



The
DUNGEON Master's Guide to
CYNIDICEA

The Dungeon Master's Guide to Cynidicea

A rules supplement for use in any Mystara™ campaign



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Introduction

Welcome, reader, to an ambitious project. When the adventure module B4, entitled *The Lost City*, was published by TSR in 1982, a new and fascinating world was introduced. Players and DMs were presented with a unique underground city named Cynidicea, which was populated by humans who had adapted to their environment in ways unknown to their surface cousins. The adventure also provided a history that was quite detailed for its time, which provided the DM with a sufficient background to understand the major motives of the various characters, as well as presenting a relatively complete overview of the city.

The module also provided political intrigue, through the machinations of the followers of Gorm, Usamigaras, and Madarua, as well as the villainy of the followers of the evil being known as Zargon. This conflict between good and evil in its simplest form allowed the players to make moral decisions as to who was "right" or "wrong", and possibly even question their own beliefs. Finally, the adventure provided an overview of the entire Cynidicean cavern after the initial adventure was over, as well as further scenarios for adventures, so as to provide DMs and players with opportunities for continued play in this fascinating environment.

This book shall pick up where *The Lost City* left off. Some of the ideas presented in the original module have been further

developed into campaign ideas, and some of the regions briefly described - such as the Lower Catacombs, the Eye of Zargon, and the Isle of Death - are given more attention. The factions presented in the original module are also fleshed out considerably, providing a comprehensive overview of their motives, origins, and strategies. Important NPCs from each group are also presented, so as to provide players with contacts, and potential enemies. Attention is also paid to Zargon, along with speculations as to his origins; other important villains are also introduced, to add greater depth to adventures and campaigns based in Cynidicea.

We have also striven to reveal the history of the Cynidiceans themselves. Who are they, and where do they come from? These questions we have tried to answer in this book, based on information from the adventure itself, *GAZ 2: The Emirates of Ylaruam*, and our own imaginations. Finally, we have provided information about the drug-induced decadence that afflicts the Cynidiceans, providing more concrete information as to the effects of drugs, as well as basic rules for drug use and withdrawal, which could also be used on a general basis in any campaign.

Prepare yourself, then, for an interesting journey, as we delve into the mysteries of Cynidicea, and bring it closer to the light!

Who Are the Cynidiceans?

The human inhabitants of the lost city of Cynidicea are unlike their surface-dwelling cousins in many ways. They are the products both of their adaptation to their new subterranean environment, and of the psychological experience of having their culture collapse and then be rebuilt in new and disturbing ways.

If one were to look back through the ages to see what the Cynidiceans' forebears were like, one would be quite surprised. Unlikely as it may seem, the Cynidiceans are in fact closely related, along ethnocultural lines, to the Milenians and the Traldar, all of whom came from the same original stock of fair-skinned Neathar folk, who lived along the southeastern coast of Brun, where coastal Ylaruam lies today.

Although there is a great deal of disagreement among scholars as to what this proto-culture was called, it is clear that, by the time it had advanced to the early Bronze Age, this group had largely fragmented into many sub-groups, each identifying itself with the locale in which it lived, or its town or city. Despite these superficial differences, there was a coherence of sorts among these people, such that, in the face of adversity, they could unite against an outsider who might threaten their way of life.

Over the course of time, several elements of this culture broke off and developed elsewhere. The people later known as the Traldar were conquered by the nearby Nithians, and were moved to what is now Karamaikos. From this group the Milenians later developed, who in turn migrated south to the contin-

ent of Davania, where they founded a mighty empire. Another element of this early folk migrated east to the Isle of Dawn. There, these people founded the cities of Trikelios and Ektos (now known as Ekto), which were in turn conquered by the Nithians at a later time.

It is also known that others migrated west, into what is now Darokin. There, the cities of Salonikos (Selenica), Akorros, and Athenos were founded, as well as the ancient town of Dolos. Finally, a large portion of these early folk moved south, to what is now Thyatis, after the conquest and displacement of the Traldar. It is around this time, not long after the forced movement of the Traldar, that those of this folk who remained in southeastern Brun began to call themselves the Doulakki. The Cynidiceans belong to this group of people, and are likely the only modern remnant of it.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Thyatica*, the term "Doulakki" is defined as:

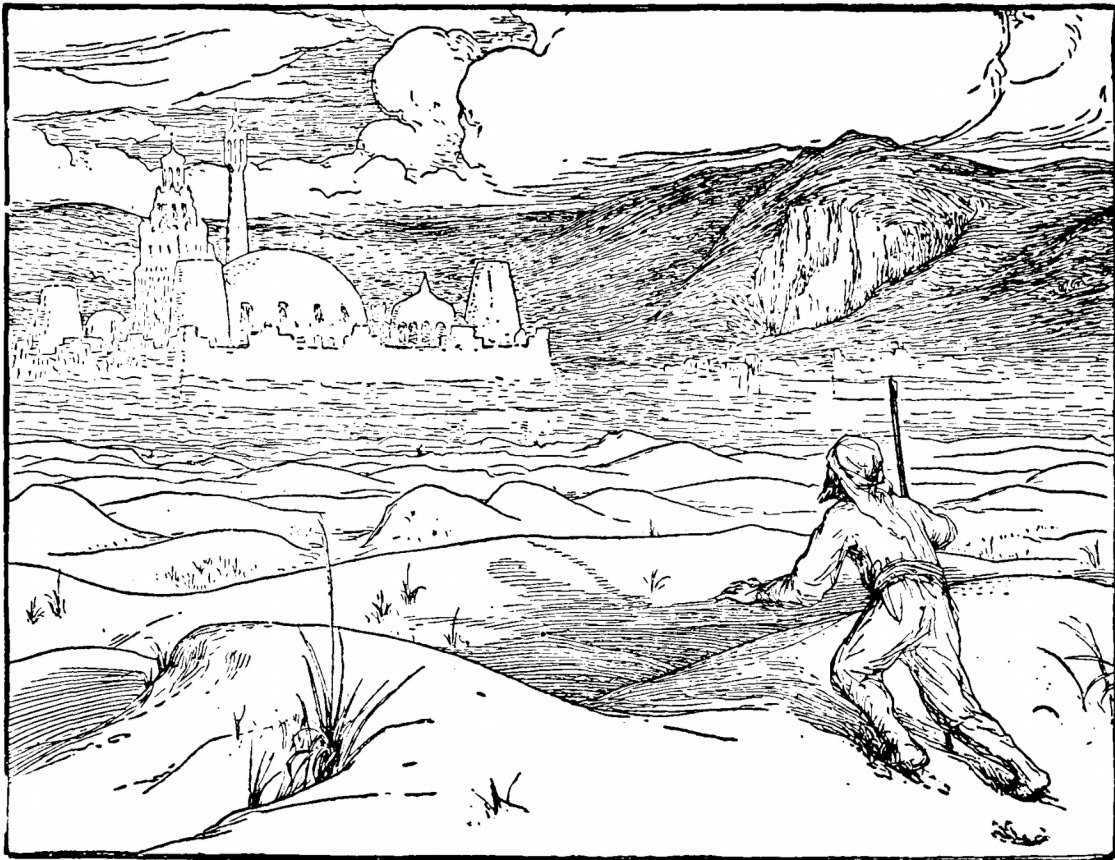
"Any one of a number of people living in various city-states in the Known World around the time of and prior to the Age of Halav. These people shared common bonds of race, culture, and sometimes trade; but often the relationship stops there."

The Doulakki were in many ways like the Traldar - to a modern observer they would be almost indistinguishable, save for differences in language. Like the Traldar, the Doulakki were a people who venerated heroes and heroines, and who respected greatly those who went on epic voyages and performed great

deeds. The main differences, however, between these two people was that, unlike the Bronze Age Traldar, some city-states in Doulakki lands had achieved Iron Age technology, such as Cynidicea. Furthermore, the Doulakki were more accomplished as sailors, and their triremes plied the seas to many far-off lands, such as the Isle of Dawn.

As with many cultures, though, the Doulakki declined. The northward-migrating Thyatians, Kerendans, and Hattians conquered and absorbed a large portion of their lands, and those living in what is now Darokin collapsed due

to humanoid raids and internal strife. Other settlements, such as those in modern Ylaruam and on the Isle of Dawn, were conquered by outside powers, and in many cases the people were assimilated. Many scholars believe that Cynidicea, at the time of its collapse, was among the last independent Doulakki city-states in southeastern Brun. Today, next to nothing is left of the old Doulakki culture, save for half-remembered tales and cultural traits in western Darokin, northwestern Thyatis, and southern Ylaruam, and possibly on the Isle of Dawn, too.



A Timeline of Cynidicea

BC 5500: Akhor, sole survivor of a Carnifex colony on Brun, and a sorcerer of renown, makes his way to the swampy region that will become Ylaruam, in the southeastern corner of that continent. He befriends local primitive lizard men, who revere him as a god.

BC 5200: By this time Akhor has brought all lizard men in the region under his control, and he has educated the most intelligent ones in the ways of Carnifex magic. His Empire of Mogreth covers the whole valley, and subjugates local Neathar and Oltec tribes. These tribes are put to work in the mines and in the fields, supplying the material wealth of the empire, while the lizard man over-class rests in relative luxury. Akhor, due to his long lifespan and great powers, is named Akhor-K'ha (Akhor the Mighty) by his subjects.

BC 5100: A peace treaty is concluded with local dragons, in which Mogreth will remain unmolested so long as the dragons are not bothered. There have as yet been no conflicts, but Akhor wishes to avoid them at all cost. Mogreth at this time has no dealings with any cultures beyond the mountain ranges that constitute its borders, and none who enter the empire from outside ever leave.

BC 5000: Akhor and his disciples implore upon the Outer Beings to present a sign that They are pleased with local developments. Zargon is sent as the Herald of the Outer Beings, and he obeys Akhor, and advises him in matters of faith.

BC 4500: Akhor attains immortality in the Sphere of Entropy, unknowingly guided by Thanatos. Even upon attaining immortality, Akhor still believes that the Outer Beings are sponsoring him. A council of high priests and sorcerers takes over, as Akhor ventures to the Outer Planes in search of a way to free the Outer Beings.

BC 4000: A civil war in the Empire ensues. Mogreth society has become increasingly stratified, as human slaves increasingly resent their lot, and the lizard man sorcerers resent the power of the priests. The slaves revolt, and many cities are destroyed. The sorcerers and priests begin fighting each other.

BC 3900: The sorcerers, believing that Zargon is the source of the priests' power, devise a means, using now-lost Carnifex magics, to seal him away in a pocket dimension. They attack the main temple, slay the priests, and seal away Zargon. Imbuing five electrum disks, engraved with sigils, with the powers of the spell, they then hide these "seals" throughout Mogreth, in the hopes that no one will find them, and discover the means to free Zargon. Unfortunately, the Carnifex spell is too powerful for a mere magical item to contain; the seals will last only a few thousand years.

BC 3800: The empire of Mogreth is destroyed by a combined assault of Oltecs, Thonian colonists, and dwarves. It had long been an obstacle to free travel in the area, and they feared its powers. This is not before some of Mogreth's greatest sorcerers use their powers to attain lichdom, or build great sanctuaries

underground. Many lizard men go into hiding along with their leaders, while others flee south, towards what is now Ilerendi and Minrothad.

BC 3300: Several settlements are founded along the coast of what was once Mogreth by Thonian colonists. The local lizard men who remain are enslaved.

BC 3000: The Great Rain of Fire. Several Blackmoor devices explode in Skothar, shifting Mystara on its axis. Many Thonian colonies along the coast are devastated, some sinking into the sea, while others are destroyed during a massive uprising of lizard man slaves. The climate in the region also changes. Where once the great valley was rather damp, but cool, it is now becoming hotter and drier. Those lizard men still remaining abandon their homeland, going south towards the coast or east towards the newly formed Isle of Dawn.

BC 2200: Neathar tribes from the modern Northern Reaches/Ethengar region, driven southeastwards by conflicts, settle along the fertile coastal regions of what is now Ylaruam. There, they lead a pastoral existence, and become steadily more fragmented as they spread further up and down the coast. Local identities soon predominate, but the people still hold a looser loyalty to their people as a whole.

BC 1800: By this time several Neathar settlements have developed early Bronze Age technology. Some rudimentary city-states war amongst themselves, while others set out across the Western Sea of Dawn to explore their world.

BC 1700: Goblinoids move into the region, and Zargon appears to them in dreams. Frightened, they appease him, and he is pleased.

BC 1530: The Nithians invade and conquer Neathar tribes living along the sea coasts of their realm. Some manage to escape the invasion, and these flee southwards, some moving into what is now Nicostenia and Dythestenia, and others moving even further south into what is now Thyatis.

BC 1500: The Neathar tribes conquered by the Nithians, who call themselves the Traldar, are forcibly resettled in what is now Karameikos. They had proven themselves difficult to govern, and the empire does not have the resources to bring them fully to heel at this time. It is hoped that they can tame the wilderness, allowing the Nithians to move in later to assert control.

This period also marks the beginning of the Nithian Empire.

BC 1400: The Traldar, due to circumstance, are devastated by poor climate, disease, and animal attacks. The resulting population losses mean that they cannot maintain their current technological level, and they regress to an agrarian state.

BC 1200: Those tribes who had managed to flee from the Nithians begin to develop a common identity, although politically they are divided into numerous city-states. They call themselves the Doulakki.

BC 1050: Nithian wizards create gnolls, combining gnomes and trolls. They hoped to create a loyal servitor race; what they actually created was an intelligent, brutal race of humanoids. The gnolls destroy the wizards, and flee into the wilderness.

BC 1000: The Traldar are nearly destroyed during a gnollish invasion. Some survivors are whisked to the Hollow

World, while the remainder descend into a Dark Age.

The Nithian Empire is at its peak by this time.

BC 900: A group of Doulakki set sail across what is now called the Western Sea of Dawn, and they settle on the eastern shores of the Isle of Dawn. The city-states of Trikelios and Ektos are founded.

BC 800: A group of Doulakki tribes migrate from their homeland in what is now upper Dythestia, due to the steadily worsening climate and Nithian encroachment. In the hilly lowlands near where Parsa stands today, they come across a fertile region of grasslands and swamps, populated by goblinoids. They attack these creatures fiercely, killing most of them and driving away the remainder. They also come across a tall idol of a tentacled being, which they destroy.

