

THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

Warlords of Norwold



The eighth issue of Mystara's premier magazine features Adventures, NPCs, Norwold Organizations and Maps; plus additional features about your favourite world.

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THRESHOLD

ISSUE #8

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Thanks To: The Mystara Community, for your support, hard work, and dedication to Mystara.

The aims of *Threshold* magazine:

- to provide a venue for community members to present material
- to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there
- to increase the exposure of existing and new articles
- to encourage authors to revisit and revitalise existing articles
- to motivate interest in Mystara in general



Issues #1 to #7 of *THRESHOLD* - the Mystara Magazine, is available for download from the [Vaults of Pandius website](#).

Also available at the same location are higher resolution versions of the maps that were included in the issue's PDF, allowing greater detail to be viewed.

Warlords of Norwold

“All I ever feel is
All I ever see is
Rise and fall
When the War of the Thrones shall begin”
Blind Guardian, “War of the Thrones”

For the inhabitants of the untamed Norwold, the advent of spring signals a new season of strife and conflict. Warlords and wizards from distant lands have reached Alpha, ready to compete and claim lands from Alphatian anointed King Ericall. Many candidates though, are not as loyal as they claim, and war is brewing as personal and territorial conflicts arise among the nobility. Far worse; two rival empires, Thyatis and the Heldannic Order, plot to wrest control of Alphatia’s grasp over this northern land.

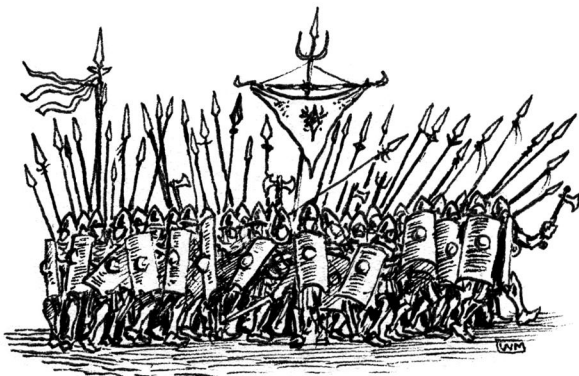
Soon, one contender will cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war. Will the erstwhile adventurers, now established landed lords, remain unified, or will they take opposing sides? Such are the challenges Norwold poses to powerful veteran adventurers...

With this latest issue, Threshold Magazine will have completed its first two years of publication, tendering articles totaling over one thousand pages. We take this occasion to celebrate, and present a twofold offering. First pairing Zendrolion’s massive companion articles for CM1 Test of the Warlords with a set of three adventures. Including an addendum to the Night Below adaptation appearing in Issue 6, a new level of our recurring Koskatop megadungeon, and lastly a return to what was for many of us, our first adventure: Bargle’s dungeon near the town of Threshold. Finally, we complete our array of Norwold personalities with an assortment of dragons from the Wyrksteeth

With this, I welcome you to the 8th issue of Threshold Magazine!

Giampaolo Agosta (Agathokles)

Issue 8 Editor-in-Chief



This Issue's Contributors

David Keyser has run four long-term campaigns set in Mystara since the 1980s, using published adventure and support materials as much as possible. He denies having any creative talent himself. It's just that if you put him with a group of friends who are willing to work with him to provide an evening of entertainment, there's a momentary spark like the scratch of flint on steel...and then something magical happens.

Even though *Sturm* (a.k.a. **Francesco Defferrari**) loves any alternate world, he believes Mystara is incomparably the best for its vibrant community endlessly delving into ethnography, linguistics and history just to make a little sense of it. Something like the real world, but with dragons.

Giuliano Michelin has been playing D&D since the late 80ies and, like many others, had his start with the Red Box. He soon moved over to AD&D and divided his gaming time between his favored settings: Mystara and Ravenloft (although playing more the latter). With the coming of 3e, he moved fully back to the first setting, Mystara. He collaborated with (and was a member of) the Overlord club in Padua, designing and developing D&D tournament modules for PadCon 2001 and several editions of GiocaPadova. Nowadays, he concentrates fully on his own gaming group, with a weekly D&D Mystara campaign, soon to switch to the 5th edition of the game.

I. "Meandratbel" Calvin enjoys drawing fantasy, and animals that can kill. Namely wolves, dragons, horses, and most large felines. Human animal hybrids are not excluded either; she often draws human versions of her favorite animals. She does, however, despise drawing things that are

unbearingly cute. It's a pretty awful thing to do.

John Calvin is fascinated by the depth of Mystaran history, and has always wanted to share that more fully with players. To that end he has been developing sub-settings like The Hollow Moon and Mystara 2300 BC.

Robin Dijkema. (*Robin* at the piazza, *Robin D* elsewhere) Female, from 1962. Playing D&D since the earliest days as far as 1978. Soon becoming "addicted", bound to the world of Mystara, liked because of its diversity and yet complexity latched to eachother. Current compiler of massive materials available on the Pandius site or her "Breath of Mystara" blog. Former Teacher of Biology, Ecology, Chemistry, Physics, travelled all over Europe as a stage dancer at houseparties. Once at a UK Gencon called "The Fletcher" by Bruce Heard for my compilation work in "Revenge of the Little Ones".

Simone Neri (*Zendrolion*) teaches history and philosophy at secondary school in Florence, Italy. He has mastered Mystara campaigns since 1987, his favourite settings being Thyatis, Norwold, Karameikos, and Glantri. He is an active member of The Piazza community with the nickname of *Zendrolion* - but don't fear backstabbing from him!

Trevor Holman has been a designer and web developer for nearly 30 years, playing RPG and War games since he was a kid. He currently creates artwork for other game companies.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Threshold editorial team invites all fans of the Mystara setting to submit contributions to the next issues of the magazine.

We are looking especially for contributions fitting the following themes:

Issue 9 - The Hollow World & Immortals

Proposal Deadline: Expired, but proposal could still be submitted if the author is confident that the article will be completed by the below deadline

Manuscript Deadline: July 1st 2015

Issue Published: End September 2015

Call for proposals for main themes of forthcoming issues (2015):

Glantri and beyond

The editorial team will accept proposal on Glantri and nearby nations (Darokin, Sind, Wendar, Ethengar, the Adri Varma plateau, the Broken Lands) and on Magic too.

Isle of Dawn, Thyatis and Alphatia

The editorial team will accept proposal on the Isle of Dawn, Thyatis, Alphatia and dependencies (Ochalea, Pearl Islands, Alatians, Bellisaria, Esterhold and any other colony).

Articles about other topics are still welcome and the editorial team will evaluate their publication in an issue, taking into account space available and that issue's theme.

Threshold accepts (and invites) the submission of extended or revised versions of works having appeared on The Piazza or the Vaults of Pandius.

Contributions may include, but are not limited to, articles (short stories, short adventure modules, NPCs, historical treatises and timelines, geographical entries, new monsters and monster ecologies, etc.) and illustrations (portraits, maps, heraldry, illustrations, etc.)

The Threshold editorial team strives for edition neutrality, but edition specific articles (e.g., conversions) are also accepted. Statistics for new monsters and NPCs may be included in articles (e.g., adventure modules, new monsters or NPCs) in any version of Dungeons & Dragons. The editorial team also offers help in providing conversions to some specific rules set (including BECMI/RC, 2nd Edition, 3rd edition/Pathfinder). However, they should be limited to the minimum -- for most NPCs, it is sufficient to mention class, level, and alignment. For important NPCs, a one or two line stat block could be included.

The Great Land Rush of Norwold - Part 2

by Simone Neri (Zendrolion)

PERSONALITIES OF NORWOLD

In the previous issue of *Threshold* we learned about many of the events that comprise the upcoming Spring Fair held in AC 1002,¹ the character and environment of Norwold's realms, and the government and laws of King Ericall's young and growing kingdom. In the second installment of the article, we will familiarize ourselves with some of the more important personalities within the Kingdom of Norwold, casting a detailed look at the royal family, the court's main officers, and dominion rulers present before the Great Land Rush - including the Vatski princes of the Vatskiy Rodina.

The Royal Family

Norwold's royal family is small, despite being related to the House of Thera, which rules the Alphatian Empire. Currently, King Ericall and his half-brother Lernal are the only members. Farian, Ericall's other half-brother

and Lernal's full brother, was captured by a Thyatian raiding party in 999 AC, along with the king's full brother Tredorian, while visiting Norwold; and the two still remain prisoners in Thyatis. The king and Lernal are described below.

Ericall, *King of Norwold*

Lawful 28th level
Fighter

Str 13, Int 14,
Wis 13, Dex 10,
Con 11, Cha 17



Appearance: Ericall is thirty years old, and at 6'1"² and 175 pounds, possesses a tall and statuesque figure. With common Alphatian copper complexion, though somewhat paler due to his father's pure Alphatian heritage; neck length brown hair; mustache; and piercing brown eyes; he is considered quite handsome among Alphatians. Ericall dresses elaborately at court, usually clothed in royal purple trimmed with gold.³

¹ The reasons behind choosing to have CM1's Spring Fair set in this year are explained in footnote 1 of the first installment of this article, *The Great Land Rush of Norwold*, featured in "Threshold" No. 7, Page 124.

² I used Ericall's height from the *Poor Wizard's Almanac* series. In *Dawn of the Emperors* he was 1" shorter.

³ *Dawn of the Emperors* describes the king as belonging to the "pure Alphatian strain, pale of complexion, black hair and eyes",

Background: Ericall is eldest son of Alphatia's Empress Eriadna and Torenal, handsome general of the Imperial Guard, and full brother to Mariella and Tredorian. Born in 972 AC, and possessing not an ounce of arcane potential, Ericall was Eriadna's least favorite child, and the object of ridicule by the Empress' other magic wielding children. Thankfully General Torenal instructed Ericall in the martial arts from a young age, and with his natural talent soon became a skilled warrior. Upon reaching adulthood, Ericall finally felt his royal calling, desiring a realm of his own. An implausibility, due to his lack of magical proficiency, in magically ruled Alphatia. While visiting his friend Beriak in Stonewall, he envisioned founding a realm where status and station were determined by competence, not magical ability. After having annoyed Eriadna beyond measure with his request, the Empress eventually caved, giving him jurisdiction over the wilderness backwater of Norwold in 992 AC, which had been made an Alphatian protectorate only a few years prior, and giving Ericall a broad degree of autonomy in ruling the region. Since then, Ericall has devoted all his efforts toward ruling the realm; however they have yielded mixed results. He has failed in bringing vast expanses of Norwold under enforceable rule. His appointment of Lernal as Governor of Landfall has turned into

while in the Poor Wizard's Almanacs he is "Hair: Brown. Eyes: Brown. [...] Copper-skinned [...]", and in the novel Rogues to Riches he has "bronze skin, piercing brown hair, and dark hair". The king's black-and-white picture found on page 11 of CM1 Test of the Warlords, instead, portrays him with fair hair and eyes. I chose to disregard the Dawn of the Emperor description, because the other sources are more or less consistent with each other.

disaster, and he was unable to bring King Yarrvik of Oceanscend into the Empire's fold. Additionally he was unable to prevent the city of Helskir, laying on the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn, from declaring independence, and was the target of the Alphatian Council's contempt when Thyatian spies captured his brother Tredorian and half-brother Farian, visiting in Alpha, later transporting both to Thyatis.

Personality: Ericall is fair and honorable. Eager and good-natured, he has found favor among his subjects. Unfortunately, he has only been marginally competent as ruler. Alarmingly naïve, even after nearly a decade of rule, his good intentions yet simplistic understanding of the world and politics often leave him disheartened and befuddled. Dreading the mundane paperwork and managerial duties necessary to run the realm, Ericall is often overwhelmed by the complexity of ruling, relegating many tasks to subordinates of varying ability, which he often fails to properly evaluate. Ericall does not take criticism or advice easily, nor lightly admit mistakes; and he still burns being Eriadna's least favorite child. To overcome this shortcoming he strives for perfection, being doubly harsh on himself whenever he fails. Whether additional years on the throne, be they further failures or successes, will mature him is yet to be seen. Ericall enjoys hunting and hawking as pastimes. The king is currently looking for a bride to be his queen, and the king's friend Beriak is working to ensure his younger sister Christina Marie, who turns eighteen the following year, fills the role; however, the king has not seen the girl for years. It is possible Ericall's eye could be caught by another alluring woman.

Additional Features: Able to draw resources from the Royal Palace's vault, the king has access to a wide variety of permanent and temporary magic items, employing them only when he feels such use would benefit the kingdom. Ericall rides his favorite white stallion, Whitemane, into combat; wearing incredibly ornate *plate mail* +5 and *shield* +3, wielding *normal sword* +3 and carrying a *dagger* +3. Despite lack of participation waging war, his intense training, innate skill, and experience garnered adventuring, Ericall has become one of the best swordsmen within the Alpathian Empire. Greatly skilled in the art of the lance, Ericall is an admirably graceful jousting. The king is accompanied in most surroundings by twenty members of the Knight Protectors, the king's bodyguard, whose members are all knights averaging 12th level, clad in suit armor and shield, armed with longsword and longbow.

Source: CM1 Test of the Warlords, Dawn of the Emperors, Joshuan's Almanac & Book of Facts, Poor Wizard's Almanac & Book of Facts I-III, Rogues to Riches.

Appearance: Although only twenty-seven years old, Lernal looks ten years older. Having a pale and ruddy complexion, exacerbated from heavy drinking, varicose veins decorate his reddish nose. Lernal is overweight, weighing 200 pounds, though at 5'10" is of average height for an Alpathian. Lernal wears his straight neck length brown hair in a page-boy fashion, and has brown eyes. Lernal could be handsome if he took more care about his health and physique. On good days, he is clean-shaven and well groomed, sporting clothes of fine fabric fashionably tailored, many of which have been imported from Darokin. While on a bender, Lernal forgoes shaving, and his clothes are slovenly and often wine-stained. His blood-shot eyes always watery and distant. Despite appearance, or sobriety, at social events Lernal most often behaves in a crude and vulgar manner.

Background: Lernal is King Ericall's half-brother, and son of General Torenal, shamefully conceived with a servant. Like all of Torenal's offspring, he was totally devoid of any magical potential. After a misspent youth in Sundsvall, hampering the martial training his father tried to provide, he lived amongst the shadows in awe of the magically proficient people his father served. After Ericall was granted title to Norwold by Empress Eriadna in 992 AC, Lernal begged his brother give him rule over a dominion. Ericall, knowing what little opportunity existed for a commoner in mainland Alpathia, and ignoring prudent advice about Lernal's intellectual inadequacy, fulfilled his plea. Granting him the southern town of Landfall, safely distant from Alpha, and presenting him with ducal title and rule over



**Lernal the Swill,
Duke of Landfall
and Governor of
Landfall Province**

Neutral 6th level
Fighter

Str 10, Int 12,
Wis 13, Dex 10,
Con 14, Cha 7

the region.⁴ Unfortunately, Lernal grew into a drunken wastrel, letting control of the town rapidly slip into the hands of the two most powerful rival local thieves' guilds, slowly becoming their puppet, and completely succumbing to their will in exchange for wine and women. Ericall has lamented the decision ever since, yet hopes time and age will temper Lernal's inappropriate behavior. Because Lernal makes a show of paying large amounts of taxes to Alpha, double the usual amount required, the king turns a blind eye toward his conduct. In actuality Lernal reports less than half of the dominions earnings, unbeknownst to the king. Unmarried, Lernal always retains a number of concubines. One of these mistresses, formerly an Alpathian slave, accompanied him when he took possession of Landfall, and has borne him a daughter. Erise, considered a young beauty, is now ten years old, living with her mother and father in Landfall keep.⁵

Personality: Lernal is an unscrupulous and rotten individual. A compulsive liar, who is

⁴ In CM1 Test of the Warlords, Landfall is described as a "dominion", and Lernal as its "lord" in a couple of passages; thus, I chose to make Lernal the Duke of Landfall, besides assigning him the governorship of the larger province around the town. This is also consistent with the fact that Lernal, the king's half-brother, should have a higher noble rank than other Norwold lords, and thus would be the only duke of the realm at the moment.

⁵ The character of Erise comes from the novel Rogues to Riches, set in AC 1010. In the book, the girl is of a marriageable age, around 18 years old, so her birth must be set around AC 992; for this reason I changed Erise's and her mother's origins from the ones featured in [GAZF8 The Streets of Landfall](#) (by JTR).

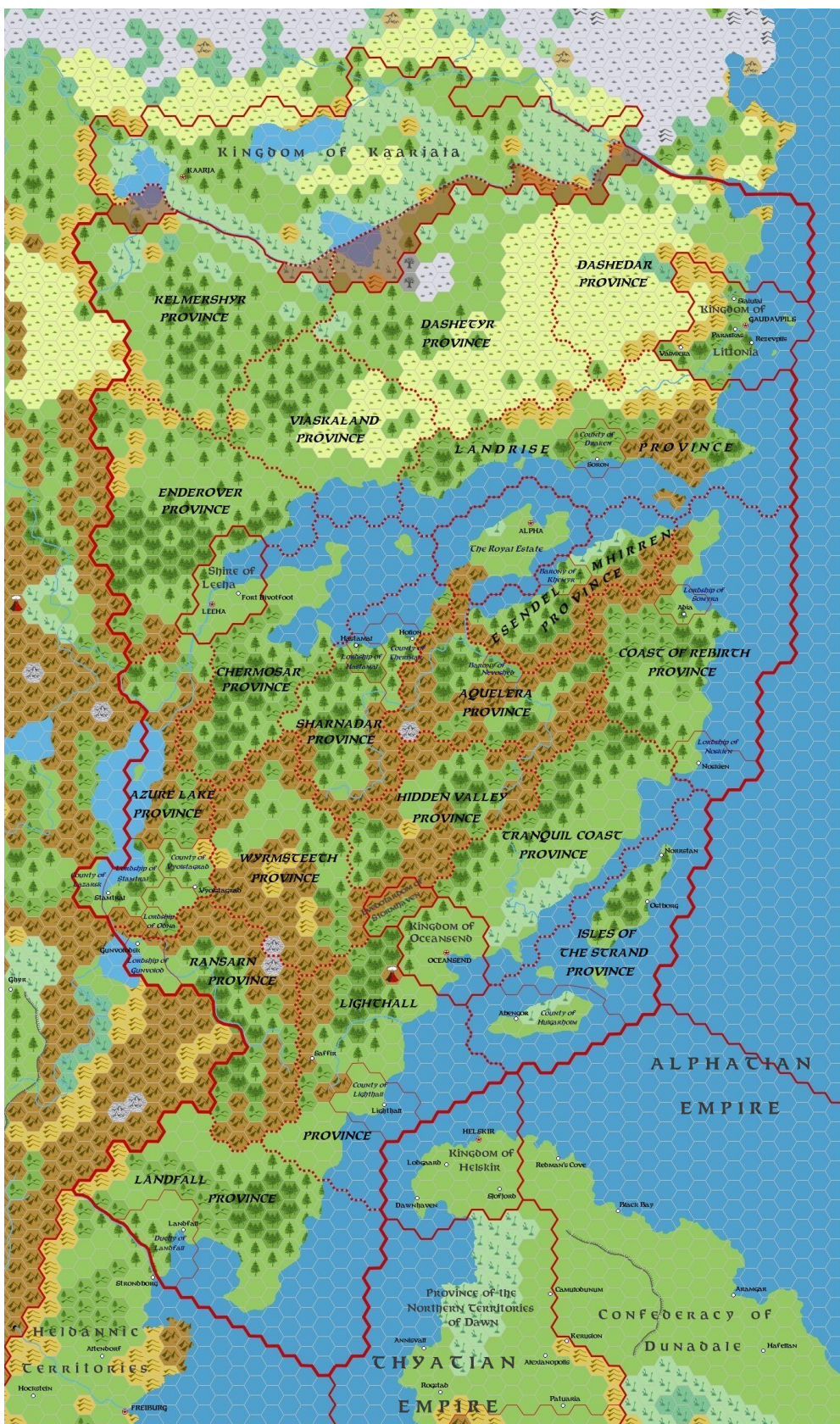
easily bribed, Lernal is an immorally weak and incompetent ruler. Lernal is greatly envious of Ericall's popularity and shining capital city, hating his half-brother for relegating him to this faraway shantytown. Nevertheless, Lernal is too much a coward to stage a coup or display direct insurrection against the crown, but would eagerly claim the throne of Norwold if the opportunity arose. Even uncharacteristically raising an army should Ericall die prematurely and without heirs. Although abstaining from his most depraved behaviors when his daughter Erise, to whom he relatively attached, is present; Lernal is otherwise utterly devoted to his vices. Drinking, eating, and women!

Additional Features: Lernal would rarely - if ever - personally take the battlefield. But if required to appear in front of the troops, wears *plate mail* +2 and shield, and carries a *normal sword* +2. As Lernal is in the hand of Landfall's two major criminal organizations,⁶ he has made enemy of other rival thieves' and criminal guilds of the town. Therefore Lernal always keeps a group of eight scruffy but able-bodied bodyguards (all are 9th level Fighters) on hand, supplied to him by his "patrons".

Source: CM1 Test of the Warlords, Dawn of the Emperors, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Poor Wizard's Almanac & Book of Facts I-III, Rogues to Riches.

⁶ [GAZF8 The Streets of Landfall](#) (by JTR) gave in depth details about Landfall's criminal guilds; according to the GAZF, the two guilds which control Lernal would be Prince Joffa and La Familia Nostra.

The Great Land Rush of Norwold Part 2



The provinces of the Kingdom of Norwold

The King's Court

Alpha's court is comprised of various individuals holding political position as one of the Greater or Lesser Officers, or officials dependent upon one of those offices, found haunting the Royal Palace in one capacity or another. A brief description of the most prominent characters follows.

Greater Officers and the Members of the Royal Council

The following personalities are all members of the Royal Council. Five also hold a Greater Office charge. Only Finnister McAlister holds no other responsibility. Beriak Alanira, Count of Draken (see below), is usually called upon to partake in Royal Council meetings as well.

Dolnarys, *Lord High Admiral*

(Lawful 20th level
Fighter)⁷



A common Alphatian from Haven whose career in the Alphatian Imperial Navy was halted by his inability in the thaumaturgical arts. His appointment was recommended to Ericall by Torenal himself. A strict, serious, and very able organizer; Dolnarys wants to build a navy worthy of his king - and with his given funds is quite likely to succeed.

⁷ Dolnarys is listed as Admiral of the Royal Fleet in module M2 Vengeance of Alphaks.



Finnister McAlister, *Member of the Royal Council*

(Lawful 9th level
Cleric of Koryis)⁸

Native to the southern Shadow Coast on the Isle of Dawn, Finnister is a former adventurer who found his true calling advising rulers. Meeting Ericall in Sundsvall years ago, Finnister befriended him, recently arriving in Norwold to assist his young colleague once more. Finnister wants to ensure the kingdom is not drowned in a constant tide of war. Ericall, despite not being a follower of Koryis, holds Finnister's word in high regard.

Madiera the Counselor, *Lady High Steward and Court Magist*

(Lawful 25th level Magic-User)

A common Alphatian from Greenspur, Madiera is a middle-aged wizard with a scholarly demeanor and immense expertise of Alphatian history, law, and tradition. Eriadna personally assigned Madiera as advisor to Ericall. Madiera sees her appointment as a stepping stone toward greater power, and carries out her work conscientiously, yet her ultimate desire is to take her place among the members of Alphatia's Great Council. Madiera additionally holds charge as Ericall's Court Magist.

⁸ Finnister makes an appearance as trusted personal advisor to King Ericall in module M5 Talons of Night.

Martigan, Lord High General

(Neutral 21st level Magic-User)⁹

A native of Redstone, and former slave and gladiator in Thyatis City,

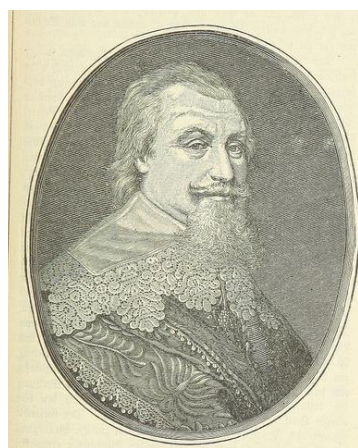
Martigan managed to buy his freedom and then become a powerful Alphatian battle mage. He came to Norwold soon after the kingdom's establishment, offering his services to the crown. After performing many missions for the crown, he was awarded commission as High General of Norwold Armies when Ericall's previous general returned to Alphatia. Martigan is a handsome, passionate, brave and fearless man, harboring a bitter hatred toward Thyatis due to his days as a slave in the empire's capital.



Nizanthrul, Lord High Treasurer

(Neutral 15th level Cleric of Razud)

An experienced priest from Theranderol, and trusted advisor of former Emperor



Tyilion IV. In his fifties, Nizanthrul accepted a posting on the outskirts of the Empire, advising Eriadna's mundane son, wanting to end his career away from the intrigues of Sundsvall. Mostly he endeavors to advise Ericall in making wise decisions through careful management of the kingdom's treasury.

Oriaehryn 'Ori', Lord High Chancellor

(Lawful 11th level Elf Wizard)¹⁰



A Shiye elf from Limn with significant diplomatic experience and acquaintance with many different races and cultures, Oriahryn has served under King Drushiye and in the Alphatian Empire's

⁹ The character of Martigan comes from the [Mystaran Almanac series](#). There, he is granted the dominion of Ersenbal on Walrus Island in AC 993, getting involved in a series of plots regarding the northern Foresthorne elves, and then taking part in the war between Thyatis and Alphatia (1005-1009 AC) earning the rank of General in the Alphatian army, and eventually returning to Norwold in 1010 AC. While in the series he is listed as a Fighter, his original write-up in the Mystara Mailing List featured him as a Magic-User, which seems more fitting considering his later role as Alphatian General. Also, in this article Martigan does not yet rule a dominion, most likely receiving title to it after the wars against Thyatis featured in modules CM1 Test of the Warlord and M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, or the Wrath of the Immortals boxed set.

¹⁰ Use the advancement table and rules found in GAZ5 The Elves of Alfheim, page 64, but with the normal Magic-User spell list. The character of Ori makes a brief appearance in the novel "Rogues to Riches" by J.R. King, set in 1010 AC. There, Ori is Ericall's court magist and scribe. Madiera likely returned to Alphatia or was killed in the intervening years.

Committee of Foreign Affairs. Ori's methodical nature and delight in handling paperwork – make him a perfect match for King Ericall, who loathes such tasks.

Other Characters

While not holding any Greater Office charge, nor members of the Royal Council, the following characters may occasionally be encountered at court, performing various duties. Five “Governors of the Provinces” are included among them. While ruling distant provinces with relevant settlements, over which the king's control is fragile at best, the governors carry out most of their duties from Alpha, and thus are usually found in the capital.



Aendim, *Governor of the Aquelera Province*

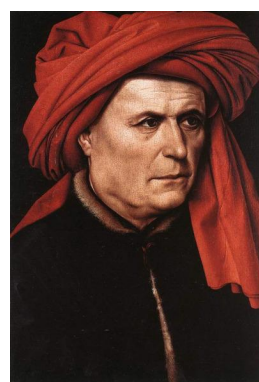
(Lawful 4th level Fighter)

Aendim, from Stonewall, has Common Alphatian ancestry. In his early forties, Aendim has faithfully served as household bodyguard for house Alanira over the course of many years. Wishing to reward the man, Beriak obtained him the prestigious charge of “Governor” in the Kingdom of Norwold. Yet thus far Aendim has had considerable difficulty managing the complexities of governing. Nevertheless, he remains a staunch and loyal supporter of Beriak and Ericall.

Alvaden Wildgaze, *Governor of the Coast of Rebirth Province*

(Lawful 7th level Elf Cleric of Zirchev):¹¹

Nearly three hundred fifty years old, Alvaden is a Shiye elf, born in the Kingdom of Vertiloch. Wandering for many years throughout the Alphatian Empire, Alvaden endeavored as a defender of the wilderness, advising various lords on matters of environmental and species preservation. Intrigued by the untamed land of Norwold, Alvaden entered Ericall's service, his past experience making him ideally suited for the task of directing the heavily-wooded province's government on such similar issues. He is primarily concerned with preventing the damage that unregulated settlement and development would cause to the Norwold environment.



Aranthor,
Personal Scribe of the King

(Lawful 5th level Magic-User)¹²

Aranthor is a quiet middle-aged, loyal servant of Common Alphatian lineage, chosen by Ericall to be his personal scribe and secretary; carrying out every order the king decrees in

¹¹ Mechanics for Elven Clerics under the BECM I rules are found in *The Voyage of the Princess Ark - Part 25: Of Blood and Steel* by B. Heard, in “Dragon Magazine” #178, Vol. XVI, No. 9 (February 1992).

¹² This character is briefly mentioned in “Adventures in the Frozen North” by M. Fleet, in “Threshold” Issue No. 2, Page 131.

an efficient and inconspicuous manner. Both Madiera and Nizanthrul are wary of the influence Aranthor might exert over Ericall, but the man has no ambition aside from accumulating encyclopedic knowledge about Norwold's various sites and regions, benefiting from Finnister's trust at least.

Kerana N'Jozee,
Governor of the
Esendel-Mbirren

Province (Chaotic
12th level Thief)

Kerana is cousin to King Lornce of Hillvale.¹³ A crafty and stealthy rogue, under guise of a lady of the court she acted as Lornce's spy for many years. Tired of her cousin's lackadaisical ruling style, she asked he recommend her for a job at Ericall's court, convincing him she could act as spy for him in Norwold as well. Despite being thirty years old, she is determined to climb the ranks within the kingdom's hierarchy and become a noblewoman in her own right. To this end, she hopes to perform her role as Governor well, persuading Ericall to employ her as his spymaster. Short of catching the king's interest – or if the kingdom begins to seriously weaken – she might consider selling her services to the highest bidder.



¹³ King Lornce's surname is reported as *N'Jozee* in Dawn of the Emperors, and as *M'Jozee* in the Poor Wizard's Almanac series. Likely the difference between the two stems from a lack of precise rules in transliteration between the Alphatian and Thyatian alphabets.

Mariela,
Deputy Chancellor

(Neutral 4th level Magic-User)¹⁴

An attractive Alphatian woman in her early thirties, Mariela helps Lord High Chancellor Oriahryn in his duties. A native of Haven, she was personally chosen by Empress Eriadna for her knowledge of Known World politics and extensive experience in trade relations – in fact despite vocation as a mage, she is a merchant by profession. Easily flattered and quick to take offense, she hopes to act in Alphatia's best interests at court.

Podo
Hornblower,
Governor of the
Chermosar
Province

(Lawful 5th level
Halfling)

Podo, at one hundred six years, is a middle-aged halfling from Stoutfellow. Born into a family of army musicians, Podo followed in the family's footsteps, leading a soldier's life for many years; afterward obtaining a government post in his home realm. After his wife's passing, besides sons and daughters grown and departed to start families of their own, Podo decided to offer his services to Alpha's court. His skill and



¹⁴ This character is borrowed from [GAZF1 The Kingdom of Wendar](#) (by JTR).

experience were soon appreciated, and he was appointed Governor of Chermosar province, bordering the halfling realm of Leeha. Ericall hopes Podo might facilitate improved relations between Leeha and Alpha.

Rodnox,
General and Garrison Commander of Regent Pass

(Lawful 18th level Fighter)¹⁵

Rodnox is a stout and able Alphatian fighter from Vertiloch. Only in his thirties, he rapidly rose in rank to commander on Esterhold, and later mainland Alphatia. His command of Eagles Rook, the Regent Pass fortress, guards the only overland route to the capital.

Tarn Oakleaf,
Representative of the Norwold Druidic Council

(Neutral 24th level Druid)

Tarn is a Norwolder¹⁶ having a special affinity with nature, thereby rising among the ranks

of Norwold druids. While not the most powerful druid in Norwold, Tarn was chosen among his peers as druidic representative to Ericall's court. Often he is off wandering the wilds of Norwold, only appearing at court when very important issues of druidic concern are at stake.

Teskithan,
Governor of Tranquil Coast Province

(Neutral 7th level Magic-User):

Formerly known as Eldras, a fifty year old unscrupulous yet skilled alchemist and bureaucrat from Meriander, in his homeland he covertly supplied poisons to local lords and aristocrats wishing to rid themselves of their enemies. When the smuggling operation was discovered, yet before traces could lead authorities to him, Eldras left Alchemos. Changing name and identity, taking Teskithan as his new moniker, and after passing some years keeping a low profile in the imperial bureaucracy, Teskithan found his way to the court of Alpha. Teskithan is disciplined and thorough in his craft – to not be could prove fatal in his profession; however, he is spineless in dealings with others, and easily subject to bribes and blackmail.

¹⁵ Rodnox is mentioned as the Regent Pass garrison commander both in CM1 Test of the Warlords and M2 Vengeance of Alphaks.

¹⁶ Here and in the rest of this article, the term "Norwolder" refers to a specific ethnic group. See my article *A Traveller's Guide to Norwold*, in "Threshold" Issue No. 7, pages 50-51 for more details.



Viktor Zhucharnov,
King's Master of Horse

(Chaotic 17th level Thief)¹⁷

Viktor is the younger brother of the *knyaz* of Lazarsk, one of the Vatski domains

pledging allegiance to King Ericall. Ruthlessly ambitious, Viktor was not content being just another of his brother's *boyarin*. Conspiring with the latter to intercede on his behalf, Viktor slyly coerced Ericall into giving him a minor charge in Alpha's court. Viktor considers this merely a first step in his climb to power – one to eventually be obtained by whatever means is necessary.

The Greater Lords

The four court styled “Greater Lords” are dominion rulers holding the title of count, and thus represent - alongside Duke Lernal of Landfall - the highest ranking nobility in Norwold. Tending towards larger or strategically located dominions, the Greater Lords are either personal acquaintances and allies of the king, or descendants of older Alphatian families settling Norwold over a

¹⁷ The character Viktor comes from the module CM4 Earthshaker! Set in the future with regard to this article, where he appears as one of the villains and is described as a “boyar” and a “nobleman” at Ericall's court. I tied him to the ruling family of Lazarsk after an idea of Giampaolo Agosta's.

century ago. Three Greater Lords - Beriak Alanira, Theobold Redbeard, and Tralkar Fenn - have been granted title over their domain during Ericall's reign, while house Therimar was already in existence before establishment of the kingdom, yet Kerik Therimar received title of Greater Lord after pledging fealty to Ericall.

Beriak Alanira,
Count of Draken and Governor of Landrise Province

Lawful 22nd level Magic-User

Str 12, Int 17,
Wis 13, Dex 13,
Con 13, Cha 14



Appearance: Thirty-three years old, and quite short for a Pure Alphatian at 5'7” tall, although held with a proud poise, Beriak is exceptionally slim and nearly haggard, weighing only 124 pounds. Having a very pale complexion and gaunt face, his hollow cheeks partially hidden beneath a thick beard and mustache, Beriak often wears a grave and mindful expression. Beriak wears his black hair long, framing a face with a prominent nose and purple eyes, and speaks with a hoarse baritone voice.

Background: Belonging to a powerful Pure Alphatian noble family, Alanira of Stonewall,¹⁸ his family is nonetheless prone

¹⁸ Alaniras' ancestors could have been Alphatians from the Isle of Dawn, since they utilize a surname; a naming convention mainland Alphatians do not employ. Also, Beriak's sister, a canon NPC from module

to anarchic behavior, rivalry, and infighting; despite close ties with King Koblan's house. Due to his methodical personality, Beriak felt out of place amongst his family, leaving home at a young age to pursue study of the arcane arts under various mentors throughout the Alphatian mainland. During his tenure in Sundsvall, he met a young Ericall; the two becoming fast friends. The future king admired the way Beriak treated him as an equal, and not as an inferior class as other Alphatian mages had. It was after Ericall visited Stonewall, at Beriak's suggestion, that Ericall first met Beriak's young sister Christina Marie,¹⁹ then a nine year old girl. Greatly maturing during his stay, the idea to found a kingdom of his own took root. In 992 AC, when Ericall was granted Norwold, fulfilling his wish to found a realm where no discrimination would exist between commoners and magic-users, the prince bid Beriak follow him to his new kingdom. Eriadna, appreciating Beriak's character and positive influence over her son, asked the young wizard to advise, assist, and protect him from the dangers of sovereignty. Since then, Beriak has stood beside Ericall in the day to day rule of Norwold, alternating between time in Alpha and journeys throughout the wilderness of Norwold, to visits to his family back in Draco, and continued study of the arcane arts in mainland Alphatia. Two years ago Ericall, at

CM1 Test of the Warlords - Christina Marie - clearly has Thyatian or at very least Dawnian roots, which are more easily applicable if the Alaniras' origins can be traced back to Dunadale or Hillvale. The family could have migrated to Stonewall in the last century or two, keeping various customs, including naming traditions, from their ancestral homeland.

¹⁹ This character is described in CM1 Test of the Warlords.

his mother's suggestion, granted Beriak the dominion of Draken, as well as rule of Landrise Province; strategically protecting the eastern entrance to Great Bay.

Personality: Beriak is trustworthy, honorable, and extremely stern; despising the chaotic and reckless behavior of most Alphatians. He holds lifelong affection and loyalty toward people who have shown him love, given friendship, or helped him over the course of his life. He harbors no special attachment solely borne out of family ties or national identity. Beriak is a great friend to Ericall, considering him a just and honest ruler. Though Beriak often feels Ericall lacks proper gumption, having to be continually advised to ensure he makes the right decision. While relatively loyal to the Alphatian Empire, he will favor his king and good friend should a conflict between the two arise. Beriak sincerely supports Ericall's aspiration to carve a kingdom from the wild lands of Norwold, bringing them under the rule of law, and will do anything in his power to help his friend and liege fulfill this purpose. Currently, he is mainly concerned with the defense of Great Bay; and monitoring, through his spells and magical devices, the various individuals haunting Ericall's court. Beriak is also promoting the marriage of his sister Christina Marie, still living in Draco among her Alanira relatives, with the king; in order to strengthen his own ties with Ericall as well as giving her a worthy and adoring husband.

Dominion: Beriak rules the County of Draken, northeast of Alpha, on the northern coast of Great Bay; laying immediately west of the Ljallenvals. Now one of the higher ranking noblemen of Norwold, Beriak has

brought many Alphatian settlers and soldiers from Stonewall, among them a small squad of battle-hardened Alphatian mages.²⁰

Special Features: Beriak possesses a wide array of spells mostly devoted to control of elemental energies, summoning, and protection; with a focus on transmutation. Though primarily a battle mage, he additionally knows various detection spells, which he uses in conjunction with several divination oriented magic items. If need arises, Beriak may request either money or resources from his family in Draco, even beseeching the King of Stonewall, with whom he maintains close ties.

Relevant Possessions: *Helm of telepathy, ring of djinni summoning, ring of protection +4, tunic of armor AC 0,*²¹ *wand of cold, wand of fireballs.*

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

²⁰ Some people also say that Beriak invited a couple of gold dragons to live in the eastern mountains, in order to keep the dangers of the Ljallenvals at bay; it seems that these gold dragons receive a small amount of Draken's yearly income to patrol the region and eliminate dangerous monsters before they spread mayhem across the county. See also the Mystaran Almanacs entry "[Draken \(Duchy of\)](#)".

²¹ Functions like a *buckle of armor*; see AC4 Book of Marvelous Magic, page 21.

Kerik,
Count of
Therimar and
Governor of
Sharnadar
Province

Lawful 14th level
Fighter

Str 10, Int 17,
Wis 11, Dex 10,
Con 13, Cha 18

Appearance: Age
fifty-one, Kerik

exhibits a good natured personality, reflected in his merry green eyes. His long hair, beard, and mustache – once brown – have already turned completely white. Copper complected, and short for a Common Alphatian at 5'8" tall, Kerik has a medium build weighing 137 pounds. Kerik is usually attired in rich yet comfortable garments, and simple jewelry.

Background: Kerik is heir to a noble house that settled Norwold in the 9th century, during the last Alphatian colonization before Eriadna's reign. Ekerin, his father, witnessed the plunder and subjugation of neighboring Hastamal by savage Northmen, yet was unable to drive them out. A warrior, like most his ruling predecessors, Kerik inherited the throne in 982 AC, and has spent most his time fighting raiding humanoids, barbarians tribes, and Hastamal Northmen. As a result, he has become a gifted tactician highly skilled in military strategy. The imperial colonization begun by Eriadna in 985 AC, left Kerik with mixed feelings, the Alphatians recognizing the Northmen's claim over



Hastamal instead of seizing the domain from them. Yet after receiving title to Norwold, Ericall elevated Kerik to rank of count, thus making him one of the higher ranking noblemen of Norwold. Kerik's wife died some years ago, leaving him an only daughter, Malaegha (Lawful Normal Woman). A comely twenty year old, Malaegha is nonetheless in frail condition, having yet to take a husband.

Personality: A cheerful and good-natured man, Kerik is very popular among his subjects, and well regarded beyond his dominion borders, being in good standing with most other lords. Kerik may be an expert of all things martial, but is not as capable judging character, resulting in more than a few corrupt individuals in his court. Kerik loves his daughter above all else, and longs to find a suitable husband in order to perpetuate the Therimar dynasty, yet is unwilling to force Malaegha into an unhappy union. On the other hand, he would not reject his own opportunity to marry again. Kerik judges Ericall an inexperienced ruler, still with potential to mature into a great king given due time. Holding onto this belief, Kerik unwaveringly supports Eriadna's son.

Dominion: Therimar County is located southwest the Peninsula of Alpha, straddling the region between Regent's Ridge and Great Bay. From Stoneface, his castle in Holion, Kerik manages modest agricultural activities, as well as healthy lumber and iron mining industries. Therimar borders the dominion of Hastamal to the west, and an undeclared war persists between the two. Asger the Grim, ruler of Hastamal, is a bitter enemy of house Therimar, since many years ago he

attempted to have Ekerin assassinated, and seize Therimar for himself.

Special Features: Though a skilled fighter, Kerik fought his last battles ten years passed against local humanoid tribes. Since that time he has not wielded his sword in combat, and therefore, makes his attack rolls with a -2 penalty.

Relevant Possessions: *Bastard sword +3*,²² *mace +1 of slowing*, *plate mail +3 of charm*.

Source: NPC from Simone Neri's own campaign, after an NPC from the adventure "Non tutto quel che brilla..." by M. Missiroli, in "Kaos", an Italian fanzine of the 1990s, Issue No. 13.

Theobold Redbeard,
Count of Lighthall and Governor of Lighthall Province

Lawful 17th level Fighter

Str 18, Int 12, Wis 9, Dex 14, Con 13, Cha 12

Appearance: Forty years old, Theobold has lightly tanned skin, and an imposing solidly built figure at 6'2" tall and weighing 187 pounds. He carries himself with a majestic countenance. Theobold has red hair, a full red beard, and keen blue eyes. Favoring plain-clothes of high-quality fabric, he wears little jewels or ornamentation; feeling much more comfortable inside a suit of armor.

Background: Theobold is a native of mixed Alpathian-Dawner ancestry from northern Hillvale. At quite a young age, he joined the

²² This bastard sword, called "Red Scourge", is a Therimar family heirloom.

East Portage army, eventually moving to the Heavy Imperial Marines, finally ending his service in the Imperial Army. All the while, occasionally leading a group of adventurers in a series of successful and rewarding quests across the Alphatian countryside on the Isle of Dawn. Having reached the rank of Commander in the army, being friend to General Torenal, he was sent to Norwold in 992 AC to help organize King Ericall's fledgling army, widening his control over the realm. Theobold performed quite well in this duty, and was granted domain of Lighthall five years ago, receiving a title as count and governorship over the surrounding province.

Personality: Theobold is an army veteran with no time for formal court ceremonies, or lavish parties and feasts. While eager to prove his hand at ruling a dominion, Theobold is still a soldier at heart, and will likely never lose his martial attitude and curt mannerisms. Unfortunately he is plagued by several shortcomings; worst among them a fondness for hard liquor. Theobold bears absolute loyalty toward his king and the Alphatian Empire, even if he disapproves of certain aspects concerning Ericall's leadership; such as the appointment of Lernal as Governor over Landfall, or court costs for construction of the Royal Palace; however, he keeps those thoughts to himself. He has little patience for inexperienced and entitled adolescents not able to cope with their responsibilities, considering Ericall among them. If conflict arose between Ericall and Alphatia, Theobold would begrudgingly obey his king; but would switch allegiance if direct orders were received from Sundsvall, and the king—from his point of view—was clearly headed down the wrong path.

Dominion: Theobold rules the County of Lighthall, centered round a small town midway between Oceansend and Landfall, so called because of its towering lighthouses. Since the loss of Helskir, defense of the strait has fallen on Theobold's shoulders, and he devotes most his energy to this task. Luckily the county is a highly developed agricultural and fishing center; providing the necessary funds Theobold needs to maintain a small flotilla and successfully perform his charge.

Special Features: If need be, he is still able to call upon his former adventuring comrades: Hogun Steelcap (Lawful 12th level Dwarf, now a general in Rockhome), Laralyn Athiliar (Neutral 10th level Elf, from Shiye-Lawr), Quentin Larathor (Neutral 17th level Magic-User, from Helskir), and Theona of the Righteous Glory (a missionary from Bettellyn, Lawful 17th level Cleric of the Seven).²³ Most are part of the "League of Extraordinary Adventurers",²⁴ a society created by Ericall, and led by Theobold, with the goal of gathering seasoned adventurers to help defend Norwold and Alphatia.

Relevant Possessions: *Dagger +3, normal sword +3,²⁵ plate mail +3, pouch of security, shield +3, spear +3 returning.*

²³ The Faith of the Seven is the official religion of the Kingdom of Bettellyn. See [The Alphatian Province of Bettellyn](#) (by B. Heard).

²⁴ The group is described in [GAZF8 The Streets of Landfall](#) (by JTR).

²⁵ Theobold's dagger is called "Fang", while his sword is called "Trollbane". Both are old Dawnian weapons forged to repel humanoids and monsters of Bogland. Wounds inflicted by these weapons cannot be healed through regeneration.

Source: M4 Five Coins for a Kingdom, provisional writeup by Giampaolo Agosta (agathokles).



Tralkar Fenn,
*Count of Hulgarholm
and Governor of Isles
of the Strand Province*

Neutral 20th level
Fighter

Str 16, Int 16, Wis 14,
Dex 13, Con 14, Cha 11

Appearance: Though apparently forty years old, at fifty two Tralkar still presents an ominous presence, with pale, near white Pure Alphatian coloration. Tall, brawny, and stout; Tralkar is 6'2" tall and weighs 212 pounds. Wearing his long straight black hair down to the small of his back, Tralkar also sports a short beard and mustache. Tralkar's jet black eyes betray his inner gloom, and resemble two deep wells of darkness. Several whiplash marks mar his back, and a deep scar dominates the left side of his face. Tralkar favors heavy fur-trimmed clothing in dark colors. In battle, he rides a black destrier and dons magical plate mail complete with a fearsome helm fashioned in the shape of an orc skull.

Background: Born Andryliar in Frisland, Tralkar is the despised second son of an Alphatian lord. Incapable of learning magic, he simmered at the abuse heaped upon him. At twenty years of age, he engaged in an affair with his brother's fiancé, later uncovered by his sibling. His brother, mad with rage and jealousy, strangled the girl;

placing blame for the crime upon Andryliar, and providing false evidence their father was all too eager to believe. Andryliar managed to flee before the farce, but his brother caught wind of his escape. Tracking him down and overpowering him, his brother then brutally lashed him, leaving him face down and left for dead in a southern Frisland river. However; Andryliar survived, and after the near-death experience hid in Stonewall recovering and assuming a fake identity. Hence Tralkar Fenn was born, feigning Helskir origins. Performing various duties, mostly as bodyguard and mercenary, Tralkar used all his earnings to improve his skill with the sword; later journeying across much of the Alphatian Empire. Often seeking duels with the condescending wizards he had come to despise. Finally returning to his family estate in Frisland, his father having died some years before, Tralkar ruthlessly took revenge upon his brother; killing his family before him, before slaughtering him as well. Afterwards, keeping his identity as Tralkar, living as mercenary and soldier for many years, climbing the ranks of Stonewall's army. In 985 AC when Alphatia attempted to regain control of Norwold, Tralkar at last found a ripe opportunity to leave the mage dominated Alphatian mainland and establish a base of power elsewhere. Asking permission to leave the service of Stonewall's sovereign, enlisting among the expeditionary units going to take control of Norwold, Tralkar was among the first detachments to arrive. Without direct orders from his superiors, he launched a daring surprise attack against the Ostland dominion of Ostmark, encompassing the Isles of the Strand. His swift military action destroyed the Northman's hold over them, afterwards executing the ruling clanleaders. This brutal

action nonetheless received approval from Tralkar's superior, also convincing many coastal communities in Norwold, accepting Alphatian rule was the safer choice. After leading further military actions in Norwold, in 992 AC Ericall made Tralkar Count of Hulgårholm and Governor of Isles of the Strand Province, with the important task of watching the Strait of Helskir. Since 997 AC, when Theobold Redbeard was granted County of Lighthall, Tralkar has devoted less and less time to patrolling the strait, which has become a matter of contention between he and Theobold. Tralkar has recently made secret trade agreements and delved into plots with the rebel king of Helskir. Tralkar married a thirty two year old Northwoman native to the Isle of the Dogs, Sassa Kajadottir (Neutral Normal Woman), has given him two sons, the eldest being ten years old, and a daughter.

Personality: Ruthless and extremely cynical, shaped by life's past events into an emotionless man, Tralkar delights only in discord and battle. Tralkar despises the Alphatian society which forbid him to rise in status, harboring a special hatred toward arrogant tyrannical wizards. Tralkar is by no means a revolutionary or a benefactor, only looking out for his own opportunities. Tralkar is clever, vigilant, and vengeful; letting no offense go unanswered. Though rash, often seeking immediate revenge when possible, he is otherwise content to seek vengeance after many years have passed. Wanting to widen his power in Norwold, Tralkar considers the current situation ideal, serving a guileless king such as Ericall. Tralkar's primary goal is laying his hands on the rich city-state of Oceansend, already placing some of his best spies in the city.

Through them, he has made contact with Thyatian agents within the city, and is evaluating the possibility of an agreement with Thyatis, possibly even exploiting the struggle between the rival empires to augment his power in Norwold.

Dominion: Tralkar's dominion encompasses the entire Isle of Dogs; ruling from his keep in Abengor, west of the isle's northern marshes. One of the isle's main settlements founded by Northmen from Ostmark decades ago. The island's economy primarily focuses on fishing, with sustenance farming carried on for local needs. A rising trade has emerged in the county, centered round ivory tusks from walrus dwelling in the waters surrounding Walrus Island to the northeast. Tralkar's walrus hunters are trying to dominate the trade by eliminating all rivals; namely Oceansend. This has caused further attrition, and some skirmishes, between rival seaborne hunters from Hulgårholm and the mainland city-state.

Special Features: Tralkar is a skilled tactician and efficient administrator, well versed in intrigue. Leading a small yet well-equipped mercenary army, and a significant flotilla of sea reavers, with bases hidden among the Isle of Dogs' marshes, or around Walrus Island's coasts. Tralkar also has at his disposal a number of efficient spies, some of whom work in Oceansend and Helskir, and he will soon attempt to place agents among the new dominions created after the Great Land Rush. In combat, Tralkar uses his magical armor's ethereality power to good advantage, and favors using only his bastard sword, switching between one-handed and two-handed styles, having mastered both; not

ruling out treachery and deception when appropriate.

Relevant Possessions: *Amulet of the iron-minded*,²⁶ *dagger +2 of watching*, *gauntlets of the shocking grasp*,²⁷ *bastard sword +4/+8 vs spellcasters*, *plate mail +3 of ethereality*, *ring of protection +2*, *ring of spell turning*.

Source: M5 Talons of Night Reference to Ostmark is borrowed from its description in the Mystara section of the Italian Games Academy forum, written by Corann; which does not include any mention of Tralkar.

Petty Lords

The following lords already controlled various regions when Ericall was granted the crown of Norwold. Their number includes descendants of old Alphatian families migrating to Norwold in the 9th century AC, whom the king granted baronial title within Norwold's hierarchy, as well as individuals obtaining control of their lands in more dubious fashion, yet managing to legitimize its possession by swearing oaths of fealty to

²⁶ This amulet grants the wearer immunity to all *charm*-like, mind controlling and reading spells and effects cast by spellcasters of 7th level or lower, or by monsters with seven or less HD. It also grants a +3 bonus on saving throws against all other *charm*-like, mind controlling and reading effects.

²⁷ These gauntlets allow the wearer to deliver once per round, three times daily, a powerful electrical shock which may also be channeled through weapons the instant they hit their target. Each shock deals 1d8+6 points of damage. When donning the gauntlets, small non-damaging electrical sparks run across their surface.

the king. Several pre-existing lords use titles not commonly part of Alphatia's hierarchy, and are deemed below baronial rank.

Asger the Grim, Lord (Jarl) of Hastamal

Chaotic 11th level Magic-User

Str 10 (6), Int 15, Wis 12, Dex 13 (9),
Con 15 (11), Cha 16

Appearance: Asger is forty-five years old, though looks at least ten years older. Fair-skinned, almost pale, having short stature for a Northman at 5'7" tall, and a frail build weighing only 130 pounds with a slightly hunched posture. Asger has waist-length, wild grey hair, tied in various braids and pigtails, no beard but long mustache, and intense light green eyes. Asger has a distinctive scar on his upper back, and usually wears colorful clothes in a mix of Northman and Alphatian styles.

Background: Asger's father, Morten Bloodaxe, was an Ostland raider belonging to the ruling clan of Vestpont, and follower of Loki. In 973 AC Morten and his men, his son among them, raided northward; sacking many villages on Norwold's eastern coast, and ending with the conquest of the Alphatian dominion of Hastamal, in the southern Great Bay, massacring its ruling house. The Northmen managed to hold fast against forces of nearby Alphatian dominion Therimar. Morten settled in as jarl of Hastamal, keeping control of the local population with his ruthless band of raiders. Young Asger learned the rudiments of magic from a captured hireling of the former

Alphatian lords, and became jarl of Hastamal upon Morten's passing in 978 AC. A year later; however, he was backstabbed and by an Alphatian slave girl, killing him. Priests of Loki raised him, and Asger delighted in brutally torturing the girl. The girl cursed Asger just before dying, and after his health and physique have faltered, often weak and prone to illness. In the long years since, he has waged an intermittent war against nearby Therimar, sending his raiders to pillage the villages of the Great Bay. Continually searching for arcane secrets to cure his curse. In 985 AC, he agreed to ally with the Alphatians and cease his raids in order to keep possession of his dominion, and subsequently in 992 AC, Ericall recognized his control over Hastamal, letting him keep the title of lord (jarl).

Personality: Asger is cruel, ruthless, bloodthirsty, and treacherous; utterly loyal to the Immortal Loki and his priests plaguing the dominion. Asger is only interested in gathering more political and magical clout, and appeasing Loki by fostering treachery and the spread of chaos throughout Norwold, and eventually hopes to lift the curse that lays hold over him. He has tried for many years to conquer the nearby domain of Therimar with the strength of arms, but to no avail - and now he is planning to use subtler means against Count Kerik. Asger has kept many concubines through the years, but has never been able to father any children, suspecting the curse may be to blame. While many Hastamal Northmen think Asger is unfit to rule, having severely weakened physically and mentally, he is a wizard no one dares challenge as long as the priests of Loki protect him.

Dominion: The Jarldom of Hastamal lays on the southern shores of the Great Bay, about 280 miles south-west of Alpha and due west of Therimar. Asger's seat is in Hastoun, the former castle of the Alphatian lords, surrounded by a large fortified coastal village. Hastamal's population is mostly Alphatian on the coast, and Norwolder in the interior's woodlands. A small number of Northman clans and their warriors rule over the land, under the leadership of Asger and of his priests of Loki; they also make up the bulk of the jarl's guard. The jarldom's main trades are fishing, hunting, trapping, and raiding - which, despite Ericall's orders, Asger's men continue to practice against unprotected or isolated villages of the Great Bay.

Special Features: Asger's spells mostly come from the spellbooks stolen from the former Alphatian lords of Hastamal, which deal with water and air elemental power. He has never researched a spell of his own, and would need to apprentice under a more powerful magic-user, but he does not like to give out clues about his lack of power. The curses which affects him lowers his physical attribute scores by 4 points each (use the scores given in brackets, above), and Asger has not found a way to lift the curse yet. Asger's most trusted advisor is the cunning, handsome, and silver-tongued Tryggvi (Chaotic 9th-level Cleric of Loki), who also acts as high priest of Loki in Hastamal.

Relevant Possessions: *Bugle of reviving*,²⁸ *magic compass*,²⁹ *periapt of protection*

²⁸ See AC4 Book of Marvelous Magic, page 21.

²⁹ If the user utters the command word and names a place, this magical compass immediately points its needle toward that

The Staff of Aquatic Wizardry

Created by a former Alpathian lord of Hastamal, this powerful staff is fashioned from driftwood, ritually purified and imbued with magical energy. Presently held by the Jarl of Hastamal, Asger the Grim. Wielded as a *staff* +2 in combat; as long as it remains in contact with the user it grants identical powers of a *ring of protection* +2, and allows the handler to survive without breathing for up to seven days. Three times per week, at the cost of 2 charges, the staff can create a waterspout – a funnel of water 100' high and 40' wide at the top, tapering to 5' at the base. Anything caught in this awesome storm is helplessly tossed about, unable to act. If the wielder wishes, a victim can be spat out at a speed of 160'. Should the victim's momentum be halted by something solid, the impact inflicts 5d12 points of damage. The waterspout lasts for 2d4 rounds and can be created on or below the surface of any body of water. Additionally, the staff can cast several spells at the power of a 10th level magic-user. Currently it has seventeen charges left.

The staff casts the following spells at a cost of 2 charges apiece:

- *charm aquatic creature* – a version of *snake charm* which affects all underwater fish, mammals, and reptiles;
- *Detect danger*;
- *Levitate*;
- *Obscure*;
- *Shield*;

- *water whisper* – similar to *wind whisper* found in PC4 Night Howlers, yet only functioning underwater.

The staff casts the following spells at a cost of 2 charges apiece:

- *calm water* (see GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds);
- *conjure elemental* (water only);
- *control weather*;
- *crystallize* – a version of *disintegrate* which permanently turns an object into a fragile, crystalline substance;
- *growth of animal* – only sea animals, affecting up to five creatures;
- *hold monster*;
- *lightning bolt*;
- *lower water*;
- *sea swarm* – a version of *insect plague* which conjures a school of small fish or sea creatures, and only functions underwater;
- *summon sea creatures* – see GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds;
- *water breathing*.

against drowned dead,³⁰ staff of aquatic wizardry,³¹ wand of cold.

Sources: NPC from Simone Neri's own campaign, after an NPC of the adventure "Non tutto quel che brilla..." by M. Missiroli, in "Kaos", an Italian fanzine of the 1990s, Issue No. 13.

Azirun IV,
Baron of Khemyr

Lawful 15th level Fighter

Str 16, Int 15, Wis 9, Dex 11, Con 15, Cha 14

Appearance: Fifty-three years old, copper Common Alphatian complexion, tall and muscular at 6'2", but a little overweight weighing 198 pounds. He has gold-colored eyes, dark brown graying hair, and a short beard. Azirun's left hand is missing after a fight against a frost giant many years ago; strapping a silver hand to his left wrist. Azirun favors clothes in dark red and black colors. He always displays a diamond earring, originally belonging to Azirun I, a custom carried down the family line.

Background: Azirun is descendant of an Alphatian lord settling the shores of Great Bay in the latter half of the 9th century AC. Azirun I, first lord of his line, was a warrior

location. The compass does not function underground.

³⁰ This periapt repels all undead aquatic creatures; mesmers, velyas, devilfishes, and undead animated from those lost at sea; at a distance of ten feet from the wearer. Creatures forced inside this radius fight with a -2 penalty on attack rolls.

³¹ See boxed text.

from Notrion founding the domain of Khemyr on the southeastern shore of Great Bay, yet forced to abandon it soon after the Long Winter began. With aid of a valiant group of companions, he fought against the Witch Queen, Frota, and her minions; eventually defeating her and liberating his domain. Despite the overall failure of Alphatian colonization, Azirun chose to stay in Khemyr protecting the sparse hamlets of the area, whose inhabitants gradually accepted him as their lord. Thus the young Azirunides dynasty was born. Current ruler, Azirun IV, came to power in 989 AC. Previously, young Azirun had spent time adventuring within the wilderness of Norwold, Alphatia, and even the Plane of Air, following a conjurer companion in his struggle against enemy djinn. The eldest among his siblings, he was schooled in the rule of Khemyr by his ederly father Theradun II, and ultimately inherited the domain, Theradun dying of natural causes. In 992 AC, Azirun greeted the Kingdom of Norwold's establishment with hope and joy; the new king appointing him Baron of Khemyr. Since then Azirun has become one of the king's staunchest supporters among minor Norwold noblemen. Azirun, is married to Ermonya (Chaotic 14th level Thief), a forty-five year old fellow adventuress from Dawnrim. They have a twenty year old daughter named Shala (Lawful 7th level Fighter). Azirun rules Khemyr with the aid of his two younger brothers, Assuryon (Chaotic 4th level Fighter) and Qurduyan (Lawful 9th level Magic-User), and his sister Naira (Lawful 13th level Cleric of Ixion), each having their own family.

Personality: Straightforward and organized, Azirun upholds the honorable warrior code

he inherited from his ancestors; aspiring to live up to them. Proud of his heritage, Azirun will not miss an opportunity to mention his heritage in front of newly anointed noblemen, sometimes presenting his stature in a haughty manner. Azirun's ambition is to build Khemyr into a powerful and respected dominion, and thinks the Kingdom of Norwold's establishment is the perfect time. However; Azirun is aware he is growing older, and desires his daughter Shala retire from her adventuring, and take the reins of government, marrying an honorable lord as soon as possible.

Dominion: Khemyr is located directly south of Alpha in a forested stretch of coastland along the strait separating Great Bay from the Gulf of Wrecks. Its population is mostly native, with additional Alpathian immigrants. The barony's industries revolve around fishing, farming, logging, and sparse mining, with most raw materials sent to Alpha. Azirunide house is quite united, and the baron entrusts his siblings with most governmental duties. A reclusive elven Foresthome is located in the forests beyond Khemir's southern borders; and thus far having not trespassed into elven territory, the elves are indifferent to Khemir's presence.

