. The embodied gods slaughtered the kappa and enslaved the cultists to their will completely. Over the decades, they consolidated their power and, through agents and other means, drew more followers to them.

Azidahaka used the looted spoils of the kappa's treasury to purchase mercenary companies and, when they were brought before his servants, he destroyed their minds and made them his own. Yazir sent down roots from his body and broke them off; from these first cuttings were grown orchards of strange grey trees and their fruits were the branch-spawn (ape-like things that knew no will of their own). His mind roamed wide and, wherever he found sorcerers who had lost their way, he whispered into their dreams of hidden treasures across the seas... and they came, and they found treasures, but they lost so much more.

Nasu was always a simple creature – she simply wanted to make sure her myriad children would grow strong and wax upon the flesh. She birthed diseases that killed and diseases that corrupted, she birthed children of her own rotting flesh, and brought life into rotten flesh. She had her few remaining cultists hunt whales and draw the carcasses into the great sea-cavern where she dragged her rotting bulk across them and laid within them the eggs of her mind and so were hatched the doom-flies.

The undead that Nasu created were set about the island's harbour as a minefield, the Yazir formed a great cloud of mist and fog to capture ships like flies in a web, and the cultists sent agents into the great southern cities.

One month, after a great many merchant vessels had been captured and their crews converted or destroyed, a great ship was caught in the mist web. A ship of soldiers and men and finery the likes of which the gods had not witnessed for many an age. The Yazir touched the leader's mind and found him ripe, and he withdrew his form from Ba'al Maquim and sent his followers down to treat with this mighty vessel.

He cloaked the cultists in illusions of great sanctity and using images from the man's own mind fashioned a tableau of utter holiness. To the crusader lord, he was meeting with truly blessed individuals, great saints who had removed themselves to this place to consider the teachings of the Lord and he was amazed when they offered to gift him with a holy relic: 'The Thorned Crown' that had lain upon the brow of the Saviour himself.

The ship left the island and resumed its course, but the seeds were sewn – some of Nasu's priestesses had lain with crew members and the rot within their souls would soon consume their flesh and raise their dead bodies to ravage their fellows and raise yet more hungry dead. The Yazir spoke to the crusader lord nightly in his dreams, but he had not foreseen that the Coradian would place the crown among other holy objects that protected him from its foulness... and so, unable to possess him, the Yazir simply drove him mad.

## Layout

Surrounded by numerous rock and dead coral reefs, the seamount is surrounded by a great area of becalmed mist-covered ocean. Wedged into every crevice of the reef are the hungry dead whether they were human, kappa, or lesser beings; the dead are particularly thick in the harbour. On the other side of the island is the narrow inlet to the sea-cave lair of Nasu, where great mounds of rotting whale carcasses litter the beach and rocks.

The island is honeycombed with hundreds of tunnels eaten away by the acidic doom-flies, and they will swarm en masse to attack their mistress's enemies. From the stone wharves of the harbour, a wide stairway and ramp leads up to a massive set of double doors. Through these doors lies an enormous vaulted and pillared chamber that was once used by the kappa for land warfare training. Beyond it lies a long tunnel, lined with barracks and storerooms, that ends at a crossroads in the exact centre of the island:

- To the right are the chambers of the Yazir, which were once the training places of kappa sorcerers, where illusion is reality and strange summonings bring horrific death. The first chamber is a hallway of mirrors that show warped scenes from the lives of those who pass them. The chamber leads into the orchards of the branch-spawn but to the side is what appears to non-worshippers to be a simple shrine to the Yazir. Instead, a razor lined pit lies here and passing it requires negotiating a narrow path; once on this path, an ancient enchantment is laid upon an individual and they pass through solid stone which the Yazir's illusions paint as a dark passageway. On the far side of this rock wall is a chasm and door with illusory guardians before a rope bridge

and bronze doorway. Beyond this doorway are the mist-cloaked chambers of the Yazir and its servants: Ba'al Maquim and his apprentices.

- The left-hand tunnel leads down to the sea cavern where Nasu squats and births her children; where her diseased followers both alive and dead are raped by doom-flies and birth abominations in their lady's likeness; where huge mounds of rotting flesh cloud the air with pestilence and all who enter wish they had no eyes with which to see.
- The central tunnel leads down to the forges and the training grounds where cultists war and practice before the glaring eyes and roiling coils of their lord Azidahaka.