Unknown to them, one of the five electrum seals was hidden in the statue, and it is destroyed as well.

BC 797: The city-state of Cynidicea is founded by the victorious Doulakki tribes.

BC 794: In far-off Skothar, in the tiny coastal kingdom of Berushta, an aged Tanagoro king finally receives a son by one of his wives. This child is named "Gorm" - meaning "he who is strong as the wind".

BC 770: The Tanagoro kingdom of Berushta erupts into civil war after four of Gorm's half-brothers contest his succession to the throne. Gorm is urged to leave the kingdom by the nation's sages, who tell him that he is destined for great deeds in the utter west. Shortly after Gorm leaves, the squabbling remnants

of Berushta are destroyed by rampaging humanoids.

BC 768: The ruling council of Cynidicea, hard-pressed to come to an agreement as to how to fight off the armies of neighbouring city-states and the Nithians, is surprised by the arrival of a powerful-looking, dark-skinned man. Calling himself Gorm, the man offers his services as a warleader. The Council accepts.

BC 766: A small horde of lizard men, who had been roaming the mountains for centuries, attacks Cynidicea, hoping to drive out the humans and reclaim this land for themselves. They are defeated by the Cynidiceans, thanks to the decisive leadership of Gorm, who is made the first king of Cynidicea.

BC 750: The declining Nithian Empire expands into the region occupied by Cynidicea. After a series of tense meetings, the Pharaoh and King Gorm agree to conclude a treaty of friendship. The Pharaoh is having enough problems holding his empire together as it is; the conquest of Cynidicea, tiny as it may be, could drain too many soldiers away from more important battles.

BC 716: After an incredibly long and successful reign, Gorm dies. In reality, he has become an Immortal, and soon makes himself known as Gorm to a select group of clerics. Thrasymachus, Gorm's son, assumes the throne.

BC 700: The Nithian Pharaoh is corrupted by Thanatos, and he turns his empire towards the worship of Entropy.

BC 694: Nithia attempts to invade Cynidicea, but the heroism of its defenders holds off the attack, and manages to drive the invaders away, but not before Thrasymachus is killed in battle. Cynidicea is in a state of chaos.

BC 691: A Nithian warrior-woman, named Ashtat, leaves her declining homeland. She comes upon Cynidicea, and sees it in turmoil. Taking the city-state under her protection, she soon makes herself known as a capable warrior and a great leader.

BC 682: Led by Ashtat, the Cynidiceans defeat a small goblinoid horde just north of their city. In honour of her leadership and skill, the Cynidiceans crown her Queen of Cynidicea.

BC 669: Ashtat abdicates in favour of her son, Oroth, deciding to embark on a quest for Immortality.

BC 667: Oroth is assassinated by a faction loyal to the old line of Cynidicean rulers. A warlike brute named Heracles, who is an indirect descendant of Gorm, is made king.

BC 652: Heracles is assassinated by a distant cousin, Xenopheus, a wizard who had been studying the lore of the Nithian mages, as well as those of now-forgotten Mogreth.

BC 621: Trikelios and Ektos and conquered by the Nithians, who had already established themselves on the Isle of Dawn, and wished to consolidate their hold on the territory.

BC 600: The Thyatian, Kerendan, and Hattian tribes migrate north from Davania and settle in what is now Thyatis. They begin a century of intermittent war with the Doulakki city-states already there.

BC 500: The Nithian Empire collapses. The Immortals divert the river Nithia, promote unrest, alter the climate, and destroy all memory of the empire.

Doulakki refugees from modern Thyatis arrive in Cynidicea, they share news of

the invasion by the Thyatian peoples. Many of these refugees remain in the city-state, while others continue west into what is now Darokin, as well as Karameikos.

BC 498: King Xenopheus, after ruling for an unprecedented 154 years, mysteriously disappears after mentioning his desire to experiment on Mogrethian summoning spells. His workroom is in a shambles, and there is no trace of his body. Only the word "Zargon" is scrawled on the wall. Oromines, a distant descendant, assumes the throne.

BC 485: Oromines "the Mad" is removed from the throne in a coup. His rule was marked by contradictory laws, heavy penalties for minor crimes, and the naming of inanimate objects into positions of power (including a boot as strategic advisor). He is replaced by Armantia, a distant cousin.

BC 460: A new Immortal enters the Cynidicean pantheon, calling herself Madarua. This is in fact Ashtat, who has succeeded in her quest for Immortality, and has decided to return to Cynidicea to develop a following.

BC 445: Queen Armantia dies. Her reign is remembered as a peaceful one, and she becomes known as "Armantia the Benevolent". Her son, Menades, assumes the throne.

BC 419: King Menades dies of old age, his rule uneventful. He is succeeded by his son, Psocretus, a rather hairy man who is surrounded by an unpleasant smell.

BC 410: Cynidicea is plagued by a mysterious wolf-creature during the full moon of each month. Livestock and lone travellers are attacked.

BC 400: Under the leadership of King Psocretus, Cynidicea begins the process of reclaiming land from the encroaching desert. Great networks of irrigation canals are dug, and more arable land is gained. The kingdom's borders expand as more land becomes available.

BC 393: Psocretus' reign ends when the wolf-creature is finally killed. By now many people have begun to suspect that Psocretus and the creature were one and the same. The odd thing is that the wolf creature does not revert to the shape of Psocretus, making many doubt that the two were indeed the same. Psocretus has no heirs, forcing the royal advisors to rule as a council.

BC 385: A halfling by the name of Usamigaras arrives in Cynidicea. He displays his magical powers (gained through a wish) and guile, and manages, against all odds, to convince the ruling council that he should be crowned their king.

BC 380: Zargon manifests himself to a madman in his dreams. Instructing him to build a faith based upon worship of the tentacled being. The madman, named Damodes, founds the Church of Zargon.

BC 320: By this time enough land has been reclaimed that several villages are established outside the city. Cynidicea is no longer a city-state, but a true kingdom.

The Church of Zargon has become a large underground movement, with close to a thousand adherents, from all social strata in Cynidicea.

BC 308: King Usamigaras leaves Cynidicea, saying that he must embark on a final quest. He has secretly embarked on a quest for Immortality, and he has decided to finish it before his mortal life

ends. His rule was peaceful, but large sums of money have mysteriously vanished from Cynidicea's coffers, which once brimmed with gold.

Later this year, a robed figure comes out of the desert, saying that he is a long-lost descendant of King Xenopheus. Named Gaius, he proves to the advisors that he has royal blood, and he is crowned king.

BC 290: Usamigaras becomes an Immortal. He begins building up a following in Cynidicea.

BC 274: Gaius completes the secret rites required to attain lichdom.

BC 264: Gaius' increasing decrepitude can no longer be hidden easily from others. It soon becomes apparent through whispered discussions that he is some form of undead, and plans are put into action to put his son, Diomenesius, on the throne. Diomenesius does not know that his father has become a lich, and attributes his appearance to extreme age.

BC 262: Gaius is chased from the palace by a horde of enraged citizens. He flees for the safety of the catacombs beneath the city. From there, he ventures into a large side cave, where he establishes his new stronghold. Diomenesius assumes the throne.

BC 231: King Diomenesius is succeeded by his son, Emenius.

BC 197: Emenius dies after a productive reign. His son, Adonius, becomes king.

BC 159: Alexander begins his illustrious reign as King of Cynidicea, following the death of his father, Adonius. The irrigation networks are expanded even more, and aqueducts bring more water from the mountains, and he arranges to have a great underground lake created be-

neath the city, which is to serve as a reservoir.

As the tomb of Alexander and Zenobia is being dug, workers uncover a previously unknown cave underground. They also find a corroded disk, apparently made of electrum, as well as an archway embedded into the cavern wall, filled with solid rock. One of the workers breaks the disk in picking it up, and Zargon is released, needing only two to be broken to do this. Although in a weakened state, he manages to kill most of the workers. Word spreads of the monster, plunging the city into chaos.

BC 127: King Alexander and Queen Zenobia both die of a strange wasting disease, which the clerics of Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras were unable to cure. The public outpouring of grief is marred by accusations that the clerics deliberately let the king and queen die. These rumours are spread by worshippers of Zargon.

BC 126: The clerics of Zargon gain control over the kingdom, convincing the people that only they know how to guide Cynidicea through these tough times. Zargon has been stalking the city at night, killing people at random. No one is able to kill him. Under their rulership, the Zargonites are able to "control" Zargon (by feeding him convicts). The unfinished tomb of Alexander and Zenobia becomes the Temple of Zargon, and he lives in the catacombs, content to be fed by his worshippers.

BC 121: The Church of Zargon declares their faith to be the only legal one in Cynidicea. Worshippers of Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras are captured and fed to Zargon, and many more flee the city, spreading their tale. Some worshippers manage to hide their allegi-

ances, and covertly work to overthrow the Church.

BC 109: Instructed by Zargon, the clerics of Zargon cultivate and distribute a fungal narcotic to the people, saying that it will calm their fears and allow them to transcend their bodies so they may enter a better world. Many citizens take these drugs, and begin losing their drive. Work becomes shoddy, the irrigation ditches are no longer maintained, and the army loses its discipline.

This is part of a plan to bring the people fully under the control of the Church. What the Zargonites do not realise is that, because of the drug's effects, Cynidicea's days are numbered.

BC 102: By this time most of the other settlements in Cynidicea have been abandoned, or have revolted. Thousands leave the region in search of better lands, as well as regions devoid of Zargon's taint. Word of this chaos reaches the Antalian peoples living in what are now the Soderfjord Jarldoms. Many tribal leaders receive strange dreams, in which they are told to destroy the plague of Cynidicea.

BC 98: A great horde of Antalian warriors sweeps in from the north, attacking the city of Cynidicea. They overwhelm the city's defences within an hour, and loot the city, putting it to the torch afterwards. Some Cynidiceans manage to flee with the clerics of Zargon underground, to a large cavern beneath the city. There, they begin to rebuild.

BC 50: By this time the underground city of Cynidicea has been built, and the Church of Zargon rules with an iron fist. Followers of Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras leave the city and set up their hideouts in the ruins of the pyramid.

They control the upper levels, and are left alone.

The fact that the Cynidiceans have managed to rebuild their civilisation underground is nothing short of miraculous. They have domesticated several strains of fungus, and cave locust, to provide them with food, and irrigation ditches have been dug from the underground lake. Water channels have been burrowed into the solid rock, in the hopes of offsetting the slowly-falling water level. Despite these gains, the Cynidicean physiology is still unsuited to life underground. Fresh oxygen, although present, is far too rare, and the absence of the sun's rays are depriving the people of essential Vitamin D.

AC 20: Some elements of all three societies opposed to Zargon have infiltrated the new city of Cynidicea by this time.

AC 33: Working in secret for many years, the three societies pool their resources, and then stage a coup, invading the temple of Zargon. Although the Zargonites put up some fierce resistance, they are soon overwhelmed by the resolve of the three allied societies. After a few hours, the surviving Zargonites have been driven from the city, and across the lake. The three victorious factions form a coalition government.

Once across the lake, the Zargonites come across several tribes of goblins and hobgoblins, many of whom are worshippers of Zargon. Pleased at the discovery, the evil clerics reveal their allegiance to the Zargon-worshipping goblins, and are taken in by them. These foul creatures are descendants of those who were defeated by the Cynidiceans in BC 800, when those people first came to the region.

AC 34: The Zargonites, hiding amongst the newly-discovered goblin tribes living across the lake from Cynidicea, convince their goblinoid allies to help them reconquer Cynidicea, in exchange for support in their own wars against "unbelievers" - goblinoids who do not worship Zargon. The clerics, as a show of faith, agree to assist the goblins first.

In Cynidicea, various efforts to kill Zargon have proven unsuccessful, though the creature does not leave his lair.

AC 36: After only three years in power, cracks are beginning to show in the ruling coalition of Cynidicea. None of the factions can agree as to how Cynidicea should be ruled, since each one feels its own beliefs should be paramount.

AC 39: After five years of hard campaigning, the Zargonites and their goblinoid allies succeed in conquering the "unbelievers". Only those that agree to worship Zargon are spared, while the others are put to the sword. The victors carve out a temple to Zargon in one of the southernmost caves in his honour.

AC 41: Cynidicea is invaded by a small horde of goblinoids, led by the surviving exiled Zargonite clerics. Although the defenders have a numerical advantage, the three factions' forces cannot co-ordinate their efforts, pursuing their own goals. As a result, Cynidicea falls within hours, forcing the defenders to retreat to the ruined pyramid above. Those living in the city who do not express sufficient enthusiasm at the return of the Zargonites are fed to Zargon.

AC 113: After several decades of consolidating their power, the Zargonites stage an invasion of the upper levels of the pyramid. Although their forces, composed of Cynidiceans and goblins, manage to draw close to the strongholds,

they are all beaten back, suffering heavy losses.

AC 170: Noticing that the population of Cynidicea is in decline, both due to the oppressive environment and the drugs, which suppress reproductive drives in many people, the Magi of Usamigaras commune with their Immortal to find a solution to the problem.

AC 172: One of the Magi, while in a trance, receives a dream message from Usamigaras, saying that "only the blood of those who are truly of the depths will revitalise the people of Cynidicea." Perplexed, she relates this message to her fellow members.

AC 175: The Magi decide to conduct an experiment, based on what Usamigaras has said. Using their magic, they locate a sizeable, embattled group of healthy goblins, who are not worshippers of Zargon. Secretly, they cast polymorph spells on the goblins, giving them human forms, and they drive off the Zargon-worshipping goblinoids who were harassing them. They then come upon the surprised goblins in peace, offering to help them deal with this "curse" that has struck them. In exchange for being hidden in the stronghold of the Magi, the goblins agree to be educated in the ways of humans, so that they can fit into society.

AC 200: Having educated the polymorphed goblins, who have now been converted to the worship of Usamigaras, the Magi quietly lead them into Cynidicea, where they seamlessly merge into the society there. Over the next few generations, not only will fresh blood be added to the local gene pool; infravision will also develop among the new generations of Cynidiceans, who will still retain the human appearance of their ancest-

ors. This new trait will allow the Cynidiceans to adapt more easily to their new home.