Special Features: If required to engage in combat, Azirun fights from horseback using lance, sword and shield. To overcome his handicap, Azirun straps his shield tightly to his arm. An astonishingly skilled rider Azirun is able to maneuver his horse using only his knees. A natural leader, Azirun breeds confidence among his soldiers in battle.

Relevant Possessions: *Censer of controlling air elementals, native drums,*³² *normal sword +2/+4 vs genies,*³³ *plate mail +1.*

Sources: NPC from Simone Neri's own campaign.

Ragnar Blueshoulder,
Lord (Jarl) of Noskien

Neutral 15th level Thief

Str 15, Int 13, Wis 10, Dex 17, Con 15, Cha 15

Appearance: Ragnar is thirty-two years old, fair skin with medium height and build at 5'10" tall, weighing 156 pounds, and an overall unremarkable appearance. Ragnar has blue eyes, unruly dark blond hair bound into a large ponytail, and a long mustache. Losing his right eye in combat, he now wears an eyepatch over it. Ragnar usually wears roughspun clothes in the Northmen traditional style.

Background: Askel, Ragnar's father, was a member of the clan ruling Haltford in Soderfjord. After numerous quarrels with his relatives, Askel felt he had nothing to gain by staying in Haltford. Stealing one of the clan's longships, Askel fled north with his wife and small band of followers. For years after they lived raiding the coasts of Helskir, Redstone and Oceansend; establishing a hideaway among the northwestern coastal marshes of the Isle of Dawn. After seven years, in 974 AC, they founded an additional northern

³² See AC4 Book of Marvelous Magic, page 30.

³³ This sword, called "Djinnslayer", grants a +4 bonus to hit and damage rolls against djinn and efreet. Moreover it deals double damage against lesser and greater djinn.

outpost for their raids against Norwold, settling a fortified camp they called Noskien at the northern tip of the Tranquil Coast. When the Alphatians returned in 985 AC, Askel kept a low profile, directing his raids only against non-Alphatian convoys, allowing him to avoid Ostmark's fate, conquered in 985 AC. (See Tralkar Fenn's background above). Some years later, Askel died fighting against the Thyatian navy, which had discovered his hideout amid the Isle of Dawn's marshes and there cornered him. Ragnar, then twenty-three years old, had remained in Noskien, taking lead of the rest of his clan and supplementing it with other Northmen vikings, securing alliance with local interior native tribes. Not fearing Ericall's retaliation, he began staging daring raids against trading vessels passing nearby Noskien; also hitting coastal villages on the northern Isle of Dawn. Begrudgingly following the advice of his counselors, Ericall ultimately agreed it was better to buy Ragnar's alliance than start a costly military campaign against him. Thus, in 998 AC, Ericall offered Ragnar absolution; if the Soderfjordan pirate would pledge fealty and stop his raids against Alphatian and Norwold shipping, the king would spare him from the might of his navy. Ragnar agreed, and since then has mostly directed his raids against foreign shipping; specifically Oceansend, the Heldannic Territories, Helskir, and northern countries of the Western Sea of Dawn; but also often attacks ships from the Alphatian mainland or the Isle of Dawn, and the most isolated villages upon Norwold's coasts, when the opportunity arises.

Personality: Ragnar is a thoughtful and calculating man, ruthless and authoritarian, whose desire for wealth is never sated.

Despite his behavior, he holds a surprisingly strict notion of Northmen honor. Once giving his word, Ragnar's loyalty is absolute. Of course, this means the opposite is also true, his threats unconditional as well.

Dominion: Ragnar's jarldom consists of a sandy stretch of coast along the Tranquil Coast's northern end. The sea around Noskien is treacherous, and quite difficult to navigate unless one knows where the various shallows and seamounts are located. The plain is swept by strong winds; resulting in stubby plants covering the soil, giving way to woodland only far inland. The village of Noskien lies beneath one of the few coastal cliffs in the dominion. Ragnar keeps a small flotilla of viking longships there. A steep path rises above the village to a line of hills beyond, and on the highest of these is where Ragnar has built his keep. Noskien's population is made up of many natives and Northmen, and a small percentage of foreigners captured during raids brought here as slaves. Only the "feoffees" class, Northman warriors and leaders appointed by the jarl, are allowed to own land in the dominion; also forming the backbone of Ragnar's advisors, lieutenants, and sea captains.

Special Features: Because of having been raised as a raider, Ragnar always favors swiftness over brute force, learning the value of performing feats of agility and dexterity over brute strength. In combat, he prefers wearing light armor and fights in a two-weapon style, using sword and dagger. Ragnar's most trusted advisors are Mads Ditmerson (Chaotic 8th level Cleric of Thanatos, worshipped in the Immortal's northern guise of Darga), a former comrade

of Ragnar's father; and Thomara Lhenic (Chaotic 7th level Magic-User). While Ragnar is not a follower of Darga, he allows Mads to run a half sunken temple in Noskien, in his Immortal's name, where the cleric secretly practices human sacrifice by drowning. Thomara; a beautiful young woman of mixed Norwolder-Alphatian descent from Oceansend, whom Ragnar captured, making her his slave; became his favorite concubine. Afterwards "freeing" her, when she became his favorite mistress. Thomara still harbors a secret desire for revenge against him.

Relevant Possessions: *Leather armor +2, normal sword +2,³⁴ ring of protection +2, ring of water breathing.*

Sources: NPC from [Tharquil's homepage](#), in French, and not available anymore on the web.

Rolland Adlamson,
Baron of Nevoshed

Neutral 8th level Fighter

Str 17, Int 16, Wis 9, Dex 17, Con 13, Cha 12

Appearance: Thirty-two years old, six feet tall and slender weighing 168 pounds. Although having handsome features, Rolland is an albino, with light gray eyes having a reddish tint, and completely white hair. He wears his straight hair down his back, and goes clean shaven. Despite a sickly appearance, Rolland is wiry and swift. He does not usually venture forth before sunset,

³⁴ Ragnar's sword is called "Talon" and allows its wielder to cast *fly* two times per day.

as prolonged exposure to sunlight hurts his pallid skin. When under the sun, Rolland dons magical plate mail engraved with golden lion heads, the baron's coat of arms, and wrapping himself in a satin purple cloak.

Background: Born in a rural village in Kendach, Rolland Adlamson was son of a peasant family. After his parents died, he was cast out from his village because of his odd albino appearance. Fleeing into the Dunadale Bogs' wilderness, he lived among groups of bandits. Following the bandits defeat by local forces, the boy was spared and taken in by an Alphatian warrior. Seeing potential in the boy, the warrior decided to educate and train him. Acting as the warrior's squire, Rolland became a proficient fighter in his own right. Having taught Rolland everything he knew, his benefactor finally bid he go off in search of adventure, and make his own fortunes. Rolland had many escapades in the Known World and the north until 991 AC, when he stumbled upon the tiny village of Nevoshed, nestled in a mountain valley near the Great Bay of Norwold. Nevoshed's lord had a daughter, Galathea, whose husband had been killed by raiding frost giant weeks earlier, her lord father having been seriously wounded as well. Though mortally wounded, the lord hastily organized a tournament in which competitors would fight against a champion for his daughter's hand, as local tradition required. It fell upon Lord Nevoshed's champion Pongo, a dwarf, to decide who would be his daughter's husband. By chance, Rolland met Galathea, falling deeply in love with her. Galathea loved Rolland in return, despite his appearance, and asked he take part in the tournament. The evening before the event, Galathea secretly drugged Pongo,

and after defeating the other competitors, Rolland easily defeated the ailing dwarf. Thus, Rolland became husband to Galathea, and when Galathea's father died weeks later, Rolland also became Lord of Nevoshed. In the following years, Rolland and Galathea (Neutral Normal Woman) pledged fealty to King Ericall, earning them baronial status. They also have a daughter, Lina, born in 994 AC. Today, Rolland and his beautiful wife are content ruling their secluded dominion, and are seldom seen at court unless summoned by the king. In most instances, Galathea more often shows up in the capital alone.

Personality: Rolland is forthright, solemn, and reserved; often behaving callously when dealing with people of lower status or rank. Nevoshed justice is extremely severe toward lawbreakers and criminals. His albinism and strange appearance do not endear him to others, either. The people of Nevoshed do not love him, but respect and fear his leadership and authority; Rolland being an efficient ruler who has successfully defended the dominion from giant and humanoid raids in the past. Rolland deeply loves his wife Galathea and daughter Lina, and will stop at nothing—even jeopardizing friends, dominion, and king – to protect them.

Dominion: Nevoshed is an old dominion also dating back to the latter half of the 9th century AC, during the last Norwold colonization before Eriadna's reign. The purpose of the dominion was to establish a route between Foxes' River and Kilmik Vale through Green Pass; but when the Long Winter came the entire plan faltered. Nevoshed survived Witch Queen Frota's reign, but remained an isolated wilderness outpost. Shandrill, widow of the original Lord

of Nevoshed, had only a young daughter. Deeming the girl would not survive to rule Nevoshed, Shandrill decided to follow local marriage custom, staging a tournament to decide her husband. Since Shandrill's time, over a century ago, Nevoshed has continued the custom of matrilineal succession, the crown passing to the eldest daughter, whose husband is chosen through tournament.

The Barony of Nevoshed is located among forested mountains along the Foxes' River. Deep snow blankets the dominion in winter, and bitter winds blow down from the heights. The principal village of the barony, also named Nevoshed, is a fortified settlement located at the confluence of the Foxes' and Blue Rivers, which flows from Eagles' Barrier to the northeast. The Foxes' River being the larger of the two. The baron's castle rests upon a high hummock towering over the village. The barony's inhabitants are mostly Norwolders and Vrodniki, with Alphatians making up the bulk of the castle's personnel. Foxfolk lupin inhabit the domain's fringes. Hunting, logging, and trapping are Nevoshed's main occupations; the products often shipped on log barges downriver to the coast and onwards to Alpha; often accompanied by what little trade products are gained from neighboring Norwolder and Vrodniki tribes. The dominion is harassed by raiding frost giants in winter, and humanoid (mostly troll) marauders, but they rarely attack Nevoshed, defended by the baroness' veteran guard and a hardy and well-armed militia.

Special Features: Baron Rolland's champion, and his predecessor's as well, is a hideous dwarf hunchback nicknamed Pongo (Lawful 9th level Dwarf), and despite being

utterly stupid is extremely faithful and monstrously strong. Rolland defeated Pongo, in part thanks to Galathea's treachery, in the last tournament held in Nevoshed. Pongo pledged his loyalty afterwards and has been Rolland's faithful servant ever since. Baroness Galathea's love for Rolland has diminished these past years, and she has become somewhat distant toward him, which grieves the baron as he still has strong love for her. While feeling connected to Nevoshed and her family's history, Galathea does not care for baronial administration, leaving the duties to her husband, enjoying every chance she has to journey to Alpha. Taking in the pleasures a more civilized place, as well as affording her the opportunity to frolic with the men of Alpha's court. Nevertheless, she loves her daughter Lina, wanting to raise her according to Nevoshed custom, and would never abandon Rolland or the dominion.

Relevant Possessions: *Amulet of protection against undead*,³⁵ *plate mail +1*, *ring of protection +2*, *two-banded sword +3*.

Sources: NPC from Simone Neri's own campaign, after an NPC of the adventure "La maledizione del divoratore d'anime" by R. Di Meglio and S. Peruzzi, in "Kaos", an Italian fanzine of the 1990s, Issue No. 17.

³⁵ This amulet grants a +2 bonus on saves against undead special attacks --a ghoul's paralysis, vampire's gaze, etc. It also enables the wearer to avoid the effects of special attacks from undead which do not usually permit a saving throw (such as energy drain) if successfully making a save versus Spells with a -2 penalty.

Sabatio the Fiend,
Lord of Somyra

Chaotic 9th level Fighter

Str 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Dex 12, Con 9, Cha 12

Appearance: Sabatio is sixty-three years old, and of average height at 5'9", yet rotund and burly weighing 190 pounds, with a squat appearance and unattractive features. Sabatio has strong wide jaw, and low forehead with bushy eyebrows. His eyes are brown, and his hair white worn shoulder length, with a thick beard and mustache. Almost never takes off his armor, and always sports a golden coronet as a token of his authority.

Background: Sabatio de Florio was born in Oreggiano, Caurenze Principality; son of a local stonecutter. Instead of following in his father's footsteps, Sabatio found intimidation and bullying easier, earning money taking disreputable jobs blackmailing and robbing people for his clients. Once coming of age, he enlisted in Caurenze's army, increasing his meagre officer's wage through extortion. Sabatio's military career ended after he and his band robbed a man turning out to have powerful connections with the wizard elite. Sabatio and some of his men deserted instead of facing capture and trial, fleeing to Darokin. In the following years, Sabatio hired out the services of his small mercenary band to the highest bidder; typically crime kingpins, unscrupulous noblemen, and brigand chiefs; touring Darokin, Thyatis, the Heldannic Territories, and parts of the Isle of Dawn. Around 976 AC, Sabatio's band decided to head to Norwold, a land left lawless by the last war between Thyatis and Alphaatia two decades before. Hired as

mercenaries, squeezing goods from peasants and plundering helpless villages, Sabatio's band toured the eastern coast of Norwold northward. Infamously known as "the Fiend" due to the wicked and brutal actions carried out by his band. Eventually, in 982 AC, they arrived in the domain of Somyra, whose lord had been killed and being ravaged by orcs and giants descending from the Dragon Spur Hills. Utilizing a magical belt's power found during his travels, Sabatio managed to extend control over the orc chieftains, turning them against the giants, and chasing them out of the dominion. Sabatio then decided they should seize the domain; occupying the castle of the late Alphatian lords. Sabatio claimed title of Lord of Somyra, imposing his tyrannical rule over its inhabitants. When Alphatia started recolonizing Norwold in 985 AC, "the Fiend" paid his due, secure the coasts near his dominion and Kilmik Vale to the south using his human and orc troops; earning the Alphatians' trust. When Ericall became King of Norwold in 992 AC, Sabatio was reluctantly confirmed as Lord of Somyra, earning the lowest rank of landed nobility. Sabatio cares little about his rank so long as he is able to rule his dominion in any fashion he sees fit. Currently a widower; Sabatio leaves increasing governmental duties to his son Aloiso 'the Hawk' (Chaotic 6th level Fighter), a thirty-five year old possessing worse traits than his father. Aloiso is a treacherous opponent, with an interest in necromancy.

Personality: Sabatio cares about little and no one, only respecting those stronger than himself. Always scheming, he seeks to gain the upper hand in all his interactions. Constantly wary and trusting no one,

including his own son and former comrades, Sabatio favors the company of his orc minions over all others. Sabatio is content to silently rule Somyra, allowing his men to abuse the local population, so long as it does not result in open rebellion. However; his men freely raid settlements outside Somyra's borders, taking slaves to trade, and participating in any number of disreputable activities as long as blame does not reach their lord. Sabatio has neither love nor respect for King Ericall, but fears the eventual solidification of the king's power over Norwold, doing his best to keep the king weak in order to continue his depredations undisturbed.

Dominion: The Lordship of Somyra is located on the coast south of Raiders' Point and the Eagles' Barrier, reaching inland toward the Dragon Spur Hills. The original dominion was colonized less than a century ago by settlers migrating from Oceansend and the Thyatian Empire, establishing the outpost of Adia. Some years after 912 AC, the small dominion was seized by Someys of Arogansa, an Alphatian exile given the task of eliminating Thyatian control over Adia by Imperial Prince Tylion, to earn a pardon for his misdeeds. Someys conquered the area, installing himself as eponymous Lord of Somyra. For over a generation Someys' descendants ruled Somyra, ignored by the Alphatian Empire. In 980 AC, the domain came under attack from giant controlled orc tribes of the Dragon Spur Hills. The current Lord Somyra was killed, and the countryside ravaged. The dominion was spared total annihilation by Sabatio's timely arrival. Yet falling under his iron fist, life improved little. Somyra's population fears Sabatio and has suffered their abuses, but as the dominion

BRANDIGGAN'S FLYING MACHINE

This odd machine was assembled by half-genius half-madman Brandiggan, a gnome from Stoutfellow. Appearing as a thirty foot long twelve foot wide boat hull, having two wood and metal wheels on the underlying side, complete with four huge mechanical wings. The front three-quarters are covered by a large cabin featuring a number of thick glass portholes, and the bow is adorned by a figurehead fashioned in the shape of a large hoopoe. The remaining rear quarter of the hull is uncovered, and appears like the deck of a normal ship.

Inside the cabin, the machine has a control panel featuring pulls, levers, rollers, and pulleys which allow the crew to move the machine's mechanical wings. The entire contraption has a technomantic framework, built along the lines of devices Serraine's

gnomes might assemble using the Fantasy Physics General Skill from PC2, Top Ballista. The two large underlying wheels allow the machine to land freely if a long enough level landing place is present.

The flying machine has an Armor Class of 5 and 65 Hull Points. It can carry up to nine people in addition to 30,000 coins of weight. It can reach a maximum speed of six miles per hour (80' per round) if wind strength is normal or lighter, but this speed is modified like a normal ship if the wind is stronger, behaving similar to a sailing ship during gales or storms. In order to make the machine fly, three crewmen are needed, one of which must assume the pilot's role. The pilot must have an Intelligence score of 17 *and* Dexterity score of 15, or a dedicated Piloting General Skill.

was preserved, many view Sabatio's men as the lesser evil.

The dominion includes villages along the coastal plain, and other farming settlements round Deepwater Lake, located in the southwestern forest. There the small fortified settlement of Adia is found, surrounded by a few manor houses dating back to Thyatian occupation. Three Stones' Clearing, an ancient stone henge consisting of three standing stones, lays nearby. Local superstition considers the site cursed, and could well be true as the stones lay over an ancient Norwolder burial site, unbeknownst to most of the population. The wooded hills to the northwest are only sparsely settled, and below the mountain slopes lies a castle

built by the Lords of Somyra; now Sabatio's residence. The castle boasts many magically crafted devices left by its Alphatian lords; including magical traps, golems, and an unusual technomantic flying machine (see the sidebar) assembled by gnomes of Stoutfellow. Half the inhabitants of the dominion are descendants of Thyatian and Oceansendian settlers, with Norwolders comprising the other half. Somyra's subjects are mostly farmers and shepherds, hunting and fishing to supplement these livelihoods.

Special Features: Aloiso has uncovered the necromantic power of Three Stones' Clearing and is trying to discover a ritual to tap into its energy; transforming his father's comrades into his undead minions. A now elderly

Sabatio fears someone among them may rise against him, and would rather Aloiso succeed him, not realizing his son would probably dispose of him. Untrusting his own men, Sabatio prefers stationing them far from the castle, which at present is defended by his orc warriors. His only trusted advisor is Selenican mage Musad ibn Wathil (Chaotic 5th level Magic-User), nicknamed “Sepia” due his skin coloration, and is actually in league with Aloiso.

Relevant Possessions: *Battle axe +2 of slicing, belt of the orc king*,³⁶ *chain mail +3*.

Sources: NPC from Simone Neri’s own campaign, after an NPC of the adventure “I cavalieri dell’ombra” by C.L. Pancini, B. Sidoti, and S. Peruzzi, in “Kaos”, an Italian fanzine of the 1990s, Issue No. 16.

The Vatski Princes

Five Vatski principalities are found in the so-called Vatskiy Rodina (“Vatski homeland”) located in the lower Ransarn River valley. These domains were created when local Vanatic clans and tribes decided to civilize over the course of the last two centuries, developing a culture and customs which are quite different from neighboring peoples, much less the Alphatians. Five larger

³⁶ Recovered by Sabatio in the Final Range, this belt was fashioned for an orc king of old. It grants the wearer powers identical to a *ring of protection +1*. Additionally, the wearer gains a +3 bonus on reaction rolls toward bugbears, goblins, hobgoblins, and orcs; and is able to cast *mass charm* at will. The maximum number affected by the *charm* at any given time is 100 Hit Die.

domains are found in this region, each ruled by a *knyaz* – Vyolstograd and Stamtral being the largest, with Gunvolod, Lazarsk, and Odna following – and numerous smaller dominions ruled by a *boyarin*. *Knyaz* is usually rendered in Thyatian and Alphatian tongues with the words meaning “duke” or “prince”, while *boyarin* is translated with “baron” or with the neologism “boyar”. Gunvolod’s ruler, being of Heldanner origin, styles himself *jarl*, but his Vatski subjects still use the term *knyaz* when referring to him.

When King Ericall established rule over Norwold, he sent emissaries to the Vatski princes of the region, asking them to join his newly founded realm. Most Vatski rulers politely received Ericall’s ambassadors, ensured alliance with Alpha, and gifted the envoys presents for the king, but refused to recognize the King of Norwold as their liege. Two however; namely the *knyaz* of Lazarsk and Vyolstograd, agreed to become Ericall’s vassals if the king would support them against the rival princes. As a result, both the *knyaz* of Lazarsk and Vyolstograd are titled counts in Norwold’s noble hierarchy, while other *knyaz* are considered allied client rulers, and treated with the respect due a landed lord in Norwold hierarchy. The rulers of Vyolstograd and Lazarsk, as well as other Vatski princes, exclusively use the traditional title of *knyaz*; generating a lot of confusion at Alpha’s court, since *knyaz* translates to “duke” in Alphatian, still the Vatski princes are considered counts within Norwold’s hierarchy.

Note that besides the five *knyaz* described below, a number of lesser domains ruled by *boyarin* exist in the Vatskiy Rodina, in the

area found between the principalities of Odna, Stamtral, and Vyolstograd.

Avel Vankomirovich,

Knyaz of Odna

Chaotic 7th level Cleric of Pearl

Str 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Dex 10, Con 17, Cha 16

Appearance: Thirty years old, with ice gray eyes and fair complexion, Avel is thought attractive by most Vatski. Though of medium height he is strongly built at 5'8" and 141 pounds. Avel keeps his black hair, beard, and mustache cropped, in contrast from the traditional fashion followed by most Vatski *boyarin*. He also bears a large burn mark on his left arm. Avel favors furs and garments in various shades of brown; his magical ring always displayed on his left hand. The *knyaz's* unusual golden crown is fashioned into a snake swallowing its tail, with an orb ornamenting its head, and is also Avel's holy symbol.

Background: Avel is first son of Vankomir, former *knyaz* of Odna. Though in truth Natasha, Avel's mother, gave birth to twins. However Vankomir, a harsh man aware ruling Odna allowed for no internal strife, had Avel's twin taken away soon after the infant was born, abandoning him in the wilderness of the southern mountains. Neither Vankomir nor Natasha ever spoke of this, and few know the truth about the twins' birth. Another son, Gennadiy, was born six years later. Together Avel and Gennadiy were schooled in administration and trained in combat. Vankomir also taught his sons the

necessary respect shown dragonkind and the importance of their good relations in the future. During his youth, Avel grew fond of Aglaja, a *boyarin's* daughter; the two becoming close friends, and eventually lovers. In 990 AC, Aglaja's family manor was plundered by raiders from Stamtral, and she was raped and killed along with most of her family. Odna's army, aided by a blue dragon from the Wyrms' Head, tracked down and massacred the raiders, but for Avel's true love it was too late. The young prince's hatred and resentment of Stamtral only grew. In the subsequent years, Avel traveled throughout the nearby Isbreidd and Wyrms' Head Mountains pleading the dragons help take revenge against *Knyaz* Stano of Stamtral, promising all Stamtral's power and riches if they supported Avel in the future. Avel also promised to adopt Volos, the Vatski dragon-god (an alias of the Immortal Pearl) as his patron. When Vankomir died in 998 AC, Avel became *knyaz* of Odna. Despite pressure from his mother, and several Odna *boyarin*, he did not wed, saddened by the loss of Aglaja. A couple of years ago; however, he met Stasya, a beautiful and mysterious Vrodniki woman claiming to have lived among the dragons. Stasya claimed she was sent by the dragons to aid Avel in his quest for revenge, giving him the magical *ring of dragonshape* as gift. Stasya quickly became Avel's most trusted advisor, and soon after his lover.

Stasya in truth is Eshritheren, a large female white dragon under suzerain of a dragon ruler of the Wyrms' Head Mountains. This dragon king wishes control over the entire Vatskiy Rodina, using both open alliance and intimidation when appropriate. He employs subtlety as well, using his dragon subjects to

infiltrate various levels of Vatski society. The magical ring Stasya gave Avel, compels the *knyaz* to honor his allegiance with the dragons, and Stasya is additionally charged ensuring Avel does not discard it. Stasya is often seen in Odnograd's court, but is absent just as often, allegedly wandering the mountainous wilderness consorting with her beloved dragons.

Avel's mother, Natasha Savelyevna (Neutral 4th level Fighter, sixty-one years old), is concerned by Stasya's influence over the *knyaz*, wanting to discover more about this mysterious woman. Avel's younger brother Gennadiy—a twenty-four year old Neutral 10th level Fighter— though loyal fears his brother's desire for revenge might bring hardship to the duchy. Gennadiy is popular among Odna's subjects, and currently leads the duchy's armed forces. He is married to Borislava Filatyevna (Lawful Normal Woman, twenty-three years old), daughter of a *boyarin* family. They have two children; three year old son Timofiy, and daughter Ogafia, age one year.

Personality: Avel is a self-assured, focused, and able manipulator. The tragic events of his youth molded his harsh and heartless personality. Avel is single-minded, enacting revenge upon *Knyaz* Stano of Stamtral his only concern; and would sacrifice all, including friends and family, to reach it. Even though Avel has become Stasya's lover, their relationship is based on passion and mutual objectives, not true love. Avel feels he will never love again, his heart dying with Aglaja. He has completely given himself over to the Immortal Volos, whom he believes is a powerful and vindictive god, in the hopes the dragon deity might help him achieve his

revenge. Avel often performs ceremonies and sacrifices to Volos in a secluded temple in his castle, surrounded only by a handful of Vatski priests. Praying dragons of the Wyrms' Head Mountains unleash their wrath upon Stamtral. Avel secretly trades away most of Odna's precious gold and silver, coveted by dragons in order to complete their Ceremonies of Sublimation. Obviously, the dragons have no intention of raiding Stamtral unless absolute success is guaranteed, but will defend their pawn Avel should any threat or coup endanger his role as *knyaz*.

Dominon: The Duchy of Odna was established in the first half of the 10th century AC, when a *boyarin* of the Vatskiy Rodina managed to expand his realm through marriage and conquest, enveloping nearby dominions. With Stamtral looming from the northwest, Odna existence had always been precarious. Over the years Odna has attempted alliance with Gunvolod and Vyolstograd, to the south and northeast respectively, to halt Stamtral's expansion. Long coveted by Stamtral the *knyaz* of Odna controls the mountain passes over the westernmost spur of the Wyrms' Head Mountains' leading from Vatskiy Rodina to Ransarn River Valley. Stamtral's desire to conquer Odna further increased decades ago, when veins of gold and silver were discovered in the mountain slopes south of Odna. The *knyaz* of Odna able to dissuade Stamtral from invading only by seeking support from dragons living in the eastern mountains, promising gold and silver in return. One dragon among them even helped Odna's soldiers thwart a number of raids launched into Odna's territory. Withn the last few years, since Gunvolod's alliance with Stamtral, rumor relates Odna's new

knyaz has further strengthened his alliance with the dragons, but the terms of this agreement remain shrouded in mystery.

Odna is a small domain whose population is almost entirely Vatski. Interestingly, a sizeable dwarven minority lives there, mostly immigrants come in the last fifty years after discovery of gold and silver. The dwarves manage a great deal of the duchy's mining activity, having precise arrangements with the *knyaz* regulating number of mining sites, quantity of metal, and share of profit. Unintegrated with the Vatski population, the dwarves tend to keep to the mines. The duchy's most important and largest mining settlement Zmeynk, lies in the southern foothills. Odnograd, largest village of the domain, is the location of the *knyaz*'s castle and court. The few *boyarin* holding land in the duchy are fervently loyal to the *knyaz*, aware that if *Knyaz* Stano of Stamtral conquered Odna, they would suffer the same fate.

Special Features: Rarely entering combat in human form, Avel prefers using his magical ring, polymorphing into white dragon form. When forced to fight in human form, he makes ample use of his clerical spells, protecting and healing his troops, rather than engaging in direct combat. In melee, he wears chain mail and fights with a magical two-handed mace.

Relevant Possessions: *Mace +2, ring of dragonshape.*³⁷

³⁷ This beautiful platinum ring features a diamond carved in the shape of a dragon's head. It allows the wearer to shape change into a small white dragon once per day. The effect functions identically to the 9th level magic-user spell *shapechange*, having a duration of one turn. The ring is also "cursed", forcing an automatic friendly reaction toward dragons from the

Sources: "The Skaufskogr and Beyond" by G. Agosta, in "Threshold" Issue No. 7.

Dagur "Widechest" Froðisson,
Jarl of Gunvolod

Lawful 15th level Fighter

Str 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Dex 7, Con 12, Cha 12

Appearance: Thirty-nine years old and fair skinned, at 6'9" tall and 273 pounds, Dagur's impressive build warrants comparison to a small giant. Broad-shouldered, large-chested, and overweight, Dagur's enormous figure towers over even the tallest Heldanner warrior. Dagur has green eyes and long, blonde hair usually tied in a variety of braids and pigtails in Heldanner fashion, with medium-length beard and mustache. His nose, crushed by a blow during a past battle, gives Dagur a particularly unattractive face; often being compared to an orc in appearance by his enemies. Because of his large build, Dagur is slow, often assuming an off-balance stance from an old wound to his right knee. He usually wears rich, heavy furs and dark clothes, coupled with golden coronet and jeweled necklace, tokens displaying his rank.

Background: Dagur, son of Froði, is one of the *hofdbingi* from Stamtral; abandoning the duchy after a failed coup against its new

wearer, as if under the effects of a *charm* spell cast by the dragon in question. This curse acts involuntarily even if the wearer is unaware a dragon is present. For example, if the dragon has taken human form. The ring acts as a cursed item when trying to liberate the bearer from its effects.

knyaz Stano in 980 AC. Dagur, already blessed with enormous stature, was proudly raised by his father to be the ultimate warrior, claiming his son had been blessed by the Immortals with the blood of giants. In his youth, Dagur learned little else besides fierceness in battle, honing his weapon and combat skills; constantly unable to appease his insatiable appetite when not in training. Dagur was twenty-two when his father led his warband, alongside those of other Heldanner chieftains, to conquer the eastern shores of Lake Gunaald establishing the domain of Gunvolod. Like other *hofdbingi*, Froði seized lands in the new duchy, and he and Dagur both took noble Vatski wives belonging to local clans. As *Jarl* Vígharður grew older, Froði began playing a prominent role at court. One of the *jarl's* army leaders, Froði managed placement of his son as captain of Vígharður's personal guard. During those years, Dagur took part in many battles against rebel Vatski, humanoid warbands, and Vrodniki hosts from the east; becoming a respected and feared figure in the *jarl's* court. Gradually receiving greater recognition by Vígharður, over his own sons. When Vígharður died in 994 AC, the Heldanner leaders quarreled amongst themselves over selection of a new *jarl*. Dagur challenged the late *jarl's* sons for the right to rule the duchy; killing the elder, Áskell. Younger brother Hálfðan saw it better to flee finding refuge at Stamtral court. Thus, Dagur became the new *jarl*. His rule has been characterized by excessive force against insurrection, donations to friends and relatives, wild excess at court, and deceitful trading policies with neighboring peoples. Dagur's finest achievement is the trade agreement struck with *Knyaz* Stano of Stamtral, temporarily halting the continuing enmity between Gunvolod and the northern

duchy, present since 980 AC. The deal included assassination of late *Jarl* Vígharður's younger son Hálfðan, mercilessly carried out by *Knyaz* Stano.

Both Dagur and younger brother Aðalsteinn were married to older women by their father. Widows of noble Vatski, whose husbands were killed in recent skirmishes with Heldanners. While Agrafena has adapted, Iskra has never warmed to Dagur, finding his behavior repulsive.

Dagur wife, Iskra Volyinichna (Chaotic Normal Woman, fifty-one years old), has given him two sons. Froði (Chaotic 5th level Thief, twenty years old) and Ingimar, a twelve year old boy. Dagur also has a son from a former concubine. Halldór (Neutral 6th level Fighter), already a formidable warrior at eighteen years, happens to be the *jarl's* favorite son. Dagur is often seen in the company of one of his concubines, as his wife is much older. Most often gorgeous yet miserable Nadezhda (Chaotic Normal Woman, twenty-eight years old), Áskell's widow. Now living as de facto prisoner at Dagur's court, and forced to please her master, offered the chance she would likely murder him.

Dagur's brother Aðalsteinn (Chaotic 13th level Thief, thirty-one year of age), is married to Agrafena Demyanovna (Neutral Normal Woman, forty years old). They have two sons; thirteen year old Úlfur, and eleven year old Þorvaldur. Aðalsteinn is an expert wilderness scout, skilled in light weapons and ranged combat, which he has taught his nephew Froði, much to Dagur's chagrin.

Lastly, Hildur is Dagur's and Aðalsteinn's younger sister (Chaotic Normal Woman,

thirty-one years old), and Aðalsteinn's twin. An alluring woman, exerting great influence over Aðalsteinn, and schemes to place him on the throne. Fearing her intrigues, Dagur has recently managed to send her away, marrying Hildur with Bogatyr (Lawful 16th level Fighter, forty-eight years old), *knyaz* of a Vrodniki tribe living east of Gunvolod. Alliance with Bogatyr is of great importance to Gunvolod, nonetheless Hildur deeply resents her brother sending her to live with Vrodniki barbarians. Though Hildur's honeyed persuasion is slowly bending Bogatyr's ear in Aðalsteinn direction. Hildur promising Aðalsteinn would reward him for his support with lands and title.

Personality: Despite lawful alignment, Dagur is not a good-hearted man. Tyrannically ruling through the strength of his Heldanner warbands and their chiefs, who fervently support him. He despises dissent to his rule, and hates being made a fool. Aware he is unable to grasp the subtly stratagems of court, he has become more paranoid with the passing of years, fearing deception or betrayal, even by those close to him. Proud and vengeful, Dagur rarely forgives slights to his authority or intelligence. His honor does not well suffer failures and defeats. When his underlings suffer setbacks, punishment is usually meted out harshly. Facing defeat, he is likely to retreat; seeking revenge against opponents when finally gaining the upper hand, though through darker means if his adversary is too powerful.

Dominion: Founders of Gunvolod descend from Heldanner exiles finding asylum in the Duchy of Stamtral during the reign of *Knyaz* Boroda (953-977 AC). The Heldanner

captains, called *hofdbingi*, supported Boroda; yet a rift occurred when many allied with numerous rebel *boyarin* switched allegiance to Stano. When Stano overthrew Boroda, the *hofdbingi* supporting the former *knyaz* initially bent the knee to Stano. But soon after, in 980 AC, stage a failed coup, forcing them to flee Stamtral to avoid persecution. The Heldanner warbands sailed upriver, following the course of the Ransarn River, finally entering Lake Gunaald; the eastern shores of which were settled by Vatski and ruled by independent *boyarin*. The Heldanners indiscriminately attacked these domains, quickly conquering them. Installing their strongest leader, Vígharður 'Longbeard', as *jarl*—equivalent of the Vatski *knyaz* or "duke". Vígharður ruled until he died in 998 AC. The warband leaders turned feudal lords then chose Dagur as *jarl*.

Ruled by Heldanners, Gunvolod is unique among Vatski domains. Despite Vatski population majority, the ruling class and bulk of the militia are comprised of Heldanner mercenaries and their families. A trait Gunvolod shares with the Duchy of Stamtral to the north. Many Heldanners have taken Vatski wives, and have integrated reasonably well with the Vatski majority, despite Gunvolod's resentful *boyarin*, still perceiving the Heldanners as foreign barbarians.

As is customary in Heldannic tradition, Gunvolod's *jarl* is chosen by majority vote among warband leaders, most often falling upon the strongest or most battle tested among them. A *jarl*, in fact, is more a first among peers than a true prince. This does not mean Dagur 'Widechest' does not harbor

dynastic ambitions, but whether one of his sons will succeed him remains to be seen.

The Duchy of Gunvolod is strategically located midway along the trade route following the Ransarn River. Both of Gunvolod's *jarls* have tried improving the trading vocation of the domain, but most the Vatski inhabitants of Gunvolod are farmers and fishermen, while many Heldanners have become the traders, building sturdy smaller versions of Northman longships to sail the rivers and lakes of the region. The route east ascends upriver along the Ransarn, to a post where the river becomes unnavigable, then proceeds overland to the town of Saffir, beyond the Lirovka's Alps. Besides the traders of Saffir, Gunvolod's trading partners include Vrodniki tribes dwelling in the Ransarn River valley. Sparse trade is conducted between Gunvolod and the Strelets Hetmanate on the opposite shores of Gunaald Lake. The most important trade route; however, runs northward to Azure Lake and down to the halfling town of Leeha and Great Bay beyond. Gunvolod competes fiercely with Stamtral for control of the trade route.

Recently, through the mediation of a foreigner named Rurik Heilagurson (see Stamtral's description below), Gunvolod and Stamtral have reached an agreement over trade and other issues, making the two duchies uneasy allies and freeing Stamtral from enemy threat toward the south. Since treaty with Stamtral, Gunvolod lacks many enemies, and Vrodniki tribes to the east recognize the importance of mutual trade.

Special Features: Though Dagur is an enormous man, he is big-boned and obese

rather than muscular or physically powerful. His very presence exerts fear in lesser men, and while an excellent combatant with poleaxe and long sword, is not as strong as one would expect. His physique also makes him sluggish in combat, nonetheless the *jarl* of Gunvolod is quite capable of defeating most opponents in melee, thanks to his intense training. Dagur is also skilled with a throwing axe. Dagur prefers fighting afoot, it being quite difficult to find a horse large enough to bear him, charging into combat fearless of missile fire, thanks to his magical shirt. Donning magical splint mail without shield; Dagur usually makes use of his ball of power to terrify opponents.

Relevant Possessions: *Ball of power*,³⁸ *normal sword +2*, *ring of command*,³⁹

³⁸ See AC4 Book of Marvelous Magic, pg 12.

³⁹ This magical ring enables the wearer use of three charm-like powers, each of which consumes some of the ring's 12 remaining charges. Though the ring is capable of being recharged by a magic-user. The three powers only function on humanoid creatures ogre-sized or smaller. The first, through expenditure of one charge, allows the wearer to issue a single-word command which a chosen target within hearing range is obliged to follow in the next round. Creatures with an Intelligence score of 13 or higher, or with 5 HD or more, are entitled a save vs spells to avoid effect. The second, allows the wearer to expend two charges to cast a *charm* spell, identical to the 1st level magic-user spell, yet lasting one full day. Additional charges may be spent to extend the spell's duration one additional day per charge used. The third, allows the wearer to use two charges, implanting a suggestion in the target's mind, forcing them to obey a course of action for one hour. Each additional charge spent extends the duration another hour. Targets of the second and third powers are entitled a save vs spells to resist the effects.

*silken shirt of invulnerability to missile weapons,*⁴⁰ *splint mail* +2.⁴¹

Sources: “The Skaufskogr and Beyond” by G. Agosta, in “Threshold” Issue No. 7.

Nevik II Volodyich,
Count (Knyaz) of Vyolstograd

Lawful 13th level Fighter

Str 12, Int 12, Wis 7, Dex 15, Con 15, Cha 16

Appearance: Nevik II is a thirty-four year old, charming man of average height at 5’9” tall, and slender, nearly feminine build, weighing 144 pounds. He has knowing, light-green eyes, defined cheekbones, and short red hair, with full mustache and cropped beard. Nevik customarily wears rich, heavy, traditional clothes of a *knyaz* at court, liking excessive jewelry. The *knyaz* wears more practical, yet not less refined, clothes for informal occasions or combat.

Background: Nevik is younger son of *Knyaz* Volodya III of Vyolstograd. Alongside brother Volodymyr, he was raised absorbing aristocratic Vatski tradition. During the Vrodniki invasion of 987 AC, Volodymyr was slain in battle, leaving Nevik as heir to Vyolstograd. Stamtral’s machinations and expansion, after defeating the Vrodniki

⁴⁰ This magical silken shirt is worn beneath armor, and it grants the wearer total immunity from any type of non-magical missile weapon damage; acting like a permanent *protection from normal missiles* spell.

⁴¹ Splint mail is simply chain mail reinforced through the addition of vertical overlapping metal plates over the torso, arms, and legs. It should be considered identical to banded mail for game purposes.



Nevik receives the homage of his officers before taking the field against Stamtral's army

horde, threatened Vyolstograd’s very existence. Leveraging the nobility’s fear of Stano, Stamtral’s *knyaz*, Nevik garnered their support under his banner. Brilliantly leading Vyolstograd’s forces in skirmishes against Stamtral’s army, Nevik repelled Stano from the western border. Upon his father’s death in 989 AC, Nevik ascended as *knyaz* of the duchy. Aware of Vyolstograd’s powerful and belligerent neighbor to the west, Nevik began a process of centralization, ensuring better defense and development of the realm. These measures conflicted with the *boyarin*’s traditional rights and privileges, which Nevik was determined to curtail. Gaining additional support from a rising mercantile and artisan class and formation of a unified Vyolstograd church, all benefiting from his expanding sphere of influence, Nevik’s centralization plan is currently working. In part because most *boyarin* fear

internal conflict would allow Stamtral's armies to seize the realm. Despite the present situation, a small number *boyarin* are conspiring to undermine Nevik's growing power.

Nevik II is married to *Knyagynia* Luba (Lawful Normal Woman), a strong mother for their two sons; Volodymyr, ten years old; and Vaclav, age six; and daughter Vesela, four years. The rest of the *knyaz's* household consists of the families of his two cousins. Nadia (Lawful Normal Woman), the younger, is wife of Aethelwulf Eahlmundsson (Lawful 7th level Fighter), Chief Magistrate of the realm. Zora (Neutral Normal Woman), the elder, is married to Barnim Draganev (Chaotic 3rd level Fighter). Their son Velibor (Lawful 12th level Fighter), is Vyolstograd's army commander. *Knyagynia* Luba's brother, Bogdan Zdravkov (Lawful 6th level Thief), administers the *knyaz's* finances. Aethelwulf, Barnim, Velibor, and Bogdan are all honorary members of the *knyaz's druzbina* (armed retinue) as well. Also a member of the *druzbina* is the *knyaz's* trusted companion, Ispan adventurer Alphonso Rodophino (Lawful 14th level Fighter),⁴² an enormously muscled man from Thyatis, but nonetheless an extremely kind character.

Personality: Nevik's ultimate goal is to strengthen his hold over Vyolstograd in order to subjugate the *knyaz* of Stamtral, reducing that duchy to a vassal state. This would make him most powerful of the Vatski princes, and

⁴² Alphonso (or Alfonso) was featured in CM4 Earthshaker! as one of the pre-generated PCs. His level has been lowered to reflect the adventure takes place several years after the Great Land Rush.

allow creation of a united Vatski realm under his leadership. Nevik considers the infighting *boyarin* a quarrelsome lot, keeping Vyolstograd regressive and divided, doomed to fall under oppressive control of a foreign power. Currently Nevik considers subinfeudation under King Ericall copasetic; stalling Stano's expansion, besides suppressing the *boyarin's* opposition, and placing the *knyaz* in high standing within Norwold's hierarchy. Nevik is an upright and honorable Vatski ruler trusted by his subjects, and will remain loyal to the king so long as it does not hamper his aims. Though resourceful and adaptable, the *knyaz* is also irresolute, vacillating, and often influenced by conflicting opinions; and therefore prone to leaving deeds unfinished and goals unrealized, despite his dream of a unified and powerful Vyolstograd. Nevik's vision for a united Rodina is ambitious, but only the fates can tell if he will succeed.

Dominon: Vyolstograd is the oldest, largest and most politically stable Vatski principalities of the Rodina. Founded by *Knyaz* Volodya I Volodymyrovich in 840 AC, it soon grew to include many smaller domains ruled by *boyarin* established around the same time in the Vatskiy Rodina. Distinct from other principalities, most notably Stamtral, Vyolstograd has had a stable government over the entire course, over a century and a half, of its existence. Its *knyaz* falling only once to a *boyarin* usurper. Current *knyaz*, Nevik II, inheriting the throne from his father Volodya III in 989 AC, pledging fealty to King Ericall in 994 AC; being rewarded with title of count, and countering the aggressive expansion of nearby Stamtral.

Vyolstograd is easternmost of the Vatskiy Rodina principalities, bordering the Severnaya Polovina to the east, traversed by fierce Vrodniki tribes. North lay the Bloody Scythe and Valley of the Wind, both plagued by dangerous denizens such as dragons, humanoids, and giants. The duchy enjoys good relations with the nearby principalities of Lazarsk and Odná, and small *boyarin* freeholds lying southwest. Vyolstograd's interactions with eastern Vrodniki tribes are generally amicable, and a stable trade exists between them. Border skirmishes and invasion are infrequent occurrences nevertheless. Having recently become a trade partner of Stamtral, Gunvolod is currently mistrusted.

The duchy's population is predominantly of Vatski descent, with a Heldanner minority. In the east, many families descend from Vrodniki clans civilizing in Vyolstograd and becoming farmers over the last century. Vyolstograd's many *boyarin* and *okolnichy* (landed lords) form the *Duma*, an assembly typically exerting a good deal of control over the *knyaz*. During the reigns of Volodya III, and especially Nevik II; however, the *Duma*'s role has been progressively marginalized, favoring a body of appointed officials (the *namestnik*), having administrative authority over various districts of the duchy; in particular its towns and villages. The *namestnik*'s authority often conflicts with the traditional rights of local *boyarin*. Nevik even forbid marriage between members of the *druzhina* (the *knyaz*'s armed retinue) and the *boyarin*'s families, in order to prevent the latter from allying with the *knyaz*'s commanders. Nevik also promoted the rise of a fledgling merchant and artisan class, with the aim of using its support to

augment the *knyaz*'s power and further curtail the aristocracy. The *knyaz* has also tried to strengthen the unity of the realm through formation of an organized Church of Vyolstograd, and the building of temples devoted to the Immortals Yaro and Yara (Frey and Freyja). Nevik expects Patriarch Alexis Vatutin (Neutral 12th-level Cleric of Frey) and the neonate church's full support toward his plans of centralization.⁴³

These developments have spurred some discontent among *boyarin* not represented in the *druzhina*, who resent the autocratic turn of the last two *knyaz* and would like to bring the *Duma* back into a prominent role in Vyolstograd. Most *boyarin*; however, continue to support Nevik out of concern toward nearby Stamtral; nonetheless a couple of their colleagues have begun weaving treacherous plots with foreign forces, Stamtral above all.

⁴³ The newfound Church of Vyolstograd is based in the Duchy of Vyolstograd, and its main temple is located in the domain's capital. The Church reveres nature in all its various manifestations, considering its main Immortal patrons divine twins in the Vatski pantheon, Yaro and Yara (Frey and Freyja). The Church is a sort of formalized druidic hierarchy, and is considered part of the larger Druidic Circle of Norwold, including both regular clerics and druids. Its patriarch and high priests often perform ceremonies in concert with druids across Norwold. *Knyaz* Nevik II vied for the church's establishment and consolidation to counter the influence and political power of the most politically active religious leaders in the area preaching traditional Vatski Immortals. The Church is popular among the common people, but priests of conventional Vatski Immortals - as well as their allies in the aristocracy - do not view its presence favorably.

Logging and farming are the main occupations of the duchy, with meagre mining operations southeast. Trade along Stryna River to Azure Lake is obstructed by the hostile Duchy of Stamtral; so the overland route through Ransarn Valley, passing through the Duchy of Odna, is commonly taken. King Ericall's colonization decree and subsequent establishment of additional dominions, may increase traffic along the route linking the Vatski Rodina with Skogenvår. This trail travels northeast from Vyolstograd, ascending High Pass, being the major saddle of the Bloody Scythe.

Vyolstograd is the duchy's fortified capital and the site of Nevik's castle, found dangerously close to the slopes of the Wyrms' Head Mountains, its people always on the lookout for rogue dragons, despite dragon attacks being rare. Obechek, laying in the heart of the northwestern woods, is a village famous for its archers and crossbowmen. It is also known for its bowers, fletchers and trapping and logging industries. The settlement is plagued by werewolves, unknown the local *boyarin* and his relatives are their leaders. The village of Depoksna, in the northeast, is trade center for exchanges with tribes of the Severnaya Polovina. The mining village of Sumarokoyva, on the eastern border, contains freemen and slaves, some bought from the Vrodniki, mining iron and gold. Bityansk and the surrounding plains produce the duchy's grain, milk, cheese, and meat. Stryna, a beleaguered community often hit by raids from Stamtral's reavers, is famous for the prized Strynaski horse breed. Vyzama, a fishing community on the southern border, is ruled by a *boyarin* puppet in the hands of the Immortal Mara's (Hel) worshippers,

promised great power after recovering a magical helm sacred to Mara, allowing him to control of vast numbers of undead. Vyzama's priest of Hel has struck secret alliance with *Knyaz* Stano of Stamtral. The village of Selchnogorsky, on the southern border, is haven for every sort of fugitive, criminal and outlaw; which during a long struggle for succession over the last several years, brought to power a treacherous and evil *boyarin* with plans to destabilize Vyolstograd from within, then allying himself with Stano of Stamtral.

Special Features: Nevik usually enters combat on horseback, his choice weapons include a short bow at distance, even having some skill firing from horseback, then wielding a lance closing combat. In prolonged battles, Nevik wields his legendary *sword of the giants*, keeping an axe as weapon of last resort, either used in melee or thrown. He commonly wears a beautifully ornate set of chain and lamellar armor, consider this armor as banded mail, preferably carrying a shield only when fighting afoot.

Relevant Possessions: *Hand axe +3 of healing, sword of the giants.*⁴⁴

⁴⁴ This powerful ancient weapon was brandished by Nevik's ancestor, and founder of Vyolstograd's ruling dynasty, Volodya I. According to legend, the weapon was crafted by giant weaponsmiths for Osmund, a mythical Antalian hero. The weapon glows with a faint golden light and functions as a *normal sword +5*, automatically severing a target's head on an attack roll of a natural 18-20, or a 19-20 if the target is larger than man-sized, and is only successful on a roll of 20 if the victim is metal or stone. In addition, its wielder can breathe and act normally underwater, as if on land, even if

Sources: CM4 Earthshaker!, “The Skaufskogr and Beyond” by G. Agosta, in “Threshold” Issue No. 7, description of Volstograd from the Mystara section of the Italian Games Academy forum by Corann.

Nazariy Zhucharnov,
Count (Knyaz) of Lazarsk

Neutral 3rd level Fighter

Str 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Dex 11, Con 16, Cha 11

Appearance: Nazariy is forty-seven years old, with a 6’2” tall fit figure, weighing 176 pounds. This contrasts with his pale sickly complexion. He has greying black frizzy hair, distrustful light brown eyes, and goes clean shaven. Nazariy, often mistaken for a girl during his youth, was praised for his “beautiful” appearance, and is still striking, albeit in an androgynous way, having a delicate triangular face, small nose, and rounded jaw. He usually wears clothing in black hues.

Background: Nazariy is first son of Zhucharn, the *knyaz* of Lazarsk. Growing up under the strong influence of his mother Grusha, the real ruler of the duchy. Raised together with his two younger twin sisters, Sofya and Valeriya. During his youth a submissive character made him the object of ridicule among his peers, and he came to detest the more brutal and savage traits of Vatski culture. Since a young age, his parents have attempted to prearrange marriage. Yet Nazariy showed little interest in women,

restrained by spells such as *web*, *hold person*, *slow*.



The wedding feast of Nazariy Zhucharnov and Nika Kolzakovna

neither was he interested in succeeding his father as *knyaz* of Lazarsk. While Grusha devoted great energy arranging profitable marriages for her daughters in order to produce an heir for Lazarsk, Nazariy spent most his time learning music, poetry, and dance. When Zhucharn died, Nazariy becoming the new *knyaz* of Lazarsk, Grusha still handled most administrative duties. Nazariy traveled to Alpha in 987 AC, and was fascinated by Alphatian culture; returning with a few cosmopolitan Alphatian friends; one of whom, Sarosh, became his lover. Grusha died two years later, her death threatening to sink Lazarsk into complete anarchy. Fortunately for the duchy, through marriage with the *knyaz*'s sister Valeriya in 987 AC, Kazimir Borisov became Nazariy's brother-in-law. Already a powerful mage, Kazimir and his wife were determined to prevent Lazarsk falling prey to Stamtral and Zilantsk's forces,⁴⁵ and thus stepped into the *knyaz*'s role, obvious Nazariy uninterested in ruling. Kazimir's initial act, in 992 AC, was forcing the *knyaz* to marry, signaling a change of tack in the sovereign's strategy to his *boyarin*. The old regent *knyagynia*

⁴⁵ Zilantsk is a draconic kingdom found west of Lazarsk; see *The Skaufskogr and Beyond*, by G. Agosta, in “Threshold” Issue No. 7.

having died, Nazariy at last decided to marry and produce an heir. Unfortunately, Nazariy's arranged mate, Nika Kolzakovna, despite her best efforts, was disheartened the *knyaz* preferred his male lover to her bed, thus preventing conception of an heir. On the contrary, the "forced" marriage pushed Nazariy further into Sarosh's arms, and after Nika's arrival, he unsparingly staged dramatic acts of jealousy. Despite the failed match, Kazimir has strove to establish good relations with the Alphantians, ensuring Lazarsk's allegiance with Alpha, and placing the *knyaz*'s younger brother, Viktor, at King Ericall's court as King's Master of Horse. Ironically, Kazimir's seizure of Lazarsk's régime, have made Nazariy and his ambitious lover Sarosh, envious and resentful. Today, Lazarsk is a hotbed of intrigue, where various factions of the *knyaz*'s family compete for power. Kazimir's drive to make the duchy stronger, resisting Stamtral and Zilantsk's influence, is mostly succeeding thanks to his commanding presence at court. Both Zilant and Stano fear the powerful wizard, but should Kazimir be removed...

Clan Zhucharnov is quite large. The *knyaz* has two twin sisters, Sofya and Valeriya. Sofya (Neutral Normal Woman, forty-five years old) is a widow, her husband having died eleven years prior; but has twin eighteen years old sons, Tikhon (Chaotic 4th level Cleric of Ixion) and Slava (Chaotic 5th level Thief). While Sofya loves her sister and believes Kazimir's regency is best for Lazarsk, both her sons long to be *knyaz*. Both are so quarrelsome and selfish; however, they cannot manage to even ally with one another against common foes. Valeriya (Neutral 2nd level Thief, forty-five years old), whose first husband was an old *boyarin*, died eighteen

years ago without giving her children. In 987 AC, she married her second husband, Kazimir Borisov (Neutral 17th level Magic-User, forty-two years old), an *okolnichy* and former adventurer, studying magic in Dunadale and Draco. Valeriya has four children with Kazimir. Three sons, Rostya age fourteen, Leontiy twelve, and eight year old Vadim; and a daughter Radinka, four years old. Since his marriage with Valeriya, Kazimir acts as regent of Lazarsk; considering most the Zhucharnov family unsuited to rule, and dreams of placing one of his sons upon the throne, though being more interested in the duchy's welfare than in personal ambitions.

Zinoviy, a younger brother of the *knyaz*, died at sixteen in 977 AC. Nazariy's other younger brother, Viktor (Chaotic 17th level Thief, thirty-seven years old), is a shrewd and charismatic man, managing to attain Kazimir's trust, and through him, obtain charge as the King's Master of Horse in Alpha. Viktor acts as Kazimir's eyes and ears in Norwold's capital, a vitally important role for the regent. Yet Viktor has goals of his own, planning to seize the throne of Lazarsk for himself, seeing his brother-in-law as the main obstacle in his quest. Using his position in Alpha, to Kazimir's detriment, keeping important information from Kazimir, leaking interesting news and details to Kazimir's foes, including *Knyaz* Stano of Stamtral. For now, Kazimir is unaware of Viktor's treachery. Viktor is a megalomaniac and sees acquisition of Lazarsk as the first step toward even greater power, even dreaming of reign over Alpha! Viktor has had many affairs with women of various persuasion, but has never married, secretly in love with his sister Evgeniya (Chaotic Normal Woman, thirty-three years old), the youngest of Nazariy's

siblings. Their incestuous affair has endured since Evgeniya was twenty, managing to keep the dalliance secret. Viktor also ensured Evgeniya's marriage to Ruslan (Neutral Normal Man, 26-years old), one of Nazariy's former lovers, in order to keep her from other men. In fact, he is father of her children; Ksenya ten, and Olena, seven. Lately the two have curtailed their rendezvous, due to Viktor's appointment in Alpha as court officer. Periodically he returns to Lazarsk, or Evgeniya visits him in the capital.

The current *knyagynia* Nika Kolzakovna (Neutral 6th level Fighter, thirty years old) hates both Nazariy and Kazimir, who persuaded her to marry the *knyaz*. She is trying to increase her position at court by taking an active role in government, but Kazimir is reluctant to share information because of her lack of experience and his lack of trust. Nika also endeavors to forge an alliance with Nazariy and his Alphantian lover Sarosh (Chaotic 5th level Fighter, thirty-five years old) against Kazimir. Should Nazariy finally resolve to rule, challenging Kazimir's claim, he could afterwards banish Kazimir for alleged treason. Both the *knyaz* and his wife could then live as they please. Though after Kazimir's disposal, both Nika and Sarosh would surely plan to eliminate the other. If her plan to ally with Nazariy and Sarosh fails, she might even garner the support of Tikhon or Slava and have Nazariy assassinated, making her available for another, more profitable marriage. Nika currently abates her unfulfilling sexual life entertaining handsome men of court with ephemeral affairs. Nika is additionally a skilled huntress and archer.

Personality: Nazariy is essentially a weakling. Though possessing the strength of

character to bring forward a course of action, he lacks the conviction to take charge over those who oppose him. The result being he always avoids proceeding in order to escape judgment, unrealizing even that course is a decision, thereby exposing him to unfavorable opinion. Nazariy wishes only for a life faraway from his scheming family, but has never been brave enough to leave Lazarsk and resume life elsewhere. When time permits, regrettably about once a year, Nazariy enjoys travelling to Alpha to attend court entertainments. Recognizing he is unsuited to rule, Nazariy knows leaving Kazimir in charge of government is the best decision for Lazarsk, this also being the reason Nazariy is reluctant to dethrone him. Despite this, the *knyaz* is often coerced into hearing Sarosh's criticisms, and to avoid displeasing his young lover, often ends up upsetting or hampering Kazimir's work.

Dominon: The Duchy of Lazarsk was established around 940 AC by Stamtral *boyarin* Alexiy Zhucharnov. After being ousted from his lands, due to internal conflicts in Stamtral, Alexiy led his men to conquer the sparse Hengerian clans and Vatski settlers living in the plains southwest of Azure Lake, beyond the Ransarn River's reach. Alexiy proclaimed himself *knyaz*, creating the new dominion of Lazarsk. During Alexiy's reign, the duchy grew into an agricultural region, which started attracting immigration from Vatskiy Rodina. After Alexiy's reign, the proceeding *knyaz* of Lazarsk were all weak individuals, including the duchy's current heir. Though in actuality, Lazarsk current policies are dictated by Kazimir Borisov's domineering personality. Shortly after Alexiy's rule, Lazarsk fell under the influence of nearby Stamtral, paying

tribute to *Knyaz* Boroda, ruler of Lazarsk's more powerful neighbor. Moreover, Lazarsk had to contend with another powerful presence on its western border; draconic kingdom Zilantsk, ruled by the green dragon Zilant. Zilant held suzerain over many dragons, as well as various Hengerian clans of the Maghnar Valley. Ultimately Lazarsk's *knyaz* yielded, offering Zilant tribute. Though Stamtral experienced debilitating internal strife, it was insufficient to allow cessation of Lazarsk's tribute. Alphatia's seizure of Norwold, and installment of King Ericall in 992 AC, presented new possibilities. Lazarsk's *knyaz* decided to pledge fealty to King Ericall in AC 994, coinciding with the *knyaz* of Vyolstograd's oath. Afterwards Lazarsk stopped sending tribute to Stamtral, hoping alliance with Alpha would substantially dissuade Stamtral's military ambitions. The tactic has been successful thus far, though the duchy has further fallen under Zilant's sway.

The *knyaz* rules from his castle in the eponymous village of Lazarsk, upon the shores of Azure Lake. The rest of the duchy is cultivate fields; dotted with hamlets, thorps, and the manors of various *boyarin* and *okolnichy*. Like most the Rodina, Lazarsk's population is mainly Vatski immigrants, while about a third of the population has Hengerian heritage. Despite the duchy's ideal location along the trade route crossing Azure Lake, surprisingly little trade passes through Lazarsk, as Stamtral and Gunvolod to the south, defend their lake trade more actively, having larger armed fleets. Fishing is the only other activity of the duchy. The *knyaz*'s brother-in-law, Kazimir Borisov, is pressuring Alpha to increase Alphatian presence in the Azure Lake region, in order that Lazarsk have

more opportunity to compete with Zilantsk and Stamtral, besides allaying their military presence.

Special Features: Nazariy disdains combat preferring flight or surrender. He gleaned some fighting ability in his youth, his father Zhucharn forcing him to drill under one of his best warriors, but has long abandoned any training with edged weapons. Nazariy ordinarily carries a magical dagger and naught else. When hunting, he dons leather armor and wields a bow, the only weapon he operates proficiently.

Relevant Possessions: *Dagger +1, ring of protection +2.*

Sources: "The Skaufskogr and Beyond" by G. Agosta, in "Threshold" Issue No. 7.