AC 300: Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras, dismayed at the fate of their people, meet with Ka, Ordana, and Korotiku. They know of the efforts being made by these Immortals to preserve various cultures in the Hollow World, and ask them to save a portion of their followers, who are much reduced in power since the original flight underground. They realise that, due to continuing difficulties adapting to their new environment, and to increasing dependency on the drugs cultivated by the Zargonites, the Cynidiceans will eventually die out unless some outside power rescues them. The Immortals say they will consider the request.

AC 310: Korotiku, Ordana, Seshay-Selene, and Ka privately discuss the predicament of the Cynidiceans. They know that the eternal sun of the Hollow World would be harsh on the Cynidiceans, though they would adapt eventually. The main drawback of this is that the culture of this strange group of humans would be forever altered. The Hollow Moon, with its darkness, would be a far more suitable place for them to rebuild. As a result, the four Immortals opt to whisk equal numbers of Cynidicean adherents of Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras to the Hollow Moon.

AC 311: After conferring with the three Cynidicean Immortals, and obtaining their grateful consent, 500 followers of each, plus 500 non-aligned Cynidiceans, are quietly urged in their dreams to ascend to the surface. Standing amidst the desert sands and half-buried ruins of their old city, the Cynidiceans look up to a strangely glowing moon, whose rays almost seem to writhe about as they

reach towards Mystara. Then, slowly, the awestruck Cynidiceans are gently gathered up with these beams, and, as they slowly fall asleep, they look downwards, seeing the ground recede below them.

AC 350: Within the Hollow Moon, the city-state of Cynidicea has already begun to rise in prominence.

AC 399: A schism begins to develop within the Church of Zargon. During a study of Zargon's directives, some lesser clerics question the importance of Zargon, saying that his presence is far too remote to be of any significance. Instead, they advocate worshipping the beings whose names are inscribed in the cavern walls in several places. Accusing the dissidents of blasphemy, the reigning high priest orders their imprisonment.

AC 410: The dissident Zargonites are released from prison, though their convictions are firmer than before. Some of them, obviously insane, babble incessantly about "great Beings from Beyond who call us in dreams". In truth, Thanatos has turned these clerics to his will. He has assumed the guise of a hideous monster, so otherworldly that any who behold him risk going mad. Instructing them in their dreams, he has ordered them to build up a following and rise up against the ruling Zargonites. The dissidents go into hiding, and manage to recruit some of the local goblin tribes to their cause. Although opposed to the dissidents' precepts as well, the followers of the three Cynidicean Immortals provide weapons and food to the rebel clerics, realising that they have a common enemy in the Zargonites.

AC 424: A small army, led by the dissident clerics, arises among the goblin caverns across the lake from Cynidicea.

Marching around the body of water, the force makes its way to the temple, and proceeds to attack it. Most of the citizens remain in their homes for the duration. The battle turns against the Zargonite defenders, who are forced to flee to the catacombs underneath the temple, and from there to secret tunnels leading to one of the goblin strongholds.

AC 427: The ruling Thanatos-worshippers pass a law forbidding the veneration of Zargon. The tunnel leading to Zargon's lair is sealed up, and powerful enchantments are cast, with Thanatos' aid, to render the creature immobile. They also permit the worship of the Cynidicean Immortals, as a form of payment for the assistance they received. During the rulership of the Thanatos-worshippers, the three factions recruit many new followers.

AC 434: By this time the Church of Zargon has once again built up a network of supporters among the goblinoid tribes to help retake the city. This time, the goblins provide aid in exchange for uncontested rule of the lands across the lake from Cynidicea. The Zargonites stage a frontal assault, and are repulsed just inside the city.

AC 441: The Zargonites launch a second attack, which succeeds. After fierce fighting outside the city, the Zargonites triumphantly return to their temple, and convert it once more to a place in honour of Zargon. Immediately afterwards, they use their spells to free their master. Seeing that Zargon is very hungry from his long imprisonment, they decide to feed their prisoners to him.

The followers of the Cynidicean Immortals, realising the danger, manage to flee to the pyramid once more, bringing most of their converts with them. They each

leave behind a network of informers and spies to keep them abreast of developments in the city.

AC 650: A new tribe of goblins, from the Altan Tepes Mountains to the south, migrates northwards, and proceeds to annihilate many of the Zargon-worshipping goblins. The Zargonite clerics of Cynidicea, seeing a means to rule the entire cavern, do not aid their allies, hoping both sides will be weakened enough that they can destroy them all afterwards.

AC 683: The war amongst the goblins reaches a standstill - both sides have taken many casualties, and neither wishes to continue fighting. Seeing an opportunity, the Zargonites launch an assault of their own, with 600 soldiers. They have the element of surprise, and manage to slaughter many of the goblins, while driving the remainder further underground or outside of the cavern system as a whole. The fleeing goblins, renouncing their faith, warn that they will return.

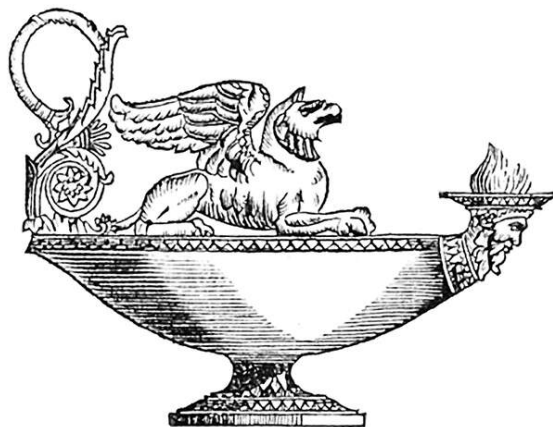
AC 685: The Zargonites order the construction of a fortress, near the Eye of Zargon, in order to better defend their southern flank.

AC 729: The goblins return to the cavern once more, and in great numbers. Within days, the embattled fortress falls to the invaders. Those unfortunate enough to survive the siege are massacred. Word quickly spreads to Cynidicea, where the Zargonites issue a call to arms.

Within hours, the two forces meet among the fungal groves running alongside the lake, and do battle. Both sides take heavy casualties, but the result is a stalemate. The leaders of both sides meet, and they agree to cease hostilities, in exchange for respecting the other's territory.

AC 850: By this time relations with the goblins have normalised somewhat.

AC 1000: The present day for the Gazetteer series. This is the suggested time period in which to run module B4 ("The Lost City").

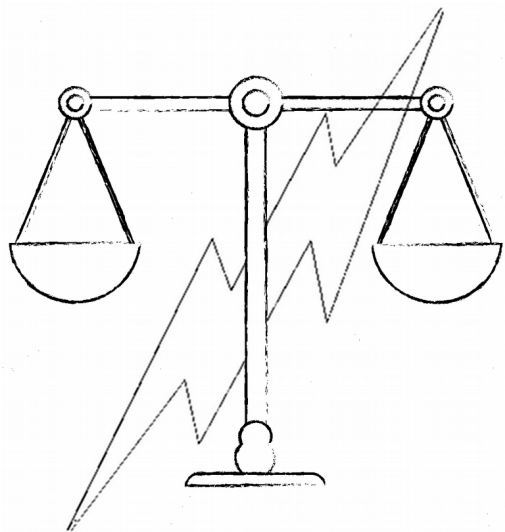


The Factions of Cynidicea

Brotherhood of Gorm

Political Beliefs

The Brotherhood of Gorm sees themselves as the solution to the problems of Cynidicea obviously. They look on wanton use of magic as the major cause of the dreamworlds of the underground city's residents and thus have big conflicts with the Magi of Usamigaras about the best way to cure the people. They also see the female fighters of Madarua as unnatural and only worsening Cynidicea's troubles; Gorm taught that the woman's place was in the home. They should not be banned from fighting but should certainly not be encouraged towards it. Also they dislike the Madarua followers' use of force without a set code of justice to guide it. Only by the use of justice, the following of Gorm's laws, and the limitation of magic can Cynidicea be returned to its former state, and freed from both the dreams in which the people live and the tyranny of Zargon.



Rituals

The ceremonies to Gorm, conducted on the fourth day of each week, have several aspects to them. In the morning, the Brotherhood practice their weapon training, as they see themselves as the police and true guards of Cynidicea. In the afternoon, they conduct their chanting, audible as far away as the Stronghold of Usamigaras, infuriating the Magi to no end. Other Cynidiceans also react to the chants, imagining them differently, depending on their current hallucinations. In the evening of the holy day (reputedly the anniversary of the crowning of Gorm as King of Cynidicea) the study of Gorm's laws is undertaken. Many in the Brotherhood fancy themselves experts in justice and seek to learn the codes set forth by their founder ages ago.

Religious Outlook

Kanadius: "The world's creation was done millennia ago by forces unknown. These forces obviously abandoned us to the harsh life of the desert and of the city. Here a great power arose, Gorm, the Bringer of Justice, the Storm-Raiser, the Warrior-King. He showed us the proper path and we strive to follow it. There are other pretenders to power, each with their own silly code, but these are nonsense rituals that only infuriate the mighty Gorm, causing him to bring down his wrath. Only by following him can we achieve true glory."

Tactics/Laws

Follow the laws of Gorm (a very complex, intricate code) and all will be right. Punish the wrongdoers but show them mercy, trying to bring them into the light. If there are several evils, work to eliminate the greatest first (hence deal with Zargonites before Magi). Do not tamper with the natural elements, as it will anger Gorm. Brute force is often a solid approach, but others may be used if the situation warrants their usage.

Ambitions

The Brotherhood's dream of an ideal Cynidicea of the future is of a city that is just and upholds the traditional and just ways set forth by Gorm when he was king. Such a city would be ruled by warrior-kings such as Gorm was and would be following in his image and ideals. If they disobeyed his laws though they would be removed from the position - justice always transcends tradition.

Composition of The Brotherhood

Full members: 2 F3, 2 F2, 21 F1 (25 in total)

Regular members (due to gender, alignment or class): 2 F2, 7 F1, 30 NM, 1 C2, 2 C1, 1 Rake1 (43 in total)

Brotherhood NPCs

Geridius

History: Geridius was born 42 years ago to the previous head of the Brotherhood and his wife, the chief cleric of Gorm at the time. He learned quickly from both, though he took more after his mother. At the age of 17, he became one of the younger initiates of the Brotherhood and rose to the head of the clerics at age 31

when his mother was slain by a Zargonite. He continues the work of his parents, spreading the word of Gorm and fighting all manners of evil and injustice. He was recently married himself to Triatha, a fighter in the service of Gorm.

Personality: Geridius is a very self-controlled individual, calm to the extreme. He does not get mad at the errors of his fellow Cynidiceans, simply wishing to bring the truth to them. He considers each member of the Brotherhood as one of his personal charges and they all look up to him as a result. He is much more esteemed than any other lesser member and often takes charge of the Brotherhood's Stronghold in key moments. His counsel is heeded by all in the Brotherhood and few dare cross him if they ever have conflicts with him (which is rare).

Appearance: Standing 6'2" and weighing 185lbs., Geridius is physically imposing. Only the presence of a mace and amulet of Gorm mark him as a priest rather than a warrior. No one knows what his facial features are, as he wears his mask at all times.

Combat Notes: He is a 2nd level cleric of Gorm. AC 5 (chain); hp 11; #AT 1 (mace); D 1d6+2 (strength bonus); ML 12; AL L; S 17, I 10, W 14, D 9, Co 15, Ch 13. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Honour Gorm (W+1), Codes of Law and Justice (W+1)

Ashlantha

History: Ashlantha was born 26 years ago to two normal Cynidiceans not badly affected by the daze most of the city residents lived in. At age 18, she was recruited into the Warrior Maidens of Madarua though she had some doubts about their philosophy. She learned quickly though and was considered a po-

tential future leader of the Warrior Maidens. Her doubts grew though when she heard a member of the Brotherhood explain the virtues of a just and lawful path. She started studying with this Gorm follower on a regular basis and eventually decided it was the proper path. Two years ago she officially joined the Brotherhood.

Personality: Ashlantha is a devout follower of Gorm though she is a bit offended by the prevention of women being full members. She has studied the laws of Gorm and not found the slightest defence for this rule but her arguments are often ignored by the Brotherhood. She still is sure the path of Gorm is the one to a better Cynidicea and has also made efforts to bring other Warrior Maidens into the fold. A rather serious individual, she fits in well with the solemn Brotherhood.

Appearance: Ashlantha stands 5'9" and is of normal build. She wears the necklace of lesser members at all times, proudly displaying her current affiliation, and makes sure to cover the sickle emblem of Madarua at all times, wearing heavy gauntlets. She is armed at all times, especially when she is out in the city.

Combat Notes: She is a 1st level fighter. AC 4 (chain, dexterity bonus); hp 5; #AT 1; D 1d8 (sword) or 1d6 (arrow); ML 10; AL L; S 11, I 10, W 12, D 14, Co 13, Ch 12. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Mysticism (W), Codes of Law and Justice (W), Stealth (City) (D), Blind Shooting (D)

Mikalai

History: Mikalai was born 81 years ago and served all his life in the Stronghold of Gorm. He was an errand boy in his

youth, a guard for the Stronghold during his prime and now in his elder years is the keeper of the library in the Stronghold wherein the lawbooks of Gorm and treatises on them are kept. He is a widower, his wife, a fellow servant of Gorm, having died over 20 years ago of natural causes. His children have both died in the service of the Brotherhood, having been full members, and his lone grandchild is currently the wife of another full member of the Brotherhood. His life has revolved around this sole cause and will continue to for the little time he has left.

Personality: Mikalai is a weary soul. He has seen much suffering in his life, seen the continued decline of his city and seen the Brotherhood remain stagnant throughout it all, never rising to the glories he wishes it to. He is proud of the others in the Brotherhood though and often tells stories of the successes it has seen during his lifetime. He cares greatly for the Stronghold where he has served his whole life, the library with which he is now entrusted and his granddaughter, his lone family. He does his utmost to make newcomers to the Brotherhood feel welcome.

Appearance: Mikalai is obviously a very old man. He wears a mask of Gorm usually but without it his wrinkled face and near-bald grey hair are plainly obvious. Even with the mask, his stooped and scrawny figure is certainly not that of a young warrior. A few scars mark his arms and chest, remnants of his warrior days.

Combat Notes: He is a normal man. AC 9 (none); hp 1; #AT 1; D 1d4-1 (dagger, strength penalty); ML 10; AL L; S 7, I 11, W 11, D 10, Co 8, Ch 11. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Mysticism (W), Knowledge (History of Brotherhood) (I), Knowledge (Stronghold of Gorm) (I), Labour (Servant) (I)

Magi of Usamigaras

Political Beliefs

Strict, authoritarian systems of any sort hinder intellectual creativity and equality, both of which must be striven for. Similarly, efforts that seek to keep out any group based on gender or on political beliefs are doomed to failure by restricting their potential. The poor should not be looked down upon - only those without the intellectual capacity to study magic in any form should be pitied or held in less regards. NOTE: Many individual Magi, like the leader Auriga, do not truly BELIEVE this but rather use it as rhetoric. The Magi overall are not as committed to a cause as are the other three factions.

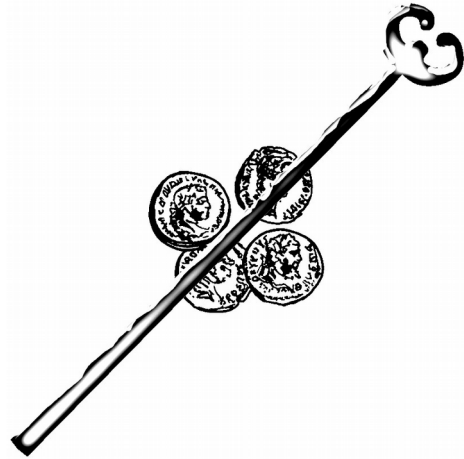
Rituals

Usamigaras is worshipped on the days of the new moon and of the full moon. On the earlier days, the ideas of creation, birth and new beginnings are celebrated. Weddings are conducted on this day and any building by the Magi is undertaken on this day, as are grand projects (unless they are rush jobs that must be begun sooner). On the full moons, the ideas of death, conclusion and finality are emphasised. Burials among the Magi are always postponed till the next full moon. Each ritual is host to an illusionary show by the chief magic-user present. Such illusions are often perceived as real by those Magi deep into the dream world.

Religious Outlook

The Magi believe in a polytheistic world and simply see Usamigaras as the one who best exemplifies their viewpoints. They will occasionally worship other deities

from the ancient lore but never Gorm, Madarua or Zargon, all of whom they consider arrogant and authoritarian beings. They also see all three other groups as being outdated, no longer able to cope in a modern world the way Usamigaras' more recently founded group can.



Tactics

The Magi prefer diplomacy (and trickery) to direct confrontation 10 times out of 10. Some of the members are dirty, back-handed folks, and some have no real regard for a just and moral lifestyle. They have great respect for opponents who mimic their strategies well, but see the more direct tactics of the other three factions as brutish.

Laws

The Magi do not follow a strict system of laws. Anything that infringes greatly on the freedom of another, as judged by the head Magi available at the moment, is punishable by fines. No severe penalties are imposed by the Magi unless there someone leaves their ranks - those 'traitors' are never allowed to return but are allowed to go on their way without ill

harm. This is as severe a penalty as the Magi will impose.

Ambitions

The Magi wish for a day when all the other factions cease to exist and/or stop trying to impose their will on Cynidicea. That day of freedom, of equal opportunity, of less law and order, is the dream of the Magi in general, though some may wish law and order and others may wish inequality. The dream overall simply strikes them as better than the dreams of the other factions.

Composition of The Magi

Full members: 1 MU3, 5 MU 2, 26 MU 1, 2 T2, 6 T1, 2 C2, 2 C1 (44 in total)

Lesser members (due to alignment or class): 2 F1, 11 NM (13 in total)

Magi NPCs

Deanne

History: Deanne was born 34 years ago, the child of two followers of Usamigaras, both mages. She did not inherit her parents' magical ability but remained inside the faction nonetheless. She does odd jobs around the stronghold, but mainly watches after her newborn son and her husband, a magic-user named Gilfast.

Personality: Deanne is a nice lady, if a bit protective of her son. She wishes for him to grow up in a stable Cynidicea, something she does not see happening anytime soon. She is sure that if any group does create stability though it will be the Magi among whom she has always lived. She will be kind to strangers until they prove unworthy of her trust.

Appearance: Deanne wears different masks, depending on her mood and on the occasion, but she never wears the masks of Usamigaras as she does not wish to identify herself as a full member, whom she envies. She wears fancily designed robes generally, with a variety of colours and symbols on them. Her son usually is carried along as well these days.

Combat Notes: She is a normal woman. AC 9 (none); hp 2; #AT 0; D none ; ML 9; AL N; S 9, I 13, W 10, D 11, Co 9, Ch 14. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Singing (Ch), Knowledge (Magi of Usamigaras) (I), Danger Sense (W), Cooking (I)

Thanti

History: Thanti was born 22 years ago, his parentage unknown. He was found by the Magi by the door of their Stronghold in Cynidicea and they have let him stay with them. He has picked up some of the more devious skills taught by the Magi but is generally loyal to their cause.

Personality: Thanti is a con-man. Anything he can get via trickery or subterfuge he will get. He does not hold the truth in any great regard. He is loyal to the Magi though and is respectful of the possessions of the members of his faction. He often works as a spy against the other factions and may be asked to spy on any strangers to the city. He might also be asked to become 'friends' with any newcomers to try to find out more about them. His only true friends, of course, are the Magi. Anyone else is a sucker ripe for the taking.

Appearance: Thanti wears a sparrow mask at all times. He is on the short side, but is of medium build. He wears loose, baggy clothing and is not visibly

armed (though he usually is carrying some weapon hidden on his body). He wears a variety of disguises when doing his actual work.

Combat Notes: Thanti is a 1st-level thief. AC 7 (Leather); hp 2; #AT 1; D 1-4 (dagger) or 1-2 (blackjack); ML 11; AL N; S 9, I 13, W 13, D 12, Co 8, Ch 16. Languages: Cynidicean, Goblin. General Skills: Knowledge (Geography of Cynidicea) (I), Deceive (Ch+1), Disguise (I), Escape Artist (D)

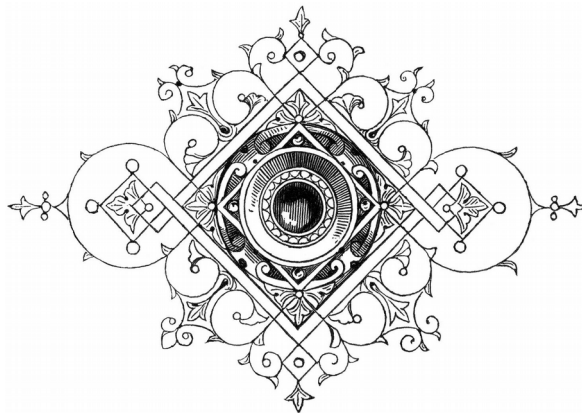
Zenifia

History: Zenifia is 31 years old. She is the daughter of two Zargonites and grew up in that order. Disgusted by the rampant immorality, she left at age 17 to join the Magi. Sensing a natural magical talent in her, they allowed her to join and she has been a loyal follower of Usamigaras ever since. Her parents are still active among the Zargonites and wish her back, thinking her brainwashed by the evil Magi.

Personality: Zenifia is a very introverted individual. She prefers being left alone with her books than being in the company of others. She also knows the Zargonites do not hold her in high regard so she stays within the confines of the Magi's Stronghold unless specifically ordered to go on an outside mission. She has no close friends and it will take a great effort to win her trust.

Appearance: Zenifia wears the typical garb of a Magi of Usamigaras. She is fairly beautiful but she specifically picks heavier robes to conceal this, not wanting any attention. She is also terribly near-sighted though the Magi have created glass frames that help her vision somewhat.

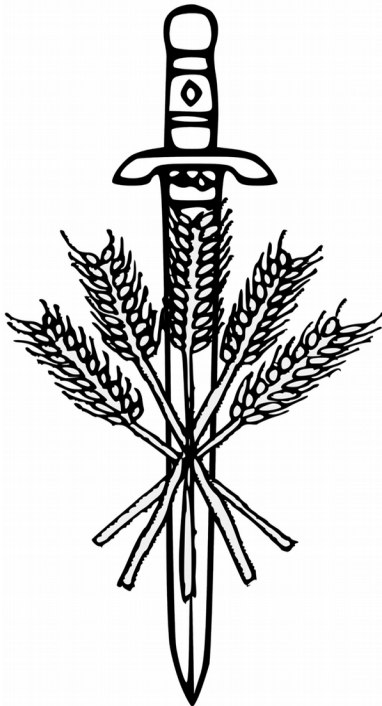
Combat Notes: She is a 2nd-level magic-user. AC 9 (none); hp 6; #AT 1; D 1d4-1 (dagger, strength penalty) or by spell (knows Light, Magic Missile, Shield and Floating Disc); ML 8; AL N; S 8, I 14, W 9, D 10, Co 13, Ch 15. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Alertness (D), Stealth (City) (D), Lip Reading (I), 1 unspent skill slot



Warrior Maidens of Madarua

Political Beliefs

The Warrior Maidens believe that neither the chauvinistic view of the Brotherhood of Gorm nor the deceptive approach of the Magi (and certainly not the evil ways of the Zargonites) is the way to a better Cynidicea. They believe that only a society that gives strength to the women and that operates in a direct, forward and principled manner will thrive. They will work with the other societies, though, if the alternative is worse - if they can be convinced the only way to topple Zargon is by joining forces with Gorm then they will do so.



NB: The Warrior Maidens' supposed stance for equality is easily questioned by those who note they prevent men from becoming full members. In response to such criticisms, they often say they are causing balance as the Brotherhood of Gorm exists as an all-male institution. Once the Brotherhood is gone the

Warrior Maidens say they would become more inclusive. Whether this is true is unknown.

Rituals

On the four holy days of Madarua, the life cycle is celebrated. In the morning of the holy days, the Warrior Maidens pay tribute to birth, the bringing of new lives into the world. The rare child born at this time of day and year is considered blessed. Also in the morning, consideration is given to the joys of infancy and childhood, before one is introduced to the harshness and inequalities of life. Often a child present in the Stronghold gives a speech for the adults at this time. As the day goes on, life of those in their prime is celebrated. Contests of strength are held at this time, gifts being available for the victors. When evening and night come (note: The Warrior Maidens monitor the outside conditions from the top of the step pyramid and relay the time changes down to those in Cynidicea proper) the focus is shifted to the elderly. The oldest and wisest of the Warrior Maidens now give speeches and counsel, tell stories of past glories and impart the rules of morality and the code of Madarua to the young.

Religious Outlook

While they once recognised her as such, the Warrior Maidens do not actually believe Madarua is an Immortal, no longer believing in ANY of the Immortals. Clerics of Madarua are scholars more than priests. The rituals are done in the honour of the former Cynidicean queen, not as if she were the entity she currently is. She does not mind this, still favouring

the Warrior Maidens with her blessing, as she is glad some Cynidiceans still follow the path she urged. She pays much more attention to them than the Nithians from whence she came and whom she left due to their chauvinistic ways, as emphasised by the religion of Rathanos. Anyone who comes preaching the word of Madarua (or Gorm or Vanya or Zargon or Ixion or Usamigaras or whomever) will be viewed sceptically at best.

Tactics

Like the Brotherhood of Gorm, the followers of Madarua are rather direct in their approach. They believe the strongest will persevere and as a result spend a considerable amount of time working on their fighting abilities and ensuring that they can not only hold their own in a fight but win easily against more numerous but less trained and weaker opponents.

Laws

Madarua, during her reign over Cynidicea, instituted a code of justice not nearly as comprehensive as that of Gorm. It was simply two lists that anyone can remember - one of crimes punishable by death and another of crimes punishable by indentured servitude (included here is one absent from all the lawbooks of Gorm - that of mistreating a person because they are female.) All the followers of Madarua know these laws by heart and abide by them.

Ambitions

The Warrior Maidens say they wish for a day when all Cynidiceans have an equal shot at whatever it is they wish to do with their lives. They wish to see a day when Cynidicea is not victim to treachery or

back-handed tactics and a day when women have true power. The ideal ruler of course would be one modelling themselves after the great queen from the past, Ashtat/Madarua.

Composition of the Warrior Maidens

Full members: 2 F3, 3 F2, 22 F1 (27 in total)

Regular members (due to gender, alignment or class): 1 F2, 6 F1, 2 MU1, 1 C1, 25 NM, 4 T1 (39 in total)

Warrior Maiden NPCs

Haria

History: Haria is one of the elder members of the Warrior Maidens, now at 62 years of age. During her prime, she was one of the better warriors among the Maidens and still retains some of her combat skills despite her advanced years. She is a widow, her husband having been killed 19 years ago by a crazed Cynidicean civilian. She has one son, who toils for the Warrior Maidens during menial jobs but is opposed to the group's restrictive philosophy. Haria herself is a firm believer that their side is right and will defend the Warrior Maidens in any argument and against

any criticism.

Personality: Haria is a very humourless individual. She is deeply concerned about the future of Cynidicea and of the Warrior Maidens and will work to ensure a better future in however much time she has left. She disdains idleness or confusion, believing discipline and stoicism are

necessary in order to succeed.

Appearance: Haria stands 5'7" and is fairly well-built. She wears the typical clothing of a Warrior Maiden, in tip-top shape (she is rather obsessed with cleanliness, seeing filth as a sign of laziness). She shows little of the effects of age, though her hair has greyed behind her mask

and she has developed a few wrinkles here and there.

Combat Notes: She is a 1st-level fighter. AC 5 (chain); hp 6; #AT 1; D 1d8 (sword); ML 11; AL N; S 10, I 10, W 8, D 9, Co 14, Ch 9. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Muscle (S+1), Military Tactics (I), Endurance (Co)

Vinzopi

History: Vinzopi was born 25 years ago, his parents belonging to the Brotherhood of Gorm. He found this group far too concerned with justice for his tastes. It wasn't that he thought law and order was a bad thing - it simply wasn't the ONLY thing that should guide one's life according to

his view. Seeing the life of a typical Cynidicean or a Zargonite or a Magi far too undisciplined, he joined with the Warrior Maidens of Madarua at age 20, knowing he would not be accepted as a full member, but still finding their philosophy the most fitting. He has worked for them as a guard these past 5 years.

Personality: Vinzopi is still trying to prove himself to the Warrior Maidens, who view males as inferior despite their egalitarian rhetoric. He has been a loyal follower of the cause though and has been accepted by most. He is generally a kind soul, but will fight for that which he believes in. He is also hopelessly in love with one of the Warrior Maidens who

shows not the slightest interest in him, causing some complications in his life at the moment and making him a bit snappish at times.