Stano Bolemirov,
Knyaz of Stamtral

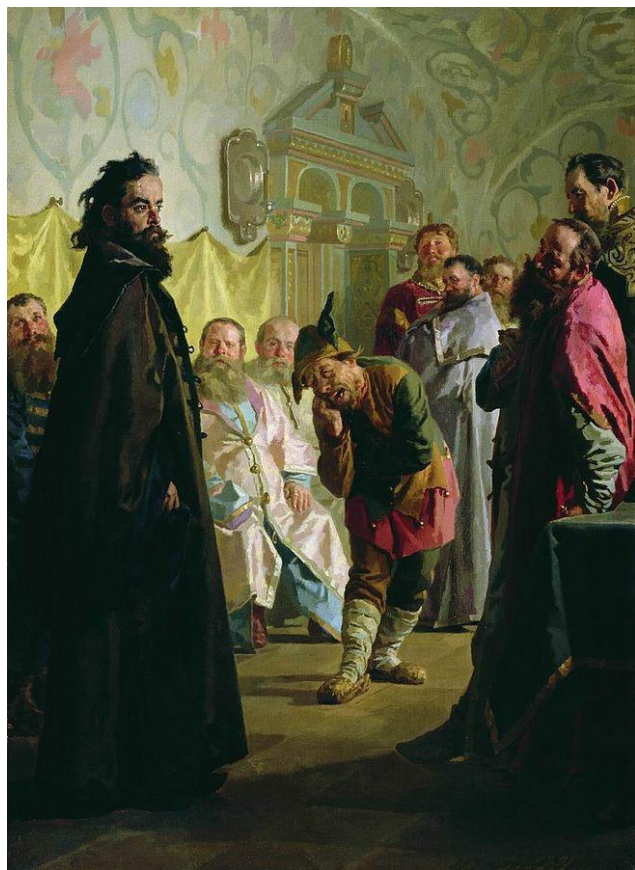
Chaotic 15th level Fighter

Str 13, Int 11, Wis 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Cha 13

Appearance: Forty-five years old, Stano has a rugged, tough and potbellied exterior, reaching 5'11" and weighing 198 pounds. Stano's complexion is tanner than usual among Vatski. He has a long face with round chin, large reddish nose betraying a strong drinking habit, and droopy hazel eyes. Stano has curly brown hair worn short, and a thick beard and mustache as is customary among Vatski nobility. His clothes are usually quite tacky, preferring they be vividly dyed. Among

his favorite jewelry is an eye-catching ivory earring.

Background: Firstborn son of Bolemir, a powerful *boyarin* of Stamtral who married a woman of Heldanner descent, at only twenty years of age, Stano rose to the throne through an alliance of *boyarin* and Heldanner mercenary captains; ousting the previous *knyaz*, Boroda, in 977 AC. Stano's family was already very powerful in Stamtral, and Stano's mixed heritage contributed to his rise, amenable to Vatski noblemen and Heldanners alike. Soon after; however, Stano managed to shed the yoke of *boyarin*'s control, playing rivals against one another, while preserving the greater duchy's military cooperation. Since his first years as ruler, Stano has shown possession of the best, some would say worst, Vatski traits; being a cruel and merciless warrior, feared leader, and cunning conspirator. Thanks to outright military support, he was able to quell opposition, employing the most treacherous means without fear of retribution; having Blackrock's *boyarin* poisoned then replaced with his cousin, an ally of Stano. Leading Stamtral's military forces in many battles throughout his reign, Stano's most successful exploit was routing the Vrodniki host which invaded the Vatskiy Rodina in 987 AC. Despite loss of control over the Duchy of Lazarsk, whose *knyaz* pledged fealty to King Ericall, Stano has managed to establish alliance with many of the independent *boyarin* of the Vatskiy Rodina. His spies have infiltrated the neighboring Duchy of Vvolstograd, weaving intrigue and discontent; and he has made overtures toward Thyatian agents, promising allegiance, with the goal of expanding



The shaman Gorshavin at Stamtral's court

Stamtral into a united Vatski kingdom, with himself as king.

Stano's wife *Knyagynia* Rikissa (Neutral Normal Woman), is a forty year old charmer with expensive tastes. She is drawn to power, skillfully playing on her husband's narcissism to influence his actions. Rikissa is stern and protective toward their four children. The eldest, Olga (Lawful Normal Woman, twenty-four years old), is a beautiful young woman despising her parents' thirst for power, along with her current suitors; Ivor Heimgarlsson (see below) and son of Blackrock's *boyarin*, Oleg Butrinev. She has instead instigated a secret affair with Rurik Heilagursson (see below). Olga's younger sister, rebel Radmira

(Chaotic Normal Woman, sixteen years old), is envious of her older sister. Next is ten year old Brana, a precocious little girl. The youngest, and prospective heir, is their only son. Eight year old Borimir is afflicted by a vengeful curse laid upon Stano by a Vrodniki shaman, when after defeat of the Vrodniki horde, the *knyaz* brutally impaled a Vrodniki infant with his lance as a cautionary warning. The curse foretold Stano's only son would bleed profusely, to wash away his father's sin, and that only a Vrodniki shaman's magic could ease his pain. In fact, Borimir suffers hemophilia, needing herbal concoctions to stop the bleeding, with all clerical healing seemingly unable to help him. Only the spells of ostracized Vrodniki shaman Gorshavin (Neutral 13th level Shaman) seem to help him. Owing to his divine power, Gorshavin has found refuge in Stamtral, and is now a stable presence at Stano's court. He is adored by Borimir and Brana, and has become confident and ally of *Knyagynia* Rikissa.

Personality: Stano is cruel and merciless, as is expected by the worst Vatski *boyarin*. Driven only by an unrestrained ambition to increase his power, fed by his egotism, Stano would sacrifice almost anyone and anything to further his goals. His youthful conduct as military commander, earned the respect of his brutal mercenaries, and fear from Stamtral's nobility and subjects. Stano is cunning, pursuing his aims with icy determination, though volatile and quick to anger.

Stano's goal is to raise Stamtral's status to one of the most powerful realms of central Norwold, conquering rival Vatski duchies, Vyolstograd in particular, in the process.

Additionally subjugating smaller freeholds of the Rodina, and subduing the Vrodniki tribes of the Severnaya Polovina, making them his vassals. In the end, he foresees the Vatski Rodina as a large and powerful realm independent from Alpha, with himself as first Vatski monarch. Since coming to power, Stano has planned plots to weaken his more powerful neighbors, and conducted conspiracies to subvert weaker ones. Through blackmail and bribes, he has already struck alliance with several free *boyarin* of the southeast, of whose sons and daughters are "guests" at Stamtral's court. He has contact with Viktor Zhucharnov, the ambitious and dangerous brother of Lazarsk's *knyaz* living in Alpha. Stano has also played on the discontent of some of Vyolstograd's *boyarin*, hoping to sufficiently destabilize the duchy, allowing easy conquest. If this weren't enough, he also entertains offers from Thyatian spies.

Only one thing worries Stano; the issue of succession. Due to Borimir's failing health, should the boy die, Stano's eldest daughter Olga would inherit the throne. Thus, Olga's marriage constantly occupies the *knyaz's* thoughts. Stano wants marry her to son of Blackrock's *boyarin* or leader of his cavalry, Ivor Heimgarlson; but Olga loathes them both.

Dominion: The Duchy of Stamtral is one of two major Vatski principalities in the Vatskiy Rodina. It encompasses the entire southeastern shore of Azure Lake as well as much of the surrounding forest. The duchy was created around 900 AC, when *Knyagynia* Rada unified various Vatski tribes and clans of the area into one political entity. Her line quickly died out, and Stamtral's saga over the last century is one power struggles

and bloody coups between military factions and the noble elite. The last coup brought a young Stano to power in 977 AC. Fierce and feared even at the time, Stano managed to secure his throne despite opposition of a number of *boyarin*, whom he later coldly cut down.

Stamtral's population includes a sizeable immigrant Heldanner minority, since from 953 AC mercenary bands have fled from Hattian conquest of the Heldann Freeholds. Most of those immigrants, and their descendants, live in settlements in Stamtral and Blackrock along the shores of Azure Lake. Despite common history and intermarriage in the last half-century, many Vatski still consider the Heldanner foreigners. More than one ruling *boyarin* in the eastern half of the duchy look down on them as crude barbarian warriors, unworthy of a place among Vatski society. Currently, hostile feelings toward Heldanners have been silenced, *Knyaz* Stano's family intermarrying with Heldanners in the past. Yet those secretly opposing him, cite his Heldanner heritage as one of many reasons Stano is unsuitable as *knyaz*.

The duchy's economy is agricultural, also exploiting the plentiful fish and timber resources. Stamtral also enjoys a desirable location along the trade route running from Ransarn River valley to Leeha and Great Bay; however, Stamtral's *knyaz* has never invested much effort on improved trade. The duchy's power is quite centralized, ruled with an iron fist by the *knyaz* and his army. *Boyarin* and *okolnichy* (landed lords) mostly with military backgrounds, and a number of Heldanner mercenary captains, called *bofdbingi*, round out the nobility; making the *Duma*, the

nobles' parliament, subservient to the *knyaz*'s will. The *knyaz*'s castle rests in the town of Stamtral, found at the point of the Ransarn River's entry into Azure Lake. Other *boyarin* control parts of the duchy, but most are closely aligned with *Knyaz* Stano. The duchy is seen as one of the most aggressive in the Vatskiy Rodina; and until 994 AC, the Lazarsk's *knyaz* paid tribute rather than face conquest. Stamtral possesses a steadfast army, of which the cavalry force is most feared. Led by an unforgiving man of Heldanner origins, Ivor Heimgarlson, uncompromisingly enforcing the will of his liege throughout the duchy, often leading his men on raids against neighboring dominions.

Special Features: Stano rarely takes the field, but despite lack of training over the last few years, he does not frown upon entering combat. When doing so, Stano uses his magical bridles with deadly cunning, converging on his victims from above. Entangling them with his net, he then finishes opponents with his magical sabre. Stano's favorite combat tactic is to brandish his sabre astride his horse, but is also skilled with use of the lance and spear.

Ivor Heimgarlson (Chaotic 16th level Fighter), leader of Stamtral's cavalry and the *knyaz*'s lieutenant, is as ambitious as Stano himself; hoping for Stano's consent to marry daughter Olga as reward for his services. Once securing his ties to the throne, Ivor will first eliminate shaman Gorshavin, then the *knyaz* and his wife, finally finishing off young Borimir; though not necessarily in that order if other opportunities arise. Afterwards his ascension as the new *knyaz* would be certain. Ivor is charged with keeping up contact with Viktor Zhucharnov and the

malcontent *boyarin* of Vyolstograd. He anticipates help from those men given the right moment, assuring his rule of a much larger Stamtral, which encompasses neighboring lands as well.

Unfortunately, a newcomer stands in the path of Ivor's success; Rurik Heilagursson (Neutral 13th level Fighter). Rurik is former member of the Antalian Guard,⁴⁶ being employed as one of Thyatis' agents in Norwold. His superior is Longtooth, one of the claimants showing up in Alpha on the occasion of Norwold's Land Rush recently announced by King Ericall. Rurik has been given the task to establish ties between Thyatis and willing Vatski princes, fostering animosity from Alpha's control. Rurik has managed to integrate himself into Stano's court after having successfully mediated a trade agreement with the Duchy of Gunvolod, to the south. Rurik makes no secret of his past affiliation with the Antalian Guard, and has enthralled Stano with tales of Thincol Torion's deeds, including those of ancient Thyatian emperors, particularly Zendrolion I. Historical figures Stano considers prime examples and past successes of political cynicism to be emulated. Currently, Rurik works to persuade the *knyaz* to improve the duchy's military forces,

readying Stamtral for conquest of neighboring principalities, coaxing Stano to entrust him with this task. In the meantime, Rurik has met the *knyaz's* daughter Olga, and the two have fallen in love, beginning a secret affair. Despite the assumed secrecy, Olga's affection for Rurik is quite evident at court. As Rurik's feelings are sincere, this turn of events might hinder his mission. In fact, Rurik's presence has made an enemy of Ivor Heimgarlson, seeing Rurik both as a rival for Stano's favor and Olga's affection.

Relevant Possessions: *Bridle of soaring*,⁴⁷ *chain mail +3 of energy drain*, *net +1 of flying*, *normal sword (sabre) +4*.⁴⁸

Sources: CM4 Earthshaker!, "The Skaufskogr and Beyond" by G. Agosta, in "Threshold" Issue no. 7, description of Stamtral from the Mystara section of the Italian Games Academy forum by Corann.

⁴⁶ The Antalian Guard is an elite fighting force of the Thyatian Empire, and de facto personal bodyguard of the Emperor, traditionally made up by warriors of northern ethnicity, hailing from the Northern Reaches, Heldann, and Norwold. The Antalian Guard traces its origins back to the end of the 7th century AC, when current emperor Giovanni I Porpora - using the [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland) - decided to return home with the regiment of northern mercenaries he had gathered during his days as adventurer and imperial general.

⁴⁷ See AC4 Book of Marvelous Magic, page 20.

⁴⁸ Stano's sabre "Dragonrage" is an heirloom from the time of Rada, first *knyagynia* of Stamtral. The sword's power can be used three times per day, each use granting its wielder a choice of the following powers: (a) an additional attack during a single combat round; (b) causing fear in all creatures within 30' of the wielder; (c) shooting a 60' long line of fire dealing 6d6 points of damage, or half that amount if successfully saving vs. dragon breath.

Rogues, Barons, and Pretenders

by Simone Neri (Zendrolion),
with contributions by
Giampaolo Agosta (agathokles),
Marco Dalmonte (DM),
Matthew Fleet (Carillion),
and Hervé Musseau (Andaire)

So, the King of Norwold has decreed the start of the Great Land Rush! Only the most honourable and valorous men and women will be awarded by King Ericall a dominion and the hard duty to tame the savage wilderness of Norwold... Will you be one of them?

All kinds of people are showing up in Alpha on occasion of the Spring Fair of AC 1002: famous adventurers, knightly champions, and clever rogues - each one hoping to catch the eye of the king, to be granted a dominion in Norwold, and to become part of the nobility. While all sort of characters are coming from all over the Known World and the Alphatian Empire to take part in the Land Rush, a good half of them are made of non-magical people coming from the Alphatian mainland and Bellissaria - places where only

spellcasters can be noblemen and where everyone else is thus banned from achieving a social rank higher than gentry.

This article presents a number of interesting NPC claimants that will be among those who will compete against one another to get a dominion from King Ericall. Individual DMs can use them to run the dominion-awards using the rules presented in 'The Great Land Rush of Norwold' (elsewhere in this issue), or choose among them the dominion rulers he prefers. Note that the NPCs listed herein by no means exhaust the number of claimants attending the Spring Fair - each DM might add to them PCs and NPCs from his own campaign; also remember that as many additional claimants should be non-spellcasters coming from the Alphatian mainland and Bellissaria.



THE CLAIMANTS

Each of the following entries presents one of the NPC claimants who will try to get a dominion from King Ericall. Each entry includes information about the NPC's background, motives and goals, family and hirelings (if any), secrets, and personality. NPC stats (including magic items) are given in BECM I D&D rules format. A good deal of these NPCs come from canon adventure modules of the CM and M lines; since the assumption behind most of those adventures is that they are set somewhere in the future after the Spring Fair (which happens in

CM1), in many cases the NPCs' levels have been lowered to the one they should have had at that time, and that NPC's entry). Some of their magic items have been taken away from their equipment (assuming they will earn them in the near future).

Each NPC's most relevant possessions (mostly, magic items) are also listed. Note that many of those items are not found in the *Rules Cyclopedia*; their description is given in the last section of this article, "Magic Items New and Unusual".

Claimants Checklist

Use the following list to search rapidly among claimants, take a quick look at their class and level, and to give the PCs an idea of other claimants through the short description line presented here. Note that

these short descriptions give an idea of how a character looks or seems like, not of what he or she really is. In the table's Class & Level column, 'EW' stands for Elf Wizard and 'Ele' for Elementor (new class, see the sidebar attached to Shuren's entry).

Name	Class & Level	Short Description for PCs
Adik de Chevas	MU15	Learned scholar and poet from Glantri.
Alak Dool	MU19	Ambitious and authoritative Glantrian mage.
Allisa Patrician	F15	Traveled, proud, and petite Ethengarian archer.
Arcadius	MU16	Absent-minded, lore-pursuing Karameikan wizard.
Arkias	C16	Masked fighting spellcaster from the Isle of Dawn.
Bardeen Longwalker	F15	Adventurer, explorer, and knight from Ostland.
Brogahn of the Steppes	F15	Severe, dwarf-loving Ethengarian warrior chief.
Celia	T19	Fascinating and trade-minded Karameikan woman.
Claransa the Seer	MU15	Scholarly and enthusiast Karameikan diviner.
Delsel Oaktree	E10	Dexterous and easygoing wood elf from Minrothad.
Dimitri Dikhoff	F18	Burly, fearsome-looking Karameikan fighter.
Elarianthas Blackblade	EW16	Wood elf adventurer from Karameikos with a vision.
Ernest Day	F16	Good-willed Darokinian former paladin of Koryis.
Fergus the Justifier	F15	Valorous and just Vestlander warrior and jousting.
Geoffrey of Heldann	C15	Fugitive priest of Frey from the Heldannic Territories.
Hanz Vackelin	F18	Fierce, elf-hating mercenary captain from Hattias.
Isabella Kartuebius	MU15	Seductive, pleasure-seeking Thyatian sorceress.
James Essex	F16	Noble warrior from Wendar in search of fame.
Knolimer Knolin	MU15	Deranged Darokinian inventor and tinkerer.
Longtooth	T20	Crafty Ierendian corsair in search of a new home.
Lucci Dhay	T16	Swindling and thieving Karameikan exile.
Magdalena Lintaine	C15	Stern crime fighting cleric of Tarastia from Darokin.
Maltus Fharo	F19	Rich, independent-minded Darokinian fighter.
Mark Acres	F15	Powerful magic-armed adventurer from Westrourke.

Name	Class & Level	Short Description for PCs
Max the First	F15	Massive Darokinian fighter with dynastic ambitions.
Maximillian	F15	Stubborn but unpredictable she-knight from Karameikos.
Ney	F18	Alien, lawful ant-like creature in search of a liege.
Niles Douglass	F20	Renowned mighty champion and knight from Hillvale.
Ossian	MU15	Shrewd and wary mage from Redstone.
Quentin Jax	MU15	Aristocratic Alphatian wizard from Randel.
Quillan Elm-Grower	E10	Friendly, human-loving elven diplomat from Alfheim.
Rutger Dag	F15	Wild and frolicsome wilderness ranger from Vestland.
Sandalane of Glantri	C16	Beautiful refugee priest of Ariana from Glantri.
Shariskan	F24	Ruthless mercenary commander from Ekto.
Shebb Woolsey	T23	Shrewd, well-travelled master rogue from Karameikos.
Shuren	Ele15	Mystical elemental of light from Vestland.
Sieger von Duwn	MU20	Powerful mage and air corsair from Hattias.
Siegfried Sixx	F16	Brave and heroic Northman fighter - with a vengeance.
Trent the White	F17	Handsome, pure-hearted former paladin from Heldann.
Weston the Tall	T15	Proud, well-traveled wanna-be merchant from Darokin.
Winnifred of the Lake	C15	Spirit-guided oracle of Tubak from Ethengar.
Zoltan Hytaxius	C19	Albino priest on a quest for the Immortal Ilsundal.

Adik de Chevas



Learned scholar and poet from Glantri

Lawful 16th-level
Magic-User

Str 12, Int 18, Wis 15,
Dex 16, Con 14, Cha 13

Appearance: 44 years old, unattractive, short (5'3") and quite overweight (185 lbs.); tan skin, bleach blonde hair (becoming white)

worn short, short beard and moustaches, grey eyes. Favours long, warm, and comfortable but expensive-looking clothes.

Background: Adik was born in Perigon (Nouvelle Averoine, Glantri), from an Averoignan father and a Sindhi mother, but left his homeland at an early age after studying at the Great School of Magic. Disgusted by the rampage of political intrigue which plagues his homeland, Adik left Glantri to lead the adventuring scholar's life. A well-travelled character, Adik has accumulated a great deal of knowledge; he is

an experienced scholar in the fields of arts, ethics, and politics, as well as an author of some books on those subjects and an acclaimed poet. He spends much of his time delving in his studies and traveling to meet other scholars, and visiting libraries and learning institutions. Adik has a long-standing friendship with the paladin Trent 'the White'.

Personality: Adik is extremely intelligent, possesses an enormous culture, and is well-versed in a wide variety of topics. He is calm and thoughtful, and always ponders a situation a lot (sometimes too much) before acting. Adik is not especially combative or fond of warlike attitudes, and relies exclusively on his magic if the need for combat arises; he is also quite stolid and lazy, favouring intellectual pursuits while leaving physical ones to his servants and fellows. Despite being a writer of love poems, one subject Adik does not have much experience with is women – he could have hard times resisting the wiles of an alluring lady.

Goals: Adik wants to put an end to his days as a wandering adventurer and scholar, and establish a base to carry on his studies, write his books, study magic, and try to enrich his knowledge of politics through the actual practice of government. He would like to make his domain a place for the study of divination magics. Adik will also get the opportunity to make his poetry and treatises known at the court of Alpha – and through it to Alphatia.

Dominion Choice: Adik will try to get a domain in an area which is well-sheltered from dangers and also not too far from a

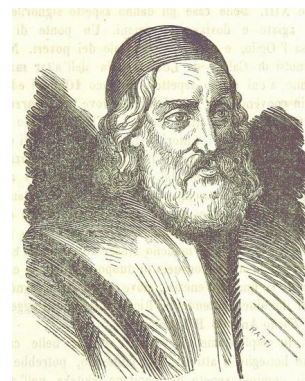
large settlement with access to international relations and trade routes.

Special Features: Adik has a preference for divination magic, but he is a generalist wizard and has accumulated a lot of spells – protection spells, force and energy spells, mind-controlling ones, illusions, transportation and movement spells, and spells which alter living and unliving matter – though few were created by himself.

Relevant Possessions: *Buckle of armour AC 3, cape of protection, staff of power, wand of negation.*

Source: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Alak Dool



*Ambitious and authoritative
Glantrian mage*

Chaotic 19th-level
Magic-User

Str 11, Int 14, Wis 10,
Dex 12, Con 14, Cha 7

Appearance: 53 years old, tall (6') and lean (148 lbs.), light skin, with a seemingly authoritative and severe grandfatherly look; he sports a huge and thick beard and long moustaches which were once red but now have almost wholly turned white, and green, misleadingly-harmless

eyes. Alak favours long tunics and surcoats in brown, red, and gold.

Background: Alestair (this is his true name) was born in a lesser noble clan in Caerdwicca, on the southern Isle of Dawn. In his youth he alternated work aboard a pirate ship with the study of magic in Ochalea and Aeria. Afterwards, he began selling his services as a mercenary wizard, working for various crime lords of Ne'er-do-well and for unscrupulous noblemen and merchants. At 30, having gathered a sizeable wealth, he entered slave trade on his own, being mostly concerned with western sea routes; this trade brought him to the court of the "Black Rajah" of Jaibul, where he lived many years, siring two sons to a local Sindhi woman, adopting the name "Alak" (a Sindhi corruption of "Alec", short form for his name), and becoming quite close with the Rajah to the point of being further apprenticed in the arcane arts by him. After having unsuccessfully tried to win the control of Jaibul at the death of his patron, and seen the death of his family at the hand of the new "Black Rajah" as a result, he fled to Glantri, where he attended the Great School of Magic for a while and had some contacts with the local underworld and aristocracy. Never a good leader, he was unable to gather enough support to win a dominion in Glantri, so he went back to Thyatis at 44. There he performed quite well as a blackmailer, bodyguard, and assassin for some senators and noblemen, at last coming to the attention of Emperor Thincol himself, who recruited him as a special secret agent of the Imperial Guard. As a pivotal mission of his career, Alak then received the duty to become the main Thyatian pawn in Norwold. He is financed both by the throne and by

some other wealthy Thyatian patrons, who have secured contracts with him in order to put their hands on Norwold's rich resources once the region falls under the empire's control. Alak never uses his original name Alestair, and since he used a fake name both in Glantri (Halach Duehl) and during his last years in Thyatis (Alexander Dolantius), he has managed to cover his traces well before eventual snoopers. At Ericall's court, he pretends to be of Glantrian origin; he is indeed followed by some Glantrian wizards, who are his apprentices and henchmen, including his right-hand, the Aalbanese Harold Loye (Chaotic 7th-level Magic-User).

Personality: Alak is driven first and foremost by ambition – loyalties, friendships, ties, promises, oaths are only tools for him, to be honoured as long as they contribute to further his goals, otherwise to be dropped and discarded. He is also arrogant, unpleasant, extremely selfish and cruel, and delights in crushing weaker enemies, and in seeing his opponents suffer humiliation and defeat.

Goals: Alak is backed by the Thyatian Empire and has come to Norwold to secretly spy and report to the Thyatians on the kingdom's development; once Thyatis is ready, the empire will invade Norwold: Emperor Thincol expects Alak to betray Ericall and side with the Thyatians – who have promised him nearly half of Norwold and the kingdom's crown for this. Thus, Alak's goal is to establish a strong dominion and raise a powerful army to be ready to take his move against the king as soon as possible; for the latter purpose, he will likely try to win the support – through money, or by whatever means – of humanoid tribes and clans, or of

local barbarian peoples (whom he however considers less submissive than humanoids to the promise of loot and riches), and get rid of anyone who stumbles in his way.

Dominion Choice: Alak will try to get a territory in the northern half of Norwold which is not too-far from one of the kingdom's main cities, but at the same time near a pool of hireable humanoid tribes whose services he might buy and whom he could unleash against his enemies once the war begins. If possible, he will try to get a dominion not too near the other baronies - he will need to keep his humanoid army a secret for quite some time.

Special Features: Alak is fond of summoning, illusion, mind-control, and energy attack spells above all; in combat, he likes to use summoned monsters and creatures to fight in melee, all the while misleading and tricking his foes with his illusions and charms, or targeting them with deadly energy spells. His spells come from a variety of traditions – Thyatian, Alphatian, Ochalean, Sindhi, and Glantrian. Alak also benefits from the help of several spies and agents which Thyatis has sent in Norwold (all thieves, fighters, and magic-users of 9th-16th level).

Relevant Possessions: *Ring of protection +4, staff of power, wand of illusion, wand of lightning bolts.*

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta, [Tharquil's homepage](#) (in French; not available anymore on the web).

Allisa Patrician

*Travelled, proud,
and petite
Ethengarian archer*

Lawful 15th-level
Fighter

Str 13, Int 9, Wis 12,
Dex 18, Con 10, Cha
14



Appearance: 25 years, very short stature and delicate body (4'11" per 81 lbs.), light copperish skin tone, and an overall petite appearance; grey, almond-shaped eyes and black, half-back long, straight hair, often tied in knots, braids, and tresses. Sometimes she wears Ethengarian-style dress (in the Krondahar fashion) in green and red colours, but usually prefers wearing clothes (often masculine) in the fashions of Glantri and Darokin.

Background: Born into the Taijit tribe in Ethengar by the name of Lisai, she was still a baby when her mother Tessia was forced to flee the steppes after a rival chief had killed her husband and two other sons. Mother and daughter were found by a widower Glantrian wizard of Thyatian origins, Domitius Patrician, who welcomed the two in his house in Bramyra and married Tessia a couple of years later. Allisa, as Lisai was called by the man she considered her real father, assumed the surname of Patrician, and was raised alongside Domitius' son from his first wife, Adrian (who was two years older than she), but her mother ensured Allisa would not forget her Ethengarian heritage, teaching her the language, the

customs, and the legends of her native land. When she turned 14, she was sent by Domitius to Glantri City together with Adrian - but, while the latter attended the Great School of Magic, Allisa was not scholarly enough to become a wizard, and she preferred to take lessons in swordsmanship and archery from Erewan teachers. At 16, Tessia died revealing to Allisa on her deathbed the true story of her origins. Allisa was shocked and intrigued at the same time, and vowed to travel to Ethengar to know her homeland and avenge the father and brothers she had never known. Wishing to improve her skills first, Allisa went adventuring for some years in Glantri, Sind, Darokin, and Thyatis - her steps always followed by her adoptive father's henchmen to ensure she did not put herself in deadly danger. During her travels, Allisa mastered the mounted archery style from former Glantrian, Darokinian, and Kerendan military officers. While in Thyatis City, she stepped on the toes of the Shadow Hand and ended up fighting in the Coliseum for a while - until freed by Domitius' agents. Four years ago, she finally decided to head back to Ethengar to embrace her native culture and avenge her family; after some adventures in the steppes, she found and killed her family's murderers (which happened to be relatives of Oktai Khan), and then had to fight her way out of the Taijit lands, which she did successfully. Her deeds were soon known among the other tribes, but no khan or chief could convince her to join his tribal warriors. A year ago, after much time spent adventuring in Ethengar, disappointed by the violent culture of the steppes, she went back to Bramyra, learning that meanwhile Domitius had died. Allisa had a short and passionate affair with Adrian, but when he asked her to

marry him, she declined and the two parted amicably. Allisa wanted to change life again, leaving behind her both Glantri and Ethengar, and headed north without a precise destination. Eventually, Allisa heard about the incoming Spring Fair to be held in Alpha, and resolved to go there in search of new adventures. Allisa is accompanied by two retainers her adoptive brother Adrian asked the girl to bring with her for company and protection: an aging man-at-arms from Glantri City, Duccio Martini (Lawful 7th-level Fighter), and a young Caurenzan physician, Ennius Constanza (Neutral 3rd-level Thief).

Personality: Allisa is a free spirit, with a friendly and open personality, and enjoys going on adventures, riding horses and tending them, and putting her skills to the test. She is also very proud of herself, and will not miss the opportunity to make anyone who ribs or offends her (due to being short, being a woman, being Ethengarian, and so on) change his mind. During her life, Allisa has learned the value of others' help, and she is always grateful to those who she considers good people, her friends, or who have benefited or favoured her: to those, she always keeps her word, never breaks an oath, and is utterly loyal.

Goals: Allisa has come to Norwold to find new adventures and tests for herself, and will attend the Spring Fair in Alpha on a lark. She does not crave a dominion, but if the king will grant her one, she will devote herself seriously to the task or the ruler. If given opportunity, she will try to build her dominion into an idealized miniature Ethengar, with the trappings of the Ethengarian culture but deprived of its violent features.

Dominion Choice: Loving horses and horse-herding, and wishing to establish a dominion akin to the Ethengarian culture, Allisa will prefer a site with plains or grasslands as dominant terrain, but will not disdain other terrain types as long as there are enough pasturelands for some horse herds.

Special Features: Allisa uses a mix of fighting styles learned around the Known World. She has an almost uncanny level of awareness and is a true master of the bow both on foot and on horseback, being able to fire rapidly and still with cool precision. When fighting mounted, she prefers sabre and shield (discarding the lance which is too large for her stature); while on foot she favours two-weapon fighting with sabre and axe or dagger.

Relevant Possessions: *Hand axe* +3 *returning*, *longbow (Ethengar bow)* +3, *normal sword (sabre)* +2, *plate mail* +3, *shield* +2.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Arcadius

Absent-minded, lore-pursuing Karamaikan wizard

Neutral 16th-level Magic-User

Str 12, Int 18, Wis 17, Dex 10, Con 13, Cha 13

Appearance: 34 years old, fair skin, medium height and lean build (5'8" per 139 lbs.), black hair worn long and usually tied in a ponytail, clean shaven (but not regularly), with brown eyes. Arcadius is an unassuming man who retains his lowly origins, augmented with scholarly lack of interest for pomp. He wears worn robes, be it for travel or adventure or lab research, and even at court. He sometimes absentmindedly adds the first cloak or hood he finds, and old sturdy boots. Half-forgotten items, many of them magical, or of historical significance, or simply of passing interest, are stashed in numerous pockets, and Arcadius occasionally fishes one out, and either plunges deeply into its examination regardless of his entourage, or begins discussing the object's importance, usage, power, and other pieces of lore, often to the dismay of his unwitting audience.

Background: Olavv Tushdboy was born in rural Traladara, where the boy's prospects would not have been very bright were it not for his village elder's realization that such intelligence would best serve theoretical pursuits rather than the practical, working life of the hamlet. Thus Olavv was sent to town with a letter of recommendation, and eventually found his way to the Magicians' Guild. With a passion for history, myth and elder lore, he eventually left in order to

travel the world, taking the name “Arcadius” for himself - a Thyatian name, which in rural Traladara Olavv thought would sound more authoritative and wizardly. In those days, he adventured together with Celia, Zoltan, Siegfried, and Ney (see their separate entries). Although he gleaned a lot, it also involved more danger than he anticipated, and all that travel interfered with his research. He would like to turn a new leaf in his life, settle down, set up an extensive library and lab, and limit his adventures to lore-gathering expeditions. He has recently come to Alpha with his friends, and they separated in order to ask a domain from King Ericall individually - which may just be the occasion that Arcadius was longing for.

Personality: Arcadius is perceived to be an archetypal absent-minded wizard with sole interest in his studies. He definitely is that, but he can also be aware of events surrounding him - he just typically chooses to ignore them as trivial and turn his mind to more interesting topics, tuning out the distractions. But when required he can be practical (to the limit of his abilities), tedious, dedicated, and even relentless; this happens naturally in his extensive pursuit of knowledge, but it might also be in the help of a friend. Arcadius has other quirks: he hates barking, biting, drooling dogs, and he holds that water is fine for drinking and maybe washing but not for immersing oneself into nor sailing over, and he hopes he never will have to recall where he stashed any water-breathing spell scroll.

Goals: After Arcadius arrives at Alpha, the quiet conjurer quickly quits the crowded court for the calm countryside to commence his compelling quest. The wily wizard will

willingly wander by wood and wilderness and watch at once the world's widest wrym wolds, voyaging through vast vistas and violent volcanoes and visiting valley villages, rejecting the rich riverlands and ridden roads the rival rulers will race for and ruthlessly row over. The modest magician will move through mountains and morasses to map the most marvellous monuments of mortal men and magical monsters. The sage sorcerer will scale snowbound summits and silently scry secret and sacred sites in his scaled survey for a secluded sanctuary.

Dominion Choice: Arcadius would prefer a small dominion in a remote area, where he can conduct his magical research and pore over esoteric tomes without the disturbance of court duties or lording over unruly settlers or resentful natives. He is not a hermit, though, and will look for a place that is sufficiently inhabited and not isolated, as he will need workers to have his tower built and supplied. It has not escaped his attention that the court of Alpha might give him a chance to gain access to the vast repository of Alphantian lore. Arcadius also wonders what myths, legends, histories and artefacts he can collect from the natives of Norwold: hin and elves and dwarves, Antalians, but also he marvels at what caches of knowledge can be found amid the fabled, long-living dragons.

Special Features: Arcadius's topical areas of research are history, languages, and peoples, especially of the lost or hidden kind. Any clue to Nithia, the Hollow World, or Blackmoor is sure to pique his interest. Quite the numismatic, Arcadius has assembled a large collection of coins. His main interests lie in pieces from lost and forgotten nations,

like that octagonal coin with hieroglyphs whose origin he is trying to puzzle out, and in non-metallic currencies - the more esoteric or magical the better. He also collects feathers and wonders if there is, or ever were, a people using feathers as currency.

Relevant Possessions: *Coin of good luck, dagger +4 of alignment detection, ring of protection +3, ring of telekinesis, staff of dispelling, star of the smallfolk.*

Source: *Mystaran Almanacs (Hervé Musseau).*

Arkias

Masked fighting spellcaster from the Isle of Dawn

Chaotic 16th-level Cleric of Alphaks

Str 16, Int 13, Wis 18,
Dex 12, Con 15, Cha 11 (5)

Appearance: 44 years old, small (5'4" tall) but very massive (he weighs 158 lbs.); sports long straight and black hair, but is otherwise completely bald; his grey eyes shimmer with mad fanaticism. Once his Dawner ancestry was recognizable on his fair-complexioned body, but now that he is suffering from the disease known as the "necromancer's reward" (see the sidebar) his appearance does not differ much from that of an undead (hence his Charisma score of 5 indicated in brackets). In public, Arkias always wears heavy robes and clothes which hide his decaying appearance, including a full-face silver mask resembling a plain human visage.

Background: Pwyll (this was his original name) was born in a village in northern Hillvale; he lost both his parents when he was four during the last war between Thyatis and Alphatia (AC 959-962), and began wandering the countryside, sometimes welcomed in by a peasant family, sometimes bullied and beaten, soon trying to get what he needed to survive without any regard for others. His natural cunning and physical prowess allowed him to push ahead, but his harsh youth took its toll on his personality, as he began to harbour an utter hate of other human beings and became totally ruthless and uncaring about others. At 16, he had become a young but feared brigand devoted to extortion, murder, and robbery. But then something changed his life: to flee from authorities, he assumed the identity of one of his latest murders, an Alphatian named Arkias. When he rummaged through the man's possessions, he found an unholy symbol and a small book of prayers - the man had secretly been a devotee of the Immortal Alphaks. Liking the violent and hateful content of the prayers, he began almost unwittingly to worship Alphaks, whose attention was caught by the strong hatred for life the boy harboured. The fiend began to speak to Pwyll in his dreams, and granted him divine spells, slowly transforming the young brigand into a fanatic worshipper and making him forfeit at all his old identity, to the point where he assumed the name Arkias for himself. Since then, Arkias has wandered the Isle of Dawn, alternating between unholy quests to please his Immortal patron, secret activities to spread the cult in Hillvale and Dunadale, and service in mercenary companies to appease his blood thirst. While he was servicing in the Scarlet Plumes, he was discovered to be a worshipper of

Alphaks by the company's captain Shariskan, who was however convinced by Arkias to adopt the Immortal fiend as his personal patron. Later, Shariskan even raised Arkias - who in the meantime had begun to spread Alphaks' teachings to his comrades - to the rank of his personal aide de camp. When Shariskan decided to lead the Scarlet Plumes to Norwold to offer the company's services to King Ericall, Arkias followed him after Shariskan's promise to grant him land to establish a community of cultists of Alphaks in exchange for units of undead with which to supplement his army. Among Arkias' personal retainers is a beautiful Ostlander-born woman raised in Helskir, Nadia Meelia (Chaotic 9th-level Cleric of Hel), owner of an infamous artefact of Entropy, the *Stick of the Dead* (see the box).

Personality: Arkias no longer has a personality of his own: he is fully devoted to the will of his Immortal, and dominated by an insane thirst for blood and by boundless lust - these are the only feelings which matter for him. Arkias enjoys violence and rape, and likes to have prostitutes and slaves ready to pleasure him. Due to his hatred of life, he has also developed a fanatic interest for undeath; Arkias regularly uses necromantic spells and his ultimate wish is attaining lichdom to continue to serve his patron eternally.

Goals: Alphaks plans to use Arkias' presence in Norwold to foster violence, destruction, and war in the region. He wants his cleric to get a place under his own control where to set a base of operation for a new cell of Alphaks worshippers; this is the main reason behind Arkias' deal with Shariskan. Once he gets his dominion, Arkias will devote himself

to gather Alphaks' cultists from abroad and to build an undead army to use when the moment comes. Until then, he will try to carry on these activities as discreetly as possible in order to avoid alerting the king's attention - nevertheless, he will do near to nothing to develop his dominion and his unfortunate subjects will suffer under his evil rule.

Dominion Choice: Arkias will not personally take part in the Great Land Rush. He will take any land Shariskan will grant him; he really has no preference, one place or another will do as the new home of Alphaks' cultists.

Special Features: As a cleric of Alphaks, Arkias can use the whip, the dagger, and the two-handed sword besides usual weapons allowed to clerics. Besides the powers his Immortal grants to him, Arkias suffers from a terrible magical illness called the "necromancer's reward" (see sidebar).

Relevant Possessions: *Cloak of protection +1*, *mace +2/+5 vs lawful creatures*, *plate mail +3*.

Source: [Tharquil's homepage](#) (in French; not available anymore on the web).

The Necromancer's Reward

Arkias suffers from an horrible magical disease called the "necromancer's reward", which hit his body many months ago. The disease hits those who spend many weeks in a row using necromantic spells and dabbling with fiendish powers. Basically, each time a character affected by the disease uses a spell which has something to do with the dead or the undead (*Speak with Dead*, *Animate Dead*, and so on) or which is powered by entropic energy, its level is added to a total, which is recorded and

compared to the table below (the effects are cumulative):

Arkias' current score on this table is 21. The disease can only be cured by a cleric of at least 30th-level casting *heal* and *resurrection* on the character in a row. However, the disease's course can be halted and regressed by coating the afflicted's body with the fresh blood of living creatures - in game terms, the score on the table goes back by 2 for each Hit Die or creatures killed in the process.

Total Spell Levels	Effect
5	Charisma score drops by 1 point; the character become very pale, with a sickly complexion and dark circles around the eyes.
10	Charisma score drops by 1 points; skin becomes wrinkled, with small darker spots all over the body and an emaciated visage.
15	Charisma score drops by 2 points; the skin wrinkles even more (making bones and teeth clearly visible), bloody streaks and dark bruises appear on the character's body; the character heals naturally at half rate.
20	Charisma score drops by 2 points; the character's flesh starts to decay in some points, the skin falls to pieces exposing open bloody patches, his face becomes skull-like; natural healing stops altogether.
25 or more	Charisma score drops by 2 points; the character's appearance becomes virtually indistinguishable from that of a fresh zombie; the character does not heal naturally anymore.

The Stick of the Dead

This magic item is a minor artifact of Entropy created by the Immortal Hel and currently in possession of one of Arkias' retainers, the priestess Nadia Meelia. The *Stick* was created decades ago by the Immortal Hel to help one of her patriarchs defend a small community of cultists on the Isle of Dawn, but was lost when its first owner and his followers were slaughtered in a battle against the Alphantians; the artifact was later found by Arkias and Nadia - the latter was then visited by Hel in her dreams and allowed to keep the *Stick*.

Sphere:	Entropy
Magnitude:	Minor
Power Points:	92
Weapon Type:	The Stick functions in combat as a staff +3 doing 2d6 base damage.
Powers:	Animate dead (60' range, animates 40 HD of undead).
Handicaps:	Recharge cost: 1 HD of creatures must be sacrificed to make the artifact recover 1 TP.
Penalties:	The owner's alignment changes to Chaotic.
Description:	The Stick resembles a long human femur bearing at each end one human skull adorned with spikes.

BARDEEN LONGWALKER



Adventurer, explorer, and knight from Ostland

Neutral 15th-level Fighter

Str 18, Int 9, Wis 10, Dex 15, Con 17, Cha 14

Appearance: 36 years old, very tall (6'5"), muscular and sturdy (238 lbs.), broad shoulders and large build; light tanned complexion (from his long voyages), redhead with hair worn at neck-length, beard and moustaches, blue eyes. Bardeen favours clothes in black and various shades of red, often adorned with silver or gold jewels; in battle he can be seen on horseback in full plate armour as well as charging on foot with little or no armour.

Background: Born in a small village in Dunadale, when he was three Bardeen's parents were killed during an Ostlander raid, and he himself taken by one of the Northmen and brought to Ostland as a thrall. Sometime later, thanks to his build and strength, Bardeen was noticed by Jarl Halldor of Hammersholm during a child's brawl at a feast, and brought to his court. He spent several years there, was made a freeman by the jarl, was trained in combat, and eventually came to consider Ostland his home. Bardeen, however, had to withstand the envy and hate of the jarl's children, in particular of Sigrid, who resented the former thrall's physical prowess. When Bardeen was

14, Halldor died and his sons started to quarrel among themselves for his inheritance; Bardeen knew that the first thing Sigrid would have done was to get rid of him, so he was forced to leave his land and went to Westrouke. Since that time, he travelled most of the civilized countries of the world, going even as far as the Savage Coast and Bellissaria, undertaking many adventures which earned him a large fortune and his nickname of 'Longwalker'. During his voyages he has been a raider, a seaman, an explorer, an adventurer, and at last a knight in the service of Queen Eldrethila of Theranderol. Now he has decided to earn a dominion in Norwold and put an end (at least temporarily) to his travels.

Personality: Bardeen is a hero at heart, always striving to find new adventures, enemies to defeat, battles to win, and new things to be discovered. He loves weapons and armour, women, and food, but he is also a cosmopolitan man, accustomed to being in contact with diverse cultures and ethnicities; Bardeen loves telling stories about the places he visited or the deeds he performed, but he never does so in a boastful way. Bardeen does not care much about politics, but he is an honourable man and is used to keep his word - once he will swear allegiance to Ericall, he will remain true to it as long as the king will behave loyally.

Goals: Bardeen has decided to settle down from his voyages for a time, building a home for himself to return to after his adventures, where he can store his possessions, and where he can devote himself to the study of his favourite weapon, the sword. He is not likely to settle down definitely for the life of dominion-ruler, however, and as soon as the

call of adventure reaches him again, he will leave his dominion for long periods of time.

Dominion Choice: Bardeen would like to have a dominion on a coastal area, near the sea or on the banks of a large river or lake, from which he could hear news of distant lands and eventually resume his travels as soon as his wanderer's spirit overtakes him again.

Special Features: Bardeen suffers from a phobia toward dogs and doglike creatures (such as lupins and hell hounds), caused by a traumatic encounter with dogs he had during his childhood. Moreover, during his travels he developed a knack for learning languages, and he knows a truly amazing variety of tongues, albeit at basic level. In combat he prefers fighting on foot in order to exploit the full potential of his skill with the sword; also, due to his stature, he needs very large warhorses - Blackbull, his current favourite black stallion, is indeed a fearsome sight in battle.

Relevant Possessions: 15 bolts +1, heavy crossbow +3, normal sword +4 of defending (named "Heart's Ward"), shield +3.

Source: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Mystaran Almanacs.

Brogahn of the Steppes



*Severe, dwarf-loving
Ethengarian warrior
chief*

Lawful 15th-level
Fighter

Str 15, Int 9, Wis 15,
Dex 11, Con 16, Cha
7

Appearance: 43 years old, copper skin tone, imposing figure, very tall (6'4") with broad shoulders and large physique (238 lbs.); Brogahn is not particularly attractive, with a scowling face, long straight black hair, and a huge black beard and moustaches, but he has two very deep, almond-shaped green eyes (unusual for an Ethengarian). He wears rich and colourful clothes in a mixed variety of fashions from Ethengar, the Northern Reaches, and Ylaruam, while in battle he dons his magical plate armour and warhammer of dwarven make.

Background: Boga (this is his original name) was born within a low-standing clan of the Yugatai tribe, in Ethengar. Trained as a horse warrior, he was considered a weirdo in his tribe, because due to his large build he never became particularly quick at firing with the bow from horseback, developing instead great skill in melee. Despite his battle deeds during the tribal wars which raged in the steppes from AC 987 on and during skirmishes with the Gostai goblins, Boga could not find proper recognition within his tribe. So he left the Khanates and went adventuring through Ylaruam, the Northern Reaches (where he seized from her master a

thrall girl of Redstone origin, Caitlin, who would become Boga's first wife some time later), and Rockhome. He earned great fame among the dwarves when he saved the life of Princess Noris, daughter of King Everast XV. Finding Rockhome to his liking, Boga learned to fight with the warhammer in the dwarven style, and even grew a large beard in dwarven fashion. In Rockhome he also befriended the dwarf Gimluk, a former adventuring companion of Moglai Khan, together with whom Boga went back to Ethengar, becoming the dwarf's main Ethengarian fellow and artillery apprentice. Later, Boga became one of the Golden Khan's advisors; due to his alien combat style, Boga was never allowed in the *Keshbak*, but bested some of the steppes' strongest warriors in melee combat and wrestling. This, the presence of still another seeming outsider (besides Gimluk and Akmad ibn Yussef), and Boga's untimely habit of contesting other khans in front of Moglai, earned him the enmity of many high-ranking personalities of the khanates. Things escalated when a vengeful khan had Boga's first wife, Caitlin, strangled to death. Eventually, Moglai himself withdrew his favour from him in order to satisfy his khans, and Boga was implicitly forced to leave the steppes. Upon his leave, he adopted the name his first wife had always called him in her native tongue, "Brogahn". He decided to head north into the Heldannic Territories and Norwold, followed by his friend Grotto 'the Tall' (Lawful 10th-level Dwarf, a wandering Rockhome dwarf who spent some years in Ethengar with him),¹ and by his clan - his second wife Gwendai (Neutral Normal Woman, a 24-year old submissive

¹ Grotto the Tall is featured in CM3 Sabre River as one of the pre-generated PCs.

Ethengarian woman), his five children (three from the deceased Caitlin and two from Gwendai), and his two lesser brothers with their respective families. Currently his clan has settled north of the Skaufskogr Hills, while Brogahn has travelled to Alpha to answer King Ericall's call for dominion rulers and pledge allegiance to him.

Personality: Perhaps Brogahn did like the dwarven culture so much because he shares with the rockborns so many personality traits: he is severe, glum, and taciturn, and his menacing appearance puts others in awe rather than inspiring regard. Brogahn is conscious and somewhat proud of his skills, but he knows he is far from perfect and is ready both to take advice from trusted individuals and to learn from his faults. He is also a truthful person, who can be a loyal friend and ally; he will be loyal to Ericall, unless the king shows weakness, lack of honour, or otherwise loses Brogahn's respect. To some non-Ethengarians, Brogahn can appear rude and backward (for example due to the custom of keeping multiple wives or to take war prisoners as slaves), but this is more due to his Ethengarian upbringing than to his actual personality. Like many Ethengarians, Brogahn is wary of magic-users and does not trust at all people of Glantrian origin.

Goals: Brogahn wants to achieve fame and renown as a great warrior and leader of his own khanate; he would have preferred to obtain them in his native country, but he is eager as well to pursue his goal in the untamed lands of Norwold, trying to become a recognized leader among the region's local nomad and settled peoples. Once established as a ruler, Brogahn will strive to build a

prosperous dominion and to serve his liege loyally to the best of his skills.

Dominion Choice: Brogahn would like to set his dominion in a wilderness land, where he would be better able to test and prove his skills as a ruler and leader. If available, he will chose lands resembling his native steppes, such as grasslands or plains, or where local nomad tribes which he could befriend are known to roam. He will not be influenced by the land were his clan has currently settled - if necessary, he will lead them to a new location.

Special Features: Brogahn has mastered the use of the warhammer from the dwarves and wields it in a style unusual for a human - let alone an Ethengarian. Contrary to the Ethengarian custom, he charges into battle preferably on foot, protected by his heavy armour and shield, and only rarely fights from horseback, using the lance. Nevertheless, he is still an accomplished rider and archer. Brogahn's magical plate mail and warhammer are both of dwarven make; his armour is a gift of King Everast XV of Rockhome, while he found the warhammer in an ancient Modrigsberg tomb in Soderfjord.

Relevant Possessions: 20 arrows +2, plate mail +4, shield +2, short bow +1, warhammer +3.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, CM2 Death's Ride, CM3 Sabre River, M1 Into the Maelstrom, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Celia



Fascinating and trade-minded Karamaikan woman

Neutral 19th-level Thief

Str 10, Int 15, Wis 11,
Dex 18, Con 12, Cha 18

Appearance: A 28-year old, tall (5'11"), slender (138 lbs.), beautiful woman with long, straight black hair and tanned skin, famous for her piercing green eyes, with which she dazzles and mesmerizes men and women alike. As her fortune grew, she naturally embraced wearing the finer clothes available, and is as comfortable in richly embroidered silk dress and jewellery (some magical) at court, as she is in the sturdiest, enchanted leather padding (or the filthiest rags, if she requires such a disguise) for cloak-and-dagger endeavours. Whatever her attire, she has a whole supplement of blades, tools of the trade, gems and coins, and various magical items concealed, in mundane or extra-dimensional pockets.

Background: An orphan from Specularum, Celia had to learn early on how to survive in the streets. Although Celia never found out, the King of Thieves inexplicably extended his protection over her, rather than recruit her. This access to the Kingdom of Thieves' resources helped her, although she attributed her growing success to her daring skills, quick wits, easy charm, and good luck. The young woman was nonetheless captured by the Iron Ring; there, she fell in love with fellow captive Zoltan during their dauntless

escape. She has kept company with him since, although the enigmatic priest has remained mum about his affection. After many adventures together with him and other companions (Siegfried, Arcadius, and Ney - see their separate entries), Celia accompanied them to Alpha in order to ask for a dominion from King Ericall.

Personality: From her lowly origins Celia has risen high, and she has no doubt that she can achieve anything she sets herself up to. She doesn't believe she can ever fail, nor does she see the role others may have played in her successes. Life is a play, a game, in which she is the triumphant heroine. She has entered a new stage, Norwold, with a new role, aristocrat, and a new guise, guildmistress. She is thrilled and enchanted at the prospect, and wonders how this will play out and help her enrapture Zoltan.

Goals: Celia has come to Norwold with Zoltan, although she approves the decision to move and looks forward to ruling her own dominion and becoming part of Alpha's nobility. She sees the northern wilderness as a diamond in the rough, a large piece of land with plentiful resources that needs only to be connected to the trading lanes of the Thyatian and Alphatian empires to thrive and prosper. She intends to run her dominion as both a trading guild and a thieves' guild, with a vision to start her own commercial empire. She has never been a prince in the Kingdom of Thieves and thus has never learned how to operate such a network, however.

Dominion Choice: Celia will look for prime commercial real estate: a coastal domain with a good harbour and no reefs or other hazards, ice-free for as long as possible

during those long winters, and near enough to the existing shipping lanes that she can convince merchant captains to make the extra leg. Inland access to the riches of Norwold, including to other settlements and dominions, would also be most useful. Whatever infrastructure doesn't yet exist but has potential she will construct with her amassed gold. One particular requirement is that her dominion be close by Zoltan's; she knows the priest will not care for the mercantile development of his demesne, and will let her handle that aspect - and of course she wants to be able to visit him often.

Special Features: When Celia locks eyes with someone, she can keep her target transfixed indefinitely and read into their soul. Celia only gets a vague impression of whether the person she puts under such scrutiny is trustworthy and amenable to her, but the longer she keeps her hold the more unnerving it becomes to the other party, as it seems that Celia is boring through their mind and ferreting their most private thoughts while they stand helpless. Many are convinced that Celia knows their darkest secrets. Also, Celia has amassed quite a fortune over the years, effectively using her Karameikan network of fences and moneychangers. She also handles the bulk of Zoltan's assets (of which she keeps what she considers a fair fee), and when she can get away with it other people's as well (generally without their knowledge).

Relevant Possessions: *Bag of holding*, *buckle of lockpicks* +15%, *chameleon blade*, *leather armour* +3 of *blending*, *necklace of protection* +3.

Source: *Mystaran Almanacs* (Hervé Musseau).

Claransa the Seer

Scholarly and enthusiast
Karameikan diviner

Lawful 15th-level Magic-User

Str 13, Int 17, Wis 11,
Dex 11, Con 14, Cha 11



Appearance: 36 years old, fair complexion, small height (5'4" tall) but willowy and lightly built (105 lbs.); Claransa has wavy blond hair, worn a little below shoulder-length, and clever green eyes. Claransa tries to keep her apparent age roughly at 25 years through use of magical means. She prefers wearing bright gowns in simple colours and of simple design, under her ever-present magical cloak.

Background: Born as Claransa Tyrevic in Vatresh (the Traladaran town which would become Threshold some years later), her family was the result of the union between two upper-class merchant families of Traladaran and Thyatian origins. Claransa was discovered possessing a high aptitude for arcane magic and apprenticed under one of Threshold's local wizards for some years; after that, she studied for a long time at the Magicians' Guild of Specularum under Grand Master Teldon, and became one of the most important teachers in the guild, specializing in divination spells - something which earned her the nickname of "the Seer". During those years she also adventured successfully far and wide in Karameikos under Teldon's advice, but she would rather spend her time studying or reading. However, since she always longed for traveling abroad and to see

faraway places, Teldon thought to encourage her to leave Karameikos and travel north, to get some experience of the wider world in a rougher region such as Norwold (which the master had visited half a century before). Halfway between uneasy and excited, thus Claransa left for Norwold with the goal to settle and establish a personal base for her studies and for further travels. During her travel, she overcame her anxiety and discovered she loved actual travel and adventure abroad as much as she had previously only thought in her head. She then came to Alpha with the aim to ask King Ericall for a dominion.

Personality: Claransa is a bright and energetic person, always willing to find and discover new things, and often bored by repetitive, uninteresting or common duties - fact is that she never found studying and reading to be repetitive tasks! Her personality makes her often overenthusiastic about new things, but then she grows more and more indifferent about them when she has gone well into them; she is not fickle, however, because she has the patience and steadiness to pursue duties she has to, even if she does not like them anymore. Claransa is a truthful person, and can represent a loyal and steadfast friend. Also - as she did have less than the average share of romantic affairs in the past - Claransa is quite sensitive about her appearance, shy when faced with someone she likes, and thus likely to fall before the romantic attention of a handsome hero or lord.

Goals: Claransa considers her Norwold trip just something more than a "holiday" after which she will come back to Specularum. Nevertheless, she wants to establish in

Norwold a base for her magical researches and for further travels; right now she hardly figures how much ruling a dominion could keep her away from those activities, and she only sees the intriguing side of it. However, she is likely to grow bored by the duties of administration, and on the long run she could get confident enough to feel the call for adventure again - so much to make her sell her dominion or put it back in the hands of the king.

Dominion Choice: Claransa will try to establish her home in one of the most civilized areas, likely a coastal area, from where she could easily start her travels and import magical tomes, components, and materials she could eventually need for her research.

Special Features: Claransa knows a wide variety of spells, but her speciality is divination - spells that detect, see through things, discover secrets, bring new knowledge, and so on; not a few among her spells also come from the tradition of Traladaran folk magic. Due to her adventuresome past, she is also a capable fighter, both with the staff and with daggers. At her arrival in Alpha, she will also have with her a lot of money - part coming from her family, part from her adventuring days.

Relevant Possessions: Two *daggers* +4, *displacer cloak*, *ring of protection* +1, *staff of wizardry*.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, CM2 Death's Ride, CM3 Sabre River, M1 Into the Maelstrom, Poor Wizard's Almanacs I-III, Joshuan's Almanac, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Delsel Oaktree



Dexterous and easy-going wood elf from Minrothad

Neutral 10th-level Elf Lord (Attack Rank E)

Str 12, Int 12,
Wis 11, Dex 18,
Con 15, Cha 10

Appearance: 163 years, good-looking for human standards (average for an elf), and tall (5'5") but slightly overweight for a wood elf (126 lbs.); straight brunette hair worn very long, and hazel eyes. Delsel likes to wear rich clothes, usually long and preciously-embroidered tunics and surcoats.

Background: Delsel was born in a wood elf clan on Alfeisle, Minrothad. Despite being raised as a proper member of the clan, he never developed a taste for the woodland life, nor for the woodworking activities of his island kin. Delsel was instead fascinated by the water elves' love for travel, and by the rowdy character of human society. Defying his father's wishes, Delsel did not enter Guild Verdier, finding instead his place among the ranks of Minrothad's Mercenary Guild, first in the Home Guard, later in the Marines. There he had the opportunity to spend a lot of time on the cosmopolitan Trader's Isle, travel the waters of the Sea of Dread, see some ports of the Known World, and undertake a number of adventures. He also met some fellow elves who, like him, had chosen to avoid traditional clan life, and were searching for their own place in the world. After many years of service, three

years ago Delsel went "on vacation" - as the Minrothad wood elves call their years-long break from work - adventuring in the Sea of Dread, living for a time in Tel Akbir, and gathering around him a bunch of like-minded elves from Minrothad. During one of his most successful adventures, he and his fellows recovered an ancient elven treasure from the bottom of the Sea of Dread tracing back to the Taymoran age - among these riches Delsel found his magical golden chain mail, a powerful ancient elven relic. Then, Delsel decided to put to fruition his wealth, and to explore the coasts beyond the Known World; he chose to try to establish a new cosmopolitan home for his fellows in the northern and untamed lands of Norwold, reaching Alpha to petition King Ericall for a dominion. Delsel comes to the king's capital together with a couple dozen retainers and former adventuring companions, a mixed group including humans and elves from a half-dozen Known World countries.

Personality: Delsel is a cosmopolitan character, who loves social interaction, carefree adventure and fun; he does not have much sympathy for the secluded life many elves live, and enjoys much more the company of other races, humans especially. Despite this, Delsel still considers himself "on vacation" and still keeps sparse contacts with his friends, patrons, and family in Minrothad - not barring a possible return home in the span of some years. Delsel also has a taste and passion for beautiful and precious things such as art, jewellery, clothing - and good-looking human girls as well.

Goals: Delsel sincerely wants to try building a home for himself and his followers in

Norwold, and will strive to carry out this goal in the best way he can. However - unless the life of a standing dominion ruler takes a definitive hold on him - he will feel the need to end his "vacation" after some years, likely going back to Minrothad if a good employment opportunity arises in the Mercenary Guild's or the government's highest ranks. To this aim, Delsel will try to make his deeds in Norwold known in his homeland, and to create trading opportunities for his countrymen through his presence in the north. At the end, should he go back home, he will likely leave his dominion to one of his most trusted followers.²

Dominion Choice: Delsel will try to get a dominion on a coastal area, in a region which is easily reachable by the trading ships of the Minrothad Guilds. He will also try to set his dominion in a central area, one where many other human dominions are located. Delsel has no interest or attachment to the Foresthomes of Norwold, and will not try to set his dominion over one of those.

Special Features: Delsel is extremely swift in melee combat and when firing with his longbow; he does not like entering in melee unless necessary, so he prefers relying on his missile skill and arcane spells in combat. Delsel is particularly fond of human girls, whom he finds more warm and welcoming than their elven counterparts; if he happens to meet a good-looking human girl or lady, Delsel will therefore likely try to seduce her.

² Delsel appears as a Commander of the Minrothad Guilds' fleet (and then Assistant Governor of Aegos) in the three booklets of the Poor Wizard's Almanac series.

Relevant Possessions: Ten *arrows* +3, *golden chain mail*, *longbow* +2, *sabre of the wereslayer*.

Source: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Poor Wizard's Almanacs I-III.

Dimitri Dikhoff

*Burly, fearsome-looking
Karamaikan fighter*

Chaotic 18th-level
Fighter

Str 18, Int 15,
Wis 13, Dex 13,
Con 17, Cha 8



Appearance: Dimitri is 35-years old, a burly, stocky bulldog of a man (5'10" tall per 201 lbs.). He wears heavy armour and large shield, and wields a broadsword, to compound this image. He adorns a helmet in the image of a charging minotaur, which sports two wicked-looking, foot-long horns. Removing his helmet does not alter the overall impression, as Dimitri has a strong neck and large head with several scars, close-cropped dark brown hair, and a remorseless cast to his maroon eyes.

Background: Dimitri left his poor Traladaran family at an early age, eager to carve himself a better place in the world. Moving up from thug to sellsword to mercenary, and from goon to captain, he always has a higher position in sight. His

advancements often leave a trail of corpses: whoever stands in his way had better stand aside or they are mercilessly dealt with. Dimitri is currently the unloved, but unchallenged, leader of a mercenary band, the Hissing Snakes, which he is marching north.

Personality: A strong, hard, ruthless man, he believes that the strong are meant to rule the weak. Being second best is never acceptable to Dimitri: he always strives for first place. When faced with superior opponents, he temporarily yields to them, biding his time until he can devise a way to best them. He favours superiority through might of arms, but victory by any means is still victory, and it is the others' failure if they expect a fair fight and pulled punches. He is often overlooked by his adversaries, who dismiss him as a simple brute that can be subdued, but the man is more clever than he appears, and unrelenting.

Goals: The next step in Dimitri's rise is becoming a ruler. He will have to learn new skills, but that doesn't deter him: he will study not just administration, but alliances, strategic warfare, and the whole game of thrones. His ultimate goal is to replace his lord as king. The appearance of Siegfried Sixx at Ericall's court has only slightly altered Dimitri's plans. Though he no longer cares for that old rivalry, which he settled long ago and has no wish to revisit, he has the nagging feeling that that woeful brawler might come after him with violent intent - he knows he would. So he will keep an eye on Siegfried, and if the mutt wants to bite, Dimitri intends to put him down again - and for good this time.

Dominion Choice: Naturally, Dimitri wants to poach the best dominion possible. At his arrival in Alpha, he has no idea what the best consists of, but he intends to find out. He fully expects that the other new lords will likewise want the finest location; in fact, that is probably how he will rank potential demesnes: by the size of the competition. Dimitri will welcome the challenge of contending with rivals, and will do whatever it takes to prevail.

Special Features: When upset or enraged, Dimitri may gore his opponent with his helmet, generally in a sudden, surprise assault. Although he is generally assumed to be a strong fighter who poses no threat outside of fair, hard combat, Dimitri is a sly man who tips the scales in his favour by catching his enemies unaware and by playing dirty tricks. To such end, he carries a number of items of the offensive kind, including several poison-tipped blades, though Dimitri generally tailors his strokes and shuns such last-resort tricks.

Relevant Possessions: *Amulet of mind shielding, charm of proof against poison, helmet of goring, necklace of spell resistance, normal sword (broadsword) +3, pendant of unscryableness, periapt of health, plate mail +2, ring of protection +3.*

Source: *Mystaran Almanacs* (Hervé Musseau).

Elarianthas Blackblade

Wood elf adventurer from Karameikos with a vision

Neutral 16th-level Elf Wizard³

Str 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Cha 14

Appearance: Handsome, 250-years old Callarii wood elf with medium build (5'5" tall per 119 lbs.); fair skin, light brown shoulder-length hair, and hazel eyes. Elarianthas always sports a smiling face, a shrewd and light-hearted look, and speaks with a harmonious voice. He always wears clothing in some shade of green, and when needed he dons his magical chain mail decorated with floral patterns.

Background: Elarianthas was born in the town of Rifflian, in Karameikos, the son of an elven trader. Once he reached adulthood, Elarianthas followed his older brother Belrain's footsteps, becoming an adventurer and spending the last century travelling and exploring the Known World and Alphatia; in the course of his travels he joined various adventuring groups, coming into contact with many races and religious faiths. During a past trip in Norwold, Elarianthas listened to a prophecy of the Crones of Crystykk regarding the rise of a powerful elven nation in the region, and since then has hoped to be

³ Elarianthas follows the advancement rules featured in GAZ5 The Elves of Alfheim, page 64, but uses the standard Magic-User spell lists for spells, and not those shown there. He is essentially an elf who has chosen the path of magic, carrying on the study of arcane spells and halting his advancement in combat skills (the opposite of the standard Elf class).

the subject of such a prediction. Back in Karameikos, he founded a new clan, the Blackblade, joining some young Callarii and Vyalia followers, and persuaded them to follow him to Norwold in his bid to obtain a dominion from Ericall and fulfil his destiny. In this quest, Elarianthas is also accompanied by his father Thyandros (Neutral 9th-level Elf), who now acts as the Blackblade clanmaster.

Personality: Thanks to his travels, Elarianthas is more cosmopolitan and open to change and novelties than most of his kin. He possesses an enthralling personality, his creative mind is always on the move with new ideas, but he is also pragmatic and never lets his thoughts bring him too far away from reality. Elarianthas sympathizes with helpless or interesting creatures and individuals, and always tries to act as their patron and protector. He is also a quite self-centred person, available to listen to all opinions but in the end considering his own to be the best due to the wealth of life experiences he possesses. The elf is also quite driven by what he believes is his destiny, and he is likely to subordinate everything which does not endanger the life of an elf - like the fealty to Ericall - to his goal.

Goals: Elarianthas wants to fulfil the prophecy foretold by the Crones of Crystykk, founding in Norwold an elvish realm in which elves coming from different backgrounds and cultures (including the Norwold Foresthomes) could coexist and feel like they are part of the same clan, the Blackblade. As means of cultural unification, he plans to create a new religion (the Ancestors' Faith) whose pantheon will include all elven Immortals, and a special natural reserve devoted to the cataloguing

and study of the whole elven known magic lore (the Evergrun Project).

Dominion Choice: Elarianthas is already followed by Callarii and Vyalia elves; he will choose a domain in an area near a Shiye Foresthome, to add the contribution of another elven culture to his goal. However, in order to keep contacts as open and frequent as possible with other regions' elven cultures, he will also try to get a domain in a coastal or easily-accessible area.

Special Features: Elarianthas is good at fighting with the sword and at firing with the shortbow, but his full martial skills become evident when he rotates his magical halberd over his head. Also, his arcane spells come from the most varied elven cultures of the Known World and beyond.

Relevant Possessions: *Chain mail +4 of electricity, elven cloak, elven longsword, halberd +3/+6 vs dragonkind, ring of protection +2, short bow +3.*

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

Ernest Day



*Good-willed
Darokinian former
paladin of Koryis*

Lawful 16th-level
Fighter

Str 16, Int 12, Wis 10,
Dex 14, Con 14, Cha
13

Appearance: 44 years, medium height (5'9" tall) with a stout physique (181 lbs.); hazel eyes, short brown hair - with a receding hairline - and large handlebar moustache which splits his face in half, but no beard. Ernest usually sports a broad smile and wears simple clothing while not donning his armour and weapons; his hearty laugh is well known to all who have met him.

Background: Ernest was born in a farming village in one of the borderlands of Darokin; wishing for a better future than that of the peasant, he left his home and started his career as adventurer becoming a wandering fighter. After many adventures around the republic, he began to feel the futility of adventure for itself, and began his personal search for higher moral values to live for. He found his answer in the philosophy of the Immortal Koryis, the patron of peace well appreciated in Darokin. Thus Ernest became a devout paladin of this Immortal, wandering the Known World and then coming to the Isle of Dawn to further the cause of peace. During an unfortunate quest, he was tricked into unwittingly aiding a villain to reach his goals, and as a consequence he lost his paladin powers. Thus, as a way to atone his

deeds, Ernest decided to head for Norwold, settle down from his wanderings, and establish a dominion under the rule of Ericall inspired by the values of Koryis. Ernest arrived in Alpha accompanied by his squire Marcus Trebonian (Lawful 4th-level Fighter, a young warrior of Thyatian ancestry), his spiritual guide Corwyn Dioministre (Lawful 6th-level Cleric of Koryis, an aging priest of the Church of Darokin), and the charming Mallia ben Mousa (Lawful 6th-level Magic-User, a small 24-year old lady from Tameronikas, Ylaruam, who met Ernest on the Isle of Dawn and has fallen in love with him but is still not sure of the man's feelings toward her).

Personality: Ernest is cheerful and good-natured; some people refer to him as “goody two-shoes”, and he indeed lives up the ideal of a paladin of Koryis even if he is one no more. He is usually seen doing something good - helping a maiden across a muddy spot in the road, feeding a lost puppy, or cheerfully tipping a beggar. Well-meaning and pious, Ernest has none of the “holier than thou” attitude of many paladins and clerics - quite the contrary, his past mistakes have taught him a good deal of humility. Ernest is strictly lawful and loyal, and will stay by King Ericall's side unless he believes his liege has turned evil. Ernest likes his retainer Mallia ben Mousa and knows her feelings, but is still unsure about marrying a woman this much younger than him; he is otherwise attracted to women with an exotic look and showing martial prowess, and in this phase of his love life he could be tempted to court any such lady (one of those could be his fellow pretender Allisa Patrician).

Goals: Ernest has come to Norwold to establish a bastion of hope and peace in this cold northern land; through omens sent by the Immortal Koryis to his companion Corwyn Dioministre, he has learned that Norwold will soon need his presence to preserve peace, and he is more than eager to do his part. Ernest has also learned that a low-profile cleric of Koryis named Finnister McAlister is one of King Ericall's personal advisors, and is looking forward to meeting him.

Dominion Choice: Ernest would like to choose a dominion in an area where he can protect an important road or trade route, or where he can act as mediator with a foreign realm; he does not fear braving the wilderness of Norwold to form his dominion.

Special Features: Ernest is quite skilled with the use of the normal sword and the lance; on the battlefield, he appears as the typical armoured knight, frowning on long range weapons he considers unworthy of single combat between honourable adversaries.

Relevant Possessions: *Normal sword +2/+5 vs chaotic beings* (named “Peacekeeper”), *plate mail +2, shield +2.*

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta, [Tharquil's homepage](#) (in French; not available anymore on the web).

Fergus the Justifier

*Valorous and just
Vestlander warrior
and joustier*

Lawful 15th-level
Fighter

Str 15, Int 7,
Wis 12, Dex 17,
Con 14, Cha 10



Appearance: 32 years old, tanned complexion due to sun exposure, large and muscular (6'2" tall per 213 lbs.); Fergus is handsome, with neck-long light brown hair, moustaches, and dark blue eyes. He likes to wear practical clothes of good manufacture and simple jewels - even if most of the time he is seen around wearing his magical plate armour fitted with a full barrel helm.

Background: Fergus Yorath is a native of Dunadale; his Dawner family belongs to the landed nobility of Dunadale and is related to the local Alphatian Lunn family, and to the region's governor, Tastagarth. Fergus had not an ounce of talent for wizardry, was not even of average intelligence, and neither was he very pious, so even the priesthood did not suit him - all this was very disappointing for his family, who hoped he could become part of the elite of the Alphatian Empire. Being quick-handed and strong, Fergus was reared to become a good fighter, and for a time he served as a palace guard for Tastagarth, even adopting the surname Lunn for himself, but in time understood that the Alphatian Empire was not the place where he could become rich or famous. He therefore left for

the Known World, travelling there for nearly ten years and visiting most of the civilized countries. For a time, he settled in Vestland and he became so fond of the Northern Reaches that he elected Vestland as his new homeland. In Vestland he became a hero, recovering a large Modrigswerg treasure and winning several tournaments. During the last tournament he won in Norrvik, he heard news of the land rush started by King Ericall in Norwold, and - being that the northern kingdom was quite like the Northern Reaches in character - he decided to travel to Alpha and have a look, with the prospect to finally settle down and try the challenge to run a dominion.

Personality: Fergus is a loyal and noble character who wishes to incarnate the ideal of the heroic warrior - he is fair, true to his word, and in Vestland has the fame to harbour a great sense of justice - hence his nickname "the Justifier". Once he pledges his loyalty to King Ericall, he will be on his liege's side even in the direst of circumstances. Due to his lack of sharpness, however, Fergus can be easily fooled or swayed by rumours, prejudices, and by the sly words of quick-witted agents of foreign powers.

Goals: Fergus has come to Norwold to establish his own dominion and start a new phase of his life: until now he has been a very successful wandering knight, but he is now eager to put his skills to the test in the matter of ruling. He will strive to build a prosperous dominion, putting his honour and that of his king first, then the welfare of the realm as a whole.

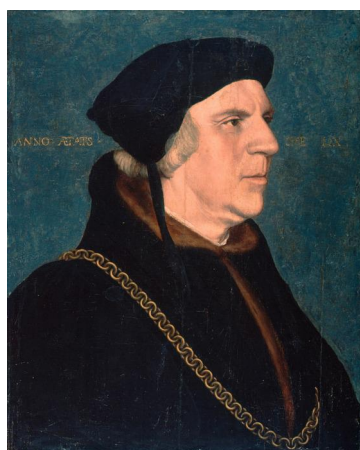
Dominion Choice: Fergus will choose a dominion which reminds him of the Northern Reaches - on the coast or near the sea, but with mountains at its back. Wherever his dominion happens to be, he is ready to tame the wilderness in order to carve it out.

Special Features: Fergus is a great rider and as soon as he establishes his dominion is likely to keep a stable with some precious and valuable horses. While he is very good at jousting on horseback with full armour and lance, he is as skilled with the longbow (he is also a great hunter) and - despite his large build - very swift with the sword in melee.

Relevant Possessions: 20 arrows +1, longbow +2, normal sword +3, plate mail +3, shield +2.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, CM2 Death's Ride, CM3 Sabre River, M1 Into the Maelstrom, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Geoffrey of Heldann



Fugitive priest of Frey from the Heldannic Territories

Lawful 15th-level Cleric of Frey

Str 10, Int 10,
Wis 15, Dex 11,
Con 17, Cha 9

Appearance: 40 years old, tall and imposing figure (6'1" tall), well-built (168 lbs.), his body bears some marks from past battles; Geoffrey has deep blue eyes, long and dishevelled brown hair (now turning grey), and is clean-shaven. He usually wears his armour but when he does not he prefers plain and comfortable tunics and vests.

Background: Geoffrey was born as Guðfriðr Baldursson to a Heldanner family in the town of Grænthæð - renamed Grunturm by the Heldannic Knights - in the recently-conquered Heldann Freeholds. Faithful to his family and his people's traditions, Guðfriðr resented the foreign Heldannic rule, and devoted himself to becoming a worthy *godi* of the Immortal Frey. During his youth he adventured in his native region, but found most of his good efforts thwarted by the Heldannic Knights; his constant efforts to help the sick and the poor in his country, however, brought him both a good reputation among the Heldanner commoners and a power the Hattian overlords began to fear. Thus, when his fame became widespread, he was forced to go into hiding. Thereafter, he worked to build a network of followers, mostly young priests, with the aim to stir up the population and overthrow the Heldannic rule. Despite his work, Guðfriðr discovered with disappointment that the Heldanner commoners' will to fight the Knights was not as strong as their fear of dying. Moreover, the Eyes - the Heldannic Knights' spies - were still trying to capture Guðfriðr's men, and - if a rebellion did not break out - the risk for his followers to carry on underground activities in Heldann was becoming far too great. So, Guðfriðr decided to leave Heldann for Norwold, in the hope of diverting the Eyes'

attention from his followers at home and that the Kings' reach would not dare follow him into Alphatia's territories, thus allowing him to build a new life as a leader and hero in Ericall's realm. To part with his previous life, Guðfriðr decided to assume the name "Geoffrey", a Dawner-like variant of his name the Alphatian court will have less difficulty to spell. He comes to Alpha armed with little funds, but a lot of experience; he also brings with him a small band of rangers, fighters, and priests of Frey.

Personality: Geoffrey is a serious, intense man, ferocious and awesome to behold in combat, but capable of great tenderness and kindness in times of peace. He spends much time quietly meditating by himself, and listening for the will of the Immortal Frey. Geoffrey despises the Heldannic Knights and every power devoted to violent conquest and oppressive rule; he is confident in Ericall's goodness and hopes that his kingdom will be very different from what he has heard of the Alphatian Empire. Geoffrey will stay true to Norwold's people first and foremost, supporting the king unless Ericall mistreats the region's native peoples or allies with the Heldannic Knights - an unlikely event at best. A last note regarding his name: he currently uses the name "Geoffrey of Heldann" for himself, and dislikes being called "Geoffrey of Grunturm" or "Guðfriðr of Grunturm", as these are the names with which his Heldannic would-be captors call him.

Goals: Geoffrey hopes to win some respite from the Heldannic Knights in Norwold, in order to devote himself to build a prosperous seat for a church of Frey in the region, and to go on quests and adventures to improve the welfare of local people.

Geoffrey would also like to marry and have a family, something he had always longed for but has never been able to achieve.

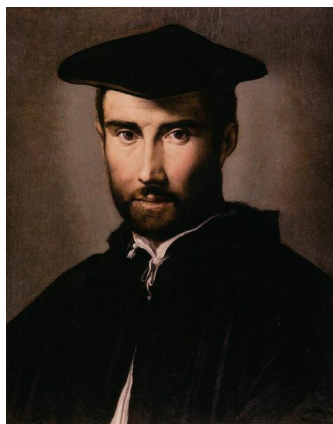
Dominion Choice: Having abandoned the hope of a Heldanner uprising against the Hattian conquerors, and wishing to put as much land as possible between him and the Heldannic Knights, Geoffrey will choose a domain located in the northern region of Norwold, possibly in an area of hills or wooded hills which reminds him of his homeland.

Special Features: As a priest of Frey, Geoffrey is skilled in the use of the long sword and of the dagger, and often makes use of those weapons, wielding his magical mace mostly against tougher opponents of undead. Geoffrey is quite able to call his Immortal's divine powers to heal, cure, feed, and protect other people, and is likely to put them to use to benefit the subjects of his domain.

Relevant Possessions: *Mace +3/+5 vs undead, plate mail +3, shield +3.*

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, CM2 Death's Ride, CM3 Sabre River, M1 Into the Maelstrom, Poor Wizard's Almanacs I-III, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Hanz Vackelin



*Fierce, elf-bating
mercenary captain
from Hattias*

Neutral 18th-level
Fighter

Str 16, Int 16,
Wis 9, Dex 13,
Con 18, Cha 14

Appearance: 33 years old, large and muscular body with a hardy physique (6'4" tall per 214 lbs.); unpleasant appearance, with a very square face, bald head with brunette short beard and moustaches, sunken hazel eyes, weathered skin from time spent under the sun, and scars of past injuries all over the body. Hanz always dresses in military uniform, and in combat he dons a dreadful horned full helm; his favourite weapons are two magical hand axes he wields at the same time, which gives him a demonic look on the battlefield.

Background: Hanz was born on the island of Hattias, Thyatis, the lesser scion of a local noble landowner family. Still a boy, he joined a Hattian brotherhood of knights - the Order of the Black Swan - as required by his upbringing; however, Hanz's arrogant character earned him the displeasure of the order's leaders, and he was eventually banished from it. Then he left Hattias and entered various mercenary units, fighting alongside the Thyatian army in the Hinterlands and on the Isle of Dawn. After some time, his prowess earned him enough respect, wealth, and fame to allow him to set up his own cavalry mercenary unit, the

Thundering Hoofs. During the clashes around Helskir between Thyatis and Alphatia, Hanz joined his forces with those of Shariskan - another mercenary leader on the Thyatians' payroll (see his description below) - and the two became friends, with Hanz soon becoming Shariskan's right arm. Sometime later, after the end of their contract with Thyatis, they decided to head for Norwold to offer their mercenary services to King Ericall in exchange for a dominion.

Personality: Hanz is full of himself and does not easily tolerate anyone overshadowing him, unless that person possesses power and rank higher than his own - in fact, at the moment Hanz only respects his colleague, Shariskan and will likely disregard orders and commands coming from anyone else (including King Ericall, unless the latter proves able to keep Hanz in line). In general, Hanz is extremely disrespectful toward peoples of lesser stations, and he considers both his soldiers and his future subjects as dogs - to be sufficiently fed and ruled through fear. Hanz also feels a deep racial hatred toward non-humans and demi-humans, elves in particular - his secret favourite hobby has always been finding elves to hunt, capture, torture, or sell on the slave market. He also likes to do a lot of martial and physical exercise on a daily basis. Differently from his ally Shariskan, Hanz does not worship Alphaks, but does not despise the Immortal either - he is just uninterested in religious matters and only cares to pray to those Immortals whom he thinks could favour him in a given situation; anyway, Hanz has no love for Arkias, who he knows is a priest of Alphaks, meddles with the undead (something he does not like at all), and more importantly has Shariskan's ear.

Goals: Hanz and Shariskan want to offer the service of their army to Ericall and get a dominion as pay. According to their plan, Shariskan will try to get a bigger slice of land, and then will cede a part of it to Hanz and another to Arkias as vassals; this means that Hanz's domain will be close to his colleague's. Hanz plans to use his mercenaries and dominion to increase his own and Shariskan's power - for the moment under the banner of Ericall, but eventually on their own. He will follow Shariskan's policy toward the king as long as it proves profitable to him; if later Shariskan will prove weak or of no more use, Hanz will not hesitate to dispose of him and of his sons, and take control of his lands and soldiers.

Dominion Choice: Hanz will not take part directly to the Great Land Rush. He will take whatever part of Shariskan's land his friend bestows him; if available, he will try to get an area near a Foresthme, in order to practice his favourite sport against the elves.

Special Features: Hanz is quite skilled in fighting with two hand axes at the same time, both on foot and on horseback, and looks like a formidable foe in the midst of a battle. Hanz also commands the Thundering Hoofs, a unit of 200 battle-hardened heavy horsemen wholly made up of men coming from Thyatis and the Isle of Dawn.

Relevant Possessions: *Brooch of protection +1, band axe +3 of terror, band axe +2/+4 vs elves, lance +2, plate mail +3.*

Source: [Tharquil's homepage](#) (in French; not available anymore on the web).

Isabella Kartuebius

*Seductive,
pleasure-seeking
Thyatian
sorceress*

Neutral 15th-level
Magic-User

Str 12, Int 17,
Wis 11, Dex 9,
Con 10, Cha 15



Appearance: Good-looking, 28 years old, tall (5'10"), with light tan complexion, and a curvy figure (150 lbs.); blonde bobbed hair, alluring amber eyes which add to her overall sensuous look. She likes wearing skimpy clothes - usually in combination with her magical cloak to wrap around her body, and with elegant jewellery - to distract and embarrass people around her.

Background: Isabella was the third child born into a family of lawyers and landowners in Kantrium, Thyatis; after being apprenticed to one of Kantridae's local mages, she caused a sexual scandal which severely embarrassed her family and ruined the marriage they had planned for her. Thus Isabella ran from home at 18, travelling through the eastern Known World and alternating dirty jobs for money to adventuring. From time to time she also furthered her arcane studies under available or bribable mentors, or in universities in Tel Akbir, Tameronikas, and Newkirk. Always in need of money, a couple of times she seduced wealthy men in order to put her hands on their money (through

legal methods or theft) - most of which she quickly squandered in lavish parties, costly pastimes, and various pleasures. Wanted in Thyatis for fraud, she moved to the Northern Reaches but, during an unfortunate adventure in Soderfjord, she was trapped inside a cursed ruined castle, until a group of adventurers freed her some weeks later (in this occasion she also seized the *staff of Naglfari* from the spirit of the ancient sorcerer who had kept her trapped). After some adventures together further north, they grew quite close and decided to head to Norwold under the leadership of Isabella herself to establish their own domain. Among her entourage is Zordak (true name Sergej Rovenscu, Chaotic 9th-level Thief), a very handsome wandering jester and rogue – who also dabbles in arcane magic – from Specularum, whom Isabella plans to employ as a spy once she has obtained a dominion.

Personality: Isabella is a pleasure-seeker whose main interest is gathering money to fulfil her physical lusts and desires; she enjoys flirting, tricking, and shocking other people, but she is also smart, rational, and cynical – fearing not to follow a course of action that others may consider wrong (such as hiring orc mercenaries as her army because they are cheaper, for example). She does not crave wealth, magic, or power per se, but only as means to achieve tranquillity and a comfortable status which would allow her to satisfy all her wishes.

Goals: Isabella wants to build a place where she can live together with her fellows, without too much to worry about and plunged into her pleasures. After becoming a dominion-ruler, however, she will develop a passion for political intrigue and for

administration and finance as the means which allows her to gather money for her personal aims. She harbors no particular affection for Ericall and Norwold, and she will likely side against them should Eriadna's scion happen to fall on the losing side of a conflict.

Dominion Choice: An area not far from civilization or existing towns, preferably on a coast, large river or lake; Isabella would rather choose a dominion in fertile plain terrain, with as few dangers as possible and far from known ones. Her first choice would be one of the small peninsulas or bays which dot the southern coast of the Great Bay.

Special Features: Isabella possess a wide array of spells learned while studying under various mentors and universities. She favours protection, transportation, and divination spells, with some added transmutation spells and self-affecting illusions; her attack spells are usually based on light, electricity or disintegration. Isabella is also quite skilled in the use of the staff, and she likes fighting in melee against lesser opponents.

Relevant Possessions: *Armband of strength, broom of flying, cape of night and fire, ring of protection +1, staff of Naglfari.*

Source: NPC from Simone Neri's own campaign.

JAMES ESSEX

Noble warrior from Wendar in search of fame

Lawful 16th-level Fighter

Str 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Dex 11, Con 13, Cha 12

Appearance: 42 years old, light skin tone, short but sturdy (5'7" tall per 141 lbs.); he is balding on top of head, but keeps short black hair (now greying) on its sides. James has round blue eyes, a slightly upturned nose, thin lips, and is clean shaven. He favours rich clothing and jewellery which make easily known and highlight his noble heritage.

Background: James Essex is the last scion of the Essex noble family, an Anglais clan who dwelled in Glantri before the "Light of Rad" (AC 859). Defeated in the subsequent uprising against the ruling wizards, the Essex took shelter in Wendar and lived in exile in the country's southern reaches, marrying into local human clans and soon giving up the hope of overthrowing the Glantrian magocracy. James was raised in the family mansion and trained in the warrior tradition of his ancestors, learning swordplay, jousting, and horse riding. Quite fond of the elven culture, during his youth he went adventuring with a mixed human and elven party in the Northern Wildlands, on the Adri Varma Plateau, and in the Wendarian Ranges, gaining fame and wealth from his deeds. He later married and started a family, but the prospect of inheriting the family's sparse fortunes in Wendar did not appeal him. When his father died five years ago, James started making plans for leaving the country and setting his home in a place where the Essex could again win recognition and glory.

The chance to move came the last year, when James heard news of the incoming Spring Fair at Alpha, during which King Ericall of Norwold would award dominions to worthy candidates. Leaving the family possessions in Wendar to his lesser brother Ywain, he travelled to Norwold's capital city with his wife Morwenna (Chaotic 9th-level Thief, a 37-years old shrewd courtier from one of Wendar's human noble clans), one son and a daughter (respectively 3 and 7 years old), his cousin Wymond (Chaotic 7th-level Fighter) with his family, and two dozens of retainers between servants and guards.

Personality: James likes to be the centre of attention, be it at court, at a feast, or during combat; he enjoys ceremonies, banquets, parties, and social events, and dislikes being alone. With others, he is courteous and amiable. Despite his flexible lifestyle which has allowed him to manage his life successfully until now, he sometimes makes serious mistakes in judgment due to superficiality, and his easy-going ways give him a poor control over the members of his family and his allies. James is an honourable man and will not turn his back on the king unless there is some very good reason for that (and high personal profit could be one only if King Ericall has behaved badly or poorly toward him).

Goals: James wants to raise again the fortunes of the Essex family, building a strong dominion in the untamed region of Norwold. Determined to put aside his days as an adventurer and local hero, James will put all his efforts on the task of ruling, wielding his sword only to lead his army and hosting as soon as possible tournaments and feasts to establish alliances and ties with

other Norwold lords. He does not realize, however, that the purpose requires much more skill and intelligence than bravery in battle and social grace.

Dominion Choice: Wishing to build a prosperous dominion, James will select an area which he thinks promising from the resources perspective and not excessively far from civilization; he would particularly like an area on one of the great rivers of Norwold, and near the region's majestic mountains.

Special Features: James is a skilled knight, able to fight both with the lance and with the longsword; when fighting on foot against lesser opponents, he usually prefers to use his magical battle axe in order to maximize the damage he can do on his enemies. Besides his magical shield, in battle he usually dons his beautiful suit armour.

Relevant Possessions: *Battle axe +2, dagger of the giantbunter, "Gemstone's Bane" longsword, ring of loved ones protection, shield +1.*

Source: D&D Companion Set.

KNOLIMER KNOLIN



Deranged Darokinian inventor and tinkerer

Neutral 15th-level Magic-User

Str 11, Int 18, Wis 11, Dex 14, Con 15, Cha 12

Appearance: 40 years old, fair-skinned, medium height (5'9" tall); Knolimer was thin and wiry as a youth, but now age has added some pounds to his frame (174 lbs. weight). He has blue eyes and shoulder-length dark-hair, beard and moustaches with a blaze of grey both on the temples and facial hair. Knolimer usually sports a knowing smile. He favours modest (almost beggarly) robes, with sleeves often rolled up above the elbows to keep them out of the way of his tinkering.

Background: Knolimer was born into a mercantile family of Favaro, Darokin, affiliated with House Pennydown. Being the third son of the family with scarce chances (and will, for that matter) to inherit the clan's fortunes, he devoted his brilliant but disorderly intelligence to arcane studies, soon becoming fascinated by what kind of fantastic devices magic was able to power. Knolimer studied magic in various Darokinian universities, even attending the Great School of Magic in Glantri for a while, and used what he earned through adventuring and selling of his magic skill for hire to further his studies. As soon as he was able to gather sufficient funds, he set up a laboratory where he began experimenting with a bunch of new arcane inventions and ideas. His family came to consider him a weird person, whose extravagant and curious inventions were sometimes of use, but who was best left uninvited to social events. At last, Knolimer managed to convince House Pennydown to buy one of his inventions, but the thing malfunctioned, doing great damage to one of the house's assets and most of all to the Knolin family's reputation. Knolimer had to pack his things and leave the republic before the wrath of his family and of House Pennydown. This was about ten years ago.

He then adventured for many years, having to leave on paper many interesting inventions he would have liked to create, and carrying behind him a cart half-filled with half-completed or ready-to-be-sold minor magical trinkets. During those years he amassed enough money to consider establishing a new laboratory somewhere. He chose Norwold, where King Ericall was about to grant lands to skilled candidates willing to rule a dominion, and headed there together with some adventuring companions of the previous years, like the wandering paladin Ethendril h'Caramore, Shebb Woolsey (see his own entry), and Unice Ethans (Lawful 15th-level Fighter, a Dawner swordswoman from Septentriona with an obsession for pink things); the latter then became romantically attached to him and the two plan to rule their future dominion together.

Personality: Knolimer is an odd character, a genius resembling in every way a deranged scientist completely out of the real world, a true volcano of strange, innovative but unusual ideas which make sense only in his own mind. The surprising thing is that his inventions almost always function - which has something to do with his great intelligence and his deep understanding of magic - albeit sometimes with comic or nearly-futile effects. Unfortunately, he produces so many new ideas that he often halts his work on his previous projects to devote himself to the newer ones - with the result that he leaves many of his would-be creations in a half-completed or unfinished state. When he comes out from his tinkering fury, Knolimer is a kind man, sensible to the problems of others, and a good friend in times of need.

Goals: Knolimer wants a place where he could store the bunch of magical creations he drags behind him, and set a laboratory, forge, and library for his own arcane experiments. He will attend any other duty with scarce enthusiasm, and will be disinterested by politics and court matters. Obsessed with his inventions, and quite disorganized, Knolimer will be a less than adequate dominion ruler, but will try to catch anyway his subjects' love by sharing with them his adventuring income.

Dominion Choice: Knolimer will likely choose a place along a trade route, where it would be easier to get the materials needed to establish a keep and a fully-equipped laboratory; he is not worried by the fact that this way his dominion could be in the core of action: he plans to let his mate Unice handle all the political and military work.

Special Features: Knolimer's specialty lies in his skill to produce seemingly-futile magical trinkets, and putting them to some use. His creations are in line with the style of those which can be found in AC11 Book of Wondrous Inventions. Alchemy, transmutation, and energy spells are those he likes most and finds more useful for his work. One of his lifelong commitments is understanding the nature of time and how to alter it. Among his most (in-)famous creations is the *thyme machine*, which dates back to his Darokinian times, an item able to release in a place a pleasant scent lasting for years. His current project (still mostly in his mind only) is that of building an item inside which to grow one's clone at an accelerated rate.

Relevant Possessions: *Ring of protection +3, vest of protection AC 2, wand of lightning bolts.*

Source: M5 Talons of Night.

LONGTOOTH

Crafty Ierendian corsair in search of a new home

Chaotic 20th-level
Thief

Str 10, Int 12,
Wis 11, Dex 18,
Con 15, Cha 10



Appearance: 33 years old, tanned complexion, not very tall (5'6") and lean (126 lbs.), with black hair worn short, a very thin moustache, and beady light green eyes. He usually shows a smiling and crafty expression. Longtooth usually wears clothing in black or dark red, often including a leather surcoat and a large plumed hat.

Background: The Ierendian corsair "Longtooth" is in truth Longinus Dolichodon, a master spy from the Thyatian Empire. Longinus was born in a lower class family of Port Lucinius, Thyatis. Since he was a boy, his sleight of hand and natural stealth helped him survive in the seedy dock neighbourhoods of his home city, swelling the meagre wage his father (a marine in the imperial fleet) brought home. Through his father, Longinus was proud of his nation's

military power and longed for the day he would have contributed to it. However, never fit for the life of the soldier, he took another path, becoming part of the underground criminal world of Port Lucinius; he swiftly rose through its ranks, but eventually secretly sold out all his criminal colleagues to an ambitious and influential judge (whose carrier would have lifted off thanks to the capture of those criminals) in exchange for a ranking within one of the empire's secret agent corps. First he served as an agent of the Treasury Guard, then as a member of the *Speculatores*, the branch of the Thyatian military specialized in reconnaissance and espionage. After a short but extremely successful career in the *Speculatores*, Longinus was selected as one of the *Agentes in Rebus*, the elite spies of the Thyatian Empire. In his new capacity, he received from his superiors an important mission concerning Norwold: he had the task of building a Thyatian spy network in that kingdom. Longinus worked hard and long to build his cover for the mission, setting up the identity of an Ierendian corsair, "Longtooth" - so-called because of a large giant sea serpent tooth he bears as a lucky charm around the neck; he even had to take to the sea for quite a time and form a true pirate crew. Then last year, Longinus received word from Thyatis to set off for Norwold and take part in the Spring Fair. He arrived in Alpha with his corsair ship, manned by a colourful crew - which includes both real pirates and Thyatian spies - with the alleged purpose to establish in Norwold a new home for his pirate colleagues and put aside his life on the seas.

Personality: As far as Thyatian agents go, Longtooth is rather evil and even more

treacherous (Thyatians would say “skilled”) than the average Thyatian; he is proud of the trust Emperor Thincol has placed on him for this task, and will do anything he can to carry it out successfully, reasoning correctly that this is the chance of his life for his career in Thyatis. Despite his treacherous personality, Longtooth is utterly loyal to his Emperor and homeland, and will never betray them; however, he is neither a fool nor a fanatic: he will rather flee to fight another day than die for the Empire.

Goals: Longtooth is Thyatis’ key secret agent in Norwold. A professional spy, his task is to subvert King Ericall’s rule by attracting as many noblemen as possible to the Thyatian side and hindering the others, in preparation for the time when the empire will be ready to launch a military invasion of Norwold. To this end, he will establish a dominion in Norwold and use it as a base for his covert operation. He will try to befriend most of the lords at different times, doing his best to persuade them to join Thyatis and to infiltrate the courts of all the lords loyal to Alphatia. Anyone who gets on Longtooth’s bad side is likely to be visited by a squad of master spies during a moonless night; while these agents are looking primarily for magic items, they do not rule out murder, in particular if the target has greatly angered or insulted Longtooth. While Longtooth’s operation is quite extensive, he does an excellent job of covering his tracks - if a lord catches a Thyatian spy in his mansion, he has a very difficult time linking the spy to Longtooth.

Dominion Choice: Longtooth will choose as his domain a coastal area, with as much access as possible to other dominions - and

an easy way out of Norwold if things go awry; the choice of a coastal area is also consistent with his corsair cover identity.

Special Features: Longtooth is lightning swift when fighting with the sabre (or sabre and dagger - his favourite combination) and when firing with the longbow with marksman-like precision. He is a master of non-magical disguise, stealth, and infiltration, and has at his disposal conspicuous funds from the Thyatian Empire to carry out his task, as well as a number of expert spies and agents (all Thieves, plus some Fighters and Magic-Users, of level 9th-16th).

Relevant Possessions: *Leather armour* +3, *longbow* +3, *normal sword (sabre)* +4 (named “Sharkfang”), *ring of protection* +3.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

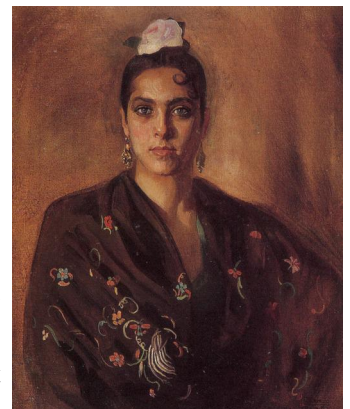
Lucci Dhay

Swindling and thieving Karamaikan exile

Neutral 16th-level
Thief

Str 13, Int 10,
Wis 15, Dex 17,
Con 10, Cha 14

Appearance: 36 years old, good-looking, with light tanned skin, medium height (5’7” tall) and buxom figure



(139 lbs. weight); Lucci has light blue eyes, and luxurious, straight brunette hair tied in an attractive-style long ponytail. She favours rich and costly silk garments in black and yellow, and is quite fond of jewellery, but switches to more practical clothes when adventuring or “on job”.

Background: “Lucci” was born as Lucilia Dhay in Sambah, Sind, daughter of a Sindhi merchant and of a Thyatian woman from Specularum; after her father’s death, her mother relocated to Karameikos’ capital city to be near her family, craftsmen affiliated with the Goldsmiths’ Guild. During her youth, Lucci learned jewellery crafting, became a skilled trader, and also delved into less honest activities she practiced as a member of the Kingdom of the Thieves; she also crossed swords a couple of times with the agents of the Iron Ring. After one of their major slave trade operations had been ruined by Lucci, the Iron Ring struck a secret deal with the Veiled Society to have Lucci framed for the murder of Duke Stefan’s advisor Krollan (AC 991, in truth the Veiled Society itself was behind the assassination). Lucci, seeing no hope of clearing her name, resolved to flee, but before leaving the grand duchy she managed to rob one of the Iron Ring’s masters of a large sum of money. With the Iron Ring’s agents behind her and thirsty for revenge, she had to flee from one country to another between the Known World and the Seas of Dawn, eventually managing to shake off her pursuers after some years, all the way earning a living through smuggling, swindling, and thievery. One year ago, she heard news about the Kingdom of Norwold and the incoming Spring Fair, and she headed there to try to establish a stable home. After many years of silence, Lucci -

hoping that the Iron Ring had by now given up the search for her - wrote a letter to her family in Specularum giving them an update about her current whereabouts and status. Unfortunately for her, the letter was accidentally intercepted by the Iron Ring, who might still send some agent in the faraway north to dispose of Lucci and avenge the damage and insult the thief did to the organization more than ten years ago. Lucci is accompanied by her best friend Nefere (Neutral 11th-level Magic-User), a Thothian archaeologist and scholar of her homeland’s past who came to Norwold to inquire about ancient Thothian traces in the north.

Personality: Life has taught Lucci to live for the moment, to be flexible and independent. An accurate person, she always strives to get her job done with skill and precision - but she hates unnecessary violence, and her best weapons are stealth and subterfuge. In relationships, Lucci is a sociable, kind and empathetic woman - but she is also wary of others: in a group she lets other speak and stays quiet, keeping her personal opinions secret and being neither a leader nor a follower. Once she speaks, however, she is genuine and what she says is usually what she feels or thinks. Lucci would like to start a family, but she will not until she feels safe and stable enough, and until she finds a person she loves and trusts.

Goals: Lucci is tired of watching her back, and sincerely hopes that Norwold will be the right place - huge, wild, and faraway - to avoid being spotted again by the Iron Ring. In any case, the region offers plentiful places in which to hide and - in the meantime - to practice her crafts. Lucci wants to be a ruler committed to her tasks, but will also try to

augment her treasury with smuggling and thievery against the most arrogant, oppressive, or rich noblemen. She considers Ericall a good man and will not betray him for personal gain - unless her personal safety or that of those she loves is at stake.

Dominion Choice: Through trading with them foreign goods, Lucci would like to get support from local native people in order to obtain help, protection, and a cheap army. She deems that the horsemen tribes who live in the steppes north of the Great Bay would be the best target of her policy, so she will try to get her dominion there, in an area controlling one of the trade trails which reach Autuasmaa from the south.

Special Features: Lucci's specialty lies in swindling and smuggling, activities at which she's a real expert. In combat, she tries not to kill her adversaries unless they are too dangerous, mindless, or monstrous. One of her favourite tactics is to entangle her opponents with her net (flying by surprise with her magic carpet, if possible) in order to capture them as prisoners or simply keep them out of combat.

Relevant Possessions: 12 arrows +3, flying carpet (large enough to carry 10 persons), leather armour +3, longbow +1, net (small) +2, normal sword +3, ring of protection +2.

Source: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks.

MAGDALENA LINTAINE



Stern crime fighting cleric of Tarastia from Darokin

Lawful 15th-level Cleric of Tarastia

Str 12, Int 9,
Wis 18, Dex 9,
Con 11, Cha 15 (12)

Appearance: 37 years, attractive, fair complexioned, medium height (5.5' tall) and strong build (132 lbs.), with wavy, long light brown hair and hazel eyes. Despite her looks, Magdalena often has a distant and slightly haunted expression, as she takes many of the world's injustices onto her shoulders in an attempt to correct them. She usually has a serious manner about her as well, and these traits combined make some people slightly uneasy in her company (for such people, use the Charisma score listed above in brackets as opposed to the full score).

Background: Magdalena was born in Darokin, and had the misfortune of being orphaned at the age of seven. She was subsequently taken into care by a small convent of the Immortal Tarastia, and eventually became a cleric within that order's ranks after showing much promise at a relatively young age. She moved to Akorros at the age of 23, where she served as a local judge in matters of family dispute, and earned a reputation for being wise and fair in her decisions. During those years, she was so successful in hunting down lawbreakers that her name is still feared by certain criminal fraternities based in Darokin. However, she

also began feeling dissatisfied by the way the people worshipped her patron Immortal, paying lip service to her or praying to Tarastia only in times of need. So, she left Darokin with some adventuring friends, and after some travels and adventures she eventually came to King Ericall's court in order to carve a dominion of her own in Norwold. Among Magdalena's old adventuring comrades who followed her to Norwold are Varlius Olavich (Lawful 12th-level Fighter), a half-blood Karamaikan who Magdalena plans to employ as captain of her guard, and Mylissia Leafglade (Neutral 10th-level Elf), a carefree Alheimer wood elf who will serve as Magdalena's court magist. Arriving much sooner than the Spring Fair during which the king will award dominions, Magdalena has already had the opportunity to meet some of those who will participate in the Land Rush.

Personality: Magdalena has a reputation for being righteous, determined to bring about justice and difficult to deceive. From her Darokinian upbringing, she has also developed a keen business sense. Magdalena is definitely truthful, a trait which enables peoples to easily recognize her goals and aims, and to strike fast friendship with like-minded people - or to make enemies of differently-disposed ones. Among the characters she met during her recent stay in Alpha are her friend Sandralane of Glantri - a cleric with whom she shares a similar outlook of life - and Longtooth, who Magdalena thinks is up to no good, even if she has no proof of this yet. Finally, soon after meeting her, important characters at Ericall's court (likely Beriak Alanira or Madiera, at the very least) will successfully

identify her as a useful and trustworthy ally in bringing civilization to Norwold.

Goals: Magdalena has come to Norwold to establish a domain which closely follows the Immortal Tarastia's tenets, in order to bring about justice and exact revenge against those who propagate evil. She also wants to build a prosperous dominion, and to this aim Magdalena will try to strike trade deals and establish trade routes with the merchant houses of Alpha.

Dominion Choice: Magdalena has spotted a couple of locations on the northern coast of the Great Bay, directly north of Alpha, which could be good places to establish her dominion (and to carry out her trading plans for it) due to their close proximity to Alpha. If none of those places turns out to be available, she will first resort to choosing any other location on the northern coast of the Great Bay, or otherwise any coastal site of the bay itself.

Special Features: Magdalena has all the abilities of a powerful matriarch of the Immortal Tarastia. Besides that, she also has a knack of sensing imminent danger, which has led to at least one assassination attempt failing miserably. Some say she is touched by the Immortal Tarastia herself in this regard.

Relevant Possessions: *Boots of speed*, *plate mail +2*, *ring of protection +1*, *shield +1*, *sling +1*, *warhammer +2*.

Source: Vaults of Pandius (Matthew Fleet).

Maltus Fharo



Rich, independent-minded Darokinian fighter

Lawful 19th-level
Fighter

Str 14, Int 13, Wis 12,
Dex 15, Con 15, Cha
17

Appearance: 38 years old, lightly tanned skin tone, average height and build (5'9" tall per 165 lbs. weight); Maltus has black straight hair worn to the neck, moustache, and light brown eyes. He is in good shape and usually seems younger than his actual age. Maltus favours expensive and form-fitting clothes.

Background: The second son of a Magistrate of the Borderlands in Darokin, Maltus was trained as a warrior at his father's castle. He joined the Darokinian army as a cavalry officer for a short but intense time, being stationed in some of the most dangerous posts in the Republic - Fort Nell and Fort Hobart. Then, he worked as a guard commander in caravans that crossed the Broken Lands, the Alasiyan desert, and the Great Waste. In those years he also adventured quite frequently with a group of close-knit companions, and in his spare time Maltus enjoyed Darokin City's social life and court life at his family's castle. He had more than one liaison with various women in those years, but never resolved to quit his life and start a family. After many years, he had amassed a large fortune which would have allowed him to buy a Magistrate position in

Darokin of his own; however, Maltus did not like at all the meddlesome attitude of the Darokin government, preferring instead to settle in a quiet, remote location far away from bickering and backstabbing politicians. Therefore, he decided to head for Norwold to attend the upcoming Spring Fair in Alpha and win a dominion in that northern region. He is accompanied by some of his former adventuring Darokinian friends, who will serve as his advisors once he will have established a dominion: Guy of Brad (Lawful 11th-level Fighter, his second in command during Maltus' time in the Army), Maryan of Halls (Neutral 10th-level Magic-User, a magician of some skill), and Jarred Nowell (Lawful 14th-level Cleric, a patriarch of the Church of Darokin who disliked all the politicking going on in the church).

Personality: Maltus has a somewhat military mind, and wants things done as he commands or plans, is a perfectionist and does not tolerate conflicts against his authority by those who must obey one possessing his rank; thanks to his leadership ability, this is not usually an issue. For his future dominion, he will then be also an efficient and caring ruler, intelligent enough to think of innovative solutions for new problems which may arise. On the other hand, his self-assurance makes him also a quite independent-minded character: he will be loyal to the king, but will demand a good degree of autonomy in the management of his fiefdom. Maltus has never thought to start a family so far, but things are likely to change once he will have stably settled in his domain.

Goals: Maltus wants to get a land which he can carve out of the wilderness as he sees fit, a place where he would rule as he pleases

without having to submit to heavy external influences. To him, the young Kingdom of Norwold seemed perfect for his goal. Once settled, he will devote all his skills and time to the development of his dominion.

Dominion Choice: Maltus will chose a remote location for his dominion - one of the small wooded valleys which dot the mountainsides of Norwold's interior will particularly appease him, especially if they include some lakes, which he loves.

Special Features: During his career, Maltus has become an expert of the Darokin fencing style (rapier and main-gauche with light armour), but later he has gradually switched to combat styles more suited for heavy armour. Anyway, even now Maltus prefers using his broadsword one-handed, while leaving his off-hand free while on foot; he uses the shield (in combination with the lance) mostly when fighting from horseback.

Relevant Possessions: *Armband of absorption, "Benefactress" broadsword, boots of wall walking, plate mail +3, shield +3.*

Source: CM2 Death's Ride, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

MARK ACRES

Powerful magic-armed adventurer from Westrouрке

Chaotic 15th-level
Fighter

Str 15, Int 11,
Wis 8, Dex 13,
Con 13, Cha 11



Appearance: 26 years old, brown skin, very tall (6'3") but slender and gracefully-built (181 lbs. weight), facial features which recall his Nuari maternal lineage. Mark would have wavy black hair, but regularly shaves his head and face. His round, night-black eyes and his appearance remind those of a predator ready to strike. Mark likes to dress in combinations of contrasting colours, in particular black and white.

Background: Mark was born in the sparsely-inhabited Sveikassli Woods (north of Newkirk, in the Grand Duchy of Westrouрке), the son of a native hunter and brigand, and of Simakoko, a beautiful Nuari spellcasting woman who had fled the Pearl Islands for some misdeed and had come to hide in this outlying corner of the empire. Mark's father died fighting against the orcs of the Dust Reaches, but Simakoko was able to assume the control of his brigands behind the scenes by *charming* her husband's lieutenant and becoming his lover. Mark grew in the shadow of his puppeteer mother, feeling an unhealthy attachment to her and a fierce jealousy toward her lovers. After some time, the count of Viksdalen (one of the lesser dominion-rulers of Westrouрке) won a

series of skirmishes against Mark's brigands; Simakoko secretly met the count, seduced him, and persuaded the man to take her and her son to his castle in exchange for the location of the band's lair; his mother had convinced Mark that this was the only thing to do to survive. While Simakoko became the count's concubine at Viksdalen, Mark grew at his court, learning to fight, to ride, and to behave as a courtier. When he came of age, he also went adventuring and after some years he joined the company of the young Thrainkell Firestorm, the son of the archduke of Westroucke, which earned him some renown in the north. Three years ago, Simakoko killed the count of Viksdalen during a quarrel; the archduke wanted her brought to justice, but Mark stood in defence of his mother, routing the guards who had been sent to arrest her. Thrainkell, defying his father's orders, confronted Mark in a duel, but was badly beaten; as a consequence, Mark robbed his former friend Thrainkell of a powerful magical sword made of black steel that the two had previously found together. Mark fled with his mother first to Helskir, then to the Alphantian side of the Isle of Dawn, where he had many more adventures, selling his services as bodyguard, sellsword, and mercenary - all the while using his earnings to grant Simakoko a decent lifestyle. Then, hearing news of the incoming Spring Fair in Norwold, his mother persuaded Mark that settling there as dominion ruler would be a good opportunity, and they headed for Alpha. Mark arrives in the king's capital together with his mother Simakoko (Chaotic 11th-level Cleric of Masauwu, a still comely Nuari woman in her fifties), a couple of her servants, and the Thyatian Sophria Nusenius (Neutral 8th-level Magic-User), former

member of Thrainkell Firestorm's group and Mark's lover since a short time before his duel with his friend.

Personality: Mark is totally dominated by the influence of his mother, for whom he feels an attachment so strong that he will do almost anything to protect and please her. Recently, however, the presence of Sophria - who despises Simakoko's control over the man - has augmented Mark's internal conflict: on one side he loves Sophria and would like to emancipate himself from Simakoko, on the other he feels an irrational fear of separating from his mother. Simakoko and Sophria dislike one another, and both are in their own ways fighting a battle for the control of Mark - how this will end and for how much time Mark's emotional stability will be preserved is still to be seen. Apart from this, Mark is quick-thinking and very much self-confident, sometimes to the point of foolishness; he could be sentimental, but sees this as a weakness - to the disappointment of Sophria.

Goals: Mark sees Norwold as a good place to settle down, gain a ranking among Norwold lords, and eventually build a family with Sophria; indeed, the story of his victorious duel against archduke Donegal's son already earned him some popularity among the Alphantian noblemen. Unfortunately, they are not Mark's aims which matter, but those of his mother. The malicious and scheming Simakoko actually wishes to turn the Kingdom of Norwold into a hotbed of intrigue and treachery of which she will pull the strings; she plans to use *charm*, seduction, false promises, illusions, and disguise to make other lords her puppets and turn them one against the other - a

situation from which her son would emerge as the winner; obviously, Simakoko's main issue is keeping control of her son against Sophria's influence. This means that Simakoko will lead Mark to exploit to his own advantage the eventual struggle between Thyatis and Alphatia over Norwold, misleading others through treachery if necessary. While Mark knows his mother worships some sort of native Nuari Immortal, he is still not aware of the being's entropic nature.

Dominion Choice: Simakoko will persuade Mark to choose a dominion in a central area with as much access as possible to the greater number of other dominions; any trait of the Norwold seacoast will purposely fit this description.

Special Features: Mark has gathered an amazing deal of unusual and powerful magic items, mostly found during his adventures in the Northern Reaches, Heldannic Territories, Norwold, and the Isle of Dawn. Worthy of note is his magical black steel bastard sword, taken from the young Thrainkell Firestorm, which is also a relic of historical significance for Heldanners (see the weapon's entry in the "Magic Items New and Unusual" section, at the end of the article). Mark is quite able at fighting with a number of weapons, including various swords and horsemen weapons, such as the lance, but he is not very skilled in ranged combat. Apart when jousting, Mark usually favours medium armour at best, as he does not like to be hindered by shields and heavier armour.

Relevant Possessions: *Black steel bastard sword, mirror of enlightenment, plate barding +2, pouch of traveling, ring of magic*

resistance, ring of the Hunakoi, warhammer +1 returning of finding, white dragonscale armour.

Source: D&D Companion Set.

Max the First

Massive Darokinian fighter with dynastic ambitions



Chaotic 15th-level
Fighter

Str 18, Int 12,
Wis 13, Dex 11,
Con 14, Cha 7

Appearance: 35 years old, light skin tone, very muscular, tall and massively built (6' per 221 lbs.).

Max has blue eyes under thick eyebrows and short, curly dark brown hair and moustache; his voice is deep, but unpleasant and easily-remembered by those who have heard it. When not going to combat, Max favours fashionable, pastel-coloured clothes.

Background: Iulius Maxentius (this is his true name) was born in Julinius, Thyatis, into a family of master armorers who made good profits provisioning the imperial armies. Iulius learned and became skilled at his father's craft, but longed for more action in life. When he was a boy, he was feared for his strength among his peers, and when he grew up he began selling his services as hired

force and bodyguard to neighbourhood bosses, innkeepers, and local traders. Later, to his father's disappointment, he left the family business to his younger brother and enlisted in the imperial legions, serving there for ten years in various provinces, and also taking part in the early stages of the Hinterlands' conquest. Despite his experience, Iulius was disappointed by his lack of advancement in the higher ranks of the Thyatian army, maturing the idea (somewhat right) that he was being outmatched by less-experienced peoples who knew high-placed persons, were sons or friends or noblemen, or who were well into politics. Then he left the army, and spent the next years adventuring alone and selling his services as mercenary, bodyguard, and bounty hunter to the highest bidder. Iulius was quite successful in his crafts and amassed quite a wealth, but his ambition pushed him to wish for something more. However, he was not rich enough to bribe someone to buy a nobility title in Thyatis, he did not belong to the aristocracy, neither was he popular enough to win a senatorial election - so he had little hope to raise his social status in the Thyatian Empire. Then, Iulius heard news about the far northern Kingdom of Norwold, and correctly reasoned that this was a young and potentially rich land which could offer him more hopes to fulfil his ambitions. So, he embarked alone in his trip toward Alpha; knowing that the Alphanian King Ericall would not trust a Thyatian former army-man as his vassal, Iulius decided to pose as a Darokinian fighter under the name of "Julian Max" and to avoid bringing with him servants or henchmen who might betray his true identity or blackmail him.

Personality: Max is driven by overconfidence and ambition - he never liked to submit to individuals who, in his view, were far less skilled and capable than him. Once he loved his homeland, but with the passing of years he has realized that Thyatis was no better than other nations in unfairness and corruption; he has therefore resolved to live for himself, caring only for his own interests and not for what other people call their "loyalties". Max is a competitive person, malicious and somewhat cruel, but his arrogance sometimes makes him daydream about future successes and lose focus on the current situation.

Goals: Max's ambition is cantered on one goal: establishing a dominion, starting a family, and beginning his own dynasty - which one day, he hopes, will rule not only the Norwold region but even the whole continent of Brun! This is the reason why he attaches "the First" to his name in official or formal circumstances - he sees himself as the first of his future dynasty. With this goal in mind, Max will try to find as soon as possible a suitable mate (in the past he has had various transient affairs, none of which produced any children), to build a powerful dominion (mostly from a military point of view) and to gauge what opportunities arise in the near future: he wants to choose the best for himself, and he sees the likely conflict between the major powers over Norwold as full of opportunities for himself. Max will side with the one who makes him the best offer, regardless of his oath of fealty to the king.

Dominion Choice: Max will rather choose an accessible area than a wilderness one; a domain's worthy capital must stand in a

central area, with good fertile fields but also with few powerful rivals in the vicinity. Likely, if available, Max will choose to set his dominion in the coastal plains north of Oceansend (and not too near to the city).

Special Features: Normally, Max is a fearsome fighter, nearly unstoppable in combat and relentless in crushing his opponents. That is, until now. Max knows well that a dead man can father no children, and see the rise of no dynasty; so, in combat he seems a bit cowardly and unwilling to take any undue risk. Apart from this, Max is quite skilled both in foot and horseback combat; he is also an expert at intimidation, tailing marks, and jungle survival - even if it is some time since he last practiced those skills.

Relevant Possessions: *“Enslaver” normal sword, heavy crossbow +2, plate mail +3, shield +4.*

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Maximillian



Stubborn but unpredictable she-knight from Karamaikos

Chaotic 15th-level
Fighter

Str 16, Int 14, Wis 6,
Dex 16, Con 15, Cha
15

Appearance: 31 years old, olive complexion, tall and with a wiry and tough build for a woman (5'11" per lbs.); she has straight, shoulder-length brown hair, and narrow grey eyes. Maximillian looks about five years older than her actual age, but people tend to find her a bit attractive, especially if they like square-jawed, manly women. She usually wears clothes in plain colours which sport some distinctive feature (a unique design, an elegant embroidery, and so on), but she is not as careful to tend to them, so they often appear crumpled or have dirty hems. On formal occasions and in battle, Maximillian wears beautifully-carved suit armour with a fluted design, which is making her famous and starting a fashion among armorers.

Background: Maximillian Holt was the only daughter of a family of poor agricultural labourers who worked in a manor outside Specularum; her father's family were natives of Septentriona, but had moved to Traladara in the early 9th century AC, while her mother was of full Thyatian descent. She lived her youth in poverty, but her life changed when, still a child, she stumbled by chance upon a

lost *ring of invisibility*, which she used to find a neighbour's lost child. The deed made her famous among the poor people living in the South End of Specularum, and Maximillian started to use her newfound ability to help people and humble evil or arrogant high-ups. During her youth, she was noted by a priest of the Church of Karameikos, who thought the girl had a great potential if only she could be directed toward a good cause. While Maximillian was enthusiast about the Church's philosophy, the priest was soon disheartened by the girl's fickleness and lack of will in pursuing a planned purpose. Under the sponsorship of her priestly mentor, Maximillian started an adventuring career which her superiors in the Church judged random and aimless - at one time she was even persuaded by the Cult of Halav to join their ranks before one member of the Order of the Griffon brought her on the "right" path! The latter introduced Maximillian into his knightly order, trying to strengthen her personality through tests and a friendly rivalry. Maximillian quickly became a skilled fighter and in a short time even surpassed her teacher, but her will had not taken any step forward. In the next few years, she became convinced that the order and the faith she belonged to were oppressing the Traladaran people; she suddenly left the Order of the Griffon and became a robber knight, sometimes in league with Traladaran rebels and conspirators. After having witnessed how the Traladaran families pulled the strings of what she considered the "resistance movement" against the Thyatians, only to increase their own power and wealth, she left for Darokin in disgust. There she served under many patrons and did many adventures, but came to hate the plutocracy and the ruling merchant elite for their lack of

moral values. At last, she heard of the incoming Spring Fair in Norwold and decided to go there, to find at last a king and a cause worthy of her services or - at least - establish her own realm marked by righteous values.

Personality: Maximillian's main trait is her unpredictability, which is due to a general lack of willpower. She is stubborn and tenacious in the pursuit of her aim, and has a competitive spirit which drives her in everything she does - the problem is that such an aim changes frequently, to the point that other people often think she acts in a totally random way. In fact, Maximillian is easily influenced - new ideas, opinions, suggestions, persons, cultures, philosophies, and religions can sway her from a stated course of action or from an order given to her; this does not mean she is a wimp, only that she is very changeable. As soon as the court of Alpha gets to know her, she will be known as "Mad Max" (short form for Madame Maximillian). Besides this, Maximillian - despite her chaotic alignment - is a good-willed person and will be a strong supporter of King Ericall (as long as she does not change her mind about him). Maximillian since her childhood has held a special fascination for magic items and for their powers, and will try to acquire or seize (depending on the owner and on the circumstances) an item of special interest for her.

Goals: Maximillian has realized that the modern love for money has ruined what she considers the great realms of the past (the Kingdom of Darokin, the Traladaran principalities, and the classical Thyatian Empire). She has left the Known World in

search of a place where a new kingdom will be born according to values she likes - honour, courage, goodwill, strength of arms, and justice. She hopes that the new Kingdom of Norwold will be such a realm, and she is determined to become one of the kingdom's leading noblewomen, to help King Ericall through her advice, and to establish her own dominion along the same lines.

Dominion Choice: It's be impossible to know what sort of things might hit Maximillian's imagination in the moment she will make her decision as to where to settle. However, given her competitive drive, she will likely choose a place in a wild and dangerous area of the realm, or near the dominion of another pretender she considers a rival.

Special Features: Maximillian is a formidable fighter, both on horse and on foot. Her mount is a huge black stallion named Blue. The weapons she likes most are the lance or sword and shield on horseback, or the two-handed use of a sword or a polearm on foot. She is also quite skilled in the use of the longbow. In battle Maximillian is relentless, and once she has resolved to enter a fight she has never been known to withdraw from it, determined to defeat her opponent or be crushed in the attempt. One of the most distinguishing features of Maximillian is her custom-made suit armour, fashioned in Newkirk, which sports a beautiful fluted design - within some time such armour design will become known as "Maximillian armour" after her.