Appearance: Vinzopi wears the garb of a full member of the Warrior Maidens, except for the mask. In its place he wears the mask of a black bear. This 5'8" man does not appear muscular, but possesses an inner strength.

Combat Notes: He is a 1st-level fighter. AC 5 (chain); hp 4; #AT 1; D 1d8+1 (sword, strength bonus); ML 10; AL L; S 14, I 11, W 11, D 9, Co 10, Ch 11. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Profession (Guard) (I+1), Codes of Law and Justice (W) (Remnant of his Gorm upbringing), Persuasion (Ch)

Jilanka

History: Jilanka is the daughter of the Warrior Maidens' former chief scholar. She did not find quite the same affinity for books that her mother did though and has instead found the warrior life much more to her liking. At age 24, she was made head of the guards at the stronghold in Cynidicea and now at age 42 she is the overall commander of that fort, though second in standing overall to Pandora. There are several more skilled fighters among the Warrior Maidens but only Pandora is more respected.

Personality: Jilanka might come across as gruff to outsiders, but she is very warm and kind to her friends and comrades. She is a strong leader, not known to second-guess herself. She does not wish to lead, but accepts the role, and she definitely does not seek to usurp power from Pandora.

She can be a bit battle-thirsty if she has not fought in a while and this comes across in training sessions.

Appearance: Jilanka is not very imposing, standing just 5'2". She is very strong though and deceptively quick in combat. She comes across as if she never feels any pressures on herself and her soldiers react to this. She wears the typical garb of a Warrior Maiden at all times.

Combat Notes: She is a 2nd-level fighter. AC 4 (chain, dexterity bonus); hp 11; #AT 1; D 1d6+3 (strength bonus, spear+1); ML 12; AL N; S 16, I 9, W 15, D 14, Co 11, Ch 14. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Leadership (Ch+1), Knowledge (Warrior Maidens of Madarua) (I), Bravery (W)

Church of Zargon

Political Beliefs

The cult of Zargon sees itself as the force that should be in charge of Cynidicea. All the other various factions are deemed to be radicals aimed at upsetting the social order and stability that would come with the rule of the Zargon worshippers.

Rituals

There is no set system of when the followers of Zargon perform their ceremonies, but it is safe to say that whenever Zargon asks them to pay honour they are willing to do so. Just to stay on his good side, they worship him at other periods as well. The rituals are rather gruesome and will not be explained in detail, but it is known that sacrifices to Zargon are often required. They often use captives of the other three factions for such sacrifices.

Religious Outlook

The Zargonites see the many-tentacled thing as the one true ruler over all. They consider the worship of former kings such as Gorm as rebellious heresy and idolatry.



Tactics

The Zargonites generally rely on brute force, as that has been enough to accomplish their goals so far. If any of the other three groups gain in power, they may try an all-out assault on the opposing stronghold. Similarly, if there are powerful newcomers to the city or if the three factions unite they will first meet the threat with an aggressive attack. Should these tactics fail though, they may resort to more devious schemes to rid themselves of their opposition. They will **never** give up, and if Zargon is killed they only will become that much more spiteful of his enemies/destroyers. Of course, if Zargon regenerates they will cite this as evidence that they were right all along. Many semi-sane Cynidiceans

may come to agree with them based on this proof.

Cynidicean warriors use drugs to their full advantage when going into battle. This dates back to ancient times when the Temple Guards would take to the streets at night to acquire food for their deity. Since it was necessary to do so in secret and as stealthily as possible, the use of drugs in the attack and capture was preferred. Often, the victim did not even realise that they were under attack until it was already over.

The Temple Warriors each have on his or her person at least one dosage of performance enhancing drugs and an antidote for the drugs that they use in battle. Many an adventurer has been surprised when a Cynidicean warrior throws a torch at him rather than a spear but soon finds to his dismay that he is paralysed by the fumes from the torch. Naturally, the Cynidicean warrior goes into battle already inoculated with the cure for the specific "combat" drugs that he will use.

Warriors serving in the great temple of Zargon are usually encountered in groups of four. Traditionally, two warriors make the initial attack and capture while the other two serve as sentries to warn of discovery. The two sentries are normally armed with slings and sleep dust-balls for ranged attacks and short swords coated with a dose of quicktime in order to slow their opponents down if melee becomes necessary. The warriors assigned to make the capture are armed with short swords tipped with quicktime as backup and blowguns with numb darts to make the initial assault.

Laws

Laws? For the Zargonites? Well, there is one. Namely, Follow the Will of the

Mighty Zargon and his Clerics. Anything they say goes. Not following their orders means death.

Ambitions

One day, all shall come to realise the power and truth of Zargon. They shall stop following false rulers and worship the mighty one. All will obey his will and Cynidicea shall become mighty, the centre of his future kingdom. Those who have served him well will be rewarded with power. Those who have not served him shall die.

Composition of the Church of Zargon

Unknown. There are no full members and lesser members - the cult claims it treats all equally. This is more true than with the other groups, as all members are treated equally. Equally badly, that is, in a group wherein all seek power and fight over it, directly or through intrigue. Members of all classes exist among the Zargonites, as do a number of humanoids. Some Cynidiceans serve the cult for money, out of terror or because the insanity has got to them enough they believe the Zargonites mean the best. Most Cynidiceans, being in their dream-world, pay the cult little heed. Those in their right minds often join one of the other three groups in the attempt to overthrow the worshippers of the slime-being.

Zargonite NPCs

Arastotheles

History: Born in AC 965 to a family of devout Zargonites, Arastotheles has been deeply immersed in the lore and dogma of Zargon his whole life. Sent to the

Temple to gain an education, as the eldest son of his family, Arastotheles had these beliefs reinforced. By the time he obtained membership in the Zargonite clergy at the age of 20, Arastotheles was a raving fanatic, eager to spread to faith, and just as willing to put down "heretics" ruthlessly. He assisted in crushing revolts on at least two occasions, relishing the experience of killing his fellow Cynidiceans, whose crime had merely been the adherence to a different faith.

Soon, he chafed for more action, and so his superiors sent him into the far caverns known to the Cynidiceans, where he was ordered to make contact with various known goblin tribes and bring them under Zargon's influence. It was here where Arastotheles fought many underground monsters, and brought many a goblin to the "light" of Zargon - by force if necessary. Recognised for his achievements, he was recalled to Cynidicea, where he was assigned the post of Inquisitor, and was made responsible for rooting out subversives, and dealing with them in any way he desired. He remains at that post today.

Personality: Arastotheles is an utter sadist; there is nothing more he enjoys than torturing and killing those who are helpless to fight back, and bringing those whom he considers heretics to "justice". Blended with his sadistic tendencies is a fervent belief in the cause of Zargon. He believes that he is serving Zargon's will by seeking out and killing those who oppose his worship, and he feels that Zargon's principles are the ones guaranteed to provide him with the means to attain Immortality one day. Like many of his fellow drug-crazed Zargonites, Arastotheles has not stopped to consider that there are no real principles to Zargon's worship as such, unless one counts such

ideas as "might makes right". This minor detail has not stopped him, however.

Appearance: Arastotheles is not very imposing, standing roughly 5'8" tall and weighing 147 lbs. He tends to wear dark clothing - usually dark grey or black, when he goes about his gruesome duties. With his stark white hair, and his piercing light green eyes, he has a very ghoulish appearance, which he has found unsettles most people around him.

Combat Notes: He is a 6th level cleric of Zargon. AC 4 (chain mail + DEX bonus); hp 35; #AT 1; D 2d4+2 (mace - Expert) or 1d2 (whip) or by spell; ML 11; AL C; S 12, I 13, W 18, D 13, Co 15, Ch 13. Languages: Cynidicean, Goblin. General Skills: Ceremony - Zargon (W+1), Survival - Underground (I), Orientation in Caves (I), Alertness (D), Leadership (Ch), Endurance (Co)

Radulfus

History: Born in AC 979, Radulfus was the youngest of three sons. His eldest brother, as is customary among many Cynidicean families that worship Zargon, went to the Temple to become a cleric of the faith. His other brother ventured into nearby caverns in search of adventure - and has not returned since. His parents not being terribly pious, and spending most of their time in a drug-induced haze after the loss of their second son, pretty much left him to his own devices. Having been turned down at the Temple for not possessing the talent to become a cleric, Radulfus enlisted in the Cynidicean army, in the hopes that there would be a future for him there.

It was in the army that his superiors exposed him to the wonders of Zargon, and, through the use of additional drugs

to enhance impressionability, made him into a drugged out, but useful, soldier. He spent over a year in this condition, scarcely being aware of his surroundings, and generally having a far greater concentration of drugs in his system than ever before - a large amount even by Cynidicean standards. It was during a botched raid on a nearby hostile tribe of goblins that Radulfus was separated from his fellow soldiers, and found himself lost in a series of strange caverns. After several weeks of searching, he finally found his way back to Cynidicea, but along the way many of the drugs had worked their way out of his system.

He noticed for the first time how clearly he seemed to be thinking, compared to his fellow Cynidiceans, and suspected that there must be something at work, which made everyone appear out of touch with reality. This was especially evident to him when he rejoined his army unit - no one noticed that he had been missing for several weeks! Though some of the ambient drugs have since found their way back into his system, Radulfus has managed to avoid taking the special drugs given to the soldiers, which he correctly suspected of turning them into zombies.

Personality: Radulfus is a soldier of Zargon because there do not appear to be any alternatives, and because it is the only existence he has really known. At the same time, he suspects that something is wrong in Cynidicea - something is inhibiting the ability of the people to function normally. His few weeks away from Cynidicea gave him the chance to see the world in a more or less "clean" state, and now he cannot help but notice how oddly people are behaving. He has no idea that there are drugs present in almost everything, or

that the Zargonites are responsible for their presence. As a result, Radulfus is at a crossroads; if someone were to show him a better way to live, or that the Zargonites are responsible for Cynidicea's current problems, he would abandon his tenuous faith.

Appearance: Radulfus is a typical warrior - moderately tall at 5'10", and solidly built (177 lbs). He is rarely seen without his short sword at his side, and his chain mail armour is always neat and clean.

Combat Notes: He is a 1st-level fighter. AC 4 (chain mail + shield); hp 8; #AT 1; D 1d6 (short sword + strength); ML 10; AL N; S 14, I 13, W 13 D 12, Co 12, Ch 15. Languages: Cynidicean. General Skills: Military tactics (I), Survival - Underground (I), Alertness (D), Orientation in Caves (I)

G'tran

History: G'tran was born 34 years ago, to the chief of the Cynidicean thouls, and his wife, the most influential shaman. His mother taught him her spells, in addition to the reading and writing so rare among his clan. When G'tran was 16, both parents were slain in an uprising by one of his

father's bodyguards. G'tran, already a powerful figure in his own right, defeated the usurper, and seized control. He now heads not only his thoul tribe, but many of the cliff-dwelling humanoids, and works hand-in-hand with the Zargonites on many missions. He has not taken a wife, but maintains romantic relationships with several female thouls.

Personality: G'tran has a need to be in charge, a combination of his heritage and his history. Having seen the danger of treachery from ones' followers, he

runs a tight ship, brooking no dissent. He has personally slain any humanoid leader in his subject tribes who dares to question his rule. Given this nature, he is especially annoyed at having to take orders from the Zargonites, and looks forward to the day when the tables are turned. Until then, he plays the part of the loyal follower, all the while ensuring that the cliff-dwellers remain loyal to him foremost. He is willing to listen to those who may help him throw off the rule of Zargon, if his followers are granted independence.

Appearance: G'tran stands just 6'3", short for a thoul, let alone a thoul chieftain. He possesses a wiry strength from the troll-side of his heritage, but also is quite nimble, unlike any troll. He is an albino, with white hair and skin (*goblinus monstrum necrophagous*) and wears

skins of important individuals he has slain. An amulet of Zargon adorns his neck, but is often removed when in the confines of his own cave. He is armed at all times.

Combat Notes: He is a 6th-level thoul shaman. AC 6 (dexterity bonus); hp 47; #AT 2 claws or 1 battle axe+1 (basic training) or by spell; D 1d3+2+paralysis, 1d3+2+paralysis or d8+3 or by spell effect; save F8 (+1 vs. spells); ML 10; AI C; S 16, I 12, W 14, D 17, Co 13, Ch 13. Languages: Troll, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Cynidicean (the cliff-dwellers do not speak any other humanoid tongues, as the passing of time has caused a great deal of assimilation and cross-culture transfer). Spells: Daily: 2 1st, 2 2nd, 1 3rd. General Skills: Intimidate (S+1), Leadership (Ch), Mysticism (W).

Drugs in Cynidicea

The typical Cynidicean lives in a world of shifting colours, sounds, and perceptions. Drugs are such a part of the Cynidicean culture that, when abruptly deprived of them, the normal Cynidicean will go into shock. "Cold turkey" is not an option with a Cynidicean; it would require months for them to physically escape the hold of the drugs they have taken. Some never escape the mental hold drugs have on the individual.

The history of drug use in Cynidicea is a long and storied one. First introduced by the Cult of Zargon in order to wrest control from the government, drugs became the norm rather than the exception. Indeed it has been observed by some in attendance at a Cynidicean meal that, rather than use traditional spices on his or her food, a Cynidicean will "spice" a meal with drugs of various sorts. Combine this with the hallucinogenic fodder given to food animals and the typical Cynidicean feast can rapidly turn into a drug induced feeding frenzy followed by long periods of almost comatose sleep.

In the beginning, Priests of Zargon were content with using drugs to alter the senses of the populace. As time went by, drug research became a more important part of the Church's activities. Poisons,

mood alteration, religious, and recreational drugs were all researched and created in order to "better subjugate the masses" to the will of Zargon. Few stories of the "pits" where such drugs were tested on unwilling subjects escaped the dungeons beneath the Zargonite temples, but those that did were enough to incite a city full of drugged inhabitants into further excesses in order to escape the horrible reality that surrounded them.



History Of Drugs In Cynidicea

A treatise on Cynidicea and its inhabitants would not be complete without referring to the role that drugs have played in the history of the nation and its people. For over 1000 years, the Priests of Zargon have made a conscientious ef-

fort to introduce drugs into the day to day lives of the average Cynidicean. This has resulted in a culture in which reality and fantasy are often intertwined. Drugs are not seen as a form of recreation, but as a daily part of life.