Relevant Possessions: Five *arrows* +5, *darkflame sword*, *dagger of the fool*, *halberd* +5, *ring of piercing*.

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

Ney

Alien, lawful ant-like creature in search of a liege

Lawful 18th-level Fighter

Str 18, Int 13, Wis 11, Dex 15, Con 18, Cha 8

Appearance: Ney is a 34-year old, 6' tall furry, an offshoot race of formians (see the box). Despite its bipedal posture, it remains very ant-like, with a body covered in protective black chitin, and a head that sports mandibles, antennae, and fly-like multi-faceted eyes. Without vocal cords, speaking is impossible, but with enough practice Ney has been able to use its mandibles to mimic a clickety approximation of human language. Ney is asexual, although as a warrior it is oftentimes addressed in the masculine gender due to local stereotypes. Ney wears at all times a tailor-made, magical plate and helmet above its chitin, and a set of four swords strapped on its back, to the exclusion of any additional clothes. Ney is quite the alien sight, even at an Alphantian court.

Background: Ney was a warrior specialist in the hidden furry Mystaran colony, but during a hurricane was swept from its post and thrown at sea; it managed the feat of surviving both storm and sea, and was eventually rescued by a human ship - aboard which he met Arcadius, Celia, Siegfried, and

FURMY

Armor Class:	4
Hit Dice:	2
Move:	120' (40')
Attacks:	Up to 4 weapons or 1 bite
Damage:	By weapons or 1d4
No. Appearing:	5d10 (2d6)
Save As:	F1
Morale:	8
Treasure Type:	L, O
Intelligence:	10
Alignment:	Lawful
XP Value:	20

Monster Type: Monster (Very Rare).

Furmies are humanoid equivalents of normal ants that stand upright on their two hind legs and uses their four front limbs as arms, giving them a more humanlike demeanor. Furmies are an offshoot, less hive-minded sub-species of the formians, which breeds only individuals, each with their own personality (no drones) in order to be more adaptable in the settling of new worlds. An adult furmy is about 6' tall.

They normally live together in "anthills" called colonies. Furmies are asexual; the queen only lays eggs that are hatched into mature furmies according to the colony's needs (the eggs need one year before they can be hatched, but can then be stored indefinitely). The first eggs laid (generally between a couple and a half-dozen) are queen eggs, while all other eggs are normal furmies.

A furmy's eyes are multi-faceted like those of a fly, granting it 60' infravision and a 360° vision - which means what, unless it is blinded, a furmy cannot be surprised. Its chitinous black carapace grants it a natural armor, while its four upper limbs allows it to wield a wide variety of weapons and shields (most warrior furmies are ambidextrous and can use a great variety of tactics with perfect dexterity); if no other choice remains, a furmy will defend itself using its mandibles. Furmies are resistant to spells and poison (getting +1 to saves against those attacks), and are immune to charm effects. Furmies can communicate empathically with each other when within 60', or telepathically when in contact through their antennae. A furmy can double its movement rate by running on its six limbs.

Furmies have a tremendous sense of loyalty toward their queen and their colony. They will typically sacrifice their lives for the greater good of the colony. This does not mean that furmies have no personality and are mechanical, instinct-driven creatures like ants, quite the contrary, just that their scale of value would appear alien to most sentient creatures. Most furmies are of Lawful alignment, and in fact eggs are normally sired for chaotic tendencies before hatching-and eggs that would bear potentially unstable individuals are destroyed mercilessly. Each furmy is born with its future decided for it in advance; the colony provides it with all it needs, including training for its position in the society. Most furmies are simple workers (farmer, craftsman, etc.), some are warriors, while some are bred for wizardry or

priesthood or other important positions; thus, furmies of all classes and levels can be encountered. A furmy's life span is about 100 years; queens generally live about 500 years.

All furmies have an instinctive fear of water, and will avoid crossing seas and oceans, or even smaller water bodies - there is no known furmy sailor. They also fear fire. Because of their strange look and behaviour, furmies will generally have a

hard time meshing with other races - but that is something they rarely do anyway. Due to their physiology, they cannot speak the humanoid languages without a very strong accent (generally described as chopped and clicking, but the differences are actually more fundamental). Because of their nature, furmies have a hard time grasping various concepts like money, property, poverty, trade, fame, sex, love, family, lying, treachery, treason, often causing them to get into trouble - even if they hardly realize why.

Furmies are not native to Mystara, but from another world where insect-like creatures are the dominant form of sentient beings. One colony accidentally came to Mystara long ago, and though it is very rare, some of its members can sometimes be encountered. The exact location of the Mystaran colony is a secret no furmy will reveal to any non-furmy. The furmies worship the Immortal Furmy, allegedly the only furmy to have ever reached immortality, and the founder of their society as an orderly one. Though not native to Mystara and mostly uninvolved in its politics, Furmy grants spells to Its Mystaran priests.

Terrain Type: Cavern.

Zoltan (see their separate entries). Not knowing how to find its way back to the colony, it eventually resolved that its original duty was over (the colony would promote a suitable replacement), and transferred its loyalty to its rescuers, accompanying them in their adventures through unknown lands, with strange peoples and customs that it was unprepared for. Living among them is a constant struggle for sanity, but Ney proved adaptable enough to survive this new ordeal. Once the group arrived in Norwold, Ney parted with its companions in order to personally offer its loyalty to King Ericall.

Personality: Like all its kinfolk, Ney was bred to be a loyal, obedient subject, but the loss of a clear hierarchy and chain of command has been trying. Yet Ney has been able to adjust in those challenging circumstances, proving its exceptional adaptability. Because of its nature, Ney still has a hard time grasping various concepts like money and property, prosperity and poverty, sale and trade, fame and power, sex, love, and family, lying, treachery, and treason, and many more, often causing it to make major blunders (more often than not at its own expense, but rarely even realizing it).

Goals: Ney is anxious and eager to swear fealty to a king, and finally have a clearly established, lawful overlord. The fact that it is a king, not a queen, is a bit troubling, not to mention that they are both chaotic humans,

although the fact that Ericall ultimately serves an empress is a comfort. Ney wants to establish whether entering the service of the king is the right decision, but if it becomes liege to Ericall, it will be with binding faithfulness.

Dominion Choice: Ney has no preference for a dominion, and fails to fully grasp what becoming a ruler would entail besides bringing order. Whatever the king bestows will become Ney's domain, but if the king does not apportion, Ney will choose a random plot of land not too far from Alpha, one with some population, fertile lands and resources. In no case will Ney go against the king's wishes, nor against any councillor's, and it will certainly not fight other pretenders.

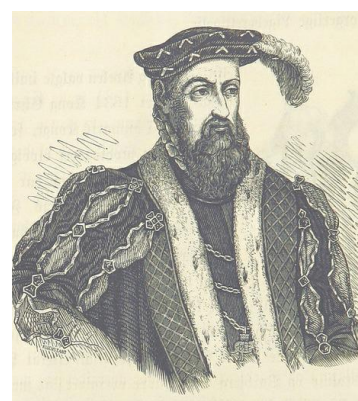
Special Features: Ney has specialized in a very aggressive four-handed combat, wielding a sword in each hand, making it a formidable warrior. But much to its dismay, this style does not mesh well with other, humanoid fighters, preventing formation fighting. Nor can Ney communicate easily with fellow combatants to coordinate tactics. Ney also benefits from infravision, and all-around field of view, strong natural armour, a good resistance to poison and spells and mental attacks. Ney fears fire and water and cannot swim (nor float), and is generally hindered by its difficulty to communicate effectively, its lack of comprehension for many common sense concepts, and its unwavering sense of loyalty and duty. Having no concept of private property or personal possession, as whatever is necessary is freely available from the hive, Ney only keeps what it deems useful, and nothing else. It also takes whatever it needs without regard for its owner, although after years spent among

humans it has determined that this is not always acceptable behaviour, though when it is or not still baffles Ney. Whomever it associates with for a long period learns to deal with this idiosyncrasy by allowing Ney to take whatever it wants and keep the rest, which is not always such a bad proposition, as Celia knows. The only things it keeps are his armour and four swords; both Ney's armour and swords are alien in appearance, and fashioned from an unknown, glittering, extremely hard and sharp kind of mineral. Its armour is custom-made to fit Ney's odd shape. Ney does not keep coin or jewellery, nor does it understand money.

Relevant Possessions: Four *normal swords* +5, *plate mail* +5.

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Hervé Musseau).

Niles Douglass



Renowned mighty champion and knight from Hillvale

Lawful 20th-level Fighter

Str 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Cha 10

Appearance: 43 years old, rather attractive, large, tall (6'3") and heavily-built (223 lbs. weight), with light skin, dark grey eyes, long and silky dark brown hair (greying, but he

dyes it), beard and moustache; Niles likes to wear precious clothes in elegant style, favouring white and orange as colours, even if he seldom seems at ease within them.

Background: Niles was the fourth son born in a family of the landowning gentry in the countryside of the Kingdom of Hillvale, on the Isle of Dawn; his family migrated there a couple of generations ago from the Shadow Coast, where it had its roots. Young Niles wasn't quite bright, but showed many physical qualities, and at the age of twelve was sent to be apprenticed as a warrior under his uncle, a famous wandering fighter, in order to be able to serve one of Hillvale's prominent noblemen. Niles spent his adolescence travelling with his uncle, learning swordsmanship, archery, horseback fighting, and many more things. When his uncle finally became a member of the king of Hillvale's guard, he acted as his squire for a time, then entered the guard on his own right after some years, performing quite well and demonstrating a high degree of loyalty in the missions which the king entrusted to him. When the old king of Hillvale died, Niles left East Portage and travelled around the Alphatian Empire, adventuring and working as bodyguard and personal champion for a variety of wizards and magic-using noblemen. His combat prowess earned Niles great fame and ultimately a job in Sundsvall's Imperial Guard, where he met a younger and talented Torenal. After many successful years of service, at last he had to leave the Guard due to a scandal which burst out when he had an affair with a young and aristocratic girl from the imperial court. Niles travelled back home, spending the next years adventuring and serving under various kings on the Isle of Dawn. It was a year ago that he

was reached by King Ericall's emissaries, who - having heard tales of his valour - offered him the opportunity to earn a dominion in Norwold; Niles decided that time was right, and he left the Isle of Dawn for the cold north, journeying to Alpha to meet the king. In his travels, he is accompanied by his friends, Lorian Lazarok (Lawful 10th-level Fighter, from Hillvale) and Shevrashan (Lawful 7th-level Fighter, from Greenspur), by some servants, and by his very beautiful and young wife, Helga Dygmirian (Chaotic Normal Woman) - a 25-year old half-Common Alphatian and half-Northman woman from a noble Helskirian family. Helga's father was killed during the recent fighting between Thyatis and Alpathia around Helskir, and she was forced by her brother to marry Niles, who had fought alongside their father; Helga was indifferent toward this choice at first, but gradually developed a dislike for Niles, whom she does not love, doing everything possible to embarrass him with her flirtatious and shameless behaviour.

Personality: Niles is a truthful and stern person, used to obeying orders and staying true to his patron or liege - including his soon-to-be new king; however, his lack of cleverness makes him rather rigid in his behaviour. Niles is also quite serious and shy, and while he is a great ally on the battlefield, he slowly becomes boring and dull during social events. Niles is greatly attracted to his wife Helga, and despite her disrespectful behaviour toward him, he tries to do all he can to please her, often with distressing results.

Goals: Niles has come to Norwold to establish a dominion and build there what he could not build in Alpathia or at home; he

wants to improve his reputation with the king and the other lords, and to this aim will try to make his dominion prosperous, hire a formidable army, enlist the aid of the best retainers available, and take part in as many tournaments, jousts, and festivals around Norwold as possible. He would also like to produce an heir with Helga, who on the other hand does her best to avoid getting pregnant by him.

Dominion Choice: Niles would like to choose a domain on Norwold's eastern coast or along the eastern coasts of the Great Bay, areas with easy access to the Alphatian mainland and to the Isle of Dawn, where his and his wife's families still dwell.

Special Features: Niles is a very skilled combatant with a variety of weapons, as required by one who has performed for years the job of protecting powerful wizards and noblemen. On foot, he favours sword and shield style, but he is also expert at fighting with two-handed weapons like his threatening poleaxe. Niles is quite fond of shooting with the longbow, but rarely uses this weapon in combat, and mostly only in archery contests and while hunting. On horseback, he likes fighting with lance and shield and is quite unstoppable while charging. Niles always wears heavy armour in combat, most often his magical suit armour, beautifully-crafted for him by one of his last Alphatian patrons.

Relevant Possessions: *Longbow of marksmanship*, *poleaxe +2*, *shield +2*, *"Steelbreaker" longsword*, *suit armour +3*.

Source: D&D Companion Set.

Ossian

Sbrawd and wary mage from Redstone

Neutral 15th-level Magic-User

Str 8, Int 16,
Wis 13, Dex 13,
Con 10, Cha 10

Appearance: 27 years old, fair complexion, tall

(height 6'1") but thin and frail (137 lbs. of weight), with light red hair - worn short, with a well-trimmed beard and moustache - and grey eyes. Ossian prefers to dress inconspicuously when he does not want others to focus on him, while he wears rich clothes which make his rank clear when he wants to soar above others.

Background: Ossian von Mereklar was born in Hattias, the son of a Hattian nobleman who wished his son to become a battle mage in the Thyatian army; thus Ossian was sent to the Collegium Arcanum in Thyatis City. Following his father's will, after completing his training Ossian enlisted in the Thyatian legions, but discovered that military life was not for him because of his frail physique and the strict rules against which he had always struggled in his own family since being a boy. A year later, Ossian caught the opportunity to desert during a mission against a humanoid tribe on the Westrourke-Dunadale border on the Isle of Dawn, when he let his companions believe he had died during the collapse of one of the orcs' caves. Then he



renounced his surname and wandered the Isle of Dawn as an adventurer and problem-solver for hire, uniting with various fellowships but never becoming part of them for very long - his nature pushed him to never stay together with the same people for too long, and to never forge permanent ties to anyone. Pretending to be a mercenary wizard from Redstone, two years ago he joined the crew of captain Sieger von Duwn on the flying ship *Silver Arrow*, but when the captain announced his wish to establish a dominion in Norwold, he again left his fellow crewmen with the goal to arrive at Alpha on his own and obtain his personal dominion from King Ericall.

Personality: Ossian's character is coy and mistrustful, always wary of other's moves and on the look to discover their true motivations; this nearly borders on paranoia, as he often tries to put himself in an advantageous position over his fellows' eventual betrayal, and to devise various plans to defend himself. He is intolerant of rules and orders others may give him, and the only person he truly trusts is himself. He bears no particular loyalty toward King Ericall (or anyone else for that matter, including his homeland), and will obey him only as long as it is advantageous for him, and as long as the king's control over his vassals continues to be light-handed. While Ossian has parted on friendly terms from his companions of the *Silver Arrow* - Sieger von Duwn, Shuren, and others - he does not feel obliged to them, and will help or collaborate with them only when it suits him.

Goals: Ossian's only goal is to finally find a place - his dominion - where others will obey the orders he gives them, and no one will

control him anymore. He knows this is his chance to give a turn on his life, and so he is determined to build a powerful and organized dominion, to bath in intrigue, and to fight harshly his opponents - in a word, to do everything that is needed to reach his goal.

Dominion Choice: Ossian will try to set his dominion on the shores of the Great Bay or at least on its vicinities, in the attempt to stay near the capital of Norwold and still not be easily reachable just in case he may have to flee.

Special Features: Ossian's character makes him appear almost fearful in combat; when the odds are against him, he is likely to exit the fray and save himself regardless of others. In combat he favours damaging long-range spells and illusions which may keep him from being directly involved in melee; he also tries to surround himself with more powerful companions who make him feel shielded from danger.

Relevant Possessions: *Dagger +3/+6 vs dragonkind, ring of protection +4, rod of aerial might, tunic of shielding, wand of fireballs.*

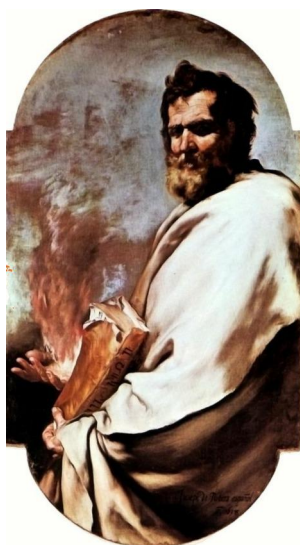
Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

QUENTIN JAX

Aristocratic Alphatian wizard from Randel

Lawful Large Gold Dragon

Str 17, Int 16,
Wis 15, Dex 11,
Con 14, Cha 18



Appearance: In human form, Quentin appears as a 45 year old Common Alphatian, of medium height and slender build (5'10" tall per 148 lbs.); copper skinned, with long golden, silver-striped hair and short, well-trimmed beard and moustache; his eyes are hazel and slightly slanted, deep and ever-moving. He wears a heavy, white brocade tunic and always carries a crystal staff whose top is shaped like a question mark (his *staff of wizardry*).

Background: Quentin Jax is in truth the alternate human identity of Jaq'antixuen, a 240-years old gold dragon. He is native of Randel, in the Alphatian continent, but started to haunt the Wyrksteeth Range of Norwold about a century ago, becoming a leading personality of Windreach and of the Parliament of Dragons. When the Alphatians came again westward in AC 985 in another attempt at colonizing Norwold, the dragons of Windreach feared this would provoke another great war between the humans and the other dragons of the Wyrksteeth Range, most of whom obeyed the authority of Mors Rufus, the red dragon ruler of the region. So,

in order to avert this risk and keep peace in the area, they secretly sent Jaq'antixuen to Ericall's court with the duty to infiltrate the Norwoldese nobility, gain the favour of the king, and eventually inducing him to keep the humans' settlements out of the dragon's sacred mountains. Thanks to his polymorphing powers, Jaq'antixuen thus assumed the identity of Quentin Jax, a rich Alphatian wizard coming from Randel's countryside.

Personality: Jaq'antixuen is utterly loyal to the cause of the Dragon Nation represented by the Parliament of Dragons in Windreach. He, like his kin, feels invested by the Great One with the duty to keep at bay the risk of another full-scale war between humans and dragons – and if fulfilling this task means practicing some necessary deceit against humans or different-minded dragons, so be it. Jaq'antixuen is particularly wary of the powerful human magic-users who attend Ericall's court (who might discover his true identity), and of the Wyrksteeth dragons who regularly threaten peace indulging in raids and forays against the human lands.

Goals: As Quentin, Jaq'antixuen will try to persuade Ericall to grant him a dominion; he will make large use of gifts to the king and to other would-be noblemen and influential persons if necessary, through the riches supplied to him by Windreach. Once in place as dominion ruler, Quentin will continue using the wealth of his dominion to keep the king's favour, and at the same time he will make fake shows of power against the dragons (with the compliance of Windreach's leaders) in order to become Ericall's front-man in Alpha's dealings with the dragons. Quentin's ultimate goal is to have the king

publicly (and in written form, if manageable) agree to keep the humans' expansion out of the dragon-dominated areas and to punish any trespasser. Once this goal has been secured, Quentin may even quit his identity as a nobleman with some excuse or explanation. If Quentin's true identity becomes known, he is likely to silence the discoverer through bribe or blackmail first, resorting to harsher methods if no other way proves sufficient.

Dominion Choice: Quentin needs a dominion rich in natural resources, preferably in precious ores. He has already thrown his eye on the area south of Leeha, where the Ransarn River passes through the Giants' Mountains – a place rich in gold deposits – and will make any effort to try to win it.

Special Features: The physical ability scores (Str, Dex, and Con) listed above refer to Jaq'antixuen's human form. As a large gold dragon, he can speak, cast magic-user spells, and polymorph into animal shape – often assuming that of a bird of some type. In battle, Quentin makes large use of his magic staff, both in melee and to cast spells.

Relevant Possessions: *Amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP, ring of protection +5, staff of wizardry.*

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

Quillan Elm-Grower

Friendly, human-loving elven diplomat from Alfheim

Lawful 10th-level
Elf Lord (Attack Rank E)

Str 10, Int 13,
Wis 12, Dex 18,
Con 11, Cha 9



Appearance: At 154 years old, Quillan is a young wood elf; he is of medium height, with a slender physique (5'3" per 96 lbs.), and delicate facial features. Quillan's complexion is lightly tanned, like that of most elves of the Grunalf clan, due to the time spent in the open. He has thin, straight, long brunette hair, goes clean shaven, and sports friendly dark blue eyes. Like most elves, he is considered attractive according to human standards. Quillan always wear comfortable clothes in elven fashion, his favourite colours being dark red and various shades of green.

Background: Quillan was born into the Grunalf clan, in the elven Kingdom of Alfheim. Since he was very young, he developed an uncanny talent for tending plants and growing trees, and a special affinity for elms. During his youth, Quillan apprenticed under skilled Grunalf foresters, and learned the trades of his clan, becoming a good boater, tracker, and hunter. Like many young elves, he felt the call of adventure and completed many successful

quests in Alfheim, down the forest's rivers and in the depths of its groves. Later, after he became one of the most prominent foresters and tree-tenders of clan Grunalf, King Doriath of Alfheim sent him to Erewan, the wood elven principality in Glantri, answering a request from Princess Carlolina, who would have liked to get some help from Alfheim to carry on her program of tree-planting in her principality. Quillan travelled there, and settled in Erewan for a long time, becoming a trusted friend of the most prominent members of the Erewan clan, including Carlolina and her family. Quillan also had the chance to visit Glantri and nearby countries during those years - Darokin and Wendar in particular - and got to know more closely the human society, discovering he liked it very much, and befriending many human personalities in those countries. In many occasions, thanks to his knowledge of the humans and their ways, he acted as middleman between the elven clans (be they the Erewan or some Wendarian or Alfheimer clan) and the humans, acquiring some fame in the field of diplomacy. Eventually, eager to move and see new places, he headed north, following the tales regarding the elves of the Great Forest of Geffron (on the Denagothian Plateau) and the Foresthomes of Norwold. After hearing the tragic truth about the former, he decided to head for Norwold, wishing to meet the elves who dwelled there. During his journey, he also learned about the incoming Spring Fair in Alpha, the capital city of Norwold, and decided to head there to have a chance to meet the local human king and his lords, and see if he could put his skills to some use to get a dominion in the Kingdom of Norwold.

Personality: Quillan is peaceful, curious and outgoing, even with members of other races, an unusual trait for a wood elf at best. He is considered in particular a friend of humans, since he likes their rambunctious company, their rowdy good humour, and their "hasty" ways. Quillan fancies himself a bit of a diplomat and always tries to calm down quarrelling people and make them come to terms before blood is shed. He is also a loyal person, who can be trusted once he has given his word or agrees to help a friend in need.

Goals: Quillan has come to Norwold to meet the Foresthome elves and learn more about them, their culture, and their ways. He sees the Kingdom of Norwold as an opportunity to put his diplomatic skills at use, because he supposes that those aloof elves living in the forests of the interior will sooner or later have the need to establish relationships of some kind with the court of King Ericall - his aim is to act as a trait d'union between them. Once installed as dominion ruler, Quillan will focus on his role as middleman, and will likely not develop his domain that much.

Dominion Choice: Quillan will try to get a dominion from the king in an area including one of the known Foresthomes. Then, he will carve a niche inside the elven society, and persuade the elven clan he chose to act as their ambassador to the court of Alpha. Quillan will claim his dominion over the area only after he has got permission from the clan; in the time to come, he will also become quite dependant on the clan's decisions regarding foreign matters, and this fact may eventually portray him as an individual reluctant to help the king at best (or as a traitor at worst).

Special Features: Quillan's favoured fighting style is shooting with the longbow from distance, something he does with lightning speed and deadly precision. He is also quite skilled in fighting with longsword and shield, but he does not like melee and enters close combat only when he has to.

Relevant Possessions: 20 arrows +1, chainmail of the forest lady, longbow +3, normal sword +2, shield +2.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, CM2 Death's Ride, CM3 Sabre River, M1 Into the Maelstrom, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

Rutger Dag

Wild and frolicsome wilderness ranger from Vestland

Neutral 15th-level Fighter

Str 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Cha 11

Appearance: 29 years old, fair skin, very tall (6'3") and stout (203 lbs.): Rutger has light brown straight hair, worn at shoulder-length with some braids and pigtails, beard and moustache, and light blue eyes. He favours wearing fine clothes and furs in the Vestlander fashion, with a few but ostentatious jewels - if needed, however, he will fit in a rougher dress more suited to wilderness adventure.

Background: Rutger was born in Bergen, Vestland, to a family of river boaters; when his father died, he and his brothers took different paths altogether, with Rutger abandoning the family trade and moving west to pursue adventure in the wilderness of Vestland. He sold his services as scout, hunter, and ranger, traveling from the Trollheim hills to the Soderfjord Jarldoms. Rutger performed very well in all his duties, and as upper class peoples and jarls heard of his deeds, they began to hire his services as well; thus, in a relatively short time, Rutger managed to gather a sizeable wealth through adventuring and to build a good fame as a warrior in the Northern Reaches. Wishing to see something else of the world and most of all the "true" north, the homeland of the legendary Antalian peoples, he left Vestland for Norwold to invest his money into his new project: the establishment of a dominion. His goal brought him to attend the Spring Fair in Alpha.

Personality: Rutger is a typical Northman fighter: he is savage in battle, courageous to the point of foolhardiness, wild in his pastimes - loving banquets, parties, drinking and eating - but does not appreciate "civilization" as intended by the Thyatians or Alphasians much. This is one of the reasons why he has left his native land to come to Norwold: it was becoming too civilized for his tastes. Rutger is a devout follower of the Immortal Thor, and is also quite superstitious. He knows Fergus the Justifier (see his entry) by fame, and considers the Dawner a rival.

Goals: Rutger has decided to put his wealth to some use, and try to establish his own dominion in Norwold. He has heard stories

about Ostlander pirates of the past sailing north and imposing their will through the force of arms on local peoples; while he is somewhat fascinated by their heroic figures, Rutger frowns upon their excessive barbaric savagery, and would like to set a dominion in Norwold according to a more orderly, Vestlander way. Dag, however, will be not overly loyal to Ericall: by his standard, being named king by a distant empress is no title to rule, so Ericall will have to prove his worth to earn Rutger's respect. Once Rutger fully commits himself to Ericall, however, his honour will force him to follow the king to the end. If Ericall does not convince him, Rutger will fight hard for independence, against Alphatians, Thyatians, or Heldannic Knights alike, though he might settle for a position as vassal of any of these powers, assuming the terms are acceptable for his old-style Northman sense of honour.

Dominion Choice: Rutger will select a domain in a region inhabited by the Norwolder tribes of clans - he believes (not incorrectly) they will appreciate his style of rulership. Preferably he would like to choose an area of coastal plains or woods in the northern Tranquil Coast.

Special Features: Rutger likes to fight in the traditional Northman style, but he realizes that in the modern world a successful warrior has to know and put to use other fighting techniques. This is why Rutger always takes the battlefield wearing his magical plate mail, even if he favours chain mail of even lighter armour for more covert actions. In combat, he usually fights with his magical sword and shield, but at times he lets Swordmaiden (his sword, able to fly and fight by itself) to fight alone while he targets his

opponents with his longbow, or charges into battle wielding the classical Northman battle axe. Due to his experience as ranger and scout, Rutger is quite skilled at tracking, hunting, and snaring in the wilderness, and he knows well many foraging, survival, and nature- or animal-related skills.

Relevant Possessions: *"Seeker" longbow +4, normal sword +2 of flying (named "Swordmaiden"), plate mail +2, shield +4.*

Sources: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

SANDRALANE OF GLANTRI

Beautiful refugee priest of Ariana from Glantri

Lawful 16th-level Cleric of Alphatia

Str 12, Int 12,
Wis 15, Dex 10,
Con 14, Cha 17



Appearance: 27 years old, very pale skin tone with bluish tints, average-height (for an Alphatian), slender and shapely body (5'10" tall per 139 lbs.). Sandralane is very pretty, with charming ways, an alluring smile, and a soft and melodious voice; she has long jet black hair, equally dark eyes, and a fascinating hint of mystery always playing on her expression.

She wears elegant, pastel-coloured but unpretentious and seemingly-modest clothing, which manage to show her beauty in a natural and innocent way.

Background: Sandralane Jaavernel was born in a village in the Principality of Blackhill, Glantri. Her parents were among the last surviving members of the deceased Order of the Golden Fountain, an old sect devoted to Ariana (an alias of the Immortal Alphatia) eradicated by the magocracy in AC 861; the Order was centered on a magical healing spring which was cursed and infested by monsters after the priests' slaughter.⁴ Some few devotees of Ariana continued to worship her in secret, in the hope that one day the curse might be lifted and the cult of their Immortal re-established. When Sandralane turned 15, however, the Glantrian authorities discovered her parents' clerical activities, and the two were burned at the stake. The girl fled to Corunglain, where she was welcomed in the small group of Glantrian exiles due to their faith in the Immortals. When Sandralane received omens and comfort from her patron Ariana, she decided to pursue the goal of avenging her parents and re-establish the cult of her Immortal in Glantri. She founded a small shrine to Ariana in Corunglain for her base of operations, and two times she returned to Glantri, trying to

organize resistance against the wizard-princes. The second time Sandralane was discovered by an agent of the Supreme Judge and barely managed to escape with her life. Her organization in Glantri was crushed, and several priests were captured and executed. Sandralane decided she would not risk the lives of her followers anymore, and decided to fully embrace the peaceful and altruist teachings of her Immortal; thus she began investigating the possibility of founding a colony for the Glantrian heretics. Norwold seemed a likely location, so Sandralane travelled to Alpha to ask for a dominion from King Ericall. She arrives in the capital accompanied by four young Alphatian followers of Ariana from Glantri: the two priestesses Meriona Derethol (Lawful 3rd-level Cleric of Alphatia) and Talia Ashai (Lawful 4th-level Cleric of Alphatia), and the two "templars" Nekorin Shasat (Lawful 2nd-level Fighter) and Tolman Pedrevan (Neutral 5th-level Fighter) - the latter is hopelessly in love with Sandralane, but knows that the woman does not consider him anything more than a very good friend.

Personality: Sandralane is a kind, self-sacrificing, and good woman; she has learned from her past mistakes that it is often better to take care of others first, and only then of one's inner passions and feelings, and that in any circumstance it is better to think about consequences before acting. She hates tyranny and evil, but thinks that in the long run a kind word of persuasion and one's virtuous example can help fighting it better than swords and severe laws. Sandralane sincerely despises the faithless wizards who rule the Glantrian magocracy, and would like to help anyone wishing to flee from her unlucky homeland;

⁴ The Order was first introduced in the adventure "The Fountain of Health" by A. Dupuis, in "Dungeon Magazine" no. 39 (January/February 1992, Vol. VII, No. 3). The cult of Ariana should be more centered on peace, harmony, and order rather than on artistic expression, with a special interest for helping others through healing and promoting health. The Order's (and supposedly Ariana's) holy symbol is the profile of a wyvern-like gargoyle-like creature.

nevertheless, she no longer believes that a violent insurrection can overthrow the wizards' regime, and hopes that prosperity and time will make her native country more tolerant. Sandralane, due to her life as an outlaw and refugee, did not have much time for love in the past years, apart from a couple of short affairs; now, if she manages to settle down in Norwold, she could even welcome love and family, if they came her way.

Goals: Sandralane wants to establish a peaceful and prosperous haven for anyone fleeing from persecution due to religious reasons. Her goal mainly calls on Glantrian refugees who worship Ariana, Razud, Valerias, Ixion, or similar good-aligned deities, but as Sandralane is very tolerant she will welcome anyone from any country, provided he or she worships a good Immortal and is willing to live a peaceful and tolerant life among her subjects. She will not carelessly make anyone's fight her own - unless the safety of her subjects is at stake. One of Sandralane's goals in Norwold - something she would like to do as a tribute to her martyred parents - is reviving the cult of Ariana in this northern land, and hopes to attain Ariana's favour for this purpose. Sandralane will be loyal to King Ericall, and will most certainly oppose both the Thyatians and the Heldannic Knights should they try to invade the realm, though, being Glantrian born, she holds no prejudices against them.

Dominion Choice: Sandralane wants her dominion to become a haven for people persecuted due to their faith - primarily from Glantri, but also from elsewhere. Therefore, she would like to establish it in an area where such people can arrive easily, perhaps

near a major port like Oceansend or Landfall, or elsewhere on the eastern coast of Norwold.

Special Features: Sandralane can take part in combat and prove her skill in a melee, but she does not take pleasure at all in those activities. Rather, she prefers defeating her opponents through effects which paralyze, incapacitate, or charm them, without hurting them directly (this is not true if she is fighting mindless things or beasts, obviously). While she is skilled in the use of the mace, her favourite weapon is her magical staff. Preferably, she travels without her armour, unless combat is to be expected.

Relevant Possessions: *Mace +4/+5 vs undead, plate mail +2, shield of the Supreme Waterbearer, snake staff.*

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

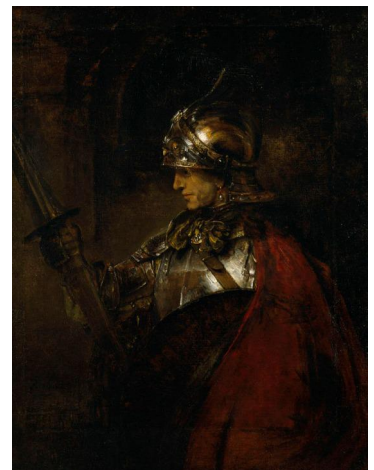
Shariskan

Ruthless mercenary commander from Ekto

Chaotic 24th-level Fighter

Str 17, Int 16,
Wis 14, Dex 10,
Con 9, Cha 16

Appearance: 46 year old Common Alphantian, very tall and lean (6'2" per 176 lbs.), hard and muscular body; golden-



skinned, with keen amber eyes, straight blonde hair worn short, and a shaved face. Usually wears military uniform and armour, but also likes more comfortable - if plain - clothes in various shades of dark colours.

Background: Shariskan was born in Ekto into a well-to-do mine-owning family. When he was still a child, the family's main mine was depleted, and the family's wealth started to decline. After his father's death when he was 12, Shariskan sold most of his inheritance and used the money for training under Ekto's veterans. Afterwards, he went adventuring for a while, often selling his services as a bodyguard and as a mercenary. In the course of the years, Shariskan rose through the ranks of the Scarlet Plumes, the mercenary company of which he was a member, thanks to his bright tactical mind and organizational skills; eventually, he became their leader. Under Shariskan's command, the Scarlet Plumes fought for the most varied parties - rival kings in the Alphatian Empire, Ochalean governors, on the Isle of Dawn both for Thyatis and Alphatia, and so on. Shariskan amassed a sizeable wealth, enlarged the company, and made it one of the most renowned and looked-after mercenary armies in both Seas of Dawn. Years ago, he discovered a worshipper of the Immortal Alphaks, Arkias (see his own entry) amongst his troops, and was drawn into raising the vile fiend as his personal patron of war, slaughter, and destruction, always praying to his patron on the eve of important battles. Later, he even made Arkias his own aide de camp. While participating on the Thyatian side in clashes against the Alphatians around Helskir, Shariskan joined forces with Hanz Vackelin, leader of the Thundering Hoofs mercenary

company (see his own entry); the two became friends and, at the end of their contract with Thyatis, decided to head for Norwold, to offer their services to Ericall in exchange for a dominion. Shariskan is married to Mei Zheng-Yin (Neutral 10th-level Fighter), an Ochalean warrior who joined the Scarlet Plumes several years ago; they have three sons, the elder of whom, Hesen, is ten years old.

Personality: Shariskan is a shrewd and calculating man, with a particular aptitude for military logistics and organization. He is respected by his men, who trust him and carry out his orders without question, being more attached to the company than to their countries of origin. Shariskan is wary of the individuals he surrounds himself with - even if he gives the impression of trusting them, in truth he always tries to keep countermoves prepared against eventual back stabbings. Despite having worshipped the Immortal Alphaks in the past only to win his favour before battles, Shariskan has been unavoidably drawn - partly due to the presence of Arkias at his side - to embrace his patron's full doctrine, including his Alphatia-hating dogma; he is not particularly bloodthirsty himself, but encouragement of pillaging and violence on his men's part and toleration of evil and necromantic magic have become common behaviours to him. Nevertheless, even if he regularly asks for Arkias's advice, Shariskan's list of priorities continues to be firstly augmenting his own power and wealth, secondly the welfare of the Scarlet Plumes, and only third his religious observance - anyway, if the former two can be obtained while following the latter, all the better.

Goals: Shariskan plans to offer the service of his mercenary army (together with that of Vackelin) to Ericall and receive a dominion as pay. According to the plan Shariskan has conceived with Vackelin and Arkias, the former will try to get quite a large slice of land, and then will cede a part of it to the latter as vassals, thereby in Shariskan's plan, creating a large land block under the control of him and his army. Once in place as a dominion-ruler, Shariskan will strive to build a small realm and make it survive; he will not hesitate to betray the king at the first possible occasion just to please his Immortal patron, but will openly side against the king only if this suits his best interests and those of his company.

Dominion Choice: Shariskan will try to get a coastal dominion, preferably on the eastern Norwold coast south of the Great Bay (north or south of Oceansend will make no difference), in order to have ready contact, supply, and escape lines to other lands, allies, and employers. He would like to get the title of count from the king, and elevate Arkias and Vackelin to baronial status as his vassals.

Special Features: Shariskan rides Sharpclaw, a large trained and extremely fierce hippogriff (+2 size modifier; see *Rules Cyclopedia*, pages 214-215). When on hippogriff-back, he usually fights with a lance or with his magical shield and "Warbringer" wielded one-handed. While on foot he prefers wielding his bastard sword two-handed. Besides those listed below, Shariskan owns many other magic items with varied effects, taken as gifts or rewards from his employers. Shariskan's mercenary company, the Scarlet Plumes, is a large force

of 1000 men (many are Thyatians, but more than half come from various places on the Isle of Dawn and the southern islands), made up of crossbowmen, heavy infantry, artilleryists, and some light cavalry (not counting Vackelin's Thundering Hoofs); the company is famous for efficiency and ruthlessness, and is quite loyal to Shariskan - even if it only harbors a few worshippers of Alphaks.

Relevant Possessions: *Banded mail* +3, *dagger* +4 of *biding*, *shield* +2 of *proof against cold*, "Warbringer" *bastard sword*.

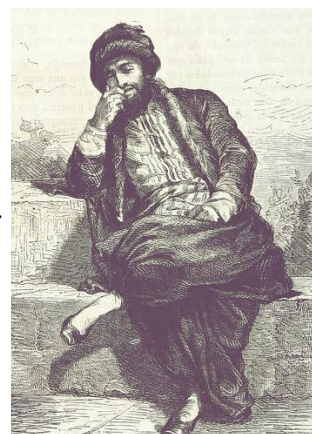
Source: [Tharquil's homepage](#) (in French; not available anymore on the web).

Shebb Woolsey

Shrewd, well-travelled master rogue from Karameikos

Neutral 23rd-level Thief

Str 13, Int 12,
Wis 17, Dex 18,
Con 15, Cha 14



Appearance: Is in fact 155 years old - but keeps his appearance magically at 40 - medium height (5'9" tall), with fair complexion and a lithe and limber body, despite some pounds added to his frame by infrequent action (156 lbs.). He has thinning brown hair, a none-too-thick beard, moustache, and a sly but encouraging smile. Shebb has small green eyes, covered by a pair of spectacles (stolen from a wizard). He is

often heard aching from an uncountable number of alleged old wounds. Shebb dresses quite simply and practically, always carrying on him in various pouches and pockets - regardless of social circumstances - the most unusual trinkets and tools of his trade.

Background: Shebb was born in Halavos (nowadays Kelvin, Karameikos), about fifty years before Traladara was conquered by the Thyatian Empire. His father's ancestors were Darokinian mercenary leaders who had fought on the side of the Black Count of the Moor (Morphail Gorevitch-Wozlany) in the Vampire War which ravaged northern Traladara in the first half of the 8th century AC. Their descendants chose to stay in Traladara after the count's people fled to the Highlands, and had settled in the tiny village which was all that remained of the once mighty city of Halavos. Due to their ancestors' allegiance they were despised by everyone and considered a dishonoured family, but continued to sell their services as mercenaries to the most unscrupulous of the local petty lords. Shebb did not like to follow the military path his father had planned for him, but spent his youth associating with bad company, frequently running away from home, wasting his time in trivial pastimes (like drinking, gambling, and sex), and even turning to do illicit activities himself. In fact, he and his fellow wastrels took turns daring one another to take risks, in order to inspire greater excitement with each new challenge - this swiftly brought them beyond the border of the law, and Shebb learned many thieving skills in his adolescence, like cutpursing, pickpocketing, burgling, shadowing, and so on. When his fellows turned more violent, his family gave him an ultimatum - follow in his father's steps or

leave! Instead he decided his time with both was over, and travelled to the city of Marilenev (nowadays Specularum), where he started a promising career as a thief, also dabbling in trade and city politics. His good-willed nature, however, often brought Shebb at odds with his own allies and patrons, and he had to flee the city after exposing an intrigue (by one of the guilds he had worked for so far) he felt was unfair. Shebb, then about 30 years old, travelled east to Thyatis City, attaching himself to a local prominent senator, for whom he performed many tasks - from trade, protection, and information, to bribing and spying. Thyatis' troubled internal situation and the time of desegregation the empire was going through ensured there was quite a space for illicit activities and intrigue. He earned quite a lot of money in this time and kept a comfortable lifestyle; his patron's dealings also taught him how things really went among men - nothing was done for nothing, everything and everyone had a cost, be they persons, feelings, ideals. Shebb and the senator's daughter also fell in love with one another and started a passionate affair; however, when the senator presented his daughter the choice between staying with Shebb and marrying the scion of another wealthy senatorial family, the girl chose the latter to ensure a future for herself and her future children. Shebb's heart was broken, and he left Thyatis. He wandered the Known World for many years, associating at times with traveling adventurers, earning much money in one place and stopping for many years more in another, only to leave again when he had spent everything. He alternated short and intense times of activity and long times of inactivity, and as the years went on without having given a direction to his life, he felt the necessity to use *potions of longevity* and other magical means to keep

himself young as the world grew older around him. In the last twenty years or so he has more or less constantly associated himself with an adventuring group which included the wizard Knolimer Knolin (see his own entry), the fighter Unice Ethans, the paladin Ethendril h'Caramore, and others; together with them, he decided to head for Norwold to attend the Spring Fair and see what this new adventure has to offer.

Personality: Shebb is a good-willed person; he has no particular sympathy for laws and rules, and does not care about them as long as breaking them causes no harm or does not put anyone in danger. He has an easy-going nature that allows him quickly to become friends with nearly anyone, but possess little leadership skills and was never one to lead others, favouring the role of advisor or right-arm to those in command. Shebb is down-to-earth and somewhat cynical, as his past life has given him insight about how the world and men really work; he also appreciates and respects other people who assume this attitude, because he thinks they will fare better in their lives. On the other hand, he looks down with commiseration on idealists, who in his opinion will soon be disappointed when the world shows them its true face. Shebb still longs for the carefree time he had in his youth, and devotes himself to those same pursuits as then, whenever he can; the result is that he accumulates large sums of money in short times of frantic, adrenaline-filled activity, and then sits down to spend and enjoy them for much longer times - this explains his quite low level, compared to his long life.

Goals: Shebb is still trying to figure out what his purpose in life will be - but after more

than a century and a half, it is a little doubtful if he will manage to find it. He is a man who lives for the day, and his arrival in Norwold is perfectly in line with that: he wants to establish a dominion, try his skills at rulership, and use his hold as a base for further adventures and thieving operations; this is all he needs to know at the moment. Despite his lack of leadership talent and organizational qualities, in the long run - if the need arises - he will use his personal funds from adventuring and thieving activities to make his subjects' lives better.

Dominion Choice: Shebb is interested in the various thieving guilds and criminal organizations which operate in the infamous town of Landfall. In the hope of making contact with them and getting a slice of the town's business, he will likely select a dominion not far from Landfall, maybe north of the Skaufskogr Hills.

Special Features: Shebb is the quintessential rogue: his long life has allowed him to master quite a wide range of skills and abilities - from swindling to stealth, from pickpocketing to trap lore, from bargaining to spying, from lockpicking to prestidigitation, and many others. He is deadly swift with the dagger, both in melee and especially from a distance, and always keeps various daggers hidden on his person; he is also quite good at swordplay, but does not like fighting in melee and always tries to solve a conflict with other means than a battle - or, if forced to fight, tries to get the upper hand through subterfuge, agility, and treachery rather than sheer force.

Relevant Possessions: *Boots of speed, leather armour +3, ring of life protection, rod of weaponry.*

Source: M5 Talons of Night.

SHUREN

*Mystical
elementalist of
light from Vestland*

Neutral 15th-level
Light Elementalor

Str 8, Int 11,
Wis 12, Dex 18,
Con 16, Cha 13



Appearance: 26 year old fair-complexioned Northman of medium height (5'11") and build (159 lbs.); Shuren has straight brown hair worn short, azure eyes, high cheekbones, and a lively look. He always wears strange leather armour studded with crystal shards, his magical cesti and sword.

Background: Born in Vestland as Søren, he was apprenticed together with his lesser brother Anders by his father Elrik to become a member of the Light Elementalor sect. Upon completion of their training, the brothers - as was custom in the sect - assumed new names, Søren becoming Shuren and Anders becoming Hanzo.⁵ Then they left together in search for adventure, but after some time Hanzo parted from his brother in order to emancipate himself from his protection, and

⁵ Elementalors customarily change their name upon their entrance in the sect; see the sidebar.

The Elementalor Character Class

Elementalors are individuals belonging to a very ancient, interplanar sect which originated on a faraway Prime Material Plane world named Draconia millennia ago, and which now spans many other planets on the Prime Plane as well as some other Inner and Outer planes. The sect's original goal was the ultimate understanding of the nature of the multiverse as a set of opposites, and preservation of the balance between the energies which make it up. In ancient times the sect broke up into various branches, each one devoted to one of the elemental essences (Air, Earth, Fire, Light, Shadow, and Water); now each branch possesses a number of small cells spread all over the planes, whose goal is to further the primacy of their chosen elemental essence.

The Elementalor character class was first devised by Marco Dalmonte; we will give here a brief and simplified overview of its features¹.

To be eligible as an Elementalor, a character needs a score of at least 12 in Charisma, a score of at least 10 in Wisdom and Constitution, and a Neutral alignment. The class uses the same XP advancement, Hit Dice, saving throws, and armor restrictions of the Magic-User, has the THAC0 of the Thief, and can use all weapons allowed to the Thief class (basically, all ranged and one-handed melee weapons). An Elementalor can use magic items restricted to Magic-User use, but only as long as those items produce

joined another adventuring group, which was to travel beyond the Sea of Dawn. Much time later, as they had promised when they separated, the two brothers returned home to meet their parents again; however, Hanzo was changed and his father was shocked when he learned that he had altered his powers, vowing himself to the power of Shadow. Shuren accused Hanzo of betraying their father's teaching - failing to understand his brother's real motivation behind his choice of Shadow. Hanzo, in fact, was trying to shake free of his elder brother's shadow, something he had suffered since they were children. The two brothers quarrelled and fought but when Hanzo cast a powerful shadow spell against Shuren, their father Elrik interposed himself between the spell and the elder brother, losing his mental sanity due to the power of Hanzo's spell. Shuren then tried to kill the younger brother, but was prevented from doing so by his mother, and Hanzo managed to flee. As his mother, a priestess, learned from the Immortals that - apart from a miracle - only Hanzo himself could have undone the effects of his spell on Elrik, Shuren swore to find him to achieve justice and attempt to heal his father. He then left on his search for Hanzo in the company of a fellow Water Elemental, Shen, heading for Denagoth where he followed the rumours of a mysterious Shadow Lord he believed might have been Hanzo. Disappointed by the results of his search, he was forced to flee the country for his life, together with Shen, and the two by accident ended on board of the wizard-corsair Sieger von Duwn's flying ship, the *Silver Arrow*. The two became part of Sieger's crew, following the captain in many adventures but never managing to find Hanzo. Eventually, when Sieger headed for

effects tied to his own Domain and do not use energies tied to its opposite.

When a character becomes an Elementalor, he assumes a new one-, two- or three-syllable name to mark the beginning of the new path he has chosen and his physical and spiritual renewal due to the **elemental essence** which imbues and permeates his body and soul. The elemental essence is transferred to a candidate by his master, who thus can exercise a degree of control over the disciple's soul (until the disciple reaches 5th level, the master has a limited form of empathy toward him and once per round can issue a one-word, non-suicide command that the disciple must carry out for one round). The elemental essence determines the Elementalor's chosen energy type - called "Domain" - and its opposite as well².

Spellcasting

An Elementalor can **cast arcane spells** using the progression table of Magic-Users; the spell slots allowed for each spell level to represent the maximum number of spells of that level that he can cast. The Elementalor needs not memorize spells beforehand (he can choose which spells to cast among those he knows on the spot), but has to rest for eight hours to replenish his elemental energies. At each level, an Elementalor gains knowledge of a number of new spells equal to half his Charisma score; he can select them among the spells belonging to the spell levels he is able to cast, but at least half of them have to be related to his Domain and none can be related to its opposite. The maximum

Norwold, Shuren decided to leave the captain and set his own domain in Norwold, as a means to manifest his presence to Hanzo and hope to lure his brother into coming to him.

Personality: Shuren is extroverted, debonair, and very brave; he does not particularly love authority figures and despises having to submit to other's orders because he is a free spirit at heart. Despite his independent personality, Shuren is a good-hearted person - while he pursues individual goals most of the time, he will also defend to the hilt those he considers his friends, even at the cost of his own life. Having spent much time on the *Silver Arrow*, Shuren is well-disposed toward his former captain Sieger von Duwn and the other members of the crew.

Goals: Shuren has decided to establish his own domain in Norwold for one purpose only: reaching fame and glory in order to lure his brother Hanzo to him. He believes that Hanzo is thirsting for revenge, and that he will not miss the chance to carry it out if he manages to find his elder brother. Another of his goals in Norwold is trying to meet the Cronos of Crystykk to know from them if there is any other way to restore his father's mental sanity. Moved by those two goals, Shuren will do what is necessary to let a dominion grow - that is, in his opinion, assist in its foundation and then selecting trusted people to manage it - but then he will likely leave for long times to pursue his personal aims, at least until he has managed to solve the matters revolving around his father and Hanzo.

number of spells an Elementalor can know for each spell level is equal to 10 + his Charisma modifier.

When casting a spell, an Elementalor needs to speak, have at least one free hand and a handful of his chosen element near him (a flame, a drop of water, a pinch of sand, etc.), otherwise the spell will not manifest. Also, he uses his own physical energies to power the spell, temporarily losing 2, 4 or 6 points of Constitution when casting a spell of 1st-3rd, 4th-6th, or 7th-9th level, respectively (half that amount if the spell relates to his own Domain). Lost Constitution points are recovered at the rate equal to the Elementalor's Constitution bonus per round (one every two round if the character has no Constitution bonus) - e.g. an Elementalor with a Constitution score of 16 (+2 modifier) recovers 2 lost points of Constitution per round.

Elementalors have their own spell lists - a general one common to every Domain, and one for each Domain. Including here a translation of the class' spell lists from Dalmonte's original writeup in Italian goes beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, at the bottom of this sidebar an usable Elementalor spell list is presented, formed only by spells from the *Rules Cyclopedia* and other canon supplements.

Individual DMs are encouraged to devise their own Elementalor spell list, adding new Domain-specific spells as needed. Only keep in mind that the effects related to each Domain should be roughly the following:

Dominion Choice: Shuren will try to get a dominion in a resourceful and easily accessible area in which a new domain could swiftly rise and prosper; thus he will try to avoid too remote or faraway locations. A site around the Great Bay probably will suit his goals better.

Special Features: As a Light Elemental, Shuren's elemental powers revolve around speed, instantaneous transportation, lightning, and force effects. Shuren's combat style combines those powers with his natural agility and his talent in the boxing unarmed combat style (further augmented by his magical cesti).

Relevant Possessions: Two *cesti* +4, *normal sword* +3, *ring of protection* +3, *ring of spell turning* (5 spells).

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

- *Air:* air, atmosphere, flight, gas, sound;
- *Earth:* earth, petrification, rock, sand, stone, earth and rock shaping;
- *Fire:* fire, magma, high temperatures, explosions;
- *Light:* light, speed, transportation, force, electricity, illusions manipulating light;
- *Shadow:* shadows, darkness, illusions manipulating shadow, mental confusion;
- *Water:* water, liquids, acid, cold energies.

Due to the link between the Elementalor's spells and the six universal essences, an Elementalor gets a +1 bonus on saves against effects tied to his Domain, but suffers a -1 penalty on saves related to its opposite. Also, he imposes a -1 penalty on his opponents' saves against the spells belonging to his own Domain he casts, and damaging spells cast by him and tied to his Domain always inflicts 1 additional point of damage per damage die. An Elementalor suffers as well 1 point of damage less per damage dice from effects (mundane or magical) related to his own Domain.

Other Abilities

Starting from 3rd level, an Elementalor can **research new spells** belonging to his Domain, and from 9th level on he can even research those belonging to other Domains (with the exception of the one opposite to his own). Starting from 9th level, an Elementalor can also **craft magic items**, but those must replicate the effects of one or more of the spells he is able to cast.

An Elementalor possesses a couple of additional special abilities. First of all, his

hard physical and spiritual training grants him a **psychophysical balance** which confers a +1 bonus on saves against all effects which affect the bodily health and structure, or the mind.

Second, each Elementalor possess a form of **elemental resistance** tied to his Domain, as follows:

- *Air*: immunity to magical deafness;
- *Earth*: ignores up to three successful attempts to petrify him;
- *Fire*: ignores damage from non-magical fires for a number of continuous rounds equal to to 1 round per Constitution point;
- *Light*: immunity to magical blindness;
- *Shadow*: possess an infravision up to 60' which is powerful enough to see even through magical darkness;
- *Water*: can breath underwater for a number of minutes per day equal to his Constitution score.

It is rumored that a special branch of Elementalors, called the "Duals", has managed to master two elemental essences at once, gaining access to the powers of both Domains (at the cost of having also two opposites); it is said that such duplicity must always include one Fundamental Domain (Air, Earth, Fire, or Water) and one Transcendent Domain (Light or Shadow).

Elementalor Spell List

The following list, while simpler and smaller than that featured on Marco

Dalmonte's website, has been included here to provide a ready-to-use collection of spells for the NPC named Shuren or any other Elementalor PC or NPC a DM would like to create.

The list has been formed using only spells drawn from canon rules and setting supplements - the *Rules Cyclopedia* and the GAZs series. Most of them are magic-user spells, but spells coming from other classes' lists (Cleric, Druid, Elf Wizard, Halfling Master, Minrothad Merchant Prince, Shadow Elf Shaman, Shaman of Atruaghin, and Shaman of Ethengar) are also featured. Because of the limited number of existing canon spells, you should handle the list with some care. I suggest you to use the guidelines featured in the article [The Color of Magic](#) (by Dan Joyce)³ to add some spice to the listed spells, and to make them consistent with the Domain they belong to.

Some examples. A *magic missile* cast by a Fire Elementalor will be made up of fire or lava, while the one cast by a Shadow Elementalor will be a bolt of dark energy. An *ESP* or *know alignment* spell will allow an Elementalor to read a target's mind or soul through a perception of the proportion in which the six elemental essences are found mixed in the subject. A *disintegrate* will dissolve the ties between the elemental essences which keep together the target's body. A *holy word* will harm all the subjects within range whose proportion of elemental essences is different from the caster's one. A *barrier* cast by an Air or Fire Elementalor will conjure up in the area of effect a number of fire- or air- made rotating blades. A *power*

word kill cast by an Air Elemental will release a sound keen enough to kill a target. A *watcher* from an Earth Elemental will target a stone instead of an animal, while an *entangle* or *web* will cause the victim's feet to become engulfed in the earth itself or strands of clay to sprout from the earth to immobilize a target. A *hunting paint* will cause an Earth Elemental to draw upon the strength of the soil (maybe sprinkling some earth or sand over his body). A *cause fear* cast by a Fire or Shadow Elemental will make the target feel through the caster's eyes the destructive power of fire or the sinister force of shadow, respectively. A *thornspear* in the hand of a Fire or Water Elemental will be made of fire or ice. A *hold person* powered by the Shadow Domain will anchor the targets to their shadows, effectively immobilizing them. *Create monsters* spells cast by a Shadow Elemental will conjure up creatures made of shadow. A Water Elemental's *mirror image* will be made of water or vapor, his *web* will be made of ice, and his *lightning* spells will do damage by acid or cold energy. In the same fashion, a Water Elemental casting *transport through plants* will move through liquids and bodies of water, and his *creeping doom* will summon a movable area of deadly cold. A *shapechange* will allow a Water Elemental's body to become fluid and able to assume the form of other creatures.

In the following list, spells marked by an asterisk (*) are actually reverse form of regular spells. The supplement where the spell is described is also indicated in brackets (RC stands for *Rules Cyclopedia*).

For spells found in the *Rules Cyclopedia*, the character class from whose list the spell has been drawn is also indicated after a slash (MU stands for Magic-User, C for Cleric, and D for Druid).

General Elementalor Spells

1st level: *analyze* (RC/MU), *detect magic* (RC/MU), *magic missile* (RC/MU).

2nd level: *detect evil* (RC/MU), *ESP* (RC/MU), *locate object* (RC/MU).

3rd level: *dispel magic* (RC/MU), *infravision* (RC/MU), *know alignment* (RC/C).

4th level: *enchanted weapon* (GAZ5), *remove curse* (RC/MU), *wizard eye* (RC/MU).

5th level: *contact outer plane* (RC/MU), *truesight* (RC/C).

6th level: *anti-magic shell* (RC/MU), *disintegrate* (RC/MU).

7th level: *lore* (RC/MU), *spell turning* (GAZ12).

8th level: *holy word* (RC/C), *permanence* (RC/MU).

9th level: *immunity* (RC/MU), *survival* (RC/MU).

Air Domain Spells

1st level: *floating disc* (RC/MU), *predict weather* (RC/D), *shield* (RC/MU).

2nd level: *levitate* (RC/MU), *obscure* (RC/D), *web* (RC/MU).

3rd level: *create air* (RC/MU), *fly* (RC/MU), *protection from normal missiles* (RC/MU).

4th level: *control winds* (RC/D), *dispel fog* (GAZ9), *slow** (RC/MU).

5th level: *cloudkill* (RC/MU), *conjure elemental* (RC/MU), *telekinesis* (RC/MU).

6th level: *barrier* (RC/C), *shout* (GAZ8), *weather control* (RC/MU).

7th level: *reverse gravity* (RC/MU), *summon weather* (RC/D).

8th level: *explosive cloud* (RC/MU), *travel* (RC/MU).

9th level: *power word kill* (RC/MU).

Earth Domain Spells

1st level: *pass without trace* (GAZ12), *shield* (RC/MU), *watcher* (GAZ13).

2nd level: *entangle* (RC/MU), *hunting paint* (GAZ14), *web* (RC/MU).

3rd level: *protection from normal missiles* (RC/MU), *slow** (RC/MU), *striking* (RC/C).

4th level: *harden** (RC/MU), *rock door* (GAZ13), *wall of stone* (RC/MU).

5th level: *conjure elemental* (RC/MU), *passwall* (RC/MU), *stoneform* (RC/MU).

6th level: *flesh to stone** (RC/MU), *move earth* (RC/MU), *pass rock* (GAZ13).

7th level: *earthgrip* (GAZ8), *earthquake* (RC/C).

8th level: *statue* (RC/MU), *transport through rock* (GAZ13).

9th level: *meteor swarm* (RC/MU).

Fire Domain Spells

1st level: *cause fear** (RC/C), *faerie fire* (RC/D), *thornspear* (GAZ8).

2nd level: *heat metal* (RC/D), *produce fire* (RC/D), *resist fire* (RC/C).

3rd level: *fireball* (RC/MU), *firebow* (GAZ14), *striking* (RC/C).

4th level: *control temperature 10' radius* (RC/D), *fire gate* (GAZ14), *wall of fire* (RC).

5th level: *conjure elemental* (RC/MU), *fear* (GAZ5), *sword of fire* (GAZ12).

6th level: *barrier* (RC/C), *transmute rock to lava* (GAZ13), *weather control* (RC/MU).

7th level: *delayed blast fireball* (RC/MU), *lower lava* (GAZ13).

8th level: *explosive cloud* (RC/MU), *sword* (RC/MU).

9th level: *meteor swarm* (RC/MU).

Light Domain Spells

1st level: *faerie fire* (RC/D), *light* (RC/MU), *radiance* (GAZ8).

2nd level: *continual light* (RC/MU), *detect invisible* (RC/MU), *invisibility* (RC/MU).

3rd level: *baste* (RC/MU), *invisibility 10' radius* (RC/MU), *lightning bolt* (RC/MU).

4th level: *call lightning* (RC/D), *dimension door* (RC/MU), *protection from lightning* (RC/D).

5th level: *ball lightning* (GAZ9), *telekinesis* (RC/MU), *teleport* (RC/MU).

6th level: *magic door* (RC/MU), *mass invisibility* (RC/MU), *summon object* (RC/MU).

7th level: *sword* (RC/MU), *teleport any object* (RC/MU).

8th level: *force field* (RC/MU), *power word blind* (RC/MU).

9th level: *prismatic wall* (RC/MU).

Shadow Domain Spells

1st level: *cause fear** (RC/C), *darkness** (RC/MU), *sleep* (RC/MU).

2nd level: *continual darkness** (RC/MU), *mirror image* (RC/MU), *phantasmal force* (RC/MU).

3rd level: *bold person* (RC/MU), *silent move* (GAZ12), *slow** (RC/MU).

4th level: *confusion* (RC/MU), *fear* (GAZ5), *ballucinatory terrain* (RC/MU).

5th level: *confound* (GAZ12), *feeblemind* (RC/MU), *bold monster* (RC/MU).

6th level: *create normal animals* (RC/C), *madness* (GAZ12), *projected image* (RC/MU).

7th level: *create normal monsters* (RC/MU), *power word stun* (RC/MU).

8th level: *create magical monsters* (RC/MU), *power word blind* (RC/MU).

9th level: *create any monster* (RC/MU).

Water Domain Spells

1st level: *precipitation* (GAZ5), *resist cold* (RC/C), *thornspear* (GAZ8)

2nd level: *mirror image* (RC/MU), *water walking* (GAZ8), *web* (RC/MU).

3rd level: *lightning bolt* (RC/MU), *water breathing* (RC/MU), *watery form* (GAZ9).

4th level: *control temperature 10' radius* (RC/D), *create water* (RC/C), *ice storm/wall of ice* (RC/MU).

5th level: *ball lightning* (GAZ9), *conjure elemental* (RC/MU), *dissolve* (RC/MU).

6th level: *calm water* (GAZ9), *lower water* (RC/MU), *weather control* (RC/MU).

7th level: *summon weather* (RC/D), *transport through plants* (RC/D).

8th level: *creeping doom* (RC/D), *sword* (RC/MU).

9th level: *shapechange* (RC/MU).

¹ A full writeup of the class (in Italian) is found on [Marco Dalmonte's website](#).

² Opposition between the Domains is determined using the rule for standard elemental opposition, with only one addition: Light opposes Shadow.

³ From "Dragon Magazine" no. 200 (December 1993, Vol. XVIII, No. 7).

SIEGER VON DUWN



Powerful mage and air corsair from Hattias

Neutral 20th-level
Magic-User

Str 7, Int 18, Wis 12,
Dex 17, Con 9, Cha 16

Appearance: 30 years old, tall and slender (5'12"), skinny (168 lbs.); olive skinned, with black, shoulder-length straight hair, and brown eyes with a gloomy look. Always wears clothes in dark colours, usually a short tunic, pants, and high boots.

Background: Sieger's father was a Hattian who was disclaimed by his family when he decided to marry into a small landowning Kerendan family. Against the wishes of his father – who wanted him to become a priest of Khoronus – the 11-year old Sieger joined a wandering wizard. When this guy turned out to be a master of magical disguise and a corsair working for the governments of Minrothad and Thyatis, Sieger became part of the crew of his ship, the *Silver Arrow*, being trained in the arcane arts by his mentor. After the latter had got the *Silver Arrow* enchanted to become a flying ship, Sieger gradually rose through the ranks to become the ship's first mate. Years later, when his mentor disappeared during a trip in an Outer Plane, Sieger managed to seize control of the *Silver Arrow* against possible rivals, and led the ship to Norwold in order to receive a dominion from Ericall and settle down. Among the *Silver Arrow*'s crew - besides Shuren and Ossian (see their own separate

entries) - are his trusted friend Ulf Karlsson (Lawful 12th-level Cleric of Odin, a Heldanner priest who saved Sieger's life years ago during a battle against a white dragon), and the mercenary Baraka de Hutt (Chaotic 14th-level Fighter, a Thyatian-Nuari half-blood swordmaster, devotee of the Immortal Korotiku).

Personality: Sieger is taciturn and serious, determined and pragmatic, and does not like to waste time. He often appears gruff and cold, even cruel in some circumstances, but has a noble soul and does not like to use force unless it is necessary – but in the latter case then he resorts to any means to achieve victory. His thirst for power and for magical knowledge is his only weakness – there is nothing he would not do to become more powerful, and this often leads him to cross the border between good and evil without too much inhibition.

Goals: Sieger wants to settle down from his life of continuous wanderings, creating a dominion of his own to carry on his magical research undisturbed, but he also wishes it to become a prosperous realm in order to satisfy his thirst for power. If there should appear a chance to make his dominion independent from Ericall in the future, so much the better. Sieger is also planning to use his arcane talent for disguise to introduce himself to Ericall on two separate occasions under two different identities – his aim is to establish a dominion for each one of his two identities, and then use some ploy to merge them together under his control.

Dominion Choice: Sieger would like to establish his dominion in an area with natural resources which would allow his realm to prosper – fertile and arable lands

around a great river, or presence of rich mineral deposits would be the best. His first choice will fall on the plains south or west of Leeha.

Special Features: Sieger is a specialist of destructive energy spells and tactical camouflage magics, and has mastered the art of magical disguise to unparalleled levels. Thanks to this ability, he is able to maintain two fictitious, different alternate identities beyond his own, which are impervious to magical means of detection (including a *truesight* spell), but may still be dispelled. Continued practice of fake personas can (very rarely) cause personality disturbances and conflicts in his mind. Sieger is also an expert of the *jeet kune do* martial arts style he learned during a trip to Ochalea.

Relevant Possessions: *Cestus +5/+10 vs undead*, *ring of spell storing* (15 spell levels), *ring of combat power*, *ring of protection +4*, *Silver Arrow* (two-masts, brigantine-class flying ship).

Source: Mystaran Almanacs (Marco Dalmonte).

Siegfried Sixx

Brave and heroic Northman fighter - with a vengeance

Neutral 16th-level Fighter

Str 17, Int 11, Wis 10, Dex 15, Con 17, Cha 13



Appearance: Siegfried is a 31 year old, tall and well-muscled warrior (6'1" tall per 187 lbs.), with short blond hair, beard and moustache, and green eyes. He always wears black, with a black surcoat over his armour, black boots, and black gauntlets. His shield is painted black, and he is now considering painting his plate mail black as well, especially if he intends to wear it at court: he is loath to part with his mails, but he will have to embellish it if it becomes his formal attire. He will have to design a coat of arms for his dominion, and he intends to emblazon it on his armour; certainly it will have black predominant.

Background: Born to a family of Thyatian acrobats of Northman descent, Siegfried acquired wanderlust and a desire to rise in station. A strong man trained with blades, he joined a band of mercenaries, until he realized that the choice of destinations and employers would never be his, and his chance at glory and riches was meagre. He left the company and became an adventurer on his own, free to choose his quests and traveling companions. Ever would he push to lead, decide, and get first pickings, and if rebuffed would part ways with the ungrateful sidekicks. One day treacherous Dimitri Dikhoff took up quarrel with him, and a

fistfight erupted. A lucky punch left Siegfried dazed, so Dimitri grabbed a blade and drove it through him. The villain quickly gathered all of their belongings before his crime was discovered, and left Siegfried to die. No aid came in time, but another companion, Zoltan, brought him back to life. Siegfried knows he owes him, though he has no idea whether the priest ever intends to collect. In the following years, Siegfried adventured for a while together with Arcadius, Celia, Zoltan, and Ney (see their separate entries); then they decided to head to Norwold and parted so that each of them could claim his or her own dominion from Ericall.

Personality: Siegfried is strong of arm and courageous in battle; qualities that he believes make him a natural leader. He is rather reserved, though, and brasher personalities sometimes fail to defer to him. Siegfried lives his life as a story in which he is the hero, and he never stops to put himself in someone else's shoes. Siegfried is uncomfortable with the notion of death (unless he's the one dealing it), ever more so since his own untimely demise and unnatural raising: he does not care for the sight of graveyards, tombs or coffins, or the company of undertakers or the departed, and he especially abhors undead. He is also distrustful of magic; magic-wielding undead are to him an especial kind of wrong in need of rectifying. Hero Siegfried cannot (or will not) see the irony of his situation.

Goals: An unexpected sight greets Siegfried at his arrival in Ericall's court: there stands Dimitri Dikhoff, his murderer, still alive after all those years, also come to the king's call to claim his own dominion! Siegfried's blood freezes cold as he is overwhelmed with a renewed yearning for revenge. From that

moment on, he will be driven by that ultimate goal: to bring Dimitri to his personal brand of justice. Unless he can do it quickly, and he is not certain this is what he craves, his goal might be complicated by the fact that they both will be vassals of Ericall's, in which case Siegfried will patiently yet unrelentingly build up towards that inevitable confrontation. It might involve finding allies, hiring henchmen, training armies, and even developing his dominion most efficiently, but Siegfried will do all of that is required of a lord with an ulterior drive. He both yearns for and dreads its resolution.

Dominion Choice: Siegfried's choice of dominion will be heavily influenced by Dimitri Dikhoff's, and vice-versa. Their enmity may lead them to lay claim to the same lands and fiercely compete over them, or to settle adjacently. This will inevitably lead to disputes over border lines or trading rights or access to resources; any dispute may be the spark that escalates the latent conflict to armed skirmishes and into full-blown warfare.

Special Features: Siegfried often switches fighting style between sword and shield and two-handed sword. In particular, when fighting undead, he typically enters into a battle-frenzy after his first hit, and drops his shield to hack through the undead, with his broadsword in both hands, until they are all returned to the grave. Unbeknownst to Siegfried his resurrection also *geased* him in giving assistance to Zoltan in his quest.

Relevant Possessions: *Armour of the bulwark*, "Death Mate" broadsword.

Source: *Mystaran Almanacs* (Hervé Musseau).

Trent the White

Handsome, pure-hearted former paladin from Heldann

Lawful 17th-level
Fighter

Str 16, Int 9,
Wis 15, Dex 17,
Con 17, Cha 16



Appearance: 31 years old, extremely handsome, with fair complexion, a tall and slender, but muscular, figure (6'1" tall per 176 lbs.). Trent wears his straight dark blonde hair at medium length, with no beard or moustache, and has brown eyes which usually cast a determined and serious look. When no combat or action is to be expected, Trent favours simple clothes in plain colours, often white or grey - otherwise, he always dons his array of magical arms.

Background: Trent was born as Helmut Jaschke in the Heldannic Territories, a second generation Hattian immigrant from Thyatis. Son of a retired army footman, Helmut was raised in the Hattian tradition to believe that the Heldannic Knights were a force of good which had brought order and civilization to the Heldanners. An enthusiast of those ideals himself, Helmut showed outstanding martial skills and, still a youth, was able to become a member of the order in his own right. But as he started to travel the land his countrymen had conquered, Helmut witnessed abuses, oppression, and injustice, and ultimately realized that the Hattian dominion over the Heldanners was indeed a

tyranny and convinced himself that the order's leadership was corrupt and evil. One day, his life changed when he turned on his commander and companions to save a Heldanner family from their abuses and torture; after this deed, he renounced his membership in the Heldannic Order and joined instead the Heldanner rebels against the Knights in the uprising of AC 992-993. Following the defeat of the uprising, Helmut stayed still for a while with the rebels in the Altenwald, then abandoned his homeland to seek adventure in the rest of the world, and gain more experience. He even repudiated his faith in Vanya and was consecrated a paladin of the Immortal Thor, giving up his Hattian name and assuming as his new name "Trent" - the name of the brook where the Heldanner family he had saved a couple of years before had lived, attaching to it the nickname "White" to signify the newfound purity of his ideals. Trent travelled much of the Known World in the subsequent ten years, going as far as Sind and the Alphantian mainland; during his travels he met the Glantrian wizard-scholar Adik de Chevas, and the two adventured together for a while. In the last few years Trent has had many adventures in the wilderness of Norwold, and has decided to stay there to help defend the land from the encroaching expansionism of the Heldannic Knights and the Thyatian Empire. He has thus resolved to put an end to his days as a travelling paladin, and settle down to rule a dominion in the Kingdom of Norwold. This goal has brought him, alongside his faithful squire Heydar (Lawful 5th-level Fighter, a 20-years old former slave from Vertiloch), to the court of Alpha to attend the Spring Fair, where he met his old friend Adik again.

Personality: Trent is the exemplar champion of good who strives to erase from the world any trace of evil and injustice. He is courageous against all perils, honourable even towards his worst enemies, and true to his word even where this could cause him some troubles. He has seen much of the civilized world and hopes that the young Kingdom of Norwold will develop along more fair directions than its older counterparts did; at the moment he considers the Alphatian Empire to be the lesser evil, but dreams of a future Norwold as a kingdom of good, independent from any empire. In pursuing his ideals and those of his patron Thor (whom he still worships despite having abandoned his status as paladin),⁶ Trent is strict and uncompromising, to the point of ignoring the opinions of others. In private dealings, he is extroverted and easy-going, demonstrating special sensitivities when talking about or discussing topics which might hurt or upset the listener. Once at the court of Alpha, Trent - who is beautiful, noble-hearted, and still unmarried - will likely become the object of the attention of many ladies and noblewomen, but he does not trifle with heart's matters: he might have again, as he has had in the past, a short-lived affair with a woman he likes (provided this does not break her heart), but will start a

⁶ M2 Vengeance of Alphaks (set some years in the future with respect to this article) has Trent the White as a dominion-ruling paladin; this conflicts with the BECMI rules, according to which only a wandering Fighter of Name-level (or higher) can choose the Paladin class option. Then, in order to make this NPC consistent with the BECMI rules, I had Trent giving up his paladin status (but not his faith in Thor) to become a dominion-ruler in Norwold.

family only with his true love - once he finds it.

Goals: Trent wants to help build a righteous kingdom of Good in Norwold; his aim is to establish a strong dominion, make it prosper, eradicate any evil nestled within the realm, and advise King Ericall to make sure he does not depart from the path of Good. He is particularly harsh in opposing any expansionism from the Heldannic Knights and from the Thyatian Empire, which he considers the root that spawned the tyrannical Order of Vanya. In voicing this opposition Trent could find an ally and friend in Geoffrey of Heldann - even if the latter is far less combative than he, himself.

Dominion Choice: Trent would like to set up a dominion in an area which ensures resources, prosperity, and chances of development; if he spots a wilderness or dangerous area with those characteristics, he will not hesitate to choose it. If given the chance to choose amongst two equally good areas, Trent will likely pick the one nearer to the southern area of Norwold - he would like to be in the front line should a conflict against the Heldannic Knights break out.

Special Features: Trent is a formidable fighter both on horse and on foot; he rides his powerful white steed, called Starkesross. He is a master of the longsword, which he likes to use in sword-and-shield combat style, but is also quite capable with the lance from horseback. When fighting on foot, if battling against large creatures or monsters, he usually relies on his magical two-handed sword to cause more severe wounds.

Relevant Possessions: *Dagger +3, plate mail +3, shield +5 of reflecting, "Starshine" longsword, two-handed sword +3.*

Source: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, Mystaran Almanacs.

Weston the Tall



*Proud, well-travelled
wannabe merchant
from Darokin*

Lawful 15th-level Thief

Str 12, Int 7, Wis 16,
Dex 16, Con 9, Cha 15

Appearance: 36 years old, slightly tanned complexion, tall and spindly (6'3" tall per 179 lbs.); Weston has hazel eyes and wavy, medium-length light brown hair. He lost his left eye in a fight many years ago, and now wears an eyepatch to cover the disfiguring scar that is left; his face is also marked by many other little scars which give him a worn and somewhat wrinkly appearance. Weston has the attitude of a merchant - talkative, likeable, and sociable - and tends to dress like one, with tight-fitting, boldly-coloured clothes, hats, and surcoats. He always wears a jade bracelet on his left wrist (a jewel left to him by his deceased mother).

Background: Aldo Weston was born in Darokin City, the son of a merchant of House Mauntea who died when he was still a child. Aldo and his brother Berto grew up with his mother's family, but the woman's relatives and the untrustworthy administrators she

had chosen to handle her deceased husband's fortunes took away most of the money the two boys could inherit. While Berto managed to get a respectable job in one of their maternal uncle's shops, Aldo was drawn by the wish to re-establish his father's fortune, and tried to make a name as a trader for himself. His pride, lack of administrative skills, and scarce grasp for accountability pushed his business more than once beyond the legal boundaries and into the shadiest areas of activity. When his mother died, Aldo further distanced himself from his relatives, and problems with the law forced him to move first to Athenos, then to Ierendi. In the island kingdom, Aldo became known as "Weston the Tall" due to his height and lean figure, and this nickname remains attached to him ever since. He perfected his agility and fencing skills, but - despite his closeness to one of the aristocratic families who sat in the Tribunal of the kingdom - his fortune as a merchant did not improve at all; instead, he was involved in some pirating and smuggling activities, which forced him again to move. In the next years, he was always on the move, traveling to most of the cities of the Known World, and never staying in the same place for more than a few weeks. He usually managed to make a lot of money during those stays, until the local authorities began to suspect him of some crime or catch him red-handed. But Aldo always managed to escape with his life and enough money to restart a business elsewhere. Eventually, his travels brought him to the virgin Kingdom of Norwold, where he has decided to start a dominion and a - hopefully longer-lived - legal business. Besides a large sum of money, Aldo comes to Alpha to attend the Spring Fair followed by three Darokinian characters: the trader Dalia Hogarth (Neutral 4th-level

Thief, one of his last employees), by his nephew Elio Weston (Chaotic 3rd-level Thief, who left the home of Aldo's brother Berto without the latter's permission), and by his apprentice Charles Isen (Neutral 5th-level Thief).

Personality: Weston is good-willed and always filled with the best intentions; he would like to be a successful trader, but he feels he has no time (actually, intelligence) for slow, complicated laws and regulations, so his fast-paced attitude invariably pits him against the system; this is why he has become a better thief than he will ever become a merchant. In fact, Weston sometimes breaks the laws in such a gross (and unwitting, as far as he has cared to know) way that even the authorities cannot believe their eyes. This does not mean that Weston has not learned anything from his past adventures: he knows of his difficulties to keep a legal profile for a long time, and he has learned always to look out for dangers, troubles, and to retain a swift way out of any situation or place. Weston has otherwise a likeable, even charming dashing personality; he is generally trustworthy (as much as a thief can be), but is also quite proud and tends quickly to become irritated and offended when one questions his motives, actions, skills, feelings, or insults his honour. In the past, Weston has seduced more than one woman, and has had many affairs and relationships - none of which has ever lasted due to his way of life, being always on the move; it would not be odd to see one day one of Weston's former lovers knocking at his door in search of revenge or holding a child of his in her arms.

Goals: Weston wants to see if he can at last establish a successful mercantile enterprise in a new region like Norwold where no one

(supposedly) knows his fame or past deeds. He will put all his efforts into reaching this goal, but given his ascertained lack of skills in this area of business, his success will likely depend on how trustworthy or able the advisors are that he will surround himself with. Nevertheless, Weston will keep eyes open for any sign of danger, and will be tempted to pack his belongings and skip the region again if the prospects start looking too bad for him.

Dominion Choice: Weston will choose a location good enough to support a mercantile business - anywhere on a large river or on the seacoast will do for him, provided the area is not too far in the interior or in a (much) too cold climate band. When choosing his dominion he will also consider if the places can provide a safe haven for him in case of danger, and what escape routes are available.

Special Features: Weston has excellently mastered many thieving skills, feats of agility, and stealth. He can also be quite persuasive and manipulative, if only his plans were not so simple and totally lacking the subtlety they would need to ensure success. Luckily for him, Weston has also an uncanny sense for danger, which has saved his life and freedom on more than one occasion. In combat, he favours the use of the rapier, often using it to fight in two-weapon combination with a main-gauche in his left hand; Weston is also quite proficient in the use of the longbow and of the throwing dagger.

Relevant Possessions: Two *daggers* +2, *normal sword (rapier)* +3, *leather armour* +3, *ring of protection* +1.

Source: CM1 The Test of the Warlords, CM2 Death's Ride, CM3 Sabre River, M1 Into the Maelstrom, Mystaran Almanacs, provisional write-up by Giampaolo Agosta.

WINNIFRED OF THE LAKE

Spirit-guided oracle of Tubak from Ethengar

Lawful 15th-level Cleric of Ixion

Str 10, Int 11,
Wis 17, Dex 12,
Con 17, Cha 14



Appearance: 32 years old, very attractive, fair complexioned, tall and slender (5'11" tall per 141 lbs.), with long, luxuriant, wavy golden hair, and large grey eyes. Winnifred's hairstyle and clothing reflect her Ethengarian upbringing: she usually straightens her hair with hot irons and wears them in the elaborate, precise, and beautiful styles of upper-rank Ethengarian women; her sophisticated dresses are in that style as well, with rich jewellery and white, pink, and orange as prevailing colours.

Background: Winnifred⁷ Gwendadottir was born in the Heldannic Territories, the

⁷ In M2 Vengeance of Alphaks this NPC's name is listed as "Winnefred" in the heading of the character's capsule on page 32, but as "Winnifred" another two times in the same paragraph and again on page 23. I have thus chosen "Winnifred" as the correct spelling of her name.

illegitimate daughter of a native freeholder and a *thrall* woman from Westrouрке. The girl's growing up took place against the backdrop of the growing resistance that the native Heldanners were putting on against the Heldannic Order. Her childhood was also very unhappy because she and her mother were kept as servants in the household of her father, while being despised by rest of her father's family and having to withstand all sorts of insults and abuses. In AC 978, Winnifred's father took part in the great Heldanner rebellion against the knights; the uprising failed and when the Order's retaliation came one year later, the knights trapped the man's family in his mansion and burned it to the ground, killing all the occupants in the process. Winnifred was left surprisingly unharmed by the fire which engulfed her home and family. People in the area began speaking with awe of the child that survived the fire, and the knights began searching for her, fearing she might give new breath to the unrest. Winnifred, who had not yet reached an age of ten, started to travel from place to place in southern Heldann, helping local families with the healing powers she realized she possessed, and receiving food and shelter as payment. A mysterious being of light began to appear in her dreams and spoke to her, revealing he was the Immortal source of her powers and that he had chosen her as one of his champions on Mystara; Winnifred found solace in this relation, and started to worship and pray to the Immortal. At last, the Heldannic Knights caught up with Winnifred on the shores of a small lake at the borders between Heldann and Ethengar; the girl, thanks to the magical *ring of water walking* she had found during her wanderings, ran over the water's surface to the centre of the

lake to escape the knights, all the while using her divine powers to shield herself from the knights' missiles and hindering their attempts to get close to her. While the struggle went on, a patrol of Uighur horsemen arrived; the Ethengarians chased away the knights and persuaded Winnifred to join them, although they were intimidated by the girl's powers. Winnifred thus went to live with the Uighurs and learned the lifestyle of the Ethengarian nomads; after the circumstances the nomads had found her in, she became known to them as "Winnifred of the Lake". The tribal priests told her the being she prayed to was the Immortal Tubak the Lawgiver (the alias of Ixion worshipped in Ethengar) and, surprised by Winnifred's innate gifts and despite the fact she was a foreigner, they agreed to formally train her as a priestess. In the span of a few years Winnifred was able to become a powerful and respected priestess of Tubak in her own right. Since she was anyway considered an odd and alien addition to the tribe's life, she went to live on a small islet in Yakgar Lake, in the Uighur lands, famous for its hot water springs; there she became a sort of hermit or oracle for the Uighurs, only enjoying the company of the nature spirits who lived in the lake and those of occasional questing heroes, khans and chiefs in search of advices, or adepts and priests seeking counsel. Winnifred adventured much in the steppes those years, even visiting the Spirit World through the gate on the top of the World Mountain. When conflict between people from Heldann and the Uighurs broke out again in AC 994, Winnifred preferred to avoid taking sides in it, and moved from Ethengar to seek her place in the world elsewhere. In the next few years, she travelled Wendar, the Denagothian Plateau, and then the Norwold

region. At last, she received omens from her patron, who urged her to settle down in Norwold, establish a community of worshippers of him and a powerful domain, and contribute to defend the fledgling Kingdom of Norwold. She accepted gladly and enthusiastically the content of this omen and decided to take part in the dominion-awards which will take place during the upcoming Spring Fair.

Personality: Winnifred is a kind-hearted, friendly, and sympathetic person, with an extroverted personality despite her lonely youth, and a great willingness to work in concert with others. She is very spontaneous in her dealings and immediately cuts to the chase without beating around the bush. Winnifred is optimistic about people, and used to being over-indulgent with them, often allowing anyone a second chance to prove him or herself. When silent, she always appears to cast her gaze beyond worldly appearances and have a more thorough understanding of things; she is as well capable of putting a great focus on anything she does, and will become an efficient dominion ruler. While she has not been that used to the most advanced trappings of civilization during her life, Winnifred has learned to know and enjoy them, and loves all the fine, beautiful, and precious things one can get through magic, trade, and money. Winnifred has had a number of short flirts with occasional visitors during her time as "oracle" of Yakgar Lake (one even with a being from the Spirit World!), but none of those ever spawned a durable relationship. She is still unsure if her role as Tubak's champion will ever allow her to cultivate a love story, but she would be glad to discover it will.

Goals: Winnifred's goal in Norwold is to fulfil her Immortal patron's omen: build a stable and orderly domain ruled by the word of the law, establish in it a new centre of Tubak worshippers (likely through establishment of a new church), and help the young King Ericall to develop his realm and govern it with justice. Winnifred will be ambitious in pursuing Tubak's will and, once in possession of a dominion from Ericall, she will strive to expand her holdings and increase her influence in the kingdom, all the way remaining one of Ericall's most loyal supporters. Soon after the establishment of her dominion, she might benefit from the arrival of some adepts and priests who have heard of her in Ethengar, and who would like to offer her their services.

Dominion Choice: Winnifred will choose a dominion located in an area which offers good opportunities for future expansion, and which will be in an easily accessible but still defensible area. Any inland location along one of Norwold's main rivers or along the coast of a shielded or secluded bay will suit her tastes.

Special Features: Winnifred is not a fighter at heart and in combat mostly makes use of the powers granted her by Tubak for protection, healing, and to disable, knockout, hinder, or capture her opponents. If the need arises, she uses her spells without regret to harm, and her melee weapons to strike, most of all if confronted by the minions of evil or chaos. Winnifred's most trusted companion and advisor is Sechegur Khan, a lawful ancestor spirit⁸ of an Ethengarian khan of the distant past that she

⁸ Consider Sechegur Khan a lawful ghost in game terms.

freed from the evil spirits who kept him prisoner in the Spirit World and who has since decided to assist her. Sechegur appears as a powerful middle-aged Ethengarian horse warrior; he only manifests himself when Winnifred asks for his advice or when he wishes to communicate with her or defend her from harm.

Relevant Possessions: *Mace +4* (named "Lawgiver"), *plate mail +3*, *ring of water walking*, *Tubak's Eye*.

Source: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks.

Zoltan Hytaxius

Albino priest on a quest for the Immortal Ilsundal

Neutral 19th-level Cleric of Ilsundal

Str 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Dex 10, Con 13, Cha 17

Appearance: Zoltan's appearance is very much defined by his albinism. His skin, hair, and his eyes are all white; in addition, he wears white clerical robes, adding to his ghostly cast. His medallion, which also acts as his holy symbol, is in the shape of a white tree whose branches wrap around his neck, and contains a single living root that seems to float in a sea of whiteness above his navel. Zoltan is 5'11" tall and weighs 154 lbs.; he tends to travel light, and most of his gear is hidden beneath his robes or in concealed pockets. He is actually 32-years old, but there is an ageless quality to him, from his albinism, mannerism, and perhaps some tinkering from his patron Immortal, making him seem at times either young, old, or middle-aged, and most often of

indeterminable age, adding to his sense of etherealness and mystical wisdom.

Background: Born to a poor family of Thyatis City, Zoltan Hytaxius became the leader of a band of teenage bullies as a way of not being rejected as a monster for his lack of skin coloration. When the girl he loved died of an overdose, he felt disgusted by the so-called civilization and left for the west. In order to avoid encounters he didn't follow roads, roaming aimlessly through fields and forests alike. One day he stumbled upon a group of elves from the Vyalia clan, inhabiting the lands between Thyatis and Karameikos. They treated him with respect, not giving any particular attention to his discoloration. The local treekeeper, saying his patron Ilsundal had forecast that his fate would be very important to the elves, taught Zoltan the Way of Ilsundal in only a few years - an amazingly very short time from the elves' perspective. He also gave him a medallion with a root he had cut from the living *Tree of Life*, telling him he would know what to do with it when the time came. Still unsure of his path, but now a young cleric who had abandoned his Thyatian past, he left the Vyalia in search of his destiny. In the following years, he adventured together with Celia, Arcadius, Siegfried Sixx, and Ney (see their own entries); then, they decided to head to Norwold and parted, so that each of them could claim one dominion from Ericall. A mischievous sprite, Maeva ap Lywell Van Gwernach (Neutral 9th-level Sprite), colloquially nicknamed "Tac" after the way she punctuates her many practical jokes, accompanies Zoltan, generally invisibly.

Personality: Zoltan generally seems cold, distant, alien, yet authoritative and

trustworthy, traits based largely on his appearance that he has fostered over the years. But for all the engineered emotional distance, his close friends can find clues that he cares deeply. Zoltan fears that if he follows his emotions, he might slip back to his old, best-forgotten ways, so he keeps his decisions rational - or rationalizes them - with an end-justifies-the-means approach. Yet at his core he is full of humanity; he always smiles at Tac's shenanigans, and cherishes Celia's attentions.

Goals: Ilsundal plans to return the Shiye clans of Norwold to his fold.⁹ He knows the task will be arduous, as they follow Eiryndul and have left the Kingdom of Shiye-Lawr to

⁹ Zoltan comes from the Mystaran Almanac's version of Norwold, in which sources like Dawn of the Emperors and Wrath of the Immortals are assumed to take precedence over older modules, like CM1 Test of the Warlords (where the Foresthomes have their *Trees of Life*, and thus worship Ilsundal). The background of Zoltan, **differently from the rest of the article**, assumes that the Foresthome elves, belonging to the Shiye, do not worship Ilsundal, but his rival Eiryndul. This choice was made to respect Zoltan's authored original background. Anyway, if you want to use Zoltan in the version of Norwold used in the rest of the article and as presented in the "A Traveller's Guide to Norwold" article (see "Threshold" issue no. 7), you could simply assume that Ilsundal, foreseeing some vague but great danger for the elves of the Known World (i.e. the events told in Wrath of the Immortals), has sent Zoltan to strengthen his hold over the Foresthomes of Norwold, introducing among them a new and more powerful species of *Tree of Life*. Otherwise, you could also assume that only a part of the Foresthomes worship Ilsundal, who has sent Zoltan to convert the other ones which still follow Eiryndul.

remain free folk. For that purpose he has groomed the strangest champion, one best suited to challenge the trickery of the northern elves. As Ericall called for heroes to gain dominion over the vast region he claims, which would include the Foresthomes, he judged the time right to reveal to Zoltan visions of his plans and knowledge of the growing of a daughter Tree of Life. Zoltan has no particular interest in Ericall's kingdom or any of the human lords, but will use them if they can help in his quest. Any elven lord or human ruler with an interest in elven matters will have his particular attention.

Dominion Choice: Zoltan's task is to walk among the Shiye elves of Norwold, share with them the wisdom and bounties of Ilsundal, and guide them towards the divine guidance of his patron Immortal. He will choose the clan most amenable to his teachings and give them the gift of a *Tree of Life*, then expand and cultivate his spiritual influence along with offshoot trees throughout the Foresthomes. Although that initial Foresthome may represent Zoltan's dominion by Ericall's recognition, the priest will in no way feel bound by this official recognition: it is just a starting point for his quest.

Special Features: Zoltan is the main protagonist in a plot initiated by Ilsundal to increase his sphere of influence over Norwold. Zoltan prays to his patron for guidance and spells as all priests do, but at critical junctures he may receive special advice, direction, and spell complement to better assist in his quest. Zoltan may also incant through a long, more taxing ritual using his medallion; in that case, he can tap

the lingering power of the root to revoke any spell ever channelled through a *Tree of Life* of that lineage. Zoltan has also learned to stage his ethereal appearance to maximum effect. Zoltan's most prized possession is a root cut from the Vyalian *Tree of Life*, part of his *medallion of the living root*; Ilsundal recently hinted in dreams that Zoltan would imbue the root with the Immortal's divine essence, and grow a *Tree of Life* and an elven kingdom in the north.

Relevant Possessions: *Bracers of armour AC 2, hardwood staff, medallion of the living root, scroll of creation.*

Source: *Mystaran Almanacs* (Hervé Musseau).

MAGIC ITEMS NEW AND UNUSUAL

Many of the NPC claimants described above possess strange, unique, and unusual magic items. Those items which can't be found in the Rules Cyclopedia are described below.

Amulet of mind shielding. This amulet grants its wearer a +3 bonus on saves against all spells and effects aimed at controlling, charming, fascinating, or dominating one's mind.

Armband of absorption. This magical armband absorbs any arcane or divine spell of 1st through 5th level, using one charge each time; the item has five charges left and is not rechargeable.

Armband of strength. See AC4 *Book of Marvellous Magic*, pages 9-10.

Armour of the bulwark. This armour is a *plate mail* +2 which continuously radiates a *protection from normal missiles* and which reduces the damage done by spells by 1 point of damage per damage die (to a minimum of zero).

Black steel bastard sword. This awesome *bastard sword* +3 is made of black steel; an historian looking at it may recognize the sword as “Hugrakkur” (“Courageous” in the Heldanner tongue), the weapon which was once brandished by the hero Heldann ‘the Brave’ at the great battle of Gil Eldur (also known as the battle of Feuerhals) against the troll army which had invaded his land (AC 710). The sword’s current owner, Mark Acres, has still not realized the historical importance of the weapon. “Hugrakkur” requires a Strength of at least 15 to be properly handled (otherwise the wielder suffers a -2 penalty on attack rolls and the weapon inflicts only half base damage) and does not grant any bonus to attack rolls, but adds a +3 bonus on damage; moreover, if gripped it protects the wearer like a *ring of fire resistance*, shields him from all *detect*, *ESP*, and *know alignment* spells, and reduces the damage from any fall to a maximum of 1d6 damage.

“Benefactress” broadsword. Maltus Fharo’s weapon functions as a *normal sword* +3 of *healing*. It has a decorated sword hilt which makes it resemble a Darokin rapier in design, but its blade is actually wider and heavier.

Boots of wall walking. These boots allow the wearer to stand or walk on any vertical surface as if it were flat.

Bracers of armour AC 2. They function in the same manner as a *buckle of armour*; see AC4 Book of Marvellous Magic, page 21.

Brooch of protection +1. Functions exactly like a *ring of protection* +1.

Buckle of armour AC 3. See AC4 Book of Marvellous Magic, page 21.

Buckle of lockpicks +15%. See AC4 Book of Marvellous Magic, page 21.

Cape of night and fire. This short cape (it only reaches the upper thighs) was crafted by the Modrigswerg; it is black on one side and red on the other, and can be worn on either side. The cape confers a +2 bonus to AC on the wearer, but its other additional powers depend on which side of the cloak is worn as the outside one; however, those powers do not function under true daylight. If the black is outside, the wearer gains *infravision* (up to 90’), has the same powers of an *elven cloak*, and can invoke at will a *darkness* spell centered on himself; if the red is outside, the wearer gains the benefits of a *ring of fire resistance*, and can cast at will the spells *light* and *produce fire*.

Cape of protection. See AC4 Book of Marvellous Magic, page 24.

Chain mail of the forest lady. This armour is a *chain mail* +4. Quillan Elmgrower, the armour’s current owner, earned it as a gift from one fey lady after he successfully recovered the remains of the creature’s deceased elf lover in the depths of the Great Forest of Geffron; the armour had been the one owned by the deceased elf in life. The small rings of its chain are set in patterns

which resemble leaves and flowers. The armour appears to be made of silver, and emanates emerald reflections.

Chameleon blade. This simple knife is in truth a +3 weapon; at the owner's will, it can change into a dagger, short sword or normal sword, all the while preserving its +3 magical bonus.

Charm of proof against poison. The wearer of this amulet never makes saving throws versus poison with a penalty (i.e. if the sum of bonuses and penalties ends up giving a penalty, the save is unmodified instead); it also grants a +2 bonus on all saves versus poison, and also allows a special save at 17 versus those poisons which do not allow for a saving throw.

Cloak of protection +1. Functions exactly like a *ring of protection +1*.

Coin of good luck. This coin grants its owner a +1 bonus on AC and a +1 or +10% bonus (as appropriate) on all rolls to determine if the character suffers some adverse effect, including saving throws; the bonus does not apply to attack and damage rolls.

Dagger +4 of alignment detection. This dagger's hilt has some small colourful gems inlaid into it; if the dagger is pointed toward a creature, the gems glow in a given pattern accordingly to the target's alignment, allowing the wielder of the dagger to read it as a *know alignment* spell was cast.

Dagger of the fool. This weapon functions as a normal *dagger* +2 when used to strike in melee; when thrown, however, it picks its

own target, choosing randomly among all available ones - friends or foes alike - within 30' from the thrower (up to a maximum of 20 possible closest targets). Rolls to hit and damage are then carried on normally, regardless of distance or line of sight. Maximillian, the weapon's current owner, is aware of this power.

Dagger of the gianthunter. This dagger of elven make was found by James Essex in a burial ground in the Northern Wildlands; centuries ago, it was fashioned for an elven commander who fought the giants of the Mengul Mountains. The weapon is basically a *dagger* +1/+3 *vs giantkind*, but also has the special power to detect any giant or giant-like creature which approaches within 200'; when this happens, the dagger's blade glows with an eerie blue-white light, which becomes brighter (up to the equivalent of a light spell) when the giant is close. A wielder of the dagger can turn down the dagger's glow at will.

Darkflame sword. This *bastard sword* +2/+4 *vs lawful creatures* was crafted long ago by the priests of the Immortal Alphaks and is imbued with the soul of a minor fiend of Entropy. The sword has a chaotic (and evil) alignment, an Intelligence score of 7, an ego score of 8, and can communicate through empathy; its aim is to carry on the will of Alphaks, and come back in the hands of a worshipper of the Immortal fiend. It flickers with tiny black, cool flames, and bursts forth in black flames when sheathed. A creature hit by the sword must make a save vs wands or lose an additional 1d10 points of damage and be engulfed in magical flames, taking 1d4 damage per subsequent round; each round, after taking the damage, the

victim can try another save which, if successful, stops the flames and the damage. Non-magical means (water included) are useless to douse the flames. When unsheathed, the sword gives the wearer infravision within 90' and better chances to avoid being surprised (roll 1d8 for him or her instead of 1d6). The sword also carries some weaknesses. First of all, the wielder suffers a -3 penalty on attack rolls against minions of Entropy (including fiends and clerics of entropic Immortals), who are immediately aware of this weakness when they come within 60' of the wielder. Second, the sword inflicts 1d4 damage less against fire- and water-based creatures (including red dragons, salamanders, elementals, fish, mermen, and so on); on those creatures, the dark flames burn for one round only. The sword's current owner, Maximillian, knows that the sword was fashioned by some evil villain, but does not suspect it harbors the soul of a fiend; she does not even realize that the feelings she sometimes feels are the sword's attempt to establish an empathic contact with her.

“Death Mate” broadsword. Siegfried Sixx's prized weapon is a *normal sword* +3/+5 vs *undead* made from obsidian-black metal. When “Death Mate” hits an undead creature for the first time, the sword becomes attuned to the target's unnatural life essence, and begins to glow and pulse in such a way that its vibe makes its wielder aware of the undead's number of HD and general kind (whether it is mindless or intelligent, free-willed or controlled, a spellcaster, an energy/age drainer, or a planar undead). A second hit by “Death Mate” to an undead attuned to the sword disintegrates the creature (undead with 7-12 HD can make a

saving throw vs death ray to avoid the effect, and those with 13-18 HD make their save at +3 bonus, while those with 19+ HD are immune to this power). Wielding “Death Mate” also grants a +2 bonus on saving throws against all undead special attacks (paralysis, poison, disease, etc. - but not spells), and nullifies up to 4 levels of energy drain per day.

Elven longsword. See GAZ5 The Elves of Alfheim, pages 33-34.

“Enslaver” normal sword. This *normal sword* +4 allows its wielder to cast *charm* three times per week.

“Gemstone's Bane” longsword. This longsword can be used as a *normal sword* +2/+4 vs *dragonkind*. It deals triple damage against gemstone dragons. It was crafted during the Time of the Second Dragonlord (beginning of the 6th century AC) for a Wendarian elven hero.

Golden chain mail. Delsel Oaktree's magical armour is a *chain mail* +5; it is made of gold but sturdy as steel, and is an elven relic from the Taymoran age.

Hand axe +3 of terror. Hanz Vackelin's *hand axe of terror* can cast the spell *cause fear* (reverse of the 1st-level Cleric spell *remove fear*) three times per day.

Hardwood staff. This staff is made of a strange, smooth black wood; it can be used as a *staff* +3 that also ignores 2 points of the target's AC due to manufactured armour (both mundane and magical, but not from shield).

Helmet of goring. This wicked-looking, horned, open-face helmet allows the wearer to forfeit all his normal attacks in a round to make a goring attempt; if successful, the attack deals 1d6 damage (and counts as a +1 weapon for the purpose of which creatures it can damage). Wounds caused by the helmet bleed copiously, causing the victim to lose 2 additional points of damage per round until magical cures are received or the victim spends 1d4 rounds bandaging herself (further hits by the helmet do not cause additional bleeding). If the victim of the goring attack is ogre-sized or smaller, she must also make a save against petrification or be stunned from the traumatic shock for 1d6 rounds; also, if the goring attack roll against such a victim was a natural 19 or 20, the target is automatically stunned (as above) and must save versus death ray or be killed on the spot.

Leather armour +3 of blending. On the wearer's command, this armour can change shape and form, assuming the appearance of a normal set of clothing while preserving all its qualities (including weight); only a *truesight* spell can reveal the true nature of the armour.

Longbow of marksmanship. This magical *longbow* +2 grants an additional +3 bonus (for a total of +5) on attack rolls against non-living targets (including constructs and undead) and on trick shots which do not directly harm a living target (like striking an opponent's weapon, an apple on a child's head, and so on).

Medallion of the living root. The medallion owned by Zoltan Hytaxius incorporates a living root cut the Vyalia clan's *Tree of Life*. It

continuously emanates a *protection from evil* 10' radius; moreover, while Zoltan wears it (that is, always), the cleric gains a +2 bonus on AC and on all saving throws, and turns undead as if he was a cleric of two levels higher.

Mirror of enlightenment. This beautiful wall mirror has the power to reflect the inner feelings and disposition of a creature that comes in front of it when a command word is spoken. It reflects the image of the creature in such a way to lend equivalent information as if a *detect evil/good*, *know alignment*, and a *wand of enemy detection* had been used.

Necklace of protection. This necklace functions as a *ring of protection* +3.

Necklace of spell resistance. The wearer automatically takes half damage from spells (even those which do not normally allow for a saving throw), and one-quarter damage if he successfully makes a saving throw. If the wearer is targeted by a non-damaging effect (such as a death effect), he gets a +2 bonus on the saving throw.

Pendant of unscryableness. Functions exactly like an *amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP* which also shields from all other *detect* and *know alignment* spells.

Periapt of health. Makes the wearer totally immune to all sorts of normal diseases caused by nature or magic, but not to magical disease such as mummy rot or lycanthropy; it also doubles the rate of natural healing.

Plate barding +2. See PC2, DM's Booklet, pages 39-40.

Pouch of traveling. See AC4 Book of Marvellous Magic, page 57.

Ring of combat power. This magical ring can be used three times per day. Each use gives its owner the choice between making 4 attacks per round or getting a +10 bonus on one attack roll each round; each use lasts 10 rounds.

Ring of loved ones protection. This ring is an heirloom of the Essex family; it has the same powers of a *ring of protection* +3 on the wearer, but also bestows a +3 bonus on saving throws to friendly creatures within 5' of him.

Ring of magic resistance. This powerful ring bestows on the wearer an individual resistance of 45% against arcane and divine spells and spell-like powers targeting him; if the resistance fails, the wearer is still allowed a saving throw (if the spell allows one). The ring has no effect on permanent magical items, and its resistance cannot be lowered by the wearer unless he removes the ring.

Ring of the Hunakoi. This ring of Thothian make bestows on the wearer an effective Strength score of 19 (see the table included in Wrath of the Immortals, Book One, page 52).

Ring of piercing. This magical ring allows the wearer to break on contact through all *wizard lock*, *wall of force*, *bold*, *web*, and similar spells of 7th level or lower; no harm

comes to the wearer when the magical barrier is disrupted. The ring also absorbs all magic *missile spells* and electrical attacks (both natural and magical), making the wearer effectively immune to them.

Rod of aerial might. This magic rod resembles a long staff, and can be used in combat as a *staff* +1 which enables its wielder to cast the spells *lightning bolt* and *fly* once per day each.

Sabre of the wereslayer. This *normal sword* +2/+3 *vs lycantropes* of Alfeislander design has a long, curved blade, and can be considered a sabre; it dates back to the time of the Silver Purge (5th century AC).

"Seeker" longbow. This *longbow* +4 is Rutger Dag's deadly ranged weapon. It is a prized, graceful and wonderful relic crafted on the outer plane of Alfheim, inhabited by the High Elves of the Northman mythology; Rutger found it during one of his adventures.

Shield +2 of proof against cold. This *shield* +2 grants its wielder a +4 bonus on saving throws against cold attacks.

Shield of the Supreme Waterbearer. Sandralane's shield has the holy symbol of Immortal Ariana (see footnote 5 under Sandralane's entry) engraved on its front; it was the shield of the last Supreme Waterbearer of the Temple of the Golden Fountain (the Order's high priest), which Sandralane managed to recover after a dangerous quest in Glantri. It functions as a *shield* +4.

Staff of Naglfari. This ancient magic staff was crafted by Naglfari, a legendary Northman sorcerer who commanded the power of storms and who lived in the 3rd century AC. The item functions as a *staff* +2 which inflicts 1d6 additional damage from electricity on each hit; the wielder of the staff can also invoke the following spells at the listed charge cost: *call lightning* (1 charge), *protection from lightning* (1 charge) and *summon weather* (2 charges). The staff has currently 16 charges and it recharges when hit by lightning (1 charge for each die of damage the lightning deals).

Star of the smallfolk. This star-shaped crystal was manufactured by the faeries of the sky kingdom eons ago; it can radiate continual light as per spell at will, and allows its owner to cast *fly*, *invisibility*, and *polymorph self* once per day each. When the star is clearly visible on the wearer, he gets a +3 reaction bonus from any elf, halfling, woodland creature, fey, or faerie.

“Steelbreaker” longsword. This *normal sword* +3, named “Steelbreaker”, was fashioned by an Alphatian wizard for his champion; when a successful deflect move with “Steelbreaker” is performed by a wielder who has Skilled or higher Weapon Mastery rank in normal sword, there is a 75% chance (minus 15% per “pluss” of the opponent’s weapon, if magical) that the opponent’s deflected weapon breaks and is effectively disrupted. Also, “Steelbreaker” cannot be broken through non-magical means.

“Starshine” longsword. This *normal sword* +5 is powerful weapon that was crafted centuries ago in Ambur, Alphatia. “Starshine” is an intelligent sword of lawful alignment, with an Intelligence score of 9 and an ego

score of 9; the sword communicates through empathy and can detect gems, detect magic, and see invisible.

Tubak’s Eye. This magic *shield* +3 appears to be made of gold and is shaped like a solar disk with the engraving of the sun (actually, a flaming wheel) in front of it and a circle of undulating blades projecting at its sides to represent the sun’s beams. The shield can be used as a sword shield, and its use as a weapon is allowed to clerics of Ixion.

Tunic of shielding. This magic tunic grants the wearer the continuous effects of a *shield* spell.

Vest of protection AC 2. Functions in the same way of a *buckle of armour* (see AC4 Book of Marvellous Magic, page 21).

“Warbringer” bastard sword. This mighty *bastard sword* +3 was passed down through generations of warlords, commanders, and generals on the Isle of Dawn. Besides its magical bonus, damage inflicted by the sword is determined by rolling the next higher die than normal (i.e. 1d10 instead of 1d8, and so on, with 1d12 upgrading to 1d20 at higher Weapon Mastery ranks), but without multiplying any other bonus.

White dragonscale armour. This *scale armour* +1 was fashioned from the hide of a large white dragon. It grants the wearer a +1 bonus on saving throws against cold attacks, and reduces damage suffered due to cold attacks by 1 point of damage per damage die the attack deals (or for every HD the attacker has, if not applicable); cold attacks dealing 6 or less points of damage are totally ignored by the wearer.



Who's Who in the Wyrksteeth part 1

*Red Dragon Head
by I. Calvin*

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)*

* Who can take only partial credit for this article, as most of the text was compiled using existing sources as appropriately indicated in the notes, by Giulio Caroletti, John Calvin, Bruce Heard, Thorarinn Gunnarsson, Simone Neri and Giampaolo Agosta.

“The true power of the Dragon kingdom is a mystery to us in many ways, and I believe no amount of investigation will solve it in reasonable time. We know the theoretical extension of the Kingdom and the alleged population of dragons and humanoids, but such figures are tentative guesses at best. Some past adventurers and spies say no dragon kingdom really exists, as the dragons are too independent to have a society similar to the humanoid ones, and the Wyrksteeth is just a pretense so that the dragons are left alone. Others say instead that the Dragon Kingdom is much larger and more powerful than we can conceive, spans huge territories all over Brun and pulls the strings of all the humanoid nations. I believe we will never

know for sure, unless the dragons themselves let us know.”

From a report written by unknown adventurer (or spy), to King Ericall, around 1010 AC.

“So you want to know how the Dragonking is chosen? Well I could tell you, but then I’d have to kill you.”

Mu’shadir Akraman, dragonkin citizen of the Wyrksteeth, joking (or not) with a Norwolder friend.

DRAGON HISTORY AND SOCIETY

Dragons have inhabited the Wyrksteeth mountains¹ since the dawn of time. Before

¹ The Wyrksteeth Dragons appeared in CM1 (page 8) as 1000 dragons organized under a 23 HD Huge Red Dragon Lord. Dragons of all colors except Gold were said to be common in the range. The Dragonlord trilogy changed the picture, as the dragons were ruled by a Parliament and its Speaker was a Gold dragon, and later a Gold dragon became Dragonking. Jamers Mishler's [Age of Blackmoor](#) created the Draconian Empire from before the Great Rain of Fire as inhabited by chromatic dragons, enemies of the Golden Empire founded by metallic dragons in Davania. Giulio Caroletti's (and John Calvin's) [Gazetteer of the Wyrksteeth](#) assumed a Dragon Kingdom where the King is a red and the Church of Pearl dominates, ignoring the Dragonlord trilogy. Simone Neri's [History of Dragonkind](#) and his article "A Traveller's Guide to Norwold" in the last issue #7 of Threshold magazine, page 5, used mostly the Dragonlord trilogy as primary source, ignoring Giulio's Gazetteer. Bruce Heard's [Future Heldannic History](#) places a Gold dragon, Eruptaar, as the Dragonking. The Mystara Fan Almanacs of 1014-1019 AC ignored all previous works and placed in the Wyrksteeth a Triarchic Kingdom. There is also a striking difference in tone between one version or another, in the Dragonlord trilogy in particular the Wyrksteeth are an ancient and civilized realm, while in other fan version the chaotic nature of chromatic dragons seems to prevail. The history and political system above is a tentative way to harmonize all the different ideas, but each DM can obviously choose what he or she prefers. Subsequent notes will indicate who created a particular dragon and provide a link to the original description, if available. Many canon dragons are also listed in the article [Who's Who among Dragons](#) by Bruce Heard, which refers to the Known World, originally

the Great Rain of Fire, the Dragon Empire dominated a vast area that included modern Norwold and surrounding lands, then a warmer country. At the time, sages believe the Empire spanned almost the entirety of Brun. The red dragon Mengul was the Emperor for many centuries. The Dragon Empire fought against Blackmoor several times, but was never conquered. After the Great Rain of Fire, it seems the Empire was dissolved, and at some point the Wyrksteeth Dragon Kingdom was created, at least by 1900 BC when the red dragon Syare ruled it with an iron fist. In 745 BC Syare became an Immortal, and for many years he had no successor, until around 500 BC the blue dragon Lyalia became queen. After she was killed fighting humans, the red dragon Pradapukran succeeded her around 100 BC. She ruled almost unchallenged for five hundred years, except for a brief tyranny by the white dragon Quesa between 330 and 336 AC. The Queen however abdicated for unknown reasons in 400 AC, leaving rulership to her mate Verslen. He was not as popular as her among the dragons, however, and by 500 AC the Kingdom no longer had a king, and was ruled by the Parliament of Dragons and its appointed Speaker, the gold dragon Marthaen. After the brief reign of the Dragonking Thelvaeneir (513 AC), and some more years with Marthaen as Speaker, by 550 AC it was eventually decided that the Parliament would elect a King, or a Queen, that would remain in charge as long as he or she had the trust of the Parliament. Therefore in recent years reigns have lasted from a few years to centuries, as the Parliament has to confirm the King or Queen every three years. Sometimes a would-be

published in Dragon Magazine 171: and the Vaults of Pandius also contains a [general list of canon and fanon Mystara dragons](#).

King (or Queen) can challenge the ruling monarch to combat to gain some votes in the Parliament. Such duels are never to the death, but the losing dragon will have to submit to the winner. If the Parliament is so divided that it cannot agree on a single King or Queen, a Diarchic, Triarchic (or even more, theoretically) kingdom may occur. In this case however the rulers are called Earls instead of Kings (or Queens).

Verslen, having learned to build better alliances, ruled almost continuously from 550 AC to 670 AC, then the blue dragon Lhoran² became King until 828 AC, when he ascended to Immortality. Verslen became the Dragonking again, creating the modern Wyrksteeth Kingdom as it is now.

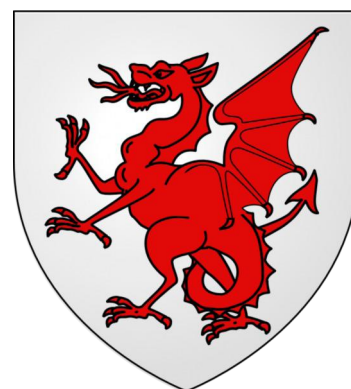
Wyrksteeth Kingdom

The map on the following page was taken from Robin D's [Detailed Map of Northwestern Brun 8mph](#) and from my map of Brun 24mph but it updates both as I replaced several dragon lairs and added some more. Each one of these lairs should be considered a city, with dragon vassals and humanoid servants. More possible dragon lairs are indicated on the map, but are unnamed as their occupants have not been developed yet. The dragons only exert nominal control over their borderlands, mainly to prevent encroachment into their territories by foreign powers such as Norwold or the Heldannic Knights, and in truth even many dragons outside the borders of Wyrksteeth are loyal to the Dragonking.

² He was mentioned as a Blue leader in the Dragonlord trilogy. A Blue King at the time was mentioned by Simone Neri and Giampaolo Agosta in their articles in issue #7 of Threshold magazine.

DRAGONS IN MYSTARA

The article "From Hatchling to Immortal Guardians" by Bruce Heard, published in Dragon Magazine 170, June 1991³, and the Dragonlord Trilogy by Thorarinn Gunnarsson, published in 1994-1996 are the main canon sources for dragon society in Mystara, but each has a quite different approach. The Ceremony of Sublimation as detailed by Bruce Heard generates a highly hierarchical society where hoarding treasures has a great importance, and the Omens of Coming caused by the sublimation can have a major impact on the campaign, creating also a major natural enmity between lawful and chaotic dragons. In Thorarinn Gunnarsson's depiction the ceremony isn't mentioned and the different types of dragon seem to get along much better in an organized and complex society. It's up to each DM to decide how to use these different ideas⁴.

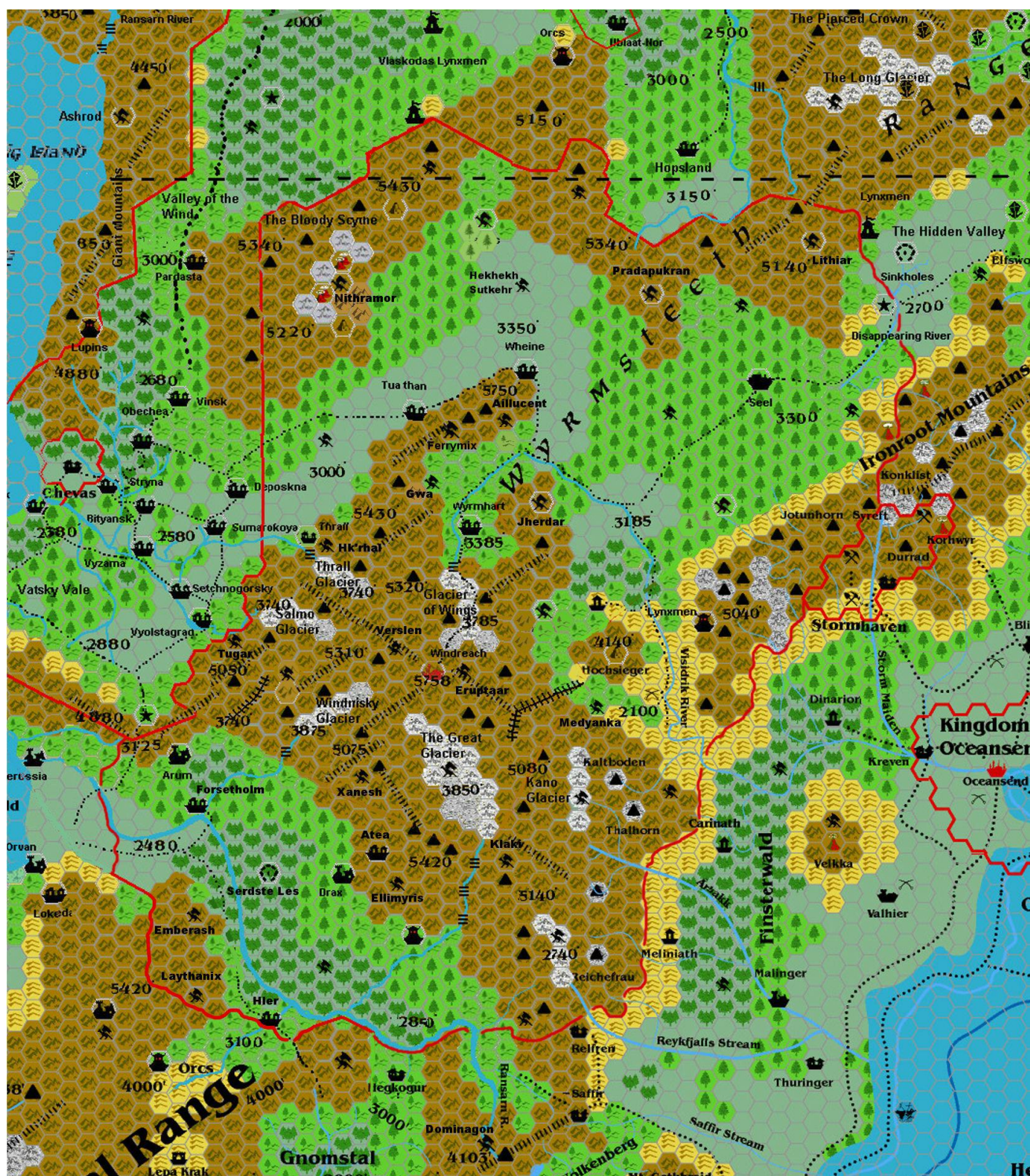


*Wyrksteeth
Kingdom
Coat of Arms*

³ "[Dragons in the D&D game's Known World](#)" and its [corrections](#).

⁴ "[The History of Dragonkind](#)" by Simone Neri has made an attempt to reconcile these two versions.

WYRMSTEETH KINGDOM MAP



DRAGON RULERS

**Verslen aka Mors Rufus
aka Red Death
aka Renffeodagg,
23 HD Huge Red Dragon, Dragonking**

The current Dragonking⁵ (from 828 to 1014 AC) was once a vassal of Pradapukran and he is rumored to be the father of her children. He more or less created the Wyrksteeth as they are now, inviting new settlers such as the Glantrian dwarves, werewolves and Thyatians, and allowing some contacts with the outside world. He is also a priest of Pearl. Even if Eruptaar is his chief rival, he is on good terms with him and the other gods,

⁵ He was created by Giulio Caroletti too. I postponed his reign to make time for the events of the Dragonlord trilogy and the ascent of Dominagon's father Lhoran. I also think his reign should end before 1014 AC to account for the presence of Eruptaar as Dragonking in Bruce Heard's [Future timeline of the Heldannic Knights](#). By 1017 AC, according to the [1017-1019 AC Fan Almanacs](#), there is a Triarchic Kingdom ruled by Verslen, Eruptaar and Xanesh, at least until 1019 AC. By the end of the year probably a new vote will occur in the parliament. Note that I decided to merge him with Giampaolo Agosta's Verslen as nominated in his map of the Draconic Omens of Coming in his "Skaufskogr and beyond" article, issue #7 of Threshold magazine, page 170. I also unified him with the Renffeodagg nominated in the 1017-1019 AC Fan Almanacs, and I suppose he is also the 23 HD Red Dragon indicated as Lord in CM1. This unification of different figures is of course totally arbitrary on my part and the original authors, even if I tried to inform them when possible, could not agree fully with my choices.

and with Jherdar, even if he tends to favor Pearl over other religions⁶. He doesn't trust Ferrimyx, even if she has supported him so far. He has always been prudent in the relations with dragons outside Norwold, even when others requested much more decisive actions, as in the case of Idris and Vitriol⁷.



Norwold book describing the Wyrksteeth

⁶ I have toned down the idea that he made the Church of Pearl the only permitted religion, as in Giulio Caroletti's gazetteer, as that doesn't fit very well with the Dragonlord trilogy.

⁷ The Onyx Ring and its leader, the black dragon Vitriol, and the ongoing cold war between the church of Idris and the Wyrksteeth will be described along with other dragons of the world in the next issue of Threshold magazine!

INCENDIARIOUS
aka Pradapukran,
 23 HD Huge Red Dragon,
 former Dragonqueen and Dragonlady
 of the Second Legion

Incendiarius⁸ was the Dragonqueen of Wyrksteeth from 100 BC to 400 AC. A great wyrm of superior intelligence, originally from Rockhome. She had long lived with humans, roaming the world in search of adventure and magic. She eventually abdicated and settled at the source of the Sabre river, where she now lives with her 5 children. She now rarely meddles in the politics of the Dragon Kingdom, but her moral authority still has great weight nonetheless. The current Dragonking is the father of her children (a fact not widely known) and she officially commands the Second Legion of the Wyrksteeth's army. She maintains contact with her subjects using magical scrolls.

⁸ This dragon originally appears in CM3, The Sabre River, where she has 5 children. In "[The Dragon Kingdom of Wyrksteeth](#)" and "[Wyrksteeth Gazetteer continued](#)" Giulio Caroletti supposed the CM3 dragon was the child of another, male Incendiarius that reigned over the Wyrksteeth. I prefer to unify the two figures, also because dragons have longer lifespans in my campaign, but other DMs could decide otherwise and follow Giulio's version instead. Pradapukran (potent flame) is just a "dragon name" I chose for her using some sanskrit-like sounds.