In the year BC 127, the Priests of Zargon were instructed by their god to begin researching drugs to better control the fears of the populace and to woo them over to the worship of Zargon. By slowly introducing hallucinogenic drugs into the food and water supplies, they hoped to dull the natural fears that they held towards the multi-tentacled one and create an atmosphere of ambivalence to the fact that people were disappearing with regularity to feed Zargon's hunger. The fact that the drugs provided a pleasant type of "seasoning" to the demigod's meals that he enjoyed was an added "benefit". After King Alexander and Queen Zenobia both died in BC 128 of a strange "wasting disease" (actually one of the first of many poisons that the Priests discovered in their drug research), the priests took advantage of the resulting chaos to take control of the city in BC 126. They began the large-scale production and distribution of the hallucinatory drugs that they had de-

veloped in BC 109. These they introduced into the city's food and water supplies in order to cement their control over the populace.

After the invasions of BC 98 destroyed all above ground evidence Cynidicea's existence, the remainder of the population moved underground to the caverns where the Priests had cultivated their raw materials for the drugs. What neither the Priests nor the Factions knew is that the entire food and water supply of the Caverns had also become contaminated from the drug farms. This resulted in the Priests also becoming addicted to the hallucinogens. By the time that they realised this, they were addicted past the point of "no return". Although they became addicted, this did not stop them from continuing to create new and improved versions of drugs to further subjugate the people and to fulfil their own cravings for stronger and more vivid experiences.

Magic and Drugs

With the mages and clerics of Zargon co-operating to create drugs for the populace, it was only natural that they began experimenting with various concoctions to enhance their magical abilities. In the case of clerics, their use was to enhance the communication with their "god" Zargon and to aid them in the cre-

ation of various ritualistic magics. These magics, when combined with and enhanced by drugs and incense, were able to affect entire populations at a time. Mages used the drugs to decrease their memorisation times and to create new and powerful illusions.

Drug Rules

Each drug is assigned a level, duration, effect, and description. The format follows that of Spell lists. Rather than detail 1000 years of drug development, the following guidelines are provided for the creation of drugs.

Level ranges from 0 to 5. Each level corresponds to the potency of the drug. Level 0 has no save modifier, level 1 has a -1 modifier to the saving throw, etc.

All saves are made vs. Poison for determining the effect of the drug. All saves

are made vs. Constitution for determining addiction. Once a save vs. addiction has been made the next check is determined by the level of the drug based on the number of days vs. the potency.

The check is made a minimum of once per 7-day period of exposure.

Example: level 0 drug = once every 7 days of exposure, level 1 drug = twice every 7 days, etc.

Addiction

Once an addiction roll has been failed the character is considered "addicted" to the drug in question and penalties will occur whenever the drug cannot be taken at least once per day. Penalties are drug specific and effects are based on the potency of the drug in question. Addiction can be cured in one of two ways. First is a *cure poison* spell cast by a cleric of at least equal the level of the potency of the drug. The second is to go "cold turkey". This method can be voluntary or involuntary.

In order for it to be voluntary the character must make a save vs. Wisdom modified by the potency for a number of days equal to the potency. Thus, a level 1 drug imposes a penalty of 1 to the save. If made, the character can proceed nor-

mally with addiction penalties being reduced by 1 per day of successful save made. If the save is failed during the "detox" time then the character must begin the process again, as he or she has "fallen off the wagon".

If the character fails the save vs. Wisdom, then he or she will refuse all attempts at detox for at least a week per potency level before he or she can attempt the Wisdom save again. If a character is forced to detox by others during this time, he or she will actively attempt to break away from the programme through whatever means possible up to and including doing violence on others. All other detox guidelines (regarding saves, etc.) remains the same.

Sample Drug Listings

Hallucinogenic

Drug Potency	Drug Name	Effects/Usage
hal1	Communicate with Gods	Shaman use to communicate with Immortals.
hal2	Spirit Walk	Out of body spiritual experiences.
hal3	Visionquest	See future/past/far away places, acts as <i>clairvoyance/clairaudience</i> spell. Same effects and duration apply.
hal4	Glowbug	Allows viewing of "aura" of all living things, in combat acts as <i>faerie fire</i> , gives attempts at first aid double the positive effects.
hal5	Nightmare Trip	Creates gateway into the Nightmare Dimension

and allows a creature from there to possess the body for 1d6 days - extremely rare and used mainly in ritualistic magic to bind a nightmare creature for use as an assassin or servant on the Prime Plane.

Barbiturate

Drug Potency	Drug Name	Effects/Usage
bar1	Sleep	<i>Sleep</i> as per spell.
bar2	Spell Regain	Halve time needed to rest before regaining spells.
bar3	Numb	Remain conscious but paralysed, as per <i>hold person</i> .
bar4	Quicktime	Sense of time if off - views world as if passing two times as fast; opponent always gains initiative and first strike, all Dexterity bonuses are nullified for duration of drug effect.
bar5	Comedown	Negates the effects of all amphetamines in the drug user's system.

Amphetamine

Drug Potency	Drug Name	Effects/Usage
amp1	Haste	Hastes the user, as per the spell of the same name.
amp2	Slowtime	Sense of time is off - views world as if passing twice as slow, all Dexterity bonuses increased by +2 for 2d6 hours. After dosage wears off, the user must sleep for twice the number of hours that Dexterity was increased.
amp3	React	User always gains initiative and first strike while drug is in effect.
amp4	Nosleep	User is able to function without sleep or rest for 24 hours, ignores any exhaustion penalties that might apply. Must rest as per exhaustion rules

afterwards.

amp5	Comeup	Negates the effects of all barbiturates in the drug user's system.
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Medicinal

Drug Potency	Drug Name	Effects/Usage
med1	Nopain	Blocks pain, will add +1 to all Constitution-based saves that are not drug related.
med2	Healing	Restores 1d4 hit points per dose.
med3	Cure Disease	Functions as per the spell of the same name.
med4	Feelgood	Restores 2d6 hit points per dose.
med5	Freedom	Removes all withdrawal symptoms and allows recipient to break free from any one addiction per dosage, but does not prevent re-addiction to the same substance in the future. This is a very rare drug, cultivated only by the high priest of Zargon.

Poisons

Drug Potency	Drug Name	Effects/Usage
poi1	Rotgut	User suffers diarrhoea, vomiting, and excessive dehydration - losing 1d6 hit points per hour until death.
poi2	Blackface	User's face turns black as all blood vessels in head explode. The increase in blood pressure to brain results in a massive stroke, losing one point of Intelligence per turn until an antidote is taken. If Intelligence is reduced below 75% of the original total, then the loss is permanent. Otherwise, lost Intelligence is regained at one point per week of rest.
poi3	Bluetongue	The victim's tongue swells to enormous proportions until suffocation occurs (within 2d2

		turns).
poi4	Rictus	Muscle spasms induce heart and lung failure, and the face is contorted into a "grin of death" rictus. Suffering is characterised by jerking motions of body, save vs. Death once per round or die immediately, with the penalty increasing by one per round until death ensues.
poi5	Jellybones	The bones weaken to point of collapse, while the marrow produces no blood. It is not usually noticeable until the final stages, and is characterised by general weakness and lack of recuperative powers.

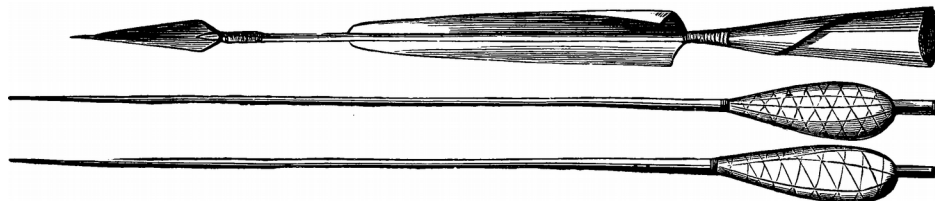
Recreational

Drug Potency	Drug Name	Effects/Usage
rec1	Sharedream	Communal dreams are possible if this drug is taken by several people at once; duration is at the discretion of the DM.
rec2	Orgiac	Sexual enjoyment increases.
rec3	Whimsy	The world takes on a dreamlike state; -4 to all saves vs. Spells.
rec4	Colours	The drug user's senses and his or her perception of them are changed: colours are perceived as sounds, sounds as smells, etc.
rec5	Creative	Used to "enhance" artistic creativity, speeds spell research by a factor of two.

Delivery Devices

The Priests of Zargon have not constrained their research to just the manufacturing of new drug types; they have also spent a millennium learning how to effectively distribute drugs to unsuspecting individuals. Some of the methods that they use are listed below.

Blowgun	A typical blowgun with a dosage of the drug on the tip of the dart. Most often used as a stealthy "from the shadows" attack.
Gas Globe	Small glass globes filled with a gaseous form of the drug in question. Often used in traps, as the globes are delicate.
Dustball	A rounded, baked clay type of missile used in slings and catapults, the clay that it is made of is, in fact, a powdered form of the drug. When the missile hits its target, the target must make a save vs. Poison or become affected by the drug used in creating the clay. Common types of drugs used in this manner are sleep drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, and sensory warping drugs.
Incense	While this might not seem to be an effective way of distributing drugs, it has great effect over large groups of people. Warriors of the Church of Zargon will often use drug incense to increase their strength and dexterity before going into battle. Many carry small snuffboxes full of powdered performance enhancers that they sniff before going into battle.
Candles/ Torches	Most of the candles (and torches) in Cynidicea are laced with one type of drug or another. The effects vary according to the purpose for which the candle was created. Common usages are for inducing sexual orgies, enhancing meditation, and encouraging sleep



Zargon and Other Villains

Zargon

Contrary to the views of the Zargonites, their patron is not an Immortal, nor is he truly exalted in any way. In truth, Zargon is a greater servitor of the Outer Beings - a creature crafted by their magics to serve as their eyes and ears on the Prime Plane. As such, Zargon is a unique creature; he is not a member of a race, nor is he a supremely powerful being. While he served his masters' cause in Mogreth, Zargon was both a living avatar of the Outer Beings' power, and a conduit through which their powers flowed. It was through him that the Outer Beings' clerics in Mogreth received their spells, and it was he who presided over their dark ceremonies.

After Mogreth fell, and Zargon was sealed away, he was forgotten by his masters, who, seeing their dream of an empire devoted to their worship crushed, turned their attention to other plots. Though he was ignored, Zargon still received some measure of the powers granted to him by the Outer Beings, such that he could still grant spells in their name. While imprisoned for those long millennia, Zargon was able to influence the thoughts of susceptible minds in the area, and thus was able to convince humanoids and their ilk to venerate him, and through him the Outer Beings - though his loyalty to his masters was quickly waning.

Eventually, as the timeline indicates, Zargon was able to influence the thoughts

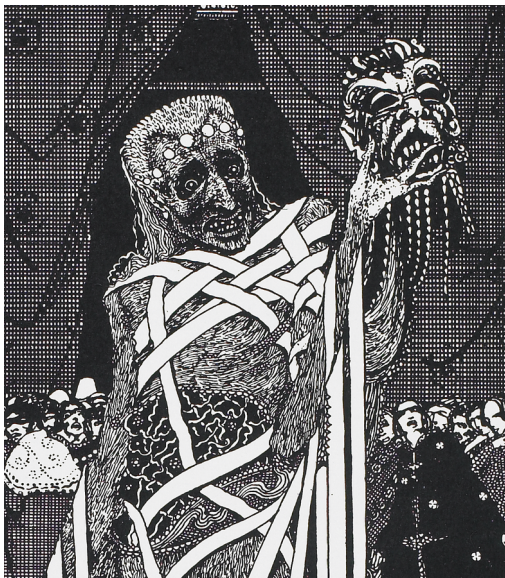
of impressionable Cynidiceans, and through them began a following in his name. The Church of Zargon arose from this, and, unlike the other followers who worshipped Zargon, the Cynidiceans worship him directly, and not the Outer Beings. Zargon is still able to grant spells to his followers as Immortals do, and in the process he is trying to build up a fanatical

following. His ultimate goal is to use his followers to smash the other three factions, and finally unite the Cynidicean people under his rulership. If he ever accomplishes this, he will use his worshippers as pawns to spread the word of his power, by persuasion or by the sword. He not only plans to convert the remaining goblin tribes in the area; he is aware of the existence of the Emirates of Ylarum, not far above Cynidicea. He remembers the time when he held sway over Mogreth; one day, he will reign supreme over that land again.

The one thing that Zargon fears is that, eventually, the Outer Beings will turn their attention to him once more, and realise what he is doing. By building a strong following, he believes he will be able to withstand anything they send his way. Zargon is unaware of Gaius or Barimoor, and has no idea what sort of machinations are being devised by these two potential rivals.

Gaius

Gaius is a 28th level lich from the ancient line of Cynidicean kings. His reign was a powerful one, though not necessarily a bad one. He was very much in the tradition of the Nithian "god-kings" of old. In life, he always seemed to assume that his borders extended fantastically beyond the true borders, even to other worlds. But he was also content with the knowledge that all was his and never felt the need to test the theory. His people followed his word, for his word was law and disobedience was death. He encouraged trade with other nations that "The superior taste and culture of the Cynidicean people soothe the barbaric inclinations of other tribes", and always pretended those other nations were "from far beyond the sea". Ambassadors learned to either deal with his megalomaniacal fantasies or they would be ousted quickly.



His lichhood was born more of a simple desire for life after death and a strong belief in his own immortality, rather than the costly, painstaking research. His desire and belief was so strong that his life force has continued to sustain him. He

still believes that he rules Cynidicea, even though the people have long forgotten him. He would certainly be shocked to learn of their short memories, but not enough to kill them all. He, in fact, believes it is the priests of Zargon who keep his minions from the city, a city his lieutenants would dearly love to feast in. A party of heroes, brought before him, expecting death, would likely instead be given the task of defeating Zargon and his followers.

Gaius believes himself to be a beloved, ousted king of the world. He is dimly aware of the Empire of Thyatis which has encroached upon his great kingdom. He is also aware of tunnels and caverns that eventually wind down to the capital of Thyatis itself. But before he invades the city, he needs to re-establish himself as ruler of Cynidicea, that he may command his 10 legions of doom once again (keep in mind that he doesn't quite realise what the current state of Cynidicea is).