GEMSTONE DRAGONS

Gemstone dragons (Crystal, Onyx, Jade, Sapphire, Ruby and Amber [or Brown]) are canon Mystara dragons, but only the Dragonlord trilogy by Thorarinn Gunnarsson gave a possible explanation for their origin, summarized in Simone Neri's "[History of Dragonkind](#)". Gemstone dragons were powerful dragon sorcerers that tried to reach immortality and failed, gaining their present aspect. They eventually started a war against Blackmoor, but were defeated and exiled to another world, where they fell under the control of a being known as the Overlord. They returned to conquer Mystara with him in 513 AC, were freed from the Overlord's control and spared by the Dragonking Thelvaneir (also the Immortal Diamond). Since then, Gemstone dragons have returned to Mystara and some of them also live in Norwold and the Wyrksteeth. Their leader in Norwold is Thyralax, a 22 HD Huge Ruby Dragon, often contested by his rival Mardius, a 22 HD Huge Brown (Amber) Dragon (They appear in AC10, Bestiary of Dragons and Giants, page 45, where Mardius tries to destroy Thyralax). My personal take on Gemstone dragons is to use them as ancient breeds more common in Skothar than in other Mystaran continents.

In AD&D and later editions Gemstone dragons are of different kinds (Amethyst, Crystal, Emerald, Sapphire and Topaz) and have psionic powers, but could be used alongside the Mystaran ones if the DM wishes so..

Eruptaar
aka Hessuarveem
aka Gheradaen the Golden,
 24 HD Huge Gold Dragon,
 Speaker of the Golds and Ruby⁹

Speaker of the Golds and cleric of Diamond, Eruptaar¹⁰ is working to become the next Dragonking, and is likely to succeed within a few years. He has a young son, Kindling, whom he loves dearly. He is an old friend of Marthaen and all the other gold dragons are ready to support him. He advocates a decisive intervention against Vitriol and Idris.

Xanesh aka Khukh
aka Y'lorchaem,
 20 HD Huge Blue Dragon, Speaker of
 the Blues and Sapphire and
 Dragonlord of the First Legion

Xanesh¹¹ is the Speaker for the Blues and the commander of the First Legion. He cares little of other dragons, but he doesn't want to raise the ire of Verslen, and so is loyal to him. Xanesh hates Vedmak, and would oppose

⁹ For Ruby dragons, see the Gemstone dragons sidebar.

¹⁰ See the Bruce Heard link in note #2 for more details about Eruptaar. I have decided to merge him with the old gold dragon Gheradaen mentioned in the Dragonlord trilogy as an older gold, and with the Hessuarveem who is an Earl in the 1017-1019 AC Fan Almanacs. Eruptaar should then reign alone from 1014 to 1016 and with Verslen and Xanesh from 1017 to 1019.

¹¹ Also created by Giulio Caroletti in "[Wyrksteeth Gazetteer continued](#)". I've unified him with the Fan Almanacs' Y'lorchaem and with Giampaolo Agosta's Khukh.

him in any case. Neither does he love the other reds, so could be inclined to support Eruptaar in the future, if he cannot raise enough support to become Dragonking himself. Xanesh's lair contains a portal to Yggdrasil¹², the World Tree, and was once a sacred place for the northern men, now lost in legends. Xanesh thinks he could build a public temple around the portal, gaining support from humans and even the northern Immortals, but he also fears the other dragons might not like such a move very much.

Jherdar
aka Vedmak,
 23 HD Huge Red Dragon, Speaker of
 the Reds and Amber

The Speaker of the Reds¹³ is a powerful dragon in the Wyrksteeth, and rumored to be very rich. He is on friendly terms with the gold dragons, particularly with Marthaen and Daresha, and respected by Verslen and Pradapukran, and is for this very reason despised by some younger and ambitious reds, such as Ferrimyx and Emberash.

¹² See this [article on Ysgard](#)

¹³ He appears in the Dragonlord trilogy as leader of the Reds. I've unified him with Giampaolo Agosta's Vedmak.

Medyanka
aka Ipsilon,
 18 HD Huge Green Dragon,
 Dragonlord of the Third Legion,
 Speaker of the Greens and Jade

Commander of the Third Legion, Medyanka¹⁴ is probably the most savage dragon of Wyrksteeth. A Great Wurm of incredible strength and magic, he considers himself as strong as Verslen but has not challenged him yet because the current king gave him the title of the Dragonlord, and also because he has very few supporters among other dragons. Medyanka despises humans, and would greatly enjoy waging a war against Norwold - naturally with himself crowned Emperor of the region as the outcome. That is very unlikely as his vassals are not very strong and not many others would follow him, unless he can become powerful enough to force them.

Hk'rhal the Dragonlizard
aka Thalbar,
 17 HD Huge Black Dragon, Speaker
 of the Blacks and Onyx and
 Dragonlord of the Fourth Legion

Dragonlord of the city of Th'hral and commander of the Fourth Legion, he enjoys the self anointed title of Dragonlizard. Hk'rhal¹⁵ genuinely loves all lizardkin, whom

¹⁴ Also created by Giulio Caroletti in [The Dragon Kingdom of Wyrksteeth](#), unified with Giampaolo Agosta's Medyanka.

¹⁵ Also created by Giulio Caroletti in [The Dragon Kingdom of Wyrksteeth](#). I've unified him with Thalbar, nominated as a Black leader in the Dragonlord trilogy

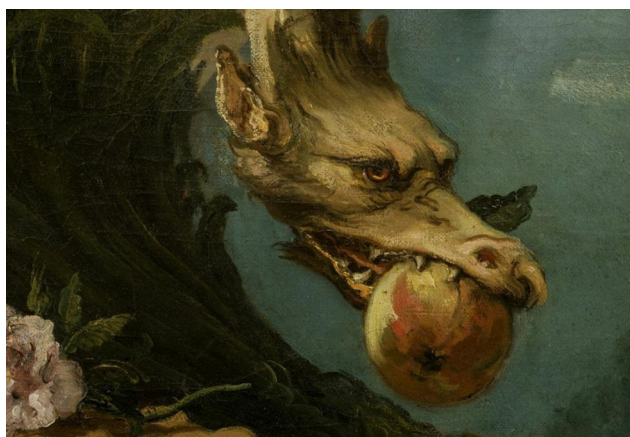
he has always regarded as made in the image of dragons. He has helped them build the city of Th'hral, where he is often found in the shape of a lizardman. The city has also a population of *Coat of Arms of Hkr'rhal* dragonborn and dragonkin. He doesn't like non reptilians much, but some live peacefully in his city nevertheless. He respects Verslen, though he does not fear him. So far he has always supported the Dragonking, but he is considering Eruptaar's claim. He really hates Vitriol for the influence he has over black dragons of the world.



Klaki,
 14 HD Huge White Dragon, Speaker
 of the Whites and Crystal

Klaki¹⁶ is a staunch supporter of Verslen as the Dragonking always shows him respect and gives him magnificent gifts, a small trick Pradapukran employed before him. Klaki has cordial relations with the golds, the blacks and the blues but is annoyed by the arrogance of many reds and greens, such as Medyanka and Ferrimyx.

¹⁶ Created by Giampaolo Agosta. Strangely enough, no important white dragon is nominated in Giulio's gazetteer nor in the Dragonlord trilogy.



Portrait of a dragon, supposedly Marthaen, in Windreach

Marthaen,
25 HD Huge Gold Dragon, Speaker of the Dragon Parliament

Marthaen¹⁷ is a old and powerful gold with great influence and great expertise of magic. Still the Speaker of the Parliament, he has never desired to become Dragonking but has always been an informal “prime minister” of the dragon nation for all the kings in the last five centuries. He is one of the most powerful dragons of the Wyrksteeth but also the most likely to interact with agents, ambassadors and adventurers. Thelvaeneir, now the Immortal Diamond, mated with Marthaen’s sister Kharendael, and he became the foster father of their daughter, his niece Therandael (described in the next issue of Threshold), when they left for the Immortal realms.

¹⁷ Important character in the Dragonlord trilogy.

Sandryth,
12 HD Small Gold Dragon

Appointed by the Parliament as envoy¹⁸ in the surrounding human dominions to represent the Wyrksteeth Kingdom, this gold lives at the moment in the Barony of Arcadia¹⁹ and is a friend of Marthaen.

Krasniy,
10 HD Small Red Dragon

This small red²⁰ rules the town of Saffir in disguise on behalf of the Dragonking, as the place is considered strategic by the Wyrksteeth kingdom.

DRAGON PERSONALITIES

Daresha,
23 HD Huge Gold Dragon

Mate of Marthaen and foster mother of Therandael, Daresha²¹ is a powerful gold

¹⁸ Appears in the [Barony of Arcadia](#) entry of the fan almanacs. May not be appropriate for all campaigns or before 1000 AC.

¹⁹ Placed on the western shores of Lake Gunaald by the fan Mystaran almanacs [Barony of Arcadia](#) entry.

²⁰ Appears in AC10 commanding human guards, griffons and wyverns, and PCs are supposed to defeat him, but later Saffir was placed near the Wyrksteeth in the article “[Norwold Region](#)”. After the Heldann invasion he could continue to rule in disguise, spying for the dragons. There is also a wild rumor that he would be a double agent for the Church of Idris.

²¹ She appears as a character in the Dragonlord trilogy.

who has no official power in the Wyrksteeth but holds much influence, as dragons and others often try to reach her for petitions or informations meant for Marthaen and the Dragonking. She patiently receives almost everyone who asks for an audience, eventually.

TUGAR aka LHORANDYN, 22 HD Huge Gold Dragon

Tugar²² is another powerful and influential gold dragon who maintains good relations with the humans, the centaurs and the other people who live near to the Wyrksteeth western border. He is also informally called the Fifth Dragonlord, and he is considering asking the King for this to become an official position. Tugar has developed an affection for Ellimyris (see below) and is preparing himself to challenge Raruk and eventually Ferrimyx²³ to free her.

SELDAEK, 16 HD Large Gold Dragon, Priest of the Great One and High Priest of Diamond

As a cleric of The Great One and now also the High Priest of the Immortal Diamond, Seldaek²⁴ is respected by everyone in the kingdom and is even able to influence

²² Created by Giampaolo Agosta, I've unified him with Lhorandyn, nominated as a gold leader in the Dragonlord trilogy.

²³ As Ferrimyx very probably will be enraged if Tugar will submit her mate

²⁴ He appears as a cleric of the Great One in the Dragonlord trilogy, but in "[Dragons of Mystara, version 2.0](#)" Frederic Ferro supposed he could have become a cleric of Diamond too after the ascension of Thelvaeneir to immortality.

Verslen, even if the King is notoriously one of the faithful of Pearl. He maintains cordial relations with pretty much everyone and does much of the everyday work of Saerna.

SAERNA, 30 HD Ancient Huge Grey Dragon, High Priest of the Great One

Saerna²⁵ belonged to the original race of the Great Dragon from before the Great Rain of Fire, and no one knows how old she is. Her skin is gray with blue hues and wild rumors circulate about her, such that she is the daughter of the Great One or she was the mate of Emperor Mengul. She intervenes very rarely on matters regarding the Kingdom but when she does, Kings or Queens do as she says. She sleeps for long times and Seldaek attends to most of the church's everyday work for her.

RZHAVCHINA OR FERRIMYX²⁶, 19 HD Large Red Dragon

The ambitious red female had 12 offspring with two different fathers (Aarl'lek and Emberash), 8 of them still living. She has been building a power base for centuries, and controls directly her offspring (from Aarl'lek) Virraxn, Nithramor, and Lithiar and the dragons Aillucant, Gwa-Dthorim, Hekhekh, Sutkehr, and Emberash. The five young offspring from Emberash still live with

²⁵ She appears in the Dragonlord trilogy

²⁶ Main source of this description is "[Notes to Dragon Society in Wyrksteeth](#)". Many of the following descriptions are condensed version of the original ones by Giulio Caroletti and John Calvin. The alternate name Rzhavchina comes from Giampaolo Agosta's Skaufskogr map, see note 2

her. She hates Aarl'lek, who killed three of her (and his own) children. She also hates Verslen, the current Dragonking, who killed her son Hedfang in self defence when the young fool attacked him. She pretends to support the king, waiting for the right time.

Virraxn, 9 HD Small Red Dragon

The smallest of Ferrimyx's offspring from her mating with Aarl'lek, Virraxn²⁷ is content to stay in her mother's shadow. Ferrimyx tolerates the young female, for she is completely beholden to her mother. She can most often be found in the presence of Ferrimyx.

Aillucent²⁸, 12 HD Large White Dragon

The ancient white was sheltered by Ferrimyx after his defeat by another white dragon, and now he uses his magical knowledge to benefit her. Aillucent however hates Ferrimyx, who taunts him every time she visits his laboratory lair. He is working on a way to distil lycanthropy though he doesn't plan to deliver it to Ferrimyx as promised, but rather to infect himself with lycanthropy²⁹ to strengthen his failing body. He has several lycanthropic servants.

²⁷ Created in "[Notes to Dragon Society in Wyrksteeth](#)"

²⁸ As previous note.

²⁹ Under BECFI rules, lycanthropy was deadly to demihumans and could only affect humans, but Aillucent discovered a way to distil an altered strain which is able to affect dragons as well, and probably other creatures too.

Gwa-Dthorim³⁰, 13 HD Large Green Dragon

A slender green who lives in the forests below Ferrimyx's lair, subjugated by her in 990 AC. He controls a flock of seven young greens (2 small dragons, and 5 young [treat as 1/2 hit die of Small in the RC]) all hatched from the same brood.

Hekhekh and Sutkehr³¹, 8 HD Small Black Dragons

This brother and sister dominate several different lizard men tribes in the area, but they too are vassals of Ferrimyx.

Raruk aka Emberash, 16 HD Large Red Dragon

Emberash³² mated with Ferrimyx 4 decades ago and was subjugated by her. He cannot openly defy Ferrimyx, but he secretly plans for her downfall. He controls Laythanix, Ellimyris, and a flock of six white dragons that live near the peaks of his mountain territory. The whites are not from the same brood, but have banded together in order to better survive in these lands. Raruk has recently discovered that the caves under his lair go all the way to the Hollow World, and he is now planning the best way to exploit this.

³⁰ As note 28.

³¹ As previous note.

³² Created in "[Notes to Dragon Society in Wyrksteeth](#)" , I've unified him with Giampaolo Agosta's Raruk.

Laythanix³³, 15 HD Large Red Dragon

This large red has just emerged from a successful Ceremony of Sublimation and with his newfound size and strength, is considering re-challenging his feudal lord Emberash. After his master is taken care of, Laythanix intends to widen his power base. He is uncertain however about Ferrimyx's reaction to such a move.

³³ Created in "[Notes to Dragon Society in Wyrksteeth](#)"

Ellimyris, 10 HD Small Gold Dragon

Ellimyris³⁴, originally from the west, has lived in the Wyrksteeth for many years, focusing her attentions on the local humans and dwarves. Emberash subdued her several years ago. She detests obeying the red, but has to admit that her fealty to him now affords her the ability to act in a much more open manner in this harsh land.

³⁴ As previous note.

AD&D AND NEWER EDITIONS DRAGONS

As the Mystara campaign setting was officially converted to AD&D in 1994, dragon breeds of that edition and following ones have appeared both in canon and fanon Mystara, even if the official Mystara AD&D *Monstrous Compendium Appendix* did not use them. The young copper dragon Vasylion the Younger appears in *Poor Wizard Almanac III*, pages 232-233, and some bronze dragons have appeared in fan works. If a DM wishes to use the typical AD&D breeds, metallic dragons such as Brass, Bronze, Copper, Electrum, Mercury and Silver could be appropriate as subspecies of the canonically Gold dragons quite common in Davania, where James Mishler placed the Golden Empire before the Great Rain of Fire. Gemstone dragons could be used in Skothar, see previous sidebar for details. AD&D *Council of Wyrms* could also be a good source for the Wyrksteeth, even if the geographical setting is completely different (an island

chain), with interesting rules for half dragons and dragon "kindred". The *Forgotten Realms 1990 Draconomicon* introduces Yellow and Steel dragons and Chromatic crossbreeds, has some adventures and details several aspects of the life of dragons. The 3ed 2003 *Draconomicon* is another good sources with new dragon breeds, magic and prestige classes. Also the d20 2002 *Slayer's guide to Dragons* by Gary Gygax (Mongoose publishing) has more details, breeds, lairs, spells, rules and adventures. The 3ed *Monsters of Faerun* describes Brown, Deep, Fang, Shadow, Song dragons and dragonkin. The 4ed 2008 *Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons* describes Adamantine, Cobalt, Iron, Mithral, Orium and Steel dragons, and contains encounters, adventures, and more material on dragon society and drakes. The 4ed 2009 *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons* details also Brown, Gray and Purple dragons and contains also encounters, adventures and information on dragon society.

Nithramor, 15 HD Large Red Dragon

Nithramor³⁵ is the only remaining male of Ferrimyx's first brood with Aarl'lek. Nithramor banded with his brother Ligander, after leaving his mother's lair, and the two brothers did fairly well for themselves, until their own father Aarl'lek slew Ligander, and drove away Nithramor. In exile, Nithramor established a small domain in the deserts of Ylaruam, subjugating a small bronze³⁶ and a large blue. After completing his first Ceremony of Sublimation, Nithramor has returned to the Wyrksteeth to reclaim his birthright. Ferrimyx has lent him support in his efforts to re-establish himself, and Nithramor is not ungrateful. He may be persuaded to offer support to his mother in a time of need, but will not risk what he has. He has also formed tentative alliances with several dragons who lair near his father, in the hopes of avenging his lost brother.

Lithiar, 14 HD Large Red Dragon

Another offspring of Ferrimyx and Aarl'lek, Lithiar³⁷ was the first to leave her mother's lair. She roams about the entire Wyrksteeth Range but has a small lair in the north west. Lithiar despises her father, and covets his lands. She has helped in various schemes of Nithramor's, but has never proven to be

³⁵ As previous note.

³⁶ See "AD&D and newer editions Dragons" sidebar

³⁷ Described in "[Notes to Dragon Society in Wyrksteeth](#)". I assigned her a lair because a dragon without one seems a bit strange to me, but other DM could find a good reason for that!

completely reliable. She holds Virraxn in contempt, and doesn't like the fact that Ferrimyx tolerates her, and for this reason Lithiar has not spoken to her mother in over 150 years. She has never lifted a finger to harm either her mother or sister, but neither would she lift one to help them in any way. In fact she often dreams of their eventual downfall.



Drawing of a flight of dragons in an ancient manuscript

OTHER NORWOLD DRAGONS

The following dragons do not live inside the proper borders of the Wyrksteeth Kingdom, but in other regions of Norwold. All of them are, at least nominally, subjects of the Kingdom and must theoretically obey the Dragonking. Each of these dragons however rules usually over a sizable number of local dragons and often also several humans and humanoids communities.

Quentin Jax aka Jag'antixuen, 16 HD Large Gold Dragon

See Rogues, Barons and Pretenders by Simone Neri in this issue for more details about him. He is loyal to the Dragonking and a friend of Marthaen.

Aarl'lek, 21 HD Large Red Dragon



First mate of Ferrimyx, this huge red male³⁸ is a vicious dragon hated by many. Ferrimyx, her clan and many others have asked the Dragonking to declare him a Renegade³⁹ for years, but Verslen has always refused

so far because Aarl'lek is powerful, has many vassals, and controls the strategic region of the Jagged Teeth. He also traditionally keeps an eye on Quesa on behalf of the King. Besides, if the king does declare him a renegade, he will probably not hesitate to ally with the Onyx Ring.

³⁸ Created in "[Notes to Dragon Society in Wyrksteeth](#)" too. I decide to place him in the Jagged teeth where Simone Neri mentioned a red dragon in his "A Traveller's guide of Norwold", published in issue #7
³⁹ A dragon who doesn't recognize the authority of the Dragonking and the Parliament of Dragons, officially or de facto, a concept introduced in the Dragonlord trilogy.

S'hastari, 18 HD Huge Black Dragon

This ancient black dragon⁴⁰ is the lord of the Dragon Spur Hills for so many centuries that many doubt he is still alive. In truth he is almost always asleep, but eventually he could gather enough strength and power to perform a final ceremony to become an immortal. In the meantime his domain is ruled by his daughter Jahinyar and his first vassal, the green dragon Vinradrais⁴¹. The two have not decided yet if they should fight or mate, in the meantime they compete for power, but usually in a non-lethal way.

Dominagon, 19 HD Huge Blue Dragon

The powerful son of Lhoran⁴², former Wyrksteeth king that supposedly ascended to immortality in 828 AC, Dominagon now lives just outside the south eastern border of the kingdom. He is jealous of Verslen, who stole his birthright and even favored Xanesh over him among the Blues. He is considering a reckless alliance with Vitriol of Denagoth and the Onyx Ring⁴³ to gain more power.

⁴⁰ Created by Marco Dalmonte in his entry for the [Barony of Ironwood](#) in the fan almanacs and mentioned by Simone Neri in "A Traveller's Guide to Norwold", in Threshold magazine issue #7, page 80.

⁴¹ Daughter and vassal were created by me for this article.

⁴² See note 3 about Lhoran, Dominagon is mentioned as the son of the Blue king in Giampaolo Agosta's "The Skaufskogr and beyond" article in issue #7 of Threshold magazine.

⁴³ That happens in my adventure "In the Name of the Dragon" published in issue #7 of Threshold

Quesa,
20 HD Huge White Dragon

Probably one of the biggest white dragon of the world, Quesa⁴⁴ doesn't recognize the authority of the King at all, but as she is now confined in her massif, Wyrksteeth dragons do not consider her a big threat. Should she be free again, the matter would be different, as Quesa reigned over the Norwold dragons centuries ago and even the whites do not remember her harsh reign with fondness.

GRUNEVAR AND GERYASHAN,
13 HD Large Green Dragons

Brother and sister, these two dragons⁴⁵ have quite different personalities. Grunevar lives in the Katfjellene hills southeast of Leeha, ruling over hill giants and orcs, and he has sometimes tried to attack the halfling shire. Geryashan instead lives in the Wyrmswoods, further east, where she has established an alliance with elves and fairy folk. Neither tolerate trespassing in their territory, but recognize the authority of the Wyrksteeth king, even if Grunevar does that only grudgingly.

⁴⁴ See "A Traveller's guide to Norwold" by Simone Neri in issue #7 of Threshold magazine for more details on Quesa.

⁴⁵ Two unnamed greens are described as above by Simone Neri in "A Traveller's guide to Norwold" in issue #7 of Threshold magazine, I created their names.

Zilant the GREEN,
17 HD Huge Green Dragon

Zilant⁴⁶ is the undisputed lord of the Maghnar Valley, a heavily forested area west of the Azure Lake. As he hates Denagoth, and local humans and humanoids share this sentiment, he is



a close ally of the Dragonking, but keeps asking for a direct intervention against Vitriol and the church of Idris.

Svartbak the black,
14 HD Huge Black Dragon

Lord of Menascha, the great northern swamp, Svartbak⁴⁷ is always playing a game with Verslen and Vitriol, professing fidelity to both and promising each to spy "on the other one". Should he be forced to decide, he will probably side with Vitriol, as he is closer.

⁴⁶ Created by Giampaolo Agosta and mentioned also by Simone Neri in issue #7 of Threshold magazine, page 156.

⁴⁷ Created by Giampaolo Agosta in the map of page 170 of Threshold magazine issue #7.

Pavystet, 11 HD Large White Dragon

Ruler of the Vuoret Muistamisesta⁴⁸, Pavystet controls several snow pardasta tribes and other humanoids of the mountains. He has good relations with the Cronos of Crystyk and he is rumored to be a son of Icyclyn or even of Quesa, or both. He recognizes the Wyrksteeth king, but he hates Aarl'lek and insists he should be declared a renegade.

Icyclyn, 21 HD Huge White Dragon

Believed to be older and bigger than Quesa, and supposedly once her mate, this white dragon⁴⁹ is a true legend of the north. He rules over a vast area, some say that indeed all the dragons north of the Great bay bow to him rather than to the Wyrksteeth king. Despite this, he officially recognizes the king, some say, provided that he is never bothered by him.

Shardarath, 14 HD Huge Crystal Dragon

One of the few gemstone dragons known to hold a sizable domain in Brun, Shardarath⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Mentioned but not named by Simone Neri in in "A Traveller's guide to Norwold" in issue #7 of Threshold magazine, page 111.

⁴⁹ His valley appears in Simone Neri's "A Traveller's guide to Norwold" in issue #7 of Threshold magazine and also in Robin D "Composite map of Norwold" in issue #6. I'm not aware of other canon or fan informations about him, so I devised most of the description.

⁵⁰ Described by Matthew Fleet in "Adventures in the Frozen North" published

rules Crystylne Island in the far north. He has visited the Wyrksteeth at least once and it's believed he recognizes the authority of the king.

Jaakultien, 15 HD Huge White Dragon

Her name means something like golden ice in Kaarjalan, and she⁵¹ rules all the eastern Everwinter lands and Itämaa. A mysterious dragon, supposedly another child of Icyclyn, she officially recognizes the Wyrksteeth king.

Ginzalias and Zydrazalias, 12 HD Large Green Dragons

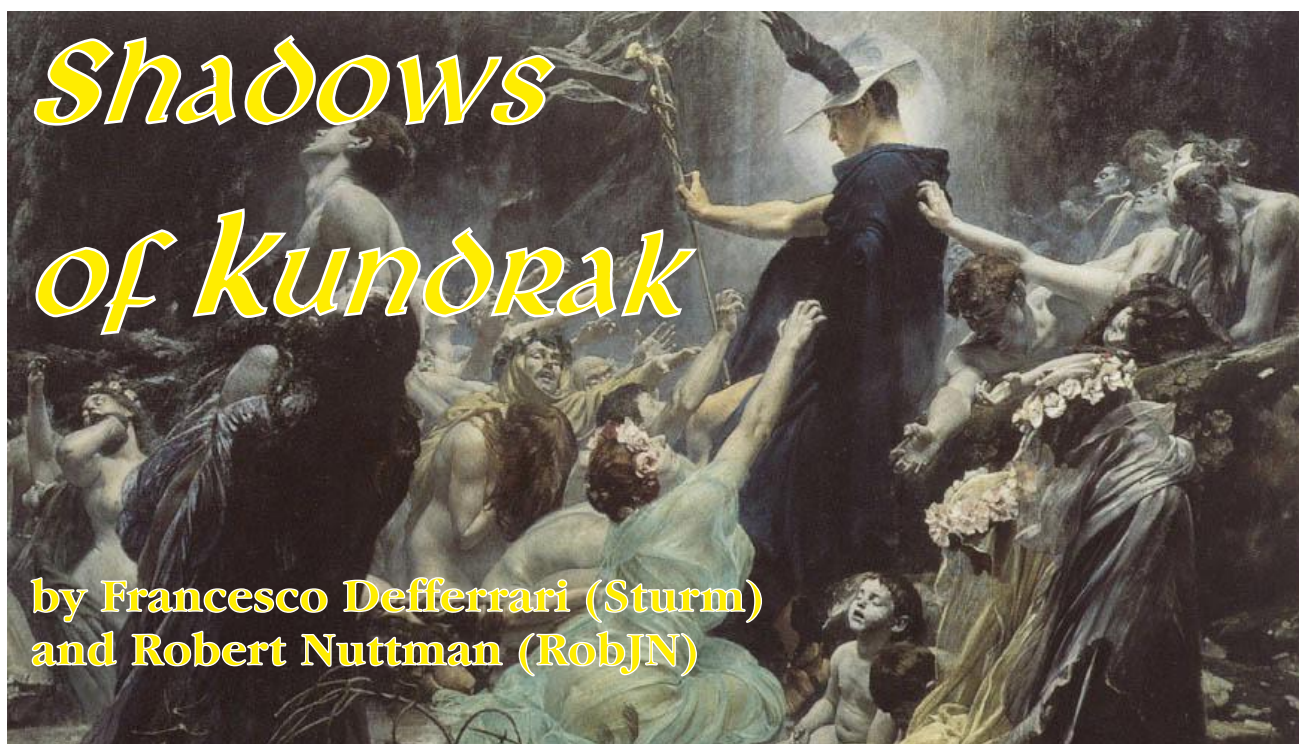
"Amber green" and "Azure green", as they like to be called, are two green dragons, female and male, who rule the Draudgīs Woods⁵² south of Littonia and part of the plains to the west. They dominate several tribes of goblins and have a great influence in the area.

More on the Wyrksteeth and the other dragons of the world in the next issue of Threshold magazine!

in issue #2 of Threshold magazine, page 129, and mentioned also by Simone Neri in issue #7 of Threshold magazine, page 111.

⁵¹ Created by me as it seems the area was devoid of named dragons.

⁵² Two unnamed green dragons appear in [Gaz F6 The Kingdom of Littonia](#) by Geoff Gander and JTR.



Shadows of KundraK

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)
and Robert Nuttman (RobJN)

The High Priestess herself destroyed Kosmoteiros, the most sacred city of the Lady of the Night, because Orcus the Evil, Champion of the Black One, had lay siege to it and the walls were about to collapse. The most sacred Starlake had not to fall in the sacrilegious hands of the unworthy, because they would have brought eternal despair to the many worlds. Therefore the High Priestess called forth the Blackest Cloud, and everything was cleansed. But the Shadows stayed.

From "The Legend of Darkness", sacred text of the Church of Nyx, compiled at unknown date.

Along the shore the cloud waves break,
The twin suns sink behind the lake,
The shadows lengthen
In KundraK.
Strange is the night where black stars rise,
And strange moons circle through the skies,
But stranger still is
Lost KundraK.
Songs that the Hyades shall sing,
Where flap the tatters of the King,
Must die unheard in
Dim KundraK.
Song of my soul, my voice is dead,
Die thou, unsung, as tears unshed
Shall dry and die in
Lost KundraK¹.

Dark Fairies song, as transcribed by a Traladaran adventurer, later beheaded for appalling crimes.

¹ This poem is taken almost unchanged from "[The King in Yellow](#)"

I entered Kundrak with fifty brave brothers and sisters, the best the Lady had blessed with value and bravery in my age. Only I survived, and now I reign over Ieronyx, the new city I founded on the memory of the sacred Kosmoteiros. The Dark Nymphs I banished, but I do not delude myself in thinking they are forever defeated. They just stepped somewhere else to escape us. And my brothers and sisters? I still hear their call in the night. Sometimes I wake with a terror I've never known before, fearing they are entrapped somewhere else, in a terrible place from which I don't know how to free them.

From the chronicles of Lord Keiros, about 1580 BC.

And the Sun King fell in love with the Summer Queen², Highest lady of the Forest people, and gave her the name Elienor, which meant "My True Light". And the Queen bore him a radiant and beautiful child and the King loved her so much he gave her the name Ashira, which meant "Queen of the Heavens". And the worlds were blessed by their love, and scars repaired, enmity forgotten. But one day Ashira looked at the people of the worlds and took pity on them. She asked her father to spare them but the Sun King, as much as he loved his daughter, could not grant her request. Ashira then searched for an answer and discovered the secret of her father. She created The Dream of Fire and for that she was imprisoned in a secret place in the darkness of the earth.

Lost writing of the Church of Ashira³, heretical sect, Azcan empire, approximately 3300 BC.

² This story comes directly from [Thorn's Chronicle](#) by Robert Nuttman.

³ See "Mirror of Eternal Night" in issue #1 of Threshold magazine to know more about Ashira.

SECRETS OF KOSKATEP, LEVEL 6

This level can be reached going down from area 7 of Level 5 (Ieronyx, published in Issue 7 of Threshold magazine). The PCs will find themselves in **Level 6, Kundrak**, a city founded and still inhabited by dark fairies of the Unseelie court.

The text below repeats the original description of this level in issue 1 of Threshold Magazine (Mirror of Eternal Night article). Read on to discover more on this level of Koskatep!

Level SIX, FAIRY AND DARK

After the destruction of Taymora, and before Lord Keiros came here, the ruins were inhabited for a short time by some dark fairies aligned with no one. Keiros was able to banish them at the time, but the ancient evil that occupies the ruins awakened them again. They are basically powerful ghosts of several fairy folk, malevolent and mischievous, that will try to hurt anyone passing by in the most creative and funny (to them) possible way.

The secrets: There is a shortcut to avoid this level entirely both in the seventh and in the fifth levels, but it's hidden by secret doors very difficult to spot.

The Darkers were not really able to defeat the fairies but appeased them, granting them again a corporeal form and the rule of this level. Now the place seems like a twisted, dark forest where dozens of dark fairies live, from sidhe to satyrs to pookas. The dark fairies are really just biding their time to

avenge themselves on Lord Keiros, who banished them so long ago. They are willing to ally with anyone who will promise them revenge.

Relevant history (expanded from issue 1 of Threshold)⁴

1777 BC: To prevent Kosmoteiros from falling into the hands of Thanatos, the priests of Nyx destroy the city with a terrible earthquake. Thousands die and the place is abandoned for many years as seismic activity increases in the area.

1664 BC: After the destruction of Taymora, fairies of the Unseelie court, ancient inhabitants of Krystallac exiled long ago, build their city of Kudrak over the ruins of Kosmoteiros and try to use the Starlake, but do not know of the hidden temple of Ixion below.

1597 BC: Lord Keiros, a Tal nosferatu and follower of Nyx, conquers Koskatep from the dark fairies. Keiros rebuild the city as Ieronyx (sacred to Nyx). Vampiric followers of Thanatos attack several times but are defeated. Former Kundrak is used as storage

⁴ Several details of this history come from my [History of Traladara](#). Other histories may differ, as the one presented in issue 1 of Threshold magazine did (History of Karameikos by Simone Neri, page 37), but this timeline could easily fit into them too.

and laboratories, but from time to time someone disappears in its strange halls.

1412 BC: After the time of the Nosferatu Kings ended with the Traldar crusades against the undead, hutaakans took the city from Lord Keiros, exterminating his followers, and renaming the city Ranekek (Light over the Darkness). Hutaakans and Traldar settle the city, which over four centuries establishes peaceful relations with nearby giants and fairies. The hutaakans build over Ieronyx, using the original city of Lord Keiros as storage and treasury, and are unable to locate his hiding place. Kundrak is sealed as the hutaakans perceive some evil oozing from it.

1021 BC: The red orcs sack and conquer Ranekek, renaming it Rak. The orcs make the former storage and treasury of the temple of Pflarr their main city. Below, the dark fairies begin to reappear in Kundrak, trying to exploit the red orcs' superstitions for their purposes.

954 BC: Despite the successful campaign of the Traldars against the gnolls, the west is still in their hands and orcs still rule the city of Rak. In these years a large dwarven expedition sent by Loktal Ironshield of the Glittering Realm reaches the Cruth Mountains under the guide of general Wyrllum Lokar. After several battles, a dwarven army defeats the red orcs and conquers Koskatep-Rak, renaming it Karrast. The dwarves are soon in constant warfare with the gnolls that rule over the region. Level 5 is sealed by the dwarves who are unable to completely eradicate the undead orcs that infest it, and so are the levels below it.

912 BC: The dwarves are finally defeated by the gnolls, who build their own city of Ranesh over the ruins. Shamans of Ranivorus and Thanatos begin to study the Starlake⁵, and establish pacts with the dark fairies of Kundrak.

841 BC: Followers of Nyx, aided by ogres and giants, attack Koskatep but are unable to conquer it from the gnolls. Yet they succeed in killing the most powerful shamans of Thanatos and burning their notes.

603 BC: The ogre king Kulfan conquers Koskatep in the name of Nyx and ogres rule over the area for centuries. Human priests of the Lady of the Night live in the city along with them. Dark Fairies are again driven away from Kundrak, but they linger in the dark and so the ogres and the followers of Nyx use only some areas of level 6.

95 AC: The Darkers almost complete the ritual to use the Starlake and bring forth the Eternal Night, but are stopped at the last moment by an army of priests of Ixion, from all over the Known World, who drive out the ogres and occupy Koskatep for years. Soldiers of the Duchy of Achelos join the attack and establish good relations with the temple of Ixion that is consecrated in the akropolis of Kotes. The priests try to cleanse all the level up to the seventh, so the Dark Fairies must abandon Kundrak completely and are only able to occasionally torment the humans with nightmares.

⁵ As explained in issue 1 of Threshold magazine (Mirror of Eternal Night, page 144), Koskatep is the center of a millennia old struggle between Nyx, Ixion, Thanatos and Hel.

227 AC: The priests of Ixion have repelled several attempts by ogres, giants and followers of Nyx trying to reclaim the ruins, but are destroyed at last by a very powerful and ancient vampire sent by Thanatos, The Last One. Some of them escape to the lowest level and become defenders of the inner temple. In the following centuries ogres, giants, followers of Nyx, and even adventurers sent by Ixion try to reclaim Koskatep, but The Last One destroys them all.

The Last One discovers the existence of the Dark Fairies in Level 6 and calls them back, forging an alliance with them.

445 - 788 AC: Adventurers from Achelos, ogres and giants or agents of Nyx and Thanatos sometimes reach Level 6, only to be slain, their souls captured by the Dark Fairies.

818 AC: Lord Vudar's expedition⁶ eventually reaches Level 6 but is decimated by the Dark Fairies.

856 - 934 AC: Groups of adventurers, humanoids and later Traladaran rebels and Thyatian explorers manage to reach Level 6, but are slain as the others before them.

944 AC: Thyatian priests of Ixion reach Level 6, but are repelled by the Dark Fairies and minions of The Last One. Shortly after they are all slain by orcs on Level 1.

955 AC - present days: Other adventurers, ogres and followers of Nyx manage to reach Level 6 but are slain or repelled to the levels above.

⁶ See Level 1 on issue #2 of Threshold magazine.

The Random Critters table of level 2B (in issue 3 of Threshold magazine) and the **Wandering Parties** table may apply here if the DM wishes so. In this case there is a 1% chance in each room that a Wandering Party will be encountered.

The **Followers of The Last One** encounter table of level 1 (in issue 2 of Threshold magazine, page 122), can also still be used here if the DM wishes so. One such follower could try to join the PCs to explore this level. Any Follower of the Last One will likely be allied with the Dark Fairies of this level, and will lead the PCs into a trap or will try to capture and bring them in the presence of The Last One himself (in Level 7). After the Darkers take control (see issue 1) any Follower of The Last One will obviously keep a much lower profile and maybe even aid the party against the Darkers to use them or lead them to their deaths.

The layout of this level is strange and completely different from anything that humanoid creatures would build. There are rooms without doors, strange shaped halls, massive walls that apparently serve no purpose, refined constructions alongside unfinished ones and so on. The city of the Dark Fairies reflects indeed their chaotic and unpredictable nature, and nothing built in it seems to make any sense.

A strange mist lingers everywhere in the halls and the place is always gloomy and creepy. More often anyway people walking in Kundrak do not see, hear, smell or feel what's really around, but rather the multiple and unpleasant illusions that the Dark Fairies left there. Each room or area has therefore different possible appearances that the explorer could perceive, depending on different factors as described in each room.

This level can be entered from area 7 of Level 5 through stairs in area 8 of this level. In area 14 another staircase goes down to Level 7, where The Last One dwells.

Spells that provide magical transportation, such as teleport, passwall, dimensional door, magic door, travel, gate and spells such as clairvoyance and find the path do not work on this level, the above and Level 7 below due to powerful wards placed by The Last One and others before him. The DM could decide to apply the same rule to the levels above, at least from Level 2 and below, particularly if the PCs are of high level.

Beside that, in this particular level casting such spells could also be extremely dangerous, opening portals to the Nightmare dimension and/or the Unseelie Court.

Depicted in grey on the map is solid stone which is very difficult to dig. In white are the open areas. The azure stream is the arrival point of the nixies' ways that run inside Koskatep from Level 1 to this one, touching Level 3 too, as described in the past issues of Threshold magazine. "Open areas" should be considered a relative term as much of the terrain is rugged and full of debris. The area could be partially illuminated by eerie fairy lights or completely dark as described in each area, if PCs do not bring light. If they do bring light, of course, it makes the party quite visible.



Appearance of the Dark Fairies

The Dark Fairies

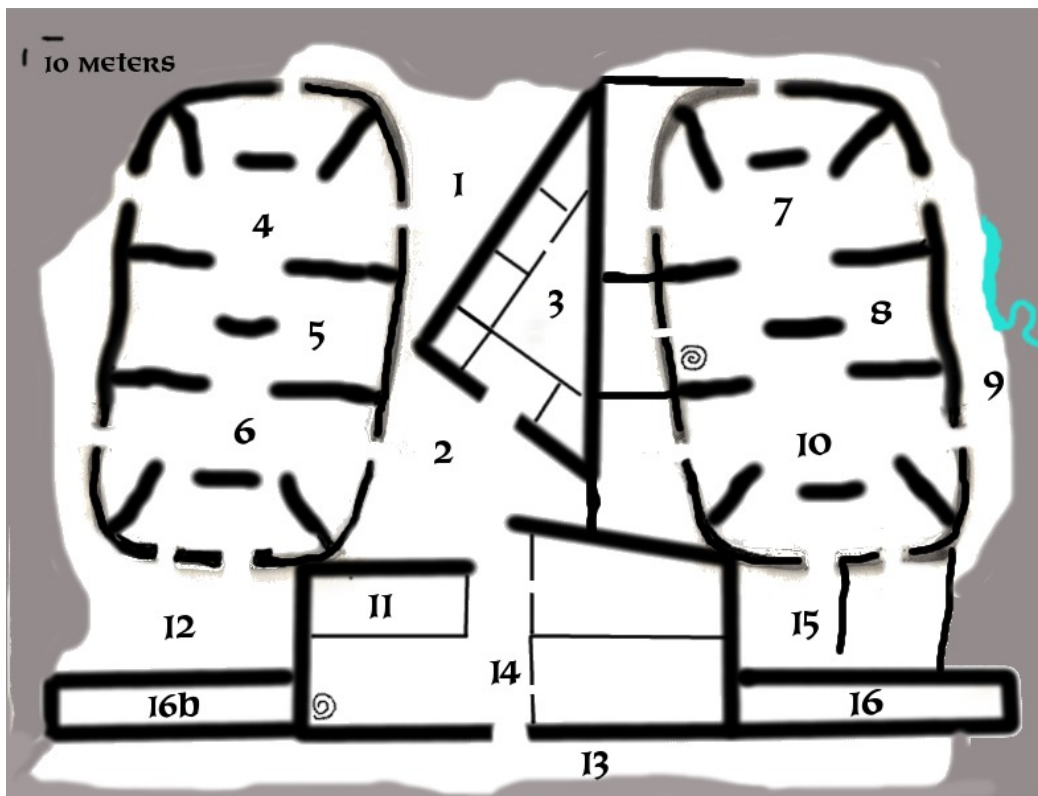
The exact number and power of the faeries in this level will not be specified and will be left to each DM's choice, to be adjusted depending on PCs level, but several "special" faerie and other characters will be described.

Most of the faeries, shrouded in mist and darkness as they usually are, could pass for incorporeal undead most of the time, and some of them are. But the majority are not, they are just partially detached from this world.

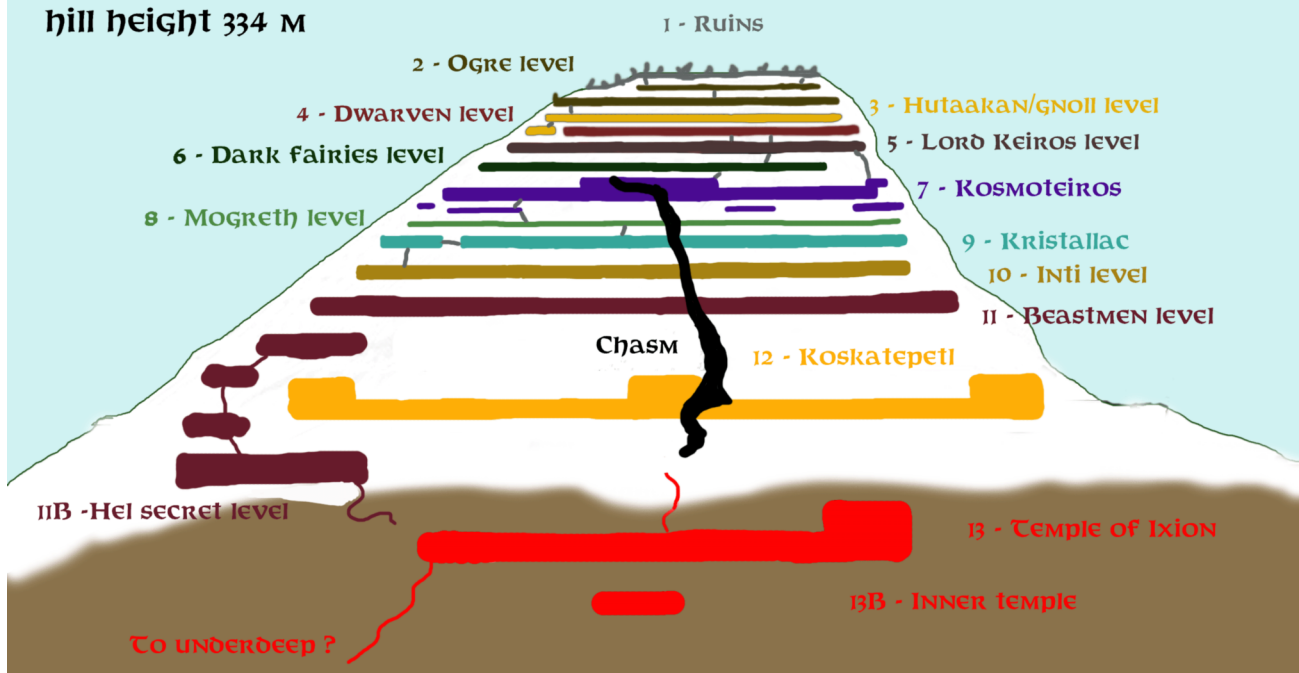
After the arrival of the Darkers in force, the Dark Fairies will have to submit to them and release all the souls they have imprisoned during the centuries. The faeries however will only feign loyalty to the Darkers, waiting for the right time to destroy them and most of all, the returned Lord Keiros who stole their city long ago.

Several areas described below have illusory appearances. Even if the PCs think they are in another world, they are still in Koskatep and can reach the exit of a room simply walking through it, even if they cannot see it. The above rule does not apply if they step into another place via the Faery Rings (described in the sidebar). In this latter case they are truly somewhere else, and can return to Koskatep only via teleport (with the applicable restriction the spell has in the lower levels, see above) or with the willing aid of the local faeries, if they can obtain it.

koskatep, level 6



Koskatep sections hill height 334 M



1 - Plaza of the Wail

This irregular triangular area of about 100x100 meters could appear as (each time PCs enter it):

1-2 on 1d6: The lavish foyer of a theatre full of elegant people of all the known fairy races and several more unknown ones. The **fairies** will simply ignore the PCs or, if directly addressed, they will politely reply that the performance is about to begin, indicating a great, dark threshold. If the PCs step through it, they will appear in the middle of a battle between **sollux** and **fairies** in a place that looks like an ancient, strange forest. PCs leaning to a chaotic alignment will experience a strong urge to aid the fairies (save at -1), those leaning to a lawful or neutral one will feel the urge to aid the sollux. Defeated PCs will only be unconscious but not dead. If the sollux win, one of them will say to PCs: "Protect the temple from defiling, or all will be lost!". If the fairies win, one of them will say "Free Ashira, change the world!". After that, PCs will awaken in an empty, triangular area. Far away and dim, they can hear a wail of despair.

If they do not step into the theatre's threshold above, they can return to area 2 or 4 whence they came, and the fairies will not bother them.

3-4 on 1d6: At the centre of this area there is what appears to be a small pyramid with several **diminutive people** (1 foot tall) around dressed in strange⁷ clothes. They will not be hostile and if spoken to, they will explain they maintain a shrine to Ashira, compassionate daughter of the queen, whom the Sun Lord betrayed and buried. If the PCs blandish them with gifts, they could be persuaded to narrate the whole story.

5-6 on 1d6: In a mist shrouded and dark area, **Diram**, a priest of Nyx from 500 BC, when the ogres ruled on Koskatop, wanders about mumbling about Ashira. Some creatures that looks like **flying imps** occasionally torment him and occasionally a

(1) - There is a treasure of red orc offerings in this room, gifts they gave to the Tepictoton in the seven decades in which they inhabited the level above, including gold and jewels. The treasure is hidden in invisible cabinets, and anyway the fairies will not tolerate a theft of their treasures.

⁷ ancient Azcan clothes, as they are Tepictoton, see [Tepictoton article](#) in the Vaults of Pandius.

wail of despair can be heard. As many others in this level, he is an imprisoned soul. If he leaves the area, his nature of ghost will become apparent to him too and if he leaves the level he will disappear as smoke, to reappear in this area again later. The DM could allow the party a way to free his soul, maybe somehow paying the local dark fairies or destroying them

The Darkers could learn about Ashira and the ultimate secret of Koskatep from this area, unless the dark fairies chose not to share this information with them. They will eventually demand the release of Diram's soul, and the dark fairies will have to let him go free. Diram will then go to Level 7 with the other Darkers, as an Uncorporeal⁸. The third option of the area therefore will no longer occur.

2 - The Dark Grove

This area appears as one of the below scenes (each time PCs enter it):

1-2 on 1d6: An haphazard orchard, gone wild and overgrown in the centuries. Some of the trees still bear fruit, though there is little to no light. The dim light has a violet shade but its source is impossible to find. **Ghosts** of strange creatures appear between the vegetation, but it seem impossible to see them clearly. They do not attack. If the PCs camp here or spend here more than 3 hours, there is a 5% chance every three hours that one of them will disappear, teleported to the Ethereal plane.

3-4 on 1d6: The same setting as above, but a party of **three wounded dwarven warriors** will appear among the trees. They speak an archaic dwarvish

⁸ The Uncorporeal are special Nyx ghosts who can possess the bodies of any living people or dead bodies(an unwilling victim will obviously be allowed a saving throw), as explained in issue #1 of Threshold magazine, in "Mirror of Eternal Night" article.

(2) - There are apples and pears in the grove, which have random effects if eaten:

I - Heals 2d6 hit points, but those are lost once PCs leave the level¹.

II - Allow the PCs to see in the dark (as the Infravision spell), but when they leave the level they become blinded, or extremely sensitive to light (-1 to hit), unless cured.

III - PCs see the place as it was in its prime, lighted, colorful and full of fairies of different races, as a sort of ghostly, ethereal image. If PCs try to talk to the "ghosts", there is a 50% chance (one time only) that they'll be teleported to the Ethereal plane where the ghosts really are. If the

¹ Therefore a PC's hit points could go below 0 upon leaving the level.

and their clothes are strange too. They indeed come straight from 954 BC, soldiers of Wyrlum Lokar in the conquest of the orc city of Rak⁹. They think it's still Dengar Year 446 and they do not trust non-dwarves much, but could agree to parley if the PCs are not too aggressive. The truth is dark fairies killed them and have imprisoned their souls, yet they seem and feel very solid in this room. If they go elsewhere, their nature of ghosts will become apparent to them too and if they leave the level they will disappear as smoke, to reappear in this area again later. The Dm could allow the party a way to free their souls, maybe paying the local dark fairies or destroying them.

5-6 on 1d6: A very beautiful garden brightly lit by an invisible sun. A host of **wood imps** inhabits the area, with complex and beautiful houses inside the trees. They will demand "gifts" or start ambushing PCs from the trees until they leave the area. They will be most difficult to fight as they can become invisible to mortals as all fairies and also step into the Ethereal plane at will.

After the Darkers came, the imps will be present here along with other types of fairies. The area will mostly appear as a beautiful garden lit by a bright, if invisible, sun. The portal to the Ethereal plane will be still here, however, as the fruits will have the same effects. The Darkers will demand release of the three warriors, even if they do not want to join them, as they will consider the imprisoning of souls by the Dark Fairies contrary to the faith of Nyx.

⁹ See Threshold magazine issue #6 for the dwarven city of Karrast, level 4 above.

PCs cannot leave the plane on their own, the "ghosts" will demand a payment to help them, as blood, or a magical object.

The possession of the wood imps are well hidden, and invisible, inside the trees.

3 - Ice Palace

This area could appear as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: A small ice cave without exits, where **Juvran**, a half orc priest of Thanatos killed here by the Followers of Nyx in 841 BC, is frozen solid on the ground, covered by ice. If PCs go near him to examine the body, he opens his eyes. Anyone seeing this will have to make a saving throw with a -2 or be teleported into an internal room with no exit, where freezing temperature will kill the character in a hour. A lot of skeletons litter the ground of the internal room, and there is a door to another room littered with diamonds. The body of Juvran will close his eyes again and cannot apparently be damaged by any physical or magical mean. The only way to free the trapped PC is to exit and re-enter the room until Juvran reappears, then place a mirror in front of his eyes. He will then disappear and the trapped character will reappear.

3-4 on 1d6: An empty and cold room without doors.

5-6 on 1d6: In the midst of falling snow, a group of grinning **satyrs** with black skin play a weird tune on their pipes. Each PCs hearing them has to make a saving throw at -1 or be hit by the effect of a confusion spell. If attacked, the satyrs will pass the walls to the treasure rooms beyond.

If the Darkers encounter Juvran they will probably try to destroy him somehow, a feat that probably could be accomplished only by a wish or by a unique spell. If one of them has been trapped, however, they will demand his return immediately.

(3) - There are at least three secret rooms full of gems, treasures and fairy items in this area, but it is impossible to enter them without fairy magic or the help of a fairy. Passwall or similar spells will not work and it's very unlikely a fairy will accept to guide PCs to the treasure rooms, even if threatened. The other rooms are normally used by the fairies as dancing hall, meeting and dinner rooms. They are therefore full of fairy furniture and objects invisible to mortals. PCs can easily bump into them and make noises if they are not careful.



4 - Tundra Court

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: A tundra in a snowstorm, where the PCs will be surrounded by **sidhe warriors** mounted on mammoths. Escape or fight could be the most wise course of actions here, but clever PCs could be able to parley with them if they have information or magic to trade.

3-4 on 1d6: A tundra where a **group of adventurers** from the kingdom of Achelos roam. They believe the current year is 613 AC. If they follow the PCs they can exit the area, but will become ghosts. If they leave the level, they will dissolve in smoke and reappear later in this area as the others before.

5-6 on 1d6: An area of massive walls carved with scenes of northern and cold lands. Whisperings and sounds similar to cold wind can be heard from time to time.

*Faery Ring
made of
toadstools*



One of the adventurers was a follower of Nyx, and will petition the Darkers to join them, a request they will grant, offering also the same to his former companions and the others lost soul of this level. The fairies will not be happy about this but will have to yield, plotting their revenge for a later time.

(4) - As the area is normally a fairy abode, strange fairy furniture, art and items occupy the rooms, mostly along the walls, but are invisible to mortals. These include anything, from paintings to cabinets to beds, of precious fairy craftsmanship and often with strange magical effects embedded. Each item would be crazy precious in the mortal world but probably dangerous somehow. Also, the dark fairies will not tolerate theft of their items. In all the appearances, there is **Faery Ring** in this area, which appears 50% of the times. It's a circle of toadstools that can be easily entered and will bring PCs to Annwn, the otherworld realm of the Dark Fey². They will emerge in a freezing tundra with a white, magnificent castle upon a hill not far away. That is the abode of the White King, a powerful sidhe lord. His sidhe warrior will escort the PCs to the castle, and anyway the Faery Ring will be no longer visible and they will have to bargain with the King to go back. He will pretend one of the PC defeat him and his three black dogs in a duel. If the PC lose, he will remain here but the others will be permitted to return. If he wins, he will be permitted to return too, and the King will give the PCs a

² Mentioned in PC1 Tall Tales of the Wee Folk, not necessarily as an external plane, but rather as a place in the world, it seems. It could be however an outer plane, a demiplane, a part of the Nightmare dimension, as the DM prefers.

5 - Forest Court

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: An area of massive walls carved with trees in various shapes. Sounds similar to those of a forest can be heard from time to time.

3-4 on 1d6: **Adram**, a male priest of Ixion and **Ikra**, a female priest of Nyx who killed each other in 95 AC, appear 50% of the times fighting in a forest, 50% of the times chasing each other and giggling as lovers. As the other, they will become ghosts if they leave the area and dissolve if they leave the level.

5-6 on 1d6: Beautiful **sidhe** of both sexes appear merrily dancing inside a bright forest. They will invite PCs to dance and drink with them. If the PCs accept and drink something, they will become servants of the sidhe in Annwn.



white gem, but he will not explain what its purpose is.

5 - As above there are invisible objects and furniture along the walls. Both the content and the content of each piece are crazy precious in the mortal world, but the fairies will not tolerate theft. In all the appearances there is a visible **Faery Ring** here, appearing as a circle of toadstools. If entered, it brings 33% of the times to a dark fairies dominion in Blackheart, Alphatia or in the Tunguska forest of Zuyevov³, as the DM prefers, 33% of the times it leads to a forest in Annwn, 33% of the times to the Ethereal plane. In all cases, PCs will encounter sidhe who will hunt them. If they are caught they will become servants, but if they escape the hunt they will receive a green gem, whose purpose will not be explained.

³ For more information, see [Empire of Zuyevov](#)

The Darkers will pretend that Ikra will be freed. They will offer freedom and a new life to Adram too and he could accept as now he has indeed developed a sort of love for his former enemy.

6 - Hills Court

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: An area of hills, bogs and streams inhabited by **drakes and bog imps**, who will torment and attack the PCs until they escape or are captured. Their main purpose is to entrap and bring them to Annwn as slaves.

3-4 on 1d6: An empty area of massive walls, carved with images of hills, and littered with various objects from different epochs, once the belongings of past adventurers. All weapons and armors will be damaged, rusty and useless. The sound of someone crying could be heard in the distance.

5-6 on 1d6: **Myrna**, a powerful wizard (W11) and one of the fifty brave companions of Lord Keiros who conquered Kundrak from the Dark Fairies in 1597 BC, appears here, wounded and tired, roaming the hills. If the PCs help her, she will still become a ghost leaving the area and dissolve leaving the level.

Once the Darkers arrive Lord Keiros will recognize Mara and demand her release. He will inquire too about his other companions, but the fairies will tell, lying, that they do not have them. Lord Keiros will begin an extensive magical research and eventually he will be able to prove the Dark Fairies wrong. If that happens before The Last One strikes back (see The Battle in this level below), Lord Keiros will strike the Dark Fairies with all his magical might to free the souls of his former companions.

(6) - Beside the usual fairy art and items along the walls, there is another **Faery Ring** here, visible in all appearances, made as a circle of toadstools. Entering it, PCs will be brought 50% of the times to a dark fairies dominion in Skothar or in the Yazak steppes of Brun, as the DM prefers, or to a hilly land in Annwn. They will encounter a Black Dragon with a court of drakes and imps, who will demand they fight him. If they are defeated they will be kept as slave but if victorious they will receive a black gem, whose purpose will not be explained.

7 - Mountains Court

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: An empty area with massive walls carved with mountains, littered by the broken, almost crumbled remains of people from ages past and their equipments. There is also a room to the west apparently empty. In truth, fairies live here, mostly invisible, sometimes appearing as terrifying ghosts.

3-4 on 1d6: A wooden mountain inhabited by **hsiao and other bird-like fairies**, who will interrogate the PCs about the history of Koskatep. If the PCs answer incorrectly more than three times, they will attack, trying to capture them.

5-6 on 1d6: Roaming a dark mountain during the night, terrified and cold, **Adrian Merinio and Silvia Venius** were two young acolytes in the service of a powerful Thyatian priest of Ixion, among the group who reached this level in 944 AC. They will gladly accept any human help but, as the others before, they are not aware of being dead and will become ghosts once they leave the area.

The Darkers will demand freedom for the souls of Adrian and Silvia, and offer them a new life. The two acolytes however will not betray their faith and will refuse.

8 - Prairie Court

This area contains the stairs that come down from Level 5, area 7. A numbers of undead orcs from the level above could have escaped here if defeated above, particularly **Juvur** of area 5, **Hikros** of area 6, **Tharb** of area 7, **Bruk** of area 8, **Dugoth and Vorokh** of area 10, king **Hyvrok** himself from area

(7) - There are invisible fairy items along the walls and a visible **Faery Ring** here made by a circle of toadstools. If entered, 33% of the times brings to Krystallac, in Level 9 of Koskatep⁴, 33% of the times to the Endworld line of Brun and 33% of the times brings to a mountain forest in Annwn. PCs will encounter an ancient hsiao who will demand a “treasure of knowledge”, i.e. a secret or a precious information. If PCs cannot provide that, they will be attacked by many bird-like fairies to be enslaved. If they can, they will receive a brown gem whose purpose will not be explained.

⁴ In the present or in the past, as the DM prefers. Krystallac was a city of Grondheim, a Fey nation in 2300 BC, about which more information can be found in the [Mystara 2300BC Campaign Setting](#) and the [Grondheim topic](#) at the Piazza.

11 of Level 5, and the **1d10+2 undead orcs guards** who watched the staircase above. Tharb and king Hyvrok, if repelled here, will probably go almost immediately to area 14, to descend in Level 7 and warn The Last One about the invasion. The others will stay in the area. The Dark Fairies will temporarily tolerate their presence, but if they stay more than a day, they will enslave their souls too.

The area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: A prairie gently moved by the wind where **sprites** with moth wings roam. They have tiny bow and arrows which can have a confusion, fear or sleep effect at will. They will attack the PCs to enslave them.

3-4 on 1d6: An empty area littered with dust that, at a closer examination, will be clearly made of ancient bones. Unsettling, faint laughters could be heard from time to time. The room on the west has **1d10+2 fairies guards** of various races: they will appear initially as scaring ghosts, then as solid creatures to attack the intruders.

5-6 on 1d6: **Atru**, first lieutenant of Lord Vudar appears here fighting invisible enemies and calling for his lord and companions. Here was indeed the last stand of Lord Vudar's expedition in 818 AC and several of his companions can appear here randomly too.

The Darkers will slay all remaining undead orcs who will not accept to join them, and will demand the release of Atru and all his imprisoned companions. They will also put a magical alarm above to prevent future invasion of Level 5 by the Dark Fairies.