He is also aware of Barimoor. His crypt tunnels do, in fact, lead to Barimoor's cavern and he has been approached by that mage's minions. Gaius has sent back his reply that an alliance can be possible only if Barimoor himself comes and kneels to him and acknowledges his godhood.

Barimoor, being a subtle mage, has not sent reply.

Gaius has several lieutenants, among them:

Tasetmerydjehuty, a level 20 mage, is actually the newest, and at the same time oldest, of the lieutenants of Gaius. He came mysteriously the day after Efram, the former 1st lieutenant of Gaius,

died in a strange accident (at least it was strange to Gaius, who isn't really aware of what a vampire is) involving a sharp stick, an arrow, which had been used as a makeshift stake by a band of adventurers. In any case, Tasetmerydjehuty came the next day and offered his services to the "Great King beneath the earth Gaius".

In actuality, he is an ancient vampire of Nithia and is working on his own designs

Barimoor

Barimoor is one of the most powerful magic users in the region of Ylaruam, though ironically few people know of him. He came to the lands that would one day become Ylaruam from his native Alphatia around AC 200, wishing to distinguish himself from his fellow powerful wizards. Bringing along many apprentices, monsters, and other creatures, he made his way into the Great Alasiyan Basin, the great central desert of modern Ylaruam. Once in the desired spot, he and his entourage summoned elemental beings to build a great underground complex.

To this day, he has remained within his personal domain, endlessly questing to become an Immortal in the Sphere of Energy, while his veritable army of 120 apprentices (some of them over 12th level) assist him in his cause. As part of his quest for Immortality, he must become the supreme magic user within a 1,000 mile radius of his stronghold, as well as alter the land for miles around his home. His network of caverns are now home to thousands of humanoids and powerful monsters, some of them other-dimensional, and his own citadel is

of taking whatever Gaius gains right from beneath him.

Dragan, a level 12 mage, is suspicious of Tasetmerydjehuty but also fears his power. He is loyal to his lord and almost sentimental in his attempts to keep his lord from knowing the true nature of his "kingdom".

Lidija, a level 15 mage, hates Dragan and fears Tasetmerydjehuty. She has her own designs and lust for power.

stockpiled with powerful magical items of all forms.



How do Barimoor's ambitions coincide with Cynidicea? Although his stronghold is not near the underground city, he does know of its existence. The great wizard has not had the time to seriously investigate the city, but the very nature of the Cynidiceans, as a group of humans who have "adapted" to live underground, does interest him. He currently sees them as potential pawns, possibly as either labourers or soldiers for his underground empire, and he views their city as a possible repository of magical knowledge which might aid him in his quest.

He is also vaguely aware of Zargon, but he does not know who or what this creature is, nor why it wields such influence over the city.

A cautious man who leaves nothing to chance, Barimoor will not act on his own against Cynidicea for many decades to come, though he does have a simple spy network within the underground city, mainly to keep tabs on important developments. He would, however, react to any abrupt changes in Cynidicean society. Events such as the destruction of Zargon, the Church of Zargon losing its power, the unification of the three sects opposed to the Zargonites, or the arrival of powerful people (such as the PCs) into the city, will attract the attention of Barimoor's spies. The news will be sent to Barimoor within hours, and he would turn his attention to the new development, but only long enough to determine whether or not it posed a threat to his plans.

If the turn of events constituted a threat, Barimoor would likely send some of his servants to Cynidicea to try to influence events so that they turn out more to his liking. The actions taken by these servants could range from the assassination of those people who might influence events, to subtle propaganda to turn the public opinion in a direction Barimoor wishes. Should these subtle machinations be foiled, Barimoor would no doubt direct his energies towards the conquest of Cynidicea, in order to prevent the establishment of any forces hostile to his aims.

Taking all of this into account, it is clear that Barimoor is a figure who should remain in the background as much as possible. In fact, the PCs should really not be aware of him at all. Only towards the end of their adventuring careers should they become aware of this wizard of great power.

Interesting Places

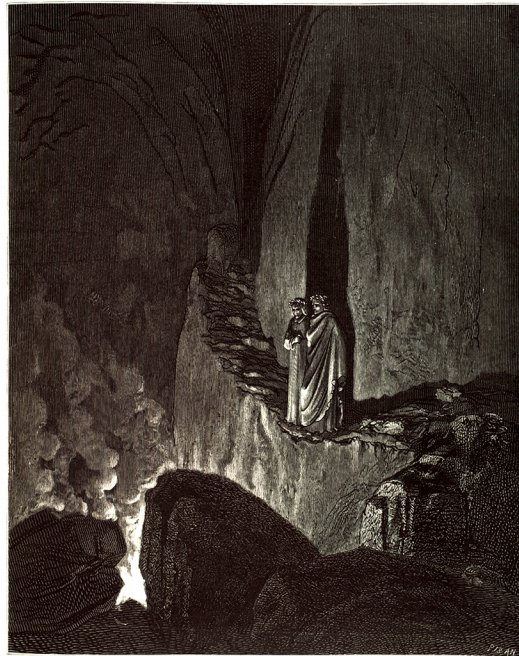
The Eye of Zargon

Perhaps the most inhospitable place in the cavern of Cynidicea is the great pool of magma known by the Cynidiceans as the Eye of Zargon. No one knows how long it has been there; the oldest surviving records in Cynidicea's archives, dating before the reign of King Alexander, describe it in considerable detail. No matter where one stands within the cavern, a faint red glow is always visible to the west.

This natural feature was so named because it greatly resembles Zargon's single red eye. Because of this similarity, the Church of Zargon considers this place to be holy ground, forbidden to all but the most senior clerics. It is here where new senior members of the Church are initiated, and it is here where the two holy days of the Church, which fall on the solstices, are celebrated by those same senior members.

What makes the Eye of Zargon unique is that it is the only place where Zargon can be truly destroyed. While he may be killed by physical or magical means, only by throwing his horn into the depths of this fiery pit will he never be able to re-

generate. The most senior clerics of the Church are also aware of this, and as a result they long ago made this place taboo to all but the most senior - and thus, the most trustworthy - clerics. Those who are found trespassing in this place, and who have not been destroyed by its guardians, are thrown into the pit.



Not wishing to have their spiritual leader destroyed by those who would seek to free Cynidicea, the Church of Zargon has ensured that the Eye is well defended. The natural topography of the cavern has been their ally in this case. The wastelands in which the Eye of Zargon is situated are much higher in elevation than the rest of the cavern - in fact, there are only two ways to reach it. The first way is to scale the sheer walls

of the cliffs bordering the wastelands to the north and east, a climb of over 60 feet. If this was not challenging enough, the rockface itself is riddled with cave mouths, all leading deep into the heart of the plateau, in which many tribes of goblinoids live. These goblinoids are loosely allied with the Zargonites, and they are

paid to keep watch and ensure no one scales the cliffs.

The second way consists of two rock bridges, which arch over a water-filled chasm, an extremely deep part of the underground lake that juts southwards from the main body. These two bridges, each roughly eight feet wide, are guarded by a patrol of ten Cynidicean soldiers (AC 4; HD 2; hp 10 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D 1d6 (short sword); SV F2; ML 8; AL C), all of whom are fanatically devoted to the Church. They will attack anyone not wearing the robes of a senior cleric of the Church of Zargon, and if attacked one of them will blow a horn to alert other soldiers within the city proper.

The wastelands that surround the Eye of Zargon pose another obstacle. It is a veritable maze of stalactites and stalagmites, as well as being full of geysers and boiling pools of mud. It is quite easy to lose one's way on the plateau, and to be seriously injured by exploding bubbles of boiling mud (1d6 damage), or searing clouds of vapour from a geyser (1d6 damage/round).

Finally, the bubbling magma of the Eye of Zargon itself is home to a large group

of flame salamanders, as well as a powerful efreet. The flame salamanders are natural inhabitants of the region; in fact, they were present long before the Cynidiceans came underground. While these creatures are dangerous on their own, they are led by an ill-tempered efreet, angry about being imprisoned here. Centuries ago, a senior member of the Church of Zargon was taught by her master how to summon an efreet, and bind him. Zargon wished to have powerful guards posted around the Eye itself, capable of surviving the intense heat, so that no one carrying his horn, should he be defeated in battle, could throw it in. The cleric summoned the efreet while standing next to the lava pit, and then cast a powerful binding spell upon him, forbidding him from leaving until he had killed any person or thing, bearing Zargon's horn, who approached the pit. Only when the thief was killed, and the horn returned to the temple, would the efreet be set free. Over the ensuing centuries, no one has been able to kill Zargon, much less bring the horn to the lava pit. Over that time, the efreet has grown angrier and angrier, and now he sometimes encourages the flame salamanders to attack any goblinoids or Zargonites who draw near.

The Isle of Death

In the centre of the lake dug by King Alexander there is an island riddled with caves. In its centre there is a group of large dolmens (megalithic sepulchral monuments) that existed long before the Cynidiceans arrived. In fact, there has always been an underground lake, but during the great reign of Alexander it was expanded considerably, and new channels were dug through the rock to tap underground rivers. These rivers

doubled the size of the lake, raising the water level so much that the Isle was almost submerged during his reign.

Not long after the fall of Cynidicea, the survivors built a new city underground, on the lake's eastern shore. In the short period of time since Alexander's death, several earthquakes had passed through the land, altering the courses of many underground rivers. By the time the new

city was established, the water level had receded so much that the Isle was visible once again.

In an effort to make the underground as habitable as possible, most of the bodies in the upper catacombs beneath the Temple of Zargon were removed to make more space, and their bodies were burned in one massive pyre. The ashes were then ferried to the Isle, and re-buried there. It was not long afterwards that the Isle acquired its modern name.

Several months after the burial, activity was noticed on the Isle. Scouts were sent over to investigate, but they did not return. A second expedition went, and it also disappeared. Concerned that the disappearances might weaken their hold on the people, the Zargonites sent some of their own clerics to see what was happening. These people survived, and upon returning they reported that large numbers of undead were present on the Isle, and it was these creatures who killed the two previous scouting parties. Realising that the new city of Cynidicea was safe as long as the undead remained trapped on the Isle, the Zargonites simply passed a declaration that the Isle of Death, as it was becoming known, was forbidden to all. The evil clerics believed that the presence of the Cynidiceans on the Isle was what awakened the undead, and that if they left the Isle alone the undead would become dormant once again.

This resolution did not satisfy everyone, and some brave souls made the journey to the Isle to see what secrets might lie hidden there. Rumours, passed down for generations from those who first visited the island under Alexander's reign, said that the ring of stones contain great power. Some folk tales, from unknown sources, claimed that the ring of stones

was actually a gateway to other realities - a great nexus point where one could travel to far-off lands and times if they knew the proper incantations.

Other tales also abounded - of the strange tombs that lay hidden in the caves of the Isle, with their strange writings and withered corpses that did not look entirely human. Those who went to the Isle, and returned, confirmed some of these tales. The caves are indeed tombs, dug out millennia before by the human slaves of the rulers of Mogreth. The region which is now occupied by Cynidicea was once used as a royal burial chamber for one of the minor noble families of Mogreth during that empire's heyday. Whenever a noble died, many of his or her favourite slaves were killed after the body was interred, so that the departed noble would have servants in the afterlife. The murdered slaves were buried in mass graves on the Isle, not far from the ring of stones. As these bodies were being buried, mouldering skeletons were found already lying in the graves. The bodies were buried there anyway.

As for the stones themselves, they stood in this cavern before even Mogreth came to be. In those ancient times, the great cave was inhabited by primitive men who lived on what is now the lake bed. They had only one Immortal, but they also paid homage to their ancestors. Their religious meeting place was the ring of stones, constructed by their ancestors when they first arrived in the cave. All their ceremonies were celebrated at the ring, and under the guidance of their shamans they could talk to their ancestors, for the stones acted as a gateway to the spirit world. Over the years the shamans had preached there would come a time when all of their people

would meet again in a new life where there would be no want or suffering. One day, a deadly plague struck the cavern, killing the tribesmen in their hundreds. One by one they were entombed on the hilly rise that would become the Isle, to serve for eternity as guardians of their most sacred place, but also in order to allow them to reach the spirit world with a minimum of effort. As for what happened to the last of the lost people, no one knows, though ancient carvings can still be found in the midst of the ring of stones showing a great pilgrimage under the stars, leading west.

While the Zargonites believe that the Cynidiceans awakened the undead, this is not true. The undead are becoming restless because of the steadily lowering water level of the lake, which is disturbing their rest. As the years passed, more caves became visible, and more undead arose. In fact, the lake itself is a sort of giant water clock, counting the passing years. Its falling level is due partially to reduced water intake from underground rivers, and partially to ancient spells

The Lower Catacombs

The lower catacombs are a vast network of winding tunnels and caverns, apparently with no end. When King Alexander had the lake dug out as a water supply for the old city of Cynidicea, he commissioned explorers to investigate the network of caverns that went even deeper into the earth. While some explorers did not return, those who did said that the caverns and tunnels seemed to go on forever, and that there was always an oppressive feeling of dread. Feeling that the place was evil, Alexander had the pit leading into the lower catacombs closed off, with a sturdy building erected around

woven by long-dead shamans of the lost human tribe who lived here so long ago. They had enchanted the entire hill which constitutes the Isle, imploring upon their Immortal so that nothing should destroy or obscure their most sacred place of worship, even after their people were long forgotten. The lake will continue falling over time until the entire hill is exposed, with more undead awakening all the while. By that time, there will be a land bridge connecting the Isle to Cynidicea.

Obviously, if such a thing were to come to pass, Cynidicea would soon be faced with an invasion of undead. Only a party of brave adventurers could save the city. Stopping the drainage of the lake will prove an almost impossible feat, and damaging the ring would be very difficult because it will be guarded by the awakened undead. Nevertheless, resourceful adventurers should be able to find a way to eliminate the undead menace, or otherwise return them to their rightful rest.

the sealed entrance, to ensure that whatever existed down below would not easily escape, and so that it would be difficult for anyone to get down there. Since he planned to send other expeditions down there in the future, Alexander did not have the lower catacombs closed off permanently; instead, he had an intricate system of winches and pulleys placed within the building so that the huge stone slab could be lifted if desired.

There are, in fact, many things of interest in the lower catacombs. Perhaps the most important, and most dangerous, feature of this place is the lair of Gaius.

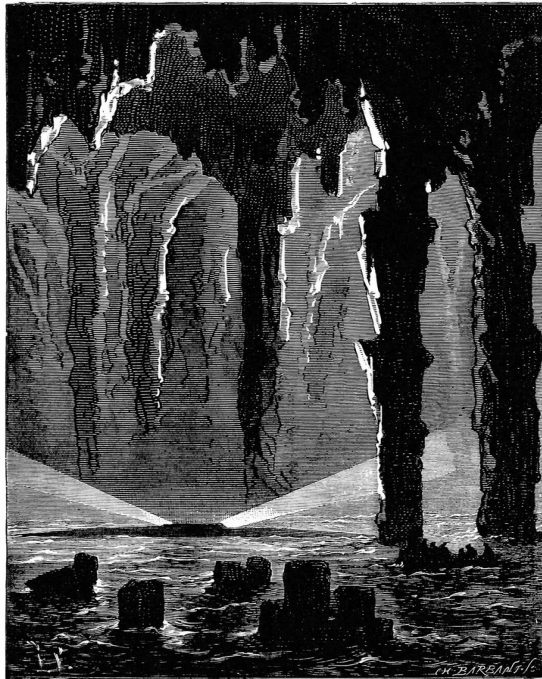
This enterprising lich has built his lair in one of the side caverns here, not far from the entrance to the upper catacombs. It is here where he keeps his undead minions, and where he foments his plans. Though he knows a great deal about what is to be found here, there are many areas where even he will not go.

Gaius, and his undead minions, are not the only inhabitants of these caverns. Deep into the cave system, roughly 20

miles south of Cynidicea, the tunnels and caves open up into one great cavern, almost 40 miles long and 25 miles wide. The entire cavern is filled with a bluish phosphorescent moss, which grows so dense that the lighting is roughly similar to that of the early evening on the surface. The cave roof, 200 feet overhead, almost looks like a "sky" of sorts, due to its colour. The cave floor is mostly covered by a brackish swamp, broken only by islands of rocky earth, which are themselves often festooned with fungi of all sorts. The air reeks of decaying fungal matter, and opaque mists often cover the swamp like a blanket.

This unpleasant place is the home of the sha'krzheth (SHACH kerZHETH), the remnants of the once-great lizard man tribes that ruled southeastern Brun before the rise of other races in the region. It was a branch of these lizard men who helped found Mogreth long ago. After the

collapse of Mogreth, the rise of humanity in the region, and the Great Rain of Fire not long afterwards, the ancestors of the sha'krzheth fled underground, retreating ever deeper as the cataclysms above continued to wreak havoc. Eventually, they were unable to retrace their route, and so they continued wandering for many years. Finally, after over fifty years, they came upon this cavern, and have remained here ever since.



A simple people, the sha'krzheth live a simple hunter-gatherer existence - fishing in the swamps and deeper waters for blind fish and eels, and gathering the various edible fungi and algae to supplement their diet. Most of these lizard men live in caves dug into the walls of the cavern, effectively small villages of between 50 and 100 lizard men. Having no metal, the sha'krzheth have learned how to cure the stalks of

certain large mushrooms, which, when hardened, are as rigid as wood. These stalks are then carved into simple spear shafts and fishing hooks. Due to their long years underground, the sha'krzheth are albinos - with white scaly skin and large pink, or red, eyes. Living a simple life, these lizard men have little need for anything outsiders could offer them, but woe to the fool who tries to take anything away from them, or harms one of their number. They seldom worship any known Immortals, though Ka is acknowledged by them.

Far to the east, the caverns and tunnels of the lower catacombs are home to vast numbers of black puddings, grey oozes, and ochre jellies, which normally subsist on the lichens and mosses that grow in the ever-present dampness, as well as each other. Should explorers come their way, these creatures would need little encouragement to devour them. Some of these specimens are very large - as much as three or four times the size of those encountered closer to the surface.

Perhaps the most fearsome inhabitant of these caverns is Chogath, a Burrower who has been awakened, but remains unable to move. His domain lies many miles to the northwest of Cynidicea, and over 500 feet deeper into the earth. With no sentient creatures living nearby, Chogath occupies his time by pondering how he will exact his revenge on the Immortals who imprisoned him here so long ago. Gaius is aware of Chogath, and he does not dare go near the creature, preferring to stay clear of the creature's plots.

Perhaps the most important feature of the lower catacombs is the fact that they are home to the night lotus, a flower found nowhere else, save for the odd cavern in the Shadowelven territories. This delicate white flower grows only on mossy boulders in absolute darkness, near pools of water. It is a rather large flower, measuring roughly six inches across, with long, thin petals. The night lotus is always found in the presence of the fungus that is used to manufacture the drug used by the Cynidiceans, although only the fungus is found near the city. The night lotus is special because its pollen, when consumed, will counteract the effects of the fungus. The caverns in which this plant is found contain their own perils, namely, large groups of dusanu, who enjoy the relative dampness of the region. Because of the presence of these creatures, the caverns in which the night lotus is found are almost invariably filled with large amounts of fungal matter.

Scenarios

Against the Lich King

This scenario is intended for use over the long term. In fact, it assumes that the PCs are not spending all of their time in and around Cynidicea, but that they voyage to other lands and have other adventures, only to return here periodically. This plot centres around Gaius, the former ruler of Cynidicea who has since become a lich, and his machinations. Here is a suggestion as to how to run B4, and incorporate the lich as a slowly growing menace, until the PCs finally face him in a confrontation. Along with each stage of the plot, the lich's reaction and possible actions will be suggested.

1. Getting Started

During the basic levels (1-3), run B4 (the upper levels of the adventure, that is, the buried pyramid), and then have them go into undercity of Cynidicea and explore it. They should learn about Cynidicean culture, a bit of its history, and they should begin to clue in that Zargon is a major villain who must be destroyed if the Cynidiceans are to prosper once again. During this time they might also run afoul of the goblinoids living in the crags beyond the Eye of Zargon. You should try to prevent them from fighting Zargon at all costs; he is simply too powerful for even a party of 3rd-level PCs to beat, not without heavy losses, at any rate. One way of doing this is to simply make his lair impossible to find until they find the required information - perhaps a fragmentary legend, or something else.

For his own part, Gaius ignores the PCs, believing them to be yet another party of surface-worlders who found their way to Cynidicea by accident. His servants will keep tabs on the PCs, but they will not interfere with their actions.

2. The PCs Learn More

By the time the PCs have reached the expert levels (4-14), they should be reasonably well-acquainted with Cynidicea and its environs. This would be a good time, if they have not done so already, to return to the surface and seek out other adventures, possibly keeping an eye open for more clues about Cynidicea. As DM, you may wish to reward their research by leaving them with fragmentary records of a "lost city", or vague references to a "tentacled idol of utmost evil". In any case, they should begin to clue in that Zargon is indeed a creature of utter evil. The PCs, armed with more information, could then return to Cynidicea, and seek out more information about Zargon, such as the location of his lair. The PCs can then explore the lower levels of the sunken pyramid, and ultimately fight Zargon. You may wish to provide them with the information as to how to permanently destroy Zargon, or you could make this into another quest requiring a great deal of adventuring. Should they take an extremely long time, Zargon might be regenerated by the time they return, forcing them to fight him again! Towards the end of the expert levels, you may also wish for the PCs to learn of a possible

way to cure the Cynidiceans of their drug addiction.

By this time, especially if they have killed Zargon, Gaius will have taken notice of the PCs. At first, he will likely see them as potential tools in his own quest for power. Even at this stage, he will only order his servants to observe the PCs, reporting on their progress.

3. Gaining Power

By the time the PCs enter the companion levels (15-25), they should have made several trips to and from Cynidicea. Ideally, if they have permanently destroyed Zargon, they should be trying to find a way to destroy the Church of Zargon itself, since it still rules the undercity with an iron fist. They should know by now that one Church uses drugs to help maintain their control over the populace (though they are also victims of addiction), and that if the drugs were neutralised, Cynidicea could be revitalised and the Church's power destroyed. It is at this time that the PCs should start hearing of the legendary night lotus, a pale white flower which could neutralise the effects of the drugs. You could then run the scenario given below, which deals closely with eliminating the effects of the drug upon the populace. This will involve going into the Lower Caverns, which are currently sealed to prevent those living below from threatening the city.

Gaius will see the PCs as a potential threat by now, especially if they are actively fighting the Church of Zargon, and seeking a way to restore Cynidicea to its former glory. He will send out his lesser servants, such as wraiths, spectres, and possibly vampires, to try to eliminate the PCs.

4. Success Is Near

Once the PCs have attained master level (26-36), they should have made many trips through the region, and be well-acquainted with Cynidicea. They should also have a great deal of notoriety among the Cynidiceans themselves, especially if they have vanquished the Church of Zargon, and found the night lotus. There might even be talk of one or more PCs becoming the new rulers of the city. If they truly care about the Cynidiceans, they should be actively aiding them in rebuilding their culture.

Gaius will now see the PCs as a definite threat, something to be dealt with as soon as possible. Initially, he will likely send his greater servants against them (druj, revenants, etc.), and in the end he will likely try to eliminate them himself, unleashing his full power on them. This will no doubt attract Barimoor's attention, as the discharge of magic will be proof to him that there is another spellcaster nearby who might thwart his own chances at Immortality. He might very well travel to where the PCs are fighting Gaius, and attack the lich as well! This could turn into a dramatic three-way battle in Gaius' lair, where all parties are fighting each other in a mad attempt to come out on top. The PCs should also know of Barimoor as well by this time, if they have spent a great deal of time in and around Ylaruam. Thus, they may see this as a chance to eliminate Barimoor, or otherwise do great damage to his plans. In the end, the PCs should come out on top, and Gaius should be destroyed, possibly Barimoor as well. With the last great menace to Cynidicea defeated, the way stands clear for a full resurgence of the city and its people, with the PCs at the helm.

5. The Ultimate Reward

If the PCs manage to attain Immortality, they could easily join Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras in the Cynidicean pantheon. Their names will be spoken reverently for centuries to come, and their deeds will join many others in the annals of Cynidicea's heroes. If they achieve

this, no doubt the PCs will wish to keep an eye on Cynidicea and its doings, subtly guiding it towards ever greater achievements. As to what shape the "new" Cynidicea might be in, that is up to you and the players, but it should be an infinitely better place than it was when the PCs first arrived there, so long ago.

The Cleansing of Cynidicea

The focus of this scenario is of learning about the drug-induced madness that is afflicting the Cynidiceans, and uncovering the means of bringing about a cure. This campaign is far looser than the one given above, and it can be as long or as brief as the DM and players wish it to be. There is also no set starting level range recommended, though higher-level PCs will obviously have a much easier time of it.

1. Setting the Stage

To introduce this scenario, the first portion of B4 should be played out. Have the PCs encounter the Cynidiceans, and become either suspicious of, or curious about, their erratic behaviour. Of the course of the adventure, the PCs should learn what is causing the Cynidiceans' erratic behaviour, and they should start wondering if there might be a cure for it.

2. Discoveries

Over the course of continued adventures, the PCs begin to piece together the history of Cynidicea, and soon learn that the Zargonites are the ones who originally introduced the drugs to the populace. This could then spur them to infiltrate the Zargonites' main temple, or attack it outright, in the hopes of uncovering more information about the drugs

that are used. Depending on how well the PCs' efforts turn out, and how well they planned their actions in the first place, they should be able to at least identify the drug (or drugs) being used on the populace. They should also obtain hints as to the existence of a possible antidote for the drug effects.

The information the PCs gain here should either lead to a small quest to discover what this antidote might be, or they might have to seek out someone who knows. If the latter, this could be a sage, a high-ranking druid, or an ancient scroll hidden deep within the pyramid, or buried under the sands.

3. Finding the Cure

Eventually, the PCs should learn that the night lotus is the source of an antidote to the drug (or a remedy for the most powerful drug if several are being used). They should also have a rough idea where it can be found (the Lower Catacombs). This stage consists of mounting an expedition deep within the labyrinthine caverns beneath Cynidicea in search of the strange flower. This can take as long as desired, as the night lotus grows only in caverns containing certain features, with just the right amount of moisture. Along the way, the PCs can encounter a wide range of subterranean

monsters. Ultimately, however, they should find some, and be able to bring a few samples back.

At this stage, several powerful enemies (such as the Zargonites, or possibly Gaius) should be aware of the PCs' activities, and should be taking steps to either hinder or destroy them. Even though the PCs have the means to counter the effects of the drug, they still do not know how to use the flower. This could very well be the beginning of a second quest - one which could lead to another foray into the Lower Catacombs, or possibly into the outer world, in search of an elusive wizard or sage who could provide them with the knowledge they need - for a price.

4. Removing the Taint

By now, the PCs should not only have advanced several levels since first entering Cynidicea; they should also be well-versed in Cynidicean history. They should know who introduced the drugs to the populace (the Zargonites), and why they did so (to make the populace more docile). Once the required actions have been taken, the slow reversal of the drug's (or drugs') effects should take place. This could take weeks, months, or even years, and the Zargonites will certainly try to reverse the PCs' gains. In their desperation, they could even try to fully free Zargon from his prison by locating and destroying the remaining electron disks, or they could call upon their

own resources to destroy the PCs once and for all.

This could lead into an epic battle, one that will determine who shall rule Cynidicea - the Zargonites, or a new order. If the PCs win, the Zargonites' power base will be drastically reduced, and possibly eliminated within the city. Those who remain could set up bases among the goblinoids, or retreat into the Lower Catacombs. If Zargon is fully freed, and destroyed by the PCs, then the Zargonites will be effectively eliminated as a group, since their master has been killed. DMS may wish to have the Zargonites survive, and remain as an organisation devoted to the destruction of the PCs - some may even follow them to the surface out of rage, and become assassins.

If the PCs lose, but survive, they could rally a core group of supporters to lead a guerrilla campaign against the Zargonites, who, although victors, would likely be reduced in power. This could still lead to a victory for the PCs, but one that takes longer to achieve. In either case, the victorious PCs will find a role in Cynidicea during its long and difficult period of recovery. If they have campaigned here extensively, they will likely be regarded as liberators, as well as possible rulers to protect the city. How Cynidicea develops afterwards is up to the PCs, but, should they desire it, they are well-placed to restore it to its former glory, and ensure themselves a legacy.