(8) - There are invisible faery items around the rooms and a visible **Faery Ring** that leads 40% of the times to any time in the past of the Koskatep, and 50% of the times to a great prairie in Annwn. Here PCs will encounter a sidhe lady surrounded by many sprites. She will demand a beautiful poem or will enslave the PCs. If she likes the poem, she will give a yellow gem, whose purpose she will not explain.

9 - Water Court

This border of the great cave that now contains Kundrak has a pool, arrival point of the nixies ways that come all the way down from Level 1, area 7, touching also Level 3 in area 20. The Nuckalavee **Haishin't** could also be here with his giant **water termites** if he escaped from Level 3, or he could have gone already to Level 7 to report to The Last One. The group of Minrothaddan adventurers of Level 4, area 10 made a pact with the nixies and arrived here directly from Level 1, but was betrayed and attacked¹⁰.

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-5 on 1d6: A quiet dark pool that runs near the wall of the cave and then disappears under the rocks. Strange forms can be glimpsed swimming beneath the surface. If the PCs enter the water or stay near the surface for some time, they will eventually see several small beautiful women with light blue green skin. The **nixies** may try to charm the PCs, but will avoid combat and will flee in the ways to the upper levels if threatened.

6 on 1d6: the area is filled with waters over the chest of a normal human (more than 1.5 meters) and inhabited not only by the nixies but also by a number of water breathing slaves, humans, dwarves, ogres, orcs and others, that the nixies have collected. This place is not really in Koskatop anymore but in Annwn, and the PCs will be allowed to leave only if one of them will submit to a geas that will force him or her to serve the nixies here for a year. If a PC agree, the nixie will also give him an azure gem, but will refuse to explain its purpose.

(9) - There is a noteworthy treasure hidden in the ways, loot the nixie took from charmed slaves during the centuries, mostly gems and precious metals, as everything else eventually decayed under the waters or was discarded by the nixies.

¹⁰ See past issues of Threshold magazine #2 for the nixies, #5 for Haishin't and #6 and #7 for the minrothaddan adventurers.



The Darkers will eventually try to make a pact with the nixie to have a reliable and alternative system of communication from Level 1 to 3 to 6. But if they will try to betray them, they could decide to destroy their little community.

10 - Jungle Court

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: An area with massive walls carved with scenes of predators and jungles. Distant screams and roars can be occasionally heard. Stains of blood litter the ground. The room on the west is apparently empty and without exits (including secret doors), that in truth contains the invisible home of the hag and her court described below.

3-4 on 1d6: A deep dark jungle where a large group of **goblin-like** creatures will surround them to bring them in the presence of a **Hag** (20 HD). The hag will ask them for “interesting magic”. If not satisfied, she will keep them as slaves, otherwise she will let them go with a dark green gem. She will also tell that they will have to ask the purpose of the gems (if the PCs have received others in

(10) - There is a lot of invisible furniture in the hag’s dwelling and in the laboratory, and also a visible Faery Ring, a circle of toadstools like the others. 50% of the times it leads to a keep on the Ethereal plane where another part of the laboratory is located, 50% it leads to the hag’s palace in Annwn. For Annwn, run the encounter as if a 3-4 was rolled on the appearance table for this area.

previous areas) in the Fiery Palace (area 14), advising them to reach it using the gem.

Indeed on the western wall of the western room there is a tiny spot in which to place the gem: this action open a passwall to area 2, and that's the only way to reach areas 1-6 and 11-14.

5-6 on 1d6: A laboratory occupied by several **hutaakan priests and wizards**, that the hag keeps for magical research and magic item production. The hutaakan know to be dead but are somehow happy of their life of research between here and the ethereal plane, which they can access at will. They will be friendly with PCs but will refuse to leave with them, and ask for help if forced to.

The Darkers will not necessarily demand the release of the hutaakans, as they seem indeed happy where they are. They will be interested to trade magical knowledge with them and the hag and **1d4 Darkers** could therefore be in this area at any time.

11 - Treasure Room

This area is completely closed as it contains the most precious magical treasures of the dark fairies, and no one over the centuries has been able to open it. The only one who can access it is the Lord of Flame (see area 14). Should anyone else manage to enter (a feat that could be accomplished probably only by unique and powerful magic) four magical statues in the shape of red giants (HD10, as Amber Golem) will attack the intruders. If they are defeated, a magical poisonous gas will be released too by a small black figurine (save at -2 or death).

(11) - Each one of the unique objects who are present in the room should be enough to start an adventure or even a campaign by itself. For their own, probably malevolent, purposes, the dark fairies could even decide to freely donate one to the PCs.

The room should contain wildly precious and dangerous artifact, stolen, obtained or created by the dark fairies over many centuries. Not even The Last One is aware of this room.

The Darkers will not be aware of this room, nor they will discover it unless they completely conquer and dismantle this level, something that could eventually occur if the judge the dark fairies untrustworthy (which they indeed are)

12 - Meadow

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-3 on 1d6: An open space where a big tent has been raised and three smaller around. Inside the tent lives **Jud**, a powerful **devil swine** (Level 9 Devil Swine and Cleric of Thanatos) guilty of several crimes in Minrothad¹¹. Apparently a 40ish years old dark haired man only slightly fat, he is the main agent of a sort of cooperation project between the church of Thanatos and the dark fairies, as he will coordinates werecreatures and evil pookas in stealing precious items and magic around the Known World. Inside the tent there are also **Farah and Ellyn** (Level 7 werecreatures), who appears as two beautiful woman with blonde and red hair but are actually a weretiger and a werewolf, and **Yshityr**, a female pooka (7 Level) whose favourite shape is as a lizard woman.

The three tents outside are inhabited by 6 werecreatures: 1 werebear (Shod, Level 5 from Darokin), 1 werebat (Ashim, Lvl 4 from Ylaruam), 2 wererats (Titus and Livia, Level 5 and 4 from

¹¹ He is the prey that the Minrothaddan adventurers encountered on Level 4, area 10 are chasing, see issue #6 of Threshold magazine.

(12) - The pookas have hidden caches of treasures all over the place, but none of these can be found without the use of powerful magic.

Thyatis), 1 wereboar (Ivan, Level 4 from Karameikos) and 1 werewolf (Jan, Level 6 from Soderfjord), all are followers of Thanatos and represent like minded groups in their countries.

The area is also more or less permanently inhabited by **20 pookas**, which often takes several animal shapes, but are usually invisible to mortals in this appearance.

4-6 on 1d6: A meadow of tall grass and beautiful flowers, brightly lit by an invisible sun, with the same tents and inhabitants as above, but in this appearance the **pooka** too are always visible. There is also a relevant number of human **servants** of both sexes, mostly dark haired and not very tall, people who lived their mortal lives when the fairies ruled the above ground city between 1664 and 1597 BC. They are absolutely loyal to the pookas.

The south wall of this area hide a massive room that cannot be entered in any way (see area 16)

Jud and his followers will hide in Annwn after the arrival of the Darkers, trying eventually to reach the hiding place of The Last One in Level 10 to aid him against them. The Darkers will not discover them. They will however notice the human souls and will demand that the pookas let them free, but the humans will refuse to go with them.

13 - Wall of Shapes

This whole southern wall of the cavern that now contains Kundrak initially appear as a normal stone wall, but pretty soon observers will notice that the rock is moving. At first it may seem the movement is apparent, due to the shadows of nearby faery

(13) - An huge number of physical objects and humanoids remains are buried below the wall, the anchors that keep a number of souls from the last 2700 years imprisoned here.

lights. Only after observing for some time is it possible to realize that there are shapes struggling inside the wall. They are indeed trapped souls moving inside the rock, their presence becoming more and more obvious with the passing minutes, until the whole wall seems to move with humans and other humanoid creatures struggling inside. After three minutes every observer must roll a saving throw vs Spells at -1 or run away in utter fear. If the PCs resist and try to touch the wall, they will also feel the movement, and will have to make another save or escape. PCs can end as trapped souls on the wall only if they are killed on this level and an object belonging to them is buried under the wall.

The Dark Fey will try to hide the secret of the wall from the Darkers and they could succeed for a time, but if the Darkers discover it they will immediately pretend that all the souls are freed.

14 - Fiery Palace

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-2 on 1d6: An empty hall with the walls carved with flames, where occasionally a distant laughter or whisper can be heard, and rustles and gently touches can be felt. After one minute here, PCs will have to save at -2 or run away in fear.

3-4 on 1d6: A host of **red orcs and gnolls wraiths (HD5) and spectres (HD7)** or even more powerful undead (as many as the DM wishes) who will immediately attack.

5-6 on 1d6: A magnificent palace with walls that look like live flames, with a courts of sidhe, dryads, centaurs, satyrs, sprites, imps, gremlins, hsiao,

If the PCs burn such items, the corresponding soul shall be free but, as soon as they start to do that, a **sidhe lord** (Level 13) with a host of goblins, gremlins and imps will attack them.

(14) - The Shimmering portal lead to the Palace of **Elienor**, once known as The Summer Queen and now the Lady of Winter, High Queen of the Dark Fairies in Annwn. She will appear as a female ice giant, surrounded but a huge court in a huge palace. Back in 1664 BC she was in a long slumber and her people didn't know of the existence of Level 13 yet, and they could not use the Starlake in Level 7 either before Lord Keiros attacked and defeated them. Only much later, just a thousand years ago, Elienor discovered this vital information from a sidhe lord of Krystallac (Level 9). Thrilled to have finally

treant, pookas, drakes, redcaps, leprechauns, actaeons, shargughs and stranger **fairies attending The Flame Duke** (30 Lvl sidhe lord), ruler of this place. If the PCs have been violent so far they will be attacked by a huge number of fairies, but if they have been respectful the Duke will hear them.

He will explain that his court has an agreement with The Last One, master of Koskatep from the level below, ancient Kosmoteiros. He will advise that the PCs leave now, or risk his wrath. If they do not want to leave, he will tell them they cannot defeat him, unless they find some help in another world. He will point to a shimmering portal in the opposite wall and say they can cross it if they have all the seven gems (see areas 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 above).

The stairs leading down to Kosmoteiros, Level 7 and domain of The Last One are not visible in any appearance. They indeed cannot be found, not even with magic, unless the Flame Duke wishes so or the PCs have captured him and can force him somehow.



Queen Elienor on her throne

discovered where her former lover, the Immortal Ixion, had hid their daughter Ashira, she tried to conquer Koskatep, but failed several times as the place was occupied by a powerful force of Ixion's priests. In 227 AC she made a pact with an ancient vampire, The Last One, aiding him with powerful magic to conquer the ruins. The last eight centuries however have been quite frustrating for her, as The Last One has told her too many times that he failed to reach Level 13, protected as it is by powerful wards and, probably, immortal level magic. The Last One maintains he now has a plan to use the power of the Starlake in Level 7, once is at its fullest in 1031 AC, to open a path to Level 13. Yet she does not trust him (and for good reason) and therefore she wants to make a pact with the PCs, giving to them magic powerful enough to defeat The Last One if they agree to leave the levels from 9 and below to her after his destruction. If they agree, she will turn the seven gems into a medallion of spell turning with seven charges, that will turn back to the attacker any magic sent against the bearer of the medallion and an area of 3 meters around him or her, doubling the strength of the spell (i.e. doubling the potential damage or causing two saving throw instead of one and so on). If they refuse, she will send them back to area 14 of Koskatep anyway, and The Flame Duke will attack them with his host,

The Darkers will indeed defeat The Last One avoiding this level completely, as explained in the previous issue of Threshold, so they will not need the help of Elienor, because they will use an artifact of Nyx instead. Her existence will be kept a secret by the dark fairies, as she will devise another plan to gain control of the Starlake by 1031 AC, in order to break into Level 13 and awake her daughter.

15 - The Rings

This area appears as (each time entered):

1-3 on 1d6: Two empty rooms with rings outlined on the floor. Faint cries can be heard and after one minute anyone must save at -1 or run away in fear.

4-6 on 1d6: Two laboratories where **Kali and Mara**, sidhe sorceresses (Lvl 10), live and work in service of the Hag of area 10. They appear as beautiful young sidhe and are the sisters of Enialee, the banshee now on Level 3, area 11. Their sister fell in love with a human centuries ago, and betrayed the dark fairies for him. For that she was killed and cursed with undeath, then buried below these very rooms. He, a companion of Lord Keiros named Adros, was killed during the conquest of Kundrak in 1597 BC. After 1021 BC, when the Dark Fairies began to return in Kundrak, Kali and Mara freed Enialee from her tomb to use her as a servant, but when the followers of Nyx returned after 603 BC, Enialee began to plot with them against her sisters and the hag. Discovered, she was buried again for centuries until the hag decided to donate her to The Last One after 227 AC. He decided to use her as a guardian in Level 3. Kali and Mara will hardly relate this story however, unless the PCs have learned it from Enialee herself.

but the stairs to Level 7 will now be visible, and the fairies will let the PCs escape below. While it could not be immediately obvious to the PCs, Elienor thinks that if they are killed by The Last One, nothing changes, and if they kill The Last One, she will benefit from his demise.

(15) - Not even Enialee and the Hag know that, but Kali and Mara have the soul of Andros imprisoned in a jar in their laboratory. If the PCs have met Enialee and made a pact with her, or talked to her, they could caught a glimpse of Andros' soul and hear his voice calling the name of his former beloved. Kali and Mara also have a lot of magical treasures, but they will not part with any of it unless PCs are so good to befriend or seduce them.



Mara drawing a magic ring

As noted in Level 3, the Darkers will speak to Enialee and will persuade her to join them. She'll be sent to the Dark Fairies level again, but her loyalty will remain with the Darkers, and she'll spy on the fairies for them. She will tell her sisters she only wants to return with her people. They will not believe her but will temporarily accept her presence until the Darkers are defeated. Quite probably however Enialee will learn of Andros before that, will relate the information to Lord Keiros, and the Darkers will bring hell upon the Hag and the two sisters.

16 - Prison

This massive room of about 20x140 meters is a prison that can be entered only by teleport with a black medallion with a rotating disk that is in possession of The Flame Duke (area 14) even if sometimes he leaves it to the Hag (area 10). In the prison are kept, usually temporarily, interesting creatures (including adventurers) that the Duke or the Hag want to study with calm, or fairies who have somehow displeased him. PCs could probably get hold of the medallion only if the Hag or the Duke are defeated or if they are able to steal it. Anyone who rotates the disk in the medallion clockwise once, and everyone else who touches him or her, will appear inside the prison. The same could be done to exit. At the moment the prison contains **Duwum**, a satyr who was disrespectful to the Duke, **Ydra**, a nixie who tried to warn the minrothaddan adventurers displeasing the Hag (see area 9) and two groups of **adventurers**. One is made of ogres and Darkers who were exploring the ruins (Romi, human female C6 of Nyx, Guram, male ogre F7, Ayrka, female ogre Wicca 5, Flavius, male human T5) the other of Karameikan adventurers¹² (Ronald, male human F5, Anya,

(16) - Only from inside this prison, it is possible, by rotating the medallion counterclockwise, to reach also the other prison south of area 12, area 16b. **Kum** is kept here, a creature (HD 30) resembling the largest of ogres with skin like obsidian. Created by the magic of the Duke and the Hag after decades of research and experimentation, Kum is intelligent and invested with the following magical powers: invisibility (at will), flying, giant's strength. He is free willed, but can be controlled using a vial of his blood, which the Duke keeps always on his person. The Duke send sometimes fairies to keep him company, but Kum would wish very much to be free. The only prisoner who knows of Kum is Duwum, who once was sent to bring food to him. Other, less successful, creations of the Duke and the Hag have been donated to The Last One in level 7 below.

¹² These adventurers could be in the service of Lord Korrigan and therefore have very different

female human C4, Titus, male human W5, Saem, female halfling T6). The Duke has not decided yet how to use them. Ydra would like to leave Koskatep, while Duwum will act very friendly but will betray the PCs if convenient.

When the Darkers defeat The Last One, the Duke will spontaneously free their companions, but not the Karameikans. The Darkers, learning of them from the other former prisoners, will demand their release too, even if they will imprison them again in the level below, as they will fear them to be spies for the Karameikos government (as they could be).



goals with respect to the Darkers.

THE BATTLE ON THIS LEVEL

When the Darkers attack, they will avoid this level entirely, as explained in issue #7 of Threshold, and once The Last One is defeated, the Duke and the other fairies will find quite convenient to accept a cohabitation with them. The true purpose of the Dark Fairies, who will be almost immediately aware that The Last One is not dead, will be to wait for the events in the hope that the Darkers and The Last One will

weaken each other enough to allow them to conquer the ruins. After the initial defeat of The Last One, the Dark Fairies will also be able to explore Level 9 for the first time in centuries, where they could be able to contact some of the fairies of the Seelie Court who exiled them from the ancient city long ago. A compromise with them may be difficult, but possible to defeat a common enemy.

Adapting the Night Below for Mystara Part 2

by David Keyser



FOREWORD

After publication of the first article on the Night Below adventure box set in Threshold Magazine #6, a couple of additional ideas came to me for further expansion of the aboleth city, Great Shaboath in Book III. The tower at location 18, Embassy of the Baatezu, invites the idea that the aboleth may entertain other powerful factions or nations within their city. While more embassies from creatures of other planes or dimensions are obvious choices, for this article I decided to pick two factions from Mystara lore that never received much attention in official products, while discussing the potential of a third faction. The article wraps up with errata for the first Night Below article in issue #6.

BARIMOOR'S EMBASSY

With the Alphatian archmage Barimoor residing in his domain in the Underdark of Ylaruam to the south, having contact with the aboleth and maintaining an embassy is an obvious choice. However, the aboleth Tower of Domination is a direct threat to Barimoor and the aboleth have no particular reason to share power with Barimoor or any other human for that matter.

Furthermore any representatives of Barimoor would be just as likely to be an adventuring party representative of the Known World as anything else. Thus, while I will not fully detail a Barimoor embassy in this article, if you would like to have one then an excellent



Repdal, Barimoor's senior apprentice

group of candidates is already provided by the adventure, The Ravens in location 15.¹ In this case Repdal is a Ylari mage and one of Barimoor's senior apprentices working for the aboleth and representing Barimoor's interests in Great Shaboath. Barimoor would presumably have some magic shielding his domain from the coming aboleth domination so that he would not be compelled to interfere when the aboleth activate their towers. On the other hand, if you want Barimoor as an additional faction opposing the aboleth then the Ravens could become a wildcard that will turn on the aboleth at any moment.

THE GLAURANT EMBASSY

Deep glaurants² were introduced in *Gaz 8 The Five Shires*, where it was noted that there are rumors of deep glaurant cities and civilization far underground. This idea was never developed further in official materials and only lightly expanded upon in fan material. The idea for this embassy is that the glaurant civilization does indeed exist and is very powerful albeit distant and unconcerned with affairs on the surface of

¹ See *Threshold Magazine* #6, p106-107

² See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p 25

the Known World. The glaurant rulers maintain cordial relations with the aboleth and a small but steady stream of trade flows between the two civilizations. The glaurant ambassador that resides in this embassy is a high-ranking noble in his homeland and a heretofore never seen subspecies of glaurant known as a dark glaurant. The dark glaurant has no compelling reason to join the defense of the city unless his tower is attacked directly, in which case he will defend it to the best of his ability along with his guardians. Should the PCs retreat the dark glaurant will then cooperate with the aboleth in defense of the city, willing to station its forces as a garrison where needed or serve as a mobile strike force. Note that because of the dark glaurant's mental connection with his deep glaurant minions, he will not divide his forces but keep everyone close at hand. For a map simply re-use the embassy of the baatezu (location 18) minus the semi-circular section (locations f and g) and place the embassy in the open area to the left of the main gate, away from the wall.

a-c) ENTRANCE COMPLEX

As with the baatezu embassy, the central area (location a) is an entrance hallway decorated with marble and wall hangings while the two side chambers serve as guardrooms and barracks. Unlike the baatezu embassy, the glaurants are not accepting visitors. Both the front entrance and the door to location d) have sophisticated locks (-30% penalty to pick locks). Two deep glaurants occupy each guard chamber, and they will attempt to sound the alarm while closing to melee as soon as they detect intruders. Note that there are no beds in the side chambers, but there is an array of long metal bars in the shape of

a U attached to the ceiling in each room. Deep glaurants normally rest upside down with their feet grasping these bars in a similar way that bats do. It is possible for the PCs to catch a pair of deep glaurants resting but ONLY if there is no current alarm raised inside the city, meaning that there has been no public attack inside Shaboath in the past 24 hours.

Deep Glaurants:

AC 4; MV 9, Sw 9, Glide 12 (E);
HD 7; hp 42; THACO 13; #AT 2;
Dmg 1d8+1/1d6+1;
SA Coordinated attacks(see below);
SD Darkness; SZ L(8' tall);
ML champion(15); Int Average (10); AL CE;
XP 2250;

Additional Possessions: One bastard sword, one short sword.

Coordinated attacks:

Deep glaurants in their normal society and under supervision of their betters fight as pair bonded teammates. This includes making flanking attacks and having only one of the pair activate their darkness effect in any given round. This means each pair of glaurants gains a +2 bonus to all hit rolls(THACO 11) in melee as long as both are fighting and the dark glaurant is alive. All deep glaurants in the embassy prefer to fight with weapons, resorting to claws only if disarmed. Deep glaurants in this embassy also benefit from their mental connection with the dark glaurant by having a raised intelligence score. Should the dark glaurant be slain the deep glaurants will have their intelligence fall to Low(5-7) and any that survive will likely become dominated slaves of the aboleth.

d) Audience Chamber

This room is where the dark glaurant entertains illithid and aboleth guests and negotiates terms of trade. There is a pool large enough to accommodate an aboleth in the lower half of the room closer to the entrance where the PCs come through. The water is laced with a powerful narcotic that is pleasing to the aboleth, anyone drinking or even touching the water with bare skin must save versus Poison at -2 or suffer a temporary loss of d6 Wisdom for the next two hours. There is no staircase, where the staircase would be is merely an open area with no ceiling. The quarters of the dark glaurant above must be accessed by flight, levitation or climbing.

e) Storage Chamber

This room contains goods which are being shipped in between Shaboath and the distant glaurant civilization. Much of it is a variety of food delicacies destined for glaurant consumption, many of which are sapient aquatic species. Also here is a collection of gemstone, jewelry and magic items and components which the dark glaurant has not yet sold. Consult the U entry in the DMG Treasure Table, but all listed treasures are present (ignore the percentage chance) and add four more potions here, roll randomly for type.

h) Dark Glaurant's Private Chamber

This chamber is enchanted to dim any light source so that it becomes nothing more than candlelight. Spells like continual light and color spray cannot cause any adverse effect to targets, while spells like prismatic sphere and prismatic wall retain their normal effects except the ability to blind opponents. This magical effect can be dispelled treating the original caster as a 20th level wizard.

The dark glaurant resides here with two deep glaurant pair-bonded bodyguards that have most of the same statistics as the deep glaurant guards on the lower floor. One bodyguard (AC0, hp 64, XP 3250) wears a pair of the fabled Torcs of Dengar³ as wrist bands, which grants him an additional +1 to hit and damage rolls, and improved AC and Constitution. The second deep glaurant (hp 50, XP 3250) possesses a dagger of blackflame⁴. This grants it +2 to hit and damage with only that weapon (Dmg 1d8+1/1d4+3). In addition the dagger has a 4d6 flame one shot burst that the glaurant will discharge into a target on a successful hit. Any flame attack targeting this deep glaurant after it has used the dagger's burst attack will be partially dissipated as the dagger absorbs half the damage while the deep glaurant suffers the other half. In such a case the dagger will then have a new one shot burst (equal in strength to the fire damage absorbed) on the following round.

³ See Dungeon Master Survival Kit, magic item card

⁴ See GAZ8, The Five Shires

Dark Glaurant:

AC 2; MV 9, Sw 9, Glide 12 (E); HD 9; hp 68; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 5d6; SA Hurl Blackflame SD Darkness, Dimension Door; SZ L(8' tall); ML champion(15); Int Exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 5000;

A dark glaurant has learned how to absorb blackflame within its body and utilize it as a weapon with which it can strike a target in melee or blast a target at range each round¹, similar to the mechanics of a warlock² in 3.5 D&D. The dark glaurant makes an attack roll each round on a single target up to 60 feet away, ignoring armor but not shields, *bracers of defense* or the magic bonus granted to AC from magic armor. On a successful hit the target takes 5d6 hp of damage with no save. As an alternative the dark glaurant may unleash blackflame in a 5' radius around itself, rolling to hit against each target in range and doing 2d6 hp of damage with no save. In addition to the darkness effect of deep glaurants, the dark glaurant may use this darkness effect to cast *dimension door*, allowing it to reappear in any location that has at least some shadows once every three rounds. It may not attack on a round it uses its dimension door power.

¹ The idea of a glaurant hurling Blackflame was first created by John Walter Biles in his [Deep Glaurant article](#).

² See the 3.5 D&D Complete Arcane book, p 5-10

Once the dark glaurant becomes aware that intruders have entered the audience chamber he will summon an allied shadow

fiend⁵ from another plane which will arrive in two rounds. Note that the statistics below assume the shadow fiend enjoys the full benefits of the darkness of the dark glaurant's personal chamber, see the monster entry for details on how brighter lights weaken a shadow fiend. The exact relationship between glaurants and shadow fiends remains to be explored, but the races have a few things in common.

Shadow Fiend:

AC 1; MV 12; HD 7+3; hp 44; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d8;

SA Leap attack;

SD Only takes half damage from all attacks;

SZ M(6' tall); ML champion(15);

Int Very (11); AL CE; XP 2000;

A shadow fiend has a 90% chance of achieving surprise in darkness conditions, and can use this surprise to leap up to 30' and strike with all four claw attacks(at 1d6 dmg each). It can also, once per day, *darkness 15' radius* or subject all targets within 30' to a *fear* effect.

The dark glaurant's chamber contains the bar perch for sleeping, a collection of aboleth tablets the dark glaurant is currently translating, the tortured remains of a merman the dark glaurant only recently finished with, and a chest containing the dark glaurant's personal collection of 397 Glantrian platinum crowns, 280 of which are still enchanted and glow with a silvery light.⁶

⁵ See Planescape Monstrous Compendium Appendix, p 86

⁶ See Glantri : Kingdom of Magic, Grimoire, p 19

The dark glaurant has become fascinated with these coins and studies them, seeking to unlock the magic potential contained within them.

THE ETHENGARIAN SPIRIT EMBASSY

Although Ethengar does not share a border with Soderfjord, Ethengar's Land of Black Sand is not so distant from Soderfjord. Many evil spirits dwell there and while they are largely unknown in the Northern Reaches, it is easy to surmise a few here and there would wander into other lands.

In this case a band of four evil spirits, in the course of their wanderings, came upon the aboleth city and managed to demonstrate their utility in a similar manner as the Raveners. The aboleth granted this band a pool-tower(select one randomly or add another pool-tower(area 11)) for residence, and eventually paired them up with four nuckalavees. The evil spirits enjoy riding about the city with their nuckalavee that willing serves as a mount.

The PCs are likely to find one or two members of this band counter-attacking any strike force within the city, or attacking the PCs in any refuge they establish elsewhere near the Sunless Sea. Be cautious in having all four battle the PCs at once in combination with the nuckalavees, as such an encounter is very likely to be deadly. Evil spirits will prefer to fight dismounted and melee next to their nuckalavee.



Ethengarian Evil Spirit

Evil Spirits¹:

AC 2; MV 18, Fly 24; HD 9; hp 56;
THACO 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10 each;
SA See below; SD Shapechange any form,
Ethereal; SZ M(5-6' tall); ML fanatic(18);
Int Average (10); AL CE; XP 4000;

¹ See GAZ12 The Golden Khan of Ethengar, p 41-42

Spirits can turn ethereal at will, at which point they cannot be detected except by spells like *detect spirits*, *detect phase*, *true seeing* and similar effects. They cannot attack or be attacked by physical or magical means unless the assailant is also ethereal or has an attack that extends into the ethereal plane (like a basilisk's gaze).

Note that the names of the four spirits below are named after the four horsemen of the apocalypse from our own real world history. If the DM likes this theme, then there are a couple of ways to integrate this idea with Mystara history. The first is to introduce a legend of the Four Horsemen of Entropy which is a common myth among the peoples and nations of the Known World. The second would be that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are a legend that migrated to Mystara from Laterre when inhabitants of Old Averogne including the d'Ambreville clan came to Mystara.⁷ In either case, the PCs should hear or read about the legend long before they ever reach the aboleth city.

And if the DM prefers to drop this theme, he or she can disregard the names of the spirits and substitute in new names if it becomes necessary.

Death takes on the appearance of a wraith. It has the abilities of a 9th level cleric. Spells: *Cause Light Wounds*(x2) *Curse*, *Darkness*(x2), *Cause Moderate Wounds*⁸(x4), *Animate Dead*(x2), *Bestow Curse*, *Poison*, *Protection from Good* 10' radius, *Slay Living*.

Famine takes on the appearance of a lich. It has the abilities of a 9th level wizard. Spells: *Magic Missile*(x2), *Ray of Fatigue*⁹, *Shield*, *Mirror Image*, *Spectral Hand*, *Web*, *Fireball*, *Hold Person*, *Vampiric Touch*, *Ice Storm*, *Monster Summoning II*, *Cone of Cold*.

⁷ See X2 Castle Amber or GAZ3 Principalities of Glantri

⁸ The spell Cure/Cause Moderate Wounds comes from the 2nd Edition Spells & Magic book

⁹ The spell Ray of Fatigue comes from the 2nd Edition Spells & Magic book

Pestilence takes on the appearance of a beautiful Ethengarian woman with withered blackened hands, and any successful hit forces the target to make a saving throw versus spells or suffer the effects of *cause disease*, specifically the debilitating effect in the PHB spell description. Further infections of disease have no additional effects. Unlike her fellows, Famine can physically attack while ethereal, if successful she cannot cause damage but can still *cause disease*.

War takes on the appearance of a massive Ethengarian man. He is the nominal leader and more physically powerful than the other spirits.

War:

AC 0; MV 18, Fly 24; HD 12; hp 75;
THACO 8; #AT 3; Dmg 1d12 each;
SD Shapechange any form, Ethereal;
SZ M(7' tall); ML fanatic(18);
Int Average (10); AL CE; XP 4000;

Nuckalavee¹:

AC 4; MV 12, Sw 36; HD 11; hp 62;
THACO 9; #AT 2; Dmg 3d8 each;
SA Death aura, fear, breath weapon;
SD Regeneration, immunities;
Magic Resistance: 20%;
SZ H(7' tall at shoulder);
ML champion(15); Int Average (10); AL CE;
XP 11000.

¹ See Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix, p 85

The tower of the spirits and nuckalavees is sparsely and macabrely decorated. There is a massive urn as tall as a man's shoulder made of delicate porcelain and painted with spirals and geometric patterns that contains 3522 gp. There is also a jewel-encrusted statue of a Darokinian soldier wielding his rapier that is worth about 4000 gp.

ERRATA AND MODIFICATIONS FOR NIGHT BELOW ARTICLE IN ISSUE #6

Caverns of the Shadow Dragon: p99-100

The Glantri Kingdom of Magic box set has a quick and dirty conversion of a night dragon into 2E AD&D stats. There it is suggested to treat a night dragon as a red dragon but that its breath weapon does equivalent damage as a red dragon but the effect is heat-draining darkness.¹⁰ If you wish to try this heat-draining darkness Fandrusch would have a cone of darkness that does cold/heat-drain of 14d10+7 damage, but it is recommended that he not have the shadow dragon's level draining breath weapon attack as well.

The Kopru Expeditionary Force: p111

Change the text "1st level divination spell like *rung's Gess*," to "1st level divination spell like *Hornung's Guess*,"

¹⁰ See Glantri : Kingdom of Magic, Grimoire, p 48-49

FIND BARGLE

A Karameikos adventure for Basic level characters

by Trevor Holman

Bargle chanced a backward glance as he fled for his life and finally realized he wasn't being pursued. Hardly believing his luck he knew there was little time, he needed to move quickly. The death of the cleric was sure to bring unwanted attention to his activities, and the warrior had seen him! He had to fulfill his oath first with the goblins to avoid the curse of the blood scroll. That will be easy enough, he thought, he scribed the terms himself. He still wanted the book though, the book hidden in some forgotten chamber of this forgotten complex. But why had the cleric been after him? Something to do with that cursed sage in Threshold?

He had devoted almost 2 years to finding this place and the key to unlock the book; he made sure that only he knew the book was within this underground complex. He also knew the goblins,

with whom he had struck the deal, were close to breaching the inner chambers. The complex itself had suffered collapses in a number of tunnels but the map displayed the tunnel, it only had to be cleared.

Bargle made his way to the corridors being cleared. He was back in control of his own mental facilities now. Some goblins were chipping away at the debris still within the tunnel; others looked up as he entered. Bargle quickly eyed the one he was searching for.

"You are to go and collect the rest of your tribe, it is time." Bargle said.

The goblins all gaped at him as if trying to comprehend what he had just said. "It is time, master?" asked the goblin almost in disbelief. His gaping maw, which was eventually a smile, didn't

improve his already nasty visage.

"Bring them back as soon as you can," explained Bargle in a calm and collective voice. "I will have the rest of you continue to dig while they are en route."

Bargle caught the eye of his henchman, Stiles, who was supervising the digging. The confused look on his face caused Bargle to rethink the events that had forced him to hasten his plans. Should he inform Stiles of the impending danger to their discovery -That one of "them" had escaped?

Turning back to the goblins, "You must fulfill your promise however before anyone arrives or else the curse of the blood scroll will fall upon you all." He made sure his gaze fell on each of them.

The statement; combined with the fact that the whole tribe was coming to take over the complex as agreed to and bound by the oath Bargle had made with their goblin chief had the effect he wanted. The remaining goblins quickly bent their backs to the work at hand with a new enthusiasm. Bargle knew that it would take a small army to root out the goblins once they were established here.

At this point Stiles stepped forward. "My lord?"

Bargle pulled him away from the goblins to speak. "Find the book," he commanded sternly. "I must leave, and when you find the book return to me at castle Mistamere. Any other treasure you find will be yours."

Stiles' eye opened wide at that. "Yes my lord" he said most enthusiastically and began ordering the goblins to hasten their work.

"Pathetic!" Bargle had little hope the book would find him through Stiles.



INTRODUCTION

Assuming Bargle escaped in the introductory adventure of the Basic D&D rulebook this adventure takes off from there. The solo adventure can occur as well, thus discovering the presence of the goblins behind the secret door or the solo adventure of the Basic Rulebook can be made part of this adventure and now the adventuring party (hired by the town clerics to avenge Aleena's death) has quickly come back to deal with Bargle, believing he is still there.

The adventure itself is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st-2nd level.

BACKGROUND AND SYNOPSIS

Bargle has been searching for a magical tome, the *Book of Knowledge and Wisdom*, which he caught wind of from an old sage in Specularum. The book was described as a large tome, bound in leather and metal casing with a skillfully crafted magical lock requiring a key. A wizard of little repute was in possession of the book but knew not what he had, unable to open it without the key¹.

At great risk, Bargle had found the key to unlock the book, and also discovering the location where the book is hidden; only to find the complex had suffered a number of collapses. He quickly made a pact with a tribe of goblins to clear out the debris. In exchange for magical assistance against intruders, the goblins would clear out the debris and afterwards occupy the complex, build defenses, and otherwise protect it. That this lair would be extremely dangerous for the surrounding area was not Bargle's concern.

¹ See the full description in Appendix: The Book of Knowledge and Wisdom

Currently the goblins help guard and dig clear the corridors. Bargle has promised to help them becoming established in their new home and will undoubtedly call upon them in the future if the need arises.

Once the last tunnel blockage is removed, access to the remaining unscathed chambers is possible. The player characters will actually reach the goblins as they have just breached the blocked tunnel, a fist sized hole will show a passageway beyond. Assuming the PCs fight their way through the goblins, Stiles and other obstacles in the complex they will find the book, however, they will have no way of opening it without the key. They will find clues left behind by Bargle in his haste to leave that will allude to the nature of the book, however, and to the goblin tribe that will soon come to claim the complex as their own.

Bargle has more than one henchman. A thief in Threshold has been instructed to find out if the book had been found and to steal the book if necessary, creating more dislike for the wizard should he fail.

Ultimately this will lead the party to continue the adventure against Bargle in the DMG Basic Rule book (or "Kill Bargle!" from *Dungeon* issue 150).

Ideally, in this campaign, Bargle survives and becomes a thorn in the side of the party and maybe particularly in one of the party members (i.e. the warrior who initially explored the dungeon and completed the solo adventure). Maybe a prudent DM would never even allow killing off this main character but rather having him around, causing as much pain and mishap as possible? DMs should play Bargle with genuine cunning and genius. In his early career, Bargle is seeking magic and knowledge, but he is neither stupid nor suicidal.

THE DUNGEON MAP

The map includes the passageways and chambers of the introductory adventure walk-through from the Basic Rule Book, this was a simple map based on the reading. The solo map is also included to show how it links to the rest of the

complex, allowing the present adventure to be played as a whole if none of the party has run the solo adventure.

Overall, the complex has suffered a number of cave-ins towards the back which Bargle has the goblins clearing out. These areas of digging are rough and almost tunnel like; even a dwarf would have to bend slightly to get through. The benefit to the characters is that sound is somewhat deadened. However a fleeing goblin will retreat to this area to warn the others. Stiles is amongst the goblins in this area. The secret doors in the back part of the complex have all shifted slightly and will be easy to spot, however they may be difficult to open.


Areas from the Red Box

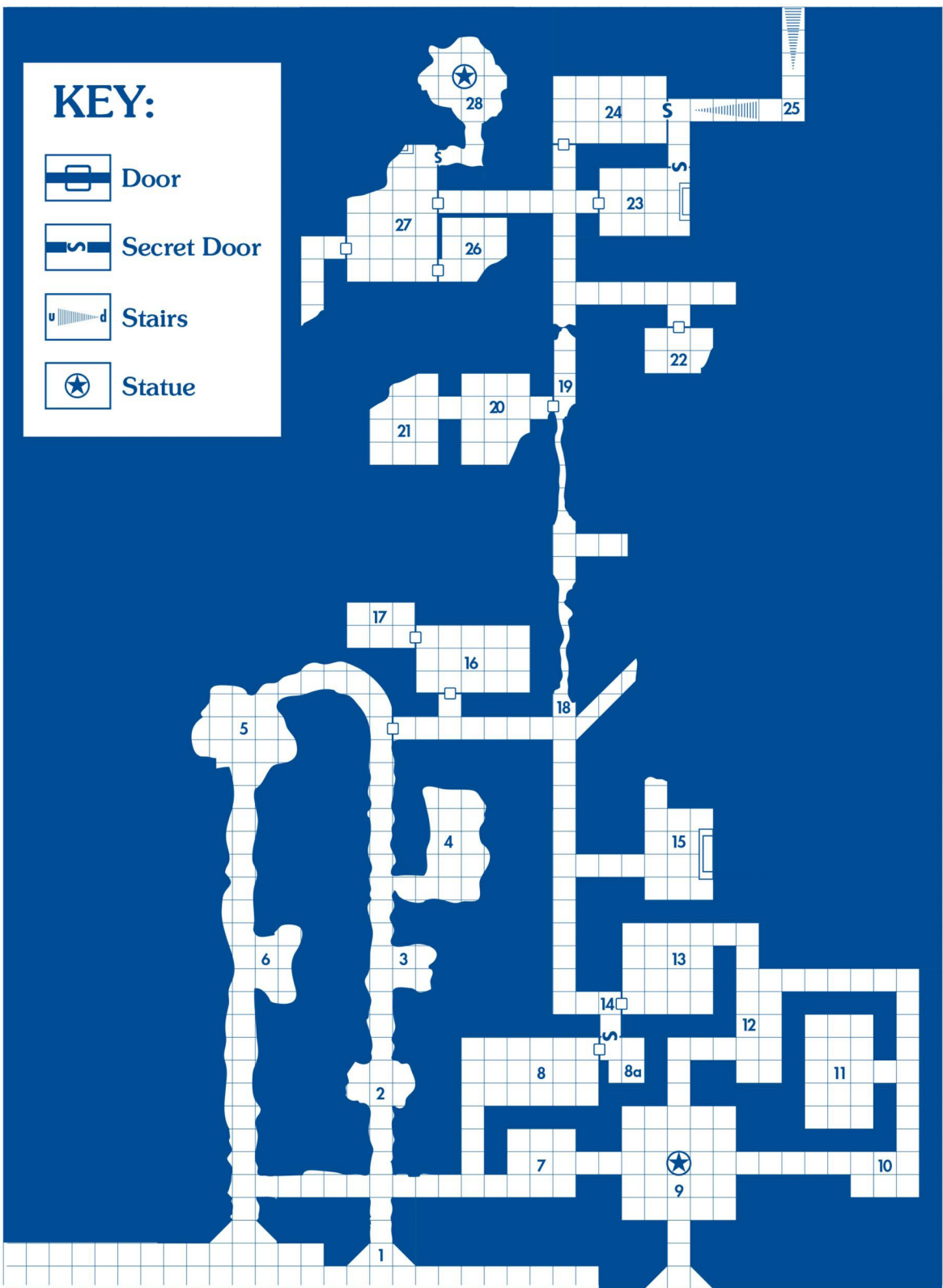
Areas #1-6: on the map are from the introduction in the D&D Basic book. The only area that might be of specific note is area #4 where the ghouls are. They may be treated as wandering monsters as well.

Find Bargle

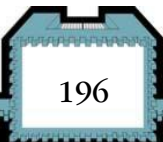


KEY:

-  Door
-  Secret Door
-  Stairs
-  Statue

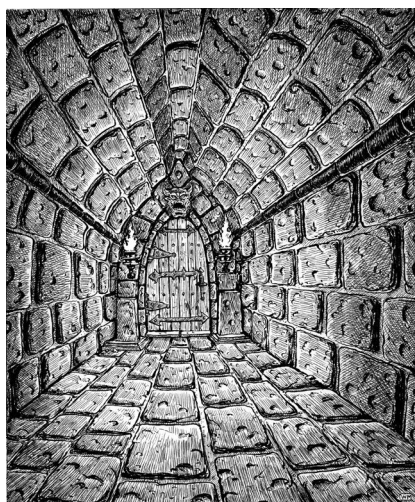


1 square = 10 feet



Areas #7-13: are described in the solo adventure of the D&D Basic book.

There are three main entrances into the rest of the complex, two at area #14 and one up from area #4. The doors are heavily barred from the opposite side, as well as locked. Characters could hack through these heavy doors however the noise will attract attention.



Area #8a (treasure room): The secret door can be forced open quick enough to possibly surprise the goblin guard there, but he is alert.

New Areas

14: GUARD POST

A couple of torches light this area where a lone goblin stands guard watching the barred door. (Note: there are no other torches in the corridors beyond this point.)

The occupants of the complex are unaware of this secret door and have become alert to intruders just recently. He can be surprised normally or with a bonus if the party can come up with a plan to increase their chances. Unless surprised, the goblin will run as fast as he can to warn the others.

Goblin (1)	
Atmour Class:	6
Hit Dice:	1-1
Hit points:	4
Movement:	90' (30')
Attack:	Short sword
Damage:	1d6
Morale:	7
Carries:	12cp

15. COOKERY

This room and passage have been avoided by the goblins as a giant spider lives here. Clearly she has been successful and has nabbed a couple of goblins for a meal. The invaders now feed the creature small animals to “confine” her to her lair and webs; they have trained the spider to expect her meal at a signal. Bargle figured he might as well put her to use guarding the passage. To do this any goblin running by will tap the webs to alert the spider which will come and get her meal. This will give the spider the 1-4 chance to surprise the characters.

The corridor branches to the right and you can clearly see webs semi blocking the passage straight ahead. The room itself was once a kitchen. Rotted tables and dented pots and pans litter the floor. Webs are thick here. There is a huge oven/fire pit against the far wall as well as a cistern full of murky water. The room is damp with harmless mold growing in places. Bones of small animals and two goblin corpses cover the floor near the fire pit/oven. The stench is almost overwhelming.

If the spider kills a character, it will drag that character back into the room if in the corridor, and try to pull the corpse up the chimney where it hides its food. Another corridor leads from this room however it is blocked with rubble and debris from a cave in. If a person searches the corpses



The sleeping bundles are goblin workers that are resting. They take turns as guards, and digging the tunnels for Bargle. They have been working hard and they are used to the door opening and closing so they will actually sleep right through someone coming in that remain fairly silent. They can be easily dispatched if that is the player character's intentions. If captured, they have no information to give accept that they dig for Bargle and his henchman. They will also tell of the promise Bargle made to bring their tribe here.

17. CAPTAIN'S CHAMBER

The door has been left ajar and the room in general is much tidier than the previous barracks despite the fact that it looks to have been ransacked recently or, as if someone left in a hurry. There is a sleeping cot in one corner and a small writing table with a few papers strewn about.

This was Bargle's room, abandoned in a hurry. The various papers on the desk cover supply manifests, other documents of daily administration, and the blood scroll (which Bargle did not deem important to take as he had fulfilled his end of the bargain). The scroll describes the simple agreement between Bargle and the goblins, allowing the goblins to have the complex for their digging the tunnels. The scroll radiates magic and will actually curse the party breaking the oath contained thereon. Should the party decide to destroy the scroll; the curse of the scroll will hit the party (curse of DM's choice, save for half damage).

There is also a flat sheet of parchment that has fallen behind the table that the party will find if they search

Giant Black Widow Spider (1)	
Atmour Class:	6
Hit Dice:	3
Hit points:	14
Movement:	60' (20') or 120' (40') in web
Attack:	-1 bite
Damage:	2-12 + poison
Morale:	8
Carries:	12cp

16. GOBLIN BARRACKS

The room is filthy and you can see a number of bundles on the floor. You can see the bundles slowly fall and rise and realize they are sleeping goblins. In the far corner is a rotted pile of broken wood that was once cots for the original inhabitants. Smashed chests also litter the corner.

Goblins (6)	
Atmour Class:	6
Hit Dice:	1-1
Hit points:	5, 4, 4,3, 3, 2
Movement:	90' (30')
Attack:	Short sword
Damage:	1d6
Morale:	7
Carries:	2d12cp, 1d4ep

carefully. The paper contains notes which describe the book Bargle was looking for, as well as a general indication of where to find it (this complex).

18. TUNNELS

The tunnels themselves are just big enough for goblins to walk through slightly bent. Human-sized creatures will need to crawl. It is not quite possible to look straight down through the tunnels and to the other side. At the first tunnel a muffled digging sound can be heard, however it seems distant.

At the end of the first tunnel is a portion of intact corridor with a branching passageway blocked by debris and newly dug rock and dirt deposited there. The sound of digging becomes louder as the players crawl deeper into the passageway; and voices of goblins and a human can be heard, though these too are muffled by the rugged passageway of another tunnel.

At some point a goblin will stumble into the area from the second tunnel carrying a basket of debris to dump if the party is still undetected. If the goblins and Stiles are

aware of the party they will set up a trap in the last tunnel, ready to pounce on anyone coming out of the tunnel at area #19.

Goblin (1)	
Atmour Class:	6
Hit Dice:	1-1
Hit points:	4
Movement:	90' (30')
Attack:	
Damage:	1d4
Morale:	7
Carries:	14cp

19. THE LAST DIG

Unless previously alerted, a small group of goblins and *Stiles* will be here as they have just broken through to the intact corridor beyond.

Torches align the wall, a partially uncovered door sits to the left, and several goblins, and a human, are busy filling baskets with rock and other rubble. As you come out the tunnel they turn to you and the human looks at you most comically and says, "Who the bloody hell are you?"



Stiles will not share any treasure, thinking that is what the party is there for, and attacks with the goblins if no good explanation of their presence comes from the party. Any mention of looking for Bargle will prompt Stiles to attack. Stiles might be a little slow in the head but he usually arrives at the right conclusion that if Bargle knew someone was coming and did not bother to tell him, it bodes evil for him. If the battle goes ill for Stiles he will back down and parley if he can. He will mention the book but he does not know any more than that. He will also mention that fact that he was promised whatever treasure was found. Stiles does not have to be loyal to Bargle, he wants to live. He might even

be willing to join the party if played right.

The digging party has broken through and a hole the size of a fist can be seen in the end of the tunnel. It will not take the characters long to finish the job and continue the search for the book.

Stiles: F3

Atmour Class: 4
(chainmail)
Hit points: 14
Damage: 1d8
Carries: ring of protection +1, long sword, 34 gp, 16sp, 1 gem worth 100gp.

Goblin (5)

Atmour Class: 6
Hit Dice: 1-1
Hit points: 6, 5, 5, 4, 4
Movement: 90' (30')
Attack: Shovels/pick axes
Damage: 1d6
Morale: 7
Carries: 2d12 cp and 1d6 gp each

20. ARMORY

Rusting blades, rotted spear shafts, warped bows with rotted strings, a couple of rusted pieces of armor and other debris litter this room. A rotted quiver partially hanging from the wall has spilled a number of arrows (12) to the ground. The arrows, aside from dust, are in excellent condition. Three hideously malformed and rotted corpses amble slowly towards you as you search the room.

There is nothing of value in this room except the arrows,

Zombies (3)

Atmour Class: 8
Hit Dice: 2
Hit points: 8, 7, 6
Movement: 90' (30')
Attack: 1 claw
Carries: 12cp

21. TRAINING ROOM

This room is nearly empty except for two rotted fighting posts in the center of the room. It was obviously a training room at one time.

22. SUPPLY ROOM

Old barrels line the walls along with shelves of materials. It appears to have been a storage or supply room. Almost everything is rotten. As you hold your torch high to see all, you quickly notice movement in the far corner.

There are two giant centipedes in this room. One is moving away amongst the shelves and barrels and the other is clinging to the wall above the door as the party walked in. It will drop down on the first person it can, attacking by surprise unless the party has taken precautions. One half rotted crate contains 20 iron spikes, another half a dozen unused extremely dry torches. Lighting these will cause them to burst into flames very fast, causing 1-2 pts of damage to the person lighting them.

Giant Centipedes (2)

Atmour Class: 9
Hit Dice: 1/2
Hit points: 3, 2
Movement: 60' (20')
Attack: 1 bit
Damage: Poison
Morale: 7

23. GREAT ROOM

This room appears to have been a great room or council room. A large table that still stands in the center of the room is covered by ages of dust and debris. The chairs have rotted and fallen into disrepair. A large fireplace sits behind the table head.

There is nothing of value in this room. The collapse has made the stonework of this fireplace very unstable and any searching and poking around will cause it to collapse on the person causing 1d6 points of damage. Allow a saving throw vs. Paralysis/Turn to Stone to avoid the falling stone. A dwarf will be able to tell upon examination that the stone is unstable. The secret door in the northeast corner is -1 to find due to the risk of falling debris.

24. COMMON ROOM

Entering this room causes a racket as your light glints on bleached bone. Three skeletons armed with short swords, tattered clothing hanging from their bones, move towards you with reckless abandon each skull issuing a silent scream of disdain for the living...



The room was a common room of some sort; everything has been smashed or destroyed leaving only splinters of rotted wood everywhere. The secret door leading to area 25 has partly rotted away making it +1 to find.

Skeletons (3)	
Atmour Class:	7
Hit Dice:	1
Hit points:	6, 5, 5
Movement:	60' (20')
Attack:	1
Damage:	1-6

25. A WAY OUT

The passage leads to a flight of stairs going up.

Up to the next landing the party will disturb a nest of stirges. They will attack immediately. Searching their nest, the stirges have collected a few trinkets it appears. A golden earring worth 15gp and a silver signet ring worth 25gp by itself. This ring was long lost by a local prominent family in the town, (the party will easily recognize whom it would belong to). If returned, the family will give the players 350gp.

Stirges (5)	
Atmour Class:	7
Hit Dice:	1
Hit points:	4, 4, 3, 3, 2
Movement:	30' (10') Flying 180' (60')
Attack:	1
Damage:	01/03/2015
Morale:	9

The passageway continues up another flight of stairs and you can feel fresh air coming in from a opening to the outside. The door is of rock and at one time was

perfectly balanced, however now it has shifted and looks extremely heavy.

It will take a combined strength of at least 40 points to move this stone enough for characters to pass through.

26. WIZARD'S BED CHAMBER

Upon entering this room you see a collapse in the far corner, a smashed bed and rotten furniture.

Searching the room will result in the finding of a small trap door in the floor that will be easy to discern. Underneath this door is a small recess dug into the floor and a partially covered chest! The chest is trapped with a blade trap causing 1-2 points of damage. The poison on the blade has long dried and lost its potency. It appears the bottom of the chest has been under some water at one time as it is partially rotted. However, the chest is full of coins and a large book, 2 vials of liquid that are potions. One is strength, the other a potion of healing with 2 doses. There are 156 cp, 75 sp, 45 ep and 40 gp. Also a small oiled pouch with 25 pp in it

and 3 gems each worth 100 gp.

The book is the wizard's spell book and unfortunately many of the pages are ruined. However, a few spells can be recovered, with careful handling. The book was wrapped in an oil cloth so the damage is limited to the part that was submerged. Four first-level spells and three second level have been preserved (DMs can choose the specific spells to fit their campaign).

27. WIZARD'S STUDY

Entering this room you see a huge collapse in the far corner; a partially covered and damaged fire place, tables and shelves smashed and destroyed along the collapsed wall. Broken glass litters the floor. A huge rock has fallen from the ceiling and you can see a skeleton partially buried underneath it. There is a translucent figure of a human that appears to be working around some other tables and shelves.

Seeing the ghost the characters must save vs. fear (spells) or flee the place for 1-4 turns. The ghost of the wizard is harmless. It will not acknowledge the character in

any way. Nor will the characters be able to communicate with it. On one of the partially collapsed shelves is a large book - dust covered, but well preserved and intact. It is metal bound with a lock. If the characters have found any clues about the book they will recognize it immediately. The book cannot be opened without the key Bargle has. The book cannot be burned or ruined without high level magic. This is the *Book of Knowledge and Wisdom*. Unable to open it, the wizard simply put it on the shelf with the rest of the books not even knowing what he had.

28. STATUE CAVE

The secret door moves hard.

You hear the soft drip of water further on and as you turn the corner a glimmering statue catches the light of your torches and lanterns. The statue is of a woman, however almost clear, and as if made of crystal. As the light plays off the statue's features you can see it is the same woman as in the front entrance of the complex. The dais she stands on is in the middle of a pool of water within a fountain base.

The statue is a water weird. Having heard the characters passing through the secret door it assumed statue shape quickly. It has lived off the life force of rodents for so long it can barely contain itself in this form anticipating a feast. If the characters are truly observant they may see the eyes actually move or believe they see them moving. The old wizard had captured this weird and kept it here for studies. He would “feed” it regularly but never did he get too close. While dangerous, this weird is relatively weak. If the players get close enough to see what is in the fountain, they are too close and the weird attacks. The pool is only 4 feet deep but clear and water drips from the ceiling to keep it full. The bottom is littered with small rodents and even human skeletons. There is no other treasure.

Water Weird (1)	
Armour Class:	5
Hit Dice:	3*
Hit points:	12
Movement:	60' (20')
Attack:	1
Damage:	1+drowning

APPENDIX: THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

[The *Book of Knowledge and Wisdom*, found in Area 27 of the dungeon, is an artifact crafted by the immortals themselves to store all the knowledge and wisdom they possessed. It can be read by only one individual at a time and the contents of the book change to match its reader's comprehension and ability. It is never the same. A single person can read this book his whole life and continue to learn from it.

The book imbibes the reader with wisdom and knowledge at a rate of 1pt. per game

year, alternating each year between wisdom and intelligence. For example: reading the book for two years adds 1 point to each basic ability). This requires the reader to spend at least the number of hours equal to their intelligence and wisdom combined per week reading and studying the book. It is a large book weighing 20 lbs.



The one who possesses the key is considered the “reader”; without the key the book is impossible to use. Once a person starts reading the book he is bound to it. If



the key is given to another or stolen or lost, the original reader will slowly be driven mad, losing all wisdom and intelligence at the same rate he gained it, but never stopping, eventually reducing wisdom, and intelligence to nothing. The book cannot be left open after reading. The reader will always close it thus locking it, desirous of keeping his knowledge secret and safe.

There are only a few sages throughout the lands that

would have any detailed knowledge of this book. Many will have heard of it though. One was made silent by Bargle. It is a wonderful and frightening artifact. It is valuable to a point but without the key the players will be hard pressed to find a buyer in any small town or village that would only give more than 100 gp for it, especially if they do not know what it actually is. Do not let the players know what they have come into possession of without

considerable seeking of knowledge. This can be an ongoing subplot if the characters decide to keep the book. Bargle has the key and if Bargle finds out they have the book he will do everything in his power to obtain it.

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MYSTARA

at the GIOCAPADOVA CONVENTION

By Overlord Executive



Overlord is a gaming association founded in 1986 with the goal to promote and spread “smart” games.

For almost thirty years, it has welcomed newcomers and fans of role-playing games, tabletop, simulation, and strategy games.



Every Friday evening Overlord's members gather in their headquarters, situated in Padua, to play one of the titles available in the association's extensive store of games or to try out new games proposed by members.

For information see the website:

www.overlord.it

and their Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/circolooverlord

Over the first weekend of September 2015, Overlord will present the 26th annual GIOCAPADOVA. This long-running event hosts tournaments, gaming tables, and special events free both for experts and anyone who wants to enter the world of tabletop, simulation, and strategy gaming.

Therefore we hope to be seeing you Saturday and Sunday, the fifth and sixth of September, amid the picturesque setting of Ex Fornace Carotta in Padua. The former brickworks, beautifully restored into a multi-purpose event center, is located near Padua's historic center.

The 2015 GIOCAPADOVA convention will host a special space dedicated to Mystara.

Genesis of the Italia Mystara Group and the Mystara Convention at GIOCAPADOVA

by Giuliano Michelin¹

During recent years the increasing widespread use of social networks, applied to the RPG world, has enabled thousands of D&D fans, including the Mystara game setting, to contact one another and create an actual network.

While this was possible in the past, through newsletters and bulletin boards, there is no doubt that social media, with its real-time immediacy, besides wide and increasing diffusion on mobile platforms such as smartphones and tablets, has contributed to the sharp increase in popularity of gaming related networks. Thus, in a few short years, online groups and web pages dedicated to every aspect of RPGs have been created. Many RPG authors have quickly realized the potential these avenues can provide in terms of communicating and consolidating the bond uniting people everywhere, even perfect strangers, through a shared passion.

Bruce Heard, who among them can be considered one of the creative founders of the classic D&D setting of Mystara, has launched one of the most influential and popular groups: Mystara Reborn.

Joining Mystara Reborn led me to understand the dedication and fervor of

Italian fans at every level, supporting and expanding the Mystara setting, which has been bereft of official support for far too long. The idea of creating a Facebook group for Italian fans of Mystara was therefore a natural progression, with the result being a high level of participation from the Italian members in the main forum. Mystara Italy, in just a few short months from its conception, has already attracted over a hundred fans.

This September, the group will celebrate its first anniversary. Therefore it seemed to me a great opportunity to be able to create, within GiocaPadova 2015, a special affair to celebrate this upcoming event. The idea was met with great enthusiasm by group members, and fresh ideas were added to mine outlining what could be done. Besides throwing a simple party or reunion, we'll be hosting more events resembling a Mini-Con focused on Mystara.

I will run at least one adventure at the event as often as possible, allowing all interested gamers to participate, and perhaps later join the group. I know others are thinking about running adventures, so stay tuned for more information; and if you are a DM willing to run a Mystara game at the convention, feel free to contact me on the Italia Mystara Facebook Group!

¹ Founder of the Italian Mystara Facebook Group and Organizer of the Mystara Convention at GIOCAPADOVA for Circolo Overlord

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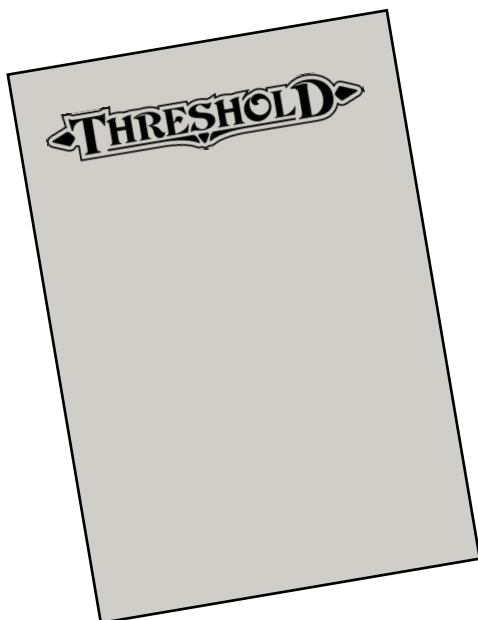
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Few who hear the stories believe them... Fewer still know the truth. The Red World is real, a land with a harsh and eternally burning sun, where the Immortals secret away their playthings for safe keeping.

Prepare to explore...

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... and much much more...

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The following guidelines apply to different types of submissions:

Illustrations: please submit art and maps in lossless format (e.g., PNG).

Articles: manuscript submissions can be sent by mail as plain text, doc(x) or odt, or shared as Google Doc. The issue editor will create a shared document (for each article) to allow the author and editorial team to work on it. Articles can be as short as a single page, or as long as 6 pages, depending on the specific content. The editorial team will do its best to accommodate the contributions, but especially long works may be split over several issues.

Tables: Tables should be numbered (Table X: Name of Table), and any references in the article should refer to that table number (and not to "the table below," for example).

Author Bios: Please include a short blurb (one or two sentences) biography/blurb about yourself for our "contributing authors" section. It can be serious or silly, but don't get too carried away with it, please.

Other types of contributions: the editorial team will consider on a case by case basis other types of contributions. Please contact us to inquire if and how we can accommodate unusual contribution formats.

†Refer to "Call for Contributions" (page 5) for next issue deadline dates.

#Insert relevant issue number in place of '#'



THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine



Warlords of Norwold

Threshold Magazine now concludes its exploration of Norwold, started in Issue 6 and continued in Issue 7, with a gallery of NPCs to supplement the “Test of the Warlords” campaign. There is also the first part of an article on the Dragons of the Wyrksteeth.

Within this issue's pages, you will also find two new adventure modules, including the next level of Koskatep, Threshold Magazine's ongoing mega-dungeon and an expansion of the Red Box multiplayer mini-module

